



EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

# EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION FOCUS

SUMMER 2016

## TRAINING APPRENTICES ‘ANYTIME, ANYWHERE’

*Strength and Flexibility at the Core of Educational Foundation’s Successful Plumbing and HVACR Apprentice eLearning Program*

For busy apprentices trying to juggle a four-year training program with full-time work, what’s not to like about getting that education on their own time, at their own pace? Even better, what about having the option to set your own faster pace and finish early?

That’s the flexibility behind the PHCC Educational Foundation’s successful Plumbing and HVACR Apprentice eLearning Program. Recognized by the U.S. Dept. of Labor, the program provides employers and apprentices with an alternative training solution to classroom-based instruction for a four-year apprentice program.



That flexibility does not compromise the program’s muscle, though. Each track (plumbing and HVACR) comprises four courses – one per year for a four-year apprenticeship. While the courses are based on Blackboard, an internet-based course management system, they follow the same comprehensive curriculum as the Foundation’s textbooks.

And, like a traditional program, on-the-job training must be coordinated with a participating employer.

Different people learn different ways. Knowing this, the online curriculum has been strategically geared to accommodate *all* types of learners by incorporating visual, auditory, reading and writing, and kinesthetic components. Merry Beth Hall, the Foundation’s director of apprentice and journeyman training, has also recently worked to add more math skills courseware, mechanical and electrical simulation software for HVAC, and relevant videos from manufacturers and industry groups that help emphasize the material in the textbooks.

### SETTING THE PACE

Because the eLearning program has open enrollment, apprentices can start at any time throughout the year and then work at their own pace. **“I really like how I can**

*Continued on page 2...*



While Raymond Mabe of GSM Services is a beginner to the PHCC Educational Foundation's HVACR Apprentice eLearning Program, he already enjoys its flexibility. "I can study by myself and work on this at any time I want," he says of his preference over the "set times" of classroom learning. The best part? "Furthering my understanding of the different systems and learning more troubleshooting advice," he adds.

**create my own schedule,"** says Plumbing Apprentice Brian Suppin of Jay R. Reynolds, Inc. in Pennsylvania, who just completed his third year in the Foundation's program. **"I can do my reading and assignments anywhere, anytime ... its convenience and flexibility are hard to beat."** Suppin also acknowledges the program's comprehensive range of topics: "From job site safety to plumbing code and blueprint reading, these courses – combined with on-the-job training – provide me with the knowledge and skills that it takes to become a successful plumber."

Apprentice Eric Pressley echoes that all-inclusive footprint on the HVACR side as well. "This program shows you an in-depth view of all the different components to HVAC ... not just how to install but all the aspects, from service and sales to troubleshooting," he says.

While Pressley just started the eLearning program a little more than a year ago, he is already taking HVACR Course 301 (third-year course). It's a perfect example of the program's flexibility, says his mentor, Sam Vagnozzi, the education coordinator/safety director at GSM Services in Gastonia, North Carolina. **"It allows our people to work full time during the day and study at their own pace.** While

each segment must be completed in a year's time, if an individual is really motivated, the program is flexible enough to allow for each segment to be completed ahead of time."

Vagnozzi admits that the local community colleges in his area offer great programs in HVAC, but **"working all day and then going to school in the evenings presents its challenges and is not for everyone,"** he says. Plus, he adds, "We often hire people who have been in the workforce for some time but are changing careers. Going back to school can be challenging or may not be in their budget. This allows them to earn while they learn."

Ginny Smith, Apprentice Coordinator at Jay R. Reynolds, Inc., says company apprentices are also able to get formal technical training elsewhere, but Jay R. Reynolds, Inc. opts for the PHCC's eLearning path for the accessibility of home study and the ease of online testing. **"The online testing has made the process go much faster and is much more convenient,"** says Smith, who has had 42 plumbing employees complete the Foundation's apprentice training, with 13 additional employees participating in the eLearning version now. To ensure the apprentices are advancing steadily, "we give all tests a due date and make sure they are completed on time," she adds.

## STAYING ON TRACK

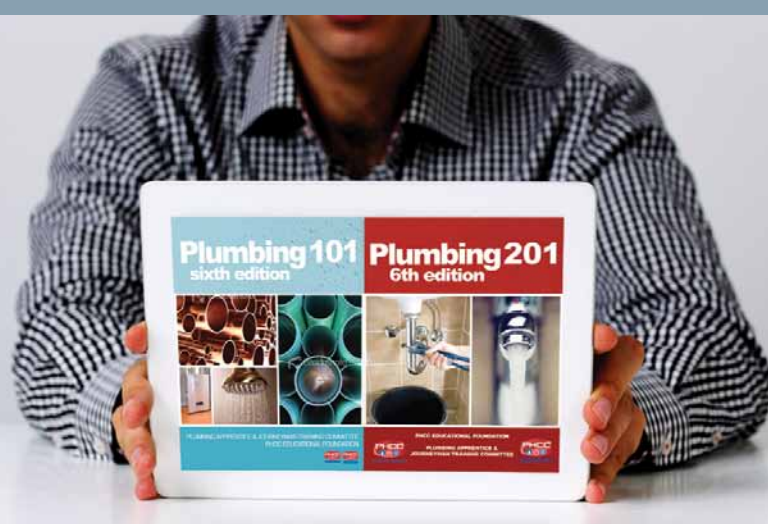
Since there is no set schedule, apprentices pursuing the eLearning option must be disciplined and self-motivated to maintain steady progress. Support from employers and/or designated mentors is crucial to ensuring the students stay on track. The Sack Company in Statesboro, Georgia, has found tremendous success by having its project managers serve as those mentors. With jobs spread throughout a tri-state area, the project managers are the ones on-site with the apprentices. Says Sack Human Resources Manager Fred Hill: **"We make sure our project managers continually are asking them, 'How are your classes going? Do you need help with anything?'"**

Hill – who currently has two plumbing and two HVACR apprentices enrolled in the program – praises its ease



Steady Growth – Enrollment in the Plumbing and HVAC eLearning Programs has nearly tripled since June 2014 and is projected to continue growing tremendously as employers work to fill open apprentice positions.

SEP-14 DEC-14 MAR-15 JUN-15 SEP-15 DEC-15 MAR-16



and flexibility. Like the traditional classroom experience, though, the apprentices, he says, have to be dedicated. **“They have to be engaged; they have to want to do this.”**

In many cases, Hill adds, “it’s really tough for them. These guys work 10-hour days and then go home and deal with personal responsibilities and then still have to complete their online coursework.” That’s why it’s crucial, Hill stresses, for those project managers to encourage the apprentices and keep them engaged and focused ... “to communicate that this program is as important to *them* as it is to the apprentices.”

Beyond that continuous monitoring, Hill himself receives the apprentices’ grades and meets quarterly with each one to review his/her status.

The Sack Company also follows the Dept. of Labor’s recommended wage increases through the program. And, once the apprentices complete the program, Sack frames

their certificates and recognizes them at the company’s quarterly superintendent meetings with a plaque and a \$1,000 bonus.

At GSM Services, the eLearning program is an effective tool for both recognition and advancement. “We promote this to our folks, as well as those looking for a career here at GSM. **This is one of several paths where they can increase their pay and advance technically in their career,**” says Vagnozzi.

So while there’s no starting buzzer or rigid track along PHCC’s eLearning program – for first-timers, career switchers, or even those just wanting to rise through the ranks – there’s certainly motivation to finish.

**For more information on the Educational Foundation’s Plumbing & HVACR eLearning Program, visit [phccfoundation.org/elearning](http://phccfoundation.org/elearning).**

## HOW TO GET STARTED...

“Enrolling an apprentice is easy,” says Sam Vagnozzi of North Carolina’s GSM Services. “We complete a one-page enrollment form and submit it with payment,” he adds. “The textbooks are sent in short order. The apprentice receives an e-mail with instructions on how to log into the system, and they can begin learning right away!”

While the Foundation’s eLearning program can be taken by anyone, contractors who want to use it for their apprentices must confirm state approval to use the program before enrolling their students, as licensing and credentialing rules are different in every state. While many states do not require licensing, it’s best to contact your state apprenticeship agency and ask them for help in getting started.

For states that do require licensing, the program must be registered with your state’s registration/approval agency to ensure that the credentials issued through the program are recognized for licensing purposes. The Foundation’s plumbing eLearning program has already been approved by state agencies in Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina and South Carolina. The HVACR program has been approved in New Jersey.

The eLearning program is qualified for use in many other states not specifically listed above. For more information, please see [phccfoundation.org/elearning](http://phccfoundation.org/elearning)



# SMARTER MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP IDEAS ROUND-UP

What happens when you get 18 smart managers, business owners and professionals from leading PHCC companies together for two days of intense discussions about our industry? You get a LOT of very good ideas about what it takes to make a contracting company successful today and how that will be changing in the near future.

## COMPANY ONLINE PRESENCE

- Your homepage needs motion – best is a video introduction to your company and work specialties that will auto play, muted with captions. Let visitors click to turn the sound on.
- Create a company YouTube Channel. See Turner Construction’s channel for how they use the platform to advertise and recruit.
- Your company logo and other graphics MUST be modern looking. Cartoon style logos and dated clip art quickly degrades customer confidence in your professionalism.
- Customers want to know who will be coming to their home or running the projects they hire you to do. Include staff photos and bios on your site, but NOT direct contact information (phone or e-mails) for individuals.
- Customers want to know you can do the work they want done. Include descriptions and quality photos of past company projects. Seeing projects on your site gives customers confidence that you can handle their similar project.



## FORECASTING THE FUTURE

- Every six weeks, the Federal Reserve’s Beige Book gives an excellent snapshot of the economy. Even better, there are easy-to-read district reports to find out exactly what is happening in the economy in your company’s work area.
- The American Institute of Architects (AIA) publishes an Average Billings Index, which shows how much new construction work is on the books of architectural firms. Monitoring this index will give you a feel for the volume of work that will be coming up for bid in 6 to 18 months.
- Making a five year company plan is less useful today. Start with a 90-day plan with specific, attainable goals and build a new plan each quarter. The short deadline keeps the pressure on to complete the objectives. Go out only 2-3 years on more strategic goals.
- You should expect your utility costs to go up significantly over the next ten years. Expect 30% increases in energy costs due to coal plant decommissions and other increases as aging infrastructure finally reaches the point where it must be replaced.

## Benefit from the best ideas shared at our recent workshop for senior management held at Viega's Training Facility in Nashua, New Hampshire.

viega

*"The current U.S. growth rate is 2%. We need 3+% to really grow. Most of the construction you are seeing now is burning off prior pent-up demand from 2 or 3 years ago and you should expect things to cool off a bit. Now would be the time to make a shift toward securing customers and exploring work in improving efficiencies of existing buildings, because that is where the best, highest margin work will be in two years." – Kirk Alter of Fast Management and Purdue University*

*"From food to cars, just about everything we use today is manufactured in a factory. There are very smart people who have asked why buildings are not handled in the same way. P-H-C industry subcontractors have the opportunity right now to team up with other subs to create manufacturing facilities where projects can be jointly fabricated under ideal conditions before being trucked off to the jobsite for assembly. If we subcontractors don't start adopting this manufacturing mindset on our own, those smart players will be hiring away our best people to go run their construction manufacturing facilities. This is already happening in several markets." – Kirk Alter of Fast Management and Purdue University*

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- There are plenty of workers out there, but you have to be ready to recruit and hire across cultures and demographics.
- Take the time to learn about the culture, language, holidays and other important traditions of the workers you are recruiting.
- Find a way to train workers and foremen in their own language.
- For vets, check their DD 214 discharge papers – they will give you a good feel for the individual's experience and eligibility for re-enlistment.
- Be the employer of choice in your area. Pay high average wages for your market and give good benefits, including an incentive program to earn even more based on individual ability & skills and company outperformance.



### MOMENTS FROM THE RECENT WORKSHOP





EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

# PHCC EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION 2016 INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS

As of June 24, 2016

**TOP 2016 CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS:** Kirk & Pam Alter, Laurie & Danny Crigler, Chip Greene, Rob Grim at InSinkErator, William Hite at the United Association, Gerry Kennedy, Rex & Alice Martin at NIBCO INC., Nate Oland at Federated Insurance, Steve and Isabella Schaefer, Brandon Stepanek at A. O. Smith, Patrick Wallner, Anne Williams, Henry Wood at Ferguson Enterprises

**FOUNDATION FELLOWS – \$1,000:** Dave Ariano, Michael Bohinc, Matt & Shawn Erickson, Gary Forosisky, Kenny Howes, Doug Isley, Rich & Karen Kerzetski, Don & Lorraine Morin, PHCC of Louisiana, PHCC of Tennessee, Roger Peugeot, Bryan Stansell, Orville Taecker, Jo Rae Wagner

**CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE – \$500+:** Mike & Heather Appleton, Timothy Beil, Keith & Linda Bienvenu, Dan Bonetti, Michael Dolan, Rhonda & Sam Dowdy, Greg Faustina, Dan Foley, Milton & Patty Frank, Charles B. Gans, Jr., Merry Beth Hall, Evan Hibbs, Randy Keys, Scott & Lois Kissinger, Rick Lanier, Butch McGonegal, Don & Lorraine Morin, Jonathan Moyer, Harley Perry, Karen Pickett, Ellen Rohr, Mark S. Russo, Dick Steadman, Tracy Threlfall, John Zink

## **CENTURY CLUB – \$100+:**

Mark R. Aigeldinger, Susan Armstrong, Dale Arndt, Jessica Burden, Kenny Calkins, Dan Callies, Richard Cancelosi, Theresa Carter, Bradd Conn, Michael R. Copp, Dawn Dalton, Peridot Davis, Charles J. Diliberto, Beth Dobkin, James and Nancy Eberhardt, Walt Edmunds, Jennifer Embrich, Fred Falkena, Sonny Friedman, Lamont Goldstein, Joe & Skylar Halpin, Chad Hart, Tina Hedrick, Jeff Heger, Jason Herrmann, Susan Hofacker, Todd Iocco, Richard G. Jurzyk, Jr., Greater Boston Plumbing Contractors Association, James J Kreifels, Rob Kreutzer, Jeffrey Kuhn, William Leydon, Earl Lively, Jeff Longspough, Robert J. Macca, John Macone, Tom Mahoney,

Plumbers & Pipefitters Local Union #9, Michael Mancini, Diane Mills, Tom Mishi, Brandon Morrison, Jim Neyer, Greg Palmer, PHCC of Indiana, PHCC of Massachusetts, PHCC of Metro New Orleans, Herbert L. Phillips, Vincent Pierangali, Joseph W. Rascher, Thomas C. Rechten, Tom Riches, Rhonda & Fred Robillard, Jerome Sabol, George Salet, Justin Sanchez, Dennis Schlekke, Cindy Sheridan, Kimberly Shoemaker, Lawrence Snow, Judi Speaks, Carl Stilwell, Kathy Stradley, Malcolm Sweet, Paul Taecker, Kathy Thaut, Jeffrey C. Voss, Michael Wente, Michelle Wittig, Greg Wolfe

**SUSTAINING DONORS – UP TO \$100:** Tyler Arndt, Adam Brantley, Andrew J. Corsillo, Andrew Hoerner, Tom King, Michael Lauber, Mark Lindsay, Robert P. Mader, Deidra McElroy, Paul Nebrasky, Steve Pullman, Joanna Roman, Randall Shoup, Stacey Ziegler Harp

## **MEMORIAL GIFTS:**

Michael Dolan, In Memory of Jack Dolan, Jr.  
Michael Dolan, In Memory of Jack Dolan, Sr.  
Chip Greene, In Memory of Debra Gover  
Kenny Howes, In Memory of Kenneth "Pops" Mallick  
Gerry Kennedy, In Memory of Fran Williams  
Jim Neyer, In Memory of Ken Neyer, Sr.  
Don & Lorraine Morin, In Memory of Fran Williams

PHCC of Indiana, In Memory of Luke Mehringer  
PHCC of Massachusetts, In Memory of Deb Gover  
Malcolm Sweet, In Memory of Len "Red" Meiners  
Orville Taecker, In Memory of Doreen Taecker  
Paul Taecker, In Memory of Doreen Taecker  
Anne Williams, In Memory of Fran Williams  
John Zink, In Memory of Fran Williams

## **GIFTS MADE IN HONOR OF:**

Mark R. Aigeldinger, In Honor of Evan Aigeldinger  
Michael Bohinc, In Honor of Frank Blau, Jr.  
Rhonda Robillard, In Honor of the Louisiana PHCC Auxiliary

Anne Williams, In Honor of David & Janet Dugger's 25th Wedding Anniversary



# PHCC Educational Foundation

Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors–National Association

180 S. Washington Street | Suite 100 | Falls Church, VA 22046  
P: 703-237-8100 | F: 703-237-7442 | W: phccfoundation.org | E: foundation@naphcc.org

- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- BUSINESS EDUCATION
- TECHNICAL TRAINING

Your tax-deductible gift supports the future of our profession!



**Professional Contractor Education**  
from the PHCC  
Educational Foundation



**Scholarships for Students**  
from the PHCC National  
Auxiliary Scholarship Program



## INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN

INSINKERATOR, FERGUSON, NIBCO AND THE UNITED ASSOCIATION PROVIDE MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOST THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT!



Please make checks payable to the **PHCC Educational Foundation** & return to:  
**180 S. Washington St., Suite 100, Falls Church, VA 22046.** Questions: (800) 533-7694.  
Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law. More details at [www.phccfoundation.org](http://www.phccfoundation.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_



This Gift is Made  in Honor of  in Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

**My 2016 Annual Campaign Gift** – Charge:  MC  Visa  Amex  Check Enclosed

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIMPLE GIVING OPTION** – Spread your gift out with monthly/quarterly payments made automatically from your credit card.

Please Charge My Credit Card Every:  Quarter  Month For This Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### ONE TIME GIFT OPTION:

\$50 (*Sustaining Donor*)

\$250 (*Century Club*)

\$1,000 (*Foundation Fellow*)

\$100 (*Century Club*)

\$500 (*Chairman's Circle*)

Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

GIVE ONLINE AT: [PHCCFOUNDATION.ORG/INVEST](http://PHCCFOUNDATION.ORG/INVEST)

OR E-MAIL THIS SHEET TO [FOUNDATION@NAPHCC.ORG](mailto:FOUNDATION@NAPHCC.ORG) OR FAX TO 703-237-7442. THANK YOU!

# Surrounded by Champions

## Students from Across the Country Compete at SkillsUSA National Championships

SkillsUSA (formerly VICA) is a national organization serving high school and college students who are preparing for careers in technical, skilled and service occupations. The SkillsUSA National Championships brings together over 6,000 students – state level competition winners – to compete for the title of the nation’s best.

The PHCC Educational Foundation is proud to run the SkillsUSA plumbing competition each year and assist with the HVAC competition. The 2016 contests ran June 20-24 at the Louisville, Kentucky Exposition Center with 44 students on the plumbing side and 48 on the HVAC side.

“Many of these students won competitions in their home states to get here,” said Merry Beth Hall, the Foundation’s director of apprentice and journeyman training, “but this is a whole new level. They are far away from home, in a huge exhibit hall surrounded by 16,000 people, and we are tasking them to get this rough-in work completed – while they can see the really tough competition they are up against all around them. It’s pretty amazing what these kids are able to do!”



See 100+ additional pictures of this event on our Facebook or Flickr pages.

“I have not been out to the national championships since my VICA days as a student right out of the service,” said PHCC—National Association Executive Vice President Michael Copp. “This experience brought back good memories of those times and appreciation for the people who helped me then to develop my skills. We have an incredible team of contractors and industry partners doing the same for the kids competing in the plumbing and HVAC championships today.”

### Connect With Us... PHCC Educational Foundation

Email: [foundation@naphcc.org](mailto:foundation@naphcc.org)  
Web: [PHCCFoundation.org](http://PHCCFoundation.org)  
Phone: 703-237-8100  
Toll-Free: 800-533-7694  
Fax: 703-237-7442

**Social Media, Video, Pictures:**  
[youtube.com/user/PHCCEF](https://www.youtube.com/user/PHCCEF)  
[facebook.com/PHCCEducationalFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/PHCCEducationalFoundation)  
[flickr.com/photos/PHCCEducationalFoundation](https://www.flickr.com/photos/PHCCEducationalFoundation)

**SUMMER 2016**  
**FOCUS NEWSLETTER**  
180 S. Washington St  
Suite 100  
Falls Church, VA 22046

**EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

