

High School Technical Training Student Achieves Certification Milestone

By Jim Ellwood, ICC HSTTP Liaison

ICC's High School Technical Training Program (HSTTP) has been growing over the past four years, reaching milestones along the way. These goals have been obtained due to the overwhelming support and persistence of our Members introducing the HSTTP to their community technical high schools. The goal of the program since its unification with the ICC three years ago is to provide technical high school students with the tools to navigate and comprehend the codes associated with their building trades. This program has been successful, as we have awarded close to 600 Certificates of Achievement (COA) nationwide, with many students receiving multiple COAs prior to graduation.



Gabe (far right) and his fellow students listening to instructions.

One of the goals we had anticipated reaching within five years of operating the program recently was achieved two years ahead of schedule:

Gabriel Bocchino, a senior at Harford Technical High School (HTHS) in Bel Air, Md., set his sights on becoming the first student participating in the HSTTP to pass the IRC Residential Building Inspector's exam. Gabe obtained COAs in building and electrical during his junior year, the first year he was in the construction program at his school. Gabe is a versatile student with a desire to learn about all aspects of construction. He has an artist's eye and an inventor's imagination. Gabe supports himself through school by making wooden bow ties, and collecting aluminum cans and shaping them into various crafts, including arrangements of roses he sells to the other students.



An assortment of bow ties Gabe has made (left). Aluminum roses Gabe makes from cans and paints which he sells at school for special events.

Gabe asked Mike Svesszce, his carpentry instructor at Harford Tech, and me—(I'm a Harford Technical High School Construction Foundation Board Member in addition to being the ICC HSTTP Liaison) to help him hone his skills and his construction and code knowledge to prepare for the IRC Residential Inspector's exam. Gabe worked through the school year with Svesszce and completed all sections of the study companion related to the residential building inspector's exam. Gabe received the ICC online IRC building inspector's practice exam, which he completed, including the timed test.

As he progressed through the online practice exam, Gabe had questions about particular construction techniques, such as those for footings, poured foundations or slab prep. He and other students in their school workshop had built only modular homes on a steel frame. I took Gabe to a construction site on several Saturdays so he could see several houses in various stages of construction. We visited each site and discussed the particular phase of construction the house was under and continued through the site until we came to a completely framed and weather-tight home. I asked Gabe to review his code book during the upcoming week and to be prepared to go to the site the following Saturday and perform an inspection. We went back

and selected a home ready for a framing inspection. Gabe was instructed to walk through and identify all parts of the structure and determine if they complied with code. After these visits, we asked Gabe to write an inspection report as if he were the building inspector and a report as if he were project superintendent.

When school resumed in September, Gabe was confident he could pass the ICC's residential inspector's exam, which was scheduled for Sept. 17. I took Gabe to the exam location and waited. In a couple of hours, Gabe came through the door, and even though he was trying to act as though he failed the exam, he could not contain the big smile on his face. He was beyond excited. Gabe said he felt very well-prepared. While the study companion was a great help, he said the online program prepared him for the testing format, which made him comfortable taking the exam. Gabe also said the site visits helped him to visually connect some of the exam's questions directly to their location and function within the structure.

Gabe then had two more concerns: the next exam he could take and where to go for dinner. I told Gabe dinner was his choice, and we decided the next exam would be the 2012 IECC.

Gabe is an outstanding student with a desire to succeed. Currently he is studying the 2012 IECC and

is determined to pass the residential exam before graduation in May 2015. Gabe recently received the coveted Future Craftsman of the Year Award from the Baltimore Building Congress and Exchange. Gabe's success has inspired his fellow students to follow in his footprints and take the IRC inspector's exam. Needless to say, Gabe is coaching his fellow students and now is the go-to guy in class when code issues arise.

The ICC congratulates Gabe on his success and admires the leader he has become among his peers at Harford Technical High School, and the example he has set for all the students in the HSTTP across the country.

Code officials interested in working with students and starting a High School Technical Training Program in their local area can contact their local ICC Government Relations representative about information and visit the [HSTTP website](#) for additional information. And I can be reached at jellwood@iccsafe.org or at (410) 937-0343. **bsj**



Gabe with his Technical school Instructor Mike Svezese at the Building Congress Banquet where Gabe received the Future Craftsman of the Year Award.



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