



WARRIOR VILLAGE PROJECT®

501 (c)(3) Nonprofit

The Bugle: Vol 7, Issue 7, October 2025

www.WarriorVillageProject.com

PROGRESS REPORT

Teaching 30 high school students in a construction class is challenging. Our students are great, but many teenagers have short attention spans and are still developing their executive functioning skills. They are on the very steep part of their learning curves. Our teachers are also great, but they aren't masters of all of the building trades. So, we recruit trades professionals to come to our schools to help our teachers instruct our students and supervise their work. Fortunately, our recruiting efforts have paid off.

Jon Hill of the [AGC Apprenticeship Program](#) and Michael McSweeney of the [California Homebuilding Foundation](#) have been working with our students for years. Pros from [Baker Electric](#), [Westlake Royal Roofing Solutions](#) and [Milgard Windows & Doors](#) have also taught our student builders. This month, we had Plumbers from [Pacific Rim Mechanical](#) and [Zack Smith Plumbing & Contracting](#) come to our schools to work with our students to install the rough plumbing in two of our houses. We couldn't do what we do without the help of all of these great industry partners.



[Pacific Rim Mechanical](#) teaches our SMHS students plumbing skills



Max, Nathan Snyder of Pacific Rim Mechanical & Gray



[Zack Smith Plumbing](#) teaches our RBVHS students plumbing

Zack Smith (Left) and Jarred Insko (Right) of Zack Smith Plumbing with a team of RBVHS students.



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EVENTS

[San Diego Trades Day 2025](#)

Palomar College
Thursday, November 13
9:00 AM - 12:00

VIP PROFILE

BITA - How and Why It Works For Students

By Michael McSweeney

Career Technical Education Coordinator, California Homebuilding Foundation

The Donald Chaiken Building Industry Technology Academy (BITA) is a State of California–approved high school elective construction curriculum provided by the California Homebuilding Foundation. Offered to public and private high schools across the state, BITA teaches students the skills and knowledge involved in building a home.

The intent is to make students aware of homebuilding or construction as a potential career pathway and to allow the student to explore this pathway by learning how to build, using tools, understanding safety and teamwork.

During the 2019–2020 school year, I volunteered to help teach the first BITA classes at San Marcos High School (SMHS) while serving as the Senior Public Policy Advisor at the San Diego Building Industry Association. Because workforce development was part of my role - and I've been a licensed general contractor since 1986 - I stepped into the classroom once a week to teach students how to build.

While working with the Warrior Village Project to build ADUs for homeless veterans, I had the opportunity to meet many students and thoroughly enjoyed learning about their knowledge of the construction industry and teaching them about the many opportunities available to them - whether they choose a college or career pathway in homebuilding.



Angie Witt, Class of 2020.

In February 2020, I was working with Senior Angie Witt - the only girl in her BITA class - alongside another student. Curious about her future plans, I asked Angie what she intended to do after graduation. She told me she planned to study environmental science in college. When I asked what type of job that degree might lead to, she admitted she wasn't sure.

Then I asked her a question that seemed to surprise her: had she ever considered a career in construction? I explained that every week, I watched her lead other students, giving directions and coordinating tasks - essentially doing construction management. I told her that this was a real career, requiring a four-year degree, with starting salaries of \$70,000 or more right out of college.

Two weeks later, COVID-19 closed the schools, and I lost track of Angie. But that brief interaction stuck with me - it highlighted how students often don't realize the valuable skills they're already building and the high-paying, fulfilling careers available to them in the construction industry.

Two years later, I learned Angie was off at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, diving into Construction Management. Today, she's a field engineer with Sundt Construction, leading the team as they rebuild Canyon Hills High School in San Diego - talk about putting her BITA skills to work!

This past year, in my role at the California Homebuilding Foundation, I met Nina Crespo while working on the next two tiny homes for the Warrior Village Project at San Marcos High School. Nina, a senior at SMHS, and another student were learning electrical work on the homes. During our time together, Nina shared that she wanted to become an electrician.

Her parents were initially skeptical about her not attending college. I explained to Mr. and Mrs. Crespo that Nina's "college" would be a paid apprenticeship, learning her trade while earning an income over the four years. After completing her apprenticeship with an electrical contractor, she could expect to earn around \$60,000 annually, with opportunities for overtime and additional compensation.

VIP PROFILE

BITA - How and Why It Works For Students
By Michael McSweeney
(continued)

Stories like Nina's highlight the real opportunities available to students through skilled trades, providing both valuable experience and financial independence without following the traditional college path.

Chris Geldert, Angie Witt & Michael McSweeney



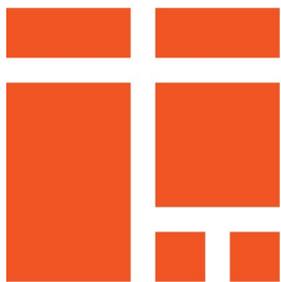
In October, BITA students Nina Crespo and Angie Witt, along with their instructor Chris Geldert, spoke to a group at the California Homebuilding Foundation and California Professional Women Build-up Network Mixer in San Diego.

Both young women shared how the BITA program gave them awareness of construction career possibilities, practical skills, and confidence to succeed on a jobsite. Angie highlighted her role at Sundt Construction in recruiting other Construction Management students, while Nina used the opportunity to network with a local electrical contractor and is now interviewing for an entry-level position.

BITA provides students a "See it to be it" experience, connecting them with industry professionals and offering career pathways - many of which do not require a college degree. The program equips students with skills that lead to high-demand, well-paying jobs with long-term stability, even in the era of advancing technology.

Teaching young people about an industry I'm deeply passionate about has been incredibly rewarding. I encourage anyone who wants to inspire the next generation and share their knowledge to get involved with programs like the Warrior Village Project and BITA - helping to build the skilled workforce of tomorrow.

To learn more about the California Homebuilding Foundation and BITA please visit www.myCHF.org



CALIFORNIA
HOMEBUILDING
FOUNDATION



Nina Crespo, Class of 2025



DONALD CHAIKEN
BUILDING INDUSTRY
TECHNOLOGY
ACADEMY

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, SMHS MTH #1

San Marcos High School: SM #1

Our SMHS construction students have been working to complete the installation of the siding and the Drain-Waste-Vent (DWV) plumbing system on SM #1.

- Chapter 1 Trailer
- Chapter 2 Framing
- Chapter 3 Rough Plumbing
- Chapter 4 Rough Electrical
- Chapter 5 Wall Sheathing
Roofing Shear
Moisture Barrier
- Chapter 6 Roofing
- Chapter 7 Windows & Doors
- Chapter 8 Exterior
Exterior Trim
Finish
- Chapter 9 HVAC
Venting
- Chapter 10 Insulation
- Chapter 11 Interior Wall
Ceiling Covering
- Chapter 12 Interior Cabinetry
Installations
Flooring
Fixtures
- Chapter 13 Interior Trim Finish
- Chapter 14 Finish Plumbing
Electrical
Fixtures
- Chapter 15 Finish Hardware
Touch-ups
- Chapter 16 Health & Safety
Final Testing
Certification
Submission



Nathan Snyder, Plumbing Foreman for [Pacific Rim Mechanical](#), worked with our students in May to start installing the DWV system. He was back on campus in October with Pacific Rim Recruiter Malaine Rodriguez to inspect the full dry-fit installation and supervise the hanging and gluing of the ABS pipe and fittings under the house.



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, SMHS MTH #1

Our students got a taste of what it might be like to be paid very well to 'lay down' on the job. According to Nathan, fitting together the pieces of the DWV system is like getting paid to play with LEGOS.



Steffani Symons of [Good News Is On The Menu](#) came to SMHS on October 29 with Cairo, her videographer, to record the Warrior Village Project in action.

"GOOD NEWS!" IS A WEB BASED SERIES AND PODCAST DEDICATED TO SHOWCASING AMAZING AND INSPIRING PEOPLE IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, AND HAVING GREAT CONVERSATIONS THROUGH FOOD.

The Warrior Village Project will be the subject of a future Good News podcast highlighting our collaborative efforts to provide affordable, permanent housing for homeless veterans while training the next generation of home builders. Steffani interviewed Phillip, one of our student leaders, Malaine Rodriguez and Nathan Snyder of Pacific Rim Mechanical, Michael McSweeney of the California Homebuilding Foundation, Mark Pilcher and teacher Chris Geldert. Watch for the upcoming podcast.



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, SMHS MTH #2

- **Chapter 1 Trailer**
- **Chapter 2 Framing**
- Chapter 3 Rough Plumbing
- **Chapter 4 Rough Electrical**
- **Chapter 5 Wall Sheathing
Roofing Shear
Moisture Barrier**
- Chapter 6 Roofing
- **Chapter 7 Windows & Doors**
- **Chapter 8 Exterior
Exterior Trim
Finish**
- Chapter 9 HVAC
Venting
- Chapter 10 Insulation
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San Marcos High School: SM #2

Our rookie construction students have been building potting benches to warm up their building skills before starting work on SM #2.

This month, Chris Geldert taught his students about roofing underlayments and asphalt shingles roofers frequently install. Then they proceeded to install the roofing materials on the roofs of their potting benches. The potting benches will be sold when they are finished.



Jon Hill of the [AGC Apprenticeship Program](#) and Michael McSweeney of the [California Homebuilding Foundation](#) started working with our rookie builders to finish the installation of the siding on SM #2.



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, RBVHS

Rancho Buena Vista High School: RBV #1

- Chapter 1 Trailer
- Chapter 2 Framing
- Chapter 3 Rough Plumbing
- Chapter 4 Rough Electrical
- Chapter 5 Wall Sheathing
Roofing Shear
Moisture Barrier
- Chapter 6 Roofing
- Chapter 7 Windows & Doors
- Chapter 8 Exterior
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Michael McSweeney, CTE Coordinator for the California Homebuilding Foundation, comes to RBV every week to work with our students. He assigns tasks to small groups of students and then bounces around between the two houses to supervise their work.

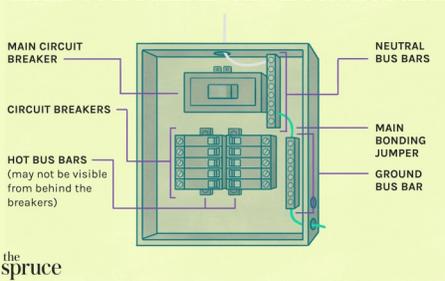
Michael spends a lot of time teaching our students which tools to use for each task and how to use the tools properly. With teacher Landon Cardenas, Michael develops a punch list of tasks that need to be completed by the students before his return the following week.



On October 30 Michael worked with groups of students from two class periods who installed additional blocking and the electrical service panel in RBV #1.



Inside Your Main Electrical Service Panel



An electrical panel is the central hub for a building's electrical system, receiving power from the utility and distributing it to different circuits throughout the home or building. It contains circuit breakers or fuses to protect each circuit from overloads and allows for manual control to shut off power to specific areas or the entire property.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, RBVHS

While Michael worked with several groups of students on a punch list of items on RBV #1 and SP #1, Zack Smith and Jarred Iscon of Zack Smith Plumbing worked with other students to install the PEX water supply system in RBV #1. Zack and Jarred worked with groups of 3 students from two different classes. It was a great opportunity for our students to work one-on-one with seasoned, professional plumbers. Under the supervision of Zack and Jarred, they got a great deal done in a few hours of focused work.



Zack Smith Plumbing will be at Trades Day at Palomar College on November 13.

Zack Smith Plumbing
A Contracting Inc.
LA Contractor #0010717

WE'RE HIRING PLUMBERS

APPLY NOW!

Send your Resume to:
tad@zacksmithplumbing.com



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE, RBVHS

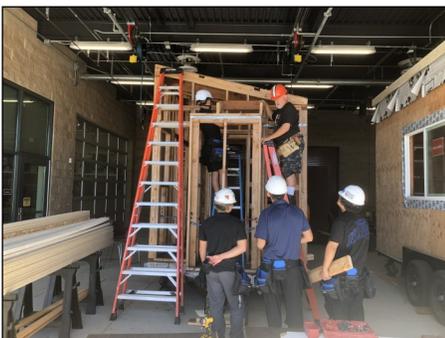
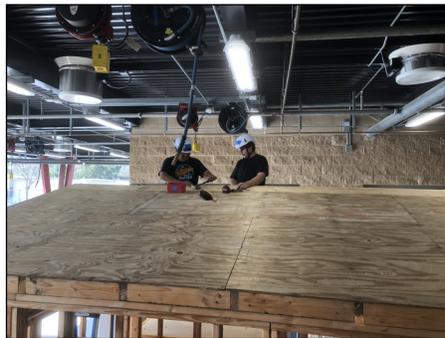
Rancho Buena Vista High School: SP #1

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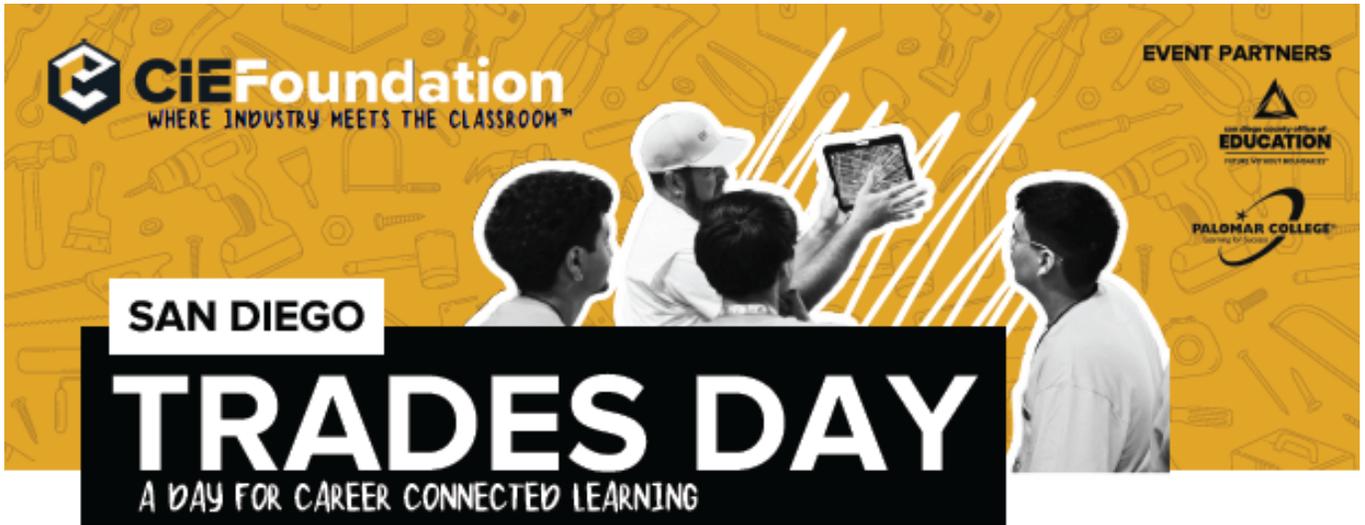
Our rookie RBV students have been turning laminated plywood sheets donated by [San Juan Creek Cabinets](#) into bookshelves for the school library. They are learning how to make measurements, to use tools properly and safely, and how to work cooperatively in teams - skills that they will take outside to build tiny houses.



Our more advanced students have been working on a punch list of tasks on SP #1: securing the roof sheathing around the perimeter of the roof, adding additional blocking where needed and building a small shed roof over the 'bump out' on SP #1.



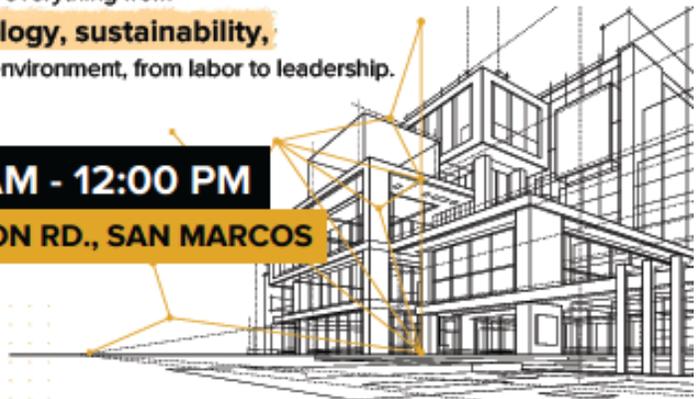
PARTNERS
Construction Industry Education Foundation (CIEF)



INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION

Engage students with hands-on activities—showcasing everything from **construction, engineering, design, technology, sustainability,** and more! Highlight real career paths across the built environment, from labor to leadership.

NOVEMBER 13, 2025 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
PALOMAR COLLEGE | 1140 WEST MISSION RD., SAN MARCOS



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BRITTANY ALBAUGH
214.241.1090 | balbaugh@cie.foundation

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DONATE TO THE WARRIOR VILLAGE PROJECT

The Warrior Village Project has joined the San Diego Gives 2025 Campaign. It is easy to donate to the Warrior Village Project through the [San Diego Gives online platform](#). Your donation will go to the Warrior Village Project General Fund to purchase materials to build Moveable Tiny Houses in high school construction classes in San Diego County.

The trailer foundation and building materials and consumables required for one Moveable Tiny House (MTH) cost about \$44,000. The curriculum and the inspection and certification package cost about \$6,000.

The cost of installing an MTH as an Accessory Dwelling Unit will depend on the site. But, it should cost about \$20,000 per house. Hence, we can provide a permanent, fully equipped tiny house for a homeless person for about \$70,000 per unit.

According to the [Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley \(March 2020\)](#): *“Between 2016 and 2019 the costs to develop a new affordable unit under the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program have increased from \$425,000 per unit to more than \$480,000 per unit.” “These escalating costs represent a significant challenge to a state struggling with an affordable housing crisis, and erode the impact of the increased public subsidies directed toward building new housing.”* Isn't it time to build truly affordable housing?



2025 Campaign

<https://sandiegogives.mightycause.com/donate/Warrior-Village-Project>

We need to raise \$80,000 to purchase materials to complete the four Moveable Tiny Houses we are building at San Marcos High School, San Pasqual High School and Rancho Buena Vista High School.

