

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

52 graduate from Skilled Trades Boot Camp



Fabricio Perez and Kyli Carroll learn carpentry skills at the 2023 Ready-to-Work Skilled Trades, Marine & Manufacturing Boot Camp. Photo by Chris Krueger/Project LIFT

Palm City, FL/August 1, 2023 – The Treasure Coast Builders Association (TCBA), aided by dozens of mentors and sponsors, graduated 52 young men and women from the 2023 Ready-to-Work Skilled Trades, Marine & Manufacturing Boot Camp on Friday, July 28 at Project L.I.F.T.'s facilities in Palm City.

The hands-on, five-day program included introductory instruction in demolition, small equipment maintenance and repair, HVAC, turf, drafting and design, automotive, plumbing, masonry, marine carpentry, surveying, welding, window/door carpentry, electrical, roofing, marine motors, metal

buildings fabrication and garage door repair. The participants were also tutored in business soft skills and financial literacy.

"I learned a lot about 16 different trades and what they do. It was a really good opportunity to express ourselves, find our passion and what we want to do for the rest of our lives," said Grady Pierce, 19. "They also taught us how to do [job] interviews and how to present ourselves."

Most attendees were between the ages of 17-22, many of them recent high school graduates exploring career options in the trades. The boot camp participants were paid \$15 per hour during training from a grant made available through Project L.I.F.T.

Victoria Burgos, 18, found her passion at the boot camp; she's signing up for the Chapman School of Seamanship's Yamaha Marine Maintenance Certification Program. "A lot of people are not interested in college. There's a stereotype that the only way to be successful is by going to college," she said, adding that the camp helped her learn to explore other options as she plans to work before considering college.

Immediately following graduation ceremonies on Friday morning, 15 local employers interviewed participants for open positions at their companies. Christy Romano of Aapex Electric said she had two current openings and was interested in at least four participants for the positions. She hired one Friday and said she will be interviewing others the following week. "These kids are eager to learn and that's what we are looking for. We can teach them how to pull wire but we can't teach them work ethic."

During the job fair, Romano coached participants filling out job applications. "What I want to know is what you have experience in. If you show up every day. What you like. It can be any experience, 'I helped my grandpa hang lights,' for example. Whatever experience you have; if you worked in fast food, guess what, you can work in high pressure situations," she explained.

"Putting together a program of this magnitude – 52 participants, five days, 16 trades, soft skills training, and a job fair – takes months of planning and many hands," said Maddie Williams, TCBA director of workforce programs. "We had more than 50 volunteers representing about two dozen companies and organizations help out with training and logistics throughout the week. More than a dozen employers participated in the job fair on Friday and I'm aware of at least seven graduates who received job offers so far with many other interviews scheduled for this week."

“This is the third year Project L.I.F.T. collaborated with the TCBA on the Skilled Trades Boot Camp. It’s a win-win for both our organizations but even more so for the teens and young adults that we serve. We have the facilities and some instructors while the TCBA brings in an incredible array of mentors and dedicated volunteers who, in turn, learn more about what our organization has to offer,” said Project L.I.F.T. CEO Bob Zaccheo. “The 49 young men and three young women who graduated from this year’s boot camp received well-deserved opportunities for fantastic jobs. We’re proud of them, and we want to give a huge shout-out to all the employers who also helped train the participants throughout the week and at the job fair.”

“In St. Lucie County, we have Cheney Bros., ACCEL, ARCOSA, and Total Truck Parts who will be hiring, at excellent wages. As part of our promise to these companies, we work with Indian River State College and St. Lucie Public Schools to help develop the upcoming workforce,” said Jenn DuBey, director of business development at the Economic Development Council of St. Lucie County (EDC). “At the end of the day, we realized that manufacturers, skilled trades and the marine industry were all competing for the same employee, so it made sense for the EDC to partner with the TCBA to expand the bootcamp and provide real life hands-on training. Both organizations had been hosting separate bootcamps for more than five years, so we took the best of the best from each organization to create the ultimate experience.”

Employers participating in the job fair included Apex Electric, Adams Homes, Bowman Consulting, Cemex, Complete Synthetic Turf, Dreamworks Restoration, Elite Electric & Air, Florida’s Finest Construction, H&M Impact Window & Door, Martin County Utilities, the Porch Factory, RDI Kitchens, Richard K. Davis Construction, South Shore Plumbing, and Sun State Demolition.

In addition to TCBA, the boot camp’s presenting sponsors included the Porch Factory and Project L.I.F.T. GHO Homes was the advocacy sponsor. Partner sponsors were R.V. Johnson Insurance, the National Center for Construction Education and Research, iTHINK Financial, Express Employment Professionals, and Apex Electric. Supporter sponsors were Fully Promoted Vero Beach, MBV Engineering, Stellar Communications, S&S Contracting of Florida, Team Parks, Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast, and IAEA. Friends of the Industry sponsors were Southeast Elevator, Elite Electric, the Treasure Coast Manufacturers Association, Building Talent Foundation, and the EDC.

About Treasure Coast Builders Association

The Treasure Coast Builders Association (TCBA) is a professional association of over 400 member firms representing more than 5,540 individuals. TCBA represents and protects the interests of the building industry in Florida's Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties. The organization's workforce development program is sponsored by the TCBA Charitable Fund, which supports scholarships for local students who are pursuing careers in the skilled trades either through degree or certificate programs. The association also provides training programs for local young adults through career exploration boot camps and mentoring. Contact the TCBA at www.treasurecoastba.com or 772.336.8222.

About Project L.I.F.T.

Project L.I.F.T. is dedicated to improving the lives of at-risk teens and their families through treatment of substance use disorders, mental health counseling, mentoring, and vocational skills training. The nonprofit organization's innovative delivery of mental health services provides therapy through the unique platform of vocational training. At no cost, at-risk 14- to 21-year-old young men and women engage in hands-on training in welding, HVAC, solar installation, metal forging, construction, auto repair, screen printing and more, while licensed therapists work with them to address issues including depression, anxiety, addiction, trauma, abuse and anger management. Project L.I.F.T. provides services in Palm City, Fort Pierce and Belle Glade. For more information, visit www.projectlift.org.



KeShawn Davis tries his hand at welding at the 2023 Ready-to-Work Skilled Trades, Marine & Manufacturing Boot Camp supervised by instructor David Bailey . Photo by Chris Krueger/Project LIFT