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Architecture, Engineering, Construction Mentoring Program Provides 700 Students with Summer Employment Valued at \$1.2 Million Nationwide

[Philadelphia, PA] – [June 17, 2024] – With a mission beyond textbooks, [ACE Mentor Program of America](#), one of the largest high school mentoring programs in the country in architecture, engineering and construction, has guided more than 100,000 program graduates into successful careers over the past 30 years.

This fall marks a major milestone for ACE Mentor, as the organization celebrates three decades of service. What began as a visionary idea by Dr. Charles “Charlie” Thornton II has grown into a transformative program that has touched the lives of thousands and impacted the future of the AEC industry.

ACE Mentor is dedicated to building a diverse and well-prepared workforce by engaging students from underrepresented communities and providing them with scholarships, internships, and ongoing mentoring support. ACE Mentor offers a variety of summer experiences, including externships, summer camps, and virtual learning opportunities. These initiatives build upon the foundation of the regular ACE Mentor program in high school and are integral to a student achieving success.

ACE Mentor understands the advantages of employment for young adults. ACE Mentor knows that unemployment as a young adult increases the likelihood of future difficulty navigating the labor market, poverty, and dependency on public benefits. Not only is youth employment predictive of future employment, but also of higher-quality future jobs and higher wages later in life. The benefits of youth employment extend beyond the

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basic economic benefits. ACE Mentor knows that the stipends and salaries earned during summer employment, from jobs and internships, are more than pocket money. These young people reap the psychological benefits of being more self-sufficient and contributing to their families' welfare. Working also can improve their mental health and well-being over the long-term, increasing their resilience.

With 700 students in externship job placements across the country, ACE Mentor is investing in the economic and educational advancement of young adults and shaping the future of the AEC industries. This summer alone, the total national economic impact of paid externships through the ACE Mentor Program is \$1.2M.

"Since 2020, the Summer Workplace Experience program has demonstrated notable growth, and the impact of these paid externships cannot be overstated. They are a vital component in bridging the gap between academic learning and practical experience, providing students not only with valuable career skills but also with necessary financial support. This is particularly crucial in fostering an equitable workforce, ensuring that all students, regardless of their financial background, have access to career-launching opportunities," said Diana Eidenshink, President of the ACE Mentor Program of America.

Though there is a gap in job quality among adults of color and white adults overall, equal access to education, training, and employment erases that gap, according to a 2018 Brookings Institution study. Specifically, structured work-based learning experiences during high school such as internships and apprenticeships, together with mentoring, positively impact job quality for young adults who face systemic barriers to economic opportunity a decade later.

The program's volunteer mentors are set to contribute a combined total of more than 200,000 hours of professional services valued at more than \$27.4M this summer. This dedication underscores the commitment of more than 5,000 industry professionals to nurturing the next generation of AEC professionals.

"We've hosted ACE students in our Dallas office for three years. The students are so engaged and interested in this industry, so it makes it very exciting for us to host this program," said Sabrina Ransbarger of Turner Construction Company in Dallas, Texas.

"The students get to meet a plethora of professionals within our organization who have a myriad of backgrounds and career paths, showing them that there isn't always a single and linear path in one's career."

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For more information, visit acementor.org and Stephanie Davi McNeely at smcneely@acementory.org or (916) 799-5483.

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About ACE Mentor Program of America: The ACE Mentor Program of America, founded in 1994, is a no-cost after-school program that prioritizes workforce development for high school students by connecting them with experts from the design and construction industry.

ACE Mentor addresses pressing workforce needs, offers a range of exciting opportunities for students, and plays a crucial role in bridging the skills gap, with continuous mentor opportunities from high school through to full-time employment.

Visit www.acementor.org for more information.
