17 students sign up for Apprenticeship Randolph

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ASHBORO — Seventeen students were selected as participants with the second Apprenticeship Randolph program.

The program gives students the opportunity to receive paid, on-the-job training while earning an Associate of Applied Science degree in Manufacturing Technology through Randolph Community College.

RCC, the Randolph County School System, the Asheboro/Randolph Chamber of Commerce and members of the local manufacturing industry worked together for several years to create the program. Its purpose is to overcome the interest gap, or disconnect, between public perception and modern manufacturing, as well as provide a vehicle for expanding the workforce pool for advanced manufacturing in Randolph County.

The 2018 Signing Ceremony was held on Aug. 9, in the R. Alton Cox Learning Resources Center Auditorium at RCC.

“This year we have welcomed four new industry partners (Post Consumer
Randolph

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Brands, Energizer, Phoenix Precision and MAS Acme) and increased our capacity for apprentices,” said Jeff Callicutt, Apprenticeship Randolph co-chair, in opening remarks.

“$35,000 — that’s how much these young adults will be making when they finish this program,” added Chris Harrington, Apprenticeship Randolph co-chair.

Harrington is director of Operations at Elastic Therapy Inc. in Asheboro, one of the first industries to participate. He noted that many students have accumulated enormous amounts of debt while seeking a four-year degree. And how achieving a four-year degree is not the only pathway to success.

“Only 35 percent of jobs in America require a four-year degree,” Harrington said.

Apprenticeship Randolph begins with a six-week, pre-apprenticeship summer program that consists of two RCC classes. It is then spaced out over a four-year span. Students start off making $9 per hour and eventually make $13.50 per hour. Apprentices have opportunities to begin their careers in Advanced Manufacturing, after completing the program.

“A recent study discovered those with an apprenticeship certificate will make the equivalent or more, of those with a bachelor’s degree,” Harrington added.

Jorge Martinez, a pre-apprentice for Elastic Therapy, Inc., gave remarks during and following the event.

“It is a big honor for me to stand behind this podium,” he said during his on-stage remarks.

“I saw something challenging in it and it really grabbed my interest,” he said when asked why he chose Apprenticeship Randolph.

“So far it’s been pretty good, it’s basically been everything I have wanted it to be. I’m looking forward to having a job,” added Ryan Woods, a 2017 pre-Apprentice for Phoenix Precision who signed up after the 2017 signing ceremony.

Nancy Cross, director of Career and Technical Education (CTE) for the Randolph County School System (RCSS), reflected on how Apprenticeship Randolph was started through a conversation with Nelson Smith, retired owner of IV-S Metal Stamping. She recalled his words: “The best thing in the world to help the students in this county and apprentices in this county is to start an apprenticeship program.”

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NEW APPRENTICES — Welcoming Technimark’s new apprentices, from left, sitting, Luke Wood, Zackary Tucker and Austin Atkins, are Tony McKnight, N.C. Community Colleges apprenticeship NC consultant; Al Fogelman, Technimark; and Tim Wallace, technical manager.

The passion to which he made those remarks and the many, many stories ... pulled us together to start Apprenticeship Randolph,” she said, adding later why that’s so important: “If kids start making conscious and intentional choices about their future at a younger age, it will help them to be more happy with the choices they’ve made, and find something they’re passionate about.

The event was wrapped up by Dr. Robert Shackleford, president of RCC.

“When you take people who have the grit, employers that have the vision, and school systems and colleges that have the vision, this county is moving in a good direction,” Shackleford said.

Pre-Apprenticeship participants

■ Austin Atkins, Class of 2019, Southwestern Randolph High School, Technimark.
■ Xzandria Bell, Class of 2019, Southwestern Randolph High School, Elastic Therapy, Inc.
■ Ben Cable, Class of 2018, Wheatmore High School, Energizer Manufacturing.
■ Keshon Coleman, Asheboro High School, Class of 2019, Post Consumer Brands.
■ Joshua DeFrees, Asheboro High School, Class of 2018, Post Consumer Brands.
■ Ethan Earls, Class of 2018, Wheatmore High School, DS Smith.
■ David Edwards, Class of 2018, Southwestern Randolph High School, Sapona Plastics, Inc.
■ Brayan Guerrero, Class of 2019, Asheboro High School, Elastic Therapy, Inc.
■ Tanner Loggains, Class of 2019, Southwestern Randolph High School, EG Industries.
■ Jorge Martinez, Class of 2018, Asheboro High School, Elastic Therapy, Inc.
■ Jesse Osborne, Class of 2019, Honeysuckle Academy, Hubbell Incorporated.
■ Zackary Tucker, Class of 2019, Southwestern Randolph High School, Technimark.
■ Justin Williams, Class of 2019, Providence Grove High School, DS Smith.
■ Dakota Wolford, Class of 2019, Uwharrie Charter Academy, PEMMCO Manufacturing, Inc.

WARM WELCOME — Elastic Therapy Inc’s Donnie Lineberry, standing left, and Melinda Lambeth, standing right, welcome students, sitting from left, Jorge Martinez, Brayan Guerrero and Xzandria Bell as their Apprenticeship Randolph apprentices for 2018.