



FOR: THE ACE MENTOR PROGRAM

CONTACT: Monica Worheide
ACE Mentor Program of Iowa
515-288-8904

Des Moines High School Students Design River Walk Rental Facility

Four Students Win College Scholarships from ACE Mentor Program of Des Moines

DES MOINES, IA, April 5, 2010 – Students from ten high schools have developed designs and construction plans for a canoe, kayak, and bicycle rental facility intended to be part of the Principal River Walk in downtown Des Moines. They developed these plans as part of the Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program. During the school year, 28 local architects, engineers, and construction professionals mentored 48 students in this afterschool program whose purpose is to attract more youth into pursuing careers in the design and construction industry.

On March 26 the Des Moines ACE affiliate held its annual awards banquet at the Des Moines Art Center. More than 200 industry professionals, teachers, students, and family members learned from the ACE students about their designs for the River Walk project. Four scholarships totaling \$8,000 were awarded to students for the study of architecture, engineering and construction management in college.

Three teams of students working with mentors created designs for the seasonal rental facility situated on the east bank of the Des Moines River just south of the newly completed pedestrian bridge and dam.

“The variety of the students’ proposed projects is remarkable,” commented **James Britt**, secretary of the Des Moines ACE affiliate and architect with RDG Planning and Design. “Students have implemented green strategies such as skylights to reduce electricity consumption and high volumes to maximize natural ventilation. Dramatic rooflines, including ‘butterfly’ roofs and blue arches relating to the nearby I-235 pedestrian bridges, define the students’ designs. Students also engineered their structures to address the challenges of the riverside soil conditions and seasonal flooding.”

Winners of the four scholarships, each worth \$2,000, are:

Cort Widlowski, Urbandale High School

Rebecca Baldus, Valley High School

ACE Mentor Program of Iowa

c/o Master Builders of Iowa – 221 Park Street – Des Moines, IA 50306

515-288-8904

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Career Directions for Students in Architecture, Construction and Engineering

Chase Dennis, Southeast Polk High School

Kari Sicheneder, Lincoln High School

Donors of the scholarships are the Des Moines Construction Breakfast Club, Neumann Brothers, ACE Mentor Program of Iowa, Luke Altmix Simmons Charitable Foundation, and Master Builders of Iowa.

During the ACE program lasting 15 sessions, volunteer mentors engaged students in hands-on activities teaching skills and basic knowledge about architecture, engineering and construction. Students also visited construction sites and learned about career opportunities in the industry. In the last half of the program, students undertook the rental facility design project that they presented at the awards banquet.

Last year the ACE Mentor Program of America involved 7,800 high school students, most from low-income families, in 180 cities and communities. Nearly 2,000 mentors, many from leading design and construction firms, donated their time to teach students about their industry and to stimulate them to pursue industry careers. According to a recent survey of ACE program alumni, two-thirds of ACE participants major in architecture, engineering, and construction in college. In 2009 Nationwide ACE awarded \$1.25 million in scholarships.

About the ACE Mentor Program

The ACE Mentor Program is the fastest-growing high school mentoring program focusing on careers in the design/build industry. It was founded in 1995 by the principals of leading design and construction firms, to introduce high school students to career opportunities in the industry. The mission of the organization is to engage, excite and enlighten high school students to pursue careers in the design/build construction industry through mentoring; and to support their continued advancement in the industry through scholarships and grants. ACE has 72 affiliates operating in 36 states. For additional information please visit www.acementor.org.

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