



WMCI NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO YEAR 2 | FALL 2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JEN SCHOTTKE

Welcome to WMCI's second academic year! Several years ago the WMCI board of directors crafted our mission statement, We build strong communities by preparing the next generation of construction professionals for lifelong careers. On any given day when you walk through the halls of WMCI, you will see classrooms filled with high school students in their carpentry class, adult craft training students learning in carpentry, exterior envelope, plumbing, and fire protection, and industry professionals immersed in leadership development, safety training, and more.

Our students represent the continuum of lifelong learning in the construction industry. This is why WMCI is here.

The WMCI team is so proud to share the growth of WMCI over just two short years. This year we welcomed 35 high school students from ten partnering school districts to our high school program. We also welcomed our new high school instructor and program manager, Kyle Jelens, to teach our Carpentry 1 course and lead the growth of our high school program. High school enrollment is up 30% from our first cohort of just 11 students. We are poised for exceptional growth, in part, thanks to our new pilot partnership with the Kent Intermediate School District. Thanks to this partnership with Kent ISD we are now offering a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program for our high school students. This means more great assets for these well-deserving students like high school credit articulation, Ferris State University college credit, and enhanced support through the Kent ISD.

WMCI
NEWSLETTER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONT.

This year, we launched our Sprinkler Fitting program and welcomed three new instructors. These industry professionals are leading our up-and-coming workforce in the fire protection industry. We also added two new instructors to our Core and Plumbing programs! Our team of instructors is led by our new Director of Instruction, Jason Roh. Jason was critical in the development of our exterior envelope program over the last year, and we're honored to have him as part of our full-time team.

We continue to grow our portfolio of professional development and certification courses and will be bringing BICSI technician and copper installer certifications to WMCI this winter.

Growth is what you tasked us with and that is what WMCI is committed to bringing to the West Michigan construction industry. We invite you to be a part of that growth by engaging with our high school students by providing field trip locations or classroom speakers. We invite you to be a part of our growth by sending your employees to our craft training programs or lending us some of your top talent to instruct the next generation and make an impact on our industry for generations. We invite you to be a part of this growth by including WMCI in your annual corporate giving strategy. Our success depends on you, the greatest industry!

Yours for the industry,
Jen Schottke



MEET OUR STUDENTS

WHAT IS YOUR HARD HAT STORY?



Harrison Nelund
Carpentry II Student
EV Construction

When I first graduated high school, I started school to be an accountant. I quickly learned that it wasn't the best fit for me and I didn't like the idea of sitting in an office all day long. My parents helped me look for alternative routes. I found my path in the trades because I knew I wanted to work with my hands and make a good living.

I started at WMCI for their Core course during their first semester to figure out what trade would suit me best. I paid for my first few classes out of pocket. About halfway through Carpentry I, I was hired at EV Construction. They have helped me pay for the rest of my courses so I can continue to learn. I have been at EV for a little less than a year and I love working here.

My first instructor, Brian Marion, worked at EV Construction as a field manager at the time. He took us on a field trip to see Tommy's Express HQ in Holland. Brian helped connect me to Tony Roussey at EV Construction and I was eventually offered a full time role.

Eventually, I want to get into management. I've always been interested in the business side of things. EV Construction has been a great example of how good leaders work through issues and lead their teams to success.

WMCI STATS



60%

Our high school program saw a 60% increase in enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year.



53

WMCI has added 53 new donors since the start of 2023.



5

For the 2023-24 school year, we have increased our instructional staff by 5 new teachers.



OUR DONORS CARE: DONOR INTERVIEW

JERRY & LESLIE CARDINAL

What lead you to donate to WMCI?

WMCI is the future of West Michigan for young men and women who want the opportunity of the American dream. It offers individuals an opportunity to learn one of the many skilled trades, encourages them to use their talents, and grows them into becoming craft professionals.

Why is the construction industry important to you?

Nothing productive can happen in society without great people in the construction industry. Look around Grand Rapids and West Michigan, this was and is, built by local talent that changes lives each and every day in the buildings they have built and are continuing to build.

What advice do you have for our students as they prepare for the construction industry?

The sky is the limit. Work smarter and harder and you can do anything. I started in this industry 29 years ago with no knowledge or prior experience in construction. The sky was the only limit. It sounds cliché but dream big. Do what you say you're going to do. Show up. Be willing. Stay humble. Learn from those that have paved the way. Have fun. Be safe!



THE WMCJ TEAM IS GROWING!

FULL TIME STAFF:



KYLE JELENS

HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTOR
+ PROGRAM MANAGER



JASON ROH

DIRECTOR OF
INSTRUCTION

INSTRUCTORS:

JASON ENGLE

SPRINKLER FITTING
INSTRUCTOR

JOHN NORTON

SPRINKLER FITTING
INSTRUCTOR

DAN KEE

SPRINKLER FITTING
INSTRUCTOR

JONATHAN RICE

PLUMBING INSTRUCTOR

WES BRAUN

CORE INSTRUCTOR

