

An Open Parent Letter From One of the First Adults to Participate in the AmSkills Career Launch Program

Samuel Gates lives in Hernando County and participated in the AmSkills “pilot” Adult Pre-Apprenticeship Program. The following is an open letter received from his mother, Michaela Gates on July 17, 2017:

“Dear Tom, I want to take a minute to explain what finding AmSkills has meant to my family and my son, Sam Gates. From the time Sam was in 8th grade, he knew he wanted to work with his mind and his hands. He spent a whole summer in 9th grade in the Automotive Shop of a friend of ours who let him spend time there to learn. I dropped him off on my way to work and picked him up on the way home. Sam went faithfully every day. He was enthralled. Later we looked into Automotive School, but Sam wasn’t sure that was the trade and career choice that was right for him. After High School, Sam took several college courses, and while Sam is extremely intelligent, he was not really engaged in them and didn’t do very well. I think we, (Sam, his Dad and I), were looking for the right combination of intellectual and manual/mechanical challenge.

It was during my own job search that I came across AmSkills through my friend’s husband, Trevor Charlton. Sam is 27 years old and he has tried different jobs (office and mortgage work), but he knew those weren’t right for him. Finding AmSkills was truly a Godsend. When I told Sam about the Adult Program that was being started, it was the first time in years that he was excited and willing to engage fully. He enjoyed the program, learned excellent skills, feels confident and is looking forward to what the future holds ...both the additional learning he will acquire and the fact that it will lead to the TYPE of work in which he is interested.

I am a huge advocate of AmSkills. While Sam’s Dad and I ushered both our boys toward college, it was obvious that was not the right fit for Sam. I will promote AmSkills wherever I go and to other parents whose kids may have interests other than the college route. You can depend on me to be a supporter forever!

Sincerely, Michaela Gates”

What AmSkills Has Meant to Samuel Gates (The following are excerpts from Samuel’s letter.)



Hello, my name is Samuel Gates and I am 27 years old. Near the end 2016, I became unemployed after my contractual employment ended with a mortgage company. I’m the type of person who does not like sitting in a cubicle all day and have always enjoyed being able to work with my hands and being on my feet. I was an apprentice auto mechanic when I was younger and have always been good at fixing, repairing, and making things work. I was at a crossroads in my life and I had the option of getting another job in the mortgage industry or trying to find a new path.

I decided to look for a new path, but not being a certified mechanic or having any certified skills to offer employers, I was having a hard time finding a job that would lead me towards that new direction. One day, my mother told me about a new program she had heard about named AmSkills. This program offered to teach knowledge and skills relating to CNC machining, industrial mechanics, and mechatronics. I was very interested as these were exactly the types of knowledge and skills I wanted to learn. I applied to AmSkills and was accepted into the program...

From day one I was hooked. The program is set up so that the vast majority of the time in class is spent learning “hands on” skills. I learned about many different applications used every day in the manufacturing industry and how to use many of the tools and machines one would find there. My classmates and I learned how to use a wide array of hand tools, manual mills, manual lathes, drill presses and more. We also learned about electronics, pneumatics, hydraulics, CNC mills, CNC lathes, 3D printers and much more.

I learned a lot, loved being there, had fun and was excited to go back every day. Having spent much of my youth searching for the right job fit, not knowing what I wanted to do for a career, starting and stopping college a few times, I wish this program had been around when I was younger. I would highly recommend this program to anyone who is mechanically inclined, likes to build/repair things, likes to work with his/her hands, is looking for a career change or has even the slightest interest in the program, to apply and find out if AmSkills could lead him/her to a bright future.

AmSkills Apprentice Featured on ABC Action News @ PharmaWorks, Inc.



Christopher Baker hasn’t finished college yet, but he’s already on his way to becoming a mechanical engineer. “This is a good beginning because it gives you the first step that you might need to actually think what do I want to do,” he said. After graduating from high school in Spring Hill, Baker came to work here at Pharmaworks in Odessa as an apprentice. The company makes hi-tech packing equipment for the pharmaceutical industry. “It’s quite an amazing opportunity for me,” he said. Pharmaworks was at the forefront of supporting Am Skills in the Bay area. Apprentice training centers here are modeled after those in Germany.

“The apprentices have actually been involved in some key projects and were able to help us to fulfill our commitments to our customers,” said Pharmaworks Apprentice Coordinator Bill Huyett.

POTUS is backing apprenticeship programs nationwide... (To read the full article, go to page 3 and www.AmSkills.org to view the video)

Congressman Gus Bilirakis & Senate Candidate Ed Hooper Visit AmSkills



Congressman Gus Bilirakis & AmSkills Adult Pre-Apprentices

On Friday, July 21st, U.S. Representative Gus Bilirakis (FL-12) and on Tuesday, July 25th, former State Representative & current Senate Candidate Ed Hooper visited AmSkills to tour the facility, and met a few of the current AmSkills Pre-Apprentices and learned how the AmSkills program is helping our youth, adults and veterans learn the skills they need to secure a long-term career in advanced manufacturing. Very positive comments were heard about the AmSkills Program and Representative Bilirakis indicated he wanted to come back to learn even more. In addition, on September 21st, the Bay Area Manufacturers Association (BAMA) is hosting a meeting in Pasco County with Representative Bilirakis as the keynote speaker and AmSkills featured for the night.



Senate Candidate Ed Hooper, Commissioner Kathryn Starkey, Tom Mudano & Samuel Gates

AmSkills Makes Presentation at the National Association of Counties Conference

Pasco County Commissioner/ICTC Governing Board Member Kathryn Starkey and AmSkills Executive Director Tom Mudano made a presentation on July 21, 2017 for the National Association of Counties (NACo). The presentation for 80+ County Commissioners, Administrators and Economic Development representatives was very well received with lots of interest in our Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Program.

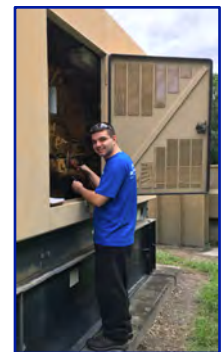


AmSkills On The Radio



Tom Mudano, Executive Director of AmSkills was recently interviewed by Ryan Gorman of iHeart Radio's "Tampa Bay Tomorrow" Radio Show, which aired on eight different radio stations at various times during the weekend of July 8th & 9th. In case you missed it go to the AmSkills.org home page and click on the Listen to iHeart Radio logo. As a result, we also received the following post on FaceBook:

"Hello! Wow! I just learned of this great organization -- AmSkills -- tonight while listening to 970 AM. I have a 16 year old son who is homeschooled and I am very interested in learning more about AmSkills for my son, Dylan. For several years now, I have believed that we, as a society, needs to go back to some of the old ways, and this is a perfect example." - Chrisine H., Pasco County



6 Pasco Pre-Apprentices Put Their Skills to Work for Pasco County Departments for 4-Weeks

This year, Pasco County has again accepted 7 of our Pasco County Pre-Apprentices in paid jobs for 4-week summer internship program. Candidates worked in Utilities, Public Works and Stormwater Treatment departments and AmSkills has received very positive feedback about all of our Pre-Apprentices. Unfortunately, Hernando and Pinellas County were unable to participate this year, however both have expressed interest in getting the program up and running by next summer.



Festo Mechatronics Interested in Helping AmSkills

During my trip to Ohio for the NACo conference, I took the opportunity to visit with Andreas Brockmann, Head of Technical Training & Education, U.S. for Festo Didactic, Inc. in Mason, Ohio. AmSkills has Mechatronics Trainers in each facility and is working with Festo to fully develop our Mechatronics Apprenticeship program. Festo is a German company and is a leading global manufacturer of pneumatic and electromechanical systems, components, and controls for process control and factory automation solutions.

Upcoming Upcoming Programs, Meetings & Events

- Aug 23: 11^{am} – Senator Jack Latvala Scheduled to Visit AmSkills Regional Headquarters (Marchman) for Tour & Presentation (Invited by Commissioner Starkey)
- Aug 30: 2^{pm} – Dan Biles, Pasco County New Administrator Scheduled to Visit AmSkills Pasco Location (Invited by Commissioner Starkey)
- Aug 31: 6^{pm} – Pasco County Economic Development Council Awards Banquet & AmSkill Presentation of Apprentice Built Project
- Sep 6 : 12^{pm} – Pinellas County Mayor’s Council AmSkills Presentation by Tom Mudano
- Sep 11: 830^{am} – Florida Manufacturing Coalition Meeting Scheduled at AmSkills Regional Headquarters (Marchman) for Tour & AmSkills Presentation
 - 2017/19 Youth Pre-Apprenticeship Programs Start in All Three Counties (Times Vary By County)
 - Adult Pre-Apprenticeship Program Starts in Hernando & Pinellas
- Sep 18: 6^{pm} – German American Chamber of Commerce South (GACC) Roundtable in Tampa: “AmSkills – A New Approach to Workforce Education”
- Sep 20: 1230^{pm} – ICTC Governing Board Meeting - Marchman Technical College, 12:30^{pm} to 3:30^{pm}
- Sep 25: 3^{pm} – Meeting with new St. Petersburg College President, Dr. Williams & Commissioner Seel

Do You Know Someone That Needs Help Starting Their Career? Youth & Adult Pre-Apprenticeships Start Soon!

Community Connections

ICTC (Related to All Counties)
 Attended Upper Tampa Bay Manufacturing Association Coalition Meeting
 Attended Florida Department of Education Apprenticeship Regional Update
 Attended Manufacturing Day Planning Committee Meeting

Hernando County
 Commissioner & AmSkills Update Meetings & BOCC Update
 Attended Chamber of Commerce Training Committee Meeting

Pasco County
 Pasco Economic Development Council Board: AmSkills Presentation
 Jobs & Economic Opportunities Committee: AmSkills Presentation
 Conducted Sun Lake High Robotics Team CNC Machinist Workshop
 Pasco County Internship Conference Call with Human Resources
 Meeting with Pasco/Hernando Career Source to discuss funding options

Pinellas County
 Commissioner & AmSkills Update Meetings: Met with last Commissioner
 AmSkills Update Meeting with Mike Meidel, Economic Development Director
 Attended Florida West Coast Chapter of NTMA Chapter Event
 Presentation to South St. Petersburg Department of Juvenal Justice
 Meeting with Pinellas Technical College regarding Pre-Apprenticeship



**Adults/Veterans
Apprentice Training
Advanced Manufacturing**

- Affordable Skills Training
- 80%+ Hands-On Projects
- Veterans Training Site
- Explore 3 Career Tracks
- Paid Apprenticeships*
- Job Prep/Career Coaching
- Job Placement*

*Based on Career Launch Agreement



AmSkills partners with Pasco, Pinellas and Hernando County Agencies and Local Manufacturers to provide European-Style Apprenticeship Training for Advanced Manufacturing in the Tampa Bay Area.




www.AmSkills.org
727-301-1282, ext. 126

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AmSkills Apprenticeships in the News In June

The following are recent articles published related to AmSkills

AmSkills Apprentice Featured on ABC Action News @ PharmaWorks, Inc.



Pasco company leading the way with apprentice program

President Trump supports program

BY: Erik Winder
POSTED: 7:11 PM, Jul 27, 2017



ODESSA, Fla. -

Christopher Baker hasn't finished college yet, but he's already on his way to becoming a mechanical engineer.

"This is a good beginning because it gives you the first step that you might need to actually think what do I want to do," he said. After graduating from high school in Spring Hill, Baker came to work here at Pharmaworks in Odessa as an apprentice.

The company makes hi-tech packing equipment for the pharmaceutical industry. "It's quite an amazing opportunity for me," he said. Pharmaworks was at the forefront of supporting Am Skills in the Bay area. Apprentice training centers here are modeled after those in Germany.

"The apprentices have actually been involved in some key projects and were able to help us to fulfill our commitments to our customers," said Pharaworks Apprentice Coordinator Bill Huyett.

President Donald Trump is backing apprenticeship programs nationwide, with the goal of giving American workers more job skills. The Federal Labor department says 90% of those in apprenticeship programs had a job waiting for them with an average salary of about \$60,000. "The industry needs qualified skilled technicians," said Huyett.

There are plans to call on Congress to pass reforms expanding apprenticeships and raising awareness that they are a viable career path outside of traditional college. Even with a full time job here, Baker plans to get his degree. Then the goal is to continue at Pharmaworks. But as a full fledge engineer. "I've learned how to do a huge amount in this field and I know without actually having the experience of being here, I wouldn't have been able to get it," said Baker.

While apprenticeships programs are centered on manufacturing right now, officials hope to see them used in a wide variety of industries in the future.

For more information on AmSkills, click here.

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The Suncoast News

Tampa Bay Newspapers

Bilirakis visits apprenticeship program

Tour at Marchman related to veterans benefit

BY ERIC HORCHY Suncoast News Staff Jul 31, 2017

NEW PORT RICHEY – U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor, toured a New Port Richey manufacturing apprenticeship center last month that would benefit from legislation working its way through Congress. Bilirakis visited AmSkills, at the Marchman Technical College on July 21 to receive an up-close look at the technical training offered to residents wishing to advance their careers.

According to the representative's press secretary, Elena Hernandez, Bilirakis met with AmSkills CEO Tom Mudano during the visit and got to discuss the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017.

The new GI Bill received unanimous support from the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, of which Bilirakis is the vice chairman, before being approved by the House 405-0 on July 24.

The legislation would remove the 15-year time restriction to use the GI Bill benefit, enabling future eligible recipients to use their GI Bill benefits for their entire lives. Reservists, Guardsmen, dependents, surviving spouses and surviving dependents would also see increases in GI Bill tuition funding.

"Education and career training programs offer veterans the opportunity to enter a new chapter of their lives," Bilirakis said July 19, when the legislation was advanced by the Veterans' Affairs Committee. He described the bill as "a major step toward improving, expanding, and modernizing the GI Bill."

Since AmSkills is certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer apprenticeships to veterans, Bilirakis wrote on his Facebook page that the legislation working its way through Congress "would help make programs like AmSkills more accessible."

Included in the bill is Bilirakis' provision, known as the VETERAN Act, which would authorize \$30 million to help the VA invest in modernizing their information technology systems for processing claims. The goal of the provision is to help veterans receive benefits in a more timely and efficient manner.



U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, front, taking a tour of the AmSkills facility in New Port Richey. PHOTO COURTESY OF GUS BILIRAKIS