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55 YEARS

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Bridge 2 Trades and NEI General Contracting celebrate graduates

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Randolph, MA Bridge 2 Trades (B2T), a pioneering program founded by New England Patriots' captain Deatrich Wise Jr. and NEI General Contracting, an award-winning general contracting firm, have presented the graduation of its 2024 cohort of students. The graduation ceremony, held at Patriot Place in Foxboro, marks a significant milestone in the partnership between B2T and NEI, which has provided students with essential skills and training in high-demand fields.

Bridge 2 Trades was established to connect the students with practical, real-world exposure and training that equips them with the skills needed across various industries, construction being the first of many trades Wise Jr. and B2T will tackle. Each year, B2T focuses on fields facing a shortfall of skilled workers. The 2024 B2T six-week exploratory program, co-led by NEI, provided students with valuable certifications such as OSHA 10 and First Aid, CPR and Narcan, as well as workshops on

drone operation, building information modeling (BIM), and exposure to plan reading, project management and pre-construction concepts.

Students were also exposed to hands-on experiences in the construction industry, including training in plumbing and electrical during their site visits to local union training centers. NEI played a crucial role by leading day-to-day operations and facilitating workshops that brought the curriculum to life.

Deatrich Wise Jr., a Super Bowl champion and defensive end for the New England Patriots, founded B2T to create alternative pathways to income-earning opportunities outside of traditional higher education. Under the strategic direction of Taisha Crayton, director of Bridge 2 Trades, the program has developed a blueprint for success that fulfills Wise's vision. By addressing the growing demand for skilled workers in construction and related fields, the 2024 Bridge 2 Trades graduates are now prepared to embark on rewarding careers with significant growth potential.

"Our collaboration with NEI has been instrumental in delivering a program that truly makes a difference in the lives of young people," said Wise Jr. "By providing access to mentorship and real-world experiences, we are helping to build a workforce that is not only skilled but also confident in their abilities to succeed."

"At Bridge 2 Trades, our mission extends beyond teaching trade skills; We're committed to developing well-rounded individuals," said Crayton. "Our students receive both professional and personal development training, equipping them with real-world strategies to stand out in a competitive industry, grow and protect their personal brand, and consistently show up prepared and as the best version of themselves. We are so thrilled about our partnership with NEI, whose expertise has been vital in launching this program."

NEI General Contracting has long been committed to fostering the next generation of skilled workers and was enthusiastic about the opportunity to partner with B2T. NEI's Diversity and Inclusion Director, Andre' Barbour, and Shanice Marshall, who was deeply involved with the 2024 cohort, expressed his excitement about the students' achievements.

"Too often, career paths are seen as one-size-fits-all, but programs like B2T demonstrate that there are multiple ways to build a successful and fulfilling career," said Barbour. "NEI is proud to work alongside Deatrich and B2T, as our missions align in creating opportunities for young people to secure their futures. We look forward to following the careers of these graduates and hope to welcome many of them to NEI's projects in the future."

This partnership between NEI General Contracting and Bridge 2 Trades exemplifies how collaboration between industry leaders and community-focused programs can create lasting impacts. Both organizations are committed to continuing their work together to ensure that more students have access to the training and opportunities needed to succeed in high-demand fields.