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NEI General Contracting forms partnership with Worcester Technical High School to promote on-the-job training

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Worcester, MA NEI General Contracting has established a partnership with Worcester Technical High School (WTHS) to provide students with real-world training in the construction industry. Since January 2024, NEI has collaborated closely with WTHS faculty and students, creating hands-on learning opportunities that help develop the next generation of construction professionals.

Through this initiative, NEI has directly placed three students in co-op positions and has supported many more through partnerships with subcontractors. Heather Courtney, co-operative education/employment coordinator for WTHS, has been instrumental in connecting students with NEI, arranging interviews, and providing resumes to both NEI and its network of subcontractors.

NEI has long championed the need to bring more young people into the construction trades to address a potential shortfall in the talent pipeline. Recognizing that Massachusetts has ambitious goals for building affordable housing, a segment of the industry in which NEI has extensive experience, the company felt it was important to take an active role in introducing students to the opportunities available in the building trades.

WTHS serves as a key resource for young people looking to develop practical skills in a variety of fields, including finance, commercial baking, IT services, and the construction trades. The Coughlin Construction Academy specializes in carpentry, electrical, HVAC, and plumbing, making it a natural fit for NEI to pair its project teams with students eager to gain firsthand experience on active construction sites. In addition to technical skills, students learn essential aspects of the industry such as budgeting, procurement, project management, site supervision, and safety.

“The mentorship, leadership and encouragement NEI personnel has provided to our students has been exceptional. The opportunity for WTHS students to build their knowledge and skill set in the construction industry at the start of their professional career will last a lifetime,” said Courtney.

“WTHS encourages all employers, from all industries, who are interested in building a youthful workforce to utilize the eager and talented students from Vocational Technical High Schools. WTHS looks forward to a lasting professional relationship with NEI and all of the opportunities they afford our students.”

As part of its commitment to workforce development and training at the high school level, NEI is dedicated to empowering the communities in which it works by creating lasting opportunities for

growth and development. This initiative not only helps address the future skills gap in the construction industry but also provides Worcester students with valuable hands-on experience that prepares them for future careers. Through partnerships with WTHS, NEI offers co-op opportunities that allow students to engage directly with both NEI and its subcontracting partners, gaining exposure to various trades within the construction process.

“Working closely with the students and instructors of WTHS has reinforced how fortunate we are to have a future workforce that is eager to learn and succeed,” said Josef F. Rettman, President, NEI. “I’m grateful for our trades staff and project management teams, who have taken time out of their schedules to help these young people discover their career paths and become the next generation of our industry.”

NEI’s commitment to education and workforce development ensures that students gain meaningful experience in the construction field, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their careers. Through this partnership, NEI continues to invest in the future of the industry by mentoring and training the workforce of tomorrow.

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