



## CHARLESTON REGIONAL YOUTH APPRENTICESHIPS

In only its fourth year, Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeships (YA) in Charleston, South Carolina, is already making a difference. Through a strong regional partnership of business and education leaders, the program has quickly grown to nearly 150 students and more than 100 businesses. Charleston Regional YA is helping businesses grow their talent pool from within the community and offering students a better way to prepare for success after high school.

### HIGH SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIPS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF STUDENTS

Shannon Brennan was one of the first students in Charleston Regional YA, and the only female among 13 students in the industrial mechanics program. As part of the program, Shannon took high school academic classes, enrolled in dual credit courses at Trident Technical College, and worked part-time at Cummins Turbo Technologies (Cummins). She graduated from high school and was offered a full-time position at Cummins. Shannon also continued taking classes at Trident Technical College (Trident Tech), with tuition assistance from her employer.

Today, at just 20 years old, Shannon has already been promoted to Manufacturing Engineering Technician at Cummins and has bought her first house. She credits her high school mechatronics instructor, who encouraged her to apply for the program, and her excellent mentors at Cummins. Cummins praises Charleston Regional YA, saying



that the program is addressing skills gaps and allows the company to utilize local talent to meet their workforce needs.

Launched in 2014, Charleston Regional YA blends technical and workplace skills with classroom learning at the high school level. In Fall 2017, nearly 150 high school students in the tri-county greater Charleston area will participate in mastering 16 career pathways and working with 122 employers. The program directly engages Charleston area employers from companies of all sizes to identify in-demand occupations which the apprenticeship program can help fill. Also, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, another partner in Charleston Regional YA, plays

a vital role in identifying regional industry sector partnerships to join the program.

The program is two years in length, and is available to high school juniors and seniors residing in one of the three counties served by Trident Tech. For students who begin as seniors, the first year of the program is their last year of high school, and then they continue working and pursuing their associate's degree for another year following high school graduation.

**BUSINESS-DRIVEN MODEL.** IFA Rotorian – a German-based manufacturing company in the area – approached Trident Tech in 2013 with the idea for youth apprenticeships. The company was having difficulty finding skilled workers in the area, and was accustomed to working with youth apprentices in Germany. IFA Rotorian sought out Trident Tech as a partner to manage a youth apprenticeship program and to provide the classroom training component of the apprenticeship.

IFA Rotorian then discussed their youth apprenticeship idea with other local employers, and encouraged five additional Charleston area manufacturers to partner with Trident Tech – and Charleston Regional YA was born. These founding businesses, and those that have joined since, look to the program to help develop a pipeline of future workers, reduce training and recruitment costs, and grow the local talent pool.

Charleston Regional YA has 16 different career pathways – from hotel operations to air conditioning repair and medical office assistants. Pathways are selected based on the workforce needs of regional businesses and talent demand data from the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. Industry needs also are integrated into the program by mapping the in-demand skills of participating businesses into the courses taken by students for the apprenticeship program.

Businesses contribute in other significant ways to the success of the program. In addition to providing paid work experience for students, the business partners have cultivated a strong sense of ownership and collaboration. For example, businesses within an industry sector agree to hire students at a uniform starting wage, which promotes employer cooperation and inhibits

#### **Charleston Regional YA has 16 career pathways:**

- Automotive
- Bookkeeping/Pre-Accounting
- Civil Engineering/CAD Technician
- CNA/Pre-Nursing
- Computer Networking
- Computer Programming
- Culinary Arts
- Cybersecurity
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Hotel Operations
- HVAC
- Industrial Mechanics
- IT Governance
- Law Enforcement
- Machine Tool Technician/CNC
- Medical Office Assistant

competition within the program. While students are not guaranteed permanent employment after graduation, their work experience provides an advantage when businesses have job openings.

## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP.

Multiple education, community, and industry partners work together to make the program a success. Trident Tech is the managing partner and coordinates all aspects of the program, including working with businesses and high school staff to develop seamless career pathways, skill competencies and curriculum. Trident Tech also employs youth apprentices in their Information Technology Department.

Other key partners include:

- Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, which provides funding for students' tuition costs, as well as promotes the program to businesses in the region.
- Four school districts, whose school counselors and career and technical education personnel provide support and guidance to interested students, and adjust students' schedules to accommodate their college and work obligations.
- Apprenticeship Carolina, a division of the South Carolina Technical College system, which works with businesses throughout the state to develop and register apprenticeship programs.

The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce provides scholarships of \$3,600 per student, which covers the cost of tuition and books for the courses taken at Trident Tech. As a result, students can participate in the program and start pathways to secure, high-paying jobs at no cost to them or their parents. Several financial institutions in the Charleston area contribute funding for the program, and additional resources come from the State of South Carolina – a \$1,000 per apprentice tax credit to participating businesses – making the program more affordable for small businesses in the community.

- Charleston Regional Development Alliance, the regional workforce development board, which partners with the Chamber to promote talent development, including through high school apprenticeships.

## CLASSROOM AND WORK-BASED LEARNING.

High school students learn hands-on skills and explore career options through a combination of classroom and work-based learning. Students attend academic classes at their high school in the morning and career-specific college courses at Trident Tech in the afternoon. They are hired as youth apprentices by participating businesses and work part-time during the school year and full-time during the summer. Businesses provide a mentor who trains and supports the student at the job site.

**STUDENT RECRUITMENT.** Teachers and counselors educate students about the program and encourage them to participate. Following a multi-step application process that includes submission of a resume, two recommendations, and a formal cover letter to prospective employers, Trident Tech reviews the applications and recommends qualified high school students to participating businesses. The businesses then interview and select their candidates, so they ultimately decide the students to hire as youth apprentices.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES.** Students who complete Charleston Regional YA receive their high school diploma; one year of college credit from Trident Tech (approximately 30 college credits that may be applied to an associate's degree); and a national credential from the U.S. Department of Labor for completion of the apprenticeship.

As of Summer 2017, **two student cohorts had completed the program and 113 of them had attained employment.** Of those hires, **62% are male and 48% are minorities,** demonstrating that the program is providing a diverse pipeline of workers for businesses, and creating paths to

### Key benefits for students include:

- Validation of career interests
- Work experience
- Opportunities to develop professional relationships
- Enhanced college and career readiness
- Up to 30 college credits transferable to a community college within the state

career success for students who may not otherwise have chosen training beyond high school.

# KEYS TO SUCCESS

Based on the experiences of Charleston Regional YA, other state, regional, or local partnerships considering youth apprenticeships can learn from the following keys to their success.

## IDENTIFY BUSINESS CHAMPIONS.

Business has been the real driving force behind Charleston Regional YA. The program began by one manufacturing company stepping forward, and then encouraging other manufacturers to participate. In four years, the program has grown from six businesses in one industry sector to 122 businesses in 16 career pathways. Trident Tech says that sector partnerships, where businesses within an industry work together to achieve mutual success, have been instrumental in building and growing the program.

## DEVELOP STRONG LEADERSHIP.

Trident Tech is the managing partner, or “hub in the wheel,” but they are quick to point out that everyone has an important and valuable role to play in the program’s success. Despite their praise for all partners, the vision and leadership of top Trident Tech administrators has built the program from the ground up. The technical college provides support to all participating businesses, school systems and local YA coordinators to ensure program success.

## ENGAGE HIGH SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND PARENTS.

YA and career and technical education staff work closely with guidance counselors, principals and teachers, ensuring that efforts remain focused on successful outcomes for students and businesses. Parents are also a key to success, providing support for students and ensuring their worksite transportation needs are met.

## LEVERAGE FUNDING TO SUPPORT STUDENTS.

When Trident Tech and other partners were developing the program, they quickly realized a major challenge – that the cost of tuition for courses at the college would make it prohibitive for many families. The financial support of the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce has leveled the playing field for all students interested and qualified to participate in the program.

### To Learn More...

Visit the Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeships website at [www.tridenttech.edu/career/workforce/car\\_youth\\_apprentice.htm](http://www.tridenttech.edu/career/workforce/car_youth_apprentice.htm)

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