MERIT**INSIDER**

ABC Associated Builders and Contractors Northern California

Chapter Newsletter
April 2023

APPRENTICESHIP

ABC NorCal is proud to announce the graduation of its latest group of apprentices. The program, which provides hands-on training and practical experience in various areas of construction, has equipped these graduates with the skills and knowledge to excel in the industry.

The graduation ceremony, held on Friday, March 24, 2023, in Livermore CA, was a celebration of the graduates' achievements and a reminder of the opportunities that lie ahead. During the ceremony, the graduates received their certificates and had the opportunity to thank those who supported them, as well as sharing their experiences and future plans. Guest speakers Milton Graugnard – Chair of ABC Board of Directors, John Marchand – Livermore Mayor, John Carli – Vacaville Mayor, Kevin Spease – Elk Grove Vice Mayor, and Hershel Baser Jr. – Apprenticeship Consultant Division of Apprenticeship Standard—all of whom provided valuable insights and inspiration to the graduates. Also in attendance were Bill Connelly – Butte County Supervisor, and Katelyn Keeshan – District Representative from Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan's office.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the success of our apprentices, and look forward to all they will achieve in their careers," said ABC NorCal President/CEO Deborah Maus. "Their dedication and hard work throughout the program has paid off, and we have no doubt they will make a positive impact on the construction industry."

The Construction Apprenticeship Program is open to individuals of all backgrounds and experience levels, and provides a pathway to a rewarding career in construction. The program's instructors, industry partners and supporters have helped make it a success, and ABC NorCal looks forward to continuing to provide valuable training and support to aspiring construction workers.

Pictured below: Livermore Mayor, John Marchand and ABC NorCal President and CEO, Deborah Maus.

Pictured below: Milton Graugnard – Chair of ABC's Board of Directors, with wife Jackie and ABC NorCal President/ECO Deborah Maus.

Pictured below: John Carli – Vacaville Mayor giving a congratulatory speech to the graduates.

Pictured below: Kevin Spease – Elk Grove Vice Mayor giving a congratulatory speech to the graduates.

Pictured below: Hershel Baser Jr. – Apprenticeship Consultant, Division of Apprenticeship Standards, during his congratulatory speech.

Pictured below: ABC NorCal Graduates!

At the Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony, the ABC NorCal Leadership had the honor and privilege of announcing the winners of the Apprentice of the Year competition. These outstanding individuals were nominated by their respective companies and were evaluated on their work habits, program performance, on-the-job performance and safety awareness. The winners represent the best of the best in their respective trades, and we are proud to recognize their dedication and hard work.

The 2022 Apprentice of the Year Winners are:

- **2022 Carpentry Apprentice of the Year –** Alexa Chacon, Sausal Corporation (pictured below)
- **2022 Construction Craft Laborer Apprentice of the Year –** Juan Valencia, Anderson Pacific Engineering Construction, Inc.
- **2022 Electrical Apprentice of the Year –** Anthony Bunio, Western Water Features, Inc.
- **2022 Painting Apprentice of the Year –** Ulises Ontiveros, E-Z Painting, Inc.
- **2022 Plumbing Apprentice of the Year –** Jeff Ostrom, WWF Contractors Corp

Each winner received a prize package of Milwaukee Tools valued at $300, plus a $200 gift card!

Pictured below from left to right: Connor Dennison, Territory Representative – JSS, Milwaukee Tools, Josh Ward, President – Sausal Corporation and ABC NorCal Past Board of Directors Chair, Hershel Baser Jr., Apprenticeship Consultant Division of Apprenticeship Standard, and Alexa Chacon, 2022 Carpentry Apprentice of the Year.

Luis Zamora, a graduate of the Electrical program, earned ABC NorCal's Outstanding Performance award. This annual award recognizes the achievement of completing the entire program without any program infractions and with outstanding performance, which is no small feat. Congratulations to Luis Zamora for this remarkable accomplishment! Luis was awarded a prize package of Milwaukee Tools valued at $400, plus a $200 gift card.

Jeremy Souza, a recent ABC Northern California (ABC NorCal) Electrical Program graduate who is working for MK Electric & Design, Inc., has been awarded the prestigious Southwire 2023 Top Gun Apprentice. Southwire is a global supplier of wire and cable, as well as a provider of electrical tools, equipment and assembled products, such as meters, extension cords and lighting.

“My ultimate objective is to become an exceptional electrician!” said Jeremy. “For those who aspire to be skilled professionals in this field, I highly recommend the ABC NorCal apprenticeship program. It offers a practical education tailored to your career path, equipping you with the knowledge and skills you need to excel as a journeyworker. Receiving the prestigious Southwire Top Gun Apprentice award was a genuine honor, and I am ecstatic about the new tools that came with it!!”

The recipient of the award is selected by Southwire and is based on who received the highest scores throughout the apprenticeship program. ABC NorCal presented Jeremy the award and gifts at the recent ABC NorCal Graduation Ceremony. The award included a backpack filled with Southwire tools worth $700.

“Southwire is really committed to making apprenticeship programs stronger and helping train the future workforce,” said Joe Fawcett, Training Instructor for Southwire Company.

Congratulations to Jeremy for this amazing recognition of his hard work and dedication!

Pictured below: Southwire Top Gun Winner Jeremy Souza (left) and Mark Kirkes, owner of MK Electric & Design, Inc. and ABC NorCal Board Chair.

Chris Leone, an electrical instructor, retired in March of this year after a long and dedicated career. To honor her contribution, she was given a special gift at the recent graduation ceremony. The apprentices and the ABC NorCal Apprenticeship Program are incredibly grateful for all Chris has done throughout her tenure. Although retired, Chris has committed to continuing her support for the apprenticeship program, and will be present at the Local Craft Competition.

Thank you, Chris, for your unwavering commitment and service. You will be missed, and we wish you all the best in your retirement.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SPONSORS FOR MAKING OUR 25TH ANNUAL GRADUATION POSSIBLE

Able Construction Group, Inc.
Acme Electric Company
Agbayani Construction Corporation
American Electrical Services, Inc.
Anchor Singh Painting
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Sparky Electric, Inc.
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TSV Painting, Inc.
Turman Commercial Painters
Vasko Electric, Inc.
Western Water Constructors, Inc.

Shoutout to a few of our recent program graduates...

Carpentry Graduate Steven Costa

Steven Costa found us as he was browsing online. He was working a security job at the time, but wanted to get into the trades, which led him to search for construction apprenticeships. While he started by looking for union apprenticeships, he liked what ABC NorCal offered and joined our Carpentry program. Steven came to us with no formal construction experience or training, but with a drive to learn. He admits that while it was a bit scary to begin his first apprentice job, the journeyworkers at the company were helpful and gave him valuable on-the-job experience. Steven appreciated the time with our instructor team, and said they pushed him to do things he might be uncomfortable to try, by pushing the limits of his capabilities and requiring him to believe in himself. They also encouraged him to be a leader in his field. He specifically enjoyed the rough framing classes, and building structures at our training facility during his in-person classes.

We're beyond proud of him and know he has amazing things in his future. What's next for Steven and his family? Steven is planning to get his contractor's license! He's truly living the dream, and is free to go wherever and #buildwhatyoulove!

Construction Craft Laborer Graduate Diego Molina

Never fond of traditional school, Diego Molina knew he wanted to pursue the trades from a young age. He first heard about us at his high school's career fair, and applied to our Craft Laborer program not long after graduating. We're certainly glad he did!

One of the main reasons Diego pursued the construction trades was because the everyday work is never monotonous and he would typically be doing something different every day. Also, he was drawn to constantly learning new techniques, procedures, building materials, etc. During the Construction Craft Laborer's program, Diego excelled in his classes, soaking in all the training with our instructor team, including special techniques he could use to propel his career.

We were excited to have Diego recently graduate, and even more excited that he has decided to continue his education by applying for the Carpentry apprenticeship! Diego has big goals of owning his own company, and we are more than confident he will achieve and exceed that goal!

Electrical Graduate Wyatt Ybarra

Wyatt Ybarra was no stranger to the trades growing up. His father worked for an electrical company during his youth, getting young Wyatt interested in the field and eventually working at the same company. Wyatt couldn't refuse when that company posed the opportunity to sponsor him into the apprenticeship program, bringing him into the ABC NorCal family.

Weathering the uncertainties of COVID and refusing to be detoured from his determination to complete the program, Wyatt developed the art of patience. While jobs everywhere were compromised and his industry peers started to scatter, he remained dedicated, telling us he 'had to keep on truckin'!

Of the many skills he learned throughout his time with us, Wyatt identified motor controls among the most valuable. Our instructors' training in this particular section of electrical has given Wyatt the confidence to seek positions that require this knowledge.

Wyatt has had a very busy past year. He competed in our Local Craft Competition in 2022, in which he placed, and went on to represent ABC NorCal at the National Craft Championships. During this time, he was able to complete his program's on-the-job training hours and graduated as an electrical journeyworker. Looking into this future, Wyatt is thinking of trying out Texas, taking his credentials and ability to work 'wherever' along for the adventure. Wyatt says he would like to give back to future workforce and just might consider becoming an instructor!

Wyatt quickly found work as a journeyworker here in the Bay Area where he lives. We're excited to see where his career takes him!

Congratulations to our March 2023 Apprentice Graduates!

- **Ryan Aguilar** – Electrical Program
- **Jose Castro** – Construction Craft Laborer Program
- **Juan Contreras** – Electrical Program
- **Jorge Gonzalez** – Electrical Program
- **Ryan Hunt** – Electrical Program
- **Andrew Lumidao** – Electrical Program
- **Ryan Marin** – Electrical Program
- **Maurece Martin** – Construction Craft Laborer Program
- **Cristobal Munguia** – Plumbing Program
- **Julio Murillo** – Electrical Program
- **Zach Townshend** – Carpentry Program
- **Raymond Valencia** – Carpentry Program

Welcome new apprentices!

ABC NorCal would like to welcome the new apprentice who joined the apprenticeship program in March 2023:

- **Rene Acosta** – Electrical Program

- **Jan Ayon** – Electrical Program
- **Michael Brown** – Carpentry Program
- **Mario Duarte** – Construction Craft Laborer Program
- **Michael Gomez-Limon** – Electrical Program
- **Benjamin Gordon-Munoz** – Electrical Program
- **Maria Guerrero Gamboa** – Painting Program
- **Arnold Gutierrez** – Electrical Program
- **Gildardo Mondragon** – Painting Program
- **Stephanie Ramos** – Carpentry Program
- **Fernando Sanchez** – Construction Craft Laborer Program
- **Angel Vargas** – Construction Craft Laborer Program
- **Paul Vasquez Jr.** – Plumbing Program

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