

Trade Spotlight: T.A.K.E. Provides Construction Training, Scholarship Opportunities, More For East St. Louis Youth

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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This Trade Spotlight is sponsored by the Home Builders & Remodelers Metro East Association.

EAST ST. LOUIS - [Teens Against Killing Everywhere](#) (T.A.K.E.) is a nonprofit that provides housing revitalization and construction, job training, and more to the community of East St. Louis. Through its various programs, the organization also provides local youth with scholarship opportunities and more while teaching them valuable trade skills.

Shannon Stelling, executive officer of the [Home Builders & Remodelers Metro East Association](#), has nominated T.A.K.E. for a Trade Spotlight for October for their work promoting the positive impact that the trades can have on the community.

T.A.K.E.'s [partnership with AmeriCorps](#) helps with scholarship opportunities for local youths ages 16 to 24 who are part of T.A.K.E.'s Tomorrow's Builders YouthBuild Charter School or the YouthBuild Construction Trades Training program from another partner, the Emerson Park Development Corporation (EPDC). The YouthBuild program began in 2005 "due to an increasing number of young people in the region interested in continuing to vocational and post secondary education."

"YouthBuild is really for a more mature student who recognizes that they are interested in doing work with their hands," EPDC Executive Director Vickie Forby said. "It is a pre-apprenticeship program devoted to construction trades, and contributes to the leadership and life skills of an individual so they can be successful, wage earning, working adults."

[According to T.A.K.E.](#), the EPDC and its partners "are responsible for the construction of new homes in Parson's Place and River City Place - the largest private rental developments built in East St. Louis in more than 50 years." Homes built by program participants not only help them find employment after graduating the program, but also provide affordable rental housing for their community.

"Every part of construction is a metaphor for life," Forby said. "As students rebuild homes for low-income families, they are learning about rebuilding themselves. You must have a solid foundation like a house, have a good skeleton like the home's frame, take care of your skin like a house has walls, and have a good head on your shoulders like a strong roof."

"We talk about parenting, personal health, math, reading, literacy, and science in relationship to setting systems such as plumbing and the basics of electrics."

To learn more about T.A.K.E. and the various programs offered, visit [their website](#). Congratulations to T.A.K.E. for this Trade Spotlight recognition from the [Home Builders & Remodelers Metro East Association](#)!