



# Career & Technical Education

By Dr. Denise Jonas, Director of Career & Technical Education

## Fargo High School Construction Program Building Our Future – Family to Workforce Development

What better way to learn about the construction and trades industry than by building a home from the floor trusses to shingles, interior walls to cabinets! What makes it even better, is building a family's first home!



Watching and hearing the excitement from the Kester family on September 3<sup>rd</sup> at a “drive the first nail” celebration event as they spoke about their gratitude to receive their first home, after 26 years of marriage, was truly inspirational to our students, faculty, and community members in attendance. Even more inspiring was knowing this passion project was put on hold due to lack of

funding, but was revitalized with a willing teacher, administrators, and collaborative partnership between Lake Agassiz Habitat for Humanity and Fargo Public Schools.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, Mr. Joe Riley and his Spartan Builders will bring this 1,200 square foot home to life from floor to roof trusses, wall framing to windows installation, insulation, interior to exterior finishes, and cabinets. Volunteers and subcontractors will also support the project through demonstrations, mentoring, and finishing some of the finer details, yet immersing high school students into the daily experience of project management, responsibility, and technical skill



development will expose them to many aspects of the construction industry. As the Kester family

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and representatives drove the first nail into the door header that will serve as the entrance and threshold to the Kester's first home, it was evident that this wasn't just any project, this was the reality and passion of a family's future home. The Kester house is planned to be finished by May of 2022 and will be moved to its new location in north Fargo to revitalize an empty lot.

Beyond the Spartan Build, Fargo Public Schools Construction/Building Trades programs have been constructing residential 1,500 or 1,800 square foot homes on Davies, South, and North High School campuses for decades, to then be moved to communities across North Dakota and the Minnesota lakes area. Instructors Mr. Ron Streit (Davies High School), Mr. Joe Riley (North High School), and new instructor Mr. Todd Johnson (South High School) balance the teaching of concepts and safety training between the classroom to application of skills on the house job site. This is a real-world, capstone experience for students in Construction II in which they will complete a majority of the project, along with sub-contractors secured for specialized tasks, such as electrical and texturing.

Goals for the Construction/Building Trades program are to introduce students to careers in the construction industry, while helping them become work-ready and college ready. Partnering with technical colleges in the region, such as NDSCS and M-State, students are connected with instructors and encouraged to earn a certificate or degree in construction management, HVACR, plumbing or electrical. Students can work while in school to earn scholarships, complete work experiences, and prepare for apprenticeship programs, walking away with minimal debt and a great paying job. Careers in the trades area are high wage, in high demand, and have demonstrated placements of almost 100%.



With the North home dedicated to the Kester family and the Davies High School Construction/Building Trades house sold to a local buyer, Fargo Public Schools has one home remaining for sale at South High School. *Contact Michelle Aarsvold at Park Co. Realtors for more information on purchasing this home, 701.237.5031.*

