



Hammering out a future

New charter school will prepare students for careers in construction industry

By Leah Masterson
TODAY'S LOCAL NEWS

Drafting tables and stools replace traditional desks and chairs, and lockers store saws and screwdrivers alongside textbooks.

The absence of bells and the motivational posters that line the hallways at North County Trade Tech High make it look and feel more like a corporate office than a school, and that's the intent.



Doreen Quinn

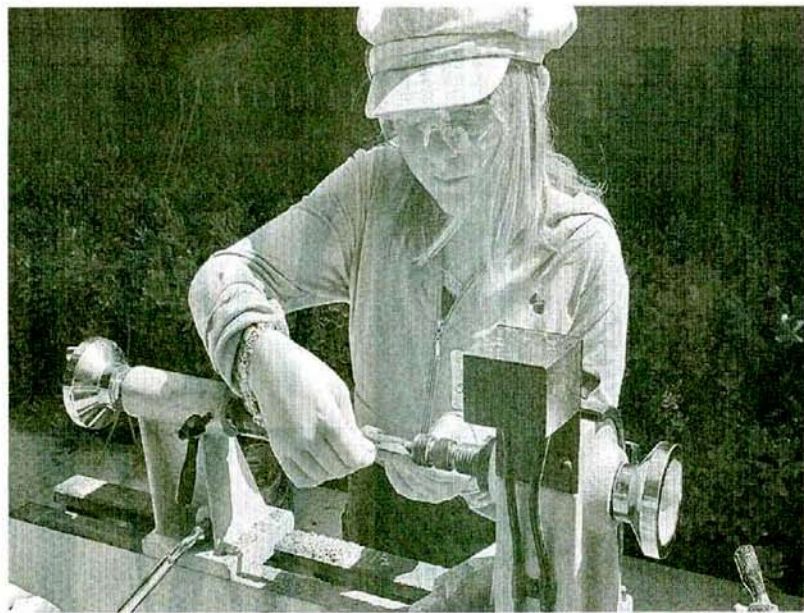
"That's what we believe education is about: preparing kids for life, and that means for work, because

that's what's going to sustain you and your family," said Doreen Quinn, president and CEO of North County Trade Tech High School and New Haven Youth and Family Services, the nonprofit group that started the school.

Vista's new construction-oriented charter school will open its doors to freshman Sept. 4. The tuition-free school still has 70 open spots, and Quinn hopes to fill them by fall.

The school will have an open house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. The local band Light of Doom, a finalist on Fox's "The Next Great American Band," will give a free concert at the event.

The school's curriculum will focus on skills used in construction trades. Students will work on project-based learning assignments in six labs outfitted with



Eighth-grader Savannah Tai of Oceanside works on a lathe at the North County Trade Tech High School. She hopes to begin a career in architecture after graduation. North County Trade Tech High School

state-of-the-art technology. They will study everything from construction technology and graphic design to plumbing, electrical work, and heating and air conditioning systems.

Each student is evaluated before enrolling and works with his or her adviser to develop a personal learning plan.

"We think when kids feel like they have some control over their education and it takes place in a small learning community ... you can make the curriculum very difficult and rigorous, and kids will rise to the occasion because they're excited about it," said Quinn, who has recruited several local industry leaders to work with students.

The curriculum is aligned with state standards, and

Girls in Construction Symposium

WHAT Event to interest girls in attending North County Trade Tech High School

WHEN July 23 at the school
INFO (760) 598-0782

Quinn said the students are taught the same core subjects offered in other schools, but the lessons are designed to complement and incorporate building trade lessons.

Students in grades 11 and 12 will be expected to enroll in apprenticeships and internships.

Ideally, when students graduate, they will be prepared to enter college or jobs in the construction industry, Quinn said.

Students will be encouraged to pursue careers as construction managers, civil engineers, surveying and mapping techs, carpenters, electricians, sheet metal workers and plumbers.

Savannah Tai, who just completed eighth grade at Lincoln Middle School in Oceanside, plans to attend the new school in the fall. Her mother, Joan Nerrettig, said she thinks the school will teach her daughter skills she can use for the rest of her life.

"I like Trade Tech because she can go to college afterward, or do an apprenticeship, so that gives her more options," she said. "She's going to get the same education, but the difference is she can apply what she learns. ...

"I couldn't tell you anything about algebra right now

WHAT North County Trade Tech High School, a new charter school opening in Vista this fall, will provide a chance to tour the school and speak with faculty and industry partners.

WHEN 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday

WHERE 2585 Business Park Drive, Vista

COST Free

INFO (760) 598-0782 or tradetechhigh.org

because I never used it"

Each class will have a community-related cause it works on throughout the school year. The first freshman class will focus on addressing safety needs for low-income seniors by building storage sheds for senior parks.

The school has partnered with Project Care at the Gloria E. McClellan Senior Center to build wheel-chairs and handrails. Trained industry workers and journeymen will act as project managers and will mentor the students.

"It's very motivational for kids to feel like they can make a difference in their community," Quinn said. "And I think it's important for the community to see kids making a positive difference."

About two-thirds of the students currently enrolled are male, but Quinn hopes to bring more females on board during the Girls in Construction Symposium, scheduled for July 23 at the school.

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