



Career Signing Day

Back row left to right: Karen Remick, Somerset CTC Director, Jamie Frampton, Somerset CTC welding instructor, Barbara Grandinetti, President, The Challenge Program, Inc., Shawn Kaufman HR Director, Riggs Industries, Joseph Smiach, Riggs Industries and Joseph Calderone, Riggs Industries.
Front row left to right: Crystal Shaulis (mother of Andrew Findley) **Somerset CTC Graduates/Riggs Employees, Andrew Findley and Russell Persuhn, Angela Persuhn and Russell Persuhn** (parents to Russell Persuhn).



Changing the meaning of Senior Signing Days

Signing days for high school seniors committing to four-year colleges for academics or athletics are common editorials during the spring. The Challenge Program, Inc. and our business partners are redefining signing days with two special events we hope will become a norm for high school seniors.

Career Signing Day

On May 31, 2018, Riggs Industries, TCP business partner to Somerset CTC, held their first **Career Signing Day** at the CTC with two graduates.

It's no secret that there is a shortage of employees qualified for skilled trades careers. Many of TCP's business sponsors of both high schools and career and technology centers currently face this recruiting challenge. TCP is affecting outcomes by giving businesses a platform to speak with students directly about the career opportunities that exist within their communities, **and it's working!**

Out of the Gate Employment

Andrew Findley and Russell Persuhn had been working part-time during the school year with Riggs Industries; and on May 31st accepted career positions as welders with Riggs Industries' subsidiary company, J&J Truck Bodies & Trailers of Somerset.

Media Celebration

The Career Signing Day showcasing Findley's and Persuhn's employment commitment highlighted the opportunities that often go unrecognized in communities.

Skills Gap Shortage

Shawn Kaufman, HR Director for Riggs Industries, explains, "Riggs has been forced to turn away contracts because the company doesn't have a large enough workforce to handle the work."

Barb Grandinetti, President of The Challenge Program, Inc., added,

"For 20 years we stopped feeding young people into the trades, now we're playing catch-up."

Findley states,

"I'm ready to start earning money."

Looking to the Future

Shawn Kaufman is taking the long view and looking to the future.

"These two young men are trailblazers. We hope they are the first of many to take this route."



Top and Middle Photos: Findley and Persuhn signing their offer letters and proudly displaying their commitment. Bottom Photo: A round of well-earned congratulations from Shawn Kaufman (Riggs) and Barbara Grandinetti (TCP).



COE Signing Day

Standing L-R: COE Employees: Jennifer Jubin, V.P. of Operations; Bill Ulmer, Purchasing Manager; John Townsend, Warehouse Manager; Brent Filak, Controller; Michelle Eitner, HR Manager; J.D. Ewing, Jr., President/CEO.
Seated L-R: High School Graduates/COE Interns, Amanda Gregg, Laurel Highlands/Purchasing Intern; Silvio Urani IV, Uniontown /Logistics Intern; Cole Waligura, Uniontown /Accounting Intern; Giovanni Marian, Uniontown /HR Intern.

COE Distributing is a Major Corporate Partner with The Challenge Program, Inc. Their corporate partnership includes sponsoring five high schools with outreach to four additional schools. These include Albert Gallatin, Brownsville, California, Geibel, and Uniontown High Schools (sponsored); Connellsville CTC, Fayette CTI, Connellsville and Laurel Highlands High Schools (outreach).

FAST FACTS

77% of Seniors

discovered businesses located in their community.

75% of Seniors

discovered employment opportunities in their community they did not know existed.

80% of Businesses

agree. The Challenge Program, Inc. effectively helps businesses introduce local employment opportunities to students.

77% of Educators

agree. The Challenge Program, Inc. award categories are connected to successful workforce habits.

Creating a Pipeline

“COE is excited and proud to provide an opportunity for four local high school students to gain experience in the professional world. At the same time, these students are providing COE Distributing with the opportunity to utilize their talents for the betterment of our business.

Through The Challenge Program, Inc., COE is thrilled that our first group of interns are so very talented. We look forward to a successful first summer of this program and gaining momentum for next year’s group.”

James D. Ewing, Jr.
CEO/President, COE Distributing

Keys to Success

A student is eligible to apply for an internship if they become a finalist in any of the five Challenge Program awards.

1. Attendance
2. STEM
3. Community Service
4. Academic Improvement
5. Academic Excellence

These award categories represent the solid work habits required for career success. Each year the Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors are challenged to perform their best in all five categories. Finalists are students in the top 10% of an award category and are eligible to apply for an internship with COE Distributing. Award recipients are then chosen from among the finalists to receive the cash incentives.

New COE Interns

On June 8, 2018, four Fayette County graduates signed a commitment with COE Distributing for internships within four departments. The first group of interns to be selected are Amanda Gregg, Purchasing Intern (Laurel Highlands); Silvio Urani IV, Logistics Intern (Uniontown), Cole Waligura, Accounting Intern (Uniontown), and Giovanni Marian, Human Resources Intern (Uniontown).

“A Laurel Highlands student was selected for one of the internships. It is great to see a successful local company willing to invest in our community and our future.”
 Randy Miller, Guidance Counselor
 Laurel Highlands High School

<p>Connecting Business and Education</p>	<p>If you know a business with a recruiting challenge that would appreciate pre-qualifying their workforce...</p>	<p>We'd love an introduction!</p> <p>Contact: Sara Deyarmin Jones Director of Program Development deyarmins@tcpinc.org 814-533-7401 x104</p>
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More Workforce Development



Blacklick Valley High School/ Cambria Care Center

Cambria Care Center in Ebensburg hosted a tour of interested students from Blacklick Valley High School. Students were treated to a Lunch & Learn session and exposed to a variety of departments which contribute to the successful day to day operations of the facility. Students heard from employees representing a variety of career positions such as Staffing, Dietary, Nursing, Therapy as well as Marketing and Administration.



Pittsburgh CAPA High School/ MARC USA

MARC USA is a full-service marketing and advertising company in Pittsburgh and sponsors CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts High School) in Pittsburgh. MARC USA hosted interested students at their Pittsburgh offices to see first-hand the many departments and career opportunities available in the advertising industry and the paths to those careers. *MARC USA also sponsors Barack Obama Academy of International Studies in Pittsburgh.*

Career Day

Business Partners of The Challenge Program, Inc. frequently participate in career days of the individual schools they support. It is proven to be a great way to engage with the entire student body, one on one. Students ask questions and gather information regarding available employment opportunities, training and education paths, and a particular industry.

Through the efforts of The Challenge Program, Inc. and the school administration the career day at CAPA included several TCP business sponsors participating in the event. Participants in the May event were Major Corporate Partner, **COE Distributing Grane Healthcare/QNS Recruiting, Huntington Bank, and WadeTrim.**



Sitting from left to right:
Tony Igwe, WadeTrim
Katie Hastie, QNS Recruiting
Deb Hoover, Grane Healthcare

Standing from left to right:
Clarence Jackson, Huntington Bank
J.D. Ewing, Jr., COE Distributing
Kyle Logue, Huntington Bank
Barata Bey, Huntington Bank



Barata A. Bey of Huntington Bank



Tony Igwe of WadeTrim



J.D. Ewing, Jr. of COE Distributing



Deb Hoover of Grane Healthcare

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