

# ACE Mentor

Spring 2008

San Francisco Bay Area Affiliate

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Aaron Gruber

### The State of ACE in the Bay Area

The 2007-2008 program year represents the sixth year ACE has been up and running in the Bay Area. During that time, it has evolved from two struggling programs in San Francisco serving a few dozen students to eight strong programs throughout the Bay Area serving well over 100 students. In fact, we currently have the following programs successfully introducing students to all aspects of the construction industry: Three programs in San Francisco with a total of 30 students; two programs in Oakland with a total of 25 students; one program on the lower peninsula with 15 students; one program in San Jose with 25 students; and our newest program in Contra Costa County which is projecting 40 students in its first year.

Success has not only been achieved in our student ranks, but with mentors as well. Initially we started with about a dozen committed mentors representing a tiny fraction of the construction industry in the Bay Area. Today we have over 50 mentors actively participating and over 40 different firms providing mentors and/or donating scholarship funds. We have also made great strides with scholarships, from just a few \$1,000 scholarships our first year to \$30,000 last year.

Please help us to expand the program and maintain the momentum we have built over the past six years.



Aaron Gruber  
Thelen Reid Brown Raysman & Steiner, LLP

*"...Before being involved in ACE I was just another student, who had no idea what his major was going to be in college. This program then changed all that when it introduced me to the field of engineering....I now feel as if I have a one up over my peers because I know exactly what I want to do one day."*

*-James Spediacci  
Class of '07*

## SAVE THESE IMPORTANT DATES!

May 21, 2008 Fifth Annual ACE Scholarship Luncheon *see page 4 for details*

October 27, 2008 Fourth Annual ACE Golf Tournament Fundraiser



Career Directions for Students in  
Architecture, Construction and Engineering



## Short Starts Things Rolling in Contra Costa

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By Holly E. Ackley

I originally intended to interview Richard Short about his new ACE team, but I got sidetracked. It ends up that Short is a pretty interesting guy! So, besides getting the low-down on the new Walnut Creek team, I learned about the many faces of Richard Short.

He's a geotechnical engineer. In fact, he is a Senior Geotechnical Engineer at Kleinfelder in Oakland, which is the office he opened in 1996. He is also a professor in foundation design at UC Berkeley. He's also a past president of the Deep Foundations Institute, and is currently the Chairman of the Education Trust (which is how three ACE affiliates ended up with \$3,000 each). But wait, there's more! He's an inventor, having discovered a way of stabilizing shallow landslides, and has a separate company known as Slope Reinforcement Technology. And lest you think he lacks an artistic side, he is a sculptor. Yes, a sculptor. He sculpts in bronze, first sculpting his dog and then bumping up to sculpting engineers. He sculpted Jim Mitchell, a world renowned geotechnical engineer. He is currently sculpting Ben Gerwick, the inventor of the prestressed concrete pile and a world renowned marine engineer. His work is on exhibit at the Pioneer Gallery in Danville.

So how did this amazing guy find ACE? Thanks to Jeff Stallman (ACE class of '06 & '07), ACE SF had one participant in the high school bridge competition held by the ASCE student chapter at UC Berkeley, and one of the Berkeley professors in attendance learned about ACE and told Short,

and the rest is history.

And what history! Short called me in the Spring of 2007 and asked how he could get involved in ACE. I told him he had several options: mentor, sponsor, committee participant, or team leader. Short chose all of the above. He persuaded the Deep Foundation Institute to contribute \$3,000 to ACE SF, and an additional \$3,000 each to two east coast affiliates. He became an active ACE participant, working with several committees, and most significantly, he became a mentor and team leader.



Short initiated the Walnut Creek team, but he is quick to mention that April Treece, Project Director with the Contra Costa Economic Partnership, has been a major help. Her organization is sponsored by various industries in the Contra Costa County aimed at persuading high school students in the region to bring their education and vitality back to county jobs. With April's connections in the industry, the trades and the high schools, and Short's engineering expertise and enthusiasm, the first Contra Costa County team took off! Following many early morning brainstorming sessions, evening

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meetings, and phone calls, the Walnut Creek team now has 43 students and 22 mentors.

This year's team project is the design and construction of a marine wharf and terminal building. To start, the team will tour the Port of Oakland by land and water. The team is well on its way to a success story. But Short won't stop there; he already has his eyes on at least two more teams in the area, and he says the high schools are eager for the ACE program! Good luck, Dick! Go get 'em!

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*San Francisco Team tours Rincon Tower.*



*Tour of Gemmiti Model Arts in SF.*

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## Upcoming Alumni Event

By Rajani Nair

This May, many of the first graduates of the Bay Area ACE Mentor program will be graduating from college. The ACE Mentor board is hosting an event for the first time to help those students who may need assistance with their job search or seek advice on how to transition into the workforce. Specific details for the event are in progress. Some potential activities or topics the Board is planning are listed below:

- Mock interviews
- Resume writing skills
- How to market yourself
- Dress for success
- What and how to achieve your goals in the workplace
- Should I go to graduate school?
- License requirements

The Board is in need of volunteers to participate in any of these activities listed above to help make this event a great asset for the future ACE graduates in years to come. It will also be a great forum for your company to meet potential employees! If you or your company would be interested in participating in this event or have ideas on what topics will be beneficial for our alumni to help prepare them in their careers, please feel free to contact Jani Nair at [Rajani.nair@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:Rajani.nair@sanjoseca.gov). The event will be held in June and it will be hosted by Thelen Reid Brown Raysman & Steiner LLP, located at 101 Second Street, Suite 1800, San Francisco, CA 94105.



**The Fifth Annual ACE Scholarship Luncheon  
The City Club**

155 Sansome Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco

**May 21, 2008**

11am – 12pm Registration  
12pm – 1pm Luncheon and Student Presentations  
**\$100 per person**

Please help the San Francisco Bay Area ACE Mentor Program by showing your support and attending the Fourth Annual ACE Scholarship Luncheon on May 21, 2008.

Proceeds from the event will fund this year's scholarships to assist high school seniors intending to pursue a career in architecture, construction or engineering.

Thank you for your support! We look forward to seeing you!

**The Fifth Annual ACE Scholarship Lunch**

May 21, 2008 11am – 1pm

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please RSVP no later than **May 16, 2008**.

**Payment due by  
no later than  
event date.**

- Platinum Sponsor - \$5,000 (includes a specially named scholarship\*\* and table for 10\*)
- Gold Sponsor - \$3,000 (includes a specially named scholarship\*\* and table for 10\*)
- Silver Sponsor - \$1,500 (includes a specially named scholarship\*\* and table for 10\*)
- Friends of ACE - \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (lunch not included)

\*Platinum, Gold and Silver sponsors agree to donate 2 of their 10 seats to students attending the event. **We expect to use \_\_\_\_\_ seats.**

\*\* Sponsorships received after May 14<sup>th</sup> will go towards the general ACE scholarship fund.

- We will be attending the luncheon. Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ seats at \$100/seat.
- We will not be attending the Luncheon, but please accept the enclosed donation.

The amount of the contribution that may be deductible for Federal income tax purposes is limited to the excess of the amount of money contributed by you over the value of the lunch purchased. ACE has made a good faith estimate as to the value of each lunch and determined the value to be \$25.00. You should consult your tax advisor to determine the extent to which the above contribution is deductible based on your individual circumstances.

Please make checks payable to **ACE Mentor San Francisco Bay Area**.  
Contact or return form with payment to:

**ACE Mentor San Francisco Bay Area**  
c/o Cynthia Muñoz, Stoecker & Northway Architects  
437 Lytton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301  
Ph. 650-327-7070 Fax 650-327-9659  
Email: [cynthia@stoeckerandnorthway.com](mailto:cynthia@stoeckerandnorthway.com)

## A Day on the Green

By Craig Stark

The third annual ACE Mentor SF Bay Area golf tournament took place last September at Crystal Springs Golf Course in Burlingame. Over 100 competitors played a scramble format tourney in foursomes. Winning scores this year were a little higher than last year, based on the slightly cooler and breezy conditions. Still, the temperature topped out just at 70 degrees, and the sun was shining. All in all, a great day of golf. With the help of all of you, we raised enough money to fill 6 scholarship applications for high school seniors who wanted to pursue careers in Architecture, Construction or Engineering.

The day included lunch, range balls and several tee prizes, including a pair of Tifosi sun glasses with multiple lenses for various conditions, and a sleeve of Titleist Pro-V1s with the ACE logo.

Alas, no one hit a hole in one on the eighth hole. There were several shots within a foot, but no one drove off with the Lexus IS 250. I guess we'll

have to try a little better next year! This year also featured a raffle for the first time, as well as dinner after the round. Melanie Lapointe walked off with the raffle grand prize – a set of Ping irons, donated by Ping.

A big thank you to all the players, sponsors and volunteers, especially the Golf Tournament Committee, that helped make this event another wonderful success, and allow the ACE mentor Program not only influence the lives of young people, but also help our professional industries.

Next year, we plan on moving the event to Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton. Tentative date is set for October 27<sup>th</sup>! Save the date!



“Graduating from Downtown College Preparatory will end my high school years. I have been accepted to San Jose State University and its College of Engineering and that is where I will be attending...the first one in my family to ever attend a four year university. I plan to get a B.S. in civil engineering and if there is opportunity to continue studying, then I will...I will make it happen.”

*Jesus Gonzales Jr.  
Class of '07*

# Oakland Gets Theatrical

By Jonathan Marshall

The Oakland 1 group is anticipating the start of their 2008 Program on February 6. For the second year in a row, the group will be shadowing the seismic improvements and refurbishment of the Fox Theater in downtown Oakland, a historic performing playhouse. Mentors from the group have visited various local schools, giving presentations and raising awareness about the ACE Program. The mentors have also been meeting to prepare for the program and plan weekly activities. Mentors in the group are excited because the group was recently awarded a grant by the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), providing funding to purchase supplies for weekly “hands-on” activities for the students. Overall, the program this year is expected to be a big success.

The 2007 group of mentors and students completed another successful program. Approximately 75% of the seniors decided to continue their education in architecture, construction, engineering or a similar field. Also, every student that applied for a scholarship in the group was awarded one.

Congratulations to the 2007 ACE Oakland 1 group!

## CONGRATULATIONS

Jonathan Marshall  
of the Oakland 1 Team

On being the recipient of the  
**National Action Council for Minorities in  
Engineering, Inc. STEM Innovation Grant**  
in the amount of \$1,000!



# Peninsula Activities

By Michael Nelson

It has been an exciting year for the Peninsula One Team! We continue to grow with more students and more mentors joining our team. We started off our first session with about twice as many students as last year and a good combination of mentors who represented each of the core ACE disciplines of architecture, construction and engineering. We meet a Palo Alto High School every other week during the school year and our students are from high schools in the south Peninsula area.

We started out the year with an icebreaker activity which was followed by a brief introduction to the ACE Mentor Program on a national level and in the Bay Area. Each mentor introduced themselves and their field and then the students told us what they knew about the ACE professions and what they hoped to learn in the program. We finished the first session by starting work on the term project. Our term design project this year will be taken from the options listed for the ACE Mentor National Competition.

The students learned about engineering principles through a bridge design activity using plastic straws. Once they built their straw bridges, a competition was held to see which bridge would hold the most weight. Another “hands-on activity” introduced the students to cost control and construction schedule

constraints through a tower design activity using only spaghetti and marshmallows – the tallest, structurally stable tower for the least money won the challenge. Most of the other class sessions have been spent working on the term project. The students selected to design a “Shelter in a Storm” where they are working on a conceptual design for a storm-resistant housing complex located along the Gulf Coast using innovative materials or techniques.

The students have been busy on the term project so our field trips are schedule for later in the year. We are scheduled to tour the water pollution control plant in San Jose so that students can learn more about environmental engineering. We are also scheduled to visit Stanford's Virtual Design and Construction Group in early March to learn more about the latest modeling technology.



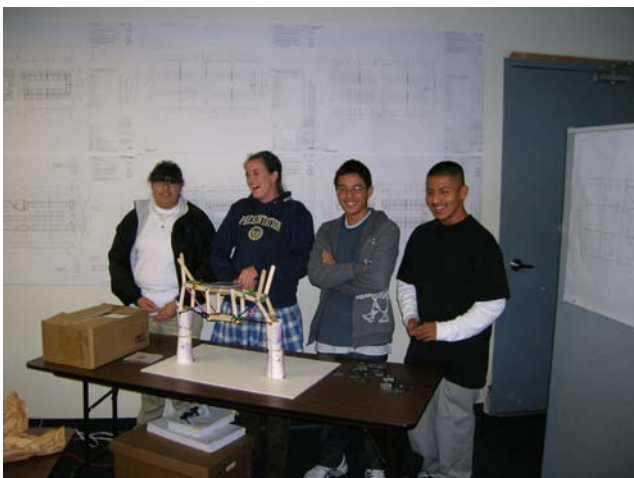
If you would like to learn more about our team, you can check out our blog at [www.acementor.wordpress.com](http://www.acementor.wordpress.com) for a chronicle of our activities.

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Thanks to the students who spent their free time to learn more about architecture, construction and engineering and a special thanks to the following mentors and their firms who donated their time to lead the Peninsula One Team: *Jani Nair – City of San Jose, John Chan – Stoecker & Northway Architects, Dora Chan - Stoecker & Northway Architects, Lars Lee – Rinne & Peterson Structural Engineers, Craig Stark – Fergus Garber Group, Lauren Kleinberg – Fergus Garber Group and Michael Nelson – Skanska USA Building.*

*“The ACE Mentoring Program was really a thrill and I enjoyed every bit of it. The lectures and assignments were fun, and it really helped secure my interests of becoming an engineer with all the wonderful people I met through this incredible program. It helped me discover several scholarship opportunities and without you guys college would not have even been an option. I thank you so much, and I wish you the best! Your generosity has really made a huge impact on my life, and I cannot thank you enough!”*

-Julian Spediacci  
Class of '07



*San Jose students build bridges out of household materials.*

## What's Up Down South?

By Cynthia Muñoz

I've been a team leader with ACE for the past five years and at the beginning of every year, I always think, how am I possibly going to manage the time and do this again? I know the same question enters every one of our mentors' minds the moment they get my email, titled "Time to start planning our next ACE year!" The inevitable answer, and the reason we all keep doing this is simple - we love working with these students.

This year, our team is again blessed with a great group of high schoolers from Downtown College Prep, Bellarmine, Presentation, Archbishop Mitty, Lynbrook and Notre Dame. Their energy has been high, their attention has been focused and their dedication has been admirable. They keep coming back to hear our professional stories and anecdotes, work on the activities we create for them and ask us questions about ourselves...as if they really like us! Imagine that!!

This year, our students and mentors have been working together on project programs that have been taken from the ACE National Competition, like the Peninsula Team. Both our teams will be having a joint presentation, in which the students will showcase their hard work, and one student group from each team will have their projects entered in the National Competition which takes place in March.

We are proud to have a strong group of mentors and students who really enjoy learning from each other. We look forward to more of the same in the coming years.



## 2007-2008 ACE San Francisco Bay Area Mentors

### **Affordable Housing Association**

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Have questions about ACE?  
Want to become a mentor?  
Want to get your school involved?  
Want to become a sponsor?

Visit us at [www.acementor.org](http://www.acementor.org)  
or contact Melanie Lapointe at  
415-986-1176 or  
[mlapointe@swinerton.com](mailto:mlapointe@swinerton.com)

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any questions, comments or corrections related to  
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