

## **Safety Training Makes High School Student Best Choice for Gainesville Mechanical**

*By Irene Wazgowska, CEFGA Feature Writer*

Brian Adkins summer vacation was far from typical. His fun in the sun meant an early rise, so that he could begin his 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. day on time.

Brian, an 18-year-old Apalachee High School senior, spent this past summer working with Gainesville Mechanical Inc., as an intern through CEFGA's Summer Internship Program. He worked in the sheet metal shop, where he helped with the manufacturing of air conditioning duct work. Knowing it was important for Brian to see the "whole process," Tracy Stoehr, Brian's supervisor, sent him to the Mountain View Church job site, where he could learn how to install the duct work.

On site, Brian learned that language barriers can be overcome. In order to understand his Spanish speaking coworkers, Brian asked questions, picked up words, and communicated as best he could so that he was able to "meet [them] in the middle." This included using the universal language of sign and motion.

In the end, Brian "had a great time." He says that: "everyone was nice and helpful to [him]" and that "[he] made friends with everyone there very easily."



Brian's love of hands-on work started long before his relationship with Gainesville Mechanical. When he was a young boy, he was "always working with wood," with his grandfather. The same was true of cars, because he often helped his dad.

It was only natural then that, entering his freshman year, Brian wanted to take an automotive class. But before he started the class, Brian was told that it was full, and was put in construction. Brian says it worked out for the best and over the years he has "stuck with it."

In his final year at Apalachee, Brian is currently in Samuel Young's Carpentry I class. In fact it was Mr. Young who encouraged Brian to consider participating in the CEFGA Summer Internship Program his junior year. Mr. Young says that: "Brian was one of the students who showed interest in the program and applied. He was chosen for an interview and selected for the program."



Mr. Young credits CEFGA as being: "very vital to the success of our program. It should be used as a model in terms of cooperation among business and education."

Tracy Stoehr, Gainesville Mechanics Manufacturing Manager, had "never heard" of CEFGA. This was until he became the supervisor of Brian. It was the company's Field Operations Manager, Wendy Hulseby that hired Brian on, after deciding he was the most qualified since "he had the most safety training."

Though Tracy hadn't heard of the organization and didn't know that his company had a partnership with CEFGA, he's certainly aware of it now. Even better, he seems to be very pleased. Tracy says, "it's fun when you have a young man who wants to learn and has a serious interest... Brian did a good job and was very eager to learn... [we] opened his eyes to so much."

Tracy has witnessed the value the internship has brought to both Brian and his company. He "thinks the internship program is wonderful," saying "it helps young people get a head-start," and that in Brian's case "it's great because it gets his future started faster." He encourages young adults who are interested in getting into the construction field to "seek out an organization like CEFGA, in order to get a head start if you can."

When Brian graduates he plans on returning to Gainesville Mechanical as a Full-time employee. He's got the support of Tracy who says there is an open personnel file on Brian so that he can return whenever he's ready. Mr. Young is also encouraging, saying his student: "has very good communication skills and is a very respectful and confident person. [Brian] should do well in any endeavor if he continues on the path he is currently on."

And this path seems to be the right one.

With his confidence, the desire to learn, and the continuous encouragement from others, this high schooler is on his way to a rewarding and fulfilling life.

*CEFGA is a nonprofit, 501c3 organization supported by leading construction companies and trade associations in Georgia. We bring the construction industry to students and students to the construction industry. [www.cefga.org](http://www.cefga.org)*