

Flowery Branch High School Grad Finds Career with Art Plumbing

Jose Moreno walked into the Construction Career Expo 2005 wondering what he was going to do when he graduated from high school. He walked out on his way to a solid career.

Moreno is an Apprentice Plumber with Art Plumbing Company in Marietta, GA. He is also a first-year student at the Mechanical Trades Institute Joint Apprenticeship Program in Atlanta, which he attends on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 8:15 pm.

Moreno had taken construction classes for four years, the last three at Flowery Branch High School in Hall County, Georgia. He learned about the fundamentals of construction, carpentry and electrical wiring. So how did he end up in a plumbing career?

“I talked to a lot of industry professionals at the Career Expo,” Moreno recalled. “The people at MTI (the Mechanical Trades Institute) told me about their apprenticeship program. It sounded good. I went and applied as soon as I graduated. They took me into the program and even placed me with a really good company – Art Plumbing.”

Moreno is working with the Art Plumbing crew on the new wing of the Northside-Forsyth Hospital in Cumming, GA. He gets his day-to-day work instruction from Journeyman Plumber Robert Scrocher, who thinks highly of Moreno.



Apprentice Plumber Jose Moreno installs a complex sink system in the new wing of the Northside-Forsyth Hospital in Cumming, GA. “This sink will be used to keep germs from spreading in the hospital, so it has to be done just right,” Moreno said. “At Art Plumbing, everything we do is done right and done safely.”

“Jose is one of those people who is naturally mechanically inclined,” Scrocher explained. “He’s just the kind of guy you want on your crew – hard working, reliable, and a fast learner. I wish we could find more guys like Jose.”

Asked what he likes about his new career, Moreno said, “I like the work, especially the hands-on part. Plumbing is always interesting. The people at Art Plumbing treat me really well.” Foreman Jason Yarborough said that Moreno is the kind of employee Art Plumbing is always looking for. “Jose has a great head on his shoulders. He knows how to work safely. Best of all, he has a really strong work ethic. He shows up every day ready to work.”

Chris Griffin was Moreno’s construction instructor at Flowery Branch. But Moreno calls him “Coach Griffin” because Griffin was also Moreno’s soccer coach. “Jose is one of those people who can take just a little instruction and go with it,” Griffin said. “He’s a great listener. Tell him something once and he’s got it. He’s just a neat guy. Everybody

likes Jose. He's mature, he's polite. He was always helping the other students when they couldn't master something."

Moreno still goes out to Flowery Branch High and cheers for the soccer team. He wears his old jersey. He also sees Coach Griffin on a lot of Sundays at the recreational soccer league. He is proud of his career and is happy to tell Coach Griffin's students what opportunities there are in construction, particularly plumbing. "I keep in touch with some of my old classmates," Moreno said. "Some work in burger joints, some are in factories. I'm doing better than them in my first year as an apprentice. If I do well in school and on the job, I'll get a raise every six months. And when I get my Journeyman's license, I can work anywhere, even overseas. Robert Scrocher is from California. He came here because there's lots of work."

An apprentice plumber starts out at around \$9.50 per hour. After one year, they can be making \$11.50 or more. A skilled journeyman plumber can make really good money.



Getting into tight spaces to attach water supply lines is all part of the job of a plumber. In this picture, Jose Moreno is working under a sink cabinet to get it ready for inspection. The space is so tight Moreno had to remove his hard hat. "That's the only time I take it off," Moreno explained. "At Art Plumbing we make sure we work safely." As soon as Moreno got the lines attached, the hard hat was back on.

Moreno plans to stay in the plumbing trade. He will continue to encourage others to find a worthy career in construction. "Yeah, I was telling my brother about my job the other day, but I don't think it made much of an impression. He's only six," Moreno said laughing.

Maybe his brother is only six, but with a role model like Jose Moreno, there's a strong chance that, in about 12 years, the construction industry is going to get another top-notch career plumber named Moreno.

CEFGA – the Construction Education Foundation of Georgia – is a nonprofit organization supported by leading construction companies and trade associations, working to promote careers in the construction industry. This success story was written by CEFGA staff member John Beavin. For more information contact John Beavin at 678-889-4445, ext. 304, or visit www.cefga.org