

NAWIC Education Foundation (NEF) – K-12 Programs

The innovation being nominated for the NOVA Award is the NAWIC Education Foundation K-12 programs. In 1991, the construction industry introduced figures regarding the shortage of needed construction workers and the potential shortage for the future. Discussions were held to determine what factor the NAWIC Education Foundation could be involved with to help change these staggering statistics. NEF the enacted several programs and contests created to foster and promote construction as a viable career choice among young adults from grade school to high school, Over 5,000 children participated in these programs the very first year and the programs continue to grow. The K-12 programs are the Block Kids Building Program, the Building Design Program, and the CAD/Design/Drafting Competition.

The goal and purpose of these programs is to reach school age children to introduce and encourage them to look at a career in the construction industry in either a degreed program such as architects, engineers, or project managers, or the skilled trades such as masonry, carpentry, electrical, HVAC, sheet metal, or plumbing. The secondary goal is to promote the value of a career in the construction industry as a viable choice for children of either gender wanting to increase their earning potential.

The objective of this program is to reach as many children as possible across the United States to promote the construction industry through the creative imagination only a child possesses. Each “building” will be an individual, positive, creative, energized piece of work giving each child the self esteem to move on to building bigger projects, or seeking information on other aspects of the construction industry. The ultimate objective is to encourage children to seek a career in the construction industry.

The **Block Kids Building Program** is a national building program that is sponsored on the local level by NAWIC chapters and other organizations. The award-winning program introduces children to the construction industry in an effort to create an awareness of and to promote an interest in future careers in one of the many facets of the industry. The program involves students in the construction of various structures with interlocking blocks and three of the following additional items: a small rock, string, foil, and poster board. National prizes are awarded to the top three projects. The Block Kids program will introduce children in the elementary school level to “Bill Dill” and “Connie Struction” who will help children guide their way into the learning world of construction. Each participant is given a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 100 interlocking blocks to complete their own imaginative building project. They are also given a small rock or stone, a piece of string no longer than 12 inches, a piece of foil no larger than 18 inches and a piece of poster board. The student may break or tear these “tools” into smaller pieces or use in combination with each other to create their “building”. The student has from 40 – 60 minutes to complete their project. Each child is permitted to build the project of their choice, provided it in some way relates to the construction industry. Each student will be given their own personal “hard hat”, so they get the feel of a real construction worker. Coloring books, bookmarks, t-shirts, patches, and pins are all part of the Block Kids supplies received by each child

The **Building Design Program** introduces construction in a positive and fun manner, while presenting challenges in math, science and design. The Scale-Model Building Program is for students at the middle school level. This team-building project involves constructing a structure from architectural drawings.

The **CAD/Design/Drafting Competition** is a contest designed for senior high students and provides recognition to students for creative design, successful problem solving and craftsmanship in preparing architectural drawings. Entries are evaluated for detail, accuracy and originality of work. Objectives of the contest are to introduce the student to the construction industry in a positive and challenging manner, while fostering a sense of self-worth and building confidence. Mentoring programs between students and educators are also encouraged. Each local sponsor is furnished with a “Design Problem” that is designed by a licensed Architect or Engineer and is generic enough to meet the needs of all areas of the US and our international affiliates. Project drawings must include as a minimum: a floor plan, exterior elevation and site plan with placement of structure. National winners receive prizes.

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BLOCK KIDS PARTICIPANTS

