

JOSEPH P. KEEFE TECHNICAL SCHOOL

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ANNUAL KEEFE TECH HOUSE BUILDING PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

Framingham, MA – In June, students from Keefe Technical School in Framingham, MA successfully completed the school's annual House Building Project. Located in Natick, MA, the 3,000 square foot, Colonial inspired house has 4 bedrooms, 3 full baths, a living room, family room, kitchen, dining room, and study as well as a garage, attic, and basement. "The students are really proud of what they've accomplished here," said Andrew Fairfield, Keefe Tech Carpentry instructor and project manager.

To find applicants for the House Building Project, the school places ads in local newspapers. To qualify, applicants must own a buildable lot that is within Keefe Tech's school district, prove that they are able to finance the project, and have an architect draw up plans for the house. Homeowners are also responsible for having the foundation poured before the students begin working on-site. Applicants are entered into a lottery and a selection committee makes the final decision.

This year's home was built for a local family who were especially fortunate to have benefited from the school's generosity and expertise. They previously owned a home in Natick that was demolished, excluding the foundation, due to a hazardous mold problem. Starting in September 2007, Keefe Tech students worked to rebuild the house from the foundation up.

Each house is the result of a highly collaborative effort between the homeowners and the school. After working with their architect the homeowners bring the plans for the house, including fixtures and woodwork, to Keefe Tech's project manager. The project manager, typically a Carpentry, Electrical, or Plumbing instructor, works closely with the owners throughout the process to ensure that the house meets their specifications.

The yearly House Building Project benefits both the homeowners and the students. The lucky owners only have to pay for the cost of the building supplies, while Keefe Tech's Carpentry, Electrical, and Plumbing majors get a chance to do hands-on work on a real project. "Working on our annual house construction project gives students the chance to gain invaluable experience in their chosen field outside of the classroom setting," said Fairfield, adding, "and it helps them see how those skills apply to their futures."

Students who participate in the House Building Project get to do a variety of jobs such as framing, roofing, wiring, and siding. "This year's group was involved in the layout of the house, from floor framing to wall and roof framing to completing the interior finishwork," said Fairfield. All construction work done by students is carried out under the strict supervision of Keefe Technical School's qualified instructors. Students working on the project have a five-day workweek, generally spending about five hours a day on-site. Their school schedules alternate weekly, with academics one week and vocational training the other.

The House Building Project has long been a staple of the kind of hands-on education available at Keefe Tech. Allowing students to try things on their own can help them with future career choices. "Many of our students have gone on to get their electrical and plumbing licenses and some have opened their own contracting businesses," said Margaret Ellis, Keefe Tech Vocational Coordinator, adding, "we also have students in the plumbing and electrical programs who have become mechanical and electrical engineers."

To have the distinction of working on Keefe Tech's House Building Project, students must be in their junior or senior year, have at least one full year of shop experience, and have completed OSHA's 10-Hour Certification course. The House Building Project is part of the required curriculum for seniors who aren't already working at a school-mandated co-op job.

Keefe Technical School, located in Framingham, MA, is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. In addition to 14 different vocational programs, Keefe Tech offers a complete college preparatory program to students from the communities of Ashland, Holliston, Hopkinton, Natick, and Framingham.

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Keefe Tech students helped rebuild this Natick



Keefe Tech students pose with Carpentry instructor and project manager Andy Fairfield (far left).



Keefe Tech senior Marone Freitas works on some wiring.



Keefe Tech students work together to frame the house.

