

PROGRAM: Orleans Technical College

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NORTHEAST TIMES NEWSWEEKLY

Back to school

Recent high school graduates and army veterans are returning to the classroom this September – but some are trading in text books for tools and pursuing trades.

By **Logan Krum** - August 29, 2019



Building a future: (From left) Dylan Pastore, Stephen Mascaro and Steven Coleman stand in front of a model home they helped build. Mascaro and Coleman are veterans hoping to start their own businesses and Pastore is a recent high school graduate excited to begin his career in trades. LOGAN KRUM / TIMES PHOTO

With school doors opening their doors back up for students next week, K-12 students won't be the only ones cracking open the books next week. High school graduates and even Army veterans are looking to continue their education – and some are opting to study trades in Northeast Philadelphia.

Vets Stephen Mascaro and Steven Coleman as well as recent Swenson Arts and Technology grad Dylan Pastore are going back to school at Orleans Technical College at JEVS Human Services, 2770 Red Lion Road.

"I had no experience in HVAC before coming here, nothing," Mascaro said. He had received weapons training and learned how to set a strict schedule during his time serving, but wanted to learn a versatile trade like HVAC to secure a job moving forward.

Ditto for Coleman. This is his second time learning at JEVS – he graduated the HVAC class and is studying building maintenance to broaden his career aspects.

"Once I got out I knew I didn't want to go to a four-year university and I found this program," he said.

Both vets are beneficiaries of the GI Bill, which provides students with a housing stipend and a one-time book fee that JEVS students can use toward books or tools.

"They can get their tuition and fees paid, they also receive a housing stipend," said Debbie Bello, director of admissions at Orleans.

Coleman has ambitions for opening his own HVAC business and possibly going into real estate once he completes his education, while Mascaro is keeping his options open between coming back for another class after this one or dabbling in real estate.

"I figure the more trades I know, the more useful it will be," Mascaro said.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, recent high school grad Pastore just started his education at Orleans a few weeks ago, but is coming in with a game plan. Coming from a family of handymen skilled in trades, Pastore knew he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps of learning electrical.

"If I learn a trade and become good at it and enjoy it, then I have a lifelong career that I love," he said.

Pastore also studied electrical while at Swenson. His dad owns a junkyard, meaning Pastore grew up with trade and car knowledge. He knew he could have a career working with his family, but wanted to learn something on his own to potentially start his own business.

Orleans has courses in carpentry, building maintenance, plumbing and heating and more beginning in September. For more information, go to orleanstech.edu/.