

PROGRAMS: Project WOW

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# NORTHEAST TIMES

## NEWSWEEKLY

### Project WOW offers career training, moral support

by Logan Krum



*Nine students graduating Project WOW stand in front of miniature houses they constructed. The program allowed them to pursue their high school diploma while gaining new skills in property maintenance and repair and career training. LOGAN KRUM/TIMES PHOTO*

Samuel Golett thought he was on track to finish 11th grade when his West Philadelphia high school asked him to find alternative schooling for his senior year due to his tardiness record. He signed up for the Keystone Job Corps to finish his education and get on-the-job training, but when life circumstances prevented him from finishing that program, too, he wasn't sure where to turn.

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When he learned about Project WOW, offered by JEVS Human Services at Orleans Technical College, it was an easy decision to sign up. He could get his high school diploma while also gaining skills in property maintenance and repair to set himself up for a career afterward.

The 21-week program gives students foundational knowledge in a variety of skills under the property maintenance umbrella like electrical, plumbing, carpentry and weatherization, while completing their high school education on an individualized basis. The program is free to those who are eligible.

“Anything I needed help with I could just ask for and get help,” Golett said.

The program (short for World of Work) offers individuals aged 18 to 24 who didn’t complete their high school diploma with opportunities to finish their education through the Penn Foster high school diploma program. While they do this, they’ll gain hands-on knowledge and skills and receive training in building a career afterward.

The days are split evenly among academics, property maintenance practice and career training, with four days at the school and one day of virtual learning a week during COVID-19. This wave’s nine graduating students constructed two miniature houses with a working electrical system.



*Samuel Golett, a graduate of the program, sits on a bench he constructed with his newfound skills. The program helped Golett gain the certifications he needs, while helping him obtain important items like his Social Security card so he can pursue a career in the trades. LOGAN KRUM/TIMES PHOTO*

Students progress through academics at their own pace and received individualized help from counselors. Barbara Parker, a counselor for the program, said she builds trust with the students so they can communicate whatever needs they have, such as Golett needing a Social Security card and an ID before he could apply to jobs.

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“The biggest thing that I found that really affects me is how much trust they give us,” said Parker, who grew up in Parkwood. “He was able to get so much more from this program because he put it out there for himself.”

Andrew Michalczyk, another graduating student, said the program provided him with a support system he didn’t get in high school. He was able to get OSHA 10 certified, power actuated tools certified and earn his high school diploma during the program.

“I never thought I’d have that,” he said with a laugh. “I just didn’t have the motivation during high school.”

Michalczyk recalled days where he didn’t feel like coming into the program, feeling the same lack of motivation from high school, until he got a text from his counselor urging him to come in to the program.

“That’s something I really needed,” he said.

The next course begins July 12. Those interested can find more on [JEVSHumanServices.org](https://JEVSHumanServices.org) or by contacting Parker at 215-728-4481.