



News release

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**Gateway students give back to community
through using career skills**

Gateway Technical College Building Trades-Carpentry instructor Michael Summers seeks out ways to connect the skills he teaches students to a real-world application.

He also likes when those projects can help a non-profit or service group.

He was able to do both this academic year through work with Habitat for Humanity to remodel a Racine house.

“Through this project, we’re able to give students a hands-on, real-world experience,” said Summers. “They need to find out ways to handle things when the situation isn’t always perfect, like they would have to do on an actual job site. This is more than a lab experience.”

Summers does have a lab on Gateway’s Kenosha Campus where students learn different carpentry skills and build smaller, more portable projects.

Shawn Talbert, in his first semester of the Building Trades - Carpentry program, said he believes the work on the house “gives us some real-world experience.”

“I think this is great,” says Talbert. “This also definitely gets us involved with the community. I think this will be great for Gateway and great for the program.

“I think it will be great for the students working here, too, because it’s something we can put on a resume – this is a home we worked on, and worked on for Habitat for Humanity. I think home ownership is very important and this will help the new owners. They will have a house, and they will also have equity if they want to move into a bigger house someday if they want to relocate.”

Summers said he is also happy that students are able to put their skills to good use in the community, to be able to help others. “They’re able to give back through this Habitat project,” says Summers.

First semester Building Trades - Carpentry student Davon Henry said he enrolled in the program to be able to renovate his own house – and, one day, opening his own home renovation business. He said working on the Habitat home was a great experience.

“This is my first semester, ever, building anything, so I was happy that we can work on some projects and get some experience, too,” said Henry.

Work focused on windows, doors, trim and will soon focus on flooring.

For more information on Gateway’s Building Trades-Carpentry program, go to www.gtc.edu/carpentry

Sarah Marbes, Gateway IMPACT program coordinator, agreed that the project affects students inside, and outside of, the classroom.

“The value of service learning is students are able to engage in that practical application and obtain a better understanding of what they are doing in the classroom,” says Marbes. “They are building their reputation as carpenters, and it’s a project they can cite to others as a demonstration of their skills.

“What’s also great about service learning is that it benefits the community. Students learn more about the community and uplift their neighbors through this work. Gateway is part of the community – we are not separate from it. When we uplift others in our community we all benefit from it.”

Marbes’ office helps to connect community groups with Gateway students seeking to engage in service learning opportunities. Gateway’s engaged students have benefited through being able to further hone their skills, and they saved its communities more than \$1.5 million since 2011.

For further information on the IMPACT program, contact Marbes at marbess@gtc.edu.

Gateway Technical College’s mission is to deliver industry-focused education that is flexible, accessible and affordable for our diverse community. The college collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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