

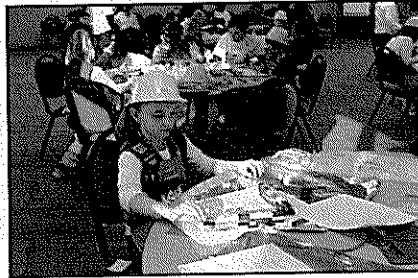
Block Kids Programs Spread The Word On Construction

Edited by Steve Hudson

A key challenge facing construction today is letting young people know that it's a viable career choice for tomorrow. Industry-wide, many groups are working to get young people excited about construction and to let them know about the excitement and opportunities that the field has to offer.

Different initiatives target young people at different ages, but when it comes to pure fun and excitement, one of the most energetic programs has got to be the National Association of Women in Construction's annual Block Kids program.

The Block Kids building program is a national building competition that 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 faces of the industry. Participants are given a specific selection of building materials, including a number of plastic building blocks (thus the name), and challenged to use the materials to construct some sort of project. Judges evaluate the process, and winners are named at the end of the day.



Children from Valley Elementary School in Pelham, AL, participated in the recent Block Kids Competition hosted by the Greater Birmingham Chapter of the National Association of Women in Construction.



Block Kids competitions are held across the country, with local winners going on to compete regionally and then nationally. What follows is a look at two recent Block Kids competitions and at some of the work that two southeastern NAWIC chapters are doing to spread the word on construction.

Greater Birmingham NAWIC Chapter Takes Construction to Elementary Students

NAWIC's Greater Birmingham Chapter recently held its annual Block Kids Building Program at Valley

Elementary School in Pelham, AL. Approximately 30 second-grade students participated in this year's event.

Each participant was provided with 101 Lego blocks, one rock, one piece of foil, and a length of string. Each child was permitted to build the project of his or her choice, but all projects had to be construction related. The children were given a time limit within which to complete their projects; once the projects were completed, volunteer judges evaluated the finished projects and named the winners.

Alex Goatley was this year's Greater Birmingham chapter winner and received a check for \$75. His project will also go on to compete regionally.

NAWIC Atlanta Block Kids Go Green

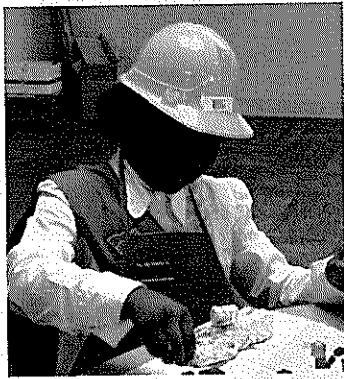
Can you say "Going Green?" In the past few years, green building, going green, sustainability, LEED, and many other related terms have been buzz words in the construction and design industries. This year, approximately 35 Atlanta-area elementary-age students went green thanks to the NAWIC Atlanta Block Kids Building Competition, chaired by Stacey Chapman of Heery International and Valencia McDaniel of IBG Building Group.

The Atlanta event was held at the Atlanta Community Food Bank. The



Members of the Greater Birmingham Chapter of NAWIC volunteered to present this year's Block Kids Competition included (standing, from left) Brenda Simmons, Brasfield & Gorrie; Deborah Williams, M.J. Harris, Inc.; Rhonda Grounds, M.J. Harris, Inc.; Alecia Melvin, M.J. Harris, Inc.; Ginger Thompson; Gary C. Wyatt GC, LLC; and (kneeling, from left) Michele Dunn, Alabama Graphics; Jenny Wilson, Associated Builders & Contractors; Stephanie Crane, M.J. Harris, Inc.; and NAWIC member Michele Alexander.

Block Kids



RaiNell Bentley took home first-place honors in the NAWIC Atlanta Block Kids competition.

theme was "Building a Greener Tomorrow, One Block at a Time." Participants included girls from Girl Scout and Brownie troops in and around North-west Georgia.

The "green" theme of the event spotlighted not only sustainability in the construction and design industry but also the significance of using recyclable materials throughout the day.

Erica Guevara of Heery International started the day off with a presentation on just what the terms "green building" and "sustainable design" mean. Noting how cartoon characters have light bulbs appear over their heads when they come up with a great idea, Guevara told the students that they all had their own light bulbs and that the more "green" ideas they thought about, the greener their light bulbs would become.

Thus armed with their "green light bulbs," the participants proceeded to build their projects. The girls created energy plants, recycling centers, solar-powered hospitals, buildings with rainwater receptacles, and more. During the course of their building, the participants were interviewed by industry judges and asked to explain what they had built and who would benefit from its use.

While the judges deliberated to select the winners, the children were able to enjoy a number of hands-on construction-related educational opportunities – all tying back to the idea of sustainability. For example, Erica Guevara and Frances Hamilton of Heery International presented a demonstration on recycling and on what happens to various items after they have been recycled, focusing specifically on the food plates, cups and other items that were used the day of the event. At another station, Katie Blankenstein of jB+a presented a landscape demonstration spotlighting stormwater filtration and even let the kids prepare their own personal water-filtration systems utilizing natural resources such as soil, sand and stone.

This year's event also included a photo-taking station complete with a life-size rendition of the Block Kids logo with a cutout for participants to stick their head through.

At the end of the event each Brownie and Girl Scout received either a Building Art Try It or Architecture Badge. The children also received reusable organic tote bags and organic T-shirts, donated by SilvAD Promotions, plus journals made of recycled paper and other goodies.

RaiNell Bentley was this year's local winner and will advance to the regional competition. Bentley designed and constructed a House of Energy for the city. The facility would capture energy from the sun through the use of the solar roofing, then distribute the energy wirelessly throughout the city. ■

ALABAMA

Bobcat of Mobile

Mobile, AL
251-456-1993

Bobcat of Oxford

Oxford, AL
256-831-1870

Bobcat of the Wiregrass, Inc.

Dothan, AL
334-792-5121

Capital Tractor, Inc.

Montgomery, AL
334-264-0086

Loader Services & Equipment

Huntsville, AL
256-895-3311

Loader Services & Equipment, Inc.

Pelham, AL
205-664-1718

FLORIDA

Bobcat of Broward

Pompano Beach, FL
954-763-9880

Bobcat of Fort Myers

Fort Myers, FL
239-334-4987

Bobcat of Metro Dade

Hialeah Gardens, FL
305-362-6632

Bobcat of Naples

Naples, FL
239-530-1111

Bobcat of North Florida, Inc.

Jacksonville, FL
904-779-8911

Bobcat of Ocala, Inc.

Ocala, FL
352-368-2400

Bobcat of Orlando, Inc.

Orlando, FL
407-273-7383

Bobcat of Palm Beach

West Palm Beach, FL
561-689-9880

FLORIDA (continued)

Bobcat of Panama City

Panama City, FL
850-769-4844

Bobcat of Sarasota

Sarasota, FL
941-342-7479

Bobcat of Tampa Bay

Tampa, FL
813-626-3470

Bobcat of the Treasure Coast

Fort Pierce, FL
772-460-9998

GEORGIA

Bobcat of Augusta

Augusta, GA
706-737-7253

Bobcat of Savannah, Inc.

Savannah, GA
912-236-5588

Bobcat of Thomasville

Thomasville, GA
229-225-9644

Perimeter Bobcat, Inc.

Atlanta, GA
770-242-6500

Perimeter Bobcat, Inc.

Gainesville, GA
678-450-6610

Perimeter Bobcat, Inc.

Lake City, GA
404-608-8533

Perimeter Bobcat, Inc.

Marietta, GA
770-850-1443

Rhinehart Equipment Co.

Rome, GA
706-232-8962

TENNESSEE

Bobcat of Chattanooga

Chattanooga, TN
423-698-4679

Bobcat of Knoxville

Knoxville, TN
865-588-8115

Bobcat of Nashville

Antioch, TN
615-941-4000



Bobcat