



SOME CET's Challenges and Achievements - Holy Trinity Catholic Church Interim Report

SOME CET was able to launch our new HVAC course this July. We are providing instruction through a combination of online instruction and socially-distanced hands-on instruction.

Our HVAC instructor, Lonnie Murray, has created interactive online activities that engage our students in all aspects of the HVAC trade. He uses Google Meet to lead online discussions of HVAC concepts via videoconference. These discussions are supplemented with daily practical assignments that test students' critical thinking skills and help them to develop the mindset of an HVAC professional. Students, for example, may be asked to create a supply list and cost estimate for a proposed job or discuss the operation of the compressor in the refrigerator in their own house. Students share their responses through a Google Classroom. This social media-like platform allows staff and students to respond to posts, creating a learning community. To ensure that all students can take part, we have purchased "loaner" Wi-Fi hotspots and Google Chromebooks.

Students join Mr. Murray for weekly hands-on instruction. SOME's 1800 square foot shop allows students to install, operate, and troubleshoot full-sized HVAC systems in full-sized, simulated rooms. To ensure proper safety and social-distancing, each student works at an individual station positioned at least 6 feet from their peers. Each workstation is sanitized twice daily and SOME CET undergoes weekly deep cleaning. Courses also meet on Saturday mornings to limit the number of SOME CET students and staff in the building.

We have also continued to provide robust career development and basic education instruction to all students in the virtual environment. Each SOME CET student participates in 6 hours of weekly career development courses per week. These courses, which cover topics like interviewing, resume writing, and business communication, are facilitated via videoconference by our team of 11 volunteer professionals. Furthermore, we have hosted monthly mock interviewing events with employees of State Farm, Accenture, and A.B. Bernstein

Our industry math instructor, David Hilder, has created industry math lessons that include simulated blueprints and circuits developed by Google Sheets. This allows students to learn the practical math

skills they need to use in the field. Since students can see each other's work, they are able to give feedback and support each other, keeping them connected and decreasing the stress of online learning. Though only one HVAC student so far has completed the course hours necessary to qualify for a CASAS posttest, he has earned an educational functioning level gain (equal to 2 or more grade levels) in both math and reading.

While SOME CET has adapted to persist through the current health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our ability to start HVAC at the time proposed and our enrollment. Because SOME CET was originally licensed as an on-campus program, we had to receive formal approval from the DC government to transition to hybrid (online and on-campus) instruction. This delayed the launch of our HVAC program until July.

Since that time, 6 HVAC students have enrolled. Because our primary mode of recruitment has been street-level outreach, we have had to pivot to find new ways to reach our clients. To accomplish this, we have hired Crystal Hailstorks, a Recruitment and Outreach specialist who is tasked with reaching out to prospective students and community partners who will refer students to SOME CET. Ms. Hailstorks has already grown our referral network, connecting with 27 referral partners in her first month of employment and scheduling outreach sessions with clients or constituents of CSOSA, Anacostia High School, One Fair Wage, K. Billy Push, DC PREP, Councilmember Trayon White's, Oxford House, and fellow SNAP E&T Grantee, Union Kitchen. As a result 19 prospective HVAC students began the application process in December, and we expect many to enroll in the coming months. Seven of these students were referred by current or former SOME CET students. To incentivize clients to refer their family and friends, students and alumni earn gift cards when their family and friend enroll in our program. Since SOME CET enrolls new students biweekly, this "pipeline" of new students will be able to quickly integrate into our courses.