



CORNERSTONE CRAFTSMAN



About Us

Cornerstone Craftsman is an Alexandria City-based nonprofit organization with a unique pre-apprenticeship program that provides young men and women, ages 12-17, the chance to build a viable career path, earn a livable wage, and pursue economic self-sufficiency.

Our History

- In 2021, Executive Director Roberto Gomez, recognizing a pressing need, began operating and self-funding an informal pre-apprentice program.
- His work began with training and mentoring five at-risk young men and providing family support,
- Roberto Gomez's personal journey, from a past marked by mistakes to the present as a respected community leader, is a testament to the power of resilience, perseverance, and the belief in the potential for anyone to overcome their past and build a brighter future.
- In May 2024, Roberto was named an Alexandria Chamber of Commerce (Chamber ALX) 40 Under 40 honoree,

Vision

Break the cycle of generational trauma and build a skilled and marketable workforce in the skilled trades.

Mission

Provide at-risk youth with the instruction, tools, and mentoring required to earn a livable wage and have a viable career in the skilled trades.

Values

Community and Advocacy | Empathy and Understanding | Honesty and Integrity | Selflessness and Self-awareness | Quality and Craftsmanship





Michael Johnson (Chair)
Community Outreach
Coordinator



Gabriel Elias (Secretary)
ACPS International Academy
Teacher & Alternative Pathways
Program coordinator



Al Martzloff (Treasurer)
Owner
Café la Solar



Alex Aguilar
Owner
Jen Contracting

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Roberto Gomez
Owner
Even Scale



Melissa Poretz Riddy
Director, Eastern Region,
Government and
Community Relations
INOVA



Ken Tran
Owner
Inky Inc

Strategic Plan

Focus Areas for 2024 - 2025

- 1. Governance:** Adopt sound, ethical governance and financial management policies.
- 2. Program:** Create and implement consistent high-impact programs.
- 3. Staffing:** Recruit, onboard, and manage high-quality dedicated board members, volunteers, and staff.
- 4. Fund Development:** Actively pursuing foundation grants, corporate gifts, and individual donations.
- 5. Operations and Administration:** Build organization quickly while maintaining quality, transparency, and values.

Pre-Apprenticeship Program

- Training in the skilled trades for at-risk youth ages 12-17
- Apprentices meet two Saturdays a month.
- Mentorship and education in key life skills such as conflict resolution, critical thinking, self-awareness, and accountability.
- Offers a viable career path to earn a livable wage and pursue economic self-sufficiency.
- We work closely with court services and families to assist youths in successfully transitioning from juvenile detention and probation.



14 Active Pre-Apprentices
30 on the Waitlist
95% Program Retention Rate

We plan to track the improvement of truancy, GPA, family relationships, and mental health using informal interviews, conversations, and surveys in conjunction with ACPS and Social Services.

We intend to place significant importance on producing quantitative and qualitative measures to prove our success in increasing valuable life skills in both career and personal development.



By the Numbers

In the News


Alexandria Gang Prevention Community Task Force
July 2024 Newsletter

Alexandria Times, May 30, 2024
'We've impacted generations'

Alexandria City Theogony, March 15, 2024
Cornerstone Craftsman: Constructing Futures

Zebra, May 10, 2024
Chamber ALX Names 40 Under 40 Honorees

Fairfax Times, February 2, 2024
Apprenticeship helps teen gain employment



“I set up monthly giving to Cornerstone Craftsman because I believe in the program. As a teacher, I see kids getting lost and leaving school with pessimism and resentment toward the world they are entering. Cornerstone Craftsman is different. I’ve seen Roberto and his crew reach kids on an individual level and show them a different future. Cornerstone Craftsman loves these kids. And guess what? Their lives are literally changed. I’ve seen it . . . kid going from posting on Instagram about wanting to be a scammer or dealer to mentoring others on the importance of learning the trades.”

Gabriel Elias
Board Member

“I will request to the courts that all the kids on my caseload can go through Roberto’s program. I’m grateful that the kids in this City have an opportunity like this pre-apprentice program. The work Roberto is doing is the only one I know of in Alexandria City.”

– Alexandria City Probation Officer (5.16.2024)

“I’m 15 and a student at Alexandria City High School. This program has helped me in so many ways. I’ve learned many new skills I can use for the future, whatever path I choose. It’s also helped me develop my communication skills, making it easier to talk to people. Plus, the program keeps me focused and out of trouble and the streets.”

– A Program Participant (11.5.2023)

“We have a young man who spent two years in our program, is now off probation, has a full-time job, and is on track to graduate high school.”

– Roberto Gomez (5.14.2024)

Testimonials



In the Community



Apprentices passing out food at an Alexandria Police Department community cookout



Group photo after training session



The group laughing alongside the future Mayor of Alexandria, Alyia Gaskins



Apprentice students attending an HBCU college fair



Two apprentices standing with future Mayor of Alexandria, Alyia Gaskins before the NAACP Gala



Group photo with Alexandria Mayor, Justin Wilson, and Councilman, Kirk McPike

Three Ways to Give



Help us bring teens off the waiting list and into the program.

Contributions will directly impact our mission and program by funding pre-apprentice wages and assistance, trainer wages, job materials, tools and supplies, meals and transportation, and general operational expenses.

1. Donate

www.cornerstonecraftsman.org

2. Volunteer

derry@cornerstonecraftsman.org

3. Give In-Kind

robertogomez@cornerstonecraftsman.org

We are deeply grateful for your time and interest in learning more about our organization.

Your support is invaluable to us.

Thank you



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