

CORPORATE GIVING

builds more
than homes

BY LISA MULKA



hardwood cherry cabinets envelop an expansive window in the open-concept kitchen, while bathroom fixtures and faucets flash a gleam that only a newly minted home can wear. The new construction build in the Somerset Neighborhood of Ann Arbor holds all the makings of a custom builder, complete with Merrilat Cabinetry, Delta Faucets and a fresh coat of Behr paint on every wall. Only the hands that built this home were those of high school students.

Now marking its 42nd home, the Ann Arbor Student Building Industry Program (AASBIP) teaches the next generation of builders and tradespeople the literal and figurative tools needed to construct residential homes. According to the program, students participate in every phase of the homebuilding process from developing raw land to putting on the finishing touches with paint and trim. Not only does the program provide unique learning opportunities through hands-on experiences, it also teaches practical uses of math and business skills while students learn how to work collaboratively in a team to execute a successful job.

"We're so impressed with the students," says Melonie Colaianne, president of the Masco Corporation Foundation. Masco Corporation, one of the world's largest manufacturers of brand-name consumer products in the home improvement and new construction industry, has been a corporate contributor of the program for two years. Masco contributed Merrilat Cabinetry, Milgard Windows, Behr Paint, and Delta Faucets and accessories to AASBIP's 2010 to 2011 home.

With a corporate citizen creed emphasizing housing initiatives, Masco's partnership with AASBIP seems a natural fit. Melonie notes that it is students in programs such as AASBIP that will be leaders in building the homes of the future. Working with quality materials that students may encounter in the workforce is part of the process in preparing them to move successfully into careers in the housing industry. The result is a stunning work of craftsmanship presented by students learning the profession firsthand with some of the biggest brand names in the business.

Funded with contributions from the Masco Corporation, the foundation believes in giving back to the communities in which it conducts business. Featuring quality products such as KraftMaid, Merillat, and QualityCabinets, Masco Cabinetry relocated to Ann Arbor Township in 2010 and has made a true impact on the local community through their support of AASBIP and other local initiatives.

In partnership with its foundation, Masco recently helped celebrate Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley's 100th home in Washtenaw County by donating funds, time and materials including windows, insulation and bathroom fixtures. Volunteers from the new cabinetry headquarters in Ann Arbor put their hands to work in the renovation showing Masco's true sense of corporate citizenship and community engagement.

Beyond the Ann Arbor region, Masco Corporation also has a strong foothold in supporting affordable housing efforts in all of Southeastern Michigan. Founded in 1952, one of the original goals of the Masco Corporation Foundation included assisting veterans in rebuilding their lives. That goal continues to remain a key focus of the foundation's current efforts, particularly in promoting long-term housing solutions for veterans.

Masco has contributed greatly to Piquette Square, a Detroit apartment facility founded by Southwest Solutions residing in the former Studebaker plant on Piquette Street. The facility provides permanent housing and support services to homeless veterans reintegrating into society. During Piquette Square's construction, Masco Corporation was integral in donating lighting for all 150 apartments with a new energy-efficient product line, Verve Living Systems, in addition to providing discounted pricing on materials for kitchens and baths.

Whether it is a young student learning how to install a fiberglass tub or a veteran readjusting to life after deployment, corporate giving builds more than homes in the housing industry—it builds opportunities. For the students in AASBIP, the life lessons learned on the job and in the classroom offer a solid foundation to build long-lasting success in their lives. □