



WHAT ARE YOU UP FOR?



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November 1, 2018

NEW CAREER-FOCUSED TOOL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE CAN LEAD THEM TO SUCCESS WHILE STRENGTHENING HOUSTON'S REGIONAL ECONOMY

Tool Features Young Workers in Rewarding Careers that Require Less Than Four-Year College Degrees

HOUSTON—As Houston tries to fill tens of thousands of advanced technical and craft positions and young people struggle with the high cost of a four-year college education that doesn't always lead to a good-paying job, UpSkill Houston has developed a new tool that can put students on a path to success and keep Houston's economy strong.

The tool is comprised of a series of "My Life As" career-focused videos featuring young workers in well-paid, dynamic careers in thriving Houston industries. Each video is accompanied by a fact sheet offering additional details on that career plus information on other rewarding careers in the industry. The careers all require less than a bachelor's degree.

The resources are available on www.UpSkillMyLife.org, a dedicated website created for easy access by young people, parents, teachers, and mentors.

"In working last year with several area school districts, we learned that students are eager to hear about rewarding careers in Houston from young workers sharing their experiences," said Dan Gilbane, who is senior vice president for the Southwest Division of Gilbane Building Company and chair of the Executive Committee of UpSkill Houston.

"This innovative tool can inspire students to pursue well-paid, exciting technical and craft careers and fill gaps in the workforce of Houston's fast-growing industries," Gilbane said.

Each career video features a young worker telling his or her story of achieving success in a career that offers stability, growth, and “skills for life,” as Keith McCray, a leadman carpenter at Marek, says in his video. The workers talk about the road to their current career, potential for advancement, key career responsibilities, and insights for following a similar trajectory.

UpSkill Houston worked with leading local companies in the construction, healthcare, and transportation industries to create five initial career videos and accompanying fact sheets. The fact sheet for each career explain its education requirements, salary range, advancement opportunities, career duties, and tips for success. Additional information available on the website includes fact sheets on the industries, advice about soft skills employers look for, and pointers on various paths to career success.

“These videos, and the materials available with them, can help companies like Marek recruit the workers we need to grow and keep the Houston economy strong,” said Saied Alavi, managing director-Houston, Marek Brothers Systems, Inc. “We’re excited for Keith to tell the story of his success in the construction industry. We’ve posted his video on the Skill Craft Careers page of our own website.”

To reach as many students as possible with the “My Life As” tool, UpSkill Houston is partnering with the region’s independent school districts. Among its initial partners are Aldine, Alief, Fort Bend, Goose Creek, Houston, Pasadena, and Spring Branch. Likewise, UpSkill Houston has joined forces with local community organizations that support youth to spread the word about the “My Life As” resources. UpSkill Houston looks to expand those partnerships over this school year and beyond.

“In a time when more and more students, parents, and educators are realizing that four years of college isn’t the best course for every young person or the best way to bolster our economy, here’s an easy way to learn about alternatives,” said HD Chambers, superintendent of schools, Alief Independent School District. “There is no question that students and teachers will benefit from these tools.”

UpSkill Houston will regularly release new videos—highlighting other industries and careers. UpSkill Houston also will expand resources on the site to help students better understand not only the requirements and responsibilities of various advanced technical and craft careers, but also the pathways to these positions and opportunities for growth in them.

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*The Greater Houston Partnership’s **UpSkill Houston** is a collaborative of employers, K-12 school districts, higher education institutions, and community service organizations working together to address the skills gap facing the Houston region. UpSkill Houston brings stakeholders together to create shared prosperity for area families and enable high-demand industries in the region to grow.*