

## Stepping Up and Stepping Out – Wisdom from ACE Academy’s First Graduating Class of 2010!

**Contributing ACE Seniors: Derric Baines, Aaron Hughlett, Jacob Billingsley, Carlos Jimenez-Canul, Carl Gerber, and Laura Riehl**

***Dateline, Early Spring:*** As high school seniors everywhere begin to report large cases of ‘senioritis’, graduating students at ACE Academy for Architecture, Construction, and Engineering gathered to comment on the important work they are still actively engaged in, their time at ACE, and their excitement about their next steps in learning and life after graduation.

It is the goal of ACE Academy to make sure that every senior is prepared with clear goals and specific next steps toward advanced preparation for their desired careers. Here we present just a few snapshots of our students as they get ready to graduate out into life beyond high school. They reflect on their time at ACE Academy, what they have learned at ACE, and what ACE has meant for them in terms of readying them for the real world. We are proud of each and every one!

### **Derric Baines, Architecture**

***What are you working on now?*** “My senior project is to design a sustainable community in a way that really helps people feel connected and well served by the residential options and services available nearby. I am including single unit and family structures, a small community center and a park. I am working with a fellow student to help with his plan for a K-8 sustainably built school. I am lucky to have a great project mentor—an architect from ZGF Architects.”



***Where to next?*** “I will be attending Mount Hood Community College, where I will play baseball (which I have played for 13 years) and take the basic courses that will lead me into a four-year university for completion of a degree in residential architecture. I am considering Ohio State as well as both Oregon State and University of Oregon.”

***Why did you choose ACE?*** “Since I was little I would get graph paper and draw people and buildings with multiple levels. I chose ACE for the opportunity to study architecture with real experts.”

***What will you take with you from ACE?*** “I have learned so much! My teacher, Ms. Rotting, is a great teacher and has not only taught me a lot but also connected me with real professionals. I have made connections here at ACE that I would not have made anywhere else. I have learned presentation skills and learned not to be afraid to say what’s on my mind, because it is an important part of the design process.”

***Advice for incoming juniors:*** “Come in with an open mind, ready to learn and work hard. I would want you to know that you will have time to do the new things and go beyond the minimum if you keep at it.”

### **Aaron Hughlett, Construction**

**What are you working on now?** “For my senior project I am deconstructing and rebuilding a deck for a house that belongs to my family. The deck is now six feet by eight feet and as old as I am. I am going to redesign a new, larger deck, eight feet by sixteen feet with an awning. For me, the main challenge has been the proposal and planning process – a lot of thinking and writing! I am looking forward to the building phase.”

**Where to next?** “I am interested in apprenticeship and college. First, I am going to Portland Community College to study Construction Management and Building Construction that will prepare me for my career. Eventually I want to own my own contracting business.”

**Why did you choose ACE?** “I was interested in architecture and heard about this new program and thought it would be cool. As it turns out, it was through ACE that I developed my interest in construction, management, and owning my own business.”

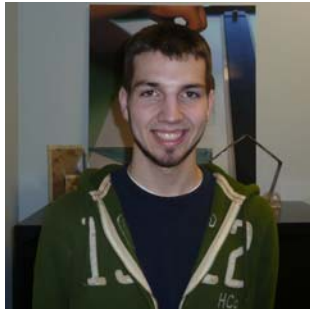
**What will you take away with you from ACE?** “Everything! All the knowledge I’ve gained, everything I’ve done and built...I’ve literally learned it all here. Over the last year and a half I realized that, though I like designing and computers, I didn’t see myself doing that for my career. I’ve done nail and hammer work since I was little and my favorite day last year was framing—I had a blast! ACE made it easy for me to switch to construction, which is my true interest.”

**Advice for incoming juniors:** “Really look at everything, try everything. You’ll be surprised where your strengths are.”



### **Jacob Billingsley, Engineering**

**What are you working on now?** “My senior project is to design and build a shake table for ACE Academy engineering students’ use in testing. I have had to work with a very tight budget and make sure I keep looking for materials with necessary quality at the lowest possible cost. My design will accomplish all the goals set out and will be able to demonstrate the effect of almost every kind of earthquake motion and impacts. It turns out that, in my project, I am getting to use knowledge and skills in structural, electrical, and mechanical engineering.”



**Where to next?** I have been accepted at Oregon State University and will apply into the Civil Engineering School.

**Why did you choose ACE?** “I chose ACE because it would further my skills in engineering. Also the abstract thinking and efficient ways to solve problems are needed to be able to really obtain the most options and the best results for any project.”

**What will you take with you from ACE?** “My engineering studies and practice have included a range of engineering types, including civil/structural, mechanical, electrical, and others, which is what I hoped to take away from ACE. I also have learned to really look at my own work and catch mistakes while trying to make each outcome better”

**Advice for incoming juniors:** “Keep in mind that there are things you are used to doing in school that you can change—i.e., we don’t just do an assignment and forget about it. There is a challenge to make it better and better—until you do, it’s not done! Be open to new learning and

work on it—then you will understand it and be able to use to solve different kinds of problems. Know that you can be good at math!”

### **Carlos Jimenez-Canul, Architecture**

**What are you working on now?** “For my senior project I am designing a ‘green’ school that will be part of a sustainable community. Some of the challenges I am facing include how to place the classrooms and what things I can do to help make the learning environment the best it can be.” **Where to next?** “I have applied to Western Oregon University and plan to pursue a degree in education. I want to teach like teachers here are able to teach at ACE—so that students can engage all the time and know they can use what they learn for things that matter.



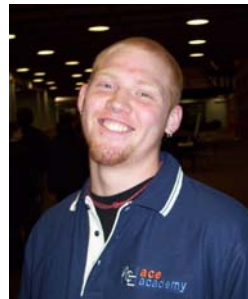
**Why did you choose ACE?** “When I first came to ACE, I didn’t know what I wanted to do in the future, but I knew I had an interest in science and possibly architecture. I had taken drawing classes and knew that drawing interested me.”

**What will you take away with you from ACE?** “I have learned so much, from design to soils sciences (now I’m teaching it at Outdoor School!) to developing an interest in teaching, thanks to getting to do the unique kind of learning here at ACE and getting to work with really great teachers.”

**Advice for incoming juniors:** “Stick with it! It’s really hard but it will all turn out okay in the end. Trust the process being used at ACE. ACE gives a LOT of opportunities, like my own opportunity to be a part of Portland’s ACE Mentor, Inc. projects this year.”

### **Carl Gerber, Construction**

**What are you working on now?** “My senior project is to design and build boxes for organizing camping equipment that will fit over the wheel well of a truck to utilize maximum space available AND to build these with no nails or screws. There are simpler ways to do this but I wanted to really challenge myself.”



**Where to next?** “I will be going to Mount Hood Community College and deciding between a career in forestry or fine cabinetry making. I will continue to participate in Northwest Youth Corps projects as a leader of back country, hike-in trail construction projects.”

**Why did you choose ACE?** “I knew I wanted to learn where I could be engaged and get better at math.”

**What will you take with you from ACE?** “I will take LOTS of knowledge and skills that I have already started to use for real projects. And, knowing that I can learn from my mistakes and make my work better and better. You can accomplish a lot more with teamwork because you can learn from other people’s ideas and get a better result.” **Advice for incoming Juniors:** “Be very open-minded and don’t sell yourself short! Be willing to listen.”

**Laura Riehl, Engineering**

**What are you working on now?** “For my senior project I am working on a tree house that will be a ‘real’ house—habitable over the long term and using new materials and technologies to make it strong and sustainable. The biggest challenge is making every part of the structure able to move with the wind and still feel stable for the inhabitants.”

**Where to next?** “I am pursuing Oregon State University or Oregon Institute of Technology to study civil or electronics engineering—I have recently discovered my interest in electronics engineering thanks to work we are doing at ACE.”

**Why did you choose ACE?** “I was interested in civil engineering, and ACE is the place for that. I was glad to discover that there was a new program that would let me study in my area of interest.”

**What will you take from ACE?** “When I first came to ACE, I was, as a female, in the minority and I never dreamed I could do the projects in engineering. Then, learning from Mr. Scott and working in our teams, I realized that I could do it! In fact, I know I can do it because I can point to what I’ve designed, programmed, and engineered!”

**Advice to incoming juniors:** Look at all the options and learn about everything..you can do it!”



ACE Academy graduating seniors will be honored at this year’s Oregon Building Congress Annual Banquet on April 8<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to hear more about these talented and energetic students by joining us at the OBC banquet, please call Jan Wierima at (503) 318-8145 for details.

**For more information about ACE Academy, check out our website at [www.acecharterschool.org](http://www.acecharterschool.org) or call the school at (503) 546-9928.**