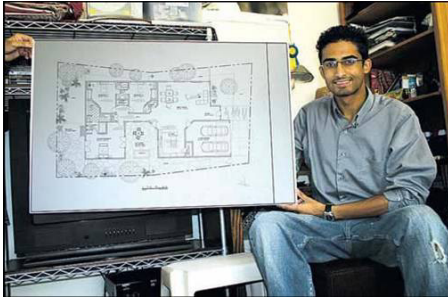


Valley Teens Get Hands-on Experience in Chosen Fields

Written by MARIANNE LOVE
Thursday, 16 August 2007



"The fact that I'm in the industry doing what I would be doing when I graduate from college ... has helped me decide if I really want to do this. I wanted to, but wasn't sure about the day-to-day things that architects do. This is exposing me [to the field]."
Rahman Pasha

Rahman Pasha and Brandon Pollock knew they were interested in engineering and architecture, but it wasn't until this summer when they were placed in internships through a special program through the Los Angeles Unified School District did they know for sure those careers were for them.

Pasha, 18, a recent Grover Cleveland High School graduate and Pollock, 17, a senior at the same school are part of the newly launched program for promising students.

iSEE, I'm A Student Exploring Excellence, is a two-phase program that provides a rigorous and engaging learning environment with hands-on experience for LAUSD juniors and seniors who want to explore architecture, engineering and construction.

"The fact that I'm in the industry doing what I would be doing when I graduate from college ... has helped me decide if I really want to do this. I wanted to, but wasn't sure about the day-to-day things that architects do. This is exposing me [to the field]," Pasha said.

Pasha, who is headed for Pierce College in the fall and eventually plans to attend University of Southern California, said it is helpful that the school district has this program because he wouldn't have known how to go about getting an internship on his own. He suggested if a student was remotely interested in they fields that should take part in the program. Phase one of the iSEE program involves a five-month seminar series in which students are offered unique insights into careers in these fields.

Rahman Pasha, 18, of Winnetka is headed to college this fall, but has spent the summer in a special internship program through the Los Angeles Unified School District in which he has further explored his interest in architecture.

Phase two provides students with hands-on experience through a six-week, paid internship position through iSEE Industry Partners, including architecture, engineering, construction management and construction companies and labor trade unions. There are 11 other students, seven of them hailing from San Fernando High School who will be placed in internships this fall. Part-time and full-time paid internships - \$8 to \$10 per hour - depend on the needs of the firm and availability of the student. Students must complete phase one in order to participate in internships.

Brandon Pollock, 17, of Northridge, a senior at Grover Cleveland High School is headed toward the field of engineering and has been working at William J. Yang and Associates in Burbank through a special internship program with the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Rasha and Pollock attended workshops that provided an overview of the construction, design and engineering fields and then are placed in internships based on their career goals, scholarship opportunities and potential receiving college credit. During these internships they received a sampling of the different fields, work on projects like building structures, putting in windows, drawing blueprints, for example.

Pollock is interested in mechanical drawing, which he said deals with anything that moves. Right now is he working on air duct and ventilation systems and how the air moves, where to place the ducts and the most effective way to cool and heat a building. "The actual part of ventilation isn't the most exciting, but the opportunity to be around engineers and see how they are similar and different than me is great," Pollock said. He said he really doesn't care about the prestige of his chosen field, but enjoys creating the drawings and figuring out the logistics. Pollock said mechanical drawing is much more precise than drawing for pleasure.

"In class you practice by taking an object and drawing it, but you can also draw an object so it's ready to be produced so someone can create the object," he added. "I'm very glad to be part of iSEE. I have definitely learned a lot." He said he believes he wants to continue this path and maintain a connection with the Yang company. He also said he went to the carpenters union and had fun, but realized it wasn't for him.

Pollock's mother, Claudia Davidovich, describes the program as "incredible" with practical experience, which provides exposure toward the field that is invaluable. "As a parent I'm beyond overjoyed. The school district eliminated vocation classes, the hands-on experience like metal and woodshop," Davidovich said. "Now the architecture, engineering and construction industries are finding a need. They want to find the local talent that's here."

"The actual part of ventilation isn't the most exciting, but the opportunity to be around engineers and see how they are similar and different than me is great. In class you practice by taking an object and drawing it, but you can also draw an object so it's ready to be produced so someone can create the object. I'm very glad to be part of iSEE. I have definitely learned a lot."
Brandon Pollock

