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National Kitchen & Bath Association Champions Trade Careers at KBIS 2019

The Association has a series of events on tap to educate the industry's next generation

HACKETTSTOWN, NJ/Las Vegas — (February 8, 2019) — The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), the authority on all things residential kitchen and bath, remains committed to providing support for initiatives that speak to the growing need for skilled labor in all segments of the residential design and construction industry. At this year's Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS), the association has created a forum for numerous panels, tours and events that shine a light on the need to develop programs to help train and develop anyone interested in a career in the industry.

"The NKBA is striving to build awareness about the plentiful, lucrative opportunities within our industry, and provide the next generation of kitchen and bath professionals with knowledge surrounding skilled-labor careers," said NKBA CEO Bill Darcy. "Our all-industry Association celebrates the opportunity to pursue a multitude of paths in design, showroom sales, skilled labor and more."

NKBA "NextUp" Panel and KBIS Tours

On Thursday, Feb. 21, the NKBA will host 150 high school students from Las Vegas-area high schools for a half-day program that will include the sharing of stories and journeys of residential design and construction professionals. The event includes a panel discussion, led by Karl Champley, an Australian master builder, television personality and currently appearing on Ellen's Design Challenge. Other participants will include *This Old House* contractor Jeff Sweenor and TOH TV Jamestown Project House apprentice Kevin Barker, plus other industry pros who have chosen a trade career path over attending a traditional four-year college or university program.

"As an industry professional who took a different path to a successful career in this industry, the NextUp initiative is near and dear to my heart. Facilitating conversations between the panelists and students is a win-win," said Suzie Williford, chief strategy officer and executive vice president of industry relations for the NKBA.

Kerry Larnerd, director of career and technical education for the Clark County School District, added, "Our goal is to ensure that all students are provided opportunities to explore career pathways by engaging with industry partners in a variety of experiences. Having the opportunity to work with the

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NKBA has been exciting for our entire team. Students will be amazed at how the skills they're learning in the classroom can be applied to the kitchen and bath industry. We can't wait to see how this partnership develops."

Following the panel, students will meet NKBA executives and practicing designers, tradespeople and other industry professionals while touring the KBIS show floor. Each panelist will guide 15 students around the show, introducing them to the products, programs, people and technologies that are changing the face of the business.

***This Old House* and NKBA "Cheers for Trade Careers: Skilled Labor Panel Discussion"**

The NKBA, *This Old House* and the Skilled Labor Fund have teamed up again to honor the industry's mission to inform brands, channels and educators about the numerous paths to success that are alternatives to traditional university/college options. The "Cheers for Trade Careers: Skilled Labor Panel Discussion" takes place on Tuesday, Feb. 19, from 3 - 4:00 p.m. at the KBISNeXT Stage. *This Old House* heating and plumbing expert Richard Trethewey will moderate. The discussion will feature a diverse panel who will be sharing their experiences on how the industry can get involved to address the skilled-labor shortage.

Panelists include Norm Abram, *This Old House* Master Carpenter; Jeff Sweenor, *This Old House* contractor, Rhode Island Builder of the Year, and NAHB Custom Builder of the Year nominee; Kate Campbell, contractor and host of *HGTV's Custom Builder* and founder of Build Women Up; Nathan Gilbert, former *This Old House* apprentice and the newest member of the *Ask This Old House* crew; and Jonathan Cheever, journeyman plumber, American Standard spokesman and Olympic and World Cup medalist snowboarder.

Said Eric Thorkilsen, Executive Chairman of This Old House Ventures, LLC. "We are honored to collaborate again this year with the NKBA to bring attention to our industry's biggest challenge: closing the skills gap and encouraging young people to pursue a rewarding career in the trades. We hope you'll join us." Immediately following the panel, guests are invited to stay for a networking reception from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

The Skilled Labor Fund

The Skilled Labor Fund is an industry-wide effort to raise funds to address the shortage of skilled labor entering the residential construction market. The Fund is a part of the National Housing Endowment, a 501(c)(3) Foundation. Affiliation with the National Housing Endowment allows 98.5 percent of all funds raised to be spent on the Foundation's mission. The Fund is 100 percent focused on the residential construction market and its mission is to attract and train skilled labor for the residential market by providing funds to accredited training schools as scholarships.

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“Being a part of this important initiative and offering a forum to continue dialogues about opportunities and needs is an important part of our Association’s advocacy work,” said Darcy, who sits on the board of the Skilled Labor Fund. “We are committed to bringing all parties together to drive awareness for the need, but also to help make things happen. Our partnership with *This Old House* is core to that goal.”

Leading up to KBIS, the NKBA, in partnership with This Old House Ventures’ Generation Next campaign, has set up a donation opportunity on the KBIS website that gives registrants the chance to donate to the [Skilled Labor Fund](#). Any amount contributed is added to the registration fee to promote a seamless process, and 100 percent of the tax-deductible donations go toward scholarships and education programs through the Skilled Labor Fund.

About the National Kitchen & Bath Association and the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) is the not-for-profit trade association that owns the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show® (KBIS), as part of Design & Construction Week® (DCW). With nearly 14,000 member companies representing tens of thousands of members in all segments of the kitchen and bath industry, the NKBA has educated and led the industry since the association’s founding in 1963. The NKBA envisions a world where everyone enjoys safe, beautiful and functional kitchen and bath spaces. The mission of the NKBA is to inspire, lead and empower the kitchen and bath industry through the creations of certifications, marketplaces and networks. For more information, visit NKBA.org or call 1-800-THE-NKBA (843-6522).

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