

# Builder Helping Build Lives

By Noel Smith

During the spring semester past three years, Dene Bustichi, owner of BCI Builders in Scotts Valley and Mayor of Scotts Valley, becomes a teacher and mentor for 20-25 students in the Santa Cruz County Regional Occupational Program (ROP). This is a serious commitment for Bustichi because it is a 90-minute class (not counting class preparation), five days (M-F) per week at Santa Cruz High School.



It all started in 2010 when he

heard Mark Hodges, Senior Director of the Regional Occupational Program give a presentation about the program and its many benefits in teaching young people practical, marketable skills. Bustichi took the message to heart and began taking the education classes necessary prior to becoming a certified ROP teacher.

As a professional builder, he teaches his student about materials, building codes, measuring and fitting, roofing, framing,

green construction, recycling, etc. In addition he covers wiring and plumbing, basic construction math, project organization, starting the job, foundations and support structures and repairing and altering structures; all the basics needed to be a tradesman in today's construction industry.

"The first year," said Dene, "We built two greenhouses for another school's agricultural project. Last year we built a storage shed for musical instruments and this year we are building a tool shed at Santa Cruz High School for their Horticultural Project." The sale of these projects provides seed money for buying additional tools and other equipment for the ROP class.

Unfortunately funding for ROP classes has been taken away from the County Office of Education and given to the schools by the State. This makes it difficult to coordinate the ROP program countywide, as it is now, and to oversee funding and expenditures for the program.

The Santa Cruz County Regional Occupational Program (SCCROP) has served the career and technical needs of students in the county since 1968. It provides high school students with the opportunity to acquire career training and technical skills to prepare for success in a changing workplace and continuing education.



So if you want to see Dene this spring from noon to 1:30 Mon-Fri, sign up for course #406162, Construction Technology taught at Santa Cruz High School-43 & Woodshop during period 3 by Bustichi, D while earning 5 per semester plus internship. Oh, and be in grades 9-12. (Damn, I missed it) ■

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For more information on ROP go to: [www.santacruz.k12.ca.us/student\\_services/rop](http://www.santacruz.k12.ca.us/student_services/rop)

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*The Scotts Valley Water District Team*

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