

Building a tiny house for a big cause?



The 2016-17 school year marked the beginning of a momentous project, as Hill Country Builders Association members joined forces with Fredericksburg High School to implement a concept house construction education program. HCBA members donated their time to provide students valuable on-the-job training right on campus.

The kids worked closely with local builders and contractors to earn school credit through building a concept house from the ground up. So, what is a concept house? For starters, a tiny house is typically less than 400 square feet, whereas a concept house is small but can measure up to 1,000 square feet.

“We’re all about joining forces to promote pride

in building craftsmanship and to teach kids valuable life skills,” said builder Richard Laughlin, HCBA trades program committee chair. “We aim to soon create a model program that high schools around the nation can follow.”

Addressing the labor shortage issue

The U.S. Department of Labor’s recent report indicates that for every five skilled tradesmen who retire, only one will enter the workforce.

“Couple the shortage of labor with the remarkable community growth in the Hill Country region, and you’ve got a high-demand construction job market,” said builder Todd Eidson, president of the

HCBA Wine Country Division. “Our hope is that the concept house program will spark students’ interests in pursuing rewarding careers in the building industry.”

First concept house a success

The FHS concept house — dubbed “Casa Über Alles” — took eight months to build and included a comfortable living area, dining room, full kitchen, full bath, one bedroom, laundry area and 16 feet of closet space, totaling approximately 576 square feet.

Shortly following completion, the house was unveiled during a “Move That Bus!” event in April and later sold in a live auction. Auction