NEWS RELEASE
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QACHS Students Awarded Prestigious Mason Apprentice Scholarship

(Pictured left to right: Austin Slacum, Mr. Blackiston, Dempsey Corcoran)

Centreville, MD – Queen Anne's County Public Schools (QACPS) is proud to announce that two students from Queen Anne's County High School's (QACHS) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Masonry program, Austin Slacum and Dempsey Corcoran, have been awarded the coveted Mason Apprentice Scholarship from Mortar Net Solutions. This national recognition places Austin and Dempsey among an elite group, as only 40 students nationwide were selected for this prestigious award.

Under the guidance of masonry instructor Michael Blackiston, Austin and Dempsey have shown exceptional skill, dedication, and promise within the masonry field. The Mason Apprentice Scholarship supports students pursuing careers in masonry and construction, providing resources that will aid them in achieving their career goals.

Michael Blackiston, their instructor, praised the students' hard work and talent. "Austin Slacum and Dempsey Corcoran are well deserving of the 2025 Mason Apprentice Scholarship," Mr. Blackiston said. "Their work ethic made them an easy choice for the Masonry Apprenticeship scholarship. They have shown consistent progress over the past year and a half with their classroom and hands-on skills. Austin and Dempsey will also be competing in our first local SkillsUSA competition!"

Austin expressed gratitude for the recognition. "It felt exciting to win the scholarship because I can use these tools in the future. The Masonry program has taught me skills, including math, measurements, angles, communication, and teamwork. Thank you, Mr. Blackiston, for nominating me."

For Dempsey, the award came as a pleasant surprise."It felt amazing, and I am happy to be nominated. I had no idea! I will use these tools in the future to build things for others. I want to thank Mr. Blackiston for this nomination, and I am greatly appreciative. I think he saw something in me that I did not see."

Adam Tolley, Supervisor of CTE for QACPS, expressed pride in the achievements of both students and highlighted the importance of the CTE program in cultivating practical, in-demand skills. “Austin and Dempsey truly represent the dedication and skill our CTE programs aim to develop,” Tolley shared. “Through their hard work and the outstanding guidance of Mr. Blackiston, they have achieved well-deserved national recognition. We look forward to watching them thrive in their masonry careers and inspire future students.”

The CTE Masonry program at QACHS provides students with hands-on experience and foundational knowledge in masonry and construction techniques. This scholarship will provide critical support to Austin and Dempsey as they pursue further education and career opportunities in the field.

QACPS extends its congratulations to Austin Slacum and Dempsey Corcoran, and its gratitude to Mortar Net Solutions for supporting the next generation of masonry professionals.

For further information, please contact:

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