

Students ready for college but need more industry support to grow programs

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To help more African Americans enter the information technology (IT) workforce, the CompTIA Educational Foundation provided 239 African Americans with free IT training and certification last year, and another 19 received merit award scholarships to help them further their educational goals.

African Americans are finding new tech career success, although they are still somewhat under-represented in the IT workforce. The Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2008 calculated that approximately 574,000 African Americans worked in IT and related fields. African Americans make up roughly 12.5 percent of the entire U.S. population, compared to only 8.6 percent of the IT workforce.

To help diversify the IT workforce, the Foundations Creating Futures program provides training and certification opportunities to U.S. veterans, individuals with disabilities, women, minorities, at-risk youth and dislocated workers. The program works with employers to identify their hiring needs, then tailors its training to help individuals obtain the skills employers require. The Foundations IT Merit Awards Scholarships recognize outstanding accomplishments by students and adult learners in both the CompTIA Education to Careers (E2C) and CompTIA Learning Alliance (CLA) programs who have trained for and received CompTIA certification.

Two recent African American merit award winners came from the Barbara Jordan High School (BJHS) in Houston, Texas, a magnet school that makes it possible for students to earn a high school diploma while acquiring career and technical skills in their chosen career. Seniors Dennis Christian and Lyndon Bolden passed their CompTIA A+ certification tests last fall and already have been accepted into Texas top universities.

Christian will attend Texas A&M University in the fall and plans on majoring in telecommunications. Interested in computers since he was young, he will travel and volunteer with the YMCA this summer before starting college.

Bolden will attend the University of Texas to major in management information systems. He will move into college in early July with hopes of gaining a student job within the computer maintenance department on campus. Lyndon starting off his high school career focusing on football and athletics, but a knee injury refocused him on an IT career in his junior year.

BJHS combines hands-on study with online curriculum. The school works with HP and the Houston Community College System, but needs more local business support.

Kevin McDonald, an instructor in the program, comments, Our students need to see where the job opportunities are and what those jobs are like, so that the students can see themselves in those roles. We need more local companies to allow field trips to their offices and job shadowing.

Our industry can only grow stronger with more diversification and more qualified technicians, said John Venator, president and CEO of the CompTIA Educational Foundation. IT jobs are available, but we lack enough qualified workers to fill them. With programs like Creating Futures and the IT Merit Awards, we help more individuals launch a career in IT. However we need more companies and training organizations to step up. Dennis and Lyndon exemplify the type of

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bright students our industry wants. Lets work together to help even more people join our industry.

Individuals and companies can make a donation and learn about partnering opportunities, and prospective participants can apply for IT training, by visiting the CompTIA Educational Foundation website, <http://www.CompTIA-EF.org>.

View this news release online at:

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20100210005912/en>