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MECHANICAL CONTRACTING

as well as external customers, Scott Kellam says.

Kellam, a father and recreational coach, appreciates sportsmanship and finds it helpful in how he manages a business. He is also entrenched in education and connecting to youth in the industry, for example, by participating in projects for the Virginia Beach Education Foundation.

For some of the young people I work with, it's the first time they've been in a house and installed a heating or air-conditioning system or done electrical work, plumbing, or brick laying. It's the first hands-on experience for them, Kellam says.

It is exciting to see them light up and develop their skills. You can see instantly who's really going to stand out in the crowd. You always have two or three that just jump in and take over. I enjoy watching their development.

It's safe to say that access to quality trade education is essential for most young professionals, and Kellam agrees. He's been on the board of a local trade school and believes that there have been many enhancements to traditional training.

The trade schools are improving greatly. They are becoming more hands-on than ever. I think that's a

huge improvement with the tech schools. Instructors are also training on soft skills and communication skills better than before. I think that's helping out a lot too, but we still have to get the proper students to the centers to learn.

Kellam has been involved with the PHCC for 35 years on and off. Since becoming active with the organization, he chaired the golf outing, leading it to its highest participation in 10 years. He has also participated in identifying membership and chapter programs and in developing a scholarship program for local HVAC apprentices. Additionally, he has been a member of the Air Conditioning Contractors of America, serving as its president in 2012-2014. Kellam believes his involvement with the industry continues to be an integral part of a business' overall success. He urges other contractors to get involved with each other.

Find mentors. They're out there

and glad to help, Kellam says. All of us are really open to help other business owners. The stronger each business, the stronger this industry. I belong to a mixed group; there's 10 or 11 of us, and we bounce ideas off each other.

Kellam is drawn to coaching, which would make sense that people who inspire him the most are business coaches.

Some coaches really drive your business. They push you to think. They challenge. They hold you accountable. I've been very blessed to have mentors that have helped me out, who have done a tremendous job for me. I wouldn't be here without them. O