



**PRESS RELEASE**

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South Bay Workforce Investment Board  
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**South Bay Workforce Investment Board and Impresa Aerospace LLC Award  
Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship Engineering Recipients**

**HAWTHORNE** - On September 22, Impresa Aerospace LLC and the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) celebrated the completion of the Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship Engineering program by Joshua Wong and Skyler Baye. The Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship (AFPA) is the first employer-centric earn and learn model for Aerospace Engineering in the state of California to ensure a qualified workforce pipeline for this vital industry sector.

Lawndale resident, Joshua Wong is going into his senior year at Cal State University, Long Beach. He transferred from El Camino College and is working toward his B.S. in Aerospace Engineering. Josh entered the Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship through his summer internship with Impresa Aerospace LLC and took advantage of the company's offer to participate in the Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship second cohort.

Skyler Baye connected with Impresa Aerospace through his Redondo Union High School Robotics Club. As a member and then mentor to this group, he met Dennis Fitzgerald's son and eventually, Mr. Fitzgerald. Impressed with Skyler's skills and personality, Dennis offered him a summer and part time job. Now a freshman at El Camino College, Skyler intends to mix school and work, eventually earning an Engineering and then Doctorate degree.

During this 14 week period, Josh and Skyler completed over 40 intensive technical classes in addition to the Blueprint for Work Readiness soft skills track and over 500 hours of on the job, hands on experience. With a focus on advanced manufacturing for the aerospace industry, and under the guidance of multiple staff and managers on the floor, they gained experience in such areas as Hydroform, Brake, Assembly, CNC Machining, factory operations and customer relations.

Living up to the 'flex' in the name Aero-Flex, the online Tooling U-SME coursework and on the floor training plan was designed for each Pre-Apprentice by Impresa's Vice President, Dennis Fitzgerald and his team. "The pre-tests were very helpful in defining what modules would be most beneficial," Dennis noted. "The material is relevant and useful to developing a reliable employee with skillsets we require." The value of the Pre-Apprenticeship was summarized by Dennis: "They definitely contributed to their skills and value to our organization. We definitely will continue the program."

Skyler and Josh leave this experience with stackable credentials, real-world experience that relates to and enhances their education, a free year membership to the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, in addition to a big 'leg-up' when seeking additional college or career placement.

As Skyler noted, "I didn't expect to do that caliber of work at age 19. In fact, I didn't like CAD before this experience. The online coursework was very helpful, especially the add-ons that Dennis selected specifically for my interests. I related to the Blueprint discussions on leadership, financial literacy and team work."



Josh found the Blueprint soft skill development a perfect companion to what he'd learned in College and through the Manufacturing Management –Tooling U-SME course. “Some of the Pre-Apprenticeship was a refresher, but things like GD&A (industry standards) and on-the-floor experiences are not taught in college.”

“These young men are stand outs,” Enrique Hernandez, Manager Engineering and Contracts told us during the graduation presentation. “We were surprised at how much they were able to pick up,” added Vince Flores, Director Quality Assurance.

The AFPA was developed through a partnership spearheaded by the SBWIB, the current Aero-Flex Employers include: Northrop Grumman, L-3 Electron Devices, Impresa Aerospace LLC, Magnetika, Space Vector, TEN TECH LLC, Verisurf and Zodiac Aerospace. These employers and other Aero-Flex partners (Training Funding Partners Group (TFP), Tooling U-SME, West LA and El Camino Colleges, the Workforce Accelerator Fund, AMP SoCAL and the America’s Job Center of California) concurrently are developing the first Registered Apprenticeship in Aerospace Engineering, which will link to the AFPA.

The SBWIB operates four One Stop Business & Careers Centers within the South Bay service area plus two Teen Centers in Inglewood and Hawthorne providing adult, youth and business services. Companies interested in being a part of the program, or for more information about the Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship, please contact Deborah Shepard at [dshepard@sbwib.org](mailto:dshepard@sbwib.org) or call (310) 970-7700.

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Photo Caption: South Bay Workforce Investment Board and Impresa Aerospace LLC award Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship Engineering graduates. Pictured from left to right: Jesse Moya, Engineering Planning and Programming Lead; Elena Ruiz, HR Generalist; Vince Flores, Director Quality Assurance; Joshua Wong and Skyler Baye, Aero-Flex Pre-Apprentice graduates; Jose Banuelos, Manufacturing Manager; Enrique Hernandez, Manager Engineering and Contracts; Marco Barrantes, CFO