



Take Your Teacher to Work Day Building a House (and a Teacher)

Emily Chapin-Clarke's first grade students learned how a builder builds a house. They watched a PowerPoint presentation with colorful pictures showing the complete construction process, starting with clearing the land, ending with professional landscaping, and just about everything else that happens in between. These future builders from Moody Elementary School located in Manatee County drew up their own house plans, carefully planning the style, number of rooms, and most importantly—the location and style of their own dream bedroom. They patiently planned this someday house with a little help from Mrs. Clarke mixed in with a lot of fun, some color, and plenty of imagination.

But where did the teacher learn how a builder builds a house so she could teach it to her students? House building isn't something they cover in Elementary Education 101, is it? Actually, she learned it on the job—through **Take Your Teacher to Work Day**, a program connecting teachers with local business and industry through a one-day job shadowing experience. And what's even more unique about her day is that she shadowed Paul Chapin, who happens to be her Dad—a Bradenton contractor and owner of Chapin Homes. Paul was thrilled to show Emily a day in the life of a builder.

The father/daughter team started out downtown at both the city and county permitting offices. They waited patiently for their turn to submit completed applications and pay permit application fees. They submitted revised plans for another project to the planning department. They discussed minute details, building codes, and the complex permitting process. After a morning spent at the planning and permitting departments, they enjoyed lunch and then headed for the lumberyard, the fence company, and finally the job site.

If planning is the brains of a building process, the job site is the heart. Here's where the lengthy planning converges into a foundation and walls; wiring and plumbing. But before any nails hit wood, exhaustive planning has paved the way. The builder has first chosen a location, obtained approval to develop it, and purchased the land. They've created blueprints, designed a layout, and submitted...reviewed...revised...and resubmitted plans. The general contractor coordinates all of the "trades"—those skilled trades people who subcontract individual building tasks like hanging drywall or installing carpet. The contractor strives to keep the project moving, minimizing downtime and constantly adjusting plans to recover from scheduling setbacks. Planning and more planning drives the entire home building process.

Take Your Teacher to Work Day gave Emily with a wealth of resources to draw on and share with her first graders. It connected the classroom with the world of work. Now when she teaches about home building, she *really* knows the nuts and bolts! This exciting program is just one of the Suncoast Workforce Board new initiatives being offered in both Manatee and Sarasota County.