

## ANDREW'S STORY

# Building the Future of Your Dreams

Shortly after Santee-native Andrew graduated from high school, he realized that he did not have a long-term career plan in place and had no idea what field he was interested in pursuing. He bounced around working different jobs in retail and IT, but he found himself dissatisfied and always looking for something more.

When his mom told him about the free, brand-new Pre- Apprenticeship program that was being offered in partnership by San Marcos Adult School and Palomar College, Andrew decided to give it a shot – and he's sure glad he did.

Joining the first cohort of students in the new program, Andrew quickly realized that he already had some experience operating the tools and machinery through his woodworking courses in high school. While he never considered himself a great student in any other classes, he excelled in his woodworking class and genuinely enjoyed the projects, but he had never considered the possibility that he could earn a living working with his hands.

"As soon as I started the program, my teacher Mr. Hernandez was really welcoming and made it super easy for me to go 'all in' on this program," says Andrew. "I knew right away that I had found my passion."

Over the course of 9-months, Andrew worked to refine and strengthen his woodworking skills. He went above and beyond normal coursework, attending hiring events hosted by the local 619 Southwest Carpenters Association to learn exactly what he needed to focus on to land a career in the construction industry. Through these events he was introduced to Mike Labruno, Career Connections Outreach Specialist at Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, who encouraged Andrew to apply to a position with general contractor Nielson Construction in San Diego. Andrew was hired for the position, and he has been working with the company ever since.

"Pursuing a career in construction is the best decision I've ever made," says Andrew. "You feel a sense of brother and sisterhood in this industry that can't be beat. It's the best."

For more information about San Marcos Adult School [click here](#) and Palomar College , [click here](#).

