



education  
partners



2016 Annual Report

# Leading the way in **work-based learning**



Across the nation, we're experiencing a massive and increasing need for skilled workers as companies position themselves for growth, especially in manufacturing. **Yet, these businesses are struggling to find qualified candidates. And it will only get worse as the nation's skills gap widens.**



Stephanie Borowski

We often hear of the lack of meaningful technical education offered in high schools and the struggles our youth has with such a narrow definition of success being through a 4-year college degree. At the same time, the skilled worker gap in Wisconsin and throughout the country continues to widen.

Today's workforce is aging, and the current generation is not finding its way to these careers. In many cases, today's graduates don't have the required skills manufacturers are seeking. This is a growing problem. Over the next decade, nearly 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will likely be needed. Two million of those are expected to go unfilled due to the skills gap.

Now, more than ever, businesses, educators and communities need to come together to solve our growing education and workforce gap and uplift our local economies. We know exposure to these careers, along with meaningful experiences, can be the difference in bridging the gap. GPS Education Partners has the proven process for making the connections needed to grow young leaders and develop the local technical workforce.

Fiscal Year 2016 was a year of incredible momentum and growth, and things are evolving at GPS Education Partners. It feels like a turning point in our history — and it is. We've been leading the way in work-based learning in Wisconsin for the past 16 years. But now we're on a journey to take on the challenges of a growing education and workforce gap at the national level. We're creating a new focus and a traction plan to get us there. We're transforming who we are, what we do and how we do it to provide more value, deliver more results, reach more students, collaborate with more partners, and, ultimately, be the nation's leading voice in work-based learning.

You're, no doubt, starting to see and feel some of the changes taking shape at GPS. We have:

- Strengthened our commitment to manufacturing. We now serve 14 high-demand industries.
- Created exposure and credentialed pathways for our students. Those will soon include Certified Welding Technician, Machining Technician and Industrial Maintenance Technician, among others.
- Developed a new education model. This new approach will begin to roll out in Summer 2017.
- Made a new office space our home. GPS Founder, Dawn Tabat, graciously donated much of the space. We're so excited to have new collaboration spaces and room to grow.
- Transformed our branding. This new direction will best position GPS to lead the future in revolutionizing education and workforce development.
- Invested in development of a proprietary Learning Management System. The new Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System will give us the customization and infrastructure to expand throughout the state and nation.

We're on a journey to change the lives of thousands of students, to validate technical career pathways as a viable career choice and to provide a pathway to prosperity for more communities. I'm honored to be part of the great work and changes happening at GPS, and I'm excited to help lead GPS into the future. Thank you for your continued engagement and support. Together, we are creating impact that will last a lifetime!

**Stephanie Borowski**  
**President & CEO, GPS Education Partners**

# Bringing communities together

High school students across the country are thriving. However, some feel disconnected or even lost. They struggle to understand the connection between their education and an attainable career. Meanwhile, the nation is experiencing an increasing need for skilled workers, and this nationwide workforce gap can have significant implications on our economic and social health if we don't tackle it now. Many are trying to minimize the gap, but none of us can solve it alone. We understand the power of coming together — across sectors — to meet the growing needs of our communities. When businesses, communities and educators unite, we can change the future for each of us. GPS creates bridges for partners to unite as we develop young leaders.

## **Serving More Communities**

We've been leading the way in work-based learning in Wisconsin, but now is the time for GPS Education Partners to expand by partnering with businesses, educators and communities across the country, and address problems at the national level. Over the next three years, we're committed to adding 1,000 students to the GPS program across five new regional markets. By 2025, we plan to have 10,000 students employed in technical careers. We have big goals. To get there, we need to be the leaders in all that we do. We've already had major accomplishments in developing new products and services over the past year, including our new Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System.

## **We're Accelerated, Customized and Outcomes-Based**

We provide a proven, accelerated program that prepares students for technical careers faster than through traditional pathways. We're customized to meet the unique needs of each of our partners. And most importantly, we're focused on outcomes. Our students have a vision and a plan. They emerge as leaders, ready to take on today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

## **Scaling Our Infrastructure for Growth**

The investment and development of GPS's very own Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System will help us deliver our program even more efficiently. Our new system goes beyond curriculum delivery. It allows us to customize the curriculum, pathways and competencies for the unique needs of each business partner and student. Our students can accelerate their learnings with the Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System by mapping out courses, competencies and career paths. In addition, this system will allow us to measure our successes. Ultimately, the Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System will make us the ideal partner and leader that can best support manufacturing and technology industries nationally.

## **New GPS, New Brand**

Positioning our organization for growth also required us to better define our brand, and we're excited to share our new logo. It's a symbol of our confidence and vibrancy. It's modern, forward looking and has movement. The bridge demonstrates how GPS is connecting students, educators, industry and the community. Our students and partners can attest — GPS provides the pathway to get you there, and we do it better than anybody else.



## Connecting communities, schools and industry to develop the technical workforce



We understand  
**the power of  
bringing together  
the right resources**  
to meet the growing  
needs of our  
communities.



# Building a bright future.

“When I look at other high school friends of mine and ask what they’re going to do after graduation, they don’t know. It makes me feel better knowing that I have that direction. I have a plan. I know what I’m going to do.” - Zack Neiselwitz

**Zack Meiselwitz**  
Plexus Education Center  
GPS Education Partners  
Class of 2017

It's hard to believe that Zack's favorite things to do in class revolve around hands-on work, presentations and group discussions. "I used to be kind of shy. I didn't like to talk in front of people or give presentations," says Zach. "But now, I have had real interviews and mock interviews. And, so far, I've gotten really great feedback. That gives me a lot of confidence."

These days, the Plexus Education Center students are reading and discussing lessons from the Habitudes book series — a leadership training and development curriculum that engages its audience through image-based circles of discussion instead of lecture-style teaching. The students just recently completed a few rounds of mock interviews. **And Zack isn't nervous anymore.**

### The start of a career

Before he received his first work placement as a junior, Zack had to practice shaking hands, crafting an elevator speech and honing his technical skill set. "Those first interviews were a turning point for me," Zack says. "That's when it kind of hit me. I get to be an adult here."

If you ask Zack, he'll say he's nailed his interviews. His first official GPS rotation was at Plexus where he worked in assembly and manufacturing creating Coca-Cola machines. This particular product represents complex supply-chain management and integrated manufacturing services, culminating a field-ready unit — all of which are made locally in Appleton, Wisconsin.

"Quality and safety are the biggest things I learned at Plexus, and these are skills I can add to my resume or talk about in my interviews," he says.

Zack's mentor at Plexus also made a lasting impact. "Nicole Moore was always in a good mood and always had a positive attitude. That's something I really learned from her," he says. "I wake up early in the morning and, like most people, I may not start my day with the best attitude. But I can change that. I can stay positive. I can keep myself motivated."

### Realizing the future

Zack's third and final rotation is with ITU Absorbtech where he is a maintenance technician and helps install, troubleshoot, repair and maintain machines. Now that he's 18, he can also operate forklifts, his favorite part. "When I first came in, my mentor, Arlyn Bauer, thought that I was just another kid. But I like showing people what I can do, and I want to prove them wrong," says Zack. "Show me a job. I'll go do it — and I'll do it right. Now Arlyn says that I'm one of the best and hardest workers they have," he says.

That's high praise coming from one of the largest industrial laundries in the nation — remarkably, a family-owned and operated company with a passion for sustainability. It's not surprising to learn Zack has already been offered a job and accepted a position with ITU after graduation. He's also excited that ITU is investing in his four-year journeyman technician program.

"When I look at other high school friends of mine and ask what they're going to do after graduation, they don't know," he says. "It makes me feel better knowing that I have that direction. I have a plan. I know what I'm going to do."

# Partnerships that uplift communities

“We need industry and community leaders to engage young people in what manufacturing careers have to offer.” - Rhonda Matschke, Senior Vice President of Global Human Resources at Generac

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When Kevin Gatling joined GPS Education Partners — then known as Second Chance Partners — there were only five other students in his class. He was a junior from Mukwonago High School in 2002 and he graduated from the program in 2004.

“Class was helpful. We learned things like blueprint reading and AutoCAD — it was all related to what I actually wanted to go into,” Kevin says. Today, Kevin is a maintenance technician at Generac Power Systems. It employs approximately 3,800 employees in global manufacturing, distribution and fulfillment with facilities located in the U.S., Latin America, Europe and Asia. Kevin has worked there since graduating.

Generac is a leading designer and manufacturer of a wide range of power generation equipment and other engine-powered products serving residential, light commercial, industrial, oil/gas and construction markets. It continues to grow, having completed nine acquisitions since 2011 and returning a cumulative total of 170 percent to shareholders in the past five years. That’s impressive compared to the S&P 500, which demonstrated only 81 percent return in the same time period.

## **Corporate responsibility**

Wisconsin proud, Generac maintains its headquarters in Waukesha and continues to work with local schools and community partners, like GPS Education Partners. The Department of Workforce Development records show 175 students worked on the Generac Power Systems manufacturing floor between 2013-2016 through GPS Education Partners.





**Kevin Gatling**  
Generac  
GPS Class of 2004

More than 200 students have walked into a Generac-hosted education center. Students learn core academics alongside soft skills like teamwork, communication and attention to detail. Beyond the classroom, students pick up practical career experiences from their work rotations: small parts assembly, water-jet cutting, computer numerical control (CNC) operations, molding, grinding, lathing, spot welding, shipping and packaging, and more.

Today's mentor program still exists through GPS Education Partners Skills Coaches. Between GPS rotations at Generac's Eagle and Whitewater facilities, there are now 14 skills coaches.

"For young people, the manufacturing sector means they can use the latest technology, create products that make a difference, and begin their careers in a competitive sector that rewards hard work and education," says Andrew Martin, Director of Operations at Generac.

Kevin has grown in his role at Generac and his education continues to play a significant role in his career projection. He has earned a journeyman's card and picked up additional training in mathematics, electrical work and welding from Waukesha County Technical College. Generac has made sure to support him, providing financial aid and being available to answer his questions along the way.

#### **Eager for more students**

"Manufacturing is a cornerstone of our economy and growth," says Rhonda Matschke, Senior Vice President of Global Human Resources at Generac. "Continued investments in the sector are accelerating innovation and creating new opportunities for skilled workers. These opportunities are increasingly highlighting the skills gap. We need industry and community leaders to engage young people in what manufacturing careers have to offer to create the necessary pipeline of talent for employers like Generac to grow."

Kevin agrees, saying his experience could be valuable for young people who have the aptitude and interest in technology and manufacturing.

"At least when the students come through here, they can see what it's like," he says. "Maybe they will love it, maybe they won't. But at least they've done their homework and know all of their options after high school. For me, I always had ambitions. I knew that's what I wanted to do, so I kept pursuing it."

# 2016 By the Numbers

**Over the last year, GPS has made tremendous investments in the future. So has our Class of 2016.** With 86 graduates, our students have made one of the greatest investments in their own futures. The Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSCC) reports that the national average for students earning their Certified Production Technician Certification in secondary programs is only 36 percent. An impressive 83 percent of GPS students earned their certification. In addition:

79%

are pursuing technical careers through full-time work or education in a related field.

81%

have full-time employment.

31%

are enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college.

GPS has also expanded pathways for students with exposure, experience and credentialed opportunities. This includes new credentialed pathways such as certified Welding Technician, Machining Technician and Industrial Maintenance Technician.



## Trades We Serve

GPS is a strong advocate for the manufacturing industry. Throughout 2016, we've supported 15 different trades that are vital to the state's economy. These are the industries that continue to propel us forward.

- Apparel Manufacturing
- Chemical Manufacturing
- Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing
- Electrical Equipment, Appliance and Component Manufacturing
- Food Manufacturing
- Furniture and Related Products Manufacturing
- Machinery Manufacturing
- Paper Manufacturing
- Plastic and Rubber Products
- Primary Metal Manufacturing
- Printing and Related Support Activities
- Transportation Equipment Manufacturing
- Wood Product Manufacturing
- Construction (Drywall and Insulation)

## Counties We Serve



# 2016 By the Numbers

## Investment in the future of GPS

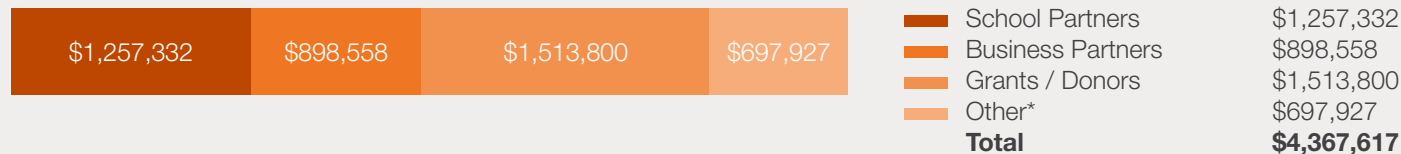
In 2017, we are positioned to serve more students and partners. To ensure our success, we've made significant investments in Research and Program Development, as well as our brand and services. By developing our brand and services, we are growing our expertise and being recognized as thought leaders in education and workforce development. In addition to expanding our pathways and program offerings, our new, proprietary Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System will help us serve more communities. The system will allow for:

**Customization:** Unlike off-the-shelf LMS solutions, our Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System allows our partners to customize the curriculum, pathways and competencies for the unique needs of each business partner and student.

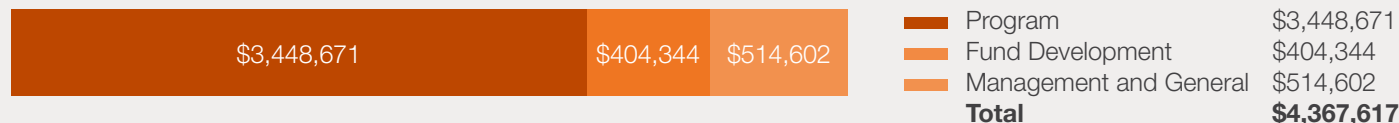
**Better Planning:** Students are able to choose their pathways and map out their courses, competencies and career paths.

**Greater Measurability:** GPS and our partners are better able to track progress, curriculum, skills, competencies and aptitude.

## 2016 Revenues



## 2016 Expenses



\*Includes intercompany transfer of funds from our Money Market account. This account was established from previously earned funds designated for Research and Program Development. Specifically, the intercompany transfer from reserve funds was used to finance the development of the proprietary competency-based responsive online Apprenticeship & Education Enterprise System that will give GPS the competitive advantage in the national market.

# 2015/16 GPS Grants

## Million Dollar Match \$1,000,000

Thanks to an anonymous donation, GPS Education Partners was gifted a million dollar match grant, increasing the impact of each donor's gift, immediately. Each gift was matched 2:1.

## AT&T Aspire Grant \$487,000 over two years



Five Wisconsin GPS education centers thrived throughout the last year, thanks to a generous grant from AT&T. From support for our instructors and apprenticeship coordinators in the field, to helping our students become industry certified and ready for employment, this grant made an incredible impact on our students.

## Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: Fast Forward 2 Grant and Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship Grant \$288,207



GPS Education Partners is proud to partner with Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to change the lives of our youth. Through these grants, our students receive market-relevant work-readiness and technical skills, leading to an industry-recognized certification in manufacturing. Thanks to our partnership with the State of Wisconsin, our students have an advantage in the workplace and beyond.

## United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County \$89,828



Through a generous grant from United Way, GPS Education Partners was able to offer our students a transformational program rooted in rigorous academics and immersive, hands-on learning through apprenticeship. This education model links academic requirements to industry standards, making learning relevant by providing a hands-on educational program that immerses students in the business environment. In addition, our model gives industry the opportunity to mold and shape the skill sets of tomorrow's workforce. United Way helps us provide our students and their families with wrap-around service that ensures a rich, fulfilling and life-changing experience.

## US Bank Foundation \$7,500



With US Bank Foundation's generous grant, GPS Education Partners is able to offer our students remarkable learning environments and technical expertise while helping drive curriculum. We are able to cultivate productive citizens as well as a much-needed future workforce. Support from the foundation has truly helped GPS change the lives of our students.

# Business Partners

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