

KeepCraftAlive

CELEBRATING PASSION FOR BUILDING

Matt Blomquist is an ardent educator. It's practically in his blood—all three of his siblings are teachers too. Matt runs the Building Trades program at Taylorville High School in Taylorville, Ill. The hands-on trades school launched in 1969, and was designed for students to learn how to build a house from the ground up. By the time Matt joined the team in 2019, the program had been on a prolonged hiatus.

Matt's background, which includes carpentry skills and college-level courses taught to prisoners, combined with his youthful energy and zest for knowledge made him ideal to lead the program's reboot. "When I came along," he recalls, "I had read enough *Fine Homebuilding* to know there are better ways of doing things."

"Green building" and "sustainability" were already in Matt's vocabulary because he was tapped into a subset of builders focused on high-performance homes. He is quick to credit his mentors, Steve Baczek and Jake Bruton, whose work and methods he first saw on Instagram, for getting him into building science.

As a teacher, Matt values education and continues his own, using social media to connect with some of the smartest people in his field—many of whom are pioneering new materials and methods at a critical time in human history. He wants as many young people as possible to have the information, which isn't part of most building programs. "I know my students will leave here with more building science knowledge than half the workforce in our area," he says proudly. "They already know how to use a blower-door test to look for air leaks."

Matt talks about an upcoming insulation demonstration for his students as excitedly as other people talk about their vacation plans. His model of learning from industry leaders, and then teaching it to tomorrow's builders, makes him a true champion of the #KeepCraftAlive movement. —*Kiley Jacques, senior editor, Green Building Advisor*

"Beyond giving kids basic trades skills, we want them to understand how to build better—and why it's important to build better."

MATT BLOMQUIST
BUILDING TRADES EDUCATOR
TAYLORVILLE, ILL.



Keep Craft Alive is our campaign celebrating those who have chosen to passionately pursue a career in design, building, and remodeling. Find out more and show your support by visiting KeepCraftAlive.org, and use #KeepCraftAlive to share your passion for the cause.