



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Colas Construction's family executives at the future site for student apartments and ground floor retail they are building for Concordia University at Northeast Killingsworth Street and 16th Avenue. Pictured (from left) are Marc-Daniel Domand, Alex Colas, Aneshka Dickson, Hermann Colas Jr. and Andrew Colas.

# From the Ground Up

## CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR DIRECTION.

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- ✓ Delinquent Child Support?
- ✓ Owe Thousands in Court Fines to Multnomah County?
- ✓ Minor convictions stopping you from being hired for a job?
- ✓ *We might be able to help you!*

Project:  
Clean Slate

**Project Clean Slate** is an award winning program which allows qualifying individuals to help remove some of the barriers to employment, housing, driving and other opportunities. *We have assisted Over 8,000 people Since July 2005!*

- Currently limited to Multnomah County Only
- Must attend mandatory personal and community responsibility classes (\$350)
- Must be sincerely dedicated to changing your life course.

Approved clients will be required to perform community service in exchange for all or part of delinquent traffic fines, must be able to make minimum monthly payments on traffic fines until case is resolved and enter into a child support re-payment program (if applicable).

Project Clean Slate operates in tandem with Multnomah County District Attorney's Office and in cooperation with Multnomah County Circuit Court. It is a program of Independent Development Enterprise Alliance, a nonprofit organization.

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"My father passed those expectations to us that we would dream big and work hard."

With work on dozens of projects across the state, Colas Construction has become a major employer and contractor.

Colas is currently working on dozens of projects across the state, including several projects that advance community needs; such as the building of affordable housing in north and northeast for Portland Community Reinvestment Initiatives (PCRI); student housing for Concordia University in northeast Portland; a headquarters building for Hacienda, a Latino Community Development Corporation, and soon, it hopes to start construction on a new Natural Grocers as an addition to the Vanport Square shopping complex on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

When PCRI recently announced plans to bring 1,000 affordable new homes into the Portland market over the next decade to offset the displacement of people of color from gentrification, construction and development was handed over to Colas, a trusted minority-owned business that the community knew would have an eye out for some of the city's most displaced residents.

Colas' work on Hacienda's new headquarters on the corner of Northeast Killingsworth Street and Cully Boulevard is expected to be completed by the end of month. Hacienda strengthens families by providing affordable housing, homeownership support, economic advancement and educational op-

portunities

"They've invested in a community that hasn't had a building like that," said Andrew Colas about the Hacienda project. "They're investing by putting their headquarters there—and that's huge for that area."

Colas also explained that the company's future includes medical building planning. "We're starting the inroads to that kind of work," he said.

The company also gives back by mentoring young people who want to enter the construction trades.

Currently it's working with students from Building Blocks to Success, a robotics program whose mission is to get ethnically and gender diverse at-risk youth excited about science, technology, engineering, and math through exposure and participation in related programs and activities.

Colas also is working with another program called Elevate, an organization that builds relationships with urban youth to promote education and leadership, giving them tours with the company so they can check out the construction projects underway and get a better understanding of the path to success within the industry.

"I hope when kids see someone that looks like them doing meaningful work, be it the electrician, the plumber, the owner, or the architect, it turns on a light in their head so they think 'hey I can do that to,' and they start thinking seriously about their future," Colas says.

He advises people starting careers to work as hard as they can to be the best, "Whatever industry you choose to be in, try to find a way to emulate what's working for the people you are succeeding. I knew my competition before they knew who we were. We all have that power and I would love to see more kids in a field that needs them."