

Career Training Starts in High School

My name is Kathryn Cesario. I am a sophomore at Erie County Technical School in the Automotive Body Repair Program. This is my first year at ECTS. During my time here I have learned a lot about the automotive field. I am also a student at Seneca High School.

I chose to study automotive body repair because when I toured the facility there was a group of students painting a classic car. I have project cars at home and thought it would be a skill I could use outside of the classroom.

There are approximately 20 students in my lab; only five of them are females. Of those females, I was chosen by my instructor to be a group leader. Students are broken up into groups of four or five.

When I graduate, the certifications and experience I will have gained at ECTS will allow me to explore careers in auto detailing and collision. After gaining on the job experience, I can specialize in what I love most, classic cars.

My day-to-day tasks in lab begin with a bellringer, chapter assignment, and shop projects. Our bellringers consist of watching a video that typically relates to the task of the day and taking notes. We normally get at least an hour of shop time a day to work on the project our group is assigned. My group is currently working on refinishing a 1971 Dodge Challenger.

In our lab, we have our shop with a wash bay, prep booth, paint booth, and two lifts. We also have a separate classroom

area where we complete our bookwork and chapter assignments. The wash bay is where we detail vehicles. There are two garage doors to bring vehicles in, plastic curtains to contain the water and soap, and all the materials we use to detail. The prep booth is where we prepare the vehicles to get painted. This is where we sand them down and do anything else that might produce fumes. The prep booth uses a vacuum-like system to suck up all the debris and fumes from the workspace. The paint booth is a temperature-controlled area we use to paint vehicles. In the classroom, we have our tables set up and we sit with the people who are in our shop groups so we can discuss shop projects.

The most important characteristics for this industry are collaboration, organization, and critical thinking. We often work with groups, and it is important that we all communicate and work well together to get the job done. It is important to keep your tools and workspace organized so you always know where your tools are. I do this by keeping my toolbox organized and keeping the tools I'm currently using where they are easily accessible.

What I like most about automotive body repair is learning new things. Every day we learn new things and different ways to handle a situation. Sometimes people bring in vehicles with a problem we've never seen before; we research and try our best to fix the problem. I also like that it is a career field that will always be

needed. There is a guaranteed future in automotive body repair.

The most challenging thing is paying close attention to detail and problem solving. When we are fixing a dent, we have to make sure it aligns perfectly with the rest of the body. When we are detailing, we have to make sure we clean every part, inside and out, without missing anything. Sometimes we don't always get along with the people assigned to our group or we get frustrated with a problem. The best way to handle this is to walk away from the situation for a couple of minutes. If I get frustrated by a project or I can't figure out the solution to a problem, I go to the classroom and use my resources to find the best way to solve it or I talk to someone more experienced to see if they can help. Our teacher is always a readily available resource, and he is very experienced. All of the students in my class feel confident seeking his advice.

In addition to the time I spend at ECTS, I also take part in my school's marching band, Envirothon, and wrestling team. I take value in the team aspect of all these activities.



Kathryn Cesario



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