

# BUILDING CRITICAL CAREER SKILLS AND DISCOVERING PERSONAL STRENGTHS

CODY KLOBUCNIK | CRYSTAL FINISHING SYSTEMS



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## EXPLORING NEW CAREER OPTIONS

D.C. Everest senior Cody Klobucnik is a familiar presence in the new technology wing of the D.C. Everest Senior High School. As a sophomore Cody took a lead role as student ambassador during the 2020 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly opened high-tech classrooms, graciously sharing his enthusiasm for the new Automotive Tech classroom with attendees from across the community. As he progressed through the DCE Career and Tech Ed program, Cody’s career aspirations began to nudge toward welding, a skill he excelled at and enjoyed. Looking for an opportunity to explore local Advanced Manufacturing career opportunities he secured a Youth Apprenticeship at Crystal Finishing Systems in the fabrication department. That experience led him down a new career path.

During his 22-month apprenticeship, Cody has developed skills in all areas of the fabrication department — progressing from press punches to five-axis CNC machines. “Had I not taken on the Youth Apprenticeship at Crystal Finishing,” notes Cody, “I never would have considered CNC. Just being exposed to the industry and the equipment expanded my career ideas.” He plans to attend NTC and pursue a degree in their CNC Operator program while continuing his on-the-job training. “I would like to grow into a full-time career at Crystal Finishing, continue to take on new challenges, gain skills and eventually work in programming and management.”



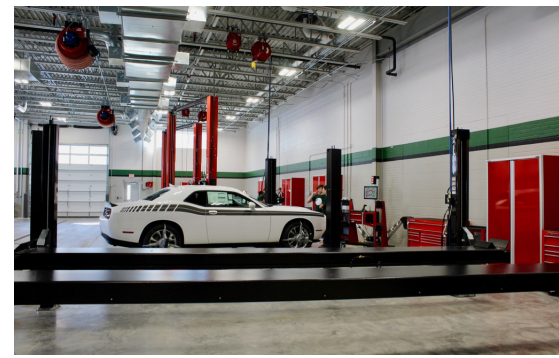
**"THE YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP HAS HELPED SHED NEW LIGHT ON OPPORTUNITIES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS COMING INTO THE WORKFORCE...AND ALLOWED OUR LEADERSHIP TO POLISH AND ENHANCE THEIR COACHING AND TRAINING SKILLS."**

**— CARRIE SANN, VICE PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES, CRYSTAL FINISHING SYSTEMS**

According to Carrie Sann, Vice President of Human Resources for Crystal Finishing Systems, "Cody is able to flex and move into any position within the fabrication department, which contributes to supplying product to our customers in a timely manner." In fact, Cody acknowledges that adapting to "down-time" (when a machine is not running) was one of his greatest challenges. But he's "learned to be flexible, jump in where needed and take on other tasks, to keep busy and be productive. As a result, I've learned more in all the fabrication areas and that has increased my understanding of the entire process." Rather than getting frustrated by pauses in production he has "learned to troubleshoot, come up with quick solutions and learn from mistakes. I welcome new challenges – anything that lets me learn more." Ms. Sann agrees. "Cody is excited to learn and grow. The knowledge he has gained from his education and work experience has given him some valuable skill sets for his future."

Cody's eagerness to learn is also beneficial to those he works with, improving department morale, communication and training. Ms. Sann notes that Cody's apprenticeship – the first in the fabrication department – has been a learning experience for the department and given them the "opportunity to evaluate and gain further perspective on the overall training process. We have adjusted the way we incorporate youth apprenticeships into our overall business model to provide valuable hands-on training experience and set up youth for future success." As a result, they will incorporate new programs and systems into their processes, including a train-the-trainer program and buddy system to help youth apprentices and new team members become more proficient. Cody, she adds, has "helped shed new light on opportunities and perspectives of the younger generations coming into the workforce" and "allowed our leadership to polish and enhance their coaching and training skills."

She encourages all businesses and organizations to participate in the Youth Apprenticeship program. "It allows businesses to give back to the community, build and support our future workforce, and sustain economic growth." Helping local youth is part of Crystal Finishing's dedication to being a good community steward because the business can play an important role in helping youth develop employability skills such as communication, leadership and professionalism that will make them valued employees and expose them to different career opportunities.



## D.C. EVEREST SENIOR HIGH FUTURE READY TECH ED CLASSROOMS

Cody is clearly an example of that. “The Youth Apprenticeship program has already given me a chance to learn complex industry skills, expand social skills and appreciate experienced coworkers. I’ve had major growth in communication skills, advocating for myself, working through learning curves and being okay outside my comfort zone. I can talk more openly and voice my opinion and ideas with confidence.” He adds that his family has witnessed the change – his maturity and responsibility – since beginning in the program. He credits his growth to the supportive and encouraging team environment he’s experienced. “It feels satisfying to have been trained by coworkers who take pride in their job and know the machine inside and out, and to have earned their trust to take the controls. I’m amazed by my coworkers – their depth of knowledge about the machines and the processes. It is inspiring to me.”

“I will always remember the first time I took over setting up the machine with my mentor – taking control that first time, being trusted and having my mentor and others feel that I was ready to run with it,” he adds. He acknowledges being surprised at how far he has come – his role evolving from entry-level production support, deburring, prep and packaging where there was little decision making and autonomy to now running a five-axis CNC router. “I enjoy the constant changes in technology. It keeps things challenging and new.” He enjoys it so much that he hopes to himself be a mentor someday.

Since Cody began apprenticing at Crystal Finishing another four D.C. Everest students have begun their youth apprenticeships there with more onboarding soon. “We’re happy to support the community,” notes Ms. Sann, “and play an active role to help increase economic growth and create career pathways that strengthen the community workforce.”

To learn more about Youth Apprenticeship partnership opportunities at D.C. Everest contact:

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**“THE YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM HAS ALREADY GIVEN ME A CHANCE TO LEARN COMPLEX INDUSTRY SKILLS, EXPAND SOCIAL SKILLS AND APPRECIATE EXPERIENCED COWORKERS. I’VE HAD MAJOR GROWTH IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS, ADVOCATING FOR MYSELF, WORKING THROUGH LEARNING CURVES AND BEING OKAY OUTSIDE MY COMFORT ZONE. I CAN TALK MORE OPENLY AND VOICE MY OPINION AND IDEAS WITH CONFIDENCE.”**

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