

Porsche and the Bridges Foundation: a decade of dedication

20/08/2020 Bethlehem Area Vocational Technical School is preparing students for the future of automotive technology, and Porsche is there to help.

For more than ten years, Porsche Cars North America, Inc. (PCNA) has been a guiding hand in the future and development of the automotive field in Lehigh Valley, PA.

Through the Porsche Care Network, an internal community service organization, PCNA has financially supported the Bridges Foundation at the Bethlehem Area Vocational Technical School (BAVTS) since 2010. Porsche representatives also sit on the Occupational Advisory Council of BAVTS, providing input on what the automotive field needs and how BAVTS should train future technicians to ensure success.

This year, the Bridges Foundation presented three students with Porsche Automotive Awards to go to either continuing education at programs such as Universal Technical Institute (U.T.I.) and local VoTech colleges, or for tools to help start their careers in the automotive technology field. All recipients - Natiana Stoneback, Derek Thomas, Joel Valencia – are co-curricular students at BAVTS and local high schools, spending a half day at each respective school.

Stoneback is the first female to ever receive a Porsche Automotive Award through the Bridges Foundation. She plans to attend U.T.I. while simultaneously working in an automotive repair facility to gain additional experience. Previously, Stoneback and a partner competed at the Universal Technical Institute Top Technician Challenge automotive technology competition, placing fifth out of 60 teams, earning a partial scholarship to U.T.I.

Valencia also plans to attend U.T.I., and apply to the Porsche Technology Apprenticeship Program (PTAP) upon completion of his U.T.I. education, with the goal to become a Certified Porsche Technician at a Porsche dealer partner.

David Becker is a PCNA Academy Technical Trainer in nearby Easton, Penn. As a PTAP instructor, he has personal experience with the BAVTS students, and enjoyed the last ten years working with aspiring automotive technicians.

“Over the years I have mentored a couple of BAVTS students,” said Becker. “One was a Moravian High School Student who was thinking about engineering but wasn’t sure. He sat through one of my transmission courses, questioning both the technicians and myself. In the end he couldn’t stop thanking us for letting him sit through our training. He went on to college and is now in the engineering field himself.”

There are more than 1,100 Porsche technicians in 193 Porsche dealer partners across the country.

More than one third are graduates from PTAP, which recently celebrated its 21st anniversary. Following a psychological assessment, a mechanical knowledge test and a personal interview, only 12 applicants are accepted into one of three 23-week programs consisting of 16 core and 38 web-based courses. Traditional hands-on skills, like engine or brake servicing, are taught alongside modern hi-tech components such as electrical systems repair.

The attention to excellence in PTAP are evident in Porsche's exemplary service reputation. Porsche has ranked atop J.D. Power's Customer Service Index Study, and continues to rank highly in customer service experiences, even during a time when extra customer safety precautions are affecting typical operations.

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