



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Goose Creek Memorial student wins 8th place in national auto collision repair competition

Goose Creek Memorial High School junior Josselyn Cruz may have been the only female competing in the high school collision repair division of the Skills USA National Skills and Leadership Competition (formerly VICA), but she was not intimidated as she breezed through the required tasks for an eighth place finish from a field of 42 competitors.

At the national competition in Kansas City, Missouri, Cruz was required to perform 10 welds; repair a fender using three different methods; read and assess damage on two vehicles using two different measuring systems; set up centering gauges on a frame and diagnose the problem; repair a bumper cover using plastic material, write an estimate, and take a suspension test and an ASE standards test.

"The judges said her welds were some of the best," said James Wheeler, Auto Collision and Refinishing teacher at Stuart Career Center.

Although the competition was a little overwhelming for her, Cruz admits that she felt confident about her skills.

"There were times when I thought, 'I'm really small, and I'm competing against these big guys,' but I knew that Mr. Wheeler and my former teacher Mr. Thomas had taught me well, so I did feel prepared," said Cruz. "I was most confident about my welding."



Cruz appreciates TASCO Auto Color for supplying her with free materials to help her prepare for the state competition and 3M for providing plastic repair materials to assist her in practicing for the national competition. She will participate in the practicum class at Stuart Career Center for Auto Collision and Refinishing next year, and she plans to work at a local repair shop. She also hopes to participate in an

internship with State Farm Insurance as an estimator after she graduates from high school, but her sights are set on the competitions next year.

"I'm going to work even harder on my skills next year. It will be my third year in Skills USA. This time I will know what to do, and I'll have a better chance to get a bronze medal or even better," Cruz said.

Auto Collision and Refinishing is offered as an elective class at Stuart Career Center. Students who are interested in signing up for the class should see their home campus counselor.

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