



April 2025

Student Connection



CUYAHOGA VALLEY CAREER CENTER

Carter Hanobik Independence



Carter (CJ) Hanobik, a senior at Independence High School, is a dedicated student in CVCC's Auto Service Technology program, led by instructor Jamie Yax. For CJ, enrolling in the program was an easy choice. "Most of my family works in the auto industry—it's literally in my blood," he shared. "Ironically, my parents don't, but my grandfathers and others before them were all involved in racing and mechanics. Even on my mom's side, there's a background in heavy-duty diesel work."

CJ's passion took root early. At just 15, he bought his first car—a fixer-upper that required significant repairs. "I kept thinking, 'How do I keep this thing running?'" he said. "I've always been a hands-on learner, so diving in and getting my hands dirty was exciting. That's why there was no question about attending CVCC. Although he built confidence by watching YouTube videos and learning through trial and error, CJ admits the beginning was anything but easy. "It was definitely intimidating. Pulling apart the interior is one thing, but tackling things like engine work? That's next-level," he said. His curiosity and interest were always there, but what he needed was a boost in confidence—and that's exactly what the program has provided. He credits Mr. Yax for helping him grow, not just technically, but personally. "Mr. Yax showed me that with the right mindset and the right people around you, you really can figure anything out," CJ said. "He helped shape how I approach challenges—and how I lead."

After graduation, CJ will attend the University of Northwestern Ohio (UNOH) in Lima to study High Performance Motorsports Technology. His ultimate dream? "I'd love to work in research and development for a racing league—NASCAR, IndyCar, or even for a company like Chevy. Anything engine-related would be amazing." Currently, CJ is gaining real-world experience through CVCC's Work-Based Learning Program at AutoZone Auto Parts (Broadview location)—and loving it.

His advice to younger students considering CVCC: "Try it. Even if the program isn't a perfect fit or you don't pursue a career in that exact field, the skills you learn will always come in handy. Honestly, I don't think I'd be headed to college if it weren't for CVCC. It gave me direction when everything felt blurry."

As the CVCC Student Ambassador for Independence, CJ has had the unique opportunity to advocate for Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding, traveling to Washington, D.C., and Columbus to meet with legislators and senators. "It was one of the coolest things I've ever done. I'll probably never get to do something like that again—I'm so grateful I was chosen."

Beyond the classroom, CJ stays busy pursuing his Eagle Scout rank, participating in 4-H by raising ducks, and lending a hand at home—especially when it comes to caring for their family's animals, which include chickens, dogs, cats, and even a rabbit. Recently, CJ also kicked off his own mobile mechanic side hustle (check out his logo above), traveling to clients' homes and workplaces to service their vehicles. From student to small business owner, CJ Hanobik is already steering his future in the right direction—one repair at a time. Keep it up, CJ!

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