



National Associations

with Chasidy Rae Sisk

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CREF Makeover Grant Receives Its Own Makeover

In 2009, the Collision Repair Education Foundation (CREF) founded its Ultimate Collision Education Makeover Grant. Since then, over \$3 million in cash and in-kind donations have been awarded to collision repair training programs to help supply them with the tools, equipment and training necessary for their students' education. Although the Makeover Grant had yielded much success for CREF and the collision repair industry as a whole, the organization's Board of Trustees decided to adjust their focus to bridging the employee gap in June 2015 after hearing of the industry's immediate need for entry-level staff. According to **Melissa Marscin**, director of Grant Programs of CREF, "The new focus will be on getting the right grants/donations into each school to better prepare the students for entering the collision industry."

Marscin explained, "Instead of just asking schools to provide us with their \$50,000 wish list of needed tools, equipment and supplies, the new makeover program asks for a profile on the school's capabilities that help it graduate qualified and productive collision students for the industry's employment. Based upon the capabilities detailed in the application, they will be assigned to tiers that will designate them based on those capabilities. The tiers will help us get the right resources to the schools that can use them."

Beginning this year, each school that submits an application for the

makeover program will be given a Collision School Career Readiness Benchmark designation, based on how certain questions are answered on the application. Tier 1 will indicate an advanced designation, with Tier 2 being proficient and Tier 3 indicating a developing educational program. The criteria for each designation, listed on CREF's website, consists of objective data to allow the school to identify which designation they fall into, and it includes items such as contact hours, existing tools/equipment, curriculum, outside activities and more.

With approximately 1,150 collision schools in the US, each possessing different resources, requirements, standards and testing, it is nearly impossible to determine what resources each school has without reaching out to them individually. The new designations will help CREF's Selection Committee determine each school's needs when reviewing the makeover applications and alert potential donors to a school's specific needs. It will also provide employees, future students, parents and counselors with information about any collision program they are interested in while showing administration that collision training is worth supporting and simultaneously demonstrating how funding can be improved to bring the program to a Tier 1 designation.

Now, the makeover application will serve three purposes; in addition to designating the schools by tiers, it will allow schools to be eligible for cash prizes as

well as in-kind donations that CREF receives from donors and distributes to schools in need. In regards to whether CREF will still offer the \$50,000 makeover grants, Marscin stated, "It will all depend on the applications. The Selection Committee, when reviewing, will have the option to award \$50,000 grants or to split it amongst smaller grant awards to help more schools. The goal will be to award amounts that will help a school reach the next tier."

Marscin assures applicants, "There will still be a place on the application to request items you need a grant for; however, your designation will help guide you on what items to request. For example, if you do not have curriculum due to the lack of computers in your program, the application will guide you to request curriculum and computers. The items requested will need to help advance your program to the higher designation. Our goal is to get EVERY school to become a Tier 1: Advanced

school!"

Schools that rank in Tier 1 are still eligible for grants and donations. The top designation indicates that the school has all the basic tools and supplies needed, but the school can seek to further advance its program by requesting replacements for outdated tools and equipment, aluminum tools, training and I-CAR curriculum fees for students.

In order to support this new designation program, adjustments will be made to the makeover grant itself. While the application will remain similar to previous years, a few questions will be added to determine the school's designation. CREF began accepting applications on January 4, and the deadline for applicants is June 3, 2016. Schools' designations will be announced in July with the announcement of makeover winners taking place in November.

For more information about CREF, visit www.collisioneducationfoundation.org.

UTI Hosts Axalta's Fifth Annual Winter Panel Jam in Long Beach, CA

Universal Technical Institute's Long Beach, CA campus Collision Program hosted *Axalta Coating Systems'* fifth



UTI students voted on the winning design by custom painter **Alberto Herrera**, who hails from Visalia, CA

annual Winter Panel Jam that featured elaborate pinstriping artwork produced onsite and live by 25 renowned artists from across the country, in-

cluding Los Angeles-based **Danny Galvez** and **Alberto Herrera** from Central California. The event took place inside the collision lab where UTI students were exposed to the creativity and original works of art that showcase this dynamic side of the automotive industry.

"Our students enjoyed being a part of Panel Jam. They engaged with the artists and asked questions about different techniques that they can apply as they prepare for a career in auto tech and collision repair," said **Scott Diaz**, collision education manager for the Long Beach campus.

The finished artwork on quarter panels will be displayed in Axalta car show exhibits throughout 2016 including SEMA, in Las Vegas, Nevada.



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