

Angel's Story: Jumpstart to Job Success



Some of 22-year-old Angel Garcia's fondest childhood memories growing up in Roslindale often involved fixing things. He would tinker with gadgets, take toys apart, and learn about their inner workings. In middle school, he joined Bikes Not Bombs' Youth Employment Program and honed his mechanical skills repairing donated bicycles for children in need. Eventually, he became a youth instructor at the non-profit while he was still in Hyde Park High.

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Angel has not only applied this approach to repairing things, but also to his own educational and career journey. One piece at a time, he built a pathway to earn an Associate Degree in Automotive Technology and a Bachelor's Degree in Automotive Management from Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT). Today, he works full-time for the City of Boston, maintaining its fleet of vehicles - from hybrid cars to large trucks.

In high school, like many students, Angel was unsure about which career path to choose, and did not excel in his classes, mostly due to a lack of interest. In fact, he was not particularly interested in attending college. "I figured school wasn't really for me," he says. "I didn't like the structure of being in classes all day."

Then, one day, a representative from BFIT gave a presentation at Angel's high school class about the college's hands-on automotive program. He also learned about the non-profit college's Early Access to College program, which enables high school students to take college courses and earn dual credits. For Angel, this meant taking traditional classes like Math and English, but also automotive classes. It also enabled him to "test drive" the college and career as a whole.

“We serviced real customers at the college’s full-service shop. This definitely prepared me for my current job and for future jobs,” he said. “Not only did I learn how to repair vehicles properly, but I also learned how to communicate with customers, and manage my time.”

“This is an awesome program, I thought. I could get a degree and do something that I actually want to do,” he said. “I earned college credits while still in high school. This helped me reduce my college tuition and save time.”



While pursuing his associate degree, he worked as a part-time automotive technician at Herb Chambers Honda and an independent shop where he provided preventative maintenance on BMWs, Jaguars, Hondas and Acuras. “When I began to do the actual repairs, it felt good knowing I progressed while I was there,” he says.

Earning his associate degree and becoming the first member of his family to graduate from college was just the beginning. With some nudging from his father, Angel decided to construct another piece to his career journey, and earn a bachelor’s degree. BFIT is the only college in Massachusetts to offer a Bachelor’s Degree in Automotive Management.

Angel has joined a growing number of college students who are pursuing careers in the fast-growing automotive industry. Equipped with both an associate and bachelor's degree, Angel is now qualified for a management position. Nationally, jobs for automotive technicians are expected to grow 17% by 2020. BFIT students are trained by ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) Certified automotive professors who have more than 300 years of combined industry experience. Students learn all aspects of automotive service and use state-of-the art equipment to diagnose and repair all types of vehicles, including hybrid and electric.