

Chippewa Valley auto program receives \$51,000 grant

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Members of the Chippewa Valley High School Engine Team include, back row, from left, students Tommy Varilone, Jose Gordillo, Amanda Hofmann, Alister Smith, and Tom Vachon, and front row, from left, Joe Hart, auto tech instructor, Al Hoover, auto tech assistant, and students Andrew Kanaan and Sargon Nasser. (Chippewa Valley photo)

Chippewa Valley Schools has received a grant of \$51,000 from the Margaret Dunning Foundation to support its Career and Technical Education Automotive Technology program.

The funds will be used to purchase new equipment needed to provide students with real-life, hands-on experiential learning in the automotive field. Items purchased will include a new lift for the shop, welding equipment, cylinder head tooling, a new fab lab door, Hunter Automotive equipment for wheel and tire alignments, and computer diagnostics equipment that will provide for additional student stations. These program improvements will greatly enhance the student experience by helping to stay current with the latest state-of-the-art equipment utilized in the industry.

"This generous donation will help move us into the future with modern equipment that will continue to prepare our students for real world jobs," Joe Hart, Chippewa Valley's Auto Tech Instructor said.

"They will be learning and training on equipment currently in use in the industry, ensuring they have the right, high-demand skills coming out of high school. Many of our students have established great careers with local car dealers or end up pursuing a degree in engineering. We're really proud of their success," Joe Hart, Chippewa Valley's Auto Tech Instructor.

The Chippewa Valley Schools auto tech program has enjoyed recent success, including the SkillsUSA regional and state competitions and first place at the annual Macomb Engine Challenge at Macomb Community College in March. In that timed event, students had to completely disassemble and reassemble a small block Chevy engine. The team's official time for the project was 98 minutes. The second-place team finished 45 minutes later. After the engine is built it must be successfully test-fired on the engine stand.

The Margaret Dunning Foundation was founded by Ms. Dunning in 1997. She was born in 1910 in Redford Township and moved with her mother to Plymouth in the 1920s. During her lifetime, Dunning was a successful businesswoman, philanthropist and civic booster. Dunning was no stranger to Chippewa Valley Schools. As a supporter of Career and Technical Education, she visited the construction trades program in 2014.

-- *Macomb Daily staff reports*