

SAANICH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
JUMPSTARTS STUDENT CAREERS

# Gen Byl

by Stu Rhodes

"When I tell people I work at Capital, the Ford dealership in Dawson Creek, they usually say something like: 'So, um, do you work at the front desk?' ... and I say: 'No, I'm a mechanic. I work in the shop!'"

And so she does! After completing the Auto Service Technician foundation program at Camosun, Genevieve Byl moved to Dawson and embarked on a career pathway that she started at Stelly's Secondary School, and hopes will take her all the way to getting her "Red Seal" as a qualified journeyman. But that's not all: she is already taking lots of online dealership courses and hopes to also acquire her diesel technician qualification.

While Gen tells people she is an apprentice mechanic, she admits that she is really training to become a technician. She goes on to say that, while mechanics really just fix things, technicians are much more analytical and try to determine why things broke in the first place. They then remedy that problem before executing the less complex repair. "I

like to get to the root of things," she says. Interestingly, her supervisor at Capital Ford, Sam Malkoc, heaps praise upon Gen for that very thing. He's impressed with her problem solving skills and her ability to sequentially plan the tasks ahead of her.

When asked about the rigors of becoming an auto service technician, Sam says he expects that it is probably way harder to get a Red Seal these days than most degrees because in addition to having to possess exemplary numeracy and literacy skills, you need to be able to problem solve, and more importantly, you need to be a productive member of an enterprising team who has the appropriate work ethic to go with it! In addition to all this, Gen comes to work every day with a smile on her face and a happy disposition. To sum it all up, he says: "She has the right attitude." When asked about Gen's non-traditional role as a young woman in a male-dominated trade, Sam says: "Gender means nothing to me. It all comes down to ability and commitment." He sees Gen showing both on a daily basis at Capital Ford.

This comes as no surprise to Gen's proud parents, Mike and Winn, who echo much of what Malkoc says. Both agree she has always been very analytical, which is probably why she is doing so well.

It takes a community to build a child, and

Gen credits many of the influential people in her life for helping her get to where she is today.

"My auto shop teacher at Stelly's, Mr. Sukut, really encouraged me, and all the instructors at Camosun were great," she notes. "My older sister Andrea helped set the stage by exploring the trades before me. And when I started at Capital, Sam gave me a little pep talk and told me to set the bar really high for myself."

When asked what she likes most about her trade, Gen responds: "I'm constantly learning. Sometimes it's almost overwhelming, but I love it!"

For more information on how to get involved as a student apprentice, or as an employer sponsor in this, or any other career program in Saanich School District, contact your neighbourhood school or Stu Rhodes at 250-415-9211. Be sure to view the promotional YouTube video *Jump Start Your Career* at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers>. ✨

