



National Associations

with Chasidy Rae Sisk

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CREF Urges the Collision Repair Industry to Donate to Improve the Industry's Future

Across the country, collision repair industry training programs face jeopardy due to a lack of funding, and although it seems like summer just began, classes will be back in session in a blink of an eye. While students enjoy the beach and make memories in the sun, their instructors are already busy plotting how to provide the best possible technical education with limited budgets and resources. The Collision Repair Education Foundation (CREF) invites the industry to partner with their organization to ensure that the next generation of collision repair professionals graduate with the skills necessary to be useful to their future employers. **Brandon Eckenrode**, Director of Development for CREF, believes, "Together, we can make an impact on the fall semester and beyond!"

Since 2009, CREF has collected over \$35 million in donations from the collision repair industry for use in local high school and college collision

repair training programs. Eckenrode explained, "The vast majority of this support has come in the form of in-kind product donations which have



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greatly assisted collision school instructors across the country with needed help to supplement their limited budgets."

One of the largest challenges instructors face is training tomorrow's professionals with yesterday's tools. In this ever-evolving industry, outdated tools and equipment pose a problem for many collision repair programs that just cannot keep pace with the changes in technology. Shops can provide relief for these programs by donating used tools and equipment to local programs. Eckenrode points out, "If you have used tools and equipment that you plan to replace in the near future, these items might be greatly valued by a local school instructor who doesn't have the budget to afford them. Whether it's equipment, supplies or the most basic items, you would be surprised what might be appreciated by a school if they knew it was available."

Because safety is always a concern, the CREF also invites the collision repair industry to sponsor safety kits for local students. The organization turns a \$50 donation into a pair of work pants, a shirt, safety glasses, a disposable dust mask and ear plugs to help students learn the importance of professionalism. Companies that sponsor at least 100 safety kits will have their logo printed on the back of the students' work shirts.

Eckenrode urges, "Let us know how you'd like to get involved with your local high school or college collision training program by contacting the CREF at info@ed-foundation.org. We can even provide information on your local programs if you'd like to know which schools are located near you."

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