

## Illinois Shop Gives VoTech Interns Real-World Experience

by Victoria Antonelli, Online Editor

For the past two years, *Mike's Auto Body* of Sandwich, IL, has given educational tours to students in body



Students gather around for a demonstration at *Indian Valley Vocational Center*

shop classes at Indian Valley Vocational Center. At IVVC's Sandwich campus, first year students get a basic knowledge of collision repair and refinishing procedures. Second year students get advanced training on frame and structural repair.

On September 12, two sessions of 10-15 students gathered around while technicians worked on and explained the latest project—the transformation of a 1962 Chevy wagon

into a show car.

“The students really enjoy experiencing how an actual body shop works, as opposed to learning about it in a classroom,” said **Stacy Skillin**, who has co-owned the 30-year-old shop for seven years.

Stacy's segment of the tour covered office functions, such as insurance company dealings and scheduling, while fellow co-owner **Shane Skillin** showed students commonly used equipment, including the paint booth and frame machine.

“We encourage students to apply for internships at our shop, so they can get real-life experience while still in college,” said Stacy. “One of our current employees was an intern [at one time].”

Stacy and Shane also gave the students interviewing tips, stressing the importance of first impressions and projecting professional behavior and attitudes.

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## CARSTAR Expands MSO Network in Kentucky

*CARSTAR Auto Body Repair Experts* announced on October 8 that *CARSTAR Hall's Collision Center* has joined North America's largest collision repair MSO network, expanding its presence in Kentucky.

CARSTAR Hall's Collision Center is located at 3947 Bardstown Rd. in Louisville, KY, and is owned by **Harold Hall**. Hall, who has been in business since 1967 and at his current location since 1970, joined CARSTAR for the “knowledge, training, and expertise” that the company can offer a shop wanting to grow. The shop is managed by Hall's son, David.

“My father met another CARSTAR owner who seemed happy with his business,” said **David Hall**. “At that point we made contact with CARSTAR, and went from there. We needed knowledge, and didn't want to move forward alone.”

CARSTAR Hall's Collision Center has a 35,000 square foot building, which is equipped with three down-draft paint booths and five frame racks, along with an in-house towing service. The shop is also up-to-date with photographic and imaging software and computer estimating software.

## ABRA Helped Raise \$100K for People with Disabilities

Courage Kenny Foundation and *ABRA Auto Body and Glass* are proud to announce they raised more than \$100,000 to support people with disabilities.

Both organizations partner annually to improve the lives of those with disabilities in Minnesota and western Wisconsin through a golf fundraiser supporting Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute's sports and recreation department.

More than 100 golfers played at the renowned Hazeltine National Golf Course in Chaska, MN on September 8. The annual charity event helps support Courage Kenny sports and recreation programs for people with disabilities.

“We are proud of our longtime support of Courage Kenny Foundation,” said **Duane Rouse**, president and chief executive officer of ABRA. “It is rewarding to see the results of our contribution and efforts reflected in the smiles and accomplishments of Courage Kenny clients.”

The institute's sports and recreation department offers leisure and competitive athletic endeavors for people with disabilities.

## Collision Shop Expands to Middletown, Ohio

by Ed Richter, Journal-News.com

With business booming at his collision shop on Liberty-Fairfield Road, owner **Mark Briscoe** decided a little more than a year ago that it would be a good time to open another shop in his hometown of Middletown.

*Liberty Collision Center* opened its new, 10,500-square-foot facility at 3363 Cincinnati-Dayton Road on Aug. 11 and had its grand opening from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 14. Briscoe believes the shop is on track to do \$500,000 in business by the end of 2014. He said the other shop, which opened in 2003 is having a record year and he expects to reach his goal of \$2.5 million for the year.

“We were bulging at the seams and I felt there was a need for a body shop in Middletown,” Briscoe said. “I grew up in Lemon Twp. under AK's stacks. Middletown has always been my home.”

The new shop features state of the art equipment and two paint booths, a waiting area and an estimation bay. He said the shop can do body work and other auto work including windshields. **Ron Cantrell**, the company's sales and marketing director, who worked for 18 years

as claims manager for Nationwide Insurance, said he's working to get insurance companies to list the new location on its vendor lists.

“There's not a lot of auto body shops here which means a good growth potential, Cantrell said. “We have great visibility and easy access.”

Briscoe, who has been in the auto body business for about 30 years, also has a family background in the business as his father also owned a body shop in Middletown.

He considered locating the new shop in Monroe and Trenton, but they were not viable. Briscoe ended up working with fellow Lemon-Monroe High School alumnus **Paul Sivak**, who developed the property and is currently building a speculation building for another business next door to the shop.

Briscoe said the average turn-around time for a repair is two days for the state of the art facility and that the shop works with local vendors for parts and other materials. At both shops, they can work on 20 vehicles at a time.

“We have room to grow and this shop has the potential to do as much as the other store,” he said.

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