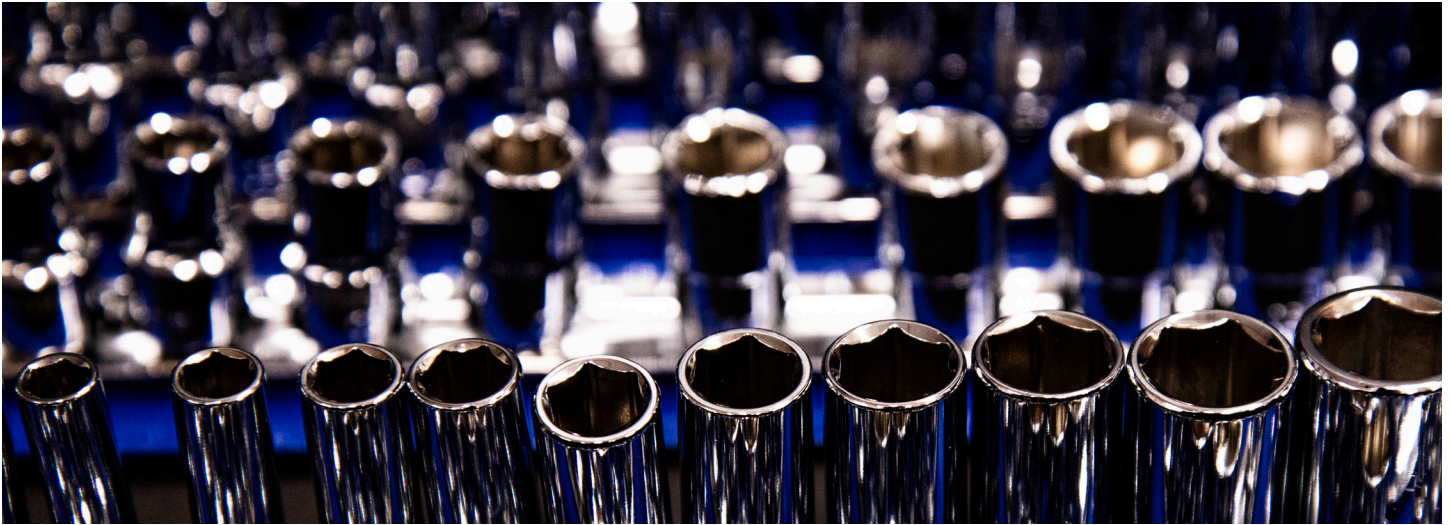


Automotive Students Receive Head-Start Gift from Rotary

Tool Kits Help Offset Job Costs



Story and photos by Patrick J. DeGeorge

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For three decades, the Schaumburg rotary clubs have awarded monetary scholarships to District 211 seniors planning to pursue careers as automotive mechanics.

After speaking with recipients and an instructors, they discovered they could help in a better way.

So this year, the group literally provided the tools for future success.

The Schaumburg-Hoffman and Schaumburg A.M. rotary clubs presented a dozen District 211 students from Hoffman, Schaumburg and Conant high schools with complete tool kits for their future careers, valued at more than \$2,000 each – and offered heartfelt encouragement for professional success.



Tom Gosche speaks with students and families at Hoffman Estates High School.

“I am really excited to receive this tool kit. It’s a crazy head-start on the career I’m choosing,” said Erik Galu, a recipient who graduated from Hoffman Estates this year. “It’s a lot of money saved for me.”

The presentation was made in the schools’ automotive shops, and some became emotional.

“It’s important for us as a community to grow, and sometimes the students need a little help,” said Tom Gosche, president of the Schaumburg-Hoffman Rotary Club. “While presenting these, I was holding back tears. I love being able to see these students get that leg-up.”

The project was a true team effort, with the clubs using the service of local mechanic Chris Senoza to select the tools and maximizing connections that club members had with dealerships and mechanics.

“You can’t do something like this alone,” Gosche said. “If it weren’t for people like them, none of this happens.”

Rotarian Jim McKenzie recalls the conversation with a Hoffman Estates instructor that changed the course on the type of support the clubs were offering students.

“He told us it was great we were giving out scholarships, but that many schools were requiring students to bring their own tools,” McKenzie recalls. And thus, the new effort was born.



That automotive teacher – Dave Ligman from Hoffman Estates High School – said the tool kits provided to the students this year truly helped give deserving students a head start on their careers.

“We had a desire to help our students on their next step. For them, this was a financial roadblock that stopped them from finding a career right out of high school,” Ligman said. “This was that little nudge some students needed to show they have that additional support to get them along in their future.”

District 211 offers a variety of academic programs to help students realize their true potential, whatever their future may hold. The scholarships contribute to an ongoing effort to break down barriers that may limit future success or access to postsecondary opportunities and access to careers.