

PARTICIPANT PROFILE:

César Barrios,

A Career With No Limits



A workforce training program helps a Venezuelan immigrant with an American dream get his motor running.

No limits. That’s how César Augusto González Barrios lives his life.

A former motorcycle racer from Venezuela, César moved to the United States in 2017 to be closer to his son in Columbus, Indiana. He took on basic manufacturing work to make ends meet, but he had loftier ambitions.

“I wanted to learn perfect English and start my own business,” he said. “I came [to the United States] to grow, and I can finish my dream.”

Though César no longer raced motorcycles, he still held a passion for them. He saw his love for working on bikes as a prime business opportunity.

“It’s priceless when I repair and fix the motorcycles, to see the looks on my clients’ faces when they’re so satisfied—that is something I can’t explain,” he said.

A NEW DOOR OPENS

To support his budding dream, César needed a steady day job, but his search for a gig that

would pay the bills led him to a training program that opened the door to a career opportunity.

Cummins Inc., a Columbus-based engine manufacturer that does business all over the world, offered an employee readiness class as part of its efforts to recruit new hires from the community. The program was offered by Su Casa Columbus, a nonprofit agency that works to support Bartholomew County’s Latinx population, in partnership with the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation’s McDowell Education Center. Participants who passed an exam after completing the class were guaranteed an interview with Cummins.

“César enrolled, and he ended up being the top student in his class, said Whitney Amuchastegui, executive director of Su Casa Columbus. “He [came to class] with a smile and an energy that you wouldn’t believe,” she recalled.

“What impressed me was his dedication to the rest of the class. He was so supportive to the other participants in helping them through it,” Amuchastegui said. “It went a long way to creating a wonderful class dynamic. He really made an impression on [Cummins].”



GOAL! (Growing Opportunities in America for Latinos) is a bilingual English/Spanish manufacturing bridge program for Limited English Proficient adults.



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS AGAIN

Before César finished his employability class, LIFT presented him with an opportunity to pursue additional training through a program called Growing Opportunities in America for Latinos (GOAL). César jumped at the chance and encouraged his fellow classmates to take advantage of this additional training opportunity. Shortly after starting his GOAL training, César accepted a job offer from Cummins as a line operator.

The GOAL program allows limited English-speaking Latinx workers an opportunity to develop the skills required for highly sought-after production jobs, GOAL combines English

language instruction with a Spanish-language version of the coursework and assessments for the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council's Certified Production Technician (CPT) credential. GOAL is funded by a TechHire Grant that the U.S. Department of Labor awarded to the Labor Institute for Training (LIFT), an Indiana-based nonprofit that assists in the development and delivery of educational programs that increase and improve employment opportunities for unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. JFF provides executive support and services to assist with LIFT's program delivery.

César eagerly completed two of the four modules in GOAL before starting his job at Cummins. He



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has found the GOAL training on torque, safety, quality, and measurements to be particularly valuable in his work at the engine manufacturer.

“All of these steps and systems are something I learned in the GOAL program,” he said.

“It coincided perfectly with what I was doing [on the job]. Dedicated hours in this program will make you a professional.”

FULFILLING A DREAM, SETTING A NEW GOAL

For César the GOAL program has also played a critical role in fulfilling his original American dream. He has used the skills he learned in the GOAL training not only in his work at

Cummins, but also in his new motorcycle repair business. “In working with motorcycles, quality is imperative,” he said, citing the training he received through the program.

While César is excited to see his business grow, he has no plans to forgo the manufacturing career opportunities that now lie ahead of him. He plans to complete the final two modules of GOAL in the next few years, and he hopes to be promoted at Cummins.

“If you want to better your life, you definitely need to be in this program,” he said. “There are no limits, especially with a training program like this.”

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