

[Bus] Ride to Success

Jaime Tovar, Automotive Instructor at Center for Employment Training (CET), came to the United States when he was 17 years. His first job was picking garlic. However, it was extremely hard on his knees, so he decided to switch to planting and picking grapes. After two laborious years working in grape fields, Jaime's father encouraged him to go to CET in early 2000. Jaime said that his father knew of CET because the bus that transported students to and from CET's San Jose campus parked behind their apartment building in Greenfield.

One day, Jaime decided to hop on that bus to check out CET and see what they had to offer. After looking through their courses, he decided to enroll in the Automotive Specialist Technician program under the Farmworker contract. Pragmatically, Jamie figured that if he had auto repair skills, he would always be able to fix his own car. Jaime successfully graduated from the Automotive program on August 30, 2000, and much to his delight, landed a job in Monterey. Unfortunately, he was not able to accept the offer because he did not have transportation to get to the job site daily. As fate would have it, CET had a bus driver position open and offered this position to Jaime. He quickly obtained a Class B License and began transporting former farmworkers, like himself, to CET on a daily basis.



In 2002, Jaime was offered the Automotive Assistant Instructor position at CET. He began assisting CET's veteran Automotive Instructor. He worked with the students in the shop with auto repairs. Jaime took the initiative to learn more and increase his knowledge in the automotive field. In 2012, he enrolled in Hartnell Community College in Salinas. He worked full-time at CET during the day and took classes at night. He graduated in 2016, Magna Cum Laude, with an Associates of Science degree in Automotive Technology-General Automotive Mechanic.

Other Automotive instructors, have come and gone, but Jaime has been committed to carrying out the mission of CET. He is now the sole instructor of the program. He gives his all and shares his vast knowledge every day with his students. He runs the CET shop that is open to the public and offers free labor to the community. He has helped countless staff and students with their own automotive repair needs so that they could safely transport their loved ones and attend training/work daily.

Jaime says that he grew up at CET but he is not done growing yet. He recently attained his Smog Technician certification from Monterey Peninsula College in May 2018. Jaimes feels that his experience at CET, first as a student and now as an employee, allows him to better understand the needs of CET students. CET gave him a career that has afforded him the ability to support a family and continue his education; and to think that it all started with a free bus ride to San Jose.

