



Monroe Public Schools – News Release

1275 N. Macomb St., Monroe, MI 48162 · (734) 265.3000

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For immediate release

Starlyn Higgins wins Breaking Traditions Merit Award

Monroe High School is proud to announce senior Starlyn Higgins has received a Michigan Department of Education 2017 Breaking Traditions Merit Award. The Breaking Traditions Merit Award is given every year to students who have overcome barriers in secondary and postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that are traditionally taken by the opposite gender.

For Starlyn, the daughter of Kenneth Loveland, however, working with her hands was just a part of growing up.

“I grew up with all guys in the family, so I was always in the garage, helping them build a racecar or work on the truck,” she said proudly.

From her time in the garage growing up, Starlyn had an interest in working in automotive classes, but she quickly found a passion for construction, welding, and all things CTE.

“I’ve taken every class except robotics,” she laughed. “I started in auto, but I fell in love with construction and welding.”

Starlyn’s hard work and dedication to her studies is a reflection of Monroe High School’s thriving commitment to the ever-growing CTE program.

“Starlyn is a shining example and point of pride,” said Julie Everly, Monroe Public Schools superintendent, “showcasing the high quality CTE programs and teachers available at Monroe High School.”

Glenn Zorn, who currently advises Starlyn in three subjects, nominated her for the award that accepts at most 25 students state-wide.

“I nominated Starlyn because she has excelled in every technical and industrial course we offer,” Zorn said. “Starlyn is an amazing student with a great work ethic.”

Starlyn will accept the award on May 11 during a formal presentation ceremony at the Forum at the Library of Michigan in Lansing.

“I was so happy when he handed me the paper, I started crying,” she said. “I worked so hard.”

Starlyn currently has a 3.4 cumulative GPA which includes a 3.99 GPA in CTE courses. She is also a quick learner; after seeing her hard work and natural skill in other CTE courses, Zorn allowed her to skip welding fundamentals and grapple with the advanced work, a decision he is happy to have made.

“That was a great move because she has been a leader in the class ever since,” Zorn said.

Zorn has been an instrumental part of Starlyn’s aspirations to continue her education in construction.

“We’ve gotten closer and closer,” she said. “I’ve changed my eyes towards Zorn to be more of a father figure. He actually had my dad as a student in a course at the college. Seeing my dad’s skills as a welder, he has pushed me harder and harder, which has made me fall in love with welding over and over again.”

Starlyn has plans to attend Monroe County Community College to take part in the welding program there, before possibly moving to a degree in construction management. Starlyn says the fact that Zorn teaches in the welding program at MCCC helped a lot with her decision.

As confident as she has been in the welding shop, Starlyn is more anxious about accepting the award itself.

“I’m going to trip, I just know it,” she laughed. “I’m going to cry too. I’m so emotional.”