It’s a wrap! Auto body kids get artsy with cars and tourist center

BY KATHY DALEY

Auto Body and Collision Repair program in Ferrandale has kept on chugging throughout the pandemic. “This is an essential business,” said teacher Fred Muller. “Auto Body never stopped a beat.”

That’s a good thing because the renamed hospitals in Harris and Middletown needed Muller’s students. Logos on the hospital vehicles had to be changed from “Catskill Regional Medical Center” and “Orange Regional Medical Center to Garnet Health Medical Center” in Harris and Middletown.

Enter the auto program’s skill in vinyl wrapping – the practice of applying large sheets of adhesive-backed clear vinyl film to individual panels of a car, van or truck, thus transforming the look of the vehicle.

“For a lot of the kids, it was a new experience,” said Muller. “It takes a lot of work. They have to get used to how the material responds. But they quickly get to see a finished product. Within weeks, they see the fruits of their labor.”

In 2015, students refurbished a van that helped disabled veterans to health appointments. The vinyl lettering “All Veterans. Some Give All” graced the ambulances, along with the logo of the Sullivan County Veterans Coalition. Muller’s students also revamped a Corvette as a tribute car for a Veterans parade.

This year, students and teachers worked with professionals at Garnet Health to come up with the artwork needed for the side of the hospital vehicles. That design was then entered into the computerized printer in Muller’s classroom. Students took photos of the four vehicles, which were then used as a kind of canvas on which the artwork was overlaid.

Eventually, a four and a half feet by eight foot sheet was ready to be cut up and pieced together: like floor tiles on the various parts of the vehicles. One was a security car and the others were courier vehicles that run between Harris and Middletown.

The students wrapped all four, and still have more four more vehicles to go. For students like Justin Brooks, all the work is worthwhile.

“I’ve been here because I want to work with my hands on cars,” said Brooks, a senior at Tri-Valley High School. “I used to fix cars with my uncle after the cars had been wrecked. Well take a bumper apart and see what it was that hit the bumper: a deer or a tree or another car.”

“I do car work at my house,” Brooks said. “We painted a few cars with automotive paint. But I want to do it.”

“I like doing the wraps,” added student Cody Boudou, a junior from Tri-Valley. “It teaches you to have patience because the wrap might stretch too much. It takes time and patience.”

Board mentioned another project that engaged students, using photo decals of real students to jazz up the new mobile classroom that serves students whose home or geographic locations do not have access to high-speed Internet.

BOCES has worked with Rolling V, the school transportation company, to outfit a school bus that can provide internet access in remote areas. Students climb up the bus steps, turn on a computer and do their school work. But occasionally, they’ve had a hard time actually viewing the computer screen.

“Kids would be working on a computer and getting glare from the sun,” said Muller. “We wanted to move or less put up a screen. Our intent was to accomplish privacy but allow light in.”

“Using the same concept as window vision film,” explained Muller, “we put photos of students in our Career and Technology Program (catering, cosmetology, etc.) on the bus windows. Some kids working in the bus actually recognized classmates on the windows.”

Muller’s student work is also drawing raves at the Sullivan Catskill Visitors Center, in the mall opposite the Liberty Diner.

“A group of us wrapped windows that feature the artwork of the artist Milton Glaser,” said Muller, referring to Glaser’s famous “I Love New York” logo and other iconic graphic work in the 1960s into the 1980s.

Roberta Lockwood, president and CEO of the Sullivan Catskill Visitors Association couldn’t have been more thrilled.

“It’s so much fun to see youthful talent and to showcase what they can do inside the mall,” said Lockwood. “They’ve done great work for us. We’re so fortunate that this talent exists. What a joy it is to work with Fred and the students.”
Beautifying a bus

On a new mobile classroom, BOCES teacher Fred Muller and a student work on attaching adhesive-backed vinyl photos of students in the BOCES programs in the arts, automotive technology, cosmetology and more. The special photos serve to lessen the sun's glare as students without home Internet service climb onto the bus to do classwork and homework. The outfitted bus for learning is a joint effort between BOCES, Rolling V Transportation, Sullivan 180 and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther.

Opening doors for students

Student Cody Bond of the Tri-Valley School District in Grahamsville reworks the color of a Garnet Health Medical Center van. He’s studying in BOCES’ Auto Body program, which connects with the wider community on many projects.