

WILMOT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



Wilmot HS CTE Profile

Student: Justin Seelig

Submitted By: Mr. Tracy Strother, CTE Advisor

At the end of a long hallway at Wilmot Union High School is a sign on the wall that reads, “Life is BIG, be prepared.”

Senior Justin Seelig walks past that sign multiple times each day, and he will be more prepared than many of his classmates when he graduates from Wilmot this spring. Seelig will have earned 30 college credits through dual-credit courses, putting him a full year ahead of his class of 2020 peers when he enters Gateway Technical College next fall.

“I didn’t even realize until this year that I had earned that many credits,” Seelig said. “It makes me feel really good to know that I’m doing something right.”

Most of Seelig’s college credits were earned in automotive, business and hospitality classes taught at Wilmot – which are also transcribed with classes at Gateway. Dual-credit courses allow students to earn college credit by taking college-level classes in high school. Seelig’s extra effort will save him over \$4,000 in tuition.

Through some of those courses, Seelig has also earned an industry certificate from the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence and a certification from the American Hotel Lodging Education Institute. He is also on track to earn the Essentials of Hospitality Management certification by May. Industry certifications are often the first step in building a career as a service professional – no matter the student’s chosen pathway.

“Justin has a lot of desire,” said Jeff Kehoe, automotive instructor at Wilmot High School. “Sometimes that’s 70-80 percent of the battle – getting students motivated to learn.”

An early fascination with toy Hot Wheels cars fostered Seelig’s interest in how engines work. He learned to drive ‘Up North’ on narrow, muddy roads when visiting his grandparents, and now he enjoys working on his 2008 Volkswagen Jetta. He credits both of his parents for supporting his interests and he recognizes how family support gave him the confidence to explore many areas of learning. But, it was only recently that Seelig recognized how his experience working in banquet service at the Grand Geneva Resort is also preparing him for a career in automotive service.

“(Hospitality) wasn’t something I thought I would be into, but once I took Mrs. Lefko’s class it kind of came to me because I work in the industry and the classwork related to my job,” Seelig said. “You don’t always think about it on the job, but service is about dealing with people.” Over the past two years on his hospitality job, Seelig says he has learned how to respond quickly to changes and sometimes challenging people. “I have to problem-solve and really manage my time,” he said.

“One thing I’ve learned is how important communication skills are on any job, especially while working on a team.”

Wilmot's business and hospitality teacher, Kris Lefko, appreciates Seelig's work ethic. “He has such diverse interests. Justin has overcome an insecurity many students have of not being able to talk in front of a class, and now he is totally confident presenting in front of total strangers,” she said. Her student agrees. “I’m a lot more comfortable and confident talking in front of people,” he said.

“When I started at Wilmot as a freshman, I had just moved from Milwaukee and didn’t know anybody. I didn’t know what opportunities were here until my counselor, Mr. Djordjevic, took the time to really get to know me and encouraged me to explore a lot of options. And I guess that’s paid off.” Seelig has taken all of the automotive classes that Wilmot High School offers, but he still spends his free time in the auto shop working on a burned-out motor to continue learning. “I don’t know everything about cars, but I trust myself to learn,” Seelig said. In offering advice to younger students, Seelig said, “There are different opportunities no matter what you do in high school. Even those things that don’t seem to go together very well really do relate.”

“School isn’t all about tests, so don’t second guess yourself. Trust yourself that you can get a good grade in any class. I learn best when I’ve seen it before, or done it before, and then I know what to do in that situation. Your mind is going to be a lot clearer when you’re not panicking about things. Just relax. The more you stress about things, all you’re going to do is miss a big part of life.”

“I never thought I’d be ready or excited for college, but I’m totally ready for that next level.”