

# Cool Wheels Car Show helps local youth center

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Special Correspondent

**Tony McClam** hopes to build his own car one day and work in the automotive service industry.

McClam, 22 and of Deerfield Beach, is enrolled in the Youth Automotive Training Center and was one of the students who volunteered at its fourth annual Cool Wheels Car Show. The show, staged at Quiet Waters Park in Deerfield Beach, featured more than 500 cars and helps build awareness of the program, said **Terry Routley**, executive director.

"The number of participants, the number of spectators, it was just awesome. There had to be conservatively 3,000 people milling about the car show," Routley said.

"We saw the best of the best in show cars, entertainment, food trucks, vendors and volunteers. And, most importantly, we accomplished the goal of telling the local car community about the Youth Automotive Training Center," said **Mona Aliseo**, the car show's co-chairwoman.

The nine-month, tuition-free program is for 16- to 21-year-olds, most of whom are considered at risk and disadvantaged, Routley said. Students learn basic automotive repair skills, academic remediation, GED preparation, job preparation and



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Among those volunteering at the Youth Automotive Training Center's Cool Wheels Car Show are, from left, Ricardo Galvan, Jerome McClam, Jovani Torres, Tony McClam and Julian Cintron.

life skills, including finances, dealing with authority, health and fitness, resumes, interviews and filling out job applications, he said.

Students also are given daily lunches, a mechanic's uniform, counseling and a professional tool box that they can keep upon graduation.

McClam said his life would be significantly worse without the program.

"God forbid, I'd be in jail somewhere or even dead," he said. "They care about you and make sure you are on time. ... I've never been in a program like this. They are good and wonderful people."

**Julian Citron**, 17 and of Weston, also is grateful for the program.

"It made an immediate,

huge impact [on my life]," he said. "... I have a completely different mindset. I go about things differently; it changed my life."

More than 600 students have graduated since the program's start in 1984, Routley said. The ultimate goal is to place graduates in industry jobs, such as with car dealerships, repair shops or in the aviation or marine industry, he said.

"The goal is to get them self-sufficient as far as job placement," he said. "We also support a number of kids to continue their education when they graduate. We teach them a skill and of course put them to work in that trade; there are a lot of opportunities."

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