

# Merit Award



## ***Brandi Caloia***

Electronics Program

**William D. Ford Career-Technical Center**

Plymouth-Canton High School

Nominator: Zachary MacLean, Program Instructor

Circuit boards have always been around her house and Brandi's stepfather would let her work with him, allowing her to learn from her mistakes. All of her career investigations helped point her to the electronics/robotics program. Now, she is a second year student in the program, where students apply their knowledge of electronics to the design, building, and programming of robots.

Last year, she built a Flutterbot, which she programmed using C++, and for which she earned a Certificate of Outstanding Performance. She also earned Algebra 2 Credits during her first year in the program and will be eligible for the fourth year math credit this year. She is the class expert on soldering.



Brandi is a mentor to other students in her program and freely shares her ideas and knowledge. She encourages students in nontraditional careers to engage and succeed. She is an asset to any team she joins as she extends the capacity of the team. She served as a student ambassador when 6<sup>th</sup> graders visited, and enthusiastically highlighted how much fun STEM classes are. Brandi has also been part of the team who visited the State Capital to showcase technology in the classroom to state representatives and senators.

Brandi is a member of *I-Save*, a student recycling program and the Innovative Vehicle Design team, where an interdisciplinary team of students create an alternatively fueled vehicle. She volunteers for Friends of Michigan Animal Rescue and is a waitress at a senior living facility after school and on weekends.

She is also a volunteer with Engineering Ambassadors, which brings high-technology to younger students across the district. She has competed in SkillsUSA regionals. She was part of a team who designed robotic drums using Kinects, which won the people's choice award and 1<sup>st</sup> place at Robofest regionals.

Brandi is interested in both electronics and their application in the automotive field. She plans to attend Schoolcraft College to continue her studies in electronics/robotics.

**T**here is a lot of stereotyping. I just overlooked it and kept on being myself.

~ Brandi Caloia