

Randy's Garage, Inc.

2016 Chet Perry Breakthrough Employer

Randy and Shelley Wimberly, owners of Randy's Garage, Inc., located in LaBelle, allowed Sergio Gomez, a student with a penchant for cars, to intern at their garage during the summer of 2012.

Sergio exemplified excellent work ethics so Randy and staff chose to invest their time to train and support the high school student in all aspects of his life, particularly to help him become a mechanic. Randy attended Sergio's graduation from LaBelle High School in 2013 and assisted in finding additional part-time work for him. Randy became Sergio's proudest mentor.

Barbara Key-Ramos, an Able Trust High School High Tech program manager for Hendry and Glades counties, first met the Wimberlys while recruiting employers to work with her students with disabilities during the summer of 2012. The Able Trust High School High Tech program works with students with disabilities to ensure a career interest path for vocational and postsecondary education.

Ramos helped Sergio explore careers and supported his career path after being paired with the Wimberlys. Sergio continued his post-secondary education at Fort Myers Technical College and became a certified mechanic.

"My experience with this wonderful employer and his staff has been nothing but positive from day one. The relationship that was initially formed in 2012 until now is the model of social capital relationship investment," Ramos said. "Sergio is happy. He has his certification in mechanics and has higher aspirations to be a great mechanic like Randy Wimberly.

Goodwill is not the only organization to recognize the Wimberly's investment in their community. In 2015, they received the Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES) Award from the Fort Myers Institute of Technology. AYES includes partners among the automotive industry, Florida Departments of Education and Labor, local dealerships and NATEF-accredited high schools.

Shelly Wimberly serves on the High School High Tech Business Advisory Council and brings community awareness to the program in Hendry County.

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