



GE Aviation - Muskegon

Johnson Technology, a wholly owned subsidiary of GE Aviation, manufactures both commercial and military engine components and currently employs roughly 900 people across its three plants in Muskegon and Norton Shores. Skilled tradesmen such as tool makers looking for work are very difficult to find which is why GE Aviation Muskegon, with the help of West Michigan Works and the Going Pro Talent Fund, decided to create apprenticeship programs and grow them internally. Aldo Gonzalez-Ramirez took this opportunity to expand his skill set to be able to continue and innovate in the work of those that will be retiring from this trade in the coming years.

Aldo came to the United States from Durango, Mexico back in 2009 speaking very little English. He spent the next few years working hard at his job and at learning the language. He started working at GE Aviation back in August of 2015 as a machine operator and quickly became the person others would go to for answers to questions and for help. His role became that of a set-up person: trouble shooting and tuning machines to adhere to the very tight tolerances and round the clock production schedule. The desire to learn more was evident from the beginning which is a primary factor to why he is doing so well as a tool maker apprentice.

Aldo applied for and was awarded an apprenticeship with the tool making team in January of this year. "I wanted to develop my skills into a high precision, very meticulous trade. It's what I love." While others may go home to rest and relax, Aldo has been known to go home and watch advanced CNC machining videos on YouTube and network with other cutting-edge machinists. His work and his scheduled reviews have been stellar as a result.

The apprenticeship is tough having to work full time in effort to complete the 8000 hours of on the job training while taking multiple classes per semester at Muskegon Community College, but when finished, Aldo will be a registered USDOL Journeyman Tool Maker whose pay range surpasses \$30 an hour. When asked what his initial thoughts were when he was chosen for the apprenticeship program Aldo said, "I felt like it was just the beginning. I knew it was going to be tough, but I just need to dedicate the time to do it. There is no room for procrastination."

When someone with this type of drive and ambition meets a career opportunity like this, it's a win-win situation. Aldo is not only going to be a great tool maker, he is going to pioneer new avenues for continuous improvement with GE Aviation Muskegon.

