Ariel Betancourt, Sophomore

Mechatronics Academy @ West Tech
Glades Central Class of 2021

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Mechatronics Academy student Ariel Betancourt represents the past, present, and future of the Glades. Armed with a dream and a plan to turn that dream into reality, Ariel is forging his path to success!

Why did you choose to attend West Tech?

My growing creativity showed very early in my childhood. I built spaceships and machines with cardboard boxes and tape. I grew up knowing nothing is free in life and everything comes at a cost. I knew I had to work hard to reach my goals to understand, build, and maintain machines. I knew had to create a path that would lead me to achieve my goals. The summer before the start of my freshman year, my family and I visited West Tech and I knew that it was the place where I could focus on both preparing for college and a career. At West Technical Education Center, I have been learning robotics, the fundamentals of engineering, and now I am focusing on electrical engineering. The great instruction provided by my teacher helps me better understand the working environment of an engineer. Mr. Alerte, Mechatronics Instructor, is very good teacher. He makes learning difficult concepts easy and fun.

What are you working on now?

In Mechatronics, I am working on electrical circuits, Kirchhoff's Law, and my last two modules for my pre-engineering industry certification. On my own, I have been teaching myself coding in C Sharp and Robot C. Next year at Glades Central I am taking Advanced Placement Computer Science; in that class I will learn Python. I also am a member of the Reading Club so I am reading a novel. I hope that we are able to meet the author.

It's my understanding that you participate in the Take Stock in Children program?

Yes, I have been a mentee in Take Stock in Children since 2017. Participating in this program is providing me with the opportunity to focus on college readiness and college life. In addition to the program paying for 2 years of community college or 1 year of university upon completion, I am receiving support on planning the best pathway to college and how to manage while in college. My mentor, School Board Member Marcia Andrews, is an inspiration to me try harder. The scholarship only covers the cost of tuition so I am researching ways to cover the costs of on campus housing, a meal plan, and books.
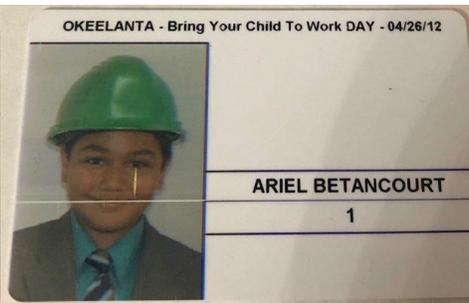
What is your career goal?

I am looking forward to working in the field of computer engineering. That's why have been learning different coding languages. I am excited to work for Florida Crystals at the Okeelanta site. Most of the machines there rely on sophisticated technology and machinery which are my two loves.

Why Florida Crystals?

I can never forget that one special 'Take Your Child to Work Day' where I was forever mesmerized by the intricacy and complexity of Florida Crystals' facility. I was truly inspired to work hard to build such complex machines. Based on my own research and my Mechatronics class visit to the rice mill, I learned that Florida Crystals has been expanding in the fields of chemistry, engineering, business and marketing. Florida Crystals has been in my life since day one. My father, Alberto Rafael Betancourt, worked there for over 30 years and is close associate with Take Stock in Children.

What are your immediate plans after you graduate from high school?

To work part time at Florida Crystals while enrolled at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in the computer science or computer engineering program. I was able to visit the College of Engineering with West Tech when we participated in a live remote with an astronought on the International Space Center; it was my first visit to FAU. During my visit, I was able to recognize some of the concepts related to electrical engineering when I observed some of the FAU Engineering students working in an experimental laboratory. Concepts that we discussed in the Mechatronics Academy.