

Student IT department volunteer recognized across campus

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News & Feature Editor

It is an early, brisk Monday morning when AP English Language & Composition teacher Lorraine Liverpool turns on her projector and speakers, ready to begin watching the “I Have a Dream” speech by Martin Luther King Jr. Rather than hearing the intended audio, the tragic sounds of a faulty speaker fill the air. With a sigh, she phones the Information Technology (IT) department, expecting to see the usual Marcus De Armas in a few minutes, and is instead met with the sight of senior Shawn Diaz, eager to assist her.

Diaz is a year-round volunteer for the IT department who first started out during the 2021-2022 school year and worked closely with Kurt Vendreyes, the previous Microtechnology Specialist, before Marcus De Armas later took over the role. Having a passion for tech while also being involved with the robotics club, Diaz had searched for other ways he could assist the school while also learning more about technology.

“I was trying to figure out how I can help the school more because I know there are different clubs and activities here on the school’s campus,” Diaz said. “I am in the robotics club and now I also help out the Microtech Specialist, which was previously Mr. Vendreyes first before Mr. De Armas came in January.”



LET’S GET TECHNICAL: Microtech Specialist Marcus De Armas guides senior Shawn Diaz as they prioritize which malfunctioning laptops to fix first. De Armas has worked with Diaz since January when he took over the role from the previous specialist, Kurt Vendreyes. *Photo by Gary Dolhon*

Diaz works directly with De Armas for the entirety of his study hall to take on simple tech tasks together like reimaging computers or fixing sound systems. As an assistant, Diaz frequently enters classrooms having mechanical issues and reports back to De Armas to prioritize the department's numerous responsibilities throughout the day. If the problem is at his skill level, he is even able to fix it by himself. Media Specialist Norma Tchir is just one of the many administrators Diaz is commonly seen assisting, especially with the IT department's location being in the Media Center.

"His original job and the bulk of his work is repairing computers, organizing materials and delivering them to teachers," Tchir said. "I think his work benefits the school greatly. He has put in a lot of hours over the past two years and because Mr. De Armas is in the Media Center, I see him here all the time."



SHAWN-THE-BUILDER: Senior Shawn Diaz is hard at work reimaging school laptops within the IT department's office in the Media Center. Diaz, interested in computer science, has worked closely with the department since last school year to assist with all technology-related issues found throughout campus. *Photo by Valentina Padula*

Having more than one set of hands on deck for the IT department has increased the productivity of technology-reliant classes and lowered the total amount of online issues found throughout campus. Time-wise, Diaz has allowed for the expansion and focus of the IT Department onto more pressing issues, such as replacing old laptops and reorganizing inventory, rather than the normal day-to-day technology malfunctions. De Armas, who Diaz regularly works with, describes him as an eager learner who is always looking for something to get his hands on.

“He does all the simple stuff that he is able to do, but I will show him stuff later on that he has asked about,” De Armas said. “He wanted to come every day during the summer to help and I had to limit him to once every two weeks because every day he would text me asking to come in. If I did not allow him that, he would just start showing up because he is tenacious like that, you know?”

Diaz hopes to continue his passion of computer science as a career later in life. Having loved anything technology-related since he was little, his interest in the field has only grown as he evolved into working with the mechanics and programming of computers. Broward College, he said, is his first step towards a computer science career and while he does not quite know what he wants to specify in, he knows he wants to work for the big leagues.

“This is a profession that I would do in the future,” Diaz said. “I love computers so much and so far this has been like training for me. In case I ever work for a company like Microsoft, Nintendo or any computer engineering company, I will be fully trained and have some type of knowledge on it.”