

Mothers of Toyota Take Pride in Working Alongside Their Children

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As a Toyota employee with a background in human resources, Beth Renfro had a feeling that a career at Toyota would be a good fit for her son, Nash. But as a parent, Beth didn't want to push him too hard to follow in her footsteps at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky (Toyota Kentucky).



Beth & Nash Renfro

“I wanted him to come in and have his own experience,” Beth says. “I try really hard to not tell him ‘You should do this or you should do that.’ I try to let him draw his own conclusions and make his own decisions.”

Luckily, Beth wasn’t the only one to see her son’s potential. Nash’s teachers noticed his interest in welding and metal art and encouraged him to take vocational classes. After he graduated high school in 2018, Nash joined Toyota’s Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program, which allows technicians to transition into the automotive field with a two-year degree and a year of hands-on experience.

“I had teachers who motivated me and pushed me in this direction because they saw that I had interest in things I didn’t necessarily see,” Nash says. “I went through maintenance classes in high school, and it turns out it’s something I actually love and enjoy doing every day.”

Beth, who has worked at Toyota Kentucky for almost 34 years, wasn’t surprised that Nash took so well to the AMT program and is excited to watch him thrive in his career on the powertrain team.

“Working at Toyota has been a great journey for me,” Beth says. “It’s rewarding to see Nash have those same opportunities to be able to grow his career the way he wants to. That’s a great feeling as a parent.”



Donna Thomasson

A Family Affair



Seth Carter

Donna Thomasson has been at Toyota for almost 24 years, primarily in quality and receiving inspection at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana (Toyota Indiana). Today, she works alongside her husband, son Seth, and daughter Jamie.

“My career has given me the chance to do things with my kids, my relationships and life in general,” Donna says. “Now I’m excited as a parent because I know what kind of company they’re coming into. Knowing my kids and the ambition they have and how much they’re willing to learn, I think they’ll do good things here.”

Donna’s son, Seth Carter, joined the company six years ago and now works in maintenance.

“I could tell how much she liked working here and it was definitely motivation for me to apply,” Seth says. “I got to ask her some questions before I came out here on things to expect.”

When Seth first started at Toyota, Donna says she was very excited for him and his new position. Like any parent, she’s always encouraging him to keep working hard and find opportunities to grow. Currently, Donna says, she’s hoping he will apply to be a group leader.

Donna’s daughter, Jamie Slaton, started working at Toyota Indiana nine months ago in assembly on the south door line. Though Jamie had worked in the Toyota plant as a contractor until 2008, working in assembly was a totally new experience for her.



Jamie Slaton

“My mom’s helped encourage me a lot,” Jamie says. “It was tough being new, and there were days I would get discouraged, but she was always there telling me ‘You got this.’ It definitely helped having her here and cheering me on.”

Donna and Jamie currently work in the same building and spend a lot of time together including having lunch together almost every day. Donna even joked about potentially giving too much advice to Jamie.

“I am much more hands on with Jamie,” Donna says, laughing. “I always just like giving her advice, reminding her to take care of her hands while they adjust to the work. The other day we were talking about something, and she goes, ‘Mom! I’ve got this.’”

Room to Grow

When Beth first started at Toyota Kentucky in 1988, she was assigned to the paint shop. Through Toyota’s tuition reimbursement benefits, Beth went to school at night, earning both her associate’s and bachelor’s degrees while working over the years in payroll, employee involvement, team member relations and quality control.

“Toyota has done an excellent job of helping me grow my career and encouraging me to finish my education,” she says. “My manager at the time knew I wanted to move to Team Member Relations and he said that once I finished my education, he’d do everything he could to help me make that move.”

Seeing how his mother was supported at work, Nash is confident in his ability to grow at Toyota himself. He is currently working in powertrain, where his quality circle recently won platinum, and just completed team leader classes.

“I’ve expressed interest, so my group leaders and management have really taken that by the horns and tried to help me anyway they can,” Nash says. “I believe that’s true for anybody at the company. If you want to grow, they’re more than willing to help you get where you want to be.”

“It’s a good place to work,” Nash adds. “When you look at Toyota and see how many second-generation employees are really out there, that’s a testament to that. There’s a ton of them.”