



While Covid-19 continues to create hurdles for the East Syracuse Minoa Spartan Garage, this school year is better than last—students are in person and on campus every school day.

“Finding, buying and getting parts delivered continues to be the biggest challenge for the program,” said Michael Edmunds, automotive technology teacher.

The 2021-22 raffle vehicle is a 1961 Ford F100. It’s a unibody, so the truck’s cab is not separate from the bed. This body style was unique to 1961 through limited 1963 models and has added to the parts issue.

“Despite the challenges, we will get through the curriculum and build a classic car for our fan base that supports us,” Mr. Edmunds added.

This is the 17th vehicle that high school students of the ESM Central High School’s Spartan Garage have either built or restored to give away to a lucky person with the winning ticket.

The annual raffle funds the following year’s project vehicle. Proceeds also support graduating students who are motivated and driven, whether they are headed to the military, workforce or college.

“I love working with my hands and that’s what I get to do here. It’s my favorite class and I enjoy it,” explained Senior Kyle Pilon. He believes classes like Automotive Technology help to keep some students in school.

Kyle is headed to the Marine Corps for aviation mechanics after high school. “It’s something where I’ll still work with my hands. I wanted to serve my country as well as take up the challenge of becoming a Marine.”

The F-100’s two-tone color is reminiscent of the original Monte Carlo Red and Corinthian White. The 292 Y-Block V-8 Engine is unique and being rebuilt by Bloss Machine. It will have a standard shift 4-speed manual with a clutch. The F100 will also have 4-wheel disc brakes by Master Power Brakes, Vintage Air AC, a Dakota Digital Dash and a new seat and carpeting.

Students voted to keep the original ride height and suspension. The truck will be enhanced with American Racing Custom Wheels and Pypes Performance Exhaust.

Fortunately the Spartan Garage connected with Slick Truck Parts, which specializes in reconditioned and used truck parts for older models.

“We can repair or replace everything that’s necessary. We’re working hard to restore this F100 back to its better days,” said Senior Jaden Ellis.

Many local businesses help with the annual raffle vehicle project donating or discounting parts and labor. Ray Miller once again rebuilt the transmission with help from students.

There are 11 seniors and 12 juniors in Automotive Technology I and II classes with another 32 students taking the Automotive Fundamentals intro class split between the high school’s two semesters. They all work on the truck. The Spartan Garage Auto Tech Club meets on Thursdays to do more work and students also drop by during free periods and after school on other days.

“It’s not really book intensive—it’s just turning a wrench and working on cars,” said senior Austin Relyea about the classes. He plans to attend Onondaga Community College to pursue an automotive career.

Austin added, “Growing up and working on cars with my dad—I always wanted to do it. He wanted me to stay safe about it, so I joined the class to learn more and then my interest really took off. I know what to expect in a career and it’s given me a base for the future.”

Students also work on hundreds of “live” vehicles for every year that customers drive on roadways when they leave the garage.

Behind the scenes, the ESM Spartan Garage Booster Club is a group of dedicated parents and supporters that assists with the raffle.

Raffle ticket information and more photos are available on the Spartan Garage’s website at www.spartangarage.org or by contacting technology teacher Mike Edmunds at medmunds@esmschools.org or 315-434-3313.

To order by mail, raffle tickets are \$10 each, 3 for \$25 or 15 for \$100. Make checks payable to ESM Spartan Garage Booster Club or “ESM SGBC” and mail to: East Syracuse Minoa CHS, Attn: Spartan Garage Car Raffle, c/o Mike Edmunds, 6400 Fremont Rd., East Syracuse, NY 13057. The raffle drawing is July 17.

The Spartan Garage is looking for next year’s project. They’d love to restore a 1968-70 Dodge Charger if they can find one reasonably priced. However, with current car market prices and parts challenges, they may go back to a Factory Five Racing kit car. Contact the garage if you can help.