



# GAME TIME

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## VOLKSWAGEN ACADEMY GRADUATE ENJOYS FULL LIFE

## PLAYER PROFILE

Joe Waller's life has come full circle in the four and a half years he's worked at Rey Reece Volkswagen in Portland, Oregon. When he first came on board as a VATRP graduate (Volkswagen Academy Technician Apprentice Program), he was looking for a dealership that could bring him back home. What he found at Rey Reece Volkswagen was much more – a dealership that puts family first and supported him wholeheartedly as he and his wife expanded their family during two lengthy adoptions from Russia.

"My first inclination was to apply for the Volkswagen Academy because I knew there were four or five quality dealers in my hometown versus other automobile brands that only had one or two locations in the area," he said. "With Volkswagen, there were so many more choices and that was important to me. Also, I've always liked the brand, knew it was a reliable car and fun to work on."

Upon graduation, Joe pursued Rey Reece himself, and as he likes to say, "Made his own plan." He's been doing that since high school when he enlisted in the Navy for four years, moved to the Los Angeles area, got married and selected CTG's Rancho Cucamonga, CA, campus for his automotive training when his career needed a jump start.

He hasn't looked back since. "If you have the right attitude, you can be way more successful," Joe said.

Recently, Joe was a top qualifier in an internal competition called the Volkswagen Service Qualification Championship. He successful-

ly answered 60 questions proving he was in the top tier of technicians nationally, and was awarded an all-expenses paid trip to Las Vegas with luxury accommodations at the Bellagio Hotel & Casino.

"My Academy training has been a huge advantage for me," he said. "I came into the dealership as an electrical specialist. It would take many years of on the job training to match

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**Joe Waller // Lead Technician**  
Rey Reece Volkswagen in Portland, Oregon

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Frank Cruz, Service Manager at Rey Reece, said Joe came to the dealership highly recommended.

"Joe was the first hire we made from the Volkswagen Academy and he's worked out tremendously well. He came into the dealership with high base line knowledge and possessed a level of maturity and responsibility similar to our older technicians. We promoted him to a lead technician in a short amount of time, so he now has a team of technicians he supervises. We really got a quick return on our investment from Joe," Frank said.

When Joe took some lengthy breaks from the shop to adopt two children from Russia, the team at Rey Reece was behind him 100%. His first trip overseas was one and a half months and his second trip, only two weeks later, was another month. He and his wife came home with a boy and a girl who are now 4 and 18 months respectively.

"There was never any backlash for the time I needed to pursue these adoptions. Everyone at the shop was always very encouraging and supportive. With such a small dealership, it's like a family and they treat you like that," said Joe.

As Joe reflects on his journey to family man, team lead and near Master Status, he believes one principle has carried him through.

"Stick with school, no matter how tough it is. It's only a few months out of your life. If it's what you truly love to do, it will make you happy." ●