

The Torch

Forging a connection to the future!



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Employers Hire ...the BEST

Space is available for interviewing Welding/Fabrication Boot Camp participants following the completion ceremony from 2:30 - 4:00 pm.

For more information contact Alonzo Payne from the Racine County Workforce Development Center at 262-638-6547 or Alonzo.Payne@goracine.org

Success Story - Jeremy Jurkiewicz (above), a 22 year old Racine native has been interested in the welding / fabrication field since he was a child, partly attributed to the success that he has seen in his two uncles employed in the welding field. Through a program at his high school he worked in maintenance at a company that employed welders. After high school he enlisted in the Army Reserves. During this time he spent ten and a half months in Afghanistan. When he returned home, he saw the listing and jumped at it.

The boot camp is Jeremy's first college experience and he "did not think it would be this fun to learn". He said the program is strong and everyone gets along and works together. Being the youngest student in the boot camp, he was worried the other students would not take him seriously. Reflecting back to orientation when they were all strangers he was surprised at how fast the group started working as a team. "I didn't think it would be like that, but by week two we were all in each other's booths, helping each other out, very supportive." He enjoys working with both his mind and his hands and likes how skillful and creative he can be, "you get out of it what you put into it." He prides himself in being organized and punctual. He likes seeing progress every week, this helps motivate him.

Jeremy looks forward to finding a job and establishing a lifelong career. He may use his GI Bill funding to continue his education in another Advanced Welding and Fabrication program. Jeremy is always looking to improve and is excited that he enjoys his work. He is so grateful for the opportunity that has been given to him, and hopes he can pay it back by sharing his story with future boot camp participants to inspire and motivate them.



Alonzo Payne

Many Hats - Instructors from Gateway Technical College and staff from the Workforce Development Centers work to ensure successful outcomes of the boot camps. The instructors run the courses and Alonzo Payne helps to support the students and teach them the necessary soft skills. Alonzo has been devoted since the first Welding Boot Camp. Alonzo is not just an employment consultant, but wears many hats. He has been referred to as a mentor, a coach, and a drill sergeant depending on what the individual needs. Alonzo and RCWDC staff take the candidates through the application and interview process. Once they begin the course he greets them every morning and briefs them on "hot topics" just like a supervisor. One of the things he tells them is "Fifteen minutes early is being on time, being on time is late, and being late means termination."

Alonzo helps students create contingency plans to deal with things that may come up outside of school. For instance, helping students determine who to call if their ride or babysitter falls through. He's been known to spell out "T.A.N.E" to let the students know that "There Are No Excuses about being late or finishing the program once you started." He is there to make sure that the students attend tutoring. He encourages the A students to stay and help their peers who are struggling, because they can also learn from the experience. He has learned about the challenges people in our community are struggling with and finds that what many really need is a support system. One of the biggest challenges while in the program can be that the participants are not used to succeeding and do not know how to handle it. The most fulfilling part short term is seeing the students graduate from the program and long term, when they have a good paying job. Participants are required to report back for the first year, and he is very proud of the fact that 95% of the CNC boot campers that he has been working with are now employed. "It is a great way for individuals to find careers."

"Alonzo said it best, after 20 days it's a routine." - Rudy De La Paz



Welding/
Fabrication I
BOOT CAMP
Completion
Ceremony

Date: February 1st, 2013
Time: 1:00–2:00 pm Ceremony
2:30–4:00 pm Interviews

Location: SC Johnson iMET Center
2320 Renaissance Blvd. Sturtevant
(Auditorium)



January 2013

Success Story - Rudy (Rodolfo) De La Paz (above) first heard about the Welding/Fabrication Boot Camp at the gym. When his friend told him he was thinking of registering for a welding boot camp it immediately peaked Rudy's interest. He thought "I am in good physical shape and I enjoy welding, I can do that." He was surprised to find out that the boot camp was not rigorous exercise, but a rigorous program and course work. After working for four years doing spot welding as a temporary employee, he welcomed the opportunity to learn fabrication and complete certifications in MSSC. He said that "he knew how to push the buttons, but did not know the process". Now he is learning the fundamentals and if an employer asks him to do a specific weld he will be able to do it. He enjoys the welding, assembling, as well as creating art using welding as the technique. He referred to how cool the "iron man" sculpture was sitting on the table and how he could do that.

Upcoming Welding/Fabrication Boot Camps

Weld/Fab II: March 2013

Weld/Fab III: September 2013

Contact one of the following Workforce Development Center (WDC) representatives for additional information and application materials:

Kenosha: Rich Salisbury, Rich.Salisbury@kenoshacounty.org

Racine: Mark Mundl, mark.mundl@goracine.org

Walworth: Mark Leemkuil, mleemkuil@dwfs.us

As an employer, if you are interesting in learning more about Boot Camp programs contact:

Gateway: Robin Hoke at Hoker@gtc.edu

Racine County Workforce Development Center:

Valerie Hanson at Valerie.Hanson@goracine.org

The most challenging part of the boot camp was the math course. Being out of school for a number of years made it a little more difficult, but he takes advantage of the tutoring and is doing well. He appreciates that tutoring is set up so students can work one on one and ask questions that they may not feel comfortable asking in class.

Rudy knows that this program is a privilege because people in a traditional program would take a lot longer to learn the same skills. After 15 weeks he will have earned 17 credits toward a degree program. Rudy would like to come back once he is employed and complete a more advanced program to learn processes such as Advanced Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW). In the past he never found the right fit, but now he enjoys going to school. One thing he stressed was that welding is not the stereotypical "dirty job," it is clean and organized. Interestingly, the friend he heard about the boot camp from never actually applied, but Rudy is glad he did and said he "would not trade the experience for the world."

Boot Camp to Apprenticeship

Employers, did you know that a candidate from the boot camps can be hired as an apprentice?

On the job and technical training will pick up where the boot camp left off, resulting in a journey-worker status after completion. This is a way to "grow your own" with the schooling and skills to back it up. **Contact: Donna Mews at 262-564-2954 or mewsd@gtc.edu to learn more.**

www.gtc.edu/apprenticeships

Grant funding is currently available in the Southeast Wisconsin region through Department of Labor TIME grants for manufacturers. Contact your local Workforce Development Center for more information.

**Gateway Technical College
Workforce and Economic
Development Division (WEDD)
2320 Renaissance Blvd
Sturtevant, WI 53177**

www.gtc.edu/wedd/boot-camps