Employers Hire  ...the BEST

Space is available to interview Welding/Fabrication Boot Camp participants following the completion ceremony from 2:30—4:30 pm.

For more information contact Todd Nienhaus from the Racine County Workforce Development Center at 262-638-6541 or Todd.Nienhaus@goracine.org.

Success Story - Paul Bruce (above) considered attending Gateway Technical College when he moved back to the area in 1999. Back then he didn’t believe that college was an option due to a lack of money, and that there were few extra moments in a day left to study after he worked his full-time job. This father of three was a truck driver for 21 years. “Truck driving can be hard on the body and it is frustrating always being away from home...missing games and not being able to spend time with the family in the afternoon,” he said.

His schedule is now consumed with the boot camp because he attends class all day, and then drives truck in the evening. He is usually at class early -- between 6:30 and 6:45. It is a full schedule “almost down to the minute” as he put it. He spends a lot of time over the weekend doing homework. Even though he is busy, he does not feel there are excuses and makes sure to meet all his homework deadlines. He feels being more mature has helped him to do better now than when he was in high school. Paul values his instructor Kim Weckerly and respects how he teaches. “It is just interesting, a lot of hands-on experience,” says Paul. He appreciates how the class requires students to be on time and works with students on their professional skills.

Paul’s eldest son shared the welding boot camp opportunity with him while completing the CNC boot camp in December of 2012. Paul is proud to say that his son got a job within two weeks of completing the boot camp. He hopes, and believes he will soon be able to do the same. Paul says the years of trucking, caused him to revisit his career goals and the boot camp gives him the opportunity to do so -- and will provided him with a new career and new earning potential. It will also provide him with another life goal, to just work “one job” in the future and have time for his family. “Having a little work life balance would be nice after all the years of trucking,” says Paul.

An Employer’s Perspective Comments: Gary Meier, President and Co-owner of Metalworld, Inc.

After their graduation from the Welding/Fabrication Boot Camp on February 1, 2013, we interviewed Justin Munoz and Jeremy Jurkiewicz to fill two metal fabricator positions. The candidates did well in the interview, which was expected, since I had performed a mock interview with them less than a week earlier. After successful interviews, both were offered positions, contingent on them passing a physical and drug screening. Both passed and were working for Metalworld within two weeks. In addition to helping with mock interviews, I also was a presenter at several of the boot camp applicant informational sessions, and participated in the Employer Curriculum Review Breakfast.

I would like to point out that Justin and Jeremy are the first direct hires for fabricator positions that Metalworld has done in many years. Previously, positions were filled with the help of temporary services in the Racine area. We would “test drive” the temporaries for several months, and if they had the needed technical and soft skills, they were taken on as fulltime employees. This worked well for some time. However, about a year ago when we were looking to fill two fabricator positions, the prospects we were getting had bad soft skills that were marginal. About that same time, I was made aware of the revamping of the Welding/Fabricating Boot Camp.

As I learned more about the curriculum of the revised program and got a little more involved, I became very optimistic about filling our two fabricating positions with boot camp graduates. We were looking for prospects that were interested in being a metal fabricator as a career, had enough technical knowledge to be teachable in the fabricating trade, and needed to be a fit with our organization. Justin and Jeremy have shown all three of these characteristics throughout their first three months with Metalworld and are now employees with full benefits.

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Equal Opportunity Employer and Educator
Success Story - Scott Bucholz (above) worked as a cement finisher in residential construction for the past 15 years. The ups and downs of working a construction career caused him to look for a different career, one more consistent in workflow and wages. “When the economy struggles, driveways and patios are some of the jobs that are more cosmetic and are dropped,” said Scott.

After being laid off the summer of 2012 for nearly two months, Scott began in earnest his search for a steady and reliable career. His search included something from his past—which has now become part of his future career through his training at the boot camp. Scott worked in a foundry when he was 18 and welding was familiar to him. He remembered and it prompted him to take the Workforce Development application process very seriously, from taking the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) tests in order to qualify, attending required workshops and made sure his resume was in order.

Scott speaks highly of the Workforce Development Center and Gateway Technical College staff members who work together to run the boot camps, even calling his instructor Saad Yousuf “a genius in math” who is “able to teach us at our level.” Scott said he has worked with math his whole life and it is vital to the work that is done in the industry. “Math is probably the most important class that we are taking,” he said.

He is moving from what he called a “jump around” background into a lifetime career and “something he can count on— a constant, a given, security.” In his old job, “if it rains you don’t work” but “even when it rains you’ve got to eat.” With three children to support, he looks forward to “not working paycheck to paycheck” and the security will benefit his family as much as it benefits him. His girlfriend has supported him emotionally and financially and once he is finished he will be able to reciprocate. This will give them the freedom to live wherever they want in the future because “you can go anywhere with a welding career.”