

This is Puget Sound. Now a look inside the issues happening in our communities around the sound. It will also create thousands of good paying manufacturing and construction jobs will take you to Renton Technical College, where interest is high in the welding program on a show called Puget Sound. With all of these future good paying manufacturing and construction industry jobs on the horizon, how do you get the training and the connections? Well, quite a few people are enrolling in vocational programs in the state of Washington, like those offered at Renton Technical College. This weekend I visited the welding shop, which combines classroom time with practical hands on training. Elisa Stuart took the course between 2013 and 15. And returned as a full-time instructor. Uh, my actually was going to take the automotive program at Renton Technical College and I needed something to kind of fill the time. 'cause the program I wanted to join didn't start for a year, so I decided, you know, I'll take welding as an additive and make me more valuable in the field and I just fell in love with it. And were you always a grease monkey as they say you like to tinker with things? Yeah, my dad got me into it and I, I just kind of fell in love with working with my hands ever since, and I'd always kind of been inclined to that. And yeah, I took welding and just fell in love with it. There was a woman who spoke at President Biden's bill signing who is a welder from Seattle. She's into professional trades, are more women getting interested in this field? We're doing our best here to encourage more women to get into the field. My own personal model is anyone can be a welder, you know. It's one of those skills where if you love working with your hands, then come on by we're trying to encourage it more. But I think a lot of women kind of have a little bit of apprehension about it, but we're trying to encourage. More women to get into the field and more women to become welders. 'cause a lot of women actually have a kind of natural talent for it. What is the apprehension? I think there's kind of this idea that the welding field isn't progressive and isn't very welcoming of some of those non traditional sort of people. And that's absolutely not true. Welding is an incredibly Progressive Field, it's, you know, come as you are, do the work and if you do good work, you have a job. What kind of welding opportunities are out there? It's not just one or two. There's quite a few aren't there? Oh yeah, the amount of welding jobs that are out there. We've seen an incredible boom in the past couple months, especially due to the pandemic and everything. There's been this incredible boom in welding jobs. Everything from building bridges to construction to nuclear. The shipyard is going crazy right now. I mean, there's just there's just so much work out right there right now for not just welders but also skilled tradespeople. It's just crazy. You work with your hands, but do you have to have background and scientific knowledge to and? And you know other courses that would benefit in your career. Having some kind of science background is helpful. It's not necessarily required. That's something that we actually teach at Renton Technical, and we teach that science behind the welding as well to try and give people the best opportunity possible to go out and go to work. But it's not one of those things where if you're not good with science, you won't be able to find a job did happen for you. How did you connect the dots and go out there in the workforce after your program training here? But I actually got help from the instructors here. They sent me out on interviews and they looked at my skills and said OK, these are your skills. These are the people we know. Need work and I went out and interviewed and some of them worked out and some of them didn't. And you know, I've worked in everything from nuclear to food service so you know it's just getting those connections and we try and connect people with industry professionals so that we can give people plenty of opportunities to go out and find work. This is one of the few programs here, right? You can still do hands on. COVID hasn't prevented people from coming in and getting the training correct. Our program specifically. We really pushed to come back to campus as soon as possible as soon as it was safe to do so. We've been back on campus since last summer and you know, you can learn some things online, but welding needs to be done with your hands and in person. People already have

welder Shields on, so safety is a priority from the get go. Oddly enough. We were somewhat prepared for this pandemic. A lot of us already had respirators, so a lot of us were like, oh, we're already ready. We've already got respirators, we're good to go. Bridges pipes what maybe is the new welding? What do you see in the future? UM industry is starting to trend a lot more towards robotic welding. The nice thing about robotic welding is it it won't completely take your job. As a welder. You do still need to know how to Weld to program those. A lot of industries moving towards new technologies so things like laser beam welding. Things like electron beam welding, 6 axis robots, three access robots, things like that, so they're really starting to trend towards some of this new technology. Not that there isn't space is out there that still use some of the older, more traditional technology. A lot of industry starting to trend towards some of the 3D printing with welding, and I mean there's just all kinds of new advancements in welding every day. It's really cool, so the big sell again, if I'm not a traditional college student, I want a good paying career out there. This is the place to come. Uh, Oh yeah, if you. If you want a good paying career or working with your. Hands and learning a new skill where there's a really high demand. Welding is the place to be. Renton technical student Michael Galvan learned how to Weld while serving in EU S Navy. He decided to pursue it as a private sector career. I was out there for five years in Guam. Did you come out to the northwest, a bang or something like that? Then? Or just? No, I actually came to the northwest to pursue school. I initially went to dive school for seven months at the beginning of 2020. Graduated from there, entered the commercial diving field, and after about a nine month stint, I figured I wanted to further my education and not only learn the underwater welding side, or I had already known that, but learn the topside welding portion as well. What's the reward? What do you like that field of underwater diving and welding? It's very hands on. Very physical. And honestly after my five year stint in the Navy, I really just could not see myself sitting behind a desk. Yeah? I mean, don't get me wrong, there were offers after I left the submarine force, but it just wasn't for me. I wanted to work with my hands, my family, my uncle, my Grandfather, they've my uncles, my Gran father. They've all worked with their hands in different fields, mechanical engineering, carpentry, woodworking, construction and. That's always what's really struck out to me. You were at the gas welding station over here. Is there a difference in the various kinds of welding or as welding welding? There's definitely a lot of differences. I can see how a lot of people would like to say, you know, welding is just welding, but it's there's definitely differences in the equipment that's used. The methods that are used to actually get the Weld onto whatever piece of material that you're trying to join. Yeah, there's a lot that goes into it. Materials, materials, methods. And yeah, I guess that's all I can really say about that. Are there other programs around that offer welding like this that Trenton does? I'd like to believe so, but it was Renton Technical College that really struck not really struck out to me. You know, primarily it's in the name Technical College. It doesn't seem to be a traditional college, you know. You come here to learn a trade skill profession and then you find yourself in that field. You gotta have connections to do. They have that lined up for you. You know, you gotta know who to talk to. I would like to say that you could definitely find those connections. You can network with individuals who are about to leave who are about to leave school. I've seen individuals from companies stop by to speak to our instructors. I'd like to believe if you put yourself out there and you network, you can definitely set yourself up for success once you graduate. So we're here with the infrastructure bill that there's going to be a lot of need for manufacturing and welding and construction, that sort of thing. So it seems like the right time for you to get this sort of training definitely, and you know. There's growth amongst all sorts of sectors. You know technology is always booming, but at the same time I mean that technology and whoever is working on the technology needs to be housed. That's why we're building buildings all over Bellevue. You still see construction Seattle. I highly doubt that the construction

field is ever going to die very much. Kind of like accounting. There's always someone that needs to count that money, right? Solar panels, wind farms. I mean, you name it. We've got to have people to put it together. Of course, definitely, I mean. And I found myself in the diving field. You know, there's you know there's a lot of maritime industry out here. A lot of sailing, you know, boats breakdown. People need to go and people need to go and fix them. Propeller maintenance. You know an old welding, all that stuff. All that kind of stuff. So the normal college career that wasn't for you. I had actually actually went to university back in Texas when I graduated high school about two years through my through my program, I decided that it wasn't for me. And after that, shortly after that I joined EU S military did COVID and you know people being sequestered a little bit and pent up? Did that make you rethink what you want to do at all? Not really having just left the submarine force, it taught me a lot. COVID definitely treated me a lot different than other people I was used to. The isolation, you know submarines. We go out for months. We never hear from family or anything so. But no, it really didn't change my perspective on what I wanted to do. You know, it was just another unfortunate time in history that we would have to get past. You know, I highly doubt that we were just going to put a halt to everything at some point. Industry was going to have to ramp back up again, so if anything, maybe new perspective and you're right place right time to get out there and get the training and the new workforce. I'd like to think so. Yes, you know a lot was a lot came to a halt with COVID, but now that you know with the introduction of vaccines and how everyone is starting to get it get inoculated, I'd like to think that you know. That boom is coming if it's not already here, it's going to be. It's going to be on its way. Mike, you're terrific. Thank you very much for sharing your information on Puget Sound now. Good luck to you in the future anytime. Thank you kindly. The welding program currently has 57 students and recently added more equipment to the shop. College relations director Kathryn Hedlund Hanson tells me enrollment at Renton Technical is up 5% over last fall and there's high interest in computer science, healthcare, automotive and aerospace. It's too bad Renton. Doesn't offer a ferry workers training program.