

Merit Award

Michelle Vought

Welding Program

Oakland Schools Technical Campus Northeast

Oxford High School

Nominator: Steve Langdon, Program Instructor



Michelle discovered welding while enrolled in the Automotive Technology class at her high school. One day, she decided to try welding and, after a brief introduction to the MIG machine, she fell in love with welding. She sought out information on the welding program at OSTC-NE and could not wait to find out more about the many different types of welding.

Michelle completed state certification in automotive brakes and automotive electrical before she switched to the welding program. Students in the Engineering and Emerging Technology Cluster rotate to six different skill areas: welding, machining, CAD drafting, pneumatics/hydraulics, soldering, and electrical wiring. Michelle was the first welding student this year to complete all of the core requirements.

She is inspired by the female welder Jessi Combs, who is not only an extremely skilled and successful welder, but has made a line of welding gear for women—that actually fit. Michelle appreciates this gear, after struggling with welding gloves that were way too big.



Last fall, Michelle had the opportunity to work on a display for the re-opening of the Belle Isle Aquarium. She is proud of being a part of that build because it was the first “real” welding project that she was a part of. Michelle has been involved in the Auto Club at her high school, and the FIRST robotics team at OSTC-NE. She has held the position of shop foreman in her Auto Service Program, and is participating in welding competitions at Washtenaw Community College, Ferris State University, SkillsUSA, Local 169 Boilermakers welding competition, the American Welding Society scholarship competition, and the AAA Ford Student Auto Skills competition.

Michelle knows that welders are well paid and she enjoys the gratification she receives from the precision of her welds. She

also loves being the only girl in her program because it gives her a chance to prove to the guys that a female can do this, too.

Michelle plans to attend Ohio Technical College, pursuing a degree in welding and business management. She hopes to find employment as a chassis and automotive fabrication welder to gain experience that will help her achieve her dream of someday owning her own automotive repair/fabrication shop.

Your gender shouldn't dictate what you do.

~ Michelle Vought