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News Release

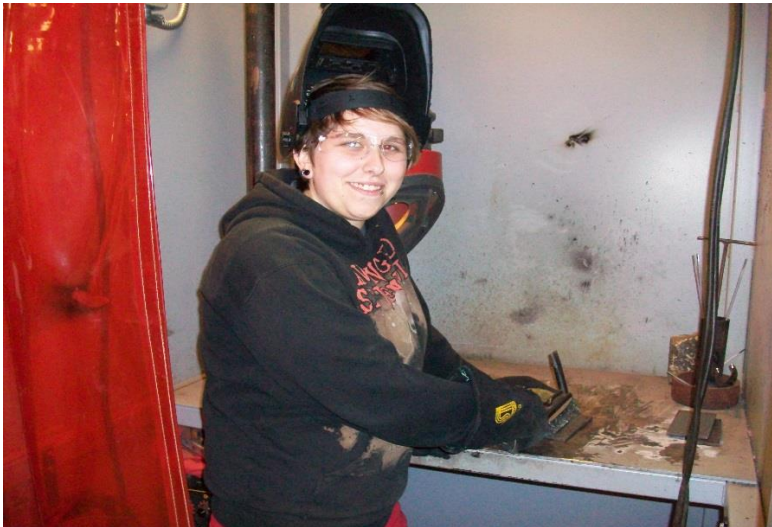
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Breaking the Mold: Recognizing Students in Non-Traditional Programs at NMCC

Aroostook County - Meet Amanda Foster, a student in the welding and metal fabrication program at NMCC. Originally from Houlton, Amanda moved to the Bangor area three years ago, then attended the University of Southern Maine as a photography student. After one year, Amanda decided she wanted to move closer to home, change her career path, and pursue her childhood interests.

“Growing up, my sister and I spent a lot of time with our father in the garage, working on cars. I wanted to paint cars because that was something my father did.”

After much thought, she decided to do welding and metal fabrication instead. The fact that it is a one-year program was very appealing to Amanda, although she may pursue the automotive collision repair program next fall.



Amanda is having a positive experience in the welding and metal fabrication program, stating that her peers and instructors are very helpful. Including Amanda, there are only two females in the program. She reports that this has not changed her learning experience.

“At first, I wasn’t strong enough to operate some of the tools and machines. My male peers are always willing to help me. If they notice that I am struggling, they come over and help. I don’t even have to ask.”

Amanda describes the program as being “fun”. She enjoys the hands-on activities, small classroom setting, and welcoming campus environment.

“People are friendly here and are willing to help out. When I tell people my major, they are supportive, telling me that employers in this field are looking for both males and females.”

When discussing the challenges of being a female in the program, Amanda commented on her initial feelings of uncertainty.

“I doubted myself at first, asking myself, ‘Can I do this?’. It took me awhile to decide if I should pursue this major. I didn’t know what to expect and I wasn’t sure if I would like it. After a few weeks into the program, I got used to it.”

Now that Amanda has acclimated to the program, her confidence in her abilities has improved. When Amanda graduates, she would like to work in a sheet metal shop. If she continues her education and pursues automotive collision repair, her goal is to have her own shop.

Amanda offers advice for females considering a career in welding and metal fabrication or automotive collision repair.

“Don’t doubt yourself or worry about it. Ask questions if you’re unsure. People will help you. Everyone wants you to do well.”

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