



WELDING “JUST CLICKS” FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

For Max Nelson, welding did more than fill a class period; it gave him direction.

Nelson started welding as a sophomore at Braswell High School, part of the Denton ISD (independent school district) in Aubrey, Texas. He speaks about the trade with the kind of passion that makes it obvious he found something that will last.

“Welding gets me excited because I like to make stuff, whether it’s art for someone or fixing something,” says Nelson. “I like working with my hands, and I feel like welding is something I will love for the rest of my life.”

Taylor Alcorn, his welding instructor at Braswell, says “I have met very few people more passionate about welding. Max is gung-ho. He wants to weld from dawn till dusk. If the welding lab needs any work done, that’s what he wants to do.”

High school senior Max Nelson (under the hood) plans to go into welding when he graduates. “There’s a lot of money in it, and I want to travel,” he says. “I want to go around the world, even it’s not just for pipe (welding), so I can meet new people and learn new things.”

Braswell offers two classes, Introduction to Welding and Welding One. Denton ISD's LaGrone Academy offers Welding Two, which Max, a junior, is now taking.

In his classes at Braswell, Nelson (and all students) started with safety and obtaining their NCCER Core (National Center for Construction Education and Research) certification, which is a prerequisite for other craft-specific certifications for technical trades. He then learned about oxy-fuel processes, MIG and Stick welding.

"I was never good at MIG at first, but then I really got into it my junior year and started getting good," says Nelson, who is also confident in his Stick welding skills.

After he completes Welding Two and graduates in May, Nelson plans to go straight into the field, hopefully into pipe welding. Nelson comes from a blue-collar family and sees welding as a path that fits both his interests and his ambitions.



Welding instructor Taylor Alcorn says about student Max Nelson, "I have met very few people more passionate about welding."

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According to welding workforce data from the American Welding Society, the median salary is \$53,000* for a welder who earns a welding certificate and passes an AWS Welding Certification Test, and pipe welders who travel and work hard can easily earn six figures ([see ESAB's Future Fabricators site for profiles of students and welding professionals](#)).

Nelson's family has supported him from the beginning, especially his father, whom Nelson calls his best friend and who helps him push through the challenges of mastering new skills.

"When I brought home welded roses for my mom and other projects, my parents said 'Max, I think you have a future in welding.' That I found something I'm good at makes me happy for myself," says Nelson. "I've never really been good with books or writing, but with welding, it just clicks for me. I can put my hands on it and figure it out."



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