



"You Can Go Anywhere From Here!"

www.shctc.k12.oh.us

District Office
9231 Hamer Road
Georgetown, OH 45121
Phone 937.378.6131
Fax 937.378.4577

Career Technical Center
9193 Hamer Road
Georgetown, OH 45121
Phone 937.378.6131
Fax 937.378.4863

Post Secondary Campus
151 32 Parkway
Williamsburg, OH 45176
Phone 937.378.6131

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Workforce Development Revolving Loan Program. As the Post-Secondary Director of Southern Hills CTC, I witness firsthand the impact this program has made and is making on the lives in my region.

The Loan Program has enabled many students to further their education and thus, improve their lives. The welding program at Southern Hills CTC utilizes the Loan Program. The welding program is a 600-hour program which costs \$6000. Many indigent people would not have the means to enroll or complete the welding program without financial assistance. By completing the program, students have the ability to obtain 4 national welding certifications. Welders are in high demand in our region, such that students are most often employed before they complete the program. These welding positions pay well above minimum wage, vastly improving the living situations of many students.

My very first student utilizing the Loan Program was Shane. Shane's brother brought him into the school asking about what programs we offered as Shane was unemployed. Shane expressed that he didn't have any money to pay for training nor did he have a job. I explained about the Loan Program. He was very excited and enrolled that day. When the orientation for the class came, Shane was concerned that he may not qualify for the program because he didn't have a high school diploma. Southern Hills CTC had just received approval for the welding program as an Adult Diploma Program also. I was very excited and explained to Shane that we could help him! Shane qualified to receive his first welding certification thru the scholarship provided by the Adult Diploma Program. He then utilized the Loan Program to fund the remainder of the welding program.

I remember one day in the fall when the weather had turned colder, I received a phone call from Shane. He said, "Ms. Vicki I won't be in class tonight". When I asked him what was wrong, he explained that he was homeless, had been living in a tent and the weather was going to be too cold that night. So, he was walking to the nearest homeless shelter – 30 miles away. My welding coordinator got with some of the other students and they were able to assist Shane so he could complete the program.

By the end of the program, Shane had earned his high school diploma, obtained a job and reconciled and moved back in with his wife and kids.

Shane is just one of many lives that have been changed through the support of the Workforce Development Loan Program. This program has been one of the most valuable programs I have seen in my 18 years of tenure as the Post-Secondary Director at Southern Hills CTC. My hope is that funding will continue for this program.

Sincerely,

Vicki Carrington, Post-Secondary Director