

**CWA: What do you enjoy most about the industry?**

Nicole LeClair: Ever since my schooling and especially once I started to work in the field (spending almost 15 years working for a gas distributor), I was committed. I was committed to being thorough and getting my customers the answers they sought. They were who I was accountable to. As such, I discovered that being in this industry, things are always changing and improving and involve many aspects. I spent time welding and training, while traveling and helping a myriad of customers with several different types of projects. Every day was different and unique and it kept me wanting more and also to strive to be a known and reputable name among my peers, customers and vendors. I enjoy that it has allowed me to meet and network with many people and expand my knowledge along the way. A desk job pushing papers is definitely not for me. Give me a welding torch any day over a stack of papers to file.

It's always been a really satisfying feeling to me to know that I've been a part of something bigger than me - a part of many welded projects that will stand the test of time.

**CWA: What do you like most about teaching?**

That's an interesting question and I think it can best be answered by pointing out that when I worked for a gas distributor, my favourite aspect was being able to help my clients by educating them on either a new way of doing something, a new technology that's out in terms of equipment or helping them with proper joint configurations and selecting the proper shielding gas. Essentially, the thing I liked most about being in outside sales was the face to face time I'd get to spend with them in educating them on different subjects. I decided to try and focus in on that specific aspect, seeing as that's what I enjoyed the most and translating it into a new career. I am proud to say that I am now teaching welding to classes of post-secondary students as well as some apprenticeship

programs at Mohawk College's Stoney Creek Campus of Applied Arts and Technology. There is an expression that I can relate to greatly - it goes like this: "Working hard for something you don't care about is called stress. Working hard for something you love is called passion." I feel that I can safely say now, that I am living my passion. It gives me great satisfaction to share my love of the trade with students who will eventually become our future welders!

**CWA: What would you say to someone considering welding as a career?**

Nicole LeClair: If I could reach out to anyone who's considering welding as a career, my advice would certainly be to pursue it. The last statistic I heard was that for every 10 people who retire from the industry, there is only 1 person entering the trade to replace them. This is going to leave a large gap in employable welders in the near future. There will always be a need for welders because there will always be things that need to be welded. From trailers and car frames, to airplanes and bridges, to medical devices that save lives. Welding is all around us and always will be. I think welding is something that's often taken for granted, but if you take the time to think about all the things in this world that are welded together, you'd be surprised at the number. Welding will never become obsolete and with the amount of the current workforce retiring, it seems like a smart trade to get into. It has certainly served me well.

**CWA: What are some of your hobbies?**

Nicole LeClair: Some of my hobbies include home renovations, cooking, attempting to stay in shape - and of course, hanging out with my trusted furry friend - my 8 year old doggy, Lucy.