

# Kennedy Jasken: Getting the Job Done

by Stu Rhodes

**Just because** Kennedy Jasken isn't big in stature, doesn't mean she isn't big on performance and potential. Her shop supervisor at

Sherwood Industries, Jeff Ferguson, couldn't agree more, "In this type of work it's not about whether you're a man or a woman, it's about whether you can do the job or not." Kennedy certainly gets the job done, and in fine style too. In addition to her skills, what makes her especially valuable as an employee is her reliability.

Kennedy has a bit of history with Sherwood Industries. While still in high school she set her sights on the welding program. She needed to log a minimum of 30 hours of unpaid work experience in the welding field as a prerequisite to the program to ensure it was a good fit for her. She liked it so much she offered to continue working for an additional 70 hours, which then transitioned into a part-time paid employment offer, before she even started her rigorous seven month training program at Camosun College. (It's worth mentioning that Sherwood Industries has been an amazing supporter of Saanich students by providing dozens of work experience placements over the years.)

Upon completion of the dual-credit welding program at Camosun, and graduation from Stelly's Secondary, she returned to Sherwood looking for work. She was snapped up immediately and has been putting her skills to use on a full-time basis ever since.

"There are only three girls working on the production floor, and I'm pretty proud that I'm the only one who's a welder," Kennedy said. "Sometimes the job is pretty physical, but I can do it, and I like it." Her mother, Lori Mills, is pretty proud of her too. She described how Kennedy first discovered her interest in the metal trades by sampling a metal class in grade nine at Stelly's with Mr. Hack, who encouraged her to explore welding. "Once Kennedy applied for the Camosun welding program it gave her a focus and she not only excelled in her shop classes, but focused and improved in her academic classes as well."

Once you get out in the work force, your skills develop, you get

noticed, and you get to do more challenging tasks. "I really like it when I get to weld some of the stainless steel components

for the wood stoves

I build. I'm pretty good and it, and

I get a lot of work done in a short time.

I like being a valued member of the team."

"Welding is a great trade to learn because it

is a skill that takes practice. Someone shows me and I can copy it. I don't like bookwork ... I can do it; I just don't like it. I'm way better at learning by doing!"

When asked about being a young woman working in a non-traditional trade, Kennedy was pretty clear that it really made no difference to her. What mattered most was being proud of the work she was producing. To other aspiring young women she had this to say, "Sample and explore. Find your passion. If you want to do it, do it. If you like to do it, do it. If it is your passion, you can do it."

In keeping with this month's theme, Kennedy Jasken truly is "a Woman to Watch!"

Contact Stu Rhodes for more information on how to get involved as a student apprentice, or as an employer sponsor in this, or any other career program in Saanich School District, at 250.415.9211.

View the promotional YouTube video, "Jump Start Your Career" at [www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers](http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers)

