

Helping Chinook's Edge students forge a path forward as they explore career possibilities in welding

Semester two is off to an exciting start for a number of Chinook's Edge students interested in gaining skills that lead to success in skilled trades careers. Thanks to a strong partnership with the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Union Local 496 and TEPF (The Educational Partnership Foundation), students are receiving opportunities to explore learning in the skilled trades through welding and pipefitting training.

More than a dozen Chinook's Edge students have begun gathering in Innisfail at Local 496's shop, for a 16 weeks experience learning about pipefitting skilled trades. Because the program is fully funded by TEPF it is offered to students at not cost. Students this semester are from: École H.J. Cody School, Innisfail High School, Sundre High School, and École Olds High School.

Also, thanks to the same partnership, students at Delburne School have increased opportunities to learn about welding in their own community. TEPF and Local 496 have donated welding gloves, jackets, helmets, grinders and welding materials to the school, as well as learning materials to support the teacher. Also, the union has lent a virtual welder to Delburne School so that students can practice this skilled trade skill in a unique way.

The donation came about when Delburne School's new Career and Technology Studies (CTS) teacher, Emily McArthur, attended a conference, and connected with industry and union representatives. TEPF and Local 496 sent two representatives to Delburne School for a visit with McArthur and to see the CTS facility.

The visit resulted in the donations, and an on-going offer of support for McArthur as she teaches beginning welding skills to student to prepare them for

more advanced courses they might take through TEPF / Local 496 or through dual credit learning at Olds College of Agriculture & Technology.

"This is all about creating awareness and access," said Scott Burr, UA Local 496 representative and Pipe Trades Instructor. Burr teaches the class in Innisfail, and was one of the representatives who visited Delburne School. Burr says the average age of an apprentice starting in skilled trades in Alberta is 27 years old, and often it is



*Top: Students from four Chinook's Edge high schools start semester two, with a 16 week experience learning about pipefitting skilled trades.
Bottom image: Delburne students and staff with representatives of TEPF and Union Local 496 which donated welding materials to the school.*



Above: Scott Burr, Local 496 representative, at Delburne School presenting donated items

individuals who are changing careers after having invested time and money in other pathways. ***“What I think is exciting is that high school students can try out skilled trades like pipefitting and welding and decide if it’s really for them, before they complete high school,”*** said Burr.

“Then, if they want to pursue it they can access government subsidies while they learn and apprentice, so that they finish their training without being saddled with a lot of debt.” Burr said students who complete dual credit learning while in high school are sought out by businesses because they have already proved themselves.

Regarding Delburne School, Burr said he’s loved being a part of growing the program. He was happy to deliver the union’s donation. ***“It’s kinda fun playing Santa Claus,”*** he said.

Emily McArthur, Delburne’s CTS teacher, said, ***“I am so thankful for Union 496 and TEPF’s support. They have been enthusiastic in their support of me and this program, and the students involved. It’s great to know the support is only a phone call or email away. It’s so helpful,”*** said McArthur.

“The students are super pumped about taking welding. They are absolutely head over heels about it,” said McArthur. ***“Students are willing to help around the shop. I’m really proud of them. I think it’s great they get to try this out at 16, rather than at 24 years old.”***

Jocelyn Pennock, Principal, Delburne School sees the excitement too. ***“Students are lighting up in our building. We know we are tapping into a***

passion for some of our students,” said Pennock.

“We’re pleased to be able to give students a chance to experience hands-on, real world opportunities,” said Pennock. ***“We’re thankful to Local 496 and TEPF for providing us with a very generous donation. We are also grateful to Ms. McArthur for building our program from the ground up, and helping to provide rural students with opportunities to learn in our own building. This helps students overcome financial barriers that come with travel to other facilities.”***

Amy Guynup, a Grade 12 student at Delburne School said, ***“I am very excited that we have the opportunity to do welding at school, so I can work alongside my dad and have this skillset to use in the future. It has been a desire to get welding within our school for a long time. As a rural community, fabrication is something many of us students do at home already, and is a big part of our jobs.”***

“It’s pretty sweet that we are actually able to weld at school,” said Troy Peters, a Grade 11 student at Delburne School. ***“If you are looking at getting into skilled trades, being able to get a head start and figuring out welding, gives you the idea of what it is going to be like.”*** Peters also acknowledges his teacher and industry support in opening this door for him. ***“Ms. McArthur has gone out of her way to make this opportunity happen. She is bringing in experts that know more about the trade, to give us tips and help on how to get better. The donation of supplies has been very much appreciated too.”***



Hugh Sutherland School reflects on a remarkable race, celebrates a resilient student, and incredible team spirit

Anyone watching closely at a junior high cross country race in Trochu last fall, witnessed something rare, stirring, and unforgettably inspiring; a quiet and unheralded victory for one young man, and a touching moment with a great group of friends... true evidence of the goodness and resilience of our young people.

Matthew Fish, a cross country coach and physical education teacher from Okotoks, said that in his 19 years as a teacher and coach, none of the accomplishments of teams he's worked with in the past made him feel how he felt that day.

Fish was watching as Landon Baker, a Grade 7 student from Hugh Sutherland School (HSS) in Carstairs, buckled down, determined to finish a challenging race.

Landon was diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer two years ago. It was in the heel bone of his right foot and required Landon to undergo 14 rounds of chemotherapy, and also an amputation below the knee. He is now in remission, and uses a prosthetic to keep his mobility.



Left to right: Lincoln Steingart, Micah Ewert, Landon Baker, Callum Cameron, Liam Pennell

Fish said, ***"The conditions were absolutely terrible that day, to say the least, and watching Landon run in the rain, up and down hills, across mud and a slippery course was nothing short of incredible. I watched him fall multiple times, and it brought tears to our eyes to see him grit his teeth each time and get back up. It was truly surreal. It's a feeling that will stay with me for a very long time."***

"What an amazing young man. I am thankful and lucky I got to witness that. I am a better man because of it," said Fish.

"Landon is just a good kid - an amazing kid," said Dean Nielsen, Principal, HSS. ***"He is resilient and doesn't let his leg define him. He runs because he loves it. Landon pushes himself to achieve his personal best and he does that regularly in running. He is also a strong student who takes ownership of his learning. He is kind and respectful to everyone. Landon looks out for others because that's just who he is."***

Landon's Mom, Keira Baker, said, ***"Prior to Landon's cancer diagnosis I probably wouldn't have considered Landon an exceptionally resilient person, but his strength, courage and perseverance certainly shines through, even in his days of treatment."***



Getting ready to cheer for Landon, on the day of the Terry Fox Run.





Baker said when she would ask her son how he found it within himself to push through, he would tell her:

“What choice do I have, Mom? Treatment is required to save my life so I just have to accept it.”

Baker said her son’s medical team has appreciated Landon’s pragmatism, and she believes that is why he has become the resilient person he is today.

The day of that race, Landon also had the support of his friends. Having already crossed the finish line, they went back to run with Landon.

“We wanted to support him,” said Micah Ewert, a Grade 7 HSS student. “We wanted him to finish the race.”

“It’s all about team spirit. I wanted to support my friend and help him do what he wanted to do - finish the race,” said Lincoln Steingart, a Grade 7 HSS student.

“It just felt like the right thing to do,” said Liam Pennell, a Grade 7 HSS student.

“We wanted him to finish strong, and know that we were with him,” said Callum Cameron, a Grade 7 HSS student.

“It was nice of them to do that,” said Landon Baker. “I just wanted to do it. Even though I fell down a hill at the end, I just kept running. It wasn’t that far from the finish line. I knew if I stopped it would be like I did nothing. I knew I could do something so I did. I was tired, but it felt good to finish.”

Just as Landon’s friends were happy to support him in completing the race, they say he helps them complete their own challenges at school.

“He definitely keeps everyone straight,” laughed Ewert, referring to Landon’s ability to get projects going and keep everyone organized.

“He helps me with school,” said Cameron. “He explains stuff.”

“I like hanging out with him. He’s a good friend,” said Steingart.

Principal Nielsen said although the boys are friends, they aren’t all best friends, which makes the fact of what happened in Trochu, and how they treat each other at school every day, even better. Nielsen sees it as evidence of the goodness of the students.

“As a new principal here, it reminds me how good our kids are. We are a large school that acts like a small school. I see in these students our three R’s - respect, responsibility, and resilience. The choices they make are truly representative of who we are as Hugh Sutherland School Kodiaks,” said Nielsen.

Nielsen said although Landon is unassuming, he has a tremendous impact on the people around him. Students at school watch Landon’s resilience and admire it.

Nielsen said last year when after Landon’s last round of chemotherapy, all of the school’s students lined the hallways, holding



up a banner they had all signed, while applauding and cheering as Landon came through.

“It was kind of overwhelming,” said Landon, “and it was really nice of them to do it. It helps me feel better about myself knowing that I have people rooting for me in my life.”

Nielsen said after that experience, and throughout the year, high school students would

talk about Landon as their example of resilience.

“He has the ability to impact 765 kids,” said Nielsen. “They all know him and see what he goes through every day. They are inspired by his example.”

Keira Baker said, ***“Thank you to Hugh Sutherland School students, staff and community. We want you to know that your support has helped us see some positives through one of the hardest times of our lives.”***

Chinook's Edge embraces empathetic approach to student behavior with Collaborative Problem Solving Model

A principal recently received professional learning that was so powerful he chose to bring the opportunity to his staff and to other Chinook's Edge colleagues.

Chris Adamson, Principal of Innisfail High School, was so impressed with the Collaborative Problem Solving model that was being shared in Chinook's Edge, that he signed up for more in depth training. After that was complete, he invited the trainer to the school to work with some of his staff one day last week, as well as other colleagues in Chinook's Edge (represented in the photo).

The division is working to employ the Collaborative Problem Solving model in its schools to support students with challenging behaviour or complex needs. The number of students with complex needs has increased in recent years.

“This approach is powerful because it assumes that students will meet expectations for behavior if they can. It is an empathetic way of engaging with students that gives adults confidence and calm,” said Adamson.



“It empowers adults to focus on helping students build the skills they need to be successful,” said Adamson.

Marcie Perdue, Associate Superintendent, Chinook's Edge School Division says this approach is currently used by the Alberta Children's Hospital when supporting children with complex needs. The approach challenges conventional societal wisdom that students who don't meet expectations lack the will to make a better choice.

“The Collaborative Problem Solving model creates an opportunity for a shift in the mindset of adults working with children,” said Perdue.

“When a child doesn't meet behavioral expectations, instead of thinking about that as a choice the student is making, what is more helpful is considering what cognitive skills a child may be lacking. When students don't meet expectations they are most likely lacking skill rather than will.”

Karyn Barber, Associate Superintendent, attended last week's session at Innisfail High, and said, ***“One aspect of the model that impresses me is the opportunity to give students voice in solving issues. It involves them in helping to find solutions, and supports students as they develop social emotional skills. We anticipate the great benefit this will be for students, and that as they find social emotional success they will also find academic success.”***

