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METAL MEETS ART

Sparks fly in PCC Community Education's welding program

By **Eloise Holland**

Students learn techniques such as grinding (pictured) in Community Education's welding classes.

When PCC Community Education welding instructor Shona Yardley talks about the classes she teaches, she keeps things simple.

"We jump in, get to know the basics, and then we start to play," she said. For Yardley and her students, "play" can mean basic fabrication, grinding, cleaning and whatever skills her students need to finish their unique projects. Students work on everything from large-scale art sculptures to more functional pieces, such as basket hangers, candleholders, trailer hitches and kayak racks.

Yardley, who graduated from PCC with her associate of applied science in welding, explains that if she were to teach a complete overview of welding, she would have to spend an entire semester just on tools.

"If everybody had to go through college again to figure out one little thing, nobody would come back to school," she said. "I try to focus on getting people into their art and feeling really successful about their project."

Every term, Community Education offers a selection of non-credit welding classes in the Home and Garden section, such as

Beginning Welding, Metal Working, Art Welding Sculpture and Introduction to Art Wire Welding.

Portland's do-it-yourself culture contributes to the widespread popularity of the program, which draws students of all ages and backgrounds who have no reservations about picking up a torch and trying a new skill.

"Welding classes often reach enrollment maximums and when possible we add classes to meet the demand," said Community Education Director Tonya Booker.

Dlynn Souba is a glass artist and teacher who first took Community Education welding classes to learn to use metalwork with her fused glass art. "I love the fact that you can take some scraps of metal and make a great piece of art. You're limited only by your imagination," said Souba.

She adds that Yardley has been a great teacher. "She gives a lot of really good one-on-one instruction," Souba said. "It can be so overwhelming when you're getting into a new medium."

PCC instructor Scott Judy, who's taught for 18 years in the credit welding program, says

that's exactly why non-credit welding is important. "A Community Education class gives the public the chance to experiment with entry-level welding classes without committing to the welding program."

Judy has been working with Newberg High School to improve its welding program, including the installation of new ventilation, wiring upgrades, new welding booths—built by the PCC welding shop—and new cutting tables and vent hoods. As a result, plans are being made for the shop to host Community Education welding classes and eventually PCC credit welding classes.

For those who want to dip their toes into the world of welding, this means even more opportunities for PCC to offer fun, accessible non-credit welding classes.

"My whole goal is to see people happy, whatever they do," Yardley said. "I just like to watch people create and be happy." ■



Find Community Education's complete list of welding classes on page 29 or online at pcc.edu/community