

Career Impact

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

VOLUME 14

ELLEN REICHERT

DESIGNS

HER FUTURE

Where Are They Now?

See What Graduates are
Up to after WITC

Horses That Heal

Students experience
equine-assisted therapy



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*Based on FY16 unduplicated enrollment of 19,407 with an 11-county population of 316,134
**According to WITC's 2015-2016 Graduate Survey Results

Career Impact

Career Impact is published for the community, alumni and friends of Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College.

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WITC is part of the Wisconsin Technical College System, with four campus locations (Ashland, New Richmond, Rice Lake and Superior), two outreach centers (Hayward and Ladysmith), a learning center in Spooner, and an administrative office in Shell Lake.

Visit our website at witc.edu.

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MISSION STATEMENT
Learning is our passion. As Northwest Wisconsin's leader in technical education, WITC creates dynamic opportunities for career preparation and personal effectiveness. We are committed to making each and every experience with us meaningful and professional.

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In This Issue

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College • Volume 14



- 2 Student Loan Debt**
Tips to get smart about financing your education.
- 3 Dual Enrollment**
High school students get a head start on college.
- 4 Framework for Success**
How one WITC graduate double majored to gain the skills that can transform her vision into a reality.
- 6 Automotive Techs Needed**
Graduating high school with a diploma in a high-demand field.
- 8 Where Are They Now?**
See what graduates are up to after WITC.
- 10 A Meaningful Career**
From marketing to gerontology: one WITC student's life-changing decision.
- 14 Horses That Heal**
Human Services Associate students experience equine-assisted therapy.
- 17 WITC Promise Scholarship**
WITC offering free tuition to eligible high school graduates.

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Do you have news or information about an alumni, program or event at WITC? Contact Sara Franc at sara.franc@witc.edu



5 WAYS TO GET SMART ABOUT STUDENT LOAN DEBT

By Sara Franc

College's effect on the economy is a hot topic this year. The rising cost of tuition and suffocating student debt are stirring up controversy on the pros and cons of college. While such debt can be a burden for college graduates, that does not mean we should give up on higher education for the future. Higher education is vital for society and a wise investment, but it's time that we get smart about that investment. WITC can be an affordable option, and 93 percent of graduates are employed within six months with an average yearly salary of \$37,829.

SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH THESE TIPS

1. THINK ABOUT FUTURE GOALS AND RESEARCH HOW A CAREER CHOICE WILL ALIGN WITH THOSE GOALS.

Arrange a class shadow at WITC with a program-of-interest. Prepare for the shadow with questions to ask the teacher and students. Connect with someone who works in the field and arrange a job shadow. A clear picture of the job will either renew confidence or discourage the pursuit of the field. Either way, it's best to have this understanding before investing time and money into a career choice.

2. SEARCH JOB POSTINGS IN THE FIELD AND RESEARCH THE EXPECTED QUALIFICATIONS FOR THOSE JOBS.

Understanding the qualifications can help determine how much education is needed to be successful in that industry. Rather than spending time and money on four or five years of college, the research might prove that the job only requires a two-year associate degree. If a bachelor's or more is required, many technical and community colleges like WITC offer transfer agreements with universities. By transferring from a technical or community college, students can save up to \$10,000 in tuition costs.

3. START COLLEGE COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOL.

High school students can earn free WITC credits through YouthOptions, Advanced Standing, and/or Dual Credit courses or by enrolling in a WITC Dual Enrollment Academy. WITC

also offers several short-term, industry-recognized certification programs that high school students can complete to be workforce ready upon graduation. The college credits students earn in these programs will save them both time and money after high school, especially if they decide to continue their education in the field at WITC.

4. APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.

Scholarships are free money for college students. WITC's scholarship process is simple. Just respond to a few questions about yourself and provide a reference. It's that easy, and every year WITC has unclaimed scholarships. Please take our money; we want to help you!

5. FILL OUT FAFSA EARLY.

According to WITC's financial aid advisor, Renee Hudacek, the number one mistake she sees students make when it comes to paying for college is not filling out the FAFSA in a timely manner.

"Fill it out as early as possible and complete any required documents right away."

If a student needs to take out loans, Hudacek advises students to keep in contact with the college's financial aid advisor to ensure the student is not taking out more loans than are needed.

"Student loans are easy to get but hard to pay back," said Hudacek. "If you need the loan, it is there for you, but you do not need to accept all of it at once; you can request more if needed. Graduating with a lower debt leads to greater success in the future."

GET A JUMP START!

Start College in High School with WITC's Dual Enrollment Academies



WELDING ACADEMY



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- All classes are taught by qualified and certified high school teachers and/or instructors

Fall 2017 Academies

Welding Academy, New Richmond High School

Construction Essentials, Clayton High School, Bayfield High School

Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair Technician, Offered at the WITC-Superior campus with students from Superior High School, Northwestern High School and Solon Springs High School.

To learn how you can participate in an academy or how you can start an academy, contact at jeanne.germain@witc.edu or call 800.243.9482 ext. 4224.



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A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

Story and photos by Deborah Anderson

Ellen Reichert knew she wanted to attend WITC-Rice Lake after high school, but like most high school seniors, she wasn't sure which field to pursue.

"One of my favorite classes in high school was woodshop, especially building furniture, so I was thinking about the residential construction and cabinetmaking (RCCM) program," she said. "But I was also considering architectural commercial design, where I could learn how all of the systems in a building could be combined into detailed drawings."

After much contemplation, Reichert ultimately chose architectural commercial design, a unique program in Wisconsin.



In architectural commercial design, students gain the knowledge in construction, heating, plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems needed to create accurate construction documents using AutoCAD and Revit software.

As Reichert converted her ideas into designs in the computer lab, she wondered about the next step in the process: transforming her drawings into something more tangible. The idea was born to continue her education and double major in the residential construction and cabinetmaking program, which is also a unique program in Wisconsin.

In RCCM, students build a house from the ground up in the second year. In preparation for this capstone project, the first year of the program includes designing, building and finishing furniture so they will be ready to construct kitchen and bathroom cabinets for the house. They also practice building walls, stairs, floors and roof systems.

Architectural commercial design is a unique program in Wisconsin. Students gain the knowledge in construction, heating, plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems needed to create accurate construction documents using AutoCAD and Revit software.

In her second year of RCCM, Reichert learned about an opening for a part-time drafter at Lampert Lumber in Rice Lake. Six months before she graduated, Lampert Lumber hired Reichert.

Reichert continued to balance work and school until her graduation in May; in addition, Reichert found time to compete in SkillsUSA. After placing first in the Wisconsin SkillsUSA Conference in Madison, Reichert earned the opportunity to compete at the national conference held in Louisville, Ky. More than 15,000 students, teachers, education leaders and representatives participated in the hands-on skill and leadership competitions.

Reichert competed in architectural drafting, which required designing two tiny houses.

"We were given the specifications such as size, square footage and number of bedrooms for the first house. Then we had to design the second house that

would adjoin the first with a deck – all in eight hours," said Reichert.

Reichert's hard work and dedication paid off. She received second place in the nation.

"I felt pretty confident about what I had done but was still surprised when I received the silver medal, I really couldn't believe it," said Reichert.

With the passion, skills and well-rounded knowledge of both architecture and construction, Reichert is happy with her career right now. Coincidentally, Lampert Lumber is supplying the materials for the 2018 RCCM house project, and Reichert herself is designing the 1700 sq. ft., three-bedroom, two-bath house the RCCM students are building for their final project.

Even with two associate degrees under her belt, Reichert doesn't consider her education journey to be over yet; she hopes to one day pursue her architect license. Whatever Reichert's future holds, she has positioned herself to be successful.



WANTED:

AUTOMOTIVE TECHS



By Jessica Hehir

The automotive industry is in desperate need of auto technicians. High retirement rates and career advancements are creating a nationwide shortage of skilled professionals. Northwest Wisconsin is not immune to this shortage, and WITC is working to develop a skilled workforce that the auto industry needs.

The New York Times recently reported estimates for the turnover of entry-level positions in the auto industry as high as 20 percent. To replenish the ranks, WITC created the Automotive Academy for high school students, which rolled out fall 2017 to the Superior School District.

The academy provides the knowledge

and skills necessary for job success in the automotive industry. Students learn the fundamentals of automotive systems, electrical systems, engine mechanics and repair.

This is a hands-on skilled career path. To prepare students, instructors work one-on-one with students to be sure they are job ready and meeting local industry needs.

WITC's automotive service technician program is a nationally certified program through NATEF (National Automotive Technicians Foundation) and NC3 (National Coalition of Certification Centers). These certifications bring students to a higher level of education and training to stay current with the

technology advancements within the automotive industry.

About the Automotive Academy

WITC automotive programs have highly skilled instructors with extensive industry experience and training that provide students with valuable insight to succeed on the job.

Todd Asanovich is an ASE Certified Master Automotive Technician and the automotive instructor at WITC. He has more than 16 years of experience at a General Motors and Honda dealership, which includes extensive factory training.

"My classroom is designed to be

'learner friendly,' said Asanovich. "I encourage students to voice their ideas and thoughts."

One of the unique components of this academy is a low student-instructor ratio. This is an effort to instill confidence in younger students and maximize their learning experience.

Academy graduates will earn a technical diploma in automotive maintenance and light repair from WITC along with their high school diploma.

At that point, the students are ready to enter the workforce or continue their education at WITC on a career pathway.

Career pathways connect progressive levels of coursework to allow students to build on their education one diploma or certification at a time. Each step in the pathway connects with employment options and provides the opportunity for advancement to higher levels. The automotive service technician program includes the following pathway options: automotive maintenance and light repair technician technical diploma and automotive technician technical diploma.

The Automotive Academy is offered to all high schools within the WITC-Superior campus region. These schools include Northwestern, Superior and Solon Springs High Schools.

CAREERS INCLUDE:

- Lube Technician
- Maintenance Technician
- Light Duty Repair Technician

Potential starting wages
\$19,550-\$24,900 annually**

**Data compiled from Wisconsin's Worknet, June 2016.

HIGH SCHOOLS:

High schools interested in learning more about the academy may contact **Jeanne Germain**, director of career prep and K12 relations, **800.243.9482 ext. 4224** or **jeanne.germain@witc.edu**.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

High school students interested in the academy may contact **Todd Asanovich**, **715.394.6677 ext. 6328** or **todd.asanovich@witc.edu**, or they may contact their high school counselor.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We caught up with a few WITC Alumni to see what they are up to since graduation.



Jordan Barningham | WITC-Ashland

Welding

Where is he now?

Journeyman at Boilermakers Local 107

"WITC was the way to go for me. It was affordable and provided me with the knowledge and skills I needed to be successful in my welding career. WITC helped me build a strong welding foundation, which has contributed to my success in the industry. I have a great job I enjoy that pays well. I discovered the sky was the limit at WITC, and it was a great stepping stone that helped build my craftsmanship in the welding trade."



Micah Jaespersion | WITC-Superior

Associate Degree Nursing

Where is he now?

RN Labor & Delivery Nurse at Essentia Health-St. Mary's Medical Center, birth center

"I went to a four-year college as a traditional student. The study atmosphere was good for those discovering themselves. I went to WITC as a non-traditional student. There, the students are there for a purpose; they are there for a passion. The instructors challenge you to be critical thinkers and to be accountable, and the students are respectful of non-traditional students."



Ellen Reichert | WITC-Rice Lake

Architectural Commercial Design
Residential Construction & Cabinetmaking

Where is she now?

Architectural Drafter at Lampert Lumber

"WITC was a great experience for me. The smaller class sizes allowed students to receive one-on-one time with the instructor, and the hands-on assignments prepared us for when we entered the workforce. The instructors have great connections in the community and assisted in helping me find a job in my field six months before I even graduated."

Read the full story on page 6.



Cody & Brianna McGee | WITC-New Richmond

Brianna – Accounting, Administrative Professional

Cody – Machine Tooling Technics

Where are they now?

Cody, Programmer, Engineer, Machine Operator and Supervisor at ProFab Machine, Inc.

"I wear many hats at my job, so my days are always filled with action. I love it because I get to design and create my own parts for something that I love."

Brianna, Math Teacher at Frederic Middle and High School

"My experience and degrees helped me get my foot in the door at the Osceola School District right out of college. I worked with students through academic support in math and other subjects. I enjoyed doing it so much that I decided to go back to college for my bachelor's degree in teaching."

Where are **YOU** now? We want to hear your story!
Go to www.witc.edu/alumniupdate and tell us what's new.



A Meaningful Career

Story and photos by Melissa Kramolis

Gerontology-Aging Services Professional graduate **Heidi Anderson** of Ashland shares her journey to a meaningful career helping others as the director of The Oaks Assisted Living at Northern Lights Services in Washburn.

Why did you enroll in the gerontology-aging services professional program?

It was a major career and lifestyle change for me. I relocated back to Ashland from Minneapolis. My background is in business and marketing, and I wanted to find something new that was more meaningful. I wanted to work with people more one-on-one than in a business-marketing career. I'm done pushing and marketing products. I want to help people, and I couldn't do that where I was.

What inspired you to pursue a career in gerontology?

Being with my grandparents in their final days and years brought new light to the meaning of senior citizens and knowing that my mom and dad will soon be in the same position where they are going to need help. Even if I wasn't going to be able to utilize this degree as a career, I wanted to have the knowledge to assist my parents.

What did you enjoy the most about the program?

The instructors, Jennifer Augustine and Jennifer Ellis. They both are amazing women in what they've accomplished, and they are amazing instructors and advice givers. They were able to look at combining my business and marketing background

with this program, and there were all these opportunities that I never even thought of.

Describe a day in the life in your current position.

It's like managing a household. I have 16 residents whom I know very closely along with their families. Since we are assisted living, they manage their lives as much as they can themselves, but we are here to help them with their daily needs and any type of appointments or activities they want to attend. I want to make sure I'm enriching their lives with something that will make their time here enjoyable.

Every day is different. I come in with an idea of what I need to do that day and my day is filled up right away. I enjoy it. My days go by quickly, and I don't mind it at

all; I don't look at it as work. It's like one big family here, and it's exactly where I want to be.

What is a unique or rewarding experience you've had since working at The Oaks Assisted Living?

I really enjoy working with my residents, the seniors. They have the best stories and such diverse backgrounds. I learn from all of them every day. You learn about what life was like when they were younger, and they're the best storytellers; you can't ask for more than that. You find out the connections they had with the community or where they're from, what their lives were like, what their careers were. One of the residents grew up with my grandfather, and I had no idea. He told me

stories about my grandfather and my grandfather's brother growing up. Their nicknames, what they used to do, history that I never knew. He told me all about my grandfather's past.

What advice would you give someone who is interested in WITC's gerontology-aging services professional program?

Gerontology is a very broad term. The degree can be used in many ways. With the future of our county, state and the aging population, the opportunities are going to be immense. Don't be afraid to jump in, even if your background doesn't necessarily facilitate working with seniors. There are many ways you can combine your background with a gerontology degree to assist seniors in your community.



Meet Jennifer Augustine

WITC gerontology-aging services professional instructor & executive director of Northern Lights Services.

Students will get a clear understanding of Alzheimer's and dementia. We also use cognitive and physical impairment simulation equipment in the classroom. These simulations give students an opportunity to feel what it's like to have dementia, visual and hearing issues, and other disabilities, so they can empathize with the individuals. They also learn about the aging process and get a feel for what resources and community providers are available.

What has Heidi brought to your organization?

Hiring someone like Heidi with a gerontology associate degree meant that I have someone who understands and has a passion for the older adult and is able to support not only the older adult but the family too. She is a strong individual and was able to show that she could manage our organization, and the gerontology background really took her to the next level. It's been awesome. She has been a tremendous asset.

Career Pathway Options:

- Gerontology-Aging Services Professional Associate of Applied Science Degree (2 year)
- Dementia Care Technical Certificate (1 year)
- Healthcare and Service Provider Technical Certificate (1 year)
- Community-Based Residential Facility (CBRF) Caregiver Technical Diploma (less than 1 year)

To learn more visit witc.edu/gero

Tell us about the gerontology-aging services professional program at WITC.

Gerontology-aging services professional is a two-year associate degree program geared at high-level learning related to older adults. It covers all aspects of the aging process. There is also an internship as part of the program, so students can get out into the community and work in areas of practice.

The program blends online and in-person, hands-on learning with community-based fieldwork. There are eight-week courses so students can take just one class, complete a certificate or the whole program for an associate degree. The program is designed to fit into busy schedules and offers working individuals a lot of flexibility. It also gives other organizations a venue in which to train their staff.

What skills will students of this program learn?

The program provides a quality employee who can walk into the job and have a solid understanding of what they need to do to care for the people they're working with, to manage an organization and to make sure that our older adults are safe.



The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration has awarded \$19,999,991 under the TAAACCT grant program to be shared among the 16 colleges within the Wisconsin Technical College System (WITCS). 100% of this project equaling \$4,898,800 of Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College's portion of this grant is being financed with Federal money. This is an equal opportunity program. Assistive technologies are available upon request and include Voice/TTY (711 or 800-947-6644).



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- MS Outlook, Excel and Word classes
- Management and Leadership program
- Human Resource Management program

To see the full list of programs and classes, visit www.witc.edu/startnow



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HORSES THAT HEAL

By Liz Whitchurch

In a world overflowing with stressors such as anxiety, depression, addictions and other staggering struggles, many people seek refuge through the calming effects of animal therapy.

Equine-assisted therapy is one such form that is proving to be a powerful way for some people to get in touch with their thoughts and feelings. It was this fact that compelled Joel Gibson to venture out of the classroom on a lovely spring day.

Gibson is the human services associate (HSA) instructor at WITC-New Richmond. Part of Gibson's teaching philosophy is to familiarize students with as many different helping/healing modalities as possible.

"I took the students to experience equine-assisted therapy as a foundational component of the HSA program, which revolves around helping students place themselves in the best possible position to help those in need of human services," said Gibson.

The class traveled north of St. Croix Falls, Wis., to take part in an equine team-building therapy session at RNR Ranch. Shannon Brice of Family Therapy Associates and Angela Fredrickson of Northwest Passage led the equine group activity. Both Brice and Fredrickson own a family of rescue animals they draw on for therapy sessions, and each animal is hand-selected for the session. For WITC's session, Brice and Fredrickson brought two horses; Ash, nine years old, and Montana, 18 years old; and Captain, a three-year-old Shetland pony.

As the WITC group stood in the arena, it was obvious how social the handpicked herd was. At times, the horses stood nearby observing the students and "talking" with the group. At one point, Ash meandered right through the group as if to say, "Remember me?"

Gibson's human services associate class was in awe by the team-building experience with the horses.

"This treatment modality allows a space for clients to spend time being present with the horses to let their own personal story unfold and be told through this experiential process," said Brice.

"I loved being able to see the different reactions of the horses with so many different personalities of the people around them and how that can be used to heal people," said Alix Boltik, a member of the WITC human services associate class.

According to Gibson, the therapeutic portion of the experience builds on the work the students engage in the classroom.

"I am pursuing field work in human services and hope to be able to work in child protection or maybe even in equine-assisted therapy," Boltik said. "I loved every minute of our visit to RNR Ranch to see equine-assisted therapy first hand. I loved seeing the connection between horse and 'client.' This trip helped open my eyes to more possibilities."

Brice and Fredrickson provide equine-assisted therapy to individuals, groups or families.



Through equine therapy, people often develop much-needed confidence to address their fears and then transfer those lessons to day-to-day life. Learning to understand horse behavior can help people learn how others function in the world and the way their behavior affects others.

As equine-assisted therapy becomes more widely accepted and utilized, it is highly likely that WITC's HSA students will encounter this modality in their careers. It's another example of how WITC instructors seek innovative yet practical applications to prepare their students for success.



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WITC Promise Scholarship

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The WITC Promise Scholarship, funded by the WITC Foundation, provides free college tuition for area high school graduates who meet program eligibility requirements. The WITC Promise Scholarship will pay the balance of tuition and fees for eligible students after federal and state grants are applied. Tuition will be covered up to four terms (pending eligibility requirements each term).

Who is eligible for the WITC Promise Scholarship?

- 2018 high school, GED or home schooled graduate
- Student must be a Wisconsin resident
- Apply for admissions to a financial aid eligible program at WITC by April 13, 2018
- Complete and submit the Free Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA) by April 13, 2018
- Complete and submit WITC Promise Application by April 13, 2018
- Student must meet eligibility requirements for Federal and Wisconsin financial aid
- Complete all program admissions requirements prior to July 1, 2018
- Have an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$3,500 or lower as determined by information provided on the Free Application for Financial Aid (A student's EFC is an index number of how much financial aid the student is eligible to receive; it is not the amount of money a student will have to pay for college, nor is it the amount of student aid a student will receive.)
- Achieve minimum 2.0 GPA for senior year in high school
- Participate in a free Financial Literacy training program while enrolled at WITC
- Enroll in at least 12 credits per term (exception to minimum credit requirement may apply for certain programs)
- Complete the WITC Foundation Scholarship application for all future terms



For more information, prospective students can call **800.243.9482** and ask for an admission advisor or visit www.witc.edu/foundation/witc-promise.


The WITC Promise Scholarship is funded by the WITC Foundation.



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93% of graduates were hired within just six months of graduating. **97%** of graduates were satisfied with their WITC education. Graduates earn an average yearly starting salary of **\$37,829**