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Technology department receives \$3,500 donation

Wednesday April 12, 2006

By Casandra
 Bellefeuille
 Paris Star Staff

The PDHS Technology department received some long-overdue new equipment, thanks to a \$3,500 donation from the Hamilton and Region Chapter of the Canadian Welding Association (C.W.A). As a result, students in the tech programs at the high school can now enjoy the use of a new Lincoln Power MIG (wire feed welder), some new welding helmets, gloves, safety equipment and glasses, welding rods, grinding wheels and even some steel donations, said tech teacher David Campbell.

"The donation was basically to update the welding program because we're using old equipment from the 1960s and 1970s," said Campbell. "It's improving the quality of welding education, particularly in high schools."

The Hamilton and Region Chapter, which fundraised the money through industrial partnerships, divided up \$72,000 to about 22 schools in several school boards. Other schools in the Grand Erie District School Board that receive part of the money include Pauline Johnson, BCI and Simcoe Composite.



Pictured above are (left) Milan Mesich and Blair Anderson working on the new Lincoln Power MIG (wire feed welder), which was donated to the school from the Hamilton and Region chapter of the Canadian Welding Association. The donation to PDHS also included new safety equipment, steel, grinders and more. The Hamilton and Region Chapter also donate to 22 other schools in several school boards.

Photo by Casandra Bellefeuille



PDHS' involvement began after meeting monthly with the Chairperson of the Hamilton and Region C.W.A. Chapter, Dan Tadick.

"We discussed the needs, what the industry wants from us and what we need," explained Campbell of why Paris received a donation.

"We basically came up with a 'wish list' of items that would benefit the program and they got items for us," he said, referring largely to the new welder.

"This one welder takes the places of two old welders. It works better and it gives students the opportunity to work on equipment that is current to the industry, without it, we wouldn't be able to work on certain projects."

Keeping up with industry standard is important, said Campbell, who pointed out that welding is a fairly high demand trade.

"Without proper training at this level (high school), we won't have the qualified trades people to come take over once the baby boomers retire."

Tadick commented, "There has been a shortage of skill trades people in Canada for a long time and we're very fortunate to work with the Canadian Welding Association and support high school students, where the seeds are planted for future welders and trades people."

Tadick said he believes the Hamilton and Region Chapter is the most active in supporting high school programs. "We want to provide as much as an impact as possible. With newer equipment and technologies we are able to influence more students to take welding as a trade."

As for the chapter's new fundraising goal, Tadick said the group would like to raise \$200,000. "We also hope to entice the Provincial government to match whatever funds we raise."

Another good news story for students planning to enter into the trade is an announcement from Skill Weld in Oakville, a professional welder training facility. They are accepting students to attend free-of-charge seminars, particularly students who plan on attending the Skills Canada Competition. Two positions are open for Paris students to attend and one of those lucky students is Blair Anderson, the other is to be determined. The seminar takes place on April 22 and 29.

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