

Schools

# Local Boy Scouts Earn Two Unique Merit Badges in Metalwork at COD

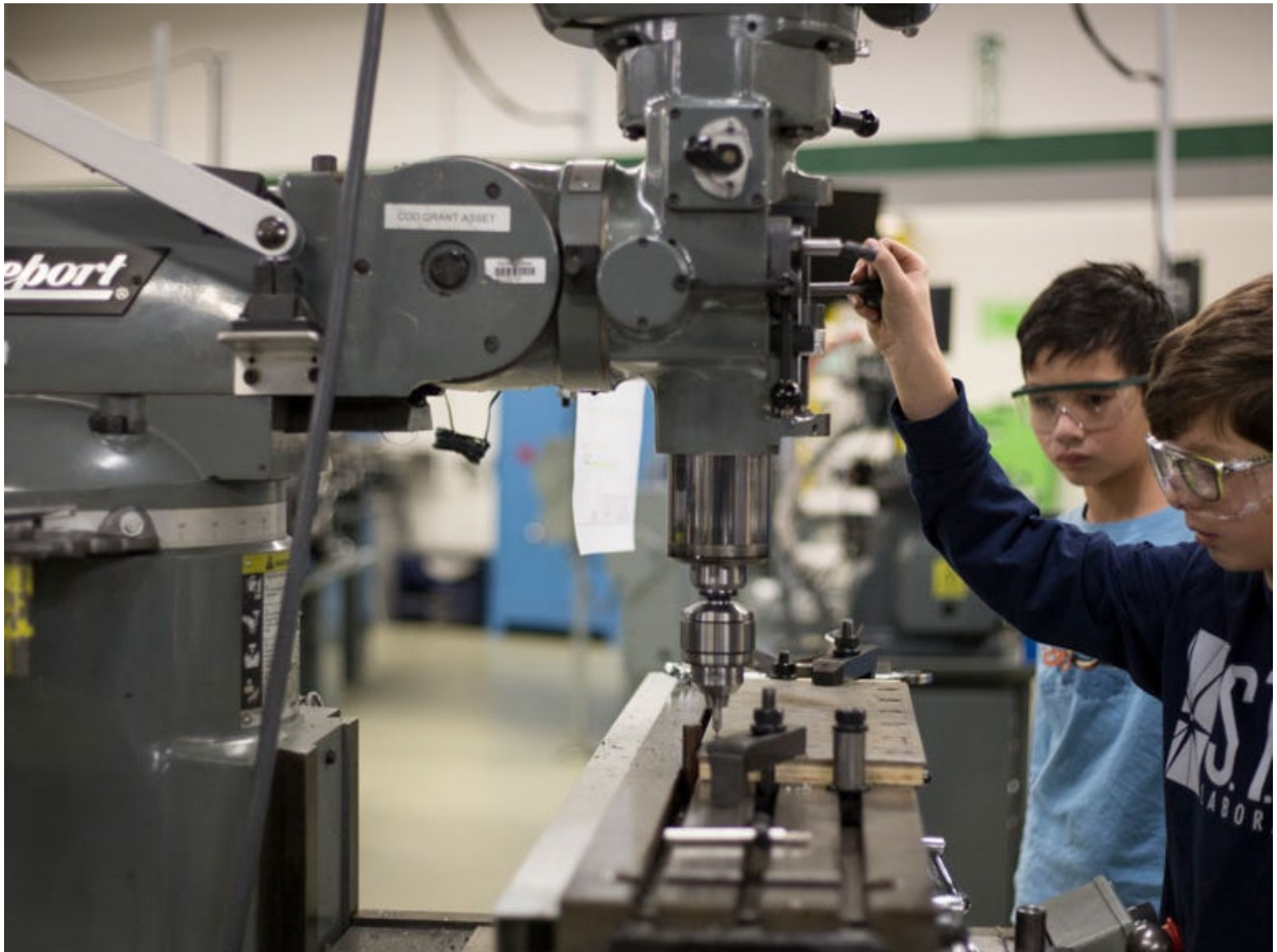
Local Boy Scouts Earn Two Unique Merit Badges in Metalwork and Welding at College of DuPage Technical Education Center

By COD Newsroom, Patch Contributor  
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Picture Caption: Thanks to the COD's Welding program and Continuing Education department, local Boy Scout troops were able to complete two hard-to-get merit badges at the College's Technical Education Center.



The College of DuPage Continuing Education department and Welding program recently teamed up to assist local Boy Scout of America Troop members earn hard-to-get merit badges and to educate the scouts on the various technical programs offered at the College. Scouts had opportunities to complete badges towards their ranks, including welding and metalworking.

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Twelve scouts spent the day learning about welding and metalwork hazards, safety precautions, processes and terms, various cutting methods and career opportunities in the industry. Participants were able to demonstrate their new skills while creating their own metal airplane, a campsite grill and a rectangle name tag holder. [View photos](#) and [watch a video of the scouts in action](#).

Inspiration for the event developed last year after the College's Manufacturing program and Continuing Education department partnered to host GADGET Girls, a camp for girls adventuring in design, engineering and technology. Area middle school girls were exposed to opportunities in the manufacturing sector. After positive feedback from the event, the idea to involve other departments and local youth organizations took off.

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Jenna Greenfield, COD Continuing Education Youth Academy Coordinator, said exposing youth to higher education opportunities at an early age is important because it fosters curiosity and helps them develop life skills such as problem solving, collaboration and resilience. With cost often times a barrier to education, Greenfield secured a Gene Haas Foundation Scholarship to help reduce the cost for attendees.

“Many times scouts’ completion of badges depends on attending various week-long summer camps,” she said. “These are not available to all scouts because of financial obstacles. The merit badge camp offered at COD hopes to eliminate these challenges. In addition, we offer hands-on training with state-of-the-art equipment that they wouldn’t have access to otherwise.”

Boy Scout member Anna Gosztola of Naperville enjoyed the hands-on activities. She earned her 16th merit badge making her one step closer to the rank of Eagle, the pinnacle of all scouts’ achievements.

“Most badges I’ve earned have not been interactive like this,” she said. “I really didn’t know COD had these labs and I definitely want to take more classes here, maybe even a class in the arts. My dad is a chemist at Argonne National Laboratory and this is just as cool. I didn’t know what I was expecting when I came today, but I didn’t expect to see all of these machines.”

As one of the only girls in her troop, she hopes to inspire other young girls to not be afraid to step out of their comfort zone.

“Being a boy scout is fun and not just for boys,” she said. “Society tells us that girls can’t be adventurous and shouldn’t get their hands dirty. We are supposed to be perfect and wear dresses. But that’s not true. You can be whoever you want to be. I’ve learned a lot from scouts and I want other

girls to learn life skills as well because when more people are educated that makes the world a better place.”

Due to the high interest in the event, COD Welding instructor David Ellis hopes to turn the event into an opportunity campus-wide so scouts can earn a diverse range of merit badges.

“This partnership is giving middle schoolers and high schoolers an opportunity to see what community college is all about,” he said. “Beyond CTE, there are opportunities all over campus. Most of the subjects offered here at College of DuPage translate into some sort of merit badge.”

While College might be far off for the scouts, Ellis said being introduced to higher education opportunities early on is critical to their future success.

“They are being exposed to unique subject matters early in their educational journey and they can see what opportunities are out there for them, what their aptitude is for, what they like, what they don’t like,” he said. “They can try all sorts of career and technical education skills right here at COD.”

A freshman at Glenbard South High School, Michael Miller of Glen Ellyn enjoyed utilizing COD’s resources and was happy to see the campus up close.

“I was excited to see the labs and be able to actually use the machinery and tools here,” he said. “At first I thought we were just going to be getting a tour and then sitting in a classroom all day, but we got to make things and try everything out. I’ve only ever seen COD from the outside driving by, and now I can tell other people about my experience here.”

At COD, the Welding program is designed for people interested in learning welding or upgrading their skills in the various processes. The program offers a variety of skill levels in oxyacetylene, arc, MIG, TIG, and plasma welding/cutting processes, using both manual and semi-automatic applications. [Learn more](#).

“Our country is 250,000 welders short,” Ellis said. “Welding is a huge opportunity. COD has one of the best labs in the United States for mechanical maintenance, which includes electronics, hydraulics, pneumatics and welding, and we compile it all into one spot.”

To be contacted when additional merit badge camps are created, email Greenfield at and include the student's name, age and a phone number at which you can be reached.