

CAREER CONNECTIONS

Education liaison works to evaluate needs of and build relationships with industry partner

By Jacob Peterson

Christopher Rodarte was an experienced warehouse worker who'd held jobs at Amazon and UPS before a medical issue forced him to stop working in 2019. As he prepared to reenter the workforce nearly five years later, he knew he needed to sharpen his skill set and bolster his resume with recent accomplishments to counter his stint of unemployment.

This led Rodarte to enroll in a forklift certification course at the Manteca Education & Training Center, one the Logistics Industrial Maintenance and Manufacturing (LIMM) Pathway courses offered at the school. After completing the program, he was able to find a new job at Costco.

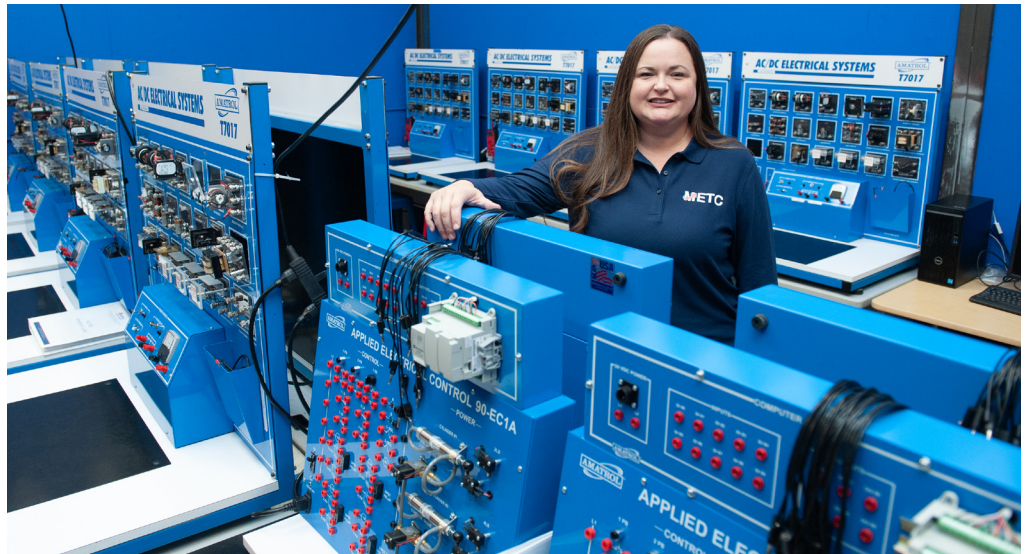
"I believe they wouldn't have even called me in in the first place if I didn't have that class," Rodarte says. "I think it showed that I really had initiative."

Helping students transition from the classroom to a job requires building relationships with industry partners. A key player in building these relations is Miranda Silveira, an adult education liaison who works with both the Manteca center and the San Joaquin Adult Education Consortium (SJAEC), a group of educational institutions dedicated to supporting the educational and economic success of adult learners in the region. Silveira acts as a main point of contact between the schools and industry partners with a focus on helping students.

She also helps SJAEC students achieve success by connecting them with services like the workforce development program San Joaquin County WorkNet, which offers a range of services to help individuals prepare for and find employment while also supporting local employers with recruitment and training needs.

"I want to help students get funded through either WorkNet or another funding source if they need funding for classes, and to maintain and nurture the relationships that we've made in the community," Silveira says.

A key part of her job is learning the needs of various local industries and us-



Adult Education Liaison Miranda Silveira helps establish and maintain relationships with businesses to ensure career training courses meet local labor needs and helps students overcome barriers to ensure their employability. Photo by Bea Ahbeck

ing that information to tailor the LIMM Pathway programs to prepare students for the workforce. An example Silveira gives is how they changed the forklift classes that Rodarte benefited from, which were originally only two days.

"That's not enough time for a well-trained candidate," Silveira says. "So we, in talking to the industry, have figured out that we should do a 17-day program."

The extended training goes over various aspects of safety, OSHA regulations and lessons on how to use different types of forklifts. Silveira says these conversations have continued to further improve the course.

Other LIMM Pathway courses cover welding and electricity fundamentals. Silveira says there is a big need for people with these skills in local industry.

"If something breaks they can fabricate, they can create something," Silveira says. "They can weld something back together and do some light electrical work without having to call in a specific repairman."

Silveira says industry partners help by not only giving information on what gaps need to be filled, but by providing material and other support for the courses. She notes CBC Steel Buildings as an important partner in this regard.

"They supply our school with their scrap metal, which help keep our class costs

down," Silveira says. "That's been a really good relationship for us."

These partnerships can also translate to employment opportunities, she says, with many students later being hired by the various partners.

"They'll email me every now and then and ask for a list of recent graduates," Silveira says. "Or if I have somebody that is specifically interested in that, then I just send their name over."

Silveira says she enjoys the work.

"I like the industry side of things, learning about industry and figuring out how to tailor that to our classes and how to prepare students for the workforce," Silveira says. "They're pretty eager to hire our graduates."



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To learn more about the programs at the Manteca Education & Training Center, visit metc.mantecausd.net/programs. To learn about more adult education opportunities in the area, visit the San Joaquin Adult Education Consortium's website at sjadulted.org.