

# TRIANGLE TECH GRADUATE UPDATES

Check out our graduates and their success.



### Eric J. Vandevander- RHVAC Graduate

“After my high school years in VoTech I felt I still needed more to further my HVAC training, so I enrolled at Triangle Tech. After the 16-month program where I not only learned technical information but received hands-on training and experience, I was able to take my education into a field I loved. I started working in residential service when I graduated 20 years ago. Now I work at a large level 1 trauma center and provide for my family. During the pandemic, when most places were shutting down, I was proud to have the security of my job to help my family. My education through Triangle Tech has helped me not only professionally but personally, my friends and family know they can come to me with their issues and I will drop everything to help them. Triangle Tech gave me that confidence to know what I am doing. I know I am able to troubleshoot, and know confidently how to fix HVAC systems.”

### Gannon Gill- Welding Graduate

“I chose the Welding Program because it was something I never did before; I spent four years in High School in the construction field. I chose Triangle Tech because a representative from Triangle Tech came to my English class and gave a presentation; I was impressed with their job placement; and they help you find employment after graduation through your entire career. After the presentation, I visited Triangle Tech and did an audit in the welding class. During the audit the instructor, Mr. Turner gave me the opportunity to run a welder and that sealed the deal for me.

While in school, I had to overcome difficulties learning to overcome the small details of welding. I stayed motivated by keeping my goals insight, seeking opportunities and working hard. Even before graduation, Johnson Controls Federal Systems came to the school and conducted testing. I knew of Johnson Controls and it was a huge opportunity for me. I passed the test and was offered a position. My goal was to find a job after graduation to start my career path, but the job found me even before I

graduated. At times I did struggle with certain things to overcome, but I stayed focused on getting my degree and certifications. I can say, once you get to third semester that is when things start to fall in place. When you pass your certifications you feel good about yourself sense of accomplishment it makes it all worth it.

I am employed at Johnson Control Federal Systems, York PA. I weld Nuclear Vessels for the US Navy; I have been moving up in Johnson Controls and graduated from their welding school;

I’m certified in all position carbon steel with tig, stick, and flux core. Also certified in stainless steel tig and stick; and certified in copper nickel tig. Some of the skills I use from my education at Triangle Tech is fabrication, blueprints, metallurgy; and welding I did every day at school is something I do every day in my career.

My advice to new and current students is always be willing to learn and be trainable, work ethic is very important; want to learn to sharpen your physical and mental skills. Stay focused always be willing to listen and learn to expand your abilities/skills. My plans for the future are see how far I can go within Johnson Controls, and willing to keep learning.”

### Jason McClelland- Carpentry Graduate

“My name is Jason McClelland. I attended Triangle Tech from July 2020 to October 2021 and was enrolled in their Carpentry Program. My journey to success has not been an easy one. I experienced adverse childhood struggles with schooling that affected my self-esteem and emotional regulation. I learned to accept the negativity in my life as it was; that this is what life would be like for me. I did not care about schooling, creating goals, or the outcome of my future. I started down a path of destruction because it was the only path I knew.

At this point in my life, drug use became a huge way to escape what I was experiencing daily. As young as 13 years old, I decided to quit playing football, something I loved doing, and started selling drugs. I dropped out of high school at the age of 17



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to participate in further drug dealing, which became a daily routine for me. At 23 years old, I was arrested for the first time. I served 12 months in prison and was assigned to a year of parole. During this time, my actions became worse. A few months after I got off parole, I was supposed to be on state supervised county probation for an additional year. That did not end up happening as I immediately fled. I ended up turning myself in about a month later and was sentenced to another twelve to twenty-four months in prison.

After serving this sentence, I began to use heroin. In addition to using it, I began selling it, once again, relying only on what I had come to know during my life. I was arrested for the third time, and it changed my life. I was incarcerated and serving a five to ten-year prison sentence for possession with the intent to deliver and possession of a firearm. My first four years imprisoned was like my life on the streets. I did not care about anything and continued drug abuse. Then, one day, everything changed for me. I called home and was informed that my aunt was in surgery. I called a few days later and was given news that I will never forget. My aunt, who was also my best friend, had passed away. That was my breaking point in my life. I knew and felt compelled to turn my life around.

I started by earning a secondary education diploma, which boosted my self-esteem. I was placed in a mandatory D&A program in which my counselor, Ms. Como, was able to help me open up to the trauma, emotional pain, and self-esteem issues I had held on to for years. I became a Certified Peer Specialist and helped others while I finished my sentence.

I returned home March 2020 as COVID-19 restrictions began. I stayed in my room for days not knowing which way to turn. One night, I picked up my phone and called Triangle Tech. I was not sure what I wanted to do with my life, but I knew I wanted to turn it around. Even with being a felon, Triangle Tech made it so easy to enroll. It was the change I needed in my life, and I ran with it. In the

meantime, I was doing odd jobs such as working in HVAC and repairing my strained relationship with my dad. While we were getting my vehicle ready for school on Father's Day of 2020, my dad had a heart attack. A week later, I got a call from the hospital to decide about my dad's condition. I went into the hospital knowing this would be the last conversation with my father. I had made a promise to him regarding my status with Triangle Tech. I was going to graduate at the head of my class with a 4.0 GPA. On October 8, 2021; I kept my promise. With my new drive and determination, along with immense support from Triangle Tech counselors, advisors, and instructors, I graduated. I earned my Carpentry Degree from Triangle Tech and did it with a 4.0 GPA in all four semesters.

Triangle Tech gave me the help I needed to finish my schooling. I gained a wealth of knowledge and self-esteem in a field I did not know I could excel in. They helped me to keep my promise to my father. I am now a cabinet maker with a large mill-work shop with the potential to one day run my own jobs. I was welcomed with open arms to Triangle Tech, and they truly made me feel like I was home. The support they gave me to succeed was insurmountable. I had a tough start to success, but with my determination and the support of the instructors at Triangle Tech, I know I can succeed in anything now."

## Chase Sattenson - Electrical Graduate

"I have been interested in the Maintenance Electricity program because I have family members who worked in the electrical field; this peaked my interest in the field. Triangle Tech was my choice, it was close to home; and I could earn my associate degree in sixteen months.

It was challenging starting school again; I had to learn to stay motivated during school, I knew when I graduated, I would have a good job working in my new trade and be able to provide for my family. At the start of my education, I didn't learn as quickly as I thought I would, but the longer I was in school the more I studied the easier it was to learn. When I



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was about half way into my education I was figuring out what I wanted to do in the electrical field. Close to graduation I accepted a position in the electrical construction field, and have been moving forward in my career.

It has been seventeen years since graduation and my achievements include: journeyman electrician, apprenticeship instructor, project coordinator/superintendent. I am employed at Steve Waldman Electric, located in Williamsport, PA, as a project coordinator/superintendent.

My duties in my position include employee management, estimate projects, schedule projects, ensure jobs have material to complete projects. Training and skills I use in my position are computer skills, conduit installation, project management, estimating, residential and commercial and electrical installation.

My advice to new and current students is don't be afraid to learn as the technology changes in your field. You will always be learning, be reliable, learn how to balance work and life. Find what you are good at – I have never regretted going into the trades. Don't be afraid to push yourself to step out of your comfort zone. My plans for the future are to never stop learning, to be the best I can be in my field. I am always looking for opportunities to better my education/ work skills.”

## Lilly Zimmerman - CADAM Graduate

I was hired with Champion Modular in late January of 2022 before I graduated. With my great experience and my demonstration of skills to the management and the lead engineers, I was their first choice when it came to the decision-making process. I did get hired as an entry-level engineer, but I was quick to catch on to the expectations, projects, and communication skills between my teammates and our sales department. Every day leads to something new and is a learning experience, and I value everything that I do on a daily basis. Coming into a field primarily taken on by males is intimidating, but my name is known around the plant, and they respect and

value my work. Since I began my career journey in 9th grade, I valued all the knowledge I soaked up leading up to this point. I felt I never failed to impress my instructors and I always strived to do my absolute best. Combining my four years of engineering in high school with my vast skillset earned at Triangle Tech, I can complete my projects and handle issues with ease in the workforce.

## Justin Patriarco-Olinksy - Electrical Graduate

I was tired of meaningless jobs, I wanted to specialize in a skill that would lead me to an amazing career. I looked into Triangle Tech's program because I took an interest in Electricity. I selected the Maintenance Electricity Program because I thought it would be the best fit for me. I knew it would be lots of hard work, but would lead to a very rewarding career. My biggest challenge while attending school was working a full-time job and attending school full time. I was able to overcome that challenge. I worked hard and succeeded. When I graduated, I wanted to achieve a career and skill that would last a lifetime. I am an Electrical Maintenance Tech at the US Steel Irvin Plant. We maintain all the PLC Systems, the Motor Control for various motors and repair any type of components that keep the mill running. I started at the mill and it was a new learning experience with equipment I had not seen before. I had to combine the information I learned in school and the information I was experiencing during on the job training. What I liked the most at Triangle Tech was learning and meeting the new people. I've met people that I have built friendships with, and still talk to this day.

## Gavin White - RHVAC Graduate

I decided to attend Triangle Tech because I knew they could give me the training and knowledge necessary to succeed in my field. I chose to enroll in the R/HVAC program because there is a great need for skilled installers/technicians and not enough people to fill the need. My biggest challenge while attending school was trying to keep track of all of the material!



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Any questions I had were addressed and anything I wanted to see was demonstrated. The areas I enjoyed most in the program were the Pneumatic Controls, Residential HVAC Lab/Theory, and Intro to Refrigeration Lab/Theory. What I wanted to achieve after graduating was getting into a company that would allow me to continue growing and learning to do more with what I already learned. I work as a Boiler Technician for Excelsa Health. My job is to ensure proper function of the boilers, chillers, air handlers, and other equipment throughout the entire building. I started receiving my own special assignments and PM's within the first month of training. Shortly after, I started working shifts on my own and have learned much from my coworkers in other departments. A future goal of mine is to move into a HVAC Technician, allowing me to work primarily on Roof Top Units and Refrigeration Systems. My advice for current students would be to utilize your time speaking with your instructors; you can learn just as much from their real-life experiences as you can from a text book.

## Joseph Ivan - Electrical Graduate

I decided to attend Triangle Tech because the college life wasn't for me. I enjoyed working with my hands and being in the working class. I selected the ME program because of my electrical interests and partial knowledge from working jobs relatable to the field prior. The program offers so many routes in which you can branch out to more things than just being stuck with one. My biggest obstacle during school was finding a mix of handling school and work at the same time. With Triangle Tech being 5 days a week 6.5 hours a day it's tough to find time when you are tired from school then going to work right after.

I really enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere. Teachers are very friendly and super helpful. Always willing to help you learn and understand more about your field no matter what. I enjoyed 3rd and 4th terms the best. The labs were more detailed and more complex. Focusing on more industrial atmosphere applications rather than

residential electrical work. Also the field trips to the companies were always fun too. Seeing the work that is actually being done in labs and getting a visual is very helpful. After graduation, I wanted to gain a steady job with good pay. I accomplished just that.

My advice to current and future students would be that this world we live in today is begging for working class trades. Study hard, ask questions and focus. The knowledge you will obtain will help drastically with 90% of the jobs Mary, the Career Advisor, helps you guys get. Having that paper and knowledge does put you a step ahead. Don't act like you know it all or think you can do it all when you get that job. Experience is a major key but getting into the door of a company is the first step and obtaining this degree and working with your Career Advdor basically gets you right in that door. I work on the fueling systems for the naval nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. Did I start my career running? Yes and no. Like I stated before, having the degree got me in the door but every job has a specific job you need to learn. Having the basic knowledge allowed me to understand and learn faster. This allowed me to run with the job and continue to grow in my company faster.

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