

Clemco Donates the “Ferrari of Blast Cabinets” to a Texas High School’s Welding Program

Highlights

Clemco Industries donated a new Pulsar Plus 55-Suction Blast Cabinet to the welding program at Samuel V. Champion High School in Boerne, Texas. The welding students at the award-winning welding program have built:

- Hunting blinds for disabled veterans
- A cattle dipping vat for the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- A metal shooting target for YouTube influencer Matt Carriker’s *Demolition Ranch* and *Off the Ranch* channels
- A metal firepit as a gift for a retired Texas fire chief
- A metal shooting target for World Wrestling Entertainment superstar Goldberg
- Careers for themselves

“That’s Smart Engineering”

“It’s the Ferrari of blast cabinets,” Dorman Vick says of the Pulsar Plus 55-Suction Blast Cabinet that Clemco donated to the Welding Pathway at Samuel V. Champion High School. Vick launched Champion High’s Welding Pathway in 2004 and has been running it since.

“I’ve used wonky cabinets before,” Vick says, “and I can tell you that the cabinet Clemco gave us is quality. It’s so comfortable and easy to use. If a 14-year-old high school freshman can operate it with no problems, anyone can. That’s smart engineering.”

Champion High, which has its share of 14-year-old freshman, is located in Boerne, Texas, a city of just under 20,000 residents situated about a 45-minute drive northwest of San Antonio. But other than the age of its students, the Welding Pathway is not a typical high school welding program.

Vick Had an Idea

In the fall of 2020, Vick had the idea that he could help his students more quickly earn their industry-level welding certifications if they didn’t have to spend so much time removing mill scale off their test weld coupons and other projects by using grinders or less efficient hand tools. Vick wanted to free up the students’ time to work on more complex and creative projects. What they needed, he thought, was a blast cabinet.

“I did my research,” Vick explains, “and everybody in the industry I talked to said the quality of Clemco equipment sets



Dorman Vick (kneeling, right) with his 2020-21 first and second period students.

it apart in the sandblasting business and the world. So I called Clemco and asked if they had a cabinet they would be willing to donate. They were the only manufacturer I called.”

Bad News and Good News

Vick spoke with Kurtis Ohse, Clemco Director of Marketing. “Vick asked if Clemco could donate a base-model cabinet,” Kurtis remembers. “I got back to him a couple months later with bad news and good news. We couldn’t donate a base model. But we could donate a cabinet from our new line of Pulsar Plus Cabinets.”

Pulsar Plus Cabinets are Clemco’s newest line of blasting cabinets. Clemco manufactures Pulsar Plus Cabinets in six models: two pressure-blast and four suction-blast, all equipped with 17 ergonomic and state-of-the art features.

“Like Going From the Flintstones to the Penthouse”

Vick and his students received their new Pulsar Plus 55-Suction Cabinet in February 2021.

“We got the cabinet set up on day one,” Vick recalls. “That day the students went to work blasting mill scale off their welds with No. 8 glass bead. It was like going from the Flintstones to the penthouse. Not only does the cabinet make the work go about 80% faster, but it is far safer than hand grinding and produces fantastic finish on the metal.”

What the Students Think

Ryan Myers, Senior

“I had a summer job at a firearms manufacturer where I used a cabinet. But the cabinet from Clemco is a million times better. It can get right inside creases and tight corners. I’m getting knowledge and experience that will give me a head start when I job hunt.”

Caleb Roberts, Junior

“I can’t tell you how much the cabinet has helped us. Right now we’re getting our welding certifications. With the cabinet we can sandblast mill scale and beads off our test plates and get them as clean as possible. We couldn’t do that before with grinders, and now I can finish five welds in the time that before I could only finish one. We really appreciate the donation.”

Nathan Young, Senior

“The cabinet is so easy and convenient to use. To sandblast without it would require a body suit and a lot more space. I only have to put the part in the cabinet, my hands in the gloves, and then I’m ready to go. We mainly use the cabinet to clean up our welds and to prep parts for painting. It saves us so much time.”

“We’re Building Strong Young Men and Women”

Vick’s students learn much more than technical welding and fabricating skills in his program—they also learn to believe in themselves and in others.

“To see kids come into our shop that maybe the system has deemed cannot go to college,” Vick explains, “and then to watch them shine and become superstars, build anything they put their minds to, that’s what it’s about. What we’re doing is more than helping young people build careers. We’re building strong young men and women. They leave here knowing they can come up with an idea and make it a reality.”

“I also see the change in my students when they give back to heroes and the community,” Vick continues. “No textbook can teach somebody that giving is better than receiving, that freedom isn’t free. They now know what it feels like to change somebody’s life. That’s so cool.”

“From Welding Under the Hood” to Teaching High School Students

Vick, who is 44-years-old and says he has been “welding under the hood for a paycheck” since he was 14, continued to weld part-time while he studied animal science in college, and welded and pipe-fitted full-time for years after he graduated.

Then in 2003, Vick went to a church event where country singer George Strait’s father, a lifelong high-school teacher, spoke about the merits of teaching. That talk, and nudging from a friend who was retiring from teaching welding classes at Clark High School in San Antonio, convinced Vick to go back to college and earn his teaching degree. His first year teaching was at Clark High, but the next year the Boerne Independent School District hired Vick to start up Boerne High School’s Welding Pathway from scratch.

“We Built the Program Up From Just About Nothing”

Vick says that when he started the Welding Pathway 17 years ago, he was given an empty building with worn-out tools. “We threw all of that old equipment away,” he recalls. “With help from many hard-working kids, we built the program up from just about nothing to where it is today.”

After three years at Boerne High, the pathway moved to the newly opened Samuel V. Champion High School, where for years it served both of the Boerne Independent School District’s high schools. Boerne High eventually opened its own Welding/Agricultural Mechanics Program; however, Vick has remained at Champion High to continue running its Welding Pathway.

“Skilled Trades Are the Backbone of This Nation”

“I’ve continued to weld part time on weekends and during summer break when I can, especially when Texas oil fields were booming,” Vick says. “It helps me bring fresh, real-world content to the students. Many students have incorrectly been told that the trades are a second-tier career choice. Nothing could be further from the truth. Skilled trades are the backbone of this nation. There’s no shame in coming home dirty after a day’s work.”

“It’s awesome to know that Clemco understands this and is investing in our youth to help bring back American trades.” ●