

Subj: **NVC 040511 Another Reason Why**
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News, Views, and Clues
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Another Reason Why

The text below is an email received by a career pathway instructor at Center Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC where Kathi Polis is now Dean of Community Development. Take a few minutes to read this email to be reminded why we do what we do:

*Dear Mr. (teacher's name)

I'm just following up with a chance meeting I had with one of your students* A young black man named Thomas.

I ride the light rail every day from my computer/software development job from the South End to the Pineville/I-485 station. Thomas got on the train and placed a handful of steel plates on the deck of the train, which caught my attention. Then he picked them up and started to carefully review them.

It's been about 27 years since my last arc strike but I recognized right away that he was taking some sort of welding class/training. One of the unwritten rules of the light rail, sort of like the YMCA/gym, never talk to strangers. For some reason I dismissed that rule* When I asked him about his program he lit up and started to tell me all about the program and the opportunities in the field. He mentioned Seimens, for example, as an employer prospect in a *wide open field** and the void left behind the retired WWII welders.

When I was in a mathematics program in community college myself I had serious doubts about my own suitability for college and concurrently enrolled in a private welding school. Although I really enjoyed it, I ended up finishing my math studies and ended up with a Masters in Computer Science. But once I was certified as a welder, I had the comfort of knowing that if college didn't pan out, I could always weld. At the time Houston was a boom town and sky scrapers were going up all over the place (though I'm not sure how I would have handled the heights).

I just want to say to you *Thank you* for giving these young folks a choice to have a real career. Not everyone is cut out for college, has the role models at home to provide direction, and certainly not everyone has the financial resources to pull it off. I got lucky.

Sometimes the grind of life clouds our vision about ourselves* but I have to tell you* I'm not sure why Thomas dropped your name, but I am sure you are making a difference.

Whatever you are doing at CPCC* keep it up.

Respectfully, Dave*

Thanks to Kathi for sharing this story:

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Keep up the good work. Let me know when we can help.

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