

Climb

A LONG JOURNEY

Climb Grad Named Welding Journeyman After Years as Apprentice

SHANA still remembers picking up her welding gear and tools for the first time during her Climb Wyoming training—the large helmet, heavy leather protective gloves, torch and cutters. Flying sparks and the smell of melting metal filled the air as she and the nine other women in her program laid down their first welding beads.

“I was hooked,” says Shana. “It was so awesome to see that I could do that!”

After Climb, Shana didn’t stop. Following a five-year apprenticeship that included 8,500 hours of training in industrial pipe welding, she has earned her certification as a Journeyman with Cheyenne’s Plumbers and Pipefitters Union 192.

When she started, there was only one other woman in the Union’s apprenticeship program. Then Summer, another grad from Shana’s Climb training, joined and is on track to become a Journeyman soon.

“It was scary at first,” Shana says of being one of the only women. “But once we got out on the job, the guys were really receptive of us.”

“You have to have tough skin,” says Summer, who often



Climb grads Shana and Summer are forging new futures for their families by rising to the top of the industrial pipe welding profession.

mentors Climb participants entering predominantly male fields like welding and truck driving. “You have to be able to adapt.”

Apprenticeships are an age-old practice of new tradespeople learning from experienced counterparts while on the job. Not everyone makes it through the Union apprenticeship’s long hours and physical demands.

Life changed quickly for Shana and her daughter once she joined Union 192 five years ago. Her salary jumped to \$48 an hour with benefits.

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AT A GLANCE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

“IT’S ONE OF THE BEST PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY.”

U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services Kevin Concannon, referencing Climb during a visit to the Cheyenne program to learn how we promote employment opportunities for families.

1.7

PERCENT OF HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC) SYSTEM MECHANICS NATIONWIDE WHO WERE WOMEN IN 2015.*

The growing tech industry led Climb’s Laramie program to offer its first-ever HVAC training in 2016 in partnership with local companies.

* Bureau of Labor Statistics



1,377

CLIMB PARTICIPANT SURVEYS ANALYZED

by the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver to assess how executive functioning skills change after the program. Among the 40% of those surveyed who reported that they had a hard time making decisions before Climb, **ALMOST HALF RESPONDED THAT THEY NO LONGER STRUGGLED WITH DECISION MAKING AT PROGRAM END.**

96

NUMBER OF MOMS CLIMB HAS TRAINED AS CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANTS (CNAs) in

the last two years due to an increase in the state’s need for healthcare workers. Starting wages for the Sweetwater Area program’s CNA graduates have reached more than \$13 an hour.



2

TRAINING OPTIONS

(CNA or Office Careers) offered in a combined Teton Area Climb program **FOR 11 SINGLE MOMS TO MAXIMIZE THEIR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

A LONG JOURNEY *Continued from page 1*

“Climb took me from making \$8 an hour and living in an abusive relationship to now I have a home, two cars, a husband, and my daughter is doing great in school.

“We don’t have to worry about where next month’s rent will come from. We don’t have to buy 99-cent cereal that doesn’t taste good.”

“My daughter will sometimes still pinch and save and I can tell her, ‘It’s okay. You don’t have to do that anymore.’ I owe Climb the world.”

Shana’s classmate, Summer, also saw a huge increase in her wages, more than doubling her income in the first year of her apprenticeship—a much-needed boost as she has five boys to support. “We’re not so stressed out all the time. It makes me proud for my boys to see how hard I work.”



EARNING A LIVABLE WAGE:

What changes for families who’ve lived in poverty when the amount on their paychecks more than doubles?

Climb participants who were employed before Climb often worked in low-wage jobs, piecing together basic needs like food and housing. Two years after Climb, these moms are typically earning more than double their previous paychecks. Here’s what they tell us:



ON \$1,000/MONTH OR LESS YOU ARE...

- Driving an unreliable vehicle that could break down at any moment.
- Busy managing chaos day-to-day, with no time to think about setting goals for the future.
- Reliant on unhealthy relationships to help with basic needs like food, transportation and housing.
- Having to choose between paying for heat or buying food in the middle of the winter.
- Sinking so far into debt that you stop paying attention to the bills piling up at your doorstep.

ON \$2,500/MONTH OR MORE YOU ARE...

- Proudly paying for your groceries with cash instead of a food stamp card.
- Sending your kids to school with homemade lunches instead of relying on free or reduced meals.
- Providing Christmas presents for your family without help.
- Moving into your own housing and enjoying independence for the first time.
- Feeling supported and valued in your workplace, with paid leave to plan ahead for a family vacation.
- Getting out of debt and paying all your bills at the end of every month.

FEATURED EMPLOYER PARTNER

OVER MORE THAN A DECADE, **MGM ENTERPRISES INC.** HAS WORKED WITH CLIMB TO TRAIN MORE THAN 100 SINGLE MOMS—AND THE BENEFITS GO BOTH WAYS.

FACING a shortage of skilled, well-trained employees is something every business dreads—so what if you had the opportunity to train your own workforce up to your high standards?

That's the chance Matt Garland, President of MGM Enterprises Inc., a construction company based in Gillette, Wyoming, had more than ten years ago. Climb's Gillette program was ready to launch a Commercial Truck Driving (CDL) training but needed a trainer.

With critical support from the Wyoming Contractors Association, Garland stepped up, developing the curriculum and using his own drivers and equipment operators as instructors. One class led to another over the years—until MGM had eventually trained more than 100 Climb participants and hired several graduates as well.



Matt Garland, President of MGM Enterprises Inc., stands with his long-time employee, Climb grad Crystal.

still works for MGM, having held several positions over the years: driver, office manager and supervisor of Department of Transportation compliance for the entire company's suite of about 150 trucks and more than 450 employees.

"I've seen Crystal buy her own home, raise her two kids and care for her mom. She's a solid citizen," says Matt. "I see several other moms we trained working in the community and doing well. I'm proud to have been part of what I think is one of the most successful training programs in the U.S."

"I was responding to a business need," says Garland. "But I also watched several Climb moms go from hardly making any money to earning \$17 an hour plus overtime, buy their first house, first car, and transition off government assistance. It's been very gratifying in that way, too."

One of MGM's hires back in 2009 was Crystal, who was in a rough place in life before Climb. Today, Crystal



Q&A CASPER BUSINESS LIAISON DANICA SVEDA ON HOW OUR EMPLOYER PARTNERS 'LEAN IN' FOR CLIMB



You match Climb graduates with local employers during the program's job placement phase—how do you find the right fit? Employers have distinct personalities—just like our participants! We have conversations asking what they value in an employee. Of course, they all respond, 'Someone who is on time,' but when you dig in, one employer might want someone who likes a fast-paced work environment. Another may want someone who is really patient. Meanwhile, I've watched our participants learn and grow, so I know their strengths. When you find that match, it's a win-win.

What's a typical day on the job for you? I'm working with a mom to get her resume ready, scheduling mock interviews, or following up with an employer to find out how things are going. Our employer partners are so willing to lean into our process. I also meet with potential employers and do a lot of research, as we identify our local workforce needs and build trainings to meet these needs.

Climb helps participants practice on-the-job skills during training. How does this get them ready for their careers? For 12 weeks, Climb mirrors the workplace so moms can practice what to do if childcare falls through, or how to take a deep breath and engage in a productive conversation to address a conflict rather than walk away. The result is that employers say our participants are more prepared than many applicants. They're ready for all that work...and life...have to offer!



Danica organizes mock interviews for Casper participants like this group dressed up and ready to practice for the real thing.



FUNDING FUTURES GIVING SOCIETY, YOU HELP US MAKE A GREATER IMPACT.

"If you want to improve your community, you have an obligation to do something about it. We have seen how Climb graduates in Laramie have blossomed. Investing in people's lives is a good thing to do, and as Climb donors, we're investing in the futures of families.

We've been annual donors to Climb for many years. For us, a multi-year pledge makes giving easier and helps Climb look to the future. We know what time of year to make a payment, and when we're doing our taxes in the spring, we aren't surprised to find that we forgot to support one of our favorite organizations!"

Oliver and Sidney Walter are long-time Laramie residents. Sid is an active volunteer with Climb's Laramie program as well as numerous other community organizations. Oliver is retired Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of Wyoming. Climb's Funding Futures Giving Society members make a multi-year pledge of \$1,000 or more per year.



Oliver and Sidney Walter, members of Climb's Funding Futures Giving Society and long-time Laramie residents.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you are at least 70½ years old, you may want to consider making a gift to Climb directly from your IRA. This tax-free Qualified Charitable Distribution makes it easy to be proactive in your charitable giving and minimize the tax effect of an IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) obligation.

There are specific requirements for these gifts, so please contact Climb's Director of Development at 307-316-1455 or your tax advisor to determine whether this giving option supports your financial planning goals.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF



LAURA CURRAN
Statewide Operations Administrator

A native of Cheyenne, Laura attended the University of Wyoming and returned to her hometown to work as U.S. Senator John Barrasso's constituent outreach coordinator. She has now followed her passion for helping others to Climb.



MANUELA HOFER-MCINTYRE
Laramie Assistant Program Director

An Austrian native, Manuela has a background in international finance and worked for many years at the University of Wyoming. She grew up in the Alps and enjoys Wyoming's wonderful outdoor recreation opportunities.



JASMINE SOLLER
Sweetwater Assistant Program Director

A Wyoming native, Jasmine has lived in several areas of the state. She has been a social worker for 10 years, loves the outdoors, and can often be found floating down the river fishing.



HEATHER COLSON
Cheyenne Program Coordinator

With experience in public relations and work with the City of Cheyenne, Heather has a passion for connecting moms to training opportunities and community resources. She enjoys being a wife and mother, and does photography in her free time.



CARRIE KIRKPATRICK
Board of Directors

Carrie is the founder of Raising Girls, a nonprofit program developed to inspire thought and dialogue and to help girls thrive. She has chaired the Board of Directors of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole (CFJH), as well as holding other leadership positions on the CFJH Board.



DANICA SVEDA
Casper Business Liaison

Born and raised in Wyoming, Danica was a professional helicopter pilot and worked at the Casper College library. She is now earning a master's degree at the University of Wyoming, focusing on post-secondary administration and adult education.



DIANE FILICETTI
Sweetwater Area Mental Health Care Provider

With a master's degree in social work from Louisiana State University, Diane has spent most of her career working with children and families through schools, community providers of mental health services and her own private practice.

This **MOTHER'S DAY**, a group of generous donors will match your contribution to Climb! Visit climbwyoming.org.





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