



# AIST YOUNG PROFESSIONALS



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In 1999, my grandfather was closing in on retiring from a 40-plus year career of working in the tool and die shop at General Motors. Before he retired, my grandfather took me on a tour of the facility. It was that tour — which, to this day, I doubt he was actually allowed to take me on — that piqued the curiosity of what the future might hold for this 11-year-old girl. I was able to see some of the production lines, the tools he used that had been crafted out of steel and the different machines he worked on.

In the years since that tour, I have expanded that curiosity into a passion for manufacturing, problem-solving and taking care of people. Those passions led me to Michigan Technological University. My college experience was outstanding, but one of my regrets is that I never took advantage of what AIST has to offer. While I learned plenty about designing products, materials, and how to problem-solve effectively and efficiently, I wish I would have made more of the opportunity to work in an industry that I am now so passionate about.

After college, I began designing products and working customer service for a company in the commercial construction industry. This position gave me an appreciation for cost-effective design, quality product and customer service. Those traits led to an opportunity three years ago, when I took a leap of faith by entering a new industry, moving to Wisconsin to work for the Elwood Corp., a long time valve supplier in the steel industry. In my time with Elwood, I have developed a passion for hydraulics and hydraulic systems, and learning how the technology works today and will be applied in the future.

This position led me to my first opportunity to attend an AIST event. In 2015, I traveled to a Midwest Member Chapter dinner meeting in Merrillville, Ind., USA, with a bit of intimidation initially, but I was able to meet with individuals who talked passionately about the industry and how their roles helped shape what the steel industry is today.

I was hooked.

The industry is full of challenges, but for every challenge, there are passionate people working to find solutions. One of the reasons AIST is so important is that many of these passionate people are approaching retirement age, and AIST is the type of organization that can help bridge the generational gap. It has been a place where I have been able to develop relationships at young engineering events, and that first meeting in Indiana has led me to attend many more AIST events.

As a young engineer in an aging workforce, I think it is important for us to learn from those who have spent years working in the industry, while also bringing in new individuals who will help cultivate a culture of appreciation of the history of the steel industry. I have found that AIST has been an invaluable resource to connect with those who are the best in their field.

It was hard to imagine the exact path that an 11-year-old me would take following that behind-the-scenes tour nearly 20 years ago, but I'm thankful that it eventually led me to cross paths with AIST. ♦



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