

From the classroom to the field and back

Wisconsin native Justin Barrett was living in Colorado, working at retail in a job he didn't find fulfilling. It was time for a change, so he went back home to start something new.

"I wasn't doing anything that I really enjoyed and decided that it was time for me to grow up and find a career that I liked," Justin said. "But I didn't want just a job somewhere, I wanted something that I felt good about doing. So, I looked into renewable energy and wind energy in particular, and found out about [Lakeshore Technical College](#)."



Justin Barrett of Lakeshore Technical College

Justin completed Lakeshore's wind technician program, and [quickly got a job](#) at a Wisconsin wind farm.

"It was such a rewarding job every day," he said. "One of those jobs where you have a small, tight crew and you enjoy the people you work with and you enjoy the work that you do. At the end of the day you feel good when you get home."

Importantly, it was a job that helped Justin support his family, and it enabled his wife to stay home with their young children.

After six years working as a wind tech, Justin decided it was time for another change. He applied for an opening as a wind tech instructor at his alma mater and got the job. That's been rewarding in its own way.

"It's exciting that [wind tech](#) is the [fastest growing job](#) in the country right now," Justin said. "And, it's exciting for the students when they hear that news because they get a renewed faith in 'yes, I'm going to have a job. I'm going to be able to go somewhere and have a secure career ahead of me.'"

Jamie Reichardt is one of Justin's students, and she also came to Lakeshore in search of more opportunity, looking for something better than her previous home care job.

"Home care was wrecking my body and I wasn't making a lot of money," she said. "I've always been into machines and fixing machines and things like that, and I just wanted a better opportunity for my family, make more money, have a better job."



Jamie actually found her calling after attending WINDPOWER 2016 in New Orleans with her school.

"I'm 36 now. For a good 34 years, I floundered: What do I want to do with my life? I want to do something that matters. I want to do something that means something," Jamie told me. "I got down to that conference and listening to the speakers, I had to excuse myself a couple times because I was just overwhelmed. I had this big "a-ha" moment: this is what I'm meant to do. This means something. It's big. It's bigger than me, it's bigger than all of us."

Jamie Reichardt, wind technician student at Lakeshore Community College.