Computer Tech Students Get Up Close Look at Yahoo!

Computer Technology students were able to get an up close look at the Yahoo! facility in Lockport. The customer care and data center helps to take care of the over one billion consumers around the world with their hundreds of thousands of servers. They also employ almost 200 people at the site.

Morgan Hahn, a senior in the program at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center, says she thought it was very cool. I think it was a good opportunity for the class to see what kind of jobs are available." Josh Magrum added, "I loved it. It is one of the places that I dream of working at. The server room was really huge and awesome. I was looking at all the hard drives in the server and they were four terabits a line. It was crazy!" Joe Meaney said they got to see things they weren’t expecting to. "We got to see a bunch of stuff that we didn’t know that they had, like where they worked and the server room. The crazy amount of heat coming off the servers and how they cool them. They use the cold air from outside. Which in Buffalo we have a lot of." Justin Corser added, "I really liked it. It was awesome to see a huge data center and our tour guide told us some awesome stories like how one time the entire thing crashed and how he fixed it. It was really cool, especially because I want to go into cybersecurity and that was really applicable." Teacher Mr. Herrmann explained, "They lost 500 million records from Yahoo!, but had it all backed up on tapes; compressed data that took five days to get." Corser continued, “I would be very interested in working there. They have free breakfast and lunches. They had Macs and Linux operating systems. It was awesome!”

Mr. Herrmann said it was a great opportunity for his students and he is very grateful to Yahoo! for opening their doors to them. “What a way to see how a data center works from the inside. It was awesome!”
**Congratulations to Our NYACCE Students of the Year!**

*The NYACCE is the New York Association for Continuing and Community Education.*

**Jessica Fitzpatrick**  
Nominated by Carolyn Graff

Jessica Fitzpatrick is a mother of twelve year old twin girls. It is her wish that her children realize the importance of education. Jessica also wants them to see that one can set and achieve goals with the proper support. This was the driving force behind her decision to achieve her high school equivalency diploma. Jessica received an IEP (Individualized Education Program) diploma at the completion of her high school career in 2004. She then suffered the loss of her mother. Soon after, she became pregnant with her daughters. As her daughters grew and entered school, Jessica decided it was time for her to enter school herself. Her first step was to enter HSE (High School Equivalency) classes. In 2014, Jessica enrolled in HSE classes in Niagara Falls, NY. She was attending class for a couple of months and was making progress towards her goal when tragedy struck. Jessica and her father were assaulted by their neighbors over a case of mistaken identity. Following this event, Jessica was afraid to leave her home and she feared being with other people whom she was not familiar with. She stopped attending class and put her goal of obtaining her HSE on hold.

In 2016, after taking some time to recover from the assault, Jessica decided she was ready to return to class. Upon entry, Jessica was offered the opportunity to enroll in the National External Diploma Program (NEDP). She completed the program and received her diploma in April 2018. Jessica also completed a 45 hour certificate program in Customer Service.

Jessica would like to enroll in college to earn certification as a veterinary technologist. She is currently working with our BOCES staff to review her skills in anticipation of college entrance testing.

**Dorothea McDonald**  
Nominated by Erica Kopp and Leslie Madrid

Dorothea “Cookie” McDonald is one of the most extraordinary students I have ever taught and the story of her life is harrowing.

It is overwhelming how much violence Cookie has seen in her life. Her father committed suicide and her mother was physically abusive. The man she dated for seven years was indescribably violent; he would drag her up the stairs by her hair. She began to regard abuse against women as “normal”. She used marijuana to cope with the violence. She has been beaten, spit on, and physically assaulted. She endured horrors that no woman should ever face.

Sadly, because Cookie’s mother did not understand the value of education, she encouraged Cookie to drop out of high school, so she could watch the younger children in the household. Even though Cookies enjoyed caring for her young family members, she was forced to abandon her education.

At 17 years old, Cookie had her first child- a daughter, named Diamond and went on to have four more children. She loved her little babies dearly and was happy to be a mom. But she was ostracized from her family and was told that she would amount to nothing with five baby daddies.

Cookie says her trust in God got her through the worst periods of her life. She found solace in her church. She and her children would collect bottles on the street to scrape together enough change to take the bus to church on Sundays.

When her youngest daughter, Gracie, asked if she had finished school, Cookie explained that she was too old to get her diploma. Gracie replied, “Mommy, you can go back and get more learning.” Right then, Cookie decided to continue her education. This has become her motto: “No matter what, anyone can get more learning”.

Attending class was daunting and doing math in my class gave her panic attacks. Regardless, she persisted, and despite her horrific life, Cookie is a happy person. She has a great sense of humor and uses jokes in every situation. Cookie is finishing the National External Diploma Program this summer. She is proud of what she has accomplished and of the example she is setting for her children.

The woman who struggled with subtraction is now a mentor in the classroom. She loves helping other students and children. She is always encouraging others. She is direct; she will tell them “Quit the drugs!”, “Get out of the violent relationship!” and so on. Cookie is still very active in her church and her community. She invites neighborhood kids into her home and helps them with their homework. Cookie is an inspiration to so many.
Students Shine at Auto Collision Competition

Students in Paul Magyar’s Auto Body program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center had a chance to show off their skills at the third annual Western New York Auto Collision Competition.

The event has high school juniors and seniors being judged on their skills such as dent repair and color mixing to help restore damaged cars to their former condition. Organized by Richard Greenawalt, it gives students a chance to compete at the national level to hone their skills and show them career opportunities in the industry.

Evan Harvey, in Mr. Magyar’s class, took first place overall in the junior category and won a $5,000 scholarship at Ohio Technical College and his classmate, Carlton Smith Jr., took third place overall and won a $1,500 scholarship from the same school.

“I really want to thank Rick Greenawalt and his staff, all the BOCES instructors, the volunteers, Sherwin Williams of Buffalo and our Superintendent, Dr. Clark Godshall, for all their support of this worthy cause,” says Mr. Magyar. “This has become a yearly event where the students and teachers can show off their skills to all the people of Western New York and go home with prizes, scholarships and cash awards. It is a great experience for all the students.”

Building Trades Students Help Out at New Community Ed Center

Students in Matt Anastasi’s Building Trades program recently spent some time at the soon to be open Orleans/Niagara BOCES’ Lockport Community Education Center. The Orleans Career and Technical Education students have been lending their masonry skills to fixing up the basement of the building where adult education electricity classes will be offered in the spring.

“It was a great opportunity for my students to get some real-world experience at a job site and we are very appreciative of our administration allowing us to help out,” says Mr. Anastasi.
Newfane Learning Center Students Celebrate Holidays With Random Acts of Kindness

Together with their counselors and teachers, the students at the Newfane Learning Center (NLC) participated in Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) throughout the entire month of December. These activities included making bookmarks for the library at Newfane Middle School, providing anonymous “love notes” to students and staff around NLC to help spread the holiday cheer, as well as creating personalized holiday cards for the residents of the Newfane Rehab and Healthcare Facility just to name a few!

This year, we are very proud to announce that Lilly Corp, of North Tonawanda, participated in the ultimate RAK! With the help of Shae Owens, a former BOCES employee turned hairstylist, Lilly was able to donate ten inches of hair to Locks of Love. Not only did she look incredible with her new chic bob, she became an ambassador for the organization explaining how her old hair went to sick people. Ms. Owens has been sharing acts of kindness throughout the year by providing free haircuts to over 25 students at the school.

School Principal, Krista Macomber, said she is very proud of all the students who participated in RAK. “A special shout out to Lilly Corp, congratulations for taking RAK above and beyond our wildest expectations! And Shea Owens, thank you for making our students look so fresh and so clean for the holidays!”

Orleans Career and Technical Education Center Donates to PB&J Drive

Students and staff at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center really brought it for the 9th Annual Peanut Butter and Jelly Drive.

The drive helps local food pantries fill their shelves with kid-friendly food like peanut butter, jelly and marshmallow fluff. It has become a tradition for the center when math teacher Sarah Ivory asked the students at the center if they would like to help out. Since then it has become a fall community project.

A friendly class competition between the classes ended up with the Welding class, taught by Eric Farrell, victorious by collecting over $400 to buy peanut butter, jelly and fluff to contribute to the local food pantries.

School counselor, Kara Kirk, says, “Every year I am amazed at the generosity of these teenagers here at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. I am very proud of all of them.”

Culinary Arts Students Taste Sweet Success!

The team of Wes Shyiah Thompson and Madison St. Cyr from the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center’s Culinary Arts program brought home third place from the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute’s Gingerbread competition.

The students’ Victorian-style gingerbread house got the judges’ attention at the Gingerbread competition’s High School category. The competition was held in conjunction with their Gingerbread Wonderland event.

Each entry was judged on: use of gingerbread and color, originality/creativity, adherence to guidelines and detail to decoration. The students’ prize was $25. “I am so proud of them,” says Culinary Arts teacher, Bob Ihle. “They were very dedicated to finishing their house and stayed after school several days to complete the finishing touches.”
Orleans Learning Center Students Celebrate Veterans Day

The students at the Orleans Learning Center in Medina, celebrated Veterans Day in a special way. Teachers Paula Scheffer, Susie Zafrano, Kim Wiley, Aimee Nicholas, Theresa Claus and Steve Kuehn had spent the weeks leading up to the holiday reviewing with their students the meaning of Veterans Day, the important role veterans play in our lives, and who is a veteran.

On November 9th, American Legion Commander Mike Hanley, from Lockport Post # 410, and American Legion Auxiliary Department of New York 3rd Vice President, Nancy Babis, visited the school to present an assembly to bring history to life for the students. Commander Hanley spoke to the students about his years of service in the United States Navy. His focus was his experience during the Vietnam War. The informative program allowed interaction between the students and the presenters. Students proudly shared their personal experiences involving family members who have served our country.

A flag folding ceremony was conducted by the Commander and Vice President while Paula Scheffer, American Legion Auxiliary member, read the meaning of each fold. Vice President Babis spoke of the importance of honoring the flag during parades and utilizing the proper etiquette of a right hand salute. Students talked about the importance of respecting the flag and our National Anthem.

A discussion of the history of the poppy was led by VP Babis. The students received a poppy to wear to display their patriotic nature. A presentation was made to Commander Hanley and VP Babis on behalf of the students and staff who made cookies for the Veterans Day post ceremony reception at the Lockport VFW.

Niagara Career and Technical Education Students Learn About the Respiratory System

Students at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center got a very hands-on lesson about the respiratory system.

Sara McCartin, who teaches the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) program, says her students have been learning about the respiratory system and ventilation and respiration and rescue breathing. “Thanks to Hartland Abattoir Corp, which is a USDA slaughterhouse, we were able to have some cow lungs brought in as a tool to show the students anatomy and physiology of the respiratory system. The students were able to find structures and identify them. They are also able to see how the lung inflates and deflates similar to inspiration and expiration.”

The EMS students also played teacher and invited students in from the Diesel Technology program, the Health Occupations Technician program and the Computer Technology program to explain to them the parts of the lung and how it works. Diesel Technology teacher Wes Blydi said, “My students thought it was the coolest and weirdest thing they had ever done. They used compressed air to inflate the lung. It is pretty awesome to say you went to Diesel class and received Science credit by helping the EMS students inflate a real cow lung. Talk about a real-life unique experience!”

“My students had a great time,” says Mrs. McCartin. “Not only were they able to see how the respiratory system works, but they got to touch and explore it. They were very excited about discovering the bronchioles and blood vessels and other parts of the pulmonary anatomy.”


Teacher Sara McCartin with students Jalen Bryant (Niagara Falls), Sam Clark (Starpoint), Ashley Dixon (North Tonawanda), Mary Fuller (Niagara Falls), Mya Garber (North Tonawanda), Savannah Hutcheson (Niagara Wheatfield), Kilee Karnatz (Niagara Academy), Sierra Lackner (Wilson), Jazmine Michel (Royalton-Hartland), Joe Phillips (Niagara Falls), Sade Rivers (Niagara Falls) and Emily Russell (North Tonawanda).
SkillsUSA Students Celebrate the Holidays with Red Cross Care Packages

SkillsUSA students at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center partook in a community service activity for military personnel and their families. The students took some of the proceeds from their annual craft fair and chose to use the money towards two Red Cross sponsored activities, “Holidays for Heroes Comfort Kit Program” and “Activity Kits for Military Children”. Suggested items for the comfort kits were toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, shaving cream, nail clippers, toothpaste, combs, razors and gum. For children’s kits they recommended coloring/activity books, crayons, colored pencils, washable markers, stickers, puzzles, books, craft kits, fruit chews, hand sanitizer and games. The students put together over 100 care packages.

SkillsUSA Advisor, Kara Kirk took the senior chapter officers shopping and says she was impressed with the students’ skills. “They spent a lot of time at the Dollar Tree looking at labels on the hygiene products and toys for the children and trying to figure out what was appropriate. They were also trying to get the most bang for their buck, so they would have more to give.”

After the SkillsUSA officers’ shopping excursion, all the SkillsUSA students spent a day making Christmas cards and packaging their purchases into kits at the Orleans CTE Center. “We want them to know someone cares about them.”

Lisa Taibi, who is in charge of the Services to Armed Forces and International Services for the Red Cross, says she was impressed with the number of kits the students donated. “I am just overwhelmed and grateful for what Mrs. Kirk and the students do for our veterans. The comfort kits will be distributed to veterans and their families in VA hospitals, during various homeless stand downs, valor days and other military fairs and gatherings across Western and Central New York Region after the holiday season and throughout the year. The activity kits will be distributed to military children at Yellow Ribbon events, family days or anything military related. They are geared towards keeping children occupied while mom and dad attend trainings or informational meetings. We are so grateful to what the students here at BOCES have done for our veterans. This is truly a wonderful thing they have done.”

HVAC Students Get Up Close Look at Key Bank Center

The HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration) students had an up close look at the rink at the Key Bank Center in downtown Buffalo. Teacher Vincent Piaskowski and his junior and senior classes, from the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, were the guests of Head Engineer Bruce Johnson.

“It was a fantastic tour,” says Mr. Piaskowski. “Mr. Johnson also oversees the Harbor Center ice skating rink and talked to the students about the different water systems that are used for both facilities. They also saw the heating and cooling systems and toured the press box.”

The students loved the tour and were fascinated by the larger scale systems. They were pleasantly surprised when Mr. Johnson gave them all a Buffalo Sabres yearbook and a scarf at the end of their tour. “We are so grateful and appreciative of the time that Mr. Johnson took to show the students around and answer all their questions,” says Mr. Piaskowski. “It was a great experience for us.”
Adult Education Literacy Students Celebrate the Holidays Together

The holidays were a great time for students in the Adult Education Literacy classes at Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Medina to come together and celebrate. The students are either ESL (English as a Second Language) and/or Adult Basic Education (ABE) and/or High School Equivalency (HSE).

Teachers Shelly Smith (Literacy Instructor), Karen Cunningham (Career Prep instructor) and Dorie Kenyon (Tester) wanted to reward the students for all their hard work over the course of the last few months. “We had a gift for each one of the students that consisted of a mug filled with candy,” says Mrs. Smith. “Mrs. Cunningham and I purchased pizza, fruit, pop, a veggie tray, cookies and brownies. The students also brought in their favorite snacks to add to the festivities.”

One student even got a special gift of a new winter coat. “Mary Melero is with us for six hours a day,” explains Mrs. Smith. “She is like a sponge in learning and a big help in the classrooms, she is always pitching in and helping clean up. She walks everywhere and only has a windbreaker. When we gave her the coat, the look on her face will always be etched in my mind.”

The students brought in a gift of $3.00 or less and played a fun gift exchange game. The teachers brought in extra gifts so everyone was able to participate and go home with a gift. “Kindness is like snow,” says Mrs. Smith. “It beautifies everything that it covers. It was so much fun, especially because we had invited our most recent graduates to come and celebrate with us.”

Niagara Academy Students Give Warmth to Nursing Home Residents

Some students at the Orleans/Niagara BOCES’ Niagara Academy showed their giving spirit before the holidays. Spanish teacher Katherine Giansante and her students made blankets and decided to donate them to the residents of North Gate Nursing Home. The facility is located on Nash Road in North Tonawanda. “We had a lot of fun making the blankets and the nursing home was so appreciative for our gift,” says Ms. Giansante.
Personal Trainer Students Speak with Experts at Ultimate Physique

The juniors in the Personal Training programs, from both the Niagara Career and Tech Education Center as well as the Orleans Career and Tech Education Center, had the opportunity to visit Ultimate Physique in Lockport. They spoke with the owners, trainers and other employees throughout the facility.

The students and their teachers, Jared Karas and Joe Wilkie, received a tour of the facility and were put through a multi-station fitness class. Students then had the opportunity to discuss the field of personal training with the trainers as well as other fitness career options.

Both teachers, Mr. Karas and Mr. Wilkie said, “This is an excellent opportunity for our classes to meet each other and learn first-hand from local professionals about the field of personal training. Ultimate Physique has also provided our students with internship opportunities as well. We look forward to working with them more in the future.”

Congratulations to the 18 students from the Orleans/Niagara BOCES’ Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program. The graduation ceremony was held on December 20th.

VIP Food Service Program Decorates Cookies for Troops

Students in Lisa Cook’s VIP Food Service Program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center recently helped in an effort to make the holidays brighter for our troops.

One of the student’s mother, Mrs. Filicetti, told Miss Cook how she and some of her neighborhood friends get together every year and make cutout cookies to send overseas to military personnel. She asked her if her students would be interested in helping them decorate them and Miss Cook and her class said they would love the chance to help out. “I jumped on the opportunity to give back to the troops,” says Miss Cook. “Together we all decorated the cookies to be sent out. I am hoping this can become an annual thing each holiday season. Giving back is a great feeling especially when it deals with the men and woman who serve our country!”

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