Dr. Godshall Named NYS Superintendent of the Year

Dr. Clark Godshall

A big congratulation goes out to our very own Dr. Clark Godshall who was selected as the 2014 New York State School Superintendent of the Year by the New York State Council of School Superintendents (The Council).

“Dr. Godshall is a nationally recognized school leader and international advocate for students,” says The Council President Mary Beth R. Fiore, Superintendent of Elmira Heights Central School District. “He is an experienced and involved leader in the local, state and national level, always keeping children’s interests at the center of his decision-making while optimum efficiencies for his component school districts. Clark is a recognized expert on educational service agencies, school finance and effective school district governance.

We are pleased to select him as our candidate to represent New York State.”

Dr. Godshall becomes New York’s candidate for national superintendent of the year, which will be awarded at the American Association of School Administrators’ National Conference on Education in Nashville, Tennessee in February 2014. Dr. Godshall said he was honored and humbled by this recognition. “To be named New York Superintendent of the Year is a direct reflection of the dedication and hard work by the local school boards, staff, teachers and support teams across the Orleans/Niagara BOCES, our component school districts and the communities we serve strongly support what it takes to make a difference in providing quality public schools. I’m honored to represent all of them and my superintendent colleagues in New York State who have dedicated their lives to this work.”

Orleans/Niagara BOCES has a service area enrollment of more than 37,000. It is the third largest career and technical education BOCES and regional summer school in New York State. Its Adult Literacy Program is ranked number one in the state and has grown from 500 to 3,000 and served over 2,000 people this year alone. We are the only BOCES in New York State to receive frequent national recognition for their fiscal management from ASBO International and Government Finance Officer’s Association (GFOA).

Roy Hart Learning Center Celebrates Thanksgiving

Students and staff at the Royalton Hartland Learning Center spent a joyous day together celebrating the Thanksgiving holiday. Each class made a dish to pass and invited guests to join them for their feast. School administrator Paulette Hamilton read a book about things to be thankful for and several students performed a song about Thanksgiving day to the cheers of their schoolmates.

Devan Haseley and Makenzie Lugo get ready for their Thanksgiving feast.
Niagara Academy Students Reach Out to Area Veterans to Celebrate Holidays

Students at the Niagara Academy spent a heartfelt day with patients at the Veterans Administration Hospital. Chris LaVigne, a teacher aide at the school, is very involved with the American Legion Auxiliary and asked the students if they would like to do something nice for the people who have done so much for this country. The students were more than happy to get involved in making their holidays a little bit brighter. Pulling together their creative talents and their fundraising skills, the students made holiday cards in art class with their teacher Rose Lewkowitz and bought socks and $25 gift cards for each of the veterans.

“I was so proud of them,” says Ms. Lavigne. “The students made sure to spend time with each veteran and loved listening to their stories. There was one veteran who turned 100 years old in two weeks and the students sang happy birthday to him and he was so touched that we did that. The students can’t wait to go back and visit with them again. They represented our school so well.”

Every year the Allied Health teachers get their students together for a powerful program that is sponsored by the Niagara County Youth Bureau. Rodney Alaimo, who is responsible for promoting safe sex among the teens in the area, warns the students of unplanned pregnancy, STDS and HIV. Alaimo says it is hard to reach teenagers because they are constantly bombarded with sexual messages from television, movies and music. “You look at someone like Miley Cyrus and her VMA performance and the shows that they watch and the message is in their face about this how you should act. We are trying to show them that these behaviors dictate outcomes that are not positive and can have consequences that they are not prepared to deal with.”

Of course it is one thing to have someone tell you the dangers and it is another thing to hear from someone who is paying the price for those choices. The first speaker that the students heard from was Kathleen Pratt, a beautiful, vibrant woman who lives with her family in East Amherst, has a beautiful garden and loves nice clothes and jewelry. She has also been living with HIV for 20 years. Something she got from her second boyfriend at the age of 17. She did not find out until many years later when she gave birth to her second child that she even had the disease. “I lived with so much fear that I had passed this on to my child, and I was basically told at the time that I had six years to live. It was heart wrenching”. Fortunately her child did not carry the disease and Kathleen had to prepare herself for inevitable. “I talked to my ex-boyfriend who gave me HIV and he told me he didn’t find out until many years later that he had it as well, but said because I looked healthy he didn’t bother to tell me. He died a few years after that. He weighed 65 pounds and people said I should have never recognized him.”

Kathleen has beaten the odds so far and has been busily checked things off her bucket list, but she knows her luck cannot hold out. “I am on 50 pills a day. I am on the absolute last drug that they can give me for this. I have no other options. I am suffering from nerve damage and sometimes I can’t bear having anything touch my skin and my energy really is low. I feel horrible.” So why does she put herself through repeating her story over and over again to the schools in the area? She was visibly upset and crying when she told the Orleans/Niagara BOCES students about her life with HIV. “If I can save just one kid the misery that I am experiencing than it is worth my time and energy. I want them to know they are still kids. That is it is okay to stay a virgin and not have to worry about pregnancy or something worse. I want them to make the best decisions for them and not worry about making other people happy. I want them to take five minutes a day and put down their phones and enjoy the beauty of a sunset or watch some squirrels play in their backyards. Their life is a gift and they need to protect it and appreciate it.”

The classes also heard from Anthony and Bernice Misita about teen depression and suicide and Bob Kuebler about drugs, alcohol, sex and gang life. Teachers Sharon Farrugia, Dee Tomasellos and Lisa Trappaso said their students were moved by all the speakers they heard. Coreena Clause from Niagara Falls High School said, “I really enjoyed Kathleen’s outlook on life and found her to be a true inspiration. I am very appreciative of everyone who shared their story."
**Precision Machine Technology Class Enters 3D World**

The students in Bill Rakonczay's Precision Machine Technology Program are getting to learn a new technology that most area businesses don’t have. The class, located at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center, recently acquired a state of the art 3D printer. "It has been in my teaching plan for a while," says Mr. Rakonczay. "It is very advanced technology and I think it will give the students some very marketable skills when they are looking for work or continuing their studies. We have already had a local company ask us to help with making a replacement part for a pump using the printer.”

Noah Hillman, a Newfane senior in the program, has become the resident expert. "When it came in I volunteered to assemble it, so I read the manual and started playing with it until I got better and better with it. It is really cool." How it works, is that students either use the software that it comes with it to make an item or they draw one in AutoCAD and export the file into the machine to make whatever they design. Using plastic, the printer heats it up and molds the design. The students have made animals, cars, jewelry, ornaments and different machine parts for practice. “It takes a long time, but the end result is amazing,” says Hillman.

Classmate Ben Smead, also from Newfane, has been working on the lens cover part that the company has requested. “I had to take apart the pump and drew the part and now we are recreating the piece. We are lucky to have this printer. It is very expensive and not many companies in the area have one. I really like using it.”

If you are interested in knowing more about the Precision Machine Technology Program or the 3D printer, you can contact Bill Rakonczay at wrakonczay@onboces.org.

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**BOCES Students Share Treats at Newfane Rehabilitation Center**

Students and staff at the Orleans/Niagara BOCES' Newfane Learning Center celebrated Halloween with the residents at the Newfane Rehabilitation Center. The students have been busy with art teacher Elyse Hulse making holiday cards and miniature ghosts to celebrate the season. Newfane Rehabilitation Center Activities Director Amy Zankevich says she loves when the students come to visit. “It is really wonderful. Some of our folks can’t leave so it brings the community to them and helps them to socialize. It is really vital to them and they love it when the children come to see them.”

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**Lockport Learning Center Celebrates Thanksgiving**

Students from the Lockport Learning Center recently got together and celebrated Thanksgiving at North Tonawanda’s Don Miller Park. The park is owned by the Red Jacket Club and thanks to their generosity the students were able to have the main cabin for the day where they prepared their feast, played games and explored some of the hiking trails. Teacher aide Arleta Sharples is a member and said the teachers and their classes were very grateful to be able to use the space. “It is a great club and we have been able to take the classes out here a couple of times during the school year. It is a great experience for the students to help clean up the park and they get to enjoy the many activities and sights available here.”
OCTEC Inducts 16 Into National Technical Honor Society

The Orleans Career and Technical Education Center recently inducted 16 students into the National Technical Honor Society: Tyler Beecher from Barker in the Culinary Arts Program, Brian Bentley from Albion in the Heavy Equipment/Diesel Mechanics Program, Brianna Caldwell from Albion in the Heavy Equipment/Diesel Mechanics Program, Brittany Clifford from Lockport in the Cosmetology Program, Calee Coleman from Royalton Hartland in the Allied Health Program, Alishia Dart from Lockport in the Cosmetology Program, Devan Freeman from Medina in the Precision Machine Technology Program, Kolbe Greenwald from Barker in the Precision Machine Technology Program, David Oddi from Lockport in the Security and Law Enforcement Program, Candace Orton from Lockport in the Cosmetology Program, Roy Phipps from Royalton Hartland in the Allied Health Program, Michael Sauvageau from Royalton Hartland in the Graphic Communications Program, Kyle Shanahan from Albion in the Allied Health Program, Garrett Van Lieshout from Royalton Hartland in the Heavy Equipment/Diesel Mechanics Program, Samantha Wendling from Medina in the Allied Health Program and Kaylynn Wik from Lockport in the Health Occupations Technician Program.

Students are only awarded this honor if they maintain a 3.0 grade point average and have completed a set number of credit hours. They must also have excellent attendance and disciplinary record. The inductees were recognized in front of their families, teachers, board of education members and home school district representatives at a ceremony at the center.

Personal Trainer Students Say It Is Never to Early to Start Healthy Habits

The Certified Personal Trainer students at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center recently showed some youngsters how to stay active and fit. The children were part of the preschool that is run by the Early Childhood Education students taught by Laura Koeppel. Personal Trainer teacher Jared Karas says his students may be working with children as part of their career, so this is a good opportunity for them. “You hear a lot in the news about the rise of obesity in children, so I think people are getting much more proactive about showing children a healthier lifestyle. My students had a great time setting up different stations with various activities for the children to do and it showed the kids how much fun it can be to be active.”

OCTEC Students Help Red Cross to Save a Life

Over 75 students and staff donated blood to the Red Cross at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center recently. “The students and our staff members were more than happy to be able to help out the organization and potentially save a life this holiday season,” says school counselor Kara Kirk.
Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Information

By participating in the flexible spending plan, an eligible employee may have deducted from his or her salary a specified amount of tax-free dollars to pay for eligible medical care or dependent care expenses. The flexible spending account plan year runs from September 1st through August 31st. In order to enroll for a plan year beginning September 1st, an eligible employee should send a completed enrollment form to the Labor Relations office generally during the month of June to participate in the plan year beginning the following September 1st. The absolute deadline for the completed enrollment form to be received in the Labor Relations office is August 31st, prior to the start of the new plan year. To ascertain whether you are eligible for participation, to receive additional information, or to have an enrollment form sent to you, please contact Nicole Bensley at the Orleans Career and Technical Center at (800)836-7510, extension 2203. Enrollment forms may also be obtained at the Benefit Resource Web site. An enrollment form does not need to be completed to receive the BOCES contribution to the health reimbursement account.

Benefit Resource link: www.benefitsresource.com

You may log on to the Benefit Resource Web site using the company code of onboces, your username (four zeros followed by your five digit employee number (employee number is on your pay stub and also on Wincap Web paycheck self service)) and password (zip code). You will be prompted to change your password after your initial sign in. Follow the online instructions to change the password.

The Web site will enable you to:

• Review your account summary (includes BOCES contribution (if applicable) and employee contribution (if applicable)
• Download forms (claim form, enrollment/ change form, medical expense/ dependent care worksheets, etc.)
• Link to eligible health care expenses
• Link to plan documents (plan highlights and summary plan description)
• Submit claims online

Health Coverage Information

This reminder applies to those of you who carry, or are eligible for enrollment in, health coverage through the Orleans/Niagara BOCES. It is important to promptly report to the Labor Relations office any change in information that may affect the health insurance enrollment of family members. Examples may include adding a spouse or child due to marriage, birth, or adoption, terminating a spouse due to divorce, terminating a child or stepchild due to reaching age 26. Such information should be reported as soon as possible and no later than 30 days after the occurrence. If the Labor Relations office is not timely notified of such changes, then claim(s) denials or processing delays may result.

Employees who wish to either enroll in health coverage or change their current enrollment from one health plan to another generally must do so effective July 1st. The completed application/enrollment form must be received in the Labor Relations office during the month of June. To have a blank application/enrollment form sent to you or if you have any questions relative to this topic, then please contact Lori Bernabei at (800) 836-7510, extension 2224.

Culinary Arts Students Lend Skills To Help Out Lockport Salvation Army

The Culinary Arts students at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center have put their cooking and preparation skills to work for a good cause. Mr. Bob Ihle's class have been roasting and carving forty turkeys for the Lockport Salvation Army for their Thanksgiving meal. “It is such a nice project for our students,” says Mr. Ihle. “We help them out every year and it makes us all feel good that we are helping this great organization with feeding so many people in need this holiday.”

Troy Gertz, a senior from Niagara Falls who helped with the preparation, said he was amazed at the number of turkeys that showed up at the center. “It is so cool to see so many people reaching out to help others. Plus it made our room smell great.”

Classmate Kevin Geltz from Starpoint says it was a great experience for him as well. “It was awesome learning how to carve up turkeys and it is great we can help out the Salvation Army.”

(LtoR) Kevin Geltz (Starpoint), Dalton Miller (Starpoint) and Troy Gertz (Niagara Falls).
Niagara County Domestic Violence Coordinator Susan LaRose was the guest speaker for the Security and Law Enforcement and Health Occupation Technician classes at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center. Mrs. LaRose said that one in four women have experienced domestic violence in her lifetime and domestic violence can happen to anyone. She told the classes it affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and all education levels and that domestic violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, economic and psychological abuse. She explained to students that domestic abuse is rooted in power and control it’s never caused by making someone angry or upset and it is never justified or excusable. Although it occurs most often in intimate partners whether they are married or not it can also happen to parents, grandparents, siblings, and others in the immediate family.

Since the students are interested in becoming law enforcement officers or work in the health care field, teachers Cal Rhoney and Bill Taczak felt that it was very important that they learn the facts on this important issue that they may encounter in their career.

The statistics are horrific. The Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data, Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2001 reports that 85% of intimate partner violence is women and the other 15% are men. Forty percent of girls age 14 to 17 reports knowing someone their age that has been beaten by a boyfriend. Studies indicate that only 70% of Domestic Violence incidents are reported to police. Of those not reporting the reasons for not reporting ranged from fear of reprisal, belief that it was a personal matter, loss of financial independence, the victims wanted to protect the offender, or they believed that the police would do nothing.

Mrs. LaRose says the Victim Assistance Unit, which is based at the Niagara County Sheriff’s Department, helps anyone involved in domestic violence in all of Niagara County. Among other things the unit can help the victim find safe shelter, transportation to court, use of a cell phone for emergencies, assist in filling out paper work and going with the victim to court to provide a room that would shield the victim from the offender during the pretrial proceedings. Those in need of assistance can call the Victim Assistance Unit at the Niagara County Sheriff’s Office 716-438-3303.

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Welding Class Creates Scary Masterpiece For Historical Society

Students in the Welding Program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center used their talents to help the Historical Association of Lewiston (HAL) participate in the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce’s scarecrow competition. Their teacher Steve Frey is a board member of HAL and he and fellow board member Claudia Carnes thought it might be a fun project for the students to show off some creativity. “Four of my students Zachary Dean, Zachary Misiak, John Rosino and Preston Valentic came up with Mrs. HAL O’Ween who graced the Frontier House porch. She is hauntingly pointed towards the Lewiston Museum. She looked great and we are very grateful to the students for giving us such a great entry in the competition.”
SkillsUSA Members Make Holidays Brighter for Vets

The SkillsUSA members from the Orleans Career and Tech Ed Center recently participated in a community service project to benefit service men and women around the world. SkillsUSA is a national organization for career and technical education students that promotes leadership, preparation for the world of work, community service, and professionalism. “We encourage students to give back to their community as much as possible, and we carry out numerous projects throughout the year to help those in need,” says school counselor Kara Kirk.

The Holiday Mail for Heroes is a project of the Red Cross, and provides holiday cards for thousands of veterans and servicemen and women who are hospitalized and in need of some holiday cheer. The SkillsUSA members spent the morning and afternoon creating cards, and at the end of the day, they had over 400 cards to send out. “The students enjoyed participating and really put a lot of thought and effort into their work,” says Kirk.

Lockport Learning Center Students Pay Tribute to Veterans

Teachers Kristina Miles and Margaret Hagan along with art teacher Elyse Hulse recently planned a lesson for their students at the Lockport Learning Center about veterans. “We talked to the students about the five branches of the military and how they protect and keep us safe and why we honor these people on November 11th each year,” explained Ms. Miles. “We decided to make cards and cookies for the Lockport VA clinic to show our thanks and appreciation.”

Art teacher Elyse Hulse volunteered to help the students with the card and used the works of artist Faith Ringgold to inspire them. “She is an artist that creates story quilts and paintings. She has a piece that is a flag that was our inspiration,” says Ms. Hulse. “The students really enjoyed the entire process and were so excited to present this to the veterans,” says Ms. Miles. “The clinic was so pleased to receive the flag, which they hung proudly in their community room, and enjoyed the cookies the students made.”

Niagara Academy Students Use Creative Abilities to Honor Veterans for Holidays

Some at the Niagara Academy are working with their art teacher Rose Lewkowitz to create some holiday cards for veterans. In their art class students made rubber stamps of various holiday themes and made cards which they then embellished with glitter paint. “It is a great project for the students and they came up with some great ideas,” says Ms. Lewkowitz.

They were inspired by teacher aide Chris LaVigne, who is very actively involved with various veterans groups. She is sharing her passion with the students to honor those who have served this country. “I take a group up to the VA every holiday season and we visit and give them cards and gifts. It means a lot to them and the students get a lot out of it as well. It is a great way to celebrate the holidays by making them a bit brighter for someone else.”

Cara Langworthy (KenTon) makes a holiday card for a veteran.
Security and Law Students Acknowledged for Help at Celtic Festival

Twelve Security and Law Enforcement students from the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center recently helped out at the Niagara Celtic Heritage Society Festival, which is the largest and most successful Celtic Festivals in New York State. Former Security and Law Enforcement student Ken Allore, who now works for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, asked teacher Ed Grabowski if any of this students would be willing to volunteer their time to help out with the festival. “Our staff is 100% volunteer. We have over 12,000 attendees and hundreds, if not thousand man hours go into the festival year-round to make sure it goes smoothly. Last year Mr. Grabowski’s students volunteered and they were incredibly helpful. We were happy to have them back this year,” says Allore.

Students from the senior and junior classes volunteered: Dylan Barlass, Brooke Cooper, Madison Gardepe, Adam Leturage, Dave Oddi, Will Skidmore, Brittany Strassel, Josh Thompson, Paul Tilyou, Nick Tobey, Kayla Undercoffer and Jayme Wadosky. They controlled access at the gates, patrolled the grounds, helped with traffic control, cleared the parade route and assisted any elderly or handicapped guests who needed help in and around the festival. The students also assisted in a medical emergency by establishing a perimeter so that emergency medical services could attend to him and transport him to the hospital.

The Festival organizers were so grateful of the students’ help at the event that they drafted a letter of appreciation for all the students that Mr. Allore personally delivered to the classes. “They did a great job and we are very appreciative of all their professionalism and efforts to make our festival so successful.”

Lockport Learning Center Students Help Out Salvation Army for the Holiday

Students from the Lockport Learning Center lent a hand to the Salvation Army at Tops in Lockport. Several classes alternated days and volunteered from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm to help to raise money for the charity by ringing the bell and collecting money from generous shoppers.

“The students ask to participate in this trip every year,” said teacher Aimee Nicholas. “It is one of their favorites. This year we did a social skills unit on compassion and discussed being sensitive to those who are suffering. This was a great way for them to help relieve the suffering of others and helping out this worthy charity.”