National Top Honors Earned in 2014 Magna Awards

Orleans Niagara BOCES has been named a grand prize winner in the 20th annual Magna Awards program sponsored by the National School Boards Association’s American School Board Journal. The Magna Awards recognize school boards for taking bold and innovative steps to advance public education. The Magna Awards supported by Sodexo, honors districts across the country for outstanding programs that advance student learning and encourage community involvement in schools. An independent panel of school board members, administrators, and other educators selected the winners from nearly 250 submissions. The award was given for a project that was started at the Lockport Literacy Zone Welcome Center and involved youth through adults, partners in the community, all for a common cause.

Orleans Niagara BOCES Adult Literacy program began a new initiative in July 2013 called a Literacy Zone Welcome Center located at the Christ Community Church in Lockport. It was patterned after the Niagara Falls program that was started in 2009. A Literacy Zone Welcome Center is located in an impoverished neighborhood in a city with high levels of unemployment, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. It invites individuals and families to come to our facility for high school equivalency, remediation, computers skills, and job readiness and career preparation. The Literacy Zone staff can assist the individual to find solutions to help break barriers and move in a positive direction toward employment, training, post-secondary, and a more productive life. “The key to a successful Literacy Zone is partnerships within the community,” said Susan Diemert, Literacy Specialist for Orleans/Niagara BOCES. “Throughout the process of applying for the Literacy Zone in Lockport, we partnered with over sixty agencies and community based organizations that can help our students find solutions to issues that are preventing them from moving forward. One of the new partners we invited to our Welcome Center was Jennifer D’Andrea Terreri, who started Kids Breaking Free Foundation Inc. (Kids BFF) and volunteered to offer some workshops for our students.” Kids Breaking Free Foundation Inc. is a community enrichment organization supportive of educating at-risk youth and their families. The Men’s Cooking Class was a result of this partnership. The men learned how to slice and dice, learn recipes, and budget for healthy meals for their families. The idea to cook for the veterans sparked other community involvement and partnerships to raise awareness for the local veterans in Niagara County. Kids BFF was also running a book club for 4th to 6th graders who were reading a book about veterans. This resulted in a canned food drive to benefit veterans and their families and the beginning planning for an event that was held at the Elks Lodge in Lockport on July 5th, 2013.

The Men’s Class (now called Cooking for a Cause), prepared salads and manned the grills on one of the warmest days of the summer. Kids Breaking Free Foundation, volunteers from veterans’ organizations, and Orleans/Niagara BOCES staff helped plan and run the event. “It was a wonderful day and uplifting to see so many people supporting our local veterans,” said Chuck Diemert, Literacy Zone Coordinator. “What started as a simple lunch developed into a partnership with many groups and individuals resulting in a community project that would raise money and awareness to address the needs of thousands of veterans in our community,” he added.

The Orleans Niagara BOCES Board of Education, which serves thirteen school districts, has always supported the adult literacy programs and the need for quality partnerships. Becky Albright, President of the Board said “The best part of the initiative was that it came together from entities in the community that saw how they could learn and share through the collaboration. We are thrilled that Mrs. Diemert’s team’s hard work has been recognized for their commitment to lifelong learning. It is very rewarding to know that not only have we touched the lives of the participants and their families, but veterans who deserve our respect and support.”

Dr. Clark Godshall, District Superintendent of Orleans/
LPN Program Ranked Third in NYS

A big congratulations to the Orleans/Niagara BOCES Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program that has been ranked third out of 77 state approved LPN programs in New York State. The ranking was determined by the results of the NCLEX-PN exam, which is used by state boards of nursing around the country for testing proficiency and granting licensure. The rates determine how well a school is preparing their students for a career in practical nursing.

“We could not be happier,” says Nursing Coordinator Karen Kwandrans. “I think the rating definitely reflects the quality of our program and instructors. They do an amazing job with our adult students preparing them for a career in nursing. We had a passing rate of 97.76% and we are very proud of our students and all their hard work in achieving this.”

Nursing is one of the fastest growing careers with a 14% increase in jobs per year predicted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If you are interested in attending the Orleans/Niagara BOCES LPN program, contact Terry Josker at 1-800-836-7510, ext: 4445 or tjosker@onboces.org or go to the Orleans/Niagara BOCES website at www.onboces.org.
Students Place at SkillsUSA Competition

Students from Orleans/Niagara BOCES' Career and Technical Education Centers had a successful showing at the SkillsUSA Region 1 Leadership Conference and Skills Olympics held at SUNY Alfred on March 4th. High School and college students competed against each other in their areas of study from Alleghany, Steuben, Monroe, Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Cattaraugus and Ontario Counties for the three top spots. The top three winners get gold, silver and bronze medals and will move on to the New York State Championship that will be held at the end of April.

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps each student excel. Its mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.

The following students placed at the competition:

**Orleans Career and Technical Education Center:**

**First Place**
Andrew Gelyon, Newfane  
Electricity/Electronics - Electronics Technology  
Calee Coleman, Roy Hart  
Allied Health - Health Knowledge Bowl Team  
Andrew Cutlip, Roy Hart  
Allied Health - Health Knowledge Bowl Team  
Roy Phipps, Roy Hart  
Allied Health - Health Knowledge Bowl Team  
Kyle Shanahan, Roy Hart  
Allied Health - Health Knowledge Bowl Team

**Second Place**
Alex Murphy, Lyndonville  
Precision Machine Tech - Precision Machining  
Trinity Milliman, Roy Hart  
Cosmetology - Cosmetology

**Third Place**
Zachery Pisarski, Barker  
Electricity/Electronics - Electronics Tech  
Samantha Wendling, Medina  
Allied Health - Job Interview  
Ashley Bower, Roy Hart  
Allied Health - Prepared Speech  
Alissa Connolly, Roy Hart  
Early Childhood Education - Early Childhood

**Niagara Career and Technical Education Center:**

**First Place**
Jacob Farmer, Wilson  
Project Based Engineering - Automated Manufacturing Technology Team  
Gunner St. Onge, Starpoint  
Project Based Engineering - Automated Manufacturing Technology Team  
Robert Schimschack, Niagara Wheatfield  
Project Based Engineering - Automated Manufacturing Technology Team  
Luke Anderson, Starpoint  
Heavy Equipment/Diesel/Ag Mechanics - Diesel Mechanics  
AshleyArsenault, North Tonawanda  
Early Childhood Education - Early Childhood  
Brianna Pichey, Lockport  
Security and Law Enforcement - Extemporaneous Speaking  
Matthania Volmy, LKPT/CAWNY  
Health Occupations Technician - Job Demo Open  
Tamia Martin, Niagara Falls  
Culinary Arts - Job Interview  
Wyatt Wolf, Lew-Port  
Project Based Engineering - Related Technical Math  
Ovalue Molina, Lockport  
Culinary Arts - Restaurant Services  
Maxwell Poeller, Starpoint  
Project Based Engineering - Technical Drafting

**Second Place**
Bailey Simone, Wilson  
Graphic Communications - Advertising Design  
James McAdam, Starpoint  
Project Based Engineering - Automated Manufacturing Team  
Matthew O’Connor, Lew-Port  
Project Based Engineering - Automated Manufacturing Team  
Derrick Orszula, Roy Hart  
Project Based Engineering - Automated Manufacturing Team  
Austin Heschke, Roy Hart  
Conservation - Conservation  
Justin Desabrais, Niagara Falls  
Emergency Medical Services - CPR/First Aid  
Kieran Riley, Lew-Port  
Culinary Arts - Culinary Arts  
Eric Weinheimer, Starpoint  
Heavy Equipment/Diesel/Ag - Mechanics  
Diesel Mechanics  
Justin Westmoreland, Wilson  
Electricity/Electronics - Electrical Construction Wiring  
Jamie Launder, North Tonawanda  
Culinary Arts - Food Prep Assistant  
McKenzie Penque, Niagara Wheatfield  
Emergency Medical Services - Prepared Speech

**Third Place**
Angela Leder, Wilson  
Building Trades - Carpenter Assistant  
Jessica Clare, Wilson  
Culinary Arts - Commercial Baking  
Corey Fuller, Starpoint  
Conservation - Conservation  
Aaron Mackenzie, Niagara Wheatfield  
Emergency Medical Services - CPR/First Aid  
Cody Wick, Starpoint  
Heavy Equipment/Diesel/Agriculture Mechanics - Diesel Mechanics  
Alena Antonava, North Tonawanda  
Health Occupations Technician - Health Knowledge Bowl Team  
Taylor Kneitinger, North Tonawanda  
Health Occupation Technician - Health Knowledge Bowl Team  
Marissa Somerville, North Tonawanda  
Health Occupation Technician - Health Knowledge Bowl Team  
Ashley Sherwood, North Tonawanda  
Health Occupation Technician - Health Knowledge Bowl Team  
Arthur Renteria, Lewiston Porter  
HVAC - Job Demo  
Kevin Kishel, Niagara Wheatfield  
Conservation - Small Engine
Life’s a Carnival

The students at the Royalton Hartland Learning Center were recently rewarded for their good behavior and obeying the school-wide rules. Staff designated it Carnival Day and students got to engage in all sorts of fun activities in a festive atmosphere. Teacher David Janicki-Howe said the students had a great time making tie-dye shirts, playing games, dancing and singing and having treats such as cotton candy, snow cones, popcorn and hot dogs. “They have been great obeying the safety plans and making calm choices. We are very proud of them.”

Occupational Therapist Emily Frank clowns around with students (LtoR) Clesson Haag, Noah Langworthy, Rianna Wyno, Raymond Trenkler, Brandon Pelczynski and Shane Lalich.

It’s Tea Time!

The little students at the preschool at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center entertained their honored guests to a tea party recently. The Early Childhood Education students decorated the commons area with decorations and prepared all sorts of goodies for everyone to enjoy.

Noah and Jack George host their grandmother Bernadette George for a spot of tea.

Chili Cook-Off Helps Starving Children

Students in Marla Rudin’s class at the Niagara Academy have been learning about world hunger as part of their curriculum. As they learned more about the number of children that go to bed hungry every night, the more upset they became. They asked their teacher if there was anything they could do and she told them to investigate organizations that help feed third world countries and come up with an idea for a fundraiser. After looking at hundreds of websites they decided on www.freethechildren.com. “They really gravitated towards this organization because they teach villages to be self-sufficient so they won’t need charity. They donate stock and work with schoolchildren to empower them to be leaders in their community. It really appealed to my students,” says Ms. Rudin.

Ms. Rudin suggested to them that they ask all the teachers to make a Crockpot of chili and then they would offer tastings or a bowl to students and staff to raise money. “We charged 25 cents a taste, five for a dollar or a bowl for a dollar and then they could vote on their favorite chili. It was a huge success and we raised $100 in two hours, which the students thought was great!”

(LtoR) Samantha Foster (North Tonawanda), Micah Vandewart (North Tonawanda), Cody Coutts (Lew-Port) and Nick Saylor (Lockport) get ready for the Chili Cook-off.
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.benefitresource.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

Cosmetology Students Get Backstage Look At “Wicked”

The OCTEC Cosmetology students spent the morning at Shea’s Performing Arts Center recently where they got a firsthand look at the makeup process for the show “Wicked”. Makeup Supervisor Joyce McGilberry transformed one of the students, Barker senior Brianna Smith, into one of the main characters Elphaba and talked to Anne Carnahan’s and Sue Lindke’s classes about her process and how she went from cutting hair to doing makeup for stage and screen. “Remember every job no matter how little will help you get the next job and make contacts and increase your resume. The richness of this business is loving people. If they love you back, they will send customers to you. Don’t do this job if you don’t love it.”

She told the students that there is a lot of money to be made and a lot of opportunity for someone who loves the industry. She advised the students to find a model and do her hair and makeup without charging them anything and let her be their advertising. “It is a great way to market yourself and build your book up. People will challenge you and ask you if you are good and that book will brag for you.” She cautioned the students not to post their work on YouTube or other social media. “Don’t let someone learn your tricks, because they will and then they will eat your lunch!” She shared that she learned a lot of her techniques from retired makeup artists. “I paid them $75 an hour and asked them to teach me what they were going to throw away. It is the greatest honor you can bestow on someone.”

“It was an awesome experience for the students,” says Mrs. Carnahan. “I liked how Joyce shared her experiences and wealth of knowledge and showed her growth in the cosmetology field. It made a huge impact on my students and they could not stop talking about it on the bus ride back to school. You could tell she spoke from the heart about her love of this field and was glad to be able to inspire these young people getting ready to start their own career. It was amazing. We are very grateful to the Shea’s Performing Arts Center’s Education Department for allowing us this opportunity.”

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.
Students Preparing for Culinary Competition

Students from the Orleans/Niagara BOCES' Orleans Career and Technical Education Center and the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center recently competed in the 10th Annual ProStart Student Invitational on March 7th and 8th at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in Hyde Park, NY.

The culinary competition was sponsored by Wegmans and students had to develop, create and execute a three course meal using only two butane burners. Teams were judged on safety and sanitation, teamwork, taste and skill level. The two teams competed with over twenty other teams and impressed judges from colleges, universities and industry with their knowledge and skills. The top five received scholarships from colleges across the nation and will compete at the national level.

Orleans Culinary Arts teacher James Atzrott said his team consisting of Tyler Beecher (Barker), Jordan Brawley (Newfane), Nicole Pidanick (Lockport), Alyssa McManus (Lockport) and Angel Chenez (Lockport) had been practicing for weeks. “They are a very cohesive team and it has been challenging making a three course meal on just two burners, but they are very talented and I think they are great.”

At the Niagara Center’s Culinary Arts program students Tamia Martin (Niagara Falls), Jasmine Coates (Niagara Falls), Ovalue Molina (Lockport) and Troy Gertz (Niagara Falls) were excited about showing off their talents. “I love this whole process,” says Tamia. “We made Shrimp and Scallops Orleans, crab salad and fried Oreos for dessert.” Teammate Jasmine says this is a dream come true. “I always wanted to be on a team like this and we work really well together. It is exciting.” Troy was on the team last year as well and says, “all we can hope for is to do the best we can and learn all we can. It was great being at the CIA and being judged by all those professionals.”

The students had to make two identical plates to serve the judges, who are leading chefs from restaurants and post-secondary schools as well as professionals from restaurants, small companies and corporations.

BOCES Alumni Show up to Judge Current Batch

It is always nice when former students come to visit their teachers at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center and tell them about their successes. It is especially nice when they are able to lend a hand during Skills Week, where each vocational class sets up competitions for their students to see who will go on to the Regional SkillsUSA competition. “We have asked several judges to come in and help us with scoring hairstyles for our competition,” says Cosmetology teacher Sue Lindke. “We are very grateful when former students, who are now in the field, come in to judge. Not only are they trained professionals, they have been through this competition so they know how hard the students have worked and what is required from them.”

Precision Machine Technology teacher Bill Rakonczay asked former student Al DeChanbeau, a 2006 graduate from Newfane to come in to judge his students work. “This class helped to shape me and the career I have today, so I was glad to come and help out. I was always better with my hands than book work and that is why this program was a good fit for me. Senior year when I capstoned at Niagara Precision in Lockport, it really showed me what the real work environment is like and paid me to learn. After graduation I went to work for them full time and now I do quality control for them. I love it.” Mr. Rakonczay asked him to talk to his students about his career and he was more than happy to. He told them, “Mr. Rakonczay really inspired me and opened my eyes up to the possibilities for me. If you want to learn, he is here to teach. You can make a good living from this and the capstoning is a great way to get your foot in the door.”
Computer Tech Grad Talks Career With Students

Will Donelson, a 2003 graduate, recently paid a visit to his former Computer Technology teacher Joe DeMerle at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. "He wanted to let me know where his training here at BOCES took him and how grateful he was that he had this educational option when he was in high school," says Mr. DeMerle. "I asked him if he wouldn’t mind speaking to my current classes about his career and what lessons he learned along the way."

Mr. Donelson is currently employed at Erie 1 BOCES as a Computer Security System Technician. He told the students that attending the Computer Technology program was a fantastic opportunity for him. "I already knew a lot about computers and I was always attracted by technology, but to be able to attend a class where I could work with people who shared the same passion I did was invaluable. I would tell my parents and friends about my discoveries or projects and they would be "oh that’s nice". I would tell my classmates and they would get excited about it or share things they had done and we would try to one-up each other. It brought out a lot of competition. We had a lot of freedom to explore different applications and a lot of tools to work with. It was great."

After graduating he went into the Army and was stationed in Arizona where he did computer intelligence interception training. After that he worked for the Geek Squad for four years to get more experience. "I ended up at Erie 1 BOCES working on the Local Area Network (LAN) and Wide Area Network (WAN) where I help to support 160 school districts over seven counties. That breaks down to over a million students and 100,000 connected machines." He told the students it was challenging and intense, but he loves that every day it is something different and he is not tied to a desk. "There are days I am in five districts in one day. Usually I am deploying new equipment or gutting and rebuilding machines or designing networks. I just go where I am needed."

He wrapped up his talk discussing computer ethics and the difference between malicious and benign hacking. "Security topics are the big thing right now. Everyone is connected on computers now, especially commerce where there is encryption to protect customers information. As you can see from local news stories that is not always the case, like what happened with Target. I think you are going to see a lot more bounty programs like Google has where if you can find weaknesses in websites and you report them, they will pay you. I think that is going to start happening a lot more."

Mr. DeMerle said his students loved hearing Will speak and got a lot of out of it. "He was very good with them and what he talked about really coincides with what they are interested in and what they are learning. I think it gave them ideas where their education can take them and how connected we all are whether it is web pages, games or data. I am really appreciative he took the time out of his schedule to be here."

Cosmetology Students Show Off Their Skills in Hair Fashion Show

The Cosmetology students at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center recently amazed audience members at the center with their recent hair show. Teachers Cathy Bonaccorso, Pauline Carney and Lori Smith had their students compete in either the evening look, braids or fantasy categories and asked several hair stylists and hair salon owners to come in and judge the best of the best. The winners are:

BRAIDING
1st Place - Stylist Jazmier Edwards-Briggs (Niagara Falls) and model Kiana Moore (Niagara Falls)

FANTASY
1st Place - Stylist Kaylie Myers (Niagara Wheatfield) and model Cheyenne Booth (Starpoint)
2nd Place - Stylist Jordan Barr (Lewiston Porter) and model Amie McNair (Niagara Falls)
3rd Place - Stylist Elexie Rios Villafane (Niagara Falls) and Kimberly Gray (Niagara Wheatfield)

EVENING
1st Place - Stylist Jordan Miller (Wilson) and model Jessica Kroening (Wilson)
2nd Place - Stylist Kaitlyn Faulhaber (North Tonawanda) and model Ashley Startweather (North Tonawanda)
3rd Place - Lauryn McNamara (Lewiston Porter) and Deanna Barto (Lewiston Porter)
Building Trades Students Show Off Their Skills

The Building Trades students at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center have been putting their skills to work. Students just completed a shed with teacher Matt Anastasi and are currently working on building a cabin that will be put up for sale after completion.

Treasured Podium Back to Life

Students from Anthony Molinaro’s Building Trades senior class and Scott Brauer’s Project Based Engineering class at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center took some time to help the Lockport Town and Country Club restore an original treasured podium that was being slashed for removal. The students took the time to reframe the structure, resetting the base and upper lectern. In addition they restained the podium to match the existing color base and even created a Lockport Town and Country Club logo seal to enhance their project and bring character to the stained and marred podium. General Manager Rowland O’Malley was more than happy to see the wonderful job the students displayed.

Lockport Learning Center Students Share Valentines to Briody’s Nursing Home

The Lockport Learning Center students decided to celebrate Valentine’s Day with the residents at Briody’s Nursing Home. Not only did they make the holiday a little nicer they explored careers that would involve working and assisting others. “Through the course of this year they have worked with seniors and autistic individuals. They thought it would be fun to not only make valentines in class, but to go to Briody’s and help the residents make valentines as well.” Student Alan Seeger says it has made him happy. “It felt very rewarding to be helping others.”

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