Lifeskills Students Enjoy Galaxy Inspired Prom

The Orleans/Niagara BOCES Lifeskills students danced among the heavens for their prom. The Lockport Opportunity Projects gym was decked out with stars, planets and spaceships as the students celebrated the yearly event as Brent Powley from Beamin’ Sound played music and keep the party going all morning into the afternoon.

The Culinary Arts students in Bob Ihle’s class made a delicious lunch of sandwich wraps and salads and a cake for the students to enjoy during the festivities. James Bogar and Sydney Lesczczak were named the King and Queen of the Prom.

A great time was had by everyone!

(LtoR) Director of Special Education Bob Cluckey, Coordinator Krista Macomber, King and Queen of the Prom: James Bogar (Lockport) and Sydney Lesczczak (Wilson) and Orleans/Niagara BOCES District Superintendent Dr. Clark Godshall.

Dennis Whitmyer (Newfane) and teacher aide Ronda Schul.

Melanie Sweeney (Barker) and Mitchell Warnick (Niagara Wheatfield).

Teacher Paula Scheffer and Kelsey Librock (Royalton Hartland).
There was a lot to celebrate when the students from the Orleans and Niagara Career and Technical Education Centers returned from the New York State SkillsUSA competition.

Twenty-one gold medals, 11 silver medals and 21 bronze medals were given to the students for impressing the judges with the skills they have learned at the two centers. “I think this is a great tribute to our teaching staff and administrators,” says Orleans/ Niagara BOCES Career and Technical Education Director Joseph Steinmetz. “They do extraordinary work not only preparing our students for this competition, but preparing them for the workforce and college. We took 32 places out of the 44 competitions we competed in. I am so impressed with our students.”

The first place winners will be moving on to the National SkillsUSA Competition in Louisville, Kentucky in June.

Best of luck to them all!

We are so proud of you!

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Roy Hart Fourth Graders Explore Options at NCTEC

Royalton Hartland Elementary fourth grade students recently spent a day with the students and teachers at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center. Sandy Shank, a counselor at Roy Hart Elementary, was so impressed with the tour that Principal Anedda Trautman gave to the Roy Hart students last year she asked if her students could return. “We were more than happy to invite them back into our school,” says Mrs. Trautman. “It is never too early to expose kids to the possibilities that career and technical education has to offer them. The trip also aligns with the Common Core and our students loved interacting with the younger students.”

The students got a tour of the building and the teachers and their students set up activities that highlighted their programs and answered any questions the fourth graders had. “We have a wonderful staff that is always willing to open their classroom doors to anyone. Every year we invite all our school districts to come and talk to our students and staff,” says Mrs. Trautman.

The students loved their time spent at the career and technical education center. Briannyn Schumacher said, “I really liked the Conservation classroom because I love fish and getting to dress up as lumberjack.” Her classmate Lorna Becker said her favorites were the Cosmetology and Conservation classrooms. “It was fun creating a new hairstyle and makeup. I also liked the Conservation class because I want to be a park ranger when I grew up. It was really exciting being at the center.” Mrs. Trautman said she was glad the students enjoyed the visit. “As educators we need to assist all students to help them build their knowledge and skills so they can succeed in college and the workforce.”

Building Trades Program Helps Out Local Army Recruitment Station

Students in Gary Benker’s Building Trades Program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center lent a hand to the Tonawanda Army Recruiting Center using the skills they learned in class. Sergeant James Vasquez, a recruiter at the center, asked Mr. Benker if there was any way his students could make a custom-sized shelf. “He said they were pretty limited on space and brought in a box which they keep their marketing items in so we could get a sense of how large he needed the shelves. The students were pretty excited to help out with this project, especially since many of them have someone in the military in their families or were thinking of taking that career path themselves.”

“I was happy to volunteer,” said Tashad Adams. “We wanted to be very precise with the measurements and used a miter saw, a table saw and a level.” Classmate James Cascoe said they planned out where to put the cleats for the shelves. “We wanted to make sure they were flush and we used all the techniques we learned from Mr. Benker. I thought it would be nice to paint it camouflage and everyone agreed.”

Sergeant Vasquez said he was very impressed with what the students’ accomplished. “The students just took the project and ran with it. The entire class participated in the planning, designing, building, finishing and painting. They did an excellent job and I can tell they are learning the skills necessary to successfully become tradesmen and women in today’s workforce.”

Sergeant Vasquez said even though it will ultimately end up in the Tonawanda recruiting center he wanted to display it at the Niagara Falls Recruiting Center for everyone there to admire. “I am very grateful to the students for the great job that they did and I want to share their efforts with other recruiters to give them ideas on projects they can set up in their own communities.”
NT Learning Center Celebrates Spring with Concert

Students at the North Tonawanda Learning Center, under the direction of Jo Paananen, entertained their audience with an amazing spring concert. Students performed several numbers to the delight of everyone in attendance. Great job everyone!

Van Gogh Inspires Art Project for Orleans Learning Center Students

Top Row L to R: Kristen Wheaton (Lockport), teacher Paula Scheffer, teacher aide Joe Vullo. Bottom Row L to R: Emily Turrell (Royalton Hartland), Krystly Reimer (North Tonawanda) and Michael Mahaney (Lockport).

Students at the Orleans Learning Center have been working with art teacher Elyse Hulse all year on various projects. Recently in honor of Earth Day the students were inspired by Ms. Hulse to use recycled items to make a beautiful work of art. “We were inspired by Vincent van Gogh,” says Hulse. “Using the items they had collected they recreated his work “Sunflowers”. It was so fantastic we entered it in the “Every Day is Earth Day” sculpture contest at the Niagara Power Vista.”

Ms. Hulse says she and several of the students who are in Mrs. Wiley’s and Mrs. Scheffer’s classes and their families proudly viewed their masterpiece at the Vista. “The sculpture was fabulous and even though we didn’t win anything, it was great for the students to be included.”

OCTEC’s UNCH Students Creating Designs to Help NASA

As part of the NASA’s High School Students United with NASA to Create Hardware (HUNCH) Program the Precision Machine Technology students at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center have had the opportunity to design parts for various NASA endeavors. HUNCH is a partnership with schools that allows NASA to receive cost-effective hardware while students receive real-world hands-on experiences while inspiring them to become the next generation of researchers and space explorers.

Amanda Phelps, a NASA HUNCH Support Machinist from Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, has been a guest in Bill Rakonczay’s classroom every other week for the past several months to work with the students enrolled in the program. “I love coming into this classroom,” she says. “They have so much equipment and they have two new machines that are what the industry has right now. I love how creative the students are and their enthusiasm.”

“This is the second year we have partnered with NASA,” says Mr. Rakonczay. “It has been great in allowing my students to learn more by designing and building prototypes for NASA. Next year they will be making a part that will actually be used in the space station. It is very exciting for the students to think something they made will be in space.” Student Cedric Cleveland says he finds working with HUNCH very interesting. “This is an amazing opportunity. Normally I would never get a chance to work with NASA and how many people can say they have built something for the International Space Station?”

Science teacher Peter Jablonski says the opportunities for learning for the students have been incredible. “We talk about different metals and what happens to them in space, how gravity affects different matters, how to design different tools for different parts of the space station and make them on the 3D printer. It really makes my lesson plans more interesting to them because it is related to what they are doing. Plus we get invited to the Glenn Research Center at the end of the year to show off what they have done in class. It’s an amazing experience for them.”
Welding Student Uses Talents to Benefit Cambria Fire Department

Royalton Hartland student Evan Kindron is a volunteer at the Middleport Fire Company and he is also a student in Eric Farrell’s Welding program at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. When the Welding teaching assistant John Gailie asked if anyone would volunteer to help out his fire company in Cambria with a project, he jumped at the chance.

The Cambria Volunteer Fire Company recently purchased a pickup that they wanted to convert from a residential vehicle to an emergency vehicle and needed a back rack for it. “We are going to use the vehicle for police and fire services when we need to block off roads or let people know to slow down,” says Mr. Gailie. “The back rack will be a customized fit for the vehicle. He had students in Mike Schultz’s Diesel Mechanics program paint it and a classmate designed the Cambria Fire Department sign that was attached.

“Our department was so grateful to Evan for volunteering his time to do this that our Fire Chief Shawn McIntyre invited him to the station and made him an honorary member of the company,” says Mr. Gailie. “All our members gave him a standing ovation for the awesome job he did and were just so impressed that the class donated the materials for him to make this rack for them. It saved the department hundreds of dollars.”

Digital Media Student Heads to LA for NO BULL Challenge Awards

Thanks to almost 1,500 views, Kevin Kearney, a Digital Media student at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, is heading to Los Angeles, California to walk the red carpet. Kevin, a senior at Starpoint High School, submitted a video entry to the Great American NO BULL Challenge, a global video contest that aims to spread awareness about anti-bullying and digital responsibility. The founder, Shawn Edgington, started the contest when her daughter was bullied in high school and wanted to give other teens a platform to share their story.

When his Digital Media teacher Jennifer Licata was contacted by the NO BULL Challenge committee that Kevin was in their top 15 and they were going to fly him and a guest to LA for their NO BULL Challenge Teen Video Awards, she could not have been happier for him. “Kevin has shown an extreme level of dedication to his work this year. He has really gone above and beyond. Filmmaking is his passion and what he wants to do as his career. He has a compelling way of telling a story and that is what you need as a director. “Starpoint Assistant Principal Joseph DiMaria says it could not have happened for a nicer kid.

“I am extremely happy for Kevin. This is right up his alley, films and movies. We are very proud of him.”

Kevin was told about his achievement during his class at Orleans/Niagara BOCES when Ms. Licata announced it to him and his family, Niagara Career and Technical Education Center Principal Anedda Trautman and Starpoint High School Principal Gil Licata.

Kevin was told about his achievement during his class at Orleans/Niagara BOCES when Ms. Licata announced it to him and his family, Niagara Career and Technical Education Center Principal Anedda Trautman and Starpoint High School Principal Gil Licata and Assistant Principal Mr. DiMaria entered the room to surprise him.

“I am flabbergasted. I thought it was great - all the views and shares I got on my video. Then to find out I am going to the video awards is amazing. I always wanted to go to LA. This is just fantastic.”

You can watch Kevin’s video at www.contest.nobullchallenge.org/video/73938-no-bull-kevin-s-story.

Diesel Students Grateful to Milton CAT of Batavia for Donation

The Heavy Equipment/Diesel/Agronomy Mechanics students at the Niagara Career and Technical Education are getting a chance to work with a brand-new engine courtesy of Milton CAT of Batavia. Teacher Wes Blysid says the company has been extremely generous to his class in the past allowing them to tour their facilities and talk to them about job opportunities and now they have gifted them with a 2013 C4.4 diesel engine. “We will use it for electronic troubleshooting, engine teardown, studying fuel systems and exhaust emissions training. It is a great opportunity for the students to work with the latest technology and improve upon their skills as they get ready to prepare for the workforce.”
Niagara Academy Helps Student Tap into His Leadership Skills

When Ray Sack, Jr. was first told that Niagara Academy would be a good fit for him, he was skeptical. Although the Royalton Hartland School District was trying its best to make sure he completed his coursework, it was an uphill battle for him. “Every year I felt like I was on the verge of failing. It was very stressful for me and my parents,” says Ray. “My perception of the Niagara Academy was that it was a place where the worst of the worst goes. I thought there would be gangs and drugs. I was terrified about attending there until I took the tour and I saw how great it was. All my fears were put to rest and I knew I would love going to school there.”

He said he immediately felt at home with Principal Dr. Sushma Sztorc and the teachers. “Dr. Sztorc is wonderful. She runs a very tight ship, but does it lovingly. She always asks you how you are doing and you can always talk to her about anything. She really cares about all of us.” He says he also gets along great with the other students. “There are no fights and if you do have a conflict with someone the counselors make you sit down and resolve the issue by communicating with each other. I was never good at expressing my feelings before and this has changed that. It feels good to be able to let people know how you are feeling.”

He credits the 6-1-1 (six students, one teacher and one aide) classroom structure for really helping him to develop into a great student. “I liked the fact that you have the same homeschool teacher every year and that every teacher is able to give you individual attention. They really push you to get your work done. I really wish I had known about this place sooner. I am really thriving here and to see that weight lifted off my parents shoulders means the world to me.”

Going to the Academy has also given him career aspirations. It was because of an exploratory program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center he took in 10th grade, that Ray also found a passion for HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration). “I am a kinetic learner and I like hands-on activity. That program just clicked with me. My teacher Mr. Destino is the best and he really works with me and makes sure that I am where I need to be in my studies. After graduation I will be attending a trade school and using my HVAC training to put myself through college.”

It was because of all the guidance that Ray received from his teachers and family that it fostered his ability to take a leadership role in school. “I am the type of person who likes to help people. For me nothing compares to successfully helping someone feel better.”

Dr. Sztorc saw that ability in Ray and decided he would be the perfect candidate for the Leadership Niagara Youth Leadership Development Program, known as LYNC. The program is eight months long and they usually take about 100 students who work with industry and community leaders. They focus on learning leadership development skills, problem-solving, communication using teamwork and collaboration to achieve success.

Looking forward to graduation, Ray says, “The Niagara Academy was a blessing in disguise for me. It helped me to realize that I have always been a leader even if I didn’t realize it at the time. Now I am going to take those skills I have learned in school and Leadership Niagara and practice them every day of my life. I know now that I want to make a difference in other people’s lives, like the people here have made a difference in mine.”

Career and Tech Ed Staff and Students Thank Advisory Committees

Despite some harsh weather, the Career and Technical Education Department's Advisory Committee Social was a huge success. The Niagara Career and Technical Education Center's Culinary Art students, under the direction of their teachers Bob Ihle, Lisa Cook and Caitlin Siresi, made some delicious appetizers and desserts for the advisory committee members to snack on as they mingled with the teachers, administrators and students.

NCTEC Principal Anedda Trautman says it was a special evening for everyone who works at both the Niagara and Orleans Career and Tech Education Centers. “We dedicated this evening to thank our business partners for their continued dedication to our programs and our students. It was a great opportunity for those partners to meet with our teachers to discuss curriculum, internships and job opportunities.”

Project Based Engineering teacher Scott Brauer says the advisory committees, who are made up of local business owners, managers and workers, are invaluable to the programs. “They really serve a threefold purpose to us. They advise on current trends in the field, they give us real time feedback on our students who are interning with them and when our budget cannot afford it, they step up to the plate to donate equipment and tools. They are a great resource to us.” Precision Machine Technology teacher Bill Rakonczay says all the teachers are appreciative of all that they do. “Their hard work they put in every year means a lot to us. All the successes that come our way are a direct reflection of their dedication to career and technical education.”
Lucas Kates, a junior from Lew-Port, took two first place spots at the Niagara County Community College (NCCC) annual Video Festival. The Digital Media Department at the college presented him first place in the Documentary and Comedy competitions.

Lucas attends the Niagara Academy and the Digital Media Program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center. Donna Antonacci, a counselor at the Niagara Academy, says he is very deserving of the recognition. “He is such a hard worker and very organized. There is no doubt that he will be very successful in whatever he chooses to do.” His Digital Media teacher, Jennifer Licata, cannot say enough things about him: “He is an awesome student. He came into a class of seniors as a junior and set the bar for everyone. He does whatever it takes to get the job done. His prep work and script writing are incredible and he is very focused on his goal of being in the film industry. He has a great work ethic.”

His work ethic is such that when NCCC asked him to give a demonstration on stop motion animation at the festival he jumped at the chance and stayed the entire day talking to anyone who had questions. “They were so impressed with him,” says Mrs. Antonacci. “They didn’t think he would stay the whole time and he did.” Lucas says he didn’t mind because it is a passion of his. “I love film. I follow people who review films and make films. Last year one of my animation films won first place and it has inspired me to make more. If anyone is interested in seeing my work they can go to my Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/user/keeponbrickin.”

Lucas says some of the $400 in prize money he won at the competition he will put aside of her college education. “I plan on attending RIT for filmmaking and I am very excited about that. Next year I will be taking the Graphics program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center to enhance my skills.”

Anedda Trautman Honored for Outstanding Contributions to Secondary Education

Anedda Trautman, high school principal of the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, has been selected as the 2015 recipient of the James E. Allen Award by the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS).

James E. Allen, a pillar of educational leadership who served as commissioner of education in New York State, was known for his strong support of secondary school administrators. This award is given annually to a SAANYS member who is a secondary school administrator, supervisor, or coordinator who has given significant contributions to education and leadership at the secondary school level and service to the community and professional organizations including SAANYS.

A long-time educator, Mrs. Trautman has been affiliated with the NCTEC since 2001, first as an instructor, then as assistant principal, and ultimately as principal since 2011. Well known as an innovative and forward thinking leader, Mrs. Trautman has worked diligently to bring new ideas and initiatives to the school, increasing academic rigor and career readiness. In particular she has developed partnerships and collaborations with local industry leaders through the Tech Centers that Work program, the Craft Advisory Committee, as well as an annual “bug out” contest where automotive students work to debug a car within a certain timeframe, this is held in conjunction with the Niagara Frontier Automobile Dealers Association at the Buffalo Auto Show. Additionally, she has hosted a “thank you reception” at the school for industry advisory committee members, showcasing the students’ work and providing an opportunity for students to receive internships and summer employment opportunities.

Local Legislators Tour OCTEC Campus

Niagara County Legislator David E. Godfrey and Orleans County Legislator Lynne M. Johnson toured the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center recently after meeting with Dr. Clark Godshall, District Superintendent and Jill Holbrook, Associate Director of Technology and Infrastructure from WNYRIC Erie 1 BOCES.

This strategic meeting was at the request of the Legislature Chairmen David Callard (Orleans County) and William Ross (Niagara County) to discuss potential collaboration between BOCES and NORA (Niagara-Orleans Regional Alliance) who has a two-county initiative to provide every student and every household with access to high-speed rural broadband, a significant part of Governor Cuomo’s 2015 budget.

“We have the same goals and challenges in reaching the last child, and sharing resources and knowledge is the best way to achieve our objective. Touring Orleans/Niagara BOCES made me realize what an asset they are to both counties”, Legislator Johnson said.

“Reliable high-speed Internet service, at an affordable price, is as important today as electricity itself. It is time to work together in reaching this goal of last mile rural broadband coverage, and our friends at BOCES are indispensable in helping make it happen”, Legislator Godfrey added.

Superintendent Godshall says he envisions a valuable working relationship between BOCES and NORA, and looks forward to discussing a diversity of shared service opportunities in the near future.
Fieldtrip Turns Into Rich Experience for Culinary Arts Students

Lisa Cook, a Culinary Arts teacher at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, recently got to expose her students to a part of her world outside of class. That world is the world of Rich Products, a global food solutions company located in Buffalo. Ms. Cook has been employee of theirs for four years and wanted to show the class what it is like to work for some a huge innovative company. “The company has always been so generous to me and it was awesome that they extended that generosity to my students as well. They truly made the days at their headquarters the hands-down best field trip I have ever been on and one my students will never forget. I am so appreciative of everything that Stephen Rich and Howard Rich did for my class and they went above and beyond to show them a true “Rich’s experience”.”

Rich Products designed a career day specifically tailored to Ms. Cook’s class at their Innovation Center and Atrium. Not only did they give them a tour of their facility, the students interacted with Stephen Rich, who is in charge of sales and marketing, Will Kreiner, the Executive Chef and Paula Lugar who is in charge of Research and Development. “I thought it was so much fun and I learned a lot in the few hours we were there,” says student Abby Kernahan. “I was really impressed with all the beautiful artwork and the architecture of the building. It was certainly something you don’t see every day.” Classmate Jessica Koller says she was impressed with the technology that Rich Products employs. “The kitchen was equipped with video cameras so they link all over the world and the equipment they had there was amazing.”

The students also got a chance to try out the learning lab by making personal pizzas and decorating cakes with the Bettercream product line and were even gifted with an apron with the Rich logo on it. “I was so pleased with the special day that Rich Products designed for my students,” says Ms. Cook. “Not only did they leave with their hands full of gifts, but with memories that they will carry with them the rest of their lives. I can’t thank them enough for extending this opportunity to my class and encouraging them in their quest to be food professionals.”

NCTEC Culinary Students Take Gold at Taste of Education

The NCTEC ProStart Culinary team of Ray Delucci, Kashiya Hogue, Tyler Mule and Wyatt Roberts cooked their way into first place at the 2015 Taste of Education at Salvatore’s Italian Restaurant. The event, hosted by the New York State Restaurant Association’s Western New York chapter, raises money for scholarships to support local culinary students in the National ProStart Culinary Competition.

The theme of the evening was Global Cuisine and the students, who are taught by Bob Ihle at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center, dazzled the crowd and judges with their chicken cordon bleu, paella, chicken paprikash, potato pierogi, Polish sausage, Shrimp Fra Diablo, chocolate mousse, tiramisu and nut strudel. They competed against high school teams from the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center, Carrier Educational Center and Hewes Educational Center of Chautauqua.

Ray Delucci was also tapped to play sous chef to Iron Chef Competitor Cody Casiglia of Empire Suites in a 60 minute competition that was waged against Bryan Mecozzi of Black Iron Bistro and Jon Wilson of Ralph Wilson Stadium and their student sous chefs. Cody and Ray walked away victorious with first place. “The Iron Chef win was great,” says Ray. “It showed me that I can be great if I work hard. You have to be dedicated to what you love and it feels great that it is starting to pay off.”

The ProStart team will be competing at the New York State Invitational at the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park, NY March 13th and 14th for a chance to win scholarships and move on to the Nationals.

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The students also got a chance to try out the learning lab by making personal pizzas and decorating cakes with the Bettercream product line and were even gifted with an apron with the Rich logo on it. “I was so pleased with the special day that Rich Products designed for my students,” says Ms. Cook. “Not only did they leave with their hands full of gifts, but with memories that they will carry with them the rest of their lives. I can’t thank them enough for extending this opportunity to my class and encouraging them in their quest to be food professionals.”

Fieldtrip Turns Into Rich Experience for Culinary Arts Students

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Local Chef Goes from Hell’s Kitchen to Literacy Zone

Some of you may have heard the name Bobby Anderson if you are a fan of the Fox Network’s “Hell’s Kitchen” with Gordon Ramsey. Anderson, a Niagara Falls native, was on season four of the show and landed in the top 5. An experience he called life changing. “Gordon Ramsay really took a liking to me and he told me I was a good chef and gave me some straightforward advice. He told me to knock off the black stuff and to become more professional. He knew I had it in me to be great and he worked with me to give me the tools to be the chef I always wanted to be. He even hired me to work in his kitchens in London.”

Anderson grew up in the Packard Court neighborhood of Niagara Falls. “I had a deplorable neighborhood, drugs and crime were rampant and I knew that was not a path I wanted to go down. I needed an outlet to get away from the streets.” He took a job as a dishwasher at a local restaurant in 1986, where he not only got exposed to a different social class of people, but found two mentors who saw the potential in him. “I remember I had worked my way up to busser at the Winter Garden and I heard people talking French and German and it took me to those countries and it made me curious about what else was out there.” He said the woman Kathy who hired him helped him because she believed in him and taught him his first lesson - show up. She then introduced him to master chef Calvin F. Long at the Cloister Restaurant in Buffalo. “He was very hard on me, but he taught me discipline and skills and he helped to make me the man that I am today. I worked with him for eight years and I thank God for putting these two people in my path because they saved me.”

After stints being a chef at the Pillar and Post in Canada, E.B. Green’s Steakhouse, Harry’s Harborview Restaurant, Templeton Landing, Hyde Park Steakhouse, he was in New York City for a job interview and was asked if he wanted to audition for “Hell’s Kitchen”. The exposure helped him form another mission in life - one of giving back. “I got a lot of support from the people in Western New York and that meant so much to me and I started thinking about all the people that were in my situation when I was growing up and I thought how can I give them what was given to me.”

He and his partner Whitney Walker, who is a social worker, came up with the idea of the F-Bites Foundation, a vocational program that teaches culinary skills along with leadership qualities. In the five years’ time he has had his company he has worked with middle school and high school students and various other community organizations. He has shared with the participants his own hard upbringing and encourages them to break away as well. “I know not everyone is going to be a chef, but what I really want everyone to take out of this is those soft skills. I look to it as a re-entry program and luckily with the support of Congressman Brian Higgins and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand we are picking up steam. We are able to give away $3,000 a year to help participants by buying them clothing and taking them on field trips.”

While sitting on a board with Orleans/Niagara BOCES Literacy Zone Coordinator Chuck Diemert he saw another avenue he could explore in his quest to help people. “I remember I was sitting in this meeting and he got a call that one of his students was in desperate need of help to escape a bad situation she was in and he said to us, “I am sorry, but I need to postpone this meeting and take care of this.” That really impressed me and I thought I want to work with him and Orleans/Niagara BOCES.”

Recently, the Literacy Zone students at Christ Community Church in Lockport and the Niagara County Jail where the Literacy program holds classes as well, have been invited to come up for the free culinary arts class and the response has been great. “His approach is very exciting,” says Mr. Diemert. “He is very hands-on, but it’s not only about cooking, it’s about giving our students the skills to get and keep a job when they move on to the next phase of their life. That is one of our missions here at BOCES to make sure our students are employable. They don’t have to be a chef or go to college, but we want them to have a goal. He can relate to a lot of our students and he shares his story and says see we are very similar and I think it inspires them. We have gotten fantastic response from both our locations. He is definitely making a difference in their lives.”
Niagara County Emergency Response Team Shows Security Students Career Option

Captain Michael Dunn and Lieutenant Aaron Schultz recently spent a morning with the Security and Law Enforcement students at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. Teacher John Marotta asked the two officers to talk to the students about their role on the Niagara County Emergency Response Team and what is involved in becoming part of the team.

Captain Dunn explained that the team provides tactical response to critical incidents such as hostage and sniper situations, high-risk apprehensions, high-risk warrant service and VIP protection using specialized weapons, equipment and tactics. “We have 20 members on the team and we do this part-time on top of our other duties,” said Captain Dunn. “We are on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It can be exhausting, but rewarding. There is no pay differential, but you do get overtime.” He talked to the students about different scenarios like busting a meth lab. “It is not like the movies,” he explained. “You have to get search warrants and they are only good for ten days. Your informers are usually crackheads who are trying to cut deals with the District Attorney’s office and the plans can change quite a bit before you make the raid. You are never 100% sure what you will be walking into.”

The students were curious about what it takes to become part of the Emergency Response Team. Both officers said the rigid process required you to be a police officer or a paramedic for at least three years, be physically fit, and have great shooting accuracy and a superior’s recommendation. “A huge thing is for your team to be able to trust you and the review board has to approve you,” said Captain Dunn.

Lieutenant Schultz then allowed the students to examine the unloaded weaponry, equipment and armored vehicle they use and talked about the four different types of gases that is part of their arsenal. “As an officer you have to be exposed to all four types of the gases so you know what it does to a person when they are hit with them. It is not a fun experience, but a necessity.” He also detonated a flashbang, which is a stun grenade, in the school parking lot so the students could experience it. The non-lethal explosive device is used by the team to temporarily disorient an enemy’s senses by producing a flash of light and a 170 decibels bang.

“I am so appreciative of Captain Dunn and Lieutenant Schultz spending this time with the class,” says Mr. Marotta. “It gives the students a much better insight into a career when they are talking to the professionals who do it. The students really enjoyed getting to explore the armored vehicle and the weapons and to actually get to experience a flashbang was a real thrill for them. I can’t thank the officers enough for giving up their valuable free time so my class can benefit from their experiences.”

Building Trades Program Asks “Can You Dig It?”

With heavy equipment operators in high demand, the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center’s Building Trades Program has recently acquired a Bobcat Skid-Steer Loader and an Excavator. Teacher Matt Anastasi says a former student Tim Freundschuh, who is the president of Bobcat of Buffalo, convinced him that having the heavy equipment in his class would open up career opportunities for his students. “I remember when he was attending my class he asked if he could bring a Bobcat with an angle broom in to help sweep up the debris from one of our modular home projects, so the class wouldn’t have to do it manually. I said sure and we were all amazed at how quickly and precisely the machine did it. I remember our Building and Grounds Superintendent asking if he wouldn’t mind sweeping the rest of the parking area and he did! When I ran into him recently he told me that they could offer us a good deal if we wanted to purchase some equipment and we jumped at it.”

The Skid-Steer Loader has lift arms used to attach a wide variety of attachments. The Building Trades program has three of those attachments: an auger, a forklift and a bucket. The excavator, which can dig about 10 feet deep, can expose a foundation or dig a trench. “We are actually partnering with our Heavy Equipment/Diesel Mechanics Program to have a training facility for both classes at the school. We are setting up different stations to teach them skills like scooping up stockpiles to put in a dump truck, delivering palettes and digging posts. We are actually looking into opportunities around our campus to assist our maintenance staff with various projects so they get real world experience as well,” says Anastasi.

Anastasi says that since these machines are very common at construction and manufacturing sites his students can add that they are familiar with the operation and safety procedures of the equipment when they apply for jobs or if they plan to attend a trade college. He says the training will benefit everyone in the two programs with learning heavy equipment operation, site development, utilities construction and insulation and repair. “We recently attended a Construction Career Day and the union and company representatives asked me if I had any females in my class because they said finding female heavy equipment operators is very hard and they are very much in need. So if the females in my class get proficient with these they will have a lot of doors open to them.”

“It has been great to add this component to our teaching. I think the students being able to physically see what we are talking about when we discuss terms like level and sloping has been very beneficial to them,” says Anastasi. “Orleans/Niagara BOCES has a reputation of producing students with excellent skills and to be able to add heavy equipment operation to that makes them very desirable to employers.”
Three Continuing Ed Students Named Student of the Year

Latasha Ford, Octaviano Gomez and Paul Morrow were recently recognized by the New York Association for Continuing/Community Education (NYACCE) for being outstanding adult learners. NYACCE is a professional organization which promotes continuing and community education in New York State. The winners, who attend literacy classes through Orleans/Niagara BOCES, were celebrated at the 32nd Annual Student Award Ceremony in Latham, New York. Literacy Specialist Susan Diemert, along with teachers Kathryn Diemert, Katie Rossi, Stephanie Bevacqua, Charles Diemert and Linda Shakoor were on hand to recognize the three for their outstanding accomplishments.

The Lockport Drug Court program is strict, time-consuming and rigorous. Along with working 50-60 hours a week to support his two sons, attending the Lockport Literacy Zone program to get his GED and attending treatment programs, Paul Morrow has little time or want to indulge his alcohol addiction. Paul was charged with a felony after being arrested for his fourth DWI. He knew he was facing a turning point in his life and had a choice of facing a long jail sentence or a shortened sentence paired with a rehabilitation program. He chose to attend the Lockport Literacy Zone which partners with the Lockport Drug Court by supporting recovering addicts and alcoholics with programming to supplement their recovery and rehabilitation. Paul decided to embrace the opportunities he was given and achieved his GED in seven months. He was given a promotion at his job for getting his diploma as well. Kathryn Diemert, who nominated him for the award, said, “Paul has an upbeat and positive attitude and he always encourages the other students by sharing his own lifestyle choices that led him here and how grateful he is to have gotten a second chance. He encourages his sons to continue their education and even brought his eldest in to talk to our teachers about the importance of staying in school. Paul says he wants to be a lifelong learner and is hoping to take computer classes at Orleans/Niagara BOCES so he can enhance his job skills. He has become a true advocate for education.”

Katie Rossi nominated Latasha Ford for facing insurmountable challenges to get her GED and attend college. Drugs and violence have been always been a part of Latasha’s life. Both of her parents died from drug use and she has struggled with addiction herself. At the age of 15 she dropped out of school to live on the streets where her life for 18 years was a combination of drug dealing, drug use and run-ins with law enforcement. After giving birth to three children, one who is disabled, drug dealing became a way for her family to survive. After being charged with felony drug possession and facing a lengthy sentence she asked to enter drug court. The court told her in order to complete Treatment Court she had to get her High School Equivalency Diploma and have sustainable employment. As a single mother of three young children, the thought of being separated from them motivated her to attend the Lockport Literacy Zone in 2013 where she obtained her GED. She also enrolled in their pre-collegiate program with Niagara County Community College (NCCC) while working at a cabinet manufacturing company. “We are so proud of Latasha,” says Ms. Rossi. “Finding a job is no easy task facing felony drug charges. Not only does she work full-time as a general laborer, she is now attending NCCC and working towards a degree as a registered nurse. Latasha now stresses the importance of school to her children and is proud of the fact that she can be a role model for them to look up to.”

Linda Shakoor frequently works with ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). While teaching at the World Life Institute Education Center in Waterport, she met Octaviano Gomez, who attended classes to improve his English and gain citizenship. Octaviano grew up in Oaxaca, Mexico and only attended school there for five months of first grade. The only thing he learned to do is write his name in his rare native language of Mixtec. At eight years old he was working in the fields of Mexico weeding tomato fields. Over 20 years he made his way around the United States picking different crops. While he was in Florida he seriously injured himself pushing a large crate of tomatoes and then reinjured himself eleven years later while stacking boxes of oranges. He is now permanently disabled. While living in Medina with his family, he decided to devote himself to learning English and becoming a citizen of the United States. “His teacher Cheryl Liberman, a former elementary school teacher, introduced a unique spelling program that Octaviano practiced religiously,” says Mrs. Shakoor. “After citizenship classes he practiced his speaking skills with Rosetta Stone and he rarely missed a day of class. We are so impressed with his determination to succeed despite being in constant pain and having to make the 30 mile round trip to attend classes. In December 2013 he passed his citizenship test with flying colors. He is now exploring enrolling in community college.”

Congratulations to all our winners!
Cosmetology Students Show Off Glamourous and Fantastical Hairstyles on Runway

Cosmetology students at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center and the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center put on amazing shows at the centers in front of classmates, family and friends. The students of Cathy Bonaccorso, Anne Carnahan, Pauline Carney, Sue Lindke and Lori Smith have been planning for weeks, with their models, intricate evening styles and fantasy inspired hairstyles to wow their audience and local hair experts to take home top honors.

Congratulations go to:

**Evening Category - NCTEC**
1st Place - Stylist Kayleigh MacKenzie (Niagara Wheatfield) with her model Ariel Mrzygut (Niagara Wheatfield)
2nd Place - Stylist Natalie Colucci (Niagara Wheatfield) with her model Summer Den Haese (Niagara Wheatfield)
3rd Place - Stylist Jessica Kroening (Wilson) and Jordan Miller (Wilson)

**Braiding Category - NCTEC**
1st Place - Stylist Delazhanea Hunt (Niagara Falls) with model Jada Beeput (Niagara Falls)

**Fantasy Category - NCTEC**
1st Place - Stylist Ana Bryer (Niagara Falls) and model Courtney Martelli (Niagara Falls)
2nd Place - Stylist Rachael Guering (Starpoint) and model Alyssa Clancy (Starpoint)
3rd Place - Stylist Rylee Lufkin (Starpoint) and model Emily Watson (Starpoint)

**Fantasy Look - OCTEC**
1st Place - Sam Reyes (Newfane) stylist/Brianna Beane (Newfane) model
2nd Place - Aloma Morford (Newfane) stylist/Emma Bow model
3rd Place - Trinity Milliman (Royalton Hartland) stylist/Jenna Snell model

**Evening Look - OCTEC**
1st Place - Keely Foster (Medina) stylist/ Taylor Moore (RoyHart) model
2nd Place - Zakiyah Blackburn (Lockport) stylist/Shania Singleton model
3rd Place - Zoraida Sanchez (Lyndonville) stylist/Eugenia Soto (Albion) model
4th Place - Jordan Starcher (Royalton Hartland) stylist/Caitlyn West (Medina) model

Anedda Trautman

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As noted by colleague, Jennifer Braun, “Mrs. Trautman’s vision for the future of our school is limitless. She has introduced and brought to fruition new ideas and programs for our students and the 13 component districts that we serve. Her student-centered approach to learning and insist upon academic rigor are just two of the many components contributing to the success at NCTEC. She includes students, parents/guardians, faculty, constituent school districts, and industry into her vision for NCTEC, which are critical to the creation of a true 21st century learning community.”

District Superintendent, Dr. Clark J. Godshall, says, “Her efforts have contributed to this BOCES’ career and technical education programs and our enrollment being the third largest amongst the other 37 BOCES in New York State. Her tireless efforts and positive role modeling have strengthened our relationship with our 13 component districts and continue to distinguish her leadership locally and across New York State.”

Trautman received her bachelor’s, masters, and advanced certification from the State University of New York at Buffalo - Buffalo State College. She was honored for her accomplishments at an awards ceremony on May 8 at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Albany, New York.

SAANYS represents nearly 7,200 school administrators, supervisors, and coordinators. As a professional association, SAANYS is committed to providing direction, service, and support to the membership in their efforts to improve the quality of education and leadership in New York State schools. SAANYS is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).