Orleans/Niagara BOCES Welcomes New Administrators

There are some brand-new faces in some of our key leadership positions at Orleans/Niagara BOCES. We want to welcome Ron Barstys, Director of Special Programs, Melanie Conley, Director of Business Services, Dan Connolly, Director of Facilities III and Safety and Matthew McCall and Rob Robinson, who are the new Career and Technical Education Coordinators at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center. We are pleased to have them join us with their expertise and knowledge and know they will be a great addition to our team.

Ron Barstys  
**Director of Special Programs**

Ron is responsible for the administration of all operations applicable to the Special Education, Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC), Alternative and Special BOCES Programs. He will be assisting Dr. Godshall in the development of policy and the overall management of the BOCES operations. He has a Bachelor’s degree in Environmental Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo, along with a Master’s of Science degree in Secondary Teacher Education and a Master’s of Science in School District Administration and Supervision from Niagara University. He is currently working on his doctorate. He is permanently certified as a secondary science teacher and school district administrator.

Ron taught earth science and living environmental classes for five years at the Niagara Falls City School District, where he was also the Dean of Students for two years and then Superintendent to the Administration Building for over five years. He also served as the Building Representative and Secondary Director for the Niagara Falls Teachers Union and a varsity head coach for five years. After 13 years of serving that district, he left to become the Director of Student Services for the North Tonawanda City School District. He worked there until taking the position of Director of Special Programs at Orleans/Niagara BOCES, which he calls a well-run world class organization. He is also a member of the Niagara Falls School District Board of Education.

His wife Christine teaches English at Niagara Falls High School and they have a son, Ryan, who attends fifth grade.

**Daniel Connolly  
Director of Facilities III/Director of Safety**

Dan is responsible for the administrative oversight of the operations and maintenance for all of Orleans/Niagara BOCES and the Safety Risk Department. “I have always been impressed with all the programs and services BOCES provides,” he says. “Working for three component districts I have seen and benefitted from these services. I am thrilled to now be part of BOCES providing these valuable services to all of our districts.” Dan lives in Lockport with his lovely wife Michelle and has two grown children and two teenagers at Lockport High School. One of his sons is currently in his second year of the Welding Program at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center.

Melanie Conley  
**Director of Business Services**

Melanie is in charge of Business Operations and Technology. She has a Master’s of Science in Education and a Certificate of Advanced Study from the College at Brockport and is a certified School District Business Leader (SDBL). She started her career at Niagara Wheatfield Central School District as the District Treasurer and then became the Assistant School Business Administrator during her tenure there. In 2009, she was appointed as the School Business Administrator for Amherst Central School District, where she worked until taking on the position at Orleans/Niagara BOCES. “I have found everyone to be very friendly and helpful,” says Melanie. “I am proud to be part of such a great organization that provides wonderful opportunities for the component districts we serve.”

She and her husband have two children, Eva, age nine and Ryan, age three and in their spare time they enjoy boating as a family.

**Robert Robinson  
Career and Technical Education Coordinator**

Rob’s responsibilities encompass instructional supervision, student discipline, staff supervision, community and districtwide interaction and being the Summer School Assistant Principal.

He is continuing a family tradition; his father taught special education at Orleans/Niagara BOCES for many years. Rob is married with two boys and enjoys playing golf in his free time.

He says his first impressions of BOCES were how friendly and welcoming everyone is.
Three Continuing Education Students Named NYACCE Student of the Year

Three Continuing Education students from Orleans/Niagara BOCES were named the NYACCE (New York Association for Continuing and Community Education) Students of the Year.

Maria Castaneda, Nicole Sarratori and Walter Stewart were among 21 students recognized statewide in Latham, New York at the annual conference.

When Maria moved to the United States from Mexico in 1994, she only had a 6th grade education. She and her husband spent eight years as migrants following the crops from oranges in Florida, cucumbers in Ohio and apples in New York. With constantly moving from north to south with their young daughter in tow, Maria had an epiphany when her daughter was going to be forced to repeat first grade. She insisted to her husband that she would stay behind in New York so their daughter could get a better education and not be forced to change schools so frequently. While her husband continued the migrant circuit, they had two more children. Maria took a job in a greenhouse and decided to obtain her goal of being an American citizen. She knew the value of education and wanted a better life for herself and her family.

In 2014, at the age of 43, she entered the Orleans/Niagara BOCES program at the World Life Institute Education Center in Waterport and started to learn English and prepare for citizenship. Maria worked hard and moved along quickly in her citizenship class, mastered writing and grammar skills and enthusiastically learning concepts of civics and US history. Unfortunately, some devastating news and events forced her to withdraw from class temporarily. Maria’s beloved mother passed away in Mexico while she and her husband were going through a devastating divorce. When she returned to class she worked very hard to catch up and received more devastating news that two cousins had been murdered in Mexico. Despite all the heartache, she focused on her goals and on September 16th, Maria stood with citizens from 72 nations at SUNY Brockport and became an American citizen and registered to vote the very same day.

Nicole is an example of a student that slipped through the cracks at her high school and as a result, ended up dropping out. Although she had a love of math and science, she would skip her specials like gym and art because they didn’t interest her. As a result she was frequently suspended which caused her to fall behind in her classes. A quiet and withdrawn girl by nature, she felt unsupported and started having problems with anxiety and depression. Being labeled a troublemaker, she dropped out of school.

She started to realize without an education her life was going nowhere and started applying herself towards getting her high school equivalency diploma. Her Orleans/Niagara BOCES teacher Stephanie Bevacqua said that Nicole was reading at a college level, but had 5th grade math skills. “Nicole worked tirelessly to improve her math skills and would spend hours studying. She passed her high school equivalency exam and decided to set more goals for herself and decided to enter the medical field. She signed up for hemodialysis classes at Niagara County Community College and after completion signed up for the phlebotomy program at Orleans/Niagara BOCES where she will graduate in June and hope to eventually work in the nephrology and care for patients with kidney disorders. “I have no doubt that Nicole will be successful in the medical field,” says Ms. Bevacqua. “She has worked two jobs while furthering her education and she is very committed to learning. She is very talented and has a bright future ahead of her. It is a shame that she didn’t receive this kind of encouragement when in high school, I know she would have achieved her dreams sooner.”

There are always students that have to face harder odds than most to succeed. This was the case with Walter Stewart. Walter began to sell drugs when he was 15 years old. Since he had no one in his life to encourage him to become something better, he dropped out of school and made that his career. As he got older his life became bleaker and more violent. He started realizing most of the people he knew were in jail or dead and he decided to turn his life around not only for himself, but his family.

That is how he came to be enrolled in the Orleans/Niagara BOCES High School Equivalency Program in 2012. While working a full time job during the day, he would travel the thirty minutes to his classroom to study for the TASC exam. He had a 5th grade math level and a 6th grade reading level and knew he had a long journey ahead, but he was determined to achieve his goal. In 2014 a class opened up closer to home in Niagara Falls and so he transferred classes and began working with Margaret Campbell and Erica Kopp who were impressed with his dedication to achieving his academic goals. “He would show up to class thoroughly exhausted from working all day, but still maintain a positive attitude and be eager to learn. His commitment to his studies inspired his peers who really enjoyed learning with him and from him.”

Walter’s hard work paid off and he passed the TASC exam and achieved his high school equivalency diploma. He was immediately promoted at his job to Housekeeper Supervisor at a local resort/casino. He plans on pursuing education in the trades and will be taking the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Cooling) and electrical wiring classes at BOCES. His teachers say they have never seen a student turn his life around like Walter did and they are very proud of him. “Walter’s determination to overcome adversity, beat the odds and carve out a successful life for himself and his family are very impressive. He deserves to be named a student of the year.”

Orleans/Niagara BOCES Students Charm Audience at Annual Holiday Concert

Orleans/Niagara BOCES Music teacher Jo Paananen and the charming students at the North Tonawanda Learning Center enchanted their audience at their annual holiday concert.

The students sang along to many classic and newer holiday favorites and put everyone in a festive mood before they left on the winter break.

Adriel Williams, Lucas Territo and Derek Green.
Continuing Ed’s Linda Redfield Shakoor Named Outstanding Citizen by Orleans Hub

Orleans/Niagara BOCES’ ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher, Linda Redfield Shakoor, was recently recognized by the Orleans Hub Editor Tom Rivers and Publisher Karen Sawicz as one of their Outstanding Citizens of the Year.

The annual event was held at the Hoag Library where the nine people that were selected were recognized for making extraordinary contributions to the community. When talking about Linda, the Orleans Hub said that she has helped students build a better life in her 20 plus years of teaching. She has helped about 400 farmworkers learn English. Linda started her career working with the workers in 1994, with the sponsorship of Orleans/Niagara BOCES, at migrant camps and now works out of the World Life Institute in Waterport since 1999. The school offers evening courses in English, as well as computer literacy, pottery and other programs through a partnership with Orleans/Niagara BOCES.

In attendance at the ceremony, with the 80 people at Hoag Library, were members of the Rosario family. “I started teaching in Albion to a now prominent family, the Rosario’s, who own Manachi Restaurant and the Monte Alban store in Medina. Dona Lucia Rosario was my first pottery/ESL student and mother of eleven sons and daughters who came to our classes at the World Life Institute Education Center. It meant a lot to me that they attended.”

“I feel very honored to be recognized by the Orleans Hub,” says Linda. Tom Rivers said that adult students who work in agriculture are left in the background and without programs where they can improve themselves. Without the ESL program we have, they would remain in the shadows. I feel like my students deserve the award so much more than I do. They are pruning, thinning, leafing, wrapping, sorting, picking, packing and taking care of the food we eat every day. Yet, they find it within themselves, after working in difficult weather conditions, indoors and outdoors, to still come to class through snow, cold and heat after many hours in the fields. I feel also very grateful to Orleans/Niagara BOCES for sponsoring our program. We could not do this without them. I hope we continue to honor those who provide our daily bread.”

Allied Health Students Visit D’Youville College

Students in Melissa Streckewald’s Allied Health Program at Eastern Niagara Hospital in Newfane paid a visit to D’Youville College. The students got a chance to talk to the Health professors at the school and explore the campus.

“We had wonderful presentations by all the professors from Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Nursing and Pharmacy Departments,” says Mrs. Streckewald. “They discussed the educational requirements needed for acceptance into each individual program, salaries, job opportunities and gave demonstrations on the equipment used in those professions.”

The students had a chance to visit the nursing lab where they have patient stimulators named Donny and Danielle D’Youville. The simulators have the ability to have a number of different ailments that the students would have to access and treat as if they were a real patient. The Pharmacy Department also gave a tour of the lab where the students perform hands-on skills and were able to see cell exploration demonstration with malignant melanoma cells.

“The students were very impressed with the demonstrations and the hands-on experiences,” says Mrs. Streckewald. “All the professors were very interesting and it was a great educational experience. This field trip inspired many of my students to get interested in fields like Occupational Therapy and Pharmacy where they previously weren’t interested in that at all. It was definitely a beneficial way for them to be exposed to a variety of health occupations.”

Orleans Learning Center Students Brighten Holidays

Students at the Orleans Learning Center spent some time at Medina Memorial Hospital before the holidays.

The students, under the direction of music teacher Mary Kuhn, played bells for the residents on the north wing at the hospital. The concert has a festive effect and the residents and staff were truly grateful for the entertainment that helped to put them in the holiday mood.
Guest Demonstrators Give Building Trades Students Concrete Education

Recently students in Matt Anastasi’s Building Trades Program, at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center, had some special guests in class. Representatives from Solid Ground Concrete in Lockport came in to show the students how they do stamped concrete and give the students an opportunity to try their hand at it.

A concrete truck came to the back entrance of the class and students took turns wheeling the concrete to several molds that the company set up for them. Owner Tony Fazzolari, along with several of his employees, worked with the students on how to finish the concrete and then stamp it with a pattern. The finished products will be used around the Orleans/Niagara BOCES center.

“This was invaluable for my students,” says Mr. Anastasi. “I can teach them how to do concrete, but these guys do this every day, so they are experts. I think we need more opportunities like this to let the students see what kinds of careers are available to them and what it would be like to follow this career path.”

Mr. Fazzolari says the students did a great job. “We are trying to give them a good idea of what is involved with pouring concrete. I want them to know that sometimes you fight the conditions and the elements can make the process a whole different ballgame. It is very important to make the concrete perfect from the base up. People are paying top dollars for this so there is no room for error.”

Student Jeremy Ribbeck Jr. said, “I found this demonstration very helpful. I haven’t learned any of this stuff yet, so it was very informational to be able to work with it and have them show us their techniques.”

Coach Jim Conley Honored in Section VI Hall of Fame

To Coach Jim Conley it’s all about luck that he was inducted in the Section VI Hall of Fame. “I looked at my career and I thought why did I get this award? I was lucky to have great teachers and amazing people guiding me along the way. I am especially lucky to have my wife, Maureen. We have been married 49 years and you know how they say behind every successful man is a great woman pushing him along the way? That isn’t quite accurate in our case, because she is out front, pulling me along and that is the truth.”

There are 85 schools in Section VI, an area that spans from the Pennsylvania border all the way to Lake Ontario to Batavia. Jim has been an administrator, coach, contributor and official and started his career in 1968 at Wilson High School as the junior varsity football and junior varsity baseball coach. He then coached at Newfane High School junior varsity football (assistant 1969-1975), varsity football (1976-1985), tennis (1979-1981) and varsity baseball (1982-2007). He also coached in the Lockport midget league and served as the coaching coordinator for the Lockport Little League from 2003 to 2008. From 2008 to 2011, he was the assistant baseball coach for Erie Community College and in 2012 became the assistant baseball coach for Lockport, a position he holds to this day. He has been honored with multiple awards.

He was the athletic director at Newfane Central School for 19 years until his retirement in 2003. He currently works for Orleans/Niagara BOCES as the Coaching Coordinator. “I have coached my whole career of 37 years,” he says. “I was very humble and totally surprised when they called me and told me I was being inducted. To stand up there with the likes of these administrators and great athletes like Bob Lanier, who played pro ball in the NBA with the Detroit Pistons and the Milwaukee Bucks, Dave Hollins, who played for the San Diego Padres and Philadelphia Phillies and played in the World Series, Warren Spahn, who was a pitcher for the Braves, NY Mets and the San Francisco Giants, Donny Gilbert, a great quarterback at the University at Buffalo and Art Ward, a great administrator who was the President of the NYSPHSAA and a member of the Football Federation Committee. It was a great honor for someone like me who is just doing their job.”

Many people would disagree with his assessment that he was just doing his job. “I guess you don’t know how many people you have impacted until you retire,” he says. “This year I got an invitation to the 1976 Class Reunion at Newfane. When I taught there I always bought a yearbook and told the students I coached if they wanted to sign it to go into my office. Well I never looked at what people wrote and that was a big mistake. I pulled out the 1976 yearbook before the reunion to reacquaint myself with some names and faces and looked at what one of my students, Laurie Wright, wrote. It said, “Hi Mr. Conley, thanks for being the dad I never had”. It hit me right in the face. I started reading other people’s notes and I guess I didn’t realize how much respect or admiration they had for me. I went to that reunion and Laurie was the first one to greet me. I thought most students hated their teachers and to see what they thought of me and that I did affect them in a positive way was amazing.”

One of the things that Coach Conley is most proud of is working with coaches that teach kids. I think it is important for those kids to have someone in their lives that teaches them skills and teaches them to accept failure. That is one of the hardest things in the world to do. A good coach will tell them how to overcome that, bounce back and try again. That is a great lesson for anyone to learn.”

Looking Sharp!

Students at the Niagara Academy have been having fun with their spirit week. For Professional Day the students came dressed to kill, including Toruean Lawrence.
Cosmetology Students Give NT Learning Center Students Day of Pampering

Recently the Cosmetology students in Cathy Bonaccorso’s class at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center had some special guests. Orleans/Niagara BOCES students from the North Tonawanda Learning Center stopped in to get a little pampering on a cold winter day. Students were treated to haircuts and manicures. “It was a great experience for my students,” says Mrs. Bonaccorso. “They did a fantastic job on the little ones. The girls invited the group to come back. It was a win-win day for everyone.”

Auto Body Students Win at WNY Auto Collision Competition

Auto Body students shined at the first ever WNY Auto Collision Competition held at Auto Collision and Glass of WNY in Amherst. The event was sponsored by Auto Collision and Glass of WNY, Sherwin Williams Automotive Refinishing, Millstream Collision, Snap-On, Dodge, Wurth Automotive Products, Hertz Rent a Car, Axalta Coating Systems and Al-Wil-Auto Supplies and gave auto body students from four local BOCES a chance to show off their skills.

From Orleans/Niagara BOCES Kevin Swift, from Newfane, won first place in the Senior Division and Jon Montgomery, from Wilson took first and Nicholas Nowicki, also from Wilson, second place in the Junior Division. There was $1000 in cash prizes given out. Every student received $25 for competing and a goodie bag filled with apparel and supplies from the sponsors. First place winners won $200 and second place winners received $100 and tools from the sponsors.

Kevin is a student in the Auto Body program taught by Tom Struebing at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. Jon and Nick take the Auto Body program taught by Paul Magyar at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center. “It was a fantastic event,” says Mr. Struebing. “Several local collision shop owners decided to hold it to give the students a chance to show off their skills. It is also great for them because they can see some of the young talent coming up and get a chance to offer them an opportunity to work for them.” Mr. Magyar says the organizers did an outstanding job with setting up the event. “It could not have gone any better. All my students thought it was a lot of fun and were very happy about what they received from the sponsors. They even had competitions for the students’ parents that came and one of my student’s mothers won a signed Jack Eichel hockey stick that was donated by Rick Greenwalt, the Auto Collision and Glass owner. Everyone had a great time and was very impressed with the event.”

The senior competition was on refinishing and blending for color match and damage estimating. Not only did Kevin walk away with over $200 in prizes, he also got a job offer at Auto Collision and Glass. “I was pretty shocked that I won,” he says. “Mr. Struebing taught me a lot. He showed me how to estimate a couple of days before the competition and it made a big difference with me winning.” Fittingly Kevin is now working with a former student of Mr. Struebing’s who graduated 18 years ago. “He told me that Mr. Struebing was the best teacher he had in high school,” says Kevin.

The junior competition involved dent repair and color mixing. The students were required to correctly compile ratios and mix products into the correct colors and repair a damaged fender. Jon took home the $200 prize and a 3M spray gun donated by Al-Wil-Auto Supplies and Nick received $100 and a sander donated by Millstream Collision. “The students were judged by local collision experts, Russ Haney and Rick Greenwalt from Auto Collision and Glass, Tim Deasey from Millstream Collision and Ken Wanamaker from Sherwin Williams Automotive Refinishing,” says Mr. Magyar. “We are very grateful at how generous they were with their time, knowledge and money. “We very proud of all our students,” says Mr. Struebing. “I think it is great that they walked away with some great prizes and a chance to impress the judges.”
Students in Wes Bldy's Diesel, Agriculture Mechanics Technology Program took a field trip to the WNY Farm Show at the Hamburg Fairgrounds. The Niagara Career and Technical Education Center students spent the day looking at the new machinery used in the construction, farming and trucking industry and talking to various companies and college representatives about careers and furthering their education. They also got a chance to try out their skills with a hay bale toss and a NAPA Mechanics Competition that tested their knowledge of assembly, tools and skills required to maintain and repair equipment.

Mr. Bldy took second place in the hay bale throwing competition throwing 26.6 inches, his student, Jacob Kiff of Starpoint CSD took first place with a throw of 30.5 inches and Isaac Stacy, from Niagara Falls, also a student in his class threw 26.2 inches to get third place. In the mechanics competition, Jacob Kiff took second place and his classmates Kyle Sharkey (Wilson) took third place, Wyatt Janese (Niagara Wheatfield) took fourth, Sean O’Brien (Starpoint) took sixth, Cooper Fournier (Wilson) took seventh and Robert Wilcox (Wilson) took eighth place. The top ten students all received prizes for their outstanding work.

Winning Metal Project Was Roll of the Dice for Orleans Learning Center Students

Students in Mr. Steven Kuehn's Multi Occupations program at the Orleans Learning Center recently completed a unique project. The students created pencil holders that looked like dice made out of sheet metal. Mr. Kuehn says the students did the layout, drilled and bent the metal to assemble their projects.

The pencil holders came out so well, that when District Superintendent Dr. Clark Godshall saw the students working on them he offered a first, second and third prize for the students whose work he liked the most. “It was an unplanned contest,” says teacher aide Brenda Buryta. “It took the students by surprise, but they kicked it up a notch and did a great job. It was great recognition for the students and taught them a valuable lesson; you never know when someone might show an interest in the work you do. Always do your best and try hard because it makes a difference, if not now, it may in the future.”

Congratulations go to: First Place Jason Brown, Second Place Kedarie Booze and Third Place Carlito Sunday.

(LtoR) Officer Todd Draper, Kye, James Trembley (Lockport), Brendan Schyve (Royalton Hartland) and Fessor Thomas (Lockport).
Domestic Violence Survivor Addresses Security and Law Enforcement Class

Security and Law Enforcement teacher Amber Croff often gets asked what is the most dangerous call she ever had to handle as a police officer. "Whenever I am asked that question, I immediately think of domestic violence. It is so prevalent in our society and I believe that people are unaware of the issue."

She recently asked Jessica Cassick, a survivor, to come and talk to her class at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center to shine a light on the issue. “I also thought it would be beneficial to my students to learn how to interact with a domestic violence victim and I was very happy that Jessica was able to share her story with them.”

Student Kaila Lavett said she was glad that Jessica was able to talk about what happened to her. “It has to take an extreme amount of courage to share your story in front of a bunch of strangers especially this topic. Her story was chilling. I think it gave me a little perspective on how law enforcement would deal with victims of horrible crimes like this.” Classmate Cameron Cooper found the statistics staggering on how many people are victims of this crime. “I had no idea that one out of three females and one out of four males will be affected by domestic violence in their lifetime. I never knew it existed to this degree.”

Life Skills Students Participate in Festival of Trees

The BOCES students at the North Tonawanda High School enjoyed a Sunday decorating a tree at the Niagara Power Project. The Power Vista turns into a winter wonderland with their display of reusable trees. Local non-profit groups are asked to come and decorate them.

The students had been making ornaments for their tree with their Art teacher Karen Knight, and could not wait to show off their decorations and spend a day together to make their tree beautiful.

EMS Students Roll Out Disaster Plan

EMS (Emergency Medical Services) teacher Amy Green assigns her senior class a unique assignment every year; a disaster plan.

The students were given a scenario of a train derailment on Saunders Settlement Road in Sanborn near the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center where the class is. Their presentation encompasses how they would respond to that event as an EMS professional. Local health professionals, educators and first responders critiqued the students on several criteria including their handouts, how they were greeted when they entered the classroom, teamwork and their actual presentation.

“The students talked about how they would triage the victims, handle any contamination and how they would evacuate the school in the event of a fire,” says Ms. Green. “They did a very good job and the feedback they received from our panel was very helpful to them. I am very appreciative of the time and expertise our guests gave us and I think it was a good exercise for the students.”

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Hannah Barone Takes Top Prizes at the Fatima Shrine Bakers Guild Bake-Off

Hannah Barone, a student at the Niagra Career and Technical Education Center’s Culinary Arts Program, competed in the Fatima Shrine Bakers Guild annual Bake-Off in Lewiston.

The Starpoint student took first place for her carrot cake cookies and second place for apple crumb pie. Her teacher, Robert Ihle, says he was very proud of Hannah and her performance. “The competition was very tough and there were a lot of entries that the judges had to taste. There were six categories that consisted of breads, cakes, candy, cookies, pastries and pies. I think Hannah’s love of baking came through and her work was just outstanding.”

Hannah says she enjoyed competing. “The Fatima Shrine in Lewiston is a neat place and everyone there was very nice to me. I loved seeing all the different recipes that were submitted.”

Here is the recipe that took first place:

**CARROT Cake Cookies**

**Ingredients**

- 1 ¼ c. flour
- ⅓ c. quick oats
- ¾ t. baking soda
- 1 ¼ t. cinnamon
- ¼ t. ground ginger
- 1/8 t. nutmeg
- ½ t. salt
- ½ c butter, softened
- ½ c sugar
- ½ c brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 t. vanilla
- ¾ c. chopped walnuts
- 1 ¼ c. finely grated carrots

**Frosting:**

- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 6 T. cream cheese
- pinch of salt
- ½ t. vanilla
- 1 c. powdered sugar

**Directions:**

- In a mixing bowl, whisk together flour, quick oats, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt.
- In the bowl of a kitchen aid fit with a paddle, cream butter, sugar, brown sugar. Add egg and vanilla.
- Mix in carrots. Mix in nuts. Do not over-mix. Add flour mixture. Mix till just combined.
- Chill dough 1 hour.
- Preheat oven 350 degrees. Scoop out cookies 2 T. measurement and roll into a firm ball. Place on baker’s paper on tray. Bake 12-13 minutes. Cool completely.
- Mix all ingredients for frosting in a kitchen aid with a paddle attachment for 4 minutes until creamy smooth.
- Using two cookies make a sandwich with filling in between cookies. Enjoy!

Precision Machine Students Sign Off On Locker Part for NASA at Recognition Ceremony

The students in the Precision Machine Technology Program at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center were recognized by NASA for their part in the HUNCH Program. HUNCH stands for High School Students United with NASA to Create Hardware. Students across America design and fabricate products for the International Space Station.

The students, under the direction of their teacher Bill Rakonczay and NASA Engineer and Support Machinist Amanda Phelps, made a Knob, Latch, Door Mid-Deck Stowage Locker Assembly that has been used to assemble 15 single stowage lockers for the International Space Station (ISS). The lockers headed to the ISS on February 15 aboard the SpaceX-10.

Stacy Hale, who is the Founder and NASA Project Manager of HUNCH, came to the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center for the HUNCH Recognition Ceremony to personally thank the students for their contribution. He also gave them a chance to sign one of the stowage lockers that will be sent where it will become part of the International Space Station.

“I think it so important for students to be able to participate in this,” says Mr. Hale. “It shows students how competent and capable they are and to see the application of what they are learning. It’s providing NASA with real hardware that we are really using. It is helping us to bring together procurement and education together. I am very proud of these students, they are my team.”

Junior Class of the Precision Machine Technology Program: Leon Thompson II (Newfane), John Reed (Lockport), Brooke Moreland (Roy-Hart), Bryan Bale (Medina), Elizabeth Oliver (Roy-Hart), Austin Cox (Medina), Jacob Kuhmann (Medina), Brianna Peterson (Roy-Hart), Jason Stanton (Albion), Rhett Jones (Barker), Skyler Simmons (Newfane), Tyler Andrews (Roy-Hart), Brett Potter (Barker), James Davis (Lyndonville), Eric Vick Jr. (Lyndonville), Seth Warner (Newfane), Kodey Hayes (Roy-Hart).
OCTEC PB&J Drive Breaks School Record

Students and staff at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center really kicked it into gear for the 7th annual Peanut Butter and Jelly Drive. The drive helps local food pantries fill their shelves with kid-friendly food like peanut butter, jelly and marshmallow fluff. It has become a tradition for the Orleans/Niagara BOCES center when math teacher Sarah Gebhard asked the students at the center if they would like to help out. Since then it has become a fall community project.

This year a friendly class competition ended up collecting 550 jars to donate to local pantries; a record for the center. A special shout out goes to Eric Farrell’s junior Welding class who brought in 196 jars and to Steve Browning’s Security and Law Enforcement class that brought in 94 jars.

When volunteer Liz Allore came with her husband Ken to the center to collect the jars she said she was amazed at the boxes of donations. “I think it is the largest number of jars we have picked up from any school so far. It is fantastic!” School counselor, Kara Kirk, says, “Every year I am amazed at the generosity of these teenagers here at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. They are not only learning to be skilled workers, but caring community members too.”

Personal Trainer Students Put Security and Law Enforcement Students Through Their Paces

The Personal Trainer students, located at the Royalton Hartland High School, have been spending time with the Security and Law Enforcement students at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. Personal Trainer teacher, Joe Wilkie, has had his students develop workouts for different people to gain knowledge, experience and communication skills when dealing with potential clients.

His class recently partnered with Steve Browning’s Security and Law Enforcement program. “Our future personal trainers need hours practicing with clients and this program collaboration allows for both programs to meet requirements in the classroom as well as better prepare students for real-life experiences they will face in their industry.”

Food Service Students Show Off Baking Skills

Students in Lisa Cook’s VIP - Food Service Program at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center, made up some sweet treats recently.

Here are Shamaria Howard, Alexandra Schlegal, Kayla Stribling and Joseph Gates, all from Medina, with their cream puffs.
Culinary Arts Students Learn About History of Sushi

Students in Caitlin Siresi’s Culinary Arts Program at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center recently learned about the history of sushi.

Sushi began in Southeast Asia and around the 8th century it was introduced in Japan. It was originally a means of preserving salted fish in fermented rice. The rice prevented the fish from spoiling and was discarded before eating the fish. Since the Japanese preferred to eat fish with rice they would eat the whole thing. The sushi known as Namanare was partly raw fish wrapped in rice, consumed fresh before it changed flavor. It became a new dish in Japanese cuisine. It developed into haya-zushi which was assembled so that both rice and fish could be consumed at the same time, making it unique to the Japanese culture. The rice was not fermented and was mixed with vinegar, fish, vegetables and dried food stuff. This type of preparation is very popular today and each region utilizes local produce to infuse a local flavor.

Ms. Siresi then had the students make sushi as part of the lesson.

SkillsUSA Students Sharpen Skills at Leadership Conference

SkillsUSA students from the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center received some professional development. The students are officers in the organization that is a partnership of students, teachers and industry representatives working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. There are more than 300,000 students and advisors in the organization and over the school year there are leadership conferences and competitions at the regional, state and national level.

The students who attended were elected by the students at their center. Terri-Ann Graham is the school’s Reporter. “You really learn a lot at these conferences like public speaking and how to lead activities so we can train other SkillsUSA members at our center. I really like that you meet new people from all around New York State. I would say SkillsUSA helped me to boost my confidence and put me on my career path.”

Jonathan Costanzo, who is the Treasurer, says he liked the team building exercises. “It forces you to get out of your bubble and participate. We can take what we learned there and teach it. That is a great skill to have.” President Sarah Kurbs says it helped her with her leadership skills. “It helps you not to be afraid to step up and take on that role. I had a lot of fun and this is a great organization that will help me to live the life I want to.”

Anthony Harris says that being in SkillsUSA and being the Vice President helped him to overcome being shy. “I am more outgoing and enjoy meeting new people. It is definitely a different experience and I like being a leader to others.” Secretary Rajillya Storms says being in SkillsUSA and attending the conference were eye-opening to her. “I have met so many people that I would have never have met any other way. I like the team building exercises and hearing everyone’s ideas, it helps me to see things I would not have thought of myself. This organization really encourages me to excel and gives you great skills.” James Trembly who is the Parliamentarian says the experience has been fun. “It is great meeting new people and getting to interact with them. It is a very social thing and I have learned a lot.”

Their advisor, Kara Kirk, says that the Leadership Conference gives students a chance to broaden their skills. “It helps them to get comfortable working with people they don’t know and be able to come to an agreement on how to handle a problem or situation. I think those are great skills for anyone going not only into a career, but in life in general.”
Medina Police Officer Discusses Public Relations and Image Problem with Security and Law Enforcement Class

Medina Police Officer Brian Marsceill stopped in to talk to the students in the Security and Law Enforcement classes at the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center. Invited by teachers Steve Browning and Gene Newman to talk about the role of police in a community, the conversation took an interesting direction about how the press and social media have portrayed law enforcement in light of current events.

Officer Marsceill talked about what it takes to become a police officer, what is involved in the exam and interview that is given and his own career path. He also opened a dialogue about how police are perceived by the public with the national coverage of assaults and shootings and the general feeling of mistrust in local communities towards law enforcement.

He told the students like any career, you will have people that are not good at doing their jobs and how that is affecting law enforcement and their role in the community. "It’s really pretty sad that when you talk to children to introduce yourselves and build a relationship and their parents will pull them away and tell them not to talk to us. They tell them that we will take them away if they are bad. It makes our job ten times harder. One of our goals as a police officer is to have transparency with the public and keep the lines of communication open. Bad officers should be held accountable for their poor conduct, but it is not fair to view us all in that light. Most of us got into this career to help people."

The students were cautioned not to believe everything posted on Facebook and Twitter and in some cases in the media. "People can say whatever they want on social media and many times they are lies. Videos can be edited or not show the whole situation. The news asks very pointed questions so they can write the story they want," says Officer Marsceill.

"It has become a big problem. Many police departments are giving more training on how to deal with the community and change that negative perception. We are also getting more training on less lethal methods to take someone down, like tasers, pepper spray and bean bag shotguns. We are trying to change the way people view who we are and what our role is. Involvement in our community is very important and we are working hard to build that trust with the people we have sworn to protect."

Niagara Academy Students Doodle for Google

Niagara Academy students in Rose Lewkowitz’s Art class showed off their talent in the 2016 Doodle for Google Contest. Google sponsors the contest for students in grades K-12 each year with this year’s theme being: “What I See for the Future”.

The students began thinking about what their theme would be and searched for visual images to create an idea board, brainstormed ideas, and created sketches which include the Google letters. After completing their drawing, and the students entered each submission electronically.

Great job everyone!

Niagara Academy Decks the Halls

Students and staff decorated the doors at the Niagara Academy to celebrate the holidays.

The halls were decked with some creative and festive winter scenes. “Each door has a story,” says Assistant Principal Michelle Kulbago. The Student Council sponsored the event and then chose the winner for best holiday decorations.

Middle School student Cameron Mangham poses in front of counselor Donna Antonacci’s door.
Cosmetology and Fashion Design Classes Hold First Ever Professional Services Day

With many of the career and technical education classrooms, teachers look to outside sources to help students get a better sense of what career paths are available to them or what resources they can tap into once they graduate.

Although many beauty and decorating professionals have been lending their support to the Cosmetology program and the Fashion and Interior Design program, recently they were asked to come in for the first ever Connect to Your Future/Professional Services Day at the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center.

Principal Anedda Trautman came up with the idea and asked Cosmetology teachers, Cathy Bonaccorso, Pauline Carney, Lori Smith and Fashion and Interior Design teacher Debra Wilczak if they would like to put something together for their students. “We have gotten a great reaction from our students,” says Mrs. Smith. “It gives the students a chance to network with salon and supply professionals and gives the businesses a chance to recruit.” Mrs. Bonaccorso says the gathering was an excellent idea. “I think it is a great opportunity for our students to have everyone here and give them time to interact with them. A lot of the vendors are giving them free samples or kits at a very good price. They are also making themselves available to answer all their questions. We are hoping to make this a yearly event.”

Students Learn Skills By Helping Out in the Community

Students in Kristina Miles’ class have been busy helping out in the community this school year. Mrs. Miles’ Life Skills students are housed at Niagara Wheatfield High School and have been enjoying their time volunteering to help others. “My students really love helping out in the community,” says Mrs. Miles. “We either go out to a location like a food pantry or the BOCES Placement Center or we sometimes bring jobs back into the classroom for them to learn various skills that will help them in the future.”

At the food pantry, students fill lunch bags; package necessary supplies and even fill tea bags with loose tea leaves. At the Placement Center the students shred papers and wrapped up ink cartridges to mail back to the supplier.

Orleans Learning Center Students Climb Aboard the Polar Express

The students in Kim Wiley’s class at the Orleans Learning Center put on their annual holiday play in December. This year the students put on their rendition of the popular movie “The Polar Express”.

Staff members made all the sets and costumes as the students rehearsed their lines and songs for the festive event. The audience was delighted as students gave it their all in a heartfelt performance.

Students in

Emily Slango (Niagara Wheatfield) helps out at a local food pantry.

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