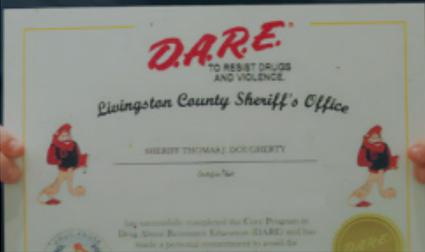


GENESEE VALLEY BOCES

Annual Report

2023-2024



Genesee Valley
BOCES
Success Stories Written Here

Kevin M. MacDonald

District Superintendent



At Genesee Valley BOCES, we are committed to creating a lasting impact by empowering students, supporting educators, and strengthening the communities we serve. Together with our districts, we are building pathways to success, fostering innovative programs, and creating inclusive environments where every learner can thrive.

Success stories are written here every day—stories of students reaching their potential, educators inspiring change, and communities coming together to shape a brighter future. These achievements reflect the dedication, collaboration, and creativity that define our shared mission.

By working together, we are making a meaningful impact. Whether through new initiatives, expanded opportunities, or enhanced support systems, our collective efforts are paving the way for transformative education that meets the needs of today while preparing students for the opportunities of tomorrow.

Your passion and partnership continue to inspire us. Thank you for trusting us to be part of your journey and for the role you play in shaping the lives of students. Together, we are not just meeting challenges—As John Dewey said "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." and together we're writing success stories that will be celebrated for life!

Here's to another impactful year ahead!

Sincerely,

Kevin M. MacDonald
District Superintendent



Kevin M. MacDonald
District Superintendent
80 Munson Street
LeRoy, New York 14482

Julie Donlon-Yates, Ed.D.
Deputy Superintendent
80 Munson Street
LeRoy, New York 14482

Jon Sanfratello
Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Programs
80 Munson Street
LeRoy, New York 14482

**Genesee-Livingston-Steuben-
Wyoming Board of Cooperative
Educational Services**
80 Munson Street
LeRoy, New York 14482
(585) 344-7900 or 658-7900

www.gvboces.org

Alexander
Attica
Avon
Batavia
Byron-Bergen
Caledonia-Mumford
Dansville
Elba
Geneseo
Keshequa
LeRoy

Letchworth
Livonia
Mount Morris
Oakfield-Alabama
Pavilion
Pembroke
Perry
Warsaw
Wayland-Cohocton
Wyoming
York

Genesee Valley BOCES

The Genesee Valley BOCES functions as a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) serving more than 24,000 students in 22 school districts located in Genesee, Livingston, Steuben, and Wyoming counties in upstate New York. Genesee Valley (GV) BOCES offers a wide range of programs and services including career and technical education, special education programs and services, alternative education, instructional and technical support services, and management services. Each year, new programs and services continue to be developed in response to the emerging needs of area school districts. GV BOCES operates two campuses, one in Batavia, New York, and another in Mount Morris, New York, that offer career and technical education, special education, alternative education, and adult education programs. A specialized program for high school-age students called The Early College High School is housed at Byron-Bergen Central Schools and a special education and Intensive Therapeutic Program for elementary-age students is located at Mount Morris Central Schools. The Genesee Community College Campus, located in Dansville, New York, is where special education programs, as well as, some career and technical education programs are offered to high school-age students.

2023-2024 Central Administration

District Superintendent Kevin MacDonald

Deputy Superintendent Julie Donlon-Yates, Ed.D.

Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Programs Jon Sanfratello

Chief Financial Officer Daniel N. Groth

Chief Legal Counsel Stephen Mahoney, Esq.

Director of Professional Learning Services Patrick B. Whipple, Ph.D.

Executive Principal, Batavia Campus Rachel Slobert

Executive Principal, Mount Morris Campus Matthew Flowers

Mission Statement

Our mission is to lead collaboratively in creating quality solutions to emerging educational challenges.

Core Values

We Believe

- All people have something to contribute
- Learning enriches life
- Accepting responsibility for choices and actions is essential for growth
- Quality relationships require honesty, trust, fairness, openness and mutual respect
- Embracing diversity enriches the individual and strengthens society

Strategic Goals

- Design systems to nurture innovation and expand services
- Utilize data to support student performance and organizational effectiveness
- Enhance services to ensure alignment with component district and community partner needs
- Maximize academic learning time to make every minute count

Non-Discrimination Notice

In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the amendments to that act, it is the policy of the Genesee Valley BOCES to not discriminate in the treatment of students, employees or others in any program or activity on any illegal basis. Illegal bases include sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, race, color, national origin, and disability.

2023-2024 Board of Education

Norbert Fuest, President

J. David Woodruff, Vice President

Christy Crandall-Bean

Margaret Foster

Robert DeBruycker

Ernest Haywood

William Kane

Roger Kostecky

Edward Levinstein

Michael Riner

Paul Webster

Professional Learning Services

The Professional Learning Services Department at Genesee Valley BOCES encompasses multiple divisions, including Enrichment, School Improvement, School Library Systems, and the Student Support Services Center. Each of these departments is dedicated to enhancing teaching and learning across the PreK-12 spectrum through specialized programs and initiatives.

The Enrichment Department facilitates programs to support and improve the learning experience of students across our region. Much of the work is provided directly to the students in schools and supports a wide range of academic areas. A key function of Enrichment work is providing additional avenues for enhancing student literacy through programs like Page Turners, Writers in Residence, and the annual Interscholastic Competition in English. To complement this Enrichment also has robust Arts in Education offerings. These provide students with opportunities to explore the fine and performing arts.

Additionally, Enrichment provides STEM education through programs such as Ready For, Interscholastic Math, and Genesee Valley Robotics programs. Recently, the Enrichment Department facilitated a First Lego League Regional Qualifier as part of the robotics program. The aim of these programs is to provide students with experiences in computational thinking and iterative design. Key elements for scientific and engineering study. The programs scaffold to the ability levels of students so that we are providing these opportunities from kindergarten through graduation.

The School Improvement Team (SIT) at Genesee Valley BOCES is committed to delivering high-quality professional learning (PL) that aligns with New York State standards and supports local districts in advancing continuous school improvement initiatives. Our services are designed to enhance instructional effectiveness, elevate academic standards, refine curriculum and assessment practices, and build local capacity for sustained educational progress.

Recognizing the unique needs of each district, the SIT collaborates closely with educators and leaders to address emerging challenges and tailor support to specific priorities. Grounded in evidence-based practices, our team provides expertise in a wide range of areas, including:

- Planning: Facilitating both short- and long-term improvement initiatives.
- Curriculum Development: Supporting the creation of a guaranteed and viable curriculum that ensures alignment with state standards.
- Instructional Enhancement: Strengthening teaching practices to improve student outcomes.
- Assessment Design and Analysis: Developing



high-quality assessments and utilizing data-driven decision-making to inform instruction.

The SIT offers both large-scale professional learning opportunities and customized, district-embedded support across the region, ensuring that districts receive targeted, high-impact assistance to drive continuous educational improvement.

The School Library System, in collaboration with AI experts, has launched the AI Scope and Sequence to help educators introduce AI literacy in PreK-12 settings. Developed under the LibraryReady.AI project and funded by the Allison-Rosen Foundation, this curriculum covers four key strands—Why AI, How AI Works, AI in Society, and AI in Practice—aligning with New York State standards in computer science and library skills. Led by Dr. Christopher Harris, the initiative prepares students for an AI-driven world by fostering critical thinking, ethical awareness, and real-world AI engagement.

The Student Support Services Center (SSSC) offers support to school communities that focuses on the enhancement and coordination of evidence-based policies and practices that improve both student health and learning. The SSSC serves as a regional and statewide hub for educator certification and leadership development. It offers NYSED-mandated certification courses, including Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE), Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), and Child Abuse Identification and Reporting. Partnering with SUNY Brockport, RIT, St. John Fisher University, and the University of Rochester, the SSSC provides semester-based training aligned with NYSED licensure requirements. Additionally, customized certification programs for component districts ensure flexible, district-specific training that supports safe, inclusive, and effective learning environments.

Genesee Valley BOCES' Professional Learning Services Department remains committed to advancing educational excellence. Districts are encouraged to connect with PLS representatives for support in achieving their goals.

Business Education Organizations

Business education organizations in Genesee, and Wyoming counties work to bring school districts and businesses together and to enhance the career readiness of students. Opportunities include Junior Achievement, business tours, career exploration days, job shadows, career fairs and summer camps.



Special Education Programs



The Genesee Valley BOCES offers a broad scope of comprehensive special educational services for students who are ages five to 22 and reside in the 22 component school districts served by the Genesee Valley BOCES. Students are grouped based on age range, academic ability, management needs and physical development. Elementary classrooms are located in the Mount Morris Central School District. All other Special Education programs are located in classrooms at Genesee Valley BOCES Batavia, Mount Morris, and Dansville campuses. In all programs, Special Education teachers provide instruction utilizing explicit and differentiated instructional strategies to help all students achieve. Instructional content is aligned with New York Common Core Standards. Students follow course schedules based on their grade level and credit needs; project-based learning and applied academics are cornerstones of instruction to engage students in learning. In addition to the core content curriculum, students ages 15 - 22 have opportunities to participate in transition programming including Career and Technical Education classes or Special Education work experience programs, depending on the program attended.

Expected outcomes for all students include graduation from high school with a Regents or Local Diploma and/or Exit Credential.

Transitions (Level I), Awareness and Exploration

This half-day program supports students who are beginning foundational skills for employment. The goal is to develop entry-level employment skills and competencies based on New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) standards. Students participate in the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) as part of the Transition I curriculum. The PAES lab includes an evaluation of employability skills, interests, and job training in a simulated work environment. In addition, students participate in a work readiness curriculum to introduce basic job skills and behaviors for employment success. Work-based skills are introduced and practiced in school-based training experiences, classroom projects, and career awareness for a variety of jobs that students may pursue as a career choice. Career-specific skills are explored in various clusters as students develop an awareness of their skills, interests, and abilities.

Example of Skills Taught

- Career exploration and job readiness
- Managing personal finances
- Caring for personal needs
- Social skills and maintaining healthy relationships
- Interpersonal skills
- Following directions and maintaining attention to tasks

The Transitions Level I program runs at the Batavia Campus and the Dansville Campus.

Transitions (Level II), Awareness and Exploration

This half-day program is designed for students who have completed at least one year in Transitions I, or an equivalent program. Transitions II continues the foundation of career awareness and more career specific exploration is introduced through a work readiness curriculum and training provided in a variety of settings. Exploration of a variety of career options include; maintenance, customer service, groundskeeping, and hospitality.

Worker safety and job specific skills are emphasized; interdisciplinary academics reinforce skills necessary in the workplace, including reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics. Skills are modeled and practiced as part of the daily routine to help students develop and apply skills for success in the workplace.

Example of Skills Taught

- How to seek and maintain employment
- Appropriate work habits
- Awareness of quality of work
- Managing personal finances
- Caring for personal needs
- Social skills and maintaining healthy relationships
- Interpersonal skills
- Following directions and maintaining attention to tasks

The Transitions Level II program runs at the Batavia campus and the Dansville Campus.

Transitions III; Food Service Industry

This half day food preparation program is designed for students who have participated in Transition I and Transition II, or equivalent programming. In this program students apply the entry level knowledge and skills obtained in previous courses to work in the food industry. In the program, students run a school-based food enterprise and are involved in all aspects of this business including planning, shopping, and preparation of a meal. All skills are developed sequentially, with demonstration, practice, and reinforcement, so that skills become embedded behaviors. Instruction includes applied technology, reading, writing, listening, speaking and mathematics, as well as time management, problem-solving, teamwork, and other work success skills.

Upon completion of this program, students are ready for work-based experiences in the community.

Example of Skills Taught

- Food preparation and restaurant operation skills
- Safety & sanitation
- Equipment operations
- Work habits and customer service.
- Interpersonal skills
- Following directions and maintaining attention to tasks

The Transitions Level III program runs at the Dansville Campus.

LIVES

LIVES - Learn Independence, Vocational, and Educational Skills

The LIVES Program is a unique college experience for students. The LIVES Program is a transition program located on the campus of the State University of New York – College at Geneseo in collaboration with the Genesee Valley BOCES. Students, ages 18-22, with intellectual and/or other developmental disabilities, are provided with an inclusive educational community. The goal is to create independent lifelong learners who are connected to their community in a variety of ways.

What opportunities will be offered?

- Career choices
- Internships
- Employment Training and Readiness
- Friends, Clubs, Sports
- Independence
- Community Service
- Leadership
- Some admission requirements are:
 - Be willing to make a two to four-year commitment
 - Have a desire for greater independence
 - Maintain a satisfactory attendance record
 - Demonstrate successful participation in an academic setting, functional-skills curriculum, and in a vocational situation

- Demonstrate developmentally appropriate social skills and the ability to act in a socially appropriate manner

A certified Special Education teacher facilitates instruction and individualized opportunities at the LIVES Program to ensure every student receives the highest quality education through this rigorous, challenging and engaging learning environment. All students benefit from close working relationships with faculty and staff to encourage intellectual engagement and personal growth. Individualized accommodations, supports, structure and specially-designed instruction provide a foundation for each student

Intensive Therapeutic Programs

The Intensive Therapeutic Program is a full day program in a 6:1:1 setting for students whose management needs are determined by CSE to be highly intensive and require a high degree of individualized attention and intervention. The program is designed to support the educational, social/ emotional and behavioral needs of students grades K -12 who are experiencing school related and/or family challenges that disrupt their education. Students who attend the GVB ITP program need comprehensive and intensive support for emotional and behavioral needs which include mental health support, crisis intervention, psychological consultation, and/ or psychiatric consultation. Academic instruction is delivered through specially designed instruction and is aligned with New York State Learning Standards for successful completion of New York State assessments and a New York State Diploma.

Alternative Education

Genesee Valley BOCES offers alternative middle and high school education programs. Each school provides a small, nurturing environment, which gives each student the maximum amount of attention necessary to improve academic and social skills. Programs have been specifically designed to provide an educational option for students from our component school districts whose needs are not met by our traditional secondary schools. Teachers assist students in attaining a high school diploma by maintaining the same academic requirements as home schools. Special education counseling services are available, if applicable, in the Alternative Education programs.



WEST - Work Experience Skills Training

This half-day program is designed for students who have participated in 2 - 3 years of Transition programming and are ready for work-based learning opportunities in the community. Work-based training is facilitated in the school setting, community, and worksite locations, creating a continuum of experience that progresses from a familiar environment to a community-based setting and then a worksite to demonstrate and apply skills. This supervised work experience training program is designed to progressively help students learn and develop employability skills necessary for independent employment. Work-based experiences vary based on individual skill level and readiness, which is continuously monitored and evaluated. The WEST curriculum follows the New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) standards to help students achieve the ability to function with limited to no supervision.

Types of Work-based Experiences:

- Community-based group experience; a group of students participating at the same worksite doing the same or different tasks with staff supervision and monitoring.
- Internship with supervision & support; students participate at a worksite with direct supervision from a staff member.
- Internship without supervision; the student is at the worksite independently, and the worksite mentor supervises.
- Paid work experience
- Work experience can vary from 1 to 4 days per week with 4-5 different internship rotations/locations. The classroom component of this program is designed to promote career exploration and the development of workplace skills and competencies for entry-level employment.

The WEST program runs at the Batavia campus and the Dansville Campus.

Adult Education

The Genesee Valley BOCES offers a comprehensive range of programs including vocational training as well as classes for those seeking to broaden their skill set.

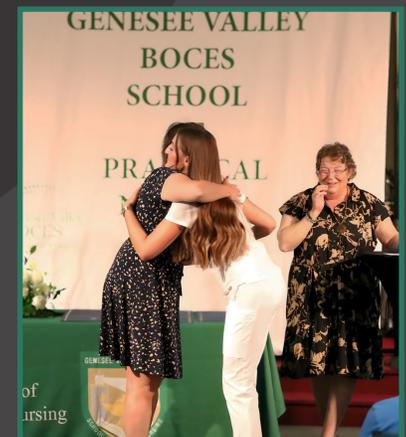
GED Preparation programs are offered for individuals looking to obtain their high school equivalency diploma. They are offered free of charge for those who qualify and are always convenient and confidential. The programs are available at different site locations and there is flexibility with regard to days and times. Books are provided and individual attention is always provided. It should also be noted that the Genesee Valley BOCES is a NYS approved testing center and offers the exam multiple times throughout the year at no charge to the test taker.

Genesee Valley BOCES School of Practical Nursing is a 1,200 hour program, is certified by the New York State Education Department, and is designed to prepare graduates for the NCLEX-PN Examination for licensure as Licensed Practical Nurse.

The Certified Nursing Assistant Program is no less than a 120 clock hour program, approved by the New York State Education Department, and prepares graduates for immediate employment following successful mastery of the post-program certification testing.

Genesee Valley BOCES also offers a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Program that includes A, B, and Bus Driver training. These in-depth one-on-one training courses give students the experiences necessary to be prepared for work in the trucking industry.

Genesee Valley BOCES also offers short term vocational continuing education programs in areas such as Welding, Fork-Lift, Defensive Driving, Five Hour Pre-Licensing, Precision Machining, and employer specific training.



The Best of Enrichment

The Genesee Valley BOCES Enrichment Department coordinates programs with component school districts to offer general Enrichment as well as Gifted and Talented programs, Arts-In-Education presentations, several competitions, and a Summer Institute program.

By providing workshops, performances, competitions, and residencies, students have opportunities to engage in hands-on activities, connect with other students with similar interests, awaken their curiosity to explore new possibilities in the world around and beyond them.

Ongoing research proves how arts-in-education programs provide learning experiences that are active and experiential, reflective, social, evolving, and focused on problem-solving.

Below is a list of the Genesee Valley BOCES Enrichment Department Arts-In-Education winners for the 2023 school year.

Literary Contest:

2023 First Place Winners:

Grades 5-6 Poetry: Caledonia-Mumford CSD

Grades 5-6 Short Story: Byron-Bergen CSD

Grades 7-8 Poetry: Avon CSD

Grades 9-10 Poetry: Avon CSD

Grades 9-10 Short Story: Caledonia-Mumford CSD

Grades 11-12 Poetry: Avon CSD

Grades 11-12 Short Story: Caledonia-Mumford CSD

Competition Winners:

Academic Challenge Bowl: Livonia CSD

Brainstormers: Caledonia-Mumford CSD

Scholastic Bowl: Attica CSD

Chess:

Elementary School Division: Geneseo CSD

Middle School Division: Dansville CSD

Interscholastic Competition in English:

Winning School: Geneseo CSD

Interscholastic Mathematics Competition:

High School North Division: Attica CSD

High School South Division: Geneseo CSD

Middle School North Division: Attica CSD

Middle School South Division: Geneseo CSD

Odyssey of the Mind:

Teams from Geneseo, Livonia, Perry, Mount Morris, Attica, and York qualified for the New York State Tournament. Six teams from Geneseo, Perry and York continued on to the World Finals.

Page Turners:

Regional Final Winners:

Chapter 1: St. Agnes

Chapter 2: Geneseo CSD

Chapter 2: Wayland-Cohocton CSD

2023 Genesee Valley Robotics Winners:

Overall Champion: Wayland-Cohocton Golden Eagles 2

Finalist: Oakfield-Alabama Hi-Tech Hornets and LeRoy STEAM Knights Robotic Royals



CTE Students Inducted Into NTHS Chapters



The Batavia and Mount Morris Career and Technical Education (CTE) Centers' National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) Chapter recently inducted new members. These students have showcased exceptional skills and academic excellence, earning recognition from the NTHS for their achievements. NTHS is a national organization dedicated to honoring top CTE students and promoting excellence in today's skilled and competitive workforce. Membership in NTHS requires students to meet rigorous criteria, including demonstrating leadership, scholarship, skills, honesty, citizenship, service, and responsibility. Additionally, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 and are selected based on completed credit hours, attendance, volunteer service, and involvement in other student organizations. Congratulations to these outstanding students on their remarkable accomplishment!



2023 NYSPRA ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS CONTEST AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

In a grand celebration of academic achievement, one-hundred and fifty prestigious awards were poised to honor excellence in school communications. A panel of over 50 dedicated communications professionals, spanning the nation, diligently served as judges, meticulously evaluating the 492 entries in this year's spirited contest. Each outstanding piece of work stood a chance to be acknowledged with the distinguished titles of "Excellence," "Honor," or "Merit," marking a triumphant moment for the talents that contributed to school communications for the 2023 school year. Congratulations to Genesee Valley BOCES PR TEAM!

Attica Central School District

Award of Honor

Excellence in Writing
Hidden Talents: Attica custodian brightens hallways with artistic flair
Matt Leader, Public Information Assistant

Award of Honor

Community Newsletter
Attica Central School District UPDATE: Fall 2022' and 'Attica Central School District UPDATE: Winter 2023'
Matt Leader, Public Information Assistant

Award of Merit

Photograph
Meeting Mr. Claus
Matt Leader, Public Information Assistant

Avon Central School District

Award of Merit

Community Newsletter
'Avon Central School District News: Fall 2022' and 'Avon Central School District News: Winter 2023'
Matt Leader, Public Information Assistant

Dansville Central School District

Award of Honor

Excellence in Writing
Empowering Students: Dansville High School Self-Defense Classes to Foster Confidence and Safety for Our Students
Kim Derrenbacher, Public Information Assistant

Genesee Valley BOCES

Award of Excellence

Social Media
Senior Spotlight
Lyndsay Herkimer, Communications Director

Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District

Award of Merit

Video
HF-L Oversimplified Season 2
Leah Shepard, Colin Pierce

Perry Central School District

Award of Honor

Photograph
Capped Connection
Megan Winter, Public Relations Specialist

Award of Merit

Community Newsletter
Perry CSD - Community Newsletter
Megan Winter, Public Relations Specialist

Award of Merit

Social Media
Perry CSD - Social Media
Megan Winter, Public Relations Specialist

The 2023 winner is: Heather Starzynski - Pembroke CSD

The Shining Star Award highlights a food service staff member who has gone the extra mile and has the spirit of service and passion to make a difference.

Heather Starzynski, a distinguished member of the Genesee Valley BOCES Regional Food Service Team, has been honored with the prestigious Shining Star Award by the New York School Nutrition Association (NYSNA). Recognized for her unwavering dedication and passion, Heather exemplifies the spirit of service, consistently going the extra mile to make a significant impact on her district, Pembroke CSD. GV BOCES extends heartfelt congratulations to Heather and expresses gratitude for her outstanding commitment to the school nutrition profession.



Genesee Valley BOCES LIVES program athletes shine at Special Olympics at Livingston Lanes

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Big cheers for the incredible athletes from the Genesee Valley BOCES LIVES Program, who shone brightly at the Special Olympics in Geneseo, NY! Their remarkable dedication and spirit truly lit up Livingston Lanes, captivating everyone with their infectious enthusiasm and unwavering commitment. It was a beautiful display of skill, heart, resilience, and the pure joy of participation. Congratulations to all the participants for competing with such vigor and grace!

The event was made even more memorable by the outstanding achievements of our stars, who not only participated but also triumphed, bringing home well-deserved honors:

- Mya-Lyn Albanese secured a splendid 2nd place, showcasing incredible talent and determination.



- Travis Nowinski claimed the 1st place spot, demonstrating exceptional skill and precision.
- Charlie Spencer earned a fantastic 2nd place, with a performance that was both inspiring and remarkable.
- Dani Drazkowski also took home 1st place, thanks to a display of unmatched prowess and dedication.



Each of these athletes exemplified the spirit of the Special Olympics, proving that determination and hard work lead to amazing outcomes. Their success is a beacon of inspiration for everyone, showing that challenges can be overcome with perseverance and teamwork. Well done to all the participants, and here's to their continued success and the bright future that undoubtedly lies ahead for each of them.



BOCES Conservation/ Heavy Equipment Class excels at NYS Conservation Contest with multiple top finishes

By Lyndsay Herkimer

On May 16, 2024, the Conservation/Heavy Equipment class showcased their skills at the annual NYS Conservation Contest held at Paul Smith's College. Competing against BOCES programs from across New York, students participated in events that tested their prowess in heavy equipment operations, forestry and conservation practices, and woodsmen's sports. This event provided a platform for these aspiring conservationists and heavy equipment operators to demonstrate their expertise and gain valuable hands-on experience in their field.

Results:

Bulldozer Trenching: 2nd Place, Jack J.(Keshequa Central School)
Bulldozer Backfill: 2nd Place, Jodie W. (Keshequa Central School)
Backhoe Rodeo: 1st Place, Lenus C. (Keshequa Central School)
Tree Climbing: 2nd Place, Sean W.(Mt. Morris Central School)
3rd Place, Allan K.(Wayland-Cohocton Central School)
Ax Throw: 1st Place, Jodie W. (Keshequa Central School)
2nd Place, Wesley S. (Keshequa Central School)
Peavey Log Roll: 3rd Place, Allan K. (Wayland-Cohocton Central School) and Chase F. (Livonia Central School District)
One Person Pulp Throw: 3rd Place, Elijah B. (Dansville Central School)



The Digies is an annual digital media conference and festival run by the School Library Service, a Genesee Valley BOCES Program. The mission of The Digies is to strengthen the digital media continuum between Pre-K-12 schools, higher education and professional institutions. The Digies recognizes student potential in an annual festival format and draws student entries from throughout the region and the Upstate New York area.

AUDIO

7-9

1st Nevaiyah Diaz, Delaney Jaros, Quinn Kenyon, Citizens and Rights, Avon CSD

2nd Carter Ballew, John Dowd, Ashton O'Donovan, Citizenship, Avon CSD

10-12

1st Gadge Savastano, The One, Mount Morris CSD

2nd Jacob House, Mya Button, The Media Room Podcast, Wayland-Cohocton CSD

GRAPHIC ARTS

Pre-K-3

1st Brady Fox, All About Hay, Pavilion CSD

2nd Ian Segovia Espinal, Double Exposed Self Portrait-Ian, Avon CSD

3rd Cliff Clarry, Double Exposed Portrait- Cliff, Avon CSD

4-6

1st Austin Green, Greger The Guinea Pig, Pavilion CSD

2nd Aislin McGinnis, Curated Digital Mosaics, Batavia CSD

2nd Michael Richenberg, Curated Digital Mosaics, Batavia CSD

3rd Nate Clarke, Digital Mosaic- Spiderman, Batavia CSD

3rd Jazmine Hermann, Digital Mosaic- Stitch, Batavia CSD

7-9

1st Isabella Ehrman, Candlelight, Southwestern CSD

2nd Priscille Toumani-Yakap, Horseshoe Falls, Rush-Henrietta CSD

3rd Marley Jackson, Polygon Horse, Rush-Henrietta CSD

10-12

1st Madison Marrero, Azalea, Avon CSD

2nd Emily Vattimo, Symmetrical Line Art, York CSD

3rd Leah Nichols, Famine, GST BOCES Wild Wood Education Center

INTERACTIVE

Pre-K-3

1st Oliver Macauley, O's Listening Library, Geneseo CSD

2nd Kallie Barnhart, Jaeger Bedard, Mackenzie Bennetti, Brayden Coyne, Kayanna Daniels, Vivienne Dyke, Ky'Maine Felton, Isabel Freeman, Ryan Gillam, Bentley Lisena, Carter Nichols, Natalie O'Dea, Nolan Paganin, Nathan Praino, Severous McCoy, Hailey Steidle, Our Favorite Poems, Avon CSD

3rd Maddison Anderson, Raxford Bennett, Lilly Bergeron, Supreme Felton, Bryant Floyd-Carter, Julianna Greenough, Piper Harper, Harrison Jaros, Jadeliz Lopez, Riona Martin, Keegan McLaughlin, Russell Polizzi, Amaia Saez, Brantley Schwiekert, Ethan Shaw, Grant Simpson, Logan Timmins, Rebel Zayown, Our Class Poerty Book by Mrs. Knapp's First Graders, Avon CSD

3rd Brooklyn Blum, Harper Brede-Dacey, Carter Chappius, Carter Cole, Penelope Covel, Kolbi Crandall, Ashley Dechau, Marcus DeGolyer, Hank Frew, Patrick McCabe, Addison Pickett, Amelia Pitcher, Reece Priest, Adrianna Salvati, Parker Sherman, Akaal Singh, Wyatt Vetter, Riley Zayown, A Book of First Grade Poems, Avon CSD

4-6

1st Rielley Schoen, Smilily's Deadly Adventure, Town of Webb UFSD

2nd Ethan Chan, Mungiss 1, Rush-Henrietta CSD

3rd Zelda Kortyna, Memes for Kids, Geneseo CSD

7-9

1st Giuliana Haney, Beauty and the Beast Platformer Game, Town of Webb UFSD

2nd Teagan Heeb, Sweet Orchard Creations (website), Letchworth CSD

3rd Ayden Midkiff, V8 Swapped Farm All 806, Pembroke CSD

3rd Isabella Granger, Applied Art Slideshow ILG, Rush-Henrietta CSD

10-12

1st Nala Smalt, LoFi Room: 3DVR Model, GST BOCES Wild Wood Education Center

2nd Morgan Adams, Going Merry, GST BOCES Wild Wood Education Center

VIDEO

Pre-K-3

1st Elise Wilson, Aubree Dunham, King of the Desert Geneseo CSD

2nd Mason Weber, The History of Our World, Pavilion CSD

4-6

1st Leona Pinckney, L-Vee Sauce, Rochester CSD

2nd Kylie Greenway, Ava Freeman, Morgan Arber, Balloon Bonanza, Avon CSD

3rd Norah Weber, The Metamorphosis (Stop Motion Animation), Pembroke CSD

7-9

1st Lyla Jones, Balloons Animation Meme, LeRoy CSD

2nd Lyla Jones, Meredith Ianni, Megalomaniac, LeRoy CSD

3rd Angelo Woods, Robot vs. Ape, Pembroke CSD

10-12

1st Amy Eck, Ready Player Start, LeRoy CSD

2nd Charlie Ritter, Idea, Pittsford CSD

2nd Kylee Bently, Typo, GST BOCES Wild Wood Education Center

3rd Ava Farrell, Helena Lynch, Amber Lazarus, Cafeteria Workers, Wayland-Cohocton CSD

D.A.R.E. makes its debut at Genesee Valley BOCES Mount Morris Elementary campus

By Lyndsay Herkimer



At Genesee Valley BOCES Mount Morris Elementary campus, the excitement was evident as the fifth and sixth graders prepared to participate in the D.A.R.E. program.

Guided by Officer Didas from the Livingston County Sheriff's Office, these young learners were ready to dive into a series of lessons and activities designed to empower them to make smart, healthy decisions.

As the classroom filled up, Officer Didas greeted each student with a smile, setting the tone for a series of sessions that would teach them not only about resisting peer pressure but also about embracing a lifestyle free from drugs, violence, and other harmful behaviors. The D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program has been a staple in many communities for years, it's a brand-new addition to this school's educational offerings.

Officer Didas, radiating warmth and authority, introduced the program confidently "Today, we embark on a journey together, one aimed at fostering smart decision-making and nurturing a life full of promise and health," he announced.

Over the weeks, the classroom transformed into a vibrant learning hub where students engaged in discussions, role-playing scenarios, and group activities, all designed to equip them with the skills needed to resist peer pressure, understand the consequences of drug use, and handle challenges in non-violent ways. The program wasn't just about saying "no" to drugs; it was about saying "yes" to life's many positives.

As the weeks progressed, the bond between Officer Didas and the students strengthened. His approachable manner and consistent presence made him not just a teacher or a figure of authority, but a mentor.

The culmination of the D.A.R.E. program was the graduation ceremony. Students, parents, teachers, and community members filled the school auditorium, their faces glowing with pride. Each student received a certificate, but it was more than just a piece of paper; it was a symbol of their commitment to making positive choices.

Assistant Principal Ashleigh Herkimer expressed, "Introducing D.A.R.E. to our campus is incredibly important. It's a program that empowers our students to make informed decisions and ensures their safety and well-being. We're excited to add this vital program to our curriculum."

With smiles of newfound confidence, the students stepped outside ready to face the world with the tools and promises they had gathered during their D.A.R.E. journey at Genesee Valley BOCES.



A decade of dedication in nursing education and compassionate service, making miracles happen at Genesee Valley BOCES and Rotary Camp

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Janet Green, a seasoned LPN instructor for the Adult Education Nursing Program at Genesee Valley (GV) BOCES, is a pillar of both knowledge and compassion in the medical field. With a decade of dedication to GV BOCES and an extensive background in nursing, Green's career is a testament to her unwavering commitment to healthcare.

Before transitioning to teaching, Green spent an impressive 35 years at UR Medicine Noyes Health in Dansville, NY, where she worked in the maternity ward and the emergency department. The wealth of experience she gained there laid the foundation for her role as an instructor, where she imparts her wisdom to aspiring nurses.

For an astounding 33 years, Green has devoted her summers volunteering at the Genesee Valley Rotary Camp, which provides a free, week-long overnight camping experience for children aged 8 to 21 with special needs. What started as a friend's invitation to assist as a camp nurse in 1990 became a lifelong commitment for Green. By 1995, she had assumed the role of health director for the camp, overseeing the well-being of the campers throughout the week.

With a team of dedicated individuals, Green ensures that the campers, ranging from those in wheelchairs to those requiring tube feeding, experience a week filled with various activities every summer. From swimming and archery to music and adaptive physical education, the camp offers a range of opportunities for the children to explore and enjoy.

"We have a motto," Green said. "If you knew where and when a miracle was going to take place, wouldn't you want to be there? Every single year we see that."

Recognizing the importance of practical experience, she encourages her LPN students to volunteer at the summer camp. This camp holds a special place in Green's heart. For Green, the camp is not just a volunteer opportunity; it's a chance to make a difference in the lives of these children.

"My favorite part is the kids. I love the kids; they're my kids," she said with a warmth that reflects the genuine connection she forms with each camper.

Green's dedication to the camp goes beyond her individual efforts; she transforms volunteering into a family affair. Her husband, son, daughter-in-law, and

even her grandchildren, all join in the noble cause, contributing their time and skills to create a memorable experience for the campers.

Green shares her nursing expertise with future healthcare professionals throughout the academic year. Each summer, she looks forward to the joy and camaraderie of Genesee Valley Rotary Camp, where she wholeheartedly believes in the power of miracles. For her, there's no place she'd rather be.



Navigating the demands of ICU nursing, a journey of determination and compassionate care

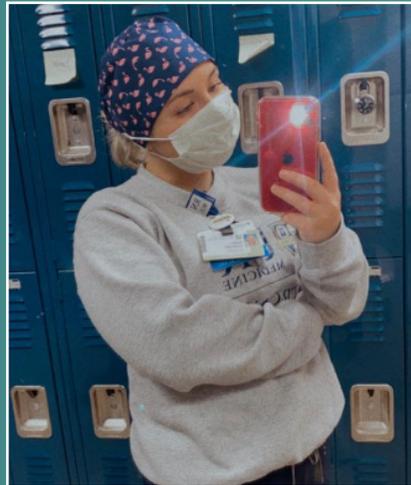
By Lyndsay Herkimer

Taylor Santasieri's journey from Livonia Central High School to her role as a Nurse Practitioner was a path paved with determination, guidance, and a passion for nursing that started at a young age. Graduating in 2016, she took a significant step towards her dream during her junior and senior years at Genesee Valley BOCES Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center in Mount Morris.

Immersing herself in the field of Health Dimensions, Santasieri found the perfect opportunity to test the waters of her desired career without the immediate commitment of college. This was especially important given the financial challenges she faced with the cost of higher education. BOCES provided her with a valuable chance to gain hands-on experience, a treasure that time alone could offer.

One figure who played a crucial role in shaping Santasieri's early career was her instructor, Mrs. Linda Blythe. Memories of Mrs. Blythe's emphasis on attention to detail, symbolized by the insistence to clean a patient's glasses, stayed with Santasieri. Mrs. Blythe's advice to become an RN first and then explore specialization resonated deeply, guiding Santasieri through her career decisions.

Entering the nursing profession, Santasieri spent nearly two years at Highland Hospital before transitioning to the challenging environment of the Medical ICUs. Working in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) demanded a level of dedication and resilience that few could comprehend. The long hours, emotionally charged situations, and the constant need for critical decision-making tested her skills to the fullest.



Three years later, she finds herself not only thriving but also pursuing her master's degree, aiming to become a Nurse Practitioner. Reflecting on her career, Santasieri expresses a profound appreciation for the complexity of her job, emphasizing teamwork and the joy of meeting new people. Working in intensive care, she highlights the daily discussions where the healthcare team meticulously reviews each patient's condition, interventions, and progress. To her, nursing is a team sport, and the collaborative effort is the key to success.

The most rewarding aspect of her job, Santasieri notes, is the impact of seemingly small gestures on patients. Her satisfaction comes from people remembering and appreciating the little things she did to make a difference in their lives. This realization echoes Mrs. Blythe's wisdom about the significance of small actions accumulating into significant outcomes.

With genuine enthusiasm, Santasieri encourages current and prospective nursing students, assuring them that the journey may be challenging but is undoubtedly worth it. Her advice is grounded in the principle of taking things step by step, semester by semester. Santasieri emphasizes the importance of patience and persistence, drawing inspiration from the demanding nature of her work in the ICU. Nursing, she believes, is a continuous process of learning and adapting to the ever-evolving healthcare landscape.

For Taylor Santasieri, nursing is not just a career; it's a rewarding and unique journey filled with moments that affirm the impact of compassionate care. In her words, there is no other job like it in the entire world.

Student Spotlight

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Colton Ingerick, a dedicated student at Batavia Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center, is passionately immersed in the world of automotive technology. His academic journey is uniquely shaped by his profound interest in racing, a flame sparked during his childhood by the Pixar movie *Cars*. Colton's fascination with the film fueled countless viewings, leading to a love for racing that transcended the screen and became a central theme in his life.

Colton's senior year at Caledonia-Mumford Central Schools finds him at the peak of his racing career, with his eyes firmly set on his dream job: working on a NASCAR team in the heart of North



Carolina. The 1988 Monte Carlo, now transformed into a New York Super Stock race car, became not just a vehicle on the track but a symbol of Colton's journey and dedication.

Entering his eighth year of competitive racing, Colton's journey began at Genesee Valley Karting Club in Avon in 2016. From go-karts to 4 cylinders and Super Stocks, his racing career blossomed alongside his little brother, culminating in a remarkable 1-2 championship standing in 2017. However, the most memorable race for Colton was marked by a crash at Spencer Speedway in Williamson, an incident etched in his memory as his first encounter with the unforgiving reality of racing.

Beyond the thrill of the race, Colton sheds light on the meticulous preparation and commitment required in the racing world. Owning and working on his own race car, he emphasizes the stark contrast between the maintenance demands of a race car and a regular road vehicle. Despite the challenges, Colton manages to balance his racing passion with academic pursuits, a testament to his commitment to maintaining good grades and ensuring that racing complements rather than hinders his education.

Bob Yates, the Auto Technology Instructor, commends Colton as a student who consistently strives for increased knowledge in the automotive domain. Colton consistently applies his best efforts and assumes leadership roles in the workshop when needed. Additionally, he holds membership in the National Technical Honor Society. Having recently completed an internship at West Herr Chevrolet, Colton has now earned a co-op position at the dealership, pointing towards a promising future in the automotive field if he chooses to pursue it.

For Colton, time is both an ally and an adversary. Racing demands a relentless schedule, with every spare moment outside of school dedicated to fine-tuning his race car. Occasionally missing a day of school to attend to racing matters, Colton diligently catches up on his studies, showcasing a resilient determination to keep both academic and racing pursuits on track.

Colton's racing odyssey extends beyond the borders of New York. Having raced at tracks like Spencer Speedway, Lancaster Motorplex, and Wyoming County International Speedway, he highlights the privilege of traveling to different parts of the country. Recent opportunities have taken him to North Carolina, where he navigated the circuits of Caraway Speedway and Southern National Motorsports Park, immersing himself in the rich racing culture of NASCAR country.

The support of Colton's family shines brightly throughout his narrative. His parents, who initially gifted him a Chevy Cavalier on his 13th birthday, continue to be a driving force in his racing journey. Their unwavering encouragement and willingness to traverse the state and beyond for races exemplify the profound family bond that underpins Colton's racing endeavors.

Through triumphs and challenges, racing has imparted invaluable life lessons to Colton. It



instilled in him a deep respect for fellow drivers, emphasizing the importance of focus and accountability both on and off the track. Responsibility and a strong work ethic are ingrained in his racing ethos, as Colton, devoid of a wealthy car owner or a professional pit crew, relies on family support to navigate the financial and physical demands of the sport.

Colton's story is not just one of racing prowess but a testament to resilience, dedication, and the profound impact of family support. As he continues to race and learn, Colton Ingerick exemplifies the synergy between academic pursuits and passionate endeavors, proving that with determination and a supportive family, one can navigate the twists and turns of both the academic and racing circuits.

Colton I. takes top honors at SkillsUSA Regional Automotive Competition

Congratulations to Colton I., a senior at Caledonia-Mumford Central School, for his outstanding achievement at the SkillsUSA Regionals! Colton secured 1st place in the Automotive Service Technology Competition, held at Alfred State College's Wellsville Campus. A senior in Mr. Yates' Automotive Technology class at the Batavia Career and Technical Education Center, Colton's dedication and skills shone brightly in this prestigious event.

2025 Colton Update

Colton Ingerick, a 2024 graduate, embarked on his professional journey at West Herr Auto Group, where his hard work and dedication quickly earned him the prestigious Presidents Club Rookie of the Year award. In recognition of his outstanding performance, Ingerick received an all-expense-paid trip to select destinations of his choice, marking an incredible start to his career.

Celebrating the new LPN Graduates of Genesee Valley BOCES

By Lyndsay Herkimer

In the heart of the Genesee Valley, a new generation of healthcare warriors stepped into the light on Friday, March 8, ready to embark on a journey defined by compassion, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to serve. The Genesee Valley BOCES (GV BOCES) School of Practical Nursing celebrated the graduation of its latest LPN class, a group of 26 individuals whose dreams of nurturing and healing had finally taken flight.

Among these graduates, Jenna Merdak shone as the Valedictorian, with Bryce Wallamn honored as the Salutatorian. Their achievements were a beacon of hope and a testament to the resilience each student had demonstrated. In a world where the healthcare landscape was marred by shortages and challenges, more than half of these graduates had already conquered the NCLEX exam, marking the beginning of their journey into nursing with triumphant success.



Krista Jaggard, one of the proud graduates, reflected on her path to nursing. Her journey was a tapestry of experiences, from human services to home health aide, and from CNA to standing at the threshold of her dream. "I find it gratifying to help others. It makes my life better knowing I'm doing something good for society," Jaggard expressed, her words echoing the sentiment of her peers. Her ambition to work in the operating room or emergency department was fueled by a love for the profession and the pride she shared with her classmates—a sentiment that had them all riding high on cloud nine.

For Ashley Staples, another graduate, the LPN program was a dream deferred but never abandoned. Juggling the responsibilities of motherhood with the rigors of nursing school, she exemplified determination. "I knew I had to put nursing school first and missing out on my kids' activities was hard, but I knew I had to study because if not, I could fail, and I couldn't do that because nursing is my future," Staples shared. Her journey was a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made in pursuit of a calling.

Kristen Bedard, having dedicated thirteen years to caring for the elderly, aspired to bring her wealth of experience and compassion to pediatric nursing. The challenge of stepping outside her comfort zone and the joy of connecting with new people had propelled her forward. "If nursing is something you've always dreamed of doing, go for it and do the work. Trust your gut, and you will accomplish your goals," Bedard advised, her words a beacon for future nurses.

Marisa Dale, an LPN Instructor, offered wisdom and a touch of realism to her students. "What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make," she quoted, emphasizing the profound impact nurses have on their patients' lives. "You are a nurse, and patients rely on you. Never ever lose sight of the patients," Dale reminded them, underscoring the sacred bond between nurse and patient.

The ceremony was a mosaic of emotions, with each graduate being pinned, some by family members who were nurses themselves. This tradition, linking generations of caregivers, underscored the deep-rooted connections and shared commitments that bound them. Behind the success of these graduates stood a dedicated team of LPN instructors, whose unwavering support and guidance were pivotal in navigating the rigorous journey of nursing education. These educators, with a blend of expertise, patience, and passion, crafted an environment where learning flourished amidst challenges. Their tireless efforts, often extending beyond the confines of the classroom, ensured that every graduate was not just prepared academically, but was also instilled with the core values critical for a successful nursing career.

The graduates, Julie Affeldt, Kristen Bedard, Andrew Brown, Amanda Buckner, Marjorie Castillo, Taylor Cox, Randi Donaghy-Bailey, Laniyah Dukes, Heather Findley, Koran Glover, Anessa Gonzalez, Shaquille Harp, Kimberly Hedgebeth, Jazmine Holmes, Krista Jaggard, Jolynn Lamphrom, Lanina Martinez, Shallie McMullen, Jenna Merdak, Diana Morales-Rosario, Sydnie Santillo, Noah Schultz, Ashley Staples, Bryce Wallamn, and Kayla Wilson, stood at the gateway to their futures, intent on making a meaningful difference.

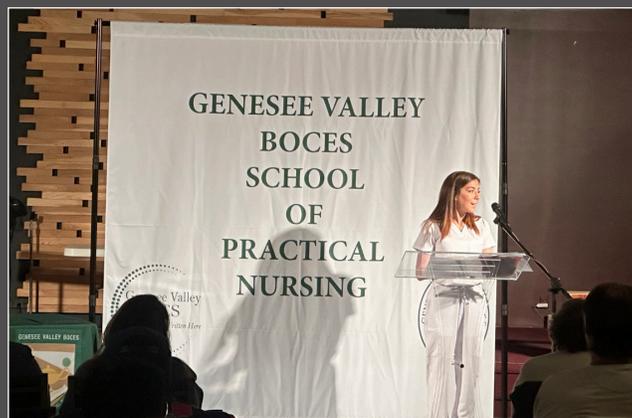
As they embarked on their respective paths, the words "On hard days never forget why you became a nurse," served as a compass, guiding them through the trials and triumphs that lay ahead. In the heart of the Genesee Valley, a new chapter in healthcare had begun, heralded by

the courage, dedication, and compassion of 26 remarkable individuals.

As the project continues to unfold, anticipation builds for the completion of these unique children's books. Becker, with years of witnessing the evolution of this project, sees a new depth in this year's narratives. "Watching them ask questions and engage with him, I'm hoping I'll see that translate into more complex stories," she shared, optimistic about the profound impact Kurtz's involvement will have on their final creations.

"The Writers in Residence program showcases the remarkable opportunities available to our students, allowing them to learn from a professional writer like Kurtz who shares both his passion and techniques for nonfiction writing. Having the seventh-graders sharing their work with second graders adds another layer of fulfillment, spreading the impact of Kevin's instruction throughout our school community. It's truly heartening to see the positive influence of this program trickling down through the grade levels," said Julie Judge, Enrichment Specialist at Genesee Valley BOCES.

Through the partnership of Genesee Valley BOCES, Kevin Kurtz, and the dedicated students of Liz Becker's class, the Mount Morris Central School District has become a nurturing ground for budding writers. This initiative not only enhances their academic journey but also enriches their lives with the timeless joy of storytelling, leaving a lasting imprint on their young minds and the community at large.



Student artists illuminate dangers of intoxicated driving through powerful visual narratives

By Lyndsay Herkimer

At the Batavia Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center, a dynamic and creative energy enveloped the students as they eagerly participated in the Genesee County STOP DWI poster contest. Drawing from diverse disciplines, the collaborative efforts of Graphic Arts and Criminal Justice students resulted in a multitude of visually striking posters. These posters weren't just artistic expressions; they were powerful messages aimed at illustrating the stark realities of driving while intoxicated.

Aiden Vallett, a senior from Pembroke Central School District with a keen eye for photography, secured the first-place position by capturing original images that spoke volumes about the consequences of impaired driving. Aiden's commitment extended beyond just his craft; he collaborated with two talented Criminal Justice students, intertwining their skills to create impactful visual narratives.

The winners' circle also featured Savannah Meyer, a senior from Pembroke Central School District claiming the second spot, and Taelynn Bragg, a junior from Batavia City School District securing the third position. These talented individuals not only showcased their artistic prowess but also conveyed a crucial message about the dangers of drinking and driving.



Their dedication to the cause was honored at a luncheon on November 17th, a well-deserved recognition by the Genesee County STOP-DWI Advisory Board.

The overarching theme of the poster contest, "Designate a Driver. Don't let alcohol take

the wheel," underscored the importance of responsible decision-making and highlighted the ripple effects of impaired driving on individuals, their families, and the broader community.

Remarkably, all the winners from the Batavia CTE Center hailed from the Graphic Arts Program, a testament to the program's commitment to nurturing talent and addressing real-world issues through art. A total of 50 students from Batavia CTE Center enthusiastically participated in the contest, collectively amplifying their voices against the critical issue of driving while intoxicated.

This contest was more than a creative endeavor; it served as a platform for these students to actively contribute to raising awareness about a pressing issue. By infusing their designs with purpose and meaning, these young minds are playing a vital role in bringing the issue of intoxicated driving to the forefront of community consciousness.

The Albert W. Hawk Award

By Patrick Burke

The Genesee Valley School Board's Association presents this distinguished award annually to a current or former Board of Education Member who, as decided by the Distinguished Service Award Committee, has displayed Outstanding Contributions to public education and children in his or her community. It truly is a reflection of their tireless efforts to improve and enhance public education and the lives that they impact on a daily basis through School Board service.

The award is named for Albert W. Hawk, a longtime advocate for rural schools and a member of both the Dansville Board of Education and the Genesee Valley BOCES. Hawk also chaired many state and national School Board Committees and served as President of the New York State School Boards Association. Hawk's legacy and his support for public education is visible to this day. His service has greatly inspired others.

The 2023 Al Hawk Award Recipient is Craig R. Phelps. Phelps has served the Genesee Board of Education for the past 15 years. His fellow members and superintendents that have served with him recognize his quiet, humble yet profound style of service that is often considered the conscience of the Board. He analyzes challenges that arise in a careful and objective manner. Phelps, as Managing Member of Edgewood Farms LLC, in the Town of Groveland, has applied his Business Expertise to the Genesee Board of Education. He is also a past Town of Groveland Board Member.

While serving on the town board, he was extremely respected for his business acumen, preparing budgets with the town supervisor. More recently he has been chosen to serve on the Board of Directors of the Genesee Valley Credit Union. He also serves on the Genesee Valley Conservancy that works to preserve and protect agricultural lands in our area. Edgewood Farms was recently awarded the prestigious Farm of the Year Award by the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce.



Utica National Insurance Group Safety Award of Excellence

GV BOCES is one of 156 school districts and BOCES in New York state to receive the 2023 School Safety Award from the Utica National Insurance Group. This year GV BOCES received a titanium award with honors; the highest level presented. This is the 22nd year that GV BOCES has received this prestigious award.

The Growth of the Genesee Valley BOCES Special Olympics Team

By Lyndsay Herkimer

It started with Rick Gage, a physical education teacher at the Genesee Valley BOCES Dansville Campus, who saw beyond the everyday curriculum and aimed to ignite a flame of excitement and opportunity within his students. Last year, with determination and a vision, Gage founded the school's first Special Olympics team.

The initial days were filled with trials. The team had varying abilities, and uncertainties about participation in larger competitions. Despite these hurdles, Gage's enthusiasm and belief in his students' potential transformed the program. He introduced them to bowling and track and field, sports that welcomed diverse abilities and fostered team spirit.

The program grew quickly; what started as a small group soon became a bustling team of eager athletes. This year, they expanded their activities to include unified bowling, where students from different backgrounds and abilities came together, learning from each other and forming unbreakable bonds. The track and field events also saw an increase in participation, with roughly fifteen students competing, including two younger athletes from the GV BOCES Elementary Program at Mount Morris Central School.

The students, matching in their green t-shirts, represented more than just a school; they symbolized a community of inclusiveness and resilience. They competed in various events including running, relays,

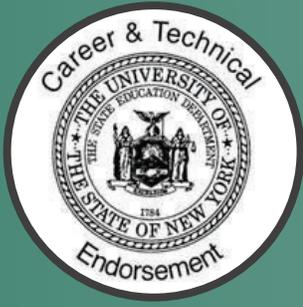


softball throw, and long jump. Each participant, regardless of their placement, carried a glow of pride and achievement.

Gage watched from the sidelines, his heart swelling with pride as his athletes crossed finish lines and cheered each other on. He knew that the real victory was not in medals or ribbons, but in the smiles of his students and their newfound confidence. The success of the team spoke volumes about what could be accomplished with passion and dedication.

As the day drew to a close, the team gathered around Gage, their faces flushed with the day's efforts and spirits high from the thrill of competition. They talked animatedly about their performances, each narrative different yet woven together by the common thread of joy and camaraderie.

The Genesee Valley BOCES Dansville Special Olympics team had not only grown in numbers but had also cultivated a reputation of enthusiasm and sportsmanship that transcended the typical expectations of a school sports team. Under Gage's leadership, they had become an inspiring example, showing that every student, no matter their abilities, deserved an opportunity to excel in the warmth of competition and friendship. For these Genesee Valley BOCES students, the Special Olympics was more than an event; it was a testament to their spirit and a stepping stone to greater achievements in the years to come.



Batavia CTE Technical Endorsement 2023-2024

These career and technical education students received a Technical endorsement on their Regent's Diploma, signifying the achievement of nationally recognized industry standards approved by the New York State Department of Education.

Animal Science

Madison Bezon, Alexander CSD
Kaidance Kimble, Byron-Bergen
Jillian Peters, Byron-Bergen
Malina Bellos, Caledonia-Mumford
Bryonna Biggie, Notre Dame
Andrea Bradt, Oakfield-Alabama
Lily Haacke, Oakfield-Alabama
Troy Lee, Pavilion

Auto Body

Jett Bruggman, Attica

Auto Technology

Brittany Johnson, Alexander
Andrew Childs, Batavia
Benjamin Stone, Batavia
Colton Ingerick, Caledonia-Mumford
Bryson Smith, Caledonia-Mumford

Building Trades

Robert Becker, Attica
Thomas Green, Attica
Lillian Horgan, Batavia
Cruze Rapone, Batavia
Benjamin Sputore, Batavia
Casper Stewart, Batavia
Malcolm Wormley, Batavia
Lukas Volkmar, Byron-Bergen
Connor Windhauser, Byron-Bergen
Maxwell Vogt, Caledonia-Mumford
Antonio Andrade, Elba
Matthew Beswick, LeRoy
Ryan Hamptom, LeRoy

Liam Luke, LeRoy
Joshua Pfendler, LeRoy
Tony Piazza, LeRoy
Dana Reschke, LeRoy
Cooper Hull, Oakfield-Alabama
Ronald Szpylman Jr, Oakfield-Alabama
Katelynn Williams, Oakfield-Alabama
Matthew Williams, Pembroke

Computer Information Systems (CIS)

Brynn Ackley, Attica
Xzavier Walker, Attica
Donte' Marsceill, Batavia
Anthony Gangi, LeRoy
Julian Schrauger, Oakfield-Alabama

Conservation

Hayden Shultz, Attica
Michael Warriner, Elba
Hunter Beverly, LeRoy

Cosmetology

Teagan O'Reilly, Caledonia-Mumford
Grace Carmichael, Oakfield-Alabama
Emalyn Yates, Pavilion
Sarah Forness, Pembroke
Olivia Peterson, Pembroke
Anna Speidel, Pembroke

Criminal Justice

Seth Doeller, LeRoy
Derryk Gacek, LeRoy

Culinary Arts

Konner Rippel, Attica
Lucian DiLaura, Batavia
Alex Merica, Batavia
Atlas Penkszyk, Batavia
Yesseira Vega, Batavia
Dakota Young, Batavia
Liliana Venegas, Byron-Bergen
Trey Higgins, Caledonia-Mumford
Rose Delude, LeRoy
Evan DeFisher, Oakfield-Alabama
Kyleigh Eck, Pavilion

Diesel Mechanics

Cody Benson, Batavia
Brendan Pimm, Byron-Bergen
Joseph Biletskiy, LeRoy
Benjamin Mattice, LeRoy
Joshua Kirsch, Notre Dame
Alex Smart, Pavilion
Tyler True, Pavilion
Mathew Vernaccini, Pavilion

Electro-Mechanical Trades

Hendrick Haymon, Byron-Bergen
Thomas Condidorio, LeRoy
Joseph Costa, LeRoy

Graphic Arts

Molly Gersitz, Attica
Kelly Sulkowski, Attica
Joshua Budzinak, Batavia
Ayden Carlson, Batavia
Elliot Meadows, Oakfield-Alabama
Aiden Vallett, Pembroke

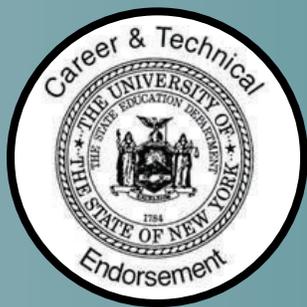
Health Dimensions

Katelyn Green, Alexander
Lillian Smith, Alexander
Emma Starowitz, Byron-Bergen
Shaylee McDonald, Caledonia-Mumford
Riley Priestly, LeRoy
Jaylyn Miller, Oakfield-Alabama
Alyssa Schmidbauer, Pembroke

Metal Trades

Anthony Auricchio, Alexander
Matthew Kingswell, Attica
Jaden Nottingham, Batavia
Nathan Doll, Caledonia-Mumford
Kyle Heineman, Caledonia-Mumford
Camden Baris, LeRoy

Wyatt Dziedzic, LeRoy
Jackson Spezzano, LeRoy
Tucker Connolly, Pavilion
Ayden Taylor, Pavilion
Riley Donahue, Pembroke
Riley Rosenberg, Pembroke
Aiden Summers, Pembroke



Mount Morris CTE Technical Endorsement 2023-2024

Animal Science

Raychelle Austin, Dansville
Race Berry, Letchworth
Catherine Carney, Wayland Cohocton
Reese DeVito, Avon
Marissa Evans, Avon
Elanna Gelser, Keshequa
Rachel Kuhlkin, Perry
Samantha Peffers, York
Ciara Price, Letchworth
Jason Schneckenburger Jr., York
Jada Scott, Perry

Auto Body

Haedon Cederholm, Wayland Cohocton
Christopher Hance, Avon
Jesse Hawkes, Geneseo
Kayden Helser, Wayland Cohocton
Dani Hopson, Avon
Trevor Mullen, York
Abby Treadwell, York

Auto Technology

Victor Giso, Avon

Tyler Guzzardi, Mount Morris
Christopher Polland, Avon
Anthony Regatuso, Mount Morris
Ryder Whitman, Dansville

Building Trades

Kadin Akram, York
Noah Beckstrand, Warsaw
Jacob Biondolillo, Perry
Daniel Burley, Keshequa
Alexander Carney, Wayland Cohocton
Logan Cole, Livonia
Arianna Dent, Livonia
Brenna Dolgos, Avon
Colin Ellsworth, Avon
Nicholas Field Jr., Livonia
Nathaniel Gardner, Dansville
Lucas Gettys, Wayland Cohocton
Nash Howe, Keshequa
Jayden Kochmanski, York
Bryce Lippens, Wayland Cohocton
Matthew Mulvaney, Livonia
Joshua Nickels, Wayland Cohocton
Jack Noto, Geneseo
McKinley Ossont, Avon
Kaleb Price, Wayland Cohocton
Rylan Rumsey, Livonia

Kurtis Schauer, Wayland Cohocton
Kenneth Silvernail, Livonia
Garrett Straton, Geneseo
Rachel Tant, Wayland Cohocton

Computer Information Systems

Thomas Countryman, Livonia
Justin Maine, Dansville
Sebastian Pohore, Warsaw
Elijah Roets, Livonia

Conservation & Heavy Equipment

Kaida Arend, Dansville
Elijah Bender, Dansville
Chase Fleck, Livonia
Sean Harcleroad, York
Jack James, Keshequa
Allan Kabasta III, Wayland Cohocton
Blake Marsh, Livonia
Wesley Sanford, Keshequa

Cosmetology

Emily Davis, Livonia
Kayla Emerson, Keshequa

Nadia Gorton, Perry/Gilead
Kaitlyn Harvey, Wayland
Cohocton
Mackayla Hawkes, York
Sylvia Kostraba, Avon
Jillian McIntrye, Wayland
Cohocton
MaryGrace Rennie, Perry/
Gilead
Gavin Waide, Avon

Criminal Justice

Nathaniel Arend, Dansville
Kayla Ballew, Avon
Ionnis Bechakas, Avon
Conlan Eiffert, Wayland
Cohocton
Andrew Gurganus, Letchworth
Jenna Hill, Letchworth
Justin Kuechler, York
Lily Morris, Mount Morris
Taylor Tucker, Dansville

Culinary Arts

Valarie Ellis, Livonia
Christopher Eney, Livonia
Jamie Fisk, Dansville
Julie Ikker, Dansville
Cody Kahl, Warsaw
Raymond Mandell, York
Kieran Nichols, Livonia
Kalista Omans, Keshequa
Harper Peterson, Livonia
Joycedeliz Rodriguez Santiago,
Dansville
Zachary VanNorman, Wayland
Cohocton
Brenna Young, Dansville

Diesel Mechanics

Corey Beman, Dansville
Payne-Davis Burdick, Avon
Levi Burdin, Warsaw
Boone Douglass, Keshequa
Quintin Hedges, Letchworth

Riley Patrick, Perry
Trevor Remington, Letchworth
Alexander Rider, Wayland
Cohocton
Damon Timmermans,
Letchworth
Marcus Urban, Keshequa
Talan Winter, Perry

Health Dimensions

Elizabeth Eddy, Wayland
Cohocton
Ella Hughes, Livonia
Alissa Kaufmann, Avon
Riley Wagner, Wayland
Cohocton
Logan Wright, Letchworth
Lillien Yack, Mount Morris

Human Services

Oriah Bonman, Warsaw
Kolby Wilson, Livonia

Metal Trades

Patrik Backus, Perry
Heather Battles, York
Gavin Blackmer, Livonia
Anthony Brongo, Livonia
Satchel Dambra, Livonia
Daniel DeBadts, Warsaw
Dominic Fanaro, Warsaw
Jaden Farley, Dansville
Zachary Green, Wayland
Cohocton
Troy Hendrickson, Warsaw
Graham Howe, Keshequa
Landon Joseph, Wayland
Cohocton
Carter Kime, Avon
Savannah Lubberts, Livonia
Tanner Luta, Wayland Cohocton
Natalie Moses, Wayland
Cohocton
Garrett Phillips, Livonia
Braxton Robson, Dansville

Eric Rowe, York
Braydon Ruffell, Avon
Yandel Santiago, Perry
Justin Schecter, Wayland
Cohocton
Blake Siewert, Perry
Merissa Slaytoln, Wayland
Cohocton
Christopher Thompson Jr., Avon
Trenton Washburn, Perry

Health Dimension students graduate as CNAs, marking the culmination of dedication at Batavia CTE Center

By Lyndsay Herkimer

At the Batavia Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center, the culmination of the Health Dimensions program is marked by the rigorous New York State Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) testing. For two years, the seniors of this program have been preparing for this moment, dedicating countless hours to learning and hands-on clinical experience. This year, out of 11 students who were eligible to take the CNA test, eight successfully passed, earning their CNA certification. The new CNAs are Riley Priestley, Katelyn Green, Tori LaMar, Lily Smith, Emma Starowitz, Shaylee McDonald, Alyssa Schmidbauer, and Jaylyn Miller.

The path to this achievement was challenging and demanding. Each student had to complete over 108 clinical hours under the supervision of a Registered Nurse (RN), primarily at the Batavia VA Medical Center. These hours were filled with tasks and shadowing experiences that honed their practical skills and deepened their understanding of patient care. The clinical instructors, including the new additions Bethany Freeman, Frank Dana, and Kathy Coyne, played pivotal roles in their journey. Freeman, an alumna of the Health Careers Academy, brought a holistic approach to teaching, emphasizing the importance of stress management and mental health in the medical field.

The NYS CNA test is comprised of two parts. The clinical exam required students to demonstrate one of 21 possible skills, ranging from denture care to vital signs measurement, in front of a New York State evaluator. To add to the pressure, the students performed these tasks in pairs, each relying on the teamwork and camaraderie they had built over the past two years.

Emma from Byron-Bergen Central School aspires to become an RN in a pediatric hospital. Alyssa from Pembroke High School plans to pursue a dual career as a pediatric RN and an ultrasound technician, starting at Genesee Community College and transferring to Alfred State. Lily from Alexander Central School will be heading to Brockport to specialize in pediatric nursing. These future healthcare professionals, along with their classmates, have expressed how rewarding it is to finish high school with a certificate that signifies their hard work and dedication.

On the day of the testing, nerves ran high, but the students felt prepared. They had learned a wide range of skills, from handling catheters and performing range of motion exercises to providing hand and foot care and transferring patients with a gait belt. Colleen Garner, their dedicated Health Dimensions teacher, was there to cheer them on, embodying the support and encouragement that had been a constant throughout their training.

The success of Riley, Katelyn, Tori, Lily, Emma, Shaylee, Alyssa, and Jaylyn is a testament to their perseverance and the excellent training provided by their instructors. These newly certified CNAs leave the program with not just a certification but a sense of accomplishment and the confidence to embark on their careers in healthcare.

Reflecting on their experiences, the seniors offer this advice to future students: "Keep pushing because the hard work is worth it in the end." Many were inspired by TV shows like *Grey's Anatomy* and a genuine desire to help people, which guided them through the demanding journey. Now, with their certifications in hand, they are ready to make a difference in the medical field, carrying with them the lessons learned and the bonds formed during their time at the Batavia CTE Center.

As a side note, the three students who did not pass will be retesting in a couple of weeks, showing their determination to achieve their CNA certification.



A tale of skill, sweat, and success

By Lyndsay Herkimer

This past April, New York State SkillsUSA Skills competition unfolded like a meticulously orchestrated symphony of talent and determination. From April 24-26, the event beckoned hundreds of young aspirants from across the state, each eager to demonstrate skills in their chosen fields.

Among these hopefuls was the largest contingent the Mount Morris Career and Technical (CTE) Center had dispatched in years. The robust team were thirty-four students, buzzing with anticipation and the spirit of competition. They hailed from diverse disciplines: Auto Collision, Building Trades, Culinary, Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, and Health Dimensions, each student a beacon of their field's bright future.

As the events kicked off, the air filled with an electric mix of nervous energy and focused determination. Each participant knew that the coming days would test their limits and perhaps even define their future paths.

In the Culinary Arts section, the lone representative from May Center, a young chef with swift and skilled hands, expertly maneuvered through the ingredients. Nearby, in the domain of Cosmetology, brushes fluttered and colors flew, with ten artists turning blank canvases into expressions of style and statement.

The Building Trades team consisted of Kadin A., Logan C., Kenneth S., and Garrett S., approached their competition like seasoned professionals. They measured, cut, and assembled with a synchrony and precision that spoke of endless afternoons spent in practice back home.

Not far from the physical constructions and culinary concoctions, the Criminal Justice contingent, thirteen strong, delved into mock crime scenes and investigative procedures. Six of these dedicated students also took on the critical role of securing the event, guiding spectators and ensuring safety, their eyes always keen and observant.



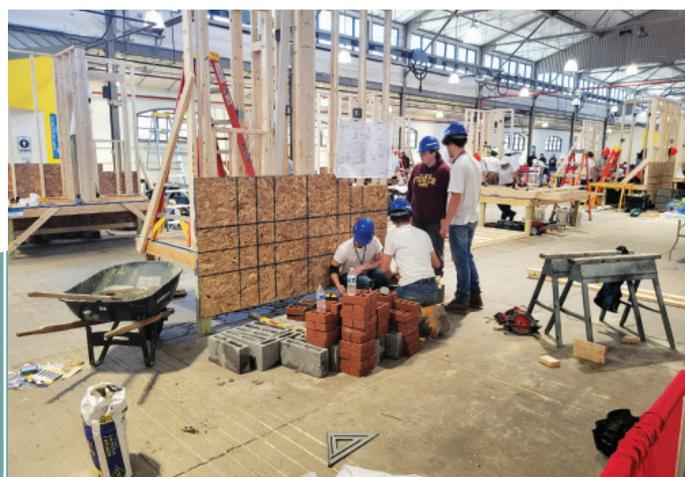
Three hopefuls from May Center stepped into leadership roles, their sights set on becoming state officers, representing their peers and shaping the future of SkillsUSA itself.

As the competitions wound down and the award ceremony approached, anticipation soared to new heights. The participants gathered, hearts pounding and hands clasped, as announcements echoed through the hall.

Then came a moment of pure joy for the Mount Morris CTE Center, the Building Trades team clinched third place in the Teamworks competition, a testament to their skill and teamwork. The entire group erupted in cheers, their voices blending into a chorus of pride and triumph. Moreover, the CTE itself was celebrated as a Silver Level Chapter of Distinction, a prestigious acknowledgment that painted smiles on everyone's faces.

As the event concluded and the students began their journey home, they carried with them more than just certificates and accolades. They brought back stories of challenges met and obstacles overcome, lessons learned, and friendships forged. Each student, whether adorned with a medal or not, had gained invaluable insights into their capabilities and their potential career paths.

In the end, the SkillsUSA Skills competition was more than just a contest; it was a milestone on each student's journey, a journey marked by skill, sweat, and the taste of success.



Students shine at FBLA State Conference, earn spot in nationals!

By Lyndsay Herkimer

This year's FBLA State Leadership Conference held in Rochester, NY, was a beacon for budding leaders, communicators, and entrepreneurs. It offered students a vibrant arena to refine vital skills through presentations, collaborative projects, and networking opportunities—essential building blocks for their future careers.



Among the participants were six dynamic students, including Sunniva from York Central School and Justin from Dansville Central School. These seniors, hailing from the Mount Morris Career and Technical Education Center's Computer Information Systems (CIS) class, particularly stood out. Their exceptional skills in digital animation not only earned them fourth place in their competitive category but also secured their passage to the national conference in Orlando, Florida. The thrill of their success was unmistakable as they prepared for the challenges that lay ahead.

Reflecting on the achievements of his students, CIS teacher Jarod Reed expressed immense pride. "Seeing our students excel at such a prestigious level confirms the hard work they've put in and the bright futures that lie ahead of them. I couldn't be prouder," Reed remarked. This sentiment underscored the conference's broader impact—it was more than just a competition; it was about personal growth, fostering community, and celebrating shared achievements.

As the school year draws to a close, the spirit of accomplishment resonates deeply within the entire FBLA chapter. Their collective efforts have not only spotlighted their school but have also fostered a profound sense of pride and unity in their community.

AHERA Notice

AHERA is a federal law enacted in 1987 which requires all school districts to re-inspect facilities for asbestos-containing building materials. All Genesee Valley BOCES facilities have been inspected and response actions are planned to ensure a continued safe environment for our students and employees. Activities included training of maintenance staff to prevent disturbance of asbestos and periodic re-inspection and surveillance activities by trained personnel. Details of such activities are described in the district's AHERA Management Plan, which is available for your review in the District Office.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Matthew DellaPenna, Director of Safety, Security and Operations at mdellapenna3@gvboces.org.

Pesticide Notice

New York State Education Law Section 409-H, effective July 1, 2001, requires all public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools to provide written notification to all persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the school year.

The Genesee Valley BOCES is required to maintain a list of parents, guardians, faculty, and staff who wish to receive 48-hour prior written notification of certain pesticide applications.

In the event of an emergency application necessary to protect against an imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour prior notification list.

If you have not registered to receive 48-hour prior notification of pesticide applications that are scheduled to occur in your school, please email Matthew DellaPenna, Director of Safety, Security and Operations at mdellapenna3@gvboces.org to register to receive notices.

GV BOCES CTE Enrollment Five-Year History Chart



This graph shows the number of enrolled CTE students as a percent of all component high school juniors and seniors. This information reflects our most recent data.



GV BOCES CTE Graduation Rate Five-Year Average



This chart shows the percentage of career and technical education students who graduated. This information reflects our most recent data.



Reesie the bunny sparks compassion and therapeutic growth at Mount Morris Academy

By Lyndsay Herkimer

In the joint 8th and 9th grade class of Mrs. Fanaro and Mrs. Farmer at Mount Morris Academy, a new member had joined the group: Reesie, a fluffy Holland Lop bunny.

Reesie's arrival wasn't a random occurrence. It all started when students from the Intensive Therapeutic program showed interest in the school's Animal Science Program. Among the charming animals they met, the baby bunnies particularly captivated them, leading to the idea of introducing one into the classroom to support the students.

Born in December in the animal science program, Reesie was chosen by the students themselves, who also collaborated on naming her. From that day forward, they worked together as a team to care for her. Feeding her, cleaning her cage, and giving her love and attention taught them invaluable lessons in responsibility and kindness.



Every morning and evening, the class would eagerly walk down to the Animal Science Program to bring Reesie back to her cage. Along the way, she became a celebrity, drawing in students and staff alike who couldn't resist stopping to pet her and say hello.

Reesie's impact went beyond mere celebrity status. She seemed to possess a magical ability to calm and regulate the students. When held, she transformed their focus, making them more attentive and engaged in their lessons.

Andrea Hubbard, the Crisis Intervention Specialist, noticed the change, remarking, "Reesie has been such a positive addition to the classroom. She has completely changed the climate of the group and has brought the dynamic of the students together. She has become a beneficial part of the classroom and has helped foster a therapeutic environment."

Principal Foster Miller echoed the sentiment, expressing gratitude to the school's O&M department for supporting this endeavor. "Having Reesie in the classroom has made a tremendous positive impact on our students," he said.

One student, Connor, found particular solace in Reesie's presence. Holding her during class brought him comfort and focus, making learning a more manageable task.

Teachers and staff marveled at the transformation they witnessed in the students. Reesie had become more than just a class pet; she was a source of support, comfort, and joy for everyone she encountered.

As the days passed, Reesie's influence continued to grow, weaving her magic through the hearts and minds of all who knew her. And in Mrs. Fanaro's 8th-grade class at Mount Morris Academy, Reesie wasn't just a bunny – she was an essential part of the family.

Congratulations to our Retirees!

Congratulations to the following staff members who retired at the end of the 2023-24 school year. Each of these staff members has served as an integral part of our organization. Their contributions will always be valued and remembered, as their hard work and dedication are worthy of admiration.

Richard Baird
Barbara Beaumont
Donald Case Jr.
Shannon Ferguson

James Parks II
Daryl Pfendler
Mark Reese
Nancy Trippi

Pamela Van Scooter
Deborah Fay
Kim Niziol

Early College High School program paves the way for students in renewable energy

By Lyndsay Herkimer

During his senior year at Attica Central High School, Nathan Sponaugle embarked on a transformative journey into the solar energy sector, facilitated by his participation in the Early College High School program. This program is a cornerstone for students aiming to secure a place in high-demand, well-compensated careers, particularly in emerging sectors. It is specifically tailored for students from school districts within the Genesee Valley BOCES region and fosters a pivotal partnership with Genesee Community College. This collaboration not only enables students to pursue a college degree while completing their high school education but also underscores the significance of integrating academic achievement with professional readiness.

The essence of Early College High School transcends the traditional educational paradigm by fostering robust partnerships between students and the business community, ensuring that learning is deeply intertwined with real-world business applications and workforce demands. The program offers a unique blend of experiential learning opportunities, from innovative workshops and talks by industry experts to hands-on mentorship in actual job environments.

By facilitating a no-cost avenue for students to achieve an Associate degree from GCC, the program directly bridges the gap between academic learning and career development. It emphasizes work-based learning experiences and the cultivation of meaningful relationships with business and industry leaders. Tailored to meet the varying ambitions and paces of its students, the program grants them the liberty to select their career paths, thereby opening a wide array of opportunities and fostering a dynamic connection between education and the evolving needs of the workforce.

Nathan's interest in renewable energy, particularly solar power, wasn't sparked by chance but by a deep curiosity about how solar energy works and its potential to transform societies. This interest led him to seek out a job shadowing opportunity

at Grasby Consulting & EDF Renewables, a company renowned for its renewable energy production.

EDF Renewables specializes in developing and building solar projects that help to power communities and support a nationwide push towards cleaner energy sources. For Nathan, this was an unparalleled chance to see the theoretical knowledge he had acquired in the classroom come to life in the real world. It was here, amidst the hum of machinery and the bustling activity of construction sites, that his abstract interest in solar energy began to crystallize into a clear career aspiration.

On his first day shadowing, Nathan witnessed the initial stages of constructing a solar farm. He observed the precision with which holes were drilled and poles were planted, a testament to the meticulous planning and coordination required to bring such a project to fruition. The sight of supplies being delivered in a timely fashion highlighted the importance of logistics and project management skills in the solar industry. This hands-on experience provided Nathan with a tangible understanding of the complexities involved in solar farm construction.

What surprised Nathan the most during his shadowing experience was the broader impact of solar farms on local communities and economies. He learned that these projects do more than just generate clean energy; they also create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and can significantly increase local revenue. This realization added a new dimension to Nathan's interest in solar energy, emphasizing the importance of renewable energy projects in fostering sustainable development.

Observing the construction of one of the largest solar farms in New York State was a defining moment for Nathan. It emphasized the growing demand for solar energy and its potential to make a significant impact on the state's energy landscape. This experience taught him that the success of solar projects relies heavily on effective communication, teamwork, and the integration of cutting-edge technology.



Nathan was particularly impressed by the technological advancements he saw, such as GPS-equipped digging machines that ensured the precise placement of poles, and solar panels that automatically adjusted their position to track the sun. These innovations highlighted the industry's commitment to efficiency and sustainability, further fueling Nathan's passion for solar energy.

The environmental stewardship demonstrated by EDF Renewables also left a lasting impression on Nathan. He learned about the careful measures taken to preserve local ecosystems, such as protecting wetlands and conserving topsoil. This commitment to minimizing the environmental impact of solar farms resonated with Nathan, aligning with his own values of sustainability and conservation.

Through his job shadowing experience, Nathan saw firsthand how solar energy projects can benefit local communities, not just through the provision of clean energy but also by funneling resources into public services and education. This realization deepened his commitment to pursuing a career in the solar field, as he recognized the potential for renewable energy to contribute positively to society.

"It is important to Grasby Consulting to educate and help all students, including adults, to further their knowledge in renewable energy and all other job opportunities related to renewable energy," stated Shawn Grasby, President of Grasby Consulting. "I feel this is important because the electrical need is so prevalent and growing quickly. As traditional power plants

needs become greater, this is the cleanest and fastest way for New York State to achieve its goals. By offering student services such as shadowing and in-person workshops, Grasby Consulting benefits the company and the students by educating the younger generation on future career paths and adults changing careers.”

As Nathan looks to the future, he plans to build on the foundation of knowledge and experience he gained from his time with Grasby Consulting & EDF Renewables. He intends to complete a two-year degree in solar panel technician studies at Genesee Community College, after which he will decide whether to further his education or enter the workforce directly. Regardless of the path he chooses, Nathan is now equipped with a clear vision for his career in solar energy, driven by a passion for sustainability and a desire to make a tangible difference in the world.

The insights provided by Haylee Ferington, the Community Relations Manager at EDF Renewables, further enriched Nathan's understanding of the solar industry's future and the crucial role of education and community involvement in achieving sustainable energy goals. Ferington's emphasis on the importance of engaging young professionals like Nathan in the renewable energy workforce highlighted the dynamic and inclusive nature of the solar industry, offering diverse career paths and opportunities for economic development within local communities.

EDF Renewables is committed to fostering the next generation of renewable energy professionals by offering scholarships to high school students in local project areas, focusing on trades or renewable energy fields. They actively collaborate with local union chapters and educational programs to enhance awareness and knowledge about careers in solar energy. They believe that supporting educational partnerships and workforce development initiatives is crucial for achieving New York's clean energy objectives and for the responsible

development of renewable energy sources. Grasby emphasized the importance of education and workforce development in the renewable energy sector. His advocacy for student shadowing programs and workshops reflects a commitment to nurturing the next generation of renewable energy professionals, ensuring that New York State can meet its clean energy goals amid increasing electrical demands.

Nathan's story, from his initial curiosity about solar energy to his immersive learning experience, is a testament to the transformative power of education and hands-on experience. It highlights the importance of following one's passions, the value of community and environmental stewardship, and the vast opportunities available in the renewable energy sector. As Nathan continues on his path, the insights and experiences he has gained will undoubtedly fuel his ambition to contribute to a sustainable and prosperous future through solar energy.

Children's Author Laura Joffe Numeroff inspires young minds and heartfelt connections at York Central School By Lyndsay Herkimer

On a spring morning, celebrated children's author Laura Joffe Numeroff, famed for her seminal work "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie", arrived at York Central School. As the first stop on a tour organized by the Genesee Valley BOCES School Library System, Numeroff, who has penned over 49 books and is currently working on her fiftieth, was warmly welcomed. Her presence filled the school's hallways, which were adorned with vibrant artwork of mice, pigs, and moose, all characters from her books, created by the students in her honor.

Her first engagement of the day was with the kindergarten through second-grade students. Numeroff captivated her young audience with enchanting storytelling, bringing to life the adventures of her beloved characters. Her dynamic presentation stirred joy and laughter among the young listeners, setting a euphoric tone for the day.

Following her presentation, Numeroff moved to the school library to begin signing books for the students. She didn't just sign her name; she wrote personalized messages in each book, creating precious keepsakes for the children. It was an intimate affair, with students cherishing each word she penned.

During this signing session, an unexpected but touching reunion occurred. Justin Andrews, a recent alum of the Batavia Career and Technical Education Center's Auto Technology program, arrived with anticipation to meet Numeroff. Now employed at Oetiker, Andrews had a personal history with Numeroff's works.

Andrews had attended Wyoming Central School, where he worked with Lorrie Mallaber (now teaching at York) for reading. While working with her, he read several of Laura Numeroff's books, igniting a passion for reading that had transformed his academic journey. Inspired by her storytelling, Andrews had taken a significant step: he authored his own children's book at the age of eleven.





His book, "*What Happens if You Give a Snake Spaghetti?*", followed a snake's humorous escapades through Wyoming County. The snake's adventures, sampling local delicacies at spots like the Charcoal Corral restaurant and nearby Silver Lake, captured the hearts of local readers. Andrews's book became a cherished addition to the local libraries and made him a celebrated young author in his community.

The day of the book signing, Andrews presented Numeroff with a copy of his creation, illustrating the profound impact her work had on him. In a reciprocal gesture filled with warmth, Numeroff signed a copy of "*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*" for Andrews. This exchange was not just about books; it was a significant moment of connection between the author and one of her inspired readers.

"That was amazing and so special! I can't believe she signed a book for me! Thank you so much for making this happen," said Andrews as he thanked his former teacher, Lorrie Mallaber.

Reflecting on this heartfelt exchange, Numeroff commented on the unique joy of seeing her influence come full circle. "It's incredibly rewarding to witness the impact of one's work firsthand," she said, visibly moved by Andrews's achievements and the influence her stories had exerted on him.

After their meeting, Numeroff continued to engage with the students of York Central School. She read "*If You Give a Cat a Cupcake*" to a group of thirty UPK students. Among them was a little girl who knew the story by heart, eagerly reciting parts alongside Numeroff, her voice filled with excitement.

Later in the day, Numeroff met with students from grades three to five. The older students had prepared a series of insightful questions about her writing process and her journey as an author. This interaction provided a deeper understanding of the creative process and inspired the students to pursue their own storytelling paths. Numeroff's advice to aspiring authors was to never give up, a lesson she had learned firsthand when her book "*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*" was rejected nine times before finally getting picked up for publication.

"It was very exciting to have such an iconic children's book author come to our school and interact with our students. Almost everyone is familiar with Ms. Numeroff's books! Our students really enjoyed learning more about her and creating projects in preparation for the visit," said Michelle Feltham, Elementary Librarian at York Central School.

The day's events underscored the profound role that author visits play in cultivating literacy and inspiring creativity among young readers. Numeroff's engagements highlighted the enchanting cycle of inspiration that her books initiate—inspiring readers like Andrews to find their own creative voices.

Through her resilience in her early career and her dedication to her craft, Numeroff has not just crafted stories but has sparked a legacy of inspiration. Her visit to York Central School demonstrated the lasting influence of children's literature on its audience, affirming the power of books to connect and transform lives.



Finger Lakes Youth Apprenticeship Program Signing Night

In a testament to innovation and collaboration, the Finger Lakes Youth Apprenticeship Program orchestrated the 2024 Genesee Valley BOCES Signing Night. This event marked a significant milestone as 40 local high school students, along with their families, came together from both Batavia and Mount Morris campuses to celebrate these achievements. Alongside them stood representatives from prominent manufacturing businesses, all united in a shared vision of fostering talent and opportunity.

Now in its third year, this pioneering endeavor is spearheaded by the Rochester Technology & Manufacturing Association (RTMA) and Monroe Community College (MCC), bolstered by the generous support of RG&E and the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. The program's essence lies in its rigorous application process, where students undergo a series of phases including interviews, ultimately connecting them with manufacturing firms for tailored instruction, immersive job shadowing, and paid co-op experiences.

The Signing Night event serves as a beacon of achievement, symbolizing the successful union between these exceptional students and their prospective employers. It's a culmination of dedication, expertise, and the unwavering commitment to nurturing the next generation of skilled professionals in the manufacturing sector.



Mount Morris Campus Students:

Dezireigh Anderson-Livonia-Job shadow at SPX Flow
Thomas Adams-Dansville-Job shadow at Gorbel
Dylan Avery-Livonia-Job shadow at Gorbel
Jackson Gascon-Wayland-Cohocton-Job shadow at Gleason Works
Preston McDowell-Dansville-Job shadow at LMC
Rylan Rumsey-Livonia-Job shadow at Davis-Ulmer Fire Protection
Ariel Rutherford-York-Job shadow at DP Tool
Asher Treadwell-Gilead-Job shadow at LMC
Isaac Wendt-Keshequa-Job shadow at NYS DEC

Batavia Campus Students:

Tyler Marino-Alexander-Job shadow at Gorbel
Micah Pullman-Alexander-Job shadow at Gorbel
Thomas Condidorio-LeRoy-CO-OP at Gorbel
Joseph Costa-LeRoy-CO-OP at Gorbel
Brody Warner-Notre Dame-Job shadow at Gorbel
Anthony Auricchio-Alexander-CO-OP at Graham
Jackson Spezzano-LeRoy-CO-OP at Graham
Emma Spink-Attica-Job shadow at Koike Aronson Ransome
Kyle Paddock-LeRoy-Job shadow at Koike Aronson Ransome
James Helmicki-Attica-Job shadow at McCabe Electric
Jaxon Delpriore-Oakfield Alabama-Job shadow at McCabe Electric
Micah Flores-Oakfield Alabama-Job shadow at McCabe Electric
Joaren Anetrini-Attica-CO-OP Nortera
Matthew Rogers-Notre Dame-Job shadow at Nortera
Evan Schlau-Attica-CO-OP at OXBO

Thomas Canfield-Caledonia Mumford-Job shadow at OXBO
Nathan Doll-Caledonia Mumford-CO-OP at OXBO
Brody Swinehart-Elba-CO-OP at OXBO
Wyatt Dziedzic-LeRoy-CO-OP at OXBO
Willis Easton IV-Oakfield-Alabama-Job shadow at OXBO
Ronald Muntz III-Oakfield-Alabama-Job shadow at Pro-Tech
Jaden Snyder-Alexander-CO-OP at TAMBE Electric
Justin Valyear-Alexander-CO-OP at TAMBE Electric
Camlin Costich-Pembroke-Job shadow at TAMBE Electric
Evan Miller-Attica-Job shadow at Turnbull Heating
Noah Peterson-Attica-Job shadow at Turnbull Heating
Gabriel Castro-Caledonia-Mumford-Job shadow at Turnbull Heating
Joseph Trewer-Notre Dame-Job shadow at Turnbull Heating
Bo Caton-Oakfield-Alabama-CO-OP at Turnbull Heating
Nikolas Moser-Pavilion-Job shadow at Turnbull Heating

Genesee Valley BOCES

Genesee Valley BOCES is composed of 22 individual school districts that are located in Genesee, Wyoming, Livingston, and Steuben Counties. Both instructional services and instructional support services are provided to each district.

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Caledonia-Mumford Central School District • Dr. Rebekah Chenaille

Dansville Central School District • Kelly Zimmerman

Elba Central School District • Gretchen Rosales

Geneseo Central School District • Dr. Jon Hunter, Interim

Keshequa Central School District • Lesley Powers

LeRoy Central School District • Merritt Holly

Letchworth Central School District • Todd Campbell

Livonia Central School District • Dr. Jeremy Lonneville

Mount Morris Central School District • Gregory Bump

Oakfield-Alabama Central School District • John Figus

Pavilion Central School District • Mary Kate Hoffman

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