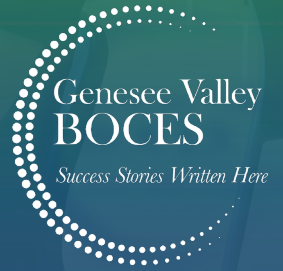


NEWS IN BRIEF

JANUARY 2024



Libby's inspiring journey

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Libby Deaton, a proud Keshequa Central School District student, calls the Mount Morris GV BOCES Campus her educational home. From her freshman year to her current status as a senior, Libby has been a fixture at both the Mount Morris Academy and the Human Services Program, a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program at the Mount Morris GV BOCES Campus. Reflecting on her educational journey, she attributes her personal growth to the unique blend of individualized learning and a well-paced academic environment.

Her evolution, both academically and personally, is a testament to her commitment to excellence. Libby's exploration of the Human Services program and her aspirations to make a meaningful impact on the lives of others showcase not only her growth but also her compassionate nature. The strides she has made since day one, from sitting at her teacher's desk to actively contributing to projects feeding families in need, illustrate Libby's transformative journey and her readiness to embrace the next chapter in her life.

"Libby stands as a beacon of growth across the various dimensions of her life. Not only has she excelled academically, but she has also seamlessly integrated employment outside of school and success in her CTE studies. The recent acceptance to Alfred State College is a resounding affirmation of her hard work and dedication," shared Holly Wetherbee, Assistant Principal at the Mount Morris Academy.

In the realm of Human Services, Libby's passion takes center stage. Her motivation to assist children and those

in need of mental health support has ignited her interest in potential careers as a psychologist or school social worker. Libby's teacher, who has witnessed her remarkable growth since day one, attests to her unwavering commitment and envisions her seamlessly working with diverse individuals owing to her versatile skill set.

Human Services Program teacher Marcia Underwood warmly expresses, "Libby is truly an extraordinary individual. I have witnessed an incredible amount of growth in her character and capabilities. She has a unique ability to connect with people on a personal level and genuinely cares about making a positive impact in their lives. Her dedication, kindness, and versatile skill set make her stand out as a student who is not only excelling academically but also contributing significantly to the well-being of others."

Human Services, an encompassing field that supports individuals from birth to 100, resonates deeply with Libby. Her genuine enjoyment in working with people of all ages is particularly evident in her involvement with the ARC, where she derives immense joy from assisting individuals with disabilities.

A shining gem in Libby's journey is her active participation in a cherished project: creating meals for families in need. This impactful initiative, spearheaded by the Student Assistance Team, goes beyond the ordinary. Led by the Human Services program, the students actively contribute by meticulously planning recipes and shopping lists to feed 42 families every week. Some of these families consist of up to eight members, ensuring there's enough nourishment for the entire family throughout the weekend.

The process involves students, including Libby, going shopping for the ingredients and then diligently preparing these bags and meals every Friday. Libby, drawing from personal experiences where she herself needed help, recognizes the profound impact these efforts have on grateful families. Her eyes light up as she explains the important work that goes

into this project, emphasizing that it's not just about providing a meal but about making a significant, positive impact on people's lives.

"It makes me happy knowing we have a big impact on people," Libby shares, her voice resonating with a deep sense of fulfillment.

This sentiment beautifully encapsulates the spirit of the program, where students, under the guidance of their teacher, actively contribute while learning invaluable life skills. Looking ahead, the Human Services program is gearing up for a post-holiday diaper drive and internships, including an exciting opportunity at a new daycare. Libby, ever enthusiastic, eagerly anticipates this new chapter, showcasing the program's commitment to providing real-world, meaningful experiences. Beyond these initiatives, the students regularly engage in weekly playgroups, strengthening their bonds and contributing to the community by recently collaborating with the food pantry at Save A Lot.

At the Mount Morris GV BOCES Campus, volunteer work, and community service are ingrained in the principles of student life. Libby's story is just one example of the broader commitment of how GV BOCES students give back to the local community. Libby's story is just one example of the broader commitment of GV BOCES students to give back to the local community. The creation of impactful initiatives, such as the weekly project feeding families, highlights the proactive role students play in addressing community needs.

The dedication to organizing events like a post-holiday diaper drive and engaging in internships that contribute to the well-being of the community underscores the integral role GV BOCES Mount Morris students play in shaping a positive and supportive local environment. Through their collective efforts, these students exemplify the significance of volunteer work and embody the spirit of community service, fostering a sense of responsibility and interconnectedness within the Mount Morris community.

Libby's time at the Mount Morris Academy, a GV BOCES program, has been marked by a flourishing journey of personalized learning and genuine connections. Thriving in an environment where teaching is tailored to individual needs, Libby has found her stride. Her appreciation for the individualized approach reflects her commitment to academic success and personal growth.

Libby's positive relationship with her Academy teachers goes beyond the conventional student-teacher dynamic, creating a supportive atmosphere that has contributed significantly to her overall educational experience. In this nurturing environment, Libby has not only found academic success but has also developed a genuine love for the process of learning itself.

In October, Libby's dedication was formally recognized when she was nominated as the student of the month. Thrilled by this acknowledgment, she eagerly awaits the possibility of being named student of the year. Despite her bustling schedule, juggling school, work, and family commitments, Libby has applied to college, with Cortland as her current preference. The recent acceptance into Alfred State College has added another layer of excitement to her journey, marking not only personal growth but also a profound impact on the lives of those she touches through her work with her classmates in the Human Services program.



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.

The 2023 winner is: Heather Starzynski - Pembroke CSD

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.



The Albert W. Hawk Award

By Patrick Burk

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.



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.





Genesee Valley BOCES Halloween extravaganza students unleash spooky fun with costumes, tricks, and dance floor beats

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Genesee Valley BOCES students marked Halloween with grand celebrations. Hallways buzzed with a mix of eerie and clever costumes, ranging from spooky classics to modern-day icons.

Trick-or-treating wasn't just for the neighborhood – it took a detour into the school. Students went trick or treating as they navigated the transformed classrooms, each hosting its own brand of haunting games and challenges. Cookie decorating, mummy-wrapping, and themed games kept the adrenaline pumping.

At the GV BOCES Dansville campus, the gym transformed into a pulsating dance floor. Forget traditional spooky tunes; the beat of "Monster Mash" set the rhythm for a vibrant dance party where creativity clashed and mingled. The gym was a riot of colors and energy, showcasing the diverse tastes and styles of the student body.

As the Halloween celebration wrapped up, the students dispersed, carrying with them memories of a great Halloween that was equal parts thrilling and entertaining.

LIVES Program students and staff traveled to Colorado Springs for the SOTA conference

By Lyndsay Herkimer



LIVES students and staff embarked on a memorable journey to the State of the Art Conference (SOTA) held in Colorado Springs. Immersed in the latest developments in inclusive post-secondary education, they took advantage of the chance to connect with experts and engage in discussions that broadened their perspectives.

The Student Leadership Conference (SLC) provides a platform for students to connect with peers from around the country. Amid sessions on seamless college transitions and expanding leadership potential in higher education, the atmosphere resonated with laughter and a palpable sense of camaraderie.

Guided by Charlie's enthusiastic recommendations from YouTube, the GV BOCES LIVES Program explored Colorado Springs, with Scheels standing out as a highlight—a unique shopping experience that lived up to its online reputation. The streets of Colorado Springs witnessed the group indulging in retail therapy, particularly at candy and chocolate shops, while Wednesday night karaoke added a note of fun to the adventure.

The exploration reached its peak at The Garden of the Gods on the last day. Opting for a trolley ride through this natural wonder proved to be an excellent decision, offering a unique perspective on the breathtaking surroundings and leaving an indelible mark on the students.

Reflecting on the journey, Marcy Wolcott, LIVES teaching assistant, emphasized the significance of the SLC in connecting students from across the country. "The Student conference gives them an opportunity to connect with peers from around the country. There's a unique connection that they all have with being a part of a college community. They talk about what they do on campus, what they like, and possible struggles that they have encountered. This has led to friendships that span the country." Kudos echoed for the SLC, centering voices, wisdom, and experiences of college students with intellectual disabilities, welcoming all students to the conversation.

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. Before she graduated in 2016, she took a significant step towards her dream during her junior and senior years at the Genesee Valley BOCES Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center in Mount Morris. Mount Morris Career and Technical Education Center, a Genesee Valley (GV) BOCES program located at the Charles G. May 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. Genesee Valley BOCES provided her with a valuable chance to gain hands-on experience, a treasure that time alone could offer.

One person who played a crucial role in shaping Santasieri's early career was her Health Dimensions instructor, Mrs. Linda Blythe. Memories of Blythe's emphasis on attention to detail, symbolized by the insistence on cleaning a patient's glasses, stayed with Santasieri. 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 in Rochester, New York, before transitioning to the challenging environment of the Intensive Care Units (ICU). Working in an 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.

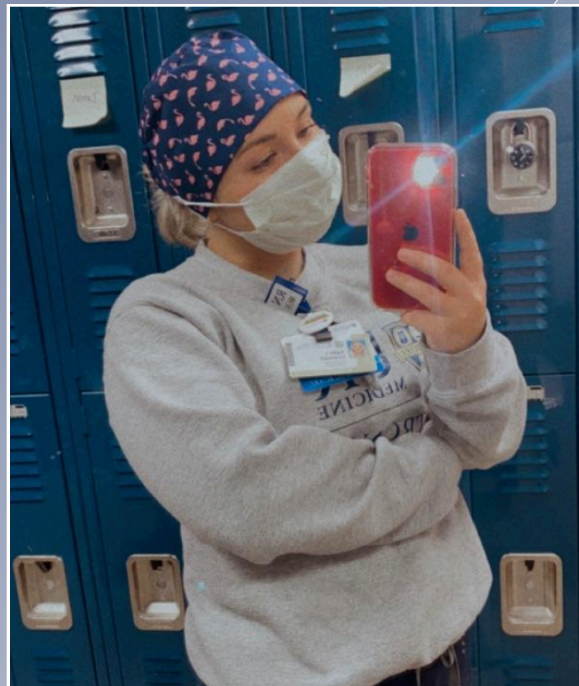
"Throughout my brief journey as a nurse, I've had the privilege of meeting a diverse array of people—patients, fellow nurses, residents, and family members. The true essence lies in the special moments when genuine connections are established," said Santasieri.

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 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.

Santasieri declares, "being immersed in the intensity of critical care continues to amaze me. Each day, the collaborative efforts of nurses, residents, fellows, attendings, respiratory care, and our care coordinator unfold in discussions that meticulously dissect every aspect of a patient's condition. We delve into issues, old and new, share insights on interventions, consult with other services—building a comprehensive understanding system by system."

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.



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 continues to convey her nursing knowledge to future healthcare professionals during the academic year. She eagerly awaits the summers, knowing that amidst the trees and laughter of the Genesee Valley Rotary Camp. Green believes that miracles are bound to happen, and she wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

New York State School Social Worker Association Conference

At the New York State School Social Worker Association Conference in Bolton Landing, NY, on November 3rd & 4th, Genesee Valley BOCES highlighted its regional presence. Sheri Kreher, LCSW-R, GV BOCES Employee Assistance Program and Trauma Illness and Grief Coordinator, led a presentation on Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Skills in the School Environment. Genesee Valley BOCES was proud to have had two Social Worker of the Year nominees: Melissa Hoffmeister (Oakfield-Alabama Central Schools) and Sara Pribanich (Livonia Central Schools).



WNY Tech Academy Students dive into media industry insights at the Genesee Valley PennySaver

By Lyndsay Herkimer

A group of spirited 9th and 10th graders from the WNY Tech Academy recently spent a day of exploration at the Genesee Valley PennySaver. They began their day by immersing themselves in promotions and learning about the array of products they could potentially create. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement as they learned about the diverse promotional strategies employed in the dynamic world of media.

Transitioning seamlessly from promotions, the students ventured into the heart of production, witnessing first hand where the magic unfolded. The production floor, a hive of activity, became a fascinating backdrop as they observed the intricate processes involved in bringing the PennySaver to life. From layout design to the rhythmic hum of printing presses, the students absorbed the synergy of creativity and technical precision essential in the production phase.



With a newfound appreciation for the creation process, the journey continued to the sales department, where the focus shifted to advertising and the Creative Suite. The students eagerly delved into the world of sales, absorbing valuable insights into the art of persuasion and client engagement. The professionals at the Genesee Valley PennySaver shared their experiences, offering a glimpse into the strategic thinking and creative prowess required for success in advertising sales.

During this segment on the Creative Suite, the students expanded their horizons, learning about social media, marketing strategies, and website design. The dynamic realm of the Creative Suite unfolded as they explored the digital landscape, understanding how to leverage social platforms, formulate effective marketing campaigns, and craft compelling websites. These additional skills illuminated the multifaceted nature of the media industry, providing the students with contemporary tools to navigate the ever-evolving digital landscape.

WNY Tech Academy Principal Catherine Bennett emphasizes the importance of this experience, saying, "Field trips like the one to the Genesee Valley PennySaver are crucial for students to explore potential career paths. The exposure to various departments, from web design to accounting, offers valuable insights, helping students make informed decisions about their future education and career goals."

Students forge lasting connections through creative exchange

By Lyndsay Herkimer

The dynamic fusion of GV BOCES Mount Morris Elementary Program and WNY Tech Academy students brought forth a day of delightful collaboration. The classroom atmosphere was filled with excitement as students from different levels engaged in a variety of activities. From the sweet artistry of cookie decorating to the whimsical world of puppetry, hallways and classrooms were infused with a sense of shared enthusiasm.



The Tech Academy students played an integral role in this dynamic exchange, not only participating in the activities but also contributing their expertise through engaging platforms like Cahoot and providing project assistance. This interaction seamlessly bridged the gap between the two academic levels, offering elementary students support in holiday activities.



The collaborative efforts sparked potential pathways to future collaborations, with some WNY Tech Academy students discovering a newfound passion for working with younger students. These experiences became more than just a day of shared activities; they transformed into opportunities for personal and professional growth. As laughter echoed through the classroom, genuine bonds were formed, fostering a sense of community and mentorship.

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.

Exploring the Justice Academy experience

By Lyndsay Herkimer

In the vibrant halls of Genesee Community College (GCC), a group of aspiring legal minds embarks on a transformative journey within the hallowed halls of the Justice Academy. Fueled by a passion for the intricacies of the legal field, these students are eager to immerse themselves in a comprehensive course of study that will shape their futures.

The Justice Academy isn't just a typical academic program; it's a dynamic experience designed to provide these promising students with a panoramic understanding of diverse legal professions. Beyond textbooks and lectures, the curriculum includes on-site job shadowing and internships, offering firsthand exposure to the inner workings of the legal system.

As these future legal eagles delve into their studies, the program also offers the added benefit of earning Genesee Community College credit. This academic groundwork serves as a solid foundation for those aspiring to become attorneys, police officers,

corrections officers, social workers, investigators, forensic scientists, and more.

Mercy Flight and the Genesee County Sheriff's Office have opened their doors to these budding legal professionals, providing them with invaluable insights into the real-world applications of their studies. These field trips aren't mere excursions; they are windows into the future careers awaiting these students.

Witnessing the inner workings of emergency medical services at Mercy Flight and gaining firsthand knowledge of law enforcement procedures at the Genesee County Sheriff's Office ignited a newfound sense of purpose and determination among the Justice Academy students.

In the heart of Batavia, a new generation of legal minds is being molded, ready to embark on diverse career paths within the legal landscape.



Annual counselors' luncheon

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Mount Morris and Batavia Career and Technical Education (CTE) Centers recently held their annual Counselors' events. During these sessions, school counselors explored classrooms and engaged with students enrolled in CTE programs, gaining insights into opportunities within the skilled trades field. At Mount Morris, Chef Robert Derin, Ms. Jay, and Culinary Arts students showcased their talents with a delightful lunch, while students from various programs, such as Conservation, AG Production, and Metal Trades, presented holiday treats they crafted. Similarly, Batavia's event included counselor visits to different programs, a Q&A session regarding programs and career paths, and a lunch prepared by Chef Alberto Santos, Teaching Assistant Denise Kaus, and culinary art students. The afternoon provided counselors with the chance to observe students applying their skills in real-world scenarios.



CTE tours allow sophomores to learn about the programs that are offered at Batavia CTE Center

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Throughout November, a multitude of local high school sophomores eagerly seized the opportunity to embark on an insightful journey through the corridors of the Batavia Career Technical Education (CTE) Center. The purpose? To immerse themselves in a captivating array of programs designed specifically for juniors and seniors.

Enthusiastically participating in this educational journey were over 600 students who navigated through the labyrinth of classrooms, devoting a thoughtful 6 minutes to each distinctive program. From the captivating realms of graphic arts and culinary arts to the fascinating domains of animal science, building trades, and criminal justice, the sophomores encountered endless possibilities of career paths for the future.

"Sophomore tours are an opportunity for prospective students to learn about each of the Career and Tech Programs we have to offer," explained Courtney Gates-Ewert, Coordinator of Student Services at Batavia CTE Center. "These tours help students decide which programs they may want to spend time in during half-day Visits and to help determine which program they would like to attend next year as juniors."

This structured and engaging tour went beyond the conventional, providing students with more than just a glimpse into the diverse career fields. It became a dynamic platform for direct interactions with both seasoned instructors and current students. Questions flowed freely, curiosity ignited, as the sophomores obtained profound insights, not just into the mechanics of each program but also the real-world applications awaiting them in the professional landscape. This hands-on exploration of the Batavia CTE Center unveiled a myriad of potential career paths, enriching the students' understanding and fueling their aspirations for the future.

LeRoy Central School District 5th graders' sweet success

By Lyndsay Herkimer

LeRoy Central School District (CSD), inspired by the innovative project at Attica Central Schools involving high school students, embarked on a chocolate mold initiative within their 5th-grade STEAM lab. This project is a collaborative effort led by Karen Tran, LeRoy CSD STEAM teacher, and supported by Emilee Williamson, Specialist, GV BOCES School Library/Media Services, and Karyn Winters and Kate Garner from the Genesee County Business Education Alliance (BEA). Students began their journey by creating intricate 3D models for chocolate molds.

Attica Central Schools had previously undertaken a similar venture with high school students, igniting the spark to replicate this project in younger students. The collaboration aimed to bridge the gap between education and local industries, fostering early interest in potential career paths within the region.

During the project, students not only designed their chocolate molds but also delved into the intricacies of packaging design. To enhance their understanding, they watched a video from Oliver's Candies, gaining insights into the world of chocolate making and molding. This virtual tour became a valuable component of their educational experience, providing a



broader perspective on the industry.

The initiative expanded further when the students, under the guidance of BEA and Genesee Valley BOCES, visited OrCon Industries Corp. The visit served a dual purpose: introducing students to the packaging aspect of their project and connecting them with local industries. The students witnessed firsthand the application of mathematical and scientific principles in packaging design, underlining the real-world relevance of their classroom learning.

While LeRoy CSD students didn't physically visit Oliver's, the video presentation provided them with a window into the chocolate-molding process. Attica's prior success demonstrated the potential impact of such projects on students' engagement and understanding of local career opportunities.

Williamson emphasized the significance of exposing students to regional career options early, aiming to retain talent within the local community. The collaboration between education and industry showcased the success of the initiative, with the goal of not only creating holiday gifts but also replicating the program in other districts to further strengthen the connection between education and local industries.

Mount Morris criminal justice student serves as the Secretary of NYS SkillsUSA

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Emily Wagner, a senior from the Perry Central School District, had always been passionate about criminal justice. Her journey took an exciting turn when she enrolled in the Criminal Justice Program at Mount Morris Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center. Little did she know that this decision would open doors to extraordinary experiences and opportunities.

In June of 2023, Emily found herself in Atlanta, Georgia, representing New York State at the SkillsUSA Nationals. As the secretary of NYS SkillsUSA, she played a crucial role on the team. The highlight of their trip was the Leverage training, which provided valuable insights into managing and running a student training room. The skills she acquired would prove essential as she prepared to lead her own room during the Fall Leadership event.

The Nationals was not just about competitions and training; it was a platform for forging strong connections. Emily and her team formed better friendships within their group and established bonds with students from other states. The delegate session, lasting five hours, was an eye-opener. Witnessing the dynamics of large meetings and the ability to reach agreements among different states left a lasting impression on Emily.

The team discovered their theme for 2023 at Nationals – "No Limits." This theme would set the tone for their future endeavors. Inspired and equipped with new ideas, Emily returned home, ready to implement what she had learned.

August 2023 brought another exciting opportunity – Summer Leadership Training in Albany, New York. State leaders trained Emily and her team to be more prepared for Fall Leadership. The training covered everything from table etiquette and the flag ceremony to parliamentary procedure and theme development. Emily felt a significant personal development during this trip, gaining a better understanding of handling situations without letting emotions interfere.

As the summer came to an end, Emily eagerly awaited the Washington Leadership Training Institute (WLTi) in Washington, D.C. This four-day event held each September promised advanced leadership training, tours of monuments and museums, panel discussions with government officials, and a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. The highlight of WLTi was the in-person visits with elected officials on Capitol Hill. Emily and her fellow students had the opportunity to advocate for SkillsUSA and career and technical education. Sharing personal experiences, they passionately appealed for continued support. These visits left both the students and congressional leaders inspired, realizing the impact of their voices.

Emily's journey from Perry Central School District to the National Leadership and Skills Conference was a testament to the transformative power of SkillsUSA and the opportunities it has provided for personal and professional growth.

As November approached, Emily and the other officers of SkillsUSA found themselves immersed in the preparations for the Fall Conference, scheduled for November 5-7, 2023, in Albany, New York. The event was a significant undertaking, attracting students from all corners of the state eager to enhance their skills and embrace the opportunities presented by SkillsUSA.

Representing nearly 400,000 career and technical education students and teachers, NY SKILLSUSA played a crucial role in shaping the future of these students. Emily, as one of the officers, took on a leadership role in organizing and conducting the training sessions. Alongside her fellow officers, she was responsible for ensuring that the event lived up to the high standards set by SkillsUSA.

The Fall Conference was not just a gathering; it was a platform for students to hone their hands-on skills against industry standards in over 140 occupational areas. From 3-D Animation to Welding, the diverse range of skills showcased the breadth of opportunities available through SkillsUSA. The event also focused on the SkillsUSA Framework, emphasizing Personal Skills, Workplace Skills, and Technical Skills Grounded in Academics. This integrated framework was seamlessly woven into classroom curricula, ensuring a holistic approach to education and skill development.

Emily, with her fellow officers, led the charge in imparting transformative career-readiness skills to the participants. Teamwork, communication, professionalism, leadership — these were the building blocks that would fuel the success of the students not just in their chosen fields but in life beyond the conference.

"I cherished every moment because it was an amazing experience. I'd give the world for just five more minutes. It felt like being on cloud nine, contributing to the development of future leaders," said Emily.

SkillsUSA isn't just an organization; it is a vital solution to the ongoing skills gap. In a world where highly skilled jobs outnumbered professionals ready to fill them, SkillsUSA stands as a beacon, having served more than 14.6 million diverse, difference-making members since its inception in 1965.

As Emily and her team worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the Fall Conference, they understood the significance of their roles. They were not just organizing an event; they were shaping the future of the next generation, contributing to a solution for the skills gap, and instilling in students the confidence and abilities needed for success in their chosen careers. The Fall Conference was not just an event on the calendar; it was an embodiment of the mission and impact of SkillsUSA, and Emily was at the forefront, leading the charge.

Criminal Justice Instructor Judith Essig reflects on Emily's journey. "I am very proud of Emily for stepping out of her comfort zone, challenging herself, and growing in her leadership skills. She will achieve her goals. I can't wait to see the wonderful things she will go on to do!"



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 2022-2023 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



Mount Morris BOCES students immerse in educational wonder at the Autism Nature Trail

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Genesee Valley (GV) BOCES Mount Morris Elementary Program students embarked on an enriching educational adventure to the Autism Nature Trail (ANT), a one-mile loop designed to be an inclusive oasis for nature exploration and engagement. Nestled into the heart of the Letchworth State Park, the ANT became a beacon of inclusivity, providing a haven for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and offering a unique opportunity for the entire community to connect with nature.

The ANT, born from the visionary minds of the "ANT Aunts" in 2014, aimed to create an environment where every individual, regardless of abilities, could find comfort and adventure in nature. With unwavering dedication, these trailblazers transformed their vision into reality, culminating in the grand opening of the trail in October 2021.

What made the ANT truly special was the collaborative spirit that brought it to life. Local residents, volunteers, and organizations joined forces to contribute their time, resources, and expertise. The collaboration with GV BOCES Career and Technical Education students added creative elements along the trail, enhancing the overall experience for visitors and fostering a sense of community ownership.

The trail, continually evolving, embraced feedback from the community, ensuring it remained a dynamic and engaging outdoor space. The success of the ANT inspired other communities worldwide to replicate its model, creating an interconnected network of inclusive nature trails.

For GV BOCES Mount Morris Elementary Program students, the ANT wasn't just a recreational space; it became an educational resource. Teachers led informative and engaging tours and provided students with unique opportunities to learn about nature, biodiversity and inclusivity.

Sustainability is at the core of the ANT's design, with efforts to keep the trail environmentally friendly and locally sourced. This commitment not only nurtured nature but also strengthened the trail's connection to the local community, making it an integral part of the area's fabric.

As the ANT stands as a testament to collaboration, community, and inclusivity, it continues to inspire projects worldwide. Its legacy goes beyond being a trail – it's a symbol of accessibility and harmony with nature, weaving together individuals of diverse abilities in the shared joy of connecting with the great outdoors.

The Department of Labor hosts workplace violence prevention training at Genesee Valley BOCES



In the midst of transformative changes to New York State's workplace safety regulations, school districts found themselves no longer exempt from the revised Workplace Violence Prevention law. As the deadline of January 4, 2024 approached, Genesee Valley BOCES took the lead in guiding districts through this transition. Under the guidance of Charles Riley from the NY State Department of Labor, the training session aimed to clarify the intricacies of the new requirements. From formulating comprehensive policy statements to conducting risk assessments, the session covered essential elements of implementing a robust workplace violence prevention program. With school districts now obliged to meet specified benchmarks by May 5, 2024, participants gained insights into crafting written programs tailored for larger employers, placing particular emphasis on incident reporting systems and employee training. As New York schools adapt to this paradigm shift, the collaboration between Genesee Valley BOCES and the Department of Labor serves as a guiding light, illuminating the path toward heightened workplace safety.

Students dove into the world of Yayoi Kusama with these vibrant acrylic masterpieces

By Lyndsay Herkimer

Diving into the world of Yayoi Kusama with these vibrant acrylic masterpieces! Our talented students unleashed their creativity, weaving dots and circles into mesmerizing patterns and rhythmic movements. Exploring the magic of warm vs. cool colors and contrasting hues made this lesson a blast! Starting with a simple 'dot,' they crafted art that's as unique as it is bold.



The Mission of the Genesee Valley BOCES is to lead collaboratively in creating quality solutions to emerging educational challenges.



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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.

