

TOGETHER

June/July 2021

Learning Life Skills on a Chess Board

by Chris Klem

Every Thursday at 2 p.m., something extraordinary happens at Terry Taylor Elementary School: the Chess Club meets. In a room set with a dozen chess boards, about 15-18 eager students in grades 1-5 find an opponent, sit down and begin to play. Once started, you can hear a pin drop in this large room filled with concentration.

“It can be surprising to see how kids respond,” said Speech-Language Pathologist Lisa Ruestow. “They actually like the rules, the strategies, the thinking ahead and figuring out options. Chess helps them understand that actions have consequences and that they have to be responsible for their decisions. Playing the game is helping them with social interactions and regulating their emotions in other life situations, too.”

The only special Club rules are that everyone must be respectful and compliment their opponent’s play at least once before the end of the game. Students learn how to cope with failure along with success; in the game of chess, there is no losing, just learning.



Students learn to win with grace and kindness, even when they beat a teacher.

“Students get a chance to meet and play with kids of different ages from other classes who they might not normally run into,” said Ruestow. “Everyone is equal in Chess Club. Emilio is a second-grader who is serious and already an extremely good player. Student chess player Passionate likes teaching new members or even adults who don’t know how to play. She is very patient. One of our newer members, Nate, is still most comfortable observing and reading a book about chess. He’s coming to it in his own time.”



Chess gives students the chance to make new friends.

The Chess Club is only a few months old, but it has been very popular with students, who look forward to participating. All of these students work in 8:1:2 and 6:1:2 classrooms during the school day as part of their BOCES 2 program. Coming to Chess Club lets some of them turn the tables, where the student becomes the teacher. Ruestow credits support from teachers and staff members for making the program a success. “It is a very collaborative and cooperative activity – for adults and students,” she said. “We all have to play well together.”



Players take time to think and look ahead before finally making their moves.



Ruestow (left) checks in on the many competitive Chess Club players.

Editor's Note: Photos of students and staff in this issue were taken following appropriate social distancing measures and/or with masks in place.

Criminal Justice Students Participate in Simulated Disaster

by Amy LaGambino, CTE Senior Teacher Aide

Education in action was experienced by the Criminal Justice senior class through a mass casualty exercise. Students met in a conference room, where they were told a tornado had hit the building, causing explosions. As first responders, they would be the first on-scene to deal with the casualties. Work-Based Learning Coordinator Cindy Christensen presented the scenario to the class. “As soon as they heard the details, they started making plans,” she said. Students discussed what supplies they would need and what actions they’d take.

Students ran to their usual classroom, but found it in disarray. Tables and chairs were tossed about. They had only seconds to spread out, find everyone, assess their conditions, and begin stabilizing the victims until medical professionals would arrive. They found eight casualties: four live actors and four training manikins.

The live “victims” were portrayed by teachers Stephen Thorndike, Sarah Spindler, Theresa Cortez and Work-Based Learning Coordinator Brandilyn Steves. Each had visible injuries, using simulations made of latex wounds and fake blood. The “victims” were screaming, moaning and calling out for help. By using live participants, the exercise taught students the unpredictability of human behavior. When asked to stay still until medical help arrived, “victims” were often uncooperative, getting up to search for others or feigning disorientation.

The training manikins also had visible wounds, and they were labeled with other conditions. Some manikins required CPR and defibrillation. In searching the disaster area, Brock Gossling (Brockport) found a manikin under a pile of debris.

After 20 minutes, students had the participants stabilized and the exercise ended. In their debriefing session with teacher Tim Steves, students talked about the techniques they used. Robert Torres (Holley) said he found Miss Spindler, introduced himself and asked if he could help her before bandaging her leg wound. Joe Grasso (Hilton) found Mrs. Steves, who had a visible head wound. He obtained gauze for her head and determined she was going into shock. He was not able to find a blanket so he used his jacket to cover her.

The entire exercise was videotaped, allowing students to study their own actions after the event. “Being first-time students going through this kind of exercise, I’m happy with the results,” said Tim Steves. “Hopefully, you will use this experience during your careers.”



Learning New Ways to Empower Student Communication

by Chris Klem

The BOCES 2 Assistive Technology department recently hosted a special two-day professional development training for dozens of speech-language specialists. Presenting via video conference was John Halloran, a well-known speech-language pathologist and trainer with The Center for AAC & Autism. He is also co-author of the Language Acquisition through Motor Planning (LAMP) approach and Words for Life, an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) app that gives nonverbal individuals with autism a means to communicate. LAMP is based on giving users access to core words on a speech-generating device and then teaching



Decorated cookies were used to recreate the Words for Life iPad screen used by BOCES 2 therapists.

vocabulary through sensory-rich activities.

Many of our students use LAMP Words for Life on iPads with great success. It has become such a valuable tool that several members of the speech department had a little fun with the highly recognizable app. To celebrate the training event, teachers Megan Knopp and Molly Penrose created a replica of the main app interface using decorated cookies. Where’s the icon for “YUM”?



Assistive Technology Department Chair Leigh Nenni relays audience questions to the presenter.

Future Phlebotomists Gain Work Experience

by Amy LaGambino, CTE Senior Teacher Aide

BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Phlebotomy and Laboratory Science students have a new opportunity: phlebotomy training at a local collection station. It's a unique experience for high school students. Four students are participating in this first-ever cooperative work option.

Seniors Alexandra Mendoza (Holley) and Sara Abdel (Greece) were the first two students to participate. Each spent one full week working with a trainer at a collection site, which is the same process that new hires follow in this workplace. Senior Alayna Hamlin (Brockport) and junior Ava Franklin (Kendall) will also complete the internship later this school year.

In order to qualify for the professional phlebotomy certification exam, candidates must complete 30 successful blood draws (or "sticks") on live patients. In the CTE classroom lab at WEMOCO, there are state-of-the-art IV practice arms that have simulated blood to help prepare students for live draws. Teacher Jim Payne said, "Students have translated well the skills learned on the phlebotomy training arm, which allowed them to begin successfully drawing patients' blood on the first day at the collection site."

One nice feature of the IV practice arms is that their veins are easy to find, and they do not have any personal issues. In real-life draws, students faced numerous challenges, which they translated into useful lessons. During their internships, students worked with babies, difficult adults and patients who fainted. As Mendoza said, "Many people come in and right away say they are either a hard stick or that their veins roll."

Right from the beginning, the skills Mendoza brought from the classroom were recognized and praised. Her trainer said, "Wow, you actually know how to tie a tourniquet!" Although she had to identify herself as a trainee for each blood draw, she had many compliments praising her for providing a painless needle stick. One patient told the trainer that she wants Mendoza for all her future blood draws!

Abdel also was told that her skills were excellent. Her trainer said, "You watched me draw two times and you already have it!"

Students felt confident with their skills at drawing blood, but they learned from the internship that they excel at another skill – making patients feel at ease. Their trainers pointed out that their demeanors were good for dealing with the public. Mendoza is a people person, and she loved the interaction with patients. Abdel enjoyed making people feel comfortable and doing something good for them. Both students shared that they kept patients talking, and calmly explained each step in the process so patients were never startled.

Being in a real workplace was a "confidence booster," according to Mendoza. "I now know I can do this," she said. Abdel was happy with being treated as an equal to the professional phlebotomists. "The staff was welcoming and supportive," she said. For Mendoza and Abdel, the onsite week affirmed their goals to pursue phlebotomy professionally. They both shared that it was amazing to put the theory and simulations they've experienced in class to action in real life. Both students plan to attend college in the future, but first, they intend to enter the workforce as phlebotomists after high school graduation.

As noted earlier, 30 successful "sticks" must be verified before a potential phlebotomist can take the certification exam. In their one-week assignments, Mendoza had more than 120 successful sticks, and Abdel had 114 – a measure of success for their skills and for this new CTE partnership.



Holley senior Alexandra Mendoza is all thumbs up at blood draw clinic.

Living the California Lifestyle at Village Plaza

by Chris Klem

If you could go anywhere, where would you go? The answer was easy for students in the Village Plaza Transition program – Los Angeles, CA: home of celebrities, singers, Hollywood and Disneyland. With the help of the entire Village Plaza team, including teachers, occupational and physical therapists, social workers, and aides, a virtual fieldtrip was planned to take students to the Golden State.

The special day incorporated many hands-on experiences and learning opportunities designed to give students the chance to break from the ordinary and use their imaginations. Village Plaza student stars began their L.A. tour with an Oscar-worthy "Roll Out the Red Carpet" skit that saw them stylishly walking

their own red carpet. Then they got down to serious work on Hollywood-themed word games and reading projects.

Their virtual trip to the west coast continued with Fitness Club at the Beach (exercise outside on a warm, sunny Rochester morning), meditation and yoga (no sand, but plenty of beach towels), and a trip to the Smoothie Bar (delicious drinks complete with tiny paper umbrellas).

The day's activities continued with Job Club members exploring different jobs at Disneyland, like Make-up Artist, Food Service, Horticulturist and Silhouette Artist. They learned a little Spanish, tried California rolls and wrote "vacation" postcards to friends.

Finding Truth Through Music

by Chris Klem

There are as many paths to every truth as there are people, and thanks to a Social Justice class at Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children, students are learning how to find their own paths. The class, led by teachers Tim Baker and Kyle Norton, combines history with current events, and teaches critical thinking skills. It gives young people a chance to understand the challenges of inequality and bias in society, and find positive, meaningful ways to deal with it. A recent project used music to bring students face-to-face with their personal feelings about these difficult subjects.

Students were tasked with choosing four songs that address topics like racism, bullying, mental health, gender inequality and more. They explored their reactions to each song: Why did the song hold power for them? How did it relate to their own lives? How did it make them feel? What did they learn? Each student created a slide presentation, shared it with a room full of peers and staff, and fielded unscripted questions.

Jair spoke about unfair racial stereotypes, citing songs by Lil Baby, Polo G and Joyner Lucas. "Blacks have stereotypes about whites and ... white people have stereotypes about blacks," Jair said. "Somebody must break the cycle of racism, so we must start somewhere." Danielle shared deeply personal stories of anxiety and being bullied. Alessia Cara's "Scars to Your Beautiful" touched her. "Everyone is beautiful in their own way even if others don't think so," she said.

"Public speaking is not something any of these kids wanted to do," said Baker. "They not only did it, they did it extraordinarily well. When they open up like this, they find that they have so much in common – the music they like, the experiences they have, the way that they feel. I'm so proud of their bravery and how far they have come."



Danielle (at right) shares personal stories and songs that have inspired her.

"Sometimes brave is learning a new language"

by Chris Klem

Fourth and fifth grade students in BOCES 2 teacher Cori Smith's English as a New Language (ENL) class at Brockport's Hill Elementary School have been exploring what it means to be brave. They began by recognizing their own bravery in the face of difficulty. For some, it was being afraid of lightning or trying to learn a new skill; for others, it was learning origami or coming to a new school. They wrote stories about their personal experiences and shared them with classmates. Finally, they read "Sometimes Brave," a novel by Trista Wilson about a young girl their age, dealing with homelessness, bullying and finding friendship.



Author Trista Wilson engages in a discussion with ENL students.

"The kids immediately responded to the story," said Smith. "Their enthusiasm for reading the book pushed them to take on the challenging new vocabulary and increase their word comprehension. It also really brought them more closely together as a group. This book is a great learning tool."

The class was particularly excited to learn that the author, an old friend of their teacher, wanted to stop in to meet them. Wilson, who now lives in Kansas, taught special education classes in Rochester for many years. She was in town on May 6, and spent the afternoon visiting with her fans at Hill Elementary School. Students greeted her with many questions, not only about her characters, but also about the process of writing and where she gets her ideas. Wilson even fielded queries about tornadoes, earthquakes and what it's like to live in Kansas.

Several of the students wrote a special poem dedicated to the visiting author that included thoughts like:

Sometimes brave is learning a new language

Sometimes brave is answering a question

Sometimes brave is doing things you're not good at

Sometimes brave is going out on a limb

"This is my first opportunity to have an in-person visit with my readers, and it's a great thrill for me," said Wilson. "I'm just so glad that my story has touched them."



WEMOCO SkillsUSA Program Wins Award

by Ashley Decker

The SkillsUSA Chapter at the BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center at WEMOCO has received the Gold Chapter of Distinction award in the Chapter Excellence Program. To earn this honor, the chapter had to document numerous criteria detailing the chapter's activities, which included completing a budget, creating a Program of Work calendar and teaching the SkillsUSA framework. The framework encompasses career-ready skills grounded in technical, workplace and personal skills that are linked to employability.



From left, SkillsUSA members Lauren Dauphinee and Erin Kuhn.

"The criteria of the Chapter Excellence Program has helped me learn to better lead and serve my community," said senior SkillsUSA President Lauren Dauphinee (Criminal Justice, Greece). "My favorite project was being able to make and deliver care packages to local law enforcement."

SkillsUSA members at WEMOCO enter competitions for their respective program's skills, and they also participate in professional development activities and community service. WEMOCO had 131 SkillsUSA members participating during the 2020-21 school year.

"Earning this award and completing all of the Chapter Excellence activities has helped me learn the SkillsUSA Framework to help me succeed in my future career in law enforcement," said senior SkillsUSA Parliamentarian Erin Kuhn (Criminal Justice, Churchville-Chili).

As part of the Chapter Excellence Program application process, students had to plan and carry out several activities and document them as SMART goals. Main activities students organized and highlighted in their application included:

- Breast Cancer Walk
- Clothing Donation
- #CTEisEssential Masks
- Law Enforcement Care Packages
- Professional Member Recognition
- Classroom Competitions and Award Ceremony

"We are beyond excited for students, faculty and staff to earn this recognition," said SkillsUSA Co-Lead Advisor Brandilyn Steves. "In a year where we weren't sure how much we could feasibly do, if anything, WEMOCO's SkillsUSA chapter showed that there is nothing that will stand in the way of true leadership."

Each professional member received a Gold Chapter of Distinction banner for their classroom or office, as well as a Gold Chapter of Distinction pin.

Career and Technical Education Center Promotes Equity Through Multilingual Resources

by Ashley Decker

Mid-West Regional Bilingual Resource Network (RBERN) at BOCES 2 recently helped with an initiative at the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center at WEMOCO. RBERN created CTE program promotional materials in a variety of languages to promote equity and access for multilingual students and families. The videos and documents on the CTE Multilingual Resources page (<https://www.monroe2boces.org/CTEMultilingualResources.aspx>) provide an overview of career and technical education programs available at WEMOCO. These multilingual resources are available in Arabic, Chinese (Simplified/Mandarin), English, Nepali, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. Translations were provided by Monroe One BOCES and Raland Translation Services.

"CTE is committed to providing quality experiences to all students," said Assistant Principal Paula Boughton. "Our new multilingual resources are one example of how we are meeting the needs of students, and I'm thankful to collaborate with RBERN to support our English Language Learner (ELL) and Multilingual Learner (MLL) students."

Tracie Fishman is an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and team leader at Greece Olympia High School who works with MLLs. She said her students found the information in the video very helpful, and they have a better idea of what they will be able to do if they enroll in a CTE program at WEMOCO.

"The newly translated multilingual resources for the CTE Center are fantastic!" said Fishman. "At Olympia, we promote the CTE programs with all students. In the past, all the materials were only provided in English, so counselors, ESL teachers and classroom teachers worked with students to make these resources more comprehensible. With these new multilingual resources, including translated videos, ELLs and their families can more easily and readily access the information in their preferred language. It's wonderful!"

The goal of RBERN is to assist districts and schools in creating an educational environment for ELLs which engages everyone in meaningful teaching and learning. RBERN helps to build capacity within school communities to cultivate strong leaders; high quality, meaningful instruction; and welcoming, inclusive environments for MLLs. RBERN encompasses Monroe One BOCES, BOCES 2, Rochester City School District, Genesee Valley BOCES and Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES.

Condolences to:

Marion Bulger on the death of her mother-in-law; **Bridget Kittel** on the death of her father; **Sally Patricia Lucas** on the death of her sister; **Kristen McClellan** on the death of her mother; **Jennifer Probst** on the death of her grandfather.

End of Year Celebrations

CTE Recognition Drive Through

On the BOCES 2 WEMOCO campus, students participated in a CTE Drive Through Recognition event in June. Students in each program were assigned a specific night and time to drive up and receive certificates from their teachers and pose for a photo. Congratulations to these students!



Center-Based Graduation Ceremony

Sixteen students graduated from the Center-Based Program in June. Staff members introduced each candidate, sharing their strength and some personal moments. "The seniors in this program have been each other's strongest supporters," said Special Education Supervisor Ken Sharp. ELA teacher Ryan Maier encouraged students to continue to be supportive and help make the lives of the people around them better in his role as guest speaker at the ceremony. Congratulations to the graduates!



Retiree Recognition Event on June 17

Retirees from the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years were recognized at this event and received their commemorative items. Congratulations to all the retirees!



Department for Exceptional Children Moving On Ceremony on June 17

This event recognizes students' many achievements during their time in school. Congratulations!



Project SEARCH Graduation

The Project SEARCH Class of 2021 interns were recognized for their hard work and achievements at their graduation ceremony on June 23. All four interns worked at the University of Rochester Medical Center this year. After certificates were distributed, each intern spoke about their job experiences, mentioned what they learned, and thanked those who supported them. Congratulations to Justin Lewis, Janelle Manning, Shandon Smith and Trinahtye Prior!



Digital Learning Impacts CTE Classes

by Ashley Decker

When students transitioned to online learning in the spring of 2020, it became evident that schools needed to embrace online learning tools. Teachers and staff at the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center adapted lessons and found new ways to provide students with hands-on, career-based learning for the 2020-21 school year.

In HVAC/Plumbing classes, teachers Dan DeFazio and Dominic Corona adapted their lessons to coincide with digital learning, both inside the classroom and remotely. This is the first year that students in the HVAC/Plumbing program at WEMOCO have used a digital textbook, which has allowed them to perform virtual house calls that simulate what they would be doing while performing a service call in-person.

Students receive the call, visit the virtual location, and then work step-by-step through the order to replace parts and address the problem. They can work through the service issue, addressing thermostats, checking pilot lights, refrigeration, gas furnaces, electrical circuits, heat pumps and more. If the student misdiagnoses the problem, it will not work, and they will need to reassess the situation.

"It's useful to learn how to do the job, and it's pretty close to being the real thing, without being the real thing," said Tristan McFadden (Holley).

Students were able to do their lab work at home while still in the hybrid model, which allowed them to work on assignments during remote days and then observe that work in-person while on campus.

DeFazio and Corona are two of the many teachers at CTE who are keeping students engaged, motivated and producing **amazing** work this year.



Putting Good into the World

by Chris Klem

In addition to their academic studies, job preparation and life-skill-building, students in the BOCES 2 Transition Program at Roberts Wesleyan College are learning the importance of giving back. After recent discussions around how individuals can put good into the world, six students in teacher Amanda Cupido's class found their own unique way to contribute to their college community.



The Transition Program is located on the Roberts Wesleyan College campus, and several of the students also participate in the Bridge to Earning, Learning and Living (BELL) Program. All feel deeply connected to their college community. Their willingness to contribute was shared with Roberts Wesleyan Assistant Facilities Director Daniel Kilker, who was thrilled with the idea and happy for help.

"There were areas of the campus covered with leaves and large branches that had blown down during the winter," said School Psychologist Gretchen Schober. "The grass couldn't be mowed without collecting all the debris first. Students recognized that this was something they could do together to make a real difference."

The students' first effort in mid-April was snowed out, but they persevered. On April 29, the determined crew, aided by Schober, Physical Education teacher Eric Stevenson and classroom aide Cindy Confer, spent about an hour-and-a-half raking and clearing the grounds, moving more than three large carts full of debris out of the area.

The group is working with Kilker to find more ways to help before the end of this school year. "The consensus from students was that they felt really proud," said Schober. "They felt great about themselves and their accomplishment. They said, 'We did something really good!'"



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Award-winning publication

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Vision

Monroe 2–Orleans BOCES is the educational partner of choice. We strive for continuous improvement in serving the diverse needs of our community, helping all students achieve their full potential.

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For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/addresses.html> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481. Please note that those wishing to file a complaint may also do so through the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html>. See also New York State Executive Law 296.



At Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children, students are filling the halls with art. Alexis (Greece) has used her talent to make a powerful statement about justice and equity.

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