

# TOGETHER

April/May 2023

## County Executive and Local Representatives Visit WEMOCO

by Jennifer Merkel



Medical Laboratory Professionals Week was April 24-28. To commemorate the industry celebration, local representatives visited WEMOCO Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center, including Monroe County Executive Adam Bello.

To kick off the week, Bello arrived on the BOCES 2 campus on April 24 to tour the CTE Center and visit the Medical Laboratory Assisting and Phlebotomy classroom. BOCES 2 representatives, including CTE Executive Principal Jill Slavny, District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci and Center for Workforce Development Director Shawna Gareau-Kurtz, guided Bello through WEMOCO, showing off the industry-aligned spaces that build the future workforce.

"The community can be proud of these students for choosing to pursue a career in the medical laboratory profession – a field challenged by a severe staffing shortage," said Bello. "It's vital work that will save lives. Thank you for the tour of your wonderful facility and educating me on the experiments you are conducting in your classroom. I learned so much from all of you!"

After the tour, Bello spent time in the Medical Laboratory Assisting and Phlebotomy classroom. Not only did he watch demonstrations by students, but he proclaimed the week Medical Laboratory Professionals Week in Monroe County.

The proclamation was created using "whereas" statements written by first-year students in CTE teacher Jim Payne's Medical Laboratory Assisting and Phlebotomy program. These statements included acknowledging "the diversified employees of the laboratory include pathologists, medical laboratory scientists, histologists, cytotechnologists, microbiologists, medical laboratory technicians, laboratory assistants, phlebotomists, medical secretaries, transcriptionists, and laboratory clerical staff who perform their duties 24 hours per day, every day of the year."

Furthermore, students included data about the demand on the profession in comparison to the workforce shortage.

"More than 14 billion laboratory tests are performed in the United States each year, and 26,000 new laboratory professionals will be needed annually to meet the growing need of the United States' population, while only 4,000 to 6,000 graduates will join the workforce each year," read another statement.

Payne's first-year students were on hand to hear the proclamation presentation from Bello. Students prepared presentations of their own to demonstrate their industry-aligned knowledge about blood tubes.

"Students explained how the blood tubes chemicals ensure a good sample, what are the common tests that are done with that sample and how those results lead to a diagnosis of common diseases," said Payne. "They created a poster about their tubes, tests and diseases, along with a one-page flyer as a takeaway. Students also prepared an activity, or manipulative, to help explain their topic."

In addition to Bello's visit, additional legislative representatives visited the classroom during the week including Monroe County Legislators Blake Keller and Rick Milne; Assemblymembers Sarah Clark, Demond Meeks, Harry Bronson and Jen Lunsford; and Constituent Services Coordinator for State Senator Jeremy Cooney, Cynshei' Wilson.

Prior to the visits, Payne and student representatives attended the April 11 Monroe County Legislature meeting to receive a proclamation.



## BOCES 2 Classified Staff Day Returns

by Nicole Mauro

This school year, BOCES 2 has focused on how everyone has their own story. There is no better place to share a story than around a campfire! BOCES 2 hosted a campfire-themed Classified Staff Day on April 28 in the Professional Development Center. For the first Classified Staff Day since 2019, staff were invited to take advantage of professional and personal development opportunities led by guest speakers, and a benefits fair to learn more about what is available to employees. Staff also enjoyed lunch catered by the Original Charbroil House and dessert made by CTE Baking students. District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development Marijo Pearson presented to all attendees the meaning of belonging and the importance of fostering a culture of inclusivity in the workplace. They allowed for staff to reflect within their groups and encouraged everyone to be present and aware moving forward. To commemorate the day, attendees received a mug filled with goodies made by Positive Promotions and Personal Services students.



## CTE Students Perform Many Roles at BOCES 2 Annual Meeting

by Nicole Mauro



During the BOCES 2 Annual Meeting on April 12, BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education (CTE) students had the opportunity to exhibit the skills they are working on in the classroom. With guidance from their instructors, students from culinary, baking and food services developed the menu, prepared the food and served guests in the BOCES 2 Professional Development Center.

Attendees included superintendents, board members and administrators from all nine BOCES 2 component school districts. Guests enjoyed iced tea-filled mason jars, hand-passed hors d'oeuvres, a grazing table, a full buffet and dessert, all executed by students. Hospitality and Applied Skills (HaAS) students also made the event memorable by handcrafting each guest's napkin holder. Following dinner, all students working the event, including Criminal Justice and Personal Services students, introduced themselves, connected with their district leaders and gathered for group photos.

The meeting portion of the evening was held prior to dinner where attendees heard from District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci, Board President Dennis Laba, and Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Steve Roland. BOCES 2 leaders shared their appreciation of component district partnerships and reminded attendees that they can overcome any obstacle together. "The work we are doing truly makes an impact," said Antonacci.





## Summer at the Center – Registration Ends Soon!

Do you know students entering grades 7-9 in the fall who would love to get their hands on tools of the trades? Register them for Summer at the Center! Campers can learn new skills at WEMOCO Career and Technical Education Center.

Camps include:



For full descriptions of the camps and a link to registration, visit [www.monroe2boces.org/summer](http://www.monroe2boces.org/summer).

Summer at the Center is a collaboration between Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Center for Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education.



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## Introducing the Second Chance BOCES-wear Shop



Is your BOCES 2-branded sweatshirt a little too large? Did you decide that pink t-shirt with the rhinestones is not really your style or the tie-dye hoodie you wanted to love is just a bit too small? Don't throw them away! Give your unwanted wardrobe items another chance to delight someone else – donate gently-used, BOCES-branded apparel to the new Second Chance BOCES-wear Shop! There they are sold at reduced prices, with all proceeds benefiting the BOCES 2 Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO).

Donate any gently used BOCES apparel, like SEPTO shirts, department or program clothing, or items from the official BOCES 2 Apparel Shop. Send donations to Donna Graham at Exceptional Children Learning Center (ECLC) or contact Tina Bonfiglio at [tbonfigl@monroe2boces.org](mailto:tbonfigl@monroe2boces.org).

Transition students in the Work-Based Learning (WBL) program run the business and welcome visitors to the shop at ECLC. These students also create brand-new, colorful BOCES 2 t-shirts for sale. Shoppers are able to “try before they buy” by making an appointment at the shop. WBL students operate a convenient online version of the store. Check out the online [Second Chance BOCES-wear Shop](#).

A few more details about the shop:

- Simple pricing! Short sleeves are \$7/Long sleeves are \$10. Additional donations to SEPTO are welcomed!
- Items requested by multiple buyers will be raffled off.
- All purchases must be made with a personal check or paid via Venmo.

Why is Second Hand BOCES-wear such a great idea? You get to clean out your closet. WBL students have a real-life job experience and learn about business. More fun, BOCES-branded clothes (that actually fit) are added back to your closet. You save lots of money and support SEPTO. Everyone wins!

Visit often – you never know what new treasures may be at the Second Chance BOCES-wear Shop!



## A Colorful Cinco de Mayo Celebration

by Chris Klem

The darkened room was decorated with brightly colored lanterns, festively striped table runners and oversized paper flowers. Exuberant Latin rhythms and flamboyant dance floor lighting created a carnival atmosphere in what is usually the BOCES 2 Professional Development Center. The menu included nachos, tacos, salsa and neon-bright Mexican sodas. The stage was set for a party like no other – the 2023 Cinco de Mayo Spring Dinner Dance!

The dancers shone brightly, too – dressed to the nines, with smiles that lit up the room all by themselves. Students from Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children, Village Plaza, Spencerport Administration Building (SAB) and BOCES 2 Transition programs ventured out for a night of fun and wonder.

Many thanks to the teachers, staff, family members, Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO) and administrators who help make this event happen every year for students.



## Planning a Taco Party at Westview

by Chris Klem

Cooking for a crowd requires extensive planning and a host of skills. Students in the 6:1:2 Complex Needs class at Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children discovered this when they decided to make a special lunch for fellow students and staff.

Students have been developing their culinary skills all year, but planning a meal for the school took things to a whole new level. They decided to put their cooking experience to the test with a Taco and Quesadilla Party. Students spent two weeks planning, budgeting, preparing the menu, determining serving sizes and making a shopping list. They applied math, finance and organizational skills, along with thoughtful consideration of what their guests would need and most enjoy.

On the morning of the party, students trekked to the store with Westview staff members to purchase everything they needed. The chefs began to prep and cook at 9 a.m. By 11 a.m., the buffet was set with an assortment of delicious tacos, quesadillas and a wide choice of toppings, along with side dishes, drinks and desserts.

These party planners were more than up to the challenge they set for themselves – everyone had a great lunch!





# Building a Culture of Inclusion and Justice

by Chris Klem

Three years ago, the practice of Restorative Justice was introduced to BOCES 2 classrooms at Taylor Elementary School (ES), Ridgecrest Academy, Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children and Spencerport Administration Building (SAB). Volunteer leaders at each location created restorative justice goals tailored to their students' ages and abilities. As more and more people have trained and contributed, each school has evolved their own ways to use restorative justice tools. Along with an emphasis on social-emotional skills, restorative justice exercises are being used to create relationship-centered schools and safely reduce retributive actions like suspensions or expulsions.

Today, restorative justice is a priority for BOCES 2, and one of its tools – the circle – is quickly becoming an integral part of school culture. Students at all levels have grown to expect their use, request them and depend on circles to help bring equality to all voices.

"Restorative justice circles are a wonderful way for students to share their stories, build community and get to really know each other," said Dawn Molitor, autism specialist and restorative justice trainer. "One big misconception is that, because they are designed to be inclusive and nonjudgmental, they don't hold power. The reality is that they promote respect and responsibility, and they do hold people accountable for their actions. They require sincere restorative dialogue, and they absolutely do work to prevent and repair relational damage."

Circles look a little different at all our locations. At Taylor ES (grades K-4), the goal is to introduce students to circles, familiarize them with the guidelines and invite them to participate. At Ridgecrest Academy (grades 5-8), students

become experts in exploring and sharing their emotions through circles. On the high school level, students begin to take ownership of the process. At Westview, student-led circles are held every Wednesday and participation has slowly grown. Circles at SAB are held twice monthly for both 6:1:1 and 6:1:2 student groups. Centered around world community topics, they encourage critical thinking and the expression of varied voices. No one is ever required to participate, but everyone is welcomed and listened to. Because circles are often integrated into daily learning activities like class discussions, students become comfortable with the process of "talking it out instead of acting it out." They can then easily apply the principles to more challenging situations when they arise.

In concert with circles, Ridgecrest Academy has also instituted the Restorative Center: a conference room where students can choose to focus on self. They can process their thoughts, talk through problems with a counselor and imagine what a solution might look like.

"One of the most important things BOCES 2 can do for our students is to provide an environment where everyone belongs," said Molitor. "When students know they belong, are valued and safe, they don't have to be told to act responsibly – they want to find ways to build good relationships. Restorative justice circles provide a predictable process for conflict resolution our students can depend on."

BOCES 2 training in restorative justice practices is ongoing. Coming up in June: Tier 1 Training on June 1, Tier 2 Training on June 9 and Tier 3 Training on June 15. Please contact Dawn Molitor at [dmolitor@monroe2boces.org](mailto:dmolitor@monroe2boces.org) for details, times and locations.



Sharing a "talking piece" at a recent Restorative Justice training session for teachers and staff members.



A student-led circle in action at SAB helps to strengthen relationships and build community.

## Condolences to:

The family of **Joan Brown** (retiree); **Martha Fischer** on the death of her uncle; **Karen Gallagher** on the death of her uncle; the family of **Janet Havens** (retiree); **Kim Melito** on the death of her father; **Beth Nash** on the death of her mother.

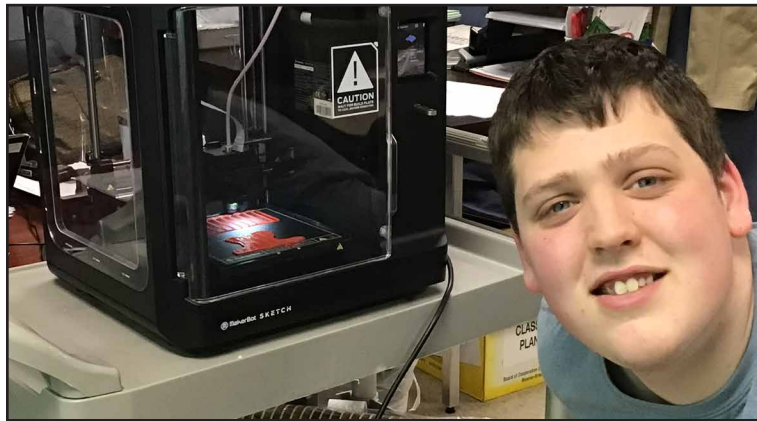
# Trying New Things and Finding Your Passion

by Chris Klem

The Work-Based Learning (WBL) program in the Department for Exceptional Children helps students build skills and prepare for the transition from school to their own bright futures: at work, in the community and as life-long learners. Teachers and staff at the Exceptional Children Learning Center are dedicated to helping their students achieve this success. Like all young people struggling to find direction, these students still need to figure out what they like to do and where their talents lie. That's where Instructional Technology Specialist Sarah Davis is making a difference.

"I help kids explore and see new possibilities for themselves," she said. "They are naturally curious and ready to try new things. I work with their teachers, and together, we plan exciting learning opportunities that spark their imaginations, build problem-solving skills and inspire them to go further."

While Davis partners with Exceptional Children teachers and staff in all BOCES 2 locations and their students of all ages, recent projects have found her in WBL and the Career Exploration Center. In April, Davis worked with Job Training Specialist Diane Brickler's and Vocational Rehab Counselor Donna Graham's students to design their own custom name plates using a computer program, and then produce them on a 3-D printer. The occasional file didn't print right – which offered a chance for students to troubleshoot and work together to find solutions. One student was so fascinated with 3-D printing that he sat transfixed for almost an hour watching the complex mechanics of the process.



Students found the process of creating and 3-D printing their own unique nameplates an empowering introduction to new technology tools.

"It's great to see students discover their interests and talents," said Davis. "Several of them have amazing abilities with computers and

programming. One of the students mentioned that he would like to write music, and I was able to introduce him to a program that will help him do that."

Davis uses a variety of digital and technology tools on loan from BOCES 2 School Library Services, along with entertaining computer games like Minecraft: Education edition or even low-tech tools – like engineering straws and cut paper to simulate robotic hands – to engage students and motivate them to learn, question and problem-solve.

"It's not always about hi-tech," said Davis. "There are all different kinds of tools – it's how you use them and how you think about them. You just need to listen to what the students are interested in and expose them to new ideas, concepts and resources. Even games like Minecraft can be used to teach empathy, creativity and collaboration – life skills our young people can use every day."



Sarah Davis working with students as they learned how to use a design program to create individual name plates.

## SkillsUSA Vendor and Craft Show

by Jennifer Merkel

Thank you to all the vendors, crafters and shoppers who visited the 2023 SkillsUSA Vendor and Craft Show on March 25 at WEMOCO! The halls were filled with products, people and positive energy despite the gloomy weather. Student smiles throughout the building helped to brighten spirits and served as reminders of whom the event benefits. Many of the students who worked at the event were SkillsUSA members who attended the New York State SkillsUSA Competition in Syracuse in April.





## Smyka Receives Curriculum Award

by Amanda Dedie



BOCES 2's Stephanie Smyka, Coordinator for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development; Reading Recovery Site Coordinator; and Teacher Leader for the Mid-West Region, was selected as the 2023 Curriculum Award Winner by the Genesee Valley Association for School Curriculum and Development (GVASCD).

"In her 26-year educational career, Stephanie has demonstrated exceptional

leadership qualities that have made a remarkable impact on the lives of students and teachers she supports at the local, state and national levels," said Dr. Marijo Pearson, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. "Her passion for early literacy instruction is truly inspiring, and she is a tremendous asset to our region."

Over the years, Smyka has dedicated herself to supporting teachers and students through professional development, and she has shown a commitment to creating and implementing systems that result in powerful changes for students and the educational field. Her insight is invaluable in many areas. She is always the first volunteer to help with state and national service initiatives, and she gives generously of her time and expertise to support Reading Recovery and the implementation of New York State Learning Standards. Smyka is also a strong advocate for common sense approaches to literacy instruction that are rooted in research and respond to the individual needs of each student.

"A few years ago, I heard a quote from Frederick Beuchner: 'Vocation is where your deep gladness meets the worlds' deep need'," said Smyka. "That quote resonates greatly with me because the work that I have been fortunate enough to do, working with district administrators and teachers on curriculum, instruction and professional learning, brings me a sense of deep gladness. That only comes as a result of the relationships that have been built; the relationships that enable me to work with districts as true partners in this process."

"I am profoundly grateful that you have entrusted me to do this work with your district communities, for encouraging and supporting my own continued learning, and I promise that I will continue to do my best to support you with quality experiences for our region, and to meet the deep needs of your worlds," said Smyka.

Smyka was presented her award by Dr. Pearson at GVASCD's annual awards reception on May 9 at Ridgemont Country Club.



## Westview Students Care About Their Community

by Chris Klem

Every year, students at Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children participate in the United Way's Day of Caring. On that day, they can be found volunteering at community centers, parks and cemeteries. This year's event was no different; the 6:1:1 and 6:1:2 classes were out in force, working hard to prepare YMCA's Northpoint Camp in Hilton for summer day camp attendees.

Eight Westview students, along with four staff members, clocked four hours of cleaning up sports fields and yards, working on landscaping, raising tents

and painting buildings. Luckily, the combination of great team members, laughter and beautiful weather made the time fly.

For Westview students, Day of Caring is an opportunity to learn about their community, find a cause they care about, volunteer and connect with others, and make a difference. This group was proud to be part of the more than 6,000 local volunteers supporting 200 nonprofit agencies across six counties on May 11.



Students helped with various tasks to get the camp ready for opening, including putting up seasonal tents and moving picnic tables into place.

# WEMOCO CTE Center Earns Highest SkillsUSA honor

by Jennifer Merkel

One of the largest student organizations for career and technical education has bestowed an elite honor upon Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Career and Technical Education (CTE).

The WEMOCO CTE Center SkillsUSA chapter has been named a 2023 Model of Excellence, an honor given annually to the nation's top 24 SkillsUSA chapters. The Model of Excellence program recognizes a chapter's application of the SkillsUSA Framework of personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics.

"Our Models of Excellence represent the very best in SkillsUSA chapter achievement and community involvement," said SkillsUSA Executive Director Chelle Travis. "These students represent America's future skilled workforce, and they are future leaders in their local communities. It is a tremendous honor for these chapters, and the recognition validates these outstanding SkillsUSA programs and schools."

The focus of Models of Excellence is student-led activation and intentional learning. These students learn and practice the skills that every employer seeks, including leadership, initiative, communication, teamwork and problem-solving.

"Participating in SkillsUSA provides BOCES 2 CTE students an opportunity to apply their industry-aligned knowledge and gain valuable experience as leaders," said CTE Executive Principal Jill Slavny. "This honor is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our students, teachers and staff members."

The WEMOCO SkillsUSA Chapter is being recognized in Workplace Skills for the World Teen Mental Wellness Day (WTMWD) activity. Students identified an opportunity to spread awareness of mental health resources and did so by providing every student and staff member with a business card of resources, as well as a poster for each classroom and office space.

"Our officers noticed many of their friends at WEMOCO were struggling with their own mental health issues, and they wanted to help anyone who was struggling," said Jennifer Probst, WEMOCO SkillsUSA lead advisor and

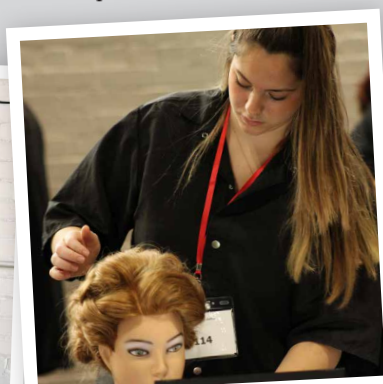
Dental Assisting teacher. "They knew that they wanted to spread awareness of mental health and provide resources that our students could access anywhere, anytime."

"This activity helped not only our officers grow in the ability to manage a complex project effectively, but it also showed that they have mastered the SkillsUSA Workplace Skill of Planning, Organizing and Management," added Probst. "I'm so proud of all the dedication and hard work these students put into this project and how they were able to reach 100% of our students and staff."

For the 2022-23 school year, 225 students joined the WEMOCO SkillsUSA chapter and have participated in teambuilding, community service and leadership activities. Students were also eligible to compete in local, regional and state competitions.

The Model of Excellence is the highest honor the WEMOCO SkillsUSA Chapter has received through the SkillsUSA Chapter Excellence program. This is the fourth consecutive year the chapter has been recognized. In 2022 and 2021, the chapter was a Gold Chapter of Distinction, the second highest level of achievement; and in 2020, it was named a Quality Chapter.

The 24 SkillsUSA chapters selected as Models of Excellence will compete for national notoriety during the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Conference in Atlanta from June 19-23. Chapter representatives will participate in a series of interviews and discuss a student-led project tied to the SkillsUSA Framework. The top three schools will be announced during the awards ceremony on June 23 and will have the opportunity to share their stories through SkillsUSA in publications and training sessions.





# CTE Combined for 10 Medals at SkillsUSA State Championships

by Jennifer Merkel

The 2023 New York State SkillsUSA Leadership and Skills Championships took place at the New York State Fairgrounds in Syracuse, NY from April 26-28. BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education (CTE) was represented by more than 100 students as competitors, delegates, event workers and guests.

Twenty-one BOCES 2 CTE students combined for 10 medals in the championship competitions. Three students from the WEMOCO CTE Center placed first in their respective competitions: Automotive Technology student Adrian Bartz (Brockport) in Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair; Introduction to Construction Trades student Logan Cameron (Greece) in Carpenter's Assistant Basic; and Dental Assisting student Briana Lewis (Brockport) in Dental Assisting.

Five BOCES 2 CTE students combined for second-place finishes across three competitions in Syracuse. Individual second-place awards were won by Outdoor Powersports Technology student Aaron Caballero (Churchville-Chili) in Motorcycle Service Technology and HVAC/Plumbing student Owen Donovan (Brockport) in Plumbing. Three female Carpentry students collaborated for a second-place finish in Occupational Health and Safety: Stephanie Maar (Brockport), Anastasia Miles (Greece) and Nicole Pilon (Hilton).

Four bronze medals were won by a combined 11 BOCES 2 CTE students. Auto Body and Collision Repair Technology student Aiden Gilbert (Churchville-Chili) won third place in Collision Damage Appraisal. Culinary Arts student Malia Sainpaulin (Wheatland-Chili) also took home a third-place win for her work in Food Preparation Basic. Collaborating for a third-place team win in Team Works were Carpentry students Matt Dearman (Brockport) and Iliya Prus (Greece); HVAC/Plumbing student Jackson Gretzinger (Hilton); and Residential and Commercial Electrical student Joseph Trostle (Greece). Seven Computer Technology students worked together to finish third in Opening and Closing Team: Jacob Chatt (Greece), Aidan Elliott (Kendall), Michai Jones (Wheatland-Chili), Riley Knopp (Holley), Mason Merriam (Holley), Thomas Phelan (Gates Chili) and Ashton Streber (Gates Chili).

Leadership activities are also a core function of the event, and BOCES 2 CTE had three students participating in

leadership roles and activities. SkillsUSA New York Area 1 Vice President and HVAC/Plumbing student Ryan Frank (Holley) joined SkillsUSA New York Reporter and Dental Assisting student Isabella Campbell (Greece) in one of their final events as state leaders. Dental Assisting student Kayla Waddell-Martin (Greece) was elected the 2023-24 Area 1 Vice President at Regionals in March and attended the state conference for leadership purposes as well.

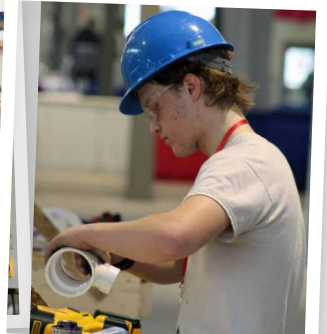
In addition to the state-level elected positions, 12 BOCES 2 CTE students represented the WEMOCO SkillsUSA chapter as delegates: Cosmetology student Erin Bills (Kendall); Dental Assisting students Samantha Petroff (Gates Chili), Aliya Plaskett (Brockport), Sydney Poormon (Brockport), Mya Rivers (Greece), Gracie Robb (Kendall), Tori Schnauber (Spencerport), Emily Van Ornum (Brockport), Calli Wamser (Greece) and Sarah Weiss (Greece); and Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance students Samuel Brown (Gates Chili) and Tyler Caballero (Churchville-Chili).

BOCES 2 CTE students could also be found throughout the event as skilled workers. Exercise Science student Charles Adams (Spencerport) served as a contest helper. Four Criminal Justice students helped at the event as New York State Security Corps members: Corrina Leo (Hilton), Gabe Loran (Kendall), Cameron Parina (Hilton) and Nicholas Torres (Greece).

Additionally, a group of CTE students and staff members attended Thursday's competition day as observers.

During the Friday awards ceremony, BOCES 2 CTE was honored for the chapter's excellence. State officers acknowledged the Model of Excellence distinction, in addition to presenting the state traveling trophy for having the highest chapter of excellence application score.

Six BOCES 2 CTE students will attend the national conference in June, along with WEMOCO SkillsUSA Lead Advisor Jennifer Probst and additional professional members. Adrian Bartz and Briana Lewis will advance to the national level thanks to their first-place finishes in their respective competitions, while Aaron Caballero will compete in the place of the first-place winner. Kayla Waddle-Martin will partake in leadership activities in Atlanta, while Sarah and Reilly Weiss will represent the chapter for the Model of Excellence award.



# CWD's REJob Graduation Embodies the Importance of Community Partnerships

by Nicole Mauro



On March 20, the Rochester Environmental Job Training Program (REJob 3.0) held its graduation ceremony at the Rochester City Council Chambers to recognize its Class of 2023 graduates. This is the seventh consecutive year of the program, and the first year the City of Rochester has partnered with BOCES 2 Center for Workforce Development (CWD) to make it possible. This year's cohort consisted of 26 graduates, now totaling 148 individuals who have completed the program since its inception.

"The REJob program seeks to provide opportunities to individuals who are motivated and excited to learn a new trade," said Rebecca Horowitz, Assistant Director at CWD. "It provides them with an opportunity they may not have otherwise."

The eight-week, cost-free training program provides Rochester-area citizens with the skills and licenses necessary to obtain rewarding careers in the field of environmental remediation.

The program is made possible by the City of Rochester receiving the Brownfields Job Training Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA supports the growth, adoption and creation of environmental employment placement across the U.S. Additional partners include LaBella Associates and Cornerstone Training Institute.

"With this graduation ceremony, we are focusing on the importance of partnerships and how vital they are to transforming the lives of individuals seeking to steer themselves and their families out of poverty," said Paul McFadden, Manager of Workforce Development and REJob Program at the City of Rochester. "BOCES 2 is saving lives here, and the City of Rochester supports that. We recognize that none of this would be possible if we did not create strong partnerships."

The graduates also heard remarks from U.S. Congressman Joe Morelle, City of Rochester Mayor Malik D. Evans and representatives from partner organizations who wished them well in their future endeavors.

Graduates had a chance to reflect on the program and what it means to them. "This program will help a lot of families lift their families out of poverty so they can have good lives," said Kilah Wade, REJob 2023 graduate. Fellow graduate Semaj Riley agreed with the life-changing assistance this program provides. "Everyone should take advantage of this program; it's helping open up a lot of doors," he said.





# Learning Unlimited Hits a Home Run!

by Chris Klem

Learning Unlimited (LU) participants received the VIP treatment recently during their outing to see the Red Wings play baseball at Innovative Field. Group members made arrangements to meet up at the ballpark, coordinating their own transportation and organizing their schedules. Once there, they watched an exciting game from the best seats in the stadium and enjoyed a catered meal in one of the luxury party suites. There were even dance parties between innings! If there was any doubt that this was a big league experience, it was erased with a special visit from the Red Wings' mascots Spikes and Mittsy. This time, LU hit it out of the park with a night to remember!

Learning Unlimited, a free 10-week program for adults with disabilities, provides an opportunity for group members to get together to work on social, leisure and independent living skills. It is offered in spring and fall sessions through a grant from the Organization for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The grant is run through Monroe One BOCES; Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Department for Exceptional Children manages the program for residents on the west side of Rochester. It is free for adults who live at home and qualify for OPWDD services.

Registration for the Fall 2023 program will begin in August. Reach out to Kimberly Stephenson at [kastephe@monroe2boces.org](mailto:kastephe@monroe2boces.org) or Andrew Fowler at [afowler@monroe2boces.org](mailto:afowler@monroe2boces.org) with any questions.



## A Full Month of Fun with Learning Unlimited

by Chris Klem

The Spring 2023 Learning Unlimited (LU) program was full of exciting events in March. For the first one on March 14, friends spent the evening following step-by-step directions and sharing materials while assembling St. Patrick's Day crafts and enjoying snacks. Happiness was found at the end of these rainbows!

On March 21, special guests Marc D'Amico, Elizabeth Winslow-D'Amico and Megan Mack, members of the comedy troupe Thank You Kiss, led the group in interactive games and improvisational exercises that had everyone in stitches. It was so much fun – thank you for sharing your talents!

The group wrapped up the month of March with a night of Martial Arts. Led by the multi-talented Nate Parker, whose day job is teaching at BOCES 2 Paul Road Transition Center, LU participants learned proper stretching techniques to safely prepare for any strenuous physical activity. Next, the young black-belts-to-be tried out a few self-defense strategies. Watch out, bad guys – don't mess with this group!



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### Award-winning publication

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Monroe 2–Orleans Board of Cooperative Educational Services

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## Mission

We provide quality, cost-effective educational services in partnership with school districts and the community in a manner that supports excellence and equity for all learners. We are committed to customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and personal and professional growth.

## 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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## Students Build Bat Houses

by Taylor Young, CTE Outreach Assistant

BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Building and Grounds Maintenance and Introduction to Construction Trades classes used donated materials to help make an impact for Earth Day. Collaboratively, the two programs built 107 bat houses at the CTE Center. Saint-Gobain donated supplies, such as plywood, which come from the pallets this business receives daily. CTE students used a variety of woodshop tools and technical skills including multiple angle cuts, controlled depth grooves and precise, measured cuts. Students learned to make and use custom jigs for easy repeatability and consistent final product. They planned the project using an “end from the beginning” strategy, working to find the most efficient techniques. Once completed, the bat houses were returned to Saint-Gobain so one could be given to each of their employees for Earth Day.



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