

TOGETHER

Spring 2024

Success is in the Cards for Transition Students

by Chris Klem

Last November, students in the BOCES 2 Transition Program at Roberts Wesleyan University decided to plan a special event for peers who participate in the various transition programs offered through BOCES 2 Department for Exceptional Children. They resolved to hold a tournament, featuring a favorite card game called Trash.

Students quickly discovered that hosting an event the size of the Transition Trash Tournament would require a lot of thought and complex preparations. Fortunately, this team of 11 enthusiastic event planners was ready for the challenge!

The tournament, held on Feb. 9 at the Golisano Community Engagement Center, was attended by more than 50 competitive student card players and dozens of staff members from other BOCES 2 Transition classes. As the groups

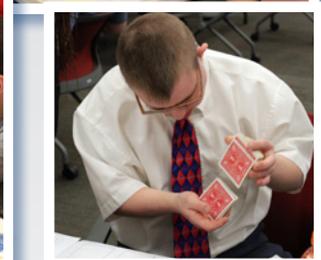
arrived from the Paul Road, Village Plaza, Project SEARCH and BELL locations, they were greeted by Roberts students. Guests had time to touch base with old friends and meet new ones before they were directed to their seats. Four cheerful student emcees presented slides explaining the plans for the day. Game tables had been set up ahead of time, so players just needed to sit down and begin playing. Their hosts moved smoothly around the game tables, answering questions, helping players keep score and assisting with card shuffling.

Attendees were also offered several on-campus lunch options to help break up the day and provide more opportunities to socialize with friends.

Roberts students were guided through the months-long planning process by Roberts/BELL Transition teacher Amanda Cupido,

with help from Student Behavioral Assistant Lisa Palumbo. Transition School Psychologist Danielle Brown said, “The Roberts student event planners had to consider a multitude of variables. These included determining accessibility requirements and how big a room to reserve; the number of tables and chairs needed; preparing and sending invitations; formalizing directions and rules of play; creating signs and visual supports; organizing score cards; and defining winners and prizes. They discussed every aspect of how they could make their guests comfortable and ensure they had fun.”

If event planning success is determined by great organization, smooth operations and lots of fun had by attendees, then the Roberts Transition team aced their assignment – excellent job, everyone!



Exceptional Children Welcomes New Director Kerry Macko

by Chris Klem



The new Director for the Department for Exceptional Children (EC) Kerry Macko said, "Coming to BOCES 2 is like coming back to the heart of why I became an educator." More than 20 years ago, she began her career as a special education

teacher. After 11 years of teaching, she served as an administrator for 13 years, first as an assistant principal and then as principal of Rush-Henrietta's Roth Junior High School. Even after these roles, her passion remained with special education. Macko has first-hand experience with this – her younger brother had the same educational and life challenges many EC students face. "I went into teaching because I knew that I could make a difference for other kids like him," she said.

In her first weeks with BOCES 2, Macko has been impressed with the tight, family-like atmosphere

created by teachers and staff members. "Every person I've met so far is truly committed and excited about what is happening in their classroom," she said. "They are passionate about their students. The positive energy I've felt all over BOCES 2 is really something special."

Macko plans to be a strong voice for the organization's initiative for diversity, equity and inclusion. "I believe that it's important that our staff mirror the diversity of the student population, providing extra opportunities for mentorship and support," she said. "I'm looking forward to being part of the change."

The EC department has seen many administrative changes over the past year. Macko sees this as a unique opportunity to "create a strong group of leaders who can respond to the voices and needs of our staff, students and families. It's a chance to establish trust, and encourage open communication and collaboration. The goal for all of us is simple: 'Kids first, always.'"

"The first priority is to make sure every student feels welcomed, safe and cared for in our classrooms," she said. "Once that is established, learning can happen." Macko wants to make sure that every child in EC programs has individualized target learning goals based on where they are now and what they are capable of accomplishing. She said, "Our expectations should be that each student will experience constant growth and meet their full potential for academic achievement."

Macko's management style embraces visibility – expect to see her out and about often, getting to know students and working with staff members to explore new ways to support both of them. "As a leader, I'm interested in listening to teachers, finding ways to improve instruction, providing more learning opportunities for our students, and focusing on setting and meeting goals," she said. "I'm very excited to be part of this community."

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Recovery High School Awarded \$100,000 NYS Grant

by Chris Klem

There was an exciting development for the Recovery High School team at Westside Academy in February – State Senator Jeremy Cooney delivered a check for \$100,000 from NYS to the school.

"The work done at Recovery High School and Westside Academy is life-changing," said Cooney. "For a student suffering from substance abuse, this program allows them to receive the treatment they need while also setting themselves up for future success."

A partnership between Monroe One BOCES, BOCES 2 and addiction recovery agency Huther Doyle, Recovery High School was established in 2021. The grant allows an expansion of the school's successful program, which already includes a part-time consultant from Huther Doyle, telehealth services and recovery coaching training for the entire staff.

"We plan to hire a full-time onsite consultant," said Principal Martha Willis. "This grant will help us add additional wellness and harm reduction education, plus activities like yoga and group therapy. We will also increase family outreach and education."

"There are 12 students actively participating in Recovery High School right now," she said. "With this grant, we will be able to extend at-risk evaluation to all of our other Westside students, with guardian approval, so that everyone who needs help can benefit from it."



From left, Huther Doyle's CEO Kelly Reed, Westside Academy Principal Martha Willis, Senator Jeremy Cooney and BOCES 2 District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci gather around the state grant check.

IAC in Action

by Beth Nash

Last year, the BOCES 2 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee changed their name to the Inclusivity Action Community (IAC) to better describe what they do. Through the initial work of forming and getting the committee running, members learned from DEI Strategist Arthur Chan that “diversity is a fact, equity is a choice, inclusion is an action and belonging is an outcome.” Since the committee was tasked with creating a culture of inclusion, seven sub-committees were created to get the work done. The committees are assessing the current state of BOCES 2, and using that data to figure out how to make the organization more inclusive for students, staff and families.

The sub-committees are:

- Academic Data
- Climate and Culture Survey
- Discipline/Suspension Data
- Interview and Implicit Bias
- Professional Learning
- Gender Policy
- Family and Community Engagement

BOCES 2 staff and students in grades 6-12 are being surveyed this spring from the Climate and Culture sub-committee. The data collected from this survey will form a baseline for future surveys to be measured against. During the 2024-25 school year, BOCES 2 parents and caregivers will be sent a separate survey. After some time has elapsed, another survey will be sent to all stakeholders to determine what progress has been made. The surveys will be sent out from a company called Panorama Education, and the questions are based on what has been asked nationally regarding DEI policies and practices.



The Professional Learning sub-committee rolled out “SafeZone” and “The Power of Pronouns (and Names) on Identity, Acceptance and Inclusion” trainings BOCES-wide beginning in 2023. Additional sessions are offered this spring. This committee is also hosting an online book study beginning in April, where interested staff will read “How to be an Inclusive Leader” by Jennifer Brown and discuss the book in weekly Zoom meetings. Beginning this spring, BOCES 2 staff will also receive training from department leaders on using inclusive language and creating affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth and staff. “The goal is for everyone to feel welcome and to be themselves at BOCES 2,” said Staff Developer Lorena Stabins. “We don’t want anyone to be unfairly treated because of any part of their identity.”

The Academic and Discipline/Suspension Data sub-committees are exploring ways to better organize this data by student demographics so BOCES 2 students can be assessed more accurately on how they are progressing, not just in their home districts, but in BOCES 2 programs.

The Interview and Implicit Bias sub-committee is revising the questions that are asked of potential job candidates. This committee is also looking at ways to recruit and retain employees, creating a more diverse workforce.

The Gender Policy sub-committee is reviewing other BOCES gender policies before creating the BOCES 2 policy.

The Family and Community Engagement sub-committee is reviewing another district’s parent survey to determine how families and community members can be engaged in ways that are based on mutual trust, confidence and respect.

The IAC is also going to be adding more information to both the internal (www.monroe2boces.org/IAC) and external (www.monroe2boces.org/dei) DEI pages on the BOCES 2 website.

There is a form on the internal site that staff can complete if they are interested in joining the IAC. IAC team members are tasked with keeping their departments updated on the activities of the IAC. They are also tasked with keeping the IAC updated on any DEI initiatives their departments are executing to share information on successes and challenges.

A group of BOCES 2 staff has formed the “Pride Coalition,” focused on intentionally building LGBTQIA+ inclusive spaces, connections and community. They have organized “Sip & Share” gatherings at Equal = Grounds Coffee Shop a few times a year. The next one is scheduled for May 18 at 11 a.m. at 750 South Avenue in Rochester. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join these sessions. This group also participates in the Rochester Pride Parade & Festival, which will take place on July 20 this year.

“DEI work is happening at BOCES 2, but we have room to grow,” said Stabins. Pay attention to the website and information that IAC members share in department meetings to learn more about the latest developments as the IAC works through their action plans.



You're invited to a

Sip & Share

Sat., May 18, at 11 a.m.

Equal=Grounds Coffee House
750 South Ave., Rochester, NY

This is a casual gathering initiated by a small group of BOCES 2 employees who want to build intentionally LGBTQIA+ inclusive spaces, connections and community.



A Fruitful Pair: CTE and Cornell Cooperative Extension

by Jennifer Merkel

In agriculture terms, the partnership between BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) has sprouted from a tiny seedling into a beautiful botanical, with the sky as its limit.

The CTE and CCE collaboration was germinated this past fall and has grown roots in the department, working with seven programs and courses across different industries. Industry-aligned learning is at CTE's core, just as connecting Cornell research to communities is a tenet of CCE.

"Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County 4-H Youth Development dreamed of the opportunity to have a hands-on learning laboratory for agriculture," said Monroe County CCE 4-H Youth Development Educator Natalie Fabretti. "With BOCES 2, we have accomplished more than we thought was possible at Springdale Farm."

Working with CTE's newest program, Careers in Agriculture, is a natural fit. In the first year of the program, CTE tapped into CCE to help enrich student experience through co-taught lessons, guest speaker connections and off-site field trips.

"Working with CCE has really helped connect our students with experts in the agriculture industry," said CTE Careers in Agriculture teacher Leah Mould.



Introduction to Construction Trades students designed, built and installed the Springdale Farm Fit Trail signage frames as part of a cross-program project.

The joint venture branched out to three additional programs this past fall as the industry-aligned skills of CTE students were commissioned to improve the Fit Trail at Springdale Farm. Exercise Science students were tasked with planning whole-body exercises along the trail. Digital and Visual Communication students provided design services for trail signage that were produced after thoughtful interviews of the client. Introduction to Construction Trades students created frames to protect the signage from harsh weather.

"Cross-program collaboration allows students to experience how interconnected various industries are in the agriculture world, fostering a holistic approach to problem-solving and innovation in the field," said CTE Career Readiness Coordinator Carisa Harding.

(continued on p.5)



The kickoff session of the NSTMOP featured guest speaker Jim Carraba from the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health.



Careers in Agriculture students pruned apple trees after a visit from CCE Integrated Pest Management Specialist Janet van Zoeren.



Lori Koenick of the Cornell Vegetable Program led an agriculture lesson on inoculating mushrooms to be shared with the Culinary Arts program when ready.

(continued from p.4)

A Fruitful Pair: CTE and Cornell Cooperative Extension

Another cross-program initiative is underway this spring as students gather the skills to become safe tractor operators. Through a six-session, three-month program, students from Careers in Agriculture, Building and Grounds Maintenance, and Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance are partaking in the National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operations Program (NSTMOP) Tractor Safety course. Coordinated with local farmers and tractor suppliers, this course includes an introduction to the farm work environment, identification of potential hazards in an agricultural setting, an understanding of tractor components, the use of tractor attachments, and the handling of other materials used on the farm.

"Industry-aligned certifications are key to preparing students for success in the workforce," said CTE Executive Principal Jill Slavny. "The tractor safety program is another example of how career and technical education prepares high school students to be the workforce of the future."

To shepherd resources for the NSTMOP course, CTE and CCE submitted a Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority (GVRMA) grant application. The in-depth proposal demonstrated the need and benefits of purchasing a tractor and rotary tiller to be shared between Careers in Agriculture, and Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance. A \$25,000 grant was approved, and the greenlight to begin securing the equipment has happened.

Rush-Henrietta pre-K students have also reaped benefits from CTE and CCE through multiple visits by BOCES 2 CTE Child and Family Development (CFD) students. In 2024, CFD seniors facilitated National Agriculture in the Classroom lesson plans to 60 young minds about wind power and the strawberry life cycle.

"These experiences gave my students an understanding of the value of classroom procedures and management, which was an opportunity area for them this year," said CFD teacher Jenna Karns.

From planting the seeds of partnership to harvesting the fruits of a dynamic educational ecosystem, CTE and CCE are nurturing students' growth and cultivating a future ripe with opportunity.



CFD student Kiya Lupisella (Wheatland-Chili) leads an agriculture lesson for Rush-Henrietta preschool students.



Careers in Agriculture students took many field trips including to the Bentley Brothers, Inc. warehouse.



Local dairy farmer and former president of the Monroe County Farm Bureau Kim Zuber shared his knowledge of hazards on a dairy farm with students.

AI: Coming to a Classroom Near You

by Beth Nash

With the availability of artificial intelligence (AI) tools at everyone’s fingertips, school districts became concerned about how this would affect students and staff. If students submitted AI-generated work in place of their original work, how would plagiarism be addressed? What kind of security protocols would be put in place to block these tools from school networks and devices? On the flip side, could this new technology be used to help teachers create differentiated lessons? Would it make writing letters and emails to school communities easier? Should districts embrace AI or reject it? With a lot of questions and not a lot of answers, education stakeholders realized that a bigger discussion amongst districts needed to take place.

BOCES 2 Instructional Technology Specialists (ITS) came to the rescue after researching and learning about the benefits generative AI could provide to both students and staff. They hosted a conference for educators on Feb. 8 entitled

“Dreams & Nightmares: AI in Education Regional Summit.” Held in the Professional Development Center at BOCES 2, the summit brought together 80 people representing 17 districts and the University of Rochester’s Warner School of Education to explore how AI could be used effectively in education.

School technology directors, administrators, instructional coaches, ITSs, librarians and teachers gathered together to share their hopes and concerns about AI in education. Small group discussions among stakeholder groups

and large group discussions were held so people could learn from one another and ask questions. Breakout sessions included: The AI Rollout Plan for BOCES 2, Reimagining Assessments in the Age of AI, Empowering District Leaders to Integrate AI and Transforming Pedagogy with AI. Communications and Technology Services Supervising Manager Ray Miller said, “This event was well-attended, well-received and the feedback was very positive.”

Due to the success of this session, there are plans for another AI-centered event in the fall.



From CTE Student Craftsmanship to Home Sweet Home

by Jennifer Merkel

Each year, BOCES 2 CTE students in construction-related programs collaborate to build a house. Rarely do students get a chance to see what their work becomes after it is sold. However, the 2022 purchaser of a house recently reached out with photographs and appreciation.

The expertise of Carpentry, HVAC/Plumbing, and Residential and Commercial Electrical students are all leveraged to create a professional-grade blank canvas house that goes up for auction each summer. It is then up to the buyer to make it into a home.

After the 1,400 sq. ft. building was transported from the WEMOCO CTE Center campus, the buyer transformed the three-bedroom, two-bathroom construction into their ideal living space. Through a series of photographs, the homeowners displayed their joy and gratitude for the student-built roots of their dream home, which is now brimming with warmth and character.

This house is another reminder of the power of applied learning and the impact it has on both students and the community.



11 CTE Students Sign-on for FLYAP

by Ashley Trevor



On Feb. 9, 11 BOCES 2 CTE students signed on the dotted line for the Finger Lakes Youth Apprenticeship Program (FLYAP). These students were a part of the fifth annual “Signing Day” ceremony,

commemorating their acceptance into paid co-ops and job shadowing opportunities through several local advanced manufacturing companies.

This event was a momentous occasion for students from the Advanced Manufacturing, and Residential and Commercial Electrical programs. “BOCES 2 CTE is proud that our talented students will take their learning experiences from our industry-aligned spaces into local industries,” said BOCES 2 CTE Executive Principal Jill Slavny. “We appreciate the county-wide collaboration that creates these partnerships with students.”

Students will take all the knowledge and experience they have gained throughout their CTE programs with them to the companies they signed on with. From there, they will be able to expand their skills, and train with machinists, tool makers, electricians and other advanced manufacturing professionals.



The event was akin to a sports draft with students partaking in photo ops, receiving jerseys and officially signing with their future employers.



This event marks an exciting start to a bright future for students. Congratulations to the following students who were selected for FLYAP:

- Cole Buda (Brockport) from Advanced Manufacturing
- Gary Falls (Holley) from Residential and Commercial Electrical
- Alexander Foreman (Brockport) from Advanced Manufacturing
- Joseph Gage Jr. (Wheatland-Chili) from Advanced Manufacturing
- Justin Guest (Hilton) from Residential and Commercial Electrical
- Maytum Hutchinson (Churchville-Chili) from Advanced Manufacturing
- Colin Neu (Hilton) from Advanced Manufacturing
- Jaden O’Meara (Greece Arcadia) from Residential and Commercial Electrical
- Damien Steinmetz (Greece Olympia) from Residential and Commercial Electrical
- Andrew Tulloch (Churchville-Chili) from Advanced Manufacturing
- Melony Welch (Spencerport) from Residential and Commercial Electrical

FLYAP was created by the Rochester Technology and Manufacturing Association in partnership with Monroe Community College.

Reduced Registration for Summer at the Center, Thanks to ESL

by Jennifer Merkel

Summer at the Center offers opportunities for middle school students to explore careers. This year, it is more accessible than ever, thanks to a generous grant.

The Center for Workforce Development (CWD) is proud to announce that ESL Federal Credit Union has provided the department a grant to reduce the costs for this year’s range of summer camps. Students entering grades 7-9 in the fall can participate in half-day weeklong camps for \$80, subsidized from the full cost of \$249.

“With ESL’s support, we’re able to significantly reduce costs for our Summer at the Center program, ensuring accessibility for all aspiring students,” said CWD Director Shawna Gareau-Kurtz. “This grant not only demonstrates ESL’s commitment to education, but it also underscores their dedication to the next generation. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for our community.”

The Summer at the Center program is designed to provide middle school students with invaluable early training in various trades and skills essential for tomorrow’s workforce. By introducing students to these opportunities at an early age, CWD empowers students to explore careers and make educated decisions about their futures.

Registration for Summer at the Center 2024 is now open. Camps are offered in a variety of fields including agriculture, baking, carpentry, cosmetology and more. For more information and to register, visit

www.monroe2boces.org/summer.

February’s Great Chili Cook-Off at Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children featured five kinds of delicious homemade chili, ranging from mild to nuclear. Staff members cooked, baked, brought in extra treats and served everything up with love.



Condolences to:

The family of **Kathleen “Katy” Ames** (retiree); **Steve Dawe** on the death of his aunts and cousin; the family of **Bonnie Diltz** (retiree); **Rachel Frate** on the death of her mother; the family of **Kathleen Pellegrin** (retiree); the family of **Joyce Sacket** (retiree); **Mike Schmitt** on the death of his mother; **Jonathan Stanley** on the death of his father-in-law; **Tim Steves** and **Brandi Steves** on the death of their father and father-in-law, respectively; the family of **Celia Syer** (retiree); **Maria Tantillo** on the death of her mother.



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Editor

Beth Nash
bnash@monroe2boces.org
585-349-9028

Contributors

Jada Atwood, Steve Dawe, Amanda Dedie,
Chris Klem, Sonya Kordovich,
Danielle Lorenzo, Nicole Mauro,
Jennifer Merkel, Beth Nash, Abbey Noble,
Gretchen Spittler, Ashley Trevor

Graphic Designer

Lisa Constantine

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Monroe 2–Orleans Board of Cooperative Educational Services

3599 Big Ridge Road
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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.

The Monroe 2–Orleans Board of Cooperative Educational Services does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, creed, marital status, veteran status, military status, sexual orientation, prior criminal offense, domestic violence victim status, gender identity, gender expression or genetic status in its services, employment, programs or activities, and it provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups.

The following person has been designated to handle complaints/inquiries regarding the BOCES' non-discrimination policies:
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, 3599 Big Ridge Road, Spencerport, NY 14559, 585-352-2420, and is also the Title VII and Title IX Officer.

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.



Students in teacher Stephanie Sekaz's Integrated Preschool classrooms at English Village celebrated the 100th day of school with a school-wide bear hunt: 100 little bears hidden all over the school. The hunters also dressed like they were 100 years old!

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