

TOGETHER

Summer 2023

Dental Assisting Student Places Third in National SkillsUSA Competition

by Jennifer Merkel

Briana Lewis was all smiles in June as she stood on the SkillsUSA National Leadership and Skills Championship stage in Atlanta. The first-year BOCES 2 Career and Technical Education student had a bronze medal around her neck after her third-place finish in the Dental Assisting competition.

“In the beginning of the ceremony, they called the three states and those were the finalists,” said Lewis, recounting her national competition medal ceremony. “You went to the back and then they took you up on the big stage, and in front of everyone, they told you if you got first, second or third.”

“At first, when they called the finalists, I wasn’t sure what it meant because I wasn’t really paying attention,” she said. “I wasn’t expecting to be called at all. While I was participating in the competition, I thought I was messing up really bad. I could have done a lot better than I did, and I was honestly shocked that I got third.”

It wasn’t the first time that the Dental Assisting student was recognized this year for her accomplishments in the field. She tied for first place in the local competition and stood atop the podium at the state competition, punching her ticket to nationals.

The Dental Assisting competition evaluates students’ preparedness for employment, and recognizes excellence and professionalism by testing their knowledge and skills aligning with the Dental Assisting National Board examination.

“I had to do instrument identification, facial anatomy and tooth anatomy, take alignate impressions and pour them up with stone, assemble a matrix band and aspirating syringe, and a few other things,” said Lewis, a Brockport Central School District student.



Briana Lewis is in the front row at far right.

When asked, Lewis knows exactly where her industry-aligned knowledge and skills come from: her WEMOCO Dental Assisting teacher Jennifer Probst. “Mrs. Probst has taught me everything,” said Lewis. “She prepared me throughout the whole year, so it made the competition even easier.”

The respect and admiration are mutual between Lewis and her teacher. “We trained so hard for this,” said Probst, who also serves as the SkillsUSA Lead Advisor at WEMOCO. “Briana has a great work ethic and initiative in her studies. She is a model SkillsUSA student. I couldn’t be happier for her and her accomplishments.”

Lewis aspires to go to college to become an orthodontist, but for now, her sights are set on big things for her senior year. “With my program, I get to experience an internship, which will be really good for my career, and I can make connections in the field,” said Lewis. “With the competition, I automatically get to go to states next year. I want to go to nationals and actually win this time.”

CWD Awarded More Than \$1 Million in Grants

by Jennifer Merkel

The Center for Workforce Development's (CWD) mission to support adult learners in their quest for career training was recently made a million times easier. The department was awarded more than \$1 million in grants over the past three months.

CWD is one of 17 projects across the state to be awarded a Workforce Development Capital and Pay for Performance Grant by the New York State Office of Strategic Workforce Development.

"New York is committed to developing a strong and diverse workforce, and investing in our workers is the most important investment we can make," said Governor Kathy Hochul. "This new round of strategic workforce development grants will help New Yorkers acquire the skills they need to succeed in today's economy, while supporting employer-driven, high-skilled training programs that will help New Yorkers thrive in the jobs of the future."

The \$700,000 grant will fund the Electrical Careers Expansion project to establish three short-term, comprehensive programs: Electrical Fundamentals for the Construction Trade, Industrial and Mechanical Electrical, and Industrial Operator. Developed in partnership with local stakeholders, the training will feature hands-on instruction, practice on portable workstation learning systems, and industry-recognized certification, as well as career skills and job placement.

"With this funding, we will be able to acquire state-of-the-art instructional trainers, develop curriculum materials, and offer low-cost/no-cost tuition to students," said CWD Director Shawna Gareau-Kurtz. "This grant not only validates the outstanding work we have done so far, but it also opens up new avenues for growth and impact within our department."

In addition to the state grant, CWD was selected to receive a \$200,000 grant from ESL to enhance short-term career training programs.

"The ESL grant will play a crucial role in strengthening our ability to provide comprehensive and impactful career training opportunities to our students," said Gareau-Kurtz. "With this funding, we can further enhance our existing curriculum, purchase training equipment and offer additional support services to ensure an enriching experience for our students."

CWD has also been the beneficiary of more than \$100,000 in additional grants in recent months, bringing the total to more than \$1 million.

"These grants are a testament to the exceptional reputation we have built and the confidence that external organizations have in our abilities," added Gareau-Kurtz. "We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and the positive changes we will bring about in the lives of our students."

Nothing Can Stop SEPTO Fair

by Chris Klem

This year's Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO) Fair was ready for anything – rain or shine – with lots of activities and food, both outside under the tent and inside the Professional Development Center. Luckily, the weather stayed beautiful, and fun was had by all. Many thanks to SEPTO, friends from the Kiwanis Club, and the many community, staff and student volunteers who ran the games, painted faces, grilled hot dogs, handed out prizes and made the day special for students.



Behind the Scenes in Preschool

by Chris Klem



Co-teachers, from left, Laura McNally and Speech Therapist Grace Keegan modeling the word of the day – “go” – using a variety of tools and motivating props.

beginning of their educational journey is a priority at BOCES 2,” said Department Supervisor Heather Malone. “We believe that ensuring all students have early access to functional communication supports is foundational for their lifetime success, both academically and socially.”

Functional communication is essential for preschoolers. It includes the first types of basic messages, gestural or verbal, used to express needs, wants, ideas, preferences, feelings and behavior. Many students struggle to master language and other communication skills, and they may be helped with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems, including speech generating devices, language boards and modeling language therapy.

There are two cornerstones of BOCES 2’s approach to developing a framework for early communication:

- **Creating an immersive communications learning experience for all students throughout the school day.** Practice with alternative communication systems and strategies is not limited to short, individual speech therapy sessions. Students are encouraged to use their devices, or any positive communication models of their choosing, in large group circles, small group sessions, physical therapy and play activities.
- **Using a co-teaching model.** The classroom teacher and speech therapist are equal partners throughout the day’s activities; both are skilled in the use of AAC systems. They are supported by a team of dedicated Student Behavioral Assistants (SBAs), who are well-versed in modeling with AAC devices and work closely with individual students to help them navigate their day.



This approach owes much of its success to the dedication of the classroom SBAs who play an integral part in consistently modeling language for students.

On the surface, preschool classes at BOCES 2 look like everyone is simply having fun. Have you ever wondered what purposeful educational strategies are behind those games and activities?

“Building language-rich environments for our preschool students at the

What does this approach look like in practice?

Co-teachers set daily learning goals that are shared with SBAs, therapists and even classroom visitors. For instance, one common goal is learning,



Incorporating animated monkey videos, fun music, the printed word of the day, and a stop and go traffic sign into the lesson encourages students to dance on cue and illustrates the concept of “go” and its opposite, “stop.”

understanding and using a word of the day. The word is printed out and posted on the walls; worked into lessons and activities; modeled in songs, discussions or with language boards; illustrated with fun, short videos; or used with toys or games. It becomes almost impossible for students to not learn the meaning of the word.

“Consistency is key,” said Preschool Teacher Laura McNally. “Our team is all on the same page. Our teaching style is very animated, and student-driven. Our expectation is to motivate and engage all students, so that everyone benefits. Everything we do is student-specific – we can change what we do quickly, according to what motivates a particular group of children. We consistently honor all forms of communication.”

While the large group activity area is at the center of the classroom learning environment, smaller physical spaces are used for small group activities, physical therapy, or individual speech therapy sessions or counseling. Spaces are defined simply with movable walls for flexibility. Students can access their communication systems in any of these areas if needed.

Families are also an important part of the process. The teaching team works with each student’s family to help find communication approaches best suited to their child. Information is shared so that supports can be used at home, resulting in an even more supportive experience for students.

Communication milestones for individual students are collected and tracked by all team members to keep everyone updated on student progress. Every success, large or small, is noticed and celebrated.

“By integrating diverse, functional communication methods into every aspect of the school day, all our students learn more quickly and increase positive social interactions,” said Co-teacher and Speech Therapist Grace Keegan. “They acquire the skill of understanding and accepting friends who are different. No matter how they communicate, they grow from the experience.”



The teaching team notes what motivators work for each child, and then tailors the lesson to increase engagement.

End of Year Ceremonies

Bridge to Earning, Learning and Living (BELL) Graduates



Moving On Ceremony



Career and Technical Education (CTE) Recognition Ceremony



Preschool Graduation



Center for Workforce Development (CWD) Graduates



Project SEARCH Graduation



Spencerport Administration Building (SAB) Commencement Ceremony for 6:1:1 and 6:1:2 Classes

Westside Academy Graduates



BOCES 2 eLearning Service Helps Kendall Students Zoom with Australia

by Beth Nash

Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES (BOCES 2) eLearning Service provides component districts with videoconferencing technology and opportunities to connect live with subject experts, museums or other classrooms around the world. These opportunities are shared throughout the school year by Distance Learning Specialist Donna Farren, who often works with teachers and library media specialists to find virtual field trips that meet NYS standards and curriculum. BOCES 2 is also a member of the New York State Distance Learning Consortium (NYSDLC), which offers workshops to participating districts.

One opportunity presented itself when Kendall Library Media Specialist Alicia Charland attended a NYSDLC workshop and won a virtual field trip. This enabled her to offer Kendall high school science students a rare chance to speak directly with a scientist in Australia. Charland and Farren organized the meeting over Zoom for an evening in April.

Students assembled in the Kendall Junior/Senior High School Library for the meeting at 6 p.m. with Craig, a zoologist and marine scientist who works at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in Queensland. It was 8 a.m. the following day for him, and students were surprised to learn about the time difference between the U.S. and Australia.

Craig showed students videos of the reef and talked about how it is the largest coral reef system in the world. He explained that the Marine Park runs along the coast of the Great Barrier Reef and is the size of the West Coast of the United States. Students learned how reefs are built and that corals are animals. He discussed coral bleaching, which is when corals are stressed by changes in conditions such as temperature, light or nutrients, and they expel the algae living in their tissues, causing them to turn completely white. The scientist explained that summer weather heightens this condition, but Australia was soon heading into the winter season, so it would lessen the effect.

He also talked about the different animals that live in the Marine Park, with special focus on the turtles. He said people are working on making beaches better for nesting turtles in Australia, and there is a turtle

hospital in the park. Global warming and climate change are having a profound effect on the reef and the ecosystem the turtles live in. Turtles eat everything, including plastic and other non-food items, which can cause digestive issues. This often results in floating syndrome, where turtles can't dive to obtain food because they are bloated from a blockage in their digestive systems. The turtles end up wasting away. Craig said the hospital has treated 250 turtles since 2008, where they are tagged before being released back into the park.

Students asked him questions throughout the hour-long presentation, and everyone walked away learning something new about aquatic life in Australia.

The NYSDLC is comprised of BOCES from across the state. More than 700 teachers and their classes participated in NYSDLC collaborations during the 2022-23 school year. In addition to workshops, a monthly session called Career Connections is offered, where students can interact and ask questions of professionals (*NYSDLC - Career Connections*). Educators interested in participating in workshops or offering learning opportunities to their classes can obtain more information from Farren at dfarren@monroe2boces.org.



Retiree Recognition

by Amanda Dedie

On June 8, former BOCES 2 employees reunited in the Professional Development Center for the 2023 Retiree Reception to honor this year's class of 22 retirees, who had a combined 434 years of service. District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci commended the group for their years of service and revealed the "Everyone Has a Story" theme and video to retirees. Each retiree was gifted an engraved memento box as a token of appreciation for their years of service. As guests took time to reconnect with former coworkers, they feasted on hors d'oeuvres prepared by students in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) culinary program. Prior to the reception, retirees had the opportunity to learn more about Medicare benefits from an Excellus advisor. Best wishes to this year's retirees!



Retirees, front row, from left, Jacqueline Meyer, Patricia DiPonzio-Mock and Susan DeJohn; back row, Ken Sharp, Leslie Bradt and Betsy Armes.

Make All the Difference Scholarships and Awards

The Monroe 2–Orleans Educational Foundation awarded 20 Make All the Difference Scholarships and Awards to students in BOCES 2 programs this year. The Foundation held a reception for the 2023 scholarship recipients and their families on June 1 in the Professional Development Center. Scholarship



sponsors and representatives from students' home school districts also attended the event. The reception was an opportunity for supporters of the Foundation to make in-person connections with students and celebrate their accomplishments. Monroe 2–Orleans BOCES District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci and Foundation Board President Joe Kelly spoke at the event, saluting each student individually during the formal program.

Congratulations to the following recipients: Meghan Felice, Ethan Sherman and Tiana Yaw-Owens (Brockport); Kaleigh Barsell, Amya Gibson and Payton Post (Churchville-Chili); Avery Murray and Jeanae Robinson (Gates Chili); Sabina Golojuch and Josh Southivongnorath (Greece); Alexis Foster and Taylor Wilson (Hilton); Shannon Kelly (Holley); Gabriel Loran and Elizabeth Randall (Kendall); Colin Boyle (Penfield); Isabella Fox, Gavin Radell and Ahmed Shaibi (Spencerport); and Olivia Elias-Pernesky (Wheatland-Chili).



Outstanding Senior

The Michael C. O'Laughlin Outstanding Senior Recognition Dinner, sponsored by the Monroe County Council of School Superintendents (MCCOSS), is the only program which recognizes excellence in all Monroe County and Rochester city high schools at one event. Students are selected for this honor based on their scholarship, leadership, service and character. The honorees received a gift from Monroe One BOCES District Superintendent Dan White and their respective school superintendents. Pictured, from left, is BOCES 2 District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci and Caia Jones-Smith (Greece). Caia was selected as the Outstanding Senior for BOCES 2 and attends the CTE Cosmetology program.

Board Member

Participates in Honor Flight

BOCES 2 Board Member Gerry Maar (Brockport) traveled on Honor Flight Mission 78 to Washington D.C. in June. Honor Flight is an organization that brings veterans to the nation's capital to see the memorials that commemorate their service. Maar is a proud Vietnam veteran. He and his fellow veterans received a raucous patriotic welcome home ceremony at the airport.



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Condolences to:

Rhonda Fauci on the death of her father; the family of Susan Goslee (retiree) and the family of Marilyn Cubitt (retiree).

Phlebotomy Graduates are Ready to Play a Vital Role in Our Community

by Jennifer Merkel

Phlebotomy is a term that is unfamiliar to many, but important to us all. Thanks to the Center for Workforce Development (CWD), 20 new graduates not only know what the word means, but they are now experts, ready to enter the workforce.

A phlebotomist is responsible for drawing blood samples, then preparing and properly storing them for transportation to a diagnostic lab. Adult learners in CWD's Phlebotomy and Lab Services recently completed their 14-week program to become phlebotomists. The May and June cohorts each produced 10 graduates, with many starting jobs in their field.

"Phlebotomy is one of the fastest-growing career fields and is an ideal entry occupation for anyone interested in working in the healthcare field," said CWD Director Shawna Gareau-Kurtz.

Students learn the skills and techniques to immediately enter the workforce, including the collection and preparation of blood and bodily fluids specimens, and the maintenance of records and collection areas. Part of their training includes between 50-100 live sticks; a "stick" is drawing blood from a patient.

The Phlebotomy and Lab Services program is offered three times a year with the next session beginning on Nov. 7. To find out more and enroll, visit <https://www.monroe2boces.org/phlebotomy>.



Generosity Helps Pave the Way to Nationals

by Jennifer Merkel

Six Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Career and Technical Education students traveled to Atlanta in June for the 2023 SkillsUSA National Leadership Conference and Skills Championships. While at the national event, they interacted with students from throughout the country, participated in leadership training and competed against peers in skill-based competitions. These experiences would not have been possible without the generosity and support of community members and industry partners.

- Bob Johnson made a \$2,500 donation to offset the costs of the national trip for students and their families.
- Fourteen businesses donated to the 2023 WEMOCO SkillsUSA Golden Ticket Raffle. This raffle helped raise money for the state and national competitions. Companies included Brodner Equipment Inc.; Corona's Authentic Mexican Restaurant; Emery & Scuro DMD, PC; Dustin's Pizzeria; Golden Eagle Family Restaurant; Jersey Mike's Subs; Mama's Rolls; Mangia Mangia; Salvatore's Barber Shop; Sam's Diner; The Garden Factory; Van's Pit Stop, LLC; Weckesser Brick Co., Inc.; and Weinstein Dental Group and Dr. Bruce Goldin Orthodontics.
- Hundreds of community members participated in and attended the 2023 WEMOCO SkillsUSA Vendor and Craft Show in March. Held annually, this event's proceeds support student participation in state and national competitions.

WEMOCO SkillsUSA appreciates the community's investment in today's high school students as they become tomorrow's workforce.



The following BOCES 2 CTE students attended the 2023 SkillsUSA National Leadership Conference and Skills Championships event at the Georgia Aquarium: from left, Kayla Waddell-Martin (Greece), Sarah Weiss (Greece), Ryleigh Weiss (Brockport), Briana Lewis (Brockport), Adrian Bartz (Brockport) and Aaron Caballero (Churchville-Chili).

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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.

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 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: Director of 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.

Retirees Gather for Lunch

In early August, more than two dozen BOCES 2 retirees gathered for a reunion lunch at Slayton Place in Spencerport. The event was organized by retiree Dave Moore.



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