



SPRING 2021

# Tools of the Trade

A Publication of the Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services

## A Message from the Director



Spring has arrived! It is the season of newness, renewal and hope! We, here at the Center for Career Services, are excited to feel the sun's warmth and look forward to bringing this challenging and exciting year to a close.

I can't say enough about how the teachers, staff and students have handled themselves through this arduous pandemic journey. Everyone has been willing to do their part to follow safety protocols, adapt to whatever changes came their way and otherwise focus, as they always have, on their work.

Throughout all of this, our students have worked hard on several special projects from painting a military-style Humvee ambulance to sharing their talent in the Katonah Museum of Art's "Young Artists" exhibit.

In the past several months, we shared student work on our YouTube channel, acquired special apps for our Sound Production students to continue their work whether in-person or remotely, and saw our Culinary Arts students share delicious fare from different cultures.

A big focus this season has been on our annual SkillsUSA competition. While COVID-19 prevented the competition from being held in-person, students rose to the challenge and competed virtually. There were laptops set up all over campus as judges watched our talented students perform specific tasks. In the end, our students earned 14 medals! Well done!

There are still several weeks to go before the Summer Recess. I want to encourage students and staff members to continue being diligent in their efforts to be as successful – and safe – as possible. As the saying goes, "this too shall pass," and we are hopeful that the pandemic will be over soon!

*Dahlia A. Jackson*

Director, Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services

## Virtual SkillsUSA competition brings on the jitters and the joy



Animal science teacher Michael D'Abruzzo gave his students a brief pep talk as they walked across campus from their classroom to a conference room in another building.

"Just be yourself," he said. "Talk slowly."

Students Jennifer Lopez, Hannah Alfano and Veronica Dutton, each wearing a black and red SkillsUSA jacket, were about to participate in the career and technical organization's Job Interview competition. They would be seated individually in a conference room in front of a camera and respond to a series of questions while their classmates waited outside for their turn.

"That was better than expected," Jennifer, a junior at New Rochelle High School, said once the camera had been turned off. "I'm happy I could make them laugh," she said, referring to the judges.

Veronica, a junior at Pleasantville High School, and Hannah, a junior at New Rochelle High School, were equally pleased with how their interviews for the 2021 SkillsUSA competition went.

"This is such a good feeling," Veronica said

when her interview was over.

"You guys did such a great job, I was just blown away," Mr. D'Abruzzo, who had been sitting in the room off-camera, told his students.

That sense of relief and hopefulness pervaded the campus during the week of March 22. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the SkillsUSA team at the Southern



Culinary art students were tested on cake decorating.

Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services was not able to compete in-person as this year the event was completely virtual. Typically, team members would gather with students from across the region and enjoy the camaraderie and competition the annual event afforded.

Competition began on Monday, March 22, and each day saw groups of students working in front of a computer, showing off their skills while judges watched. Students competed in tasks in their specialty area or were tested on a specific skill, such as Job Demo or Job Interview. Throughout campus students decorated cakes, attended to a patient, pulled over a vehicle and more all while judges watched via computer. They would have to wait until Thursday to see how they did.

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Periodically we'll be sitting down with one of our standout educators to talk about their unique perspective on the world of Career and Technical Education and what motivates them the most.

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

*Kevin McAllister | School Counselor*

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME



Kevin McAllister credits his high school counselor, Muriel Taylor, with turning his life around, helping him embrace education and become a successful individual.

"She was the first to get me to believe in myself," he said. "I don't know if she knows it or not, she really saved my life."

It has been his life work since his own school days to do the same thing for the at-risk youth he has worked with for past three decades. Today he is using his skills to influence and inspire the young men and women as a school counselor at the Center for Career Services, a position he came to in September.

The first in his family to attend college, Mr. McAllister received a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science from Mercy College, where he also minored in psychology and criminal justice. He later received his Master of Science in Counseling, also from Mercy. He is duly credentialed as a School Counselor and Mental Health Counselor.

Mr. McAllister worked in the Department of Corrections for years and in 2005 had an opportunity to come to Southern Westchester BOCES. He began there as a community worker and eventually as a teacher's assistant. When he received his master's degree in school counseling, he was able to transition to the role of school counselor at SWBOCES' Sprain Brook Academy, a school for incarcerated youth operated in partnership with the Westchester County Department of Correction in Valhalla.

As that program evolved, Mr. McAllister had the opportunity to join the Center for Career Services to work with students in its Career and Technical Education programs. He was told he would be a good fit for the student population there.

"I kept saying I was a jail person," Mr. McAllister said with a laugh. "That was my jam."

"Very quickly I learned it was true — this is a good fit," he said of his new position.

Mr. McAllister works with students enrolled in the Television Production, Sound Production and CISCO, Pre-Engineering and Security, Law and Policing programs.

It could not have been a more perfect fit. Not only does Mr. McAllister have years of experience counseling youth, he also has a side gig working with his brother as a DJ for their company DTE, Divine Truth Entertainment. He also has known Ray Sulla, who teaches Security Law and Policing, for years as they were both involved in union work.

"Are you kidding me," Mr. McAllister said of his reaction to learning what groups of students he would be working directly

with at Careers. "They are programs that agree with me and who I am."

In addition to counseling students, Mr. McAllister said he views his role as an ambassador for Career and Technical Education. He understands that not all students are college-bound, and he has worked with at-risk youth for years, seeing them grow and develop into mature, capable individuals who put their pasts

behind them and become successful in a chosen profession. He knows what they are capable of achieving.

"I've been supporting kids in education. I mentor kids. I understand how having a mentor can save your life," he said. "It amazes me I get paid for doing something I love, something I would do for free."

The key to working with young people, he said, is to meet them where they are in their lives. From there, he can help them create a plan and discern how they can best use their skills. A large part of this is not what they learn in the classroom. It comes down to respect — for

themselves and those working to help them.

"I'm a big fan of the concept of what BOCES stands for. BOCES is a win-win. Students can use it as a catalyst for the future," he said. "I see what it does for a kid. The kids are my boss. I work for the kids."

"I can be proactive. I can get the kids before they head down a bad path," he continued. "You wake up that sleeping giant. If they don't have something constructive to do, they become destructive."

It is why he is always checking in with his students, they weren't in school today. Why? He will text or call a student if he has to find out what is taking them away from school.

"Making that commitment to kids is immeasurable," he said, adding he has always told the youth he works for that if he can do it, they can as well.

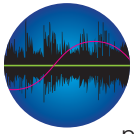
It was not always easy for him. He grew up without a father, moved around the area and even got into trouble having been accused of selling drugs. His own school counselor vouched for him and told him he has a bright future, and he should not be wasting it. That was all the motivation he needed. Now he hopes he can be a motivator for someone else.

"It goes back to Ms. Taylor. She was there. I was scared of her, but it was a healthy fear," he said. "I wake up everyday, my day starts when the kids show up. My niche is being a broker, the middleman, to help people out."



School Counselor Kevin McAllister is new on campus and is using his skills to support and motivate students at CCS.

## Access to app allows Sound Production students to train their hearing



An integral part of the training that takes place in the Sound Production program is learning how to listen. The classroom is fitted with equipment and computer programs that enable students to listen and learn different frequencies. When COVID-19 disrupted in person learning, and students went to remote instruction, they had no access to their classroom equipment, therefore they could not practice their listening skills.

Teacher Sean Harty was determined to find a way for his students to get their listening training done no matter where they were.

Having worked with Pro Audio Files before, an online company that shares blogs, articles and more with sound production professionals and musicians, Mr. Harty reached out to them to see if they could help. Happy to do so, Pro Audio Files covered the cost for each student to download the ear training app Quiztones.

The app has different quizzes the students can take that ask them to identify the specific frequency they are hearing. Each day students take a quiz and send the results to Mr. Harty, as it is part of a student's grade.

"We can have the best equipment in the world, be in the best studio in the world, it doesn't really matter if you can't use the equipment," Mr. Harty said. "Now all students have Quiztones and can use it at home."

Being able to identify frequencies is integral to the work a sound production engineer does. As Mr. Harty explained, every instrument has a frequency, engineers need to determine if the frequency sounds correct, and if not, make adjustments.

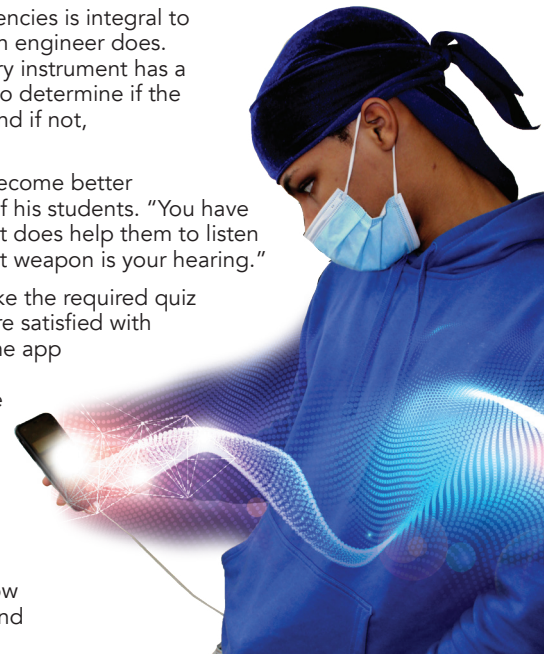
"It is basically for them to become better engineers," Mr. Harty said of his students. "You have to learn what sounds right. It does help them to listen better. I always say your best weapon is your hearing."

Students are welcome to take the required quiz more than once until they are satisfied with their score. In many ways, the app has motivated students to challenge themselves to see if they can get a 100 the first time they take a quiz.

"You are training both your ear and your brain," while listening, Mr. Harty said.

"You are training to get into a conscience thought, 'I know exactly what is happening and how to make it better.'"

**Students in the Sound Production Program now can practice listening to and identifying different sound frequencies. Thanks to a generous donation from Pro Audio Files, students now have an app where they can practice their skills anywhere, anytime.**



## Humvee ambulance project rumbles off of campus



The military style 2012 Humvee ambulance was eased out of the garage on Dec. 8 looking nothing like it did when it arrived in January.

It entered the space a dusty green color with camouflage highlights and left a shiny black, sophisticated-looking machine ready to go to work.

This was the first leg of the vehicle's new purpose: assisting the City of Rye Police Department in emergency flooding situations.

Students in the Collision Technology program at the Center for Career Services were responsible for transforming the vehicle. It was the second such project the students had done; the first was repainting a Chevy Tahoe that is now part of the City of Rye Police Department's auxiliary fleet. Both vehicles were obtained through the federal Law Enforcement Support Office, or LESO, 1033 program, which enables law enforcement departments to acquire military surplus vehicles for their fleet.

"We built a relationship with the BOCES team, the kids and Paul from the last project they did for us," Lt. Scott Craig of the City of Rye Police Department said, referring to

teacher Paul Casagrande. "They were looking for something bigger and more exciting to work on. We told them we had this Humvee from the military. They just jumped at the chance to paint it, so the kids and Paul were excited to have a chance at it."



**Students in the Collision Technology program worked on a special project — painting a military Humvee for use by the City of Rye Police Department.**

"I wanted to work on it. One hundred percent, I wanted to work on it," student Emily Vazquez from White Plains High School said. "And look what happened, I did."

Emily said she helped work on the sides of the vehicle and had to use two gallons of paint because it is so big.

In addition to honing her skills in painting, Emily said the project also taught her patience.

"It helped me learn to be more patient with the paint. You have to learn to wait on it and paint layers," she said.

Breyner Gramajo from New Rochelle High School helped sand and prime the rig as well as pop out some dents on one of the doors.

"It was a really ugly green and it was really ugly before. Now it looks really nice, it's a nice glossy black. It's really shiny so it just catches your eye," he said.

"It was great," Jose Nava, a student at New Rochelle High School, said of working on the project. "We wanted to do a nice job."

Apparently, they did.

"I was blown away. I mean for such a big piece of equipment that came in a flat military green to have such a black shine to it. These guys paid very close attention to the details right down to the rims and lugnuts. I mean they did a phenomenal job," Lt. Craig said.



## Virtual SkillsUSA competition brings on the jitters and the joy



A. Animal Science students, from left, Veronica Dutton, Jennifer Lopez and Hannah Alfano all competed in Job Interview.



B. Architecture and Design students Alexander Anderson and Sofia Elias worked together on a design for a café.



C. A Cosmetology student works on her updo during the SkillsUSA competition.

### SKILLS, cont'd from page 1

"I was kind of nervous," Bianca Torello, a senior at Port Chester High School competing in cosmetology, said. Seniors were being tested on creating an updo hairstyle on long hair.

"I wanted everything to fall perfectly," Bianca said. "I think the camera made it easier. It didn't feel like we were being watched."

"Ahhhhh," was the sentiment one nursing assistant student shared as she walked from her classroom to the lab where she would be watched as she competed. The nursing assistant students' competition consisted of hand-washing their own hands and range of motion on the lower extremity of a patient.

"I'm just relieved it's over," Yadira Velancia, a junior from New Rochelle High School and fellow nursing assistant student, said after her competition. "I was trying to stay as calm as possible."

SkillsUSA adviser and Security, Law and Policing program teacher Ray Sulla said competing in a program like SkillsUSA offers students an extra focus on an area of interest. It can help further enforce this is a field they would like to pursue after high school and can enhance their resume

and applications for jobs and colleges.

When the competitions are held in person, Mr. Sulla said, it serves as an opportunity for Southern Westchester BOCES students to meet peers from other schools and to learn more about them.

"They find out they are not so different," he said.

The hope is the competition will be in person next year.

If students do well in the regional competition, they have an opportunity to compete at the state level and then go on to the nationals.

On Thursday afternoon, when the competitions were over, students and staff tuned into a virtual awards ceremony to see how they did.

"We made it a priority, and not having this event was not an option," Kim Bell, director of the Rockland Skills Committee, said at the start of the ceremony. "All of you should be proud of yourselves. I look forward to seeing you all at states."

The results? Students at Southern Westchester BOCES took away 15 medals! (See sidebar for complete results.) ▶ ▶ ▶

## Congratulations to our SkillsUSA Winners!

### Action Skills

First Place, Jade Saccomanno

### Advertising Design

Second Place, Sofia Sanchez

### Cosmetology, Junior

Third Place, Roselyn Lima

### Crime Scene Investigation

Third Place, Joseph Bergey, Sabrina Cardenas, Brian Penn

### Criminal Justice

First Place, Giovanni Wellington  
Second Place, Felix Medina  
Third Place, Leslie Patino

### Digital Cinema

First Place (tie),  
Harley Fernandes/Brandon Perez

### First Aid/CPR

First Place, Madison-Taylor Fry  
Second Place, Eileen Plotkin  
Third Place, Michelle Valbuena

### Job Interview

Second Place, Veronica Dutton  
Third Place, Jennifer Lopez

### Job Skill Demo, Year 1

Second Place, Jorge Corona-Lopez

### Job Skill Demo, Year 2

Second Place, Bryanna Valencia

Please visit our website, [careers.swboces.org](https://careers.swboces.org), for more about 2021 SkillsUSA competition.

## Student work makes its debut on YouTube

{ Access to the channel can be found at <https://careers.swboces.org/>



There are so many talented students who attend the Center for Career Services, it does not seem fair that so few people get to see, hear or learn more about the incredible work they do.

Three teachers have collaborated to share their students' work on a popular format: YouTube.

Sean Harty, who teaches the Sound Production students, has been collaborating with Television Production teacher Mike May and Commercial Art teacher Damian Powers to create the YouTube channel: CCS Digital Media Productions.

"Since Mike and I do the videos and work with all the programs, anything we do can be put there," Mr. Harty said.

One of the most recent projects posted on

the channel consists of students' short video clips for a hypothetical production company logo.

"They are really good, I have to say," Mr. Harty said of the students' work.

Students from the three classes, Sound Production, Television Production and Commercial Art worked in groups to create a company logo and video.

"My students benefit from collaboration work because it gives them a real-world experience of working with their peers and developing ideas," Mr. Powers said. "Collaboration with other students and teachers on campus is of utmost importance for my students. The students need to know how to interact with others and guide the flow of ideas to a creative solution for the client, or people involved in the project that they are working on."

The YouTube channel will enable parents and prospective students to view the work done by current students.

"It will be easier to find it in one place," Mr. Harty said. "We want parents, students to go to this site and see what we've done. That becomes helpful for school counselors."

Mr. May added that the channel is a good way to keep student work "front and center."

"There will be new content to look at and highlights of student work," he continued.

In addition to the company project, viewers will find a recent video on the Virtual Work-Based Learning program, Student Voices and video work from previous years.

"The channel is growing," Mr. Harty said. "We don't want to wait until everything is perfect."



# Be Our Guest!

## Culinary students share cuisine from around the world for year-end project



The parsley garnish was on the plates and the cannelloni only had minutes left to bake, leaving Dominic Lotto, a junior at West Lake High School, time to pace through the kitchen.

He was a bit nervous. His dish was minutes away from being served to his classmates as part of a special weeks-long project involving selecting a dish, preparing and serving it, all while researching its history. The information would then be shared in a brief oral presentation during the meal. He would be graded on the food he prepared, the presentation and a written essay.

In the end his worry was not necessary.

"This is delicious," announced a classmate before diving in for another bite.

Dominic made his presentation in the culinary kitchen. The class paused the work they were doing to listen to his discussion of the dish and to enjoy it before going back to their classwork.

For the past four years, students in the Culinary Arts program have participated in an end-of-year assignment in which they have two weeks to research and prepare a dish to share, said teacher Chef John Damiani.

"It's a culmination of two semesters where students put everything together," he said.

Students are encouraged to select a dish representing their heritage or culture, or to find a personal favorite.

"I think it's important and offers other students an opportunity to experience different kinds of cuisines they might not get exposed to," Chef Damiani said.



Dominic Lotto, a junior at West Lake High School, holds up a portion of cannelloni that he baked as part of a Culinary Arts year-end project. Students were required to research a special dish and make it to share with their classmates.

Many students select a recipe their grandmother made for them or one that has become a traditional dish served during the holidays with their families.

"It shows how food brings people together," the chef said.

Dominic selected cannelloni, a traditional Italian dish, similar to what Americans think of as manicotti. Although it did not reflect his personal heritage, when he saw the recipe, he thought it would be something he would

enjoy and decided on it for his project. He added his own twist: instead of the using tubular pasta the recipe called for, he opted to use homemade crêpes.

Cooking is something Dominic loves to do, and he often practices at home.

"It really caught my eye," Dominic told classmates as they enjoyed cannelloni. He added that the dish can be traced back to Italy in 1770.

"The filling is ground pork and ground beef and is served with a tomato and béchamel sauce," he said.

After enjoying a serving of Dominic's dish, Pleasantville High School junior Guilder Cruz returned to his prep station, where he chopped vegetables for his presentation the next day.

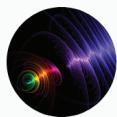
Guilder was getting ready to make Guatemalan enchiladas, a common street food served in his native country.

"Basically, it's vegetables and meat over a tortilla," he said, adding that it is also a platform for a variety of colors — green lettuce, purple cabbage, red tomatoes and white cheese.

"You can find it everywhere in Guatemala," he said.

Chef Damiani said 26 students will complete the project this year. For him, the joy comes from enjoying the variety of fare the students make. The challenging part is ordering the unique ingredients some of the recipes call for that are not typically part of the kitchen inventory.

"It all comes together with the cooking techniques and fundamentals they've learned all year," he said.



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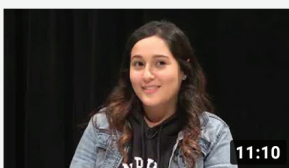
IMNDS Productions  
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6 views • 1 week ago



2016 PM Student  
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Three teachers have collaborated to share their students' work on a popular format: YouTube.

## Working with clients is part of the learning that goes on in Commercial Art



Commercial Art students Sandra Oseguera and Emma Garcia, two New Rochelle High School students, were selected to spearhead the final aspects of a special collaborative project to create a new logo for the Southern Westchester BOCES St. Matthews Center for Special Services.

"They gave us free reign," Commercial Art teacher Damian Powers said of the project.

The class was instructed that the real-world project needed to include certain parameters, including designing a logo that could be scaled up or down in size without losing any detail. The logo also needed to incorporate the principles of St. Matthew's.

Throughout the process students met virtually with the client to gather information about what the clients hoped to achieve in the new design. The clients were questioned about the color palette, size, font style, what the logo will be used for and more.

"We want this logo to define what we stand for," were one set of instructions given to students.

Students also learned more about the institution they were working for. They were told St. Matthew's Center for Special Services is "an alternate assessment-based program

that works with students in middle school and high school. Students in our program have an interest in working on pre-vocational skills and need support on functional life skills." The center works specifically with Autistic students as well as those with Down



Commercial Art student Emma Garcia, a senior at New Rochelle High School, was one of two students who spearheaded a special project designing a new logo.

syndrome and several with developmental delays. The client described the school as "compassionate, caring, safe, trustworthy, creative, community, family, friendly."

Students worked on their own individual designs and shared them with one another in a peer review format. From there, students selected three designs from what they had developed and shared those with the clients.

Sandra, a junior, and Emma, a senior, were selected to take the feedback and finalize a design and present it to the clients.

"I've never created a logo before," Sandra said. "It's a first-time experience. I am out of my comfort zone, but I am pretty proud of the work I've done."

Emma said she has worked on developing logos before, experience that helped make this current project easier.

"They knew what they wanted," she said.

In her original design, Sandra incorporated the American Sign Language sign for "I love you," along with books that represent learning and a tree symbolizing how students grow as they learn.

Emma also used the "I love you" hand sign in her original logo as well. She also included hearts and hands in her design as the clients noted they wanted the logo to represent caring and loving.

Mr. Powers said this type of project not only helped students learn how to work with clients, but also was important because it was a collaborative project amongst his students.



ST. MATTHEW'S SCHOOL  
Center for Special Services  
Southern Westchester BOCES

## A lesson in police safety: Traffic stops



A car rolled through a stop sign without braking. Two officers in a patrol vehicle pulled the car over. The regular traffic stop quickly turned into a dangerous situation when they discovered the passenger had a gun.

This was a simulated situation for students in the Security, Law and Police class at Southern Westchester BOCES. It was an example used to demonstrate appropriate tactics when pulling over a vehicle, as well as to remind the students that anything can happen at any time.

Officers Stephen Ellroodt and Danny Sunagawa from the Community Affairs division of the Greenburgh Police Department visited the class on March 11. They reviewed material with students in preparation for the upcoming SkillsUSA competition, which enables students to compete with other career technical students throughout the region. Students are judged on specific tasks or skills and have an opportunity to compete at states and then at the national level.

The two officers showed students how to

conduct a routine traffic stop and offered tips on how to handle the situation, no matter what happens.

Officer Ellroodt asked students how they felt; after volunteers had demonstrated how officers should exit their own vehicle and approach a car they had pulled over.

During a second run-through of the scenario, circumstances changed when the student-officer approached the passenger side noticed a gun in the vehicle. Suddenly, the student-officers quickly backed away from the vehicle, drew their own weapons and gave forceful instructions to those in the car. The passenger with the weapon cooperated and dropped it out of the car window, allowing the officers to approach the vehicle safely.

"When you approach the car, touch the car to leave your fingerprints," Officer Ellroodt said.

Teacher Ray Sully reminded students to use an authoritative voice and speak loudly with conviction.

"You have to mean business," he said. "Just by hearing your voice, they will know



Students in the Security, Law and Policing program practice a routine traffic stop with the assistance from members of the Community Affairs division of the Greenburgh Police Department. The practice was for the upcoming SkillsUSA competition where students would compete in Criminal Justice.

that you are serious."

The practice session facilitated by the officers benefited students in the SkillsUSA competition that took place the week of March 22, said Mr. Sully, especially as they were tested on DWI traffic stops

Earlier in the day, Officers Ellroodt and Sunagawa had shared a PowerPoint presentation with students, reviewing a cop's duties and responsibilities. The pair have worked with Mr. Sully for years and often visit the Center for Career Services to help his students.



## SWBOCES students featured in virtual Advocacy Day



Every year, educators and administrators from Southern Westchester BOCES take part in Advocacy Day, a day-long visit with state legislators highlighted by student delegates whose success illustrates the value BOCES offers. Due to restrictions, Advocacy Day was reimagined this year as a series of virtual engagements. The goal was the same, though, to ensure our state representatives understand the depth, breadth and scope of services provided by Southern Westchester BOCES to our students, schools and districts. As always, our students are our best advocates. Their unique stories share a common thread: BOCES has made a difference in their lives. Meet Desmond-Michael Washington and Michelle Novominski — two students from The Center for Career Services...

**Desmond-Michael Washington** a Woodlands High School senior completing his second year in SWBOCES' Audio Production program, is a typical Career Tech student in many ways.

He's gaining marketable career skills that align with his interests while he's in high school. He's also not committing just yet to a career in his field of study. That's also typical of many CTE students even if it's surprising to some who expect a direct, high school-to-job market trajectory.

Desmond has a passion for mental health, and is mulling a career in social work or as a guidance counselor. If he chooses one of those paths, then audio production will provide a valuable secondary skillset, something he'll always do no matter his career choice.

"Right now I don't really know what the future holds for me. I want to do a lot of different things," he says.

That's part of what makes SWBOCES the right place for him to be. It has made a tremendous difference for him.

"I want to be able to do multiple things, he says. "I don't want anything to hold me back. I don't want any lack of education or lack of ambition or lack of knowledge holding me back. That's why I'm in BOCES."

"I always have that knowledge now," he adds, "even if I do end up being a mental health expert. If I'm a social worker, if I'm a school counselor, I always have that knowledge no matter what I do."

Desmond likes that his program, and the CTE campus in Valhalla generally, is so diverse. There are students from many different backgrounds pursuing a range of skills and trades. BOCES has made a difference for him in boosting his confidence while providing that diversity.

**Michelle Novominski** was considering a career in healthcare, possibly as a nurse practitioner or a nurse anesthetist, when a job shadowing opportunity with her aunt arose. The experience settled her on the latter choice.

For a lot of high school students like her, the journey would start there. For this Edgemont senior who is eyeing either Pace University or CUNY's



**Desmond-Michael Washington**



**Michelle Novominski**

Macaulay Honors College, though, the journey was well under way. For one thing, she'll complete SWBOCES' two-year Emergency Medical Services program in June and earn her EMT certification.

"When I first heard about the program and the opportunity to take classes, I was really intrigued," she said. "I looked into what the program offered, specifically the EMS program, and I also learned we could gain college credits as well."

"It definitely made a big difference for me educationally and personally as well," she added. "It gave me a lot of skills and experience through the program. I learned a lot about how to treat patients."

She is currently president of the state HOSA Future Health Professionals, an international career and technical student organization. She is also a Red Cross-certified lifeguard and a volunteer at White Plains Hospital.

She is a member of the National Technical Honor Society at SWBOCES' Career and Technical Education campus in Valhalla, where she takes her EMS classes.

"A big reason why I decided to take classes at BOCES is that it will give me the skills to work right out of high school in order to support myself while continuing my education in the medical field," she said.

At the same time it has expanded her personal network, letting her get to know like-minded students from different high schools. Students at BOCES focus on getting hands-on skills, and everyone supports each other and works as a team in order to succeed, she says.

What would she tell someone unfamiliar with BOCES about the value of programs like hers? That's easy. For students who want the training to allow them to go straight into a career, it's a great fit. For those unsure of what they want to do, BOCES helps them find their passion.

The best part about taking classes at BOCES, she says, is that "you get the hands on experience you might not get in your home school."

"Getting that hands-on feel of doing something I really love is amazing," she said.





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WESTCHESTER BOCES

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#### SWBOCES NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Southern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services, its officers and employees, does not discriminate against any individuals, including but not limited to students, employees or applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, creed, sex, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, citizenship status, marital status, partner status, genetic information, predisposing genetic characteristics, weight, military status or service, political affiliation, or domestic violence victim status.

This policy of nondiscrimination includes access by students to educational programs; counseling services for students; course offerings and student activities; recruitment, appointment and promotion of employees; and employment pay and benefits. This policy also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to the Compliance Officers at Southern Westchester BOCES, 17 Berkley Drive, Rye Brook, NY 10573. (914) 937-3820.

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SWBOCES IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

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"The job of BOCES is to support the work being done in schools by providing services and supports they are not able to provide for themselves."

## On the walls for all to see: Commercial Art students participate in KMA student exhibit



For the third year in a row, several students in the Commercial Art program of Southern Westchester BOCES' Center for Career Services had their work on display in the Katonah Museum of Art's annual "Young Artists" exhibit.

The exhibit, now in its 38th year, is composed of work created by 350 high school seniors from 30 schools throughout Westchester, Putnam and Fairfield counties. The exhibit was on display during the month of February.

Oquasia Pride, a senior at White Plains High School, had one of her projects shown in the exhibit. Although the museum limited the number of people who could view the work at one time, she was fortunate enough to have seen her work hanging as part of the show.

"It was nice seeing everybody's art," Oquasia said, "and to see the different styles of art."

For her piece, Oquasia selected a portrait she created in Adobe Illustrator of Chance the Rapper.

Oquasia said before she got started on her piece, she was thinking she wanted to use a celebrity as a model. The rapper, wearing a baseball cap, caught her attention.

Oquasia said she came to BOCES to study commercial art as she is intending to study graphic design in college.

"We get to be creative and make anything we want," she said.

Emma Garcia, a senior at New Rochelle High School, also submitted a piece for the show. Her selection was a digital piece reflecting current events — a girl wearing a mask.

"It feels really good," Emma said of having her work on display in a public place.

In addition to being part of the exhibit, Emma also participated in a special workshop offered by the museum. Select students had an opportunity to safely meet and design a piece. One would be chosen for a postcard detailing information about the Young Artist's Exhibit.

Although her design was not chosen, Emma said the workshop was a great experience as it allowed her to meet other art students.

In all, nine students from the Commercial Art program had their work shown in the exhibit.

"I am just super proud of these guys," Commercial Art teacher Damian Powers said of his students. "Especially with the pandemic. For them to be able to get focused and engage with everything going on outside, it's great."



Commercial Art teacher Damian Powers (above) had an opportunity to visit the Katonah Museum of Art for the annual Young Artists Exhibition.

Only a certain number of guests were allowed in the exhibit at one time. Those lucky enough to do so were able to see work by several Commercial Art students.

Each year the Young Artist Exhibit features work by area high school students.

