



SPRING 2022

Tools of the Trade

A Publication of the Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services

A Message from the Director



It's always a surprise how quickly the school year flies by. It has been a wonderfully "normal" year in ways we haven't fully experienced since before the pandemic. Normal at the Career Services campus, of course, means students achieving excellence on several fronts, as you'll read in these pages.

For starters, Nurse Assistant student Amy Uvaydova had the rare opportunity to share her SWBOCES experience with state legislators in February during BOCES Advocacy Week. They were excited to hear the unique college and career path Amy has planned, and how SWBOCES has been integral to her pursuing her ambitions.

The Cosmetology program saw first-year students judge the advanced color, cut and styling skills of their second-year peers. The results were striking. We are also proud that Benjamin Alejandro (Security, Law and Policing) is our first student in some years serving as an officer with SkillsUSA.

Speaking of standing out, Daniel Mitrione (Automotive Technology) and Christopher Ripoll (Audio Production) were members of Pelham's state-champion hockey team, showing that CTE students can do it all!

Students in Damian Powers' Commercial Art class continue to see their work put on prominent display. They returned in April to the White Plains Public Library's posh art space and have also joined the virtual showcase offered by the Lower Hudson Region Media Art Show.

I want to congratulate our HOSA and SkillsUSA competitors. Twelve students from the Emergency Medical Services, Security, Law & Policing, Animal Science and Nurse Assistant programs participated in the virtual HOSA Spring Leadership Conference, coming away with several honors in their respective fields. Meanwhile, 39 students traveled to Orange-Ulster BOCES in March to participate in the SkillsUSA Regional Competition, placing first or second five times apiece and taking third place six times.

Congratulations to all of our students who model excellence and demonstrate their commitment and their skills every day. We couldn't be more proud.

Dahlia A. Jackson

Director, Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services

SWBOCES students distinguish themselves at statewide competition



Southern Westchester BOCES Career Services students shined brightly at the recent HOSA Spring Leadership Conference, coming away with numerous honors in the virtual competition.

Students from the Emergency Medical Services, Security, Law & Policing, Animal Science and Nurse Assistant programs participated in the competition.

In the Veterinary Science Program taught by Michael D'Abruzzo, student Hannah Alfano placed 3rd statewide. From the Nursing Assistant program, Karen McDonald's students Yadira Valencia placed 1st and Kristy Gonzalez placed 2nd.

From the EMS program taught by Robert Del Greco, Gabriela Gonzalez and Dillon McGee placed 1st in the EMT competition. For CPR/ First Aid, Emily Ferraro and Denisse Rivera

Saenz placed 2nd while Michael Pereira and Alyssa Carrasquillo placed 3rd. Jessie Asiedo-Wiafe, Gabriela Gonzalez, Lisanne Rattery were recognized in the Individual Achievement Test.

Several of the students are expected to take part in the national competition in Nashville, Tenn., in late June.

"I'm learning a lot, and it's my favorite class of all the classes I've ever taken," Emily Ferraro from the EMS program said.

A first-year student from Edgemont, she found the competition exciting even though it was changed to a virtual event. "You had knowledge of what you were walking into, but it could have been a multitude of different scenarios. So you kind of just had to think quickly on your feet and act accordingly," she said.

HOSA, continues on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2 A Leader at Skills USA | 6 CTE Students Hoist Hockey Trophy |
| 3 Skills USA Medal Winners | 6 Special Construction Project |
| 4 Cosmetology Color Challenge | 7 2022 Car Show |
| 5 Commercial Art on Display | 8 Nursing Student Spotlight |

SWBOCES students distinguish themselves at statewide competition



PASSION, continued from page 1

Alyssa Carrasquillo, a first-year EMS student from Harrison, admitted she was nervous going in, but she and her partner worked through the challenge together. The scenario was entering a McDonald's and encountering someone who is choking. She came prepared to show her skills on a mannequin, but the challenge was actually an oral presentation. The end result showed her something about herself.

"It tells me I can do a lot if I put my mind to it," said Alyssa, who plans to study psychology in college and work as an EMT on the side.

Mr. Del Greco's said his students reacted with surprise that the competition wasn't even more challenging than it was.

"I said, that's what it feels like to be over-prepared, and that's how you want to approach all of this," he said.

They perform weekly skills practice, mixed with lectures, vocabulary and other foundational work. For something like CPR, he said, it needs to become muscle memory.

He teaches first and second year students with a goal of certifying them as EMTs so they can go right to work. "Any time I can throw a curveball at them I try to do it because I want them to not be super-comfortable with it," he said. "It's hard. It's real life."

SECURITY, LAW & POLICING

Security, Law & Posing student stands out as SkillsUSA Officer



To hear Benjamin Alejandro talk about his academic goals, it's hard to imagine that the second-year Security, Law and Policing student was ever shy about public speaking.

He shares his thoughts clearly and thoughtfully, which is a credit to both to SWBOCES and to SkillsUSA, the career and technical education organization where he is an officer this school year.

SkillsUSA helped him "grow out of his shell," Benjamin says, and achieve the level of success for which his teacher and advisor, Ray Sulla, saw the potential.

"He saw me as being a bright, intelligent student, and with the right push I could become something greater," said Benjamin, who is a senior at White Plains High School.

Mr. Sulla agreed, saying, "It was clear to me that Benjamin had the makeup of a student who will go far. His work ethic is excellent. He just needed to break out of his natural shyness. It has been a pleasure to watch him grow as a student."

SWBOCES hadn't had a SkillsUSA



student officer in some time, so Mr. Sulla encouraged Benjamin to pursue it. As a new student, Benjamin wasn't familiar with the organization.

"When I looked into it," he said, "I realized it was an organization that, sort of like BOCES, helps you understand career and technical skills that you need in the workplace and that help you improve later in life. So I decided to join."

Benjamin has been accepted to Manhattan College, where he'll study American History next year. His goal is to teach history, for which he's always had a passion. Preserving the past is important, he said. It's too easy, he said, for it to be interpreted incorrectly.

The child of Peruvian immigrants, he believes his family background gives him a unique perspective on U.S. history. He takes his academics very seriously, he said. That comes from his parents.

"My biggest inspiration is my parents because my parents taught me you have to be serious," he said. "You have to take your grades seriously because they'll get you places. I would say that has had one of the biggest impacts on my life."

He would tell anyone considering one of the 20 CTE programs at SWBOCES not to miss out.

"I would tell them no matter what opportunity you're given, no matter how far off it is from what you want to do, you should take it because you never know how it will help you later in life," he said.

SWBOCES students win medals at statewide SkillsUSA competition



It's no surprise that two SWBOCES students won medals at the SkillsUSA Spring Competition in Syracuse, where they faced off against top students from all over New York State.

After all, they were backed by a teacher who was a finalist for Advisor of the Year.

"I love these kids," Teacher Ray Sulla said. "I love SkillsUSA and HOSA. I enjoy doing it for the kids. Seeing them prepare is such a joy."

After taking 21 medals at the Region 4 competition, the SWBOCES team entered the state contest confident but respectful of those they would compete against.

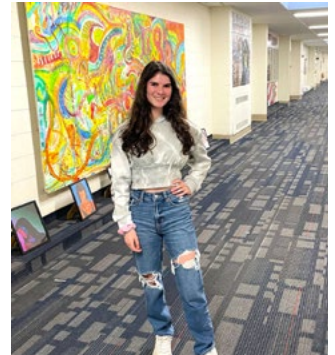
At the end of the event, first-year student Ariel Novominski of Edgemont came away with 2nd place in Related Technical Math, while Raquel Thomas, a second-year student from New Rochelle, took 3rd place in cake decorating.

"It's a big deal because they competed against everyone in the whole state," said SkillsUSA Advisor Ray Sulla.

He told his students to be prepared for the competition, which would be a level higher than what they saw at the earlier regional competition. At the state contest, they faced 60-70 students from BOCES as well as four-year high schools, including some that boast their own training programs.

Ariel admitted she was nervous for the two-hour exam covering algebra, geometry, trigonometry and statistics. She was up against 20 competitors with just her calculator and pencil. The 50-question test was filled with real-world applications of technical mathematics. She went in prepared, though, and that helped calm her nerves.

Her program, pre-engineering with Teacher Letizia Noche, demonstrates the high-level academic rigor of CTE programs at SWBOCES and defies misperceptions. BOCES isn't widely discussed at her home school, she said, and students with her academic interests are more likely to take Advanced Placement classes and compete with one another.



This has been her passion since the fifth grade, when she took classes in cake decorating at Michael's craft stores. Now she's heading to the Culinary Institute of America.

She credits Chef John Damiani with encouraging her to apply, to seek out scholarships and simply to believe such a prestigious path was possible.

"So I thought, if everyone's doing the same thing, what can I do to stand out?," Ariel said. "How can I be different? So I thought, I might as well try BOCES. There are so many great programs. You can get certified. In this class we're doing AutoCAD. Even as a side job, even if I don't do engineering, it'd be great to have that knowledge that others might not."

She still takes AP courses as well. She's considering majoring in biomedical engineering in college.

There are so many overlooked opportunities at BOCES, in her view.

"The fact that you're getting experience in a field before college to me is a great thing," she said.

Raquel, meanwhile, had a very different challenge: to decorate a three-tiered cake.

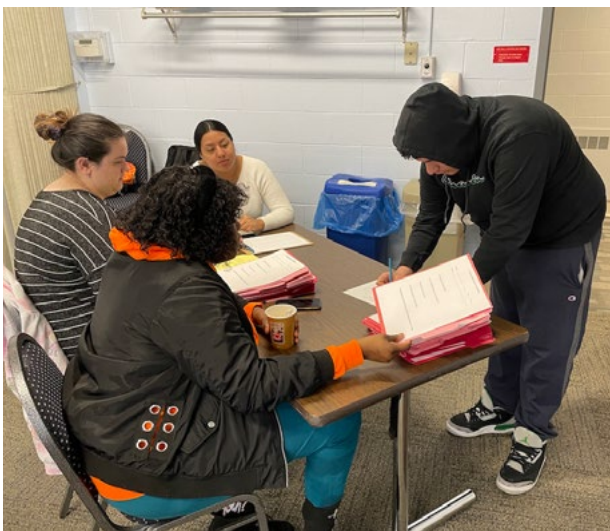
For her competition, she was able to bake her cake at home, but she had to make her buttercream on the spot, as well as come up with a theme and flavors.

"It was kind of like a baking show," she said with a laugh.

She wasn't nervous at first because this is what she loves to do. "But they let people watch us, so that was a lot of pressure surrounded by a lot of different people," Raquel said.

BOCES gave her the foundation of knowledge she'll need to excel in her field, she said, and she has made amazing friends along the way. "We're like a family now," she said.

A family that competes, excels and achieves, that is.



WORKING AT PLAYLAND PARK

#CTE students were able to apply on campus for summer jobs at Playland Park. A support team of fellow students assisted with the applications during morning and afternoon sessions. Applicants were interviewed for positions at the park by Playland Human Resources.

Available positions included: cashier, lifeguard, electrician, carpenter, painter, marketing intern, information technology, mechanic, park management, EMT, plumber and custodian.



COLOR CONTEST



There was something very artistic and eye-catching about the tables at the back of Laura Mirabel's Cosmetology class.

Vibrantly colored coifs of hair adorned rows of busts used by her senior students to apply their techniques.

The assignment here was cutting, styling, coloring and blow drying. The results were impressive.

The challenge, said Bella Siqueira of Harrison, was "blending the colors and doing something creative enough but that also looks really good."

"This was fun," said Treasure Jones of New Rochelle. "It was our first experience doing what we do, without our teacher showing us."

More than an assignment, though, this was a contest. The work of these second-year students was to be judged by first-year students from down the hall.

While the seniors looked on from their desks in their combination salon-classroom, the juniors filed in with notepads and closely observed their work, evaluating and ranking their work.

"It's pretty advanced work, and even the haircuts are very challenging," said Teaching Assistant Tess Giorgio. "It's more for them (her first-year students) to see second-year work, especially to look forward to what they're going to be doing."

Ms. Mirabel was enthused by the quality of her students' work. She acquired certificates and Dunkin Donuts gift cards for the winners.

"It's just my way of telling you guys that you did a wonderful job creating style and hair color of your inspirational picture," she said.



COMMERCIAL ART

Virtual exhibit showcases work of SWBOCES Commercial Art students



Students in Commercial Art teacher Damian Powers class had their artwork seen by the entire world thanks to the latest exhibit to put their creative skills on display.

On the heels of prestigious exhibits at the Katonah Museum of Art and the White Plains Public Library gallery, the Lower Hudson Region Media Art Show 2022 has accepted the submissions of Mr. Powers' students along with those from a dozen schools in the region. Rather than a brick-and-mortar exhibit requiring the travel time of patrons to visit, this latest coup for these aspiring artists was an entirely virtual affair.

"This is an incredible honor," Mr. Powers said. "More than that, though, it is a great opportunity for these students to have their artwork be seen by anyone with an Internet connection."

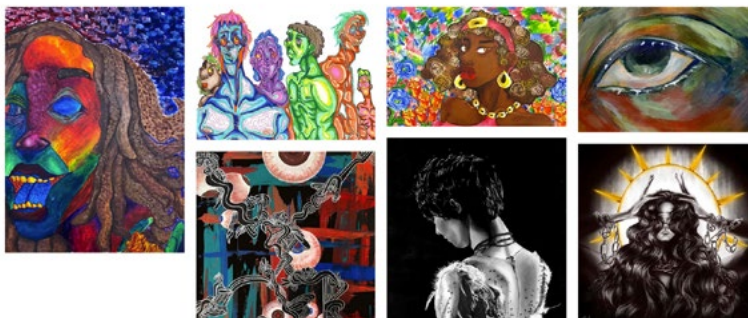
The Media Arts Show is a unique opportunity for students to exhibit and screen their work and see what their peers are producing. Some 235 students submitted 930 works of art from 16 different high schools in the Bronx, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam Rockland, and Westchester counties along with 17 film submissions on Filmfreeway.

SWBOCES students whose work was featured in the exhibit include: Lisa Fabrizio, Citlali Ixpango, Jonah Marti, Ali Martinez, Arianna Hoover Llesma, Sandra Oseguera, Viviana Rivera, Julian Woods,

Southern Westchester BOCES

Mr. Damian Powers
Digital Photography, Computer Art, Graphic Art

Congratulations to the students whose work appears on this page:
Lisa Fabrizio, Citlali Ixpango, Jonah Marti, Ali Martinez, Arianna Hoover Llesma, Sandra Oseguera, Viviana Rivera, Julian Woods, Nyana Randolph, Ashley Solis, David Akinbola, Ayden Stelling, Sofia Sanchez



Nyana Randolph, Ashley Solis, David Akinbola, Ayden Stelling and Sofia Sanchez.

Mr. Powers said these opportunities to showcase student work are crucial as they chart their career paths and hone their skills. By seeing their work in these high profile, real world settings, they get a taste of the kind of success that their futures hold for them.

Commercial Art students' work returns to White Plains Library



Continuing a tradition begun prior to the pandemic, artwork by students in the Commercial Art program at Southern Westchester BOCES' Valhalla Careers Campus was again on display at the White Plains Library through the month of March.

"They're so excited to have their work on exhibit in what is really a prestigious downtown location," teacher Damian Powers said. "This demonstrates for them that the high caliber work they are doing in class is worthy of public display and celebration. I couldn't be more proud of them."

The library, at 100 Martine Avenue, hosted the exhibit in its posh, second-floor gallery through March 30. It featured several dozen works in a range of commercial and fine art styles.

"The students have a variety of work here, and they're super-talented," Mr. Powers said. "For them to be able to see their work in a public space, it makes a huge difference for them. It's also good to bring some creativity back into this environment, especially after COVID."

The exhibit pieces were recreated for display using a large format printer. The gallery features sharp lighting and other improvements since the class was first featured here in 2019. That year marked a movement from school-based displays to more public settings. Mr. Powers' senior students' work is also displayed each year at an exhibit at the Katonah Museum of Art.

The pandemic prevented a return to the library in 2020 and 2021, but gallery organizers reached out to Mr. Powers about coming back this year.

New Rochelle senior Sandra Oseguera pointed to her painting of a woman in a blueish dress holding an orb that she said could be the moon or a crystal ball. "It's whatever you want it to be. It's interpretive," she said.

"I really like this class," she added, "because I'm learning a lot of things in the class art-wise."

Sandra wants to major in game development after high school, and she believes that knowing how to draw digitally as she's

learning now will be a valuable skill."

"It feels nerve wracking," she said of having her artwork put on public display, "but I hope they like everyone's art because I think everyone did extremely well and tried really hard."

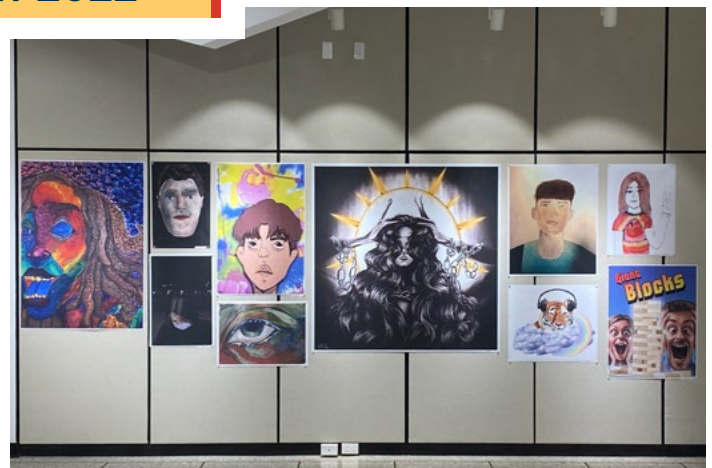
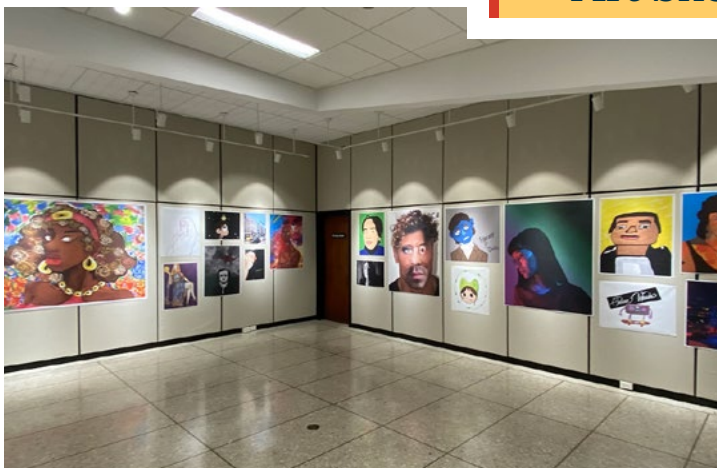
Joe Margolis, a junior at Westlake High School, submitted to the exhibit a shadowy face with a stoic expression and a dark background. He wanted to create something that would stand out amidst his peers' work.

Joe tried a few different CTE programs first before settling into Commercial Art where he found the best fit for his ambitions. "I really feel like I'm home and I'm welcome in this class," he said. "I feel like I can express myself."

"It feels amazing because I'm putting in such hard work," he said. "It feels great that other people are getting to see how hard I'm working and my progress throughout this journey."



Art Show 2022



CTE STUDENTS HELP RAISE A CHAMPIONSHIP BANNER IN BUFFALO

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Daniel Mitrione started playing hockey when he was 8. His teammate, Christopher Ripoll, was just 6. A junior and a senior at Pelham High School, respectively, they now share more than just a passion for the ice.

Besides both being enrolled in Career and Technical Education programs at SWBOCES' Center for Career Services in Valhalla, the pair are both state champions. The Pelicans won the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Division 2 championship in Buffalo March 13.

The team marched through a five-game playoff run rather comfortably before the championship matchup against Section VI's Starpoint. Pelham came away with the 7-6 overtime win.

Daniel reflected on the win before the start of Teacher Peter Schwartzott's Automotive Technology class. He said his passion for hockey and for cars have something in common — the work ethic they demand.

"You definitely have to work hard," said Daniel, who plays forward. "You have to be dedicated. You put in a lot of time."

Chris, meanwhile, is studying Audio Production, eyeing a career in that field. He agreed with his teammate.

"The focus for the game and the focus for the world I want to go into are pretty similar," the goalie said. "If things don't go your way, you have to stick to it."

Mr. Schwartzott said the student body here is as likely to produce top scholars and champion athletes as any high school setting because of the caliber of the CTE programs and the students they attract. His program, in particular, requires high level knowledge and skills, especially given the complicated nature of cars today, not to mention the market for new and used vehicles, which puts a premium on quality maintenance.

He, too, sees a parallel between success in the rink — or field or court — and success in the CTE classroom.

"Having students work together is important," he said. "They bring that team environment into the classroom."



"The focus for the game and the focus for the world I want to go into are pretty similar. If things don't go your way, you have to stick to it." — Christopher Ripoli



CONSTRUCTION & PLUMBING

Students Construct Wheelchair-accessible Flowerbeds

Students in Kurt Boysen's Construction and Plumbing class on the Career Services campus in Valhalla built flowerbeds specially designed to be wheelchair-accessible for students who attend SWBOCES' Special Services programs at Tappan Hill School in Tarrytown.



2022 CAR SHOW

On Sunday, May 22, students from the Automotive Technology program, along with Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, and TV/Video and Sound Production programs, participated in the 8th annual Classic Car Show on campus.



AUTO TECH STUDENTS TOUR PREMIER COLLECTION FACILITY



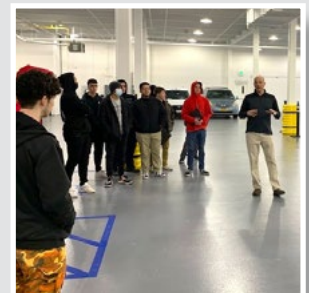
Students in SWBOCES' Automotive Technology classes toured the Premier Collection dealership in Elmsford, one of many such on-site visits planned by the Office of Work-Based Learning to expose students to professional settings in their field of study.

Nearly two dozen students were given an overview of the organization, which boasts nine regional locations offering a range of vehicle makes. Prospective employment opportunities, including paths for advancement, were discussed as students toured the impressive, state-of-the-art facility. Before they left, students were able to give their resumes and ASE certificates to the dealership's hiring manager. Teachers Mike Ward and Peter Schwartzott and Counselor Lori Aufiero joined the tour.

"The goal of these tours is to allow students to see actual working environments in the industry they are pursuing," said Work-Based Learning Coordinator Garrett Jennings. "We arrange for them to meet and hear directly from professionals, including hiring managers, about internships, externships, co-operative opportunities and both seasonal and permanent employment possibilities. These visit never fail to make a positive impression."



AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY





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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.

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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."



NURSING

Amy Uvaydova's career path isn't the one you might expect

SWBOCES nursing student eyes college, career by a less than typical route



Amy Uvaydova talks about her career and college plans with clarity of purpose and common sense frugality.

Even before her junior year, she was eyeing a healthcare career, and as a senior she has every intention of going to college. She's just not signing up for the traditional sequence—high school, four-year college, first job—that would delay her entry into the field and entail more college debt.

Thanks to the head start she's getting through SWBOCES' Clinical Nursing Assistant program, she'll be able to parlay a two-year degree into a job with salary and benefits and the chance to pay her way through the rest of college, all the while gaining valuable professional experience.

"I can leave this course with a certificate and start making money as soon as possible," the Edgemont student said of her SWBOCES program. "I thought it was a really good stepping stone considering I want to go to nursing school."

It's hard to argue with her logic. She credits her mom—her superhero, she says—for helping her think things through and develop a plan that makes sense.

"I'm trying to stay on a budget," she says, sounding wise beyond her teenage years. "I don't want to go to a four-year college. I'm applying to two-year programs so that I can

actually get my associates degree and get my benefits and work for my bachelors."

She's been accepted into the nursing program at Westchester Community College, where she has already earned credits, but she's also studying for the entrance exam at the Cochran School of Nursing, which is affiliated with St. John's Riverside Hospital in Yonkers.

The key to her plan has been the training SWBOCES has provided her. Meanwhile, she's meeting and networking with students from across the region, beyond her small school community.

Her plan may not be for everyone, but she doesn't necessarily think the traditional college route is either. Amy has already convinced a few friends to look at two-year programs after high school.

Assuming someone works hard, she said, they can get a job and earn money and benefits and then go back to college.

"Maybe someone doesn't really know what they want to do," she added. "They don't want to spend a lot of money on college, or they can't really afford it at the moment."

Compared to making a costly misstep in their college and career plans, BOCES offers an attractive alternative, one she touts often to her friends.

"There's no downside to it," she said.

"I can leave this course with a certificate and start making money as soon as possible. I thought it was a really good stepping stone considering I want to go to nursing school."

—Amy Uvaydova