

FALL 2020

Tools of the Trade

A Publication of the Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services

A Message from the Director



Change is a fact of life and few can argue that we here at the Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services have changed with these COVID times.

These days our focus has been on keeping our students and staff as safe as possible through the pandemic while also providing them the important hands-on instruction they need to be successful. Before school began, we implemented several safety measures that would enable our students to attend classes in person. We are constantly updating and evaluating our policies as new information becomes available.

One big change on our campus is an adjustment in our administrative team. Assistant Principal Evangelo Michas has been named the interim principal as James Matera, who served our Careers students for 20 years, has accepted a position in a new district. We wish Mr. Matera all the best and are thankful for Mr. Michas' leadership.

As the school year continued our students had opportunities to share their work: our Architecture and Interior Design students' work can be viewed on Instagram thanks to teacher Christine Ireland starting an account, @careersndesign. Students in our Commercial Art program got to know one another through their creative cube art projects that introduced students to one another through visuals.

Students also had an opportunity to learn from industry experts who "visited" the TV/Production classes virtually. We very much appreciate them taking the time to share their insights into a creative field.

We look forward to continuing the fun, exciting and essential education of our students. We will continue to monitor the pandemic and to follow guidelines from the State Department of Health, the governor's office and our own specific safety measures.

May you and your family be well and continue to stay safe and healthy!

Dahlia A. Jackson

Director, Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: Principal passes the baton to Michas at Careers campus



In many ways Principal James Matera sees himself in the students he has served for 20 years.

As a student at Tappan Zee High School it was not expected he would take a technical-related course. Yet, he was intrigued with his school's auto mechanics class and received permission to take the course.

"It was one of the most fun classes I ever had," Mr. Matera said, adding he loved, and still does, working on engines of all kinds — cars, lawn mowers and especially boats.

"When you give them something they really like, you see them flourish," he said of the students at the Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services. "I am extremely interested in that connection. We give students something different. You put it in their hands, like that engine for me, and it's that trying to figure it out. You see it make sense in their eyes."

On November 9, 2020 Mr. Matera will begin the next chapter in his career, having accepted an administrative position with a neighboring district. Assistant Principal

Evangelo Michas will succeed him, serving as interim principal at the Careers Campus.

"I'm excited for the change," Mr. Matera said. "It's the same skill set that you use in the principal job. I can take what I've learned and refined at BOCES and apply it in a new setting."

Mr. Michas has been with BOCES for five years, working first as the Work Based



Assistant Principal Evangelo Michas is currently serving as interim principal following the departure of James Matera.

Learning Coordinator before being named assistant principal. He has more than 20 years working in CTE and special education, having worked as a home economics teacher in Greenburgh, for Job Corps in Brooklyn, NY and as a CTE teacher of the culinary arts again in Greenburgh before coming to BOCES. He is certified in CTE, math and special education.

The school is being left in good hands, said Mr. Matera.

"We've worked together for several years now. He is right for the part," he said of Mr. Michas. "He is very caring; the staff seem to trust him. It's a natural fit."

When Mr. Michas came to BOCES, with his background in special education and CTE,

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Thanksgiving food prep kept kitchens busy for a good cause



With less than a week before the Thanksgiving holiday, students in the Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services culinary program were momentarily able to catch their breath. They had just spent several weeks prepping, cooking and packaging meals to be distributed to local families by Caritas of Port Chester, a foodbank that operates the Meals on Main Street program in that community.

"Over the past three weeks, we have prepared approximately 200 trays of food for them to distribute to the over 1,000 families they will be feeding," Chef and teacher John Damiani said.

The students were kept busy preparing:

- 200 servings of venison stew
- 200 servings of venison chili
- 25 trays of vegetable and sausage stuffing (made from donated bread)
- 25 trays of cornbread
- 200 servings of roasted potatoes
- 250 servings of pan-roasted salmon
- 400 servings of turkey
- 3 gallons of turkey gravy

The food was provided to the culinary program by Caritas, which collects donated food and needs assistance in preparing it to be distributed. Students prepared the

food and froze it. Caritas of Port Chester will finish cooking the food before they deliver it to those in need.

"The students understood the cause, worked very hard and did an amazing job," Chef Damiani said. "I was very proud of them all."

"The students are a real help to us," said



Students in the culinary program have been busy preparing food for a local food pantry.

Bill Cusano, Caritas of Port Chester Director. "The work they do is first-rate and the trays of food help us reach more homes and individuals than we could on our own."

Mr. Cusano explained that his organization collects donations of perishable food in

quantities greater than they can process. "It is a huge help to be able to bring some to BOCES and have the students use it to prepare trays of food we can freeze and use later," he said. "The end result is food doesn't get wasted."

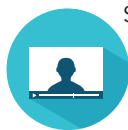
Mr. Cusano continued to say that Chefs John [Damiani] and Peter [Tomaskovic], along with their entire staff and students, are a joy to work with.

"Our decision to start this partnership in 2018 sure paid off this year with the pandemic," he said. "Because we had developed a method of operating together, we were able to implement a similar program with local restaurants and caterers during the months the school was closed to us. Collaboration makes so much sense. We look forward too much more in the coming months."

The students were not able to rest for long after preparing the Thanksgiving meals. Their attention quickly turned to making homemade pies for the holiday.

As part of a Culinary annual tradition students baked just over 100 pies to sell as a fundraiser. The number is a bit lower than other years due to COVID, however, Chef Damiani said he was still pleased with the output.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES WORK-BASED LEARNING GOES VIRTUAL



Students at the Center for Career Services are required by the New York State Board of Education to complete a Work-Based Learning program, enabling them to gain real-world experience in a number of industries.

In the past, students may have explored potential careers through paid internships or jobs. However, due to the pandemic, in-person experiences have been greatly reduced. The desire to have students engage in these activities has not decreased but has transitioned to virtual.

Southern Westchester BOCES Work Based Learning Coordinator Garrett Jennings has created a virtual work based learning classroom for teachers to share with their students. Accompanying the virtual

classroom is a YouTube video with help from the TV and Sound Production programs. The video highlights what the WBL program is about and the expectations for students.

Preparations to launch the virtual classrooms also included interviewing companies that already have experience in virtual WBL and developing assignments for students.



Students and teachers now have an easy way to access all the information for a virtual Work Based Learning experience.

"We reached out to local Chambers of Commerce and SkillsUSA," said Mr. Jennings. "We also worked with our ELA consultant as a means to help create a beneficial program."

"It's a way to centralize things," Mr. Jennings said. This way students and teachers have all the information they need in one place. The program can also be shared with student homeschooled so they also know what the program is about and what are the student expectations.

The virtual classroom is also more convenient for students, who can find all the information that they need for the required 54 hours of WBL right on their phones.

Mr. Jennings has also shared the classroom at the Lower Hudson Valley Zone meeting, which is part of the Work Experience Coordinator's Association he chairs.



A visit to the Animal Science classroom reveals that rats have taken center stage this year. The animals are an integral part of teaching student's animal training techniques.

THE YEAR OF THE RAT: *RATS ARE IN THE SPOTLIGHT IN ANIMAL SCIENCE*



There is a lot of mischief going on in the Animal Science classroom this year and it has nothing to do with cunning students. A group of rats is called a mischief, and this mischief is helping students understand animal behavior and teach them animal training techniques.

"This year I am focusing a lot on animal training, so it is a lot of work with the rats mostly," Animal Science teacher Michael D'Abruzzo said. "This is the first year that every student in both classes is assigned a personal rat that they do not share with other students. This is also helpful with COVID since they are not all cuddling up to the same animals."

Mr. D'Abruzzo said students are "learning different principles of behavior modification and then living it by applying it to their rats."

Since the start of the school year, students have been working on training their rats some simple commands. Among them are teaching the rats to spin in circles or "give paw."

"Hopefully by the second half of the year, as they learn more advanced concepts, they will see fancier things like rats fetching objects or putting ping pong balls into baskets," Mr. D'Abruzzo said.

Each day students must write in training logs, putting emphasis on words related to animal training.

"Besides that, they get to live all the real-life considerations when applying the principles," Mr. D'Abruzzo said. "There is so much more to just understand how training is supposed to work. For instance, if the rat is not well cared for and comfortable with the student, it will not have the motivation to learn tricks."

When not working with their rats, students are taking advantage of some of the renovation work that took place over the summer in their classroom. The room is now fitted with an extra tub for grooming. Some old closets were also removed making room for some additional animals. Mr. D'Abruzzo said he would like to add parrots to the program's small menagerie along with some fish tanks.

Rats may have a bad reputation, but they are smart and are great companions when studying animal training. The rats in the Animal Science class are used to teach students animal training techniques and have made themselves at home.



Getting to know you... THROUGH GRAPHIC ART



When students arrived on campus for the first day of classes in the Commercial Art program at the Center for Career Services, it would be too easy for them to just introduce themselves to their classmates and inform them of their home school.

Commercial Art teacher Damian Powers found a more creative way for students to get to know one another. Rather than tell your classmate who you are, why not show them?

For one of their first art-related assignments, students were tasked with creating 3-D cubes with specific pieces of information on each side. Among the details they were asked to share was visually answering the following questions: What is your favorite color? What is your talent? Who is your favorite visual artist? Who is your favorite musical artist? What is your favorite animal? What is your name?

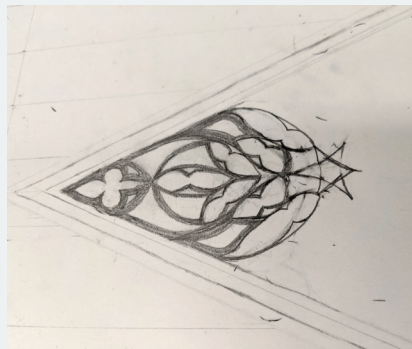
Students were only permitted to use typography on one side of the cube to write out their name, otherwise they had to create their own visuals.

"The assignment was designed as a project to get the students working with Adobe Photoshop, as well as a way for the students to get to know each other," Mr. Powers said.

"The cubes are hanging from the ceiling in the classroom near the students' workspace, which helps to promote a personalized classroom environment," he said.



Students in the Commercial Art program got to know one another through a creative project.



@careersndesign

Architecture and Interior Design students' work now on Instagram



Each day Architecture and Interior Design teacher Christine Ireland sees the amazing work her students are doing. Now she wants to share her students' talent and has created an Instagram account to do just that.

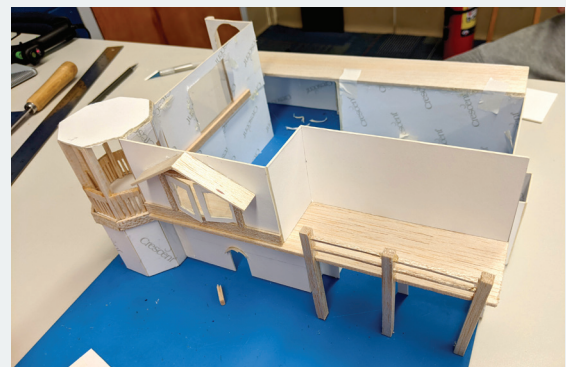
"I was prompted to make the Instagram account because our class does such great work but, no one knows about it," she said.

Additionally, "I also find it's a way to archive great student work, have student's network with alumni and see what each other is up to in the morning and afternoon sessions."

Ms. Ireland said she plans to continue to upload pictures of student work throughout the year and looks forward to adding Senior Portfolios when they are complete.

It's also a nice way to get the students to know each other since they come from so many different districts, it helps create classroom unity, she said.

Students' work can be viewed on Instagram at @careersndesign.



Architecture and Interior Design teacher Christine Ireland wanted to find a way to share her students work. She found the perfect venue on Instagram. Fellow students can see the amazing work their classmates are doing, and now so can everyone else. Visit @careersndesign on Instagram to see the work the Architecture and Interior Design students are doing.

FILMMAKERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE



According to industry experts, if you want to be a successful filmmaker, you will need two things: passion and coffee. And not necessarily in that order.

"You live on coffee," confirmed Joseph Capriglione, owner of the New York-based Lost and Found Productions, where he also serves as a director.

On a scale of 1-10, of how important coffee is, colleague Taso Zouroudis said, with a laugh, it was a 22.

While long hours come with the territory, they should not deter any aspiring filmmaker, they both agreed during a virtual meeting with students in Mike May's Television and Sound Production classes. The two, who first met Mr. May working on a project years earlier, spoke with students about their work and the industry in general.

"This particular business is all about passion," Mr. Zouroudis said. "I just know if you are not passionate about this business, you are wasting your time. It is the passion that keeps you fueled."

"We do this because we love the work we do," agreed Mr. May.

Mr. May was excited to introduce them to his students so they could learn from people who live and breathe the work.

Mr. Capriglione said he always loved movies and music videos growing up and it was a natural career to pursue. In high school, he attended a summer program focused on filmmaking, worked as an intern and began to do some freelance work. He attended Hofstra University, earning a degree in communications and film. In college, he continued freelancing, working on commercials, advertisements and music videos. His resume also includes work at Fuse TV, the BET network and Hot 97.

Due to the pandemic, he is currently working from home, although he does have access to a 9,000-square-foot film studio in New Jersey.

One of the biggest pieces of advice he offered was for students to invest in tools they will need — cameras, computers and other gear. This way, Mr. Capriglione said, they can create their own content and be ready whenever a job becomes available.

He also encouraged them to meet as many people as possible. His college experience was invaluable in that it helped him meet

others in the industry and provided an alumni network.

Mr. Zouroudis took a different route. At 19, he headed to New York City intent on becoming an actor. He continues to act, but he is also a self-taught assistant director, producer and editor.

"If you don't go to school, you have to work three times as hard. It will take you three times as long," he said of working behind the scenes. He encouraged students to learn as much as they can about the industry, even do their own research, as he has often done.



Joseph Capriglione, owner and director of Lost and Found Productions spoke virtually with students in the TV/Video Production program.



TV/Video Production teacher Mike May recently hosted a virtual interview session with industry professionals. It was a way for students to learn more about the field and ask questions.

His dream of becoming an actor was because of the allure of "imagination land." But he is also excited to have expanded his career to include the production side of filmmaking.

"It's one career you literally get to play for the rest of your life and create cool

content," he said.

He met Mr. May when he hired him for an acting role.

"Mr. May was my first director, and now I am here in a studio talking to you guys," Mr. Zouroudis said.

Talent will only take you so far. He suggested students be kind to everybody they meet in the business because it will only benefit them.

"Character is your currency in this business," he said.

Students asked questions about what courses they should take in college, whether the assistant director creates a call sheet, using a film slate during production and more.

"Yes, so the editor knows what takes to use. It's also important when synching sound," Mr. Capriglione said of the film slate. If a slate is not available, improvise and write the information on a sheet of paper.

"Don't sit there and waste time. Hold up the paper in front of the camera, take the paper down and clap your hand," added Mr. Zouroudis.

When asked what the hardest part of editing was, Mr. Capriglione answered keeping continuity, finding the right sounds and staying organized.

As to the most frustrating part of production — it is never having enough time.

The industry has gone through major changes since they began their careers. They no longer use film and the pandemic led to another change that is likely to remain — working remotely, particularly for post-production.

"There is a higher demand. It can be done safely in your home," Mr. Capriglione said.

Another change that is likely to continue is the increasing use of LED screens rather than green screens. Although using LED screens is more expensive because the technology is so new, as the price drops its popularity will rise.

Finally, if the students were expecting a relaxing career in the industry, they learned they need to adjust their expectations.

"Is the film industry always stressful?" one student asked.

"Yes," they both answered.

"Anything you enjoy will come with stress," Mr. Capriglione said. "But if it's something you enjoy, you'll find a way to do it."

SWBOCES 'ambassador' praised for support, guidance of youth



Mike Jones is a familiar face to anyone who visits the Center for Career Services campus in Valhalla.

As a Security Aide stationed at the main entrance, he greets faculty, staff, students and visitors with an official and authoritative demeanor that belies his friendly nature and sense of fairness and good will. Spend any time with Mr. Jones, and the latter traits quickly become apparent.

That's why it's little surprise that the City of White Plains Youth Bureau has formally praised his "outstanding support and guidance" offered to the young people served by the Westchester Development Academy for Youth. Program Director. Hilary Blackman penned a letter of commendation extolling Mr. Jones's partnership.

"I feel strongly that at this particular point in U.S. history, while in the midst of a pandemic, we must recognize the invaluable service and work of partnering staff and stakeholders," Ms. Blackman writes. "We are grateful to Mr. Jones for his dedication, coaching and mentorship of many young men that may lack a Father figure in their lives. This has been one of the most important roles that Mr. Jones has played in helping my youth progress. SWBOCES is essential to offering our at-risk

youth opportunities to connect with growing trades, which ultimately lead them to financial empowerment with certificate training as the open door and path to success."

When WDAY program participants visit the campus, Mr. Jones said he is often tasked with guiding them to their destination. Frequently he has the opportunity to provide information and insights into the workforce development programs for high school students and adults that SWBOCES offers at the campus.

While he'd prefer not to be singled out, Mr. Jones said he considers himself an ambassador for SWBOCES programs. He said he tries to connect with them and convey that SWBOCES is about the students and not the other way around.

"People need hope, caring, a kind word that gives them faith and hope in the future," Mr. Jones said. "When I speak about SWBOCES, I look at myself as representing the organization. I look at myself as representing what we're supposed to believe in. If they're coming here, I want them to know it's going to be a good experience."

The letter of commendation was prompted specifically by Mr. Jones's effort to quickly obtain essential paperwork for students enrolled in the WDAY program.

"Mike Jones is always there for us and is willing to go the extra mile to provide excellent customer service for our students, districts and center," said Dahlia Jackson, SWBOCES' Director of Career Services.



Center for Career Services Security Aide Mike Jones was recently recognized by the City of White Plains Youth Bureau for his "outstanding support and guidance"

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he thought it would be a good fit for him professionally. His goals while interim, he said, are to keep the integrity of the programs sound, ensure students are equipped with 21st century skills and are prepared for their future, whether that is an immediate step into the workforce or post-secondary education.

"I also want to create a collaborative culture," he said. "All stakeholders have input as to what is happening on campus."

Encouraging students to consider an education at Career Services is something he has always promoted.

"This is the place for them to explore their careers," he said. "We are here to train workers. I'm here to make sure the programs are moving forward, to continue that tradition."

Mr. Michas is there to bridge the gap until a permanent principal can be hired. He said that, in his role as interim, he will be the point person for the campus and have additional responsibilities as he works more closely with Director Dahlia Jackson.

"Evangelo is a servant leader. He listens to the needs and concerns of the staff and identifies systems to move the concerns along," Ms. Jackson said. "He sees this opportunity as a way to lead others in all that they do."

She said he is the type of person "who will roll up his sleeves and jump right in to assist," adding that her colleague "is humble and kind and always willing to help everyone be better in all that they do."

As Work Based Learning Coordinator, he worked with staff to identify authentic work experiences for student programs, Ms. Jackson said. Through his hard work, he was nominated by New York State as Rookie Work Based Leader of the year.

In the last few weeks before his departure, Mr. Matera had time to reflect on his contributions at the Careers campus. He first arrived in 2001 as a school counselor.

During the 2012-13 school year, while serving as an administrative intern, Mr. Matera was asked to fill in for an individual who was out on medical leave and soon was appointed principal.

"I always knew I would work in some kind of profession to help people. I took the counseling route," he said.

When he took the reins as principal, Mr. Matera said he felt confident he could make an impact pretty quickly because he had worked on campus for so many years. He worked to improve student test scores on industry exams and to expand the Center's outreach by inviting the public to campus events and having students showcase their skills out in the community. He also worked to create strong relationships with surrounding school districts.

"It's just been a really wonderful experience. And I love career tech. That will always be a part of me," he said.

As the Center moves forward the focus, Ms. Jackson said, is to "continue to serve our students and districts with quality programs and rigor. Doing this will allow Career Services to continue to provide our students quality instruction that will prepare them for the future."

Garrett Jennings is the new WECA Zone Leader



Work Based Learning

Coordinator Garrett Jennings has a new role beyond his work for the Center for Career Services. In September, Mr.

Jennings began his tenure as a Zone Leader for Westchester/Lower Hudson Valley with the Work Experience Coordinator's Association.

"I'll be responsible for communicating ideas and policies coming from the New York State Board of Education. I will also be responsible for creating community within the region and growing WECA membership," he said.

Mr. Jennings, who has been the Work Based Learning Coordinator at Southern Westchester BOCES Career Services for the past two years, has been a WECA member since taking that position and said he was interested in gaining a leadership role in the organization.

The position will also help him promote the work done at the Center for Career Services.

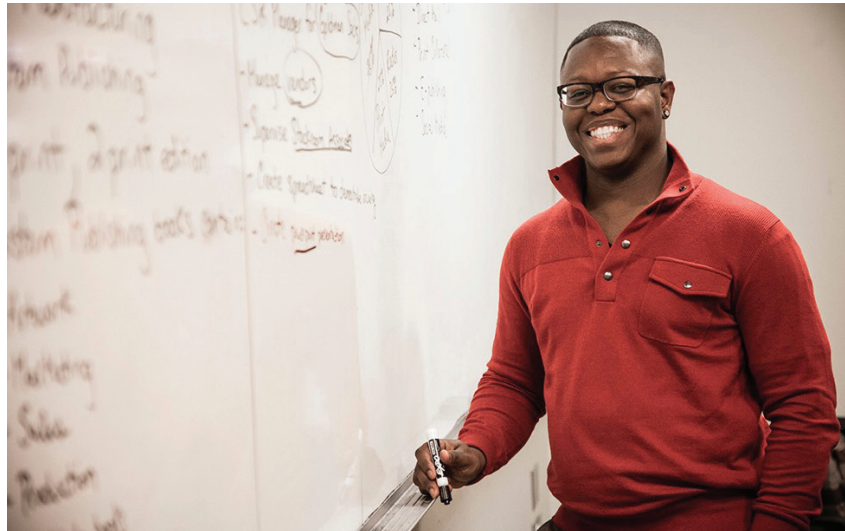
"It will give us more visibility," he said. "More people will be coming to our campus. It will more of a model school in terms of what we do and will help with our business partners and connections. For me it's about building the actual brand," Mr. Jennings continued. "Both at Career Services and

WECA and making sure we are all united as well."

Mr. Jennings is also looking forward to introducing Southern Westchester BOCES to the rest of the state through speaking engagements and representing the organization through WECA.

"It's a great win, a great opportunity for our campus," he said.

Like so many organizations, Mr. Jennings said WECA has held its meetings virtually. Moving forward he will be participating in the two annual zone meetings.



Work Based Learning Coordinator Garrett Jennings has a new role beyond his work for the Center for Career Services. He was recently named as a Zone Leader for Westchester/Lower Hudson Valley with the Work Experience Coordinator's Association.

Teacher *Hanifah Muhammad* remembered

With sadness we share the loss of our esteemed colleague, dedicated teacher and friend, Hanifah Muhammad who taught Emergency Medical Services.





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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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"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."



'HALLOWEEN' makes a visit to campus



A little spooky fun showed up on campus just in time for Halloween, compliments of the TV/Video Production teacher Mike May and his students. Students were treated to a special screening of the movie 'Halloween,' complete with complimentary lighting in the studio space. Not to mention an appearance from a horrifying guest!

