

Tools of the Trade

SUMMER 2022

A Publication of the Southern Westchester BOCES Center for Career Services

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



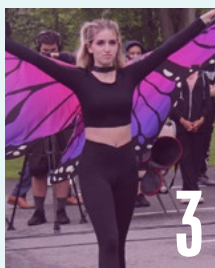
CTE RECOGNITION CEREMONIES



On Saturday, June 11, 2022, the Center for Career Services celebrated right on our very own campus the 300 students who completed our Career and Technical Education programs. The ceremonies were held across two events, in the morning and afternoon, outside on the Career Services campus in Valhalla. Congratulations to all!

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A Message from the Director



Where does the school year go?

The Career Services campus is quiet now, but the hustle and bustle of the 2021-22 school year was welcome and refreshing.

On June 11, in a pair of ceremonies under a large tent right on our campus, 300 students were honored for their successful completion of our Career and Technical Education programs. The grassy quad was a fitting setting to celebrate this year-end recognition.

The annual fashion show, dubbed "Nature of Fashion" was held in the parking lot outside Building B. The fashions on display featured an array of ensembles divided into categories representing different natural elements.

A recurring point of pride for us is our partnerships, exemplified by our collaboration with The Premier Collection. The Elmsford-based automotive dealership group looks to SWBOCES for students with skills and training that foretell long-term success in the field. Along with financial support, The Premier Collection provides our students with tangible experience and real job opportunities—four SWBOCES students currently hold career-track positions there!

There are many other highlights in these pages. The Commercial Art and Automotive Collision programs teamed up to vinyl wrap a van in partnership with Graphics by Color Group of Hawthorne. The National Technical Honor Society welcomed 32 new members from our student body. Students in iCTE classes gained real-world experience at The Knolls residential care facility next door. Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Jamaal Bowman visited twice this spring, first to meet with local superintendents and again to tour our campus and meet our students. Thank you, Rep. Bowman!

Surely July and August will fly by even faster than the school year seemed to pass. Before long, we will welcome students back to our campus. Until then, enjoy these summer days.

Dahlia A. Jackson

Director, Southern Westchester BOCES
Center for Career Services

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

CTE RECOGNITION CEREMONIES

CTE GRADUATION, continued from page 1



NATURE OF FASHION SHOW 2022

FASHION SHOW RETURNS WITH BRILLIANT "NATURE OF FASHION" THEME



It was worth the wait. The Fashion Design and Merchandising Fashion Show had been paused due to COVID-19, but this year it returned with an outstanding array of fashion for men and women, all with an environmental theme.

A runway for the models was created in a parking lot at the Center for Career Services campus. Students, friends and family were welcomed as guests, along with peers from other CTE programs.

"You're going to see some amazing stuff," Assistant Principal Phil Donohue informed the crowd at the start of the show. And he was right.

Music played as each model entered the area, paused so everyone could get a good look, then traversed down the make-shift runway to applause.

The show, called "Nature of Fashion," featured an array of ensembles divided into different categories representing different natural elements: Flowers, Ocean, Sky and Birds and Animals and Insects.

"We discussed a variety of themes early in the year. I like to get feedback. When we got to nature it clicked and immediately everyone agreed on it," teacher Carmen Galiano said. "There's enough inspiration they can all do something different."

"It's funny, as differently as it could have gone, they all went in similar directions. I let them go to any part of nature they wanted," she continued about her students, adding that several expressed interest in flowers, birds, and clouds.

All the attire that was shown was designed and created by students in the class.

"I decided on the azalea because when I saw the fabric, I thought it would complement her skin tone. I believe the pinkish/purplish/lavender really compliments how she looks," said Geovanni Escobedo, who designed the dress worn by model Donna Richardson.

"This was my first dress ever," Geovanni, a senior at New Rochelle High School, said of his floor-length, strappy shirred dress. "The teachers helped me. It really came out gorgeous, and I am really thankful for that."

Port Chester High School student Stephanie Saldivar she initially considered a butterfly theme for her dress. But when she found fabric with a dragonfly motif, she changed her mind.

"I thought it was cool, and I started liking dragonflies when I learned the meaning

behind them," she said. "The open back is like an asymmetrical design and kind of represents their wings."

For all the outlandish outfits shown on the runways of the most famous fashion designers, Stephanie kept her ensemble practical. She designed and created it with the idea of wearing it to her prom.

"I wanted to do something that was form-fitting and formal enough for prom," she said.

For Maria Reda, a junior at Eastchester High School, her first thought was she would do something pink.

"I love the color pink. It's my whole personality," she said. In addition, her grandmother's favorite tree is the cherry blossom, and there she had her answer. Maria designed a pink shirt adorned with faux cherry blossoms around the wrists, and she wore it with a patterned skirt. She wore faux cherry blossoms in her hair too.

"This was an amazing opportunity, I think," Maria said of the fashion show. "I had so much fun doing this."

Like many of her classmates Jathiya Abiff, a senior at New Rochelle High School, had thought she would do something with a beach theme, but she changed her mind too.

"I really like sand, but I decided to focus on one particular part, the desert," she said. "I wanted to do something different from everyone in my class, something outside the box."

Her outfit consisted of a dark tan, floor-length ruffled dress with a large collar that accented her tall frame. Not only did the entire campus attend the show, but several programs assisted in its production.

Cosmetology students spent a good part of their day doing the hair and make-up for the models before the show. The Film Production class filmed the entire show, while Sound Production students provided support with music and audio. Office Skills students printed the show's programs, and Commercial Art students designed the nature-themed props that accompanied the show.

School Counselor Eileen Yip, a former model herself, shared tips with the student models, and the cafeteria staff provided lunch for the models as they prepared for the show.

"There was a lot of joy today," Ms. Galiano said when the show had ended.



GARRETT JENNINGS NAMED ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AMONG WBL COORDINATORS



Garrett Jennings, Work-Based Learning Coordinator at SWBOCES' Career Services Campus, has been named "Rookie of the Year" by the Work Experience Coordinators' Association.

Members statewide meet annually to work on curriculum and policies, collaborating in a number of areas. The award is given to a first-year WBL Coordinator who has displayed creativity and Innovation their first year.

"Because of the pandemic we started doing Work-Based Learning virtually, so we did virtual site visits, job shadows, guest speakers," Mr. Jennings said. "We had virtual internships. We had team building projects where an industry partner would give us an actual problem and we'd work off of that."

The conference took place May 5-6 in Albany.

SWBOCES has been ahead of the curve in incorporating virtual technology, Mr. Jennings said. We did it to keep up services for our students. "For us it was more of a survival thing," he said, "but I think we set a good example of what could be done virtually."

He credited Principal Evangelo Michas, the previous Work-Based Learning Coordinator, and Director of Career Services Dahlia Jackson for their innovations as well as their support.

The goal now, he said, is to continue to grow the program. "I want us to be seen as the industry standard," Mr. Jennings said. "I want to incorporate more technology into the program and do more collaborations with other BOCES."



REP. JAMAAL BOWMAN TOURS CTE CAMPUS IN VALHALLA



We were proud to welcome U.S. Rep. Jamaal Bowman for a tour of our Career Services campus in Valhalla June 1, and to a meeting there of our region's superintendents in early May.

The Congressman met with dozens of students from Culinary Arts and Cosmetology to Automotive Technology, Sound Production, Animal Science and more. The tour was led by District Superintendent Harold Coles, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services James Gratto, Director of Career Services Dahlia Jackson, Principal Evangelo Michas, Assistant Principal Phil Donohue, and Director of Communications Brian Howard.

A longtime educator himself, Rep. Bowman was eager to hear from students about all the ways that SWBOCES' programs have benefited them. They enthusiastically shared their goals and ambitions as well as the path that led them to SWBOCES' Center for Career Services. **Thank you, Rep. Bowman!**



THAT'S A WRAP



Commercial Art / Automotive Collision Students Collaborate With Real-World Client



Mark Weinstein has deep roots in Westchester County. His company, Graphics by Color Group, has been operating in the region for more than 40 years.

So, in 2019 when it came time to have his company vehicle wrapped with an eye-catching design, he knew exactly where to go: the Commercial Art Program at Southern Westchester BOCES' Careers Campus in Valhalla.

"I had auto body work done on my van previously at BOCES, so I knew about the great things these students are capable of," said Mr. Weinstein. "I immediately thought to reach out again to ask if students can create a unique wrap design for my van."

Commercial Art Teacher Damian Powers gladly obliged, knowing the collaboration would provide real-world experience for his students, from learning how to meet

a client's vision to understanding how a professional design would appear on a commercial vehicle. He decided to have some fun with the idea by making it into a contest. With the company logo as a starting point, Mr. Powers' students created various designs, narrowed them down, then submitted the top three to Mr. Weinstein for the final decision.

"Although one design was selected, we took different elements from various student designs to create one final version," said Mr. Powers. "With its bright colors and unique pattern, this one really met Mr. Weinstein's vision."

Once the final design was chosen, Mr. Powers and Mr. Weinstein connected with Paul Casagrande in the Automotive Collision Program to schedule the printing and installation. Unfortunately, COVID-19 halted production and the project was

delayed, and the students who worked on the project have since graduated. But by June 2022, their creation came to fruition and the wrap was ready for installation.

As the wrap was installed by a third-party company, Mr. Casagrande's students watched closely, learning the intricacies of automotive vinyl wrapping.

"This is another example of how our students gain real-world experience," said Mr. Casagrande. The project integrated two of our departments and provided the skills they need to work with outside clients."

And Mr. Weinstein couldn't have been more pleased with the final product.

"From the body work to the design wrap, it feels like a brand-new vehicle," said Mr. Weinstein. "It looks fantastic."



SWBOCES STUDENTS GET REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE AT THE KNOLLS



Upon arriving to the Careers Campus on a recent Friday, a half-dozen or so iCTE students boarded a bus for The Knolls, a residential continuum of care facility next door where they went to work in the kitchen.

They knew what they were there to do and went right to work, preparing food and doing other tasks at the supervision of Chef Rona Leake.

"They're eager to learn and they have no problem helping out," Chef Leake said. "If you give them something to do, they ask to do more."

The students were here as participants in the Workplace Initiative Program, which seeks to place Career Services students with disabilities in real-world work environments. The idea is to allow them to apply the training and education they receive at Southern Westchester in the very settings where they'll seek employment after graduation.

Counselor Laurie Aufiero said this business-led transition program has been a vision of her and her colleagues for five years. They have wanted to create internship opportunities for iCTE students. The pandemic set back their timetable, but now they are excited to be collaborating with community partners like The Knolls to place students from two of the seven iCTE programs, Culinary Arts and Office Skills. The immersive program launched in March.

The iCTE program serves students with special education needs by providing training and opportunities to explore a range of fields.

Students learn about employability and job skills such as communication, teamwork, listening and following directions while participating in various worksite rotations. SWBOCES job coaches provide individualized job development based on the student's experiences, strengths and skills. Students are given support with accommodations, adaptations and on the job adaptations.

One of the goals is for students to learn how to work independently, to take initiative and think creatively about their work. Those are things that community partners have told Ms. Aufiero and her colleagues that they value in the SWBOCES graduates they hire.

"Hopefully this will lead to employment opportunities," she said.

On this recent morning, student Phil Schultz, who is from Harrison, prepared yogurt and granola parfaits. He said he was very happy to be here. He has learned how important it is to be positive and to be punctual. His goal is to work in the kitchen of a restaurant. "It motivates me to get the job I want," he said.



Another student, Julian, who attends the SWBOCES program at Irvington High School, wants to be a chef. "I would love to work in a hospital as a chef," he said, acknowledging the experience he's getting here that will help toward that goal. "I actually get to experience working in a kitchen full of people."

"I think it's a nice collaboration with all of our staff," said The Knolls Director Michael Dobbins. He noted that the residents have enjoyed interacting with the BOCES students on occasion.

Chef Leake is a former BOCES student herself, so she felt inspired to give something back, particularly because she has raised a child with special needs herself.

She plans a May 28 luncheon for the program participants to thank them. "I love it," she said. "They're very good."

NATIONAL TECHNICAL HONOR SOCIETY HONORS NEW MEMBERS



The Center for Career Services hosted its 13th annual National Technical Honor Society Induction, welcoming 32 new members in ceremonies for morning and afternoon session students.

The May 13 event was held in person and also live-streamed for those unable to attend. To be inducted, a student must maintain an 88 average or higher throughout the school year and have no more than six absences per quarter.

"The National Technical Honor Society is an acknowledged leader in recognition of outstanding student achievement in Career and Technical Education," Counselor Anna Macchia told those assembled.

"This unique organization encourages high academic achievement, cultivates a desire for personal excellence and helps top students find success in today's highly competitive workplace."

In addition to a rigorous application process,

Ms. Macchia said, students must embody the eight principles of the NTHS philosophy: knowledge, skill, scholarship, service, leadership, responsibility, citizenship and honesty. Eight lighted candles on the dais at the front of the room represented each of these principles.

Principal Evangelo Michas said that the ceremony was a celebration of the inductees' hard work and perseverance, excelling both here at the Career Services campus as well as in their academic studies in their home schools.

"That's quite an accomplishment," Mr. Michas told them, adding that now they face the responsibility to give back to their families and to their communities.

"Today's students will be expected to become global citizens and to successfully acquire the necessary survival skills for the 21st century global economy," he said.



He told them that critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, agility, adaptivity, curiosity and imagination are among the skills they will need.

He said he always encourages accomplished students to meet new challenges with confidence and to never let their most recent success be their last.

"The future is bright and your responsibility is great, Mr. Michas said. "Go forward and make your mark on the world as a 21st century global citizen with the knowledge and confidence that you can succeed and you will succeed."

Counselor Lori Aufiero read off the inductees' names as they were called up one by one to receive their induction certificates.

"You've done tremendous work, and you've accomplished this over the past year, some of you over the past two years," Ms. Aufiero said. "Your tenacity and resilience create a clear path of success for all students."

DRIVING STUDENTS TO SUCCESS

Partnership with local car business creates pipeline of skilled workers



The Southern Westchester SWBOCES' Valhalla Careers Campus has partnered with The Premier Collection, a car dealership group based in Elmsford, to identify, train, and ultimately hire students in an effort to create a pipeline of skilled technicians and automotive professionals.

The auto group recently donated \$5,000 to SWBOCES to support the program.

"We're excited to be partnering with a prestigious car dealership that shares our values around community and service-based learning," said Garrett Jennings, SWBOCES Work Based-Learning Coordinator.

"With a stronger pipeline, our students will develop the core skills needed to succeed in the workforce. It's vital that we support and train our future workers by providing valuable experiences such as this."

The newly formed partnership allows students to explore their career goals, interests, and abilities while applying their

technical skills in a part-time work setting at The Premier Collection's Volvo and Lincoln car dealerships.

"We are a local, family-owned business, and we're always looking for ways to add value back to the community. By helping to fund this program, we're able to give back, and in turn, the community gives back to us by providing these talented students," said Premier Collection Group Manager Jeremy Abramson.

SWBOCES students who are currently working at The Premier Collection include Kevin Molina (Service Porter), Ernesto Espinoza (Car Wash), Anthony Fuentes (Service Porter), and Larry Fuentes (Volvo Express Technician).

"BOCES has been a great opportunity. It helped prepare me for this, from the basic oil change and brakes to the more advanced jobs. My teacher, Michael Ward is a former

Volvo tech, so hopefully what he taught me will help in this role," Kevin said of the program.

Assistant Principal Phil Donohue is thrilled about the opportunity the program provides for his students.

"Having a standard place to send our kids is very helpful. It's nice for students to have this opportunity to see what the industry is like firsthand," he said.

Down the road, the program will eventually provide a pre-apprenticeship bridge system for seniors at the Center for Career Services, where students will train for industry certifications while gaining valuable work experience, complete with mentors and coaches. It will also provide the opportunity for students to pursue a postsecondary education in the automotive field at institutions like Rockland Community College.



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Specially designed flowerbeds bring joy to Tappan Hill students



Specially designed flowerbeds are creating joy and excitement for students who attend SWBOCES Center for Special Services programs at Tappan Hill School in Tarrytown.

The flowerbeds, which were custom-built by students in Kurt Boysen's Construction and Plumbing class on our Career Services campus in Valhalla, were designed to be wheelchair-accessible.

Assistant Principal Francesca Fernandez said she is very thankful for the partnership.

"This wonderful collaboration has brought joy to our school," she said. "Our students are now able to participate in gardening, and they get so excited when we come outside to see how the plants and flowers are growing."

The flowerbeds were delivered to the school in late May, and excited students and staff wasted no time to fill the gardens with a variety of plants, flowers, and herbs, which are now thriving in the early summer sun.





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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."



Scarlett Cabrera was supposed to sing the National Anthem at the Center Career Services' end-of-year recognition ceremony in 2020. Like so much else two years ago, those plans were waylaid by the pandemic.

Aside from that, though, she has no regrets about her decision to study Animal Science at Southern Westchester BOCES. The experience put her in position to pursue a range of career options.

"BOCES enlightened my perspective on how many directions within my career that I can go in regard to animal care," she said. "There's pet grooming, veterinary medicine, working as a veterinary technician, assistant and so much more... My mom told me if you do what you love you'll never work a day in your life."

Currently, Ms. Cabrera, 20, works at a local country club and recently reached out to the Work-Based Learning Office at SWBOCES to inquire about the availability of student interns. In addition to her day job, she operates her own pet grooming business.

Having since attended Westchester Community College, she's now considering not only a career in veterinary medicine but possibly a very different career in nursing.

Those divergent paths were both inspired by her mom, Ms. Cabrera says. Her interest in nursing was inspired by memories of her mother caring for her baby sister. Her talent for animal grooming, meanwhile, was a bit more indirect. She used to watching her mom style hair in her salon.

When she came to SWBOCES, she learned to groom animals and fell in love with it. Now she owns her own mobile grooming business.

Ms. Cabrera believes her SWBOCES education opened a world of possibilities for her. "I'm deciding what I want to do right now," she said.

Animal Science Teacher Michael D'Abruzzo, now a friend and mentor, inspired her to excel, she says.

"Scarlett has an outgoing personality and was basically the head of the unofficial greeting committee," Mr. D'Abruzzo recalled. "She loved to give tours of the classroom and

advocate for the program even then."

She has remained involved, he said, becoming the first former student to join his craft committee. Her input has helped to shape his grooming curriculum, he said.

"I am just as grateful to have had her in the animal science program as she is of the program," he said. "I could not be more proud of her."



Ms. Cabrera said collaboration between CTE programs was common. She coordinated with the Culinary Arts program to procure surplus produce for the animals in her program.

"I would go in everyday and get them," she said. "So it wouldn't go to waste and would benefit the animals."

She encouraged Commercial Art teacher Damian Powers to bring his dog in for grooming by her class and said his students used their skills to design a courtyard for the animals.

"It was really great to have the classes collaborate," Mr. Powers said. "Working with students from other programs is beneficial. It creates a real-world project atmosphere."

Ms. Cabrera works in business and member communications at the country club, as well as event planning. She's recently been developing a concept she calls "Yappy Hour" where members would bring their dogs to the club.

She has several regular grooming clients and said she loves the look on their faces when they see their freshly trimmed and styled pet. "I have so many passions," she said. "I'm just trying to choose."

Side projects of hers include managing social media and marketing for a friend's reptile breeding business, similar work for an animal adoption agency and at least two other ventures. Ms. Cabrera's post-SWBOCES career is off to a busy start.

She's thankful for the real-world experience she got at SWBOCES, but thankful as well for what she calls a family of friends.

"I would say SWBOCES saved my life because of the warm and loving environment that Mr. D'Abruzzo set," she said. "I was lost before I went there, and I found my passion and self along the way."