

November 2020

BOCES BITS

Message from the District Superintendent:

To all OCM BOCES Staff:

In my first few days at OCM BOCES, I have enjoyed visiting our programs, meeting so many of you, and learning about the work we do for our students, our districts, and each other. So far, I've seen the Liverpool Adult Education programs and made it out to the McEvoy Education Center at the Cortlandville campus, the Innovation Tech and CTE programs at Thompson Road and the CNYRIC. I'll do my best to use my Twitter feed to tell our story, because if we don't, someone else will.



One of my goals over the next several months is to be as present as possible, to learn as much as I can about all the facets of the organization. In my experience, that cannot be done effectively from the second-floor corner office of Main Campus. It's a large system and it will take me a little while to get around to see everyone. Also, I'm horrible at names. Please forgive me if I have to ask a few times. I'll do my best, but I know my limitations.

I'll close this by thanking everyone for all their hard work and dedication to helping each of our students become the best version of themselves. I saw the image on the right on Twitter the other day and it speaks to what we are all going through. Unsung heroes of this pandemic are all of you, working directly with or supporting student growth during this unprecedented time. Be well and take care of yourself and each other.

Sincerely,



Matt
Matthew L. Cook, Ed.D.
District Superintendent
OCM BOCES



Please share your good news! If you have any interesting, positive or uplifting or interesting stories you would like to see in the next edition of BOCES Bits, please send an email to editors Jackie Wiegand at jwiegand@ocmboces.org or Katie Jensen at kjensen@ocmboces.org.

OCM BOCES educators share expertise at national conference

A team of educators from OCM BOCES presented a virtual workshop about Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for the 25th Annual Conference on School Mental Health, an event organized by the National Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.



The OCM BOCES team of **Rosanna Grund**, **Laura Dibble**, **Dominique Ricciardelli**, **Chrissy Woodring**, **Heather Vitale**, and **Erin McLaughlin** presented "[Not Just Another Initiative: Empowering School Staff to Embrace MTSS.](#)" which is now available on our OCM BOCES YouTube Channel. If you are not familiar with MTSS, it is a framework of interventions and supports to help schools identify students with academic and/or behavioral needs. The framework takes a proactive approach, using early assessments and interventions to help students catch up with their peers. The OCM BOCES workshop, presented Oct. 29, was filmed and edited by **Katie Jensen** in the OCM BOCES Marketing Department.

Cleaning rivers, supporting chicken barbecues — Seven Valleys students chip in

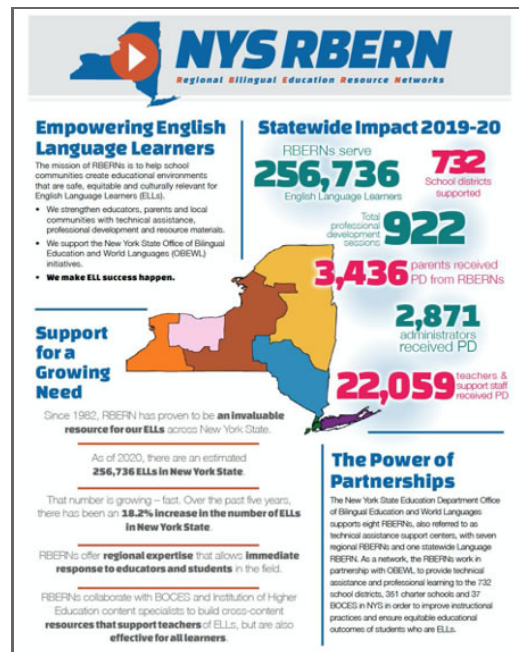
Students in the Seven Valleys New Tech Academy Interact Club are putting in a lot of volunteer hours to help their community. Most recently, they assisted with a chicken barbecue (in photos) for the Cortland Rotary, which was held at the Homer Fire Department. Prior to that, students made the front page of the newspaper, the [Cortland Standard](#), by volunteering for the 24th annual Cortland County River Clean-Up. Students joined other volunteers to clean out trash and other debris from the Tioughnioga River and other bodies of water.



Big impact: Supporting English Language Learners is the mission of RBERNs

As of today, there are an estimated 256,736 English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York State. That number has been growing – fast. Over the past five years, there has been an 18.2% increase in the number of ELLs in New York State.

OCM BOCES is the home of the Mid-State Regional Bilingual Education Network (RBERN), one of eight RBERNs across the state. The mission of RBERNs is to help school communities create educational environments that are safe, equitable and culturally relevant for ELLs. As a network, the RBERNs work with the New York State Education Department's Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages to provide technical assistance and professional learning to 732 school districts, 351 charter schools and 37 BOCES. For more information, [check out this statewide flyer](#) facilitated by the Mid-State RBERN team and the OCM BOCES marketing team — you will be impressed!



"Let's GEO!" project inspired by math and art

The first step in a long-term project got underway this fall at Innovation Tech, where students enjoyed the warmth of a sun-splashed morning to chalk out colorful, symmetrical designs on a sidewalk in front of their school. Students in this 10th-grade class, called GeoDesign, are learning simultaneously about geography and design, which have overlapping vocabulary and concepts. On this day, after studying tessellation-inspired art, students used color schemes, artist chalk and lines of symmetry to outline and color in their own creations. Facilitator **Christine Alexander** said the project was part of a project-based learning initiative called "Let's Get Everyone Outside" or "Let's GEO," with a bigger, culminating community event planned for later in the year. In the GeoDesign class, she said, students are quickly learning that common vocabulary, such as a line, "is very relevant to both art and math, but the application is different."



OCM BOCES gets special recognition for business-embedded programs

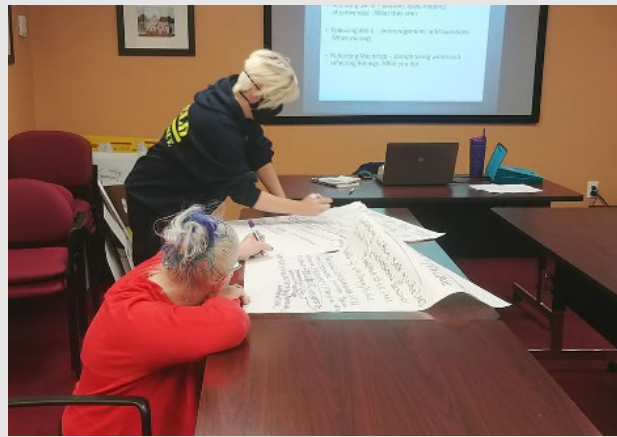
Sandra H. Ruffo of the New York State School Boards Association presented OCM BOCES Board of Education President **Wayne Brownson** with a banner on Oct. 15 that honors our organization as a "Champion of Change" because of our groundbreaking Career & Technical Education programs at WCNY, Lockheed Martin, Driver's Village, and other companies. Ruffo is Second Vice President and Area 4 Director at NYSSBA. As noted in the previous issue of BOCES Bits, the recognition came on the heels of [an interview Deputy Superintendent Colleen Viggiano conducted with Education Week about our business-embedded programs.](#)



Adult Education partners with Guthrie Cortland Medical Center for patient advocacy class

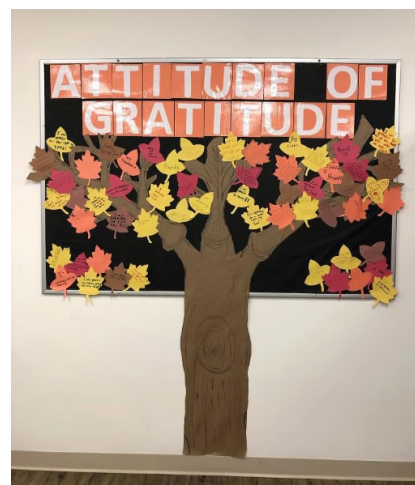
In a partnership with Guthrie Cortland Medical Center, the OCM BOCES Adult

Education division is collaborating on a "workforce transformation" grant offered by the Care Compass Network. This grant has allowed the Adult Education team to design a new, 10-week patient advocacy class that is being held at the offices of Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc. Adult Education Director **Mari Ukleya** said the pilot program, which included input from many Cortland-area community agencies, offers a mix of in-person and hybrid learning for its participants, who are learning the content they need to get ready for the National Patient Advocate Certification Exam, as well as job-readiness skills. The pilot is part of a three-year, \$200,000 grant awarded in January of 2020. Curriculum development was completed in July, and the first class began in September. The next session will begin in January 2021.



Students share kindness, gratitude in FOR Club at Innovation Tech

Students in the Friends of Rachel (FOR) Club at Innovation Tech are promoting a spirit of gratitude at their school to help alleviate the stress and uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. In October, students put together a bulletin board full of "positivity pumpkins" that shared anonymous compliments with their classmates. The pumpkins promoted the club's monthlong theme of kindness. In November, appropriate for Thanksgiving, students filled out "leaves of gratitude" for a tree that promoted an "attitude of gratitude."



Rosamond Gifford Zoo receives a big boost from the CNYRIC

Early last year, CNYRIC e-Learning Coordinator **Amy Keesey** met with the director and education coordinator of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park to show them

how e-Learning would increase their audience. Initially, the zoo planned to roll it out this fall. However, COVID forced the zoo to close, so it became a priority to get it off the ground. With Amy's assistance, they were able to launch the program over the summer and were added to the content of the [Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration](#), an online video



conferencing catalog. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is now offering sessions through Zoom for our regional schools as well as schools across the United States as a result of Amy's efforts. Topics include "*Species Survival*," "*Beastly Builders*" and "*Animal Myths Busted!*" Districts in our region have begun to register for programs for multiple grade levels.

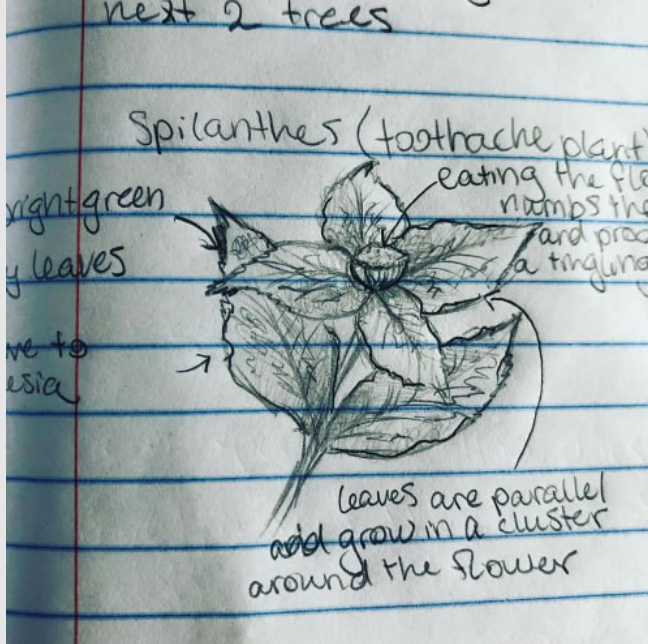
More from the CNYRIC: Pandemic brings changes to services

Several vendors that provide services to our districts through the Central New York Regional Information Center (CNYRIC) have modified their products to support the hybrid model of in-person and remote learning for our students.

CNYRIC Director **Pam Mazzaferro** shared with the OCM BOCES Board of Education that SchoolTool, for example, now includes attendance codes for remote learners and reporting options for homeroom vs. period-based attendance. The CNYRIC is supporting students' at-home access to the internet with MiFi hotspots and Kajeet. Finally, the COVID screening app you use each day at OCM BOCES staff is also being used for employees in seven districts. All were part of a concerted effort by CNYRIC staff to give as much assistance as possible to districts as they worked to re-open schools this past fall. For more information, see [the latest edition of *Inside CNYRIC*](#).

Exploring the outdoors — the perfect classroom for New Vision Environmental Science students

An outdoor classroom just might be the ideal environment for healthy, hands-on learning during this pandemic. In the New Vision Environmental Science Program at Limestone Hollow Nature Center in Cortland, seniors get to explore nearly 430 acres of forests, fields, streams, bogs, ponds, flora and fauna, and trails. Topics include forestry, fish, wildlife, maple production, environmental issues, soil, water, land use and outdoor recreation. Instructor **Chad DeVoe** has shared some amazing photos and projects [on the program's Facebook page](#), including (in photos) a greenhouse performance study, the notes of a budding student biologist, and some recent community service projects that included mulching trees at Homer Village Green harvesting carrots at Main Street Farms.



OCM BOCES Marketing team honored in annual communications contest

Every year, the OCM BOCES marketing team submits work to the New York School Public Relations Association (NYSPRA) Annual Communications Awards. The contest is one of the largest in the nation, providing an opportunity for members to showcase and share their work. This year, the OCM BOCES Marketing team received six honors, including:

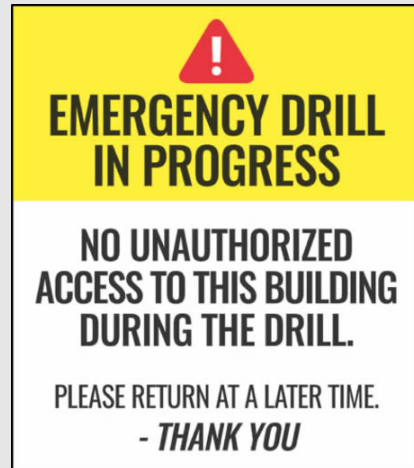
- **Award of Excellence - Video**
["Home is the First Classroom - Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network,"](#) produced by **Lou Reid**, public information specialist, and the RBERN staff at OCM BOCES
- **Award of Honor - Annual Report**
[OCM BOCES 2020 Annual Report](#) - **Jackie Wiegand**, marketing coordinator; **Lou Reid**, public information specialist; and **Katie Jensen**, school information officer
- **Award of Honor - Poster**
[CTE Open House - Cortlandville](#) - by **Lou Reid**, public information specialist
- **Award of Honor - Social Media**
["Saying 'Thank You' to Frontline Workers"](#) - **Katie Jensen**, school information officer
- **Award of Honor - Video**
["Join our Team - Innovative Education at OCM BOCES"](#) - by **Jackie Wiegand**, marketing coordinator; **Lou Reid**, public information specialist; & **Katie Jensen**, school information officer
- **Award of Merit - Electronic Newsletter**
"BOCES Bits" by **Jackie Wiegand**, marketing coordinator; **Lou Reid**, public information specialist; & **Katie Jensen**, school information officer

Have you done your required employee training yet? Don't forget!

If you have not already done so, please complete these required online training sessions:

- [Orientation Training for Emergency Response Procedures](#) - was due Sept. 15
- [Ed Law 2d](#) - was due Oct. 15 (Start by creating a PIN.)
- [Right-to-Know \(RTK\)/Bloodborne Pathogens \(BBP\)](#) - due Dec. 15
- [Sexual Harassment Prevention Training](#) - due Dec. 15

Please contact your supervisor if you have any questions!



Spread the word! OCM BOCES is hiring

OCM BOCES is hiring for a wide range of positions. Take a look at our [Employment Opportunities webpage](#) if you are interested in learning more and spreading the word.

The OCM BOCES & CNYRIC Clothing Store is still open!

The OCM BOCES and CNYRIC [clothing store offers apparel with either the OCM BOCES or CNYRIC logo embroidered on the clothes](#). The items in the store represent the top five styles selected by BOCES employees last year. We hope to add more items in the future!

Have questions about the store, including information about sizing and shipping? We can answer them! Visit <http://www.ocmboces.org/clothingstore> to learn more.



It's time to join OCM BOCES on social media!

OCM BOCES is on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, so follow us! Tag us! We are happy to share and retweet any and all of your important news! Please like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) (@ocmboces) and [Instagram](#) (@ocm.boces). Check out our [YouTube Channel](#) as well.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The OCM BOCES non-discrimination policy is on our website. Please [click here](#) to view it in full.

Need help? Don't forget about our Employee Assistance Program

Don't forget about our confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which can help you with many challenges associated with the pandemic, as well as other needs. Go to ocmboces.org/eap for more.

If you would like to contribute to the BOCES bits, which is generally distributed once each month, please contact Jackie Wiegand at jwiegand@ocmboces.org or Katie Jensen at kjensen@ocmboces.org.

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