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# BOCES BITS

December 2017

## Message from the Superintendent



With the holidays fast approaching, I wanted to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the season to wish you all a wonderful holiday.

There's an old African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone, and if you want to go far, go together." At OCM

BOCES, we have always been able to "go far" in achieving success with our students because we "go together" as a united and dedicated organization. We are also fortunate to have invaluable partnerships with our component districts, our elected officials and our community leaders. All of us work together, no matter what our roles, for the benefit of the whole.

I hope this holiday season gives you a well-deserved opportunity to celebrate, reflect and recharge with friends and family. As we welcome the new year, may you and your loved ones enjoy health, prosperity and a renewed sense of promise for all the good things our lives have to offer, no matter what the season.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jody Manning  
District Superintendent



## Rachel's Challenge

The holiday spirit is alive and well amid all the incredible “kindness” activities going on across OCM BOCES as part of Rachel's Challenge. The long list of activities is impressive, especially since students and staff involved in the “Friends of Rachel” (FOR) clubs are exceptionally committed to promoting a culture of kindness in our schools.

Highlights include:

- Students at our Cortlandville Campus are filling up “Snack Packs” with donated food and sending them home each Friday with three dozen students. They are also working hard to create a clothing closet for those in need.
- At Innovation Tech and REACH, students are ringing the bells for the Salvation Army and “lighting up” the hallways with paper Christmas bulbs that share ways to be kind. They are also delivering candy canes to students that include kind messages.
- At Cortland Alternative School, a “Caught Red Handed” campaign collects nominations for acts of kindness, which in turn results in a red hand on the wall and prizes for three-peat winners.
- Students in the Crossroads program are currently making holiday crafts and ornaments for residents at the Parkrose Retirement Community.
- Letters to Santa are being written and delivered to Macy's by students in the Crown Road Campus REACH program because each letter will result in a \$1 donation to the Make a Wish Foundation.



And there's more! Please read about the [Rachel's Challenge initiatives on our web site](#).

## Holiday Safety

The holiday season is a time for family, friends, and... fire safety. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) has prepared useful fire safety tips pertaining to candles, Christmas trees, holiday lighting, and other hazards commonly encountered this time of year. These safety tips and fire statistics can be obtained by clicking the links below.



- [Winter Holiday Safety Tips \(OFPC\)](#)
- [Holiday Candle Safety Tips \(OFPC\)](#)
- [Home Christmas Tree Fires Fact Sheet \(NFPA\)](#)
- [Home Structure Fires that Began with Decorations \(NFPA\)](#)



Please consider sharing this information with your community and encourage others to have a safe holiday season. If you have any questions, please contact OCM BOCES Health & Safety Coordinator David Daignault at [ddaignault@ocmboces.org](mailto:ddaignault@ocmboces.org) or 315-431-8591.

### Life-Saving Help

Speaking of David Daignault... David was at a holiday celebration Dec. 14 at our Thompson Road Campus with a large group of OCM BOCES administrators and Board of Education members when one of the participants starting choking on a piece of beef. David took notice and performed the Heimlich maneuver until the food broke free. He and most of the Safety Officers within his program are certified in CPR/AED through the American Heart Association —training that also includes the Heimlich. Daignault and his team regularly provide CPR training at OCM and within the components. Daignault downplayed his life-saving assistance, saying, “I’m just glad it had a happy outcome and everyone could go home and have a Merry Christmas.”



### Lights, Camera...

Not only is OCM BOCES participating in its first-ever Friday night sponsorship of Lights on the Lake, we are also offering you a chance to win a free ticket to drive through the display. Human Resources Director/School Attorney Joseph Bufano is offering a free “Lights on the Lake” pass worth up to \$15 for the first 25 people who submit a short video about why they like to work at OCM BOCES. Entries should be 30 to 60 seconds long, positive in nature and emailed to [jbufano@ocmboces.org](mailto:jbufano@ocmboces.org) or shared with him via Google Drive, YouTube.com, OneDrive, etc. Tickets are good for any night of the week. If interested, submit a video soon so you can catch the display before its final



night on Jan. 7! Please note that OCM BOCES will have the right to edit and use the videos for promotional purposes. For more information about the entry rules, please refer to the Dec. 13 email sent out by Joe Bufano. You can also visit [lightsonthelake.com](http://lightsonthelake.com) to find out more about the event.

### Karen Clark's Retirement Celebration

After 30 years of dedicated service and a passionate devotion to students at OCM BOCES, Alternative Education Director Karen Clark celebrated her retirement with co-workers, friends and family members at Justin's Tuscan Grill in East Syracuse on Dec. 12. Clark will be retiring at the end of this month and handing the reigns to Chris DiFulvio, who previously worked as the CTE principal at our Cortlandville Campus. For more information about Karen's successful career at OCM BOCES, be sure to check out [the story on our web site](#). In the photo, Karen Clark (at left) poses at her retirement party with Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Colleen Viggiano, who said Karen "has been an amazing leader over the course of her time at OCM BOCES. The quality of our programs has improved greatly due to her vision and commitment to student success."



### Making Jewelry, Helping Others

Students in the first-ever Jewelry Class at Seven Valleys New Tech Academy in Cortland held a winter jewelry sale Dec. 7 to benefit local and national charities. Students had spent the previous six weeks exploring the question: "How can we, as jewelry crafters and entrepreneurs, make and sell our works of art so that we can grow a business with a positive community impact?" During this time, they made a variety of handcrafted jewelry that included beading, wire-wrapping, rings, and earrings. They also researched and contacted the charities of their choice to prepare for the sale.

**Seven Valleys New Tech Academy**

**Jewelry Sale!!**

Where? @ Seven Valleys New Tech Academy  
in the Teacher Training Room

When? Thursday December 7th, 5-8pm

Why? We are making and selling jewelry  
to make money to donate to the  
**I Have Wings Foundation**  
and  
**The Red Cross.**

Come meet us here at 240 Port Watson  
St. Cortland, NY!

We'll be waiting!

The students chose to partner with one national charity, the American Red

Cross, and one local charity called “I Have Wings,” a breast cancer foundation that supports women and their families. Students raised more than \$260 for the two charities in their evening sale and held an additional sale for their classmates. Facilitator Jake Melnyk, a jewelry maker himself, said the students “were excited that their creativity could have a strong impact in this holiday season.”

### **Dear Santa: How about World Peace?**

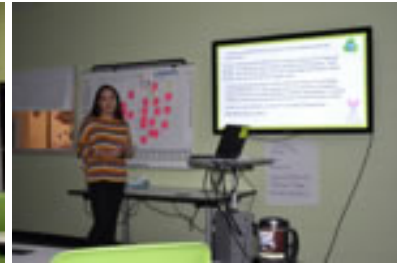
Speaking of Chloe Zeeuw ... The Seven Valleys sophomore from Cincinnati had the honor of seeing one of her writing pieces published on [voicesofyouth.org](http://voicesofyouth.org) for a class called LitMania. It was a Letter to Santa, asking him very politely to forego “clothes or books or fuzzy socks” and challenging him to “go against your usual Christmas Agenda and gift the whole world the unbelievably wonderful gift of World Peace.

“I know it’s a stretch, Santa,” Chloe writes in a piece that was critiqued by her peers, according to Facilitator Jenna Fleury. “Believe me, I know. I’ve read enough history books to understand the concept of war and history repeating itself. I know that it’s a really big gift and you won’t be able to fit it in your sleigh, but I know so many people who wish for world peace when they hit their knees and pray by their beds every night.” [Read the full letter here.](#)



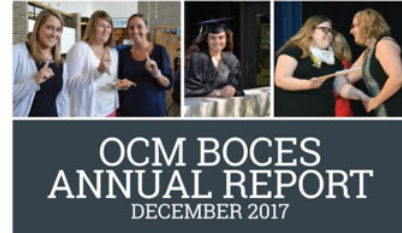
### **Innovation Tech: Passion Projects**

Students at Innovation Tech turned their high school into a showcase of their work for two hours on Dec. 15 for parents, friends, students, staff members and other special guests. In rooms throughout the building, students gave oral presentations on their “Passion Projects,” which involved exploring and researching topics they were exceptionally passionate about and explaining how this passion helped them grow as people. The topics covered a wide span of interests, including “Kindness Rocks” (Amber Venturi), “The Opioid Epidemic” (Zach Piston), and the “Benefits of Veganism” (Hanah Stringer). Students used slide show presentations and dressed professionally. They were also able to live-stream several of their presentations on the Innovation Tech Facebook page: [facebook.com/4innovationtech/](https://facebook.com/4innovationtech/)



## OCM BOCES Annual Report

Check out the [latest OCM BOCES Annual Report](#), which highlights just a few of our many achievements during the past year. You may even learn something new. For example:



- OCM BOCES saved our districts \$62 million through cooperative purchases in 2016-2017.
- Students, staff and guests celebrated the first graduating class last June at Innovation Tech, the first New Tech school in Central New York. Twenty-three graduates from six districts walked across the stage.
- The OCM BOCES STAC Service has grown by an average of 41% annually since it began in 2012. The service helps districts with the state aid requirements involved with high-cost students.

## Go Green 2.0

Don't forget about the Go Green Challenge, which ends at the end of next month. Do you know where your building stands? Do you know which building is in the lead? Check out the latest update by going to our [Go Green web site](#). In the spirit of the holidays, if you want some Christmas or [holiday-related recycling tips](#), be sure to check out this site from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



## There's a Grand Old School in Homer

OCM BOCES has been working with the Homer Central School District to assist in its search for a new superintendent. Nancy Ruscio, the current superintendent, is retiring at the end of this school year. [Check out this video about Homer](#)



[schools and their idyllic community](#). It even includes drone footage!



### The OCC Effect

Are you an OCC graduate? Do you know one? OCC, one of OCM BOCES' higher education partners, has launched a new initiative, "The OCC Effect," to get input from alumni about how the college has affected their lives. If you would like to [share your OCC story](#), please go to this web site.



### A Class for Everyone

Check out our OCM BOCES Adult Education course catalogs for Liverpool and Cortland. They offer the latest information about full- and part-time classes and literacy programs. During this long winter, you might want to check out dozens of part-time courses that could put a little zip in your step: dancing, cooking, karate, yoga, computer classes, art, essential oils and so much more. Catalogs will be arriving in mailboxes soon. You can also find them online at [ocmboces.org/adulted](http://ocmboces.org/adulted).



### Employee Assistance Program

If you or a loved one suffers from anxiety, this topic was the December theme from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The program can help you with anything from job stress to aging parents to a death in the family. Please go [to ocmboces.org/eap](http://ocmboces.org/eap) for current offerings.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

The OCM BOCES non-discrimination policy has been updated and added to our web site. [Please click here to view it in full.](#)

**Follow us!**

If you have not done this already, please like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and check us out on YouTube. While several OCM BOCES programs have their own social media outlets, our organization has a general [Facebook page](#), [Twitter account](#) and [YouTube channel](#) to share news and events across all departments. We are happy to share and retweet any and all of your important news. The latest? Check out this Youtube video about [our goals and results from 2016-2017 across all divisions](#). For all of our social media platforms, check out our social media hub at <http://ocmboces.org/follow>.

### How to reach us

If you would like to contribute to BOCES Bits, which is generally distributed the first or second week of each month, please contact Jackie Wiegand at [jwiegand@ocmboces.org](mailto:jwiegand@ocmboces.org) or Laurie Cook at [lcook@ocmboces.org](mailto:lcook@ocmboces.org). If you are looking for work from our communications department outside of BOCES Bits, you can send us an email or use [a request form](#) to get started.

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