

BOCES BITS

April 2010 Vol. 6 Issue 4

Jessica F. Cohen, District Superintendent • Laurie Cook, Editor

From the District Superintendent

Dear Staff:

Over the past two weeks, I feel as though we have been bombarded with information on health care and health care reform. I write this month's letter sitting in the Intensive Care Unit at Crouse Irving Memorial Hospital with my father (who has since recovered), endlessly watching CNN report on the passage of the health care legislation. I am not sure if you are like me but I am still trying to figure out what the legislation does and how it will impact all of us.

The night before my father was rushed to the emergency room, my husband Norm and I were visiting some friends that we haven't seen in six years. Dick, Cindy, and Norm worked together when we lived in Massachusetts. Dick and Cindy left their jobs in Massachusetts to start a dog walking business in Virginia Beach. As we talked about their transition to a new and very different life, they remarked that their largest monthly expense now is health insurance – at about \$1,800 a month or almost \$22,000 a year. As we rushed back from our visit to get to the ICU, I thought a lot about the state of health care in this country; the incredible advances that save lives as well as the rising costs of prescription drugs and health care in general.

This year, as BOCES and districts work on our budgets, one of the costs that continues to increase faster than it should is health insurance. During the current year, we pay Excellus \$6,100 for individual coverage and \$14,600 for family coverage. Compared to Dick and Cindy's policy, that's not bad! But it equals a cost of more than \$10,000,000 for our active employees and an additional \$2,860,000 in BOCES' costs for retirees. That is more than 15% of our BOCES budget. Said another way, for every \$1.00 that is spent by BOCES, \$.15 goes to health care coverage.

Providing high quality health care coverage for BOCES staff is important. But it is equally important that we try to contain the costs. We know that the largest growth in our health insurance costs over the past five years has been in the component that pays for prescription drugs. The data that we have been reviewing also tells us that our use of generic drugs is lower than similar groups (and that we use

a much higher percentage of the more expensive brand name drugs than similar groups.)

Over the next year, we will be working with our health insurer, our unions, our staff, and others to find ways to ensure that we have healthy employees and that we understand our health insurance coverage and how to best utilize it to help control our costs. If you have any ideas about how to do this, or are interested in working with us to create a wellness approach, please let me know.

In the meantime, enjoy the spring weather!

Jessica

LPN Program Graduates 55 Students in March



Pictured: Amanda Goodrich of Auburn pins the cap on her fellow OCM BOCES LPN Program Graduate, Christy Marshall of Warners, prior to the March 2, 2010 graduation ceremony at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool. Congratulations to Amanda, Christy and the 53 other March graduates of OCM BOCES' Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Program!

McEvoy Building Trades Students Lend Helping Hands to the Community



Pictured above: McEvoy Building Trades students David Towers, Andre Leduc, Gavin Stage, Alex Knapp, Ben Johnson, Blaine Burton, and Chris Schoemaker with the benches they've built for the Cortland Housing Authority.

Building Trades students at the McEvoy campus have been keeping busy this winter lending their hands to several community projects. Over the past several months the students have built three heavy-duty outdoor benches for the Cortland Housing Authority, which provides low-cost housing and apartments for seniors, the handicapped, and the disadvantaged. The benches will be used at the Senior Citizen apartment tower in downtown Cortland as part of a "beautification project" for the complex. More benches, a storage shed, and large planter boxes are planned projects for the future.

A community service project that the Building Trades students have performed for several years now, is the construction of a ramp for Cortland County's annual "Chill-a-Bration" celebration. The ramp is used by amateur daredevils of all ages to ski, snowboard, or slide down at the winter family event. The 2010 event was held on Saturday, Feb. 27th, 2010 and featured a variety of music, food, and other entertainment for the day.

Many thanks to instructor James Bender and the students involved in these fantastic community projects!



Pictured above: McEvoy Building Trades students Lyman Carmen, Adam Gordan, Isaac Darling, Eli Kabat, George Chamberlain, and Dale King.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Presents

**When It's Time To Act:
Providing Care for Your
Aging Parents & Loved Ones**

Facilitated by
Michelle Stolicker, LCSW

Timely information to help you negotiate the service system

- * Understand the long term care system
- * Comprehend what's happening to your aging loved one
- * Know when it's time to act
- * Gain control of a crisis
- * Cope with and survive the stresses of family caregiving

DATE: Tuesday, April 13, 2010
TIME: 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
FEE: FREE
LOCATION: OCM BOCES-IEH Campus
Administration Building B
Distance Learning Center
6820 Thompson Road, Syracuse, NY 13221

If you have questions about the program, contact Michelle Stolicker at 1-800-EAP-8764 or (315) 471-1361. To accommodate participants, please complete and return by April 7, 2010. Please fold, staple and return entire sheet to address below. Late registrations will be accepted


Providing Care for Your Aging Parents & Loved Ones — April 13, 2010

Name: _____
School Building: _____ School District: _____
Position: _____
School Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____
Email (please print clearly) _____

Return : EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
OCM BOCES - IEH
Michelle Stolicker
906 Spencer Street - Prevention Network
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK 13204

— Save the Date! —

Mark your calendars for the 2010
Chase Corporate Challenge
Tuesday, June 22
at Onondaga Lake Park!



Career Exploration Students Work on Alternative Energy Projects



Students in the OCM BOCES Career Exploration program at McEvoy have been working on several different alternative energy

projects. By teaching students about new (and in some cases, old) sustainable technologies, they are developing an understanding of the different jobs that could be available for them upon graduation, and are gaining experience working with many different tools.

Some of the projects the students are working on include: a vertical wind turbine, a horizontal wind turbine, an electric lawn mower, a bio-gas engine, wood gasification, an electric bike, and a solar water heater.

To create a vertical wind turbine the class used two five-gallon buckets that had been cut in half. Students had two days to research the topic and develop a basic construction concept. The vertical wind turbine will be installed on campus and the energy created will be stored in a battery.

Students also created a horizontal wind turbine from three 2x6 boards. The boards were hand-planed to create the perfect angle. The windmill will also be installed, and just like the vertical turbine, the energy that is being created will be stored in a battery.

The energy stored in the battery will be used to run an electric lawn mower which was donated to the class. The mower was in poor condition and was missing some pieces so students had to take it apart, clean it up and give it a new paint job.

Other projects the class is working on include creating bio-gas, a fuel that comes from decomposing materials; wood gasification, the burning of wood which creates smoke that can then be re-burnt; a bicycle that creates electricity; and a solar water heater.

In the future, career exploration program teacher, Michael Howay, hopes to apply for a grant in order to convert all of the school's lawn mowers to electric and to create more wind turbines, creating a more earth-friendly BOCES campus!

Committee Works to Improve OCM BOCES Internet Presence

In the fall of 2009, OCM BOCES formed a committee to undertake the revision of our OCM website and to improve our overall organizational web presence. In November, the group met for the first time and started to gather information about internal and external customer needs, and subsequently created and administered a survey for OCM BOCES' customers, employees, students, parents and the community.

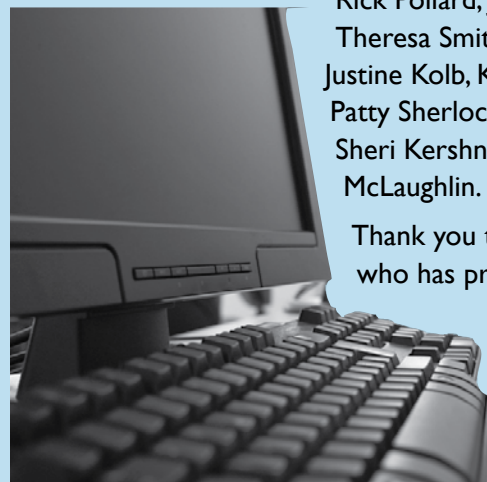
Over the past six months, the committee has met monthly around the task of replacing the OCM BOCES website in order to provide an improved look and increase the site's functionality. In addition to surveying our target audiences, the group has identified user-friendly educational and organizational websites, and most recently has begun to create a beta site for BOCES.

During the next several months, the committee will continue to meet and add to and revise the draft website. We anticipate that the site will be made available to OCM BOCES employees as a test site during the 2010 summer months. Prior to "rolling-out" the site to our employees, the group will identify site maintenance processes and responsibilities. The committee's intent is that the new, improved OCM BOCES website will be made public in the fall of 2010.

The group, consisting of members from several areas of our organization, has worked hard to consider the needs and input of all staff and customers of BOCES. As our new website is unveiled and tested, please provide, or continue to provide, feedback and ideas to the committee. Members of the group include Jeff Craig,

Rick Pollard, Josh Seitz, Theresa Smith, Laurie Cook, Justine Kolb, Karen Clark, Patty Sherlock, Dave Cirillo, Sheri Kershner and Vicky McLaughlin.

Thank you to everyone who has provided input and ideas for the new OCM BOCES website!



CONGRATULATIONS! KUDOS! GREAT JOB! WELL DONE! BRAVO!

If you know of an OCM BOCES student or employee that has done a great job on a project or if you know someone that should be recognized for an achievement they've made, please let us know about it! We'd like to get the word out about the great things that are going on in our organization. Send your information to Laurie Cook at lcook@ocmboces or call at 431-8597.

BOCES Student Places in Newspapers in Education Week Contest

Congratulations to OCM BOCES student Brian Rahl, a senior from the Syracuse City School District, who recently placed fifth in the Syracuse *Post Standard's* 2010 Newspapers in Education Week contest in the ninth through 12th grade cartoon category. Students in Gina Morabito's TEP class at the Career Training Center participated in the contest and Rahl's entry on making good choices was selected as a winning submission. Great job Brian!

Turning Point Class Raises Money for Clinton-Bush Haiti Relief Fund

On March 10th, students in Deb Vibbard's and Lisa Trerrotola's High School Turning Point class at McEvoy held a bake sale to raise funds for the Clinton-Bush Haiti Relief fund. As part of their Social Emotional Learning, the students planned and organized the sale. The students wrote the proposal for the sale, contacted staff members to donate baked goods, delegated jobs, did the advertising and worked the sale with limited guidance from adults. Students were overwhelmed by the amount of goodies baked by staff to support their efforts. As a result, the sale raised \$225.00 to be donated for Haiti Relief. Great job!



BOCES Employee Has Her Head Shaved to Support Childhood Cancer Research



On March 21st OCM BOCES' Sue Kline had her head shaved in front of hundreds of people at a St. Baldrick's event to raise critical funds for childhood cancer research. Sue takes part in the event each year in honor of her granddaughter, Brianna, a leukemia survivor who was diagnosed at age six. Sue and her family made up "Team Brianna" and together raised \$1,000 in their fight against childhood cancer. Pictured left: Prior to the St. Baldrick's Day event, Sue dyed her hair green in honor of St. Patrick's Day and knowing that her colored locks would be shaved off quickly!

BOCES Grant Recipients Showcase Their Grants

Congratulations to OCM BOCES' Dawn Cooley and Kathy Turenne for having recently been showcased at the Central New York Teaching Center's Celebration of Educational Excellence on March 18th for their literacy grant, "Listen Up! Read". The educators wrote the grant for the purpose of enabling students with low reading skills to interact and respond to literature in a productive and meaningful way. Congratulations!

OCM BOCES Board Members

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Mary Ann Haley
Mike Murphy
Lisa O'Reilly
David Paczkowski
Joan Reeves
Sandra Rausa
Ann Wright, *President*

TEP Program Goes "Behind the Scenes" at Local Businesses

Students in career studies classes in OCM BOCES' TEP program have been spending time studying and researching specific careers. After their research, students have visited local businesses that employ persons in the positions they have researched to get a first-hand look at jobs within the company. Not only are students given a tour by a company employee, they also have a chance to ask questions and practice filling out job applications. The class has already visited Wegman's, Burger King, News 10 Now and the YMCA. Plans have been made for the students to tour Honda City and the Ramada Inn in the next month.