

December 2019

# BOCES BITS

## Message from the Deputy Superintendent:

With the hectic pace of the school year and the added responsibilities of the holidays, the month of December can be stressful for just about everyone. We are very fortunate to have staff in our buildings who are sensitive to students' needs and can provide as much holiday cheer as possible for children who struggle during this time. I hope all of us at OCM BOCES can enjoy the upcoming holidays and take advantage of this time to relax, rejuvenate, and enjoy some quality time with loved ones.



If you keep in mind our OCM BOCES theme for the year — **Culture Counts ... Wellness Counts** — the holidays are a perfect time to put that “wellness” piece into action. As much as you can, I hope you will find time to get some rest, stay active, set healthy expectations for the holidays, and give yourself permission to let some things go. Time invested in yourself will go a long way toward boosting your general sense of well-being throughout the holiday season ... and all year long!

### Crown Road Campus

It is hard to believe that a month has passed since we held our public vote to purchase the Crown Road Campus. As many of you know, the Nov. 19 referendum passed by a resounding margin, 772-162. I would like to thank everyone who supported this project in any way, whether it was heading to the polls, serving as election officials, encouraging others to vote, serving on the referendum committee, or doing any number of tasks we needed to launch this vote in a very short amount of time. It is satisfying to know that we can now purchase our Crown Road building, end a long-term lease, and retain a quality learning environment for our students while also being fiscally responsible to our component districts. [If you didn't have a chance to see it, here is the story about our project that aired on Newschannel 9.](#)

### District Visits

Every year, our senior leadership team at BOCES visits each of our component districts so we can discuss how, as an organization, we can support each district's goals. We also receive valuable feedback about our services and programs. So far, these visits have gone very well, which makes me especially proud and grateful for all the hard work you are doing at OCM BOCES on a daily basis. I can tell you first-hand: Our districts appreciate you!

Whatever your plans for the holidays, I wish you and your loved ones a very safe, healthy and happy season. Enjoy!

Sincerely,



Colleen Viggiano  
Deputy Superintendent, OCM BOCES



## The results are in! BOCES employees pick top items for inaugural clothing store

Based on a Google survey presented to OCM BOCES employees last month, the top items for our inaugural BOCES- and RIC-branded clothing store include:

- ✳ **Men's and women's softshell jackets**
- ✳ **Women's cardigan**
- ✳ **Women's full-zip cardigan**
- ✳ **Men's V-neck**
- ✳ **Men's quarter-zip sweater**
- ✳ **Men's and women's polos**
- ✳ **Men's and women's button-down collared shirts (in image)**



The online store is expected to open Feb. 1. To review images of these items, please [check out this link](#). Prices are indicated next to each item, as are the color options. Styles come in men's and women's cuts. Once the store is ready to go, we will provide additional information, including how to order. Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey!



## Rachel's Challenge makes the holidays meaningful

Students across OCM BOCES embraced the spirit of the holidays through a multitude of activities in their Friends of Rachel (FOR) clubs. From "Happigrams" to gratitude circles to a pre-vacation "Blizzard of Kindness," students got creative in their efforts to spread holiday cheer both inside and outside their buildings. Here are just a few examples of holiday-inspired activities from our Rachel's Challenge initiative:

✳ In the Special Education program at McEvoy, students collected donated clothing and started a small “Rachel’s Closet” in the office of their advisor, Kim Capalongo. They also wrote notes of gratitude for each other, called Happigrams, as well as notes of appreciation for veterans at the VA Hospital in Syracuse. FOR Club members were also helping with a door-decoration project called “Christmas Around the World.”

✳ At Innovation Tech, students decorated paper bags for Meals on Wheels and filled out “leaves” to outline what they are thankful for (see image).



✳ At Thompson Road, Career & Technical Education (CTE) students were teaming up with the FOR Club at STARS for a holiday gathering in which students would receive hot cocoa and candy canes as well as a surprise visit from Santa. They also started a “Hello Campaign” to greet students upon arrival and a “Word of the Month” project for teachers to post in class. The first words: “gratitude” and “generosity.”



✳ At Seven Valleys New Tech Academy, students facilitated “gratitude circles” by grade level during a recent Thanksgiving feast and also planned to hand out candy grams for the holidays.

✳ At Cortland Alternative School, students created a welcome bag for new students that includes a pencil, pen, chapstick, lollipop, Smarties, and a pack of gum. The “Caught Red Handed” campaign has also been a big hit, celebrating students’ random acts of kindness with a red-construction “hand” posted on the walls.

✳ At Cortlandville, CTE and Special Education students rang the bell all day long Dec. 17 at the local P&C for the Salvation Army red-kettle campaign. They were also planning a “Blizzard of Kindness Day” for Dec. 20, the last day before the holiday break, to wish everyone a nice time off. The blizzard will include high-fives for all and snowflakes with kind messages and wintergreen Lifesavers.

## Who designed and built a new red kettle prototype for the Salvation Army? BOCES students did!

When the Salvation Army put out the call for help for a new red-kettle design, students in the OCM BOCES Welding and Auto Collision classes answered in a big

way. Students at the Thompson Road Campus worked together to design, build, and paint a new kettle that will now be used as a prototype throughout the state. Please [go to our website to learn more](#), including a television news story that appeared on CNYCentral's morning show.



## Find your holiday recycling tips here!

Confused about what to recycle during the holidays? Can you throw away bows, recycle wrapping paper? The Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency has some really good information for holiday recycling as well as general tips about what to throw out and what to recycle. [Check out this link to read all about it.](#)

## Marcellus superintendent selected to lead new Aspiring Leaders Institute

OCM BOCES is pleased to announce that Marcellus Superintendent Michelle Brantner has been selected as the lead instructor for the Aspiring Leaders Institute, a new program aimed at recruiting and developing teachers so they can later become successful administrators. The program is the result of a partnership among OCM BOCES, local school districts, and five higher education institutions. It is overseen by

the Instructional Support Services division of OCM BOCES.

Brantner comes to the position with more than 20 years of administrative experience, including 3½ years as superintendent of Marcellus Central Schools and seven years as superintendent of Moravia Central Schools.



## Armoured One trains OCM staff in school safety

Tom Czyz (in photo), founder of Armoured One, opened the Nov. 5 Professional Development Day at Thompson Road Campus with questions and answers about student safety and school security. The nearly three-hour session received high marks from OCM educators, who learned about intruder profiling/assailant psychology and ways to be proactive in situations involving school entry by unauthorized persons.



Later in the day, Health Occupations teacher **Meridith Kindred, RN**, practiced disabling an "active shooter" from using their weapons. Armoured One instructors showed OCM teachers techniques that can be used successfully by even the smallest staff member to divert and disable an assailant, giving students and colleagues time to exit an impacted area.



- Submitted by Henry Career & Technical Principal Peter Hunn

## SUNY Cortland writers share expertise with Seven Valleys

An excellent learning opportunity for students at SUNY Cortland and Seven Valleys took place in November when members of the college's Cortland Writers Association and professor David Franke (in photo) traveled to Seven Valleys to work with students on honing their writing skills.



BOCES students were divided into small groups and given a brief creative writing assignment, followed by a group reflection on the work. Both the SUNY students and BOCES students and staff enjoyed the experience so much, they hope to schedule another event in February. [Here is the full story on the SUNY Cortland webpage.](#) The same story appeared in the Cortland Standard.

## 209 students inducted into National Technical Honor Society

More than 200 Career & Technical Education students were honored for their exceptional achievements this fall during jam-packed induction ceremonies in Cortland and Syracuse for the National Technical Honor Society Induction (NTHS). To be inducted, students must have an 85 grade-point average or higher, 12 or fewer absences, and a teacher recommendation. Students must also demonstrate attributes that include respect, honesty, skill, responsibility, leadership, service and citizenship. For a full list of names from each district, please [visit our website.](#)



# Adult Ed exceeds standard for overall graduation rates and job-placement averages

As part of its requirements for the Council on Occupational Education (COE), the accrediting agency for Adult Education, the program needs to meet standards that include a 60% average graduation rate and a 70% average job-placement rate. For the 2018-2019 school year, Adult Education exceeded these standards: The overall average graduation rate was 86%, and the overall average job-placement rate was also 86%. Some of the most successful programs included: Construction Trades — 95% graduation rate and 95% job-placement rate; HVAC/R — 97% graduation rate and 97% job-placement rate; and Office Technology and Welding, which both had a 100% graduation rate and job-placement rate. Congratulations to our Adult Education teachers and leaders who worked closely with our students to achieve these results!



## Read the latest version of Culture Counts

Each month, OCM BOCES produces a newsletter that focuses on creating a positive organizational culture and promoting wellness among our students and staff. Employees throughout OCM BOCES are now being invited to provide articles that offer information on these topics or spotlight what we are doing at BOCES to support these themes. [The latest newsletters can be found on our website.](#)

We want to hear from you! After looking at some previous issues, please feel free to submit ideas to Special Education Director Rosanna Grund at [rgrund@ocmboces.org](mailto:rgrund@ocmboces.org). Articles are due by the 15th of each month.

## Crown Road staff give back for Thanksgiving

Prior to the Thanksgiving break, visitors to the main office at the Crown Road Campus were met with an array of laundry baskets filled with boxes of stuffing, gravy, bread, cranberry sauce and more. The items were the result of efforts by the Crown Road staff, who held a food drive among their colleagues to give students and their families the essentials for a Thanksgiving feast. A total of five families were presented with the



baskets, just in time for Thanksgiving. Thank you to the Crown Road Campus staff who worked together to make this possible!

## Game of Thrones film editor has BOCES connection

Turns out **Chris Leece**, our new STEM coordinator in Instructional Support Services, has an impressive connection in the world of film. His sister, [Meredith Leece](#), is an assistant film editor in London for the epic series, *Game of Thrones*. In Baldwinsville, C.W. Baker High School Librarian Leslie Cartier started a new film studies class this year. After hearing about the connection, she set up a time this month for students talk to Meredith through a videoconference. “My Baker film students had the opportunity of a lifetime to discuss the art of film editing with a pro!” Cartier said on Twitter. “Absolutely blown away!” In the photo, Meredith appears on the screen in the school’s large group room.



## Music-loving BOCES students shine in Homer

OCM BOCES students in the district-based STAR class at Homer Intermediate School received the “Golden Instrument Award” for showing outstanding participation and leadership during the month of October. Special Education teacher Amy Whittington said she and her class were “thankful for our award and for our music teacher, Mrs. Allison Henry! Let’s be joyful all year round.”



Whittington also gave a shout-out to the students in her class who are part of the Cortlandville Junior Chimers, directed by Natalie Walters. The students recently performed holiday carols with students in Lori Fiumara’s junior-high class at the Cortland Free Library for families and community members. “One mother told me this was the first time her 6th grade student has ever performed with a school group,” Whittington said. “She was delighted!”

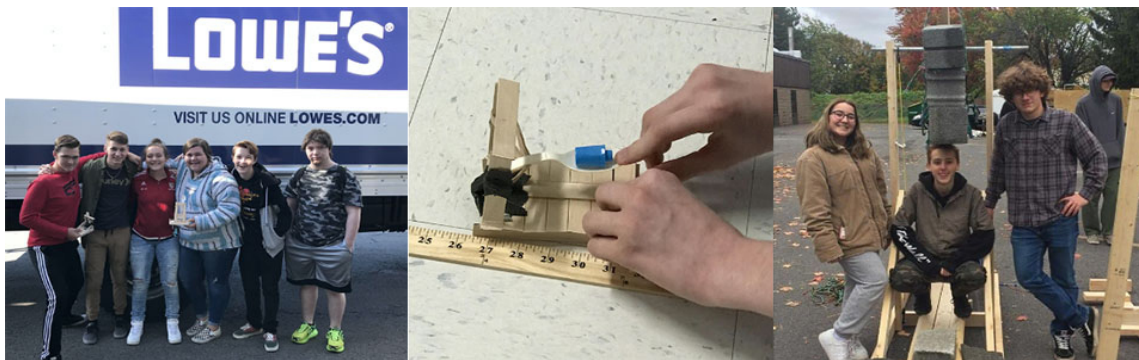




## When a fall favorite meets algebra and physics ...

Students from Seven Valleys New Tech Academy and Innovation Tech prepared pumpkin launchers this fall as part of an assignment for a class called Physebra, which combines Regents Physics and Regents Algebra II. In their study of roots, vertices, and parabolic motion, students used math concepts from Algebra II to design and create pumpkin launchers that demonstrated the Physics concept of parabolic motion. Students from both schools partnered with Lowe's for materials and built and tested small-scale models prior to building full-size launchers. Both programs met in October for their third-annual battle to see whose pumpkin launchers would fire the farthest. Students then used their data to calculate the specifics of the pumpkin trajectories, including speed, height, and distance. In the photos, students from Seven Valleys pose at Lowe's; students work on a small-scale benchmark model; and students at Innovation Tech pose with their full-scale launcher.

- Submitted by Seven Valleys Facilitator Jake Melnyk



## Thompson Road students help Carrier execs bring holiday cheer to Syracuse school

Students in the OCM BOCES Early Childhood Education CTE program at Thompson Road recently helped Santa and his elves bring some holiday cheer to the Seymour Dual Language Academy, a school in Syracuse. For 30 years, Carrier has been delivering gifts to kindergarten students in Seymour. This year, OCM BOCES students were asked to help Santa and his elves with a holiday visit and gift distribution, handing out gifts to 100 kindergarteners at the holiday event.

Our OCM BOCES students received praise from Carrier for how professional, polite, and helpful they were during the event. Scott Hopkins, senior supervisor of product training at Carrier, credited the OCM BOCES students with helping the program run so smoothly.

*“They should be proud of the time and effort they put in to making the experience a positive one for the children. They all stepped up and were engaged with the children from onset,”* he wrote in an email.

Great job to our Early Childhood CTE students! [View the NewsChannel 9 video of the kindergarteners meeting Santa and receiving their gifts here.](#)

## Cortland Physical Therapy students embrace the holiday spirit

Students in the business-embedded Physical Therapy & Rehabilitative Professions program at our Port Watson Street Campus recently volunteered at the Salvation Army in Cortland to help pack holiday food boxes for those in need. The program is embedded at Fadden & Associates Physical Therapy.



## Stay healthy in 2020! Two fitness centers offer education discounts



Looking to improve your health after the holidays? OCM BOCES found two fitness centers in the region that offer special discounts to educators. [You can view our informational flyer here.](#) This ties in with our organizational theme for the year, “Culture Counts ... Wellness Counts.” If you know of any other facilities that offer discounts for educators, please send an email to [jbufano@ocmboces.org](mailto:jbufano@ocmboces.org) The two fitness centers are:

### **Cortland Area:**

#### **Vine Health & Fitness Center**

20 North Main St.

Cortland, NY 13045

Find out more: 607-756-4905 or [vinehealthandfitness.com](http://vinehealthandfitness.com)

### **Syracuse Area:**

#### **‘Cuse Camp**

Camillus, Cicero, Clay, Liverpool, Manlius

Discount: \$97/month (more than \$30 off the regular price) with a six-month contract

## Looking for the perfect gift? How about a fun, part-time class at OCM BOCES?

In addition to its full-time certification programs, OCM BOCES offers dozens of part-time, evening or weekend classes that are sure to please just about anyone on your holiday gift list. From dancing to cooking to computers to welding to personal finance to self-care — and so much more — OCM BOCES has a class for everyone.



Why not give the gift of education and get a discount as well? OCM BOCES is now offering holiday gift certificates valued at \$50 for \$40, a \$10 savings. Just call at 315-453-4455 to find out more.

Need to pick out a class? [Check out our newest course catalog](#) online. This catalog will be arriving in mailboxes in just a few weeks.

## Get the word out! Teachers, teaching assistants and job coaches needed at OCM BOCES

Why become a teacher? A teaching assistant? A job coach? The reasons are many: job satisfaction, family-friendly schedule, great benefits, supportive environment, professional development opportunities — and so much more. Check out our [careers website page](#) and spread the word about our BOCES job openings.

## Like us on Facebook! Follow us on Twitter! Check us out on YouTube!

While several OCM BOCES programs have their own social media outlets, our organization now has a general Facebook page, Twitter account and YouTube channel that we can use to share news and events across all departments. 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). 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 anything from job stress to aging parents to a death in the family. Go to [ocmboces.org/eap](http://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](mailto:jwiegand@ocmboces.org) or Katie Jensen at [kjensen@ocmboces.org](mailto:kjensen@ocmboces.org).*

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