

From the District Superintendent

Dear Staff,

Change is certainly the word of the day. From our classrooms to the break rooms, on January 20th I saw students, teachers, and staff transfixed by the transition in our country from one president to another. We live in an amazing country that follows clearly prescribed routines for orderly change.

Change is also in the air at BOCES. In fact, there are some who say that the “C” in BOCES could stand for “Change” in addition to “Cooperative.” We are an elegantly flexible organization that forms and reforms itself in response to the needs of our students, districts, and staff. Over the past seven years, we have been in a period of significant growth across our entire organization. The down side of our organizational responsiveness and flexibility, however, is that sometimes growth slows, stops, or is even reversed. We are facing some of those reversals now in response to the fiscal issues that our districts are seeing and the drying up of state and federal grants.

As we develop our budgets for next year, we are being very deliberate and thoughtful about the changes that are necessary. We anticipate that we may be forced

to cut some positions that may or may not result in layoffs depending on the normal course of resignations and retirements. As we go through this process, our commitment is to communicate the information that we know to staff that are involved. As part of this communication process, I am planning a series of Conversations for February and March, scheduled at BOCES sites. The purpose of the Conversations is to try to answer some of the concerns and questions that people have about the budget process, BOCES, and our organization in general. Dates, times, and locations will be shared through email.

Please let me know your thoughts and your concerns... our BOCES is strong and well-thought of among our districts and our community. Charles Darwin said it best when he said “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” That has been and will continue to be our strength.

Jessica

Many Lives Touched by OCM BOCES Career Exploration Teacher

Barbara (Barb) A. Lehmann worked for OCM BOCES for 32 years, first as a Pastry Arts Teacher and most recently as a Foods Instructor in the Career Exploration Program. On January 19, 2009, shortly after her 59th birthday, Barb passed away at her home. Barb’s dedication to her job went beyond teaching. She also served as Union President and was very involved and interested in her students’ lives and helping them achieve their goals.

Those who knew Barb, know what an incredible person she was but for those who didn’t, her students’ testimonies speak volumes about the person she was. It is clear through their words that Mrs. Lehmann influenced many young lives. Some of the comments left by her students on the *Syracuse Post Standard* obituary guestbook website include, “...thank you so much for making a difference in my life.”, “She touched my life and I will really miss her.”, “...she was a great inspiration...”, “...she was one of the best teachers I ever had.” and “...she was always proud of me and I never forgot that!!”

Barbara will be greatly missed by her family, her friends, her students and her many colleagues who had the privilege of having her in their lives. A scholarship fund in Barbara’s name has been established through OCM BOCES.

McEvoy Gives The Gift of Giving



Pictured above: Students from Ms. Virgil's and Mrs. Currie's classes with Carla Plunkett from Bridges for Kids.

Each December, McEvoy's Special Education staff members, along with Career and Technical Education and Adult Education programs, donate toys, gifts and cash for the Cortland YWCA's Bridges for Kids program. A building-wide bake sale was also held, enabling the Bridges for Kids program to provide Christmas gifts for needy children. In December 2008, the total collected was almost \$450 in addition to the toys and gifts donated! Many thanks to everyone who helped make the holidays brighter for children through the Bridges for Kids program!

Fit Bits & Bites

If you are one of the many of us who made their 2009 New Year's resolution to get fit, here are some tips to staying on track (or getting back on track!)

Baby steps - If your diet needs reworking in many areas, try doing one thing at a time, like drinking black coffee instead of coffee with cream and sugar or substituting a glass of water for your typical afternoon cola. Small steps can cut calories and help you drop weight by the end of the year.

Water works - Nothing quashes an appetite quite like good old H₂O...lots of water! Water fills you up and lessens your appetite, but it also flushes out your systems and rids the body of toxins. A healthy amount of water to consume each day is 64 ounces or eight - 8 ounce glasses. Bring a bottle with you wherever you go and sip often.

Make a Move - Find ways, even if they seem small, to add activity to your day. Climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator and park farther away from buildings so you're forced to walk.

EAP Spring 2009 Workshop Schedule

March 11 Wednesday	The ABC's of ADD/ADHD - Help For Adults & Children with Michelle Stolicker	CRC Conference Room - Oswego BOCES, Main Bldg., Mexico Campus 179 Rt. 64, Mexico, NY	4-5:30 pm
March 25 Wednesday	Let's Talk Money - Constructive Communication About Money Matters with Michelle Stolicker	McEvoy Conference Center, Room 701 OCM BOCES 1710 Rt. 13, Cortland	4-5:30 pm
March 31 Tuesday	The Cutting Edge: What You Need To Know About Self Injury with Michelle Stolicker	Ithaca City School District Conference Room, Boynton Middle School - 1601 N. Cayuga St., Ithaca	4-5:30 pm
April 8 Wednesday	Down On The Pharm: Facts About Prescription & OTC Drug Abuse with Michelle Stolicker	OCM BOCES, IEH Campus Admin. Bld. B, Distance Learning Center 6820 Thompson Rd., Syracuse	4-5:30 pm
April 29 Wednesday	Secrets To Slumber - Strategies For A Good Night's Sleep with Michelle Stolicker	Liverpool Public Library - Sargent Meeting Room 310 Tulip Street Liverpool	4-5:30 pm
May 12 Tuesday	NYS Employee Retirement System - An Overview - Representative of NYS Retirement	OCM BOCES, IEH Campus Admin. Bld. B - Henry B, Large Confer. Room 6820 Thompson Rd., Syracuse,	4:15-6 pm

For more information on EAP workshops or for registration forms/information, go to www.eap.ocmboces.org. All workshops are free of charge.

Energy Conservation Initiative to Begin at OCM BOCES

School districts and BOCES are currently facing many fiscal challenges. It is essential that we continue to look for every opportunity to contain costs to allow us to maintain quality, cost effective programs that meet our districts' needs.

One area of focus recently identified by the New York State Office of the Comptroller, is electricity savings available through effective computer power management. As an organization with over 4,100 computers, monitors, printers, and copiers, the potential savings are significant. Based on the data provided in the Comptroller's audit report, the savings for OCM BOCES may be as great as \$50,000 annually.

In order to realize our potential savings, everyone in the organization is being asked to assist in this initiative by doing the following:

- Turn off all computers and monitors at the end of every day.
- Turn off all printers and copy machines at the end of every day. Each department will need to develop a process to ensure that the last person leaving the department turns off the copy machine and the first person in powers it on.

All new computers will be set up to automatically go to "standby" mode after 60 minutes of inactivity. The CNYRIC will begin a process to activate this setting on existing machines over the remainder of this school year.

The CNYRIC will be monitoring computer activity to ensure adherence to the procedures described above.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this initiative. If you have any questions or would like to offer other ideas for cost savings measures that could benefit our organization, please contact OCM BOCES Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Deb Ayers (dayers@ocmboces.org) or District Superintendent, Jessica Cohen (jcohen@ocmboces.org) at your convenience.



Floral Arts Sells Bouquets to Benefit Barbara A. Lehmann Scholarship Fund

On Friday, January 23rd, students in OCM BOCES Floral Arts program designed and sold bouquets of flowers to raise money for the Barbara A. Lehmann Scholarship Fund. BOCES employees had the opportunity to purchase bouquets of carnations, asters and Barb's favorite flower, tulips. The Floral Arts program sold out of flowers on Friday and extended the sale to the following Monday in order to accommodate all the employees who wanted to buy flowers to help fund the scholarship. The fundraiser was organized by Floral Arts Instructor, Sue Nagen, and according to her, was a success, raising more than \$100 to benefit a college-bound student in the field of Culinary and Pastry Arts.



Pictured far left: Students from Sue Nagen's Floral Arts class put together bouquets for sale to benefit the Barbara A. Lehmann Scholarship Fund. Pictured left: OCM BOCES employees Dennis Hill and Deb Yuckel purchased several bouquets to help fund the scholarship.

Important Tax E-Filing Information From the IRS

Companies can help their employees get ready and make the process easier, by reminding them of the following e-file tax-filing tips.

■ **Gather and organize supporting paperwork** *before* filling out tax forms, such as proof of mortgage interest, property taxes paid, medical expenses, payments to charitable organizations, etc.

■ **Organize receipts by category** by putting them in large envelopes or file folders, with the totaled amount written on the front. Bring these organized documents to your tax professional if you have one. Have last year's adjusted gross income to electronically sign e-filed federal tax returns.

■ **Take advantage of the benefits of e-file**, which is safer and more accurate than filing paper returns. In addition, taxpayers who e-file their federal returns receive an e-mailed response within 48 hours confirming that the return was received for processing by the IRS. And there's always the satisfaction in knowing that less paper is being used... thereby helping the environment.


■ **e-file avoids the need for Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) and Refund Anticipation Checks (RACs)**, which can incur high fees. Those due a refund can get it fast by e-filing, which can arrive in as little as 10 days with Direct Deposit. Plus, there is no fee.

■ **Encourage employees to see if they qualify for Free File.** Taxpayers whose adjusted gross income was \$56,000 or less during 2008, about 70 percent, can e-file their federal returns at no cost. The service is accessible only by going to IRS.gov and clicking on "Free File." Those who used Free File last year and want to again must go back and access it through the IRS website or they may be charged a fee. Those who lost jobs or are working fewer hours because of economic conditions may find that they now meet the Free File threshold, even if they didn't qualify before.

■ **Employees may be able to access and electronically insert information from their W-2 Forms** directly into any

e-filing software or program, including Free File, if your company uses a payroll service.

■ **Those who use the services of a tax professional should request e-file** to realize its same great benefits. Most tax professionals offer the service, but taxpayers may need to ask their tax professional to e-file their return. And they should call to schedule their appointments early. Those who wait until April to call their preparers may find that their returns will have to be extension filed.

It's never too soon to start preparing for tax time. This year, help employees get a head start by giving them these handy tax-filing tips and reminders before tax season begins. 

Learn More Online

■ e-file: www.irs.gov/efile/index.html

■ Free File: www.irs.gov/efile/article/0%2C%2Cid=118986%2C00.html

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.

Congratulations to Cortland Alternative High School senior, Bill Cozort! Bill is pictured (left) wearing the Cortland Youth Bureau Staff Shirt that symbolizes his paid internship with the Youth Bureau. Bill applied, interviewed and was offered a six-month, 10 hours per week internship. He assists with programs at the Youth Center, including dinners, Band Night and special trips. On February 9th and 10th Bill was in Albany attending the annual Association of New York State Youth Bureaus Youth Forum and Legislative Breakfast. Bill took part in a presentation about the Cortland Youth Bureau Teen Center's Youth Internship Program. While in Albany, Bill also had the opportunity to meet with Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton to discuss the necessity for youth development funds in the state budget. Congratulations Bill and thank you for representing OCM BOCES so well!



"Young people frequently forget what we say & do, but they rarely forget how we make them feel."

- Michael Carrera

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