

# BOCES BITS

December 2010 Vol. 6 Issue 10

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

## From the District Superintendent

Dear Staff,

There is no mistaking that winter has arrived in Central New York. The beautiful, fluffy snow that we woke up to one morning several days ago has not yet changed to the slushy, messy, and dirty snow that we see in March. With the beauty of the snow also comes the beauty of the holiday season.

The beauty is not only in the lights, the snow, or the decorations but is in the actions that we see in the caring,



giving, and believing. This month's BOCES Bits has several examples of ways that our students and staff

are giving back to others in need. Thank you to all of them as well as to all of our staff that adopt a family for the holidays or that donate to the Food Bank or other organizations that benefit families that are in need. Our staff and students truly care about others.

I hope that you all have happy and healthy holidays. As I think about the new year and the hopes that I have for 2011, I hope that there will be peace, that we will all have good health, and that happiness will find us all. In the words of Oprah Winfrey, "Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right."

*Jessica*

*Pictured: Students from OCM BOCES' STAR Program in Amy Whittington's classroom at Homer Intermediate School give to Cortland Loaves and Fishes. Read the story on our news blog at [www.ocmboces.org](http://www.ocmboces.org).*

## 35 McEvoy Students Inducted into National Technical Honor Society

Congratulations to the 35 Career and Technical Education students from McEvoy, who on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society. Students inducted into the technical honor society represent the "best of the best" in McEvoy's Career and Technical Education Programs. In order to be inducted into the technical honor society students must have an 85 average or higher, 12 or fewer absences from their program for the year and receive a teacher endorsement. Students must also demonstrate attributes that include: respect, honesty, skill, responsibility, leadership, service and citizenship. A complete listing of students achieving the recognition can be seen on the OCM BOCES news blog at [www.ocmboces.org](http://www.ocmboces.org). Congratulations to the students and their families!



*Pictured (left to right) are: Richard Hansen, McEvoy Career and Technical Education Principal; Douglas VanEtten, Homer Central School Principal; Karley Brown, Inductee; Nathan Parker, Inductee; Andrew Gallagher, Inductee; Carly Riehlman, Inductee and Rebecca Robertson, McEvoy School Counselor.*

### Holiday Stress? Think EAP!

Holiday time can be a joyous and wonderful time of the year, but it can also be very stressful. December is Stress Awareness month so be sure to visit the EAP website at [www.eap.ocmboces.org](http://www.eap.ocmboces.org) to access a variety of resources about stress management.

## Weather-Related Announcements

Since weather conditions can vary greatly across the OCM territory, different criteria are used to close our campuses. For this year, procedures will be the same as in the past.

### ONONDAGA COUNTY FACILITIES

The decision to close OCM BOCES is based on whether or not some of our larger districts decide to close. If Baldwinsville, East Syracuse Minoa, Fayetteville Manlius, Liverpool, and North Syracuse are closed, then OCM BOCES facilities in Onondaga County will be closed for students and instructional staff. These facilities include: Alternative to Homebound, Career Academy, Career Training Center, Henry Campus, Kasson Road (If Marcellus is closed, Kasson Road is also closed,) Children's Village (If ESM is closed, Children's Village is also closed,) Onondaga Alternative High School (STARS,) Cedar Street Educational Program, New Vision Program Sites, and Reach.

BOCES classrooms located in component school district buildings will close if the district is closed.

We will use several radio stations and television stations to air the announcements. They are as follows:

**Radio Stations:** AM 570, AM 620, FM 93.1, FM 94.5, FM 95.7, FM 104.7, FM 105.9 and FM 107.9.

**TV Channels:** 3, 5, 9 and 10

### CORTLAND COUNTY FACILITIES

If Cortland and Homer districts are closed, then OCM BOCES facilities located in Cortland County will be closed for students and instructional staff. If only one of the aforementioned districts is closed, and the Career and Technical Education program enrollment by all districts totals one-half or more, OCM facilities located in Cortland County will remain open. If other smaller districts that send students to the Career and Technical Education programs at McEvoy close, OCM BOCES facilities located in Cortland County will close for students and instructional staff.

The OCM BOCES facilities located in Cortland County include: McEvoy Campus, Cortland Alternative School, and New Vision Program Sites.

BOCES classrooms that are located in component school district buildings will close if the district is closed.

We will use several radio stations and television channels to announce the closing of OCM facilities located in Cortland County. They are as follows:

**Radio Stations:** AM 680, AM 870, AM 1290, AM 1430, AM 1470, FM 92.5, FM 97.3, FM 98.1, FM 99.1, FM 101.5, FM 103.3, FM 103.7, FM 104.1, FM 105.7 and FM 107.5.

**TV Channels:** 3, 5, 9 and 12

**Adult Education** – Adult Education daytime classes will be closed for students if the OCM facilities are closed in the designated county. Evening class closings will be announced separately by JoAnne Flood (Onondaga County) and Mary Reagan (Cortland County).

**Workshops** – Any workshops that are scheduled through OCM BOCES Instructional Support Services will occur unless there is a state of emergency.

### Administrative, Clerical, and Service Personnel

– Administrative, clerical, and service personnel are expected to report to work when BOCES facilities are closed for students and instructional personal.

When Onondaga or Cortland area BOCES facilities are closed, and there is a “no travel” order declared in that county, no employees are to report to work, except those employees designated as essential. Employees who reside in, or must pass through, a county where there is a “no travel” order in effect, will not be charged for workdays lost.

### Flexible Spending Plan Enrollment

OCM BOCES employees wishing to participate in Flexible Spending (Medical, Dependent or Premium Reimbursement) during the 2011 plan year (January 1, 2011 - December 31, 2011) must enroll or re-enroll by completing the Flex Spending form that was in your December 1 paycheck, and returning it to Tammy Jones in the Personnel Office by **December 15, 2010**.

There are two important changes to the Flexible Spending Plan for 2011. It is important that you are aware of the changes when considering participation in the plan and the amount that you want to flex for medical accounts.

**Change #1** – The **Beniversal Card** for medical reimbursements will be added to our plan for 2011. The Beniversal Card is a prepaid card that works much like a credit card, but uses funds from your Medical Flexible Spending Account to pay for eligible medical expenses at the point-of-sale.

**Change #2** – The Affordable Care Act of 2010 changes the rules for using Medical Flexible Spending Account funds to purchase Over-the-Counter (OTC) drugs and medicines. Employees need to consider the new rules when estimating their Medical FSA election during enrollment.

Effective January 1, 2011, Medical FSA funds may no longer be used to purchase OTC drugs and medicines (other than insulin) without a prescription from a medical provider.

Employees have received a memo regarding these changes. The full memo is also **available online** at <http://www.ocmboces.org/teacherpage.cfm?teacher=1103>.

In order to estimate medical and dependent care expenses, use the Benefit Resource, Inc. website at <http://www.benefitresource.com/Employees/how-flexible-spending-works.htm>

## OCM BOCES Staff and Students Have and Give in Spirit of the Season!

**Cortland Alternative Students and Staff Pitch-In to Help Out** – Nine students and two staff members from OCM BOCES' Cortland Alternative School (CAS) recently donated their time and effort for two good causes to help their community. Through the Family Essentials Program of the Cortland County Community Action Program (CAPCO), students and staff assisted with the 2010 Cortland County Coat drive. This is the second year that the CAS has helped with the drive by organizing coats according to the various sizes donated.

In addition to providing assistance with the coat drive, the same group also helped make the playground at a local day-care safer for the children who will play there. The group recently spent time at the day-care spreading recycled rubber tire bits around the center's newly installed playground. The children who attend the center will have opportunities to use the playground in the spring. *View this article online at <http://www.ocmboces.org/newsStories.cfm#2> to see a list of students and staff involved as well as photos from the events.*

**TEP Program Raising Money and Donations for Francis House** – For the third year in a row, students and staff from the



*TEP student Kayla Barclay dishes a slice of pizza for BOCES' Adult Education HVAC student Kyle Cook.*

OCM BOCES TEP (Transitional Education Program) have been working hard to make the holidays a little merrier for residents of Syracuse's Francis House, a supportive home for people with terminal illness. Under the direction of School Social Worker Meghan Gould and TEP Teacher Gina Morabito, students have been brainstorming ways to expand their charitable efforts. In addition to collecting food and household items as was done in previous years, the students this year also made blankets for Francis House residents and held a pizza sale to raise money. The students were fortunate enough to receive pizza donations from several local restaurants including Pizza Hut, Wegmans, Mark's Pizzeria and Bagozzi's Pizza. More than \$200 was raised by the pizza sale and that money will be used to purchase Wegman's gift cards for residents. On December 17, three TEP students, one Stellata student and several TEP and Stellata staff members will personally deliver the gifts to Francis House.

**REACH Program Helps Salvation Army** – Students in OCM BOCES' REACH Program are involved with several charitable events to benefit the Salvation Army this holiday season. Throughout the month of November, students collected food for the Salvation Army and toys for the agency's Christmas Bureau Donation Day on December 21. On Monday, December 20, students and staff will be participating in the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign at Carousel Center by acting as bell ringers and they will also help organize gifts at the Christmas Bureau Distribution Day.



*REACH students Jameson Kissane and Jesse Miles headed-up the program's food drive for the Salvation Army. On Friday, December 10, members of the 174th Air National Guard came to the school to pick-up the barrels of food donations!*

**STARS Students Build Relationships with VanDuyn Residents** – Students at the OCM BOCES STARS alternative high school were involved with an interdisciplinary service learning project this holiday season.



*Left to right: STARS art teacher Pam Mac Nabb, C-NS student Gabby Latimer, C-NS student Sierra Mungo, Solvay student Caitlin Cameron and Westhill student Audrey Martone.*

Through the project, students and staff visited residents at VanDuyn Home and Hospital to work on activities with them. Students visited the facility three times during the month of December and spent time singing to, talking with and creating projects with the residents, exploring activities across the curriculum in English, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Art. Not only did the project bring joy for the home's occupants, it was designed to promote learning in a more personal manner to the students.

## 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](mailto:lcook@ocmboces) or call at 431-8597.

### Health & Safety Office Welcomes new Safety Officer

Welcome Craig Fisher! The Health, Safety and Risk Management Office is pleased to announce the addition of Craig Fisher as our new full-time Safety Officer as of November 15. Craig will serve several school districts and will be based at the Administration Building. Craig joins us from Sullivan BOCES where he served as Environmental Health & Safety Technician since 2006. Please join us in welcoming Craig and his family!

### Cortland Alternative School Featured in Cortland Standard

On Wednesday, November 24, 2010, students and staff from OCM BOCES' Cortland Alternative School were featured in the *Cortland Standard* newspaper for their Thanksgiving meal preparation at Cortland's 1890 House. A link to the entire *Cortland Standard* story can be viewed by following the address below: <http://www.cortlandstandard.net/articles/11242010n.html> and can also be accessed via the OCM BOCES news blog at [www.ocmboces.org](http://www.ocmboces.org).

### Dental Assisting Students Raise Thousands of Dollars for Smile Train

Nancy Chappell's Adult Education dental assisting students recently chose to raise funds for the Smile Train, an international charity that provides cleft lip and cleft palate surgery to children in need, as well as providing cleft-related training to doctors. In order to raise money, students sold candy daily during lunch hours, organized and held a pizza sale, went around to local dental offices to notify them of their September "Smile Train night" at Pizza Uno and also gave them envelopes to send donations in case they couldn't make it to the fund-raiser. The total amount of money raised by the students was an impressive \$2070, which is enough to complete eight full surgeries! Great job Nancy and students!

### Students Donate Time and Talents for Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Colleen Viggiano is currently training to take part in the January 8, 2011 Disney World Half Marathon with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training. On Saturday, November 15, Colleen and her teammates held a spaghetti dinner benefit to raise money for their cause. OCM BOCES Henry Campus Cosmetology Instructor Annemarie Morabito and seven of her students attended the benefit and donated their time

and talents to raise money painting the faces of benefit attendees. Those students were: Chelsea Clarkson from Baldwinsville, Michael Dennis from Baldwinsville, Torrie Gavin from North Syracuse, Brenda Kendrat from North Syracuse, Caitlin Kurilovitch from Baldwinsville, Jessica Ptaszek from Liverpool and the Career Academy and Amani Zatar from Fayetteville-Manlius. Many thanks to Annemarie and her students for generously donating their time and best of luck to Colleen as she prepares for the half-marathon!



OCM BOCES cosmetology student Jessica Ptaszek and her instructor, Annemarie Morabito.

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