

BOCES BITS

March 2011 | Vol. 7 Issue 3

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

From the District Superintendent

Dear Staff,

Every month as I sit down to write a message to you, I try to find an interesting way to communicate what is happening at BOCES, in our districts, and in the state. Recently, I have been struggling to find a way to put the complexities of state budget cuts, local district budget planning, BOCES budgets, and politics into a few words.

School budget preparations this year are the most difficult I have seen in the time I have been in education. While in almost every other year, the discussions are around how much more will be put into state aid by the legislature, this year the discussions are about the cuts in state aid from previous years. Our 23 districts will lose \$79 million in state aid if the Governor's budget is enacted. In addition, they will lose another \$9.2 million if the proposed cuts to BOCES aid are made.

So where does this leave us? As we do every year, our staff have proposed to the BOCES Board of Education budgets that are based on the initial requests of districts. Those budgets have been developed with the recognition that this is not a year for growth in budgets; but is a year that budgets need to be lean as possible. Initial budgets are the first step in our process of budget and program development. During April, based on the final requests that districts make, our staff will develop the final budgets. I am anticipating that because of the reductions in state aid and the proposed cuts in BOCES aid that requests will be down. That will require the elimination of programs and will likely result in the reduction of staff.

As I visit with the 23 component boards of education and talk with the component district superintendents, I am asked if BOCES "is feeling the same pain that the districts are?" They are really asking what we are doing to reduce and hold costs down.

Recently, I read an entry on my daughter-in-law's Facebook page. She entitled the entry, The Mad Scientist and recounts a discussion between my three year-old granddaughter Iselle and her father, Geoff.

Iselle: I have a hop-this.

Geoff: What?

Iselle: I have a hop-this! I am going to test it.

Geoff: Oh, you have a hypothesis! What's your hypothesis?

Iselle: Some sharks are nice. Some sharks are not nice.

Geoff: How will you test your hypothesis?

Iselle: (Thinks.) I will use my whole family.

Leaving aside the question of how a three-year old knows about testing hypotheses, the story reminded me of a hypothesis that I have. My hypothesis is that the OCM BOCES staff can come up with some ideas for helping reduce our costs to districts. If you have any ideas, please e-mail them to me. In the meantime, our board and administrators will be working on trying to do the same.

Jessica

McEvoy Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser

Wednesday, March 30th
OCM BOCES' McEvoy Campus
4:30 - 7:00 PM

Cost:

\$7.00 - Adults

\$6.00 - Seniors (65 & over)

\$4.00 - Children (12 & under)



Stop by OCM BOCES' McEvoy campus on Wednesday, March 30th to support the campus' SkillsUSA and Epicurean Club students. The groups are holding a spaghetti dinner fundraiser at the campus in Cortland. Money raised will be used to support the students in their upcoming occupational competitions for ProStart and SkillsUSA. For more information, contact Kay Kraatz, McEvoy SkillsUSA Advisor at 607/758-5140.

Target Staff Helps Deaf Program Celebrate Read Across America



On Wednesday, March 2nd, three Target team members from the Camillus store came to visit OCM BOCES' Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at Solvay Elementary School. Target Team members Tina Falteisek, Sandy Campbell and Mary Hlberti came to BOCES to help celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday and to participate in the Read Across America program with Jaimie Williams' K/1 class and Mary DeMatteo-Vitale's 2/3 classes.

The Target team members read three Dr. Seuss stories and shared goodie bags with the students. The students enjoyed the stories and were excited to have the visitors read to their classes. Many thanks to Target for participating in Read Across America with OCM BOCES' Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program students.

March is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Awareness Month

This month, the OCM BOCES' Employee Assistance Program (EAP) would like to help you understand Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or OCD. The EAP has a variety of resources on working through the disorder and helping others work through the issues they face with OCD or other anxiety disorders. To receive information about OCD or any of the many other topics available through the EAP, visit their website at <http://eap.ocmboces.org/>.

Videoconference Teaches Sign Language and a Bit About Syracuse



On March 2nd Lisa Austin's 9th grade Deaf and Hard of Hearing class videoconferenced with a second grade classroom in Klum, North Dakota. The interaction was provided by TWICE (Two Way Interactive

Connections in Education,) as part of their Read Around the Planet event. Since students at Klum Elementary are learning about nutrition, the BOCES students decided to read a nutrition-related book to the younger students. The BOCES students also wanted to showcase something special about Syracuse, so they created a book about the New York State Fair and nutritious food choices available at the Fair. The students discussed the Fair's Horticulture and Dairy buildings as well as the animal barns. In addition to creating a book, the students taught the signs associated with the buildings they discussed. The students from Klum Elementary enjoyed learning sign language and hearing about Central New York. The experience was very enjoyable for both classrooms and it is hoped that the connection will continue in the future!



March is Open Enrollment Month for Health and Dental Plans

All employees were recently given a form to complete in order to receive information regarding changing health and/or dental plan enrollments during OCM BOCES' Open Enrollment period. The March Open Enrollment period is the one time each year that employees may enroll in a BOCES health/dental plan if not currently enrolled, or change their coverage level *without a qualifying event*. Any changes made in March will become effective April 1, 2011. If you would like to receive the information necessary to change your enrollments, you must complete and return your interest form to Tammy Jones in the Personnel Office by **March 18, 2011**.

2010 Flexible Spending Claims Due by March 31

The 2010 Flexible Spending Account (FSA) plan year ended on December 31, 2010. All claims for unpaid monies must be postmarked to Benefit Resource, Inc. **by March 31, 2011** for expenditures from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010.

OCM BOCES Students Participate in Regional SkillsUSA Competition



Students from OCM BOCES' Syracuse and Cortland campuses participated in the SkillsUSA Regional Competition at Delhi University on Thursday, February 17, 2011. Fifty students from the two campuses competed against other career and technical education students in contests varying from Nurse Assisting, Commercial Baking, Customer Service, Carpentry, Automotive Service, Criminal Justice, Food and Beverage Service and more.



The following OCM BOCES students were SkillsUSA Regional-level medalists:

- *Shawn Bocyck (pictured above right) - junior Laboratory Technician student from the Baldwinsville Central School District, took first place in the Related Technical Math competition*
- *Yaroslav (Slavik) Burko - senior Automotive Collision Repair student from the Baldwinsville Central School District, took first place in the Collision Repair competition*
- *Mikayla Cregan (pictured above left) - senior Culinary Arts student from the Tully Central School District, took second place in the Food and Beverage Service competition*
- *Asia Darbey - junior Pastry Arts student from the North Syracuse Central School District, took third place in the Job Demonstration Open competition*
- *Shawn Michael Derrick - senior Pastry Arts student from the North Syracuse Central School District, took first place in the Commercial Baking competition*
- *Mackenzie Edinger - junior Graphic Communications student from the Tully Central School District, took second place in the Customer Service competition*
- *Phillip Spinella - senior Construction Technology student from the Liverpool Central School District, took second place in the Carpenter's Assistant competition*
- *Kyle Vandeburg - senior Automotive Technology Student from the Marathon Central School District, took first place in the Basic Vehicle Maintenance competition*

Congratulations to all the OCM BOCES students who participated and placed in the Regional SkillsUSA Competition! New York State SkillsUSA competitions will be held April 13-15, 2011 at the New York State Fairgrounds.

Kay Kraatz, OCM BOCES' McEvoy Campus SkillsUSA Advisor, would like to give a special thanks to the following sponsors for supporting registrations for our students: *Kellogg Auto Supply, Tully Building Supply, and Tractor Supply Company*. For more information about the SkillsUSA organization or competitions, visit their website at <http://www.skillsusa.org>.

Don't Forget the Books!

The United Way's Success By Six *Bring on the Books!* Book Drive distributes **new and gently used books** to child care centers, after school programs and other organizations in need of children's books. This initiative is an attempt to promote reading and literacy throughout Central New York.

Look for Success By Six collection boxes at the Henry Campus through March 18, 2011.



Heave Ho' HENRY Wellness

Staff at OCM BOCES' Henry Campus have begun a free wellness program, run completely by employees generously donating their time. Two different programs are currently being offered on Mondays and Wednesdays through April 15. Individuals can start a class at anytime and participate as desired. There is no cost to participate and pre-registration is not necessary. Each class takes place from 4:15 to 5:00 PM at the CNYRIC in conference rooms 1 & 2. Participants are asked to wear sneakers and comfortable clothes and bring their own water bottles. Join us on Mondays for ZUMBA and Wednesdays for Line Dancing! Hope to see you there! For more information contact Linda Miller Shapess at 315/433-2671 or by e-mail at lshapess@ocmboces.org.

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.

OCM BOCES Employee Takes Frosty Dip for Good Causes



OCM BOCES' employee Melinda Shimer (red shirt) was one of several people to be pictured in Syracuse's Post Standard for having taken part in Baldwinsville's Big Chill Polar Bear Plunge event. The festival took place the weekend of January 23rd and 24th, with the "Plunge" taking place on the 24th. The event raised funds for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of CNY, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of CNY, and Baldwinsville Chamber of Commerce. Minimum sponsorship for the frosty dip was \$100. Great job Melinda! Photo credit: Peter Chen/The Post Standard.

OCM BOCES Coordinates Sectional-Level Academic Decathlon

Each year, as a service to component districts, OCM BOCES coordinates the local sectional-level competition of the United States Academic Decathlon (USAD). This year's competition, held Saturday, February 5, brought students from the Cazenovia, Liverpool, North Syracuse, Tully, West Genesee and Westhill school districts together to take part in the competition at Westhill High School. The theme of this year's event was The Great Depression, with all areas of the competition centered on that theme, including the history, economics, science, and literature of the period. The West Genesee High School Academic Decathlon team took top honors, with the Cazenovia team placing second. Both teams now advance to the New York State competition at Onondaga Community College. Cicero-North Syracuse High School placed third and qualified for the state competition as a wild card. Many thanks to Jeff Craig, Steve Saya and Kathy Miller for making the event possible each year!

Chili and Soup Cook-Off Heats Up Regional Information Center



On Thursday, March 3, OCM BOCES employees at the Central New York Regional Information Center (CNYRIC) held their annual soup and chili cook-off. CNYRIC employees brought in nearly 20 crock-pots filled with different varieties of homemade soup, stew and chili to be sampled and voted on by their coworkers. Employees got together on their lunch break to taste the culinary creations and in the end four winners were chosen. In the soup category, second prize went to Terri Redhead and first prize to Rick Dillon. For chili, second prize was awarded to Donna Tosano and first prize to Michele Rourke. In February, CNYRIC employees also held their first "Best Cookie Ever" contest. Congratulations to all winners and participants on some fun and tasty events to help break up the long Central New York winter!

Pictured: CNYRIC Chief Technology Officer Michael Fay prepares to sample one of the many varieties of soup at the building's annual chili and soup cook off.

OCM BOCES Board Members

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