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A look
at
BOCES

SCHOOL

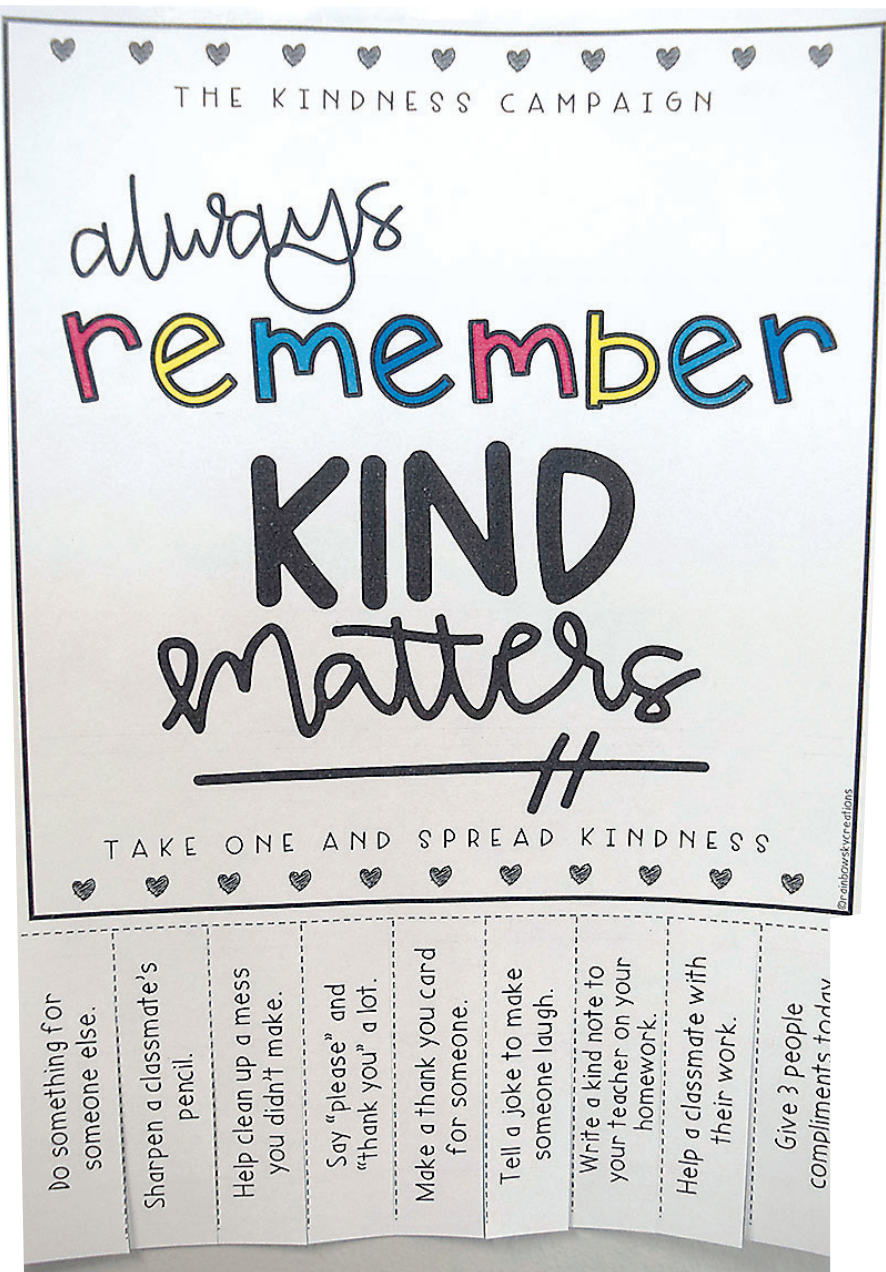
A Special Supplement to the Sullivan County Democrat

SCENE



SECTION 5 • APRIL 2022
CALLICOON, NY

Be kind at BOCES



BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

According to Adam Riehl, Executive Principal at Sullivan BOCES, kindness is spreading in the classrooms and hallways of the Rubin Pollack Education Center.

The Kindness Challenge is a grassroots initiative that came out of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) meeting. It was an effort that the group wanted to create to impact the school's culture positively.

"The idea behind this is [that] those small things can have big impacts. We're looking to spread kindness, spread positivity, and have a positive impact on the school culture," said Riehl.

Coming out of the ongoing COVID pandemic, it has been rough on not only the students but also the staff.

"It's a collaborative piece and really brings staff and students

together," added Riehl.

Using coupons, students and staff acknowledge one another by the gifting of one of the coupons, which, in turn, the student or staff member can redeem for an award.

"It's something that's becoming at the forefront of students' minds now. So it's become part of the daily conversation," said Riehl.

"You can have a great effect on not only your day but on somebody else's day," said Riehl.

Suzanne Lindstadt, a Teacher Assistant in the Special Education Division, said that a letter went out to partners letting them know about the kindness initiative along with discussions within the classrooms.

Furthermore, Lindstadt says that there is a kindness challenge every day for all the students and staff to work towards.

PLEASE SEE **BE KIND**, 45



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Above: Kindness coupons reward good behavior.

Right: Jadin Suarez, an 11th grade student from Minisink Central School District and Jakai Jones, a 5th-grade student from Monticello Central School District hold up the kindness entry box.



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BE KIND at BOCES

CONTINUED FROM 25

And when the staff or students hand in their coupons, they could be traded in for some sweet desserts made by the students in the culinary program.

Jadin Suarez, an 11th grade student from Minisink Valley Central School District, said that students now have the opportunity to be kind.

When he receives a coupon, Suarez says he feels good, and "I feel like everybody noticed the kind stuff that I do for other people."

Suarez got motivated when he saw other students getting dessert treats from the culinary program.

"I saw a friend get food from there [culinary program] and said to myself, I kinda want to get one for myself and went to find out what they did to get it," added Suarez.

Jakai Jones, a 5th-grade student from the Monticello Central School District, says he has been caught spreading positivity and uplifting other students' spirits.

Jones was recently awarded a kindness coupon for holding the door open for someone, and once inside, he says he came upon some papers on the floor, and he proceeded to pick them up and throw them away.

"I've seen students get really excited and want to do things to earn an extra thing," said Lindstadt.

Samantha Hitchcock, a Teacher Assistant, says they discuss the

kindness cards in the classroom, and when she receives one herself, she says she feels appreciated.

Hitchcock said she got a card for helping a student with their work and helping de-escalate a crisis behavior.

Lindstadt said when coming back from COVID, it was hard to return to "normal" after going completely virtual; the kindness cards have helped to smooth the transition.

Riehl said, "We really want to focus on building community because school is a community at the end of the day, and we all want to belong."

That sense of belonging is what binds us. So that's really what the initiative is based upon."

In looking into the future, Riehl would like to see the initiative grow and become part of the culture in Sullivan BOCES.

"It's really been a collaborative effort. It isn't about one person. It isn't about me; it's really about everybody kicking in," said Riehl.

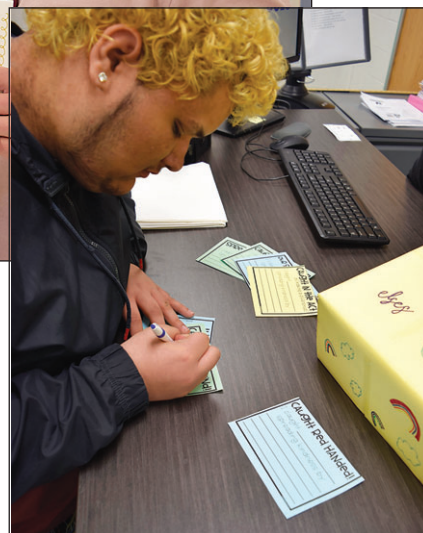


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Top: Jakai Jones, 5th grader from Monticello CSD being kind to Samantha Hitchcock, Teacher Assistant for Sullivan BOCES.

Middle: Thomas Gale from Livingston Manor receiving his kindness award from Adam Riehl, Executive Principal at Sullivan BOCES.

Bottom: Jadin Suarez 11th grader from Minisink CSD filling out a kindness card.



School Scene

'A look inside the BOCES School District'

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Above: Seann Koskey (Liberty CSD) enjoys the outdoors.
Inset Top: Students learning in the Outdoor Space are Carlito Santiago from Fallsburg CSD and Joshua Jennings from Ellenville CSD.
Inset Bottom: Jill Holland working with Emily Sheldon from Roscoe CSD.

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

Sullivan BOCES is on a mission to provide their students and staff with the tools to get healthy, and by partaking in Sullivan 180's "Empowering a Healthier Generation" challenge, they are right on track.

Jill Holland, Occupational Therapist at Sullivan BOCES, who coordinates the program at BOCES, says, "Their focus is on student and staff wellness."

Empowering a Healthier Generation from Sullivan 180 invests in today's children to ensure a healthier future for Sullivan County.

After receiving a grant from Sullivan 180, they got to work on Phase 1 of their Healthier

Generation projects to design and build an outdoor learning space for the students to learn and enjoy.

"We took an outdoor area of the campus and added a concrete base, and we painted the concrete base and our Career & Tech construction Program built on picnic tables and raised bed planters out of recycled wood," said Holland.

To increase the WiFi in the area, the IT department at BOCES boosted the signal so students who need to work on their laptops can do so in the the clean and open air of the Sullivan Catskills.

"Students and staff could go outside and have a quiet area to conduct lessons. During the COVID restrictions and social distancing efforts a lot of teachers brought their Chromebooks out to the area and

Empowering a Healthier Generation

held classes and used the space for mask breaks," said Holland.

Sullivan BOCES says Empowering a Healthier Generation Initiative will be rolled out in phases. Phase 1 is now completed. The staff and the student council will start to work on phases 2 and 3.

One of the projects will be developing a lounge for the staff," Holland says, "where they [the staff] can just kind of take a moment to breathe."

Holland says the students love the experience of working outside and being able to grow plants outdoors. She said it had become an additional learning tool that teachers have been able to use.

With flower beds outside, they have been able to plant and grow flowers for bees to pollinate and herbs for the students to smell and use.

"It just gives them an appreciation; it gives them some opportu-

nities to see outside of what their normal lives are like and experience those awesome things", said Holland.

The outside space has also been a collaborative effort with the students.

For Sullivan BOCES, the effort does not just stop at the outside area for the students; it follows them into the classrooms.

Several of the teachers and staff have been trained to provide movement in the classrooms or yoga in the classrooms, where they perform non-mat-based yoga, where the movements can be done from their chair or desk areas.

"The program teaches the students the tools they need so they can take that home with them. They may not have an opportunity with a yoga mat," said Holland.

The program also teaches how to help alleviate stress and anxiety by doing simple breathing exercises.

Holland says it's as "simple as putting your hand on your belly and filling it up with air and breathing out. They can do that anywhere; they can do it at home; they can do it on the school bus and on vacations. Along with a little visualization of going to a nice space, it becomes a safe space for them, during difficult times to stay calm."

In the future, Holland says she hopes this Empowering a Healthier Generation will help generate more student and staff interaction.

She added, "We can work together, our staff and students, to make our school even healthier and better. The students can take that home, show their parents, and show their friends, brothers, and sisters. Despite what your situation is, there are healthy alternatives. There are healthy options for you."



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BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

Preparing kids for a career in construction

Darryl Emmett, Construction Technology Teacher at the Sullivan BOCES Career & Tech Center, who started his new position in September 2021, says he comes from a long line of construction experience and hands-on training.

Born and raised in Sullivan County, Emmett attended Sullivan BOCES in the mid-90s as a junior high school student. He said after his two years, he was hired as a carpenter apprentice straight out of the program.

"I spent the last 25 years as a union carpenter foreman for local contractors around the Hudson Valley area," said Emmett.

After seeing an ad in the **Sullivan County Democrat** that a construction teacher was needed at Sullivan BOCES, Emmett jumped at the chance to return to BOCES and give back to the community that gave so much to him.

"I saw the need for young people in the trade industry, not only on a residential level but also on a commercial level, throughout construction," said Emmett.

He wants his students to be able to leave his program with the knowledge they will need to be successful in the construction industry.

Emmett said the recent housing boom has made the need for qualified construction workers so much greater.

"The [number of] projects going on right now are more than I've ever seen in my lifetime," said Emmett, who has worked on some

of the most significant projects in the Hudson Valley, including the Resorts World Catskills Casino.

The first thing learned at the construction tech program are safety and teamwork.

"Everybody's got to work together as a team," said Emmett.

Students are currently working on a shed, learning all aspects of construction on a smaller scale.

Working with the community building projects helps bring Sullivan BOCES students real-world experience and shows them how their skills can be used in the real world.

Some projects that Sullivan BOCES construction tech students have worked on include the new location of the WJFF Radio Catskill's studio in Liberty and New Hope Community in Loch Sheldrake.

"It's got to be a teachable moment we're not providing free labor. It's got to be something that kids are going to learn and want to learn," said Emmett.

And every moment can be a teachable one, from learning all about the materials they are going to use on a project to how to bid jobs, create estimates, and rate how many labor hours are needed in a project.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Top: Construction students with one of their shed projects.



Lower Left: Efraim Rivera from the Monticello CSD is getting serious about construction at Sullivan BOCES.

Lower Middle: Brandon Lohmann from the Sullivan West CSD puts down flooring.

Lower Right: Kyle Lyons from the Monticello CSD working on a wood frame.

Jared Barnum Bud from Tri-Valley Central School District says he never thought about a career in construction until he went to Sullivan BOCES.

After seeing what needed to be done, and the prospect of being able to join a union construction company after school and learn more about the trade, he was all in.

Brandon Lohmann from the Sullivan West Central School District said he grew up on a farm and was always building something around the barn and was already working in construction when he joined Sullivan BOCES.

"I know I can improve my skills and perfect them here," said Lohmann.

One of the things that Lohmann enjoys is framing homes, and he says he's eager to join the workforce after leaving Sullivan BOCES.

Lohmann said he takes pride in his work and recalls a story of building a shed that now stands in someone's backyard, and every time he drives by he points out that he had a hand in creating it.

Lohmann says that Sullivan BOCES has been great and is "a great learning environment, and we have an awesome teacher."

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Auto tech program prepares students to break into the field



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

At the Auto Tech program at the Sullivan BOCES Career & Technical Education Center, Bruce Gettel, one of the Auto Tech teachers, says the students learn just about everything they need to repair a car and start working in the field after they graduate.

The Auto Tech program is a two-year program, and students learn about repairing and replacing brakes, car suspensions, engine rebuilding, tire rotations, and more in a real shop environment.

When the students graduate from the program, they are also prepared with the knowledge to get a New York State Inspectors license and implement OSHA certification training.

Giving back to the community is what Sullivan BOCES strives to do, and the students at the auto tech do their part by helping out with repairs for those who are hurting financially. Furthermore, they bring much-needed help to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts, assisting with their trucks and cars.

During the height of the pandemic, as many classes went virtual, the auto tech class had no choice but to do the same.

While it might not have been ideal, the teachers would film demonstrations of what was cov-

ered in the books, and the students would work on projects at home.

Gettel said that while they were concerned with the students receiving the education during the height of the pandemic, he said the biggest concern was how they were doing and how their families were handling the situation.

"That was a tough time, and they were really good talking about it; they talked to us every day," said Gettel.

When the students leave the program, Bernard Lohmann, another Auto Tech teacher, says they try to instill the work ethic and what it means to work out in the field. Part of the program includes doing an internship at a local garage and auto dealership.

"Some kids are going to excel in automotive fields; some are going to do entry-level jobs, but it's about getting the kid to show up and willing to learn more to go farther in the field," said Lohmann.

Lohmann said that getting the student certificated will make them more of an ideal choice for local employers because it will take less time and money to train someone who is just starting.

Joshua Klaus from the Fallsburg Central School District says he has always been hands-on when working and was naturally drawn to the automotive field.

Left: Brodie Kipp from the Roscoe CSD hard at work at Sullivan BOCES.

Center: Joshua Klaus from Fallsburg CSD is reinstalling a tire at Sullivan BOCES.

Right: Andrew Dollard from the Monticello CSD is making sure everything is ready to go with his repair.

"Growing up, I used to help my dad fix things and thought it was really cool. So I wanted to pursue a career," said Klaus.

Brodie Kipp from Roscoe Central School District hopes to gain the skills in Sullivan BOCES to hit the ground running and work in an automotive shop when he graduates.

Andrew Dollard from Monticello Central School District says he also wants to obtain the skills needed to continue his career in the automotive field.

Both Kitt and Dollard are looking forward to becoming interns in the field to learn in order to expand their knowledge and continue learning about engines and how they can get them to perform better.

Jacob Harrington from the Monticello Central School District says he likes to do just about anything in the automotive field as this is his first time learning these things.

Harrington says he discovered oil changes while in the Boy Scouts and wanted to learn more. Harrington says he wants to pursue college in the future but also wants to learn a trade so he can have a job he can "fall back" on.

He hopes to one day own a repair shop with his friends.

Gettel says gender does not matter in the auto tech program as one of his top past students is a female who graduated 15 years ago and now has her own customized car shop in Florida with over 30 employees.

"They don't look at it as if it's just a guy thing," said Gettel.

Gettel went on to say they are also testing their Math, English, and Science skills while learning automotive repair. They do this by working on filling out job orders and keeping track of inventory.

Science is at the forefront when it comes to learning about the different measurements and types of fluids that go into the car and discover the real-world effect it could have on a car.

Donna Hemmer, Director of Communications for Sullivan BOCES, says, "The students at the Career & Tech Center are learning skills that will put them ahead. Regardless of going to college or to a trade school, our students are going to be further ahead than the average student who walks through the door. Our students already know the basic skills."



Building a Healthy Community, One Degree at a Time.

Sullivan 180 would like to thank Sullivan BOCES Healthier Generation Advisor for her hard-work on the Empowering a Healthier Generation program and continued dedication to promote health and wellness among students, staff, parents and communities!

Thank you, Jill Holland!



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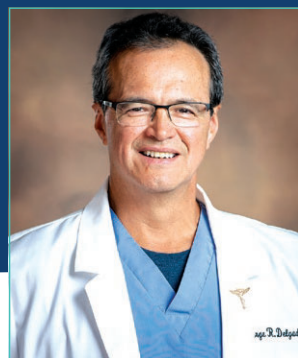


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