Abby Thomas, a senior Animal Science student at TST BOCES and Lansing High School has earned a Special Commendation Award from NYS Senator Pam Helming for her community service and commitment to FFA (Future Farmers of America). She has raised $6,000 for six schools in Tompkins County. This includes Ithaca, Lansing, Dryden, Groton, New Field and Trumansburg. Each school is given $1,000 toward their school lunch programs to provide students with food during the pandemic. When asked what inspired her to raise these funds Thomas replied, “I saw a real need for our school program (Lansing High School) because so many kids during the pandemic were requesting lunches to be brought to them at home. I teamed up with Chef Jay Dietershagen from CrossRoads Bar and Grill and a student from Groton named Addie Clore. Jay rode his bike over 3,000 miles to get sponsors, while Addie and I set up a Facebook page called Tompkins Farm Bureau.”

On the Facebook page, the pair created press releases, videos, and tracked Jay’s miles traveled. They also sent out reminders about donating to their GoFundMe page.

Food insecurity is a major issue in Tompkins County. According to Tompkins Weekly, “Food insecurity impacts 11.6% of adults and 13.3% of children in Tompkins County. Food insecure families need an additional $7 million to have enough food.” Thomas said after doing some research on the challenges kids are facing locally, with the help of Dietershagen and Clore, she plans to create another fundraiser for 2022. If you would like to donate, you can visit their Facebook page for more information.

Being a part of TST BOCES has led Thomas to think about the bigger picture of our food in America as well as the animals that provide it. Growing up, she worked on a 1,500 cow dairy farm in Lansing. She describes her experience, “I milked cows and showed them off every year at the New York State Fair. I also learned from my stepdad who works on the crop side of things, so he deals with a lot of the mechanics.” Thomas recently learned that she will be attending Alfred State College this fall for Veterinary Technology. Being a part of TST BOCES Animal Science class has helped Thomas make this choice for her future. “I love coming here for at least half the day and being able to do something that I really enjoy,” she said, “It is nice to see kids who are interested in the animal industry and want to come to learn about all the different related industries and jobs!” For more information on TST BOCES Programs, please visit tstboces.org or follow them on Facebook @tstboces.
FACILITIES DEPARTMENT’S FIRST EV SUMMIT LEADS THE CHARGE

It all started with a spark. The facilities team at TST BOCES discussed how they can further create a greener future through their continued commitment to sustainability. They discussed maintenance steps that can help with carbon emissions and burn less fuel, including various recycling and conservation efforts. Among the endeavors discussed, a conversation was initiated about electric vehicles.

Starting with personal transportation vehicles, TST developed a partnership with EV Connect to provide electric charging stations for staff in parking lots on campus. Following the resounding success of this EV (Electric Vehicle) initiative, they discussed other ways to expand efforts and help electrify component school districts.

With feedback from various regional districts, the facilities team put together the first EV Summit, as a resource for any district or organization looking to lower their carbon footprint through EV programs.

Held in January, this virtual conference included guest speakers from Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT), New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG), and TST Energy Management Services to discuss electric bus procurement, safety/training partnership opportunities, including ways to identify and secure funding through state and federal grants. Guests were encouraged to interact with speakers and ask questions throughout the event.

TST Transportation Specialist Donna Boyce, who acted as the Emcee, stressed that the overall purpose of the conference was “getting us all together, answering those questions, alleviating range anxiety and helping our districts through the process of creating a greener future for our community at large.”

Following the success and increased interest in this EV initiative, TST is planning to offer additional conferences and training opportunities focusing on facilities sustainability. For more information, please visit our website at www.tstboces.org/evsummit.
NEW VISIONS STUDENT SETS SIGHTS ON CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Lucy Farmer, an Ithaca High School Senior discusses her experience with the New Visions program and how this high school program led to a Cornell University acceptance letter.

Farmer began this journey into New Visions a little over a year ago. Her teacher Mrs. LeFever introduced Farmer to the program, thinking she could benefit from getting hands-on experience while combining her love for science and animals. New Visions Life Science is taught on Cornell University’s campus in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Farmer describes what it was like working in this environment, “I really got to see these animal-based careers in action at Cornell,” She said, “I loved working with the baby goats and on case studies especially!”

She also shared that she enjoyed the program’s approach to alternative learning. Her classes were less about sticking to a curriculum and more about how to solve real life challenges. Each New Visions student works with their instructor to design an experience that would include their career interests, such as applied scientific research, animal behavior, environmental engineering and more.

Students who want to attend New Visions programs come from high schools in Tompkins, Seneca and Tioga counties. Students that are eligible will participate during their senior year. Tuition is paid for by their home school district and books are provided by the program. There are three New Visions programs currently at TST BOCES that includes Life Sciences, Engineering, Health and Medical Sciences.

Through Farmer’s experience at New Visions, she discovered that Cornell University was where she wanted to spend the next four years. She expressed how her New Visions teacher helped her through this process, “Mrs. Kline has been really great and taught me a lot, especially when it came to applying to college. She talked to me about what I should look for in a school, thought about my long-term goals and wrote me recommendation letters! Everyone has been helpful in guiding me into thinking about not just what I want for this year or next, but for the rest of my life!”

Thanks to this program provided by TST BOCES, another student has found their path. Farmer will start college this fall as an Animal Science major and then plans on studying at Cornell’s College of Veterinary Medicine. When asked what advice she would give students looking at going into New Visions, Farmer states, “Just go for it! It is so worth it! This is a very different community than your home school and I mean that in the best way possible.” She explained, “New Visions is tailored to you as an individual. People here are really focused on you and what you are capable of!” To learn more about New Visions, visit www.tstboces.org/cte or follow them on Instagram @tst_careertech for more information.
SOUTH HILL STUDENTS COMMIT TO DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Ithaca City School District’s South Hill Elementary students recently completed a project relating to digital citizenship in partnership with TST BOCES’ Instructional Technology services.

Kelly Reitz, TST BOCES Instructional Specialist for Technology and Digital Fluency, worked with each of the first-grade teachers to co-teach three Common Sense Education lessons on digital citizenship, an important part of the NYS Computer Science and Digital Fluency standards.

“Learning about digital citizenship helps prepare students to take control of their digital lives,” said Reitz, who also mentioned the project’s support of emotional needs of students as well.

Through songs, scenarios and interactive games, the classes explored the following questions: How can we be safe, responsible and respectful online? Why is it important to listen to your feelings when using technology? How do you stay safe when visiting a website or app?

Students also learned about the six digital citizen characters, who taught students how to: use your arms online to balance your time; user your legs to stand up to bullies online; use your feet carefully when leaving tracks online; listen to your gut to stay safe online; use your head to ask questions about what you see online; and use your heart to be kind and respectful online.

The culmination of the digital citizenship unit was the creation of a music video accompanied by the song ‘Pause and Think Online.’ Each class created their own dance moves to remember each of the digital citizens and recorded their choreography.

The first-grade team at South Hill (Patti Buhr, Laurie Pattington and Chris Ruyack) each said that their students had great fun leveraging technology (Flipgrid, Peardeck and Seesaw) and music to create a music video that teaches students to be safe and respectful online.

Classes hosted a music video screening party with popcorn to celebrate their learning, and each student received a digital citizenship certificate.

To learn more about TST BOCES service offerings through the Regional School Success Department, visit tstboces.org/rss.
SOUTH SENECA INNOVATES THROUGH SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING TECHNIQUES, REGIONAL SCHOOL SUCCESS

South Seneca Elementary School recently saw success implementing social-emotional learning techniques after a professional development session with TST BOCES Instructional Specialist for Inclusive Education Teresa Heatherman.

During the session, Heatherman pointed out that breaks away from school can be tough seasons for students. For some, it could mean 12,960 minutes without heat or running water. For others, it could mean 216 hours without a kind word. And for some, it could mean nine days without regular meals or clean clothes.

South Seneca educators were moved by the presentation to act on SEL techniques to meet student needs. One teacher did a pre-vacation zone check with her students, looping in the school counselors. Another sent home holiday packets with calendars to help students countdown the days and still others sent home personalized worksheets with self-management strategies and calming techniques.

“I am thankful to TST BOCES and Teresa Heatherman for offering this professional development,” said South Seneca MTSS Coordinator Laura Rundell. “The presentation was so impactful, helping us to think about what time away from school and the holidays mean for some of our kids and how we can support them before and after break.”

For more information on Regional School Success professional learning opportunities, visit tstboces.org/rss. Don’t forget to follow @rsststboces on Twitter for tips and best practices.

A South Seneca educator implements zones of regulations for their class. Students take a piece of manila paper, fold in half twice, draw lines on the folds to create boxes and label each box the colors of the zones of regulation. Students respond with comments in the green and yellow about being happy and excited. Some comment in the blue about feeling sad.
SMITH SCHOOL TEACHER RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

National Board Certification is the most respected professional certification available in education. It was designed to develop, retain, and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate ongoing improvement in schools nationwide. In the state of New York, only about 1% of teachers have completed the NBCT process. Smith School Teacher of the Visually Impaired & Speech Pathologist Trish Peterson is one of them -- and she did it twice.

Trish Peterson was born in Pittsburgh, PA and went to Pennsylvania State University to become a teacher of the deaf/hearing impaired. Throughout her career, she has taught in Missouri, Maine, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Seattle, and New York.

Peterson started at TST BOCES in February 2007 as a speech therapist. When asked to be the Speech Assistive Technology member on the CAST team, she completed a graduate certificate program in Assistive Technology to bring the most recent evidence-based practice to the TST region. “I first learned about National Board certification when a colleague encouraged me to attend an informational meeting,” said Peterson. “I shared that I was certified in Special Ed K-12 but was employed at TST as a speech therapist.”

That is when Peterson was approached by Laura Havill, a National Board-Certified Instructional Coach at TST BOCES Exception Education Department. Havill shared with Peterson that she could apply for NBCT in Exceptional Education even though she was not currently employed as a full-time Special Education teacher. “I saw this as a wonderful opportunity to grow as a professional,” said Peterson.

As one of the facilitators for TST BOCES’ Candidate Support Cohort, Havill was instrumental in helping Peterson succeed. By sharing the reasons for the strategies used in the program and focusing on improving student outcomes, Havill successfully coached Peterson through the program.

While completing her first National Board certificate, Peterson worked as a speech therapist in Foundations, an Autism program that was just being introduced at TST. “It was a nice way to make sure the speech curriculum I was creating for a new program utilized current evidence-based best practices,” said Peterson.

The National Board believes that reflecting on current practice and focusing on evidence-based strategies is vital to growing as a professional. As part of the COSER cohort, candidates pursuing their own National Board certification meet on Saturdays to work on their submissions and receive feedback from each other as well as certified NBCT professionals.

Throughout this process, Havill guided meaningful discussions that both supported and challenged the class. Participants were encouraged to revise their work to be more concise and add more concrete examples of strategies used, students’ outcomes and how to change instruction to improve student success.

“Laura was helpful in the application process to receive the Shanker Grant to offset the cost of my original National Board components,” said Peterson. “I would tell any teacher considering National Board certification that the process is challenging but very rewarding.”
NYSUT supports the reflection inherent in National Board work through their ELT credits offered through Empire College. This meant that for each component Peterson completed, the process itself would earn her three graduate credits. By the time Peterson passed her original National Board certificate, she had earned 12 credits that benefited her salary for the rest of her career. “The professional growth that I felt had real financial benefits, too!” said Peterson.

TST had a vacancy for a teacher of the visually impaired and, although missing some credentials, Peterson knew she was perfect for the job. Shortly after submitting her NBCT components, Peterson learned that Dominican College offered an online program for certified teachers to add the coursework needed to add “visually impaired” to their teaching credentials. She applied and was accepted. This moment became one of the growth reflections that Peterson later recounted for her Maintenance of Certification (MOC).

The recertification process must be completed every five years to keep the National Board credential. Peterson is now an NBCT certified teacher in Exceptional Education Birth-Adult through December 2027.

“My work with the National Board gave me the confidence and written skill set to be successful in both the TVI graduate program and the written portion of the NY State TVI Content test required for certification,” said Peterson. “I am thoroughly enjoying my new position as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired.”

Currently, Peterson is taking graduate courses in Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment, which will be used as her next growth reflection. During the course, Peterson was asked to edit the final group project. Her colleagues and teachers shared that her writing on the discussion board was more professional and concise than their own. Peterson credits that success to her time with Havill. “That is a skill I learned during the revision process of my National Board submissions,” said Peterson.

That confidence is also what led her to apply for an adjunct faculty position teaching American Sign Language at Elmira College. Peterson now teaches ASL I in the Fall and ASL II in the Spring. “Between working with the visually impaired, including a deaf/blind child, and teaching ASL, my teaching career has definitely come full circle,” Peterson reflected.

Peterson has continued to grow as a student, an educator, and a leader throughout her time with the cohort. She is now looking forward to finishing her teaching career working with students that have a visual impairment throughout the TST BOCES region.
TST CTE STUDENTS PLACE AT REGIONAL AREA II SKILLSUSA COMPETITION

Career and Technical Education students recently placed at the Area II SkillsUSA competition held at SUNY Morrisville in February.

Digital Media student Liane Jackson competed in the Pin Design contest, where she created a design that was selected as the Area II SkillsUSA pint and t-shirt design for the competition.

Participants and results of the competition are as follows:

- Ari Hesler - Newfield - Cosmetology, Sr.
- Sean Roe - Newfield - Criminal Justice - Earned 2nd Place
- Kendal Collins - Lansing - Crime Scene Investigation - Earned 3rd Place
- Tim Ward - Dryden - Crime Scene Investigation - Earned 3rd Place
- Cosey Zavaski-Starks - Newfield - Crime Scene Investigation - Earned 3rd Place
- Aislinn Korb - Ithaca - Commercial Baking - Earned 1st Place
- Ava Reynolds - Newfield - Advertising Design
- Trisha Banner - Trumansburg - Photography - Earned 2nd Place
- Alex Blakely - Newfield - Television Video Production - Earned 1st Place
- Nora Hernandez - Newfield - Television Video Production - Earned 1st Place
- Max Olmstead - Newfield - Precision Heavy Equipment Operation
- Brennan Brockway - Groton - Diesel Equipment Technology - Earned 2nd Place
- Chase Wojtanik - Newfield - Welding - Earned 3rd Place
- Ty Evans - Candor - Auto Service Technology - Earned 3rd Place
- Emmalyn Ingalls - Dryden - Cosmetology, Jr.
- Liane Jackson - Newfield - Area 2 SkillsUSA Pin Design - Earned 1st Place
- Viktoriya Loyko - Ithaca - Job Demo A

UPCOMING ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Home Health Aide Training Program
Starting in Spring
Tues, Weds & Thurs 5:00pm – 9:00 p.m.

Defensive Driving 6-Hour Course
Saturday, April 23, 2022
9:00am to 3:30pm

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Spring Job Fair
Wednesday, April 20
11am-2pm at the Ithaca Commons
Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES shall continue its policy of providing educational opportunities for all students who wish to enroll in any course without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, political affiliation, sex, age, marital or veteran status, disability, religious practice, ethnic group, gender expression and identity, weight, or genetic predisposition. TST BOCES provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

For information regarding the nondiscrimination policy, contact:

David J. Parsons
Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services

555 Warren Road,
Ithaca, NY 14850
Phone: 607-257-1551