

## BOBCAT TALES

SPRING 2016

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ANNOUNCEMENTS 2-3

STUDENT  
HIGHLIGHT 4EDUCATIONAL  
NEWS 5RESIDENTIAL  
NEWS 6HEALTH CENTER  
NEWS 7STAFF PROFILE  
INTERVIEW 8HAPPENINGS  
AROUND CAMPUS 9-11Superintendent's Message

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

Every parent and caregiver wants his/her child to lead a happy and productive life. When we dream about a child's future, we hope they will be part of a community, have friends, live independently, and enjoy health and well-being.

We already know that the skills and behaviors children develop early in life lay a strong foundation for their adolescence and adulthood. For this reason, we need to continuously work to promote lifelong independence in our children. It's never too early to start thinking about your child's transition from school into an adult program, college or work.

It's important that we all help our students foster the independent skills they will need to be successful in their post-secondary experience. As spring approaches, I would challenge you to make a resolution to help your child build more independent skills. You can do this by asking yourself, "What aspects of my child's day do I assist with?" Are you assisting because your child is not capable of the skill or because it is easier for you?

Challenge your child to become more self-directed by allowing your child to make his/her own choices, when appropriate. Another way to think about this is that children deserve to have some sense of control over their environment.



**Let them make mistakes.** We want our children to grow into adults who can solve problems and make good choices. We also want to protect children from the painful lesson that mistakes can teach. But is that really the best for them? We all make mistakes and we learn from them. We need to let our children learn this critical skill necessary for independent living.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **NEW LOGO**



The New York State School For the Blind has developed a new logo. This logo will be displayed on apparel, our website, and other NYSSB official materials.

### **PBIS**

NYSSB has been recognizing staff who best embody and reflect the character qualities of the month established by the PBIS Committee. All staff members are asked to nominate a person to be considered for this monthly recognition. Our winners for January and February are:

January 2016: Character trait of the month—Availability. **Winners: Norm Liss and Sarah Liss**

**Norm** is a Recreation Therapist. He wears many hats at NYSSB: plans exciting and fun activities for our students; drives bus for day and evening activities; assists with P.E. swim. Norm is a fantastic staff member who is willing to substitute in any of our classrooms and works hard at whatever he is asked to be. Thank you for all you do Norm!

**Sarah** is a Child Care Aide. Sarah is always willing to help in any dorm she is needed. She knows all of our students.

February 2016: Character trait of the month-Deference. **Winners: Jamie Kahn and Diana Giglia**

**Jamie** is a Special Education Teacher. She always thinks of others thoughts and feelings. Jamie is considerate of others expertise and also always puts the needs of the students first.

**Diana** is a Child Care Aide. She always gives a friendly smile, never makes a rude comment, very agreeable. Diana is always friendly and she has never offended anyone. She thinks before she speaks.

### **IN-SCHOOL YOUTH CAREER COLLEGE & OCCUPATIONAL TRADES FAIR**

On April 13<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Pangrazio's class will be attending a Career, College & Occupational Trades Fair. There will be employers on site to provide a practical 20 minute presentation to students about what employers are looking for in employees. There will also be a traditional job fair employer set-up where students can speak to employers about their companies and types of employment.

Student will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from colleges and vocational training programs to receive information on post-secondary training options.

## **DINING IN THE DARK**

NYSSB is working in conjunction with our local Independent Living Center to host a new event called “Dining in the Dark”. We are inviting 50 local business owners and community members to join us for lunch on April 28th. Lunch will be provided in a darkened environment so our guests can see first-hand what it’s like to live with a disability. Some of our students will be participating on a discussion panel to explain to our guests their triumphs and struggles living with a disability. This collaboration is an effort to promote disability awareness within our community.

## **DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW YORK**

Disability Rights New York (DRNY) is the federally and state-authorized Protection & Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program (P&A/CAP) for persons with disabilities in New York. DRNY advocates for the civil and legal rights for New Yorkers with disabilities. New York residents with disabilities can contact DRNY for assistance with problems directly related to their disabilities and/or services. DRNY provides free legal and other advocacy services to advance and protect the rights of people with disabilities and to ensure they are free from abuse and neglect and unlawful discrimination.

With all of the changes and budget constraints in NYS and with OPWDD, some of our families have experienced difficulty with maintaining their Home and Community Based Waiver Services (HCBS) and Medicaid benefits. DRNY is interested in helping NYSSB families to determine if these services can be reinstated. Please contact DRNY at <http://www.drny.org/> or Intake Line: (518) 432-7861 to open a case to get DRNY advocating for your child’s services.

## **2016 PROM**

This years theme is “Enchantment Under the Sea.”

## **2016 NYSSB COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY**

This year’s commencement ceremony will take place on June 21st at 10:00 am in the auditorium.

## **ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION (APE)**

Swim Meet at the NYSSB Pool – **Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 9am**



# STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

On March 17, 2016 Thomas Buboltz was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) through Genesee Valley Educational Partnership (GVEP) BOCES at a ceremony held at Elba Central School, in Elba, New York. NTHS recognizes achievements made by students enrolled in career and technical courses. Thomas is currently enrolled in his first year of the Graphic Arts program at GVEP BOCES at the Batavia, NY campus.

In January, Thomas was nominated by his Graphic Arts teacher, Mr. Russo, to apply for admission into the honor society. Teachers nominate students based on attendance, grades, and their work ethic. In order to be considered for admission, students are asked to complete a paper portfolio which consists of a resume, an application, and letters of reference. Thomas compiled these items, and after submitting his portfolio to the committee for review, he was interviewed by a committee of peers and adults from BOCES in February, and selected to be a member of the NTHS. This is an honor that not all students enrolled in BOCES achieve. We are very proud of Thomas, and all his hard work and dedication as he learns and achieves in the Graphic Arts program.



# EDUCATIONAL NEWS

Room 114 is a busy classroom that works on a wide variety of skills across both academic and functional areas. The classroom team consists of Julie Zielonka, Rachael Ciociola, Chelsie Pangrazio, and Tricia Severino.

In this classroom, communication is a huge focus. Skills related to appropriately communicating wants and needs as well as responding strategies are worked on in whole group, small group, and individual lessons. Functional skills related to independent living are merged with early academics as students work on both Common Core learning standards and standards from the Expanded Core Curriculum.

Most recently, during English Language Arts (ELA), the classroom has been focusing on developing conversation skills. They have practiced orienting to the speaker, following a sequence in conversation, and responding at a rate that fits the purpose. During small group activities students have demonstrated these skills in many ways, including writing, speech, responding in social situations, and physically completing tasks.

The focus of math lessons in the classroom is developing foundational skills for the use of math in everyday life. In the last few months, students have demonstrated an understanding of math terms by completing sorting tasks and differentiating between opposites.

Responsibility is a large part of the daily activities within room 114. The students are all aware of their classroom routine and are beginning to complete some tasks independently. They have opportunities to earn pretend money for rule following and task completion. This money can be used to “buy” leisure time and activities. Everyone is learning that good citizens follow rules, participate in society, and work together.





## RESIDENTIAL NEWS

While the lack of snow put a damper on activities such as sledding and snow play, the students still had fun participating in activities such as Bingo, Boy Scouts, Scrapbook Club, Bowling and some students were able to do indoor fishing at the South-towns Walleye Association in Orchard Park. They had a great time! In addition, our students take pride in their dorms by participating in decorating their areas as well. Students are currently participating in a Bocce Tournament.



Spring promises to be a fun and busy time as well. Planting and working in the Greenhouse is set to begin; a fun and educational summer long activity in which the students get to eat the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor. In addition, our students will be participating in a 'pajama dance' at the Byron Fire Hall in May. The theme for this year's NYSSB Prom is "Under the Sea". It will be held on Monday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Hope to see you at the Prom!

# HEALTH CENTER NEWS

## Meningococcal Vaccine School Requirement

As of September 1, 2016, all public and private school students entering 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in New York State must be fully vaccinated against meningococcal disease in order to attend school.

The meningococcal vaccine protects against serious and sometimes deadly diseases such as meningitis (an infection of the lining of the brain and spinal cord) and sepsis (blood infections).

It is administered as a shot.

The meningococcal conjugate vaccine (also known as MenACWY or MCV4 vaccine with brand names Menactra and Menveo), is the preferred vaccine for preteens and teens. It helps protect them from the four most common types of meningococcal disease in the U.S. **\*\*\*This is the vaccine they will need in order to satisfy the school requirement before September.\*\*\***

Another meningococcal vaccine is also available for teens. It is the Serogroup B meningococcal vaccine (also known as MenB vaccine with the brand names of Bexsero and Trumenba). It helps protect against a different type of meningococcal disease, and it can be given to teens and young adults between the ages of 16 and 23 years. **This vaccine is not required for school entry and cannot be used to fulfill the school entrance requirement.**

### Before school this September 2016:

**One dose of meningococcal vaccine is required before 7<sup>th</sup> grade.** If your child had the first dose as a sixth grader (11 or 12 years old), then another dose is not required until 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**A total of two doses will be required before 12<sup>th</sup> grade.** Most students entering 12<sup>th</sup> grade (17 or 18 years old) got their first dose when they were younger and are now due for their second dose, or booster. This booster is needed because protection from the vaccine decreases over time.

The **only** teens that will not need a second dose before 12<sup>th</sup> grade are those who got their first dose on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

It is best to check with your child's doctor to see whether or not your child needs the vaccine. Students who are not up-to-date will not be allowed to attend school until they are vaccinated. If you have any questions regarding these new NYS regulations, please call the Health Center.

# STAFF PROFILE INTERVIEW

This section “shines the light” on a staff member in each publication of “Bobcat Tales,” in order to enrich our relationships with those who make up our NYSSB family. RHIANNON had the pleasure of interviewing Kurt Diesfeld, one of our Adapted Physical Education (APE) teachers for this issue.

**RHIANNON:** “Where do you live?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “Depew, New York.”

**RHIANNON:** “What are your favorite sports teams?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “The Buffalo Bills, and the Oregon Ducks.”

**RHIANNON:** “What is your favorite restaurant to go to?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “Londa’s Diner.....great breakfast.”

**RHIANNON:** “What do you order when you are there?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “The Lumberjack- 2 eggs, 2 pancakes, home fries, coffee, and 2 sausages (links, not patties).”

**RHIANNON:** “What do you like to do on vacations?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “I like to take time to relax, play sports, and coach.”

**RHIANNON:** “Do you have any pets?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “Yes, a pet cat named Bailey. We play all of the time!”

**RHIANNON:** “If you could visit one place in the world, where would it be?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “I would love to go to Europe and see all of the historical pieces there.”

**RHIANNON:** “Is your ice cream in a cone or a dish?” “Why?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “It is in a Ben and Jerry’s cup because it is cleaner than a cone.”

**RHIANNON:** “What do you like best about working at NYSSB?”

**Mr. Diesfeld:** “The staff and students make it such a friendly atmosphere!”



RHIANNON AND MR. DIESFELD



# HAPPENINGS AROUND CAMPUS





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2016 BOWLING TOURNAMENT AT MANCUSO LANES

