

Southern Tier



Steps to Success!

For Students with Disabilities

**Volume III,
Issue I**

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**We've
moved!**

**Alternate formats available
upon request**

Questions or comments:

**Contact Debra Carson at
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VESID's Eligibility Criteria

- * Individual must have a permanent, documented disability
- * The disability must pose an impediment to employment
- * Individual must require services to successfully enter and maintain employment
- * Individual must be able to benefit from services

The State Education Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, gender, genetic predisposition or carrier status, or sexual orientation in its recruitment, educational programs, services and activities.

GST BOCES Hosts Mentoring Event



Students received certificates of participation in DMD

On Wednesday, October 22nd, 17 students from GST BOCES participated in Chemung County's first Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) event. DMD provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to be mentored, or to job shadow in career areas of interest to them.

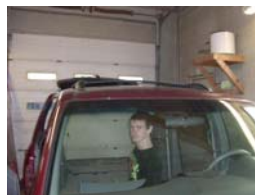
The event began with a kick-off breakfast at GST BOCES, sponsored by the Human Resource Association of the Twin Tiers. The keynote speaker was Diane Marshall, MTP Coordinator for GST BOCES. Following the breakfast, students went to one of five businesses or locations; GST BOCES Maintenance Department, United Detailing, Arby's, City Zoo Pet Store, and the YWCA Child Care Center.

The student "mentees" observed and/or participated in daily activities of the business. All of the students enjoyed the experience very much, and there was a great deal of excitement in the air upon their return to school in the afternoon.

The experience was equally rewarding for the mentors. Judith from the YWCA Child Care Center stated, "It was a great experience for the staff and the mentees. The mentees were very accommodating with the children." Sandra from Arby's Restaurant stated, "The students were very inquisitive about the duties of an employee who prepares for opening in the morning. They received hands-on experience which they really enjoyed. When it was time to wrap up their mentoring experience, they were not ready to leave. They really enjoyed themselves and I enjoyed them."



Mentees at The City Zoo Pet Store



Mentees at United Detailing enjoy a variety of tasks

Disability Mentoring Day came to the nine-county Southern Tier area in 2006, when a committee of government and non-profit agency employees in the Broome and Tioga County areas decided to plan a DMD event in Binghamton. The event continues there on an annual basis. This year's Chemung County event was the first step toward expanding the number of activities across the Southern Tier in 2009, giving more individuals with disabilities the opportunity to experience a career of interest to them.

Special thanks to Debra Carson, Regional Marketing Representative, NYS VESID, and the GST BOCES committee of teachers and job coaches, Kathy Loven, Lisa Bryant, Russ Tubbs, Judy Mather, and Brenda DuVall for planning a successful event!



Mentees at the YWCA Child Care Center

"...a well received experience for the Mentees (students) to participate in a career exploration activity that aided in directing their future career. From this experience we are willing to offer summer employment to students."

*Sondra & Sheila
The City Zoo Pet Store*

Southern Tier Employers Receive Recognition



Each year, NYS VESID recognizes employers for their efforts to hire and/or accommodate individuals with disabilities. The Southern Tier VESID office gave out 25 employer awards at a number of events during the month of October, in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The award winners were:

Beechtree Care Center, Ithaca
Burger King, Endwell
Cornell University, Ithaca
CVS Pharmacy, Cooperstown
Glen Mountain Market, Watkins Glen
Holiday Inn, Ithaca
Howard Johnson, Norwich
KFC/Taco Bell, Norwich
Modern Marketing Concepts, Binghamton
Owego Associates—Holiday Inn Express, Owego
Panera Bread, Elmira
Rynone Manufacturing, Sayre, PA
Security Mutual Life Insurance of New York, Binghamton
Sodexo at Binghamton University
Southern Tier Veterinary Associates—Valley Animal Hospital, Vestal
Steuben County Sheriff's Department, Bath
Taylor Rental, Vestal
The Star Group, Inc., Whitney Point
Tioga Farm & Home, Inc., Owego
Tioga County Personnel Department, Ithaca
United Health Services, Johnson City
USA Custom Pad, Sidney
Wal-Mart Supercenter, Horseheads
Woodland Manor/Emeritus Corporation, Vestal
YMCA, Norwich

Congratulations to our employers!

Did you know?

From iPods to cell phones, ear buds are suddenly sprouting up all over. Parents have long known that loud noises can harm their child's hearing. But the often overlooked part of the equation is duration: the length of time a child is exposed to loudness is just as important.

One study at the Oregon Health and Science Tinnitus clinic showed that 16 % of patients 6 to 19 years old had early signs of noise-induced hearing loss. Researchers have found that when people play an MP3 player at 60 % of its potential volume, they can listen safely for an hour with headphones. "Dangerous Decibels" is a public health campaign designed to reduce the incidence of hearing loss in school-aged children. Check out their website at www.dangerousdecibels.org for more information.

From www.cincinnatichildrens.org

Accommodation Ideas

Each year in September, one week is designated as Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Week. Below are examples of reasonable accommodations for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Interpreter services would also be an appropriate accommodation for any of these situations.

To access information from videotapes, television broadcasts, or webcasts

- Captioning
- Providing a script

For group communication

- Assistive listening devices
- Communication Access Realtime Translation Services
- Computer-assisted note taking equipment

For individual communication

- Writing messages with paper and pen
- Inter-office e-mail
- Basic sign language instruction for coworkers/fellow students

From the Searchable On-line Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at www.jan.wvu.edu

BT BOCES Hosts Family Fun Night!

Article by Don Sbarra, Principal Communications Coordinator
Broome-Tioga BOCES

The first-ever "Family Fun Night" at Broome-Tioga BOCES was a huge success, attracting more than 300 people interested in learning about special education offerings available in our community. Set in a carnival-like atmosphere replete with



games, refreshments, and attractions such as Bo Bo the Clown and radio personality Louie G, the event featured 18 community agencies providing a range of services, including supported employment, counseling, recreational programs, higher education and respite care.

Among the 40 volunteers needed to ensure the event's success were BOCES staff members, community residents and students from our Criminal Justice, Skills USA and high school Oak Tree programs.

"BOCES' Family Fun Night exceeded my expectations," said Donna Cupina, of Sheltered Workshop, Inc. "I met and talked with numerous families searching for services and they commented that having this be in a "fun" format rather than a lecture format made them feel more at ease approaching vendors they really wanted to talk to. My agency looks forward to participating again."

The free event was co-sponsored by BOCES, NBT Bank, United Health Services and the National Disability Awareness Month Planning Committee.

"It really was a classic example of community and school collaboration, which resulted in good things for our students and families," said Maggie Kosik, Special Education director at BOCES.



Theresa Fiacco from VESID and Jill LaVuoio from Community Options were among those providing information to families



Southern Tier VESID Staff Corner..

Diana Meyler joined the Binghamton VESID office in July as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Diana previously interned at the Syracuse District Office. She completed her Master's in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling in May of 2008. She has a Broome County general caseload as well as covering the Chenango Valley, Chenango Forks, and Johnson City school districts. Welcome Diana!

Bridget Flannery joined the Binghamton VESID office as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Intern in September. She covers Broome and Tioga County cases under the supervision of Sue Spencer-Kellman. Bridget expects to complete her Master's in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling in December 2008. Welcome Bridget!

Check out our website at www.vesid.nysed.gov/southerntier