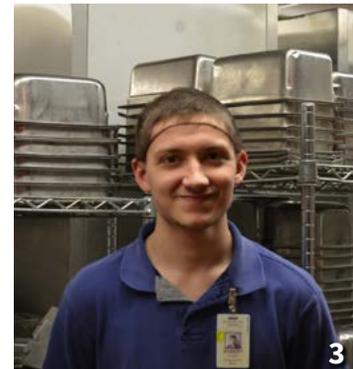


# Exceptional Education

*Programs and Services*

## List of Events:

- 5/19 E1B Prom
- 6/6 Hearing Awards Banquet
- 6/12 Special Education Graduation
- 6/13 - 6/22 Regents Exams
- 6/21 Alternative Education Graduation
- 7/5 First Student Day for Extended School Year Program
- 8/15 Last Student Day for Extended School Year Program



1. Students from Northtowns Academy are rewarded for good behavior, see page 4.
2. Bryanna Karn creates her first client piece, see page 4.
3. Robert Snyder is this year's featured alumnus, see page 7.
4. Cindy Angelo works with a student in her classroom, see page 5.

# Congratulations Graduates!

Exceptional Education would like to congratulate all of the students who will be graduating in the coming weeks. Approximately 50 students will graduate from the various Erie 1 BOCES Special Education and Alternative Education programs. The following three graduates offer insight into the Class of 2017's journey and the promise ahead.

## Finding a Career Path

Noah Fuller-Delmont has set himself up for a career in the automotive industry even before he graduates from high school. As a student at the Erie 1 BOCES Maryvale Work Readiness program, he takes traditional academic courses for part of the day, then attends the Auto Technician program at Potter Career & Technical Center.

"I like the program because it relates to something I'll be doing after I leave," says Noah.

Noah, who is from Lackawanna, enjoys the Work Readiness program at Maryvale saying that the pace is simpler and the teachers make it conducive to academic success.

"Noah is in my economics course and has had the top grade in this class all year," said Jill Siradas, Noah's teacher. "He is very outgoing and loves to tell jokes. Noah enjoys sharing his ideas with the class and will often be the first to participate. Noah always includes others when in study hall, asking them if they would like to be a part of whatever is going on."

Noah has excelled. He was inducted into the National Technical Honor Society this spring and also earned three Automobile Service Excellence certifications, which will help to bolster his resume when applying for jobs. Noah hopes to have a career as a diesel mechanic or work on semi-trailers.

Overall, Noah's greatest takeaway from his time, "[The program] gave me a start with what I wanted to do with my life."



NOAH FULLER DELMONT

## A Transformative Experience

Kayla Barrett, of Lancaster, admits she was too caught up in high school drama when she started at Northtowns Academy.

The staff at Northtowns cannot believe the transformation she has made in three years.

As Kayla prepares to graduate from the Alternative Learning Program (ALP), Rebecca A. Chirico-Hager describes her as "very contentious, responsible, sweet and determined." No longer consumed by drama, Kayla recognizes the importance of academics and feels that the small class sizes at Northtowns, where teachers are able to work more one-on-one with students, are a factor in her success.

"ALP made me grow up and realize that my education comes first." Kayla said about the Alternative Learning Program.

Kayla also credits the schools guidance department, especially Dawn Picard and Chirico-Hager, with helping her onto the right track.

"Miss Picard is tough but she really cares. She's pushed me to do better. Miss Becky too. They have given me a lot of advice and guidance," Kayla said.

The admiration is mutual.

"She has become an amazing, mature, young leader who has really set the bar high. She really cares academically and has worked very hard to be on the honor roll," says Picard.

After three years at Northtowns, Kayla plans to attend Erie 1 BOCES Workforce Development and have a career as a nurse. After getting her feet wet as a Licensed Practical Nurse, she hopes to eventually enroll in a Registered Nursing program.



KAYLA BARRETT

See page 8 for Lorenzo Earthman's story.

# Health and Wellness is a Focus at Northtowns

High school can be a trying time for all and especially difficult for young womens' self-esteem. Every year, the young women at Northtowns Academy have a two-part health and wellness day, put on by physical education teacher Mary Tomczak. The program intends to build up self-esteem and teach the girls good health and wellness habits.

Part one involves a field trip to the BAC for Women on Colvin Boulevard. The trip is open to all girls in grades nine through 12 at Northtowns Academy. Tomczak says that one of the standards for the physical education curriculum is to acclimate students to community resources. She feels that the BAC for Women is a good place for the students to visit, as it is a supportive environment whose membership is entirely women and all of their staff are women. This year, over half of the females attending Northtowns Academy signed up for the visit.

Before the trip, Tomczak works with the students on gym etiquette as well as appropriate clothing for the gym. While at the BAC for Women, the girls take part in two different sessions. Tomczak tries to vary the first session so that the students who have attended in past years are exposed to something different each time. This year, the first session was split, the girls did a half hour of spinning and then were taught proper weight lifting techniques for the second part of the session. Tomczak says that the trip allows students to experience different ways to stay healthy and use equipment that school gyms do not have. The second session is always yoga as it promotes both physical and mental wellness.

After the trip, the girls return to Northtowns where they have lunch together and are able to get to know one another better. In the months leading up to the trip, Tomczak asks her co-workers at Northtowns to donate health, beauty and personal care items that the girls might need, everything from socks to deodorant and journals, so that she can put together a basket raffle for the girls. All items focus on some aspect of the girls' well-being, be it mental or physical. Tomczak was so overwhelmed by the staff's generosity this year because every girl who attended received a gift bag, in addition to the basket raffle.

Part two of the day comes in May, focusing on team building activities. The day starts in the gym at Northtowns where girls have to problem-solve as a team to get around the gym, while not touching the floor, in an activity called "Electric River." After the gym portion, the girls return to the classroom and are broken into teams. Each team is given a bag of puzzle pieces and have to work together to solve the puzzle. Finally, each girl is given a large white puzzle piece to decorate with her name and her goals. The puzzle pieces will fit together to create a big "Northtowns puzzle," before each girl has her piece returned to her at graduation. Tomczak expects to have all female Northtowns students participate in part two this year.



*Mikaylah Hart and Nahjea Darby learn proper usage of machines at the BAC for Women.*

"I want them to learn to accept who they are," says Tomczak. "It's all about acceptance. I want them to accept themselves and others even if they felt there were too many differences previously."



Northtowns "Student VIPs" at the showing of "Hidden Figures."

## Rewarding Positive Behavior at Northtowns

Students at Northtowns Academy are learning that positive behavior pays off. A new program provides quarterly incentives to students who have outstanding attendance, character and grades.

Last year, Northtowns began a program to promote positive behavioral interventions and instituted monthly enrichment activities. This year, they decided to take it one step further and reward students for their all-around good nature. In the second quarter, 36 students were able to go to a free, private screening of the film "Hidden Figures" as a reward for being a Northtowns "Student VIP." The film was also educational as it told the story of three African-American women who were the brains behind the launch of astronaut John Glenn into space.

Each celebration will be a bit different but all activities will reward students for maintaining good attendance, grades and good character.

## MiddleTech Academy

The Erie 1 BOCES Learning Center is welcoming a new program next year, MiddleTech Academy. The MiddleTech Academy is open to academically or socially at-risk students in seventh and eighth grade. The full day program is project-based, discovery learning, while still being aligned to NYS Assessments and Common Core. There are a number of student supports for the program including a social worker, school counselor, and special education consultant teacher on staff in a positive, supportive environment.

The Academy focuses on character education, which provides mentoring experiences and a student ambassador program. Students still take courses in specialty areas including physical education, art and music and will have regularly scheduled visits to the Potter Career & Technical Center. For more information please visit [e1b.org](http://e1b.org) or contact Kristen Marchiole at [kmarchiole@e1b.org](mailto:kmarchiole@e1b.org).

## Teen Artist Starts a Client Portfolio

When the floor-to-ceiling mirrors were finally removed from the main reception area of Erie 1 BOCES on Harlem Road in West Seneca, the space transformed from 1970 to 2017. However, the remaining walls stood barren. Staff at BOCES forged ahead with optimism, calling upon a talented Hamburg teen to tackle a particularly tricky project.



Bryanna Karn shows off her artwork at BOCES.

"As a regional hub for educators, thousands of people visit this building each year," said Lynn Fusco, district superintendent of Erie 1 BOCES. "We knew the art in this two-story space would need to align with our brand."

Bryanna Karn, a teenager from Hamburg who is enrolled in the Alternative Learning Program at Erie 1 BOCES Northtowns Academy, answered the call to help after being approached by her art teacher.

"When Mrs. Amico asked me if I would be interested in the project, I gladly accepted the offer," said Bryanna. "Although, I was a little intimidated because of the fact it was my first-ever commission piece."

Nancy Amico, Bryanna's art teacher, organized a meeting between Bryanna and BOCES' communications office. From that meeting, Bryanna learned about her first client's requirements including dimension and color. The rest was in her hands.

"It was always a dream of mine to be able to do a piece of art for someone... I learned so much from this experience," said Bryanna. "I feel very proud of what I have accomplished."

In early March, when a lift became available to reach the two-story wall, Bryanna's three canvases were hung. Later that month, at a reception with her family, Bryanna explained her artwork.

"My piece is considered a triptych piece because it is composed of three large stretched canvases arranged to illustrate the sequence of falling water." Bryanna drew her inspiration from Georgia O'Keeffe and detailed which O'Keeffe paintings inspired her sequence.

"Bryanna rose to the challenge and the result is stunning," said Fusco. "She is welcome to visit her artwork any time - but we're keeping it."

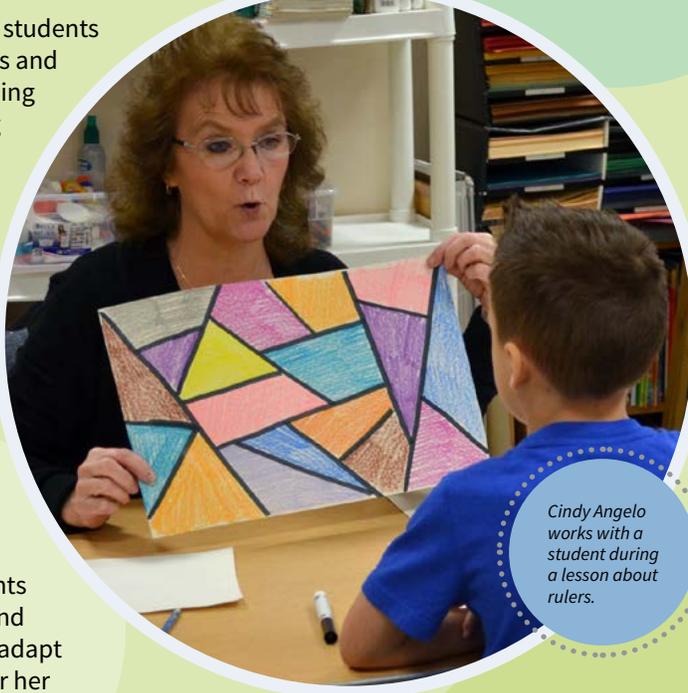
# Meet Cindy Angelo

After completing her student teaching in an Erie 1 BOCES 6-1-1 special education class, Cindy Angelo never left, having been a special education teacher for Erie 1 BOCES for 23 years. Each year she teaches a group of six students in grades K-2. Currently based at Akron Elementary, Angelo began teaching as a substitute for Erie 1 BOCES in Hamburg. Her placements have also included Amherst and Williamsville, including Forest Elementary for 13 years.

Angelo works mainly with students with behavioral challenges and says that the most rewarding part of her job is watching her students grow academically, socially and emotionally.

Angelo tries to incorporate fun into the curriculum, including in a recent lesson about rulers, showing her students how to use a ruler to make a drawing of a “stained-glass window.” She also says that flexibility is key when working with students in a range of age groups and capabilities. Angelo must adapt lessons to be pertinent for her second graders as well as her kindergarteners, while also taking into account the students emotional needs. Angelo tries to give each student as much individualized attention as possible, to ensure that they are working towards achieving their goals.

Even after 23 years, Angelo credits where she is today to the original student teaching experience at BOCES, saying, “[My supervising teacher] taught me everything I know.”



*Cindy Angelo works with a student during a lesson about rulers.*

## Extended School Year Program

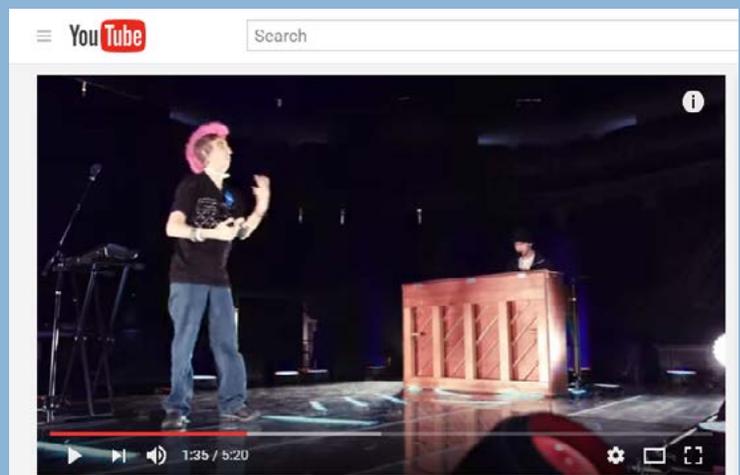
As a reminder, Erie 1 BOCES extended school year program begins on July 5 for students and runs through August 15. The program runs six weeks and is a full-day program intended to ward off significant regression some students face in the summer months.

The extended educational time allows students to retain and build upon their skills. Throughout the program, students work on all school subjects and are in classes, or strands, specifically suited to each student’s needs and learning goals. Students are also able to attend educational field trips that relate to what they are learning in the classroom.

Attendee’s families with questions may contact Carmen Tripi at (716) 821-7372.

## A Wish Granted

Anderson Pleasant-Smith, a Williamsville East High School student who receives interpreter services from Erie 1 BOCES, recently had a wish granted by Make-A-Wish. He was able to sign the song “Ode to Sleep” at a sound check for Twenty One Pilots. A video of the wish can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQ\\_ETg-wAR0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQ_ETg-wAR0).



# STAR Awards

Erie 1 BOCES held the annual Steps to Achieving Real Success (STARS) recognition ceremony for students across the Special Education division on Tuesday, May 9. STARS is an annual awards program where teachers, classroom staff and therapists nominate one student from their classroom to receive this honor. The awards ceremony is a collaborative effort as students from the Maryvale Work Readiness Program created the invitations and a number of Erie 1 BOCES classrooms provided the refreshments.

In all, 24 students from 14 districts were recognized this year for their success.

This year's award recipients were: Jacob Afanador, Frontier; Nathan Apotosky, Lorenzo Earthman, Abby Quinn, and Brilynn Smith, Lackawanna; Michael Backes, and Jake Pannullo, Lancaster; Dana Benz, Rhiannon Muggleton, and Hollee Stehle, Maryvale; Omarion Frank, and Jordan Hicks, Cleveland Hill; Benjamin Franz, Orchard Park; Kristoffer Iwanitzki, Hamburg; Kathryn Kelly, North Tonawanda; Adam Krauss, Frontier; Hunter Lorenzo, Williamsville; Connor McQueen, Depew; Patrick Murphy, West Seneca; Jose Neyra, Grand Island; MacKenzie Sceusa, Amherst; James Sheehan, and James Virella-LaBelle, Kenmore.



Hollie Stehle of Maryvale poses with her family.



Nathan Apotosky and his mother after the ceremony.



Lorenzo Earthman and his father are all smiles after the awards.



Jordan Hicks and family pose outside of the Maryvale auditorium.



John Pope stands with award winner Benjamin Franz.



Pamela Carland presents the award for Michael Backes.

# James Sheridan Named EXCEL Winner

James “Jimmy” Sheridan, of Erie 1 BOCES’ Maryvale Work Readiness Program, has been named this year’s EXCEL Award winner. The EXCEL Award is given by Erie 1 BOCES Board of Education to a student with outstanding achievements in the Exceptional Education program. Jimmy has been at Maryvale for three years and will graduate this year with his high school diploma, a goal of his since arriving at the program.

Jimmy, a Ken-Ton native, is a student of Marie Szabla, who speaks highly of him, his wonderful sense of humor and talent for drawing. Szabla also credits Jimmy’s hard working nature as a reason for his success.

Jimmy says that he enjoys the program at Maryvale because it is calmer and more centered than his old high school, which better meets his needs and learning style.

Jimmy is also a student with the Kenton Career & Technical Center’s Building Trades program. He took part in building a tiny house from scratch, an experience that left a lasting impact on him.

“It was cool to start from nothing and go through the whole process of building a house from scratch. I’ve learned a lot of skills that will help me in my future,” said Jimmy.



2017 EXCEL Award recipient is James Sheridan.

# Robert Snyder Seeing Success

Robert Snyder is this year’s Special Education featured alumni. Robert is an alumnus of Western New York Project SEARCH Collaborative. Western New York Project SEARCH Collaborative is a business-led partnership which offers a school-to-work program alternative for students with disabilities who are in their last year of high school. The program is provided by Beechwood Continuing Care in conjunction with Erie 1 BOCES, Aspire of WNY and The Summit Center.

Robert currently works in Dining Services at Beechwood Homes. In his favorite role, Robert delivers the daily grocery orders to the various “homes” at Beechwood. He takes great pride in making sure that each home gets the items they ordered in a timely fashion.

“The people at Beechwood are supportive and helpful,” Robert said of his favorite thing about working at Beechwood.

Robert says that Project SEARCH has been an important component to his success in the role. Project SEARCH is a transition program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school. The program features one-year placements at Beechwood Continuing Care, where students between the ages of 18 and 21 have the opportunity to test their strengths and grow more independent.

Being able to intern at Beechwood allowed Robert to learn the role in a supportive environment with an established program and encouraging teacher before he was hired on as permanent staff. Robert began in the supply clerk department with Project SEARCH before moving to dining services where he has stayed ever since.

“When I see Robbie continuing to work at Beechwood, it reassures me that we are all working well as a team to ensure our students leave with the tools for an amazing life ahead,” said Erin Richeal, teacher of the Project SEARCH program.



Robert Snyder in the kitchen at Beechwood Homes.

# Determination is Key for this Graduate

Lorenzo Earthman loves a challenge. This is just one of the many qualities that make him so well liked at Frontier High School.

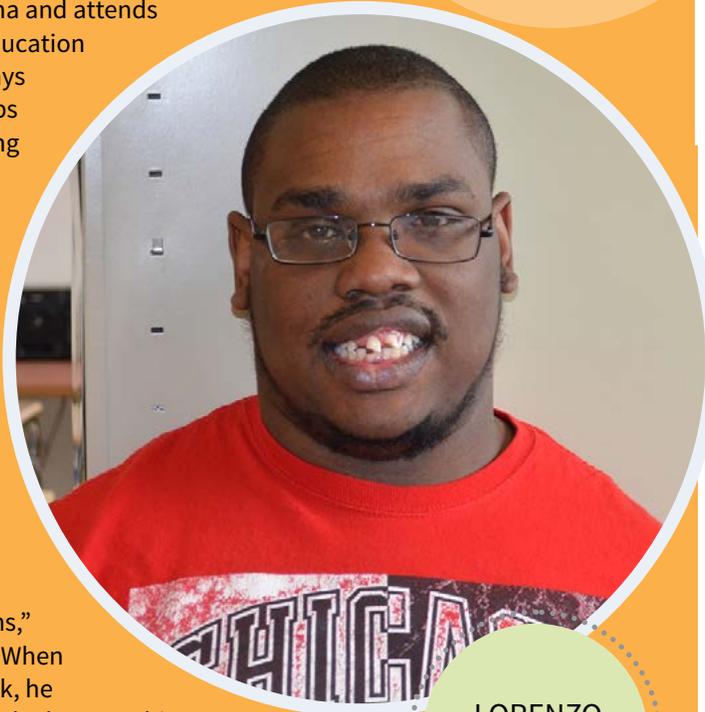
Lorenzo is from Lackawanna and attends an Erie 1 BOCES Special Education class at Frontier. He is always the first to volunteer for jobs around the school according to his teacher, Alma Marranca-Ceccarelli. One of his favorite activities is working in the school bookstore with Marrcana-Ceccarelli. Always determined, Lorenzo taught himself how to carry a case of water with his wheelchair, so that he would not have to ask for help with it.

“Creative problem solving is one of Lorenzo’s strengths,” says Marrcana-Ceccarelli. “When encountering a difficult task, he typically does not ask for help, but uses his ingenuity to figure out how to perform the job on his own.”

In addition to work in the bookstore, Lorenzo helps out in the kitchen, works in the cafeteria and this year had an internship with Goodwill Industries. He loves problem solving to figure out the best way to complete a task.

Activity is another major priority for Lorenzo. Lorenzo is determined to be able to walk across the stage at graduation and he has worked tirelessly to achieve that goal. He makes sure that he goes on the treadmill for at least 10 minutes daily and is constantly setting new goals for himself. Additionally, he is a wonderful badminton and basketball player.

As Lorenzo crosses the stage at the Erie 1 BOCES graduation, he will know that he has the support of everyone back at Frontier High School.



LORENZO EARTHMAN

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