

Education

BOCES students participate in YESS!

Students from the Dutchess BOCES Career and Technical Institute participated in an international youth empowerment and sustainability summit (YESS!) February 6-8 at the Ashokan Center in Ulster County.

The YESS! Summit, sponsored by youngvoicesfortheplanet.com, Woodstock Day School and the Ashokan Center, featured youth activists, a United Nations advisor, environmental experts, and an Ivy League professor.

"This experience was way outside of the comfort zone of my students," said CTI teacher Shawn Prater-Lee. "It was a subject matter with which they don't regularly interact and in a setting that challenged them in many ways. They produced an action plan to undertake on their return to school. I'm proud of them."

The summit was designed to encourage and empower young people to change their lives and their communities by working toward climate resilience. Middle school through college age students, some from Sweden and England, were taught how to develop solutions-based thinking and civic engagement skills.

The students' plan is to initiate a full review of recycling efforts at CTI and then to design a plan of action to improve

upon efforts that are already underway.

"In the course of a typical school day in most of our students' lives, they interact with people and in places that are familiar and somewhat routine," said BOCES Deputy Superintendent Cora Stempel. "This event afforded our students the opportunity to spend three days with students from more than a dozen schools. They heard from internationally recognized climate change experts, one of whom spoke to them directly from the Vatican, and from other high school students who are already activists making a difference in their communities."

Economist Dr. Jeffery Sachs, an advisor to the United Nations and a professor at Columbia University, joined the YESS! Summit via Skype from the Vatican. He and other top world economists were at the Vatican for a conference. The discussions supported the ideas that it is proper to put the planet first and people first when planning the future.

For student Breelyn Miles, the experience was much more than she expected. Initially, she decided to attend to enjoy a trip.

"Once there, I learned a lot about climate change and what needs to be done to reverse its effects," said Miles. "I got to talk to people I would have never had met



Left to right: Kenya Jenkins, Talisa Muniz, Dutchess BOCES teacher Shawn Prater-Lee, Ashley Santiago, Breelyn Miles at the YESS! Summit at the Ashokan Center.

-Courtesy photo

otherwise, even some girls from England and Hudson. I'm excited to be back and I'm looking forward to working on our project."

Organizers combined rich learning opportunities and social gatherings,

including square dancing, art and performances. "This made for an unforgettable three days that I'm sure our students will remember for years to come," said Stempel.

WJHS basketball game raises more than \$1,000 for Council on Addiction Prevention and Education

The Council on Addiction Prevention and Education (CAPE) of Dutchess County announces the donation of over \$1,000 toward its' mission. The Council provides services and education that promote the prevention of and recovery from substance use disorder (addiction). Wappingers Junior High School's Physical Education Department selected CAPE as the beneficiary of the 4th Annual Staff vs. Students Basketball Game Fundraiser. This initiative was led by Robert Lynch and Brandon Opitz of the PE Department. CAPE Community Educator Crissy Groenewegen and Prevention Counselor Jess Sirianni represented their organization at the game on Thursday, February 20.

Students from both the boys and the girls WJHS basketball teams faced off

against some of the school's favorite teachers, with over 500 people in attendance. In the end, the teachers held on to their undefeated streak for yet another year. Funds from ticket sales and concession were collected for CAPE. Crissy and Jessica set up an informational table with literature about CAPE resources and passed out over 1,300 giveaways to all who attended—including t-shirts, lip balm, earbuds, reusable shopping bags, bracelets, fleece vests, baseball hats, sunglasses, and phone popsockets. All in all, the event was a great success! CAPE is extremely appreciative of the WJHS PE Department's recognition of their mission and for the donated funds that will help promote health and wellness in our community.



Pictured, from left, are Terrence Thompson, WJHS Principal; Mellisa Thomas, Assistant Principal; Crissy Groenewegen, CAPE Community Educator; Brandon Opitz, Physical Education teacher, and Robert Lynch, Physical Education teacher.

-Courtesy photo

Mount transitions to online classes through the end of the semester

The Mount Saint Mary College Board of Trustees and Mount president Dr. Jason N. Adsit announced on Friday, March 20 that the college will continue hosting classes online for the rest of the semester due to concerns surrounding to the

COVID-19 pandemic.

Residence halls will remain closed for the remainder of the semester. The college's Commencement ceremony, originally scheduled for May 16, will be delayed.

All spring semester events and college sponsored trips are canceled or postponed. In addition, the Skyline Conference recently canceled spring sports for the 2020 season.

Initially, students, faculty, and staff

were scheduled to return on March 29, with classes resuming March 30.

For more information, visit www.msmc.edu.