

Benefits planning help is available

The Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL) staff is available to give you information on work incentives, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other information you may want related to benefits planning.

- Trained advocates help you understand and apply for public assistance, food stamps, assistive technology, and housing
- Do you want to work but are worried that you may lose your benefits? RCIL can help.
- Would you like to work without losing your Medicaid benefits? The Medicaid Buy-In Program for working people with disabilities provides the ability to keep your health care coverage.
- Earned Income Tax Credit helps some people reduce the amount of federal tax they owe.

For more information, contact RCIL is located at

347 West Main Street
Amsterdam, NY 12010
(518) 842-3561

No LIMITS!

Entering the work world? Come to the Transition Service Fair

Are you a student planning to get a job, work with a job coach, or use community support?

Bring your parents and attend the Transition Service Fair on Thursday, May 15, 2008.

Learn all about the school-to-work transition process and meet agency representatives from

- Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID),
- Employment Resources,
- Career and Employment Network,
- Liberty,
- Lexington,
- The Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL),
- the Private Industry Council,
- The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD)
- and many more.

Food prepared by the HFM Foundations of Food class will delight your appetite.

TRANSITION SERVICE FAIR

May 15, 2008

4:00-7:00 PM

HFM BOCES Center Cafeteria and Petit Cafe

Hear from students and parents who have been through the transition process.

For more information, ask your teacher, or contact Julie Brown or Letah Graff at 736-4356.

This newsletter is a result of the collaborative efforts of the Transition Task Force. Members include:

- Stephanie Andrews – RCIL
- Christine Belanger – Broadalbin-Perth CSD
- Ron Briggs – Employment Resources
- Julianne Brown – HFM Transition Counselor
- Linda Cole – Fort Plain High School
- Holly Dargush – Amsterdam High School
- Peggy Dillenbeck – Private Industry Council
- Robin DiVito – FMCC
- Anna Everhardt – HFM Guidance
- Ellie Fosmire – FMCC
- Tanya Grant- HFM Youth Employment
- Connie Glover – WIB
- Letah Graff – HFM Career Assessment
- Tom Guiffre – VESID
- Janet Kucel – Lexington
- Mindy Lawrence – Northville School
- Greg Melita – Career Employment Network
- Susan Naple – SETRC
- Joe Schifano – VESID



Jon Cooper, a senior at Broadalbin Perth High School, explains the HFM BOCES Vehicle Repair Program to his Transition Counselor. Jon's transition plan also included job shadow experiences at Midway Auto, Vandeline's Restaurant, and Broadalbin Village Market.

Transition Times

Winter 2008

A Resource for Families and Students in the Transition Process

TRANSITION WORKS

Transition to college takes determination

by Julianne Brown

Brandon Kaczor graduated Johnstown High School last spring. He decided to attend Fulton-Montgomery Community College after attending a college prep day offered by the transitions taskforce. He is now working toward a degree in Criminal Justice. Working with Brandon, anyone can see what determination and a positive outlook can do for personal success.

I met with Brandon in the FMCC Student Union where he frequently hangs out and socializes between classes. We spoke about how he came to be a successful college student despite apparent physical limitations.



Brandon Kaczor knows that to achieve his dreams he has to be his own best advocate.

Q: Can you explain the steps you have taken in your life, both personally and academically, to get to this point in your career?

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Work study can lead to after-school job success

Christopher Liljeberg is one example of a successful transition from work study to employment after high school. Chris currently works at Don's Electric in Canajoharie. Since Chris was so busy working, we weren't able to interview him. He did send us some words of advice about transition.

Q: What steps did you take in your academic career to get to this point?

A: Work study in high school, resource room, extended testing time, extracurricular activities, transition, career activities and training programs

Q: What steps have you taken in your personal life to get to this point?

"Stay in school, keep your goal in mind, be a part of work study, and volunteer."

– Christopher Liljeberg

A: Using support systems like family, agencies, teachers and counselors, and volunteer work.

Chris' current employer was so impressed with him as a volunteer during the flood in Canajoharie that he hired him as an employee.

Q: What self-advocacy skills do you think are the most important to utilize?

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VESID helps students with post high school plans



Joe Schifano helps students formulate plans for life after high school as the new youth liaison vocational counselor for VESID.

Joe Schifano was recently hired as the youth liaison vocational counselor for the Gloversville Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) office. Since students take many different paths once they leave high school, Joe wants to meet with students now to begin the important dialogue about post high-school plans.

The vocational goals of the student drive the process. Students must have sufficient interest and possess the proper skills and abilities to qualify for sponsorship in any type of VESID service, whether it is for employment or further education.

VESID works with students to help them find and keep jobs within their communities. VESID can also help students interested in college or training after high school. College-bound students should begin studying programs of interest to learn more about them, and must apply for admission as well as file necessary financial aid forms.

You can meet with Joe at your high school, the one-stop center or the Gloversville VESID Office. Contact Joe at 773-2884, or through email at jschifan@nysed.mail.gov.

Brandon Kaczor

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A: I learned to push myself, people always kept on top of me with academics and I learned to always do my best, or try to do my best.

Q: Who helped you with your transition plan?

A: I sort of made my own plan. I knew that I wanted to go to school for criminal justice and did my own research to find out what job options I would have in this field.

Q: What self-advocacy skills do you think are the most important?

A: Learn to speak your mind and don't give up on your dreams.

Brandon shared a quote that he put under his yearbook senior

picture: "To follow your dreams you must push yourself to the limit to succeed."

Q: What advice would you give to students in high school right now?

A: Enjoy it while it lasts. Don't wish high school away. Every year goes by fast. Do what you want to do, want your goals bad enough and be your own advocate and stand up for yourself, your rights and what you want to do with your life.

Q: What plans do you have for the future?

A: I plan to continue to take computer and criminal justice classes at FMCC and work toward my goal of working in the FBI or the CIA for criminal investigation and finding and tracking people with satellites and computers.

Chris Liljeberg

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A: Approaching teachers and employers on your own to ask for help when you need it, believing in your goal and working for it.

Q: What advice would you give to students who are in high school right now?

A: Stay in school, keep your goal in mind, be a part of work study, and volunteer.

Q: What plans do you have in the future?

A: Branching out into a different field. Chris would like to try working at an airport.

Transition Counselor joins the HFM team!

Julianne Brown, CRC, has recently been hired by HFM BOCES to provide transition support in Fulton County for students with disabilities and their families. She was hired through the VESID grant for model transition programs.

Julianne is here to help students identify their transition goals and find activities that help smooth their transition, work together with community partners, make referrals to local agencies and collaborate with the student's transition team. She also offers assistance in job coaching, help getting a job, job shadowing and exploration.

For more information, please contact Julianne at 736-4356. Julianne is also located at each high school. If you would like to meet Julianne, ask your special education teacher, consultant teacher or CSE where she is located at your high school.



Julianne Brown (left) and Tanya Grant support students with disabilities as they find their way from high school to employment.

Counselor Tanya Grant helps teens with disabilities find jobs

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Tanya Grant and I am a youth employment counselor through the Model Transition Program (MTP) grant for Fulton County. I am an employee of the Private Industry Council, but I am located at the HFM BOCES Center and in the five high schools of Fulton County.

As a youth employment counselor, I can assist teens with disabilities prepare for employment. We can build a portfolio together. I can help you develop your resume and write an effective cover letter. I can assist you in filling out job applications, as well as prepare you to meet with potential employers through mock interviewing. I can even help

you find a job that's right for you.

I am currently setting up job shadow days and job tours for students within the Fulton County schools. My contact information is:

tgrant@hfmboces.org
518-332-8635



Katie Cyr, (right) a senior at Canajoharie, talks with her job coach about her work study at Little Friends Nursery School and Stewarts. Katie is participating in a job rotation program. Prior to Stewart's she worked at Ft. Plain Animal Hospital. Katie says she "likes trying out the different jobs because it will help her get a job when she graduates."