

## Winter 2023

The goal of Equity and Special Populations Newsletter is to provide information that will be useful to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) community to support ALL students, but particularly, students within special populations.

**This issue of the Newsletter is dedicated to my friend and colleague, Muhammed Sadek. Muhammed passed away on December 7, 2022. Muhammed was a kind, generous soul. Before he passed away, I worked on a math equity project with him. He was a math teacher before joining the Michigan Department of Education and believed in equitable education opportunities for all students. He was a father, husband, and mentor and was kind to all who met him. Although he is no longer here, he will never be forgotten. Rest in Peace Muhammed.**



**Valerie Milton**

## The Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) is looking for Data Stories

The OCTE is interested in stories from both students, parents, and employers on how CTE benefited them, or its value to them. We would like to be able to feature students with diverse experiences including special populations students (nontraditional, students with disabilities, English Learners, Migrant students, students in foster care, students of military connected families, economically disadvantaged students, pregnant or parenting students) and students of color. We want stories that feature how CTE helped students stay in school and graduate, helped them see value in reading and math, or helped them earn college credit or industry credentials, or participate in an internship or work-based learning. Please share stories with Dr. Valerie Milton at MiltonV@michigan.gov.

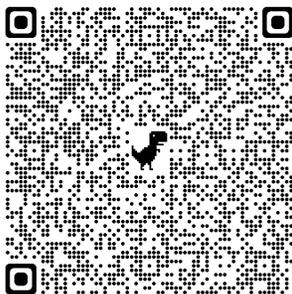
### Student News to Share

#### Allie Curtis, Jackson Area Career Center

#### Submitted by Lauren Sager, Assistant Principal, Jackson Area Career Center

Allie Curtis is an 11th grader and a first-year student in our Health Technician program. Allie is also wheelchair bound and has not let that stop her from pursuing her career goal of being a healthcare worker- she is diligent, a hard worker and incredibly smart. She also leads with compassion and humor, which are great qualities for anyone in the healthcare setting. Allie always has a smile on her face, and it is a genuine pleasure to be in her presence.

Here is a quote from Allie talking about her experience as a student with a disability in a CTE program: " I attend a medical technician program at Jackson Area Career center to kickstart my dream of becoming a registered nurse. I am also physically disabled. I have a genetic condition called Ehlers Danlos Syndrome. This condition has caused me to be a non-ambulatory wheelchair user, and reliant on a port and GJ feeding for nutrition and hydration. Please see [Allie Curtis](#) to continue reading about this amazing young lady.

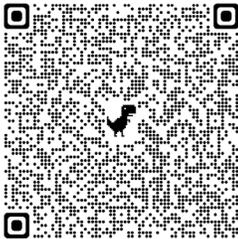


## Makyla Bevele, Ypsilanti Community High School

### Chef Aaron Gaertner, Culinary Instructor Regional Career Technical Center

I would like to introduce you to 17-year-old Makyla Bevele from Ypsilanti, Michigan. She is currently a senior at Ypsilanti Community High School and a second year student at Regional Career Technical Center (RCTC) studying culinary arts and bakery science. Makyla is a stellar example of what CTE education along with leadership opportunities like SkillsUSA can do for a struggling student.

Makyla struggled a great deal in middle school. From falling behind in work to low attendance. She found herself in position to enter ACCE (Achieving College and Career Education), our local alternative high school, instead of the traditional high school at the beginning of her freshman year. Through her first two years at ACCE, Makyla worked hard at recovering credits and impressing teachers and administrators with her self-motivation and dedication. During a summer school program where students prepared a meal individually, some of her teachers noticed her skills and enjoyment and recommended attending the RCTC Culinary Arts & Bakery Science program. Please see [Makyla Bevele](#) to continue reading about this dedicated young lady.



## Partnership between Crestwood High School (CHS) and William D. Ford Career Technical Center (WDF)

### Submitted by Amy Lukaszek, Teacher Consultant & Transition Coordinator

Our ability to enroll students with special needs and help them participate in a high quality, skilled trades program alongside their general education peers is built through the cooperation of many people. Without the support of administrators from both districts, our agreement would not be possible. In addition, I would like to give a special shout out to the Crestwood Special Services Administrator for continuing to provide a Crestwood paraprofessional who is familiar with our students and our staff to the CTE program as an additional layer of support and has been instrumental in our success.

**Carol Gjernes** is a direct resource for students and a conduit between the CTE teachers at WDF and Special Education teachers at CHS. We have direct information and feedback through this paraprofessional that is specific to the students at Crestwood. In addition, we have been able to send over students with lower incidence disabilities by having her work specifically with them during the morning shift, when it is often less crowded and chaotic. In the afternoon shift, she works with a larger group of students with higher incidence disabilities. Carol Gjernes has been a vital component to the success of students. She understands the goal and is open to assist in any way possible. She is the first person to volunteer and asks questions if something is not going well so that it can be addressed. We don't have to wait until the end of a semester to find out how students are doing because she continues to communicate with her team at all points. Carol is able to help with math assignments (a big barrier to some students at the CTE program) and read certification tests. She is knowledgeable about disabilities and knows how to help students focus on their independence and work skills. She is energetic and teachers respond to her because they know that she is there with the best intent. Carol is a key person to the success of Crestwood students at William D. Ford CTE.

Thank you for your consideration as you look for staff who support students with special needs in CTE. While it takes a village, I know that without Carol, many of our students would not be where they are today.



## **MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SPECIAL POPULATIONS ASSOCIATION (MOSPA)**

MOSPA held the 2022 Conference at the Boyne Mountain Resort. There were several secondary and postsecondary award winners at the conference. Please see [AWARDS & RECOGNITION \(mospaonline.org\)](#) for more information.

The 2023 Conference will be May 3 – 5, 2023, and again will be at Boyne Mountain Resort. Please see [State Conference \(mospaonline.org\)](#) for more information.



**If you have information that you think would be beneficial to others, please contact:**

**Dr. Valerie Milton at [miltonv@michigan.gov](mailto:miltonv@michigan.gov) or at 517-281-2878**

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