

## Career Mentor Program Launched

The Warren County Career Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Southern Adirondacks and the Warren County Probation Department recently collaborated thanks to a grant from Y-ReConnects, an organization whose mission is to foster the use of innovative, collaborative approaches to support successful community relationships with youth.

Four local teens participated in the 8-week pilot program. Each was partnered with a career mentor at an area business for the opportunity to job shadow and gain valuable work experience. The participating worksites were: A Pretty Parlor, Romeo Toyota, Sawyer Family Chiropractic, and Assemblyman Matt Simpson's office.



Amanda Parker, owner of A Pretty Parlor, with her youth mentee, Jordyn

Jordyn, who shadowed staff at A Pretty Parlor, called it “an amazing place to be, and everybody is very nice.” The bond created between Jordyn and her career mentor was made evident when Amanda Parker, owner of A Pretty Parlor, signed up to be her Big Sister as a way to continue their relationship beyond the program. The initiative concluded with a celebration at Kingpin's Alley where youth were awarded certificates of achievement in recognition of successfully completing the mentorship.

The program is a great way to strengthen the connection between youth and the community and the partnering organizations are already thinking ahead to the next cohort, set to begin in February, with plans for an additional session in the fall. If you are a business interested in acting as a career mentor for this program or similar programs, email Andrea Kinderman at [kindermana@warrencountyny.gov](mailto:kindermana@warrencountyny.gov).

### Did You Know?

January is National Mentor Month! According to research, youth who are in mentoring programs are:

- 59% more likely to earn better grades
- 52% less likely to skip school
- 81% more likely to participate in extracurricular activities

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### Workforce Development Staff

Liza Ochsendorf - Director

Annie McMahon - Fiscal Manager

Gayle Mender - Counselor

JoAnne Finn - Counselor

Andrea Kinderman - Youth Counselor

Mike Graney - Student to Careers Development Specialist

# Creating Positive Work Culture

The current labor market has made recruiting and retaining employees even more challenging. By thinking outside the box, employers can create a positive work culture. This has been proven to be effective in increasing retention, productivity, morale, and engagement amongst employees. The Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce recently conducted a panel discussion to share best practices for creating a positive work environment. Panelists included Jim Marco (Glens Falls Hospital), Patrick Welton (Lake George Escape Resort), George Ide (Burch Bottle and Packaging Inc), Kathy Flacke Muncil (Fort William Henry Corporation), and Liza Ochsendorf (Warren County Department of Workforce Development).

Panelists represented an array of businesses and organizations all seeing the value and importance in taking steps to cultivate positive work culture. While employee retention has been a common hurdle faced by many businesses, the pandemic seemed to spotlight the need for employers to creatively engage and support their workforce. Patrick Welton shared that Lake George Escape Resort had their busiest summers ever during the first two years of the pandemic. Keeping morale up was of vital importance as they only had 25-50 employees taking care of 1500-2000 guests. Welton's employees return to the resort year after year. Having a team comprised of seasoned hospitality professionals as opposed to short-term employees is integral in providing exceptional guest experiences. He attributes high retention rates to emphasizing respect towards his workforce, allowing employees to have a voice and share ideas with management, and providing opportunities for staff to grow with the company.



Panelists with ARCC President & CEO Tricia Rogers.

Jim Marco saw firsthand the devastating emotional toll the pandemic took on staff at Glens Falls Hospital. As frontline workers, they were stretched thin and working long hours while being faced with losing patients and being forced to keep families away from dying relatives. To support the staff, Marco conducts in-person check-ins with employees, ensures an active Employee Assistance Program providing support for staff financially and emotionally and provides resources for childcare, mental health, and substance abuse. In addition, while many HR departments work traditional 9-5 hours, Glens Falls Hospital has HR staff on duty for 2nd and 3rd shift so all employees have access to the department.

Even small measures can be taken to show appreciation toward employees. George Ide buys lunches for staff and provides bonus incentives. Liza Ochsendorf holds yearly staff retreats, stresses work-life balance, and conducts "temperature checks" to gauge what sort of day employees may be having and if they need additional support. Kathy Flacke Muncil discussed her willingness to assist at all levels, stepping in to make beds and clean bathrooms when needed. This was a sentiment resonating across the panel. Supervisors taking on patient loads, managers working in the warehouse, and CEOs helping in the laundry room are examples of employers fostering a sense of togetherness and promoting positivity when working through challenging times.

# Networking to Your Advantage

If you are looking to enter/re-enter the workforce, change career fields, or advance your position within your current profession, networking is one of the most vital activities for achieving your goal. An expansive and supportive network helps you identify more jobs of interest, connects you to those already in the field in which you want to work, provides direct referrals and references, and helps you to identify your skills and qualifications. However, many people feel intimidated by networking or don't know how to network effectively. The tips below may help you improve this valuable skill and accelerate your path to success.



- **Embrace the idea of networking.** Tell everyone you know you are looking for work and be specific with what type of job you want. As a result, you now have multiple people helping in your search and sending you leads.
- **Engage with people everywhere.** Make a conscious effort to meet, greet, listen, and engage in conversation. Whether you are at a party, wedding, sporting event, etc. you never know where you may make a valuable connection or hear about a job opportunity.
- **Become a better listener.** Learn to ask “what do you do?” with sincerity and interest. Once you ask a question, be quiet and listen for the answer.
- **Practice the presentation of your skills.** Often called an elevator pitch, this is a way to briefly introduce yourself while detailing your skills, expertise, and goals.
- **Use social media to your advantage.** LinkedIn is a great professional networking platform. Be sure your profile is up to date, share articles and links related to your desired job, and connect with leaders in your field of interest.
- **Be confident.** You need to be able to communicate your value. Think positively about the skills you can offer and what sets you apart from the competition.
- **Improve your public speaking.** If you are lacking confidence and find networking difficult, take classes to strengthen your communication skills. Join the local Toastmasters club. Not only will you improve your ability to communicate, it will also provide you with more people to add to your network.

## Did You Know?

Networking is actually the #1 way in which people find work. Over 80% of jobseekers say their network helped them find a job and recent studies show that 70% of jobs are not publicly listed.

Attend a monthly Greater Capital Region Virtual Workshop to learn more helpful tips...

- Resume Development
- Transferable Skills
- Interview Preparation
- Completing Job Applications
- Goal Setting
- Overcoming Barriers
- Social Media

To learn more about these workshops or to register for an upcoming workshop, visit <https://thejoblink.org/calendar/>

# SPOTLIGHT on SUCCESS

## Jason

Jason has been using the Career Center long-term as a resource to work on improving his career and his choices for employment. Jason makes excellent use of the Career Center resources by frequently taking free online courses. He also earned an OSHA certificate to enhance his current employment and increase possibilities should he decide to change careers. Recently Jason contacted us to state he had been released from his long-term position. Feeling a little overwhelmed, he returned to the Center for encouragement and ideas. Jason was willing to discuss his questions and desires with counselors and followed the agreed upon advice as well as instructions for steps he needed to take. He was willing to take risks and decided to go entirely into a new field. Jason applied for a grant to take the SUNY Hospital Sterilization Program partnered with Saratoga Hospital while continuing to work at a part time position he already had. Jason stated, "it's one step at a time. Sometimes overwhelming, but I'm getting there." The SUNY school program moves into on-the-job training working at the Saratoga Hospital.



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## Welcome to the Team!



Mike Graney has joined the team in a new position as Student to Careers Development Specialist. He will be working closely with the Youth Counselor and Warren County school districts to help create, support, and implement career exploration programs and activities for middle and high school students. He is originally from Ticonderoga where he previously worked in a college and career readiness program. Mike is looking forward to increasing student exposure to different career paths in Warren County. He is a graduate of SUNY Cortland and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Sports Management. He resides in Queensbury and enjoys playing golf in his spare time.

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**Warren County Career Center**  
333 Glen St, Suite 300  
Glens Falls, NY 12801  
Phone 518-743-0925

**americanjobcenter®**  
Warren County, NY

