

# CAREER CENTER NEWS

## Warren County Celebrates Workforce

WARREN COUNTY, NY – Hospitality and retail workers from around Warren County were celebrated Tuesday, September 12th with a free night at Six Flags Great Escape amusement park that included prizes, rides, food and even a pie-eating contest! More than 300 local workers and their supervisors, representing 82 businesses, gathered for the second annual event that was held to say “thank you” to the employees who helped local businesses get through another busy summer. The event, organized by Warren County Department of Workforce Development and Six Flags Great Escape, rewards the people serving as the backbone of our tourism and retail industries.

Workers who were nominated by their supervisors for going above and beyond were honored with certificates for their skills, energy and expertise, ranging from Excellence in Customer Service to Team Spirit and Sales Extraordinaire.

Tony Grecco, General Manager of The Log Jam restaurant in Queensbury, was chosen as the recipient of the first-ever Frank Dittrich Award, given to a tourism

industry leader who is committed to employee development, dedicated to improving lives and conditions for workers and embodies a cooperative spirit. The award was named for Dittrich, the late general manager of The Inn at Erlowest and tireless regional hospitality advocate, who passed away in December 2022.

Said Rebecca Wood, President of Six Flags Great Escape: “We are so grateful to be a part of what is

now a meaningful tradition to end the season. Our people deserve some time to have fun, reflect and enjoy the recognition. We look forward to next year already.”

Attendees could bring a friend for \$5, with proceeds from ticket, Skycoaster and game sales going to Wait House of Glens Falls. Just under \$800 was raised for Wait House for use to purchase supplies for youth residents.

Dane Morton, owner of Adirondack Adventure Center in Lake Luzerne, noted: “It was great to see my employees out there having a good time together and blowing off some steam after a long season. It was also nice to be able to interact with some of the other businesses in the area and have some friendly competition at the pie eating contest!”

Mark your calendars for the Summer Workforce Celebration in 2024, as the event will become a fixture during the week following Adirondack Nationals Car Show.



Workforce Development Director Liza Ochsendorf,  
Frank Dittrich Award Winner  
Tony Grecco, & Tourism Director Heather Bagshaw

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### Workforce Development Staff

Liza Ochsendorf - Director

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JoAnne Finn - Counselor

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Counselor

Mike Graney - Student to Careers  
Development Specialist

Melissa Gibb - Office Specialist

Denise Yannaci - Coordinator

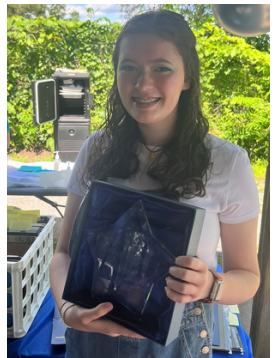
# Warren County's Summer Youth Employment Program

Warren County's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) concluded another successful season, culminating with an annual picnic celebration on August 11th. The program, funded by TANF, places teens aged 14-20 at worksites throughout the county to provide an opportunity to gain valuable work experience. This year's program saw 28 youth complete their work experience at 20 participating worksites. Returning worksites included hospitality businesses as well as municipalities.

As a way to acknowledge and celebrate the hard work of this year's participants, worksite supervisors, members of the Warren County Board of Supervisors, community members, friends and family came together at East Field pavilion for this year's picnic and awards ceremony. Food for the approximately 80 in attendance was provided by the four teens who worked with Operation Food Chain under the supervision of Chef Matt Young. Megan Skelly of Lake George RV Park served as guest speaker and was able to share inspirational words about overcoming challenges in order to achieve success. A new tradition of naming Worksite of the Summer was awarded to Andrew Percetti, owner of Adirondack Safari in Warrensburg. Andrew was recognized for going above and beyond to provide a meaningful work experience and for embracing the mentorship component that comes with serving as a worksite.

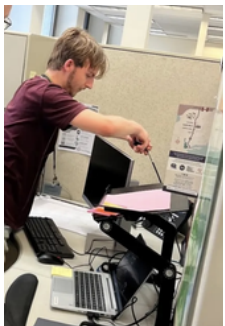
While all youth received certificates for successfully completing the program, a handful of participants who stood out and excelled throughout the summer were recognized with special awards and Target gift cards. Prior to the start of the program, the Career Center youth team identified five employability skills to serve as a focus: communication, teamwork, respect, responsibility, and perseverance.

Worksite supervisors nominated their youth worker for one or more of these skill areas. Many youth received nominations but ultimately the field was narrowed and the following participants emerged as winners: Corey R. from Queensbury for Communication, Oshun J. from Glens Falls for Responsibility, Connor P. from Johnsbury for Respect, Braydon N. from Glens Falls for Teamwork, and Jesse S. from Queensbury and Dalton W. from Warrensburg for Perseverance. This year's highest honor, Employee of the Summer, went to Grace B. from Queensbury who excelled in all five categories of employability skills. This was Grace's second time in the program and her worksite from the previous summer, Queensbury School Cafeteria, was more than happy to take Grace back as part of their team. Grace's positive attitude and strong work ethic impressed her supervisors throughout the program.



Above photo: Grace B.  
with her award for 2023  
SYEP Employee of the  
Summer

The group of young participants this year were exceptional workers who rose to challenges in order to flourish in their roles. Four of the youth were offered continuous employment beyond SYEP. The Career Center is proud of all of the youth who chose to work this summer and for the growth they displayed in just six weeks.



Above photo: Corey R.  
from Queensbury



Above photo: Oshun J.  
from Glens Falls



Above photo : Connor P.  
from Johnsbury



Above photo: Braydon N.  
from Glens Falls



Above photo: Jesse S.  
from Queensbury



Above photo: Dalton W.  
from Warrensburg





Cartoon & Article  
credit: Forbes.com

In a job interview, have you ever found yourself stating “yes, I have worked in XXX for 15 years”? What did you just tell the prospective employer? Absolutely nothing. The employer is left wondering “So What?” There is not much time during a job interview nor space in a resume to sell yourself. Every word needs to count. Voila! Enter the Dragon-Slaying Story. A colorful story about a time when you made something happen, something impactful and positive for your employer. Years of experience tell us nothing. Depending on the way you use Excel, for instance, you could be a master in six months, or a novice after ten. If you are the Excel whiz, you need to get that information across in a compelling format. That's where Dragon-Slaying Stories come in.

### Did You Know?

On average, interviews run for 40 minutes, but the typical interview ranges from between 30 and 90 minutes.

Source: zippia.com

A Dragon-Slaying Story is simple. It has three parts:

- First, explain the problem -- the issue that caused you to act.
- Second, explain what you accomplished.
- Third, share the impact your action had for your employer.

Imagine ending your dragon-slaying story like this: “That day I came up a big step in my understanding of Excel. Now I train new co-workers on it! My boss told me the VPs loved the presentation and suggested every new employee get a version of it to help them understand our company.”

If you say: "I've done a lot of that kind of programming," your response is incomplete. With a story, you grab the listener's attention. They see you in action. You bring drama to the story, like recounting a movie to a friend.

No one really cares how long you've been writing code or how long you've been a CPA. They want to know what kind of results you've had, so tell them! Tell them the whole story. Your magic increases dramatically when you start telling Dragon-Slaying Stories in job interviews. It's like bringing your super-human power right into the room.

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

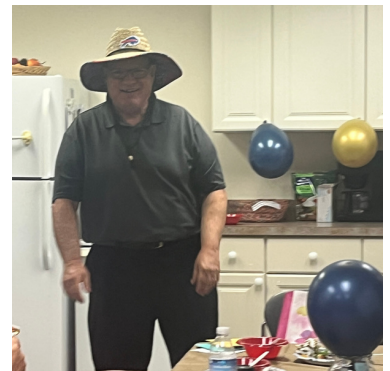
- Resume Development
- Transferable Skills
- Interview Preparation
- Completing Job Applications
- Goal Setting
- Overcoming Barriers
- Social Media

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

# SPOTLIGHT on SUCCESS

The Warren County Department of Workforce Development and the New York State Department of Labor are pleased to announce the retirement of Anthony “Tony” Ruggiero. Tony has been a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) with DOL for over 15 years. He worked directly with veterans and provided intensive services to help them succeed in obtaining competitive employment. Tony has advocated for numerous veterans during his tenure and provided a full range of employment services, including comprehensive assessments leading to individual employment plans, job referrals, referrals to training and support services, resume and interview preparation assistance.

Upon hearing on Tony’s recent retirement, a veteran and former client stated the following, “Mr. A.J. “Tony” Ruggiero has that ability to feel like a fast-friend that you’ve known for a long time, and always with a warm and courteous approach to a question or concern. I’ve long appreciated Tony’s capacity to be relatable to “life’s challenges”. Our area’s veterans look forward to Tony’s next phase in his role of encourager-and-advocate. I’m very glad to know Mr. Tony Ruggiero.” Tony said he is looking forward to traveling with his wife, spending time with his children and grandchildren and cheering on the Buffalo Bills.



Anthony “Tony” Ruggiero  
celebrating his recent retirement

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Did you know that Warren County Career Center has partnered with the Crandall Public Library to offer a monthly in-person Computer Skills Workshop for Beginners? Topics covered include basic internet searching, creating and saving documents, and creating an email account. Held at the Warren County Career Center, this class is available to the public, free of charge but registration is required. Those interested in attending can contact Crandall Library directly at (518) 792-6508 for more details.

Did you know that October is **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**? Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) celebrates the contributions of America’s workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices that benefit employers and employees. More information and resources can be found online at [acl.gov](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam) and <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam>

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