

CLINTON TOWNSHIP

Chippewa Valley Schools highlights career education courses

C AND G NEWSPAPERS

By Thomas Franz✉

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Cora Scott



Savannah Wood

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — With February designated as the month to celebrate career and technical education, or CTE, Chippewa Valley Schools officials are touting their work in developing programs that provide students with hands-on work experience while in high school.

Claire Brisson, the district's CTE director, said Chippewa Valley Schools offers 15 programs for more than 2,000 students each year.

The programs include construction trades, a medical academy, a teacher cadet program, graphic design and several more.

“There’s certainly a lot of job opportunities out there for the areas in which we have programs,” Brisson said. “Sometimes there’s a disconnect between the parents and community understanding that we have programs that provide these skills. We have students coming out of high school with some valuable employability skills.”

Many of the programs allow students to earn high school and college credits while also gaining real employment experience.

The district’s two-year medical academy program gives students a chance to earn English and science credits while working in a local hospital their second year. Dakota students work at Henry Ford Hospital, while Chippewa students work at McLaren Macomb, and they each rotate through about eight different departments.

In construction trades, students from both high schools work out of a building at Dakota to build a home from scratch for Habitat for Humanity.

Brisson plans to present the district’s teacher cadet program to the board of education Feb. 27, when students are also anticipated to demonstrate how they use equipment purchased from a \$10,000 grant for technology-focused courses.

“People are beginning to realize the importance of integrating the manufacturing experience and various technologies into the learning experience,” Brisson said. “We’ve been doing that for years as part of our technology design program. Students have a unique ability to work on hands-on projects that integrate technology.”

Brisson said the programs supplement traditional coursework, and the impact of the CTE programs isn’t revealed through test scores, but from the acceleration that students gain into the workforce.

“Our alumni tell the best stories. We try to take advantage of chances to share those, because to me, state assessments and all that kind of data are great, but nothing hits home more than hearing the stories from our alumni of how the programs have made a difference,” Brisson said.

As part of celebrating CTE month in Macomb County, the Macomb Intermediate School District held a breakfast event Feb. 3 to recognize high-achieving students and community members who have positively impacted CTE programs.

Two students and one community member from each school district were recognized during the event.

Chippewa Valley senior Cora Scott received an outstanding CTE senior award. Chippewa junior Savannah Wood was given an outstanding CTE student award.

Scott has studied graphic design for three years, while Wood is in her first year in Chippewa’s automotive technology program.

Helen Hicks, the president and CEO of Macomb County Habitat for Humanity, was recognized as the district’s outstanding community partner. Chippewa Valley Schools and Habitat have been partners for 10 years.



Staff Writer Thomas Franz covers Macomb Township, Chippewa Valley Schools and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners for the Macomb Township Chronicle. He also covers sports primarily for the Shelby-Utica News. He has worked for C & G Newspapers since 2013 and attended Michigan State University.