

# TechLife

Your Award Winning News Publication



# IMAGINE

WHAT WE CAN DO!

## CTE COMING FULL CIRCLE THROUGH PROUD ALUMNI: CONTINUING THE BULLDOG LEGACY!

PCTVS pride doesn't end after graduation, just ask our amazing alumni who continue to pursue excellence in their careers and postsecondary education! Our alumni take what they've learned through career and technical education (CTE) and enter the professional world with incredible experience, knowledge and goals for the future. The Bulldog legacy continues with their impressive stories of success!

As award-winning leaders in career and technical education, our two high schools provide students with cutting-edge curricula that will prepare them to be the professionals of tomorrow and excel in the world's most in-demand, high-skill careers. According to Scott Stump, Assistant Secretary for Career, Technical and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education, "CTE opens pathways to success for students whether they choose to pursue postsecondary education or enter the workforce after high school. These data show that students who concentrate in a high-demand CTE field, such as STEM or health sciences, go on to reap benefits from their studies long after graduation."

The month of February is especially meaningful at PCTVS as we celebrate **National CTE Month!** All month long, we recognize the vital role that career and technical education plays in building successful futures for our students and alumni. These valuable CTE skills have been proven to be beneficial for our alumni as they reach for the stars after graduation!

PCTVS is proud that more than 75 alumni have come back home to Bulldog country to continue their careers! The following have gone on to become supervisory leaders guiding our staff and students throughout the school year. These are just some shining examples of alumni coming full circle from a CTE education to successful careers!

More alumni features and photos are highlighted in the centerfold!



## Proud Alumni

### DID YOU KNOW?

The new PCTVS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION is currently in the planning stages and will offer events and activities for graduates as they achieve their goals. The Alumni Association is a great way to foster alumni connections and welcome graduates back to the PCTVS community! For more information, contact Marinelly Tavarez at [mtavarez@pcti.tec.nj.us](mailto:mtavarez@pcti.tec.nj.us).

Between amazing awards and impressive careers, our alumni are out in the world and thriving! We are thrilled to celebrate their stories and highlight their incredible accomplishments. *Continued on page 4...*



**Alaa Abdelaziz** - Class of 2005; **Kenneth McDaniel** - Class of 1987; **Maureen Wacha** - Class of 1987  
**Scott Cumberbatch** - Class of 2003; **Jerry Castaneda** - Class of 1990; **Roberto Rubino** - Class of 1995  
**Marinelly Tavarez** - Class of 2003; **Mark Cacace** - Class of 1978; **Yesenia Berta** - Class of 1994

# PCTVS is thrilled to name Route 23 Auto Mall as its valued Business Partner of the Year for 2019-2020!

For several years, PCTVS and Route 23 Auto Mall have enjoyed a mutually beneficial partnership through their engagement with PCTI's School of Automotive Technology and School of Business Careers. Through this collaboration, Route 23 Auto Mall has hired students from the School of Automotive Technology program via the Cooperative Education Program and after graduation to work at their facility. Owner Scott Barna has been instrumental in the success of this partnership and has showcased a true devotion to students' achievement. Additionally, Mr. Barna and service managers from Route 23 Auto Mall are valued members of PCTI's Advisory Committee, in which they provide Shadowing Trips and share valuable input for PCTI's automotive program and car shows.

Route 23 Auto Mall continues to uphold a steadfast commitment to students' success which is further demonstrated in Mr. Barna's collaboration with students of PCTI's School of Business Careers. He organized an engaging and educational contest for Business students in which participants were challenged to develop the best strategies to enhance the company's business model. Mr. Barna generously awarded the winning team members with MacBook Air laptops to enhance their education! Second place teams received Amazon gift cards for their hard work!

Thank you to Route 23 Auto Mall for their continued support and commitment to our students, and congratulations for being selected as PCTVS' Business Partner of the Year!



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2019-2020 EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR!

**Jody Lazarski**  
INSTRUCTOR OF VIDEO PRODUCTION  
School of Communication Arts  
Educator of the Year

**Tenaya Bascomb**  
GRADE LEVEL COORDINATOR  
Educational Specialist of the Year

# CTE MONTH AT PCTVS!

National Career and Technical Education Month is celebrated all across the nation during the month of February. Here at PCTVS, students from various CTE programs of study celebrated through a myriad of activities around campus.

As a special “thank you” to valued community partners, members of SkillsUSA made visitations to local businesses and county agencies with items created by students in various CTE programs such as Culinary Arts, Welding, Graphic Arts, and Advertising Art/Design. Students from PCTI’s School of Cosmetology hosted women from Oasis in Paterson for a day of pampering with manicures and new hairstyles, while students from the Academy of Health Sciences took blood pressure for the guests. Afterwards, lunch was enjoyed in the school’s gourmet restaurant Chez Technique.

To keep the celebration going, students from the Academy of Finance, School of Business, Child Development program, and Academy of Criminal Justice gave insightful presentations demonstrating interesting topics within their respective programs of study to faculty, staff, students and guests.

Students from the Diana C. Lobosco STEM Academy were also busy celebrating CTE Month. They participated in the Innovation Shark Tank competition and biomedical students also viewed an insightful “Meet the Surgeon” Video conference session with Neonatal Surgeon Dr. Yi-Horng Lee, MD. Engineering students attended the “Young Engineers Day” at Rutgers University, an annual community outreach program.

These are just a sampling of the special CTE activities that were celebrated throughout the month at Passaic County Technical-Vocational Schools. PCTVS will continue to celebrate the amazing achievements and opportunities that a career and technical education provides in preparing students for the in-demand jobs of the future!



# PCTVS and Alumni – PERFECT TOGETHER!

As we celebrate CTE Month, PCTVS is proud to boast its comprehensive and innovative programs that offer students unparalleled access to exciting educational opportunities. From such an immersive education, our Bulldogs graduate with technology-based and career-oriented skills that will give them a competitive edge in the professional world. Take a look at some of our alumni's incredible success stories!



## Give Our Regards to Broadway!

**Damani Van Rensalier**, a graduate of PCTI's School of Performing Arts Class of 2015, recently made her Broadway debut in the hit show *Hadestown* at the Walter Kerr Theatre! After graduating from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance, Damani secured her first professional job in this popular musical.

This is not the first time Damani has taken the stage in New York City, as she has performed at the Joyce Theatre twice before. She performed there as part of a special night for Rutgers University performers and also danced alongside a professional dance company as a senior.

Congratulations on your outstanding accomplishments, Damani!



**Vanessa Vargas** graduated from PCTI's School of Cosmetology in 1996. Vanessa launched V'VA Hair Salon in Little Falls in 2002 and consistently gives back to her alma mater by providing opportunities for our students through job shadowing, cooperative education, and mentorship. She serves year after year on the Advisory committee and works closely with School to Careers to conduct career workshops, and in-class training sessions for the students. Vanessa is the epitome of what PCTI stands for, and she's utilized the skills acquired in her CTE program to become a successful business owner, mentor, and respected member of her community.

Vanessa praises the CTE education she received at PCTI, saying that *"PCTI jumpstarted my career in cosmetology!"*

Three accomplished alumni from PCTI's Academy of Finance recently returned to our campus to share their valuable insight with current students! **Jose Borbon** served as Keynote Speaker and MC of the alumni panel event. He attained his CPA and presently holds the impressive role of AVP / Senior Auditor at Kearny Bank! Jose graduated from PCTI in 2010 and then from Rutgers Business School in Newark in 2014.



Also on the alumni panel was **Solange A. Alvarado**, a graduate of the Academy of Finance in 2011 who is now a Senior Audit Specialist at Merck! Solange earned her CPA and graduated from Ramapo College of New Jersey in 2015.

**Laura Tavera** graduated from the Academy of Finance in 2010 and then from Rutgers Business School in Newark in 2015. Laura now serves as an Associate with the Latin America Controllers Group at BlackRock!





**Kyle Markham** graduated in 2014 from PCTI's School of Communication Arts - Graphic Design program! Now, he is employed at Clear Channel Outdoor in New York City, where he is a senior designer for out-of-home advertisements. Kyle has also pitched visual ideas to renowned companies like Netflix, Blizzard, and Quibi, and some of his displays were featured in Times Square! After graduating from PCTI, Kyle continued his education at Montclair State University, where he majored in Graphic Design and Visual Communications.

*"None of this would have been possible had I not attended PCTI and realized my passion for graphic design,"* Kyle said. *"I am proud to be a PCTI alumnus!"*



### Environmental Excellence

**Jayson Velazquez**, an alumnus of PCTI's Project Lead the Way in 2017, is a Special Projects and Operations Intern at Smart Columbus where he works on smart city initiatives in transportation and mobility. Also, Jayson is an Inclusion and Outreach Coordinator in the School of Environment and Natural Resources, in which he works on programming and specific initiatives to support students of color in the environmental field. Jayson is currently studying Environment, Economy, Development, and Sustainability at The Ohio State University.



### Remembering Her Roots

**Alysha Acosta**, is a 2018 graduate of PCTI's Academy of Medical Arts and a QuestBridge Scholar matched to Columbia University where she is on the pre-med track studying Neuroscience and Behavior. She recently came back to PCTVS to speak with students from the Diana C. Lobosco STEM Academy, where she discussed the transition from high school to college, her QuestBridge journey and the importance of prioritizing education. Her current work at the Peer Health Exchange and National Multiple Sclerosis Society supports her chosen career pathway.

*"I continue to uphold the values that my education at PCTI has instilled in me... The skills gained from my CTE education at PCTI have proven to be quite valuable in classroom and professional settings. I could not be more grateful for the opportunities that I was given."*

**Hajar Lakhouili** graduated from PCTI's Academy of Criminal Justice in 2011, and currently holds the impressive role of Assistant District Attorney in Brooklyn! At PCTI, Hajar served as a student representative for four years and captain of the girls' tennis team. Hajar also held the roles of President of SkillsUSA and ERASE. She also participated in swimming, golf, track, Mock Trial, NHS, and NJROTC, to name a few. After graduating from PCTI, Hajar attended The College of New Jersey for her undergraduate studies and then Brooklyn Law School for graduate school.



**Joey Mondesir** graduated from PCTI's Academy of Medical Arts in 2013 with an EMT certification and then continued his studies at William Paterson University. Now, Joey is a BSN, RN, and CCRN at Hackensack University Medical Center in the Cardiothoracic ICU.

*"The Medical Arts program at PCTI was the foundation for my desire to be a nurse,"* said Joey. *"It gave me the drive and motivation to care for people and save lives every single day."*

# Spectacular Scholarship Achievements!



**Dewan Chowdhury, a senior in PCTI's Academy of Information Technology**, has been selected as one of only 106 recipients nationwide for the Horatio Alger National Scholarship! Through this prestigious program, Dewan will receive a \$25,000 scholarship toward his bachelor's degree.

Additionally, **Shah Rahman, a senior in PCTI's School of Applied Engineering** was also named a 2020 Horatio Alger State Scholarship award recipient as a result of his academic achievements. As a scholarship winner, Shah will receive \$10,000 toward his collegiate studies.

The Horatio Alger Scholarship Program grants scholarships across the nation to assist high school students who have overcome great challenges in their lives and who have demonstrated excellence in their academic achievements.

**Congratulations to Dewan and Shah for achieving these well-deserved scholarships!**

## QuestBridge Scholar Matched to Brown University!

**Michael Calixto, a high-achieving senior in PCTI's Academy of Medical Arts**, was matched to Brown University, to which he has earned a full scholarship for his incredible academic achievement!

Michael currently ranks as #1 in his senior class of 835 students and is involved with various extracurricular activities. He participates in the E&E Medical Arts/Health Sciences fundraiser, which raises money for underprivileged individuals as well as those who are affected by natural disasters. Additionally, Michael volunteers as a Saturday Tour Guide for Passaic County Technical-Vocational Schools, volunteers extensively at the Clifton Library and Eva's Village, and is an active member of St. Anthony of Padua's Youth Group. Michael has also served as HOSA Parliamentarian, selected for Boys' State, and attended New Jersey Governor's School in the Sciences (NJGSS). **Congratulations to Michael, and best of luck at Brown University!**



# Theater Arts Students Take the Spotlight!

In January, Theater Arts students attended the Speech Theatre Association of NJ's (STANJ) Governor's Awards Competition, which strives to promote excellence in the study and teaching of communication and theater arts. Held at Montclair State University, this annual competition welcomed nearly 800 students from across New Jersey!

PCTI senior Javier Martinez was awarded the Senior Scholarship, which provides recipients with the opportunity to study at a college or conservatory of his choice! Additionally, in recognition of his awesome accomplishment, Javier will be honored at a ceremony as the Governor's Award Winner at the War Memorial in Trenton this May.

Also, congratulations to junior Raphael Trastoy on receiving third place out of hundreds of participants in the category of Dramatic Monologue! This was the first theater competition in which Raphael participated, and his third place victory demonstrated his extraordinary talent!

Sophomore Christina Cinque also received notable accolades at the New Jersey Thespian State Competition. Christina received a

Superior Rating for her Musical Solo and received an automatic invitation to the National Thespian Festival, which will be held at the University of Indiana in June!

Congratulations to all, and keep lighting up the stage!



# AWESOME ATHLETICS!

## PCTVS WRESTLING NAMED STATE CHAMPIONS!

The PCTVS wrestling team was named the North 1 Group 5 State Sectional Wrestling Champions in a 35-31 win against Clifton! Earlier in the season, the team won first place in the Passaic County Championship! Congratulations to four individual champions: Ricardo Balanzategui, Steve Khunthanom-Perez, Alex Vertedor, and Laith Hamdeh, and a job well done to the whole team!!



### GIRLS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL TEAM WINS GOLD!

The Girls Varsity Volleyball team won first place at the NJTAC Girls Volleyball Invitational Championships! Victoria Grace Mistretta, a sophomore studying Biomedical Science in the Diana C. Lobosco STEM Academy, won the impressive title of Most Valuable Player at the event. Congratulations to all of the girls for your extraordinary achievements.



### PCTVS FOOTBALL TEAM – STATE FINALISTS!

To conclude an impressive season, the Bulldogs faced off against Ridgewood in the State Finals in November! After a tough game, the Bulldogs unfortunately could not clinch the win in a 10-7 final score. Congratulations on a job well done, and we look forward to another exciting season in 2020!



### PCTVS GIRLS TENNIS TEAM WINS COUNTY TITLE!

At the end of the 2019 season, the PCTVS Girls Tennis Team shared the first-place title with Wayne Hills High school in the Passaic County Tournament Championship. Each team finished the championship with 14 points, securing PCTVS' first county championship win! Congratulations to the Girls Tennis Team and keep up the fantastic work!



### BOYS AND GIRLS SWIM TEAMS NAMED COUNTY CHAMPS!

The PCTVS swim teams had an outstanding season! The boys swim team won the Passaic County Championship meet for the sixth straight year, and the girls swim team won the Passaic County Championship meet for the third consecutive year! The girls scored the most points in tournament history, and the 200 freestyle relay team broke a 12 year old meet record and qualified for the NJSIAA State Meet of Champions. Senior captains Vanessa Hernandez and Symran Lall both won individual events and broke their own meet records! Congratulations to all swimmers!

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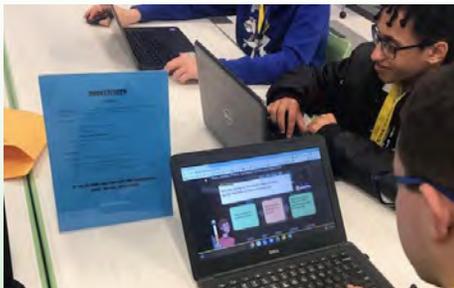
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## Passaic County Technical-Vocational Schools

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# STEM ACADEMY SPOTLIGHT!



## STEM ANTI VAPING INITIATIVE

Recently, guidance counselors from the Diana C. Lobosco STEM Academy attended a workshop at William Paterson University entitled "Don't Get Vaped In" and brought the important lessons back to PCTVS! Working in collaboration with English classes, the counselors presented a two-day informational and interactive session to students highlighting the dangers of vaping. Students rotated between three hands-on activities including a New York Times illness tracking station, and a station in which they identified water vapor, gas or aerosol. The third station featured an interactive video game entitled smokeSCREEN, which strives to prevent youth smoking and vaping.

## SHARKS IN STEM!

Freshmen Biomedical students in the Diana C. Lobosco STEM Academy participated in "STEM Shark Tank", a pitching competition similar to the hit ABC show! Students worked in groups to formulate an innovative idea or design that would help improve the life of a diabetic by managing or curing the disease. Teams then pitched their presentations to "sharks", who represented a panel offering a research grant. This panel was comprised of academic teachers and administrators in the STEM Academy, who provided students with valuable feedback.



## LIVE FROM THE STEM ACADEMY

Biomedical students in the Diana C. Lobosco STEM Academy viewed a previously recorded operation of a neurosurgery procedure with a medical educator from Liberty Science Center! This activity is part of the Liberty Science Center's "Live From...Neurosurgery" program which presents students with the exciting opportunity to interact with operating room staff at Overlook Hospital during neurosurgery.