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Anticipating Spring

This morning as I was out running errands I saw two Robins on the side of the road. It instantly brought me back to my childhood and conversations with my grandparents. Among the many lessons and memories that I carry with me is how more in tune their generation was with nature, and the signs that communicated change of seasons and the passage of time. Robins of course indicated that Spring had arrived and preparations needed to be started for planting in the garden.

I think one of the things that drew me to education was that the school year is cyclical. The school year, like a garden, has a time for the planting of seeds, a time of dormancy when we need to trust in the natural order to do its magic, and a time when we start to see the promise of a harvest.

The time between planting and harvest can be filled with worry and second guessing. Those of us who have been around a while might recognise this as part of the natural order of things. It is a time for us to reflect on the good work that we have done. It is a time for us to remind each other of this and to support each other through our struggles. It is a time to look towards the future as no two years are the same.

I recently had the chance to visit some programs I hadn't visited in a while. I am always impressed by the quality of our staff and the quality of the services we provide our students. It is great seeing how our staff are constantly growing and evolving as the needs of our students and programs change.

We know this is not easy. The work that we do is challenging. We know that we are stronger and more effective together. Thank you for the work that you do. The Association will continue our work to better support our members, our students and our programs.

In Solidarity,
Joal Bova, President, RCG BOCES
Teachers' Association

We want to make sure that you are getting all that you can out of your membership. Make sure you are receiving communications from us through a personal email. Check out our website at <http://rcgboces.ny.aft.org/>. Follow us on Twitter, @BocesRcg. If you have not already created an online account do so at www.NYSUT.org. Our Local is RCG BOCES Teachers' Association and we are Local 10175. Once you log in you will have access to a variety of membership benefits.



The 2024-25 New York State Executive Budget proposes funding cuts for ALL school districts in New York State.

- The budget proposes **\$419 million** in underfunding
- **More than half of cuts** will be taken from districts classified as **High Needs Districts**
- Many of the **harshest effects** will be on needy districts and small, rural communities

To learn more about the budget proposals, visit: <https://fundourfutureny.org/>

Anyone who is a sports fan looks forward to the time when your favorite team once again is back in play. After the athletes start practices, but before the “official” games begin, is the pre-season.

The prefix “pre” means earlier, preparatory, in advance, a time to get ready for what’s next. In terms of wellness, one of the ways we can get ourselves ready for whatever is our next “season” is with preventive care.

Preventive care may include getting regular check-ups with your medical and/or dental care professionals. Your health care team may alert you to certain conditions that you may be able to improve or prevent from becoming a more serious problem.

These could include:

Pre-diabetes, high cholesterol, Osteopenia (pre-Osteoporosis), high blood pressure

With certain changes in lifestyle, such as nutrition and physical activity, as well as medical tests or recommended medications, you may be able to stop or even reverse the advancement of these conditions before they become more serious. Your doctor or EAP

should be able to direct you to information and programs to help you.

It’s also so important to take care of your emotional wellbeing. Athletes preparing for competition don’t wait until game day to get in shape. They know a routine of daily practice is the best preparation. Find something that works for you, whether it is meditation, prayer, yoga, exercise, checking in with a friend, taking your dog for a walk.

If you are experiencing more stress, increased anxiety or depression, especially if it is creating problems with sleeping, diet or your relationships, don’t wait and hope “things will get better”. Just like every team has a coach, you may find it helpful to work with a therapist for some guidance and life skills.

Coach John Wooden once said: “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail”. So don’t wait until a physical or emotional problem becomes a crisis.

By continuing to be an active participant in taking care of our physical and mental well-being, we can be ready to be the champions of our lives in any season!

Be well,
Mari Warfel, Member Wellness Coordinator

SHARED SUCCESS

“If agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have the chance to go right.” -M.S. Swaminathan

Agriscience Program Newsletter March 2024

This is the second year of the Questar III Agriscience program and it has taken off in more ways than one. Agriculture programs are composed of a three circle model which consists of the classroom/laboratory, FFA, future farmers of america, and SAE, supervised agricultural experience. Throughout this year the focus has been on getting this program set to revolve around these three concepts.

Starting with the classroom, students have been exposed to the following curriculum topics: Safety, soil science, hydroponics, horticulture, plant anatomy and physiology, photosynthesis/cellular respiration, the scientific method, FFA, SAE/record keeping, and floriculture. The way the program is designed is to have students focus on a plant science based curriculum one year with an emphasis on animal

science the opposite year. Students have had the opportunity to attend multiple field trips through the program to places which include: SUNY Cobleskill, Farm On Foundation, Wayward Ranch Animal Sanctuary, The Hen and the Hive, and Jourdin’s Maple LLC. Some projects we are working towards include starting a community garden and getting paddocks with sheds for animals for the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

Beginning the school year in September we were voted on by the National FFA Organization in New York to have our Questar III FFA chapter chartered. FFA is an intracurricular part of any agriculture program and a crucial part of student success. Since being formally established in September, we have created both a Senior and Junior officer team which consists of a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. As a chapter we have received \$10,000 in grant money and raised close to \$5,000 through

various fundraisers. Events we have attended include: winter weekend at camp Oswegatchie, Ignite leadership conference in Queens, NY, District 2 “districts” competition where 4/6 students have advanced onto substates which we will be attending in March. Students competed in various leadership development events, LDE, at districts which include: Sr. People in Ag, Sr. Creed speaking, Sr. Prepared Public Speaking, and Employability skills. All students advancing are also agriscience students who also serve as FFA officers. We also plan to attend the NYS FFA convention in May in Buffalo, NY where students will compete in various career development events, CDE. I am beyond proud of what my students have accomplished so far this year and am excited to see them grow both academically and personally.

Written by: Cassandra Monaco

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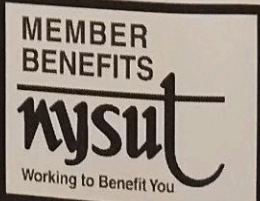
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