

Discover214

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We Are District 214

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D214: We Are a Leading High School District. Here's Why

Over the past year, High School District 214 has responded to the challenge of carrying out its mission in the face of a pandemic that has altered norms and routines for everyone.

Throughout, District 214 remains focused on preparing students for success beyond high school. By persevering. By innovating. A recent National Technical Honor Society induction ceremony highlighted a couple of examples. In one, District 214 College Manufacturing and College Automotive teachers created safe, socially distanced in-person labs, ensuring that students would continue to have the opportunity to earn dual credit. In another, one school hosted a socially distanced DECA competition for all of District 214, allowing business students the opportunity to apply skills learned in their classrooms in a safe and fun environment.

This issue of Discover 214 Magazine highlights other examples and shares accounts of the many ways in which District 214 is preparing students for future success:

- By teachers going above and beyond the call to create learning opportunities for and to support all students.
- By reimagining and retooling career pathways to reflect shifting professional needs and requirements.
- By nurturing partnerships with universities that have led to many more of our students earning college credit while still in high school.
- By working with the District 214 Education Foundation to create higher-education opportunities for first-generation students.
- By expanding apprenticeship opportunities that provide pay as well as on-the-job training.

The pandemic reminds us that our community partnerships are invaluable. Our partners support students in ways too numerous to list here. Community members donate generously to the Education Foundation's fund to assist families in need. Interest and participation in our Community Education and Adult Learning programs remains high in spite of current challenges.

We are proud to offer through this edition of Discover 214 Magazine a glimpse of the dedication, creativity and resourcefulness that make 214 one of the nation's leading high school districts.



Dan Petro, President
District 214 Board of Education



"We Are..."

– Dr. David R. Schuler

We are Community Partners.

District 214 both serves and is served by our community. Never has the value of our partnerships been more apparent. Since the pandemic began, the Education Foundation has received more than \$100,000 in donations for families in need. Rolling Meadows High School's greenhouse provides food for the community. Our Career and Technical Education teachers utilized 3-D printers and community partnerships to manufacture badly needed personal protection equipment. Numerous community businesses complement our efforts through generous donations of equipment or mentoring our students.

We are Lifelong Learners.

We believe in education at all levels, so we have built one of the nation's most robust community education programs, generating some 30,000 interactions with community members annually. We offer programming that includes enrichment courses and GED completion classes. For 35 years, the Read to Learn Adult Literacy/Volunteer program has been changing lives. In January 1985, Read to Learn started with just eight students and eight tutors. Today, we have established 13 learning sites and have trained more than 6,200 tutors and tutored over 13,000 students.

We are 214.

I never have been more proud of our educators. We have asked teachers to inspire and motivate students in a learning environment that none of us had ever experienced. They have risen to the challenge, devoting countless hours to ensuring that equally rigorous opportunities are available to students learning at home and students in our buildings. They have worked with students to learn in new ways and have provided them with invaluable support throughout these difficult months. Our educators have been a shining example of professionalism and dedication to serving our students and our community.



Dr. David R. Schuler, Superintendent
2018 National Superintendent of the Year

The past year has tested all of us in ways unlike any previous year and has brought changes that none of us anticipated or wanted. And yet, in the tradition of High School District 214, our students and staff have persisted. Adapted. Innovated. We have lifted one another up and stayed true to our mission of preparing students for success in a future we can only imagine. We continue to live that mission every day. This issue of Discover 214 Magazine highlights just a few of the many ways in which we prepare students for success beyond high school.

We are College Ready.

In addition to the rigor of our own classes, we are building strategic partnerships with universities, substantially expanding dual credit opportunities so that now 67 percent of our students across all demographics are participating in dual credit courses this year. Our virtual College and Career Ready! Night, featuring moderated panels and presenters, drew 500 attendees. We are opening the door to higher-education opportunities for first-generation students; our District 214 Education Foundation-funded Next Generation Pathway to Completion program recently celebrated the college acceptance of all 12 students in its inaugural year.

We are Career Ready.

Not only do we offer a vast array of Career Pathways, we also continually adjust and revise these pathways to meet changing workplace needs. Just one example, highlighted in this magazine, is the Multimedia Communications Pathway, which was redesigned to train students in the multiple platforms we use to disseminate information and stories today.

We are Life Ready.

While providing work-based learning experiences has become more challenging during the pandemic, we persevere here as well. Our second cohort of apprentices is currently working, earning wages in addition to gaining invaluable on-the-job mentoring.

For more from the cover visit:
www.d214.org/Page/2074

*Some images in this issue were taken before the pandemic.



Discover District 214 at a Glance



STUDENTS

12,000

Students in six comprehensive high schools and one specialized school

600

Academic programs and 140 co-curricular opportunities

70

Languages spoken at home

CAREER PATHWAYS

1,000+

Number of industry and business partners

97.6%

Students who identify a Career Pathway by senior year

2,400+

Workplace learning experiences in 2019-20

EARLY COLLEGE CREDIT

100+

Dual credit courses offered

47,000+

Potential college credits earned in 2019

83%

Seniors who successfully completed early college credit classes in 2017-18

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

30,000

Community Education interactions with lifelong learners

107

Students who received U.S. citizenship in 2019-20

28

Students who received GEDs and High School Equivalency diplomas in 2017-18

Discover

High School District 214

We Are College, Career and Life Ready



Megan Knight

In Partnership With Community, District 214 Prepares Students for College, Careers and Life

From academics and Career Pathways to work experiences and certification opportunities, High School District 214 encompasses so much more than traditional classroom education. The District focuses on preparing students for college, careers and life—and it is committed to working with the communities it serves as well.

As the District’s director of Academic Programs and Pathways, Megan Knight oversees a broad range of areas that define the District and its goals. Knight, now in her second year in her current position, draws on her 16 years of experience working in four District high schools, from English teacher to associate principal of instruction, to influence her contributions to the District.

In a recent interview, Knight discussed the District’s goals that guide how it works with its students, its faculty and its communities now and in the future.

Q District 214 has set college, career and life readiness as its overarching goal for its students. At the same time, it also believes in working with the communities in the District beyond its students and their families. So when we look at the theme of this issue, “District 214 is,” what does that mean to you?

A I really believe District 214 is transformational. Having had the privilege to work in four of the six comprehensive high schools, I can tell you each one is different from the next. But at the same time, we’re all a part of this large District that is working so hard to create opportunities for students that they can’t even imagine for themselves.

One of the things that makes us so unique, and this really is where so much of my work around the Career Pathways comes into play, is we’re not just focused on this moment or these four years. We truly see ourselves as playing a huge role in our students’ future trajectories.

[District Superintendent] Dr. [David] Schuler talks about “students can’t dream it if they can’t see it.” We live that. We have health science classrooms with hospital beds, and we have large classrooms that mimic courtrooms. It’s not just about what we do in this moment with these kids, it’s about what’s going to come next. And that’s something that we embrace Districtwide.

Q When you look at District 214’s programs, how do you prepare students for college and for careers in a way that goes beyond test scores and basic classroom work?

A Everything we do hinges on the college and career readiness indicators, and what we recognize is that they go hand in hand. What we’re not doing is teaching academic skills and career skills in two separate silos. By design, our Career Pathways model marries these different pieces. So whether we’re helping students meet graduation requirements or discover their future through a Career Pathways program, that’s one component of it.

We also place equal value on the experiential side of education. And that’s where we’re really looking at how we embed and integrate work-based learning into all of our students’ experiences. We’re constantly asking ourselves: How do we create capstone programs at the end of Pathways that capture both the academic and experiential sides of education?

Another way is by offering dual credit opportunities, which allow students to earn early college credit while in high school. These courses are future-focused, and the work students are doing in these classes regularly becomes a next step to their future. It’s a natural marriage of the two pieces of education and placing weight and value on both of them side by side.

“District 214 is transformational.

...We’re not just focused on this moment or these four years... it’s about what’s going to come next.”

Q When you combine college ready and career ready, how does that lead to life ready?

A What we’re looking at is the development of a requisite set of transferable skills. So much of what we do is focused on critical thinking, the ability to be analytical and then how that translates across content areas. Those are the 21st century skills that we know our kids need in order to be successful moving forward. And those are the pieces that we embed across all of our programs so our kids are able to take those skills with them into the next phase of their lives.

Q District 214 considers community partnerships an important component in preparing students for life beyond high school. What do these partnerships offer, and what do they mean for students?

A Our community partnerships, particularly through the Center for Career Discovery, become the backbone of the experiential or hands-on learning side of what we do. It’s one thing to have students sitting in classrooms, learning content and skills. It’s another thing entirely to have them put what they’re learning into action. So whether that’s through a 30-hour micro-internship, which is largely what we’re doing right now in our COVID world, a 60-hour internship or a 12-month apprenticeship, it’s that on-the-job experience in real-life settings that truly helps our kids affirm or change their career paths long-term.

Q How does this benefit local businesses and organizations that partner with you?

A High school students are an untapped resource. They are phenomenally talented, they’re creative, they are passionate. They bring so much to the table. So many of our external partners who have taken our students have been able to share stories about what the kids have brought to them.

A big piece of this, depending on the path, hinges on our ability to create a talent pipeline for our partners. We have a lot of kids who will do internships and then continue to work, and the internships become paid work, which is a benefit to the partner and to the student as well. So everything we do around work-based learning becomes a win-win for our students and for the community partners with whom they work.

Q Lifelong learning is also a critical element for District 214. How does this factor into the District’s mission as a whole?

A Our lifelong learning programs are an extension of our overall mission to instill the value of learning in our students. By making classes available to their families, their parents and the community at large, we’re fostering a passion for learning throughout the District and not just in the schools. We’re building a sense of community as part of our overall mission, and through lifelong learning, we are seeking opportunities for all of our community members.

The manufacturing program at Wheeling High School is a perfect example of that. We had a parent who works in a manufacturing shop, but was never able to advance because he lacked certification in particular manufacturing areas. Through our adult manufacturing program, he was able to work toward those certifications. I think that speaks volumes to how we value lifelong learning opportunities and view our public education system as an economic engine for our community and society as a whole.

Q What does it mean to District 214 to work not only with students and their families, but also with the community as a whole? What is the District’s ultimate goal?

A What we know is that 80 percent of our graduates come back to our communities to work and live. We want our kids to come back to us. We want our kids to want to raise their own children in the community in which they were raised.

I come back to that idea of public education being an economic engine. Some of the best measures of our success have to do with our ability to graduate students who are able to go on to pursue whatever it is that they choose in their postsecondary lives because we took the time to figure out how to match their personal interests with their next step. Because we created these incredibly innovative learning environments and staffed them with phenomenal teachers. And when I say teachers, I’m speaking broadly—I think that everybody who works in public education is a teacher in some rights.

Overall, it’s about forward progress in society and how we prepare our kids for what comes next so that when they do come back to us, they’re able to contribute as well. That’s the driver behind everything that we do. ■

Virtual College & Career Ready! Night Scores High Marks

High School District 214 introduces students to college and career opportunities in many ways, including the annual College and Career Ready! Night. This popular event draws hundreds of students and parents each fall to learn about the District’s program.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Director of Academic Programs and Pathways Megan Knight and her team made an innovative shift to ensure the event continued this school year. With the cooperation of a large team of presenters and panelists, Knight and her team took the October 20 event virtual. Moderated panels of D214 faculty, students and staff, joined by industry professionals and university and college partners, held in-depth discussions online about 13 Career Pathways.

Student and staff response was outstanding, with approximately 500 unique attendees and 800 views of the various panels—which was only the beginning, as all sessions were recorded and are available online. The virtual format actually increases access, giving students and families a permanent resource as they select courses and explore career opportunities long after the actual event.

“Even in the midst of a pandemic, a record number of current and future District 214 students and their families participated in College and Career Ready! Night, taking advantage of the opportunity to connect not only with District 214 administrators, faculty and staff, but also with our postsecondary partners, industry partners, former students and alumni,” Knight said. ■



The 16 Nationally Recognized Career Pathway Clusters

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Engineering and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

CareerNights

Life and career planning events

Panel recordings & related sessions

Accessed online at:

www.discover214.org/collegeandcareernight

Discover your future today.

College and Career Ready! Night:
A Virtual Event

We Are College Ready



Growth of Dual Credit Participation Benefits Students

Student participation and success in dual credit courses continues to grow rapidly in High School District 214. This is significant because students who complete dual credit courses are both better prepared for the rigor of college academics and also save money by accumulating college credits while still in high school.

In an update to the District 214 Board of Education during its October 29 workshop, Dr. Lazaro Lopez, associate superintendent for teaching and learning, explained the many ways in which dual credit success continues to grow. For instance, while only 11 percent of students from the Class of 2014 participated in a dual credit course—accruing a total of 705 course enrollments—74 percent of this year’s seniors will take at least one dual credit course, and the total dual credit enrollment count for the Class of 2021 will approach 11,000.

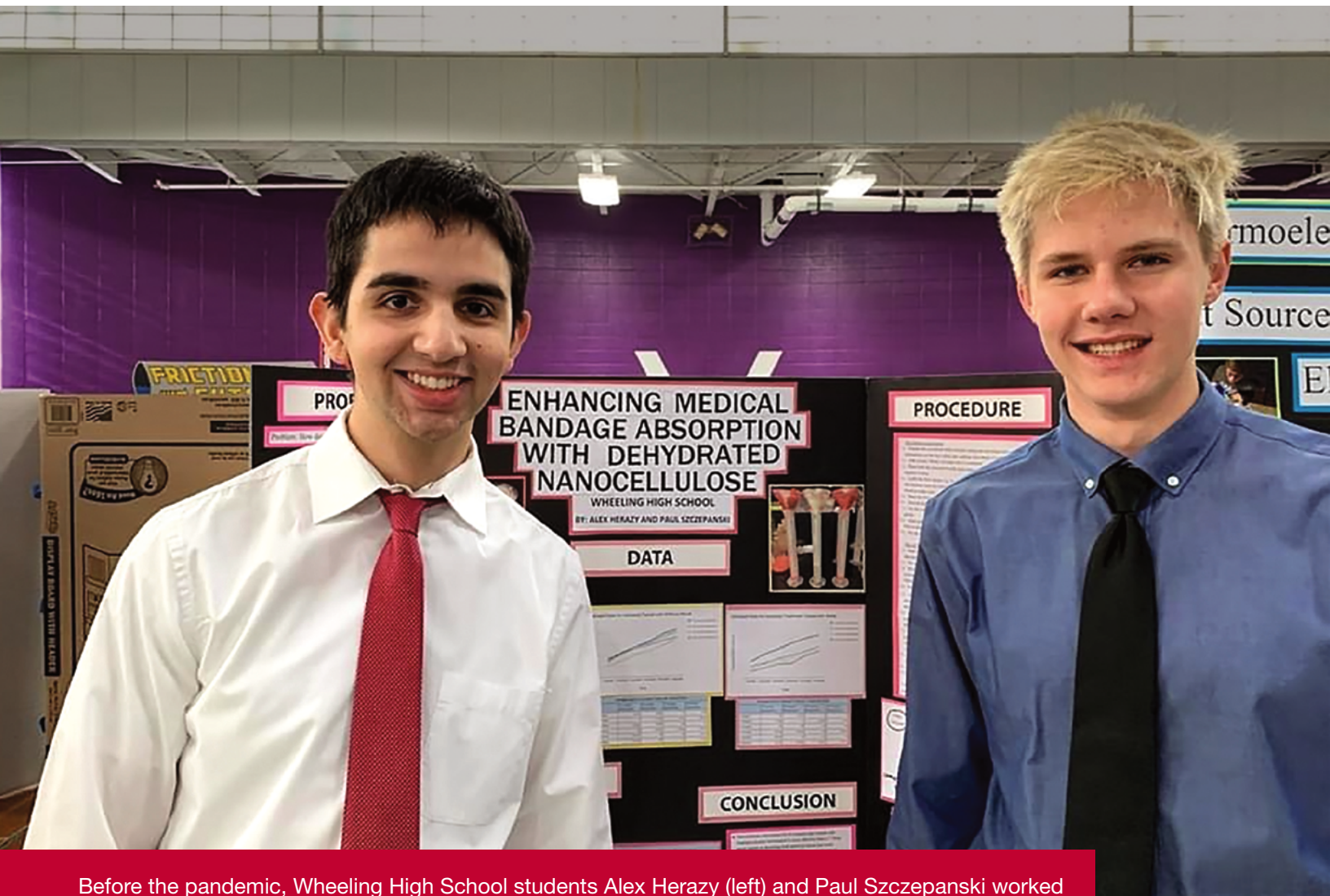
“We could not have delivered these opportunities for our community without the support of our several higher ed partners and the commitment by our teaching staff to earn the advanced degrees in their content areas needed to be

credentialed as university faculty,” Dr. Lopez said.

For years, school districts have fallen short in establishing equity for all students in dual credit classes. In that regard, District 214’s numbers and trends also are encouraging. Dual credit participation is relatively balanced by gender, race and income status, Dr. Lopez reported. The percentage of District 214 Latinx and African American students participating in dual credit programs has increased from 12 percent in the 2013-14 school year to 69 percent for the current year. Dual credit participation across all demographics is 67 percent for the District.

“With over 92 percent of seniors graduating having taken a college course, and 61 percent transitioning to higher ed with at least eight semester hours of credit, our students are fully prepared academically for the next stage of their education,” Dr. Lopez said.

Among the most popular dual credit courses are college speech communication, college composition, college intermediate Spanish, college algebra and college business. ■



Before the pandemic, Wheeling High School students Alex Herazy (left) and Paul Szczepanski worked to create a more effective medical bandage for their nanotechnology research project.

Nanotechnology Course Teaches Trial, Error and Victory

By Alex Herazy

When Paul Szczepanski and I decided to team up to develop a project for our nanotechnology research project at Wheeling High School, our main goal was to create something that would positively impact humanity. In researching various ideas, we eventually decided to try to create a more effective medical bandage after our teacher directed us to a bucket of nanocellulose in the back of the Nanotechnology Lab.

Nanocellulose is an organic plant-based substance in a gel-like form. Its structure can best be compared to spaghetti: It's composed of nano-sized spaghetti-like fibers that intertwine with each other. Preliminary research showed us that dry nanocellulose could absorb liquids

in high amounts, so we thought this would be a perfect product for replacing current medical bandages.

To start, we spent a great deal of time on preliminary experiments trying to find the best way to dehydrate the gel-like nanocellulose. While many of our classmates were designing experiments based on primary research they had read, we couldn't find any research that fit our ideas and had to generate our experiment from scratch. So we tried a lot of different methods of air drying, including using a dehydrator and an oven, with the virtual help of our mentor, Will Grubbe, who is working toward a Ph.D. in molecular engineering at the University of Chicago. He guided us through many trials and errors.

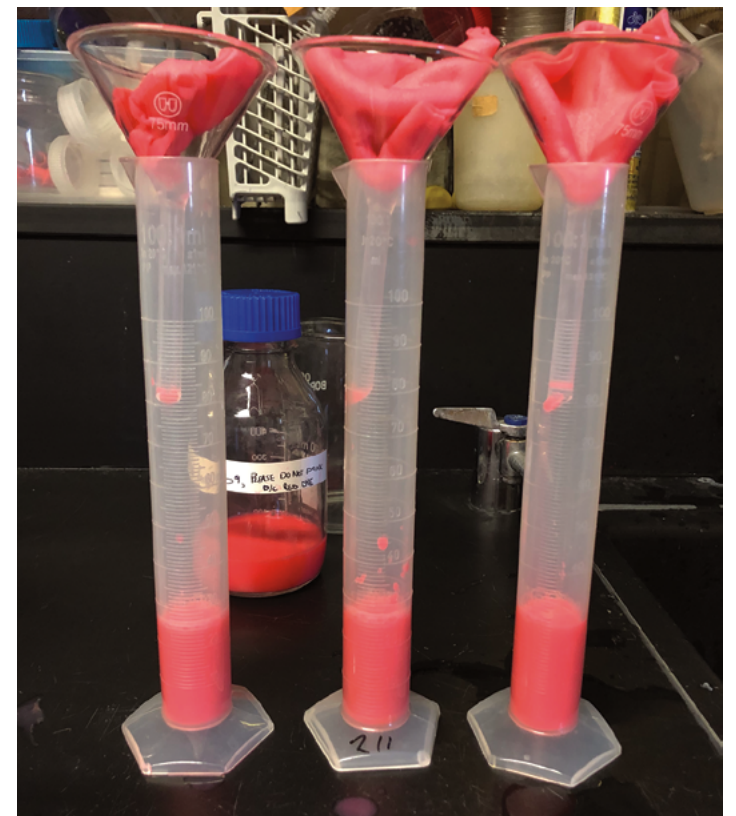
Our final experimental procedure involved changing the amount of dehydration time as determined by our preliminary experiments, then measuring the absorption of water and a synthetic blood with the nanocellulose samples we created. We also sprayed isopropyl alcohol on selected samples to add another variable that we thought might alter the nanocellulose porosity of our bandage and increase absorption. We completed three trials of this experiment and found nanocellulose at all dehydrated intervals was more effective at absorbing liquids than industry gauze.

In all, we put more than 260 hours into this project and tried over 50 combinations of variables to create the most absorbent bandage. And it paid off.

Our project won a Gold Award at the Illinois Junior Academy of Science Regional Fair and was selected for the Illinois State Science Fair, which was later canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. It also was honored as one of only 15 projects statewide to be selected for the Illinois Science & Technology Institute's Student Research Showcase at the Microsoft Technology Center in Chicago, which was moved to a virtual Facebook showcase.

Paul and I learned a lot from this project, especially thanks to ISTE's Mentor Matching Engine, an invitation-based web platform that connects Illinois high school students and their teachers to STEM professionals who serve as online mentors. That's how we met Will Grubbe, who mentored us throughout the project. We also benefited from the guidance and support of our teacher, Carol Bouvier, who discouraged us from using our own blood in our experiment but allowed us to wear lab coats to ensure we looked professional; a phenomenal substitute teacher, John Astreides, who stepped in for Ms. Bouvier when she was out for several weeks; Greg Wallace, a former University of Chicago researcher who currently teaches AP biology at Wheeling High School, who carefully reviewed and edited our 38-page project document; Bruce French, WHS division head for Math & Science, who helped with initial guidance and project planning; and Steven Bradley, a material scientist and president of Bradley Consulting Services, who volunteered to work with WHS's nanotechnology students and was always willing to offer advice.

Through this process we learned that one experiment can lead to others, and there are many possible ways to further this research. Once the most effective treatment for nanocellulose absorption is developed, we would next research how to apply these results and create an effective medical bandage. But that will have to wait. Paul graduated in May and is attending DePaul University, and I'm working through my senior year before going to college to study economics and public policy. ■



A final experiment involved measuring the absorption of water and synthetic blood with the nanocellulose samples.



Herazy and Szczepanski spent over 260 hours working with nanocellulose, an organic plant-based substance in a gel-like form.

Middle College Offers Students Best of Both Worlds

Some of High School District 214’s most vital work these days involves breaking down barriers to students’ post-high school success and, in place of those hurdles, charting new opportunities and roads to productive futures.

One such example is this year’s launch of District 214’s Middle College at the National Louis University Business Program. This program is designed exclusively for seniors committed to completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration at National Louis University following graduation from District 214.

This Middle College program, supported in part by a significant alumnus contribution to the District 214 Education Foundation, is currently giving 19 seniors a best-of-both-worlds opportunity as they divide their time between attending National Louis classes virtually and completing their District 214 courses.

The Middle College concept offers numerous advantages, including enormous financial benefits. Participating students will earn a full year of college credit by the end of their senior year, allowing them to complete their National Louis degree in just three years—effectively cutting their family’s college costs by 25 percent. This also potentially puts them in the job market a year earlier than they would have arrived otherwise.

In addition, Middle College gives D214 students the opportunity to adjust to college-level work while enjoying access to support from both high school and college staff. Sometimes that means helping students develop life skills that will serve them well in any setting.

For Wheeling High School senior America Munoz, Middle College meant balancing a fall semester course load of four high school classes and three National Louis courses: business, psychology and English. Munoz describes the workload as challenging but says support provided by National Louis helps. While her college classes have been offered exclusively through Zoom, National Louis also



provides weekly, in-person support sessions for the District 214 Middle College cohort.

Munoz was drawn to the program by a career interest in marketing, which she believes will offer her a chance to apply her creative talents in a business setting. So far, the Middle College experience has reinforced that interest, thanks in part to a professor who, she said, “really makes us think about real-life situations.”

Munoz also said that initially she was devoting a disproportionate effort on her National Louis courses, to the detriment of her high school work because “I didn’t want my college opportunity to go to waste.”

With time and support, she’s made appropriate adjustments, as have her classmates.

“A lot of them were scared to reach out to professors,” said Erin Torrisi, District 214 early college program supervisor. “We worked with that and explained that if you have a question, you should be emailing. The feedback we’ve gotten from National Louis is that our students are incredibly engaged, even in this online format. And the students’ grades speak to how hard they’re working.”

Torrisi also lauds the university’s work in welcoming D214 students, saying, “National Louis has done an incredible job of making these students truly immersed in the college experience, even in the midst of a pandemic. They’ve hosted activities on campus that, even if virtual, make our students feel like college students and create more of a connection with them to their professors.”

This is not District 214’s first Middle College offering. A pilot program with Harper College gives students interested in health science careers an opportunity to begin taking college classes in high school. Seniors committed to eventually completing a healthcare program at Harper are able to take dual credit classes in health science and general education at Harper while continuing their work in District 214. ■



First-Generation Students’ Path to College Aided by D214 Foundation

College was an enigma to Serena Bekteshi. There was a point when the High School District 214 senior, who will be a first-generation college student, didn’t quite understand the nuances of applying or what grants were and couldn’t quite figure out how scholarships might work.

Then came a turning point: the Next Generation Pathway to Completion, a donor-funded program created by the District 214 Education Foundation in partnership with District 214’s Student Services department. Bekteshi was part of the inaugural cohort of the program—a nationally unique offering providing support and guidance to first-generation students and their families beginning in students’ junior year of high school and continuing through college completion.

Now Bekteshi could ask her questions in a safe place and seek support from those in the know. She learned about standardized testing and how to prepare for her academic future. The results paid off: She’s been accepted to Marquette University and is completing other college applications for more options.

“When my family sees me walking across the stage with my diploma in my hands, I want them to think to themselves that it was worth it,” said Bekteshi, who plans to study biology and business and open her own orthodontics clinic. “All the pain and hardships we have come across, it was all worth it.”

To date, all 12 students in the program’s initial cohort—who signed letters of intent and shared their stories at an induction ceremony last fall—have been accepted to college. Some have received scholarships.

They’ve also reported the good news to Kathy Fox, a retired Buffalo Grove High School college counselor who has overseen the program in its initial years. Fox regularly visits with the students, ensures they’re staying on track with applications and financial aid forms, educates them on the basics of college and provides them and their families with support.



The group now will be matched with mentors for their college years, while District 214 welcomes its second cohort of first-generation students, representing every school in the District.

The program got its start several years ago, when college counselors reported a desire to have first-generation students attend college visits with their parents and turned to the Foundation for support.

“We knew we could, and should, do more for these students,” said Erin Holmes, executive director of the Foundation. “Higher education can be complicated for everyone, and for those who have no experience with the system in America, it can prove discouraging. It is so inspiring to see these students beaming with pride and knowing they have the support to make it work.”

The Pathway to Completion is funded by donors through the Foundation, with community partners also offering to assist with things such as mock interviews and summer job or internship placements. Students in the cohort will receive scholarships and laptops for college, and the mentors will guide both them and their families.

Those interested in funding the program can contact Holmes at erin.holmes@d214.org or 847-718-7688 or visit www.214foundation.org for further information. There are opportunities to sponsor students, college visits and entire portions of the program, or make other contributions.

Hundreds of District 214 students are considered first-generation, with their parents either having never attended college or attended in another country. The Foundation plans to slowly grow the cohort, always with the intent of involving the entire family in the support process. ■

We Are Career Ready



Education Pathway Winds its Way Through Invaluable Classroom Experience

High School District 214’s Career Pathways are designed to prepare students for success beyond high school by supporting their interest in a particular field or by pointing them in a different direction.

For Wheeling High School senior Stephanie Tadda, the program confirmed her decision to pursue her dream. Almost from the day she walked into Wheeling’s preschool program to teach after completing her Foundations of Learning and Development course, she knew that her future would lie in teaching.

“At that [preschool] age they find everything joyful and exciting,” Tadda said. “They’ll say, ‘Look, it’s snowing!’ when as an adult, I am more worried about driving in the snow or shoveling. Being with young students makes me a better person.”

Pursuing a profession, of course, hinges on more than warm feelings. District 214’s Education pathways have prepared Tadda for a teaching career and reinforced her commitment in many practical ways.

“My teachers have helped me to understand the significance of content and lesson planning—how to present the content, how to get the kids engaged and ensure understanding,” Tadda said. “The program started with a preschool learning plan; then as we progressed to 3rd, 6th, 10th grade, the lesson plans became more complex. The teachers use a step-by-step methodology, and all of that that is well explained.”

District 214 offers Career Pathways in early, primary and secondary education. The District’s Educator Prep program teaches students the skills and knowledge

needed to become successful educators while offering dual credits and the opportunity to observe and teach in classrooms.

And District 214’s program was created for students interested in a teaching career locally by offering the opportunity to take education classes, earn college credits and gain student teaching experiences at area schools. The program has 450 students Districtwide, half of whom are students of color. The goal is for these future teachers to teach in the community where they grew up.

While this year of hybrid and remote school is not anyone’s ideal, it has provided education students with invaluable lessons in flexibility and adaptability.

For Linda Thorson, who teaches education courses at Rolling Meadows High School, being flexible has translated into working with her high school students to create a Mini Mustang Lab School for the 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds enrolled in Rolling Meadows’ preschool program. Instead of being in a classroom with preschoolers, Thorson’s high school students establish a weekly theme, create lesson plans and send the preschoolers video guides to lessons, including reading, songs and fingerplays. The “Mini Mustangs” go through these videos with their caregivers independently and do the activities at their own pace.

“Parents tell us that their children love this and sometimes will like one video and play it over and over again,” Thorson said, adding that the high school students still gain the learning benefit of creating lesson plans.

For Prospect High School’s Joyce Kim, who teaches

I call our students teachers because they are teachers. It’s important for them to feel that ownership. It’s important for students to learn that no matter what else is going on for them, they know that ‘I have to put this all aside when I walk into a classroom’ because then it’s all about your students.”

— Linda Thorson

College Intro to Education and Intro to Teaching Methods, the pandemic has given her the chance to bring in guest speakers via Zoom.

“We brought in a graphic novel author by Zoom to talk with us,” Kim said. “He was teaching a class himself and talked to our students for 20 minutes while his students were in breakout rooms. That opportunity wouldn’t have happened if not for remote learning, and our kids were so inspired that they got to hear him tell his story. It was awesome. I also connected with my student teacher from a couple of years ago. She’s now at Elk Grove High School, and she’s going to talk with us by Zoom about how you handle yourself as a young teacher teaching high school students.”

In addition, Kim said, the pandemic has nudged her to broaden her view of legitimate teaching resources that are often forgotten, such as using Twitter feeds to share resources about racial justice and social equity.

And, said Wheeling High School Education Academy teacher Rebecca Castro, students who have successfully navigated remote learning will be “light years ahead on technology.”

In the end, working through pandemic-related challenges seems likely to sharpen the preparation of students looking to become teachers.

Said Thorson: “I challenge students to ask, ‘Do I want to do this or not?’ It doesn’t matter what level you want to teach in; you get in the pathway on the ground level as freshmen. I call our students teachers because they are teachers. It’s important for them to feel that ownership. It’s important for students to learn that no matter what else is going on for them, they know that ‘I have to put this all aside when I walk into a classroom’ because then it’s all about your students. Because that’s what teachers do.” ■



At that [preschool] age they find everything joyful and exciting. ... Being with young students makes me a better person.”

— Stephanie Tadda

#214Learns

A Day in the Life of Learning in D214

District 214 staff and students do amazing things every day. They create, innovate and solve problems. They serve their communities. They discover their future. And they track the highlights online at www.d214.org/Page/2074.

life @D214Life

Congrats to our LIFE student Dan for exiting our program with a full-time job with @KeatsMfg! Dan started his vocational experience through Career Discovery & impressed Keats so much that they pursued him to offer employment. Good luck Dan, we'll miss you! @District214

2:18 PM · Dec 9, 2020

54 See life's other Tweets

Patrick McGing @EGHS_CTE

Wow! This is quite impressive.

Ryan Christie @EGHSJapanese

It's amazing when you ask your Japanese 2 students to create a visual of their dream room for their final project and they come back with images incorporating the skills they learned in classes like art survey and engineering. @eghs_art @EGHS_CTE

12:50 PM · Dec 16, 2020

5 See Patrick McGing's oth...

WHS Mock Trial @MockWhs

A huge thank you to the @D214Foundation and our donors who helped us supply our Mock Trial Team with formal wear for this year's competitions! We are incredibly grateful for your support and could not do it without you! @District214 @WeidnerDan @jerrycook73 @signorahawkins

2:41 PM · Dec 17, 2020

13 See WHS Mock Trial's o...

jerrycook @jerrycook73

New Health Careers Lab is coming along. Accent walls being painted. Tracks for privacy curtains installed. Mock bathroom is built. Can't wait to unveil next month. #relevant spaces. #STEM @STEMLdr @District214 our CMA rocks!!

9:14 AM · Dec 11, 2020 from Wheeling, IL

29 6 Copy link to T...

profe @MrJuanibarra

Can you tell I'm smiling under my mask?! It is such an honor to be recognized for working with our EL students @RMHSMUSTANGS !! Thank you @MLuckritz and the whole EL team!! Mil Gracias 🙏 A seguirle echando ganas!!

1:00 PM · Dec 17, 2020 from Chicago, IL

32 See profe's other Tweets

Buffalo Grove Network @BGN_bghs

"Creators Without Desires" a short film written, directed, edited, and composed by Multimedia Production student Neko Heinrich #214learns @BG_Bison @District214

9:13 AM · Dec 18, 2020

See Buffalo Grove Network...

Mrs. Nicol... · Dec 15, 2020 @stoltz_nic...

Replying to @stoltz_nicole

The Humanities art show is my favorite day of the year. These amazing seniors did not disappoint! So proud of their hard work! #everyknight @District214 @KnightsOfPHS #phslearns

Mrs. Nicole Stoltz @stoltz_nicole

The Humanities art show is my favorite day of the year. These amazing seniors did not disappoint! So proud of their hard work! #everyknight @District214

LifeAfterHersey @LifeAfterHersey

Another new episode of "Career Chats with Mr. Chiakulas" premiered TODAY with 2005 @HerseyHuskies alumna Lara Driscoll! Lara is a professional performer and music educator and has released several albums. @HerseyBand #214Learns

Watch the episode here: youtu.be/ZT_N8e38PZc

RMHS Theatre @TheatreRMHS

Join us tonight at 7pm for our second live stream and talk back of Around the Kitchen Table! Zoom access and additional details at meadowstheatre.com! 🍷🍷🍷 #aroundthekitchentable #devisedtheatre @RMHSMUSTANGS @d214finearts @RMFineArts @MLuckritz @D214Justice

3:46 PM · Dec 12, 2020 from Wheaton, IL

11 See RMHS Theatre's o...

Christina Jou-Kim @JouChristina

We can find some good and stay positive even in the midst of a pandemic through SEL activities @214Newcomer @District214. #214learns #SEL #PositiveVibes

10:24 AM · Dec 1, 2020

4 See the latest COVID-19 ...

Tina A @t_athans

Impressed with Criminal/Civil Law with their mock trial of Illinois vs. Buckley. Great opening statements and presentation of witnesses. #Everyknight @KnightsOfPHS @District214 @d214CareerDisc

10:26 AM · Dec 14, 2020

22 See Tina A's other Tweets

Ms. Park @MsPChem

Science Club @ElkGrove_HS found ways to experiment with all that old Halloween candy at home #AllInTheNameOfScienceOfCourse #214Learns #WeAreEG

5:46 PM · Dec 3, 2020

8 See Ms. Park's other Twe...

Prospect Fine Arts @PHSFineArt

Tonight these 28 brave students put on their winter play! Show goes live at 7 pm, but log on beforehand for pre-show & the ability to participate. We are so proud of their work! Go to phsfinearts.com for show links &

D214 Foundation @D214Foundation

The Education Foundation is proud to launch the Bob Frisk Legacy Fund, in partnership with Districts 211 and 220. District 214 will use the fund to support Career Pathway experiences for students interested in careers in #journalism. #BobFrisk



“To be able to sit across from someone and have a conversation; to look someone in the eye and listen to what they’re saying; to have those interview skills... whether they become a lawyer, or doctor, or work in PR or whatever, these are skills that are universal.”

– Jason Block

D214 Builds Multimedia Pathway for a New Media World

Change is the only constant and nowhere is that more true than in mass communications, where a 6:30 a.m. newspaper on every doorstep and a 6:30 p.m. newscast in every home have given way to a dizzying array of cable networks, podcasts, online news sites, social media platforms, video outlets and streaming sites.

To prepare students for careers in this shifting landscape, District 214 has launched a redesigned Multimedia Communications Pathway. The objective? To introduce students to the skills and judgment required to work across any or all of these media, preparing them for a range of professions, including—but not limited to—audio and video equipment technician, broadcast news analyst, camera operator, film and video editor, producer or director, public relations specialist, writer, reporter or sound engineering technician.

“Journalism is not going away; it’s evolving. But so many districts have gotten rid of media or journalism programs,” said Buffalo Grove English and Multimedia teacher Stefanie McCleish, who was drawn to D214 in part because of the District’s commitment to updating its teaching of multimedia communications.

Where District 214 students once progressed through a sequence of journalism or broadcast courses, they now begin with foundational writing skills paired with an introduction to multimedia communication and then advance to working with all contemporary communication platforms.

Jason Block, who has taught journalism and English at Prospect High School for 16 years, says the change in course names and sequence conveys to students that the pathway involves much more than writing. “I think one misconception before was that if you’re not a gifted writer, then you can’t succeed in or enjoy this course,” he said. “The new focus is that there are many ways to tell a story. We work with students to say, ‘I want to tell this story. Now let’s examine the elements and decide: Is it best told in a written story? Is it best told in a photo story? Is it best told in a podcast?’”

Students can learn to tell stories in all of these ways—and more—in the Multimedia Communications Pathway. Building on that concept, schools are combining previously siloed communication platforms. For instance, the new Buffalo Grove Network is an umbrella for students working collaboratively on The Charger newspaper, the Stampede yearbook, BGTV and a new podcast, “The Unspoken Herd.” Similarly, Prospect is rebranding its newspaper, The Prospector, as Knight Media, which also encompasses the newspaper’s online presence as well as Knight TV and a podcast, “Knight Voices.”



Students are utilizing these opportunities to deliver a wide range of stories—from livestreaming band concerts and swim meets to live tweeting a staged news conference, or from serious print accounts of election result implications to fun TV reports covering friendly debates about when it’s OK to start displaying holiday decorations.

This approach pays career-readiness dividends. “Now, when you get into the media world, you’re not just a writer,” McCleish said. “You might have to take photos. You might have to edit your own film clips. You might be going on social media. You really need all these skills to stand out and be marketable.”

Said Elk Grove High School teacher Kevin Modelski, “This is a field that is about getting experience and clips and projects, so it’s beneficial for students to pursue stories that interest them in ways that interest them. If they do pursue this in college, then they already have a body of work that shows they’re capable of telling stories at that higher level.”

Introducing students to so many means of communicating helps them decide which aspects of multimedia communications most interest them. Prospect High School sophomore Alyssa Degan entered the pathway with a long-standing interest in video. “Mr. Block is really good at introducing us to all the things so that we really know what we’re doing and how to do it,” she said. “I’m thinking of maybe moving out of news and more to creative video. What we’ve done so far definitely helps me know how to do other things.”

Buffalo Grove senior Zoey Heinrich, co-editor of Buffalo Grove’s student newspaper, agrees that working through the pathway has helped her sort out what she wants to pursue. While she no longer envisions a journalism career, she values the experience. “Being part of a newspaper and now multimedia program has given me a very solid writing and editing background that will be important no matter where I end up,” she said.



On that point, the Multimedia Communications teachers agree. “To be able to sit across from someone and have a conversation; to look someone in the eye and listen to what they’re saying; to have those interview skills ... whether they become a lawyer, or doctor, or work in PR or whatever, these are skills that are universal,” Block said.

Equally important, particularly when information is disseminated through so many sources, are imparting journalistic values that apply across all platforms and learning how to be informed consumers of news and information.

So, in addition to helping students assess and analyze the quality and reliability of news and information they are consuming, Modelski said, multimedia teachers also instill core values. “We still hammer home all the principles of American journalism,” he said. “We still start off with teaching news values, principles, ethics, court cases, all the basics that you need. We go over court cases; we want them to know what they can do as student journalists and what they can’t do.” ■

We Are Life Ready

Internships Offer Students Real-World Experience

Displayed on posters and banners throughout High School District 214's schools, "Redefining Ready!" is a familiar phrase to many District students. It's far more than an alliterative slogan—the District has taken many steps to ensure its students are prepared for life after high school, most notably through its work-based learning programs.



Rachel Sowa

These programs set students up with professional work opportunities, helping them to develop career skills before they enter the workforce or invest time and money in postsecondary education or training.

For Rachel Sowa, a University of Notre Dame freshman and a 2020 Buffalo Grove High School graduate, the program gave her the opportunity to intern at

LocalMed, a company that connects dental workers with their clients through their online interfaces.

Sowa assumed a wide range of responsibilities, according to LocalMed Marketing Assistant Emily Dunkin. She primarily worked with the company's business development team and also assisted the marketing team.

"She helped us with social media," Dunkin said. "We went to several events that we sell at, so she helped us in making sure we had the right supplies for those."

For Sowa, it was a chance to test her interest in business. "I never really had hands-on experience in a business environment, and I wanted to make sure that this is a career path that I wanted to go into," Sowa said last spring. "By taking an internship, I knew I would be able to get that hands-on experience and learn what business is truly about."

In addition to the internship, Sowa took a variety of business-related courses at Buffalo Grove and participated in DECA, an entrepreneurship group that competes at the regional, state and national levels. By design, her work-based experience, classroom work and co-curricular activities all complemented one another. For example, Sowa said her use of Google Sheets in her Financial Accounting class at Buffalo Grove prepared her to use the program to organize client information at LocalMed.

"That actually really helped directly translate over to where I had to use exactly what I learned in class at my internship," Sowa said "Meanwhile, my internship really helped to increase my confidence, because I was able to determine that this is what I'm passionate about."

But Sowa wasn't the only one to reap rewards from the opportunity. Dunkin said LocalMed also benefited by working with Sowa.

"It's fun to see how technologically handy students in high school are, because they pick up on things super quickly," Dunkin said. "So while it's fun to teach them as much as we can, they usually end up teaching us something too."

How pleased was LocalMed with Sowa's work? Enough to hire her over the summer as a part-time employee working mainly in sales.

Sowa says that compounded the internship's value. "I was able to further develop skills such as time management, accountability and efficiency," she said. "It's been such an amazing experience."

Now at Notre Dame, Sowa reflects on the ongoing value of an internship—even one disrupted by a pandemic.

"My business internship at LocalMed taught me a variety of skills that I can utilize in college and beyond. I was able to see how the various internal departments work together," Sowa said. "For example, I had the opportunity to work with both the marketing and the sales team. That hands-on experience helped me to decipher that I'm interested in the social aspect of sales. Based on that ... I've decided to pursue a management consulting major at Notre Dame where I'd be able to work with a variety of firms one-on-one in a more personal manner."



Remington Jankusky

TEACHING/TRAINING: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

For his micro-internship, Remington Jankusky worked with an 8th grade class at a Mount Prospect middle school. While he had taught pre-schoolers at Hersey, Jankusky discovered that working with 8th graders is a lot different.

The experience played a large role in solidifying his postsecondary plans. "In college, I plan to major in early education, and hopefully after college, I can be employed as a teacher."



Kane Lecomte

FINANCE

Interested in business and economics, Kane Lecomte did his micro-internship researching sustainable purchasing policies for the Village of Mount Prospect.

Lecomte said the opportunity reinforced his path in finance. It also taught him the importance of workplace skills. "Sticking to a strict schedule, having to be there on time, dressing up and having set times and deadlines really prepared me for being successful in the future."

Culinary Arts Pathway Serves up a Learning Buffet

The Culinary Arts Career Pathway offers District 214 students the opportunity to explore careers in food preparation, service and management through a combination of classroom courses and work-based experience in professional kitchens throughout the community.

Like all Career Pathways, Culinary Arts begins with the fundamentals. "Every single class starts with safety and sanitation," said Elk Grove High School culinary instructor Erin Ludewig, explaining that these lessons establish the foundation for everything that follows. In Foods 1 and 2, students earn the basic safety certification, solidify knife skills and study measurement, conversion and basic recipe prep—all skills that carry over into actual jobs. For example, Elk Grove High School senior Martin Lopez says he has already used the measuring conversions that he memorized in Foods 1 and 2 for his job at Panera Bread.

After mastering these classes, culinary students advance to ProStart 1 and 2, where they earn an official food handlers certification from ServSafe that is recognized by most restaurants and the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation.

In the ProStart class sequence, students also drill deeper into the outside-the-kitchen skills they will need to succeed in the culinary world. "Not only are they learning food preparation skills," Ludewig said, "but they're learning the professional aspect of running the business too—communication and professionalism, menu development and marketing."

This deeper level of understanding, Ludewig said, helps her students understand that they are not limited to "standing in a kitchen." Her goal is to foster their passion for the culinary arts through career discovery, whether that be event catering and banquets, cooking on the line or pastry artistry.

ProStart 2 students advance to internships with local businesses to refine their culinary skills and discover in practice if this is the right career pathway for them.

One of District 214's most dedicated community partners is Frato's Culinary Kitchen in Schaumburg. After reaching out to Ludewig to host a pizza-creating competition for D214 students, Frato's became a D214 community partner in 2017.



Frato's owner Mike Kudrna describes his kitchen as "a unique concept built on evolving with the ever-changing landscape" that "serves as a training ground for passionate young culinary students."

At Frato's, students are trained in specific hands-on skills, techniques and methods of cooking, but most importantly, they learn how to work within a team.

At the restaurant, students work on their skills in both operations and creation. Kudrna believes students need to be well-rounded in both areas in order to survive in a professional environment where customers reward both.

The application of classroom skills to a real world kitchen at Frato's and other area establishments provides a well-rounded experience.

Not only are they learning food preparation skills; they're learning the professional aspect of running the business too.

— Erin Ludewig

From a student's perspective, Lopez said he recognized the value of transitioning from familiarizing himself with the kitchen, to learning industry practices and finally to filling orders on his own. He said one of his biggest takeaways from the internship has been learning to be more vocal on a team, adding, "You have to communicate with everyone because everyone is doing something different."

Overall, Lopez said, "I love doing it, and it's really fun."

But the internship is also designed to show students the reality of culinary careers, as they grapple with the not-so-glamorous side of the business. This exposure, Kudrna said, is what "ensures growth in their passion or a realization that the industry is not the right fit for them."

He believes by helping these students grow and refine their skills, he is not just helping his business and the students but also the greater community. "By helping others, we improve ourselves and everything [and] everyone around us," he said. "Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?" ■





D214 Graduate Exits the *life* Program and Lands Full-Time Manufacturing Job

When Dan Soto landed a full-time manufacturing job, he was making much more than critical parts for various machines—he was also making a major positive change in his life.

Soto, who participated in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program at John Hersey High School, was part of the District 214 *life* program for almost three years. Despite his hearing challenges, he was able to gain interdependence and manufacturing skills with the assistance of the *life* program, which provides transitional services following high school.

“Dan is probably one of the nicest and most genuine students that I have had,” said Katie Termion, his case manager. “He’s a hard worker, and he’s very aware of others and their feelings.”

Termion said that while students have been hired in part-time positions and volunteer experiences, it is unusual for a student to be hired for a full-time position while in the *life* program.

“Dan has been a smashing success,” Termion said, pointing out that he was offered a full-time manufacturing job with insurance and a 401(k) plan.

“He’s trying to be better and better,” said Dan’s father, Celso Soto, about his son’s manufacturing work. “I am so happy with this program. His life has changed.”

In addition to learning new job skills, Celso said his son is more motivated in general now, developing new hobbies such as running.

In the *life* program, which currently has an enrollment of 110, students spend half of the day in the classroom and the other half participating in volunteer vocational experiences, often with a job coach from District 214. Program training includes daily living and communication skills, work-based learning and personal management.

Dan received on-the-job experience through the *life* program at Keats Manufacturing Co., a Wheeling-based company that makes precision metal parts for vehicles, airplanes and more. Based on his work, the company decided to hire Dan for a full-time position.

“They realized what a valuable employee he would be,” said Jack O’Neal, with the District 214 *life* program, adding that Keats Manufacturing has been very supportive of the District’s students over the years. Other *life* program partnerships include healthcare, hospitality and retail businesses.

Dan also received support from Julie Lee, his American Sign Language interpreter throughout his time in the *life* program.

“We helped him with [building his life skills], but this is all coming from him,” said Termion, who added that Dan’s strong work ethic and character got him where he is today. ■



D214 Apprentices Earn College Credit, On-the-Job Experience—and a Paycheck

Any solid foundation offers the opportunity for growth and expansion.

Now several months into its second year, High School District 214’s Apprenticeship program is building on the success of its inaugural year. Not only is it branching out to serve more students in more fields, it’s also begun to enlist community partners as apprenticeship hosts and mentors.

The Apprenticeship program started with students working in HVAC and cybersecurity for District 214. This year, seven students are working with the District as well as community hosts in a move that benefits both the student and the host, District 214 Partnership Manager Kathy Wicks said.

“We are trying to help our hosts with their talent pipeline,” Wicks said of the program’s new move. “Healthcare providers, for example, are always looking for talent. It’s a natural fit; we have students looking for training, and the apprenticeship hosts get a chance to train prospective employees.”

This year’s class of seven apprentices is engaged in a variety of fields. Three are working in cybersecurity, two in automotive, one as a nursing assistant and one in construction and trades. Last year, four seniors from the Class of 2020 completed their apprenticeships in HVAC and cybersecurity with D214 despite pandemic-related challenges.

It’s a natural fit; we have students looking for training, and the hosts get a chance to train prospective employees.” – Kathy Wicks

Apprenticeships differ from internships or other work-based learning experiences in that students devote more hours to apprenticeships. And—significantly—they get paid. The program is rigorous and designed for students who have made firm decisions about a career choice by midway through their junior year.

Once apprentices are selected, they engage in about 15 hours per week of on-the-job training during the school year, in addition to college coursework and mentoring. During the summer, apprentices work up to 28 hours a week to expand their skills. At the end of the program, students receive either a federally registered apprenticeship certification or a youth apprenticeship certification in addition to up to a year of college credits.

This year, the program expanded as the Greek American Rehabilitation and Care Center in Wheeling, R & R Towing and Auto Repair Services in Wheeling, Symphony Health in Buffalo Grove, and Arlington Heights Ford in Arlington Heights all offered to serve as hosts. While the pandemic compelled some partners to delay their involvement, Wicks is no less grateful for their willingness to work with District 214.

“This virus threw everyone for a loop, and it was important for us as a district to understand and meet our partners where they are,” she said.

Prospect High School senior Bethany Cook is currently working in a cybersecurity apprenticeship, which is helping her make decisions about her career course. “This apprenticeship has already helped me advance my education because I’m enrolled in college classes for cybersecurity/networking,” she said.

She also spoke of the program’s value in professional networking: “Just being able to make connections with people that are already in the field and learn how they got to where they are will always interest me.”

Elk Grove High School senior Brendan Shorey, working in construction and trades, said, “The apprenticeship is helping me learn how to correctly use heavy tools and read measurements. It’s taught me a lot of ways to be safe and work in the construction environment.”

Looking ahead, Wicks said, the program’s goal is to roughly double the number of apprenticeships each year and to add additional fields. Any business interested in learning more can contact Partnership Manager Kathy Wicks at kathy.wicks@d214.org. ■

We Are Community Partners

District Tech Teams Go the Extra Mile to Support Students

Sometimes thinking outside the box means thinking—and venturing—outside the building.

So it was with High School District 214 Technology Department mobile help desk units. With COVID-19 compelling the District to rely primarily on remote learning as this academic year began, each of the District’s six comprehensive high schools dispatched tech staff members into the community to help students resolve problems that cropped up.

As school opened with many students learning remotely, District 214 techs set up shop in local parks or elementary school grounds to take care of students’ needs. Sometimes that meant swapping out an iPad that needed repair or assisting with unwieldy passwords. Sometimes it meant delving into a Zoom issue or loading onto an iPad a learning app that had gone missing. But almost always, it meant meeting student and family needs by answering questions and handling matters that the tech staff would normally field face-to-face at school.

Like many good ideas, this one stemmed from collaboration—this time in the form of a problem-solving conversation among colleagues. Tony Schlorff, district director of instructional technology & technology services, explains: “I was talking with our tech supervisor at Prospect, Kevin Kolcz. We were brainstorming: How do we continue to support our students and parents when they’re at home? In the spring, when COVID shut down everything so suddenly, we created a knowledge-based website for students needing help. That’s what we could do when we were up against a time crunch. During the summer we had more time to plan. What could we do differently?”

“We had a help desk still running,” Schlorff said, “but it was still, ‘Send an email, and we’ll get back to you.’ Or, ‘Call and we’ll get back to you.’ And so many times, when you need support, you need it right then.”

Eventually, their discussion led to Schlorff asking: “Why are we making people come to us when we could go to them?” He asked Kolcz to develop a plan based on that concept—and he got that plan in only a day or two.

“Kevin sent me a text saying, ‘I’ve got this whole plan,’ ” Schlorff said. “It looked good, so we fine-tuned it and sent

a message to parents and students that we had picked some spots, mostly at parks and elementaries that are neighborhood-located. Then we set up a recurring schedule, saying ‘We’ll have a support person at this spot for a couple of hours every Tuesday at a certain time.’ ”

On the first day that Prospect set up its mobile help desk—with masks and social distancing in place—a line of students and parents had formed even before starting time.

“The feedback from parents was great,” Schlorff said. “They said, ‘This is amazing. We didn’t know how to help, and the kids are so used to going to the help desk at school.’ ”

Seeing the demand for the service and hearing the appreciation expressed by parents and students alike, Schlorff challenged the tech supervisor at each of the District’s schools to tailor his or her own mobile help plan.



“I told everyone it doesn’t have to be this plan,” Schlorff said. “It doesn’t even have to be super similar. I just want us to be able to meet the needs.”

The tech supervisors responded with plans to meet each community’s needs. Elk Grove and Wheeling high schools, for instance, scheduled more weekend hours for their mobile help desks, knowing that schedule works better for many families in those buildings. Each school tried to establish a recurring schedule so students can count on a mobile help staffer being available at a specific place and time each week. Tech supervisors deployed their staff so that some members worked at mobile sites while others continued to take help requests sent via email or phone.

It all, Schlorff says, came back to continuing to work on the same question: “How do we continue to support our students and parents when they’re at home?” ■

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 214



Community Fuels Education Foundation Campaign, Bringing Relief to Hundreds of Families in Need

It has been nearly a year since the District 214 Education Foundation launched 214Cares—a response to the national COVID-19 quarantine aimed at helping students and families most significantly affected by the pandemic. In that year, much has changed. Normal has shifted. But the need has remained—and grown.

The giving response was significant: alumni, community members, parents and staff have provided more than \$111,000—and counting—for the effort, with gifts coming in nearly every day. The money stays in District 214 and makes a life-changing difference. A gift of \$250 adopts a family, providing funding for food and other basic needs. Gifts of all sizes drive change.

The effort had aided more than 400 families in the first nine months, some of them more than once, at every high school in District 214. The campaign is a monumental team effort, with collaboration among school counselors and social workers who identify the families in need, Foundation staff and the Foundation’s Student Needs Task Force, a group of retirees, community members and Foundation Trustees who have helped set funding perimeters and ensure needs are met.

“This has been one of the most inspiring and impactful initiatives I’ve ever seen,” said Tom Munz, president of the Foundation Board of Trustees. “While the pandemic continues to magnify the inequities within our student body, our community has come together to give our students and our families peace of mind, better opportunities and hope. It matters.”

“This has been one of the most inspiring and impactful initiatives I’ve ever seen.”

– Tom Munz

Much of the funding has gone to basic needs like food and household supplies. Gifts also have been disbursed for utility bills—often restoring electricity or heat for families, car repairs to help families get to work, medical expenses, rent or mortgage payments and curricular needs. In addition, the Foundation has turned to District business partners, who typically work with and inspire high school interns, to examine possibilities for job opportunities for those out of work.

Amid job loss and illness, needs continue to grow, and the Foundation now is considering options to expand the program to more broadly address needs for families in dire need situations, beyond the pandemic impact—or in the long-term aftermath of COVID-19.

To give to the campaign, visit www.214foundation.org and select “Impact.” The Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization supporting District 214, and gifts go entirely to the students and families. Gifts are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law and make a life-changing difference. ■



Wheeling High School Offers Enrichment Through ‘Tutoring in the Park’

As public health guidelines compelled District 214 to offer a mix of remote and in-person learning throughout the school year, providing in-person enrichment opportunities for students became a persistent challenge.

While school staff made countless adjustments to ensure that students enjoyed equitable learning experiences regardless of whether they were at home or in a school building, they also came to see that providing enrichment opportunities would require additional recalibration.

At Wheeling High School, Becky Kinnee realized that while she knew how to give her own children access to these kinds of programs, others weren’t as fortunate. “If I want enrichment experiences for my own children, I have the means to search and find experiences,” she said. “I want that to be possible for all students. How can we come alongside families to offer support?”

That’s when the idea that “it takes a village” really began to resonate for her. She asked herself, “What can we provide to engage kids and families, not just in academics but ‘whole child’ experiences in art, music, STEM?”

After giving it some thought, Kinnee created Tutoring in the Park, a program offering students of all ages an opportunity to join activities at Willow Trails Park in Prospect Heights and Northside Park in Wheeling from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. With help from Wheeling High School staff and students, Tutoring in the Park offered tutoring, music lessons, tech support and some activities for middle school and elementary students from Aug. 8 through Nov. 7, missing only one week due to inclement weather.

Teachers as well as students from Wheeling’s COVID Catch-up Tutors, National Honor Society and Lit Lab came together to help students in different subject areas, from math and chemistry to English and language arts, including AP-level classes. In addition, Wheeling orchestra and guitar teacher Sarah Struebing gave music lessons, including violin and cello instruction.

“We know that a strong school-community-home partnership is important to learning,” Kinnee said. “Part of the beauty of this has been that we’re going to the

community. We tried to pick areas that kids could just walk over, hang out at the park for an hour, get some tutoring, talk to some teachers, form some relationships and then be on their way for the rest of their Saturday.”

Overall, Kinnee said, as many as 20 students attended sessions, with many returning. At the same time, a core group of 10 teachers regularly donated their time, with other teachers showing up when they were available. At least 10 different student tutors volunteered to work with students as well.

For example, Wheeling junior Brandon Suerth got involved with Tutoring in the Park through COVID Catch-up Tutors, a group of students who came together to tutor other students over the summer. Suerth, who showed up for every session, tutored freshmen in biology and algebra, among other areas, and worked with sophomores in chemistry as well as AP government and AP human geography.

“The students came because they wanted to get help,” he said. “And I really enjoyed being in the program because it gave me an opportunity to help others. It’s my responsibility as an upperclassman to help the underclassmen. My freshman year I received help from seniors, and it’s just an overall good experience.”

In addition to tutoring and other activities, Tutoring in the Park also gave students and parents access to IT and administrative help.

“Brad Kahler, our [technical support staffer], has been there almost every single week,” Kinnee said. “He brought hotspots and new keyboards for kids, and the kids arranged to meet him there and pick up new chargers. He’s also helped people get their forms done for remote learning and with logins. He has been awesome in providing tech help.”

Another support for students and their parents was Henry Brown, Wheeling’s associate principal of student services. Brown showed up to help parents fill out return-to-school forms and set up parent-teacher conferences. Fluent in Spanish, he was also available to help Spanish-speaking parents and students with a variety of matters that they normally would have had to handle in school if it were open. ■

Ag Pathway Greenhouse at Rolling Meadows H.S. Helps Feed Families

As many suburban families continue to suffer from a pandemic that struck quickly, erased jobs and created financial crises over the past year, High School District 214 continues to join many others to assist those in need.

At Rolling Meadows High School, that means continuing to utilize a greenhouse that had become a focal point for the school’s groundbreaking agriculture program before COVID-19 closed all Illinois schools last March.

The Rolling Meadows greenhouse did not stay empty or quiet for long last spring, as Rolling Meadows Principal Eileen Hart and colleagues answered her question of “We’ve got this greenhouse resource that’s not being used; could we turn it to be of good use?” with an emphatic yes.

Working with Dave Wietrzak, Rolling Meadows’ division head for career and technical education, who had played a key role in launching the greenhouse, Hart found a way to convert the idled greenhouse into an element of community outreach.

“Back when I started the ag program, a big thing for me was that it be a part of our community outreach,” Hart said. Her own commitment to community partnership includes monthly meetings with Rolling Meadows Partners, a group that includes Dr. Natalia Nieves, a Social Services outreach specialist for the city’s police department.

From these conversations emerged a plan to utilize the school’s greenhouse to grow items—tomato plants and red and green peppers—that could be distributed to community members who would continue to grow the plants indoors.

From there, the project took off. District 214 Education Foundation Executive Director Erin Holmes created a donation opportunity to make the effort cost-neutral, working with Home Depot to secure necessary supplies at no cost to the school or District. Through this initial effort, Hart and Wietrzak provided about 200 tomato plants, which they turned over to Nieves for distribution to local families.

“The families were incredibly grateful and excited to have received plants and flowers,” Nieves said. “So many families were touched by the offer of a plant to take care of and eventually benefit from its fruit. It was a very unique and beautiful way to offer hope in this terribly difficult time.”

As the pandemic stretches from month to month, the Rolling Meadows greenhouse continues to provide food. In addition to its partnership with the city, the school conducts a once-a-week school meal bag pick-up. On one recent day, for example, the high school’s Food Service staff distributed more than 50 bags of basil and about 50 bags of lettuce to local families. As winter goes on, ripened greenhouse tomatoes will be added to the mix.



In more normal times, when not pressed into service to help feed a community during a pandemic, the greenhouse and Rolling Meadows’ Agriculture Pathway offers students an array of career opportunities often overlooked in the suburbs, including veterinary science, agricultural engineering, food science and more.

Agricultural, Food and Natural Resources is one of 16 nationally recognized career clusters. Within this cluster, District 214 has established four Career Pathways, each of which consists of a multiyear program of academic and technical study that prepares students for a full range of postsecondary options. **These pathways are:**

Environmental Science Systems, preparing students for such careers as occupational health, safety specialist or environmental engineering technician or many others.

Food Products and Processing Systems, aligning students for such careers as food science technician or farm or ranch manager.

Plant and Animal Systems, laying the foundation for such careers as veterinarian, vet tech or animal breeder.

Power, Structural and Technical Systems, setting the stage for such careers as agricultural engineer or heavy equipment mechanic.

“Agriculture is not common in suburbs,” Hart said, “and yet it offers so many career options.” ■

Spotlight: Schools in the Community



Prospect Provides Community Drive



Prospect High School • @KnightsOfPHS
Nov 20, 2020

Prospect Provides Community Drive is picking up momentum as we head into Thanksgiving. Donations will be accepted during school hours next week. @ProspectASB



EGHS Leadership Through Service



Elk Grove LTS • @ElkGroveLTS
Nov 3, 2020

Thank you to all the #eglts volunteers who used their day off of school to provide lawn care for those in need. Very proud of these #leaders



BGHS Halloween Drive



BGHS Orchestras • @BGHSOrchestras
Oct 28, 2020

The donations! The Drive & Donate event helped gather food and monetary donations. 4 SUVs packed full of food donations delivered it all to Kingswood United Methodist. Each Thursday they distribute food to those in need in our community, including many BGHS families. @BG_Bison



JHHS Food Drive



Hersey SOS • @Hersey_SOS
Nov 23, 2020

Our 51st annual food drive was a success!!! With your help we were able to collect over 8,000 cans and deliver them to 2 local food banks! Thank you to everyone who donated we couldn't have done without you

We Are Lifelong Learners

Adult Ed & Family Literacy Offers Life-Altering Programs



It's positively impacted my life. The program has opened up many opportunities for me.

– Yemi Ojeleye

For Yemi Ojeleye, the Manufacturing Career Pathways program offered by District 214 Adult Education and Family Literacy has been life-altering.

Ojeleye recently landed a manufacturing job making various types of equipment, thanks to the Adult Manufacturing program that is an example of District 214's commitment to supporting lifelong learning opportunities.

Many adult students such as Ojeleye have benefited from the program, which is free for students. The program is funded this year by an Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) grant and was funded last year by an Innovative Bridge and Transition grant.

"It's positively impacted my life," said Ojeleye, who added that the program gave him the confidence to change careers and find a good-paying manufacturing job. "The program has opened up many opportunities for me."

Ojeleye said that when COVID-19 first hit the community, he had the unique opportunity to help repair pumps to get an old hospital ready to serve COVID-19 patients.

In the program, students get hands-on experience during a weekly manufacturing lab at Wheeling High School and attend an online class once a week.

"During my class, I help them get NIMS credentials, a nationally recognized standard that can follow them anywhere," said April Senase, an instructor with the program.

"There is a huge shortage of skilled workers coming into the industry and way too many people retiring and going out of it," Senase said. "It is absolutely in demand."

The Manufacturing Career Pathway Credential Class prepares students to take three NIMS Credential tests for entry-level positions in Quality Control (Measurements, Materials and Safety-MMS) and Computer Numeric Control (CNC) in lathe and mill operations.

Senase said she teaches students how to read blueprints, properly use measuring devices and geometric

dimensions and more. Students also learn basic operator capabilities that will help them walk into a job with the proper knowledge.

"Manufacturing is a broad world," Senase said, explaining that high-paying manufacturing jobs are in demand, and various types of jobs are available after completing the program—including CNC, molding, welding and making various types of pumps, among other opportunities.

Senase's 23 years of manufacturing industry experience in fields such as aerospace, automotive and the military allows her to provide real-world scenarios for her students. She also teaches adult manufacturing for the Technology and Manufacturing Association (TMA) and helped develop the 16-week District 214 Adult Manufacturing program.

"I would like to start in the manufacturing environment to try something new," said Eftimka Petkova, who enrolled in the program last fall in order to switch careers.

"It was very helpful," Petkova said about the program.

Another program offered by Adult Education and Family Literacy is Bridge to Manufacturing, created to support students preparing for the CNC Manufacturing program. In weekly online support sessions, students are introduced to the field of manufacturing while they continue to develop their math, reading, writing, comprehension and other skills. In addition to starting students on the path to three NIMS certifications, the CNC Manufacturing Bridge program focuses on basic skills, resume writing, job searches and interviewing.

Manufacturing Career Pathways is just one of several programs offered by District 214 Adult Education and Family Literacy that have had a positive impact on people's lives. Other programs include Read to Learn, one-to-one literacy tutoring, citizenship classes, English as a Second Language and more. ■

After 35 Years, ‘Read to Learn’ Still Transforms Lives

For 35 years, the District 214 Read to Learn Adult Literacy/Volunteer program has been changing lives. In January 1985, Read to Learn started with just eight students and eight tutors. The program continued to grow through the years. Today, there are 13 sites, and the program has trained more than 6,200 tutors and tutored over 13,000 students.

As part of District 214 Adult Education and Family Literacy, Read to Learn connects dedicated volunteers with adult students. They meet once a week for 10 weeks to work on basic reading and writing skills through various engaging activities.

Although the ultimate goals for students—such as improving reading and writing skills to better communicate in their personal and professional lives—have stayed the same, the program has evolved significantly over time, with several changes occurring recently.

Six years ago, an online tutor application was implemented, as well as a blended learning model for new tutor training that includes online courses and in-person training.

Due to COVID-19, several other changes took place. For example, training for returning tutors is conducted as hybrid training. Library resources continue to be digitized and updated, book clubs are still continuing in a virtual form, and tutors and students are working together virtually except for the site at Forest View Educational Center. Staff is also in the process of developing online new tutor training.

Cultivating new relationships and having a positive impact on people’s lives have kept volunteers returning year after year.

“I love the Read to Learn program,” said Deb Fredericks, who has been a Read to Learn volunteer for five years. “It is structured enough to be effective, and

yet we have the freedom to customize our time with the students to meet their individual needs and goals.”

“I would encourage anyone who is motivated to improve their English skills to sign up,” Fredericks shared.

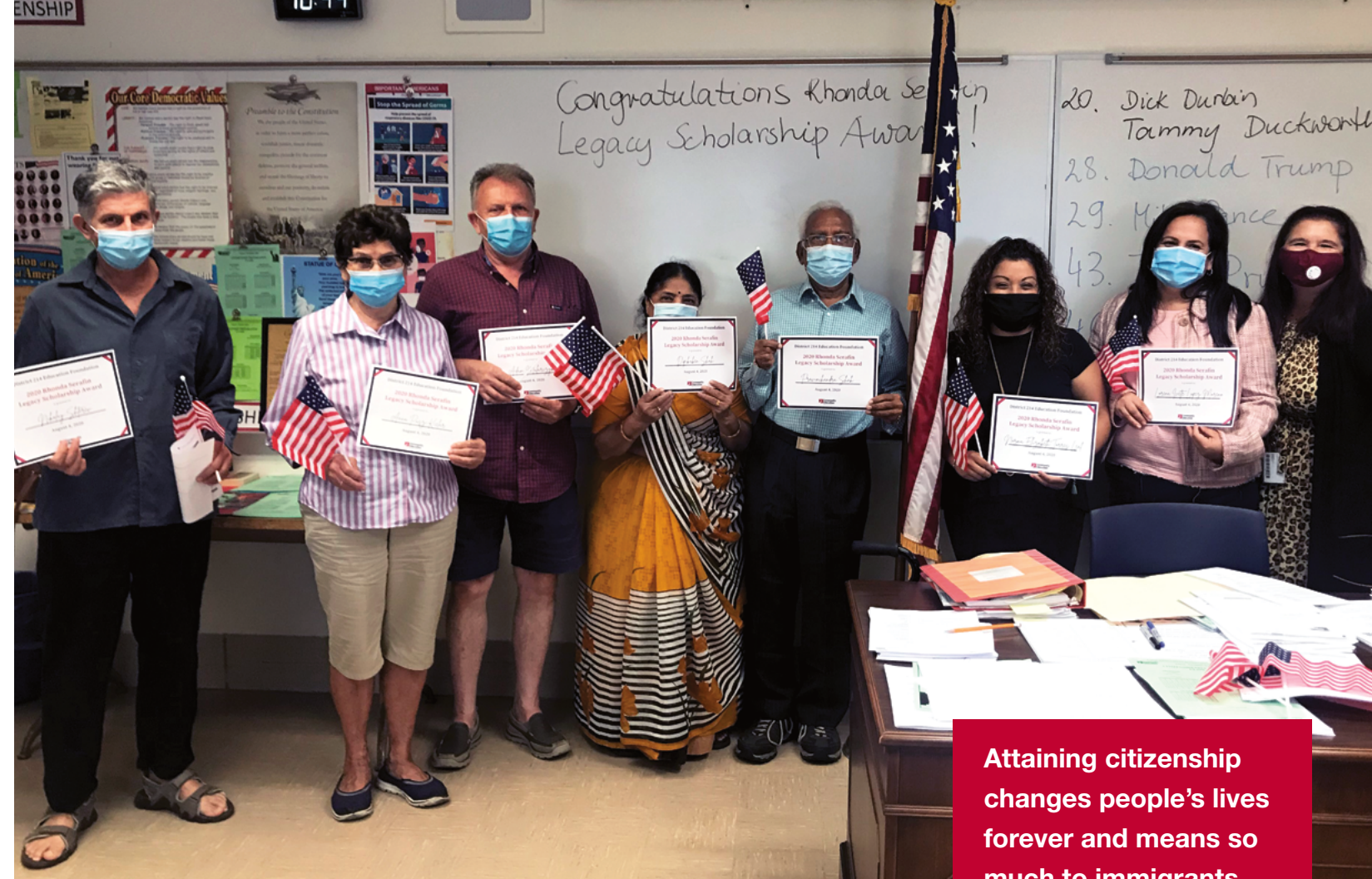
Many students, including those who have come to the United States from other countries, find the program helpful in order to get a new job or to communicate more effectively with their children’s teachers.

Despite several changes to the program during 35 years of serving the community, the dedication of the volunteers and students has remained unchanged. Volunteers form friendships with students and also learn about their students’ cultures.

“Read to Learn is a program with a well-documented history of success and provides the materials and instruction in a relaxed, non-threatening environment so tutors can help students work on improving all these skills,” said Miles Ducore, who has worked with students from China, Korea, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Mongolia, Latvia and the United States.

“They want to improve their English to reduce any sense of isolation and so they can function more efficiently in day-to-day interactions,” Ducore said. “Others are permanent residents, quite skilled and professionals, who also see improving their English as part of advancing their careers.” ■

Many students find the program helpful to get a new job or to communicate more effectively with their children’s teachers



Serafin Fund Aids Pathway to Citizenship

Becoming a United States citizen is life-changing, and the Rhonda Serafin Legacy Fund is helping make the dream a reality for adult students.

This year, the Serafin fund, awarded through the District 214 Education Foundation, went to nine students and relieved nearly \$6,000 in financial burdens connected to citizenship application filing fees and the evaluation of degrees earned in other countries—a pathway to promotion in the United States.

All awards went to students in District 214’s Adult Education & Family Literacy program.

For more than three decades, Rhonda Serafin inspired thousands of District 214 Community Education students. When she retired in June 2018, the Foundation announced the new Legacy Fund, aimed at providing additional resources to assist enthusiastic adult learners in the community.

This year’s recipients are Prav Shah, Dipikaben Shah, Adam Mularczyk, Anna Pusz-Kielar, Nikolay Shterev, Rania Elsadawy, Lorena Moreno, Norma Leal and Lelizaveta Dukhovna.

“I see students saving up for the fee sometimes for years,” Citizenship Program Coordinator Ewa Crowe said. “Last year’s recipients were very grateful, and a couple of them, while fighting back tears, were saying how much they appreciate the financial help and the chance to apply for U.S. citizenship.”

Attaining citizenship changes people’s lives forever, she said, and means so much to immigrants.

“It’s hard to describe the joy, pride and sense of accomplishment on their faces when they come back to class to tell us that they passed,” Crowe said. “For many, this is the biggest accomplishment in their lives. I see students start believing in their own self-worth.”

Winners this year sent notes of gratefulness, describing the impact the funds would have on their lives and futures.

The Serafin Fund, like other funds through the Foundation, is supported by the generosity of donors who believe in the cause and the support of students, lifelong learning and public education.

The awards are given annually. For more details or to donate, visit www.214foundation.org. ■

Discover The Board of Education



The Board of Education is the policy-making body of High School District 214. The seven members of the Board are elected at large to four-year terms of office by the registered voters of the school district.

(top row left to right) F. Daniel Petro, President; William J. Dussling, Vice President; Mark Hineman; Alva Kreutzer; Mildred "Millie" Palmer; (bottom row left to right) Leonard "Lenny" Walker; Todd Younger



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District 214 Community Education

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District 214 Education Foundation

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7700 | www.214foundation.org

Buffalo Grove High School

1100 West Dundee Road
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
847-718-4000 | www.d214.org/bghs

Elk Grove High School

500 West Elk Grove Boulevard
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
847-718-4400 | www.d214.org/eghs

John Hersey High School

1900 East Thomas Street
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
847-718-4800 | www.d214.org/jhhs

LIFE Transition Program

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7772 | www.d214.org/life

Newcomer Center

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7937 | www.d214.org/newcomer

Prospect High School

801 West Kensington Road
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
847-718-5200 | www.d214.org/phs

Rolling Meadows High School

2901 West Central Road
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
847-718-5600 | www.d214.org/rmhs

The Academy at Forest View

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7772 | www.d214.org/academy

Vanguard School

2121 South Goebbert Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-718-7870 | www.vanguard.d214.org

Wheeling High School

900 South Elmhurst Road
Wheeling, IL 60090
847-718-7000 | www.d214.org/whs

Young Adult Program

2901 West Central Road
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
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