

# PAW PRINT

Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School



Volume 7 Issue 2 - Winter 2017

## From the Principal's Desk

Hello to the Monty Tech Community,

As we approach the holidays, the harsh realities of the upcoming official start of winter become more and more apparent. Nevertheless, I am sure that everyone's spirits are uplifted by the thoughts of the approaching holidays, and the fresh start of a new calendar year.

This also means that we are fast approaching the mid-point of the 2017-2018 academic year, which is a fine time to share some updates on a variety of projects and initiatives around the school. Those include —

- Our goal is to launch our new website sometime this month. We are striving to create a site that provides more information on our programs and policies while simultaneously being user friendly. This means that we look to have more direct links and fewer long drop-down menus. As we make the website live, please feel free to share any concerns or difficulties with navigating the site.
- Of course, our largest school-wide initiative is the ongoing construction of our Veterinary Clinic as all of our construction trades continue to make great progress. At the start of the month, after the construction of a series of exterior canopies was completed by our Cabinetmaking program, our House Carpentry students were able to finish the roof. This means that the exterior work is complete, and we can focus on the installation of the finished plumbing and lighting, hanging sheet rock, and completing the ceiling grid.
- We are very pleased to announce that, coming soon, all teachers will provide access to student-grade information via our school database, X2 Aspen. In order to view this information and subsequent updates, parents must be registered to use our parent portal. On our new website, you will note that there is a direct link to the parent portal on the site's main page. This link will soon provide access so that new users of the parent portal can create their own accounts and access their student's grades.
- Four months into the school year, and we can say with confidence that our new program Supporting Transitional At-Risk Students (also known as the S.T.A.Y. Program) is already yielding positive results. You may recall that the focus of this program is to support students who have experienced extended periods of absences, due to long-term hospitalizations caused by physical or mental health concerns, transition back to the regular school environment. In the past, many of these students would often drop out due to the added anxiety of returning to school and making up all of their missed work in a timely manner. Our new program has already made nearly a dozen referrals, assisting students by developing transitional plans which allow them to succeed at their pace. We are very proud of this initiative and expect that it will continue to yield positive results.
- We also hope that parents and families have noted the improvements around campus. For example, after many years of use, we repaved the main section of the front parking lot. In addition, the instructors and students in our Masonry program have completed repairs to the front steps of Performing Arts Center.



Looking ahead, there are a number of upcoming events at Monty Tech after the holiday break. These would include —

- Jan. 2nd — School reopens following the Holiday Break.
- Jan. 10th — The winter session of the VIP Program begins for students in the towns of Harvard, Holden, Lunenburg, Princeton, Sterling, and Winchendon, and also for The Paxton Center and CAPS.
- Week of Jan. 16th — Sophomores and Seniors will sit for Mid-Year Exams.
- Week of Jan. 22nd — Freshmen and Juniors will sit for Mid-Year Exams.
- Jan. 26th — Marks close for Term 2.
- Jan. 29th — Second semester courses begin.

Clearly, things do not slow down at Monty Tech even with the winter months upon us. Finally, on behalf of the faculty, staff and administration, I want to wish everyone in the Monty Tech community a Happy Holiday Season!!

Best regards,

Tom Browne  
Principal



## Monty Tech SkillsUSA Students Attend Fall State Leadership Conference



Students from Monty Tech recently completed three days of intense leadership and employability skills training at the annual SkillsUSA Fall State Leadership Conference held in the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center, Marlboro.

A total of 20 students, the largest group to date, successfully completed the training in areas such as communication skills, group dynamics and employability skills. They also participated in SkillsUSA's professional development program, earned leader awards, and learned about the organization's various programs.

Those receiving leadership pins include: Kelsey Aggrey, Jade Bailey, Adrianna Buzzell, Alexandria Chattaway, Sophia Chernoch, Kayla Cintron, Samantha Collette, Kylee Cormier, Dominique Dupuis, Adrianna Durand, Kayla Gerry, Valerie Guzman, Ariel Johnson, Maggie Lashua, Daniel McKenna, Francisco Melo, Hannah Shults, Casey Szlosek, Ziola Wilder and Sadie Wright.

SkillsUSA's mission is to empower its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.





## Wreaths Across America Convoys Stops at Monty Tech

On December 12th, the Wreaths Across America convoy stopped at Monty Tech. The convoy travels from Columbia Falls, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery, where wreaths will adorn the graves of fallen soldiers this holiday season. Wreaths Across America has now become a national organization with over 1200 participating locations - all focused on the mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach.



(U.S. Army photo by Rachel Larue/Arlington National Cemetery/released)

## Let Workers Credit Union Help You Get Started on a Secure Financial Path

Did you know there is a Workers Credit Union right in the front lobby of Monty Tech? We are here to be a resource to all faculty and students. You can open an account with us, apply for a loan, and make withdrawals and deposits. You can even come up and ask us questions, such as, “How do I start saving for the future?” Or, “How does direct deposit work?”

Becoming a member is easy. All it requires is a \$5 deposit into a Share Savings account and two forms of identification.

Once you are a member you are now a shareholder of the credit union. That means benefits, such as access to a shared branch network all across the country; No-fee accounts, and best of all, the GiveBack program. That’s where the credit union gives back money to its members! Ask us about all the eligible accounts, and how you can be a part of the GiveBack.

Sound good? Stop by anytime to find out more or just to say “Hi!” Oh! And don’t forget to bring a smile!



Banking that works.

**Written by Senior Amanda Misner, Second-year Co-op student,  
Workers Credit Union**

## Happy Retirement! .....



Congratulations to Beth Martellotta on her retirement! After over 20 years at Monty Tech, she is leaving us and heading to the sunny shores of Florida for the winter!

**Beth, thank you for being a tireless professional, a helpful coworker, and a good friend. You will be remembered for the all wonderful things that you did here. Thanks for your years of hard work and dedication. Now go and unwind!**

**Wishing you a relaxing retirement filled with fun and happiness!**

## School Break Calendar .....

**Dec. 22nd** – There will be an early release for students at 11:00 a.m. as we begin our Holiday Break.

**Dec. 26th-29th** – Holiday Break -Please note that the Main Office is open during the break from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30p.m.

**Jan. 2nd** –School reopens following the Holiday Break.





## Allison Lind Takes Her Passion to Extreme Heights



Allison Lind, a senior from Ashburnham, has two passions that people might think are rather unusual for a petite young lady. Her first passion is performing as an aerial silks artist, and her second is Masonry.

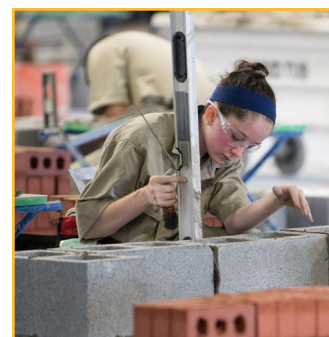
Allison first saw a performance of aerial skills when she was in grade school on a cruise with her family. "I thought it was really cool. When I got home, I looked for a studio that offered it. I found one in Fitchburg. I tried it out and loved it," she said. "When that studio closed, I found Sky High Studios in Marlboro. After my first class, I was hooked," she said. She's been doing it for four years and has quickly gone from beginner to performing at events sponsored by the studio, and joining the teaching staff.

Allison said she tried the usual team sports, but never really enjoyed them. "I tried volleyball, basketball and track and field in my freshman year, and none of them suited my need to climb, bend and work creatively. The summer I found Sky High Studios, and took my first silks class, I knew I'd found my passion," she said.

"Not only has aerial silks given me the opportunity to do an extra-curricular, but I became part of a community of aerial artists and aspiring circus artists. In addition, aerial silks have hugely improved my confidence and overall ambition to be the best I can be in any aspect of my life." Turning moves into spinning moves, and dropping in a series of combos are what she likes to do best, she added.

She also gets enormous satisfaction seeing her students grow and develop their skills. "My entire life completely changed because of silks, and being able to share that experience with my students is truly the greatest feeling. Each time my students nail a new move, or drop a new drop for the first time, the excitement and happiness burst right out of me," she said.

Her students range in age from 15 to 71 and come from all over the world. When friends and classmates ask her to describe aerial silks, she tells them, "I climb curtains." She was featured last summer when Boston 25 News did a Zip Trip segment at the Marlboro studio.



Known to her classmates and teachers as "Mini Mason," Allison said she was drawn to Masonry much as she was to aerial silks. "I started here thinking I wanted House Carpentry, but as soon as I started exploring Masonry, I knew that was the place for me," she said. She not only loves the field, she excels at it. Her confidence and skill level resulted in her capturing the gold medal at the SkillsUSA state-level competition last spring and going on to finish ninth in the country at last summer's SkillsUSA national-level competition held in Louisville, KY.

She credits her teachers, particularly Jake Proctor, and her classmates, for preparing her for the nationals. "All the kids and teachers in trade are great. They like to tease me about my size, but we all support each other. We are like a family." Although Mr. Proctor couldn't make the trip because his wife was due to have their first baby, Allison said they stayed in touch throughout the competition through text. "He was there to see me win gold at states, and he has been very helpful."

Her goal is to qualify for a second trip to nationals next summer. Although she was pleased with her performance last year, she said there are a few things she would do differently the second time. "The scores were pretty close. I was working next to the boy who took first place. I knew my project wasn't quite as great as his, but my technique was good," she explained.

An outstanding student, Allison was recently inducted into the National Honor Society. She is ranked 13th in her class of 329 students with a 3.68 GPA. She plans to go on to college, hopefully one of the UMASS campuses, but she's not decided what she wants to study. "What does an aerialist who loves Masonry do?" she quipped.

Her dream is to open her own studio, she especially wants to teach children, and possibly perform with Cirque du Soleil.

Sara Storm, Allison's guidance counselor, said she is in the top of her class and academically accomplished. "Allison is a sweetheart and has so much potential. She is the type of student that will excel at whatever she chooses to pursue."



# Monty Tech Cadets to Assist With Hurricane Recovery Efforts in Texas

## Students Raise Funds to Purchase Building Supplies and Equipment



Monty Tech's Marine Corps Junior ROTC program has a long and commendable record when it comes to community service. Their recent project, however, is the most ambitious to date.

Each fall, the cadets conduct a 10-mile "March-A-Thon" to raise funds for a community service project. Recent beneficiaries of their efforts include the Monty Tech Student Assistance Fund, which provides financial support for families experiencing financial hardships, Wounded Warriors, and NEADS organization, based in Princeton, to fund training of a service dog for a wounded vet.

This year, a "Marching for Texas" fund-raiser has netted over \$42,500 and counting. Those funds, along with a \$44,000 grant from the Marine Corps, will pay for 50 cadets and chaperones to fly to Texas during the school break in February, and help rebuild homes in the small town of Wharton, located south of Houston.

Of the 8,700 town residents, approximately 5,000 were affected by the hurricane.

Cadet Cpl. Alex Sweet, a junior House Carpentry major from Fitchburg, raised over \$5,000. One woman gave him \$500.

"Thanks to the Marine Corps grant, which will cover food and transportation, the money we're raising will go directly to purchasing building materials and equipment," said First Sgt. Paul Jornet, U.S. Marine Corps (ret.), program instructor-in-charge.

To prepare the students for the construction work they will be doing, two Monty Tech vocational-technical teachers, Peter Maxfield from House Carpentry, and Bill Stuessy from HVAC and Property Maintenance, will be spending their time off teaching the cadets how to install sheet rock and to paint. The cadets will be collaborating with students from Wharton County High School on the rebuilding project.

Wharton, Texas, was selected as the recipient of the recovery efforts because of a special significance it holds to First Sgt. Jornet. Although he is not from the area, and doesn't have any family there, he participated in a walk through the town three years ago in honor one of its former residents, a fellow serviceman, Master Sgt. Michael Pena, who was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously by former President Obama in 2014 for his service in the Korean War.

"We are humbled to be welcomed to the Wharton community, and honored to undertake this effort in memory of Master Sgt. Michael Pena," Jornet said.



Peter Maxfield, Monty Tech House Carpentry teacher, directs Marine Corps JROTC cadets in how to install sheet rock. Maxfield led a training session, "Texas Mission-Training Day," recently to teach cadets how to install sheet rock. A group of cadets and their chaperones will be traveling to Wharton, Texas, in February to help rebuild homes destroyed in the area by Hurricane Harvey.



## Continuing Education Program Provides Bridge To Successful Career

Summer LaFortune, a 2016 graduate of Monty Tech's Dental Assisting program, didn't want to be like many of her classmates who were working minimum-wage jobs and borrowing money to get a college degree.

She is a bright and ambitious young lady who figured there had to be a better pathway to getting a college degree and securing a successful career.

Although she enjoyed studying dental assisting, and planned on becoming a dental hygienist, as graduation got closer, she decided she wanted to try something else.

A friend suggested she consider becoming a phlebotomy technician. Summer was intrigued and looked into taking a course offered through Monty Tech's Continuing Education program. Not content to take the easy way out, she enrolled in the course, while completing her senior year in the Dental Assisting and working a part-time job.

The course requires students successfully complete 51 hours of classroom work, followed by 120 hours of hands-on training in a clinical setting.

"I figured I would try it and see how I liked it. I like to educate myself and try new things. If I didn't want to pursue it full time, I could do it while in college and make a lot more money than working in retail or fast food. So many of my friends are struggling to get through college, working minimum-wage jobs," Summer said.

After completing an externship working in the lab at Athol Hospital, Summer was offered a full-time position at Heywood Hospital. She's been there a little over a year and works with both inpatients and outpatients. She also travels to area nursing homes.

She stressed that the three and a half years she spent studying Dental Assisting has helped her in her current job. "The certifications I earned in the program have helped me a lot in this job." She is certified in infection control, CPR, AED (automated external defibrillator) and OSHA. She also studied medical terminology.

She was offered a full-time dental assistant position the same time she got the job in the lab at Heywood.

Currently, she is working at the lab full time and studying criminal justice full time at Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner.

"I like the work very much, and I'm good at it," she said. She plans to continue with it while studying, full time at the Mount, and then go on for her bachelor's degree. She wants to make a career out of working as a corrections officer. "I was told it would be much easier to get in the door if I started there as a phlebotomist," she said.



*Summer LaFortune, a 2016 graduate of Monty Tech's Dental Assisting program, completed a course in phlebotomy through the school's Continuing Education Program. She is working in the lab at Heywood Hospital in Gardner, under the supervision of Julie Holly (left).*



Congratulations to Lauren Gaunt, Irene Gulnick, Hannah Gaunt, Jaliseanne Duenas, Sophia Chernoch, Noely Macias, Hannah Comeau, Paige Cook, Lexi Arsenault, MAggie Lashua, and Julia Niejadlik . These talented Cosmetology students recently passed the Massachusetts State Board of Cosmetology exam, and are now fully licensed cosmetologists. Monty Tech's extensive 1,000 training program and the hands-on practical experience in the salon no doubt prepared them well for a career in this very popular industry. Great Job!

Wishing you and your family  
a wonderful holiday season  
and a healthy and  
peaceful  
new year!

