

CTE creates pathways to careers



John Meyer
Oregon Connections Academy
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This time of year, I often think about high school seniors poised to graduate but undecided about their future. Instead of a feeling of uncertainty, high school students should start preparing for life after graduation well before their final year. Perhaps your student is curious about a job, classes, or an internship over the summer? Maybe they’re mapping courses for next fall? Families facing any of these scenarios should consider three words: Career Technical Education (CTE).

You may have recently heard about CTE at your child’s school or in the news. Thanks to CTE, students no longer must choose between college preparation or workforce skills — they can now have both.

According to the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), CTE “provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners.”

I call CTE “learning with relevance,” because students receive real-life skills they’ll need for the workforce and/or the academic foundation to continue career

studies in college.

CTE students take part in rigorous coursework, hands-on projects, and internships.

Previously called vocational education, parents may remember auto shop, woodworking, cosmetology, home economics or other titles. The new generation of CTE courses cover professions like health care, criminal justice, and information technology.

ODE reports 770 CTE programs of study available across the state, in career learning areas ranging from natural resources to arts, from communications to engineering.

Less than a third of all high school students in Oregon are engaged in CTE classes, but the numbers are growing after recent efforts to increase funding for local programs.

Besides class credits and the opportunity to “learn by doing”, there are other benefits to Career Technical Education. The graduation rate for students who take even one credit of CTE is around 92%, 15% higher than the overall rate in Oregon. Research also shows CTE students score higher on standardized tests, have better attendance, and are more likely to complete homework.

Students are often motivated to explore CTE because of the real-life relevance of offerings. This “linked learning” provides hands-on training combined with college-ready academics.

CTE helps connect the dots between school and the real world for many students, answering the question, “why do I need to learn this stuff?”

Over 75% of high school graduates go on to higher education after taking career-tech coursework, notes Advance CTE, a leading national non-profit group. Other grads turn to community colleges, vocational schools, or apprenticeship programs to earn associate degrees or certifications.

Having CTE classes available is a valuable way for students to audition their career interests before they spend lots of money on college and later decide to switch professional paths. A 2017 nationwide survey of thousands of parents and students found 81% of CTE students were satisfied with their ability to get a leg up on a career, versus 44% of non-CTE students.

Another potential incentive for CTE students is bringing home a paycheck shortly after high school graduation. There’s a middle-skills job gap (positions that don’t require a bachelor’s degree) in Oregon and companies are scrambling to find qualified workers. Though Oregon’s unemployment rate is the lowest in decades, employers have record numbers of job vacancies. Three-fourths of these vacancies are hard to fill, in large part because they require a postsecondary certificate or associate degree. Job prospects span many occu-

pations too: truck drivers, firefighters, massage therapists, nursing assistants and electricians.

As a coordinator for Oregon Connections Academy’s CTE program, I’ve noticed many students are attracted to the technical career fields. They also appreciate the scheduling flexibility available with online public school so they can participate in career exploration opportunities. This school year, we offered more than 20 Career Technical classes including Accounting, Homeland Security, and Sports Management.

The state Employment Department’s Career Explorer program (<https://www.qualityinfo.org/>) is a helpful resource for students to begin investigating occupations, and to discover which jobs require post-high school job training.

The current list of highest demand jobs across Oregon includes: computer occupations, truck drivers, retail sales and food preparation managers, customer service representatives, maintenance workers, nursing and medical assistants, and security guards.

As workplace skills evolve, encourage your student to develop a passion for learning, embracing ideas, and new technologies. As a parent, you can also be a job coach, supporting your child on their career path and helping them develop the skills they need to succeed along the way.

Birds

Continued from Page 2A

to protect. Keep in mind that to birds, some plants are way tastier than others. Peas, lettuce, squash seedlings and cabbage family members seem to be the birds’ favorites. These are the ones you will most want to protect. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, potatoes, carrots and aromatic plants like mint and herbs

are not often sought out by our feathered friends.

Protect the most vulnerable/tasty seedlings and transplants with covers. Plant the seeds under a hoop house, cold frame or spun row cover like Remay. Remember to stake it down.

Drape bird netting over larger plantings and berries. I use bird netting, draping it over my whole raspberry patch and strawberry bed, sometimes over hoops. Be sure to monitor the netting regularly, as sometimes birds get

caught in there.

Scavenge for protection. I use old plastic mesh plant flats that you can get at the nursery. I place them over newly planted seed and starts. I put plastic gutter guard over rows of seeds until they germinate. Plastic berry baskets work well to cover individual plants.

Scare the birds. Hang old shiny CDs around plants and on trellises near vulnerable plants. Nurseries sell shiny flash tape that blows in the wind. Remember the old-fashioned scarecrow?

I’ve used plastic owl statues around my raspberry bed. Get creative.

Offer them alternative sources of food. Try placing hanging feeders around the garden.

Carol Savonen is a naturalist and writer. She is an associate professor emeritus at OSU and tends a large garden in the Coast Range Hills west of Philomath with her husband and dogs. She can be reached at Carol.Savonen@oregonstate.edu or c/o: EESC, 422 Kerr Admin. Bldg., OSU, Corvallis, OR 97331.

OBITUARIES

Diane Lorrayne Merrifield

Dec. 10, 1954 — April 8, 2018

On Sunday, April 8, while surrounded by the children and grandchildren she adored, Diane Lorrayne Merrifield passed quietly, joining her husband and true love, Steve, her son Michael, and her granddaughter, Cassie-Jo in Heaven.

Diane was born in Vancouver, Washington, on Dec. 10, 1954, to Larry and Jean Powell. In her teens, she walked into Cascade Lanes, where she met the night manager, Steve Merrifield. They later married, relocated to Albany and started a family. Steve and Diane had three children: Eddie, Mike and Tonya-Jo. They were also proud to adopt Jeff and welcome him into the family, raising him as their own.

Throughout the 80s, Diane worked the front desk of Albany Bowling Center and coached junior bowling leagues. She bowled regularly, and also played slow-pitch co-ed softball.

In 1988, Steve and Diane purchased Silver Creek Lanes, and the family moved to Silverton. In addition to her children, her customers became her extended family. Holidays were multi-family gatherings at the bowling alley, welcoming one and all.

In the mid-90s, Diane took the name that she most enjoyed, “Nana.” That’s the name that her grandchildren called

her. Nana and Papa’s was a place for the grandkids to come together to play and have fun with their cousins. In all, Diane had 10 grandkids.

After selling Silver Creek Lanes and “retiring,” they moved to Charleston. It was then that Diane found her true calling as a caregiver. From that time until her passing, she provided loving care to her mother-in-law Darlene, sister-in-law Jackie, husband Steve and later her grandson Owen-Michael.

Diane was selfless and giving, always trying to make those around her happy. She raised her children and grandchildren on these two simple principles: “choose to be happy” and “live by the Golden Rule,” and she set a great example for both.

Diane is survived by her children: Eddie Merrifield, Tonya-Jo Robinson and Jeff Merrifield; and grandchildren: Devan, Calvin, Boston, Noah, Cooper, Lantz, Kaylie-Jo, Owen-Michael and Evan-Wyatt. She is also survived by the many lives she touched along the way, who she looked upon as family.

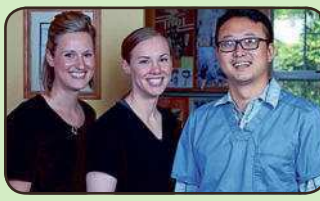
She was preceded in death by her husband Steve, son Michael and granddaughter Cassie-Jo.

There will be a celebration of life at 10:30 a.m. April 29 at Silver Creek Lanes in Silverton. For additional details, contact celebrationofnana@gmail.com. Diane was notorious for avoiding having her picture taken, so the family welcomes any and all photo submissions that anyone has!

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that

you make a small donation to the American Cancer Society or to Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House in Diane’s memory.

Online condolences for the family may be posted at www.fisherfuneralhome.com.



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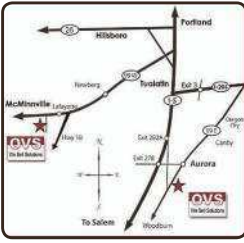


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