



# SUNY Erie Career Centers

## January 2021 Newsletter

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## Looking back with gratitude, and forward with hope.

As another year comes to an end, we look back at what we've been through and accomplished. The pandemic threw us some major unexpected curve balls. Individuals who are unemployed and under-employed are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 and its collateral disruptions such as job loss and food insecurity, making our SUNY Erie Career Centers' services more important than ever. When the COVID-19 rates increased in the community and our physical locations were required to close, we moved to 100% virtual programming with increased online career coaching and resume appointments, expanded workshop offerings, and weekly WebEx networking meetings. The Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has remained an unwavering source of support for us as we serve the community: mobilizing efforts to reach companies with massive layoffs; providing increased support for Dislocated Workers suffering from permanent job separation due to foreign trade through the Trade Act program; and providing Erie County's Career Centers space to grow our programming through the WIB's shared network and [workforcebuffalo.org](http://workforcebuffalo.org) website.

We are also incredibly grateful to our wonderful partners who invested their time and resources with us to serve the community. Our partnership with Feedmore WNY allowed us to continue to provide food-insecure families with weekly seven-meal packages through contactless service. The Walden Galleria Microsoft and LinkedIn teams generously donated their time, energy, and talent to teach our customers and Career Coaches how to leverage technology to increase job placement success. The American Red Cross facilitated numerous Stress Management and Relaxation workshops for our constituents, students, and staff. The Buffalo and Erie County Workforce Development Consortium provided us amazing support and brought our participants new training opportunities in growing, high demand fields. Our friends at Supportive Services Corporation continued to do what they do best, by elevating opportunities for mature individuals. Each business and public service partner collaborated with us generously, through a customer-focused lens.

As we look forward with optimism, our January 2021 newsletter focuses on resiliency and gratitude, while celebrating some special individuals who collaborated with our Career Centers. May your 2021 be filled with kindness and optimism. - Denise Raymond-DiBlasi, M.S., CWDP, SUNY Erie Dean of Employment & Training Services





## New beginnings with sharper skills for a high demand job for Robert Diaz.



"After being laid off from my position in March 2020 due to Covid, I was at a loss. I was unsure what I was going to do next, but I knew I wanted to do something different. I had always wanted to go back to school or pursue training, but I did not know how I was going to pay for it. I am thankful I was able to connect with the staff at SUNY Erie Career Center because they helped me obtain funding to pursue a career in Welding. They provided me with assistance on applying for a grant, which would essentially cover my school tuition. In addition, they provided me with job search assistance and valuable tools I can use to acquire employment when I graduate from my training program in January 2021. They helped me update my resume, sharpen my interview skills, and provided me with resources to perform an effective job search." - Robert Diaz



## Crystal Gramse accepts new challenge as SUNY Erie Perkins Officer.

SUNY Erie Project Director and Healthy Food Pantries Manager Crystal Gramse accepted additional responsibilities overseeing SUNY Erie's Perkins grant. The New York State Education Department Perkins grant helps SUNY Erie to improve student outcomes programs in career and technical education. Crystal has extensive experience in career development, assessment, and managing program deliverables. We are grateful for all the energy and advocacy that Crystal provides to our constituents, students, and colleagues.



## Neldria Staton, MBA, builds the future through a nontraditional career pathway.

"I am a Project Management professional. I first started using the SUNY Erie (ECC) Career Center several years ago after a large construction project ended, which is typical in the building trades industry. I am the type of person who relentlessly pursues professional development opportunities, so I attended many of the Career Center's free workshops and networking club events while I searched for new opportunities. The Center created an awesome new resume for me to highlight my strengths in contract management, project safety, OSHA construction safety, and budget management, which set me apart and positioned me for additional executive and leadership opportunities. After I completed my Bachelor of Science and then Master of Business degrees, the Center's professional staff updated my resume with my new credentials and enhanced branding to leverage my experience and education in business/finance leadership to meet my professional goals with confidence. I eventually established a small company in Western New York to support a wide variety of project management activities. I hope to inspire young women everywhere to pursue their dreams in the nontraditional, construction, and project management fields." - Neldria Staton, MBA





## A happy return to work for Research & Broadcast Media Professional Kathleen Petkovsky.

"When I was furloughed from my job of 20+ years due to COVID-19 in April of 2020, I didn't know what to do or where to start. Thank goodness for SUNY Erie Career Center. Rashada Stewart and the whole team at the Career Center helped me update a woefully outdated resume, build, and polish my LinkedIn Profile, and provided guidance in finding continuing education classes, many of which were free. Their weekly Job Club gave support, camaraderie, and practical information, shared by fellow job hunters and guest speakers.

Mine is a happy ending: I was called back to the job I love in early October. But I'll always be thankful for SUNY Erie Career Center and all the help they gave me during a very trying time of my life."

– Kathleen Petkovsky

## Certified Safety Professional Michael Waidell brings experience & expertise to new job.

"I wanted to thank you all for the tireless effort you gave me during this pandemic and time of unemployment. I was off work for over 11 months. You helped my mental outlook and gave me something to look forward to improve my skills and techniques every week. Also, I appreciate my networking group of job seekers so much, where I learned from them and they networked with me for job opportunities." - Michael Waidell, Army veteran and Certified Safety Professional providing health, safety, regulatory compliance, oversight and training for clients in the petro-chemical, utility, building automation, and construction industries.



## Talented Administrative & Business Management Professional Dawn Hall lands new role.

Dawn Hall collaborated with SUNY Erie Career Coaches and staff during the pandemic, brushed-up on her skills, and contributed to the SUNY Erie Career Center's weekly networking job clubs sharing her positive outlook and empathetic ear to others.

"Thank you all so much for your help, kindness and endless encouragement! All of the classes I've taken through ECC One-Stop have helped me tremendously. Job Club is also an excellent program! Being able to talk with people about job searching, sharing tips, leads and experiences is beyond helpful and brings support/encouragement during a stressful time."

– Dawn Hall





## SUNY Erie Healthy Food Pantries sponsored by Feedmore WNY offers contactless service.

Erie County is a special place to call home, and our people make it even better. We are here for each other in good times and in bad. If you or someone you know needs food, we can help. Please contact Crystal Gramse at 270-4450 or [gramsec@ecc.edu](mailto:gramsec@ecc.edu).

**North Campus Food Pantry:** Wednesday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Gleasner Hall Suite 166, 6205 Main St., Williamsville, NY.

**South Campus Food Pantry:** Tuesday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Bldg. 6, Room 6201b (hallway between buildings 5 & 6), 4041 Southwestern Blvd., Orchard Park, NY.

**City Campus Food Pantry:** Thursday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., POST Room 145, 121 Ellicott St., Buffalo, NY.

## Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is available.

The federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced because of increased imports. It offers eligible individuals a variety of benefits and reemployment services to help unemployed workers prepare for and obtain suitable employment, including job training, job search and relocation allowances, income support, and other reemployment services.

The SUNY Erie Career Center offers two virtual workshops each month to review TAA program benefits, processes, and services, including extremely important time sensitive deadlines. If you have recently lost your job due to foreign trade, we can help. Our Trade Act Specialists and Job Developers Karen Daube and Monique Carr can help you build a strategy to support your career goals. To register for the TAA workshop, please call 716-270-4444 or [register online](#).



*Karen Daube, Ed.M.*



*Monique Carr, Ed.M.*

## SUNY Erie Career Center turned 20 in October 2020!

We've reached many milestones over the past 20 years, from embracing new legislative changes; moving our operations to the SUNY Erie North and South campuses; growing our partnerships, offerings and workshops; welcoming new faces and ideas; and best of all, celebrating thousands of local constituents' job placements. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey!



*Funded under the Federal Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). An Equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*

