
Capital District Counseling Association

CDCA Newsletter

January 2024



EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Trish Poupore VP of Professional Development
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2024
HAPPY NEW YEAR

We hope that each and everyone of you had some well deserved time off with family and friends. As the new year begins, we hope that you all take a priority on yourselves this year! As counselors, we are always caring for others but its essential to also maintain your own balance. Take the times to do things for yourself- at least once a month, if not every week- you deserve it! Cheers to 2024.

ANNUAL WINTER PROGRAM



Members of the Capital District Counseling Association got together on December 6th, 2023 at Shaker Country Club for the annual winter program. This years theme was about legal considerations while maintaining documentation. What a hit! Everyone was extremely engaged with our extremely infomrative speaker; legal representative of many local districts, Jeffrey Honeywell, Esq. Our members asked many important and thoughtful questions which kept the conversation going on. Truthfully- we probably all could've continued if it wasn't time for dinner! Our evening was a perfect example of why networking and professional development is so important. Every person in the room learned something that night. We hope that Jeff will join us again at another CDCA event! Food and decor was fantastic thanks to Shaker Country Club. Congratulations to all of the raffle winners- what fun!



Thank you Jeffrey Honeywell, Esq!



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Katie Lesko



The Lesko annual Chili party started as a pre-game party to the Siena vs UAlbany basketball game 18 years ago. While we aren't as young as we once were, we've kept the party alive. For the past 15 years, it's turned into a holiday season kick-off with a twist. We ask attendees to bring a gift for someone in need and we coordinate the donations to Capital City Rescue Mission. Through the years, people have missed the party, but the gifts still arrive. We even hosted a drive by during the pandemic in December 2020. Ron and I picked the local Rescue Mission because they create a holiday shopping area for families in need where people can pick gifts for their loved ones. There is a human dignity created through charity with this approach. We loved hosting this party this past Dec!

The 19th Chili party is scheduled for Saturday December 7, 2024! All are welcome.

We want to hear from *you.*



Do you have something amazing, fun, informative or just something that others need to know about going on?

Please reach out to **Katelyn Baker**, kdobert1@gmail.com if you are interested in sharing the awesome work you or your department is doing for students.

Your work is **important** and deserves to be shared with others. Not only do you deserve a shoutout but your programs, events, meetings etc could inspire someone else in their profession!

CARLA YOUNG

NYSSCA COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR



Carla Young was honored on November 17th as New York State Counselor of the Year!

A school counselor is recognized yearly by NYSSCA as a leader in their profession who devotes their careers to serving as advocates for NY students, addressing their academic, social emotional and career development.

In a recent article by Bethlehem CSD, Superintendent Jody Monroe noted, 'she wears her heart on her sleeve, always has a smile on her face and simply never lets her enthusiasm be dimmed by a challenging situation. She tackles issues as difficult as racial justice, sexual harassment and cyberbullying with a reassuring manner that makes you believe one person can indeed make a difference'.

Not only does Carla do an amazing job with her role as school counselor at Bethlehem Middle School, she also facilitates the Beautiful Me program at the middle school focusing on student self-esteem!

Q: How did you feel after being awarded NYSSCA Counselor of the Year??

CY: When I found out about being awarded NYSSCA Counselor of the Year, I felt genuinely grateful to my colleagues who took the time to nominate me. What made it even more special was that a counselor/former student I admire was the one who started the whole process. This definitely added an extra bonus to the experience. I love my job, take pride in my work, and being acknowledged in this way is really gratifying. It motivates me to continue the never ending work of advocating for all students.

Q: Tell us about YOU!

CY: I have a wonderful and supportive husband and two amazing kids. We enjoy traveling and exploring. Our son will be off to college next year and our daughter shortly after that. Time really does fly!

Q: Why did you choose to be a school counselor?

CY: I always knew I wanted to have a career working to help people, but I wasn't 100% sure on what I wanted to do, so I volunteered and interned at a variety of settings from kindergarten classrooms to maximum security prisons. When I had the opportunity to work with school counselors, I knew right away it was the right path for me. I have been a school counselor for almost 20 years and I still love it.

Q: What do you have going on this year in your professional life?

CY: I am extremely excited to officially announce that I have started my own business working with families, youth and school districts. Through **Ethical Edge SEL Consulting**, I provide schools with support to build their comprehensive school counseling plans, guardians with educational discussion groups, and youth with the PILLARS Empowerment Program.

<https://www.ethicaledgeselconsulting.org/>

I feel strongly that a comprehensive school counseling plan needs to be a fluid document that is updated and revised each year based on students' needs and our professional standards. This year I will continue the work of reviewing areas of need in order to develop and implement new programming that includes both direct and indirect services for students. Some of the topics that I am specifically looking at this year have a strong focus on prevention education, internet safety, and building healthy relationships.

Q: Any advice for newer school counselors?

CY: Collaborate and connect with other school counselors and school social workers that you trust and admire. They will provide you guidance, support, and give you the energy you need to keep moving and advocating for kids. This is a unique and wonderfully stressful career. Don't go at it alone and don't ever stop learning.

Winner, Winner!

Last February at the CDCA and NYSSCA School Counselor week celebration at Fort Orange,

Darnell Douglas from Bethlehem CSD

won registration to the NYSSCA Conference for 2023.



Tell us about you!

I have been a school counselor for 11 years. I currently work at Bethlehem Central High School as a school counselor. I have been an elementary school Counselor, an at-risk counselor, a 9th-grade counselor, and now a 9-12th-grade counselor. All of these roles have given me different skills and perspectives that help shape the way I work with students.

What was your favorite part of the NYSSCA Conference?

The Award Ceremony!

What was your most important takeaway from the Conference?

I enjoyed networking with others in the profession. I like to find out why others are doing this work. I also enjoy learning new things that could help me to be a more effective counselor.

Thoughts on Counselor of the Year?

I am happy for Carla Young. She is a great counselor, mentor, and a wonderful friend. Sometimes many people go unnoticed for trying new things and stepping outside their comfort zone, and she deserves to be recognized for being authentically herself.

The closing of The College of Saint Rose



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On behalf of the CDCA board, I would like to express our heartbreak on the closing of The College of Saint Rose. Saint Rose has been a beacon in the world of higher education in the Capital Region community for over 100 years. This closure disrupts the many students pursuing their chosen fields and upends the dedicated faculty and staff who have dedicated their lives to educating Saint Rose students. The number of students who have graduated and went on to become integral members of the surrounding communities is tremendous and a testament to the stellar education those students received when at Saint Rose. The College's contribution to both the School Counseling and Social Work professions is undeniable in the many schools and private practices across the Capital Region who employ Saint Rose graduates. We also know their place in helping our community find services and advocacy through the Speech and Language Winkler Center Clinic, Living Resources, Cold Case Center, and other community partnerships. As an organization that supports our local School Counselors, College Admissions Counselors and Social Workers, we want to share our support to those students, faculty and community."

-Sage Fulgan, President Elect

NYSSCA CONFERENCE - NOVEMBER 2023



Thank you NYSSCA!
Congratulations to Carla Young for Counselor of the Year! Thank you to NYSSCA for hosting a wonderful and informative conference. Everyone is looking forward to 2024!



Retiree Committee Reading Project



It is with excitement and great pleasure that the CDCA retiree committee announces that we have launched our reading project this past fall 2023!

A special THANK YOU to Ms. Houbres third grade class and Ms. Brunsons first grade class for the warm welcome!



The reading project idea is a simple one. The focus is to engage elementary school children in the love of reading and sharing. CDCA provides books to elementary school classes, volunteers to read to the class, and then encourages the young people to read to their reading buddies of a younger class.

Launching this project was exciting and even more fun than we expected.

Two elementary schools welcomed, CDCA retirees to bring books and read to their classes. The students were then gifted books and encouraged to read to younger children.

A big thank you goes out to Jennifer Houbre from Menands union free elementary school. This was the first class that launched the reading project. Jennifer's third grade class read "The Magic of Friendship, Snow" with aspiring retiree committee member Julie Testo on December 13, 2023. The children were engaged and lively and had many questions for Julie.

On December 14, 2023, Amanda Brunson from Wood Road, elementary school, in Ballston Spa, welcomed Kathleen Freese to read to her first grade class. "Snowball Soup" was the chosen book and everyone had a great discussion about their favorite soup following the book. The very next day, Amanda's first graders, read their books to the kindergartners at Wood Road elementary school. This is so exciting on so many levels! Reading buddies is beneficial to young people. It gives the reader more confidence, and the young person being read to begins to embrace reading books. Reading is a skill that needs to be nurtured beginning with the very youngest. It is so exciting to have our elementary school students be so engaged in this project.

Springtime may bring a few more opportunities to read to elementary school classes. For more information, feel free to reach out to anyone on the retiree committee, but especially Kathleen Freese the chairperson for the retiree committee.

EMAIL CONTACT: kathleenfreese@yahoo.com

Upcoming Events

CASDA Roundtables 23-24

9:00-10:00 AM- Virtual

January 18th, 2024

March 14th, 2024

May 16th, 2024

CDCA CELEBRATION MIXER with NYSSCA

February 8th, 2024

Fort Orange Brewery

RETIREE MIXER

February 22nd, 2024

Fort Orange Brewery

Free Professional Development Highlight!

The Power of Character Strengths: Get Ready, Get Set, GO!
(15 Hours, 15 Credits or 15 CTLE)

Have you ever attended a conference or workshop where you were intrigued by the material and motivated to implement the concepts in your work but just didn't quite get around to making that happen? Did your excitement around the ideas and topics just seem to fall into an abyss of wishful thinking? Did getting back to regular routines and demands just suck the desire to make a positive change from your mind, taking your energy with it?

Whether you have been acquainted with the 24 Character Strengths or they are new to you, this workshop will take you on a deeper dive into wisdom, humanity, justice, courage, temperance, and transcendence with a tribe! Get to Know, Grow and Show your character strengths while you Spot, Savor, and Celebrate the strengths of others for yourself and your students.

Check out the full description along with other free course offerings from The Greater Capital Region Teacher Center on the-centers.org !

LET'S CELEBRATE

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

WITH CDCA & NYSSCA

Join us for an evening of celebration and fun!
Mix and mingle with counselors in the field.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH, 2024

4:30- 6:30 PM

FORT ORANGE BREWERY, ALBANY, NY

kathleenfreese@yahoo.com'."/>

RETIREE MIXER

02/22 4:00

FORT ORANGE BREWERY
Albany, N.Y.

All retiree committee members and aspiring retiree committee members are welcome to attend!
Please RSVP by 2/15 to Katheen Freese at kathleenfreese@yahoo.com

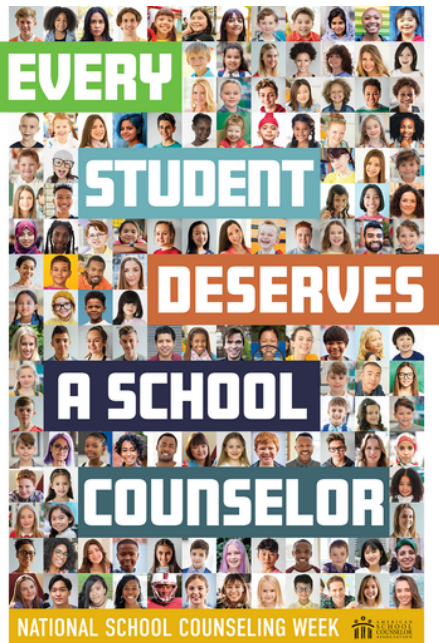
NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

National School Counseling Week 2024 (#NSCW24) is Feb. 5-9, 2024, to focus public attention on the unique contribution of school counselors within U.S. school systems. National School Counseling Week, sponsored by ASCA, highlights the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career. National School Counseling Week is always celebrated the first full week in February. The 2024 theme is "School Counseling: Standards-Based, Student-Focused." (ASCA)



U.S. Department of Education
@usedgov

Facing a challenge or planning a future: both require courage, persistence, and support. #SchoolCounselors can support all of these things as part of the school team that helps students turn their dreams into reality. ✨ #NSCW2020



Check out this link
for ideas on how
to celebrate at
your school!

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/Events-Professional-Development/Events/National-School-Counseling-Week>

WHEN YOU ADVOCATE
FOR YOUR ROLE
AS A SCHOOL COUNSELOR,
YOU ADVOCATE FOR ALL
STUDENTS



FEBRUARY 5-9, 2024

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

SCHOOL COUNSELING: STANDARDS-BASED, STUDENT-FOCUSED

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

AWARDED TO

FOR YOUR SERVICE AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO
THE SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM AT

IN HONOR OF NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK 2024

Print this template out for
the school counselors
in your building!

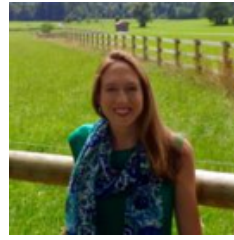
Download the certificate here
<https://schoolcounselor.org/getmedia/962feaf8-f848-4c3a-9776-5c812f2f1653/2024-NSCW-Certificate.pdf>



Katie Lesko, President

Katie has been a member of CDCA for many years. She is currently Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management and Director of Admissions at Maria College. She has worked over 22 years in College Admissions, working at Saint Rose and Siena College.

"I love the support that CDCA provides for counselors. I would strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of the professional development and the networking opportunities!"



Paige Collins, Chair of Committees

My name is Paige Collins. I am a Middle and High School Counselor at Tamarac Middle/High School in Brunswick. I have been a part of CDCA for the past sixteen years and held various positions on the Board throughout that time. I love that CDCA brings professionals from many levels of education (elementary, middle, high school, college, etc) together to provide a supportive place to connect and collaborate with each other. When I am not at Tamarac or a CDCA event, I love to spend time with my husband, two kiddos and friends. I love to travel, bake yummy treats and read.



Sage Fulgan, President Elect

She has been a CDCA member off and on during her 15 years as a School Counselor. Sage graduated from SUNY Cortland with her BA in Business Economics, Financial Management and a concentration in Computer Applications. She earned her Master's and CAS from Sage Graduate School in Professional School Counseling. She has worked as a High School Counselor in Middleburgh, a Crisis Counselor through the Family Counseling Center of Fulton County, and a School Counselor at Gloversville High School. She is currently a School Counselor at Tamarac serving grades 6-12.

When she is not at work, Sage enjoys spending time outside in nature. She and her husband enjoy bike riding and walking their Corgi, Ifan. When not outside, she can be found cuddled on the couch watching Netflix with their Siamese cat, Macca.



Trish Poupore- VP Professional Development

I have been a member of CDCA since 2010, and first joined the Executive Board in 2017. I am happy to be back on the board, serving our CDCA community! I love collaborating with other members, and the professional development and networking opportunities CDCA provides. I am a School Counselor at Questar III BOCES, supporting students in the Special Education programs. I earned my Bachelor's Degree from Elmira College, and my Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology from Lesley University. Outside of work I like to travel, attend concerts, and spend time with my family and friends.



Katelyn Baker- Co VP of Communications

This is my eighth year as a school counselor. Currently, I am at Algonquin Middle School which is the district where I graduated! I have been a member of CDCA for the past few years and last year decided to take on a committee chair role. This year, I am excited to be a part of the board surrounded by some of the best in our profession. I am a graduate of Sage Graduate School and love networking with students to help with the journey! I am the owner of two golden retriever boys whom I love to pieces, a wife of my high school sweetheart and the mom to two toddlers, Lucy & Ella! We love to travel and discover new unique restaurants.



Shanell Brown- Co VP of Communications

I'm a School Counselor at Lisha Kill MS in the South Colonie Central School District. This school year marks my 21st year in education. I enjoy working with students and their families, thus becoming a part of their academic journey. I joined CDCA as a way to collaborate with fellow School Counselors and to be a resource for others. School Counseling is a rapidly evolving field so it's always nice to stay connected with those doing the same work. As a proud Sage graduate, I enjoy speaking with current students about the importance of joining a network in their field. The connections you'll make will last a lifetime. Outside of my counseling role, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, baking and traveling.



Colleen O'Flaherty- VP of Membership

I'm Colleen O'Flaherty and I have been a member of CDCA since I was a grad student nearly 30 years ago. What I love most about this organization is the friendships and connections I've made with counseling professionals from elementary school to college admissions counselors. These connections have helped me best serve my students over the years. I encourage anyone in the counseling community to consider joining CDCA.



Alicia Caldara - Secretary

This is my eighth year as a school counselor, and I am currently a School Counselor at Albany High School. I graduated from Siena College, and completed my counseling program at Sage Graduate School. This is my fourth year as secretary for CDCA, and I enjoy collaborating and networking with other counseling professionals across the region. Having a supportive network to collaborate with, especially in the early stages of my career has been very rewarding, and I have enjoyed learning from others. Outside of work, I enjoy baking and spending time with my family and friends!



Kimberly Leva- Treasurer

I am in my 25th year as a School Counselor at Colonie Central High School. I also serve as the Counseling Department Coordinator. I've been a member of CDCA for those 25 years as well, and am very happy to be the current Treasurer of our organization. I enjoy being in CDCA for the professional exchange of ideas and supporting each other in our work.



Start Spreading the News

CDCA WILL BE LOOKING FOR NOMINATIONS FOR COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR- 2024!

Please start to consider who you would like to nominate as CDCA Counselor of the Year 2024! Sunshine and our annual June business meeting will be here before we know it. Look out for more information about how to nominate in our next newsletter!

Nomination Considerations

- Current Member of CDCA
- Is an extraordinary person who has gone above and beyond in their field
- Has contributed to CDCA in a positive way



Capital District Counseling Association 2024 Scholarship Application

The following must be included in the scholarship application packet postmarked no later than May 1, 2024:

1. A completed scholarship application form.
2. An essay on the following topic for each Scholarship below (between 250-500 words):

(For Freshman or Transfers going to Two or Four-Year Colleges)

The choice of where you will attend college will be one of the most important and sometimes difficult choices you will make in your life. Explain what person(s) has been the most influential on you throughout the college search, application and enrollment process and how they have made a difference.

(For Freshman applying to the First-Generation Scholarship-defined as a freshman applicant whose parents have not received a four-year college degree.)

What does it mean to you to be a first-generation college student? How will receiving a college degree impact your future?

3. A complete official transcript(s) showing your most current grades, in a sealed envelope with a signature written across the seal. Transcript(s) should indicate a minimum grade point average of 85 (3.0) or higher.
4. One letter of recommendation from a teacher or school counselor, in a sealed envelope with a signature across the seal.

Mail completed applications to:

CDCA Scholarship
P.O. Box 50153
Albany, NY 12205

5. Electronic submissions will be accepted directly from a high school counselor or faculty member and can be emailed to directly to Melissa Coon (m.coon@hvcc.edu).
6. Applicants may apply to more than one scholarship, but will only be eligible to receive one.

The Scholarship Committee will review the application packet and select award winners based on their academics, letter of recommendation and the quality of the essay in terms of content and demonstrated writing ability.

THE CDCA SCHOLARSHIP



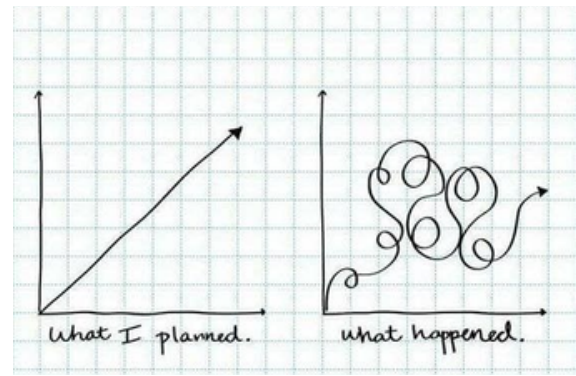
We are proud to sponsor 4 scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500.

Freshman First Generation Scholarship (\$2,500)
Freshman Attending a Two-Year College/Trade School (\$1,000)
Freshman Attending a Four Year College (\$1,000)
Transferring from a Two-Year College to a Four-Year College (\$1,000)

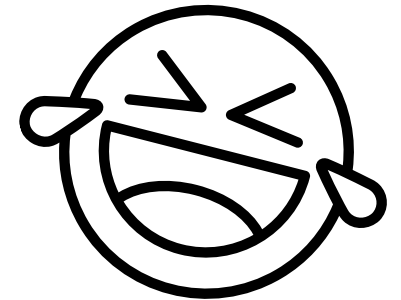
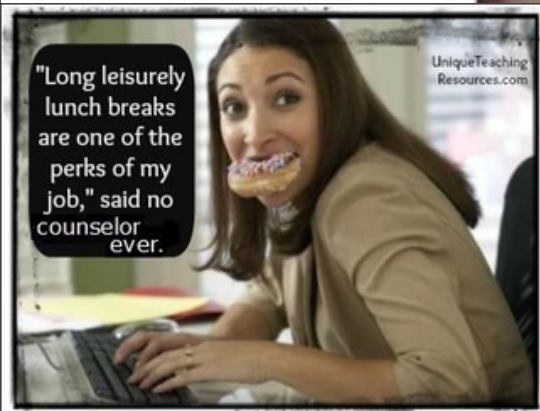
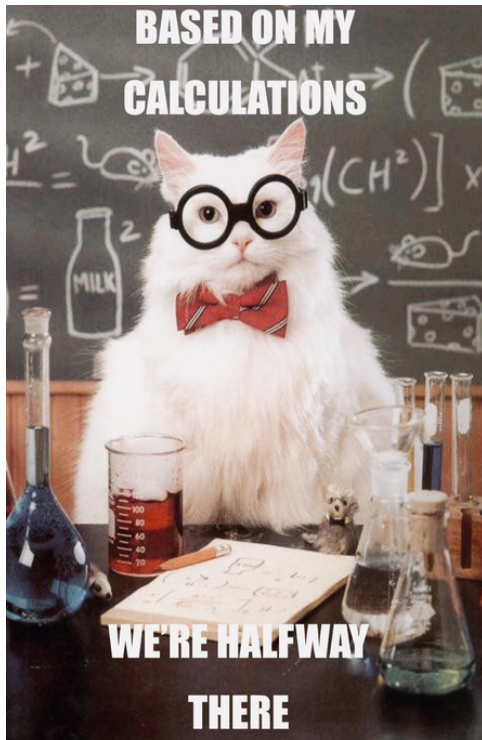
In order to make our scholarships more comprehensive, this year we have opened up a scholarship for students choosing to attend a trade school. Please remember, applicants must be from the Capital Region and plan to attend a Capital Region College. The Capital Region includes the counties of Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Montgomery, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and the southern part of Saratoga. If you have any questions about the scholarship please contact Melissa Coon (m.coon@hvcc.edu). **All applications are due May 1, 2024 by mail or electronic submission. See the attached application for more information.**

Scholarship
Link

It is the beloved half way point in the academic year! We are almost there but not quite yet. Lean on your people, stay warm and take care of you! Sometimes all you can do is laugh.



WHEN A STUDENT SENDS AN "URGENT" EMAIL AND WALKS INTO YOUR OFFICE 5 MINUTES LATER ASKING IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE TO READ IT YET.



BEING A COUNSELOR IS EASY
*It's like riding a bike.
 Except the bike is on fire.
 You're on fire.
 Everything is on fire.*

Therapist: How does that make you feel?
 Me: It's like... [pulls out my phone] Hang on, I saw the best meme for this. There, I tagged you.

