



# MAKING THE Connection TO Career Technical Education

Thursday, March 2, 2017

## Students prepare for life in home and professional kitchens at RETC

By Leanna Harris '18

Romeo Community Schools offers an abundance of classes in all different areas of work, preparing students for “the real world.” From Health-Care to Hospitality, Romeo schools supplies it all. The Culinary Program at Romeo High School’s partner building, The Romeo Engineering and Technology Center (RETC), educates students utilizing real life simulations, resembling the hospitality industry. Students learn how to make meals fit for a future in the culinary arts as well as simply recreating traditional family meals.

The head of the kitchen, Monica Vallier, also known as ‘Chef,’ has divided the kitchen up into stations including: bakery, fryer, lunch, soup and project stations. Each student is assigned a station and several tasks to complete before the biweekly transition to a new station.

“They [the students] are getting a dynamic version of everything. The project station is where they are figuring out all of the sauces and making a how-to video, like how to make this type of sauce,” Vallier said.

The stakes run high in the kitchen as all students prepare RETC students’ lunches for that day. Though lunches remain their top priority, they also



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Students put together culinary creations in the Romeo High School Culinary Arts program.

make breakfasts and provide for catering events. Events take place both before and after school and each student is required to participate in at least one event. For second year students, at least two events must be attended.

Recently, the Culinary Program hosted an event for the RHS board and administration, a total of 115 people.

“We do student of the month breakfasts for the High School. If they have PTO meetings here, we do them. Right now, Amanda Moore Elementary has come in contact with us and we’re going to try and do some events for them. We also co-

ordinate with SERVE to do some senior citizen events, and other schools to try and get them more outside simulations in either a banquet center or catering facility,” Vallier said.

The class knows how to have fun, too. The students have ‘cupcake wars,’ judged by teachers. They also make cookies and pies for special orders.

Some students fall in love with the Culinary Program and decide to take the class again. These second year students wear red hats. Each second year student is assigned to a station and acts as a leader that students look up to, resembling

a head chef. One of Vallier’s second year students, Gillian Giancarli, a junior at Romeo High School, has a special passion for the Culinary Program.

“This is something I actually want to go into as a job one day. My goal is to open my own restaurant. I really enjoy meeting new people and being in the class. The new teacher is really motivating kids and she is making it a great experience,” Giancarli ‘18 said.

Even if students don’t have a dream like Giancarli’s, understanding the basics of Culinary is considered essential knowledge. Culinary teaches students



Learning to prepare both meals that will prepare them for a career in culinary arts and make them better cooks at home is the aim of the culinary arts program.

**Culinary teaches students the staples of the cooking, like homemade lunches, pastas, sauces, and ice creams. Everything made in the kitchen starts from scratch.**

the staples of the cooking, like homemade lunches, pastas, sauces, and ice creams. Everything made in the kitchen starts from scratch. “Even the chicken tenders, they [the students] bread them themselves and then they fry them. Everything is made from scratch,” Vallier said.

The Culinary Program is unique to Romeo. Not many schools offer programs that give students the ability to express their unique passions at school. The RETC allows students to gain real world experience within

classroom hours. “People should take the class because everyone deserves to know how to cook and having that privilege in school is amazing. You meet great people and learn great skills,” Giancarli said.

The opportunity to cook and bake while surrounded by people who share that passion is not something students take for granted. The ability to experiment with different CTE (Career Technology Education) classes aids students to find their niche and prepare for both college and “the real world.”

## Romeo students own the opportunity in mechanical design program

By Kayla Kieleszewski

At Romeo High School, many opportunities are available for students to engage in classes they feel most passionate about. The Romeo Engineering and Technology Center (RETC), a partner building to Romeo High School, offers the creative program of Mechanical Design, which is run by instructor Tod Rawling.

Physics, mathematics and engineering describe some basic skills needed that make up the Mechanical Design course. Students in 10th-12th grade must take Mechanical and Engineering Design I for a whole year in order to qualify for Mechanical and Engineering Design II. Students own the opportunity to take these classes in a one hour class or a two hour block class. Each level introduces new activities with fresh material.

This course proposes the idea of individuality and creativity to those who chose to take it.

In Mechanical and Engineering Design I, students receive the opportunity to recreate sketches from a book or design their own creations, focusing on vehicle design, machining, and packaging, along with creating their own design and building it. Designers go through a process of multiple rough drafts until they are satisfied with their



Students take Mechanical Engineering and Design I for a full year to qualify for Mechanical and Engineering Design II.



Individuality and creativity are hallmarks of the program.

product. Another portion of the class deals with problem solving. The student designers take real life situations that can be complicated to the average person, and alter them to become simpler. The goal in the end is to make life easier and more efficient for others.

In Mechanical and Engineering Design II, the design and building process

gets taken a step further. Students possess the opportunity to draft real-life parts and assembly drawings, create 3-D computer models, build hands-on models, and put together presentation boards for new products.

“I enjoy many different aspects of mechanical design, but my favorite part has to be the design aspect



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Under the direction of instructor Tod Rawling Romeo students learn new activities with fresh material in the mechanical design program.

of it,” RETC Mechanical Design student, Jillian Bernotaitis ‘18 said. “I love trying to find solutions for things and sketching out different designs. The design process allows me to express my creative side which I don’t get to express that often with classes I take.”

When students decide to put their thoughts into reality, programs like AutoCAD 2010, Photoshop, Inventor and other 3-D modeling software, help design the artwork. These programs urge the users to be imaginative and artistic, along with giving them experience on using these professional programs.

Many of the clubs and classes display student efforts by competing in competitions. The two events that the Mechanical Design program compete in, M.I.T.E.S. and ASBE, allow the chance for students to explore possibilities for future design and showcase their current designs. By clashing at these events, students can earn the chance to receive college scholarships and future jobs based on performance.

“Mechanical Design is about exposing high school students to knowledge about careers in engineering as well as teaching students valuable skills that

will help them succeed in a career in engineering,” Bernotaitis ‘18 said.

Currently, numerous amounts of jobs in the engineering and mechanical field exist. The skills learned in the Mechanical Design program help students become anything from a vehicle designer to a machine operator.

The Romeo Engineering and Technology Center in Romeo Community Schools, allows students to display individuality by offering these specialized classes. Students get the opportunity to be creative and design anything they can imagine.

Anchor Bay Schools  
Armada Area Schools  
Center Line Public Schools  
Chippewa Valley Schools  
Clintondale Community Schools  
East Detroit Public Schools  
Fitzgerald Public Schools  
Fraser Public Schools  
Lake Shore Public Schools  
Lakeview Public Schools  
L’Anse Creuse Public Schools

For more information about CTE, contact Shannon Williams at 586-228-3488 or swilliams@misd.net



Macomb Intermediate School District  
44001 Garfield Road  
Clinton Township, MI 48038  
586-228-3300

For more information about the MISD and the 21 school districts, go to [www.misd.net](http://www.misd.net)

Mount Clemens Community Schools  
New Haven Community Schools  
Richmond Community Schools  
Romeo Community Schools  
Roseville Community Schools  
South Lake Schools  
Utica Community Schools  
Van Dyke Public Schools  
Warren Consolidated Schools  
Warren Woods Public Schools