

TECHtalk

SPRING 2016



From Manufacturing to the Medical Office



INSIDE

FROM THE DIRECTOR:
RMCTC—A SMART
INVESTMENT
REVOLUTIONARY
TEACHING & LEARNING
FACULTY NEWS
CAREER CAMP
& INTERNSHIPS

Bobby Unser, three-time winner of the Indianapolis 500, is credited with saying, "Success is where preparation and opportunity meet." A group of adult students at RMCTC have recognized the wisdom expressed in that quote and have taken action. They've enrolled in a course to prepare for career opportunities in healthcare.

The Health-Medical Office program, which is popular among secondary students, is now also being offered by the Adult Education department.

Adult students in the Health-Medical Office program benefit from the knowledge and experience of their instructor, Ms. Mary Kay Wade.

More than a dozen adults are currently enrolled in the 18-month-long program, which entails 1,440 hours of classroom instruction.

The course's curriculum offers a combination of administrative and clinical subject matter with an emphasis on insurance coding/billing and medical assistant training. Upon completion of the program, individuals will be prepared to

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**Reading
Muhlenberg**
CAREER & TECHNOLOGY CENTER



FROM THE director



Students and parents, I challenge you to think about education from an investment standpoint. I would like you to consider the educational opportunities available at the Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center (RMCTC). Choosing to attend the RMCTC might be a smart investment option for the following five reasons:

- Career & Technical Education (CTE) offers real-world learning – students are afforded the opportunity to build a strong work ethic, learn time management and communication skills, develop positive attitudes, learn how to problem solve, work in a team environment, be flexible, and learn the importance of lifelong learning.
- CTE prepares students for career options, not simply a job or a college major.
- Students connect to CTE – many students begin to understand the relevance and importance of academics once they understand how those academic concepts are used to solve real-world problems.

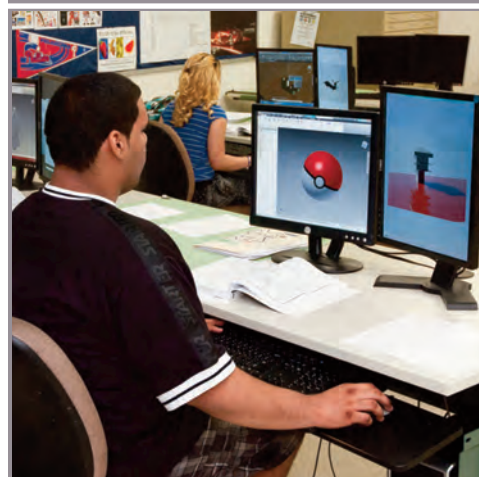
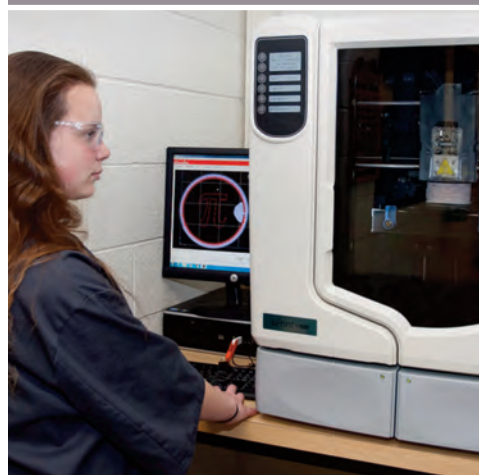
- CTE increases graduation rates – 93 percent of high school students who participate in CTE graduate with a diploma compared to the overall graduation rate of 81 percent (*Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*).
- CTE can lead to a higher salary – CTE grads earn \$4,000 to \$17,000 more than graduates with an associate's degree in the humanities (*Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*).

The Reading Muhlenberg CTC offers 31 unique programs of study for your consideration. All programs offer the opportunity for students to obtain industry certifications prior to graduation and provide pathways for students to continue their education at two- and four-year colleges. In many cases, students have the opportunity to articulate or earn college credit while still in high school. Students who qualify for enrollment into the Berks Technical Academy (see our website for more details at www.rmctc.org) can earn up to 30 credits through the Reading Area Community College while still in high school.

If you have completed 9th grade and have not already enrolled at RMCTC, but would still like to submit an application, please call 610-921-7310 to arrange for a personal appointment with a counselor over the summer. Perhaps you'll discover a pathway to a rewarding career through RMCTC!

Gerald P. Witmer Jr.

Gerald P. Witmer Jr.
Administrative Director



RMCTC offers students real-world learning in 31 different programs of study, including Sewing & Clothing Manufacturing, Machine Shop Technology, and Computerized Drafting.

medical OFFICE

continued from front cover

work in the front or back offices of single-physician or multi-physician practices.

Multiple factors are driving the demand for the course. One is the projected rise in the overall demand for workers in the healthcare field. Another is the number of workers in the area that have lost their jobs due to workforce reductions or company closures. “All of the adults currently enrolled in the program are dislocated workers,” explained Becky Seltzer, adult education coordinator at RMCTC. “For example,” she continued, “former employees of Surgical Specialties Corporation, which moved its Exeter operation to Tijuana, Mexico, are taking the course so that they can re-enter the job market with new, in-demand skills.”

“Returning to the classroom presents challenges to adult students,” said **Mary Kay Wade**, teacher of the program. “They have to juggle multiple responsibilities, including their studies, home life, elderly parents, and perhaps adult children still living at home. Most of them have been out of school for years and need to readjust to the rigors of school work and tests,” she explained. “Nevertheless, they are determined to meet those challenges, complete the program, and become gainfully employed once again,” said Wade.

For **Marjorie Fackler**, Sinking Spring, the course represents a variety of possibilities. Fackler, who is interested in working with the elderly, is excited by the prospect of being trained for career opportunities in doctors’ offices, clinics, hospitals, and retirement homes. “I couldn’t be happier about the program,” said Fackler. “Education is a great thing, and I’m learning a lot. I’m looking forward to having a job that won’t move to Mexico and to the sense of accomplishment I will feel when I am working in the healthcare field,” she said.

For more information about the program and other adult education courses, please contact **Becky Seltzer** at bseltzer@rmctc.org or 610-921-7300, ext. 7321.



After their manufacturing jobs moved to Mexico, Jeannette Irizarry, left, and Sonia Texidor are looking forward to new careers in the expanding healthcare field.



Marjorie Fackler is optimistic about the new career possibilities open to her upon completion of the Medical Office adult education program.



Classrooms in the Cloud

In the same way that technology is changing the way we go about our daily lives, it is also revolutionizing the ways teachers teach and students learn. A good example of this phenomenon is currently happening at RMCTC.

Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, teachers and students in eight programs are being introduced to Canvas, a cloud-based learning management system (LMS). The pilot group spans a wide spectrum of subject areas, including information technology, horticulture, baking, early childhood education, and others.

In the past, a standard classroom dynamic involved a teacher presenting a lesson to the class while the students listened and took notes. Today, most classroom scenes do not look like that at all. Much more common, especially at RMCTC, is the classroom where students are engaged in a variety of activities, learning at their

own pace, utilizing multiple resources, and collaborating with their peers.

How does Canvas fit into this modern educational paradigm? It is designed to connect teachers and students with a vast array of digital tools and resources and more fully engage them in the learning process. The system helps to organize learning activities, videos, articles, assignments, tests, and other materials into a single, convenient place that can be accessed via the Internet.

Kathie Murray, Baking and Pastry Arts teacher, is enthusiastic about Canvas because of the many advantages it offers. With a few keystrokes she can incorporate slide shows, videos, and readings into lessons; create quizzes, tests, and assignments; set deadlines and schedules; check homework, assign grades, and give feedback to students.

From left, teachers Heather Yobb, Michelle Merkel, Kathie Murray, and Mark Vrabic collaborate on effective ways to use the Canvas learning management system.



“Canvas provides students with easier, faster access to resources,” explained Murray. “Also, it is an effective tool for giving timely feedback, whether through self-graded assessments or online comments (written or video). It organizes everything in one place that I can easily access

from home, and it eliminates the need to carry papers back and forth,” she continued.

An example of how Murray uses Canvas in the Baking program looks like this:

- She finds a YouTube video about cake decorating that supplements her in-class instruction;
- She places a link to the video in an assignment to watch the video, write a paragraph about the video, read and comment on what other students have written about the video.
- Using Canvas, she can track her students’ progress on the assignment, read their paragraphs and comments, grade the assignment, and give almost immediate feedback to the students.

Students give Canvas high marks for its home access functionality, prompt grading and feedback features, and easy tracking of assignments and deadlines.

“Yes, there is a learning curve with Canvas,” said **Michelle Merkel**, Information Technology– Applications teacher. “However, after you become familiar with it, you can quickly appreciate its many advantages—for teachers and students alike,” she said. “Since using it, I’ve seen student productivity increase,” she added.

A further benefit of using Canvas at RMCTC is that it is quickly becoming the LMS of choice at many institutions of higher learning, including RACC and Penn State. Students enrolled in the Technical Academy appreciate the ease of



accessing their RMCTC and RACC course materials online and know that they will be comfortable with the system as they continue their post-secondary education.

Flower arrangement photos and videos, brought to the classroom via the Canvas learning management system, add to the classroom dynamic in Mr. Vrabie’s horticulture class.

As the year progresses, the pilot group is advancing in its understanding and appreciation of using Canvas as a learning management system. Plans call for additional teachers to introduce Canvas into their classrooms next year.



Students in the Baking and Pastry Arts program use Canvas to access resources, complete assignments, and take tests in a timely and efficient manner.

welcome NEW STAFF



Perry DeJesus has been hired as instructional assistant for the Building and Property Maintenance program. His work experience includes more than 15 years at Exide Technologies. He completed the Building and Property Maintenance program at RMCTC in 2015.

Colleen Russo has been appointed instructional assistant in the Learning Resource Center. She previously served the Fleetwood Area School District and the Muhlenberg School District. Russo holds a bachelor of business administration degree in management from Penn State University.



Margielene Soriano has been hired as instructional assistant candidate for the Information Technology–Applications/Web Design programs. She is a graduate of Fleetwood High School and previously worked as a teller for Fulton Bank.



Christopher Gardecki has been appointed Plumbing and Heating teacher. He has more than 10 years of experience working in the plumbing industry in Berks County and was most recently employed by Quality Plumbing Solutions of Leesport. Gardecki is a graduate of Exeter High School. He earned a journeyman license at Berks Career & Technology Center and is a Certified Master Plumber.



Mary Kay Wade has joined the Adult Education department as Health–Medical Office teacher. She recently worked as LPN nursing instructor at Lincoln Technical Institute. Wade has had diverse experience working as a staff nurse at The Reading Hospital and Medical Center and has served as an adjunct instructor at Pace Institute and Alvernia University. She completed the computer programming course at RMCTC and earned a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Alvernia.



Jacklyn Rusnock, a Registered Dental Hygienist, has joined the RMCTC faculty as Health–Dental Occupations teacher. She has 20 years of experience working as a dental hygienist. She previously served as long-term substitute instructor for the Dental Occupations program at Berks Career & Technology Center. Rusnock graduated from Muhlenberg High School and West Virginia University, where she earned a bachelor of science degree in dental hygiene.

Forward to the Future

Last fall, movie fans celebrated “Back to the Future Day,” which commemorated Marty McFly’s successful trip to the future year of 2015. If today’s students could travel to the future, what would they find?

Most experts agree on one aspect of life in the near future: the advanced manufacturing and healthcare fields will offer some of the most prized career opportunities in the region. That is why effort and funds are being invested now in promoting interest in those careers and in preparing students for them.

summer INTERNSHIPS

Working closely with the Berks County Workforce Investment Board, RMCTC, in cooperation with other schools and agencies in Berks and Lancaster counties, is engaged in a multi-faceted initiative to expose youth to specific industry sectors while familiarizing them with the expectations of local employers.

On April 29, ninth-graders from Reading Intermediate High School and Muhlenberg Middle School who were accepted into select RMCTC programs for tenth grade visited the Center to shadow tenth-graders enrolled in those programs. In addition to participating in career-specific activities in their chosen program areas, the students met with industry professionals, who discussed career options and pathways to training, advancement, and success.

During summer 2016, students will have three additional opportunities to explore careers and gain valuable work experience. At the RMCTC Career Camp, students who will enter ninth grade in the fall will explore seven careers, participate in fun projects, and learn to use tools and equipment common to major manufacturing and medical facilities in Berks County.

A summer work experience will be offered to RMCTC students as a means to prepare them for future internships or employment. While working for local companies during the five-to-seven-week program, students will earn \$7.25 to \$8.00 per hour.

Thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous supporter, RMCTC is also able to arrange a number of paid summer internships. Participants will be employed for 40 hours per week for eight weeks and earn a minimum of \$7.25 per hour. Upon successful completion of the program, each student will receive a stipend of \$1,136.

The purpose of these programs is to provide students with rich learning experiences that will assist them in making decisions about their career paths and goals. Students who take advantage of the many opportunities offered to them by RMCTC and its corporate partners in the community will gain confidence in their skills and take positive steps to secure their own futures.



Joel Castillo, a Reading High School student enrolled in the Machine Shop Technology program at RMCTC, will gain valuable on-the-job experience this summer working as a paid intern at Excelsior Blower Systems in Blandon.

RMCTC Advanced Manufacturing Programs

COMPUTERIZED DRAFTING TECHNOLOGY

ELECTRONICS & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ENGINEERING & AUTOMATION TECHNOLOGY

MACHINE SHOP TECHNOLOGY

PRINTING & GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS

WELDING & METAL FABRICATION

RMCTC Healthcare Programs

HEALTH-DENTAL OCCUPATIONS

HEALTH-MEDICAL OFFICE

HEALTH-MEDICAL PROFESSIONS

HEALTH-NURSING CAREERS

board members

Abraham Cepeda
Robin Costenbader-Jacobson
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Garrett Hyneman
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Joseph Lupia
David MCCoy
Cindy L. Mengle
Eddie Moran

MISSION STATEMENT

The Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center, in partnership with our diverse community, sponsoring districts, and business and industry, is committed to providing quality career and technical education, resulting in opportunities for students to gain employment, pursue post-secondary education, and develop an appreciation for lifelong learning.

WE WISH YOU THE BEST!

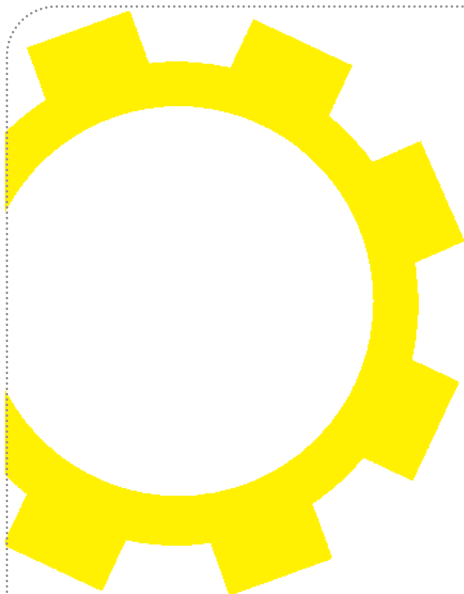
As the 2015–2016 school year comes to an end, we wish a fond farewell to two veteran members of the Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology faculty and staff. **Mr. Michael Coulehan** and **Mrs. Carol Keiser** will be retiring after a collective 37 years of service to the school.

Mr. Coulehan will conclude his career after having served as guidance counselor at RMCTC for 27 years. Mrs. Keiser will retire after 10 years of service as the instructor of the Sewing and Clothing Manufacturing program.

Through their dedication, they have had a positive impact on the lives of countless students, who are now active and productive members of our community. We extend our gratefulness for their service and wish them a happy and fulfilling retirement.

It is the policy of the Reading Muhlenberg CTC not to discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504 and Title VI.

DESIGNED BY BERKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT



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