

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Risa B. Hoag, Harquin Creative, 845-627-3000, risabh@gmail.com

Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board's 8th Annual Youth Summit Helps Youth Test Drive Career Paths

(WESTCHESTER/PUTNAM) – More than 300 students and business leaders participated in the 8th Annual Westchester-Putnam Youth Summit on Thursday, April 18, 2019, which took place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains. The Youth Summit is a coordinated effort between The Business Council of Westchester, Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board, and Westchester County for young adults between the ages of 16-24.

This year's theme was “**Test Drive a Career Path**” and the workshops piqued interest and provided real world information in the sectors of Aviation, Healthcare, Technology, Hospitality/ Culinary, and Skilled Trades like construction, plumbing, and electrical. The day's agenda was filled with team activities like Building a Race Car Track, workshops, motivational speakers, and a College & Career/ Job Fair. Event Emcee **Lucinda Cross**, CEO of Activate Worldwide commended the attending youth on utilizing their spring break to learn and improve themselves.

Deputy County Executive **Ken Jenkins** welcomed students, along with Business Council of Westchester (BCW) President and CEO **Marsha Gordon**, and WPWDB Executive Director **Thom Kleiner**. Business leaders from a variety of industry backgrounds volunteered as business mentors, workshop facilitators, and career fair exhibitors. Workshop facilitators were: Healthcare – **Dana Politis**, *Director, Community Workforce Programs* Montefiore; Hospitality – **Peter Herrero, Jr.**, *President, NY Hospitality Group*; Skilled Trades – **Bud Hammer**, *President, Atlantic Westchester, Inc.*; Aviation – **Millie Becker**, *CEO, Skyqueen Enterprises* and **Frank Williams**, *Executive Director, White Plains Youth Bureau*; and Technology – **Hank Foley**, *President & CEO, New York Institute of Technology*.

Daniel Bonnet, *Deputy Director of the College & Career Center of the Guidance Center of Westchester*, conducted an Ice breaker activity taken from WPWDB's R.E.A.D.I workplace attributes curriculum where everyone paired up and took turns telling each other the positive things about themselves to demonstrate good listening skills and empowerment by focusing on our passions and positive attributes.

Through short “Career Commercial Breaks,” attendees gained insight into careers at Wegmans and PCSB Bank where Zach Bell, *Area Service Manager, Harrison Wegmans* and **Domenick Petramale**, *Senior Vice President, Retail Banking Officer, and Director of Cash Management* at PCSB talked about how they got their start and the work ethic they employed to move up and build a career. Domenick explained how banks make the world go around. “A bank loans people money for things they need like a house, car,

business. I started as a teller, then moved up to branch manager, and now I'm a district executive. I turned an entry level job into a career that I love and can do for life." Zach added, "We're hiring 500 people for our newest Wegmans store in Harrison, NY. We are looking for people who care for other people. We can train you to do anything, but we can't train you how to be passionate and care about people." Joshua Thomas, *Chef*, Wegmans also spoke about this career.

This year's Keynote Speaker was **Orane Barrett**, *Founder and Chief Executive* of Kool Nerd Club. Orane earned a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from University of Rochester and an MBA from MIT's Sloan School of Business. Orane encouraged attendees to ask themselves, "Be a "Nerd" because nerds are driven by their passion—it's who they are inside, and they find a creative way to turn their passion into a cool career." He added, "What do you love to do more than anything? Test drive and try things out. Find people in different careers and ask them what their day is like."

Thank you to our sponsors NY Institute of Technology, Wegmans, Veekast, and PCSB Bank and to all the workshop leaders and employers who participated in the Career Fair.



L-R: Orane Barrett, *Founder & CEO, Kool Nerd Club*; Nicole Paige, *Interim Director of Workforce and Employer Development, Business Council of Westchester*; Ebony White, *Director of Workforce and Employer Development, Business Council of Westchester*; Lucinda Cross, *CEO, Activate Worldwide, Inc.*; Marsha Gordon, *President & CEO, Business Council of Westchester*; Thom Kleiner, *Executive Director, Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board*; and Donvil Collins, *President & CEO, Veekast*.



Youth working diligently as a team on the Road Race Challenge.



Youth visiting the Youth Summit Career Expo.

THE WESTCHESTER-PUTNAM WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WPWDB) is comprised of leaders and staff of state and county government agencies, non-profits, public education, and the private sector who work together to strengthen the partnerships between business, education, and service providers within the “Career Center Network” to meet the needs for a skilled workforce. The WPWDB pursues funding opportunities and develops model programs and leading-edge practices. The “Network” is made up of four Career Centers (White Plains, Mount Vernon, Peekskill, and Carmel) as well as partner agencies that provide state-of-the-art technology, training, resources, and services to youth, adults and employers. For more information, visit www.westchesterputnamonestop.com.

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com.

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