



CSO Connections Newsletter



Bridges to the Future

Bridges to the Future helps eligible students in selected school districts in Northumberland, Columbia, Montour, Union, Snyder, Mifflin, Clinton,

Lycoming, and Centre counties graduate from high school and get a job, enroll in post-secondary education, or join the military. The program runs from the sophomore year in high school until one year after high school graduation.

Participation in the program is income-based. Students belong to one or more of the following categories: reading, writing, or computer skills at or below the 8th-grade level; participant in the juvenile justice system; pregnant or parenting; homeless or in foster care; English language learner; and/or has a disability.

There is no cost to students or their families to participate. The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act funds **Bridges to the Future**.

Bridges to the Future staff supports students with intense one-on-one case



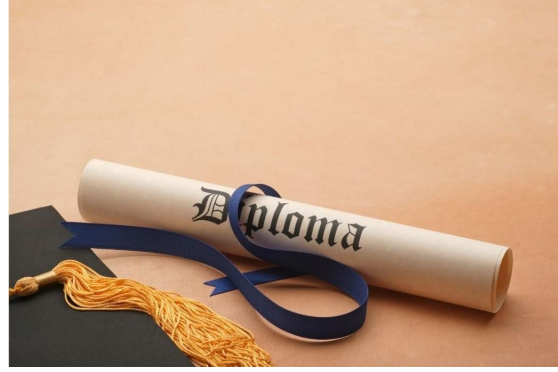
management services. Participants explore their career interests and build skills to create goals for the future. Students leave the program with a resume and cover letter, interviewing skills, teamwork and customer service experience, work and leadership experience, financial knowledge, contacts in the local industry, and a clear pathway to achieve their work and life goals.



Each year, something different...

- **10th grade**, students explore and learn about their skills and interests to develop career goals. They begin mapping out plans to achieve their goals. Students will participate in one job shadowing experience learning about their field of choice.
- **Summer following 10th grade**, students participate in **Camp STEAM** (science, technology, engineering, art & mathematics) a fun, two-week camp to learn about the STEAM occupations. Students learn about entrepreneurship, leadership, and financial literacy. They tour local businesses, learning about employment opportunities.
- **11th grade**, students work one-on-one with a mentor to refine their career goals and plans. Students create a resume, practice interviewing, and learn more about finance.
- **Summer after 11th grade**, students do an eight-week paid work experience with a local employer. Earning \$10.35 an hour while building confidence, learning new skills, and getting real-life work experience. Students can begin applying for internships or future work experiences.
- **12th grade**, students finalize their career and post-high school plans. Staff members organize college tours and help students with financial aid applications. Together they update students' resumes, complete job or college applications, and practice interviewing skills. By graduation, students know what their plans are: post-secondary education, employment, or entering the military.

After graduation staff continues supporting and advocating **for Bridges to the Future** students for another year, through any challenges that may arise. The staff strives to help every student see and realize their full potential.



Meet Alex

Alexandra entered the **Bridges to the Future** program in June 2020, as a 10th grader in the Keystone Central School District. Her goals were to receive assistance with career exploration and career pathway planning with the eventual goal of becoming a registered nurse. Alex's motivation to enter nursing comes from the heart, for as long as she can remember, she has helped take care of her disabled sister.

Despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, **Alex** attended two weeks of **Camp STEAM** virtually. Along with her peers, she learned about local opportunities, financial literacy, as well as the soft skills employers look for in candidates. A guest speaker from **UPMC** discussed job opportunities in their healthcare facilities, provided social media guidance, and gave the group resume writing tips. **Alex** received a \$250 stipend for participation and had perfect attendance in **Camp STEAM** activities.



Alex never allowed setbacks from the pandemic to decrease her determination to begin taking steps toward a healthcare career pathway. She managed to apply, interview, and secure unsubsidized employment with **UPMC**. Currently working approximately 20 hours in the evenings and on the weekends in the dietary department at Lock Haven Hospital.

Once finished with 11th grade, **Alex** plans on securing a paid work experience with a participating health care employer. Not only will she be gaining real-life work experience in patient care, but she will be earning \$10.35 per hour. **Alex's** workforce specialist from **Bridges to the Future** will be there to monitor her progress and accomplishments.

With the support of her family, school, and workforce specialist, **Alexandra** is destined for continuing success. Her decision to enter a high priority occupation in the healthcare field will ensure job placement and job security in her future.



Alexandra and her family.



Alex working in the dietary department of Lock Haven Hospital.

Staff Spotlight

Derek Reber



Derek has worked for CSO for eight years in the In-School Youth program, Bridges to the Future.

He has been the supervisor for the past two years.

His favorite part of working with youth is being able to help students who are in need & assisting students with career exploration for post-graduation.

He believes in "being the best at what I do, no matter what it is. I don't like failing in anything. Having that competitive side carries over to every aspect of my life." He contributes this to wrestling being a big part of his life.

- Derek has two children, a two-year-old son and an eight-month-old daughter
- He is the head coach of the Mifflinburg High School wrestling team
- in his time away from CSO he fishes, hunts, & coaches wrestling



Thad Swinehart Youth Workforce Specialist

He covers Midd West High School, SUN Tech, Mifflin County School District & The Mifflin County Academy of Science & Technology

His favorite part of working with students is communicating with them about their plans after graduation; learning about their goals & career interests to collaborate toward achieving their goals.



Thad finds inspiration in people who achieve something great or find success despite insurmountable odds.

MORE ABOUT THAD

Thad has two dogs:
Pocono & Otie

He enjoys kayaking,
snowboarding, fishing,
hiking, exploration
& travel

Thad likes the
enormity & unknown
of the world



FREE TAX PREP

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Northumberland County residents with income of \$57,000 & below

Our **VITA** services look different this year.
Changes to keep you & our volunteers healthy!

- Taxes prepared virtually
- Safe, secure document drop-off locations
- Must have an appointment

CALL US TODAY

570-644-6575 x 171



Four spots open in the C.A.R.E.S for Savings program!

Call today or refer someone you know.

CSO C.A.R.E.S. for Savings *Crisis Assistance Refueling Energy Services* 100 % Match Savings Program

Start saving for your heating bill this winter

- Save up to \$400 in 10 months
- Receive 100% match
- Paid directly to YOUR heating provider



Benefits residents of
Northumberland, Columbia,
& Montour Counties



For details call 570-644-6575 ext. 113
or ask your CSO case manager

www.csocares.org



Funding for the CSO C.A.R.E.S. for Savings program is provided by donations & CSO staff fundraisers

In Conclusion...

In 2020, **CSO** completed the PHFA Rent Relief program. Over 100 tenants applied for assistance in Northumberland & Columbia Counties & approximately 100 landlords.

There was a total of 57 households eligible in Columbia County & 25 landlords. The total grant money distributed was \$161,358. In Northumberland County, **CSO** distributed

\$117,650 to 57 households & 34 landlords.

CSO is now accepting applications for residents at risk of losing their housing in Northumberland County. Eligible individuals or families can receive up to \$5,000 through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-CV) to prevent homelessness.

This Resident Subsistence Program is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It can be used to pay utility payments preventing cut-off or service and rent or mortgage payments to prevent eviction.

Up to 3 Months of Assistance



Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc. is now accepting CDBG CV applications for up to 3 months of **rental, mortgage, & utility** assistance.

Coverage is for parts of Northumberland County.

Individuals must meet certain qualifications. If you do not meet them, we may be able to help in other ways!

Call us for more details.

PLEASE CALL 570-644-6575 ext. 171



This flyer is funded in part by a CSBG grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development



Thriving Individuals, Thriving Families, Thriving Communities
Provide Opportunities. Empower People. Strengthen Communities.

Visit our Website

| [CSO/Central Susquehanna Opportunities, Inc.](#) |

2 E. Arch Street, Shamokin, PA 17872

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STAY CONNECTED

