



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Area legislators pay tribute to local GST BOCES student honored as 'Student of the Year'

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 16, 2019

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**Elmira, N.Y., October 16**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Assemblyman Chris Friend (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) sponsored an official Legislative Proclamation congratulating Carrie Parkhurst of Chemung County, who was among a group of adult education students from across New York State recently honored as a "Student of the Year" by the **New York Association for Continuing/Community Education (NYACCE)**

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Parkhurst was nominated for the award by the **Greater Southern Tier BOCES (GST BOCES)** Adult Education and Training Services to recognize her successful completion of the TASC Program, along with her exemplary work ethic and positive attitude. The NYACCE is the professional organization representing adult education professionals statewide. Parkhurst was honored as part of the organization's 36th Annual Student of the Year Awards and Legislative Event near Albany in early October.

In a joint statement, O'Mara, Friend and Palmesano said, "This recognition is a real tribute to Carrie's determination, optimism and strength. She recognized the powerful difference that education makes to a fuller, more successful and more hopeful life, and she pursued the opportunities offered by GST BOCES with great energy and positive outlook. Carrie is a true inspiration to her classmates and a great source of pride to the administration and staff of the GST BOCES."

Parkhurst enrolled in the TASC program more than 30 years after attending high school. Her instructor, Georgiana Horvath, said that Parkhurst faced the challenges of the rigorous classwork and took her studies seriously while holding numerous jobs and managing a household.

"I've been teaching Adult Ed TASC classes for 10 years, and while most adult learners I see are dedicated students, Carrie stood out amongst her classmates," Horvath said. "Carrie has become a great role model, especially with some of the younger students, most of whom have complex and sometimes troubling personal lives. She is always willing to help and assist with classroom learning, but when someone shares a personal issue, she mostly listens – always giving sage advice. Having raised four children (the youngest about to graduate high school this year) and now helping to raise grandchildren, she has become an invaluable

source of wisdom, information and emotional support to her fellow classmates.”

With the class being in a remote location lacking public transportation, Parkhurst selflessly supports her classmates by driving them to class in inclement weather and to the regional TASC test site 25 miles away. After being enrolled in class for nearly a year, Parkhurst completed her TASC work and earned her High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma in August 2018.

“Carrie Parkhurst is a perfect example of the student we as instructors want in our Adult Ed programs – and the reason our TASC programs need to exist – so that adult students like Carrie can get that second chance,” Horvath said.

To help commemorate the tribute locally, on Wednesday in O’Mara’s Elmira office, O’Mara and Friend presented Parkhurst with the proclamation which states, in part, “It is the sense of this Legislative Body to take note of those individuals who have distinguished themselves through their exemplary pursuit of education as adults...While Carrie Parkhurst’s journey to pursue adult education and high school equivalency diploma classes took some unusual twists and turns, Carrie was able to rise to every challenge and has consistently stayed on course.”