

MAKING THE Connection TO Career Technical Education

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Prepared for any challenge



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ABOVE: Julia Lengemann is pictured with Entrepreneurship students. **RIGHT:** Shelly Bartolotta poses with son Danny, who competed at many DECA competitions and qualified at the international level representing Romeo.



"I viewed DECA from the parent point of view and saw what was expected of him for how much time and effort went into preparing for competition...I am fortunate to have an inside look into DECA due to Danny's past involvement."

— Shelly Bartolotta, co-advisor

Romeo CTE programs continue on despite pandemic

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Romeo High School

With Romeo Community Schools open for students on a hybrid schedule, students receive the opportunity to return to school part-time, with the ability to attend in-person class twice a week and to attend class remotely three days a week. Due to this change, teachers need to adapt to the new addition of Google Meets while also teaching a class in-person. This challenges CTE classes that rely on communication and hands-on learning.

The countless changes that everyone encountered this year forced teachers and students to find the best way to communicate and engage everyone in class discussions. A common solution to allow students to still contact their peers, breakout rooms place students in small groups via Google Meet. This tool helps marketing teachers split students into smaller groups in order to involve all students in more in-depth conversations.

Shelly Bartolotta, recently hired Business Management and Marketing teacher, explains that she utilizes breakout rooms

to keep students connected and engaged. Her main focus remains for students to walk away with the knowledge of basic marketing techniques and/or better communication and management in business.

"The first time we tried [breakout rooms], it was confusing and a disaster," Bartolotta said. "But now the students enjoy doing projects in groups and it is a great way to keep everyone connected."

Fairly new to Romeo in her second year is Julia Lengemann, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, and Accounting teacher. Mrs. Lengemann has prior experience in Capac and Oxford and she works with students to manage the school store and teach them how to run a business. Working at the school store provides students with the opportunity to learn how to operate a business by offering them real-world scenarios. Both teachers demonstrate to students the importance of communication and how to ethically connect with their customers.

With big plans for the Romeo marketing program, Lengemann is working with students to en-

hance the new website, purchase new apparel and possibly have a sidewalk sale. At the end of last year, Entrepreneurship students created a website for the school store. At rhsdawghouse.com students, parents, and teachers can order Romeo apparel straight from the website. While contact remains limited, the school store is open for business.

Recently, Lengemann introduced departments into the school store. Teaching two classes of Entrepreneurship, Lengemann came up with a plan to organize students into different groups to make the class run more efficiently. Some departments consist of finance, digital marketing, operations, and more. She plans on keeping these students in each department for about a month, then switching and moving students to another one in order for them to get experience with all of the various tasks they encounter in the workplace.

"Last year, I only had six students in my Entrepreneurship class," Lengemann said. "Now, we have two classes, so I have departmentalized the students and they each have determined

responsibilities for departments and made a list."

In addition to all of the transitions, Romeo plans to reintroduce the DECA program to the high school this year. This marketing competition prepares students with marketing and entrepreneurship skills that they later carry into the workplace. Romeo previously sent students to DECA competitions on all levels.

What makes this even more special for Shelly Bartolotta is that her son Danny became one of the few students who competed at many DECA competitions, and qualified at the international level representing Romeo. Co-advisors and marketing teachers, Lengemann and Bartolotta plan on guiding students along through the DECA competitions in hopes of restoring Romeo's winning reputation from previous years.

"Having Danny compete at all levels of DECA competition for 3 years has really helped me understand and feel like I know how the DECA competition works," Bartolotta said. "I viewed DECA from the parent point of view and saw what was expected of him for how much time and effort went

into preparing for competition...I am fortunate to have an inside look into DECA due to Danny's past involvement."

Danny Bartolotta is now the Social Media Marketing Manager of Flagstar Bank, and an active member of the advisory committee for the Business and Marketing programs. Danny remains involved in sharing with students whenever opportunity allows, and when asked how his high school experience impacted him, Danny said "my DECA experience has helped me to thrive not only academically but also professionally. DECA forges bright, hardworking, determined leaders for tomorrow's business world. Through DECA I learned how to think quickly on my feet, articulate ideas and stay one step ahead of the competition."

The business and marketing program at Romeo High School provides students with the opportunity to expand their understanding of business and apply that new knowledge to their life. Both teachers are excited to build and expand their programs as part of the Business, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Academy of Romeo High School.

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