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We Don't Do It Alone

When someone asks, “What do you do for a living?”, I tell them I am part of the Workforce Development team at MACNY. If the next question is, “What does MACNY do?”, I’m tempted to respond with, “How much time do you have?” I’ll start with the basics about how we’ve advocated for the success of local manufacturers for over 100 years. There’s always someone out there who is amazed to learn about all the work that MACNY does on behalf of our businesses and manufacturers.

I thought about this as I attended the recent *Pathways to Careers* event, presented by the Central New York School Board Association (CNYSBA), a MACNY affiliate. It occurred to me that our work is not done in isolation. CNYSBA’s event was successful because of collaboration. MACNY, CNYSBA, and Partners for Education and Business (PEB), a fellow MACNY affiliate, collectively put our heads together to present an information-packed evening for local students, parents, and guidance professionals about career possibilities in our region.

We were asked to consider who from our member companies and apprenticeship contacts might we invite to the panel to share their perspectives. Nick Gratch, Apprenticeship Training Representative from the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL), agreed to discuss the many prospects for journey workers across the state in advanced manufacturing, as well as the building trades. We were pleased to introduce two of our MACNY-group-sponsored apprentices to CNYSBA as possible panelists to talk about advanced manufacturing.

Greg Reals, now in year two of his Toolmaker apprenticeship at PPC Broadband, described how he learned of the

opportunity during his last month as an Onondaga Community College (OCC) student. Even though he was about to achieve his Associate Degree, Greg recognized apprenticeship as a solid next step in his career.

Also contributing insight from the registered apprentice perspective was Jack Stone, who became an Electro-Mechanical Technician apprentice at Anoplate in January of this year. Jack was recruited to the apprenticeship by his supervisor (himself a journey worker), who noticed his work ethic and advised him about the benefits of registered apprenticeship. He’s currently taking classes at OCC. An advantage of this pathway is that he will not have to consider the cost of this education, as it is covered by The SUNY Apprenticeship Program (SAP).

We were thrilled that these MACNY-sponsored apprentices were so willing to share their experiences with this audience, comprised of attendees who were not much younger than them. It’s one thing to hear about the value of apprenticeship from their teachers or from us, but it’s quite another to listen to individuals who were sitting in their seats just a few years ago.

Our work with our affiliate associations, member companies, and school partners to showcase the great career paths in CNY offers us the comfort of knowing that these collaborations support the needs of our manufacturers and students who consider working for them. In that way, MACNY advocates for our region’s success and a thriving talent pool. For more information, contact Laury Ferguson at lferguson@macny.org.