

# COMMUNITY *News*



The Community Foundation  
for South Central New York

## Oneonta Library Champions Digital Literacy

Public libraries have always been champions of lifelong learning. So it's only natural that libraries would embrace digital technology, the newest set of tools for gaining knowledge.

"It's very important that we support all kinds of information literacy, whatever the format," says Tina Winstead, director of the Huntington Memorial Library (HML) in Oneonta. Knowledge comes to us today through a variety of media—not just print, but also video, audio, websites, e-books,

mobile apps and more. And for many of us, consuming information through those channels is just the start: we also want to use digital tools to communicate and create.

Spotting a vital community need, Winstead and her team have built an impressive array of digital resources at HML. They've developed a makerspace with a three-dimensional printer and 3D design software. They've also stocked up on digital equipment for children, such as littleBits, Lego Robotics, Sphero, tablet computers

and Minecraft software.

Kids and adults come to HML to have fun while gaining new digital skills. "We started a program this fall called Open STEAM Quest, where everything was out and kids could just come and play," says Winstead. (STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, art and math.) Future "quests" will focus on specific equipment, she adds. "We'll create challenges based on the Spheros, for example, and that's all we'll have out for two or three weeks." That concentrated focus will give staff a chance to train users on the equipment before the kids embark on their own discovery learning.

The library also offers a Minecraft program to teach children specific skills. "Each week they have a different challenge," Winstead says. "They'll build a maze, and then everyone tries to get through their friends' mazes. Or they'll do art."

Adults have gravitated mainly to the 3D printer. "We've had workshops on how to use Tinkercad and slicing software," Winstead says. "We have open hours, and classes that are relevant to the season: a snowflake class, a jack-o'-lantern class. Children have come to these, too, which surprised us."

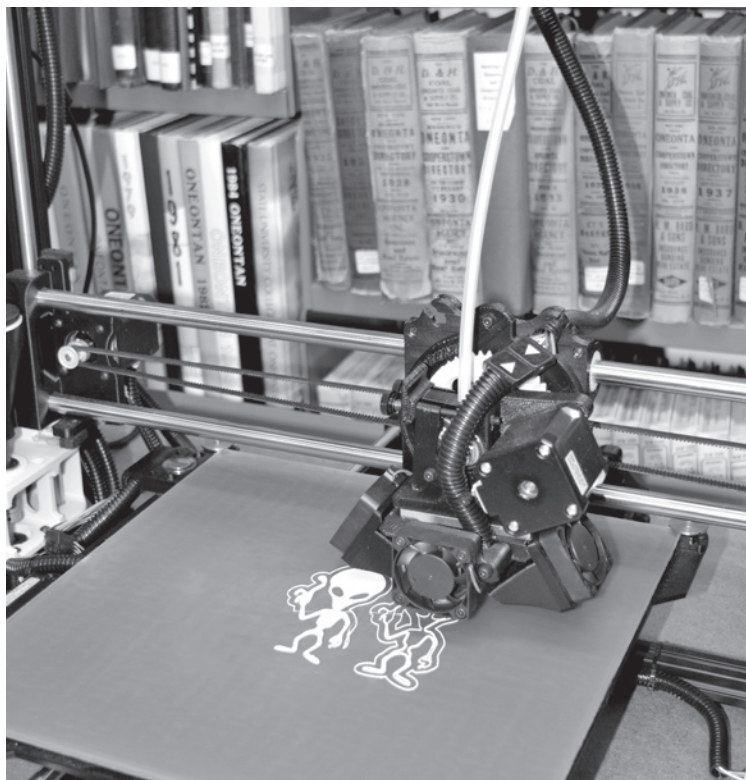
The atmosphere in a maker-

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space is somewhat reminiscent of an old-fashioned quilting circle, Winstead says. "People join together with various levels of expertise and help each other learn and grow." The average person can't afford to buy a 3D printer, but at the library, everyone shares this resource, she says.

This spring, HML will open a media lab where visitors can develop skills in photography, videography, podcasting, video editing and graphic design, among other activities. The library has already bought equipment for the lab, including digital still and video cameras, a 3D scanner, a light studio with a green screen, the Adobe Creative Cloud software suite and a high-end desktop computer. Staff



*Continued on page two*

# Grants

## Fall 2016 Competitive Grants from the Community Fund and Special Funds

### Grant Funding to be used for Capital Projects, Programs and Operating Support

**Action for Older Persons** \$14,778 for a senior health insurance program (*Broome*)

**Broome County Urban League** \$4,400 for a summer camp program for special needs children (*Broome*)

**Deposit Foundation** \$4,660 for a senior transportation program (*Broome/Delaware*)

**Children's Home of Wyoming Conference** \$15,000 to convert a classroom to an in-patient substance use disorder rehabilitation program for adolescents (*Broome*)

**Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango County** \$2,500 for a youth kayak education program (*Chenango*)

**Eric D. Dettenrieder Memorial Fund** \$3,000 to support athletic programs for disabled youth (*Otsego*)

**EPAC (Endicott Performing Arts Center)** \$15,000 for lighting, security and software (*Broome*)

**Huntington Memorial Library** \$3,000 for a media lab intern (*Otsego*)

**Life is Washable** \$4,999 to support athletic programs for disabled youth (*Broome*)

**New Berlin Library** \$550 for a summer reading program (*Chenango*)

**Regional Science and Discovery Center** \$5,500 to support a mobile science lab in Tioga elementary and middle schools (*Tioga*)

**Richfield Springs Community Center** \$1,500 for building improvements (*Otsego*)

**Richfield Springs Community Center** \$15,000 for the *Teen Zone* program (*Otsego*)

**Ti-ahwaga Community Players** \$5,000 for building repairs (*Owego*)

**Unatego CSD** \$9,422 to purchase a *Phonics for Success* program to improve elementary reading levels (*Otsego*)

**Village of Walton** \$11,850 to update computers and software in two patrol cars (*Delaware*)

**WSKG Public Media** \$13,450 for the *Youth Voices* program at U-E's Tiger Ventures (*Broome*)

**Total: \$124,609**

## A Classroom on the River

Young people these days have plenty of opportunities to benefit from technology, but not nearly enough chance to enjoy the natural world, says Kenneth Smith, executive director at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Chenango County.

And that's unfortunate. "There's a fair amount of research to show that kids do better emotionally and academically if they have an opportunity to make a connection with natural environments," Smith says.

That's one reason Smith and his staff at CCE are starting a program this spring to teach local youth how to paddle kayaks.

CCE has already done some kayak instruction, using a few boats provided by staff to conduct a trial program with a small number of kids and adults. "Seeing the success of that, we have sought out additional equipment and are ramping it up," Smith says.

The organization recently bought 18 kayaks from another Cooperative Extension, but those boats came without life jackets or paddles. CCE used a \$2,500 grant from the Community Foundation to buy that essential gear so it can get more people out on the water in 2017.

Starting this spring, CCE plans to work with local afterschool programs, summer camps, the YMCA and the Rogers Environmental Education Center in Norwich to organize kayak education sessions. Most of those activities will be aimed at kids, but adults will probably find some opportunities as well.

The sessions will be free of charge or offered at minimal cost, depending on the situation. Instructors will first take students onto calm sections of the Chenango River or other local waterways to give safety instruction and teach basic paddling strokes. Later, the group will head into the current to practice more advanced skills.

Chenango County is a particularly convenient location for offering kayak instruction, especially when the students come from an afterschool group. "The schools in this region typically have a river in their back yard—in most cases, literally," Smith says.

And the river complements the classroom very nicely, providing opportunities to study wildlife, erosion and other natural phenomena. "Once the kids develop some proficiency, this allows us to take them onto the river to teach STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) topics," Smith says. "At a certain point, the kayak becomes just a means of transportation to other lessons."

## Digital Literacy *continued from page one*

conducted several pilot programs this winter with some of the equipment.

"For example, we did a photo studio for the holidays, where people could take a family picture, and then we used Photoshop to snip them out and drop them into a background," Winstead says.

One group that library staff particularly hope to serve with the media lab consists of entrepreneurs who want to create professional graphics for their fledgling businesses. "We're going to show them how to create nice flyers, business cards—anything related to the business—and also how to use

# WSKG Brings Real-World Excitement to Alternative High School

A new alternative high school in the Union Endicott district is making a name for itself in the media realm. Exhibit A: “*We Are Tiger Ventures*,” an entertaining look at the school itself, a unique learning center that pairs classrooms with a startup business incubator to inject some invigorating real-world experience into the academic curriculum.

Students at Tiger Ventures made the three-minute video under the guidance of staff from TV and radio station WSKG, which opened a new Student Production Studio at Tiger Ventures in the fall of 2016. You can see the video at <http://wskg.org/education/student-production-studio-opens-in-union-endicott/>. The Community Foundation gave WSKG a \$13,450 grant to help with the costs of operating the studio and working with the students.

Housed in the U-E District’s Linneus W.



West Building, Tiger Ventures currently educates about 50 students in grades 8 and 9. Kids who don’t feel a strong connection to education in the district’s traditional settings are invited to take advantage of a blended learning environment in the alternative school, says Suzanne McLeod, superintendent of the Union Endicott Central School District.

The “blend” comes courtesy of the business incubator, which U-E created to help early start-ups, or established concerns such as WSKG that need extra space. “The entrepreneurs who have their businesses in the incubator, in exchange for free ‘room and board,’ are responsible for giving back to the district by mentoring the students,” says McLeod.

WSKG looked to the incubator as a new home base for its Youth Radio program, says Jackie Stapleton, director of education at the TV and radio station. Youth Radio has worked with students from numerous districts since 2012, but during the 2016-17 school year it is focusing on Tiger Ventures.

Staff from WSKG participate in Tiger Ventures’ English Language Arts (ELA) class and bring students into the Student Production Studio to learn to use equipment for video and audio production. Students who feel most drawn to the studio spend extra time there during a daily elective period.

“Our goal by the end of the project is that all students—even the ones who aren’t coming to the Production Lab during their free period—will have foundational experience with all different types of media,” Stapleton says.

Besides making the video to show to their parents on Meet the Teachers Night, the students



recently worked with their ELA teacher and WSKG staff on a project developed by the PBS News Hour. They wrote letters to the incoming U.S. President outlining the issues they feel are most critical for the government to address. The students then worked with WSKG to turn the letters into audio pieces, which WSKG played on air during inauguration week.

“I was so moved by everything they said and all the issues they talked about: poverty, gun control, ISIS, the environment,” Stapleton says. “They have a lot to say, and this is about encouraging, empowering them and giving them a platform.”

Some students are also working on an animated film, Stapleton says. “They’re investing a lot of their time in creating a storyboard and script for the Rod Serling Film Festival.”

These projects have made a profound impact, says McLeod. The students who attend Tiger Ventures often don’t respond well to conventional classroom projects, which offer an intellectual challenge but don’t seem relevant to their lives. “They need to see it in the real world,” she says. “That has been a huge contribution of WSKG.”

YouTube channels,” Winstead says. Another target group consists of teens, who may already have some experience with digital media but want to learn to work on a more sophisticated level.

To help get the lab fully up and running, HML will hire a part-time intern for 15 weeks. The Community Foundation has awarded the library \$3,000 to

support this position. Among other possibilities, the intern will develop and run workshops and document the training that patrons must get at the library before they may borrow equipment from the lab.

When the intern’s term runs out, HML’s adult services librarian will become responsible for the lab. “Once this groundwork is done, it will be a lot simpler for her to take

that on,” Winstead says.

Part of the library’s campaign to promote digital literacy addresses the lingering “digital divide”—the opportunity gap that separates people who have access to computers and the Internet and people who don’t. “But there’s an even greater gap in technical ability,” Winstead says. Many employers today say they don’t see enough job appli-

cants with the technical skills to fill their open positions.

“Our schools and colleges in Oneonta provide a lot for the students,” Winstead says. With its digital literacy initiatives, staff at HML hope to build upon that good work and help interested patrons climb to the next level of technology expertise.





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## **Board Welcomes New Members and Bids Farewell to Old Friends**

We are pleased to announce and welcome new board members Dr. Rajesh Davé and Susan Burtis to the Foundation. At the same time, we say good-bye and thanks to longtime friends Elysia Gudas, Peter Newman and Catherine Scarlett, each of whom have given generously of their time, talent and treasure for nine years; we will miss them.

Susan Burtis is an administrative vice president with M&T Bank in the Commercial Lending Group. She has been in banking for 26 years and has lived in Binghamton with her husband John and four children—Jack, Brendan, Liam and Mary Catherine—since 1991. Sue is also active with the Catholic Education Foundation and was most recently on the board of the Binghamton Philharmonic, the Broome County Council of Churches and the UHS Foundation.

Dr. Rajesh Davé is executive vice president of clinical integration and chief medical officer at United



*Dr. Rajesh Davé*



*Susan Burtis*

Health Services. Board certified in pediatrics and neonatology, Dr. Davé obtained his medical degree from Bombay University, did his residency at Mercy Catholic Medical Center in Pennsylvania, and completed his fellowship at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia.

He obtained his master's degree in business administration from Binghamton University. Dr. Davé is also the dean for undergraduate medical education for Clinical Campus, and a clinical professor in pediatrics at the State University of New York.

Involved extensively in community organizations, he is the founder and past president of the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of SCNY, past president of the South Central New York State Perinatal Association and chair of Healthlink NY, a regional health information network for an eleven county area.

*Please join us in welcoming Raj and Sue to our Board!*