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## OPCTE Launches Fall & Spring Technical College Expo

careerinayear.com



In October of 2022, The Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education (OPCTE) hosted its first district-wide Career EXPO at the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition in the Fuch’s Pavilion.

The event featured our Seven Technical Colleges and live demonstrations in programs like cosmetology, culinary, baking, information technology, aviation, marine and much more. Over 2,000 Miami-Dade high school students and a few members of the community attended the expo and were able to engage with industry experts and our Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructors while exploring career pathways and interacting with hands-on exhibits.

Moreover, in February 2023, we raised the bar; the event catered not only to over 2,200 high school students but also approximately, 2,700 middle schoolers who discovered dual enrollment options in the technical fields. On the first day of the event, Thursday, February 16th, Counselors and CAP advisors attended a professional development focused on CTE training opportunities available to dual enrolled and post-secondary students. The general feedback is that the event was much needed and provides true insight in the vast number of technical education training available in our District. Thanks to our industry partners, volunteers, OPCTE team, school site instructors, and students for making this year’s event a success.



Culinary program cooks up a batch of paella



Dental Assisting instructor and students from Lindsey Hopkins Technical College



## South Dade Technical College Student, The First to Receive Funding from ATB

[southdadetech.edu](http://southdadetech.edu)

The Ability to Benefit (ATB) program is a federal initiative that offers financial aid to students who do not have a high school diploma or GED® but are seeking to pursue some type of postsecondary education. The program provides a pathway for students to access higher education and gain the skills and knowledge necessary for a successful career. Prior to the introduction of the ATB program in our District, students who did not have a high school diploma or GED® were not eligible for federal financial aid, making it rather difficult for many of them to afford college tuition. However, the ATB program has changed that by allowing students to demonstrate their academic readiness through alternative means, such as passing an approved Ability to Benefit test (Accuplacer ATB). This test is now available at all of our seven technical colleges and will certainly level the playing field, allowing a diversified population of students access to higher education while providing opportunities for those who otherwise may not have had access to traditional educational pathways.

This school year, one of our first recipients of the Ability To Benefit funding has been awarded to Ms. Maria Nodarse, a Medical Assisting student at South Dade Technical College who completed 225 hours of the program. Ms. Nodarse became eligible in mid-February and is now on her way to completing the remaining 1075 hours in Medical Assisting, thanks to PELL Funding.



Maria Nodarse and her instructor, Carmen Saez at the Spring Technical College Career Expo



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## Conversation Thursdays at Turner Tech Adult

[turnertechadulthood.com](http://turnertechadulthood.com)



Turner Tech ESOL students learning and engaging in group activities



New wall wrap at Turner Tech Adult showcasing CTE programs

At William H. Turner Technical Arts Adult and Community Education Center, also known as Turner Tech Adult, our students are our priority; therefore, we are always looking for exciting and educational ways to assist our ESOL population. In January 2022 the ESOL teachers at Turner Tech Adult introduced “Conversation Thursdays” for the first time. This concept was introduced by one of the school’s phenomenal ESOL instructors, Ms. Patricia Louissaint. Through Conversation Thursdays, students engage in meaningful conversations and practice their speaking and listening skills. Ms. Louissaint felt the need to utilize this activity to teach students how to work collaboratively as a team to solve real world problems, improve their math skills, encourage team building skills and enhance their vocabulary. In addition, a Gallery Walk is infused in this activity. This strategy is perfect because it is a discussion technique that allows students to be actively engaged as they walk throughout the classroom. The teachers also noticed that the Gallery Walk boosted the students’ confidence in using the target language—English. Not only that, but students also learn about practical topics such as going to the grocery store, banking and citizenship among other things.

Conversation Thursdays has been a huge success at Turner Tech since it started. Based on students’ interviews, and academic data we were able to learn that they really enjoy the activity, and they are learning as well. Turner Tech Adult plans to continue having Conversation Thursdays so that students can continue to learn while having fun, as well as meet new friends and strengthen their English-speaking skills!



Turner Tech ESOL teacher, Ms. Patricia Louissaint giving instruction

## Discovering the SAVES Program in Search of Freedom

[savesdadeschools.com](http://savesdadeschools.com)



Mrs. Rosa Hernandez, student, left of Mr. Alex Cazañas, principal

Mrs. Rosa Hernandez was born and raised in Cuba. She migrated to the United States in September 2015, leaving her home and career in search of freedom, a better life, and being reunited with her family, whom she had not seen for years.

Rosa became a grandmother months before her migration as she worked as a teacher in Cuba. One of her goals as a teacher was to learn the English language then when she arrived at the United States, she was joyful not only for the opportunity to learn the language she always wanted to learn, but she also knew she would watch her grandson grow up in a better and safer environment. A month after arriving in the United States, her friend told her about the SAVES program and the benefits she would receive as a Cuban immigrant. With the support of her family, Mrs. Hernandez was excited about starting English classes, which is when she registered at American Adult Education Center. She registered for ESOL classes and was determined to learn the language she dreamed of learning,

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knowing that with hard work and dedication, she could take advantage of all the opportunities she would not have had in her home country.

After completing three ESOL levels, she was able to have a job interview and began working part-time as an office clerk. Mrs. Hernandez feels that the SAVES program has helped her to communicate and acquire the English skills necessary to succeed in this country. Moreover, she took full advantage of the program completing ESOL level 5, then took the citizenship preparation classes, and became a US citizen. Ms. Hernandez feels grateful to the wonderful staff at American Adult Education Center, who made her feel like family.

# SAVES

SKILLS FOR ACADEMIC, VOCATIONAL, AND ENGLISH STUDIES

## REFUGEE PROGRAM

## CTE Makes Positive Changes in Student's Life

[dadorseytech.edu](http://dadorseytech.edu)



Veronica Jones, student from D.A. Dorsey, at her graduation day

Veronica Jones is the epitome of perseverance and dedication. She faced many setbacks in her personal life, including her mother's passing and the onset of her oldest brother's severe health issues. These events left her depressed and withdrawn. But she didn't stay that way for long.

Veronica decided she wasn't going to go anywhere in life by feeling sorry for herself, so she enrolled in D.A. Dorsey Technical College's Medical Coder Biller program. Medical coding and billing specialists help healthcare facilities manage insurance claims, invoices and payments. At the program, Veronica met instructor Irma Als. Irma supported and inspired Veronica throughout her program, imparting her knowledge in all aspects of the Medical Coding and Billing industry.

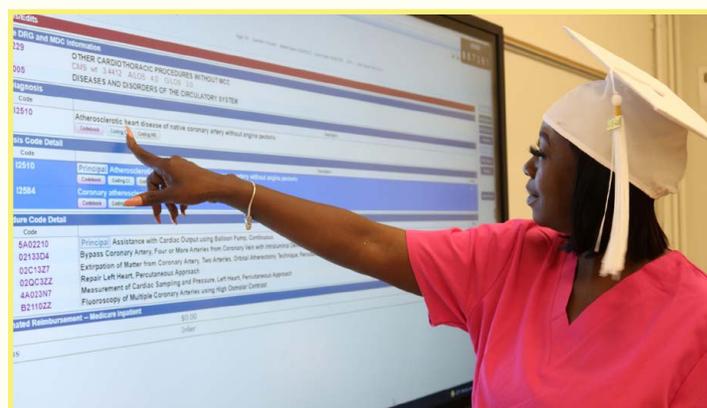
Veronica learned about anatomy and physiology as well as the medical terminology she'd need to know for her chosen profession.

In under a year, Veronica was able to complete her required 1,110 contact hours for the Medical Coder/Biller program and began studying for the Certified Coding Specialist (CCS) Exam. In April 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Veronica successfully passed the AHIMA National Certified Coder Specialist Exam. Soon after, Veronica began her career as a Medical Coder Specialist with the Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Miami. Veronica says, "Pushing through my struggles and aspiring to becoming a Coder/Biller is truly one of the best decisions I ever made."

It's because of programs like D.A. Dorsey Technical College's Medical Coder-Biller program and dedicated instructors like Irma Als that students such as Veronica can get to work faster, more affordably, and at a pace that our state needs them most-now.



Veronica Jones with her Medical Coder Biller instructor, Irma E. Als



## Robert Morgan Educational Center & Technical College Hosts SkillsUSA Regional Competitions

[skillsusa.org](http://skillsusa.org)



Region V SkillsUSA contest at Robert Morgan Educational Center & Technical College



Major Appliance Repair Instructor, Mr. Zilka and his student at SkillsUSA Competition

Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College (RMEC&TC) hosted the 2022-2023 SkillsUSA Regional competitions on February 7th, and 8th. This year's leadership contest followed the skills contest which took place on the first day of the event. The Region V SkillsUSA contests included programs and schools from Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Our school district had competitors representing programs such as Automotive Service Technology, Information Technology, Major Appliance and Refrigeration Repair, 3D-Animation and a many others. Approximately 200 students from schools throughout the county from Miami Lakes Educational Center & Technical College (MLEC&TC) to South Dade Technical College participated this in this two-day initiative.

In the Leadership category, RMEC&TC students won 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in 3-D Animation, and in the Skills category, RMEC&TC students also won 1st and 2nd place in the area of Computer Technology, as well as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in the area of Diesel Systems Technology, and 1st and 3rd place in Major Appliance and Refrigeration Repair. One of the students in the Appliance Repair program at MLEC&TC won 2nd place. The 1st & 2nd place winners are eligible to participate in the State competition this April in Jacksonville, Florida. Congratulations to all of our student and teachers who participated in this noble event. Best of luck at the state level competition.



Students demonstrating their abilities at the SkillsUSA competition

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