



REALNews

Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education

JUNE 2024 | VOL.9 | ISSUE 1



CONTRIBUTORS

CORAL GABLES ADULT EDUCATION CENTER

MIAMI SUNSET ADULT EDUCATION CENTER

LINDSEY HOPKINS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

MIAMI BEACH ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

MIAMI PALMETTO ADULT EDUCATION CENTER

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY AND CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

SOUTH DADE TECHNICAL COLLEGE



OPCTE CHAMPIONS OF THE YEAR

Spring 2024 was an extraordinary season for the Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education (OPCTE), marked by a series of prestigious annual honors. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the office for its remarkable achievements in various categories. Ms. Chantal G. Osborne, Director at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, was celebrated as the Miami-Dade County Public Schools 2024 Principal of the Year and Mr. William O. Torres, Teacher at Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College, earned the distinction of 2025 Fransisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year runner-up, and Ms. Carmen M. Jones, Office Employee at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, was honored as the UTD Office Employee of the Year.

Our congratulations do not end there. We also recognize the outstanding OPCTE region finalists: Mr. Michael A. Muraro from Coral Park Adult Education Center for Assistant Principal of the Year; Mr. Victor A. Ramos from South Dade Technical College for Rookie Teacher of the Year; and Ms. Nancy Oliva from Lindsey Hopkins Technical College for AFSCME Support Personnel of the Year. We proudly celebrate these exceptional individuals, whose dedication and commitment exemplify the pinnacle of excellence within OPCTE. Their achievements are a testament to the high standards and unwavering efforts that propel our success. Congratulations to all the annual award winners - your accomplishments make us immensely proud and inspire us all at OPCTE.



23-24 ELITE CONFERENCE RECAP: AMPLIFYING AND CONNECTING

careerinayear.com



The 23-24 ELITE Conference for Adult Educators and Administrators recently concluded, marking another successful gathering of professionals dedicated to advancing adult education. This annual event, known as a cornerstone in the field, brings together educators and administrators from across the region to explore excellence, innovation, and collaboration in adult learning. Hosted by ACE of Florida and sponsored by selected M-DCPS vendors, the ELITE Conference provides a vital platform for professionals to exchange ideas, share best practices, and engage in meaningful discussions about the future of adult education. This year's conference, held in mid-January at the Doubletree Miami Airport and Convention Center, welcomed over 260 attendees eager to enhance their skills and network with industry peers.

The conference agenda was packed with enriching activities, including workshops, keynote presentations, and networking sessions led by industry experts and thought leaders. Attendees had the opportunity to delve into new teaching methodologies, explore strategies to address the evolving needs of adult learners, and gain valuable insights to better serve their students and communities. Highlighting this year's event was the esteemed presence of Rachel Ludwig, Vice President of Talent Development for Future of Work Florida Chamber Foundation, as the guest speaker. Ludwig's expertise and insights added depth to the discussions, inspiring attendees to embrace innovation and excellence in their educational practices. The ELITE Conference provided networking,

idea exchange, and partnership opportunities for professionals in adult education. It emphasized collaboration, learning, and excellence. The event aims to empower adult educators to meet diverse learner needs and drive positive change. The conference fosters innovation and continuous learning to shape the future of adult education.



2024 SPRING TECHNICAL COLLEGE CAREER EXPO

careerinayear.com



The Spring 2024 Technical College Expo, proudly sponsored by the Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education, marked a significant triumph last February. Over the course of two dynamic days, this exposition illuminated a plethora of career pathways, captivating the imagination of students from middle and senior high schools across the district. Set against the vibrant backdrop of southwest Miami, attendees were treated to live demonstrations spanning the spectrum of Miami’s local industries. The overarching aim of this immersive experience is to acquaint students with the boundless opportunities awaiting them within the Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Technical Colleges where they can prepare for “High Demand, High Paying Careers in 1 to 2 Years.” From the precision of aviation airframe mechanics to the artistry of cosmetology, from the high-tech world of welding to the nurturing realm of childcare, the event showcased an assorted array of programs designed to ignite passions and shape futures. Drawing an impressive crowd of over 3,000 students, including those from charter schools and our valued Success Management Academy (SMA) program, the expo unfolded on February 14th and 15th within the illustrious Darwin Fuchs Pavilion at the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition grounds. The profound enthusiasm among attendees, which also included a group of educators from Collier County School Districts, Florida helped to underscore the event's success. Many of those in attendance expressed gratitude for the invaluable insights gained into the realities of the professional world.

Discover the possibilities that await as we continue to empower the next generation of professionals. For those eager to explore further or delve into training opportunities, we invite you to connect with us by calling 305.558.8000, or visiting careerinayear.com.



SAVES PROGRAM: EMPOWERING DREAMS AND BUILDING FUTURES

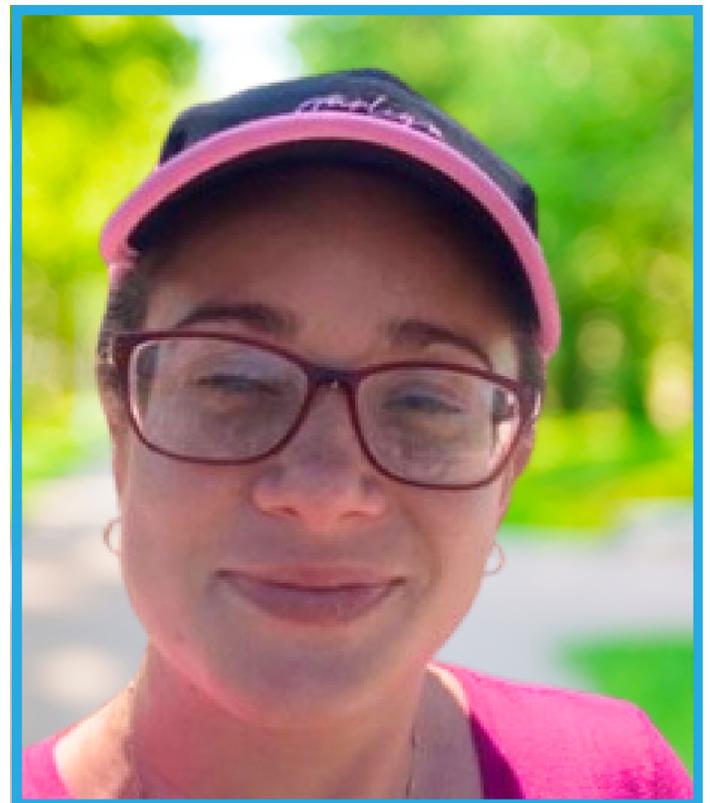
savesdadeschools.com



The story of Jessica Trujillo is a testament to the transformative power of education and the invaluable support provided by programs like SAVES. Arriving in the United States from Cuba in January 2022, Jessica embarked on a journey to rebuild her life and pursue her dreams in her new homeland. As a Chemical Engineer in her home country, Jessica possessed a strong academic background but faced the challenge of adapting to a new country and starting afresh. However, her determination to seize the opportunities available, led her to discover the SAVES Program, a beacon of hope for refugees and asylees seeking to improve their lives through education. Through the SAVES Program, Jessica found a lifeline—an opportunity to pursue vocational courses of her choice free of charge. This was particularly significant for Jessica, as she did not yet have a work permit but was eager to enhance her skills and contribute to her new community. Driven by her passion for animals, Jessica chose to pursue the Veterinary Assistant vocational course. With the unwavering support of the SAVES Program, she began studying English as a foundation for her chosen career path. The program provided her not only with essential knowledge but also with basic study materials and even a free monthly transportation card, easing her journey towards her goals. The assistance provided by the

Program extended beyond the classroom. Jessica received support to certify and translate her university degree through Josef Silny & Associates, fully covered by the program. She completed all English levels at the Miami Senior Adult Education Center and successfully obtained her Certification of Completion in Veterinary Assistants Laboratory Animals Caretakers course. Reflecting on her journey, Jessica expresses profound gratitude to the SAVES Program for empowering her to realize her personal and professional fulfillment. The program not only enabled her to become a productive member of society, but also provided her with the support and encouragement she needed to navigate the challenges of immigrating to a new country.

As she looks towards the future, Jessica hopes that SAVES will continue to serve as a beacon of hope and opportunity for immigrants seeking freedom and opportunities in the United States for many years to come.



SAVES PROGRAM: EMPOWERING DREAMS AND TRANSFORMING LIVES

savesdadeschools.com

In the pursuit of the American Dream, sometimes it takes more than just individual effort—it takes a supportive community and resources like the SAVES program to bridge the gap between ambition and achievement. One shining example of this is the transformative journey of Ms. Evlyne Colas. Ms. Colas's story begins in Haiti, where she was born and raised. At the age of 18, she made the courageous decision to immigrate to the United States with her parents, leaving behind her familiar life and loved ones. Despite the challenges of adapting to a new country and culture, Ms. Colas remained steadfast in her determination to create a better future for herself.

Her journey towards her educational and professional goals began at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, where she initially enrolled in English acquisition courses. The SAVES program played a pivotal role by covering her tuition and book expenses, easing the financial burden and allowing her to focus on her studies. Encouraged by her father's unwavering support, Ms. Colas pursued her education with determination.

As she progressed through her studies, Ms. Colas discovered her passion for the billing and coding field. With the support of the SAVES program, she completed the program and secured a position at Mercy Hospital. However, her journey did not end there. Driven by her thirst for knowledge and professional growth, Ms. Colas transitioned to an interest in Nutrition Services.

Returning to Lindsey Hopkins, Ms. Colas enrolled in



the Nutrition & Dietetic Clerk Course, once again benefiting from the support of the SAVES program, which covered her tuition, fees, books, uniform, and even provided bus passes for transportation. Under the guidance of her teacher, Ms. Nura Gonzalez, Ms. Colas thrived, earning her certificate of program completion. Today, Ms. Colas has come full circle. She serves as the new Nutrition and Dietetic Clerk course instructor at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, inspiring and shaping the lives of students in the same manner her own life was transformed. Her journey exemplifies the power of perseverance, community support, and access to educational opportunities.

Indeed, Ms. Colas's story underscores the importance of programs like SAVES in empowering individuals to pursue their dreams and contribute meaningfully to their communities. As we celebrate her success, let us be reminded that it truly takes a village to obtain the American Dream, and the SAVES program is an integral part of that village.



SAVESDADESCHOOLS.COM
SKILLS FOR ACADEMIC, VOCATIONAL, AND ENGLISH STUDIES

SAVES is a free of charge program with the purpose of delivering vocational, educational services, and scholarships to adult refugee students. Call 305.558.8000 for more information.

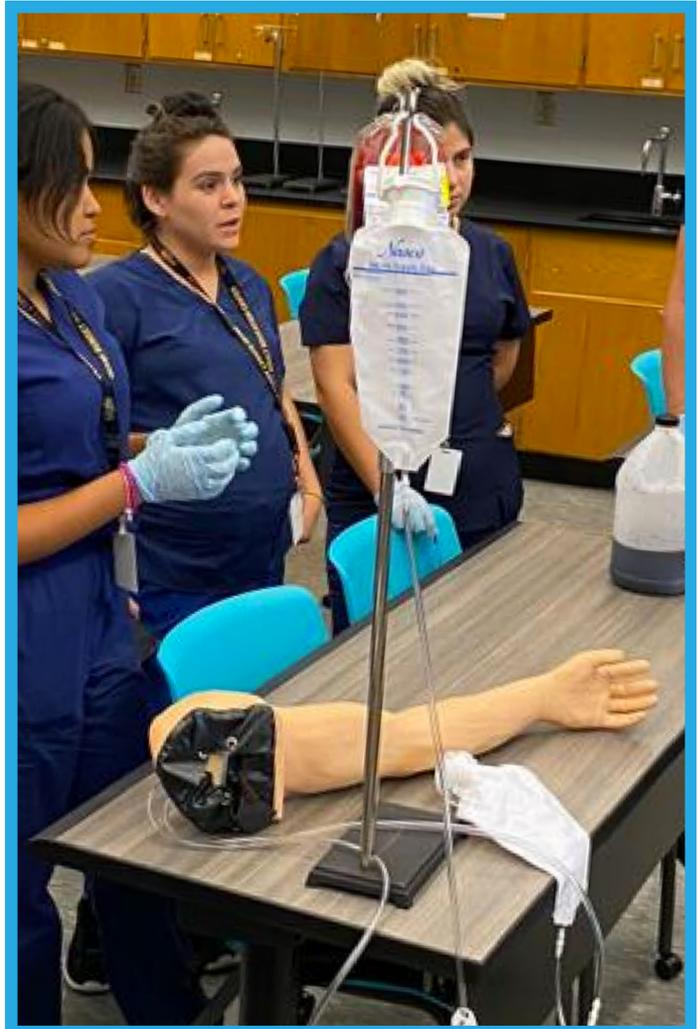
PRACTICAL NURSING PROGRAM PASSING RATES

careerinayear.com



Miami-Dade County Public Schools Practical Nursing (PN) program is indeed a remarkable opportunity. We are proud of our students and grateful for the support of our faculty, staff, and the community. It is wonderful to see the impact that our PN program has on the lives of our students and their careers.

The passing rates for the 2023 Florida Board of Nursing Practical Nursing program were released in January of 2024, designating Lindsey Hopkins Technical College, Miami Lakes Educational Center and Technical College, and Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College Practical Nursing programs as high achievers and acceptable or above average passing rate for first time test takers. For more information about this program, please contact 305-558-8000!



PASSING RATES AT A GLANCE:

Lindsey Hopkins Tech. College	93.33%
Miami Lakes Tech. College	80.00%
Robert Morgan Tech. College	92.31%

SOUTH DADE OPPORTUNITIES GALORE

southdadetech.edu



In a remarkable display of collaboration between educational institutions and industry leaders, South Dade Skills Center recently organized a highly successful Opportunity Fair. The event which brought employers such as Florida Department of Corrections, Walmart, Community Health Centers of South Florida, CSL Plasma, GM, Hyundai and many more, provided students with an opportunity to engage in professional conversations and submit their resume for potential employment. An Opportunity Fair holds immense value for both schools and students serving as a bridge between academia and the professional world. The event held at the South Dade Skills Center allowed students the chance to gain practical experience in the job application process. By interacting with employers face to face, students were able to refine their communication skills, learn how to present themselves professionally, and receive valuable feedback on their resumes. This hands-on experience is invaluable in preparing students for future career opportunities. Students were also able to explore various career options and industries. The presence of diverse employers helped students make informed decisions about their future paths and discover new opportunities they may not have considered before. One of the most significant outcomes of the South Dade Skills Centers' Opportunity Fair was the successful employment of some students. Francis Mullen, a student at the school, was able to use the Opportunity Fair as a networking opportunity. She secured herself employment at the Opportunity Fair and began working in December of 2023. The South

Dade Skills Center has seen the benefits of an event such as this and is planning to make this an annual event.



OPCTE GRADUATION INITIATIVE CELEBRATES SIX YEARS OF SUCCESS

careerinayear.com



As we commence this graduation season, we proudly commemorate the sixth anniversary of our High School Graduation initiative. Spearheaded by the Office of Postsecondary Career and Technical Education (OPCTE), in collaboration with the Division of Athletics and Activities, this initiative has been instrumental in helping to bring awareness to our Adult and Career Technical Education training programs during select high school graduation ceremonies.

At selected venues such as the Adrienne Arsht Center for Performing Arts, Watsco Center @ University of Miami, and Ocean Bank Center @ Florida International University, our team has strategically seized the opportunity to showcase over 75 training programs available at our Technical Colleges and Adult Education Centers. These programs not only equip individuals with valuable skills and knowledge but also prepare them for competitive and rewarding careers, in addition to helping them learn English as a second language, which ultimately helps them to acclimate into the community.

The overarching goal of this initiative is to raise awareness about the diverse array of opportunities offered by OPCTE. Through targeted outreach efforts during high school graduation ceremonies, we aim to reach high school graduates, their friends and families and provide them with essential information about the pathways to success available through our programs.

A team of adult educators worked diligently for two weeks, totaling 85 contact hours, to distribute flyers and provide program information. Their dedication reflects the commitment to empowering individuals for workforce success. The graduation initiative has positively impacted many seeking education and career advancement over six years. The focus remains on promoting lifelong learning and offering affordable, quality education. The team aims to make a difference in students' lives and community prosperity.



MIAMI LAKES TECHNICAL COLLEGE CELEBRATES SUCCESS AT SKILLSUSA STATE COMPETITION

miamilakes.edu



GOLD Douglas Edwards
Miami Lakes Technical College
SILVER Joshua Brinsley
Miami Lakes Technical College

We are thrilled to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Richard Zilka, Major Appliance Repair Instructor at Miami Lakes Technical College, and his outstanding students, Douglas Edwards and Joshua Brinsley, for their remarkable achievements at this year's SkillsUSA State post-secondary competition.

Held on April 14th in Jackson, Florida, the event showcased the talent and dedication of vocational students from across the state. Douglas Edwards emerged triumphant, securing the coveted 1st place prize, while Joshua Brinsley demonstrated exceptional skill to clinch the 2nd place spot in the area of Appliance Repair. Their success is a testament to their hard work, determination, and the guidance provided by Mr. Zilka. Joshua is looking forward to attending the national competition on June 24th - 29th, 2024, in Atlanta, Georgia. In a statement, Mr. Zilka expressed his immense pride in his students' accomplishments, highlighting the rigorous preparation they undertook in the lead-up to the competition. Both Douglas and Joshua exemplify the values of dedication, perseverance, and excellence that Miami Lakes Technical College strives to instill in its students. The SkillsUSA State competition provides a platform for young talents to showcase their skills, compete with their peers, and demonstrate their proficiency in various vocational fields. Douglas and Joshua's success not only reflects their individual abilities but also underscores the quality of education and training provided by Miami Lakes Technical College.

As we celebrate this remarkable achievement, we commend Mr. Zilka for his commitment to nurturing talent and empowering students to reach their full potential. We extend our best wishes to Douglas Edwards and Joshua Brinsley as they continue to excel in their academic and professional endeavors. Miami Lakes Technical College takes great pride in its students' achievements and remains dedicated to fostering a supportive and enriching learning environment where students can thrive and succeed. We look forward to witnessing more accomplishments from our talented students in the future.

Congratulations once again to Mr. Richard Zilka, Douglas Edwards, Joshua Brinsley, and the entire Miami Lakes Technical College community on this well-deserved recognition at the SkillsUSA State competition. Your hard work, determination, and dedication serve as an inspiration to us all.



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

Please ensure that the story is accompanied by high-resolution images that are clear and of good quality.

E-mail us at: recruiting@dadeschools.net



THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Ms. Mari Tere Rojas, Chair
Mrs. Monica Colucci, Vice Chair
Mr. Roberto J. Alfonso
Ms. Lucia Baez-Geller
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Ms. Mary Blanco
Mr. Danny Espino
Dr. Steve Gallon III
Ms. Luisa Santos

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Jose L. Dotres

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. John D. Pace III

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. René Mantilla

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Reginald J. Fox

M-DCPS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, social and family background, linguistic preference, pregnancy, citizenship status, FMLA or any other basis prohibited by law in its educational programs, services, activities, admissions or in its hiring and employment practices. Please refer to School Board Policies 1362, 1362.02, 3362, 3362.02, 4362, 4362.02, 5517 and 5517.02 for more information. For additional information about Title IX or any other discrimination/harassment concerns, contact the U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and/or: Executive Director/Title IX Coordinator, Office of Civil Rights Compliance, 155 NE 15 Street, Suite P-104E, Miami, Florida 33132; PH: 305-995-1580; E-mail: crc@dadeschools.net; Website: <http://hrcdadeschools.net/civilrights>. The District also provides equal access to its facilities, as required by the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act.