

# the Connect

BVT ALUMNI NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2026

Check out what's inside this issue...

- 2 A Win-Win Partnership
- 3 Share Your Industry Insights  
Browse Our Annual Report  
Make a Job Connection  
Remembering Old Friends...
- 4 Join Our Practical Nursing Open House  
27th Annual Golf Tournament  
BVTi  
Connect...

## Harness Her Superpower

It's common for adolescents to want to fit in with their peers, but we're all different. Our experiences, circumstances, and challenges often highlight those differences. How we choose to navigate them shapes our growth, tests our resilience, and reveals our character. Learn how Kate MacDonald (*Painting & Design Technology, Class of 2022*) faced hurdles in traditional learning, embraced creative strategies, and developed unique strengths that ultimately led her to pursue a vocational education. Every superpower comes with challenges—but how you harness yours makes all the difference.

**In grade school, Kate struggled with spelling and reading. It was difficult to concentrate in a classroom setting and understand what was being taught.**

“As a child, I was not familiar with dyslexia and was unaware that it could cause difficulty with reading. I just knew that school was challenging, and I was struggling pretty severely.”

Then, in the fourth grade, Kate was diagnosed with dyslexia. She said, “Often when people hear about dyslexia, they think that the letters move on the page. For me, they don't really move, they just appear different. It was a relief to finally understand why.”

“I attended grades five through eight at the Carroll School, an independent day school for students with language-based learning differences. I learned techniques that made a big difference, and by the end of the 8th grade, I was reading well above grade level,” said Kate.

As a creative, hands-on learner, Kate knew she needed a learning environment that matched her strengths. That led her to BVT. “I work best in small groups and through hands-on learning, which was one of the biggest things that drew me to BVT,” she said. “When you break the school down into shops, it really suits that style of learning.”

During the exploratory process, Kate discovered the Painting & Design Technology (P&D) program. “I also explored Cosmetology, but P&D was by far my favorite shop,” she said. “I even met one of my best friends during exploration, and we both ended up in P&D. Having that connection made a big difference.”

At BVT, Kate received continued support through IEP accommodations for dyslexia, allowing her to demonstrate her knowledge without lowering expectations. More importantly, she found a community where she felt safe, supported, and motivated.

Growing up, dyslexia presented numerous challenges. Reading and writing, fundamental skills in traditional education, were difficult for Kate. Yet, her unique visual way of thinking became her superpower in the visual world of graphic design.

“I've always been artistic, but it makes more sense now that I know I'm dyslexic,” she said. “In P&D, I loved learning painting and design techniques used to enhance interior and exterior spaces. I was especially drawn to graphic design and our kitchen and interior remodeling projects.”



Kate looks on as two students work at their computers.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

Kate immersed herself in creative opportunities, often staying late for Art Club. She credits her P&D instructor, Mr. B. (*Timothy Buono, Class of 2013*), who was so supportive and fostered a sense of community and safety for all his students. “With his help, I rediscovered a love of learning and figured out what I wanted to do with my life. Everyone should have a mentor like Mr. B.”



Today, Kate is continuing her career and technical education at Curry College, where she is pursuing a degree in graphic design and photography. “It’s a smaller college, and I know everyone in my major,” she said. “That’s something I loved about BVT, too. We were like a little family.”

Kate entered college with a strong advantage. She explained, “In P&D, we used the Adobe Creative Suite, which includes Photoshop (image editing/manipulation), Illustrator (creating graphics, icons, and logos), InDesign (page layout for print/digital publishing), and XD (designing for web and mobile apps). Many of my classmates did not know how to use these Adobe tools, but I did, and that was incredibly empowering.”

With a strong portfolio, technical skills, and proficiency with industry software, Kate is well-positioned for a career in graphic design. However, her ultimate goal reaches even further—becoming a vocational instructor.

Recently, Kate returned to BVT for an internship and worked alongside Mr. Buono, which reconfirmed her passion for teaching. “I think I would be a very empathetic teacher,” said Kate. “Because of what I went through, it’s easier for me to notice signs of dyslexia and understand what someone else might be experiencing.”

During her internship, Kate spoke with P&D students, assisted with shop projects, and shared her educational journey.

Continued on page 3



## A Win-Win Partnership

With the growing need for skilled professionals in the technology industry—and the hiring challenges many companies face—building mutually beneficial partnerships has never been more important. When schools and employers work together, they foster innovation, strengthen communication, and create meaningful connections that prepare our students for successful careers, a win-win!

We are proud to partner with Worldband, a computer consulting firm that has long supported our students through guest speakers, mentorship, Cooperative Education (Co-Op) placements, and even employment opportunities.

“Through our partnership with BVT, we support the future of our industry and our clients with the in-depth knowledge and IT expertise of our highly skilled team,” explained Lawney Tinio, IT Specialist and owner of Worldband. “We set students up for success and show them through first-hand experiences how rewarding their IT careers can be.”

Located in Bellingham, Worldband has offered accessible Co-Op opportunities for more than a decade. They have supported nearly a dozen student placements and currently employ six full-time staff members who are graduates of our Information Technology program, several of whom serve on our advisory committee, such as Bryan Bradley (*Class of 2011*), who has been instrumental in reviewing program curriculum, making equipment recommendations, and providing insight on industry trends.

Another alumni, Zabel DerKosroffian (*Class of 2025*), applied what she learned at BVT through her Co-Op at Worldband. She reflects on her experience as a Tier I Technician:

“Every other week of my senior year, instead of going to school for my shop, I got to work for an IT company and learn more about IT in a professional and real-life environment. This experience at Worldband was something I had been working toward since I first walked into my shop as a freshman. I not only learn valuable skills beyond my school’s curriculum, but I incorporated my soft skills into a real-world environment, while also earning money, and who wouldn’t like the sound of that?”

Dr. Matthew Connors, Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum Director, noted, “The partnership with Worldband has created many learning opportunities for our tech-savvy students to delve deeper into their careers. While there are many paths to success, we’re proud to see our students further their career technical education alongside industry experts and gain experience through Co-Op that will help launch their careers.”

### Friend of Vocational Technical Education

Each year, we present the Friend of Vocational Technical Education Award to individuals who have made significant contributions to our vocational programs. This honor recognizes those whose involvement, support, and commitment have helped our students thrive—particularly in the trades. This year’s award recipient is Mr. Tinio.

We are grateful for our long-standing partnership with Worldband and for their dedication to supporting students in their career pursuits. Having Worldband by our side offers our students invaluable opportunities as they prepare to enter the workforce. We appreciate Mr. Tinio, Mr. Bradley, and the entire Worldband team—their commitment to vocational education continues to make a lasting impact on our community.

# INDUSTRY INSIGHTS 2025

## Share Your Industry Insights

To gain a clearer understanding of what it means to be a professional in today’s workforce, our Career Enrichment Department creates opportunities for our juniors to hear directly from panels of industry professionals in aspirational trades about their educational and career journeys.

We recently hosted our 3rd Annual Industry Insights event, welcoming a diverse group of business and industry leaders who generously shared their time and expertise. Panelists offered valuable insights into their professional experiences, credentials, post-secondary education, and the day-to-day realities of full-time employment. The event is designed to bridge the gap between our students and employers, providing industry-specific insight to enhance classroom lessons on employability, career readiness, and career navigation.

Many of our panelists were alumni—professionals just like you who once sat in our classrooms and returned to inspire the next generation. Are you interested in serving as a panelist at our next Industry Insights event? You would be in great company, as many alumni choose to give back by participating in this engaging and impactful event.

To learn more about past speakers and take the first step in sharing your story with our aspiring students, simply complete the form on our website: [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/industryinsights](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/industryinsights).



### Browse Our Annual Report

Many thanks to our community, during the Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025), our students received an outstanding vocational-technical education.

We take immense pride in seeing our students and alums take what they have learned and find true passion and purpose in their professional careers. Our annual report shares their success and achievement as evidence of a positive return on your investment. Therefore, our FY25 annual report titled “It Takes a Spark” goes beyond the facts and figures of our operation to illustrate how the budget is maximized and used to prepare our students to be career and life-ready, which includes:

- An Alumni Profile: It Takes a Spark
- Cooperative Education
- Industry Insights & Opportunities
- Community Investments
- And more...

Want a copy of your very own? Our annual report is available online: [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/annualreport](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/annualreport) and by contacting our Superintendent-Director’s office at 508-529-7758 x3037.

Continued from page 2

“One student even opened up to me about their own struggles with dyslexia,” she said. “That meant a lot.”

Reflecting on her journey, Kate shared, “I had a hard time growing up. The P&D shop was like a second family. I want to do what Mr. B. did for me and help students with different skills see that school can be fun and that they can succeed.”

Kate plans to continue gaining experience while working toward her teaching certifications. Her journey—from struggling reader to confident designer and aspiring educator—demonstrates the power of embracing differences and harnessing them as strengths.

### Share Your Story With Us

By sharing stories like Kate’s, we hope to inspire others to recognize their own superpowers and create a future where every learner has the opportunity to thrive. If you would like to share your story, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/alumnispotlights](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/alumnispotlights) and complete our Alumni Spotlight Form.

### Make a Job Connection

Are you looking for your next dream job? Do you have the opportunity to hire new talent for your company? Our Job Board is designed to help you do just that. We connect prospective employers who want to post openings with talented candidates from our school community seeking Co-Op, full-time, part-time, and seasonal positions.

Start making your next job connection today! Visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/jobboard](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/jobboard) to explore current job listings or post a job opportunity.

### Remembering Old Friends...

- David Morais, Class of 2015 (*Electrical*) of Upton, passed away on 9.23.25
- James Brown, Class of 1984 (*AC&R*) of Bellingham, passed away on 1.13.26
- Paul LeBlanc, Class of 1970 (*Machine Shop*) of Grafton, passed away on 1.15.26



# Join Our Practical Nursing Open House

## Return to Our Campus & Explore a New Career in Healthcare

As a graduate of BVT, you know firsthand the value of hands-on learning and career-focused education. If you—or someone you know—are considering a meaningful and rewarding career in healthcare, we invite you to attend our **Practical Nursing Open House on Thursday, April 2nd**, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

This evening event is designed with working adults in mind and highlights our part-time, 60-week evening Practical Nursing program. During the open house, you'll have the opportunity to tour our nursing classrooms, see our state-of-the-art equipment, and reconnect with faculty and staff. A Q&A session will provide helpful information about program expectations, admissions requirements, and the enrollment process. Whether you're looking to build on the education you started here or explore a new career path, this event offers a clear picture of what it takes to succeed in nursing.

Earlier that same day, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., we will also host a Child Safety Fair, open to alumni, families, and community members. Our nursing students will lead interactive presentations and demonstrations focused on keeping children safe at home and outdoors, including bicycle safety, car and booster seats, fire safety, backyard and playground safety, and water safety.

This free, family-friendly event includes hands-on activities, demonstrations, and important safety lessons in a fun and engaging environment. We hope you'll join us for one—or both—of these events and take the opportunity to reconnect with our campus community.

### We Look Forward to Seeing You There!

To reserve your seat at the Practical Nursing Open House, please complete the registration form at [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse).



## Our Evening Programs Are Calling You

With a proud tradition of delivering high-quality vocational education in our classrooms and vocational shops, we continue to build upon that legacy with the launch of the Blackstone Valley Technical Institute (BVTi). Located on the BVT campus, BVTi opens its doors in the evenings to adult learners and provide hands-on, career-focused training designed to prepare you for high-demand careers in skilled trades.

**EXPLORE** programs custom-designed to meet your needs and schedule with grant funding for qualifying students in Advanced Manufacturing, Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, and Welding.

**EXPERIENCE** state-of-the-art learning labs and learning new skills in courses taught by experienced industry professionals.

**EXCEL** in your career through our 200-hour technical programs and earn industry-recognized credentials such as OSHA-10, Hot Work, HAAS, EPA 608, and AWS Welding Certification.

### Now Recruiting Employers

Are you an employer, looking to connect with skilled, career-ready talent? Join us at our **Job Fair on Wednesday, May 20th** from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at BVT. This event offers you the opportunity to meet job-ready candidates, promote open positions, conduct on-the-spot interviews, and build your future workforce. There is no participation fee. Reserve your place today by calling **508-519-3790**, or e-mailing us at [info@bvtadulded.org](mailto:info@bvtadulded.org).

We continue to expand our course offerings. To learn more, visit [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvti](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvti). Let BVTi help you take the next step in your professional or personal journey.

## Tee Your Golf Ball High...

...then let it fly at our **27th Annual Golf Tournament on Monday, June 8th and Tuesday, June 9th**, at Highfields Golf & Country Club. It's a great opportunity to gather with friends, hit the links, and show off your skills while raising money for a great cause. Registration starts at 9:00, with tee times at 10:00. The cost is \$150 per player or \$600 per foursome.

Register today at [www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/golftournament](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/golftournament) and support this fun-filled event!



**Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School**  
65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA 01568  
508-529-7758  
[www.valleytech.k12.ma.us](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us)

## Connect...



Keeping in touch with your classmates is easier than ever through the Alumni Services section of our website ([www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/alumniservices](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/alumniservices)). It's your go-to resource for alumni information on special alumni events and planning your class reunion, as well as how to sign-up to receive the Connect via e-mail ([www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/alumnieregistry](http://www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/alumnieregistry)).

In addition to this newsletter and our robust website content, our social media sites will give you an opportunity to connect and engage with us and other alumni. Join in on the conversation by following us on X: [@BVTHighSchool](https://twitter.com/BVTHighSchool) and Instagram: [@bvt\\_highschool](https://www.instagram.com/bvt_highschool).

