

the Connect

BVT ALUMNI NEWSLETTER • FALL 2026

Check out what's inside this issue...

- 2 Biotech Curricula Transformed
- 3 A Life-Changing Career
Transcript Requests
Remembering Old Friends, Classmates,
& Teachers...
- 4 5-Years In the Making
Alums Reflect on Their BVT Education...
Calling All Members of the Class of 2021
Connect...

Full Circle

Long before a young person steps into a leadership role or envisions a future career, someone has to show up, listen, and believe in their potential. Whether it's a parent, teacher, coach, or employer, that encouragement can change the course of a life. Discover how mentorship, reassurance, and unwavering support shaped a successful career for Dan Lavoie (*Electrical, Class of 1994*)—and how he is now paying those lessons forward—proving what it truly means to come full circle.

As Director of Operations at Lavoie Heating Service, Dan leads the family-owned HVAC company his father, Andrew, established in 1978.

The Milbury-based business provides HVAC installation, repair, maintenance, and generator services throughout Central Mass while remaining equally committed to developing the next generation of skilled trades professionals.

For Dan, mentoring is deeply personal. Growing up in a family rooted in the skilled trades, he knew early on that a vocational education was the right path. As a BVT student, he found that the Electrical program gave him the technical training, strong work ethic, and problem-solving skills that continue to guide him today.

As a senior, Dan participated in our Cooperative Education (Co-Op) program with Tom Renaud Electric, where he learned firsthand the importance of teamwork, professionalism, and taking pride in every job. He credits instructors Henry Nydam and Herve Guertin with preparing him not only for Co-Op but for a lifelong career in the trades.

After graduating, Dan expanded his experience in both the electrical and HVAC industries by earning an associate degree in engineering and completing the education and training required to become a licensed HVAC professional. Dan continues to grow Lavoie Heating Service, which he has run alongside his father

for many years. While his father, Andrew, has stepped back from day-to-day operations, he remains an important presence—helping in the office, lending a hand around the shop, and sharing decades of experience as he watches Dan carry the company's legacy forward.

BVT taught me the value of showing up, working hard, and always looking for ways to keep learning.

Cooperative Education

Our Co-Op program provides students with an employment opportunity in an industry that is directly related to their vocational pathway. Students participating in this program work rotating weeks according to the school calendar. Eligible students can join Co-Op starting in the third trimester of their junior year.

At BVT, this experience is made possible through partnerships with a growing network of local businesses, including Lavoie Heating Service, which support students each year while strengthening both the workforce and the community. Co-Op students build technical knowledge at school, but true confidence comes



from applying those skills alongside experienced professionals. Through Co-Op, students gain hands-on experience while industry mentors help them strengthen their technical skills, professionalism, confidence, and problem-solving abilities.

As a Co-Op employer, Dan is proud to continue that tradition of mentorship this year with Trevor Dupont-Sullivan, a senior in the HVAC&R program. Since 2007, Lavoie Heating Service has welcomed students interested in developing their skills, reinforcing the importance of passing knowledge from one generation to the next.

"We've had great success working with BVT students over the years and have been consistently impressed by their work ethic, professionalism, and eagerness to learn," Dan says.

"We're grateful for our partnership with BVT and are proud to help support the next generation of HVAC professionals."

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

Mentoring Trevor has been especially rewarding. “He’s eager to learn, asks good questions, and isn’t afraid to work hard,” Dan says. “It’s been rewarding to help him apply what he’s learning in the classroom to real-world situations and watch his confidence and skills grow.”



For Dan, mentorship extends beyond teaching technical skills. He believes young tradespeople also need guidance in professionalism, communication, honesty, and taking pride in their work—qualities that strengthen both individual careers and the skilled trades as a whole.

Watching Trevor grow has reminded Dan of his own experiences. “I remember being in his shoes as a student, learning from experienced technicians and gaining confidence through hands-on work,” he says. “It’s rewarding to be the one passing that knowledge along and helping someone else get started.”



For students like Trevor, Co-Op offers much more than valuable work experience. It introduces them to apprenticeships, manufacturer training, licensing, and continuing education—the lifelong learning that defines today’s highly technical HVAC industry.

Lifelong Learning

Dan continues to embrace and instill the philosophy that shaped his own career: Never stop learning. Reflecting on his own experience, Dan says BVT prepared him not only with technical skills but also with the mindset to succeed.

Continued on page 3



Biotech Curricula Transformed

Students Benefit From Grant-Funded Tools

We’re proud to be a recipient of the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) BioLEAP Classroom Grant. This competitive award allowed us to purchase 10 life-size rat models for our Biotechnology program, eliminating the need for traditional animal dissection while equipping students with modern, humane learning tools.

The male and female rat models are detailed anatomical replicas designed specifically for educational use. Each model features interchangeable reproductive systems, detachable organs—including the heart, lungs, liver, and intestines—and a numbered key to support student learning. These tools allow students to thoroughly explore anatomy without using real animals.

“The reusable models are cost-effective, humane, and easy to manage,” said Biotechnology Instructor Zoë Army, M.S. “They give students early exposure to animal anatomy without the pressure of a full dissection. This approach supports engagement while fostering curiosity about careers where lab animals may play a role.”

Sophomores in our Biotechnology program responded positively to the new tools:

“I liked the models more than if we had an animal dissection, which is rather off-putting,” said Fiona Comeau. “I gained a lot of useful information about rat anatomy using the model.”

“The model made identifying anatomy less stressful and more interactive,” added MacKenzie Moran. “It encouraged discussion and participation, and I would recommend continuing to use them in future classes.”

As part of the grant agreement, recipients must submit a video demonstrating the models in use. This created a valuable opportunity for collaboration with seniors, Logan Didio and Joseph Bache, from our Design & Media Production program, who produced a video for NAVS highlighting the impact of the grant.

“It was exciting to contribute to this initiative and use our shop skills to support humane science education,” said Logan.



Joseph said, “It was a great experience to select equipment and prepare interview questions that clearly communicated the purpose of the grant, while keeping students comfortable on camera.”

Ella Drumheller reflected on her experience. “The interview gave me a chance to think about what I learned using the rat model and how it applies to our biotechnology work,” she said. “The model reduced the anxiety of traditional dissection while building my confidence and understanding of anatomy.”

View the completed video at www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvtinthenews.



A Life-Changing Career

Explore a Future in Health Care

Are you or someone you know looking for an exciting new career? Are you passionate about helping others? A rewarding career in health care might just be the answer you’re looking for and it’s closer than you think.

Our adult education program in Practical Nursing (PN) offers adults, age 18 and older, the opportunity to build the knowledge and skills needed to pursue a career as a practical nurse. The 60-week, part-time evening program is designed with working adults in mind, making it possible to pursue a new career while balancing work and other responsibilities.

Prospective students are invited to attend the **Practical Nursing Open House on Monday, October 26th** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on our campus.

The open house provides an opportunity to:

- Learn more about the 60-week evening program firsthand
- Tour our classrooms and observe the state-of-the-art nursing equipment
- Meet our faculty, staff, and current students
- Understand the admission requirements, the application process and how to enroll
- Participate in a Q&A session and learn what it takes to pursuing a career in nursing

For you, our alumni, returning to campus can be an opportunity to experience the school from a different perspective while building on the hands-on education that started your own career journey.

“It is a great time to enter the nursing field because there’s such a need for skilled nurses,” said Practical Nursing Coordinator Joann L. Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA

The program features small class sizes and welcomes applicants from in-district, out-of-district and out-of-state communities. Applicants are required to take the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) for admission; and we also accepts TEAS results from other testing locations.

Whether you are ready for a complete career change or looking to build new skills in the growing field of health care, our adult education program in Practical Nursing may offer the opportunity you’ve been looking for.

To learn more and register for the open house, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/pnopenhouse.

We hope you can join us!

Continued from page 2

“The hands-on learning, problem-solving, and attention to detail have stayed with me throughout my career,” he says. “Just as importantly, BVT taught me the value of showing up, working hard, and always looking for ways to keep learning.”

His advice for today’s students is straightforward and right on point. “Take every opportunity to learn, ask questions, and work hard. Technical knowledge is essential, but attitude, curiosity, and a commitment to continuous learning are what transform skilled technicians into successful business owners and industry leaders.”

For Dan, the greatest reward isn’t simply continuing the family business—it’s helping launch someone else’s career. “I wouldn’t be where I am today without the people who took the time to teach and mentor me,” he says. “It’s meaningful to have the opportunity to do the same for someone else.”

Decades after beginning his own career, Dan takes pride in mentoring students eager to follow a similar path. The encouragement, guidance, and opportunities that once shaped his future are now shaping someone else’s. By investing in the next generation, he’s continuing a tradition that defined his own success—and proving what it truly means to come full circle.

Remembering Old Friends, Classmates & Teachers...

- In Memoriam of Lost Friends**
- Megan Demers, Class of 1994 (*Culinary Arts*) of Whitinsville, passed on 3.1.26
 - Joseph Yacino, Retired Maintenance Repair Services Instructor (1994–2000), passed on 5.26.26
 - Kimberly A. Riley, Class of 1984 (*Painting & Decorating*) of Auburn, passed on 5.29.26
 - Stacey Lee Schiappucci, Class of 1996 (*Culinary Arts*) of North Smithfield, RI, passed on 7.18.26

- Best Wishes for a Happy Retirement**
- Michael Norton – Vocational Instructor – Electronics & Engineering, 29 years
 - Steven Caligaris – Vocational Instructor – Culinary Arts, 23 years
 - Kristen Martell – Special Education Coordinator, 16 years
 - Colleen Langin – Vocational Instructor – Dental Assisting, 18 years
 - Marcia MacWilliams – Human Resources Director, 23 years





5-Years In the Making

The Class of 2020 Then & Now

We are often asked how our graduates use their vocational-technical skills in their chosen career path. Alumni, you are our ambassadors, and your career success demonstrates the life-changing impact of a BVT education.

Where Did They Go?

Just before graduation, we surveyed 298 students* through an exit survey to learn about their post-secondary plans. Here are the results:



17.45%
Workforce/
Apprenticeship



67.45%
4 Year College/
Tech College



10.07%
2 Year College/
Certification Program



2.35%
Bridge or
Service Year



1.34%
Military
Service

* 1.34% Unknown data due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Where Are They Now?

Five years later, we surveyed the same class again to see where they are now and how their paths have unfolded. Ninety-two respondents across all vocational programs shared their perspectives and career paths. Check out these stats!

100%

Identified transferable skills such as professionalism, time management, and teamwork.

87%

Continue to use and strengthen their career technical skills.

65%

Showed interest in serving as guest speakers, mentoring students, or partnering in our Co-Op program.

58%

Work directly in the career field they studied at BVT.

The BIG Picture!

Our alumni consistently agree that their technical expertise and professional skills opened many doors in their careers, at college, or while serving in the military—a value that lasts long after graduation. We're grateful to the Class of 2020 for staying connected and sharing your experiences. Your journeys inspire current students, strengthen our alumni community, and showcase BVT's transformative education.

Alums Reflect on Their BVT Education...

Five years after graduation, our 2020 alumni are making an impact in industries across the region—and beyond. From construction and electrical work to aerospace engineering and health care, their journeys have taken them to interesting places.

The hands-on experience and industry knowledge I gained at BVT helped launch my career and continue to support my growth as I pursue new opportunities in construction and real estate.

— Maribeth Buteau, Construction,
Project Engineer, O&G Industries

The electrical code theory and schematic-reading skills I learned helped me advance quickly, earning my Massachusetts Journeyman & Master Electrician license at a young age. As a Working Foreman, I use those skills every day in the field.

— Kevin McGowan, Electrical,
Working Foreman, A.S. Jones & Co., Inc.

Calling All Members of the Class of 2021



Now it's your turn! Tell us where your education has taken you and complete our 5-Year Graduate Survey. Your response can help us to continue to transform education—shape curricula, improve student services, and inform our stakeholders. To share your experience, visit www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/5yeargraduatesurvey.

We look forward to showcasing your voice, celebrating your accomplishments, and sharing your success in a future issue of the Connect newsletter!



**Blackstone Valley Regional
Vocational Technical High School**
65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA 01568
508-529-7758
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). 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).

In addition to this newsletter and our robust website content, our social media channels provide opportunities to connect and engage with us and other alumni. Join the conversation by following us on X: [@BVTHighSchool](https://twitter.com/BVTHighSchool), Instagram: [@bvt_highschool](https://www.instagram.com/bvt_highschool), and LinkedIn: [Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District](https://www.linkedin.com/company/blackstone-valley-vocational-regional-school-district).

