

# Transition conference held at SU

SELINGROVE — A family tradition of serving in the military and a passion for helping animals are two reasons Katie Raker is interested in enlisting in the United States Air Force and pursuing a career as a veterinary technician.

A junior at Mifflinburg Area High School, she attended a conference at Susquehanna University this week to learn more about military life as well as important life lessons like managing finances and participating in mock interviews.

“I’d like to combine trainings from the Air Force and college so I can reach animals in need and be able to help them,” Katie said.

The Union-Snyder Transition Conference, a biennial event for juniors and seniors from the two counties, featured breakout sessions led by representatives from area agencies and businesses. The presenters showcased what is available to students as they transition to life after high school, including options and resources. One session was led by two former conference participants who shared their experiences in the post-secondary world.

Micheal Martine, of Sunbury, shared how his career progressed from part-time work he didn’t enjoy to a full-time job where he feels valued.

“Until I had a car, I walked or rode my bike six miles to work every day,” he said. And having been in the working world for more than two years now, he added, “I only missed work twice.”

He said he is proud of his work history and that his good attendance record and positive attitude helped him earn the job he presently enjoys at Masonite Doors.

The second panelist is currently a sophomore at Susquehanna University studying graphic design. A graduate of SUN Technical Institute and Selingsgrove Area, Caitlin Meleski showed her portfolio and pointed out that she designed the 2015 Union-Snyder Transition Conference program cover.

Meleski also shared some of the lessons she’s learned since the time she attended the conference as a senior in high school. She talked about the support she receives from the university in helping her professors understand her autism diagnosis. One note she reiterated was that life “throws curve balls and you have to learn to adapt.” She advised they seek help from area resources, and to “start small” to finish something big.

The conference was organized by the Union-Snyder Transition Coordinating Council, made up of transition coordinators from area school districts and the CSIU, as well as community agency personnel. Programming is especially for



Photo provided  
**Rebecca Kinney**, above left, represented the Schloss Family for the Dr. Cynthia Schloss Transition Education Award; **Michael Camp** (first-place award); **Destiny Ferguson** (runner up); **David Tota** (second runner up); State Rep. **Fred Keller** (R-85); and State Rep. **Lynda Schlegel-Culver** (R-108).

Photo provided  
At left, **Katie Raker**, of Mifflinburg Area School District, visited the PA CareerLink booth at the Union-Snyder Transition Conference.

students who might have an IEP (individualized education program) due to a developmental delay or disability. All costs for the conference are offset by donations from private individuals and businesses.

“We strive to feature topics and resources that students will need after they move on from high school,” explained Misty Harris, CSIU transition consultant. “Whether they are going on to employment, training, school or the military, they should walk away from the conference having learned something new that will help them.”

In addition to breakout sessions, the conference also featured vendor booths and an awards ceremony. Schools nominate students for the Dr. Cynthia Schloss Transition Education Award, which is named after Schloss, a valued member of the Bloomsburg University community as well as the Union-Snyder Transition Coordinating Council. She recognized the potential for all students to succeed, despite their challenges or limitations, and her family honors her memory with monetary awards to students who have overcome barriers to be successful.

This year’s nominees were Michael Camp of SUN Area Technical Institute and Mifflinburg Area School District, Destiny Ferguson of Mid-West School District, Isaiah Lynd of Milton Area School District, Brian Saxman of Warrior Run School District and David Tota of Mifflinburg Area School District.

Rebecca Kinney, daughter of the late Schloss, and State Reps. Lynda Schlegel-Culver (R-108) and Fred Keller (R-85) presented the award to first-place recipient Michael Camp. Michael is a student in the ma-

sonry program at SUN Area Technical Institute, and plans to work as a mason or mason’s tender upon graduation. His mason instructor Ryan Swinehart said, “Michael is an inspiration to me. Just in the short

time that I’ve known him, he has demonstrated tremendous growth in knowledge and skill, and developed his confidence levels.”

Matt and Mahlon Baney of Mid-West School District

named the title of this year’s conference: “Your Life...Your Future...Your Success.” The conference program cover was prepared by SUN Area Technical Institute student Katya Haines.

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