

Protecting our communities

See pages 2, 8-14



**Union persistence pays off
with legislative victory**

Page 3

**CSEA/VOICE members mobilize,
advocate and solve pay issue**

Page 5

**Project Excel workers
vote to join CSEA**

Page 6

Photo of the Month



CSEA member and Village of Warsaw Police Officer James Yansick, back to camera, administers a field sobriety test to a student actor at a mock car crash scene at Warsaw High School. For more, see Page 15. Photo by Ove Overmyer.

Joey Horsford, longtime Metropolitan Region activist

MANHATTAN — CSEA mourns the loss of longtime Metropolitan Region activist Joey Horsford, who passed away on May 19.



Horsford

Horsford, a secure care treatment aide at the Manhattan Psychiatric Center, had served in various CSEA Manhattan Psychiatric Center Local offices, including as local president. Before becoming local president, Horsford had served in local offices alongside former Local President Sam Koroma.

An active member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), Horsford had also served as the Metropolitan Region Treasurer for several years.

“Joey was an outstanding young man and truly committed to the union movement,” said CSEA

Metropolitan Region President Lester Crockett. “He was a real friend, someone you could always depend on and someone who was true. On behalf of the CSEA family, we extend our deepest condolences to his family, his co-workers and community.”

When he wasn’t engaged in union activities, he could be seen and heard leading a steel drum band.

A member of the New York Marsicans, Silhouettes and Pan Rebels steel orchestras, Horsford “was an awesome bass player and an even greater person,” according to an article in “When Steel Talks,” an online magazine dedicated to the genre. “His leadership, organizational skills and know-how are irreplaceable.”

Horsford was also an integral member of Southern Marines Steelband Foundation Steel Orchestra in his native Trinidad.

— David Galarza

As this issue of The Work Force went to press, the results of many Local and Unit officer elections had yet to be finalized. Individuals referred to with their union title reflect their current status at the time of publication.

State Executive Branch members: Complete contract survey

CSEA is requesting state Executive Branch employees (who are covered under the Administrative, Institutional, Operational and Division of Military and Naval Affairs) to complete contract surveys. These surveys will directly assist the CSEA Negotiating Team in formulating proposals in negotiations.

We urge all state employees to log in and update your user account at <https://cseany.org/register> to ensure we have your most current personal email address on file.

Those state employee members who had previously registered personal emails with us should

have received a survey invitation in June. Those who have not yet registered accounts on the CSEA website must do so and can then fill out the form at: <https://cseany.org/state-contract-survey> to request a survey link. **Note:** survey may only be completed once. Please only use personal email addresses. Information about state contract negotiations will not be sent to state email addresses.

For members who do not have the ability to take the survey online, printed copies will be available upon request by calling our State Operations Department at (518) 257-1279.

CSEA persistence leads to DMV office hours change

CSEA helped lead the way for positive changes at State Department of Motor Vehicles offices across the state.

The union has been working with DMV on several matters, including implementing new hours at the agency’s offices.

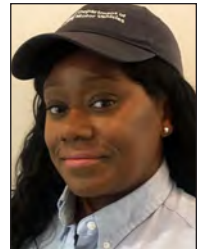
DMV recently informed CSEA that the agency will be implementing new schedules on July 8, 2021. Those schedules have all offices closing at 6 p.m., as opposed to 8 p.m. and all offices will be closed on Saturdays.

“I am pleased to report that as a result of CSEA members’ persistence, coupled with the good work of local officers, activists, fellow union members and CSEA staff, that DMV heard us and made the change,” said CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan.

“The DMV worker is dedicated

to serving our customers, however the hours and mandated Saturday work was taking an extreme toll on our overall well-being,” said New York City DMV Unit President Dawn Destine. “We look forward to a better work/life balance. CSEA fought a good fight!”

“DMV is going back to some type of normalcy,” said New York City DMV Unit Vice President Ben Greene. “They took into account the members’ hardships, but also maintain an efficient flow for the customers.”



Destine

— David Galarza

The CSEA
Safety Net
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This past year has taught us the value of community and social connection. Let’s keep the momentum going and ensure worker safety & health remains a priority.

Now is the time to rebuild our
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to subscribe!



Protecting our communities

Editor's Note — Thousands of CSEA members who work in local government probation departments, county jails and local police departments are providing the essential service of keeping our communities safe.

These services include helping probationers rehabilitate and keeping citizens safe from violence.

They are often filling these roles amid challenging working conditions, including dealing with chronic understaffing and risk of violence. The COVID-19 pandemic not only amplified these challenges, but workers had to quickly adjust to new ways of getting the job done.

However, these workers are also giving back to their communities,

including through helping pack and distribute thousands of bags of food for families in need; coordinating crowd control and data entry at vaccination sites and helping community members safely reunite with their loved ones at public nursing homes.

Through it all, they go above and beyond every day to not only help

their communities, but those who are directly served by their agencies.

As we mark Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week from July 18-24, CSEA honors not only these workers, but all CSEA members who work to keep their communities safe. On these pages, you will read only a few of these stories.

Collaboration targets intimate partner violence in Ulster

KINGSTON — For many people experiencing intimate partner violence, the pandemic made an already dangerous situation even worse.

With instances of illness, quarantines and loss of income from job loss, it was the toughest time in recent history for victims looking to leave their abusers.

Thankfully for several Ulster County communities, an initiative between several public agencies and non-profits provides a targeted response that helps victims get the support they need and gives offenders a chance at rehabilitation.

The county's Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Task Force (IPVI), created in 2017, has CSEA members from the county Probation Department teaming up with police from several communities, the District Attorney's Office, and local non-profit agencies that provide counseling and other services.

"We're trying to help people make that positive change," said CSEA member Brian Brady, one of two probation officers assigned to IPVI. "They're identifying cases earlier, there are more services than in the past and there's more of a targeted approach for supervision."

David Kennedy, a criminologist working for the National Network for Safe Communities (NNSC) based at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, spearheaded the national IPVI program after a previous success with an initiative

targeting gang violence.

NNSC identified the City of Kingston in Ulster County as the first location in New York to pilot IPVI due to the city already having more measures in place dealing with intimate partner violence than the average municipality. Since the program's initial success in Kingston, the task force has expanded to include the Towns of New Paltz and Saugerties. There are hopes to eventually expand the program countywide.

"I think it's a great approach to help the client or defendant get resources and be held accountable at the same time," said CSEA member Jessica Ercoli, also a probation officer.

Police identify intimate partner violence cases that are then referred to the IPVI team. Once the offenders and victims have been added to the caseload, officials from different agencies reach out to offer different services and resources. Should another incident occur, first responders are better prepared.

"With collaboration between agencies, the officer on scene has the history," said Brady. "They don't have to require the complainant to relive everything and explain from day one, when the reality just opens up a lot of memories they don't need to go through again."

In addition to Brady and Ercoli representing their department as probation officers, they also refer victims to colleagues in their



Ulster County Probation Officers Brian Brady and Jessica Ercoli on the job.

department working as part of the Crime Victims Assistance Program, who offer confidential support.

Holding regular meetings allows representatives of the different agencies in IPVI to collaborate and bring each other up to speed on cases.

"We still all have our own duties and our own positions, but it's nice to get feedback from people and deal with clients collaboratively," said Ercoli.

Rehabilitation is the goal. Job resources and training are offered, as are "call in" sessions where offenders hear from IPVI task force members about their offense, their conduct and how to avoid continuing down the wrong path. The response is customized to the individual, said Brady and Ercoli. Individuals

are screened when they enter the program.

"For some people, prosecution is warranted," said Brady. "For individuals who want to change, if they feel like they have a need we're not meeting, we work to get them what they need."

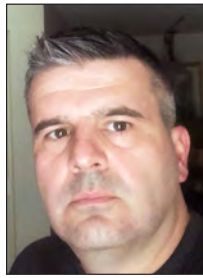
While the measure of success can look different based on the person, IPVI is helping many Ulster County residents turn their lives around.

"I have found some people that have gone through that program and have taken it to heart," said Ercoli. "They've understood that if their behavior continues, they're going to be looking at some kind of repercussion. It's definitely a deterrent for some people."

— Jessica Ladlee

Onondaga County probation officer saves life on day off

SYRACUSE — On a Saturday, Onondaga County Probation Officer Jason Deuel got a call from a client's mother, concerned about her son's well-being after not hearing from him.



Deuel

If Deuel didn't pick up his phone on that day off from work, that client could have died.

This particular client was initially considered a low-level case. Months before the call from the client's mother, Deuel, who works the department's DWI Unit, performed a home visit.

"He was conscious, but he didn't

really know what day it was and he was a little groggy," Deuel said. "I called 911 and the paramedics assessed him and he came around, but he refused to go to the hospital."

Because of that incident, Deuel raised the case to a medium level, which requires more supervision by probation staff. Before the pandemic, probationers often visited offices, but now home visits and drug screenings are the norm.

Months after that visit, Deuel got the call from the client's mother. Despite being off from work, he paid the client a home visit.

"I went to his house; his mom said his door would be open," Deuel said. "I knocked and there was no answer. The door was open, [so I went in] and he was laying on the

couch. He was breathing, but he was non-responsive. I called 911 and they were able to revive him with some pretty aggressive sternum rubs."

Deuel noted that the client had been drinking and was taking prescription medications. He stayed in the hospital for at least four days.

"Dealing with people who have drug and substance issues is difficult," Deuel said. "If his mom couldn't have gotten a hold of me that day or would have just called my office phone and not my cell phone, who knows what might have happened."

Deuel, a former CPS investigator, said probation officers do more than just law enforcement tasks.

"You get to know the clients as well as you can," Deuel said. "We're

not just law enforcement. We can be social workers as well," Deuel said. "We're not all punitive. We're not looking to send everyone back to, or to, jail. We're here to help our probationers and support them as long as they're doing what they're supposed to be doing."

Deuel usually has between 60 and 70 clients at any given time, but makes sure to take notes and keep track of all of them equally.

"I enjoy working with the people and when they succeed," Deuel said. "When we're able to get them an early discharge, complete drug treatment, or find employment and suitable housing; it's enjoyable to get them through that process."

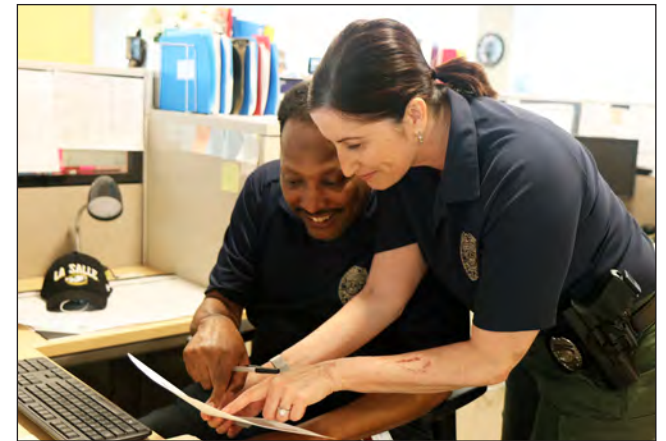
— Nicholas Newcomb



Onondaga County Probation Officers Dana Jackson and Michelle Millender, who have been working together for 20 years, collaborate on the day's schedule of client visits.



Onondaga County Probation Officer Bonnie Walts updates client records on her computer.



Onondaga County Probation Officers Chris Brower and Donna Capria work together to review a client's file.



Onondaga County Probation Officer Todd Guerin makes a call to a client.



Onondaga County Probation Officer Sonialys Dussing inputs information from an interview with a client.



Onondaga County Probation Officer Nate Brown checks in with a client on the phone

Helping their community during time of need

SCHENECTADY — CSEA members employed by the Schenectady County Probation Department have been playing a key role in a large, multi-month COVID emergency response operation that continues.

Late last winter, efforts surrounded a large-scale food distribution program that saw county employees, volunteers and staff from the local Boys and Girls Club come together to pack and distribute food to community members in need.

“Our ‘work from home’ weeks were spent at the ‘club,’ as we called it,” said CSEA Schenectady County Office Unit President Katie Soule, a probation officer.

“We estimate packing up thousands and thousands of food bags,” said Soule, who also serves as CSEA’s Schenectady County



Schenectady County probation officers gather recently in front of their Broadway office building. From left, Angie De Carlo, Carrie Schnoop, Erikka Burns, Mary Redmond, Shannon Corcoran, Patty Corcoran, Dana Gannon, Katie Marra and Jim Wolff.

Employees Local treasurer. “During the re-opening phase, we were pulled in, in part due to our experience in working within



In this 2020 file photo, Schenectady County Public Works employee John Roth left, and CSEA Schenectady County Office Unit President Katie Soule help package groceries for families in need.

the community with a variety of populations, our professionalism, adaptability and willingness to and desire to help. We were assigned to assist our County Public Health Department, which was completely overwhelmed with managing the health crisis, by aiding the Environmental Health members with performing inspections of local gyms who sought approval to reopen.”

Soule said Probation Department workers helped in numerous ways, including helping with crowd control and data entry at county vaccinations sites at Schenectady County Community College and municipal housing complexes.

The workers also happily helped at several community food bank drive-thru events held at the community college that served more than 600 families.

Workers are also helping in another special way.

“Most recently, and ongoing, we have been assisting over at the county run nursing home (Glendale) managing visitation, enabling loved ones to enjoy visits on-site,” Soule said. “Our training in de-escalation techniques, motivational interviewing along with our strong desire to serve our community, and our organizational and time management skills have enabled us to support other departments and the community, while still maintaining a high level of probation work. These efforts combine to support a safe, strong community and, of equal importance, build unity within our membership.”

“We were all very eager and honored to be able to help. We really felt like our efforts were making a difference in helping our community impacted by COVID in so many different ways,” said Soule.

— Therese Assalian

Nassau County Probation Team keeps guns off of streets

MINEOLA — In 2020, the U.S. News and World Report named Nassau County, Long Island the safest community in the United States.

Much of that can be attributed to the county’s commitment to funding public safety professionals, including CSEA Nassau County Probation officers. A group of probation officers has been conducting very successful gun seizure searches. Since 2018, the officers have taken 39 guns off of the streets.

The six-person team goes out as a group and searches the homes and vehicles of probationers to ensure that person is not in possession of anything illegal. The officers mostly work on cases specific to gangs and other types of violence affiliated with guns.

Once the guns are seized, the probation officers contact their counterparts in the county



Nassau County Probation Assistant Deputy Director Anthony Johnson receives a call about a new probationer.

Police Department, who make any necessary arrests.

The probation team usually focuses on people who have given an indication that a search is in order.

“If the [probationer] isn’t showing up for probation meetings or their drug treatment program, then we know that we should conduct a visit,” said Nassau County Probation Officer Matthew Rechner. “We might also realize that we haven’t been to someone’s house in a few months due to the pandemic, so a visit is needed.”

The officers also discuss cases before they conduct the search. Details include whether probationers are dealing with drug addiction, have had recent arrests and what kinds of guns they have possessed in the past. These conversations give the probation officers a better picture of the circumstances they may face during the search.

Many times, the team will get a tip from the probationer’s neighbor, significant other or family member that a visit should be conducted.

Once the team goes out into the field for the visit, the probation officer who is heading up the case will establish initial contact with the probationer. Once the probationer is patted down to secure safety, the entire team then goes into the home and conducts the search. Vehicles are also part of the search.

Years of conducting home visits has taught the probation officers signs to look for.

“[Probationers’] body language can tell you a lot,” said Nassau County Probation Officer Isabel Arroyo. “They may start sweating or fidgeting. Those are red flags.”

“You may go into the closet and there’s dust everywhere,” said Nassau County Probation Assistant Deputy Director Anthony Johnson. “That usually means that no one has



The Nassau County Probation Team leaves to conduct a house search. Front row, Isabel Arroyo and Keith Moore, Second row, John Blalock and Hector Constain, back row, Matthew Rechner.

been in there for a long time, which means you should look, but there’s probably nothing in there. You always have to look anywhere close to the bed because the [probationers] usually want their illegal items close by.”

During one particularly noteworthy search, the Nassau County Probation Team found a probationer sleeping in his bed while a gun was resting on the nightstand.

“Izzy [Isabel Arroyo] saw the guy sleeping in the room and motioned for me to come over,” said Rechner. “We knew we couldn’t wake him up because the first thing he would do is grab his gun. Izzy and I quietly walked into the room and I grabbed the guy, threw him down onto the floor and handcuffed him.”

The probation team continued the home search and found a second gun in a nightstand drawer.

Once the search is over, the team debriefs back at the office.

Probation team members note they has never had any serious incidents

of aggression with a probationer. This can be attributed to the respect the team has for the humanity of the people whose homes they search.

“We build a rapport and mutual respect with probationers,” said Johnson. “We would ruin that if we were to disrespect them, or their home, by going in and trashing the place. Problems with aggression arise when the [probationers] feel disrespected. To probationers, probation is a game and when they get caught, they respect it. For gang [members], respect is everything.”

The efforts of the probation team have been noticed by the Nassau County Police Department, which presented the probation team with a commendation for their work a few years ago.

“Police tell us that we take more guns off of the streets than some precincts,” said Johnson. “It feels good to know that we’re making Nassau County streets safer.”

— Wendi Bowie

Pandemic exacerbates jail staffing problem

MONTICELLO — CSEA members working at the Sullivan County Jail can't catch a break.

That's not a figurative statement. Chronic understaffing has reached a crisis level over the past year, with days off being few and far between, vacation requests being denied and mandated overtime becoming the norm.

It's a vicious cycle that puts both officers and inmates at risk. CSEA Southern Region President Anthony Adamo recently issued a public call for officer recruitment to become a top priority for the jail administration.

"The jail administration needs to commit to both a proactive external recruitment campaign to bring new officers in and an effort to improve employee morale to prevent existing officers from leaving," said Adamo. "Our members have done the best they can to power through the last year, when they were dealing with COVID and moving to a new jail,

but enough is enough. Because jail officers aren't as visible as other law enforcement, this staffing crisis hasn't been treated with the seriousness it deserves."

CSEA Sullivan County Jail Unit President John Wagner said the worker exodus is in part due to retirements and



Wagner

transfers to either the county's road patrol or a different agency. Others have gotten so frustrated on the job that they've left law enforcement behind or quit without another job lined up. COVID quarantines have created an added strain.

"We've lost over a dozen people since December," said Wagner.

The officers left behind, Wagner said, have suffered the effects of that exodus. When an officer arrives at the jail for a regular shift, chances

are good that they will be held over for an additional eight hours.

At the end of that double shift, officers have to head home for a few hours of sleep before reporting back to the jail the next day, facing the same scenario. That reality is often worse for female officers, as the jail's women's unit is required to have a female officer present, leading to even more mandating.

While the jail has already exceeded the amount of money budgeted for overtime this year, many in the county prefer to lean on existing officers for overtime rather than hire additional staff, which requires the county to pay for health insurance and other benefits.

That's not an acceptable long-term solution, said Adamo.

"Constant overtime and the sleep deprivation that goes along with it has been proven to be harmful to workers' physical and mental health," said Adamo. "Worker burnout puts everyone at risk. This is a tough job even in the best-staffed facility. If the jail administration invests in the recruiting process and succeeds in bringing in and keeping more staff, everyone will benefit."

— Jessica Ladlee



Sullivan County Jail Unit members that work the evening shift.



Sullivan County Jail Unit members that work the day shift.

'Every day, you have to be vigilant'

CSEA corrections officers uphold the rule of law

ALDEN — Working as a corrections officer is one of the most dangerous professions in the United States. Those on the job face high degrees of stress and risk injury, so it's only natural to wonder what would motivate a person to become a correctional officer (CO).

Often overlooked and undervalued, most careers in prison or jail facilities are not for the faint-hearted. They are essential and virtuous endeavors, designed to protect the community from harm and to uphold the rule of law.

Thousands of CSEA members are employed as corrections officers at county and municipal facilities across the state. In state prisons, CSEA represents civilian employees.

A difficult job

Corrections officers are exposed to a higher degree of institutional related dangers as well as mental and physical health risks. Stress and burnout often contribute to a greater risk of chronic injury and health problems compared to other law

enforcement occupations.

Because of these factors, some studies have noted that corrections officers have an average life expectancy of 59 years, compared to the U.S. national average of 75 years.

Adding to the stressful nature of the job, short staffing and retention remain a huge ongoing issue for many county run facilities in New York State.

Additionally, work and home life conflicts, fatigue, a heavy workload and inadequate resources all contribute to elevated stress levels among corrections officers.

Marc Priore, who works as a corrections officer at the Erie County Correctional Facility and serves as the Erie County Correctional Facility Unit President as well as the Erie County Local 7th Vice President, is tasked with keeping inmates behind bars



Priore



Inside the Erie County Correctional Facility.



Marc Priore, a corrections officer at Erie County Correctional Facility, checks the log book.

and the community safe.

"Every day, you have to be vigilant," said Priore. "Every day brings a new challenge."

For Priore, a career in law enforcement was always a family affair. His grandfather was a City of Buffalo Police Captain and he had two uncles who also worked at the Erie County Correctional Facility.

"I always wanted to be in law enforcement, and to serve my community," Priore said. "It's in my blood."

Inside Erie County Correctional Facility

For 24 hours a day and seven days a week, corrections officers report to work at the facility, located in Alden.

Whether it's running a unit transporting inmates to court, managing visitation rights, escorting prisoners throughout the jail, or working in the control room, corrections officers must be everywhere all the time.

The Erie County Correctional Facility has an inmate capacity of 700 and is staffed by CSEA and other unionized employees. CSEA represents approximately 270 jail employees.

For Priore, the biggest challenge is

trying to get through a shift with no major incidents to report.

Priore has logged 24 years on the job and said that working overnight shifts, holidays and weekends can be very monotonous.

"We know what we got into when we signed up to be a [corrections officer]," Priore said. "You must be alert and always pay attention to the details. Going home to your family in one piece with no major incidents at work is often the goal. That would be a good day."

Priore also said the job comes with many personal rewards, noting that the sense of pride he gets from keeping the public safe from dangerous individuals is truly a great feeling.

"With every job, there is a certain amount of success and sometimes failure," Priore said. "The opportunity to save a life or create a best possible outcome when violence erupts, or a bad incident occurs is what keeps me coming back to work each day. We have a very strong CO brotherhood and sisterhood here. We all have each other's back, on and off the job. It's good to be union."

— Ove Overmyer

First responders drive home a sobering message

WARSAW — A community team of first responders, many of them CSEA members who work for the Village of Warsaw Police Department, created and held an automobile crash simulation for high schoolers to educate them on the dangers of driving distracted or under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

The mock demonstration took place June 3 outside Warsaw High School, complete with student actors, crashed vehicles, fire personnel, police officers, ambulances, a hearse and a windy visit from a Western New York Mercy Flight helicopter. More than 140 high school students attended the simulation.

The program was spearheaded by CSEA Village of Warsaw Police Department Unit member Scott Kelly, who is not only a village police officer but works as the Warsaw Central School District's School Resource Officer.

"We wanted to hold this demonstration to illustrate to our

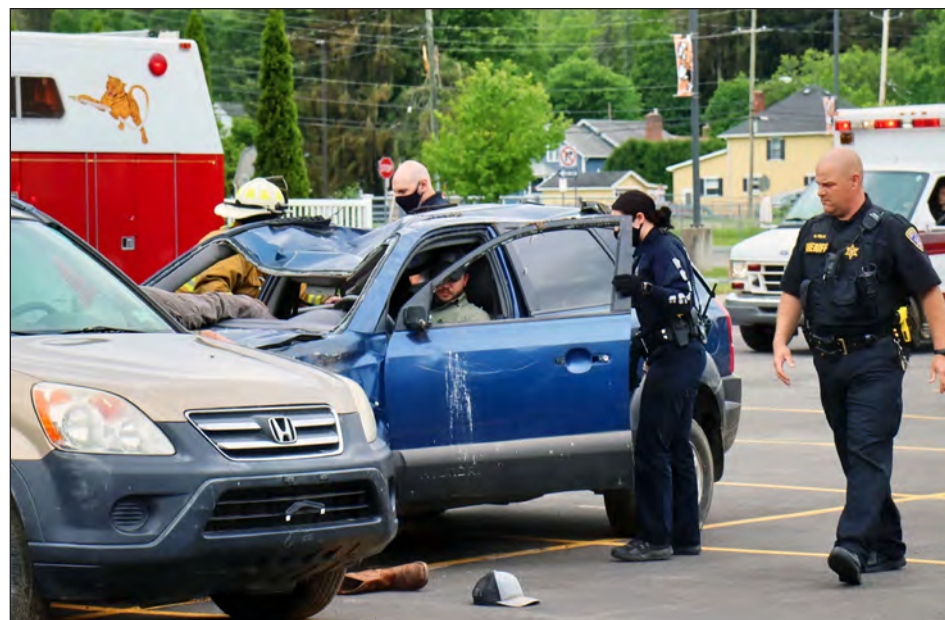
students there are real-life, deadly consequences when you choose to drink and drive," said Kelly.

Kelly said putting the car crash simulation together was a team effort, involving many students and local agencies, including the Village of Warsaw Police Department, the local fire department, the Wyoming County Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney. Several of the volunteers and emergency public service workers who helped make the demonstration a memorable experience were CSEA members who live and work in the Wyoming County area.

In the simulated car accident, student actors with fake blood and injuries were put on stretchers and taken to the hospital. A driver was given a field sobriety test and



Kelly



First responders and student actors simulate a serious automobile accident to underscore the need for safe driving.

arrested while a front seat passenger laid motionless on top of a car hood.

The passenger student who was ejected through the windshield was eventually pronounced dead by a medical examiner and was transported to the county morgue.

Kelly said the objective of the demonstration had to be "real-life" and graphic as possible, to drive

home a sobering message of making smart decisions.

"Our students should know they have the power to make good decisions and prevent accidents before they occur, especially when it comes to driving responsibly," Kelly said. "I think this program accomplished that, so I am grateful."

A risky time

The simulation happened during a particularly risky time of year for young drivers.

According to the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, from 2010 to 2019, more than 7,000 people have died in automobile crashes involving teen drivers during a time period the foundation calls "100 Deadliest Days," which runs from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The foundation also noted that teen drivers ages 16-17 are three times more likely to be involved in a deadly crash compared to adults.

One of the major reasons for the increased number of teen driver accidents is that young people tend to have more unstructured time during the summer months. Top reasons for the accidents include inexperience, distracted driving, speeding and alcohol use.

— Ove Overmyer

Honoring those who served



CSEA Long Island Region Veterans Committee Chair Maryann Phelps, left, salutes as committee member Steve Abramson plants a flag beside a gravesite at Calverton National Cemetery as part of the committee's annual Memorial Day Flag Placement, when committee members, guests and community members place flags at the graves of CSEA affiliated individuals who served in the Armed Forces.