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PENNSYLVANIA'S 2014 | NEW CAREER & TECHNICAL

HORTICULTURE & LANDSCAPING INSTRUCTOR

JOE LUTHER

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

MR. JOE LUTHER

PENNSYLVANIA'S 2014 OUTSTANDING NEW CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATOR

CPI'S HORTICULTURE & LANDSCAPING INSTRUCTOR

As the owner/operator of his own landscaping business at age 16, Joe Luther was inspired to help prepare young men and women for employment in the Horticulture and Landscaping field. He was hired as the Horticulture and Landscape Construction instructor at the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology (CPI) in 2009. As part of this program, students gain first-hand experience in all aspects of greenhouse crop production while honing their business skills through direct customer sales of poinsettias, roses, and spring flowers to CPI faculty and staff, as well as to local community members.

Mr. Luther requires the students to run the greenhouse like a business, which teaches them both the financial aspect and customer service skills necessary for industry success. Also, Mr. Luther and his students ensure that all of our community events at CPI have the fresh, colorful floral arrangements to add the "special touch" needed to better welcome our guests. Students in Mr. Luther's program also grow leafy vegetables and herbs that are used by our Culinary Arts program to prepare the meals for the same events.

To teach students about reusable resources and green technology, Joe applied for and received a \$5,000 Lowes Toolbox grant in 2012. He used this money to retrofit the greenhouse with a rain water harvesting system. More recently, Mr. Luther applied for a Monsanto Rural Education grant in the amount of \$25,000. Money received from this grant will be used to fully fund a second hydroponic greenhouse which will utilize solar passive energy so that it will be completely "off the grid."



The CPI campus serves as an outdoor learning laboratory at the request of Mr. Luther. His students are responsible for upkeep of the landscape for all CPI facilities. Students maintain both the landscapes and hardscapes of over 5 acres of land and have access to an on campus arboretum for plant identification purposes. Mr. Luther has his PA Commercial Pesticide Applicators License (Category 6 and 7) and understands the importance of this certification for his students. For the past three years, the 12th grade Horticulture and Landscaping students have successfully completed their Pennsylvania Pesticide Applicator Certifications and have the opportunity to receive their commercial certifications as well.

"MR. LUTHER BELIEVES IN GIVING BACK TO HIS STUDENTS."

Mr. Luther is dedicated to his own professional development and willingly shares his successful practices with the other instructors at CPI. He has also made several presentations at local and state workshops. He has presented at both the PA Career and Technical Education and Integrated Learning Conferences for the past two years. Further, Mr. Luther has worked with Penn State University's Department of Agricultural Sciences as an adjunct instructor for several years. He attends monthly Central Intermediate Unit meetings as our Literacy Coach where he shares his best practices in career and technical education with academic teachers.



Pictured: Kayla Greijhen, Mr. Luther, Ellen McClain

He began his career in the landscaping field during high school as a result of financial support from his parents. In addition to owning and operating his own business at age 16, Mr. Luther attended the Pennsylvania College of Technology where he received his Associate's Degree in 2002. He is currently enrolled at the Pennsylvania State University in the Workforce Education Program where he expects to receive his Bachelor of Science Degree in the very near future.

Joe believes in giving back to his students, the teaching profession, CPI, and the Centre County region. His membership/participation in the following professional organizations and activities demonstrates his understanding of the need to be involved in all aspects of the school and the Horticulture and Landscaping industry in order to provide additional opportunities for his students.

Mr. Luther is a past or current member of the following organizations: Association of Career and Technical Education, National Concrete Masonry Association, Central Intermediate Unit #10 Literacy Coach, CPI Recruitment Core Team Member, Professional Learning Community Member at CPI, National Home Builders Association, American Federation of Teachers, PA Association of Agriculture Educators, and Phi Theta Kappa Member.

"A TEACHER WHO IS PASSIONATE ABOUT IMPROVING ALL OF CPI TO BENEFIT OUR ENTIRE COMMUNITY."

He understands the importance of giving back to the community and providing his students with service learning experiences. These service learning opportunities include: hardscape/new patio completion for the local American Legion Wounded Warrior project, landscaping of the Bellefonte Teener League Field, Construction for Centre County Conservation District, Planning of Wetlands at Penns Valley High School, exhibit at the Centre County Builders Association Home and Garden Show, greenhouse and floral arrangement demonstrations, instruction at local retirement communities, and setup of the Centre County United Way Festival of Trees at CPI.

Joe Luther is a teacher who is about helping the entire school improve, not just the students enrolled in the Horticulture and Landscape Construction program. In summary, Mr. Luther exemplifies all of the qualities of an outstanding teacher. ■



Pictured: Dekota Ronk, Luke Gerber, Mr. Luther, Matt Zimmerman