To meet Ulster’s current and future needs, we must engage the conversation about the types of jobs that are available when students are in elementary school and not wait until they’re ready to graduate in high school. Dr. Jonah M. Schenker, the new District Superintendent of Ulster BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services), will challenge this strategy and more when he speaks to Chamber members at the next breakfast meeting June 21 from 7:30-9 a.m. at The Venue Uptown at the Best Western Plus. It’s sponsored by WMC Health and HealthAlliance Hospital.

Ulster BOCES offers a host of high school training and adult education programs ranging from BOCES, technical, culinary, photography, graphic design, auto-repair, computer, music, culinary arts, cosmetology, criminal justice, nursing, business, and agriculture. In Career & Technical classes, students can participate in hands-on, real-world projects, where they can choose to work on a team or independently. Upon completion, students not only have the valuable skills that will truly set them apart, but they will also have opportunities for college and post-secondary education.

But, says Schenker, there also exists a unique opportunity to foster conversation, collaboration, and economic growth by combining our K-12 schools and expanding access to programs and services that will prepare our students for college and successful careers.

According to Schenker, conversations about the educational aspects of economic development are more important if they begin with a discussion of the role of the 113 years of educational tradition that occur at a high school graduation or go directly into the workforce. It is here, says Schenker, where economic development and closing the workforce gap can begin. Ulster BOCES, he says, is uniquely positioned to bridge the gap that leads to K-12 education, post-secondary education, and workforce leaders and helps them all pull forward in the same direction.

“We don’t shift perceptions about working in manufacturing or the trades with 28-year-olds. We do that with elementary students, so they’re encouraged to align passion with opportunity,” Schenker says.

“We don’t have a prepares workforce with the skills and competencies needed for careers in Ulster County by starting these discussions at the end of their educational experiences through the career and curriculum connections that start early. In Career & Technical classes, students are exposed to some of the careers that are the foundation to the economy.

Schenker also emphasizes that earning a four-year degree is not the only way to a great career. Some, the journey may be earning a two-year degree. For these pathways from high school to work is a viable option. “Redefining the pathways and opportunities so each student has multiple options for pursuing and achieving his or her career goal is crucial.”

For these pathways to be successful, there needs to be an active role for business/industry and employers. “It is here where Ulster BOCES is uniquely positioned to ensure that the voice of both business/industry and higher education is heard in the realm of college elementary and middle school.”

Schenker’s career can seamlessly integrate all of these pieces by being a single point-of-entry for business and industry to navigate the complex K-12 world,” says Schenker. “It is vital to explain how requiring the economic community to interface with eight separate central structures, this work will be isolated and disjointed and will be challenged to realize its true capacity and return on investment.”

Ulster BOCES already has developed experience in facilitating this education and business/industry collaboration through the development of its career and technical education curriculum, and more recently through the highly-successful Hudson Valley Pathways Academy. "Pathways Academy should define these discussions in a natural next step," says Schenker.

Schenker, a native of Ulster County and veteran educator, has 21 years of educational experience and has been a part of an Ulster BOCES since 2010. He serves school-wide role as state economic commissioner’s representative for the right education local school district in the Ulster BOCES region and as chief executive officer of Ulster BOCES.

Ulster Chamber Breakfast Meetings are a great way to stay on top of current events and connect with other local business leaders. Reservations are required. Tickets are $30 in advance and $35 at the door for Chamber members ($40 for non-members). For more information or to register online, go to the Chamber at (845) 318-3100 or online at www.ulsterchamber.org.
Cybercrime fighter Rivka Tadjer says there’s nowhere for businesses to hide anymore. Hackers are getting more sophisticated, and several high-profile breaches have already hit the headlines—Equifax, TikTok, the IRS, DAV, PayPal, Apple, American Airlines. How can you protect your business in this new world?

Tadjer, the chief marketing officer for the cybercrime prevention company Cyber Team Six, says her firm can help your local business.

“You have to advertise your hair salon on social media, or you won’t have any customers, but there’s no way to do it safely and I teach you how to neutralize the real threat,” she said.

Tadjer said New York is a prime target for hackers due to its prevalence of high-income individuals and business. Her firm can help you see if your email, password and other personal information have been compromised. She also can help protect your supply chain. “Cyber data is digital information in conjunction,” Tadjer warned.

“Give me a call whether you’ve been hit or you want to prevent and I’ll help you.”

Cyber Team Six, located at 213 Mount Road in Shokan, can be reached at (914) 446-3878 or cyberteam6.net.

“I committed to myself about three years ago that I didn’t want to do national things anymore,” Tadjer said. “I’ve lived in Ulster County for 23 years and I wanted to help the community.”
Welcome to the return of the YUP Spotlight! This column will highlight the Young Ulster Professional’s (YUP) events, our participants, and the local talent that inspires us. Every few months, young professionals in their 20s and 30s who are making a difference and showing their support for the Ulster Chamber will be showcased in the Chamber Newsletter for their achievements and dedication.

Today, we’re putting the spotlight on Jillian Nadiak-Bruck, Community Engagement Facilitator and Technical Assistance Specialist with the Ulster County Government, focusing on opioid prevention in the community. Within the county government, Nadiak-Bruck works with different work groups in harm reduction, primary prevention, treatment and recovery data to build coalitions on this ongoing problem.

“I engage various community groups and I encourage them not to work in silos,” she said. “I help people break down the silos to work together.”

The cause is close to home for her, as she lost her brother in 2016 to the disease.

“Helping others heal is my passion,” she said. “I’m so thankful that every single day I get to wake up and do this work, and know that I’m having an impact.”

Nadiak-Bruck also makes an impact in her community by attending YUP events regularly.

“Going to events brings me access to people I would not have otherwise met,” she said. “When I go to a Young Ulster Professionals meeting, I know that I can go there, I can talk about my work, and they’re expecting to hear about my work.”

She started getting involved with YUP as a representative for then-Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan, who now serves as a U.S. Congressman for New York’s District 19. For Nadiak-Bruck, YUP serves as both a place to highlight her professional work in community engagement and also expand her social circles.

“A highlight for her was YUP’s PechaKucha night in January, which served as both a get-together with friends and a showcase for her opioid prevention advocacy. Along with other young professionals, Nadiak-Bruck delivered a PowerPoint presentation of 20 slides each with 20-second soundbites, in a format inspired by the Japanese style of presentation of the same name.

“It felt a lot like I was in my own living room, making new friends and hanging out with my current friends,” she said of the experience.

Nadiak-Bruck encourages those interested in attending YUP events to put themselves out there. “I encourage anyone who’s young, who’s in Ulster County and is also professional to get involved and join, because the more the merrier,” she said.

Want to get involved? Follow YUP on Instagram @ youngulsterpros and on Facebook @ Young Ulster Professionals - YUP to learn about upcoming events and other opportunities within the group.

Business Recognition Awards Nominations Now Open!

Nominate a business, business person, or organization online at www.UlsterChamber.org For a nomination to be valid, the Nominations Form must be complete and submitted no later than 12 noon on Friday, July 28, 2023.

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Christina Aboue, Nur Yilmaz, and Davina Thomasoulus (all from Keller Williams Realty Hudson Valley North) with Heather Fitzgerald (FASTSIGNS of Kingston).

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