

PCTI “Dares to Dream,” Conference a Success!

Wayne, NJ – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Passaic County Technical Institute (PCTI) recently hosted the *Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conference*, an event sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Education Office (Special Education). The conference highlights the importance of leadership and student self-advocacy. This year, PCTI’s Dare to Dream conference focused on hearing impaired students.

Two keynote speakers were featured, Sarah Vazquez and Michael E. Lawson, both accomplished adults with disabilities. Mr. Lawson, in particular, shared his struggles and triumphs as a deaf student and successful college athlete. Following the speeches, dance pieces were performed by PCTI students, three of which were performed with American Sign Language by deaf and hearing students. These presentations focused on the struggles to overcome barriers and to achieve one’s dreams.

The conference also included nine breakout sessions which provided conference attendees with the opportunity to gain insight into the transition of the self-advocacy process. All sessions were developed and lead by PCTI seniors. Topics of the sessions were: *Life After High School*, *Self-Advocacy in College*, *Overcoming Stereotypes*, *You are More than Your I.E.P.*, *Save the Drama for your Mama*, *Overcoming Communication Fears*, *Dealing with the Shadow of Coping*, and “What if” is an Illegal Phrase.

Students of Livingston High School, The Benway School, Paramus High School, Hackensack High School, and more than seventy classified students from PCTI attended the conference.



Photo Caption 0007: Students Kierona Morton, Ja’Kayla Green, Wendy Ramos, Ali Yasin, and Yassmin Rosario assist at the Dare to Dream Conference held at Passaic County Technical Institute.



Photo Caption 0615: PCTI senior Dominic Sylvester presents *Dealing with the Shadow of Coping*, a breakout session held at the Dare to Dream Conference.