

Buy Local, High Local Promo

OCVTS Program: Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, Jackson Center – Kim Szulecki, Instructor

Student: Edward Franczak

Employer: Cicconi Farms, Jackson, NJ

Website: cicconifarms.com

My name is Edward Franczak and I started at the Ocean County Vocational Technical School located in Jackson in 2011 as a junior in high school. Throughout my sophomore year I kept hearing about the vocational schools and what they have to offer and my parents thought it would be a really good opportunity for me to go through. The Environmental & Agricultural Science class seemed really interesting to me. After going to an open house and seeing the greenhouse, I knew that is where I wanted to spend part of my last two years of high school. Plants are my true passion. Throughout my two years at the vocational school I had a wonderful teacher, Mrs. Szulecki who taught me so many things. Because of Mrs. Szulecki, I became part of the FFA. (Future Farmers of America) She told me about all the good things they have to offer and how you can learn a lot from the program so I decided to join. We did contests at Rutgers and went to state conventions. Being part of the FFA gave me the awesome opportunity to go to Indiana my senior for the FFA National Convention. It was an amazing experience that I will never forget. During my senior year I was looking for a job, one that I wouldn't hate...hopefully one in the plant field. Mrs. Szulecki recommended Cicconi Farms which was a place that we shopped for plants for the greenhouse and it wasn't that far from my house. I did apply for the job and with Mrs. Szulecki's recommendation, I got the job. Now I am a full time employee and have worked there for two full years. It really is a wonderful thing to work around the things that you love every day and that just so happens to be plants. I am now a full time college student at Mercer County Community College and I am majoring in horticulture. I am in my second year of college and cannot believe how much I have learned in a year and a half. It is my true interest and because of Mrs. Szulecki I am going to Mercer. I wasn't exactly sure I wanted to go there but she reassured me that it would be a great school and that I would learn so much and she was definitely right. I am so thankful that I had Mrs. Szulecki as my teacher for two years. She has taught me so many things and has guided me in the right direction and is one of the biggest reasons why I am where I am and I am forever grateful!

Kim Szulecki, Instructor of the Agricultural & Environmental Science Program was delighted to share a comment about Ed Franczak. "Currently, Ed is attending Mercer County Community College, studying Ornamental Horticulture. He has been working at Cicconi Farms in Jackson for two years. He also earned college credits through the OCVTS articulation with Rutgers University. While attending the Agricultural & Environmental Science Program, Ed was very involved in community service. He volunteered at the NJ Farmers Against Hunger and the NJ Agriculture Society. He also served as a FFA Chapter Officer, attended numerous leadership conferences, participated in Career Development Events and participated in the OCVTS Skills USA Competition. Ed was an "A" student, truly loved learning and was a joy to have in the class."



Cicconi Farms, the Perennial Specialists, is located in Jackson, NJ. Given the fact that they have a great selection of perennials, numerous unusual plants, it's easy to see why Ed loves working at Cicconi Farms. They have been supplying Garden Centers, Landscapers, Parks and Schools for sixty years. For more information about Cicconi Farms, check out their website at cicconifarms.com.