

Romano, Linda

**Page: Overview**

While “career and technical education (CTE)” is new to many, those in the field have long understood the power and importance of education that provides students with high-tech, real-world learning infused with career exploration. Not only is CTE at the roots of today’s most relevant education trends such as ‘STEM’ and ‘Maker Spaces,’ it’s a vital component to ensuring America’s economic prosperity and status as a leader for innovation. It is part of ACTE’s mission to ensure the value of CTE continues to grow and gain the recognition it deserves.

ACTE’s Champion for CTE Awards were created to recognize education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities and thought leaders who support and champion CTE programs as a vital part of developing a prepared, adaptable and competitive workforce. The words and actions of a few dedicated and influential individuals have the power to further best practices, foster supportive policies, and shape a more positive public opinion of CTE. These awards showcase outstanding champions—from local leaders to national figureheads—who have leveraged their influence to expand, improve, and promote CTE.

These examples of model leadership serve to inspire and inform other leaders on creative and meaningful ways to positively impact the field. Highlighting their stories aligns with ACTE’s goal of cultivating a positive image of CTE and recognizing a broad community of supporters, ultimately creating a stronger vision for the future of CTE and empowering its leaders to speak with a unified voice.

If you know of a deserving candidate for this recognition, we urge you to explore ACTE’s preeminent awards program.

These awards are open to education leaders, business and industry executives, celebrities, thought leaders and other individuals who have made a significant impact on the improvement and expansion of CTE programs and/or on positively influencing policymakers and public opinion regarding CTE. *Federal policymakers are not eligible for these awards and should instead be nominated for [ACTE’s Policymaker of the Year Award](#).* Greater consideration will be given to candidates who have repeatedly demonstrated their public support for CTE and who exhibit an understanding of the components of modern, high-quality CTE.

Nominations will be accepted online until May 1 and may be submitted by the candidate or by a third party nominator. All candidates who meet eligibility and criteria requirements will be highlighted on ACTE's website as a 'Champion for CTE Spotlight.' Top nominations may be featured as model leaders in a future issue of *Techniques*, and/or invited to present sessions at ACTE's CareerTech VISION.

An independent panel will review all submissions to select the national recipient(s) of the ACTE Champion for CTE Award, which will then be considered for approval by the ACTE Board of Directors. Winners will be notified in August and recognized at the ACTE Awards Banquet during CareerTech VISION.

*All nominators permit ACTE to use and edit content of the application for promotional activities. ACTE reserves the right to maintain the anonymity of judges and confidentiality of their scores. Non-winning candidates may be re-nominated for the same or another Excellence Award the following year. Winning candidates at the national level may not be nominated for the same or another national ACTE Excellence Award within three years of their win.*

**Page: Basic Information**

**Nominator Information**

Please provide your information as the nominator of this candidate.

**Your Name**

Romano, Linda

**Email Address**

lromano@necsd.net

**Title**

RN BSN, Health Science Educator

**Employer**

Newburgh Enlarged City School District

**Phone Number**

845-742-8747

**Relationship to the Candidate**

Associate

**Candidate Information**

Please provide information on the candidate being nominated.

**Candidate's Name**

William Kaplan

**Title**

Philanthropist

**Employer**

Chairman of Board for Newburgh Armory

**Work Address**

321 S William St,  
Newburgh New York 12550 US

**Email**

lromano@necsd.net

**Phone Number**

18457428747

**Does the candidate have a background (diploma, certificate, degree) in a career and technical education field?**

Not Sure

**If yes, please provide more detail about their background in CTE.**

A World War II veteran and distinguished businessman, William Kaplan of Newburgh has spent the better part of his life giving back to the community as one of the area's leading philanthropists. It's in recent years, however, that his passion for the local educational system has really come to shine.

Back in 2010, his ardent and enthusiastic efforts, organizing, and funding propelled the plans for the Newburgh Armory Unity Center to become an educational and social center for the city's people.

Mr. Kaplan serves as the founding Chairman of the facility. He views NAUC as a space to, "get the kids off the streets," and into constructive programs with potential to really benefit their futures, with a diverse range of options ranging from Reading programs, Coding, Math, and yes, even healthcare!

Mr. Kaplan is a 90 year old, philanthropist. A man with a vision....a Champion and my Hero!

**Page: Description of Candidate**

**1. Please describe actions the candidate took to help expand, improve, and/or promote CTE.**

Driving by the Newburgh Armory Unity Center, one can see hundreds of eager Kindergarten through 6th grade children, their parents and siblings walking, parking their cars and running into the building. Each child wearing a visible tee shirt, carrying books, guitars, and medical tool kits. A kind smile and hand shake is their greeting. A wonderful man named Mr. William Kaplan greets every child, parent, and volunteer with a smile and gleam in his eye. He welcomes everyone and wishes them a good morning. Even the shy children can't help but embracing this kind hearted man.

I facilitate one of the newest programs called Scholars in Scrubs. The Scholars in Scrubs program was simply an idea that when presented to Mr Kaplan was greeted with a cheerful, excited, "YES" and he fully supported.

Scholars in Scrubs is a full health science program for K-6th grade. Mr Kaplan has allowed me to not only bring Health Science CTE to young scholars in an out of school setting every Saturday morning, created an avenue of volunteerism, but through his mentoring and guidance has opened doors for my program in areas of collaboration with colleges, hospitals, and assembly representatives.

He has been a strong advocate for CTE in the area of health science and supports my efforts to create programs for summer, middle school after-school and more opportunity for my existing high school program. He has connected me with St. Luke's/Cornwall hospital who collaborated to create a Sim lab in the Scholars in Scrubs classroom.

Mr. Kaplan has promoted the program and pathway to Senator Larkin and Assemblyman. He advocates for the health science pathway as he is a strong advocate of healthcare and support

In my eyes, Mr. Kaplan is not only a Champion but a Hero! He believed in the mission of CTE and has been a continuous support to promote and grow my vision into reality. He is now saying YES to other CTE programs, such as cosmetology volunteers earning skill practice by giving back to the community with free hair cuts. He is

## **2. How did the candidate's actions shape the adoption/expansion of best practices in CTE?**

Although this is not a traditional CTE or Academic program, one would say engagement is occurring by the excitement for learning that is going on within the Armory. Programs are run by volunteers, many from our CTE programs. College professors, professionals from business and healthcare, and parents facilitate and assist our scholars to become life long readers and learners.

Project based learning and integrated academic happens with each lesson in a non formal way. Children asking for books, having conversations about learning...all while outside of the walls of the classroom and on a Saturday.

Each child is welcome, no money needed, everything is free, including snacks. Children lead the learning, selecting programs they find interesting. Want to play guitar, no purchase necessary. The program will give a guitar, bearing in mind, the child learns to play. Books are given away, as well as the love for reading and developing vocabulary and writing skills.

Lacking in technology, not here, in Scholars in Scrubs, Mr Kaplan purchased full simulation manikins so our scholars can gain real world experiences.

To think this all began as a way to keep children streets and help the community! Mr. Kaplan may be 90 years old, but you would never know it. He can our "energize" me on a daily basis both in idea, vision, and his art for collaborating. He supports my ideas, shares my visions, and simply says YES. The rest he will leave up to us. He will walk through the armory watching each child learn and smile. He encourages all to come by to witness the magic that happens in this old armory. He has brought in Senators, Legislators, Teachers, and Community members. Once he personally gives you a tour, you find you want more of the magic and don't be surprised if you see yourself the following week facilitating a class.

Mr. Kaplan has done something for me, not just saying yes to my idea....however the best gift this Champion has given me is belief...belief in myself and my abilities. He gave me strength, confidence, and a renewed sense of hope. This wonderful man does that for each child and adult. He supports CTE without even intentionally setting out to do that. True CTE comes from the heart and love for community and making it better. This statement describes Mr Kaplan and his vision...making a difference directly from his heart!

**3. How did the candidate’s actions impact CTE policies or positively influence public opinion of CTE? How did these actions contribute to a broader understanding of modern CTE (not ‘vocational education’) that is robust, rigorous and relevant?**

“K Through Career: A Paradigm Shift.

Over the past several months, through the collaboration of the Unity Center (Mr. Kaplan, Founder and CEO of the Newburgh Armory Unity Center), the Newburgh School District (Dr. Padilla, Superintendent of Schools Newburgh Enlarged City School District, Mr. Doddo, Principle of North High School Newburgh enlarge City School District and Linda Romano, Health Science Education Teacher/Nurse Aide Program Newburgh Enlarged City School District), Mount St. Mary College (Dr. Kennett, President of MSMC and Linda Kelly, MSMC Instructor), St. Luke’s Cornwall Hospital (Joan Cusack McGuirk, CEO SLCH and Margaret Deyo Allers, CNO SLCH), Montefiore and Crystal Run, we have been able to accomplish a paradigm shift, within the educational system. In partnership, we have changed the “usual way” in which education has been delivered over the past many years and transform the teaching into a collaborative approach that involves the professionals in education, the professionals in careers, along with the involvement of the parents and children; this paradigm shift has created a very unique way in which successful learning is delivered to the children at an early age of four years old and into their career. Through this paradigm shift and this partnership, we have been able to accomplish an integrated model that intertwines required core curriculum through NYS education and collaboration with careers to accomplish a journey for these student that provides additional skills needed in order for the student to be successful in life.

The driver of this need for the paradigm shift has been the astounding reality that students are, by and large, not college and career ready by the time they graduate high school. Research from the Institute of Education Sciences indicates that 29 percent of students who enroll in public four-year colleges and 41 percent of students who enroll in public two-year colleges enroll in remedial course work.

The Armory programs are being built on this need, the need to seek improvement through partnership amongst our professionals in the industry, Educational and Careers, in order to meet the ultimate goal of eliminating remediation, preparing the student to become College and Career Ready and eliminate unnecessary costs to the educational system.

**4. What is the scope of the candidate’s impact on CTE?**

Local

**5. Would the candidate be willing to speak about their supportive efforts on behalf of CTE at an ACTE event?**

Yes