

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Onteora needs volunteers to help build the new playgrounds being planned for Woodstock and Phoenicia primary schools. Please go to the website of your child's school and click on the link on the home page to sign up. Phoenicia's Community Build event is scheduled for September 11-12, while Woodstock's is slated for September 18-19. We hope to see you there!



ONTEORA

S U M M E R 2 0 1 5

Farewell, Class of 2015

A human mosaic of red and white, Onteora's Class of 2015

marched onto the High School football field to the strains of "Pomp and Circumstance."

High School Principal Lance Edelman welcomed the students and their guests, kicking off a

program that featured inspiring addresses by Salutatorian Andrew Meci, Valedictorian Raymond Wu, Class President Taylor Kight, and Kathleen McGloughlin, a painter, printmaker, and President of the Board of Directors of the Woodstock School of Art.

Andrew challenged his classmates to use their experiences and the lessons they had learned during their school years to make a difference. "Don't be afraid to change the world and yourself," he said.

In his valedictory address, Raymond echoed the words of Mahatma Gandhi, declaring, "We must be the change we want to see."

Taylor also issued a call to action, quoting the advice of actor Bradley Whitford: "Take action....You have a choice. You can either be a passive victim of circumstance or you can be the active hero of your own life."

"The future is bright and I know each and every one of you will make it brighter," she concluded.

McGloughlin, a member of the Class of 1980, assured the students that everything they need to succeed already exists within themselves. "I know that Onteora has prepared you well for your next adventure," she said.

Musical entertainment for the celebration was provided by singers Emma Russell and Shannon Sperl, as well as members of the Onteora High School Orchestra.



MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESIDENT

Dear Onteora Community,

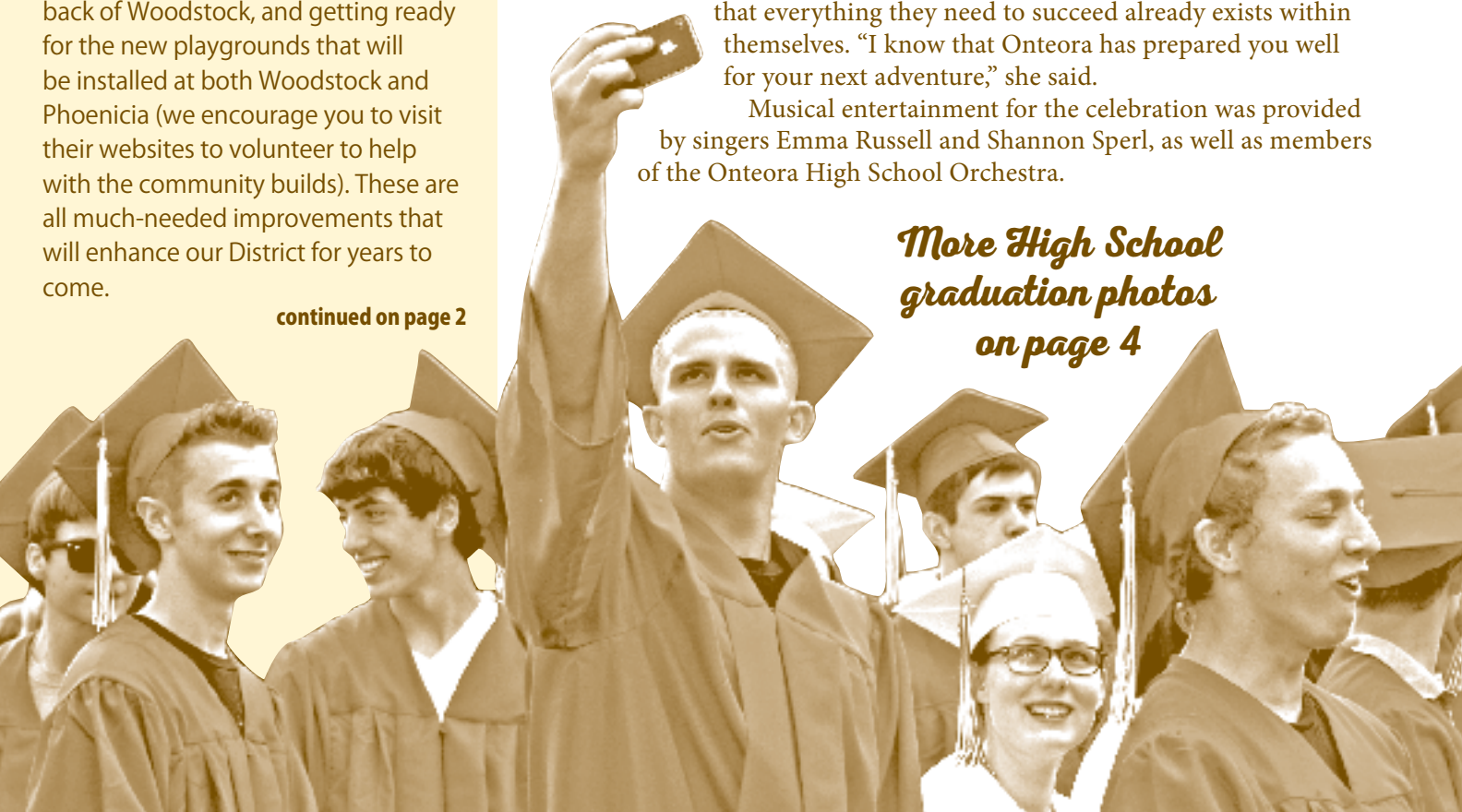
We hope everyone is enjoying their summer break and recharging to come back to school in September.

Staff members who work during the summer are busy preparing for the return of our students. Teachers are getting their rooms ready in anticipation of the new school year, and are ready to warmly welcome their new students and families.

We have work going on at multiple locations this summer to improve the facilities for our District. We are repairing the brick façade of all of our buildings, repaving the parking lots at Phoenicia and in the back of Woodstock, and getting ready for the new playgrounds that will be installed at both Woodstock and Phoenicia (we encourage you to visit their websites to volunteer to help with the community builds). These are all much-needed improvements that will enhance our District for years to come.

continued on page 2

*More High School
graduation photos
on page 4*



Congrats to the Class of 2015!

Middle School Students Head to High School

Grade 8 students marched into a packed auditorium the evening of June 22 to the celebratory sounds of “Pomp and Circumstance.”

Before receiving their certificates, the students heard some parting words from their principal, Jennifer O’Connor. “Remember to be kind, do your best, and be responsible for yourselves,” she said.

High School Valedictorian Raymond Wu, who will attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in the fall, told the



students that the evening was more than just a moving-up ceremony; it was also an important transition as they continue their journeys from childhood to adulthood. He urged them to have faith in their own ability to successfully navigate this challenging passage. “The key to unlimited potential is your belief in yourself,” he declared.

Continuing an Onteora tradition, each student was given two flowers—a red one to keep, and a white one to give away to someone who had helped him or her succeed in Middle School. Afterwards, the cafeteria was dotted with red and white, as students celebrated their successful completion of Middle School with their families, friends, teachers, and mentors.



Bennett’s Class of 2015 Bids Farewell to Intermediate School

The 120 students in Bennett’s Class of 2015 celebrated their successful completion of Intermediate School with a festive ceremony held on June 24. The newly minted seventh graders will be entering Middle School in the fall.

Highlights of the evening included an inspiring performance of “The Star-Spangled Banner” by student Maia Weiss, as well as several lively musical selections by the award-winning Bennett Jazz Ensemble.

Students were also recognized for their achievements in many areas, including academics, art, music, citizenship, service, and physical education.

Speakers included Bennett Student Council President Colin Vernet. Noting that “it takes a village to raise a child,” Colin acknowledged that he and his classmates had been supported by an “incredible village” of Bennett teachers, cafeteria workers, and support staff. Looking to the future, he said, “When we work together, we achieve more. We can make a difference if we work together!”

Principal Gabriel Buono shared the wisdom of learned advice-givers, ranging from Helen Keller (“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision”) to J.K. Rowling (“The best of us must sometimes eat our words”) to Albert Einstein (“It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education”). Mr. Buono also offered up his own words of advice: “Do something productive. Go clean your room!”



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT continued from page 1

Summer professional development activities aimed at keeping our teachers up to date and developing new learning opportunities for students included writing curriculum, Teachers College training, and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) and Safety team meetings.

Victoria McLaren will continue as our Interim Superintendent as we begin the search for a new School Superintendent, and Don Gottlieb will be joining us as Acting Assistant Superintendent for Business. Bobbi Schnell, President of the School Board, and all the trustees look forward to working cooperatively and collaboratively with the Onteora community on important initiatives.

Onteora is an amazing district with wonderful, nurturing staff, and our students are constantly impressing us with their achievements. Our administrators, faculty, and staff are dedicated to their craft, and we are a community rich in diversity, creativity, and academic opportunities.

We welcome your positive input, and together, we look forward to a successful, healthy, productive, and joyful school year.

Sincerely,
Victoria McLaren and Bobbi Schnell
Interim Superintendent and Board of Education President



End-of-Year Ceremony Celebrates Phoenicia Students' Accomplishments

At Phoenicia Primary School's Third Grade Moving Up Celebration, the "graduating" students proudly showed off many of the things they had learned during the 2014-2015 school year. The event kicked off with a theatrical reading of Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*, and continued with students sharing persuasive speeches and poems, as well as illustrated reports written during the course of an integrated Science and Social Studies unit. After an amusing enactment of a story about a "big bad wolf," the 41 students received certificates and rousing rounds of applause from a capacity crowd of families, friends, and staff members.

Woodstock Students Move Up to Intermediate School

On June 18, 53 children celebrated their transitions from Woodstock Primary School to Bennett Intermediate School, where they will begin Grade 4 in the fall. Looking back, it was a very good year.

"This is one of the best years I've had as a principal," said Principal Scott Richards. "We really do have a very special school here."

The event's theme was "Hawaiian Luau," and the students arrived dressed in bright, summery colors. There were tropical shirts, sundresses, and a grass skirt or two. The students wore floral leis and opened the assembly by playing Hawaii's signature instrument—the ukulele—and performing two numbers, "You Are My Sunshine" and "Hakuna Matata."

The students' achievement was also celebrated with the presentation of certificates and a slide show of the year's highlights. The children sang the school anthem, and after a final round of applause, everyone had ice cream sundaes together.



Woodstock Grade 3 students display their ukelele talents.

Pre-K Slots Still Available

There are still spots available for Onteora's **half-day** Universal Pre-K program located at First Steps Day Care Center in Woodstock. To be eligible to apply, children must be 4 years old on or before December 1, 2015, and must also be residents of the Onteora Central School District. Applications are available on the District's website (<http://bit.ly/1z77grD>). You may also obtain an application by calling Margaret Harkin at 657-3320.



Above, some of Onteora's youngest scholars celebrate their successful completion of the District's Universal Pre-K program in June. Prior to receiving their "graduation" certificates, the children sang, danced, and play-acted their way through an entertaining program that showcased some of their newfound knowledge.

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN will be Thursday, September 3.

BUS ROUTES are being finalized, and the new "redbooks" (listing transportation routes) will be available at the school buildings on or about



August 28. Parents can also call their children's school or the transportation office, or use the Parent Portal. The parents/guardians of Kindergarten students can expect to receive a call from the Transportation Department by the last week of August about their children's first-day schedules. Please note that even after the bus-run information is released in August, there will continue to be last-minute additions and deletions to the routes. So please be sure to check the Parent Portal right before the start of school. Thank you.

Community Helps College Dreams Come True

As an enthusiastic crowd of proud parents, friends, and community members looked on, Onteora High School seniors gratefully accepted scholarships totaling approximately \$180,000 during a June 10 ceremony. Approximately 120 awards were announced at the event, which took place in Harry Simon Auditorium.

Students were recognized in a wide range of areas, including music, art, business, sportsmanship, citizenship, community service, leadership, extracurricular activities, and academic excellence. Among the numerous scholarships announced during the event was the Bishop Scholarship Medical Professions Award, which

will provide up to \$17,500 a year for four years of college. This year's recipients were Hailey Marchand-Nazzaro and Nathaniel Mapstone.

High School Principal Lance Edelman was thrilled by the impressive show of support for the graduating seniors. "Our community has once again stepped up to the plate to recognize student achievement. I'm confident that our students will make our community proud."

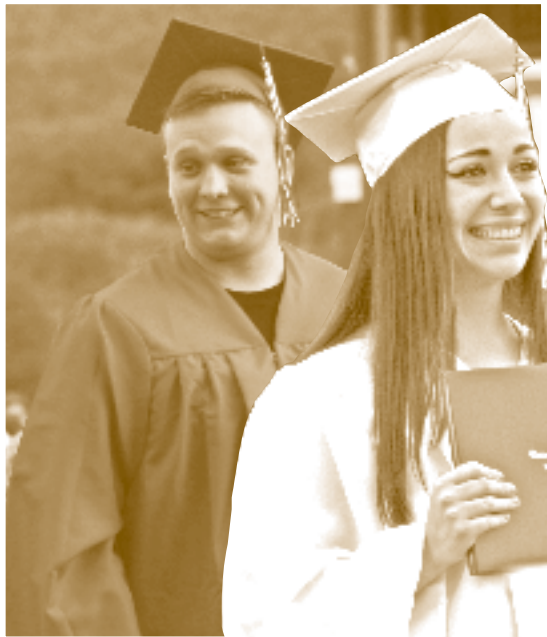


"Our community has once again stepped up to the plate to recognize student achievement. I'm confident that our students will make our community proud."

– High School Principal
Lance Edelman



*Congrats to the
Class of 2015!*



Mentor Program Encourages Students to Pursue Passions

Onteora’s Community Mentor Program offers students in Grades 9-12 the opportunity to pursue their interests and passions—and in some cases their ‘dream’ careers—with the guidance of community-based professionals. During the 2014-2015 school year, the program led to mentorships in a wide variety of fields, including veterinary medicine, psychology, screenwriting, music-making, dentistry, taxidermy, physical therapy, and food production.

According to Program Coordinator Kay Goldbeck, students are paired with community members who have expertise in the mentees’ respective areas of interest. In addition to meeting regularly with their mentors, the students carry out independent research. “The program culminates in a celebration during which students present complex, polished, authentic projects to a public audience,” she explained.

Thank you to all the community mentors, who so generously shared their time, advice, and expertise with our students!



Robert “Jack” Warren (right) honed his screen-writing skills through a mentorship with Claude Dal Farra of BCDF Pictures, a film-production company based in Kerhonkson.



Onteora student Natalie Rubin (left) listens to a song written by Lucia Legnini (right), who explored songwriting and music production with her community mentor, singer/songwriter/producer Kevin Salem. Visitors to Lucia’s booth at Onteora’s Community Mentor presentations had the opportunity to listen to Lucia’s beautiful original piece, which featured her singing and ukulele playing. Natalie, who also participated in the program, produced a book of poems under the encouragement of poet Gretchen Primack.



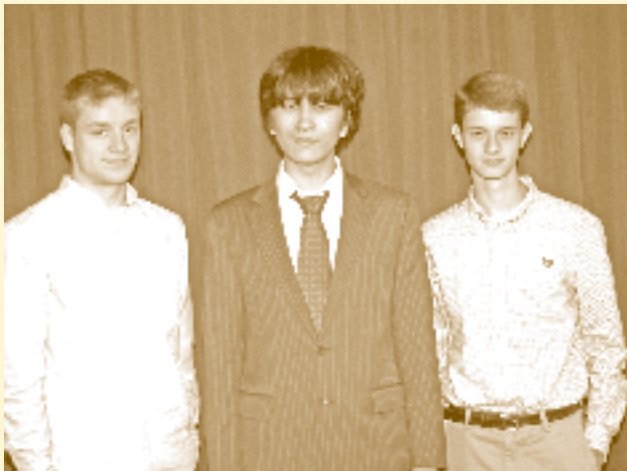
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Kudos to the following students, who were inducted into Onteora’s chapter of the National Honor Society during a candlelit ceremony on June 10:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Graham Ebbecke | Sarah Rudge |
| Julia Fatum | Alexander Schaef |
| Daniel Foster | Andre Senecal |
| Rafael Higuaita | Asa Spurlock |
| Anna Kuhne | Stephanie Smith |
| Lucia Legnini | Suika Sono-Knowles |
| Raegan Loheide | Robert J. Warren |
| Jeremy Milite | Megan Wiacek |
| Jordan Milite | Andrew Wright |
| Natalie Rubin | |

Congratulations are also due to Alina Amin, Anna Compton, and Emma Russell, who were recognized as honorary inductees in recognition of their dedicated service to their school community.

OHS Students Honored at Ulster County Scholastic Achievement Awards



Three Onteora High School students were honored at the Ulster County Scholastic Achievement Breakfast: Principal’s Award recipient Aidan Klein (left), Valedictorian Raymond Wu (center), and Salutatorian Andrew Meci. The breakfast was held at the Ulster BOCES Conference Center in New Paltz on June 4.

Middle School Celebrates Academic Achievement

Onteora Middle School's top students were honored at the school's annual Academic Awards ceremony on June 11.

In addition to certificates honoring their scholastic achievements, the young scholars received inspiring words from Onteora Class of 2015 Salutatorian Andrew Meci. Quoting the famed American author and humorist Mark Twain, Andrew said, "There are basically two types of people: People who accomplish things, and people who claim to have accomplished things. The first group is less crowded."

Building on Twain's advice, Andrew urged the students to "be doers, be thinkers, be leaders, and most of all be hard workers."



Bennett Jazz Ensemble Receives Gold with Distinction!

For the second time in three years, the Bennett Jazz Ensemble received a Gold with Distinction rating from the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA). Gold with Distinction is the highest rating awarded by NYSSMA, and the Bennett students earned it at the Association's annual evaluation festival at Kingston High School on June 2. Congratulations to these fine student-musicians!



Summer Academy a Success



During Onteora's Summer Academy, students enjoyed outdoor classes, including hands-on lessons under the guidance of environmental educator Matt Savatgy. They also enjoyed a field trip to the Esopus Creek, where they worked with staff members from Cornell Cooperative Extension. Pictured above are Hunter Byron and Isabella Brekke, who are collecting samples from the creek.

MAILLET MEDALS AT TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS



Congratulations to Avery Maillet (above), who placed second in Division 2 (and fourth overall) in the long jump at the State track and field meet in Albany in June. Also turning in stellar performances were Sarah Rudge, who placed 7th in the 800 and 1500 meters, and Avi Kleine, who placed 12th in the 100 high hurdles. Great job!

Important Upcoming Dates

SEPTEMBER	
Sept. 2	Superintendent's Conference Day, No School for Students
Sept. 3	First Day of School for Students
Sept. 3	Kindergarten Orientation, 10 AM-12 PM (Phoenicia and Woodstock)
Sept. 7	Labor Day, School Closed
Sept. 14.....	Rosh Hashanah, School Closed
Sept. 23.....	Yom Kippur, School Closed
OCTOBER	
Oct. 12.....	Columbus Day, School Closed
NOVEMBER	
Nov. 6	Superintendent's Conference Day, No School for Students
Nov. 11	Veterans Day, School Closed

Going Green at Woodstock Primary School

Woodstock Primary School students celebrated Go Green Day in May. Rotating between different learning stations located throughout the school grounds, the students learned about a range of topics, including recycling, watershed protection, animal welfare, and bicycle safety. Activities included decorating paper grocery bags with environmentally conscious slogans, planting peas, listening to birdsongs, and examining and identifying aquatic insects found in local



◀ Ed Blouin of New York City's Department of Environmental Protection uses a model landscape to discuss watershed protection techniques with Woodstock Primary School students during the school's recent Go Green Day.



▲ Jennifer Bowman of Cornell Cooperative Extension's Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program talks about the water cycle and the health of the local watershed with Woodstock students. Students had the opportunity to examine and identify aquatic insects found in local streams.



▲ Woodstock Grade 1 students Elizabeth Bergenn, Audrina Benjamin, and Abby Voelker show off the grocery bags they decorated with environmentally conscious slogans. The bags were donated to local stores in an effort to inspire shoppers to "go green."

BENNETT HOSTS COLONIAL TRADE FAIR

In late spring, visitors to Bennett Intermediate School stepped into another time and place—a bustling trade fair set in the Colony of New York.

To prepare for the school's annual Colonial Trade Fair, Grade 4 students conducted extensive research on a trade that was common in early America, using books, Internet sources, and in some cases, interviews with modern-day craftspeople. They wrote a research-based report, prepared a short speech, and created costumes, tools, shop signs, and other appropriate props. On fair day, the "tradespeople" stood in front of their "places of business," regaling fair attendees with tales of what is involved in their particular lines of work.

At the fair's conclusion, students showed off Colonial dances they had learned in physical education classes, performing a reel entitled "Yankee Doodle" as well as a cotillion called "George Washington's Favorite Cotillion."

This project-based learning initiative was part of the fourth grade's year-long study on Living and Working in Pre-Revolutionary Colonial New York.



Phoenicia Honors Our Flag

In June, the students of Phoenicia Primary School continued a decades-long tradition of celebrating Flag Day with rousing patriotic songs, poems, and special guests.

The event, one of the most anticipated on the school's calendar, has brought students, alumni, and community guests together since Helen T. Cordo, a beloved retired employee, organized the first celebration more than 30 years ago. The assembly featured student performances, short speeches by dignitaries including Shandaken Town Justice Judge Thomas Crucet, and a flag-folding ceremony presented by the local American Legion.

Current Flag Day organizer Tracy Quick, a teaching assistant at Phoenicia, took over the event's organizational duties when Mrs. Cordo retired in 2001. "I am very passionate about our flag and the men and women who have, and still do, serve our country," she said. "It is important that children understand that the flag is the symbol representing our country's freedom, and that this freedom came with a price. Many men and women have sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today."

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Diana Knight Bendz, Class of 1964

Diana Knight Bendz has racked up many accomplishments since graduating from Onteora in 1964. She credits her Onteora education with laying the groundwork for many of her achievements, which have run the gamut from being one of the first women chosen for her university's marching band, to building a successful career at IBM, to receiving numerous honors in the areas of electrical engineering and the environment.

Bendz's talents for advocacy and leadership were honed at the High School, where she served as president of the Leaders' Club and the National Honor Society.

"I also enjoyed being part of the Onteora band and chorus," she recalls. Thanks to the solid musical instruction she received from Onteora Band Director Harry Simon, she says, she was well prepared to join five other women in breaking the gender barrier on Syracuse University's previously all-male marching band.

At Syracuse, Bendz decided to major in Polymer Chemistry, a choice she attributes to the influence of Onteora Chemistry teacher Carl Brown. "Mr. Brown was inspirational and certainly stimulated my interest in chemistry," she remembers. She subsequently received B.S. degrees in Forestry and Polymer Chemistry from Syracuse University and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

In 1969, she was crowned "Miss Ulster County," a title she won after presenting a humorous monologue describing what it was like to be a woman in a field of study overwhelmingly dominated by men. In recognition



of her continuing efforts to promote women's involvement in technical fields, she was presented with the Girl Scouts Woman of Distinction Award.

Joining IBM Endicott, Bendz worked in electronic packaging and product development, receiving several patents for her inventions. She also held numerous management and executive positions and received the Technical Innovation Lifetime Achievement Award from Binghamton University.

A fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), she created the institute's Technical Committee on Electronics and the Environment, chairing its first international symposium. She went on to create and chair the first Electronics Recycling Summit in 2000, focusing attention on the pressing need to recycle computers and other electronics.

Among her career highlights was receiving IEEE's Third Millennium Medal for her outstanding contributions to electronics packaging and environmental activities. She also received IEEE's Centennial Key to the Future Award, as well as the Environmental Progress Individual Award from the Environmental Issues Council of the Electronics Industries Council. She retired from a senior executive position at IBM in 2007.

Bendz currently lives in Binghamton, New York, where she has served on the Board of Directors for several organizations. She continues to serve the community on the boards of United Health Services, Roberson Museum and Science Center, the Goodwill Theatre, and the SUNY ESF Foundation and was awarded the Civic Leader of the Year by the Broome Chamber in recognition of her service.

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