



Dr. Juliette Pennyman, Superintendent of Schools

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Hudson SHS Alumni Making a Difference with NYS Parks and Recreation Nov. 6, 2023**

**HUDSON, N.Y.** – Hudson Senior High School Class of 2023 graduate Patrick Tompkins has established a positive impact at Olana State Historic Site since being employed by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Tompkins, a former member of the Hudson Senior High School Life Skills program led by teacher Lisa Schmitt which provides work-based learning opportunities to students, said he has enjoyed his first months as a maintenance worker. Tompkins can be found keeping trails and facilities pristine, raking and blowing leaves and blowing out culverts to sustain proper flow of water when it rains.

“I found this job because of my wonderful teacher, Mrs. Schmitt. I started out as an intern in her work-based learning program. She then got me hooked up with Workforce at Columbia Greene Community College where I was paid over the summer to work here. My coworker Bryan (Gerard) here at NYS Parks told me that there was a position open and my boss Tim (Dodge) recommended me for the position,” Tompkins said. “I’m really excited that I get to work outside. I was really excited to get the chance to work with Bryan and my other coworkers because they respect me and they are glad that I am here every day.”

Hudson City School District Superintendent Dr. Juliette Pennyman is proud of the work of both Tompkins and Schmitt in setting a positive example for Hudson’s youth.

“The Life Skills program at Hudson Senior High School is giving our students new outlets to expand and find their strengths as they mature. To see Patrick Tompkins contribute to a beautiful local location is a joy and an exciting prospect to see what future generations of students will do,” Pennyman said.

Director of the Olana State Historic Site Amy Hausmann spoke on the connection made between herself, Olana State Historic Site and the Hudson City School District, as well as the positive production Tompkins has provided early into his career.

“Olana State Historic Site began our partnership with the Hudson Senior High School Life Skills Program/Hudson Kindness Club in 2022. Our goal for the partnership was to provide opportunity and cultivate the learning experience for local students, and to make them aware that New York State Parks, and Olana State Historic Site in particular, offers great prospects for training and employment right here in our local community,” Hausmann said. “We were impressed by teacher Lisa Schmitt and her team, and appreciated the cooperative and collaborative nature of the program they developed. Throughout the year, the Olana crew got to know and work with a group of truly incredible students. When the chance to host a paid summer internship for graduating senior Patrick Tompkins surfaced, we jumped at it, and he proved himself working with members of our small and mighty crew to maintain and care for Olana’s 250-acre public park. After Patrick completed the internship, we were thrilled to offer him a full-time position working at Olana and we all look forward to seeing him learn and grow in his new role as a valued member of our team.”

Tompkins’ coworker Bryan Gerard commented on the partnership with the Life Skills class at Hudson Senior High School being beneficial for both sides, and that Tompkins has proved to be an asset to his staff.

“It’s a good introduction for high school students and an opportunity for kids that wouldn’t otherwise get a chance to experience this type of work here. It’s an opportunity for them to get their feet wet in this kind of work. It helps them determine whether or not this is the kind of work that they want to do in the future,” Gerard said. “Work-based learning gave Patrick an opportunity to showcase that this is the kind of place that he would like to work. Patrick has gumption and the desire to learn and progress. We find that some kids/workers want to avoid work. He really wants to learn.”

Tompkins credits collaborating as a team to accomplish a common goal as one example of something he learned through the Life Skills program that he applies to his typical workday. The opportunity to work with current Life Skills program students is also enticing to Tompkins.

“I would like to get my CDL so that I can drive the dump truck. I am now working to train students from Mrs. Schmitt ‘s class and hope that maybe they can get a job here someday too,” Tompkins said.

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