



**Eastern Suffolk BOCES provides educational services that transform lives...
- Joe Isbell, former Data Processing Career and Technical Education student**

"It was during my two years of schooling at ESBOCES that I came to the conclusion I wanted to make a career out of working with computers," said Joe.

During his junior and senior years in high school, Joe attended the Brookhaven Technical Center (BTC) in Bellport. He recalls that this was during the early days of the personal computer revolution. "I was very intrigued with computers and found very quickly that I had a knack for working with them." Mr. Richard Garriot, the son of astronaut Owen Garriott, was an inspiration to Joe. Mr. Garriot developed the computer game, Ultima while he was a senior in high school. Joe remembers that this accomplishment was ahead of its time and thoroughly impressed him. Joe said, "I wanted to know everything he knew."

While attending ESBOCES, Joe represented the agency and the Data Processing program at the statewide competition of SkillsUSA in COBOL programming. "While I didn't medal, it was still a wonderful experience to represent the William Floyd UFSD and compete against other students across New York State."

Joe had some obstacles to overcome in school. He was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome at an early age and the uncontrollable twitching and vocalizations made school in general difficult for him. Looking back, Joe said, "I had very few friends." Choosing ESBOCES afforded him numerous opportunities and in retrospect was a pivotal point in his life. "I always looked forward to getting on the bus and heading over to ESBOCES every day," he said. "If it were not for ESBOCES I might have decided to pursue another field of study; and now having worked for the past 15 years at ESBOCES I can say I pretty much have my dream job."

Joe decided to attend college directly after high school but the two years of ESBOCES training put him ahead of students in his freshman class at SUNY Cobleskill. He said, "Because of the training I received at ESBOCES, I was permitted to take a programming class normally reserved for seniors."

After college, while interviewing for junior level positions, Joe always felt that he had an extra strike against him because he could never completely control the affects of the chronic tics. "When I interviewed for a job at ESBOCES, given my previous experiences here back in high school, I felt comfortable explaining my condition to Mr. Andrew Setzer. Everyone (and I mean everyone) at ESBOCES always treated me with the utmost courtesy and respect and I have more friends here than I ever did during grade school, middle school, high school and college combined."

Today Joe is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Suffolk Regional Information Center (RIC) computer network and serves as project manager for district

fiber WAN, and high speed and voice over IP projects. Joe said, "Being responsible for the RIC network is something I take very seriously and enjoy very much."
In addition to being given the opportunity to advance his career, Joe feels he had the good fortune of meeting his wife Evelyn at BOCES. Evelyn said of Joe, "He is truly a success story, an excellent person, husband, and my best friend."