



Orange County Government
Office of County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus
NEWS RELEASE

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**County Executive Neuhaus presents Frances Gallardo with May's
Citizen of the Month Award**

*The Pine Island resident has volunteered her time tailoring prom suits and dresses
for special needs students at Orange-Ulster BOCES for 15 years*

Goshen, N.Y. – Orange County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus has recognized retired Orange-Ulster BOCES social worker Frances Gallardo as the Citizen of the Month Award winner for the month of May.

Gallardo, a lifelong Pine Island resident, has voluntarily tailored suits and dresses for BOCES students attending the annual Raymond C. Cramer Secondary (RCCS) Program Prom for the past 15 years. The RCCS vocational programs serve students ages 14-21 with developmental disabilities, accommodating their diverse academic, vocational and socio-emotional needs.

“Frances Gallardo has had a positive impact on hundreds of RCCS students and their families over the years,” Neuhaus said. “Even in retirement, she continues to dedicate her time to help make the prom a memorable experience for them. Frances’ commitment and dedication to the BOCES community is an outstanding example of a caring and giving spirit. That’s certainly something to honor and celebrate.”

Gallardo, and two of her former RCCS colleagues, Rose Ann Lombardo and Diana Pulliam, started the BOCES Boutique 20 years ago, collecting used formal wedding, and prom dresses and suits from the staff and community for students

attending the prom. Five years later, Gallardo, 68, began tailoring the garments for the students.

She retired in 2012 after working at BOCES for 28 years, but still tailors the dresses and suits for the students ever year. Gallardo and her suitcase, which carries her sewing machine, are fixtures at RCCS when prom season arrives. She even makes custom alterations for students.

Gallardo estimates that she has tailored approximately 750 dresses and suits for students over the last 15 years. Her mom, Fran Gasienica, a seamstress, taught her how to do alterations growing up. Gallardo still takes sewing classes and seeks out tips on YouTube.com.

“This has been a community effort and I have received a great deal of help from the teachers and administration at RCCS, and my wonderful children (Dan and Francesca),” Gallardo said. “Everybody has worked together and I appreciate that County Executive Neuhaus is recognizing this initiative. This work has nurtured my soul and it gives me a special feeling. It is very important to me.”

This year’s RCCS Prom was held on Friday, May 19 on the BOCES campus in Goshen.

Neuhaus introduced his Citizen of the Month Award, which acknowledges outstanding Orange County residents, in January. To nominate someone for the Citizen of the Month Award, please email ceoffice@orangecountygov.com or mail a letter to “Citizen of the Month” 255-275 Main Street Goshen, N.Y. 10924. Be sure to include the nominee’s name, hometown, a list of their accomplishments, why you are nominating them and any other pertinent information. Nominees must be from Orange County.

For more information, contact Justin Rodriguez, Assistant to the County Executive for Communications and Media Relations at 845.291.3255 or jrodriguez@orangecountygov.com.

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(From left to right) Frances Gallardo with a student from the RCCS Program at Orange-Ulster BOCES in the prom dress that Gallardo tailored for her. They are joined by Orange County Executive Steven M. Neuhaus. As per Orange-Ulster BOCES' policy, RCCS does not release the names of its students.