



All-in!

NEWSLETTER

April 2022

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Our Mission

CAIU provides innovative support and services in partnership with schools, families, and communities to build capacity and model courageous leadership to help them be great. #BeGreat

Our Vision

Recognized as a trusted and influential partner in achieving life-changing outcomes in the Capital Area. #ChangingLives

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On the cover: Last month, Dr. Calvecchio, Assistant Executive Director of the Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU), and the communications team visited the CAIU Early Learning Center and Delbrook Preschool. Dancing, laughing, singing, and running under a parachute made for a fun day. Kudos to our Early Intervention staff for their #dedication and hard work every day! #ChangingLives



All-in! NEWSLETTER

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Unit



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From the

Executive Director's Desk

Holding Space

The CAIU is committed to building our organizational culture around belonging, dignity and a community of caring. My hope is that we all engage in self-reflection to increase our awareness and commitment to shape our individual practices in support of others with empathy and compassion. This month, for your consideration, I want to share a bit about the practice of "holding space."

Holding space is the practice of being physically, mentally, and emotionally present for another. It is a way of engaging that honors the dignity of another. You intentionally put your focus on them, allowing them to be vulnerable by creating a safe space where they can experience their emotions. When you hold space for another, you offer a kind, curious, judgement-free zone for that person.

It is said that the hardest thing about holding space for another is that it can feel like you are doing nothing. In some ways this is true. Holding space is not about you. You are not there to help or fix. In other ways, you are doing the most important thing there is in that moment.

Here are some tips for holding space:

- Listen: Listen to understand what they are saying, not to respond. Practice active listening, with your ears and your heart.

- Have unconditional positive regard: No matter who you think they are, what you think they have done, hold them with deep respect, compassion and positive regard.
- Sit with what is: Most of us react to a problem by trying to reframe it or solve it. This is not the time. Suspend judgement and solutions and just be with them.
- Do not insert yourself: empathy can take an automatic form, where we think about ourselves in the same position and relate it to our own experiences. There is a time to share this, but not while you are focusing on another.
- Believe them: It can be incredibly difficult to be vulnerable with another. Accept their truth and express that you believe them, and believe in them. Acceptance is a state of grace.
- Allow the other person to feel whatever they are feeling: Be open to any emotions that arise. Emotions can be complicated, grief, anger, sadness, grace, etc. can all come up, in a confusing and contradictory way. Reassure them that you are there for them, no matter what.

Also consider how you can hold space for yourself as well. While this does not involve having someone be physically there to lis-



"When we are looking for compassion, we need someone who is deeply rooted, is able to bend, and most of all, embraces us for our strengths and struggles."-Brené Brown

ten, you can hold space for yourself whenever you are going through something, big or small, by tapping into self-compassion.

This includes:

- Self-kindness: being gentle with yourself, non-critical, and understand that we all sometimes suffer, fail and feel inadequate.
- Common humanity: We are all imperfect, and we are all just people having a human experience.
- Mindfulness: be thoughtful about what you are feeling. Observe your emotions with openness, without suppressing or exaggerating them.

Holding space is not something we will master overnight. Our practice will evolve, and as we know better, we will do better.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andria Saia".

Dr. Andria Saia (she/her/hers)
Executive Director

April is Autism Acceptance Month



By Kellie Custer, MA, BCBA Program & Grant Specialist, Student Services

As you have most likely seen across CAIU social media platforms and on posters throughout the office the month of April is a time to celebrate Neurodiversity and Autism. This community has so many beautiful gifts to share and we want to highlight our staff, students, and families. Celebrations at the IU will be spread out through the month with a different theme each week; Celebrate, Making a Shift, Supporting our Students, and Transition. An autism acceptance webpage was created to spread information and document our efforts to celebrate and encourage acceptance throughout the month.

During the first week of the month, staff were invited to celebrate the autistic individuals in their life by sporting their CAIU gear including a student-designed shirt and a button. 'Celebration' week focused on achievement over adversity. Autistic individuals have the capacity to achieve great things when given an accepting environment that supports their needs. 'Making a Shift' was the theme for the second week of Autism Acceptance Month. During this week information was disseminated regarding the shift from awareness to acceptance. In recent years, the autistic community has made it clear that awareness of their needs was

not enough. Acceptance requires action. The most notable shift within the autistic community is the transition from a puzzle piece to a rainbow or gold infinity symbol. The rainbow infinity symbol represents overall neurodiversity and the gold infinity is for autism.

'Supporting Our Students' week puts a spotlight on the dedicated staff IU wide that support autistic learners. Being on the autism spectrum might mean that a student needs some extra supports such as learning support, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy or physical therapy. At the CAIU, we have



**Autism Acceptance
&
Neurodiversity
Month**



a variety of classrooms that are customized to meet the individual needs of all our students. Our qualified staff bring expertise and leadership to the field of autism and education. We are very proud of the services we provide to our students and families. Autism Acceptance Month wraps up with a focus on transitioning autistic students to higher education or employment.

Post-graduation for students with autism means choosing between employment or secondary education. Once a student graduates, the services provided through IDEA will end and the student and family must navigate these systems without public education supports. However, the CAIU works closely with families and individuals to help with effective transition and beyond. We work with employers, helping them to see the value in hiring individuals with autism and we work in communities to make sure that there is an inclusive environment for all on the autism spectrum, ensuring the success of all individuals with autism across the entire lifespan. The CAIU also works with colleges and other post-secondary institutions to help them make the best accommodations so that every individual can succeed and advance their education. Although we spent the month of April celebrating, remember that acceptance involves year-round acts.

To stay connected, follow autistic individuals on Instagram, support sensory-sensitive events in the community, and encourage others to make the shift from awareness to acceptance.

We asked educators in our autism support classrooms what their favorite part of the job was. These are some of their answers.

“

#TEACHERSHARING #AUTISM



The most rewarding aspect of my job is watching the students grow as well as the relationships I have built with both my students and the staff I work with. There is truly a feeling of one big family within the classroom and it has been such a great experience for all! Our team working so cohesively has truly given the kids an opportunity to thrive in the best environment possible.

”

Ms. Napoli,
South Middleton School District



“

#TEACHERSHARING #AUTISM



The most rewarding thing is watching our students learn and that even when they have a setback, I love watching them grow from it and persevering.

”

Miss. Kimi,
South Middleton School District

“

#TEACHERSHARING #AUTISM



The most rewarding part of my job is seeing the 'light bulb' moment when our students understand what you are teaching them.

”

Miss Josie,
South Middleton School District



“

#TEACHERSHARING #AUTISM



The most rewarding part of this job is watching the students reap the benefits of a cohesive and present school team. Class-wide implementation of rules and supports has facilitated immense growth in not only the students but the staff as well. This phenomenon has been incredibly rewarding to watch.

”

Miss Julia,
South Middleton School District



“

#TEACHERSHARING #AUTISM



This job has impacted me by helping to keep me young and moving. One of the most rewarding parts of this job is seeing our students' smiling faces when they arrive from their vans in the morning.

”

Ms. Gelbaugh,
South Middleton School District

Noteworthy ^{#BeGreat} ^{#ChangingLives}

Occupational Therapy at CAIU

By: Cara Jury MOT, OTR/L & Emily Reese MS, OTR/L

Happy OT Month!

Occupational Therapy (OT) is an evidence based profession driven by science that seeks to assist individuals of all ages live meaningful lives with illness, injury, or disability. Occupational therapists serve across many settings including our favorite here at the CAIU, Education!

School-based Occupational Therapists use meaningful activities (occupations) to help students ages three through twenty-one access and participate in their



educational environment to meet the demands of their education. In the educational setting OT is a related service that can be considered by the educational team to assist in meeting a student's established IEP goals or 504 Plan needs.



Occupational Therapists address the physical, cognitive, social-emotional, and sensory components of school performance including: Academics/play, activities of daily



living (ADLs), self-regulation, and transition/work skills. These skills are addressed as they relate to the educational environments, routines, academic demands, and expectations of the school. The occupational therapy department at the CAIU is composed of passionate, innovative, and flexible individuals who are strong advocates for the best interest of



their students. Each of our therapists bring unique experiences and expertise on a variety of specialties. Some of the special interest projects of our OTs include: exploration of nature-based therapy, increasing parent communication,



developing new service delivery models, creating adaptive seating with cardboard, researching service delivery models, and implementing updated standardized assessments.

We are fortunate to have a network of more than 30 Occupational Therapists.



Thank you to our CAIU Occupational Therapists for your hard work and dedication to best serve our students!



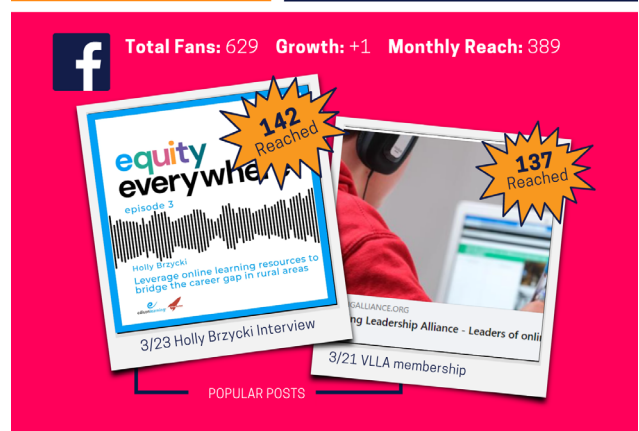
Noteworthy #BeGreat #ChangingLives



As a small token of our immense gratitude, Paraprofessionals will receive a gift code to order the t-shirt pictured above in the Spring swag store.

April 6 was National Paraprofessionals' Day. At CAIU, we took an extra moment to show our tremendous appreciation to our paraprofessionals for the amazing contributions they make every day. Have you thanked a para today?

- Thank a Para, because if you think their hands are full, you should see their hearts
- Thank a Para, because all educators need a hero who lives to inspire
- Thank a Para, because 'multi-tasking miracle worker' isn't an official job title
- Thank a Para, because they offer a shoulder to lean on, a voice to inspire, an ear to listen, a hand to hold, and heart to care
- Thank a Para, because there is extraordinary power in the caring relationships they make with our students to ensure their success
- Thank a Para, because a great one is hard to find, and impossible to do without
- Thank a Para, because the difference they make and the lives they touch cannot be measured



Noteworthy ^{#BeGreat} ^{#ChangingLives}



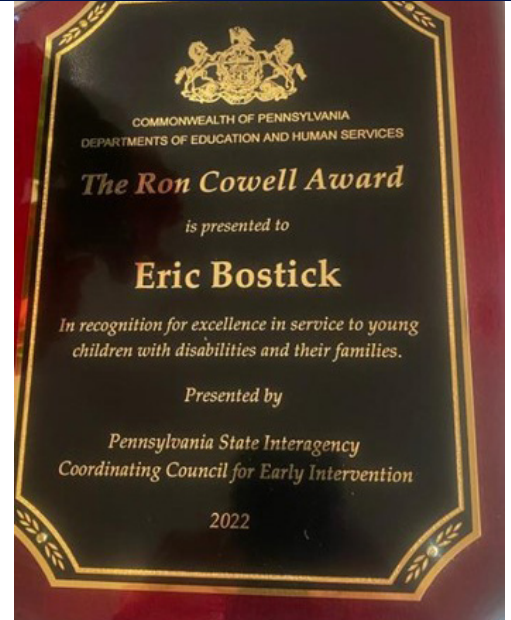
On March 22, 2022, Lauren Parker from The American Heart Association trained a group of individuals from across the Capital Area Intermediate Unit who are now Certified trainers in adult and pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED. The training was held at the Capital Area Early Learning Center. Certified participants include: Meghan Harvey, Shana Montgomery, Melissa Rosado, Jody Forney-Cole, Tracy Lentz, Jamie Gordon, Melissa Ross, Irene Reedy, Nyla Kater, and Lindsey Stauffer. Training for CAIU staff will begin as soon as April 2022.



We are delighted to announce that the window graphic and entrance sign have been installed at the Capital Area Early Learning Center



Happy Spring!



Eric Bostick is the recipient of the 2021 Ron Cowell Award for Excellence in Service to Young Children with Disabilities and their Families. The Ron Cowell Award is named in recognition of former PA State Representative Ron Cowell, who was instrumental in passing Act 212, which established Early Intervention in Pennsylvania. The Ron Cowell Award recognizes an individual who has had a significant impact on Early Intervention public policy development, Early Intervention practices, or staff development. Congratulations to Eric Bostick who retired from the CAIU Preschool Program as Program Supervisor in February 2022.



Having fun with Mr. Music!

Noteworthy #BeGreat #ChangingLives

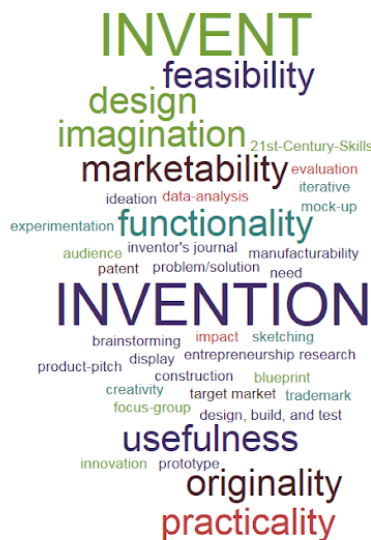


Congratulations to Aria Bricker from Paxtonia Elementary School in the Central Dauphin School District for winning the Best Prototype K-4 category at the Pennsylvania Invention Convention! Her project was entitled, "ARWIN: The Seed Dispersal Robot."

The Pennsylvania Invention Convention gives students recognition for creating inventions to solve real-world problems.

This year's convention was hosted by PETE&C at the Hotel Hershey. Creativity, critical thinking, innovation, teamwork, and

communication skills are recognized as the skills that prepare students for increasingly complex school, work, and life environments.



The Pennsylvania Invention Convention gives students recognition for creating inventions to solve real-world problems.

PETE&C recently hosted the 2022 Pennsylvania Invention Convention on Tuesday, February 8 at the Hotel Hershey.

A full list of statewide winners can be found [here](#). Some of the winners will be heading to the 7th annual Invention Convention U.S. Nationals at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan from May 31 to June 3, 2022.

The PA Invention Convention is open to any Pennsylvania student in grades K-12. It is designed to showcase and celebrate student problem-solving, innovation, creativity, and ingenuity.

caiu
Capital Area Intermediate Unit
summer camps
CAIUSUMMERCAMPS.ORG
SUMMER ADVENTURES
await!

Welcome March New Hires!



Anthony Casale

is a Certified School Nurse at various locations. He loves shark fishing and the ocean.



Kimberly Cicero

is an EPP/LPN at Melrose. This year marks her 19th wedding anniversary with her husband. Together they have 3 sons.



Emily Corchado

is a Program Assistant at the Enola office. She lived in Australia for 5 months.



Julie Feister

is an EPP at Hill Top Academy.



Lauren Gross

is a Marketing and Communications Specialist at the Enola office. Lauren is a quilter. She started quilting during the pandemic and loves it.



Levi Hayes

is a Network Systems Engineer at the Enola office.



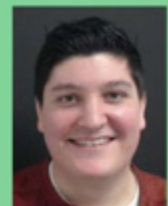
Kirby Hoke

is a Custodian at the Enola office. He is a retired army master sergeant, former railroad conductor, former cub scout leader, father, son, brother, grandpa, and husband.



Shane Murphy

is a PCA at CVHS. He loves spending time with his family!



Courtney Noss

is a Program Secretary at the Enola office. She has a pitbull named Storm whose name fits her perfectly.



Shawn Saunders

is a Human Resources Generalist at the Enola office. He rides his motorcycle all year long.



Tiffany Stone

is a Program Secretary at the Enola office.



Holly O'Neill, Teacher:

#Dedication Holly is a trusted co-worker who has become a dear friend. She is responsive, dedicated and can make difficult tasks fun! She is creative and loves planning and executing amazing experiences for the students on her case load. Holly is a gem! *Submitted by: Shannon Wonders, Educational Consultant/Direct Ed. Provider*

Patricia Benner, ANPS Remedial Specialist: #Dedication

Mrs. Benner is enthusiastic and dedicated to her job as a remedial teacher! She is always committed to the well-being of her students and colleagues! Mrs. Benner reflects on her remediation sessions to ensure that what she is teaching the students is helping them make progress in math and/or reading. If it isn't working, she changes her instruction to meet the students' needs. Mrs. Benner is always there to bounce ideas off whenever you need some recommendations for remedial strategies. She gives countless suggestions for remediation and is always there to listen, whether it is school-related or not. I am so grateful to work with such an amazing colleague! *Submitted by: Ashley Reddig, ANPS Remedial Specialist*

Elizabeth Laplante,

Paraeducator: #Dedication Liz you are such a kind, caring, and patient person. It does not matter what classroom a student is in.

You always say good morning and you try to get the students back on track. You make the staff smile. Keep spreading your sunshine and joy. *Submitted by: Anonymous*

Cheryl Fisher, ANPS School

Counselor: #Expertise Cheryl has been the kindest, most available, expertise-sharing mentor since my first day at the CAIU. She goes out of her way to make herself available for consultation and resource sharing. There have been countless scenarios where I have contacted her about consultation for complicated cases, and she has replied within minutes. This has made all the difference to me as I develop skills and confidence. Hearing about her experiences from many years in the field has greatly informed me and helped me navigate professional relationships at my school sites. More than anything, the passion she has for the profession paired with the joy it brings her reminds me of how lucky I am to be doing what I am doing each day. Thank you, Cheryl! *Submitted by: Kerry Campbell, ANPS School Counselor*

Erin Waltz, ANPS School

Counselor: #Leadership Erin Waltz has shared her leadership and expertise with me countless times this school year. As a new ANPS school counselor at a school that was part of a community that experienced a student loss, I relied on the lead-

ership of Erin and the CAIU Crisis team to show me how to support staff and students most effectively. Erin worked around the clock, including over a weekend, to brief me on the situation, review best counseling protocol and approaches, walk me through paperwork and how to fill it out correctly, and made sure I had all the resources I needed going into a difficult week. She came to my school, let me observe her sessions, and checked in multiple times to answer questions. Erin is frequently leading trainings at our staff meetings. Recently she walked us through how to implement appropriate CBT-based interventions/strategies at schools. I took engaging resources/ideas from her presentation and used them the very next day. I am thankful I could learn from this leader and expert in the counseling field. *Submitted by: Kerry Campbell, ANPS School Counselor*

Laura Morton, Social Worker Hill Top Academy: #Service

Laura is a kind and dedicated social worker at Hill Top. Laura heads our Hill Top Equity committee and Sunshine committee. In the past she has also published our yearbook. She is the go-to person when we need to support a colleague. Laura quietly goes about BEING GREAT and will probably hate being called out for her awesomeness. Laura, we appreciate everything you do. *Submitted by: Michelle Sholder, Social Worker*



On March 2, in honor of Happy Read Across America Day, the Capital Area Intermediate Unit and CASTL launched the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library fundraiser at the Capital Area Early Learning Center (ELC) in Lemoyne.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library sends books to children, ages birth to five, at no cost to families, no matter their families' income.

Millions of preschoolers all over the world, including Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, the U.S., and the Republic of Ireland are receiving books every month, but

NOT in Dauphin, Cumberland, or Perry County.

Why? Because there is no local affiliate in our area.

We are here to change that reality.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library negotiates the wholesale cost of books, ships them, supports affiliates with promotional materials, while the affiliates provide the \$2.50 cost of each book, registers children, and promotes the organization in their area.

A group of volunteers, under the umbrella of CASTL, is determined to make sure the youngest children in the CAIU footprint all have the same opportunity to start life with a rich literary foundation. All children deserve this, regardless of economic circumstances. We recognize that a child's success in school and life is largely dependent upon an extensive vocabulary, exposure to a wide and varied selection of stories, and the ability to be a critical consumer of information.

Beginning life hearing a loving adult read well-chosen stories puts children on a better path to a brighter future.

We still need to reach our goal of \$180,000 before we can open Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Dauphin, Cumberland, and Perry Counties. If you would like to donate, please use the link below.

[DONATE NOW](#)