

### Principal's Message

Greetings and Happy New Year!! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and would like to personally extend my best wishes for a happy and healthy 2023!

During the month of December, Crossroads was hard at work on programs and activities focused around our themes of the month. The themes for December centered around kindness and patience, as well as holidays around the world. Student's had the opportunity to learn about different traditions and cultures during

Crossroads School's first International Day Event. During this event, students stamped their passports while visiting different countries in order to experience international cuisine, crafts, music, and games.

In keeping with the theme of kindness, Crossroads organized a coat drive to collect and donate winter clothing for those in need. Crossroads school also benefitted from the kindness and generosity of others. We want to thank Heritage Mortgage of Morristown for their generous food donation to our school. We also are thankful to the Wardlaw- Hartridge School, which donated holiday gifts for each of our students.

Wishing you the best,

Matthew Fernandez  
Principal

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## General Information

### Enrollment as of Jan 3, 2023

Actual: 44

Changes: Entered: 1 Exited: 0

Referrals: 2

Intakes Scheduled: 1

Accepted: 0

Fire Drills: 12/9/22

Emergency Drills: 12/16/22 (Active Shooter)

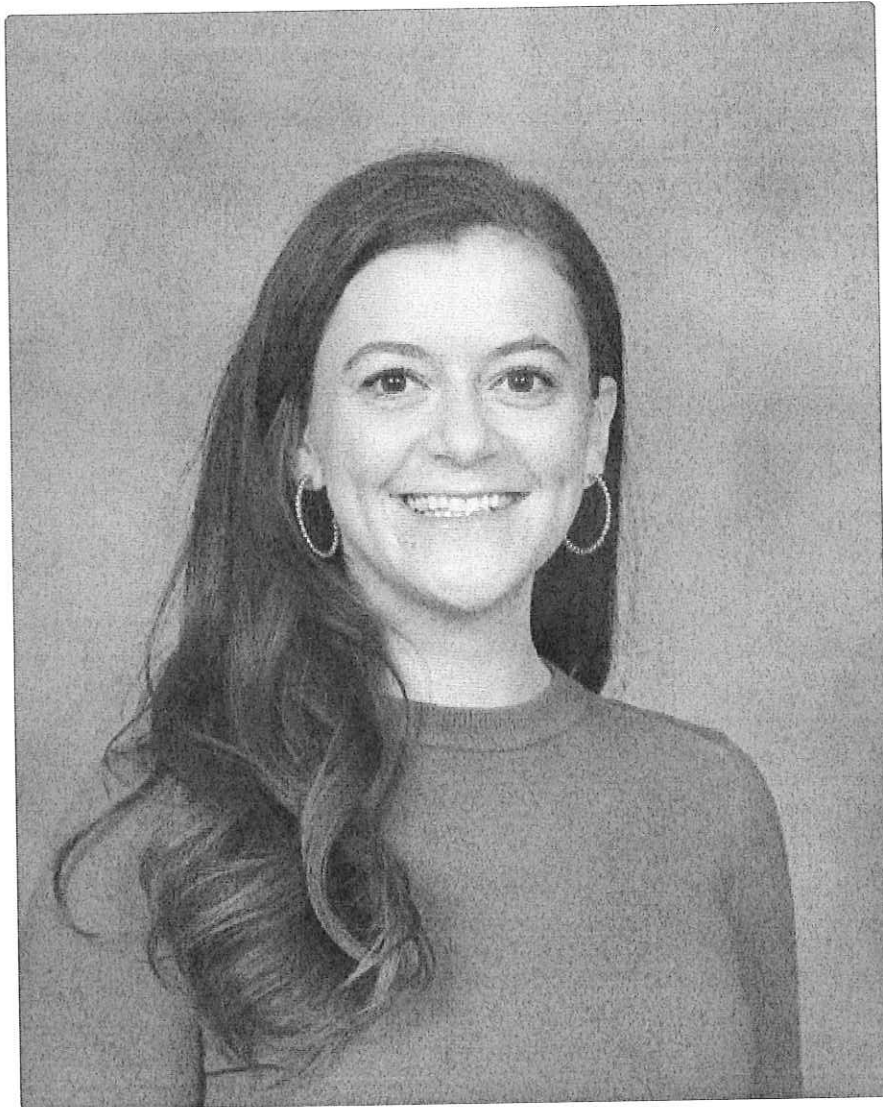
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General  
Information



### Student of the Month - Lyla

Our first Crossroads' Student of the Month is Lyla! Lyla has stunned staff and peers with her incredible crafting skills! Not only does she have natural talent, but she has made a great effort to learn new skills involving color mixing and texturizing clay by watching youtube videos. We can't wait to see the amazing artwork she will continue to make!



**Certificated Staff of the Month - Dana Bartone - Speech Therapist**

**1. How long have you been working for UCESC**

- I started working with UCESC over this past summer! This is my first full school year here and my fifth year working as an SLP.

**2. What would we be surprised to find out about you?**

- Outside of my job here as an SLP, I also spend a lot of time teaching and practicing yoga. Over the last few years I've spent time to become certified as a 500 hour registered yoga teacher. Now, I teach power yoga, children's yoga, and specialized populations of children and adults!

**3. What is your dream vacation?**

- My dream vacation is to travel to South Africa. I've always wanted to see South Africa and experience the culture and the animals. My favorite animals are elephants, so I look forward to be able to see them up close one day!

**4. What is your favorite meal?**

- Growing up in an Italian family, nothing beats my Dad's homemade pasta and meatballs. Even though I love his the most, I enjoy almost every pasta dish I've ever had (unless it's spicy!)

**5. What is your greatest accomplishment?**



- My greatest accomplishment is not only becoming a speech language pathologist, but finding a career and work environment I really love. SLP's are required to have a master's level degree before starting to work in the field which includes six years of schooling and multiple placements. Although it felt like an accomplishment just to make it that far, it feels good to really love my job and my personal mission to help others communicate in their best and most functional way. I feel incredibly



**Para of the Month - Joyce Astalos**

**1. How long have you been working for UCESC**

- I have been working for the commission for 20 years!

**2. What would we be surprised to find out about you?**

- I love going deep sea fishing, crabbing, and snow and water skiing.

**3. What is your dream vacation?**

- Hawaii

**4. What is your favorite meal?**

- Lobster, King Crab Legs, Scallops, and all seafood.

**5. What is your greatest accomplishment?**

- Having a wonderful family (my husband and five children)!



# Classroom Spotlights

## Ms. Susan's Classroom

### Holidays

During the month of December the students learned about the different holidays that occur in December. The holidays that were discussed were Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza. Students took time to research information on each holiday. Students also participated in activities centered around each holiday.

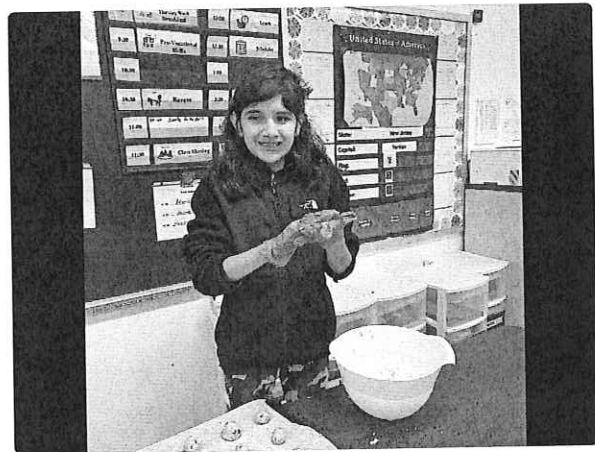
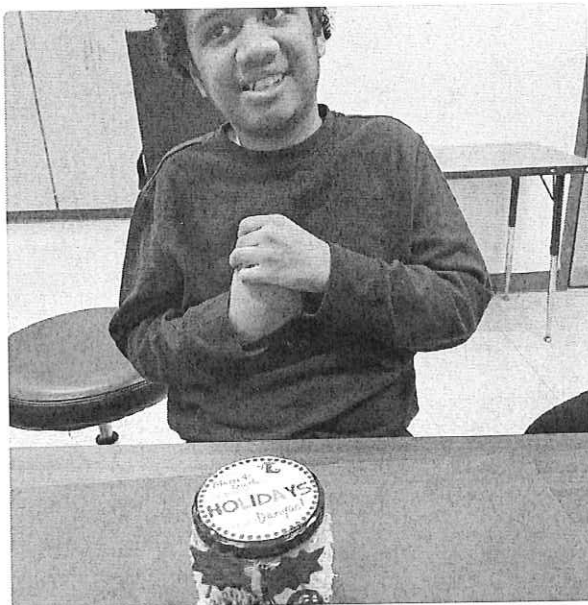


### Kindness and Patience

The students sorted examples of kind and unkind action cards. Each card had an picture paired with a sentence eg. share, help a friend or use mean words. The purpose of this lesson was to get students to think about their own thoughts and feelings and those of others and to give students some awareness into how their choices (words & actions) can make a difference.

The students then made a Hot Cocoa Kindness craft. Each student wrote or cut out kind words/actions on paper marshmallows and then glued them onto their hot chocolate mug.

The students enjoyed sharing ways to be kind to each other through this activity.

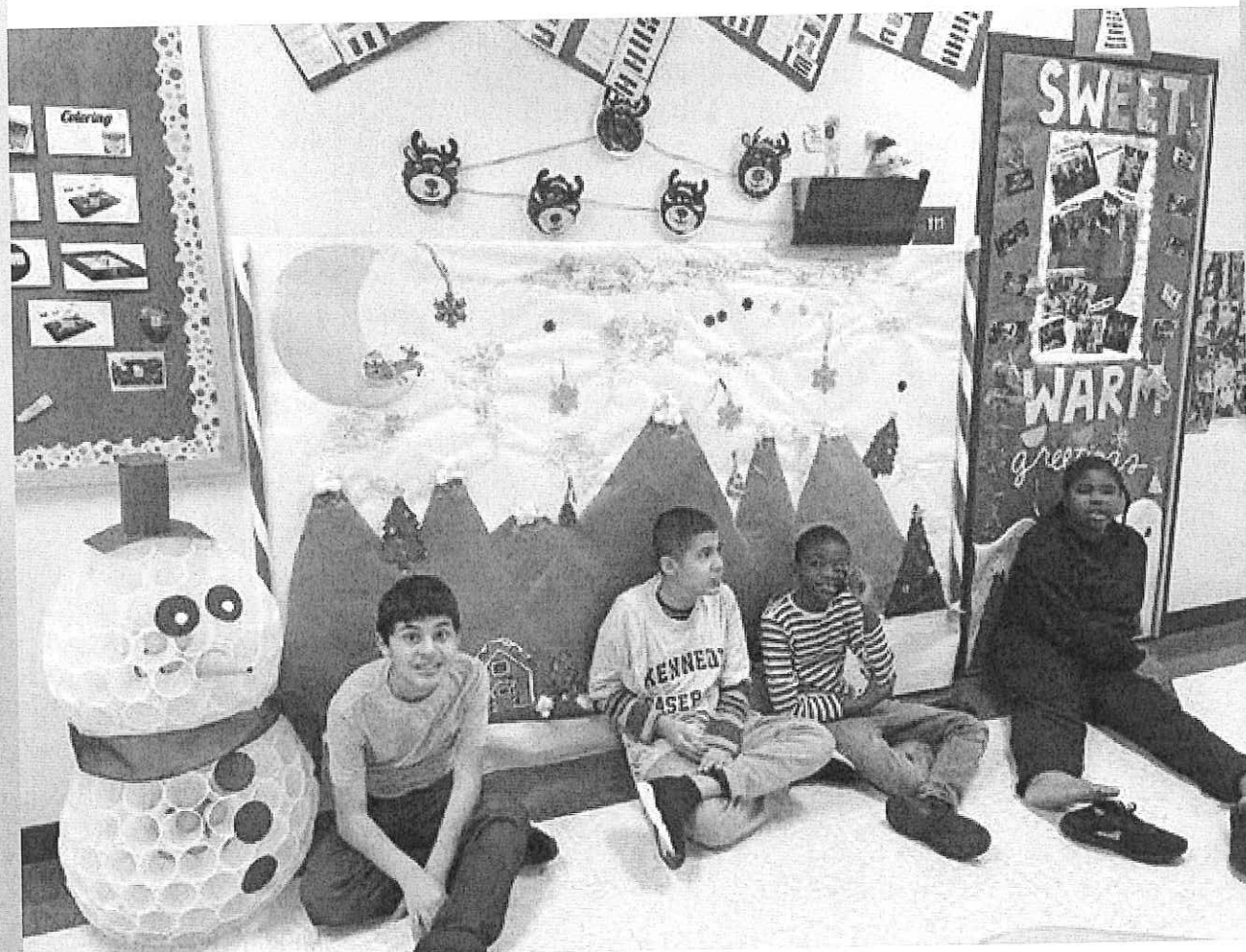
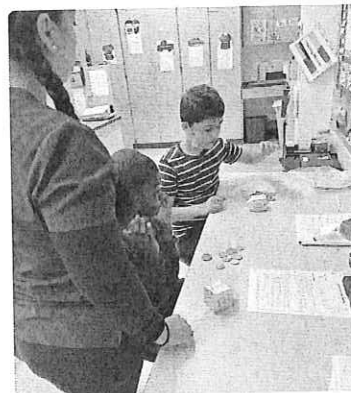


## Ms. Natalia's Classroom

For the month of December, the class learned about the different holidays that are celebrated within our country. The class learned about Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa through the use of technology, writing activities, and making crafts. It is unbelievably amazing to see how our class families came together during the door contest activity to help our classroom win first place!!!

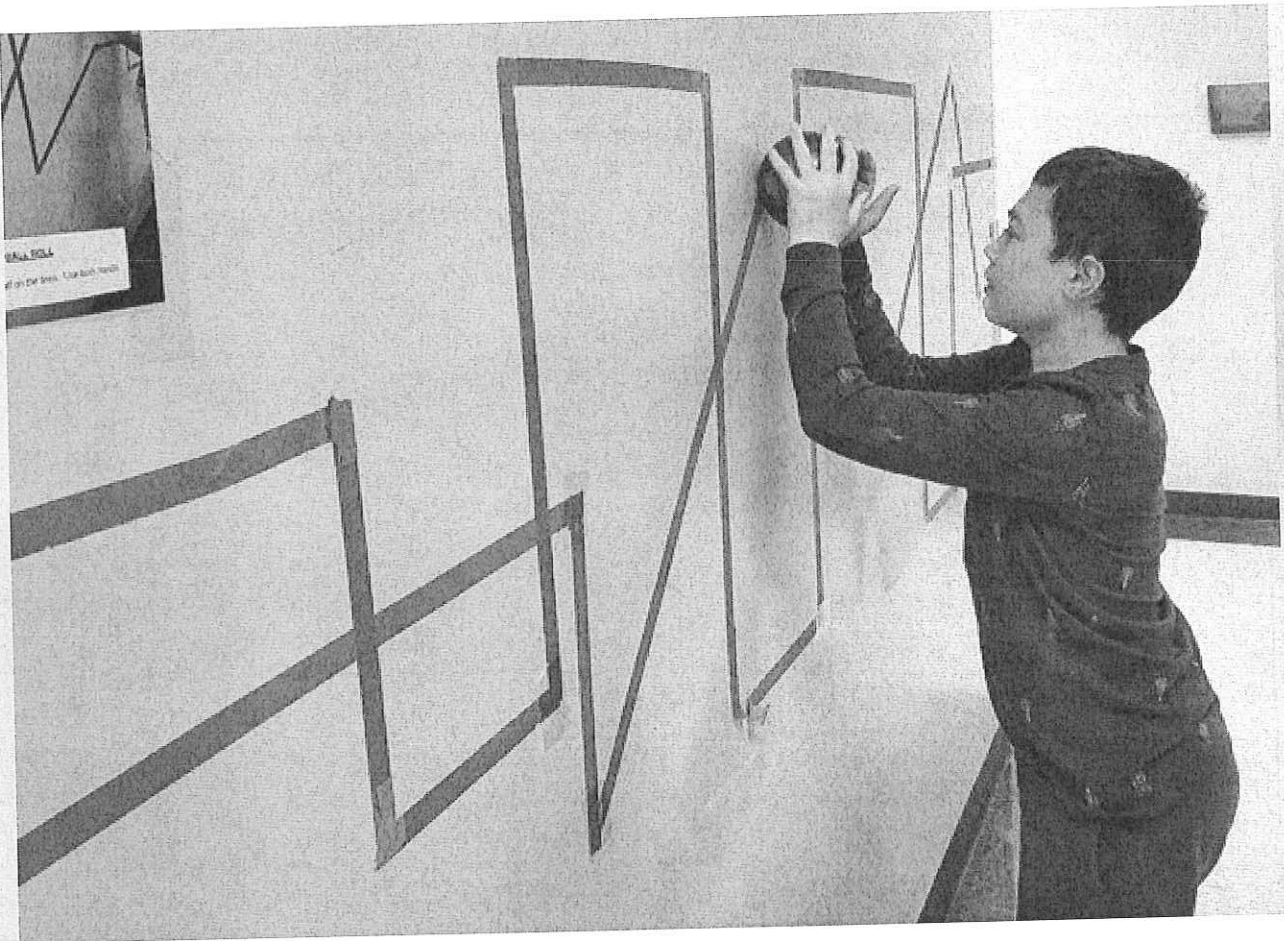
Students also enjoyed the international feast. It was great to see how some of our pickiest eaters were motivated to try all the different ethnic foods:)

All students continue to work on their individualized educational plans through various forms of instruction. Students are making huge gains during their SRA lessons. Students are strengthening their skills in the areas of object identification, following directions, nouns, pronouns, and using their expressive language to formulate complete sentences. I am also using SpellingCity to help my Edmark students generalize their understanding of their sight words.



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## Therapy Spotlight



During the month of December 2022 the OT department has been busy coordinating the students goals with holiday themed activities. Many of the activities include printing, copying, or cutting out holiday words onto stockings/decorations/candy canes and other holiday objects. Several holidays have been included to be able to address all cultures.

Outside of the OT room is a "ball roll" activity that requires the student to use both hands together while visually tracking a line. Body strength and mobility is required to successfully move a weighted ball along the "red" and "green" lines.

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## December at Crossroads



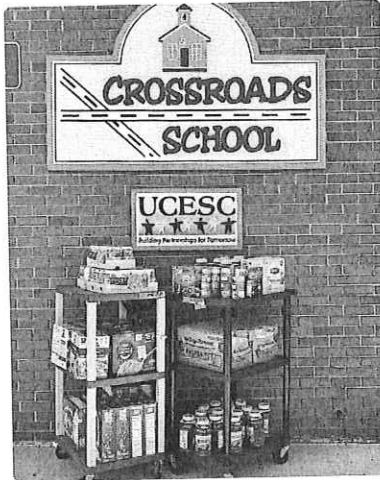


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## Month of Kindness at Crossroads



On a Community Based Instruction Trip a kind gentleman at Panera purchased chocolate chip cookies for all of the students.



Special thanks to Heritage Mortgage of Morristown for your generous food donation.



Warm weather clothing collected during the Crossroads coat drive.

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## Crossroads in the Community



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## A Very Special Partnership



Crossroads School has a very special community partnership with Wardlaw- Hartridge School . A giving tree is decorated each year at Wardlaw-Hartridge School with all the names of our Crossroads students, along with a tag that includes two special wishes. Wardlaw-Hartridge students then select a Crossroads student from the giving tree and purchase an item or two.

Late in December the gifts are picked up and brought back to Crossroads School where they are sorted and wrapped for our students. Santa then presents the gifts and wishes each student a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday. Crossroads greatly appreciates the generosity of Wardlaw Hartridge School every year. A special thanks goes out to Kirstin Rogers, Teacher of 7th grade American History and Dean of Students for leading the way . We are so thrilled to continue this Holiday Gift exchange as well as continue this community school to school partnership which benefits all of the students .

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### About Us

**Website:** [https://www.ucesc.org/schools/crossroads\\_school](https://www.ucesc.org/schools/crossroads_school)

**Location:** [45 Cardinal Drive, Westfield, NJ, USA](#)

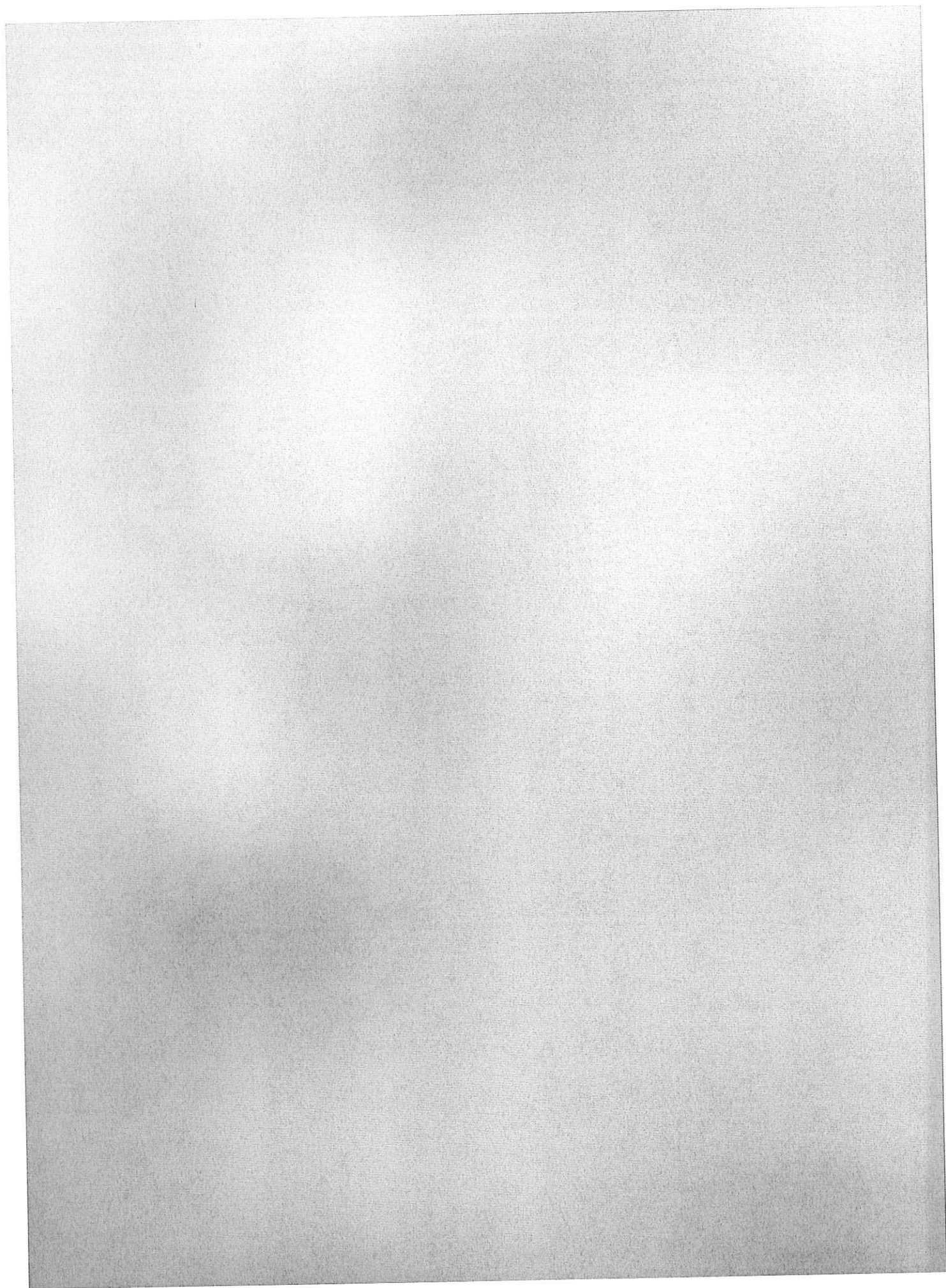
**Phone:** [908-233-9317](tel:908-233-9317)

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# Hillcrest North Monthly Report

December 23th, 2022

## Principal's Message

The month of December was an exciting time at Hillcrest Academy North. Students and staff have enjoyed both the academics in the classroom as well as getting ready to celebrate the holiday season. We, as a school community, decorated the school with Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa ornaments and inspirational messages, and have planned our first incentive trip for the end of next week to celebrate the holidays together!



## Monthly Data

Enrollment- 86

New Students- 0

Intakes- 0

Disenrollment- 0

Fire Drill- 12/13/22

Medical Emergency- Shelter-in-Place- 12/15/22

## Student of the Month

Dasani Marie Brown is our student of the month at Hillcrest Academy North. Dasani has used her strong work-ethic, positive attitude and skill at engaging in meaningful classroom discussions to

earn an "A" average across all of her classes. She serves as a role model for other students in the school and is an asset to our learning community.



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## *Teacher Spotlight*



### **Ms. Miller History Teacher**

Ms. Miller went to Fairleigh Dickinson University and majored in History and Education. Ms. Miller has worked for the UCESC school district for six years: four years as a paraprofessional at Westlake, one year as a social studies teacher at LMA, and now it is her second year here at HAN. Ms. Miller did competitive dance in high school, and her favorite thing about working at HAN is the students!

## Mr. Mojovich

In the month of December, Mr. Mojovich's Health Classes have discussed an array of topics that are essential in everyday life. Some of the topics that were taught and discussed have been "Anxiety/Mental Disorders and Depression," "Nutrients for Every Day Wellness," and "Decision Making and Goal Setting." The students were very interested and receptive about those topics! Students created Google Slide Presentations about Phobias and even presented them!

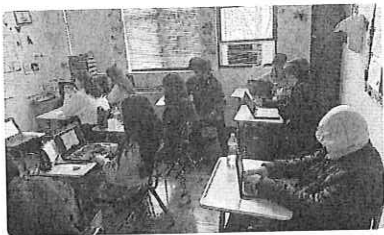
## Phobia Project

## Mr. Kaplan

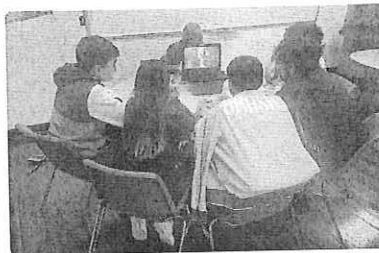
December was very exciting for Hillcrest Academy North, specifically the Social Studies department. United States History 2 was finishing up the WWI unit when it was announced that there would be a school-wide holiday door decoration contest. When hearing this, I assumed the students of my history class would create a basic holiday visual. However, I was proven wrong almost immediately. My students decided to create a holiday door based on WWI. With very little guidance, students created a scene based on the war. They created a snowman that was meant to represent the Archduke of the Austria-Hungarian Empire (Franz Ferdinand - they called him Franz Ferdinsnow man). They then proceeded to have the Independence movement that rebelled against Austria-Hungary represented by holiday elves. The background was filled with explosions, snowflakes, and snow-man's land (a play on words for "no man's land.") The students showed true mastery in their ability to take a concept and synthesize it into one that was completely unique. It truly was an exciting month here at Hillcrest Academy North.



## December at HAN



**Students Working Hard  
on Their Credit  
Retrievals!**



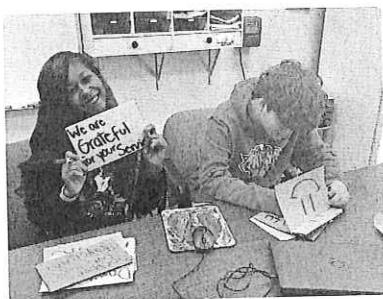
**Students Watching the  
World Cup**



**Students Decorating the  
Hallways for the Holidays**



## Theme of the Month: Kindness and Patience



### Students Making Cards for the Troops

The theme for the month of December is Kindness and Patience. Students made cards for the Troops to show their kindness and appreciation.



### Celebrating our Principal's Birthday!

Ms. Di Carlo ordered a yummy birthday cake from Bovella's bakery to celebrate Mr. Marquet's birthday! Mr. Marquet is always showing patience and kindness towards staff and students, so it's only fair for us to give that back to him.



### Students' Gift for Mr. Marquet

With the help of our art teacher Ms. Picciano, and our paraprofessional Ms. Rivas, students created this beautiful present for Mr. Marquet out of the kindness of their hearts!

The leaves on the tree branches are individual students' thumbprints and students went ahead and wrote meaningful messages to Mr. Marquet.

## School in the Community



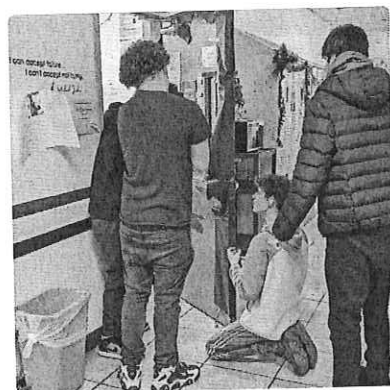
### Bowling Trip!

Students having fun during our field trip at Jersey Lanes!



### Ugly Sweater Day!

Some of our staff showing off their ugly sweaters!



### Door Decorating!

Students working hard on decorating their homeroom doors for the holidays while gaining community service!

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## About us

Hillcrest Academy North assists students from the Elizabeth Public School District in reaching their full potential by providing an alternative to the traditional high school setting. We offer smaller class sizes with a rigorous and challenging high school curriculum that is aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and prepares students for college and career. Our goal is to provide a safe, supportive, and empowering school environment that fosters lifelong learning, mutual respect, creativity, and the joy of learning, with an effective, caring, innovative staff, in partnership with home and the community.



**John Marquet**

John is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

# Hillcrest Academy South Campus

December, 2022



## **Dr. Balsamello's Message**

Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) staff and students are excited to have moved back to 1571 Lamberts Mill Road over the Christmas/ winter break. It has been a long road since the 1571 location was destroyed in Tropical Storm Ida that included extended remote learning then moving into a renovated department store. Staff and students rose to the task by making

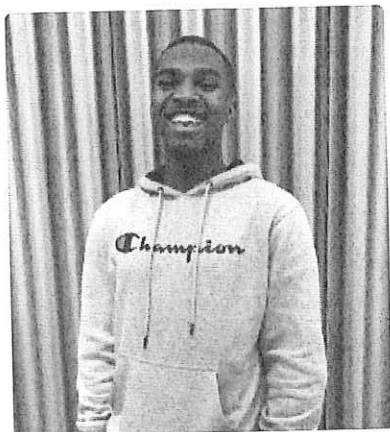
the best of the situation over the past year and a half. Stay tuned for the next newsletter when we will highlight this transition.

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## **December Data**

1. Enrollment-81
  2. New Students-8
  3. Intakes-6
  4. Disenrollments-1
  5. Fire Drill-12/5/22
  6. Other Drill (specify type)-12/15/22 Shelter-in-Place
-





### November Student of the Month

Darryl C. is a former state champion boxer from Elizabeth NJ. He always tries to focus to stay up to date on work and loves helping others in need. Our Student of the Month learned to cook with an interest in opening his own restaurant in the future and plans on going to trade school to further his education.



### Teacher Spotlight

Ms. Flores has been with the Commission for the past 12 years and is currently teaching Spanish I and Spanish II here at HAS. She is a native speaker from Ecuador and has been living in the United States for 30 years. During that time, Ms. Flores earned a Masters Degree from Kean University, was awarded Outstanding Student Teacher from both Kean and the State of NJ, and received Teacher of the Year for one of her many years with the Commission.



### December Student of the Month

Emely F. is our Student of the Month for December. Her nationality is Argentinian and Italian, so it came as no surprise when she showed up to school so proud that her team won the World Cup! Before moving to NJ, she lived in NY for 10 years; specifically in the Bronx and Queens. This is Emely's first year in HAS and she has already made herself at home, earning her place on the 1st marking period's honor roll! In her spare time, she likes playing volleyball and her zodiac sign is Cancer.

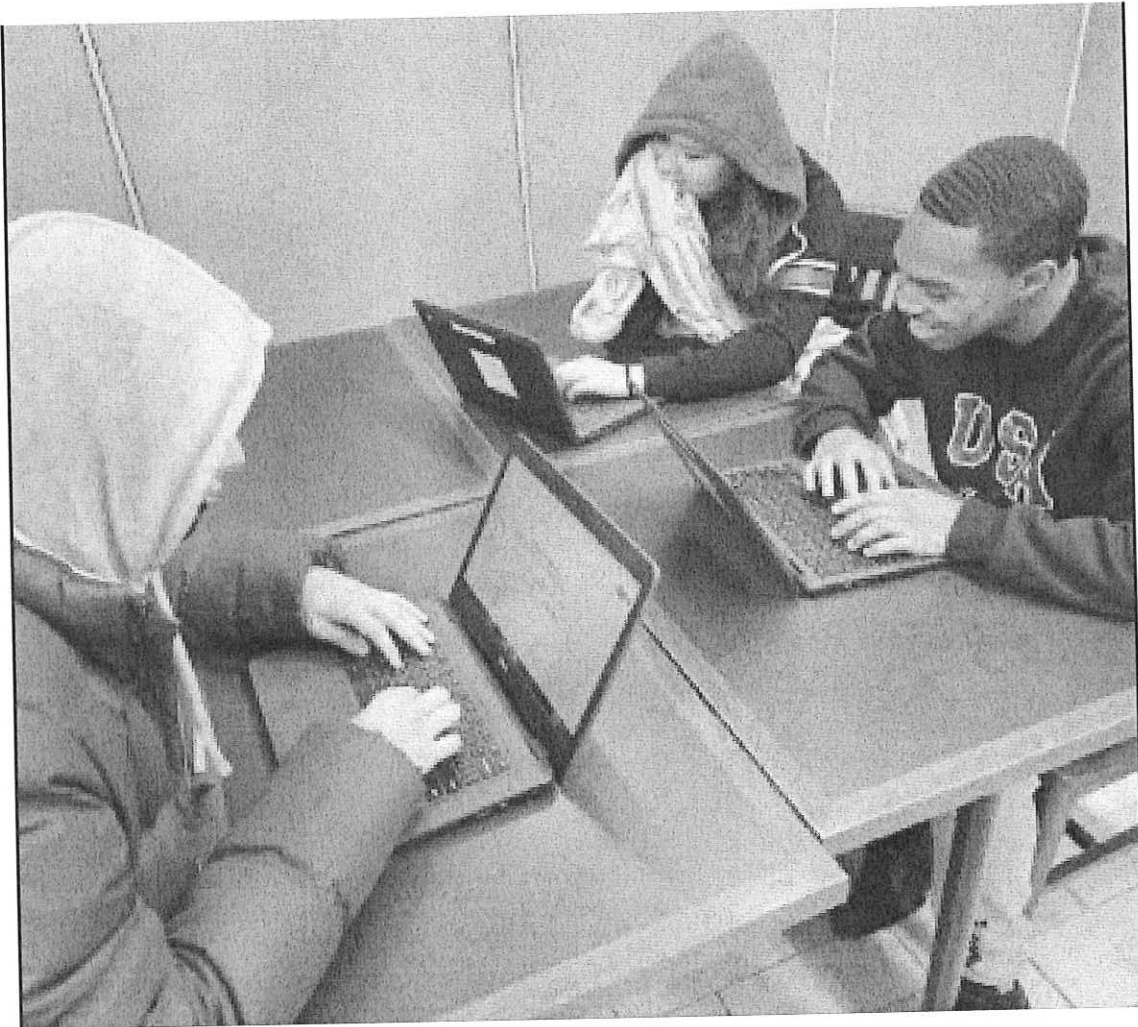
## Classroom Spotlights

### Ms. Vlastaras' Classroom

Students in the English classes have been practicing annotating, identifying key concepts, and reflecting on informational texts on the topic of intelligence. Using the short story *Flowers for Algernon* as the anchor text of the unit, students have learned about IQ, Intellectual Disabilities, and argued for or against the use of animals in scientific experiments. Students read about and reflected on the importance of having a growth mindset, and developed a list of strategies that will help them succeed in high school, college, and beyond. After learning about Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, they determined what type of intelligence is their strongest, and will use that information to create a project to showcase their particular type of intelligence. In Creative Writing, students are exploring different types of writing and practicing writing their own pieces from reviews of their favorite foods and artists to original



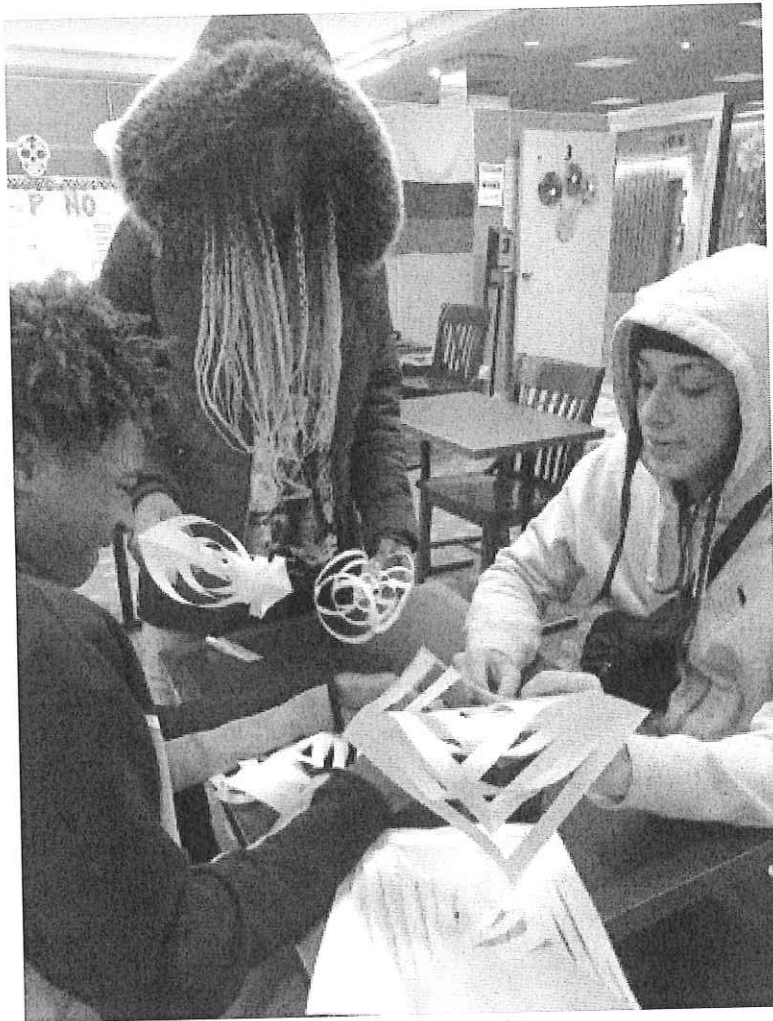
short stories. After reading *The House on Mango Street*, students developed their own vignettes based on life experiences that helped them grow up and learn more about themselves.



### Ms Flores' Classroom

This month students have been working on the unit "*La Vida Escolar y Las Tradiciones*" in Spanish class. Students distinguished the similarities and differences between the patterns of celebrations of the target culture related to activities, holidays, and celebrations of the local culture in different Spanish countries. This unit fits precisely in the social studies component of high school standards, where students are exposed to different experiences, traditions, and lifestyles of other people around the world with "*Las Posadas*". Moving forward, students will research different Holidays around the world, which exposes them to a variety of cultures and traditions in other countries (as well as their own). These experiences help the students identify similarities and differences, so they can grow a deeper level of appreciation and respect for others. They learn about these holidays both by researching a specific holiday and presenting it to the class.





## December Happenings



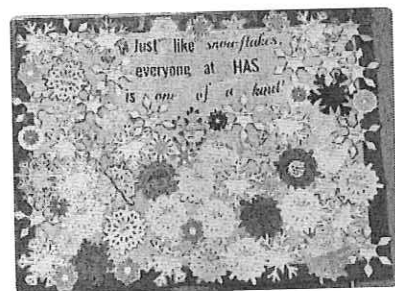
### Ms Flores' Flurries

Students created snowflakes after learning about traditions and discussing what traditions they celebrate during the holiday season.



### Ms. Ferrari's Flag Contest

In Ms. Ferrari's Geometry classes, students used what they learned about symmetry to create geometric flags of HAS.



### Everyone is like a snowflake...

Students from Ms. V's class cut out snowflakes filled out by the entire student body about what makes them unique in celebration of diversity!



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## Month of Kindness



**Cocoa for a Cause**



**Making Cards for Veterans**



**Frosty's Friends**

During December, the HAS Random Acts of Kindness committee held both the "Cocoa for a Cause" and "Frosty Friend's" fundraisers to support the random acts of kindness performed for our community partners: Connor's Crew, Emmanuel Cancer Foundation, Memorial Veterans Home, Runnells Long Term Care, Children's Specialized Hospital and Frosty's Friends/Casa of Union County. It is our sincere hope that these small acts will provide them joy and happiness this holiday season!

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## In the Community



**Incentive Trips**



**World Cup**



**Spirit Fridays**

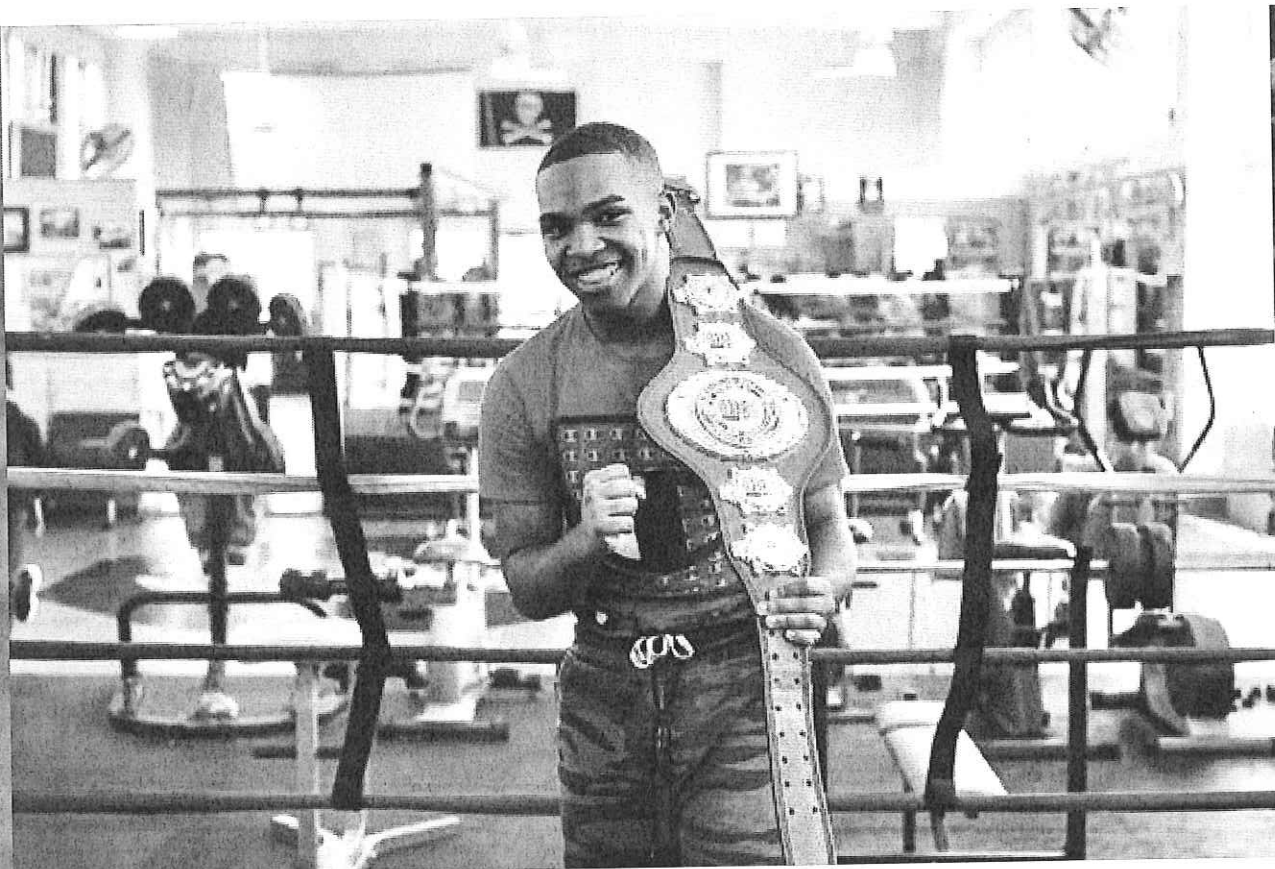
Ms. Gilchrist, Hillcrest Academy South Social Worker, has continued counseling and teaching SEL to all the students. She has integrated the monthly SEL theme of Kindness and Patience into her weekly SEL sessions. In anticipation of the end of year Vision Board project, the students discussed how Patience and Kindness relate to their future plans. The Social Worker also has continued to facilitate "School Spirit Fridays" to encourage students to attend school and participate in the group activity. For instance, "The 5 days of Christmas/ Winter Holidays" includes playful themes. Celebratory events this month included a World Cup viewing incentive, Honor Roll breakfast and Pizza Party celebrating the end of our time at our temporary location.

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## Our Students In and Out of School

### Rollin' with the Punches

Darryl C. joined a boxing gym at the age of twelve years old. His father helped him find a gym in Elizabeth to become an outlet to keep him off the streets. Before Covid, Darryl trained at the Elizabeth Rec, to soon begin his career as a boxer. With his old team, he fought in the Silver Gloves Championship to become the Silver Glove State Champion. Being ranked first in New Jersey, he and his team decided to join the Junior Olympics. However, due to the start of Covid and quarantining, the event shut down and boxing stopped for months. In December of 2021, Darryl joins a new gym, Zilla Boxing Club, which he currently trains and competes. For the off season workout, he needs to complete 500 push ups, 500 jump squats, 700 shoulder presses and 50 pull ups to stay in condition for boxing matches, followed by an hour of boxing training and sparring or running a total of 5 miles. For Darryl, boxing is more than just a sport, as the friends he's made along the way ended up being closer than family as they all train together, learn together, and supper each other through their careers. Darryl is looking to turn professional at 19 as his coaches have helped him develop an old school, rhythmic fighter style.



### About Us

Hillcrest Academy South is an alternative high school for students from the Elizabeth Public Schools. Students are referred to HAS by their Elizabeth Academy guidance counselor and administration for an interview at HAS. We provide a small educational learning setting with opportunities to make up courses through our Credit Retrieval Program in a caring environment in order to meet Elizabeth's graduation requirements.

**Website:** [www.ucesc.org](http://www.ucesc.org)

**Instagram:** [ucesc\\_has](#)

**Facebook:** [Hillcrest Academy South](#)

**Location:** [1571 Lamberts Mill Road, Westfield, NJ, USA](#)

**Phone:** [908-233-9317](tel:908-233-9317)

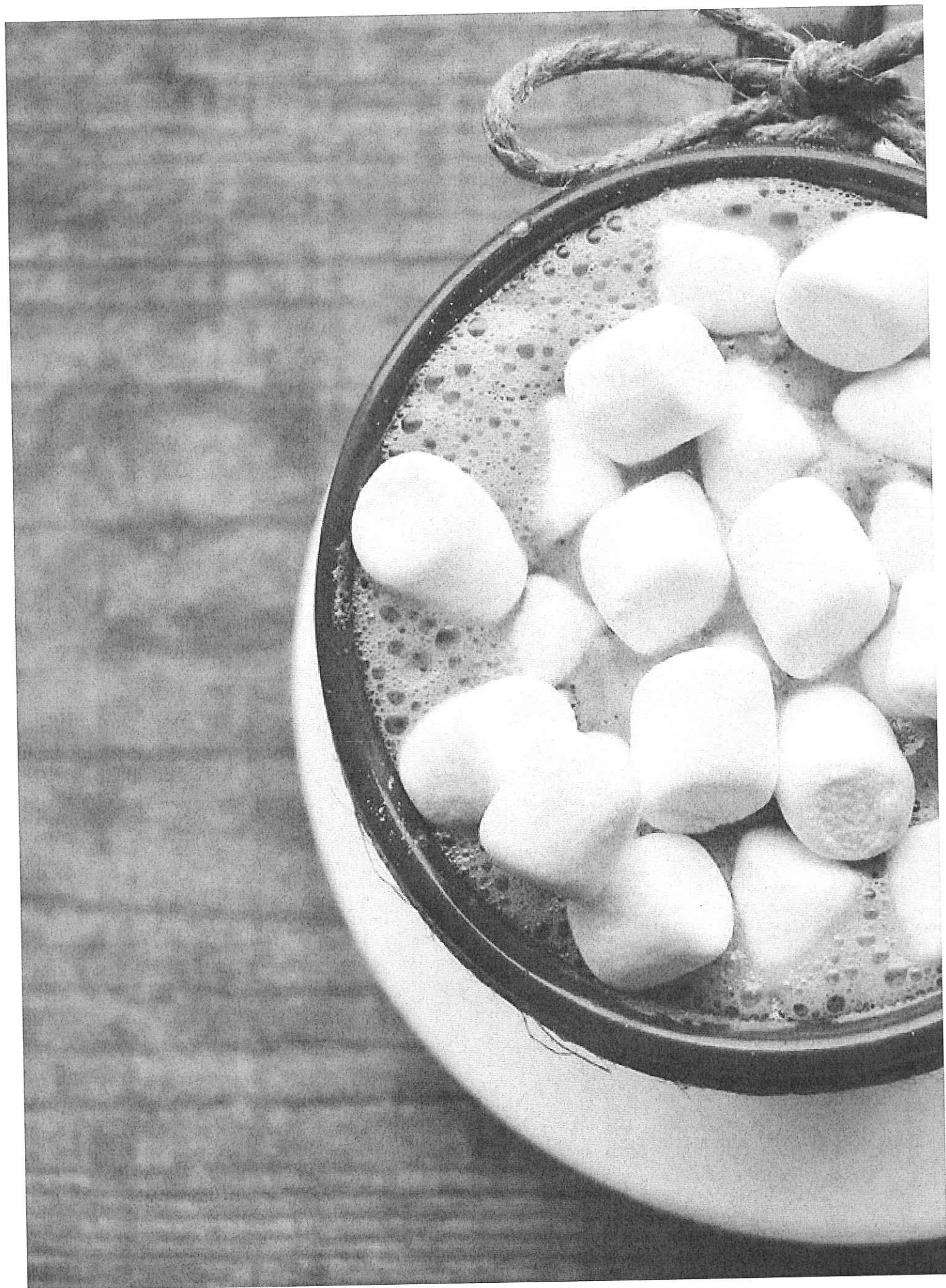
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# LMA December Monthly Report 2022

December 23th 2022

## Principal's Message

My name is Reed Leibfried, the Principal of Lamberts Mill Academy. The LMA school community is extremely excited and proud to introduce our inaugural LMA School Newsletter! Our staff continues to work diligently to create a positive school culture, and our hope is that this is reflected in this newsletter! Please enjoy the learning about our program and joining us in celebrating the outstanding achievements of both our students and staff!



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## Monthly Data

Enrollment - 41  
Acceptances - 2  
New Students - 2  
Student Intakes - 3  
Referrals - 3  
Disenrollments - 1  
Fire Drill - 1 (12/5/2022)  
EM (Shelter in Place) - 1 (12/15/2022)

## LMA Student of the Month December 2022

### Niomi Mendez

The Lamberts Mill Academy Student of the Month for December is Niomi Mendez. Niomi has started at the LMA main campus this past September, and has learned how to be a consistent student with all her academic classes. Niomi was voted Student of the Month by all LMA staff. Not only has Niomi proven to be responsible with her academic classes, but she also has taken on

leadership roles in the classrooms by helping her peers out both with academics and technology. LMA is proud of Niomi for her consistent effort, respect towards peers and staff, and overall responsibility.



## *Teacher Spotlight*

### **Mr. Ryan Peters - PE/Health**

1. Has worked for the Commission for over 12 years.
2. Was a 3-sport athlete in high school playing football, wrestling, and lacrosse where he was team captain and varsity gold letter winner his senior year.
3. Volunteer coaches about 20 hours a week during football and lacrosse season for his son's teams.
4. Goes to Disney every year with his family because we are HUGE fans.
5. Worked security for 12 years for the New Jersey Devils and over 300 concerts/shows.



## *Classroom Spotlights*



### **Mr. Bell's Career Explorations**

Mr. Bell's Career Explorations classes have been reading, and learning about how different businesses and industries have been evolving and progressing to keep up with consumer needs. Students have been learning about many different careers, and markets along with what type of credentials



### **Ms Finver's Class Gives Back**

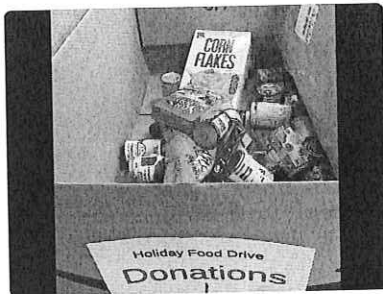
Ms Finver's ELA classes have been working on giving back, especially for the month of December. ELA classes have been working with Ms Finver in communicating with, Ryan's Case for Smiles. Students have



different jobs. In addition to exploring and visiting different worksites including: K-9 resort, and Westfield Food Pantry; the LMA Post Graduate have started the course work in order to be ServSafe Food Handler certified to eventually work with Maschio's Food Services at the 1571 Main Campus.

need, along with creating custom pillow cases to make feel children more comfortable, and reduce the stress of a traumatic event, or illness these children are facing. In addition to LMA students helping for a great cause, they have also been benefitting from the experience of sewing the cases as it provides them an opportunity to focus hands on, and to clear their minds of their own external stressors.

## *Month at School*



**LMA Holiday Food Drive**



**LMA Post Graduates visiting K-9 Resort learning about job opportunities in Fanwood, NJ.**



**LMA Students getting the L&T facility more festive.**

***Theme of the Month - Patience/Kindness (Holidays Around the World)***



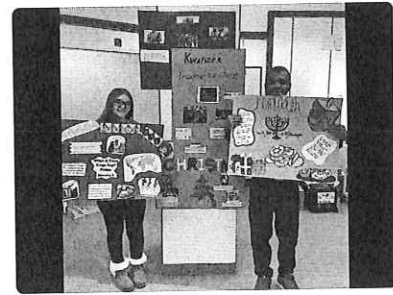
### Kindness

Students at LMA have been displaying kindness both inside and outside of the school. Teaming up with Westfield Food Pantry, LMA students have been learning about all the operations of the food pantry with retired UCESC teacher, Mr. Convery. Students have been learning about, and displaying acts of kindness as they work with food pantry staff, and understand the importance of giving back to the community for the individuals in need, especially during the holiday season.



### Patience

LMA's December Monthly Community Meeting has allowed all students the opportunity to exercise patience and respect for their fellow peers. Monthly Community Meetings has been reintroduced at LMA since this past September, and students are gradually understanding the importance of community, and supporting one another in LMA's culture. Students eagerly wait Community Meeting to see if they put enough time and effort in their academic courses in order to be eligible to receive an award and community recognition for a specific course.



### Holidays Around the World

LMA students spent the month of December participating in their Life Skills group researching, and learning about different holidays celebrated throughout the world. This monthly project gave students the opportunity to share and research how different holidays are celebrated in different parts of the world, and different cultures. Once students finished the research, they spent time creating informative posters of the learned holidays, and what regions of the world celebrated them. Students were able to present their posters to their peers and staff, and have a discussion about the different holidays.

## School in the Community

1. Mr. Bell and our Post Graduate students continued to participate by helping the local food bank.
2. Assemblies - Community Meetings spotlighting student of the month (LMA overall) as well as student of the month in each classroom.
3. Honor Roll Breakfast for the students achieving this accomplishment. LMA staff served breakfast to our students.
4. Winter Holiday Extravaganza! Student and staff activities celebrated the holiday season throughout the week prior to break.

## LMA Students Outside of the Classroom

### Interview with Jahzara Dillard of LMA

*Mr. Lopreiato: How did you get involved with theatre?*

Jahzara D: I've been doing theatre since I was younger. I've always had a deep love and passion for theatre and music as a kid. My mother signed me up for a community theatre program nearby when I was 6 years old.



*Mr. Lopreiato: Tell us more about your recent theatre experience?*

Jahzara D: Working on *Annie Jr.* this past Fall at Villager's Theatre in Somerset, NJ was a lot of fun. After casting, we worked on rehearsals for the following 3.5 months so we spent a significant time together.

*Mr. Lopreiato: What do you enjoy the most about being a part of theatre?*

Jahzara D: The first reason I joined theatre is because I love music, and the ability to perform on stage with individuals who share my same passion. I also really enjoy the response, reaction and appreciation from the audience and theatre members after the performance.

*Mr. Lopreiato: Tell us about the character you played in 'Annie Jr.'*

Jahzara D: The character I played was Rooster. It was really fun getting into character for this show, I really had to practice a "Brooklyn accent" along with my British accent. Rooster's character is arrogant, and funny; which I feel I was able to portray. My favorite part about playing Rooster was the interesting costumes.

*Mr. Lopreiato: Do you see yourself continuing theatre after high school?*

Jahzara D: Yes, I definitely plan on pursuing more theatre shows after high school as it's such a positive experience for me.

## About Us

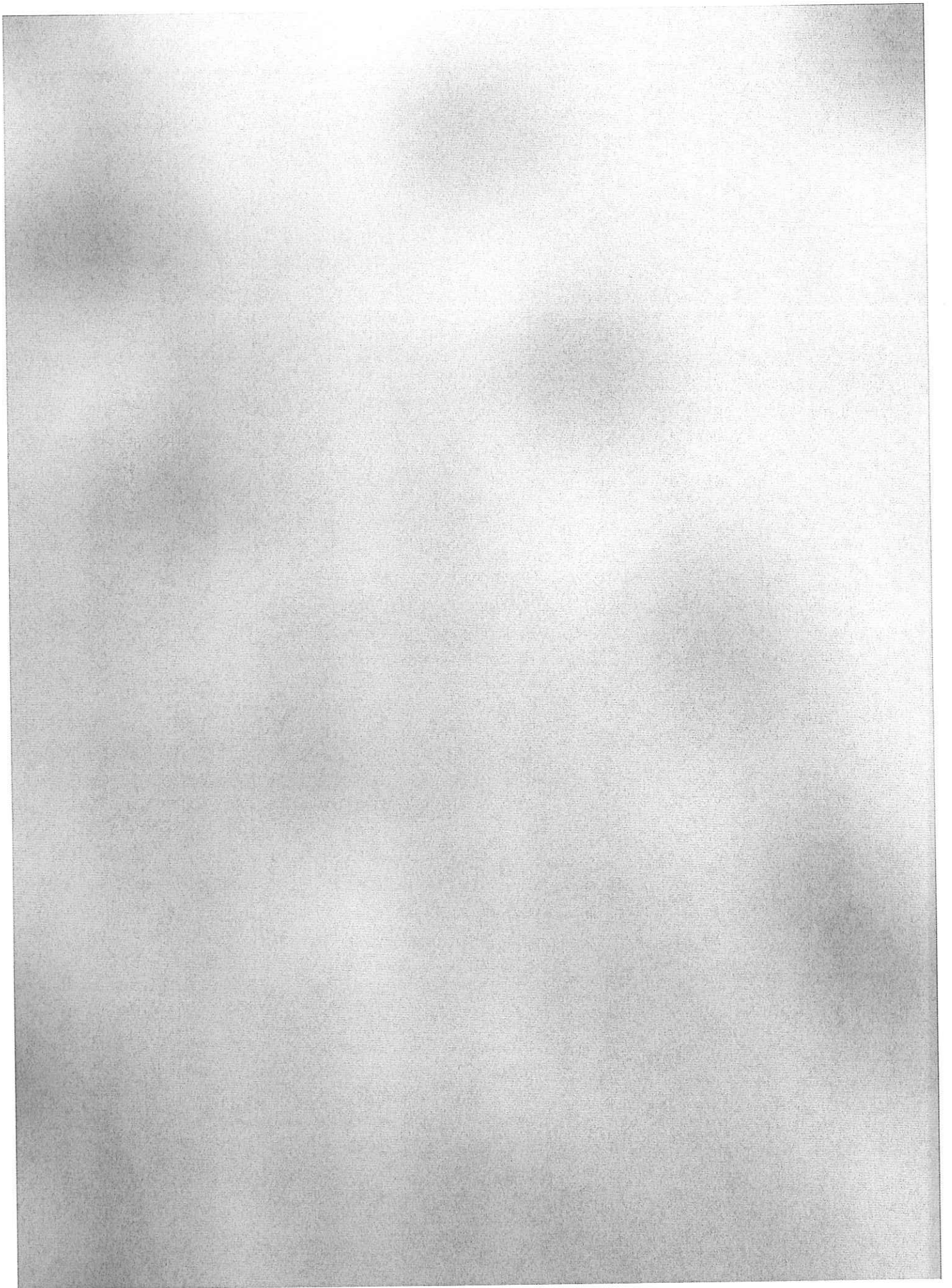
Lamberts Mill Academy is a school within the Union County Educational Services Commission. We are an out of district public school for students with psychiatric disabilities. We continue to partner with Trinitas Hospital to provide clinical therapeutic sessions for our students. Our school community prides itself on our relationships with all stakeholders: students, staff, parents, families and community partnerships. Being a public school, we adhere to all NJDOE assessment and curriculum mandates. Our professional learning community strives to increase student achievement and improve classroom instruction to provide students with the most effective educational, social and emotional learning environment possible.



**LMA Smore**

LMA is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters







# *Westlake's* **MONTHLY REPORT** DEC 2022



## **Principal's Message**

Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and are off to a great start to 2023! Westlake has a lot to be grateful for. We are so excited to announce that we have successfully transitioned back to Westfield, our home building. Not only were staff excited, but the smiles on the students faces showed us they are so happy to be back. We thank Holy Spirit for all of their kindness, support and lifelong community friends that we made by being there. The Community of Holy Spirit Parishioners bought holiday gifts for

support of our students at Westlake.

During the month of December, Westlake continued to learn and have students strive through a focus on highly engaging and hands on academics. Students also worked on Social/Emotional Learning related to kindness and patience. This month's theme was Holidays Around the World and through these themes, students were able to gain knowledge working on skills such as; listening, following directions and learning about how others celebrate their holidays.

Students also spent time on Community based trips going to the Cranford Movie Theater, Shoprite, Dollar Tree, the playground at Crossroads, the recycling center and Garwood Lanes. Our Work Based Learning Program enabled students to go out to work in the Community where students worked at Olive Garden, Walgreens and Shoprite.

All the best,

Claudine Tantillo  
Principal

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### December Data

Enrollment - 59  
Acceptances - 1  
New Students - 0  
Intakes - 4  
Referrals - 6  
Disenrollment - 0  
Fire Drill - 12/12/22  
Lock Down (2 of 2) - 12/8/22  
Shelter-in-Place - 12/15/22 - Due to Student Behavior

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### Westlake's December Spotlights!



**Student of the Month**





## Principal's Award Recipient



### Teacher Spotlight

What is Mrs. Fernandez most proud of?

"Our Westlake Dance Team! We meet twice a week to collaborate, create, and practice dance routines that we perform on school holiday events. Everyone is welcomed no matter their ability or behavior level. My only rules are that you have fun and are kind. I am proud that kids take an active role in creating the dances and helping others learn the dances. I also love seeing how much fun they have and how proud they are of themselves."



### Paraprofessional Spotlight

Meet Mr. Barr! His favorite activity is hanging out with his son! His favorite song is Charley Crockett- "I'm Just A Clown". Mr. Barr's favorite movie is Despicable Me. We are grateful for his fantastic sense of humor and appreciate how dependable he is!



### Therapist Spotlight

Why did Mrs. Rocha choose Occupational Therapy?

"It is such a rewarding profession. You get to channel your creativity in ways that are helpful to our student population but also fun! I am working on transitional/life skills with students who are graduating this year. It's nice to know that what we are working on in OT are skills they will be using/will be helpful to them once they graduate Westlake!"

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## Ms. Shaw's Classroom

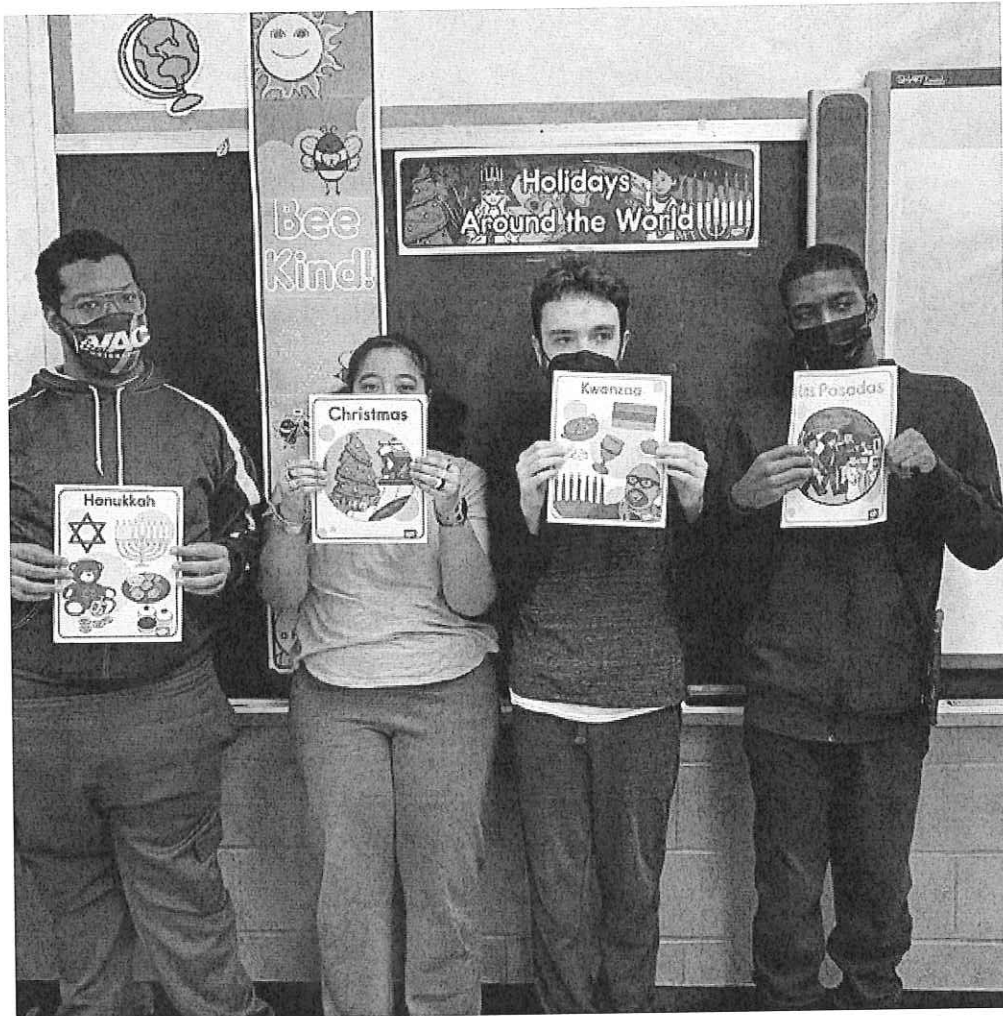
### Kindness and Patience

By celebrating the month of kindness, the students read various stories about kindness (A Spot of Kindness, Be Kind, Kindness is my superpower, and more). The students learned about feelings and emotions, understand what it means to be kind and how to express kindness to ourselves and others.



### Community Based Instruction

The students went on a virtual trip to the grocery store and worked on counting money as well as counting and retrieving items from the shopping list. During the Target trip, the students were given a \$10.00 budget and worked on how to stay on the budget by rounding up each item to stay under budget.



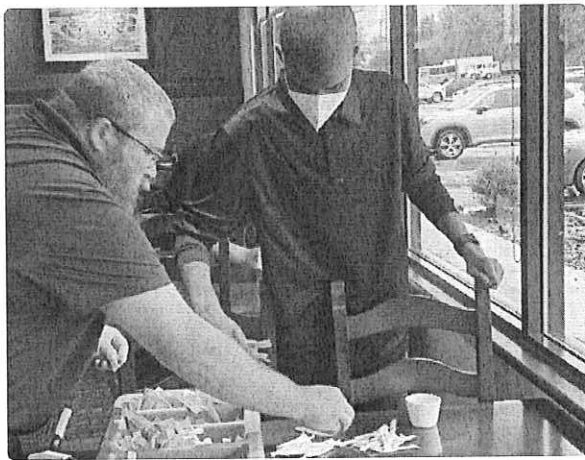
Ms. Swisher's Classroom

### Work Based Learning

Students have requested job applications for the movie theater positions. They have been working on interview skills within their classrooms. When we return to our school in January I will be sitting with students to complete their interview and select students for their Work Based Learning positions.

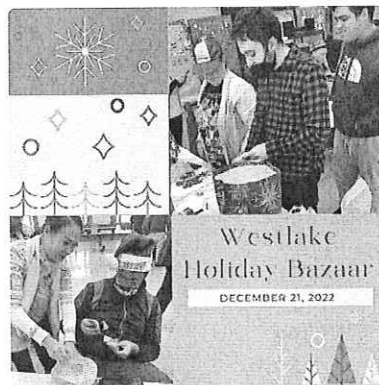
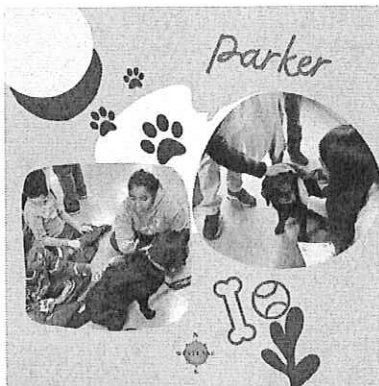
We continue to complete our in school work readiness activities. These activities include collecting the breakfast and lunch counts daily, completing supply and PPE orders, collecting pizza orders from staff, and distributing materials as needed.

Our external WBL sites are continuing to be successful. Students are currently working at Olive Garden, Walgreens, Westlake School, and ShopRite. I review their progress each week with the students and ask them to state one thing they are successful with and one thing they feel they could improve upon.



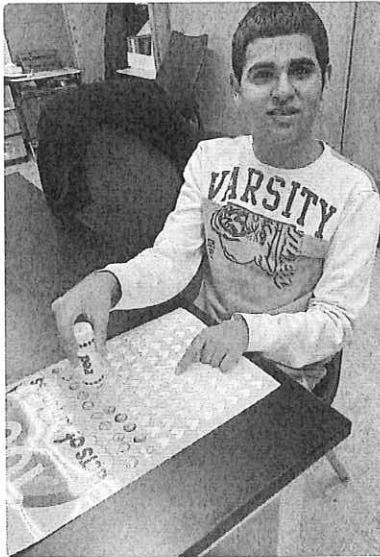
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## December at Westlake!





**"Kindness is sharing the best parts of our hearts with the ones around us."**



Mrs. Schiumo's class had a Kindness Challenge! They marked each act on their 100 Acts of Kindness poster. Their goal was reached in no time!

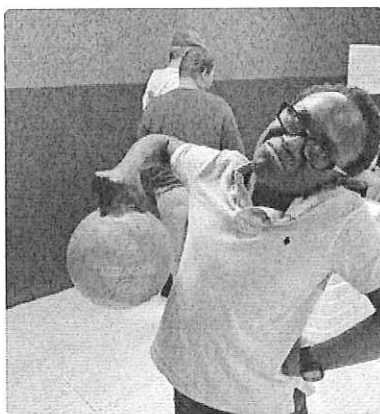


Kindness with holiday spirit!  
Mrs. Roble's class made their own Kind-deer.



Mrs. Palmer captured a wonderful candid act of kindness.

## **Out and About!**

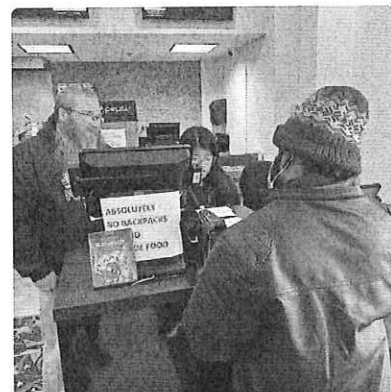


### **Mrs. Convery's class bowling**

"Bowling was a total success!  
Couldn't have been a better  
day" - Mr. McClay



### **Students go to the movies!**



### **Mrs. Palmer's class ran the ticket booth!**

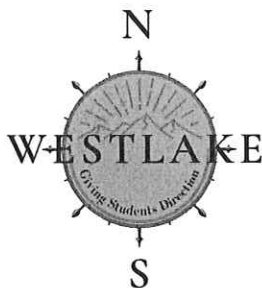
## Our Students In and Out of School

### Mrs. Palmer's Class Goes to Candyland!

Candy was sold at the board meeting, at the Commission, and we had an order for 150 pretzels that were picked up yesterday. The students have gone to Candyland Crafts and decorated cup cakes. Since we do so much work for them, each student was able to decorate 6 cupcakes. The students love that trip and can't wait to go again. We went to Shoprite twice this month and we will go to the movies on Monday. The students are also getting ready for another sale next week.



Visit us on Instagram!



### Contact Us

Website: [www.ucesc.org/schools/westlake\\_school](http://www.ucesc.org/schools/westlake_school)

Location: [1571 Lamberts Mill Rd, Westfield, NJ, USA](#)

Phone: [908-232-4181](tel:908-232-4181)



**Robert Peneno**

Robert is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



# The Work Readiness Academy

Monthly Report - December 2022



## Director's Message

Dear WRA Families,

Happy New Year!

I hope you all enjoyed the winter break and found time to celebrate the holiday season with loved ones and other friends.

We are looking forward to seeing what 2023 brings, including new internship experiences and a new home for the WRA!

Moving forward we will be sending out one official newsletter at the completion of each month. Other important updates will still be sent out via email.

Here is our recap of some highlights from the month of December.

Josh Bornstein

Director at the UCESC Work Readiness Academy

## December Data

Enrollment as of Jan 3, 2023

Actual: 27

Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 0

Referrals: 10

Intakes Scheduled: 7 (Jan & Feb '23)

Accepted:

December 9 - Fire Drill





### WRA Student of the Month

Our Student of the Month for December is Alex Mclean! Alex has demonstrated growth in the area of accepting and applying feedback while at his Work-Based Learning Experiences. Congratulations Alex!



### Staff Spotlight

**Name:** Elizabeth "Betsy" Whitehead

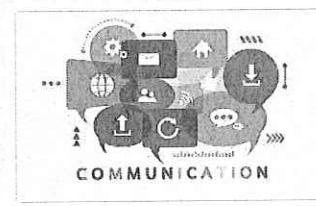
**Position:** Paraprofessional

**Years with UCESC:** 16

**Interests/Hobbies:** Hiking, Camping & Cooking on an Open Fire.

**Quote to Live By:** "It is what it is."

**Something Most People Wouldn't Know About Me:** I sing in a semi-professional Group called Cantabile Chamber Chorale.



### Employability Skill of the Month

Communication skills are important to everyone - they are how we give and receive information and convey our ideas and opinions with those around us.



### The Work Readiness Academy is Moving!

The new home for the Work Readiness Academy will be located inside what was formerly the Holy Spirit School building located at 970 Suburban Road in Union, NJ.

We will be moving the weekend of January 14-15. The district will be closed on Monday, January 16th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. We will also now be closing the program on Tuesday, January 17th to students, so that our staff will have one full day to get acclimated to the new environment, including emergency procedures. This also means that Tuesday, January 3rd will now be a regular school day for the Work Readiness Academy.

The new space is approximately 10-12 minutes from our current location in Westfield. This move will provide our program with more space to support additional programming and increased enrollment. For several years we have had a waiting list for the program. We are excited to be able to offer more students from around Union County the opportunity to join the WRA to help prepare them for a life of work and independence. Additionally, the new space will feature the following enhancements for our students:

- Larger classrooms to accommodate our adult-sized students.
- A "Zen" room that will serve as both a recreational "break room" space and a room to use in the event a student needs some quiet time away from class.
- A large multi-purpose room with a gymnasium floor and stage that we will use for fitness class, yoga, lunch, community meeting, and other special events.
- A larger, expanded kitchen space to support our food safety & independent cooking skills cycle class.
- Separate, dedicated bathrooms for both male and female students.

We hope to schedule an "Open House" for parents in February. Stay tuned for more details.

Finally, we are also sharing this information with your school district case manager and the respective transportation departments and contracts so they are aware of the change in location and dates. Some routes may experience an increase in travel time, while others may see the route time decrease.

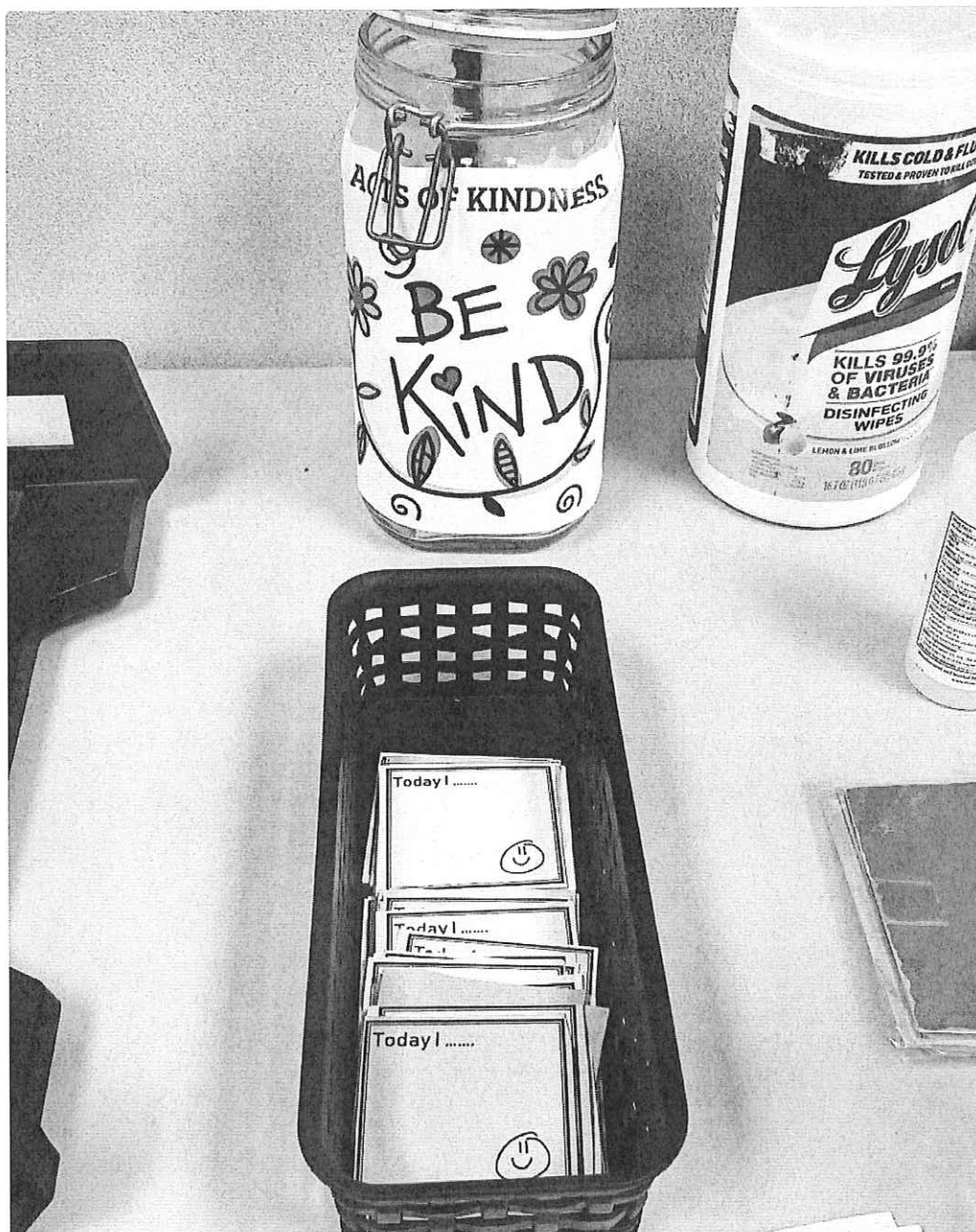
## December Pictures from our Work-Based Learning Experiences

Click on each picture to enlarge and see more information!





## Month of Kindness at the WRA



## WRA Students in the News...

WRA Student **Alejandro Colon** joined the **Celebration Singers** "Hope for the Season" Winter Concert on December 16th and 17th at Saint Michael's Church in Cranford. The Celebration Singers are multi-generational ambassadors of song, drawing music from a breadth of genres and cultures. Congratulations Alejandro!



## The Work Readiness Academy

📍 45 Cardinal Drive, Westfield, NJ...

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[Click Here to Visit the WRA on Instagram!](#)