

# The Work Readiness Academy

April 2023 Monthly Report



## Director's Message

Dear Families,

Below is a recap of some highlights from the month of April at the Work Readiness Academy. Other important updates will still be sent out via email or letters home with your child.

The Work Readiness Academy is dedicated to providing your child with an excellent educational experience. In order to ensure our school is meeting your needs and to identify areas where we could potentially address unmet needs, we have developed a feedback survey. We would greatly appreciate you taking 10-15 minutes of your time to provide us with your valuable insights. Your input will be vital as we ensure that we continue to provide the services that make us strong and work to improve in areas that need our attention.

Thank you to those who have already completed the survey. If you have not yet done so, you can access the survey at the following link:

<https://forms.gle/B3wHmCgCWfnHyUfR6>

Thank you for trusting us with your child's education!

Sincerely,

**Josh Bornstein**

Director at the UCESC Work Readiness Academy

**April Data**

## Enrollment as of April 26, 2023

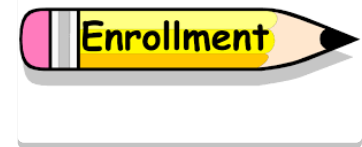
Actual: 27

Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 0

Referrals: 4

Intakes Scheduled: 4 (April '23)

Accepted: 3



**April 21 - Lockdown Drill (Active Shooter/Gymnasium)**

**April 27 - Fire Drill**



## **Save the Date!**

The Work Readiness Academy will be holding its annual **End of Year Awards Ceremony** on **Monday, June 19th from 10-11:30am** in our auditorium at 970 Suburban Road in Union, New Jersey.

**ALL** students will be recognized at this ceremony, including those who will be graduating from our program this year. We would love to have at least one parent in attendance for each of our students.

Please email me if you have any questions at [jbornstein@ucesc.org](mailto:jbornstein@ucesc.org)

We look forward to seeing you then.



## **Student Absences, Late Arrivals & Early Dismissals**

As a reminder, in the event that your child will be absent, arriving late, picked up early, please call our main number at (908) 633-2704 and speak with our secretary Maureen Wakeman. If it is before 8am, please leave a message. You can also email Maureen at [mwakeman@ucesc.org](mailto:mwakeman@ucesc.org)



## WRA Student of the Month

Our Student of the Month for March is Vanenburg Innocent! This is "Van's" first year with the WRA. When he first arrived to our program in September he was understandably shy and nervous. Since that time he has demonstrated noticeable growth. He has been dressing appropriately for his internships each day and is more willing to have regular conversations with students and staff.

Congratulations Van!



## Staff Spotlight

**Name:** Phil Acosta

**Position:** Special Education Teacher & SLE Supervising Teacher

**Years with UCESC:** 4; This is Phil's fourth year with the WRA!

**Interests/Hobbies:** Sports, Video Games, and Spending Time with my wife and kids.

**Quote to Live By:** "Today is a good day for a good day."

**Something Most People Wouldn't Know About Me:** I have completed a half marathon in under two hours.

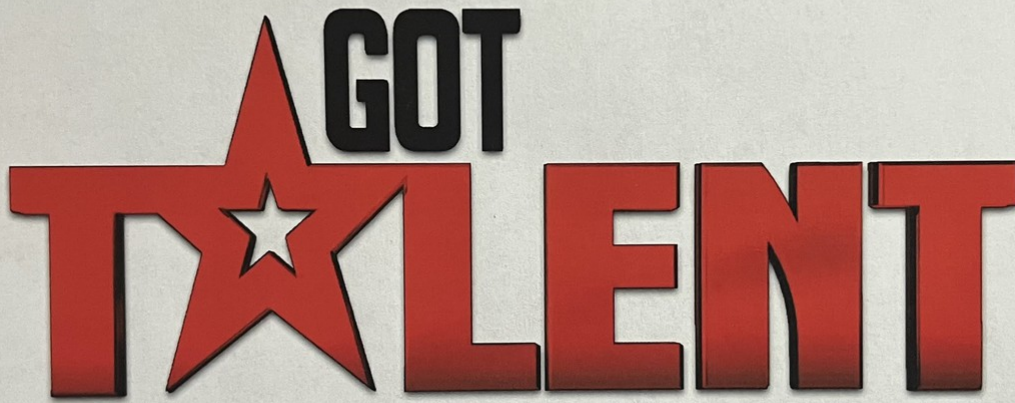


## Community Business Partner Spotlight

This month we spotlight **Hilton Newark Airport Hotel** located at 1170 Spring St in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

This is our 4th year working with the wonderfully supportive team at the Hilton Newark Airport. WRA students get the opportunity to intern with the Food & Beverage department where they re-stock the food pantry, help maintain the employee cafeteria, and tend to the rooftop vegetable garden. Students also intern with Housekeeping where they serve as room attendant helpers learning to reset room including stripping and replacing linens, vacuuming, dusting, and removing and restocking towels.

**WORK READINESS ACADEMY + PROJECT SEARCH**



## **"Got Talent?" Variety Show**

On Friday, May 26th the Work Readiness Academy & Project SEARCH programs will be holding our first ever WRA & Project SEARCH's Got Talent Variety Show!

This is an opportunity for any student or staff member to share an interest or talent with our combined programs. Students and/or staff may collaborate with each other!

### **Some example Acts might include:**

- Sing a song
- Perform a dance routine
- Read a poem
- Play an instrument
- Demonstrate a sports skill
- Tell jokes
- Show a video montage you created
- Act out a scene
- Juggle
- Perform a magic trick

Any student who is not interested in performing, but would like to help out as part of the "crew" that day should email Josh at [jbornstein@ucesc.org](mailto:jbornstein@ucesc.org) or let their homeroom teacher know.

## **Fitness at the WRA**

One of the many benefits of our new building is the expanded space for our students to participate in Fitness class (now held on Friday mornings). Each week, WRA special education teacher Sharlene McQuade, who is also dually certified as a PE & Health Instructor, leads the students in warm up exercises, and then plans fun and engaging team games that keep the students moving and smiling. Fitness class is also an opportunity to help students set personal goals related to their overall physical health and wellness. This is definitely a favorite weekly activity!

Additionally, one Friday per month students get to visit the Strength & Fitness Club in Cranford where they practice learning to use real cardio equipment, nautilus machines, and free weights.









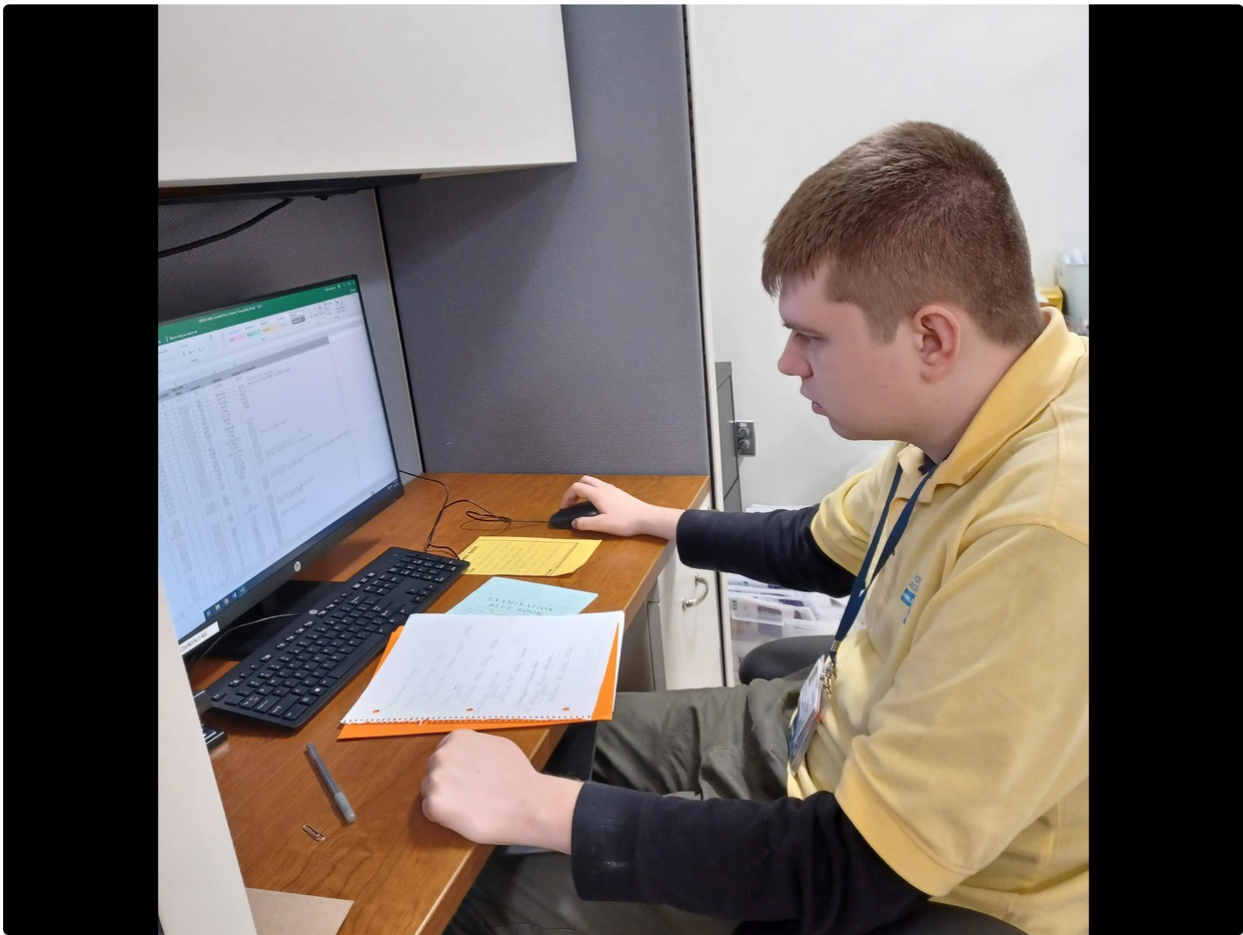
## **Thank you, Maureen!**

On April 26th we celebrated Administrative Support Professionals Day. Thank you to Maureen Wakeman, our school secretary at the WRA for all she does every day to keep the wheels turning! Maureen enjoyed a beautiful bouquet of flowers from our staff. Blue & orange for this lifelong diehard Mets fan. We also treated Maureen to a complimentary takeout lunch!

## **April Pictures from our Work-Based Learning Experiences!**













## About the Work Readiness Academy

The Work Readiness Academy serves students ages 18-21 with disabilities and provides a comprehensive employment training experience that incorporates both classroom-based instruction and community-based work-learning experiences. While in the training classroom, students work cooperatively with similar aged peers to learn critical skills related to employment and socialization. Students also work on career exploration and planning, including the development of a person-centered, post-secondary vision and plan with clear goals and action steps. Program staff remain on-site during the internships to provide and fade support and assistance as needed. Students also participate in field trips focused on career discovery, independent living skills, recreation and independent travel training.

 970 Suburban Road, Union, NJ, ...

 [jbornstein@ucesc.org](mailto:jbornstein@ucesc.org)

 908-633-2704

 [ucesc.org/schools/the\\_work\\_r...](https://ucesc.org/schools/the_work_r...)

[Click here to visit the WRA on Facebook!](#)

[Click here to visit the WRA on Instagram!](#)



# Crossroads Monthly Report

April 2023



## Principal's Message

Spring has sprung here at Crossroads. Even with Spring Break, students have been engaged in a multitude of activities during the month of April. April is autism acceptance month and Crossroads kicked off the month with themed activities that both students and staff were able to participate in. From wearing blue on World Autism Day to tie-dyed/rainbow clothing to highlight Neurodiversity, students and staff were able to bring awareness to our school community.

With the weather turning a bit warmer students have also had the opportunity to spend more time outside. Right before the break our students participated in a spring egg hunt outside on our

playground. This year Crossroads School was awarded a Kids Dig In gardening grant. Many of our classes have already started the process of prepping gardens in anticipation of the growing season. For Arbor Day, we planted a tree gifted to us by the Union County Board of County Commissioners.

I would also like to formally announce the return of the Crossroads School Carnival. This event, sponsored by MLB Residential Lending, will take place on June 1, 2023. A schedule will be sent out in the coming weeks. This event will have food, games, inflatables, and music. Please save the date as we would love for our families/districts to join us as well.

Crossroads School is dedicated to providing students with an excellent educational experience. In order to ensure our school is meeting your needs and to identify areas where we could potentially

address unmet needs, we have developed a feedback survey. We would greatly appreciate you taking 10-15 minutes of your time to provide us with your valuable insights. Your input will be vital as we ensure that we continue to provide the services that make us strong and work to improve in areas that need our attention.

You can access the survey at the following link: [Union County ESC Feedback Survey](#).

## General Information

General Information

### Enrollment as of April 27, 2023

**Actual:** 50

**Changes:** Entered: 0 Exited: 0

**Referrals:** 7

**Intakes Scheduled:** 6

**Accepted:** 0

**Fire Drills:** 4/21/23

**Emergency Drills:** 4/27/23 (Bomb Threat)

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## Upcoming Dates

**May 8, 2023 - May 12, 2023** - Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week

**May 25, 2023** - PTO and Parent Ed/Support Meeting

**May 29, 2023** - School Closed (Memorial Day)

**June 1, 2023** - Crossroads Carnival

**June 7, 2023** - Preschool Stepping Up Ceremony

**June 14, 2023** - 8th Grade Graduation



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## Crossroads Staff and Student Spotlight



## **Student of the Month - Sander**

April's student of the month is Sander. Sander is a happy boy who enjoys most school and classroom activities. Academically, Sander is best known for using photos and objects to match & sort a variety of products. This is a pre-requisite skill necessary to help perform jobs in a workplace, often practiced during middle school prevocational sessions and community-based fieldtrips. Sander continues to strengthen his visual perception skills, demonstrating increased accuracy and requiring less adult prompting. Sander is praised for his emerging independence as well as functional behavior. If he continues to make these positive gains, he will soon be seen working at a local store in your neighborhood. Great job Sander!



## **Certified Staff of the Month - Hannah Amengual - Teacher**

### **1. How long have you been working at the commission?**

I started working at the commission over the summer as a para. I was then hired as a teacher for the regular school year.

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

In school, I was able to work alongside the mens basketball team for Oral Roberts University. I'm really good at math even though I dislike it very much and I only write in cursive.

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

My dream vacation has always been to visit the beaches in Bolivia. I did research on the country in the 6th grade and have wanted to go ever since.

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

My favorite meal is Puerto Rican rice, chuleta (pork chops), and buneulos.

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

My greatest accomplishment so far is this job. I've wanted to teach in this kind of environment since my freshman year of high school. So, 9th grade me is definitely proud.



## **Paraprofessional of the Month - Dallas Benavent - Paraprofessional**

### **1. How long have you been working at the commission?**

I have been working with the commission for 3 years. Working at Crossroads school is very rewarding. Each of the students truly put a smile on my face.

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

I'm a huge sports fanatic and I'm a lefty but bat righty while playing softball.

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

My dream vacation would be visiting Europe with my entire family.

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

This is a really hard question to answer. I love to eat and try new dishes. My favorite meal is probably any type of Spanish or Mediterranean dishes.

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

My greatest accomplishment is earning my master's degree in special education with autism at Kean University. I will be graduating in May. I couldn't have made it this far without my family's support and my colleagues here at Crossroads school.

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## ***Classroom Spotlights***

### **Ms. Peggy's Classroom**

It's been a busy spring season in room 102! April is Autism Acceptance month, and our preschoolers have been celebrating all of the things they can do independently. The students have become self-sufficient in many areas, but we are most excited to recognize them becoming self-reliant in their daily living skills. These achievements took a lot of time and effort from the students, and they deserve to be applauded for these accomplishments! Our class has been immersed in reading [The Very Hungry Caterpillar](#) and its related activities. The preschoolers have

developed skills such as sequencing, matching, colors, counting, and reviewing the days of the week. During arts and crafts, the students made their very own classroom caterpillar! Each student painted a couple of green paper plates, and we hung our caterpillar on the wall. Our caterpillar has been incorporated into our circle time routine during which we practice all of our preschool skills. The most exciting part of this unit is our live butterfly garden. We are watching our caterpillars grow, and can't wait to see them change into butterflies!



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### Mr. Steve's Classroom

Mr. Steve's class in Room 108 is learning about Spring. The students are currently enjoying a multitude of science activities related to the life cycle of a plant. The children are learning vocabulary such as soil, seed, root, stem, leaves, bud, and flower. They are also discussing the importance of sunlight and water. The students can be seen interacting with a diagram daily taking

turns matching their vocabulary words to corresponding pictures posted on the classroom bulletin board. Using additional photos, the children are encouraged to sequence each phase of the life cycle of a plant. An activity they especially enjoy is watching an educational time-lapse video of a seed emerging into a flower from beginning to end. This activity provides the students with evidence that all living things grow and change as they progress through a life cycle. To further strengthen this understanding, Mr. Steve and his staff complete a follow-up activity with the eager learners to create their own Chia Pets! The students use panty hose, soil, and grass seeds to make their own silly characters (see photo). This science experiment is another fun, hands-on learning opportunity for the children to observe the typical changes that occur during plant growth and development. Spring is really blooming in Room 108!

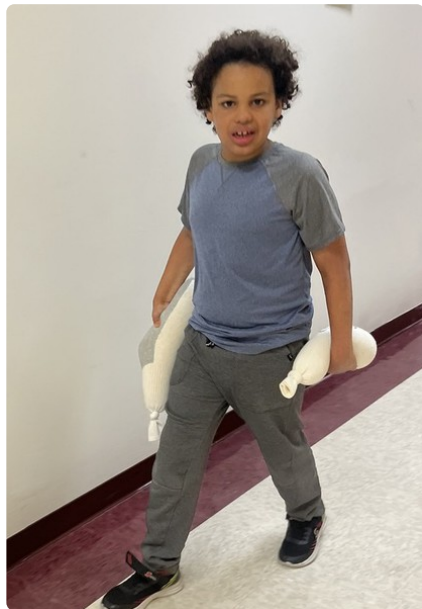






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## *Therapy Spotlight*



**Ms. Dina Brigandi - Occupational Therapist**

April is Occupational Therapy Month! To celebrate this event, the occupational therapy department created a bulletin board with posters highlighting the different skill areas that OTs work on at Crossroads School. Many of the students participated in the OT Month celebrations by completing an “OT Flower” on which each petal contained a picture of one of their favorite OT activities. The “OT Flower” required multiple fine motor and visual motor skills including coloring, cutting with scissors, choosing activities from arrays of 12 and gluing the petals in the correct placement on

the stem. The students did a great job with this project and many of them were able to participate in discussion about what they do in OT.

In keeping with the theme of OT Month, many of the sensory diet activities were taken into the hallway. A weighted ghost bucket was placed at each end of the hallway and the students complete the ghost transfer by carrying 1-2 ghosts down the hallway to toss in the 2nd bucket. This activity is an opportunity for the students to get heavy work and movement between class work to increase body awareness, organization and functional attention. A large figure 8 infinity sign was put on the wall outside the OT room for use by all students. The students can use a car or ball to trace the figure 8. This activity works on shoulder movement and stabilization, crossing midline with both arms and eyes and motor coordination, The Sensory Pathway was re-introduced and used as a motor warm-up prior to OT sessions and to assist with transitions between classrooms.

The focus of OT at Crossroads School is to prep the student's bodies and sensory systems to increase functional attention and participation in the classrooms. Occupational Therapy promotes independence and self-esteem. This is summed up best by the chant that my students say/sign at the end of every session:

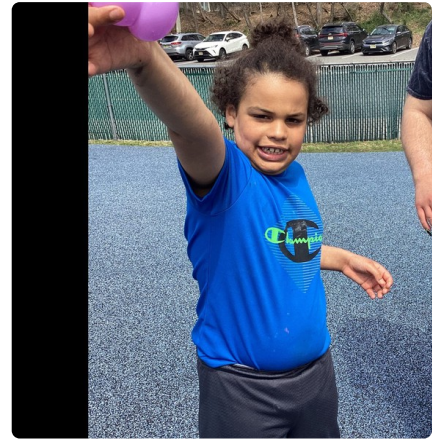
"I am Brave. I am Strong. I am Smart! OT is all Done"

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## *April at Crossroads*



Celebrating Neurodiversity Day by wearing Tie-Dye Clothing



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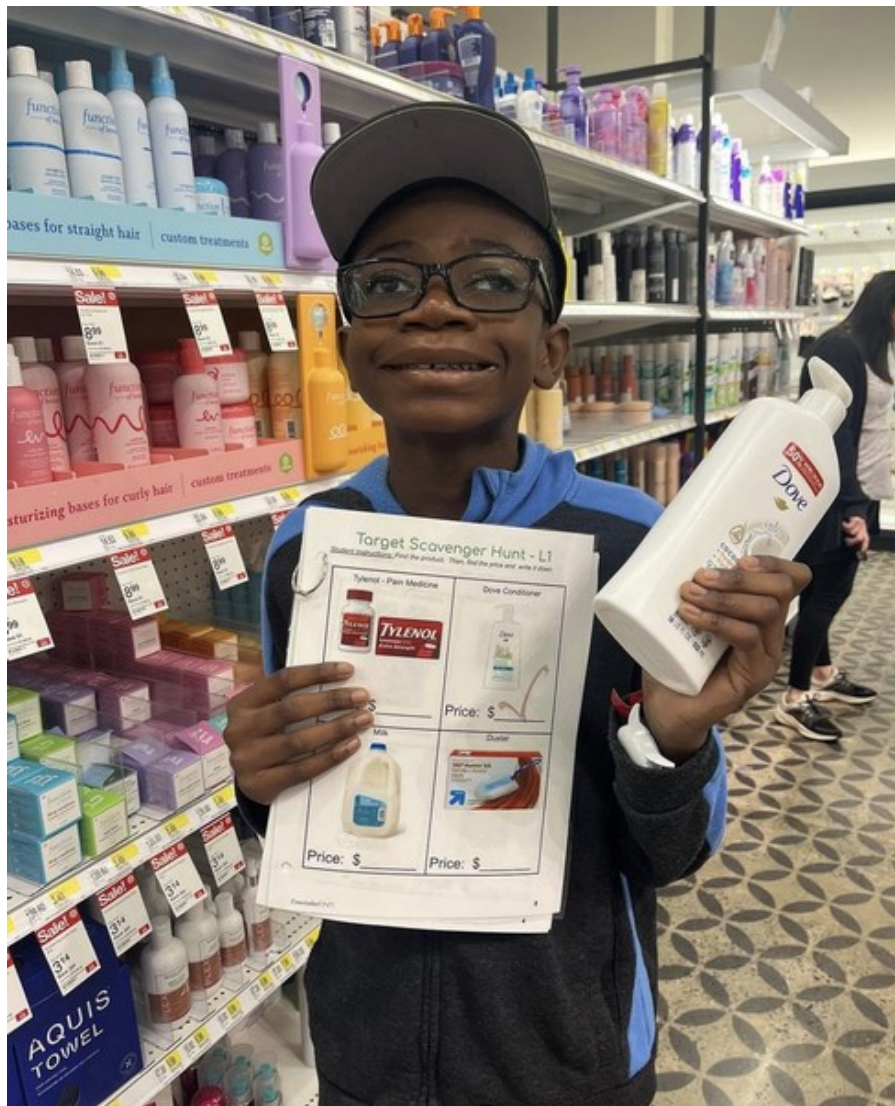
## Spring Planting/Gardening



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## ***Crossroads in the Community***

Crossroads students working on Community goals in Target and Panera



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## *Specials Report - Ms. Elaine - Social Worker*

In honor of Autism Awareness Month /Acceptance Month the classrooms created "Can Do" boards to display things the students have accomplished this year. The students are learning and growing each day, taking on more responsibilities and learning about self care. Students are becoming more independent, having play dates with peers, as well and learning and practicing hygiene and self care in girls groups.

The students also enjoyed our wear blue day to Celebrate World Autism Day. Tuesday was Neurodiversity day where the students wore rainbow or tie dyed clothes to school . Students also participated in "What's your passion" Wednesday where students wore something they were passionate about , and a fun filled spring egg hunt on Thursday to find sensory toys hidden in colorful eggs as well as enjoy 80 degree weather on the playground and dance with the bubble machine.





## 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)

Visit us on Instagram



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Westlake's

# Monthly Newsletter

April 2023



## Principal's Message

The month of April has been extremely busy at Westlake since we are forging ahead in our comfortable space we call "home". Students are happy to once again be back in our space and utilize every area of it. We have weekly Café time where students serve

beverages and cakes and just have sometime to socialize with their peers. We also have the apartment where students are cooking, working on hygiene skills and independent living skills. Students continue to work various jobs within the school setting, making chocolates, jewelry, and working with our Vocational Teacher, Ms. Swisher to complete various work tasks.

Westlake has begun to partner with the Akhil Foundation to work on student skills of horticulture and hydroponics. The Rutgers hydroponics department is offering 10 lessons that will be taught to a group of students through a pilot program which has already begun in April. Students will start with seedlings, then a larger hydroponic plant based project will be underway in school. Our hopes is to expand the project and also work on our outside garden.

Our Social Emotional Learning Theme for this month is our Responsibility/Self Care and Autism awareness month. Students and staff all wore their autism awareness shirts and have completed activities to be sensitive and more understanding to students with autism.

Students are using their Super Hero powers and describing them in a video themed 'SUPER HERO' for our PLC presentation which will be presented to the Board of Education on May 3rd. We would love to share the video with all and once, finished it will be emailed to everyone!

Happy Spring!  
Sincerely,  
Claudine

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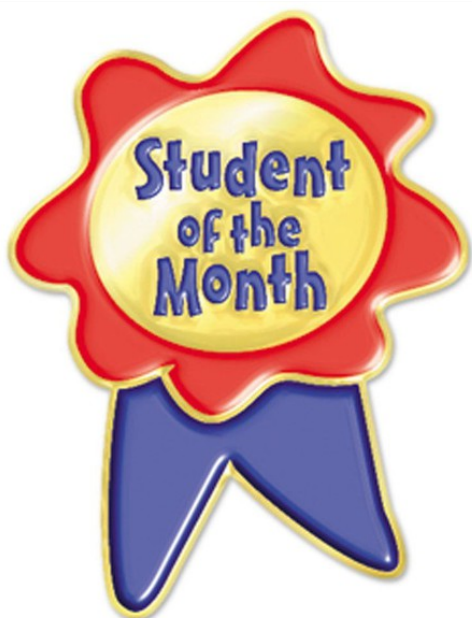
### Westlake School Data Download

Enrollment: 64  
Acceptances: 0  
Intakes: 3  
Referrals: 6  
Disenrollment: 0  
Fire Drill: April 3, 2023  
Lockdown (Internal Threat): April 6, 2023



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### Westlake's April Spotlights!



#### Student of the Month

TP received student of the month in recognition of all of her hard work in academics and her increase in social skills.



#### Principal's Award

PK received the Principal's Award from Mrs. Tantillo and Mr. Peneno for his work in Speech and Academics.



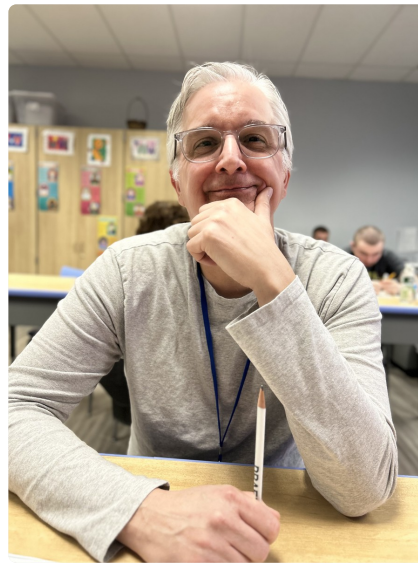
### **Teacher Spotlight**

**Mr. Shanfield**

Favorite Movie- Miracle

Hobbies- Backpacking, playing with his kids, and playing ice hockey

Spirit Animal- Eagle



### **Paraprofessional Spotlight**

**Mr. Nelson**

Favorite Movie- The Sting

Hobbies- Photography, hiking, and music

Spirit Animal- Border Collie



### **Security Spotlight**

**Mr. Fitz**

Favorite Movie- Rudy

Hobbies- Golf and working out

Spirit Animal- Bear

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## **Mrs. Convery's Classroom**

Mrs. Convery's class has been busy doing volunteer jobs for outside agencies this month. They have assisted the Crawford Jaycees in their annual Easter Egg Hunt by filling over 1200 eggs with delicious treats. They have also packaged tissues, bracelets, and seed packets for The Sharing Network to distribute at their spring fundraisers. The students complete these tasks during their vocational class, where they gain real world experience by completing real jobs. They also gain a sense of pride and accomplishment in being able to help others.



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## **Ms. Papeika's Classroom**

During the month of April we focused on self-care and Autism Awareness.

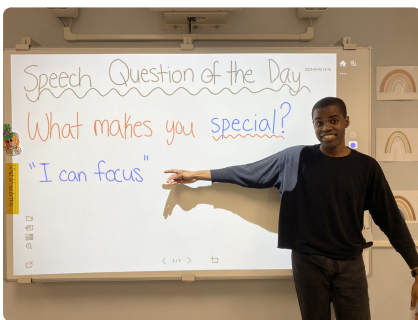
For self-care, we watched video models of handwashing and toothbrushing. Then we learned and sequenced the steps to each self-care activity. Lastly, we practiced handwashing and toothbrushing using the classroom sink.

For Autism Awareness, we watched a video on Autism Acceptance and interacted with Boomcards to learn more about Autism. The students also painted puzzle pieces and wooden picture frames. We are planning on hot-gluing them to the frames to bring home for Autism Awareness month.



## April at Westlake!

“To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.” -  
Oscar Wilde



Westlake Out and About!



Ms. Swisher and a few students selling their wares!

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## Springtime Garden

We are excited to announce that Westlake School is a recipient of the 2023 Union County Kids Dig In! Grant Award! This program will include renewal and expansion of the existing garden beds at our school, agricultural education with a focus on vocational skills, and a brand new hydroponics program. We have also received a grant from the Achilles Autism Foundation for a 10 week pilot program with Rutgers to learn about horticulture and hydroponics. The pilot program and Dig in! Grant projects will be spearheaded by our new Lead Gardener, Asher KurtzFreilich.



We would like to give a huge thank you to the Union County Board of County Commissioners and the Achilles Autism Foundation for their generous support!



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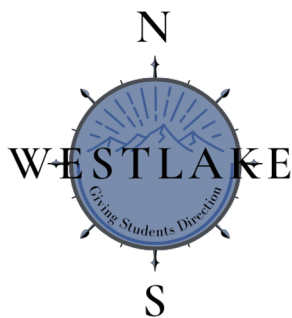
## Westlake School receives \$13,000 in Donations from the BMW Car Club!



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Visit us on Facebook!

## Union County Educational Services Feedback Survey



### 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



# Hillcrest Academy South Campus

April 2023 Monthly Report



## Dr. Balsamello's Message

Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) staff and students focused on Responsibility and Self-Care themes throughout April as well as held an event for Autism Awareness Month. Everyone is excited to have begun the fourth marking period and have been working towards completing their academic goals!

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## April 2023 Enrollment Data

1. Enrollment-99
  2. New Students-2
  3. Intakes-5
  4. Disenrollments-1
  5. Fire Drill-4/3/23
  6. Other Drill (Emergency Drill: Emergency Drill: Active Shooter, internal threat)-4/6/23.
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### April Student of the Month

Congratulations to our Student of the Month for April, Kally S. Kally's hobbies involves doing hair and nails. On her free time she loves to play volleyball or go to the beach with her friends so it comes as no surprise that her favorite season is summer. When asked what her favorite subject is, her reply was "English because you get the chance to be so creative!".



### Good Luck Ms Holden!

HAS English teacher Ms Holden, has announced her retirement from the teaching profession. Thank you for the 25 years of time and dedication you gave at HAS. Best of luck to you in your future endeavors!



### Teacher Spotlight

Ms Ferrari has been a teacher at HAS for the past 7 years. Ever since she was in the third grade, she knew that being a teacher was her calling. When she wakes up in the morning, she enjoys exercising (preferably yoga) to help set the tone for the day. Ms Ferrari enjoys going on adventures like camping, whitewater rafting, horseback riding, and so many more with her daughter's Girl Scout troupe. No matter what is going on in her life, Ms Ferrari always relies on her strong faith to get her through good and difficult times. "I am in awe how mathematics relates to everything, including nature".

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## Classroom Spotlights

### Ms. Arora's Classroom

In Forensic science, students studied the main categories of fingerprints. During lab time students made their own fingerprints and used pencil and tape to find out the which type they have. Students took those finger prints to analyze which type of prints are most common. In Environmental Science, students researched the Big Bang Theory and continental drift. by researching how the universe and different continents were formed. On Earth day they planted a tree and flowering seeds. In Biology, students learned about anatomy and physiology. They observed or participated in



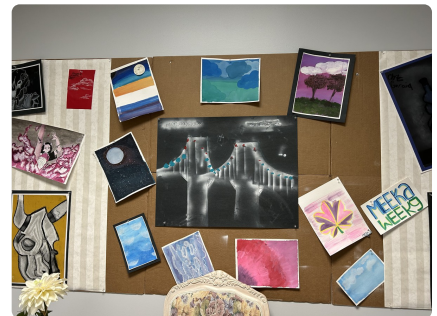
a dissection of a fetal pig, a sheep brain, and cow eyes. In the post lab, they studied the anatomy of human beings and labeled a diagram of all the body systems as well as participated in virtual labs.



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## Ms Picciano's Classroom

In art class this month, the students experienced an array of artistic medians. First, they created their own sketchbooks to draw in on their down time. Then random items were set up in the middle of the classroom for students to sketch and add their own flair to the piece. Students then learned the technique of drawing in 3D. Also during this month, students were told to print out a picture of their favorite character and then traced it using carbon paper and a metal pen. Finally students began to learn about the different types of paint (water color, oil, acrylic, etc.)



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# Autism Awareness Month



## Reading of Facts

On National Autism Awareness Day, facts about autism were read to the students to bring awareness.

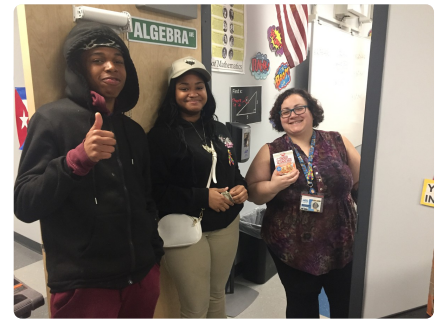
- Research suggests that autism develops from a combination of genetic and non-genetic, or environmental influences.
- In 2023, the CDC reported that approximately 1 in 36 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD), according to 2020 data.
- Boys are four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than girls and affects all ethnic and socioeconomic groups.
- Over the last two decades, extensive research has found vaccines do NOT cause autism.
- Early intervention and speech and occupational therapy can improve learning, communication and social skills, as well as underlying brain development.
- The (CDC) estimates that 75 million people have autism. This is 1% of the world's population.

Above facts from Autism Speaks and the World Health Organization.



## Ribbons

Students wore ribbons in solidarity with Autism Awareness. These ribbons are created with great meaning behind them. The symbolism of the different color puzzle pieces stems from the complexity of the spectrum and the hope that early interventions will help those with autism to live life to the fullest.



## Noodles for a Purpose

The HASCSP hosted a Noodles for a Purpose fundraiser to benefit Autism Speaks. Members of the group went from classroom to classroom with a trolley to sell uncooked noodles during 5th period. Students were then able to prepare and enjoy their noodles in the cafeteria during lunch.

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## Month of Responsibility



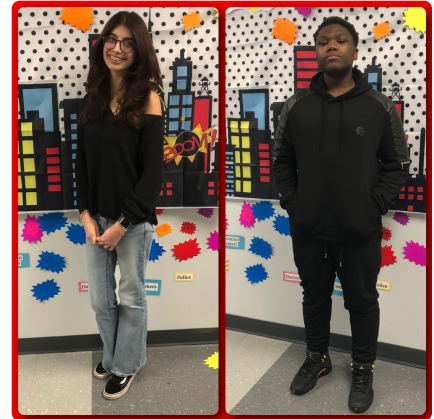
### End of Marking Period 3

Students took the time those last few days of the 3rd marking period to work on and submit assignments and meet benchmarks for credit retrieval. There are many different reasons why students need to make up work, but here at HAS we believe in giving the students every opportunity to do what they can to thrive in school.



### Food Drive!

The HASCSP hosted a food drive to benefit the Community Food Bank of NJ. Students brought in donations of non-perishable food to help their community. As part of our Responsibility theme this month students are taking care of those in need. When looking up the definition of responsibility in Google the first sentence that accompanies the definition is "a true leader takes responsibility for their team and helps them achieve goals" and this embodies what HAS is doing!



### Outstanding Scholars

Valerie C and Kamori B were awarded the Union County Outstanding Scholar award for HAS. Both students have achieved the highest academic rating this year. These students work very hard and are greatly deserving of this award! Congratulations you you both!

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## In the Community



### **Can-Do-Cafe Continues!**

Continuing with our partnership with Westlake School, Dr Balsamello every Tuesday will take students as a reward for different accomplishments; Student of the Month, Perfect Attendance, service, and even birthdays. Our students have a choice of 3 different cakes and drinks that are all made at Westlake and the Westlake students take orders and help serve the treats. We hope to continue with this partnership for the rest of the school year and many more school years to come!



### **UCESC Spirit Day**

On April 6th, HAS participated in the district wide UCESC Spirit Day. Everyone wore their UCESC shirts in solidarity of the spirit day. Our district helps so many students from so many different backgrounds and needs from within Union County, so it is only right that we get to celebrate.



### **National Administrative Professional's Day!**

According to Google, the definition of an Administrative Professional are those who "provide essential office duties such as writing business correspondence, scheduling appointments, managing projects, maintaining paper and electronic files, and delivering customer service". Here at HAS, Ms Demilio is so much more than that! The students love her and look up to her for all the kind things she does for them. The staff appreciates all the work she does behind the scenes to keep our school running. Thank you Ms Demilio from the bottom of our hearts!!



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## **Our Students In and Out of School**

### **Gimme A Beat!**

Jacob L has been a musician since he was 13. He found that music was a great healthy way for him to be able to express himself. Jacob believes that there is always room to work on your craft, so he is always in the music studio singing or writing his own lyrics, trying to be the best music artist he can be. Jacob says his music style is a mix of Hip Hop and R&B.



## 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](https://www.instagram.com/ucesc_has)

**Facebook:** [Hillcrest Academy South](https://www.facebook.com/HillcrestAcademySouth)

**Location:** [1571 Lamberts Mill Road, Westfield, NJ, USA-Door 3B](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1571+Lamberts+Mill+Road,+Westfield,+NJ,+USA-Door+3B)

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

## Union County ESC Feedback Survey

By completing this 2 minute survey, this will provide information for the UCESC and HAS to better assist you!

Visit us on Instagram



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# Hillcrest Academy North

APRIL 2023

## Principal's Message

The month of April was an exciting time at Hillcrest Academy North. Students are very productive in the classrooms and are enjoying learning the content. Our second incentive trip took place at the Woodbridge Community Center where ALL students enjoyed roller skating together. Students commented on how much they enjoyed being with one another outside of HAN while some were thrilled to try roller skating for the first time. Our seniors enjoyed a morning at Union County College on April 21, 2023 touring the campus, hearing from admission representatives, and exploring majors they are interested in. Community Service Projects continue to be attended at the Elizabeth Public Library by numerous students especially those in need of community service hours. It is certainly a pleasure to see how hard students are working in the classes during my daily walk-throughs. Students are engaged, curious, asking great questions, and trusting one another in taking certain academic risks in the classroom. Very well done!



Great job, HAN Students and Staff!  
Mission, Teamwork, and Communication!

Regards,  
Mr. Marquet

Please look to the link found at the bottom of this page for our feedback survey. We are always interested in getting better!



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## Upcoming Dates

May 5th - Cinco de Mayo Celebration  
May 8-12th - State Testing  
May 29th - Memorial Day - No School  
May 31st - Credit Retrieval Deadline



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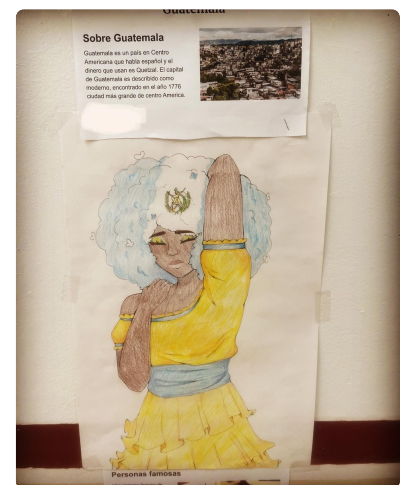
## Monthly Data

Enrollment: 91  
Enrolled: 1  
Disenrolled: 2  
Fire Drill: 4/20/23  
Shelter-in-Place: 4/26/23

## Student of the Month

### Leslie

Leslie is a junior and has been at HAN for two years. She excels academically, is a compassionate friend, and is an extremely talented artist. Leslie most recently helped Mrs. Flores with the Spanish classes Cultural and Women's History Month Projects. Leslie drew the outlines for all of the projects that the other students filled in. The hallways of HAN are now decorated with Leslie's drawings!



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## Teacher Spotlight



### **Mr. Van Cleef, Supervisor of Instruction**

Mr. Van Cleef has worked at Hillcrest Academy North for ten years! He started as a Social Studies Teacher and is now in his second year as the Supervisor of Instruction for both Hillcrest Academy North and South. Mr. Van Cleef's positive energy radiates throughout the building and students are constantly seeking him out for assistance and advice. Mr. Van Cleef is a dedicated administrator and always encourages and supports staff members. HAN students and staff are lucky to have Mr. Van Cleef as the Supervisor of Instruction!

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## **Classroom Spotlights**



### **Mrs. Flores, Spanish Teacher**

This month students are working on the unit “La Familia y Las Tradiciones / Comida” in Spanish class. Students distinguished the similarities and differences between the patterns of family celebrations of the target culture related to activities, family, 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, family traditions, and lifestyles of other people around the world with “La Quinceanera”. Then, as an assessment students will research different Holidays, traditions, culture and food around the world, which

exposes them to a variety of cultures, families and traditions in other countries (as well as their own). The experiences help the students identify the similarities and differences, so they can grow a deeper level of appreciation and respect for others. Moreover, the Spanish classes are preparing a "Cinco de Mayo" celebration (assembly) for Friday May 5th. This celebration will help to develop a culture for learning by communicating a passion of the students to work together in different ways. They would create research projects in each of my classes and share with their peers and staff.

### **Mrs. Goldenberg, Social Worker**

April has been a busy and productive month in the social work office! There has been a lot of focus on graduating seniors -- meetings held with each student to discuss graduation status and/or concerns being one of them. We also visited the campus of Union College of New Jersey (formerly Union County College) and had a representative from NJ HESAA come speak with seniors and help them with the financial aid progress. Additionally, SEL classes have been in line with the theme of the month of Responsibility and Self care: discussing progress for the year until this point as well as a lesson on being a Grump vs. an Optimist. The social worker also meets with students daily regarding social, personal, or school related issues as needed and communicates with parents on a regular basis regarding these concerns. Finally, scheduling and credit retrieval has been monitored by the social work office for the past several months.



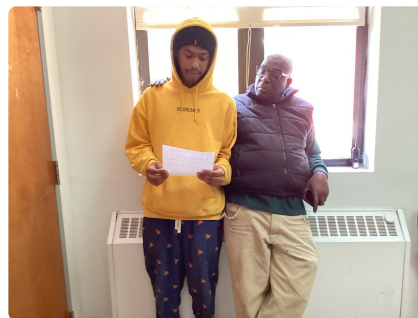
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## **April at HAN**



### **School Leadership**

HAN Junior Felipe offered to help Mr. Mojovich and Ms. Miller by taking photos of students and staff for the Yearbook. Felipe followed a list of photos needed, found the necessary people, and used the iPad to take the pictures. The HAN Yearbook is now complete thanks to Felipe's



### **Student Culture**

HAN Custodian Mr. Jones and senior student Isaiah helped Ms. Rivas work on a special video project! Students and staff members shared words about how important HAN is to them and the impact the school has made. We cannot wait to see the final project!



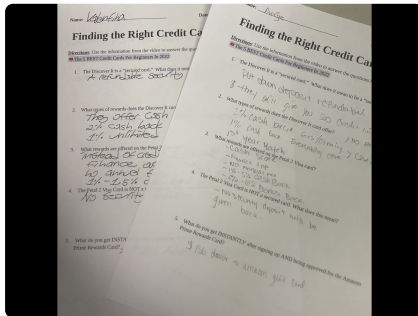
### **Social Emotional Learning**

April is a busy month for HAN seniors preparing for graduation and life after Hillcrest! Mrs. Goldenberg has been meeting individually with students and using time in the Social Emotional Learning weekly sessions to review students' status with Credit Retrieval, Community Service, and yearly grades. Students are

efforts! He even took a great selfie with Mrs. Di Carlo!

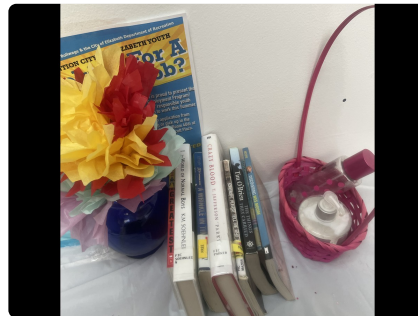
focused and excited for the fourth Marking Period!

## Theme of the Month: Responsibility and Self-Care



### Economics Class - Credit Cards

Students in Ms. Miller's Economics classes completed their lessons about credit cards with a project to help them decide if they are ready for a credit card and which beginner card might be good for them. Economics students have spent all year learning information and skills that will help them become financial independent.



### Self Care Corner

Students are able to visit the Self Care Corner outside the Main Office! We currently have books and personal care items available for the students to use. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and their Social Emotional needs and the focus on Self-Care this month allowed students to improve upon those skills.



### Principal's Awards

Every month, HAN staff nominate students for Principal's Awards! Fitting with the April theme of Responsibility, the awards of Integrity, Most Respectful, and Best Citizen were awarded to students who rose above and beyond the standard expectations.

## School in the Community



### Roller Skating Field Trip!

HAN students and staff were able to enjoy a trip to the roller skating rink to start off Spring Break! Everyone was able to rent skates and test out their balancing skills while skating around the rink. Students were also able to play games at the arcade and spent time with their friends. Everyone who went on the trip raved about how much fun they had!



### UCC Senior Trip

HAN seniors along with Mrs. Goldenberg and Ms. Rosenfield were able to take a trip to Union County College! Students learned about the different programs available at UCC and were able to take a tour of the campus. We are excited to see the seniors take the next steps in their education!



### HESAA Presentation

A representative from the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority visited HAN and presented to students interested in attending college next year. The representative explained the different options of paying for college and then helped students complete their FASFA applications!

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## Union County Educational Services Commission Feedback Survey

Click the link above to complete the UCESC Feedback Survey!

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## About HAN



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.

Mr. John Marquet, Principal

Mr. Thomas Van Cleef, Supervisor of Instruction

Location: [2630 Plainfield Ave, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076](https://www.google.com/maps/place/2630+Plainfield+Ave,+Scotch+Plains,+NJ+07076)

Phone Number: (908) 233-9366

Website: [https://ucesc.org/schools/hillcrest\\_academy\\_north](https://ucesc.org/schools/hillcrest_academy_north)

## Visit Us On Instagram



### Mission Statement

It is the mission of Hillcrest Academy North that all graduates have demonstrated the following attributes: Responsibility and accountability for themselves by routinely producing quality work through high academic standards now and in the future A sense of pride in who they are and what they can contribute as a

[ucesc.org](https://ucesc.org)



**John Marquet**

John is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



# LMA April Monthly Report

April 2023

*"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."*

William Shakespeare

## Principal's Message

As the Principal of Lamberts Mill Academy, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate our LMA students for leading for Professional Learning Community LMA school video! Students Jahzara Dillard and Shai Allen are taking the lead interviewing students and staff, and most importantly showcasing individual student Superpowers! A special thank you to LMA/RWJ Clinician Ms. Jasmine Thomas and LMA classroom teacher, Ms. Chana Finver for meeting with Mr. Leibfried and the LMA students creating this video! I look forward to the overall UCESC PLC video presentation at the next Board of Education meeting.



LMA students were provided with a training from the DVR organization. The presenter Ms Samia Haridi, informed the students and staff of the incredible benefits that can be obtained by simply applying for the program. Students and families are entitled to college tuition assistance, transportation discounts and the ability to obtain real life work experience guidance and expertise through the DVR. The presenter was outstanding and our students were completely engaged and interested in learning more about the variety of programs offered.

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# Monthly Data

Acceptances - 5

New Students - 0

Student Intakes - 6

Referrals - 7

Disenrollment - 2

Fire Drill - (4/3/2023)

EM (Active Shooter, Internal Threat) - (4/6/2023)

## LMA Student of the Month - April 2023

### Steven Abreu

Lamberts Mill Academy is proud to announce our April student of the month, Steven Abreu. He started with LMA this past September starting off at our New Point campus learning with both Ms. Fort-Hollstein and Mrs. Fay on a daily basis. Steven made significant progress and growth at New Point, and quickly transitioned to LMA Main campus this past January. Ever since starting with us at the LMA Main campus Steven has been incredibly focused on improving himself to be successful for after he graduated in June.

Steven has been an active participant in all his academic classes; and often goes above and beyond for his artistic abilities in his therapeutic group projects. We at LMA are proud of his progress and growth since September, and are proud to name him our Student of the Month for April!



## Staff Spotlight - Mr. Jimmy Bromell

### Mr. Jimmy Bromell - LMA School Safety & Security Monitor

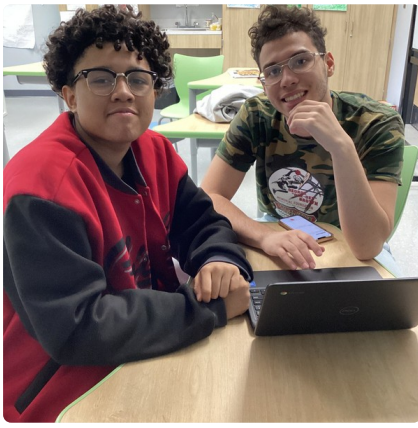
#### Five Fun Facts about Mr. Bromell

1. Has served as School Safety & Security Monitor at LMA for the past 20 years.
2. Is an avid fisherman, with a wealth of experience in both fresh and salt water.
3. Works security at the Prudential Center in Newark, NJ in the evening and weekends.
4. Harley Davidson motorcycle enthusiast
5. Has multiple reputations at LMA of being the *Gentle Giant* and *The Wise Man in the Hall*, as Mr. Bromell not only cares about the safety of the school, but of the well being of all the students at LMA often times providing calm, therapeutic advice to our students.



## Classroom Spotlights





### **Mrs. Van Clief's class podcast**

Select students in Mrs. Van Clief's History classes have been learning about, and creating their own podcasts. These students have plans to submit their final podcasts to the NPR Student Podcast Challenge. Students have been creating podcasts with interviews from one another on different current events occurring at the state, national and global level. Students are talking about the events in depth, and how it makes them feel with their own thoughts on these topics.



### **Ms. Bartone's Speech Therapy classroom**

Ms. Bartone has been a welcome addition to LMA starting this past September. LMA has been fortunate to have Ms. Bartone to work with both LMA Main campus and New Point Campus for two full days per week. Students receive speech in individual or small group settings, and in few cases both. This setting allows students to grow toward achieving their individualized goals. During speech sessions at the high school level, students work on skills that will help them be more successful in their futures including expressive, receptive, and pragmatic language. Some specific goals that are commonly worked on include social language skills with different audiences including peers, teachers, and future employers, how to navigate figurative language and sarcasm, executive functioning skills including planning and organizing information, and more! Some students also practice using their most clear and presentable verbal speech for their day to day life, but we also stress this importance as they grow into adults. We are fortunate to have Ms. Bartone on our staff as such a talented,

and experienced speech  
language pathologist at LMA.

## Month at School

### Arbor Day at LMA

On Wednesday, April 19th, three students went to Oak Ridge Park and learned how to properly plant a tree in preparation for Arbor Day. This trip also fell on the same week as Earth Day, so the timing was ideal for the students since trees provide many benefits to our environment. A representative of the park, Mr. Jim, provided the students with the proper tools, and instructed them with how to use each one to plant a Redbud tree. Each student participated in the process and felt accomplished to leave behind something they worked on so hard together. Thank you to Oak Ridge Park for your tree contribution to Lamberts Mill Academy, it was an educational experience for each student to take with them and perhaps become better guardians of our planet.



### Blake's Monthly Experience working at Maschio's.

Recently, I started working in the school kitchen on every Tuesday of the week as part of my Work Based Education program. It has been a very inspiring and wonderful experience. Ms. Swisher, my WBE supervisor and Ms. Lauren, the cafeteria manager/cook, are extremely helpful and kind. They have been very good at answering any questions I might have. I also get to practice the food rules that I have learned as I study Servesafe for my Food Handler's certificate.



Some of the jobs that I do are pouring sauces into small containers/small cups. The last time I worked in the kitchen I helped the lunch ladies fill up small cups of salsa. In total I think I cupped at least 60 cups, because there were a lot of students in school that day, and because a lot of the students love salsa with the meal that we were having.

I also volunteered for some extra work on Monday to provide the kitchen additional help. I volunteered because it seemed like Monday is one of the busiest days of the week. I enjoy helping and of course learning new cooking and work skills. They include safety, speed, quality, patience, and flexibility.

Doing all this work is hard at times but I know it's all worth it in the end or long run.

Sincerely Blake Debenham

### Life Skills group celebrate Autism Awareness

Mrs. Thomas and her Life Skills group decided to not only discuss Autism Awareness, but to create a school wide bulletin board in the hallway. The group decided to highlight interesting facts about Autism Awareness for all students and staff to see throughout the day.



## Responsibility / Self-Care (Autism Awareness)



### DVR Educational School Assembly

Student and staff at LMA main campus had guest speaker, Ms Samia Haridi, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Elizabeth visit LMA for the morning. Ms Haridi was kind enough to dedicate time in her schedule to education students and staff on the benefits of DVR for students transitioning out of high school, and how younger students can benefit from Pre-ETS services. Students and staff responded well with great questions and discussions. Ms Haridi did inform LMA that she will be assigned to LMA, so will continue to service LMA in any capacity that she can. We look forward to have Ms Haridi back at LMA in the future; and for students to begin the formal referral and intake process.



### New Point Campus visits NYCSG for Yoga

Students at LMA New Point Campus we're able to take advantage of the warmer April weather, and visit the New York Chinese Scholar's Garden (NYCSG) in NY. LMA students we're able to tour the authentic garden inspired by China, and see how tranquil the garden can be. New Point staff also coordinated their weekly Yoga teacher to meet students at the NYCSG and we're able to complete a lengthy yoga session within the garden. Students and staff admitted this environment helped them to relax and concentrate on their yoga.



### Autism Awareness

At the start of the month while reviewing Autism Awareness month in Life Skills groups, select students decided to participate in their own activity. These students decided to give up their lunch period with the school population, and appropriately asked staff to watch the television show, *The Good Doctor*, in a classroom during their lunch period. Not only did students watch surgeon Doctor Murphy, but had meaningful discussions and conversations about individuals who are Autistic appropriately functioning in society, along with their everyday challenges. This was a great opportunity for students to participate appropriately, and talk amongst each other about the content they we're watching and observing.

## School in the Community

1. Mr. Bell and our Post Graduate students continue to work with Mashcio's food service on a consistent basis.
2. Assemblies - Community Meetings spotlighting student of the month (LMA overall) as well as student of the month in each classroom, and the growth they have made academically.

## LMA Students Outside of the Classroom

### LMA Alumni - Hailey Perez (Class of 2020)

The past few Newsletters we have been spotlighting active LMA students outside of the classroom, but for the month of April we wanted to spotlight Hailey Perez, an LMA Alum who graduated the class of 2020 during the pandemic.

Hailey began her educational career at LMA in February 2018, halfway through her Sophomore year. While it took Hailey time to get to know the LMA staff, students and expectations; she quickly became hard to forget! Hailey always expressed herself best through her art and photography; and often times looked to incorporate it into her academics. By her Senior year she became a natural LMA leader, and one that many students looked up to.



Although she had an unconventional graduation, virtual like all other Seniors around the world, she quickly joined the work force after graduation. Working various different retail stores, she was able to apply the skills learned at LMA into the real world. After working multiple stores, Hailey decided to commit to the next step of her life, and enrolled in Cosmetology school. She has recently graduated from Cosmetology school, and is looking forward to the next chapter of her life. While in Cosmetology school she is still currently employed at the British Swim School where she can still help younger individuals, and continue to be a community role model.

## UCESC Feedback Survey Reminder

Lastly, a friendly reminder to all UCESC community partners, school districts and parents/guardians that our UCESC Feedback Survey was sent out via email to complete a couple weeks ago. If you can take 10-15 minutes to complete the survey below, we would greatly appreciate the feedback to improve upon LMA.

Thank you in advance!

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScdBdrvjEV5Dmat0XfEV\\_BYM3FPWmGSoftE9BL3cDNklhRoQQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScdBdrvjEV5Dmat0XfEV_BYM3FPWmGSoftE9BL3cDNklhRoQQ/viewform)

## About Us

### **Contact Information:**

*Phone:* (908)-233-7581

*Address:* 1571 Lamberts Mill Road, Westfield, NJ, 07090

*Website:* [https://ucesc.org/schools/lamberts\\_mill\\_academy](https://ucesc.org/schools/lamberts_mill_academy)

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/ucesc\\_lma/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/ucesc_lma/?hl=en)

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 RWJ Trinitas Regional Medical Center to provide clinical services 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.

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**LMA Smore**

LMA is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

