

The Work Readiness Academy

May 2023 Monthly Report



Director's Message

Dear Families,

Below is a recap of some highlights from the month of May 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/B3wHmCqCWfnHyUfR6>

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

Sincerely,

Josh Bornstein

Director at the UCESC Work Readiness Academy



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

We look forward to seeing you then.

May Data

Enrollment as of May 31, 2023

Actual: 27

Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 0

Referrals: 3

Intakes Scheduled: 3

Accepted: 3

May 23 - Lockdown Drill

May 10 - Fire Drill



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



WRA Student of the Month

Our Student of the Month for March is Ian McCormack! Ian brings a positive attitude and infectious enthusiasm to our program each day. He is kind, respectful, and attuned to the needs and feelings of others. This month, Ian recognized that a peer was feeling anxious about performing in our WRA's Got Talent Show. He proceeded to volunteer to participate alongside this peer to provide support.

Congratulations Ian!



Staff Spotlight

Name: Rosemarie "Rose" Makris

Position: Paraprofessional (with CDL license; drive students)

Years with UCESC: 20! Rose started her career with UCESC as a paraprofessional in the nurse's office at Westlake School before joining the Transition Services department as a job coach, and then eventually a paraprofessional with the WRA.

Interests/Hobbies: Rose loves to read and spend time with her family.

Quote to Live By: "Success is not final; failure is not final; it is the courage to continue that counts." -- Winston S. Churchill

Something Most People Wouldn't Know About Me: Rose maintains her cosmetology license and still provides hair styling on Tuesday evenings to her longtime clients from the past 30 years.



Community Business Partner Spotlight

This month we spotlight **Children's Specialized Hospital**, a member of the RWJBarnabas Healthcare System.

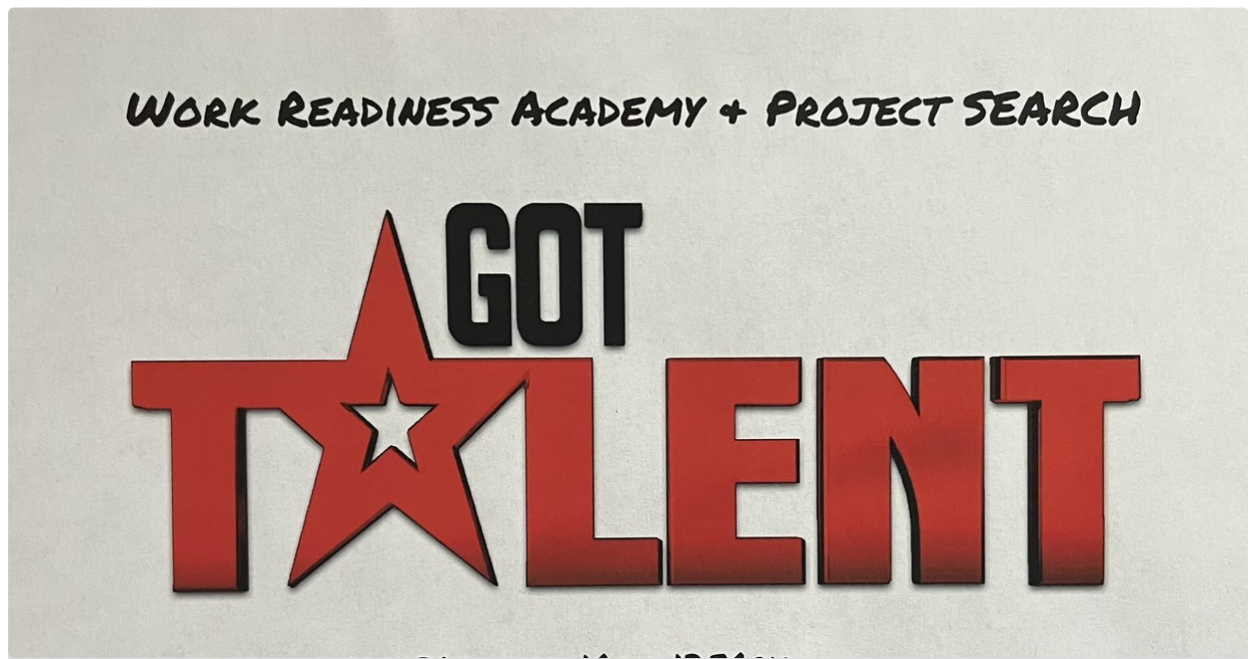
This is our 4th year working with the team at Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH). Our students intern at two different CSH campuses - Mountainside, NJ and Union, NJ.

In Mountainside, WRA students have had the opportunity to intern with Dietary Services, Materials Management, Human Resources, the Autism Department, and Medical Records.

In Union, WRA students have had the opportunity to intern with security, physical therapy, and primary care. Students also support with the operation of the UCESC "Can Do" food cart at the Union location.

We are grateful to CSH's Center for Discovery, Innovation and Development

(CDID) for partnering with UCESC to establish this growing partnership!



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

Students and staff members shared their amazing interests and talents with our combined communities. We were very proud of all the participants, our stage crew volunteers, and our supportive audience members.

Enjoy some photo highlights below.

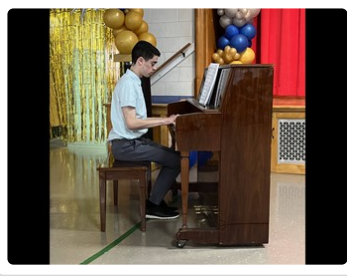
If you are interested in watching the replay of the talent show, click the links below.

Part 1:

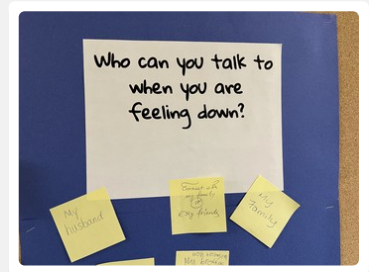
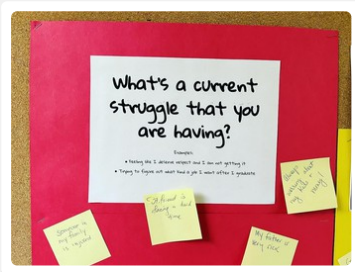
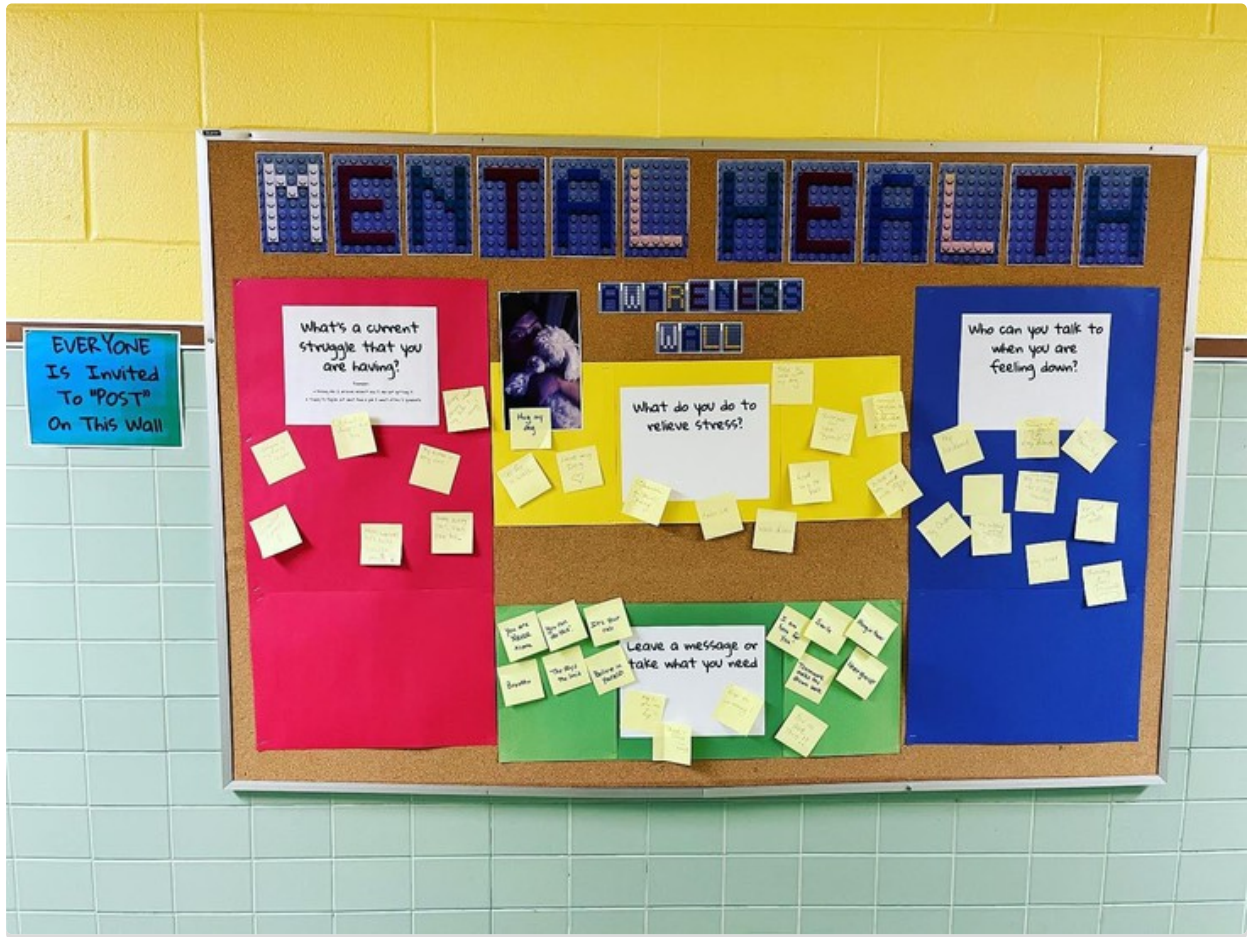
<https://youtu.be/hsal6MFn10A>

Part 2:

<https://youtu.be/V6HFYrovxdQ>



During the month of May, the WRA recognized Mental Health Awareness Month!



Community Trip to Kean University

During the month of May the Work Readiness Academy visited Kean University - now located just down the road on Morris Avenue.

Our students and staff took the NJ Transit Bus to get to and from the campus. During our visit, we checked out the Bookstore & received a tour from a Kean Ambassador that included stops at the Athletic Facilities, Cougar Walk, Student Center, and Dining Hall.





May 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.

For more information or to make a student referral, please email Josh Bornstein at jbornstein@ucesc.org

 970 Suburban Road, Union, NJ, ...

 jbornstein@ucesc.org

 908-633-2704

 ucesc.org/schools/the_work_r...

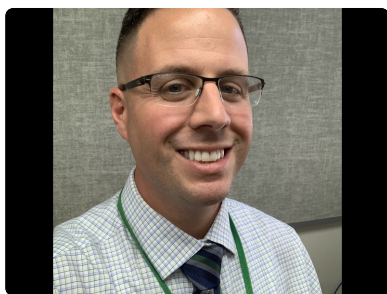
[Click here to visit the WRA on Facebook!](#)

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



Crossroads Monthly Report

May 2023



Principal's Message

I cannot believe that we are already entering the final month of the school year. The month of May has not only brought the beautiful weather, but also many fun activities here at Crossroads. Our Elementary school was invited to participate in a Mini Golf Trip at Hyatt Hills Golf Course sponsored by Connors' Crew. They had a beautiful day playing golf and participating in a pizza party. Our

Middle School program had their end of the year field trip at Funplex, where they were able to play games and go on rides. Crossroads was also visited by Union County Vice Chairwoman Kimberly Palmieri-Moudey who awarded the school with the Kids Dig In Grant and our Earthboxes for planting. May is also the month where we honor the wonderful staff who work tirelessly for the students of Crossroads. The staff here at Crossroads were treated to an appreciation lunch. We were all very touched by the generosity.

With the end of the year approaching I wanted to mention some of the special events we have coming up over the next few weeks. On Wednesday June 7 we will have our Preschool Stepping Up Ceremony for our students who are stepping up to Kindergarten or Preschool 4 next year. On June 14th we will host our 8th Grade Commencement Ceremony where we will honor our 8th graders who are moving on after this year.

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

Enrollment as of April 27, 2023

Actual: 51

Changes: Entered: 1 Exited: 0

Referrals: 10

Intakes Scheduled: 6

Accepted: 3

Fire Drills: 5/25/23

Emergency Drills: 5/31/23 (Evacuation)

Upcoming Dates

June 7, 2023 - Preschool Stepping Up Ceremony

June 14, 2023 - 8th Grade Commencement

June 15, 2023 - Early Dismissal

June 16, 2023 - School Closed (Juneteenth)

June 19, 2023 - Early Dismissal

June 19, 2023 - Early Dismissal (Last Day of School)



Crossroads Staff and Student Spotlight



Student of the Month - Matthew

May's student of the month is Matthew! He has grown so much this school year and has been transitioning from using his AAC to mostly spoken language. Although tiny in stature, his voice is mighty when he is communicating his wants and needs! Matthew impressed us beyond measure when he began asking for common items in full sentences. We are multilingual in 105, so we try to use Spanish and English in conjunction daily. Matthew has started saying "I want agua (water) independently". Watching him transition from gestures to spoken language has been the most amazing thing to watch as a teacher. Academically, Matthew has been working hard to master new skills within motor imitation and listener responding. His attention to his friends and teachers throughout the school day has improved dramatically, and he has been initiating greetings all on his own! We love Matthew and 105 is so proud of everything he has accomplished!



Certified Staff of the Month - Alexis Lorenz - Teacher

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

I have been working at the commission for the past 4 years. This will be my 24th year working in the field of special education and I truly enjoy working with all the students and staff at Crossroads School.

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

On Sundays I volunteer as a "Buddy" to work with children and adults with intellectual, emotional and physical disabilities in teaching them soccer skills, self confidence and improve skills in relationship building.

3. What is your dream vacation?

My dream vacation would be to go on an African safari. I love to learn about different cultures and watch all the different animals in their habitat.

4. What is your favorite meal?

My favorite meal is Chicken Paprikash with dumplings. It is a Hungarian chicken dish made with onions, sour cream, paprika and other delicious ingredients. My grandmother made it the best and I am still working on perfecting her recipe.

5. What is your greatest accomplishment?

My greatest accomplishment is earning my degree in Special Education at Kean University. I am also proud to say that I followed in my father's footsteps and became an educator. I know he



Paraprofessional of the Month - Halley Daniels - Paraprofessional

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

I have been working at the commission for 3 years now. I am grateful to have learned so much in that time.

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

Something I think people would be surprised to find out is that I am a writer. I have studied medieval literature. I also write poetry and short stories.

3. What is your dream vacation?

My dream is to travel to Ireland and visit the city that my family came from.

4. What is your favorite meal?

If I had to pick one food it would be fried chicken. But I love to try new foods. I also love cooking so I am always trying new recipes.

5. What is your greatest accomplishment?

My greatest accomplishment is working in the Special Education field. I knew from a young age that I wanted to be a teacher. I love working with our students and feeling like I am making a difference.

Classroom Spotlights

Ms. Allison's Classroom

Much to Love About May

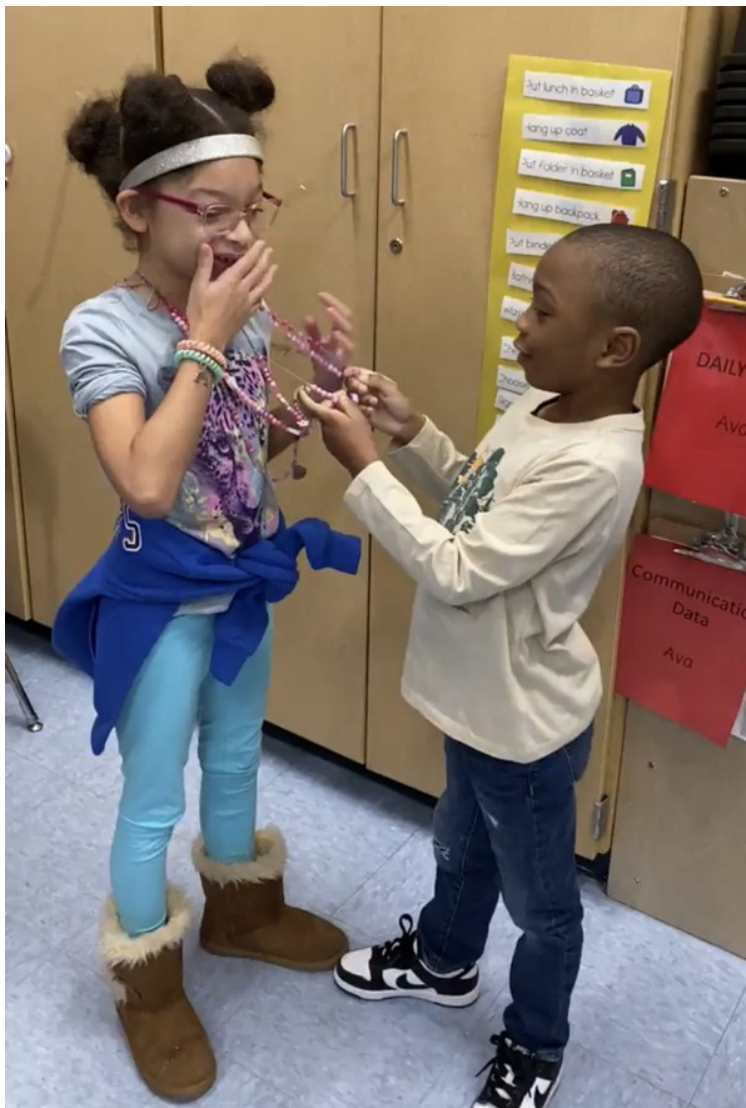
During the month of May, our students were very busy! We started off by celebrating Cinco de Mayo with a special snack of chips and salsa. Our students and families shared their love for Teacher's Appreciation Week with a delicious luncheon, cards, gifts, and so many hugs. All of us were so thankful to Connors' Crew for our first field trip in years!! Our entire elementary school played mini golf and had a special pizza lunch at the Hyatt Hills Golf Course. Students practiced social skills in the community, including taking turns, waiting in line, listening to staff, and cheering each other on. It was a wonderful day!

Self Reflection & Mental Health Awareness

Our classroom staff works very hard to not only meet the needs of our students, but to teach our students how to appropriately advocate for themselves. Many of our students are engaged in a

positive behavior intervention system, where they earn stickers for independently listening, following directions, and demonstrating the friendship skills we have taught them. Leo, Lyla, Ava, and Harith all earned enough stickers to pick from the prize bin during May. They also practiced being peer buddies to their younger classmates, Yusef and Kenny, by engaging in hobbies and sharing with them! It's wonderful to see the pride, joy, and friendship that grows from these important relationships!





Ms. Gaby's Classroom

What a blast it has been in 105 in the month of May! April showers bring May flowers, so we tried to be outside enjoying the sunshine as much as possible (pollen permitting!). Everyone has found their favorites on the playground and someone they are fond of sharing their recess time with. Noah and Matthew often say "Push please" to each other on the swings, Joshua and Dilan hang out on the bridge laughing, and you will often find Jose and Sidney walking the perimeter trying to find dandelions to blow in the wind. We also went on our first field trip and went mini golfing! As the school year winds down, we have been exploring new play skills and games. Our toy closet is full of games that require turn taking and waiting...so we have been playing whenever we can as a class. Dilan, Jose, Joshua, Matthew, Noah, and Sidney have done a phenomenal job describing what games and activities they want to play. Additionally, we have a basketball hoop in the classroom that the students (and staff!) regularly use to break up the day. Truth be told, we think all of 105 will be first round picks in the next NBA draft with how much our dribbling has improved! We have so much fun in 105 and are lucky to have had not only a fantastic May, but an incredible school year overall.

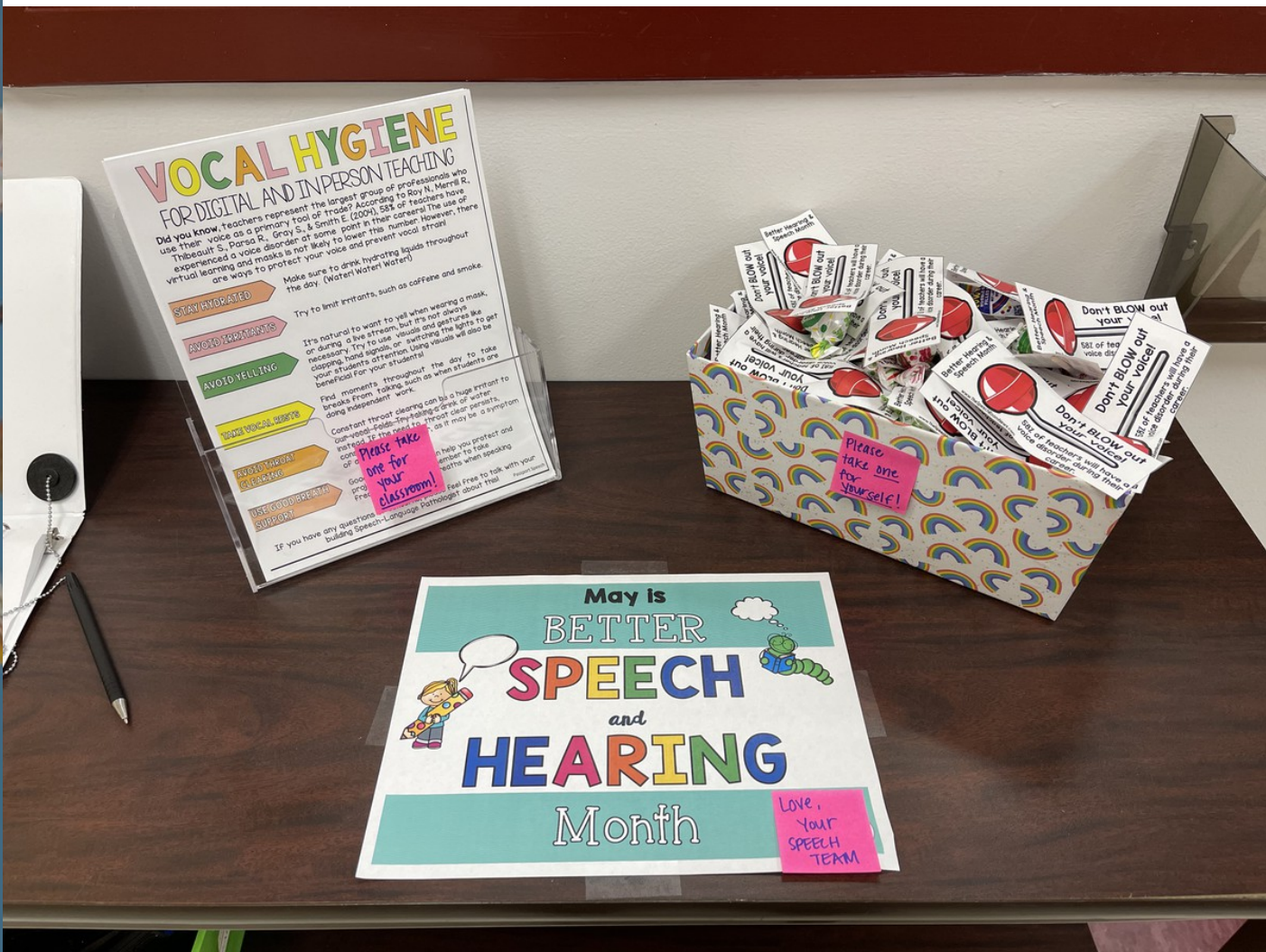


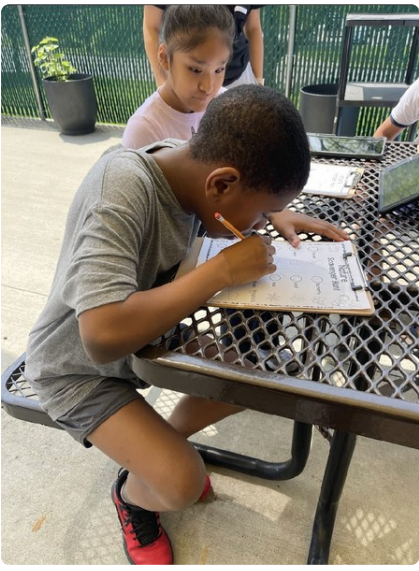
Therapy Spotlight

Speech Department

The Speech Department is happy to be reporting this month because it is Better Hearing & Speech Month. Did you know... "58% of teachers will have a voice disorder during their career". This month we spread awareness to the school community of how to use better vocal hygiene tips for teachers and language enhancement tips & tricks for students!

Spring is in full swing in speech this month! Our students are being immersed into spring vocabulary and activities that make learning fun! In speech groups this month, we have done a spring scavenger hunt, made cookie flowers, and created butterflies out of coffee filters! The students have shown many smiles doing these hands-on activities. A great way to carryover growing language at home is to talk about things you see, especially while outdoors this time of year!





May at Crossroads



Crossroads was awarded Earthboxes as part of the Kids Dig In Garden Grant



May Field Trips

Crossroads Elementary School students enjoyed a day of mini golf at Hyatt Hills while the Middle School students enjoyed activities at Funplex.







Crossroads in the Community

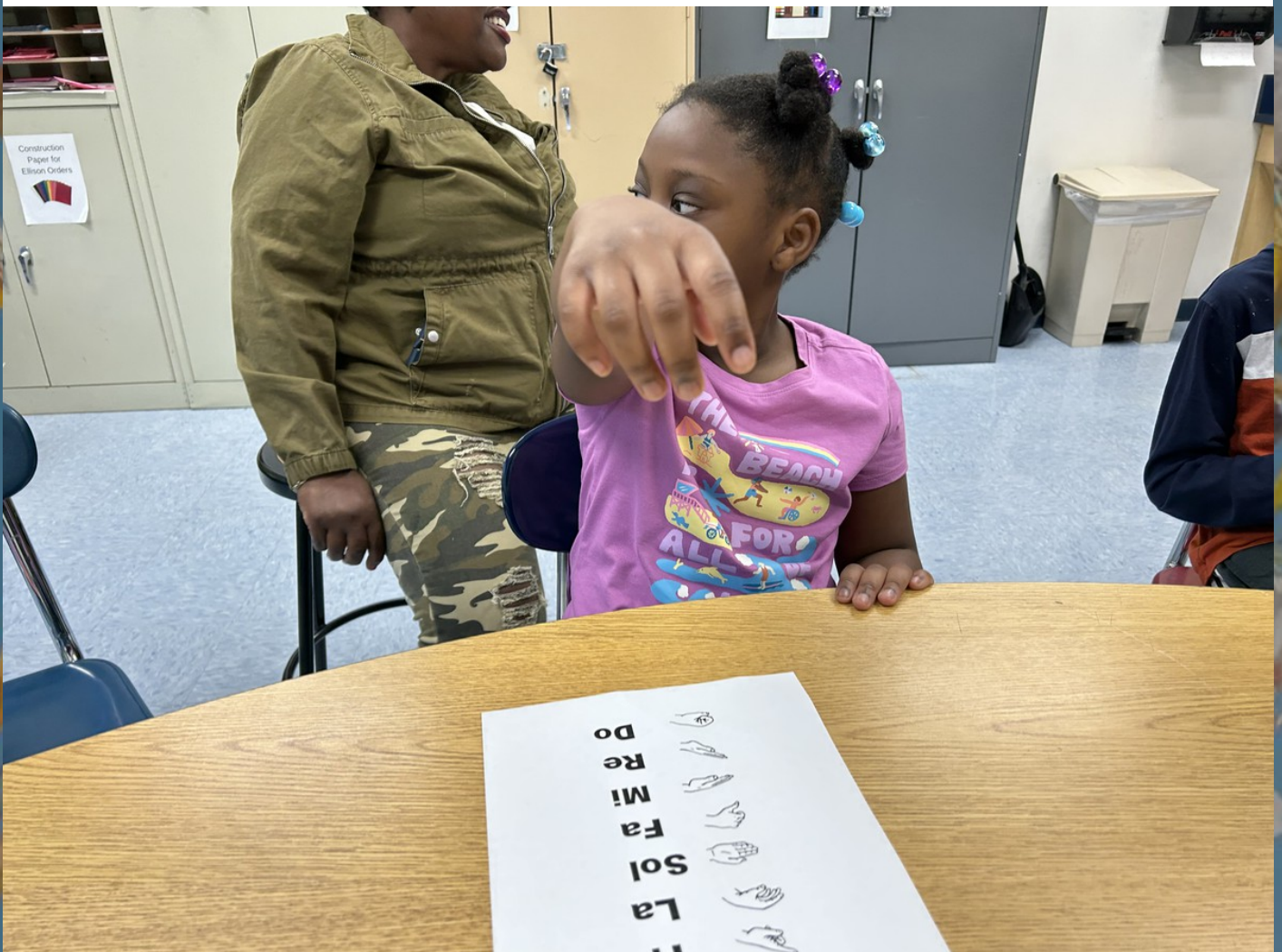
Out and about working on Community goals in Target

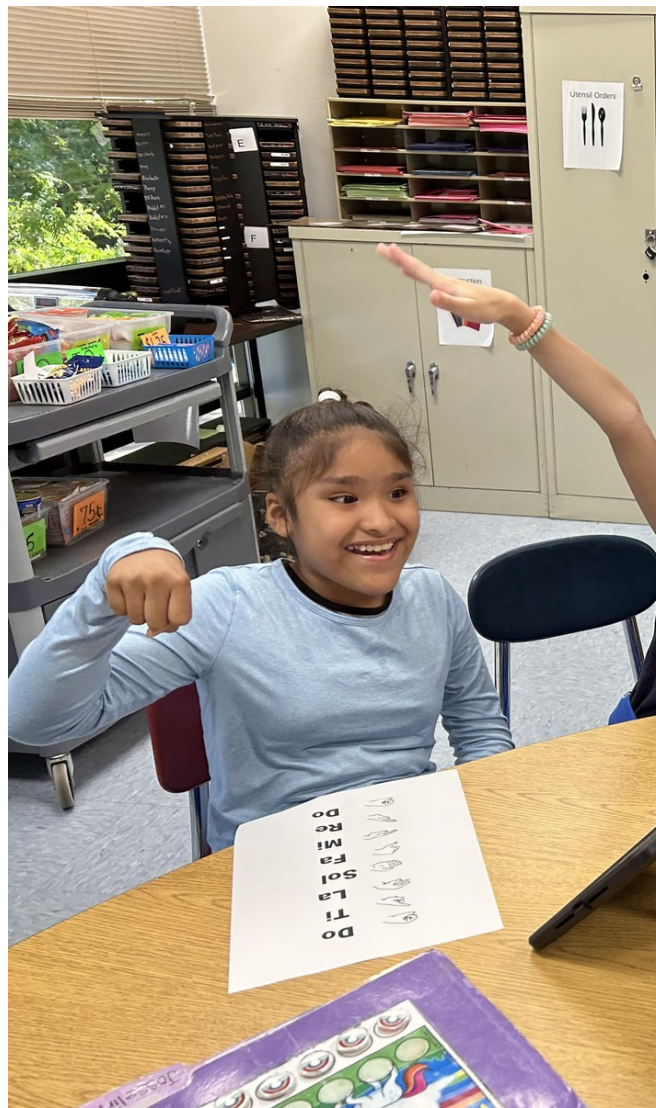




Specials Report - Mr. Pat- Music

In music class we have been working on the syllables for the major scale (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do). We began with singing the syllables along with the piano. Then we sequenced flashcards with the syllable names in order and sang the syllables while pointing to the cards. This past week we learned the coordinating hand signs and moved through them while we sang. It was lots of fun! Pictured here are Josselin and Alaiyaa showing off their singing and hand sign skills!





Crossroads Parent's Corner - Jessyca Munera

A New App for Families

I am extremely happy to be able to introduce Crossroads to Iwonderspectrum, a social media platform forum that I created to bring parents with children on the spectrum together to share their ideas, concerns and get advice on anything that involves autism awareness and support. I wanted us to be able to share what has worked for us and maybe help another parent in need or a parent whose child has just been diagnosed with autism. This app will create a safe and supportive space for parents raising an autistic child, those who work in childcare with autistic children and people that are on the spectrum themselves. Forums on the app will explore different topics such as nutrition, education, community resources and much more. Iwonderspectrum is available on all platforms and all comments are able to be translated to your language of choice. I hope we can all connect and communicate and share this app to anyone we know thank you so much for your support.



For more information please click the link below

<https://www.iwonderspectrum.com/>

Website: 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



CR Smore

CR is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters





Hillcrest Academy North

May 2023

Principal's Message

The month of May was an exciting time at Hillcrest Academy North. As most of you know, we celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week at the beginning of this month. The week consisted of a continuous focus on our dedicated teachers and how they change the lives of our student population on a daily basis. We celebrated with a breakfast, students made cards with meaningful messages, and every morning we started the day with a quote dedicated to our teachers and how heroic they are to us. Next, we celebrated Cinco De Mayo. Ms. Flores did a wonderful job facilitating the event and relied on students to take the project from conception to completion. Lessons were learned about the history of the day, cultural music and foods were enjoyed by students and staff, and arts and crafts made by our very creative student population. 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!

May Updates

Enrollment: 90

Enrolled:1

Disenrolled: 1

Drills: Fire 5/24/23 Lockdown 5/30/23

Upcoming Dates

June 7th - Awards Night

June 14th - Senior Dinner

June 15 - HAN BBQ

June 16th - No School

June 15, 19, 20th - Early Dismissals

June 20th - Last Day of School!

Student of the Month

Elijah

Elijah is a junior at HAN and was named Student of the Month!

Elijah goes above and beyond in his classes to help other students complete assignments. He demonstrates being a student leader in the building by always offering to assist Mr. Jones with different projects. Elijah will be returning to HAN in the fall as a senior and we are very excited to see him continue to shine as he prepares for life after high school!



Teacher Spotlight



Mrs. Prieto, School Nurse

Mrs. Prieto has been working at Hillcrest Academy North for eighteen years as the School Nurse. Her calming presence makes both students and staff feel comfortable talking to her. Students stop by throughout the day and Mrs. Prieto is always there to offer any help she can. On May 10th, we celebrated Mrs. Prieto for School Nurse's Day! HAN Staff celebrated Mrs. Prieto with a card and a cake! We are incredibly grateful for everything Mrs. Prieto does!

Classroom Spotlights



Mrs. Machado, Mathematics Teacher

Mrs. Machado has been working towards preparing all her students for the 2023 Hillcrest Academy North's Annual Chess Tournament. Learning to play chess can help students acquire the cognitive skills needed to build strong math skills as well as in other subjects across the curriculum! Chess promotes higher-level thinking skills; analyzing chess positions strengthens

problem-solving skills; it develops spatial reasoning skills and visual memory; it improves attention span and sharpens self-confidence. Chess also increases intrinsic motivation to learn and helps students find enjoyment through mentally taxing activities.

To introduce the game, Machado's math classes watched the movie, *Critical Thinking*, based on the true story of the 1998 Miami Jackson High School chess team, the first inner-city team to win the U.S. National Chess Championship.

Machado's students began the lessons at the basics, learning piece's moves and abilities, then into the history and its relation to war tactics. Some students quickly advanced to becoming "Masters", having them be the teachers guiding and overlooking games. All students are engaged and motivated, looking forward to find out who is name the 2023 Chess Champion of the year.

Mrs. Goldenberg, Social Worker

May has been a productive month in the social work office.

Throughout the month, the social worker has met with Seniors to discuss academic progress – and more specifically to ensure that graduation requirements are being met. The social worker has been in regular contact with all counselors from Elizabeth to discuss this progress and to begin to prepare for graduation.



The theme of the month in May is Self-Reflection. The social worker has continued to work on SEL activities with classes. We did a review of progress this year and completed a questionnaire on the best way to end the year on a positive note. As it was teacher appreciation week, the students made cards for multiple teachers that they are thankful for. The social worker has continued to meet with students regularly for various needs: peer issues, issues within the home, and obtaining insurance to name a few. The social worker has also reached out to the truancy officer in Elizabeth multiple times to go to the homes of students. Many of these students return to school the very next day and get back on track.

We are looking forward to a June full of celebrations!

HAN Alumni



HAN Class of 2017 Alumni Kwame stopped by Hillcrest to visit with Mr. Marquet after running into Mrs. Goldenberg and current HAN students on a field trip to Union County College last month. Kwame discussed how his life has been since leaving Hillcrest. In the fall of 2017, Kwame was incarcerated and spent three years in prison. Almost a year after his release, Kwame was in a car accident that put him in a coma for a month and left him paralyzed from the shoulders down. After many months of physical therapy and determination to recapture his mobility, Kwame was able to regain his ability to walk. Kwame started taking classes at UCC in January 2023 and is majoring in business marketing. He also remains passionate about producing music. While talking with Kwame, he spent time reminiscing about his years at Hillcrest. He talked about how the teachers made him excited to learn and taught him skills that he didn't learn before. Kwame went on to discuss how passionate and caring the staff was and made him feel like he finally belonged at a school and enjoyed coming to Hillcrest everyday. Kwame talked with Mr. Marquet about his favorite HAN memory, going outside on Fridays to play basketball! We wish Kwame the best and look forward to his next visit!

May at HAN



Chess Tournament Preparation

Mrs. Machado's math classes are hard at work preparing for the upcoming HAN Annual Chess Tournament! Students spent time learning the rules and strategies for chess and have been working on their skills in practice games. Students are looking forward to the tournament in June!



Cinco De Mayo Celebration

Mrs. Flores and her Spanish classes put together a fantastic Cinco de Mayo Celebration! Students rotated between five stations focusing on Mexican food, music, history, games, and art. Each room had several student leaders to introduce the topic and guide their classmates through the activities. The celebration ended with a pot luck lunch featuring different Hispanic dishes!



Spirit Week

HAN Seniors Kenia, Taneiya, and Camila worked with Mrs. Rivas and Ms. Rosenfield to create the Spring Spirit Week! Each day was a different theme and included Decades Day, Character Day, Sports Day and Twin Day. The week ended with Freaky Friday where students dressed as teachers and teachers dressed like students. Spirit Week is always a fun time at HAN!

Theme of the Month: Self Reflection



Outdoor Fun

After a long week of State Testing, students were able to go outside and relax. Some students play basketball or walk around the Goldville



New Skills

HAN Social Worker, Mrs. Goldenberg, and Junior student Ximena started learning how to crochet by following online

Monday May 15th 2023

Do Now: May is mental health awareness month. What comes to mind when you hear the term 'mental health'?

Tuesday May 16th 2023

Do Now: Do you think mental health is just as important as physical health? Why or why not?

Wednesday May 17th 2023

Do Now: Do you think it should be more normal for people to talk about their mental health?

Thursday May 18th 2023

Do Now: Should schools do more to help their students with any mental health problems?

Ms. Killeen's Do Nows

Ms. Killeen created her Daily Do Now questions for her English classes based on the monthly theme of Self Reflection. Students spend the first few minutes of class

others relax on the playground. The nice weather and sunshine was a much needed break after the week of testing!

learning a new skills allows for the students to focus on the activity while chatting with Mrs. Goldenberg. We can't wait to see the finished projects!

independently answering the question and then sharing their answers in a small class discussion. Because May is Mental Health Awareness Month, Ms. Killeen combined both themes for a week to have students reflect on the importance of mental health.

HAN in the Community



Union County Scholars Breakfast

HAN's Valedictorian Josi and Salutatorian Jordi were honored for their outstanding academic achievements at the Union County Scholars Breakfast! Everyone at HAN is incredibly proud of Josi and Jordi for their dedication to their academics and we can't wait to see all the great things they accomplish in the future!



Team Building

HAN Staff spent time outside playing badminton together! Staff members were paired off into teams of two and learned the basics of the game; then the teams played games of 2v2. It was a great way to bond as a staff!

Union County Educational Services Commission Feedback Survey

Click the link above to complete the UCESC Feedback Survey!

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

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



John Marquet

John is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters





LMA May Monthly Report



"The humanity we all share is more important than the mental illnesses we may not" — Elyn R. Saks

Supervisor's Message

May is Mental Health Awareness month, but we should take care of our Mental Health every month.

Greetings,

I hope this Newsletter finds you well! As the LMA Supervisor of Instruction, I am truly proud of all the activities, events, lessons and counselling session that have Mental Health Awareness month infused into them! I would like to thank all the staff members at LMA who have made this possible. While you read this newsletter you will see all the wonderful activities that have taken place at LMA, along with all the awards LMA students have received!



Personally, I have a very soft spot for Mental Health as I've dedicated my entire professional career working in the Mental Health field. Prior to entering the world of education, I am humbled to have the opportunity to work as a Mental Health Counselor on an adult inpatient unit, and a Residence Counselor in an Adolescent Residence for 4 years after completing my college degree. Working in these settings gave me learning opportunities that resonate with me far deeper than any course I've taken. Receiving this opportunity gave me first hand experience on how to really actively listen

to individuals, have meaningful conversations, and establish firm limit setting. All of these experiences helped shape me to be a highly effective, special education mathematics teacher for the past 13 years, and now the opportunity to help assist Mr. Leibfried and Mrs. Ruchaevsky to successfully run Lamberts Mill Academy.

Unfortunately, nobody is immune to the daily stressors we all encounter in life. You will see the theme of stress presented throughout this newsletter, and I ask all readers to really think about your own stressors, and what you do to 'depress' yourself. For me; when I'm not running an IEP meeting, responding to a safety call, conducting an HIB investigation or monitoring state testing; I enjoy being outside working on my lawn and house with my kids during the weekends. Being able to carve out some time for yourself on a daily, weekly and even monthly basis is so important to managing stress, and keeping internal and external stressors at bay.

I hope you all enjoy our monthly newsletter!

Monthly Data

Acceptances - 2

New Students - 1

Student Intakes - 5

Referrals - 7

Disenrollment - 0

Emergency Management Drill: (Evacuation (non-fire) On-site (5/11/2023)

Fire Drill - (5/17/2023)

LMA Student of the Month - May 2023

Farad W.

LMA staff have all voted for the month of May's Student of the Month. The student that received the most number of votes for his dedication, persistence and growth for the month of May is Farad. He has started with the LMA community mid school year. Even though he transitioned during the school year, he has been incredibly focused on completing his academic high school career at LMA. Appropriately advocating for himself, he intends to complete his high school career next January in order to pursue his post-graduate goals. Farad has shown the LMA community how hard work, dedication and high levels of respect can help you succeed with your future plans. We are all proud of Farad's progress at LMA, his academic dedication and his growth in the school community!



Staff Spotlight - Mrs. Danielle Ruchaevsky

Mrs. Danielle Ruchaevsky - Clinicial Director

LMA's very own, Mrs. Ruchaevsky, is our staff spotlight for the month of May. Prior to joining us at LMA, Mrs. Ruchaevsky gained valuable experience working in both hospital crisis units, and partial hospitalization programs. No stranger to working with individuals with clinical needs, she started working at LMA in 2005 joining the clinical team as a school based clinician. After working as a clinician for LMA, and providing valuable therapeutic feedback for the LMA school program to evolve for 9 successful years, she was promoted to Clinical Director in 2014, leading the therapeutic team with her wealth of knowledge and expertise. She is a central part of the LMA team providing knowledge regarding our student's diagnoses, serving on the school safety team, leading and instructing her therapist to tend to all LMA student needs and helping the program progress are just some of the things Mrs. Ruchaevsky does on a daily basis. LMA is truly fortunate to have such a talented, and knowledgeable Clinical Director working with us day in and day out.



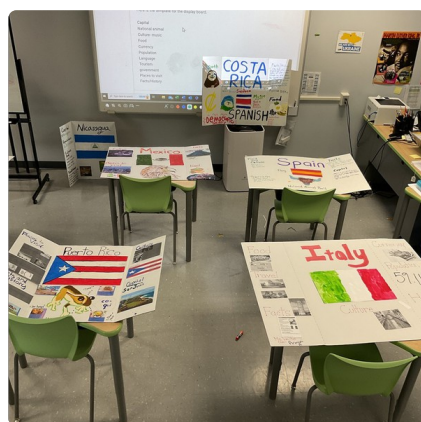
When Mrs. Ruchaevsky is not at LMA, she enjoys the following activities to help her destress; long walks with her dog, riding bikes with her kids, watching her kids participate in various sports and endless days at the Jersey Shore!

Classroom Spotlights



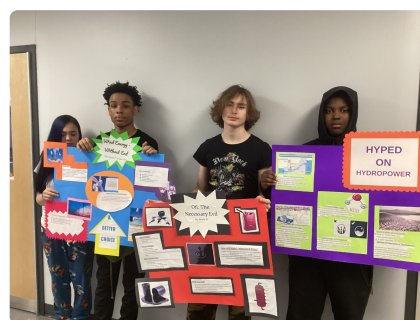
Mrs. Finver brings back the Java Joint

Mrs. Finver has been leading the charge with students creating their own original creative writings and expressions. This is the first year LMA was able to welcome back the Java Joint. LMA's cafeteria was converted into a coffee house, open mic café room in which students presented different platforms to their peers and staff. LMA has unique students: and



Mrs. Van Clief's Classes Presents about Different Cultures.

Students in all History classes learned about countries and cultures from all over the world. They researched various topics for their display boards and learned about various topics which include culture, currency, tourism, government, places to visit, facts and history. Students learned and researched the architecture, murals and art exhibits that



Ms. Cosio's Science Class Learns about Renewable Energy

Students in Ms. Cosio's Science class spent the month of May learning all about the differences between Renewable and Non-Renewable energy sources. Energy sources is a very popular topic dominating many students current events throughout the school year. For the month of May students had the opportunity to research a Renewable or Non-Renewable, than create detailed posters on

students we're able to showcase some of their original works, poems, perform songs, and even present jokes to the crowd. This was a great event as it allowed our students to get up in front of a crowd, and to present to their fellow peers and staff. Select Westlake students even got the opportunity to watch as LMA students performed. Finally, students had their original artwork displayed throughout the cafeteria giving it a true coffee house feel.

would be in these countries. Some of the art was recreated for their display. Many of the Art History students made Art for a French cafe and it was incorporated in our coffee house, Java Joint. The Spanish classes also researched Spanish countries to be incorporated in our multicultural month as well.

all the different research based facts and myths about each energy source. Students concluded the project by presenting the research and presented information to their peers.

Month at School

LMA Honors Scholastic Achievement for Jahzara D. & Steven A.

LMA is proud to recognize and honor students Jahzara D. and Steven A. as the LMA Outstanding Scholastic Achievement award recipients. Both students attended a breakfast award ceremony with students from Union County.



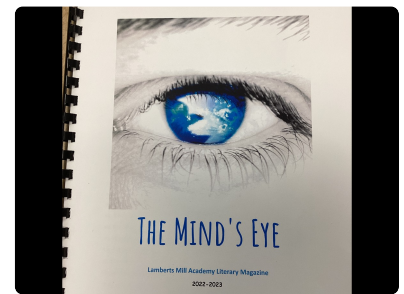
Post Graduates Wrap up with the Westfield Food Pantry

LMA Post Graduates, and Senior Michael R. conclude the year with a final visit to the Westfield Food Pantry. Through this experience they we're able to help, and see the operations of the Westfield Food Pantry with the guidance of former LMA teacher, Mr. Convery. We are thankful for their help, and hope they've learned a lot with this work based experience.



The Mind's Eye

LMA is happy to announce the return of the annual publication, "The Mind's Eye" this month. This is a collection of pieces of artwork, and creative writings created by LMA students. When you visit our facility please ask to view it!



Mental Health Awareness (Self-Reflection)



LMA Stress Survey

While discussing mental health awareness through various Group Therapy sessions, it became evident that stress was a common theme. While students learned about and discussed different internal and external stressors they may experience on a daily basis; it was important for groups to recognize ways they can alleviate and manage stress. Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Charletta's groups though it would be interesting to create a school wide stress survey to see how LMA students and staff appropriately 'de-stress'. The results are posted below with a majority of the LMA community relying on communicating with friends and family as an effective way to manage their stress.



Managing Mental Health with Life Skills Group Therapy

Life Skills have been focusing on mental health awareness month. Students have been working collaboratively to bring awareness to mental health. Students have created a bulletin board entitled "you cannot pour from an empty cup". Students researched different mental health topics including anger, stress, depression and anxiety to find facts and statistics on the topics. Students have also come up with coping skills to fill said empty cup on the bulletin board. In class, we continue to discuss mental health stigma and various topics to continue to bring awareness.



New Point Presents Mental Health Issues and continues with Yoga

Students at New Point learned that the month of May is a time to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding behavioral health issues. Each student had a topic of their choice to elaborate about the many different mental health issues and how they affect all of us. They were presented on Google Slides and students really did a wonderful job. Yoga has also been incorporated into our program and students participate once a week to help New Point students to promote stress reduction.

UNION COUNTY teenarts



Erzuli shares their Poetry with LMA and judges.

Erzuli is able to present her original poem about her life experiences, and receive meaningful critique from the Teen Arts Festival judge.



LMA students get hands on with a sculpting class.

LMA students participated in many different stations set up throughout the festival. The most popular station was the sculpting table in which students received instructional steps on how to properly knead clay to make a human sculpture.



Jahzara D. performs in the Musical Theater and Pop

Jahzara had the wonderful opportunity to perform amongst other fine Union county students. Singing in the, "Musical Theater and Pop" category, Jahzara's performance of *Fools Rush In*, with the assistance of Mr. Cerra left the judge in tears! LMA students and staff we're proud to support Jahzara in the performance.

School in the Community

1. Mr. Bell and our Post Graduate students continue to assist with the Westfield Food Bank
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.
3. LMA Students attend the Union County Teen Arts Festival and receive professional critique for their performances and work.

LMA Students Outside of the Classroom

Michael Richards - UCHRC Student Unity Achievement Award Recipient

LMA is proud to acknowledge our very own, Michael Richards, for being awarded the 2023 Unity Achievement Award for a student from the Union County Human Relations Commission. Michael received this award for his dedication, hard work and wonderful progress while starting LMA as an 8th grade student. He is now a 12th grade student, graduating high school in a few weeks, and LMA couldn't be prouder of his growth both academically and therapeutically. Michael has been a model LMA student in the community. He often looks to help his fellow peers and staff members in any way he can, usually assisting with technology. Michael has been incredibly supportive emotionally to some of his peers on a daily basis, usually maintaining a positive outlook, and pride in his daily progress to reach and maintain therapeutic goals.



Unfortunately, Michael was unable to attend the UCHRC award event, but the UCHRC was incredibly generous to dedicate time from their busy schedule to personally address Michael during school hours. Michael was personally delivered his award from UCESC Board President, Mrs. Lorraine Aklonis & UCHRC secretary, Mrs. Karen Positan while Michael's mother, sister and LMA staff and students we're proud to watch Michael's special moment.

LMA is incredibly thankful to the UCHRC for awarding Michael this prestigious award, and we will always be proud of the progress and growth Michael has made with LMA while attending our school!

For more information on the Union County Human Relations Commission please see below:
<https://ucnj.org/uchrc/>

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/1FAIpQLScdBdrjEV5Dmat0XfEV_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

Instagram: 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.



LMA Smore

LMA is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



Supervisor's Message

"A Good Teacher is Like a Candle-It Consumes Itself to Light the Way for Others"-Unknown

After 25 years of enlightening minds, igniting imagination and instilling a love of learning to all her students and the Westlake Community as a whole, BJ Robles will be retiring at the end of this month. As one of her colleagues has written, "BJ is a creative, compassionate teacher who loves her profession." To her core, BJ has always embodied patience, practiced kindness and shared her love of literature and the spoken and written word to all her students, staff and families. BJ has a sharp wit and a kind heart and has always embraced the idea that inspiration and education begin with motivation and encouragement.

We are all extremely grateful for all the years of passion and dedication that BJ has displayed on a daily basis for the past 25 years and she will be missed by the students, their families, staff and administrators alike. Take heart in knowing though that your educational message that teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is really what matters and will continue to live on.

THANK YOU BJ and ENJOY YOUR NEXT LIFE'S CHAPTER!!!!

School Data Download

Enrollment: 64
Acceptances: 1
Intakes: 5
Referrals: 5
Disenrollment: 0
On Site Evacuation: May 11, 2023
Fire Drill: May 17, 2023



Westlake's May Spotlights!



Student of the Month

JW received the Student of the Month Award for his continued success in academic excellence and growth in the areas of independence and self awareness. Congrats JW!



Principal's Award

WA received the Principal's Award for his willingness to always help others, his positive spirit and his active peer modeling. Fantastic job WA!



Custodial Spotlight

Therapist Spotlight

Mrs. Sara

Favorite Band- The Beatles

Favorite Movie- Good Will Hunting

Hobbies- Hanging with her kids!

Spirit Animal- Swan

Paraprofessional

Spotlight

Mrs. Dolce

Favorite Song- "Perfect" by Ed Sheeran

Favorite Movie- It's a Wonderful Life

Hobbies- Being with her Grandchildren, going to the beach, and going out to dinner!

Spirit Animal- Cheetah

Mr. Ed

Favorite Band- Iron Maiden

Favorite Movie- Rambo

Hobbies- Bicycling and Gardening!

Spirit Animal- Eagle

2023 Westlake School Prom

With the help of Westlake staff members, outside volunteers and the gracious accommodations that Holy Spirit Church made to host the event, the 2023 Westlake School Prom was a "Rock your party, rock your body" major success. Students, family members and staff alike "Uptown funk'd" their way to student recommended songs, Electric "slided" their way to vintage favorites and celebrated the "Last Dance" to the end of an eventful 2023 school year.





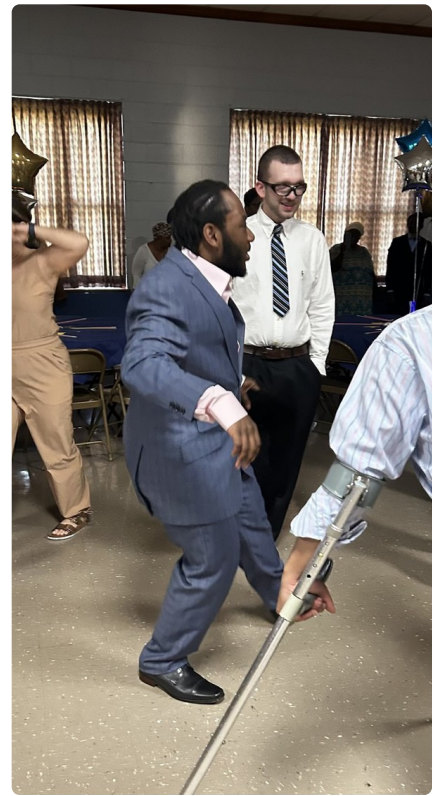
"It Takes Two to Make Things Go Right"

TP and KB bustin' a move on the dance floor.



Styling and Profiling

Mrs. Convery, RG and Mr. Carten posing for the Prom Picture.



Dancing shoes don't fail me now

Students showing off their "mad" skills on the dance floor during the Prom.

Ms. Alison's Occupational Therapy Spotlight

In Occupational Therapy we have been having fun working on our ADL's.

Our students are working hard to improve their independence in taking care of themselves. They use songs and videos to thoroughly brush their teeth and clean and dry their hands. They are learning to dress themselves, fold laundry, and manage fasteners such as buttons, zippers, belts, and tying their shoes.

This Month we used the microwave and oven to make sweet and sour dino nuggets, we used the blender to make smoothies, we used a fork and knife to cut fruit and to spread jelly on toast and crackers. We also followed picture recipes to make honey mustard pretzels and nachos on Cinco de Mayo.

In each activity the students learn to follow directions, organize materials, and clean up after themselves. The students enjoy eating together and working on table manners when they enjoy the meals they made together.



May at Westlake!

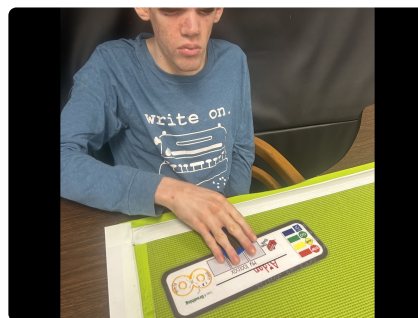
“Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forwards” -Soren K.



Mother's Day Sale 2023

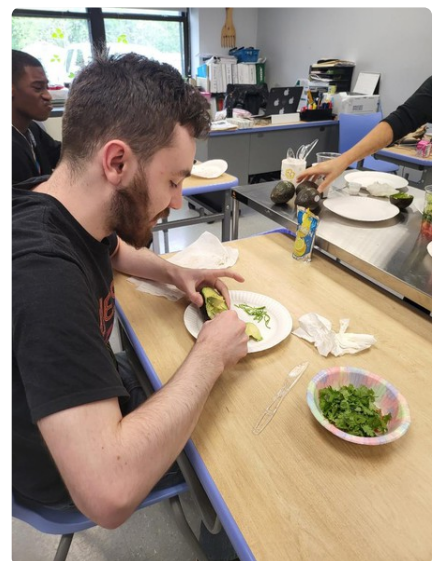
Sell, Sell, Sell

Mrs. Shaw's class hard at work selling student created Mother's Day gifts.



Let's take time to Self Reflect

AF learning to become self reflective during a self-awareness activity for Mental Health Awareness Month.



"Tengo Hambre"

NA showing off his culinary skills during a Cinco De Mayo activity.

Westlake Out and About!



Can I interest you in a beverage?

WC presenting beverage options to our guests during an Open House.



Let's play 18 holes!

Students enjoying their time on the Mini-Golf outing.



He works hard for the money!

WB making change during a sale.

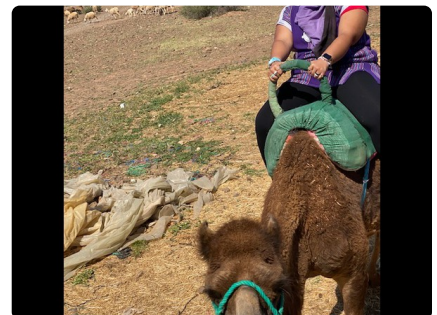
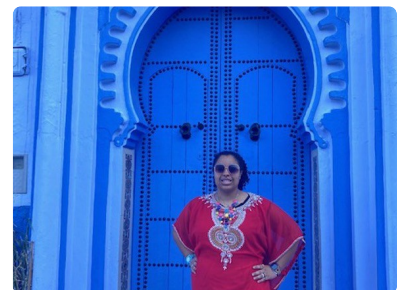
A Morocc'ing Good Time

My name is Tianna. During spring break, I went to Morocco and Portugal with my mommy, Deedee, and Tarika.

I rode a camel and helicopter. I took pictures with a falcon, camel, and monkey. I was a bit scared to take pictures with a camel and a monkey.

I liked the blue city (Chefchaouen) because everything was blue.

I liked hiking the most. I want to travel to other countries.



All Vital Signs point to why we love Nurse Veronica



Happy Nurse Appreciation Day Nurse Veronica!



Nurse Veronica being showered with gifts and love.

He's the Man! CA proudly showing off his 84 Special Olympic Medals he has won



Visit us on Instagram!

Visit us on Facebook!

Union County Educational Services Feedback Survey



Contact Us

Website: www.ucesc.org/schools/westlake_school

Location: [1571 Lamberts Mill Rd, Westfield, NJ, USA](https://www.google.com/maps/place/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

May 2023 Monthly Report

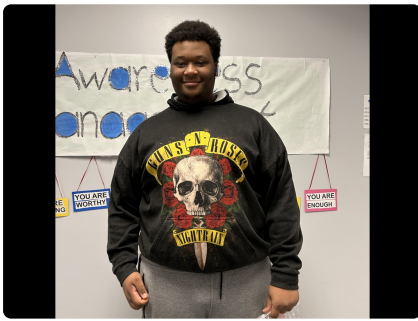


Dr. Balsamello's Message

Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) staff and students focused on Self-Reflection for Mental Health Awareness through SEL activities as well as observed Asian Pacific American Heritage for the month of May. Everyone is excited to have begun the fourth marking period and have been working towards completing their academic goals!

May 2023 Enrollment Data

1. Enrollment-100
2. New Students-4
3. Intakes-tbd
4. Disenrollments-3
5. Fire Drill-5/17/23
6. Other Drill (Emergency Drill: Evacuation (non-fire) On-site)-5/11/23



May Student of the Month

Congratulations to Brandon S who was picked for Student of the Month. When asked by his teachers what makes Brandon their choice for this award, the teachers were more than willing to sing his praises. For example, Ms Duarte's comment was "Brandon is someone that comes into class with great energy and a desire to learn. His energy rubs off on his classmates and it's great to see him hold onto this enthusiasm as he approaches the end of his senior year." Ms Clark chimed in with "Brandon has demonstrated a drive to learn and succeed. He came into the 4th marking period ready to thrive and he is! I am so proud of him!" Great job Brandon!



Staff Spotlight

Ms Clark has been on staff here at HAS for 18 years! She was the first person that Dr. Balsamello hired to work at HAS. One of Ms Clark's favorite places to go to is Lancaster County, Pa. Before getting into education, Ms Clark used to be an Assistant Vice President on Wall Street! One hobby she loves to do is to re-home stray kittens and cats. Some other fun favorites; color is blue, food is pizza, snack is spearmint gum!!



Teacher Spotlight

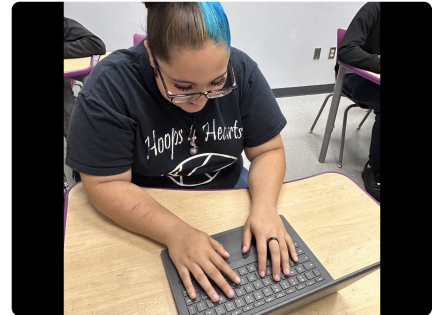
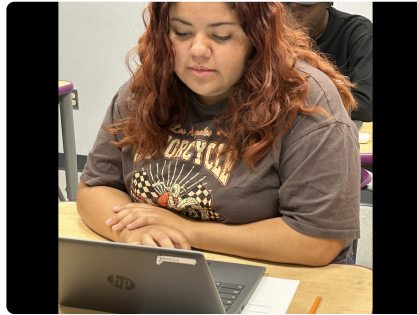
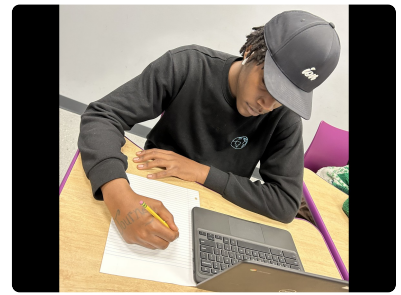
Ms Wrzesinski, aka Ms W, has been a teacher at HAS for 6 years. She didn't start out as a history teacher as she originally studied Diplomacy and International Relations with a concentration in Economics and Italian studies at Seton Hall University. Ms W's goal was to work in international commerce where she interned. Lucky for Ms W that the recession hindered those plans because it brought her to HAS! She then went to St. John's University in NYC for her masters in education. She used to work at WSOU in college which is NJ's and the tri-state areas only rock/metal station. It is also where she met her husband! Ms W truly LOVES working at HAS and feels honored to work with such amazing admin, faculty, and students. Some fun facts about Ms W is she loves anything purple, polka dotted, or glittery.

Classroom Spotlights

Ms. Rubin's Classroom

In Health/PE Credit Retrieval the students are learning about how going effects our immune

systems and to start healthy habits when we are young, as well as the difference between cardiovascular and resistance training. The students are creating slideshows about athletes that inspire them, they will explain how the athlete rose to the level of play that they engage in today, and how that inspires them. The class is small so the students are able to get individual attention from Ms. Rubin. I enjoy working with them as a group and individually. In the health office, Ms Rubin is continuing with annual screenings of vision and hearing as required by the department of health.



Mr Peters' Classroom

Students in Health and Physical Education have been working hard during the month of May thanks to the wonderful weather we have been afforded this month. Although we are still without a gymnasium due to the flooding, students are still able to participate in many sports on nice days. Utilizing the parking lot, students are engaged in sports such as basketball, football, soccer, frisbee, and even cardiovascular exercises such as walking and running. For Health we have started Unit 4: Community Health Skills. Students are beginning to learn about life saving techniques such as CPR/AED, first aid, and other life threatening emergencies.



Month of Mental Health Awareness and Self Reflection



HAS Affirmation Station

With May being Mental Health Awareness month, Ms Vlastaras put up an Affirmation Wall. The wall consists of empowering messages like "You are Strong" and "You are Enough" for when HAS students need a reminder of how important they are. Also posted are tips and methods to help control anxiety, build self-esteem, and how to distinguish between what is "in my control" and "out of my control". To add to the meaningful wall, there is a mirror in the center of it all so students can see themselves in the mirror as they say the affirmations to themselves.



A little piece of L&T

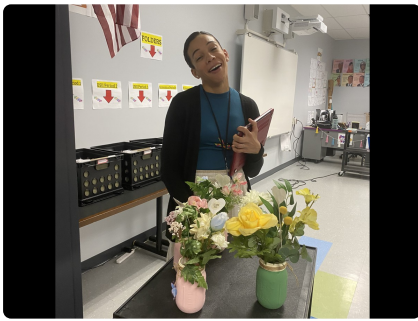
Ever since Lord & Taylor, this sign is a daily reminder of Self-Awareness and Management that has been on display thanks to our Spanish Teacher Ms Flores. Even though this month focuses on Self-Awareness and Mental Health, HAS has always been advocates and supportive of mental health for both students and staff. As staff we try to demonstrate self love and acceptance to be role models for the students as well as supporting them and each other in the process.



Outstanding Scholar Breakfast

On May 15th, students attended a breakfast that celebrated the Union County Outstanding Scholars. Valerie C and Kamori B were among those who received the honor of having the highest GPAs of the year at HAS. Both of these students are very deserving of such an award because of their dedication, hard work, great attendance, and optimistic attitude. Congratulations Valerie and Kamori on a job well done! You have made HAS very proud!

Appreciation Celebrations



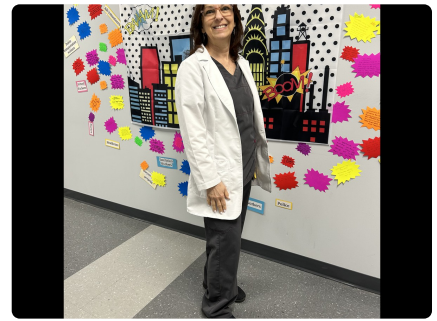
Teacher Appreciation Week

Teacher Appreciation Week started the week before on Teacher Appreciation Day. Dr Balsamello bought a Chili's lunch for the faculty and staff to celebrate all the hard work they have put in this school year. The following week Teachers were surprised with gifts of flowers and written sentiments from students as well as shout outs from fellow faculty members from across the district. Thank you teachers for all you do!



Principal's Appreciation Day

May 1st was Principal Appreciation Day and HAS could not have asked for a better principal! Dr Balsamello was surprised with a breakfast and written sentiments from faculty and students. Thank you Dr Balsamello for all the support you give to the faculty and staff!



Nurse Appreciation Week

Nurse Appreciation Week and Teacher Appreciation Week always falls on the same week, which is fitting for our school nurse, Ms Rubin, who does both! Ms Rubin is always ready and willing to help students in need. Ms Rubin also has a Health Credit Retrieval class that she oversees and is there to help students with any questions. Thank you so much Ms Rubin for all you do; HAS is very lucky to have you!

Our Students In and Out of School

Fresh Cut!

About 4 years ago Kevin ended up taking lessons on how to cut hair, but he didn't start to take his craft seriously until last November. At first, he didn't really have an interest in it; he was forced by his mom to learn during the summer. Then last year friends started asking about it. Kevin realized that he can now use the lessons he learned and took them on as clients. Cutting hair has now turned into a passion and he has realized he has a great talent for it. When asked how does cutting hair make you feel, Kevin replied with "It makes me feel happy that I'm doing this because I'm learning more every day without me knowing and I hope to someday be someone big in the world".



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

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](#)

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



HAS Smore

HAS is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

