



Lamberts Mill Academy Monthly Report

"This is a new year. A new beginning. And things will change."

— Taylor Swift

Administrators' Message

A message from LMA Administration

Greetings,

We hope this Newsletter finds everyone getting into the school year routine as we complete our first month of school! LMA is excited with the start of the 2023-2024 school year as we start new initiatives to enhance the educational and social experience at LMA! Some new faces join the LMA community as we welcome new teachers, teacher assistants and therapists to help promote our positive, school culture. We are proud to build on our successful team of LMA staff with the addition of a full time Music teacher, Work based learning for our post graduate program and a full time RBT to help assist with students, and manage behavioral points. We hope you are as excited for the new school year as we are! The LMA team is here to support all students, parents/guardians and sending district staff. We hope to hear from everyone in the future, and that your school year is off to a great start!



Mr. Leibfried & Mr. Lopreiato

Monthly Data

Enrollment: 34

Acceptances: 0

New Students: 2

Intakes: 2

Referrals: 7

Disenrollment: 1

Fire Drill: 9/15 9:40am

Emergency Management Drill: 9/12 9:15am

Upcoming Events

October 2-6 - Week of Respect

October 9 - School Closed (Professional Development Day)

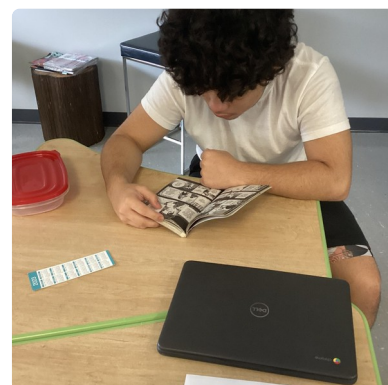
October 31 - Halloween Festivities



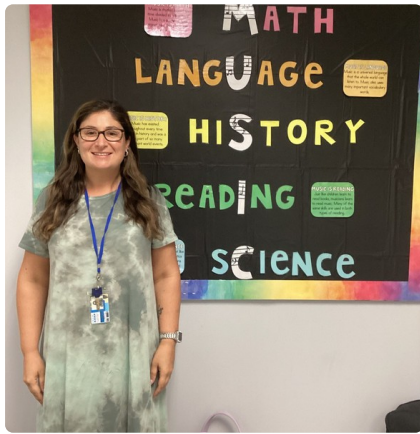
LMA Student of the Month - September 2023

Riley G.

The LMA Staff has voted on the first student of the month for the month of September. While there were many great candidates for student of the month, Riley G. came out victorious with the most amount of votes. Riley recently graduated 8th grade this past Spring; and has started the school year as a Freshman. He has been consistently working hard in all his academic courses, while staying focused and on task. Riley has become the model LMA student by 'working hard, playing hard' completing his assignments in a timely manner; and often earning enough points to participate in the Gymnasium during earned time, primarily playing intense basketball games. We hope Riley can continue to grow, and serve as model student to his peers at LMA.



LMA New Teacher Spotlight



Ms. Schnedier - Music Teacher

All about Ms. Schnedier, Professionally education is my second career, and I couldn't be happier! I majored in Music Business at Berklee College of Music and worked at WPLJ-FM in New York City for 6 years. This is my 10th year in education, this year returning to LMA to be the Music Teacher in the newly created position. It feels great to be back with my "LMA Family". On a personal note, in addition to loving music and art, I enjoy camping, kayaking and fishing when I have free time.



Mr. Acosta - Post Graduate WBL Teacher

All About Mr. Acosta, This is the start of my 17th year of teaching. I previously worked at the UCESC Work Readiness Academy. I love giving students various work-based learning experiences to help identify what they like and are good at. When I'm not teaching I enjoy watching all kinds of sports!



Ms. Fite - Science Teacher

All About Ms. Fite, I am certified in Adult/pediatric CPR/AED and I am a certified Peer Recovery Specialist, I have a B.A., Teacher of the Handicapped Teaching. I have been in education for 26 years; 3 as a paraprofessional, 23 as a Special Education Teacher (22 years in NJ and 1 year in Florida) On a personal note, I am an avid equestrian and have owned 2 horses.

Classroom Spotlights



A look into Ms. Finver's ELA Classes



Mr. Bell's Social Studies classes start with the home state, NJ.



Mr. Peter's PE Classes start their own fitness journey.

Students have been working hard to start the year at Lambert's Mill Academy. We

Students outlined classroom norms and expectations for the class structure. We got to know each other through the creation of a bulletin board ,“You are an important piece of the puzzle” as well as playing a get to know you bingo game. We have begun Unit I Argumentative writing and Non Fiction by creating short writings explaining our opinions on various topics guided by the RACER writing format. Each student has explored our library and has chosen an independent reading novel. Lastly, we celebrated Hispanic Heritage month by viewing various digital speakers and followed a graphic organizer to depict what more students learned in regards to Latinx globally.

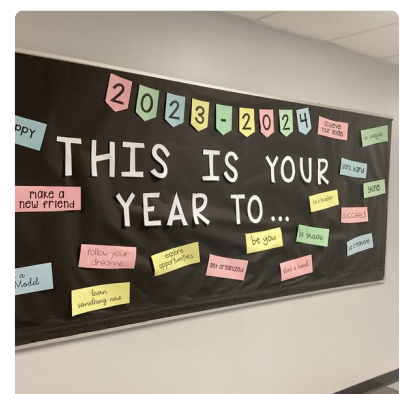
All of the classes began the year with a review of New Jersey. We looked at its geography, its varied topography, its industries and population mix. We also reviewed the way immigration trends have affected our state from the 1800's to now. World History began with a look at the Age of Exploration and the role of natural resources, climate and the topography of Europe. US History I started with the impact of the Atlantic Slave trade and the impact it had on the native African tribes as well as the agricultural economy of the South. US History II studied the Industrial Revolution - its roots in Europe - and the effect it had on the new colonies of America. Major inventors were identified and we watched the urban areas grow based on the boost in factories.

began the school year with the Fitness Unit where students participated in multiple fitness activities. Exercises include yoga, Pilates, cardiovascular training, strength training, and stretching. Students were introduced to all the new and exciting machines and equipment that were purchased over the summer. Students loved the variety and challenges faced during the activity, and all enjoyed themselves.

LMA SEL Monthly Theme: Self-Awareness & Management

Life Skills classes start the year on a positive note

The students at LMA kicked off September with an exciting return to the school building. They eagerly engaged in their group therapy with ice breakers and getting to know their peers within their groups. The students were encouraged to identify short and long term goals that will be revisited over the next few months to see if these goals have been met. Students have also started Overcoming Obstacles, a social emotional curriculum that includes lessons and activities on communication, decision making, career readiness, and more!



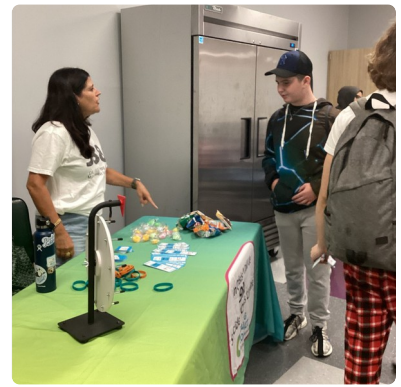
Caring Contact visits LMA

LMA is thankful and appreciative to Mrs. Ramirez, our district wide student assistance coordinator. Mrs. Ramirez was instrumental in coordinating a representative from Caring Contact to come visit the student population at LMA during their lunch period. Students learned about Caring Contact,

and some of the supports the provide for all students in New Jersey. It was great for students to feel supported, and for LMA to proactively create connections for our students.

Caring Contact

<https://caringcontact.org/>



Mrs. Ramirez our Student Assistance Coordinator and Ms Bell from Caring Contact.

LMA Students in the Community

LMA would like to conclude this monthly newsletter by spotlighting how our students help out in their community. For the month of September, LMA is going to spotlight Farad W. a senior at LMA. Ever since starting at LMA, Farad has always had a strong work drive both in the classroom, and in the community. While LMA is promoting our transition preparation, career exploration and work based learning programs for seniors; Farad has had no problem gaining work experience himself. Working in multiple different businesses throughout Cranford, and Garwood. Presently, Farad is a manager at a Wendy's fast food restaurant in Garwood. Farad said he enjoys working with people, and feels his work



experience at Wendy's is preparing him for his career after graduating high school. We are proud to have Farad with us at LMA, and making us proud as a positive worker in the community.

School in the Community

1. Post-Graduate Program is beginning to make connections with local businesses.
2. Monthly Community Meeting to acknowledge student achievement

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

The Work Readiness Academy

SEPTEMBER 2023 MONTHLY REPORT



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear WRA Families,

It has been a fantastic first month of the school year here at the Work Readiness Academy! We've spent the opening weeks helping our students acclimate to their new routines - and get to know each other and our staff. We are excited to have ten new students, plus two others who joined us for the first time over the summer! Many new faces...and wonderful personalities.

As we transition into October, our students will be starting their Work-Based Learning (WBL) internship experiences. Each student will be assigned to one internship on Monday and Wednesday, and a second experience on either Tuesday or Thursday. Classroom instruction focused on Employability Skills and Career Exploration will take place on either Tuesday or Thursday (when your child is not in the field). We will be sending home a copy of each student's weekly growth tracker on Friday afternoons so that you can keep abreast of their learning and growth at their WBLs.

I hope to see all of you at our upcoming Back to School Night event on Tuesday, October 3rd!

Sincerely,

Josh Bornstein

Director at the UCESC Work Readiness Academy

SEPTEMBER 2023 DATA

Enrollment as of September 29, 2023

Actual: 30

Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 0

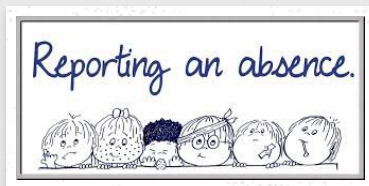
Referrals: 2

Intakes Scheduled: 1

Accepted:

September 13th - Fire Drill

September 19th - Tabletop EM Drill



STUDENT ABSENCES, LATE ARRIVALS & EARLY DISMISSALS

As a reminder, in the event that your child will be absent, arriving late, or 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

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT AT THE WORK READINESS ACADEMY

WHEN

TUESDAY, OCT. 3RD, 6:30PM

WHERE

**970 SUBURBAN ROAD
UNION, NJ**

MORE INFORMATION

Parents and Guardians are encouraged to join us! We will share information about plans and goals for the school year, including new programming components. You will also get the chance to spend time with your child's teacher in the classroom.

Light refreshments will be served. Our program will run from 6:30-8:00pm.

This event is for parents and guardians only. Students should not attend. Younger siblings are welcome, if child care is an issue :)

**Please RSVP to Maureen Wakeman at
mwakeman@ucesc.org or call (908) 633-2704.**

SEPTEMBER INSTRUCTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

September has been filled with a variety of activities to support our staff and students in getting to know one another! Students have enjoyed playing human bingo, would you rather and 4 corners as a whole group, providing an opportunity to hear about individual likes, experiences, challenges and opinions across a variety of environments.

We have also begun to explore our first social emotional learning topic this school year, self awareness. WRA creativity is on display with our self portrait silhouettes, visually representing who we are and where we are going!

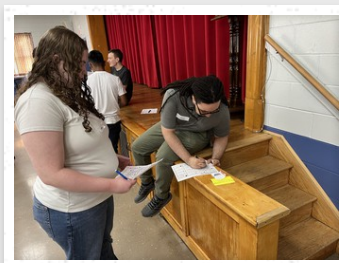
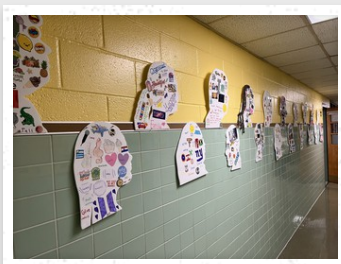
As we gear up for our Work Based Learning (WBL) internships to begin students have also been working collaboratively to research and explore a variety of local businesses to discover positions available, skills required and ways they can practice those skills in school, during internships, and at home to prepare themselves to enter the workforce. Students have also had the opportunity to practice their communication skills as they share their findings with the group to inform each other of potential employment opportunities in the future!

We are wrapping up September with a bang as we discover Hispanic Heritage through food! WRA will be hosting its first ever food truck fair in which students will research and prepare a dish from some select Hispanic cultures. Working collaboratively, students will research, cook, design and present their discoveries to staff and students from across the Commission!

¡Buen provecho!

Rachel Richer

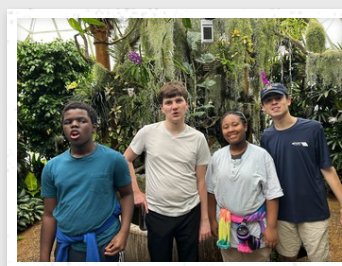
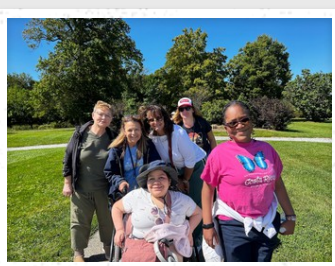
WRA Supervisor of Instruction



SEPTEMBER COMMUNITY TRIP

Our first "program-wide" trip of the year was to **Duke Farms** in Hillsborough, New Jersey. Duke Farms is a 2,700 acre center for environmental stewardship that restores the natural environment, invests in sustainability innovation while offering visitors free inclusive and

accessible resources for finding their place in nature. The weather was perfect! Enjoy some pictures below.



SEPTEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Michael Stephens has been selected as our Student of the Month for September 2023!

Michael arrives each day to our program with a positive attitude and is kind to everyone, including the bus driver who he always remembers to thank when he gets off the bus in the morning and afternoon!

Congratulations, Michael!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet **Sarah Cooke!**

Work Readiness Academy Teaching Assistant (Sarah is also one of our licensed drivers to transport students).

How long have you worked at UCESC? This is my 12th year!

What do you love most about your job?

I am truly passionate about supporting all young adult interns along their journey to future employment. There is nothing more fulfilling than watching our interns successfully apply the skills they develop and learn through our dedication.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Spending time with my family and 2 "hotdogs" Abby & Moose, love to draw, paint, design (anything), plant, garden, being in nature, hanging at the firepit on a cool night, going out on a boat and fishing in the ocean,..... but my absolute favorite thing to do is watching the beautiful sunrises and sunsets on LBI!

What is one thing that would surprise people about you?



COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

This month we spotlight and thank...

Hilltop Bicycles - a premiere cycle shop on the east coast. The WRA partners with the location in Cranford, New Jersey. As part of the WBL experience at Hilltop our students learn basic bike maintenance & assembly.

I enjoy driving an ATV and often go ATV-ing in the woods behind our property. I also operate our ATV with a snowplow during a winter storm....which is pretty fun!

AN INTRODUCTION TO DDD SERVICES & MEDICAID – PART 1

WHEN
THURSDAY, OCT. 12TH, 5:30PM

WHERE
THIS IS AN ONLINE EVENT.

MORE INFORMATION

Join us for this virtual event where we will cover:

- Overview of DDD (NJ Division of Development Disabilities)
- Qualification Criteria
- Options to Access Medicaid

We will be sharing the link in a separate email as the date of the event gets closer.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Caregiver Support Group at the JCC



with Lisa Afflitto,
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Wednesdays

October 18, November 15, December 20,
January 17, February 21, March 20, April 17,
May 15, June 19

7:30 - 8:45 p.m.

Raising a child with special needs is challenging and requires a unique approach. Join Lisa Afflitto, LCSW, for a monthly support group where caregivers can learn strategies to support their own mental wellness, share their experiences and meet/connect with other caregivers. This monthly group is free.

Lisa Afflitto is a seasoned Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), a NJ certified Special Education teacher and the owner of Integrative Therapy Solutions, LLC. Her clinical focus is in supporting adults (18+) and families, who are navigating life either as an individual with a disability, or as a caregiver to a child or adult with a disability.

Lisa has a passion for facilitating support groups and bringing caregivers together to connect in a supportive space.

For questions and registration, contact Beth Mitchell, Director of Inclusion and Diversity, at BMitchell@jccnj.org.

The JCC of Central NJ is committed to accessibility and inclusion.
To request accommodations, please contact Beth Mitchell
at bmitchell@jccnj.org at least two weeks prior to an event.

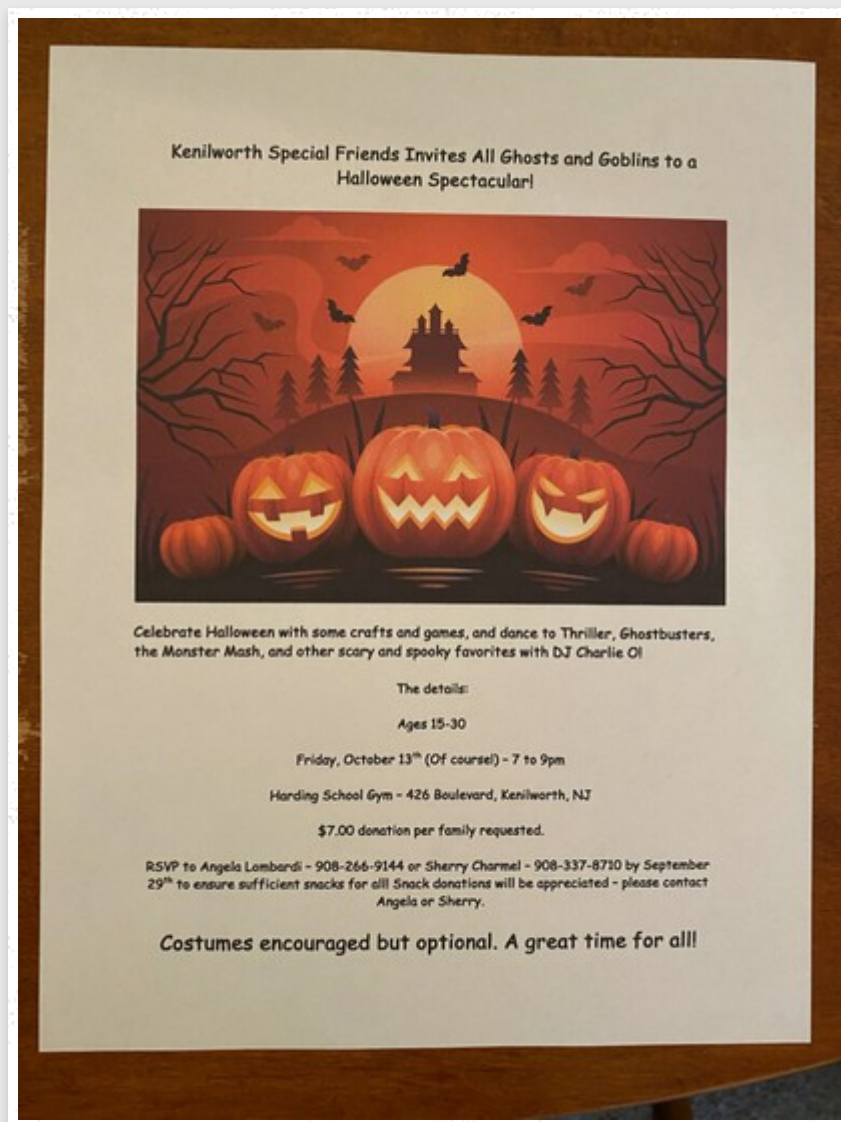


Help us stock and fund
Bagged with Love for the
food insecure. Food or
fund donations welcome
at this event!
Scan and learn more!



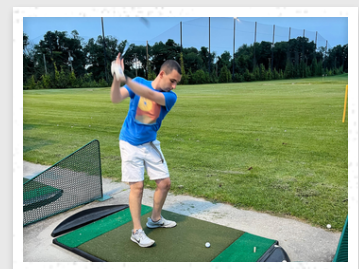
1391 Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076
908-889-8800 • www.jccnj.org





SPOTTED IN THE COMMUNITY!

Congratulations to former WRA student **Jonathan Wiener** who has been selected to play for Team New Jersey in the [Special Olympics North American \(SONA\) Golf Championship](#) in October. The SONA Golf Championship will take place at Seaview Golf Course from Oct. 2 to Oct. 5, and will feature over 200 athletes from North America.



Click here to read more: <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/scotch-plains-slash-fanwood/sections/sports/articles/scotch-plains-resident-jonathan-wiener-selected-to-nj-special-olympics-golf-team>

Good luck, Jon. We are so proud of you!



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 INSTAGRAM!



Westlake's Monthly Report

September 2023

Principal's Message

Westlake Information

Enrollment: 55

Acceptances: 0

Intakes: 1

Referrals: 3

Disenrollment: 1

Test of the EM audio system: September 12, 2023

Fire Drill: September 15, 2023



Dear Parents,

I hope this message finds you well and excited for the start of school. As we begin the new school year, I wanted to take a moment to share some important updates and reminders with you.

First and foremost, thank you for your continued support and trust in our school. It's our privilege to educate and nurture your children, and we are committed to providing them with the best possible educational experience.



This year, we are excited to announce several initiatives aimed at enhancing your child's learning journey. We have added 4 additional Registered Behavior Technicians to assist in the classrooms which we are extremely excited about. Also, we will continue to teach Social Emotional Learning through theme based monthly topics that our team of educators have been hard at work preparing and incorporating these lessons into their lesson planning. We will engage students in extracurricular social groups and lessons and therapists will coordinate activities of daily living groups to work with students on hygiene and independence.

Communication is key, and we encourage you to stay connected with us. Our monthly newsletters, parent-teacher conferences and back to school night which will be held next **Thursday, September 28, 2023 from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm.** We hope to see you all there!! We will also be continuing with our Westlake Parent Organization and will have more information about it at back to school night. These are just a few ways we aim to foster strong partnerships between home and school. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns; your feedback is invaluable to us. Wishing you and your families a wonderful September and a successful school year ahead.

Warm regards,

Claudine Tantillo
Westlake Principal

Westlake September Spotlight

Student of the Month

Self-Awareness & Management

S.P. has done an amazing job this month! He transitioned to a new classroom and met new friends! We are so proud of him.

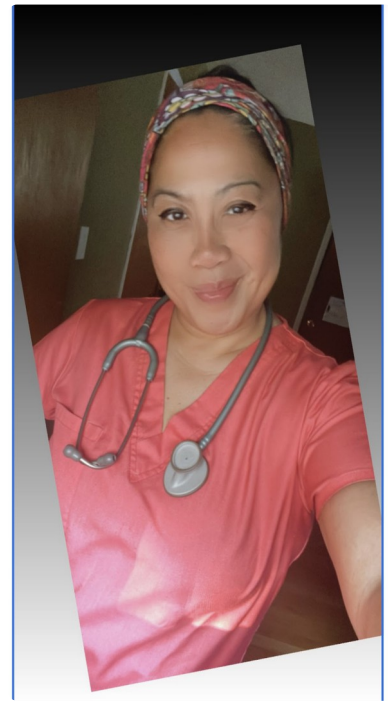


Nurse Spotlight

Nurse Veronica

1. I love kickboxing.
2. I am an avid soccer mom!
3. I like to sing in her spare time.
4. I practice Holistic Health with Conventional Medicine.
5. I write poetry.

Favorite Quote - "Where there is no struggle, there is no strength" - Oprah Winfrey



Classroom Spotlight

Mr. Carten's Class

This year in Mr. Carten's room the students will be learning to make chocolate and dog biscuits as our business. We will also be following recipes to make a healthy snack. Below is a picture of the students making dog biscuits.



Ms. Victoria's Speech Class

This month, the speech department has been working on building rapport and fostering our relationships with new and old students. Speech sessions have focused on asking and answering questions utilizing our "All About Me" activities in order to better understand and find out new and interesting facts about our students. Although this is a fun way of facilitating conversation, it also helps the therapists in planning functional and relevant activities for our students.

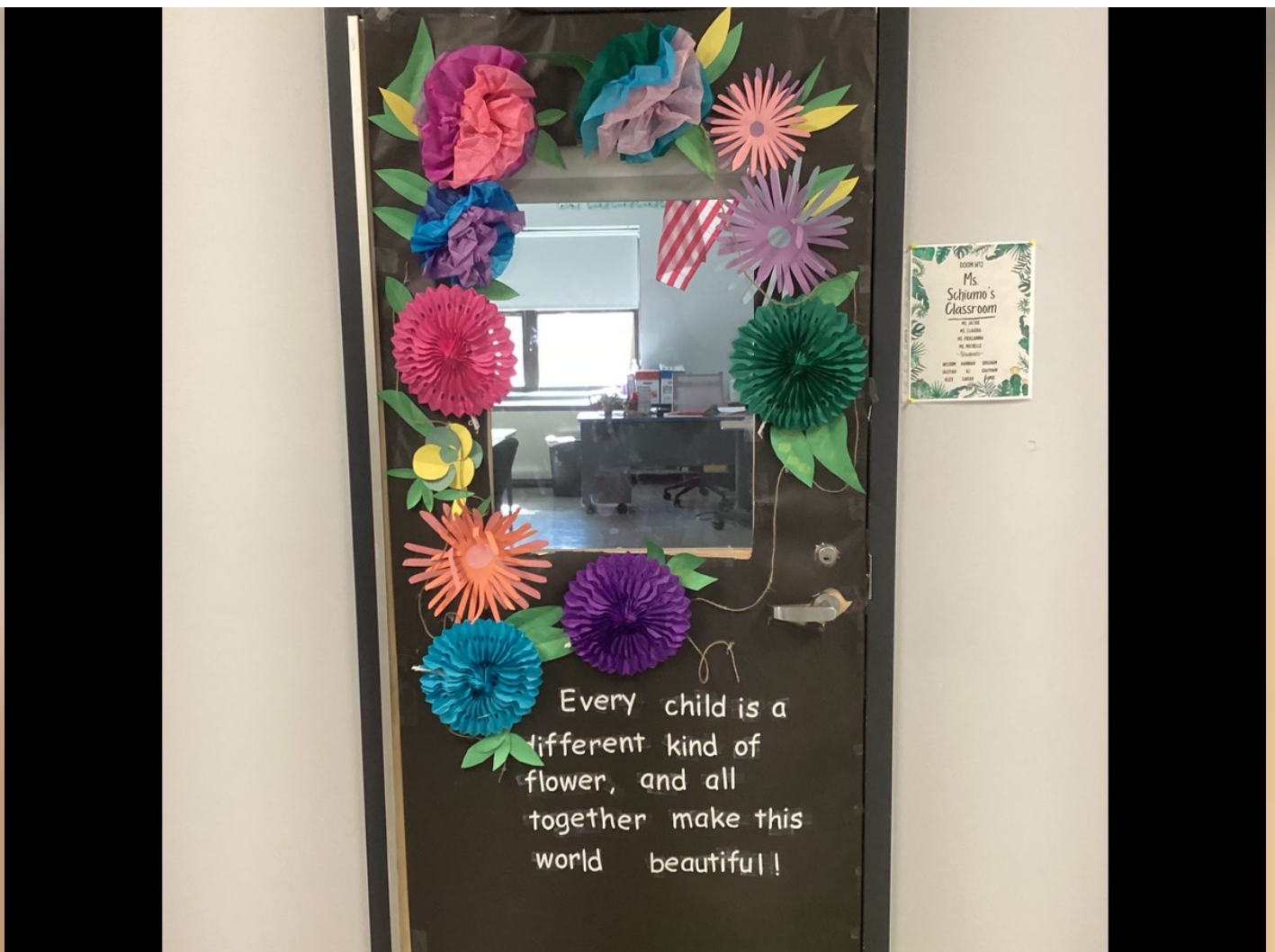


Staff Creativity

The first week of September, our staff was busy getting the building ready for the return of our students. Everyone worked hard to create a fun and inviting environment!



Ms. Gewirtzman and staff are celebrating how amazing their students are!

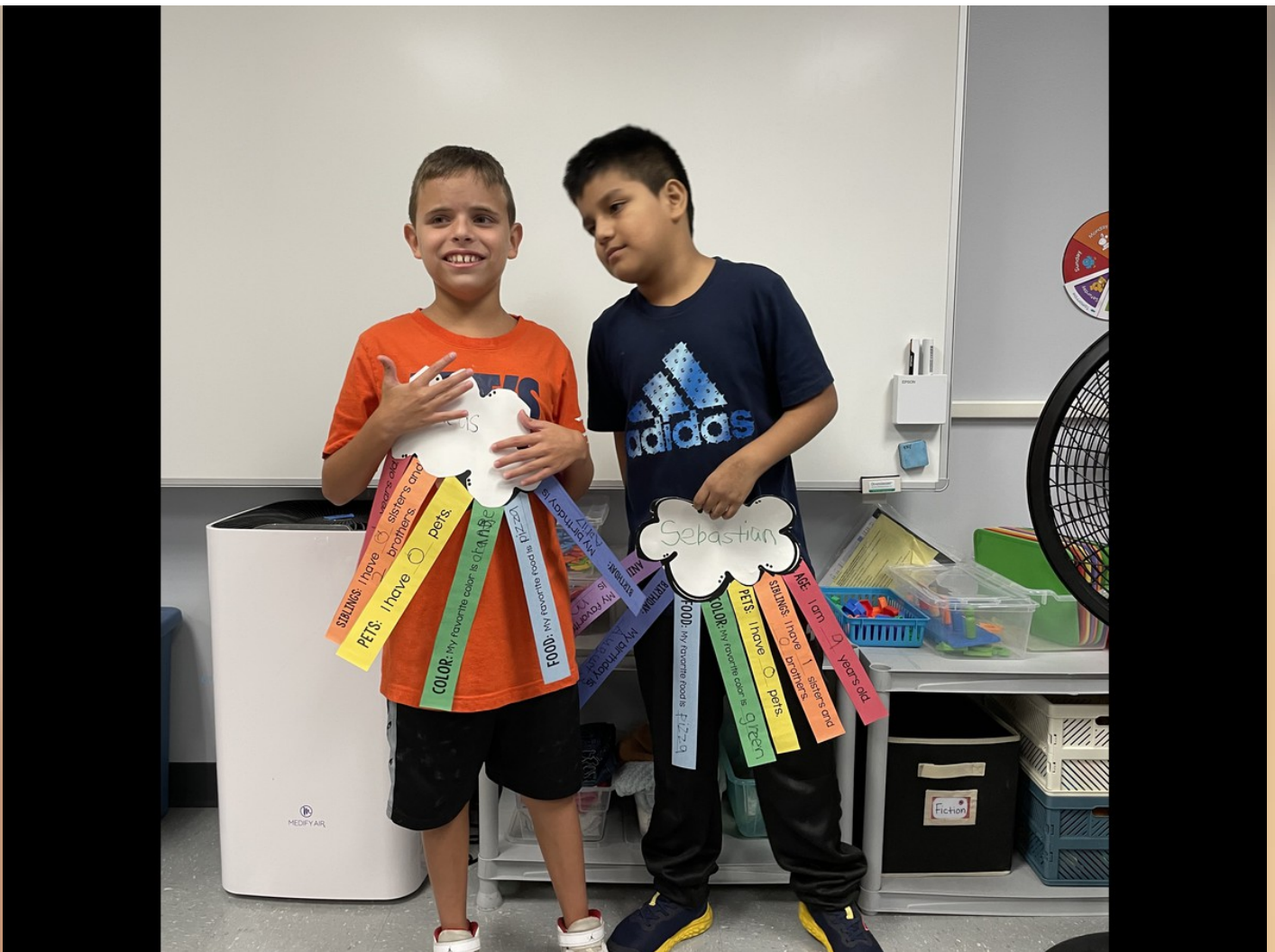


Ms. Schiumo and staff are accepting of each other's differences!



Mrs. Shaw's and staff are prompting teamwork in the classroom!

Self-Awareness and Management Month



Mr. K's class completed All About me projects!

The Westlake Gym Reopens!

Everyone at Westlake was excited for the opening of our gym! Mr. Shanfield has been hard at work organizing all the new equipment and getting everything set up. All the students were ready start all the fun activities that he has planned.



The obstacle course is ready!



Sorting colors and scooters!



V.A. on the obstacle course!



V.A. finishes strong!



Scooter's are so much fun!



We color matching!

Student Profile



My Name is Jonathan. I am eighteen years old. I started at Westlake school, at the summertime where I went to The summer program, and it was a fresh start for me.

I am in Ms. Shaw's Class, and I really like her class, classroom, & everybody else is good too. I'm Brazilian-Portuguese American. Also, I'm very talented at drawing and very good at Uno, Plus I am a very big fan of many things from Films, Shows, Comics, Franchises, and Many other things in or from Pop Culture or some nostalgia. I'm also starting to get a Job, and my Career goals & opportunities are very good, Because I am very good at Organizing, Stocking, Building, Thinking, and also Persuading too. This explains why my career type is a Persuader. And I like that.

Teacher Profile

Ms. Shaw's class consists of 5 beautiful ladies and 5 gentlemen this year. In the first week of the school year, the students took a vocational / career assessment. Based on their interest profile, each student scored on 6 different interest areas: Building, Thinking, Creating, Helping, Persuading, and Organizing. Thus the students discussed and learned the types of careers that will suit their personality, interests and strengths.

While celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, the students learned about Frida Kahlo who is a remarkable Mexican painter, and the students also learned how to make delightful Spanish treats: churros using puff pastry.

For vocational, the students are practicing making their own family wooden sign (Home Sweet Home, This is us, or God Bless this home). Currently, the students are focusing on learning woodwork techniques as well as how to set up / clean up their work area independently. Soon we will start taking orders for personalized wooden signs for any occasion (Weddings, Housewarmings, Baby Showers, and seasonal special events) as well as wooden signs with inspirational quotes. Keep your eyes peeled for our talented and artistic workers!



Visit us on Facebook

Use buttons to direct readers to different pages, Google Drive files or any other URL. Buttons are great for the important things you want people to click on.

Follow us on Instagram!



Please fill out the UCESC Feedback Survey

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScdBdrjEV5Dmat0XfEV_BYM3FPWmGSoftE9BL3cDNklhRoQQ/viewform

Contact Us

Website: 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

September 2023 Monthly Report



Dr. Balsamello's August Principal's Message

Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS) staff are excited to begin the 2023-24 school year back at our building since Storm Ida. During September we are addressing Self-Awareness and Management strategies along with exploring Hispanic Heritage Month.

September 2023 Enrollment Data

- Enrollment-77 (as of 9/27/23)
- New Students-2
- Intakes-4
- Disenrollments-6 (3 attendance, 1 moved, 1 work/GED, 1 conduct)
- Fire Drill-9/15/23
- Emergency Drill (Testing of school's communication system and procedures)-9/12/23

New Student/ Family Orientation

8/30/23: The New Student/ Family Orientation provided individuals to meet with staff, tour the school, and complete required paperwork before school officially began! HAS also contacted

potential students and families to attend this event in order to conduct their interview.

New Faculty and Staff

UCESC New Staff Orientation

Dr. Balsamello presented at the UCESC's New Staff Orientation on 8/21/23. He welcome all the new staff that inlcuded the three new HAS faculty members, reviewed the history of the Commission, explained the different schools and programs, as well reviewed various policies and procedures.



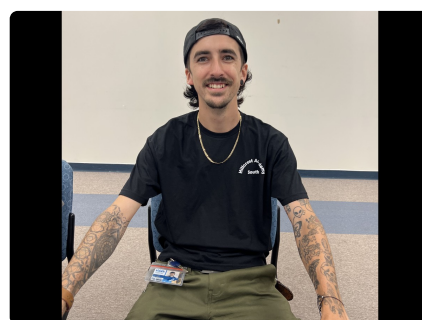
Welcome Mr. Lund!

Mr Lund is HAS's new science teacher. Fourteen years ago, he decided to leave the Financial Services industry to teach High School Science and has not looked back! Mr Lund will be married 34 years this December and is a competitive Scrabble player. Fun Fact; Mr Lund ran for State Senate in 2011. Some of his interests involve hiking, biking, and travel. Best wishes for you in this new season here at HAS!



Welcome Mr. Fritz!

Mr Fritz is HAS's new history teacher that will be a leave replacement come December. Since he is an avid lover of history ranging over 2000 years, it is no surprise that Mr Fritz decided to become a history teacher. This past May, Mr Fritz graduated with with his masters degree in Social Studies Education making this his first year teaching. Some fun facts; he is an Eagle Scout of Troop 73, (Boy Scouts), he is a triplet with 2 sisters, and grew up right here in Westfield, NJ. Best wishes for you in this new season here at HAS!



Welcome Mr. Whitehead!

Mr Whitehead was hired to be HAS's new custodian! Even though he has only been working at HAS for the past 3 months, he has a long time connection to UCESC. His mother Betsy Whitehead spent 18 years working for the Commission. Aside from his job at HAS, Mr Whitehead is a published photographer. Some of his past occupations include a decade as an electrician and a wildland firefighter. When asked what was his greatest accomplishment was, he listed being a dedicated father and husband on the top of that list! Best wishes for you in this new season here at HAS!

Welcome Back!

Reopening of the 1571 Gymnasium!

When hurricane Ida hit NJ on September 1st 2021, no one knew the waters in the area would be able to do so much damage.

Unfortunately our building at 1571 was affected and our gymnasium was unable to be used. Even when the schools at 1571 came back into the building this past January, the gym was still out of order.

Despite all the damage, there is a bright light at the end of this tunnel. Not only were we able to start the school year in our home at 1517 for the first time since Covid, we were able to start the year in the newly renovated gym! Brand new floors, walls, room divider, basketball hoops, gym equipment, and more are now available to the staff and students of 1571.



Faculty Orientation

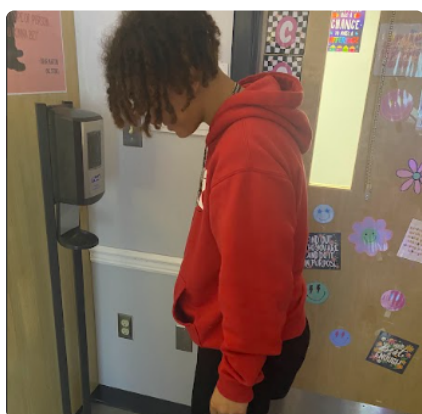
On September 5th 2023, the UCESC faculty and staff joined together for their first day of school. Returning members were able to socialize and catch up with their colleagues on the summer adventures they had. New staff were introduced to their respective fellow faculty and staff members. All of the UCESC community was welcomed by our Superintendent of Schools, Mrs Dattilo. Then



begin getting ready for the students. At HAS, we had a faculty meeting to discuss the happenings for the beginning of the year before we staff set up their classrooms/ offices.



Spirit Days



Red, White, and Blue for 9/11

On 9/11/23, faculty and students dressed in red, white, and blue in memory of September 11th, 2001. Even



Hispanic Heritage

With about half of our population being Hispanic, students and staff were very excited to show their pride! From El Salvador to Peru, the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico, even Portugal and Cuba; all nationalities came out to



New Jersey Represent!

On State and Capitals day, students wore yellow or green to represent the great state of NJ. Yellow represents the state flag which has a yellow background. Green represents the fact NJ is the "Garden

though those events happened 22 years ago, they still make an impact to this day. Students have talked about people they've heard stories of and staff talked about where they were when it happened. Over all, the respect for this day is still prevalent today.

represent their shared/similar backgrounds.

State". The idea behind this day is to know the importance of knowing all 50 states and capitals with an emphasis of making learning fun!

Students In/ Out of School

Students Return!

The students of HAS returned to school on September 8th 2023. Returning students were excited to see their favorite teachers after being away all summer. New students got to meet their teachers and get a feel for their new school. Over all, we at HAS are excited to see and hear the students exciting adventures of their summer, their projects and sports outside of school, and what they wish for in their future. So stay tuned to see and hear their stories! And who knows, maybe we will get some alumni stories this year too!





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: 908-654-8558

Union County ESC Feedback Survey

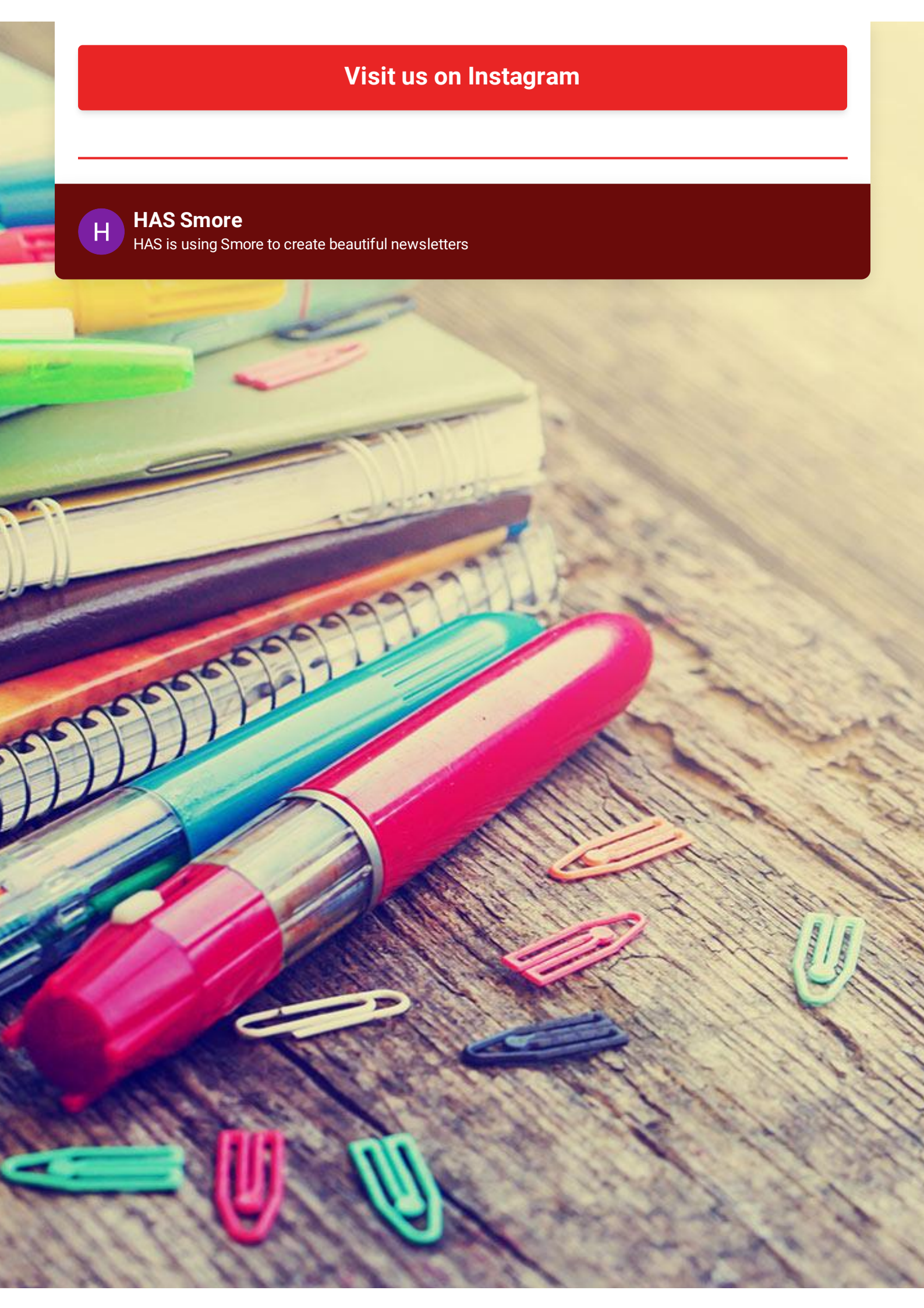
By completing this 2 minute survey, this will provide information for the UCESC and HAS to better assist you!

Visit us on Instagram



HAS Smore

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Hillcrest Academy North

**SEPTEMBER
2023**

Principal's Message



Dear Hillcrest Academy North Campus (HAN) Student and Family,

All students have really made an effort to start off the school year right! They are attending school regularly, enjoying learning in their scheduled classes, completing their daily academic exercises, and adhering to our code of conduct especially regarding respect, technology, and health safety. There is such a sense of community in the building which adds to our positive school culture. Students and staff are feeling safe, supported, and empowered everyday which makes my job so rewarding! Keep it up, HAN!

We are looking forward to our Back to School Night scheduled for October 3rd from 6:00 -7:30 p.m. We hope to see everyone in attendance.

Please feel free to contact our main office with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mr. Marquet
Principal

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

September Updates

Enrollment: 70

Enrolled: 2

Disenrolled: 2

Fire Drill: September 15th

Lock Down Drill: September 27th

Upcoming Dates

October 3rd 6-7:30 pm - Back to School Night

October 9th - School Closed for Professional Development

October 13th - First Field Trip

Teacher Spotlight - Ms. Lederman

Ms. Lederman is one of the English Teachers at HAN and has been working for UCESC since 2012. Ms. Lederman attended University of Delaware where she earned her Bachelors Degree in English and is currently attending Montclair State University to earn her Masters Degree. One of Ms. Lederman's favorite memories at HAN is finding a cat on the campus and rescuing it. Ms. Lederman adopted the cat and named her Hannah after HAN! In the classroom, Ms. Lederman is able to foster communication skills in her students by creating Do Now and Discussion questions that lead to deep discussions. Students will engage in the question first in writing then share their ideas and thoughts with the class. HAN students and staff are lucky to have Ms. Lederman as a teacher and colleague!



Classroom Spotlights

Ms. Goldenberg, Social Worker

The 2023-2024 is off to a great start in the social work office. The students have all been placed with an Advocate – their first period teacher – who will reach home several times a month to communicate with parents regarding their academics, attendance and behavior in school. It takes many of the parents time to adjust to receiving POSITIVE phone calls about their child. The



principal and social worker also took time to meet with every new Hillcrest student to discuss their adjustment and offer support. The students state that they are happy to be in an environment where the teachers are all supportive of them and where they can learn in a small setting. We have started with SEL lessons – focusing on introductions and an explanation of what Social Emotional Learning consists of. The students will be completing a survey to identify areas of interest to ensure that this time is meaningful for them. Finally, the social worker continues to meet with students as the need arises.

Mr. Grez, Science Teacher

It's a new school year and the halls of Hillcrest Academy North are abuzz with science! All science classes began the year with a collaborative inquiry into the nature of science and the underlying principles that drive scientific discovery and thought. Biology students then launched into their studies of the characteristics of life and were able to successfully argue using evidence that viruses, while seemingly so, are not, in fact, alive. Environmental Science students successfully wrapped their minds around the heady concept of The Big Bang and were able to apply the concepts of redshift and cosmic background radiation to their explanations of the origins of our universe. Through the use of multiple interactive scenarios, Forensic Science students learned that humans are horrible eyewitnesses and it takes a concerted effort from law enforcement to ensure impartiality and accuracy of testimony are maintained. Next month, Biology students will begin to understand the differences between cell types, Environmental Science students will discover Earth's place in our solar system, and Forensic Science students will begin to learn how to identify and collect physical evidence from crime scenes.



September at HAN



Caring Contact Presentation

The group, Caring Contact, along with the Commission SAC, Mrs. Ramirez, talked with



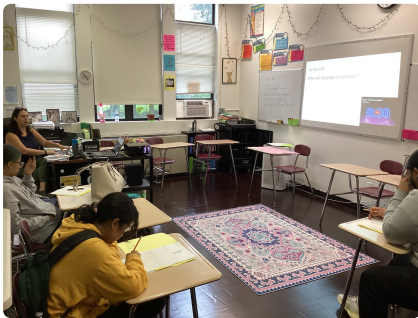
Community Service Table

The Community Service Table is back again this year due to the hard work of HAN's Teacher

students about the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, which is a hotline anyone can call for help and support during difficult times. Students were able to learn about the hotline, ask question, and play games to win prizes.

Assistant, Mrs. Rivas. Mrs. Rivas researches Community Service opportunities for the students to participate in after school in Elizabeth, NJ. The table also has HAN upcoming events and self care items for students to use.

Theme of the Month: Self Awareness and Management



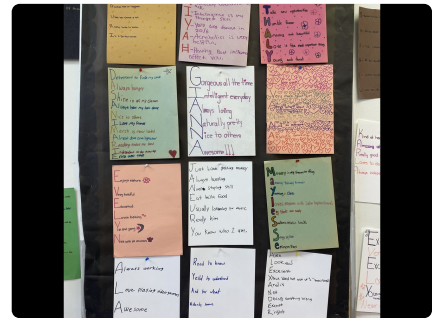
Class Discussions

Ms. Lederman's class engaged in a class discussion about the question "How can language be powerful?" Students discussed how their words have meaning, can impact others, and that they are responsible for the words they use.



Time outside

Taking time for self care is an important part of self-awareness. Students were able to relax outside chatting with friends or play a game of basketball.



Acrostic Poems

Ms. Killeen's English students used their names to create acrostic poems. Students had to write positive sentences or phrases about themselves using the letters of their first name. The poems are now decorating Ms. Killeen's classroom!



HAN Alumni

Hillcrest Academy North has been lucky enough to have several alumni stop by to visit and share what they have been up since they graduated in June. Pictured with Mr. Marquet are members of the Class of 2023 Isaiah and Taneiya. Isaiah is looking into schools and programs where he can earn his Commercial Driver's License and Taneiya was recently accepted into the Police Academy! HAN staff are incredibly proud of Isaiah and Taneiya and we look forward to hearing about all of their accomplishments in the future!

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



John Marquet

John is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters





Admin Message

We are thrilled to welcome you all back to the 2023-2024 school year at Crossroads School. As we begin the journey of another school year together, we want to express our heartfelt appreciation for your continued trust and support. Our dedicated staff have been working tirelessly to provide an enriching and nurturing environment where each student can continue to grow

academically, socially, and emotionally.

We remain committed to fostering a safe educational space that encourages curiosity, learning, and personal growth. The partnership between home and school is crucial, and we invite you to stay involved and partner with us in your child's educational journey.

October will be a busy month at Crossroads. Next week is designated as the Week of Respect. During this week all schools are tasked with providing age appropriate activities and instruction focused around character development and bullying prevention. We have included some themed days below that your child can participate in to observe the week.

Looking forward to a successful and rewarding year ahead!

Warm regards,

Matt and Danielle

General Information

General Information

Enrollment as of September 29, 2023

Actual: 49

Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 1

Referrals: 3

Intakes Scheduled: 1

Accepted: 1

Fire Drills: 9/15/23

Emergency Drills: 9/19/23 (Active Shooter)

Upcoming Dates

October 5, 2023 - Parent Education/Support Meeting - 1:00 (in person or virtual)

October 9, 2023 - School Closed for Students (Staff In-service)

October 31, 2023 - Halloween 🎃 (more information to come)

WEEK OF RESPECT - OCTOBER 2-6

October 2, 2023 - Wear Blue for World Day of Bullying Prevention

October 3, 2023 - Wear Beach/Tropical Clothing as we "Surf the Waves of Success"

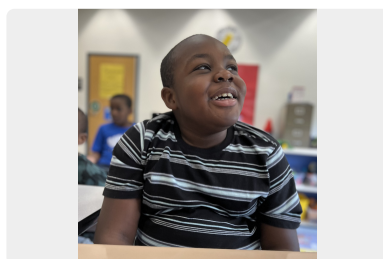
October 4, 2023 - Hats Off to Bullying Prevention - Wear your favorite crazy hat.

October 5, 2023 - Disney Day because "You've Got a Friend in Me"

October 6, 2023 - HERO (Helping Everyone Respect Others) Day



Crossroads Staff and Student Spotlight



Student of the Month - Richard

Richard is a lot of fun to have in Room 104! If he's not singing you his greatest hits, he is more than happy to offer you one of his world famous hugs. Richard enjoys spelling and reading with any letters he can find. He also enjoys helping during morning meetings by counting out the dates on the calendar. His favorite part of the school day is helping serve lunch to our classroom. We love having Richard as part of our classroom family!



Certified Staff of the Month - Jennifer Feldmann- Teacher

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

This is my first year at Crossroads School and I'm excited to be here.

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

A lot of people are always surprised to learn that I am a certified Reiki master and that I do not like chocolate, with the exception of brownies. 😊

3. What is your dream vacation?

I have always wanted to visit Paris.

4. What is your favorite meal?

Growing up, my mother (who was born in Hungary) and grandmother would always make homemade chicken paprikash and dumplings once the weather starter getting cooler. I loved it so much that my mother would make it for me each year around my birthday, which became a tradition that she continues to this day.

5. What is your greatest accomplishment?

My greatest accomplishment has been being a mom and raising my three sons.



Teacher Assistant of the Month - Frank Contreras-Chavez

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

I have been at Crossroads for 1 year and 4 months. In April of 2024 it will have been 2 years.

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

Something you would be surprised to find out about me is that I am a huge Marvel and Foodie fan.

3. What is your dream vacation?

My dream vacation would consist of a trip to the Caribbean where I would enjoy going on excursions and road trips to various beaches. I would also enjoy the astronomical scenes and

cannot forget about the nightlight in the popular areas.

4. What is your favorite meal?

I eat a lot so saying that I have a favorite meal is an understatement. I am always open to trying all types of foods.

5. What is your greatest accomplishment?

What comes to mind is my time during this previous school year. There was a student in my class who had challenging behaviors at times, but with consistency, my coworkers and I managed to make a lot of progress. This progress allowed up to assist this student in achieving many of their goals for the year.

Classroom Spotlights

Ms. Gaby's Classroom

Welcome to room 105! Miss.Gaby is so lucky to ring in the new school year with her fantastic partners in crime Thomas and Gloria! We welcomed the school year by getting used to our classroom routines and remembering old and new friends. The best part of coming back in September is seeing all of the new toys and activities we can engage with. From a bubble machine to a galaxy light projector, we got to enjoy new sensory experiences! We are so grateful for the new materials that were donated to our room from Miss. Gaby's Wishlist! With new and improved teaching materials, our first weeks of doing Morning Meeting and Activity Schedules have run so smoothly. September can be a crazy month, but Alaiyaa, José, Joshua, and Matthew are so eager to learn and that it makes it all worth it.



Let's have a great school year!



Ms. Natalia's Classroom

For the month of September, my staff and I have been working hard on establishing a solid rapport with our students and getting them to feel comfortable with our brand-new classroom and routines. We are also working on maintaining consistent classroom rules and routines that will enable our students to be successful throughout the day. All students are being assessed, and books are being updated to match their present academic levels. We are also creating structured

activities that allow students to interact with each other and work on their functional communication skills.

In the area of social studies, we have been exploring various topics through reading, writing, crafts, and videos. We have researched topics such as Labor Day, 9-11, and community helpers. For Labor Day, we read a story called, "When I Grow Up by Mercer Mayer". Students worked in dyads to answer WH questions and sequence the story. Students were given the choice of a few different community helpers to research and write a short text about what they learned. We wrapped up the lesson by having them complete a craft.

We also enjoyed celebrating a couple of birthdays in our classroom by cooking, baking, and dancing!! We surveyed our students about what foods they liked, and we made a little buffet that consisted of rice, french fries, cupcakes, and chicken nuggets!! Our class had a blast cooking and eating what they made:)



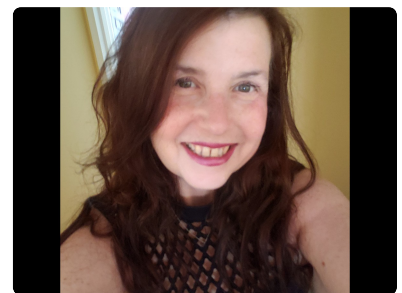


Therapy Spotlight

Ms. Elaine Liggeri - School Social Worker

Welcome back to School Parents and Families,

Our Social Work office is open and available to all of our families . I am happy to support you throughout your journey at Crossroads School.



Services available include;

- Individual guidance and support with student and family matters,
- Individual assistance with completion of PerformCare Application
- Assistance with parenting challenges
- I am available if you just need a listening ear to sort things out and discover solutions.
- Assistance with outside resources as well,

Please feel free to reach out by phone or email . I am happy to assist you with your needs.

In addition I am the Parent Liaison for our PTO (Parent Teacher Organization and facilitator for our Monthly Parent Education and Support Groups. We have many fun events to plan for this new school year and I am looking forward to meeting you and working together to expand our Home / School Connection

Our first PTO and Parent Education/ Support meeting is scheduled for Thursday , Oct 5, 2023 at 1:00 pm here at Crossroads School, A virtual meeting invitation will also be provided to all families if you are unable to attend in person.

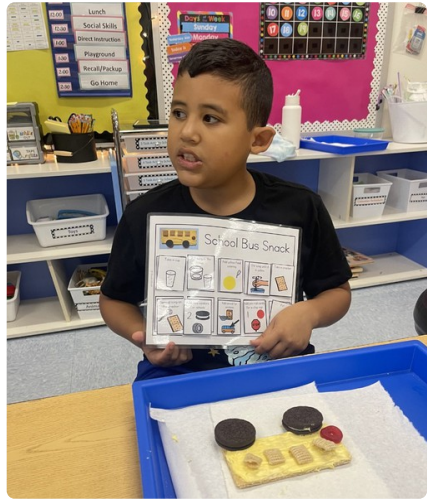
Please feel free to contact me by phone or email. I am happy to assist you with your needs and help to provide comfort and relieve stress.

Elaine Liggeri, School Social Worker,
You can reach me by email - eliggeri@ucesc.org or phone - 908-232-6655 ex t2005

September at Crossroads









Parent Resources

Caregiver Support Group at the JCC



with Lisa Afflitto,
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Wednesdays

October 18, November 15, December 20,
January 17, February 21, March 20, April 17,
May 15, June 19

7:30 - 8:45 p.m.

Raising a child with special needs is challenging and requires a unique approach. Join Lisa Afflitto, LCSW, for a monthly support group where caregivers can learn strategies to support their own mental wellness, share their experiences and meet/connect with other caregivers. This monthly group is free.

Lisa Afflitto is a seasoned Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), a NJ certified Special Education teacher and the owner of Integrative Therapy Solutions, LLC. Her clinical focus is in supporting adults (18+) and families, who are navigating life either as an individual with a disability, or as a caregiver to a child or adult with a disability.

Lisa has a passion for facilitating support groups and bringing caregivers together to connect in a supportive space.

For questions and registration, contact Beth Mitchell, Director of Inclusion and Diversity, at BMitchell@jccnj.org.

The JCC of Central NJ is committed to accessibility and inclusion.
To request accommodations, please contact Beth Mitchell
at bmitchell@jccnj.org at least two weeks prior to an event.



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food insecure. Food or
fund donations welcome
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1391 Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076
908-889-8800 • www.jccnj.org



About Us

Website: https://www.ucesc.org/schools/crossroads_school

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

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

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