

Work Readiness Academy

April 2025 Monthly Report



Dear WRA Families & Supporters,

Happy Spring! As we step into April, the Work Readiness Academy is buzzing with energy and growth, just like the season itself. With longer days and warmer weather, our students are not only working hard indoors on key skills but also taking advantage of the outdoors to boost their mental health and physical well-being.

This month, we're excited to share how our program continues to foster communication, teamwork, and real-world experiences through our Work-Based Learning opportunities and Community Based Instruction activities.

"Spring is a time of plans and projects." – Leo Tolstoy

Much like nature, our students are growing, adapting, and preparing for exciting new possibilities. With the return of sunny days, we are taking learning outside whenever possible! Outdoor walks, gardening projects, and movement breaks are not only fun but also help students stay active, reduce stress, and practice mindfulness. This month, we've introduced a new elective course that teaches simple strategies like deep breathing outdoors, nature observation activities, and yoga stretches to support our students' mental health and emotional regulation. Physical activity is a vital part of our program, and spring offers the perfect opportunity to connect movement with well-being. Thank you for your continued support. We are so proud of the hard work our students are putting in and the progress they are making—together, we are building a bright future!

We have two special events coming up in May.

First, the week of May 5 - May 9 is **Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week** ! We are fortunate to be blessed with an amazingly dedicated and caring team of professionals that work hard all year to support your children. This is the perfect time for our families to show their gratitude. We have several options for families to participate:

1. **Send in a snack or treat of your choice** next week that we can put out in the faculty lounge!
2. Have your child **write a short note or card of appreciation** to our staff!

3. If you'd prefer to **make a small monetary donation that will be used towards our teacher/staff appreciation gifts**, you are welcome to do so as well. Donations can be sent in with your child (cash or check made out to "Rachel Richer"); please label the envelope "staff appreciation week" or we can accept Venmo donations at @Rachel-Richer. Upon receipt of any donation, we will email you a confirmation that it has been received. The suggested donation is \$10.

We are pleased to announce that the **WRA's Got Talent Show** will be returning at the end of May. This annual event showcases the unique talents and strengths of our students and staff. Homeroom teachers will be assisting students to come up with ideas for participation - on or off the stage. More details to come!

Finally, as has become our tradition, we are pleased to feature another one of our graduating students in this month's Message from the Administration picture. We're excited to continue to support **Hernan and his family** with his upcoming transition from the Work Readiness Academy.

Please enjoy the rest of this month's newsletter and as always, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at jbornstein@ucesc.org or richer@ucesc.org if you have any questions or want to discuss your child's program. We can also be reached at (908) 633-2704.

Josh Bornstein, Director
Rachel Richer, Supervisor of Instruction
UCESC Work Readiness Academy



April 2025 Data

Enrollment as of April 30, 2025

Actual: 26
Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 0
Referrals: 5 (SY 2024-25)
Intakes Scheduled: 4
Accepted: 3



4/28/25 - Fire Drill
4/30/25 - Shelter in Place Drill



Attendance Reporting

In the event that your child will be absent, arriving late, or picked up early, **please send us an email at AttendanceWRA@ucesc.org.**

You may also call our main number at (908) 633-2704. If it is before 8am, please leave a message.

April Student of the Month

Izzy

Each month, we are proud to highlight students who are demonstrating significant progress in important areas. In April, we celebrate **Izzy** who has made great strides in her stamina during internships and effective communication during classroom activities. **Izzy** has demonstrated a willingness to try new approaches and strategies to learn independence and self-awareness skills. Whether it's greeting staff members, participating in skills center activities, or asking clarifying questions, **Izzy's** confidence and courage continues to blossom. Well done **Izzy**!



April Classroom Spotlight

Spring Has Sprung: Growing Knowledge and Kindness

This month, students fully embraced the spirit of spring with hands-on learning experiences that connected financial literacy, science, and social-emotional growth. From saving money to sprouting beans and cultivating kindness, we explored the many ways growth happens all around us!

In Financial Literacy, students learned about the importance of savings accounts and how money grows over time, much like a flower. Just as a small seed needs care, patience, and the right



environment to flourish, a savings account grows with consistent contributions and smart financial decisions. This real-world connection helped students see the value of a savings account for saving for bigger needs and wants in the future.

With the request of a student in class asking to learn about Science, the learning continued with a lesson that brought growth to life in a very real way! Students planted beans in clear bags, providing the perfect window into how plants develop when given air, water, and care. They observed and logged changes each day, gaining a deeper understanding of plant life cycles and the impact

of a nurturing environment.

Finally, in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), we explored the “Marigold Effect.” Just as marigolds support the growth of nearby plants, people who act as marigolds help those around them thrive. To bring this lesson to life, the class planted marigolds around another flowering plant, reinforcing the idea that kindness, encouragement, and positive relationships help us all grow. Students then brainstormed ways they could be marigolds in their own lives—supporting friends, classmates, and co-workers—while also recognizing and seeking out marigolds who uplift them.

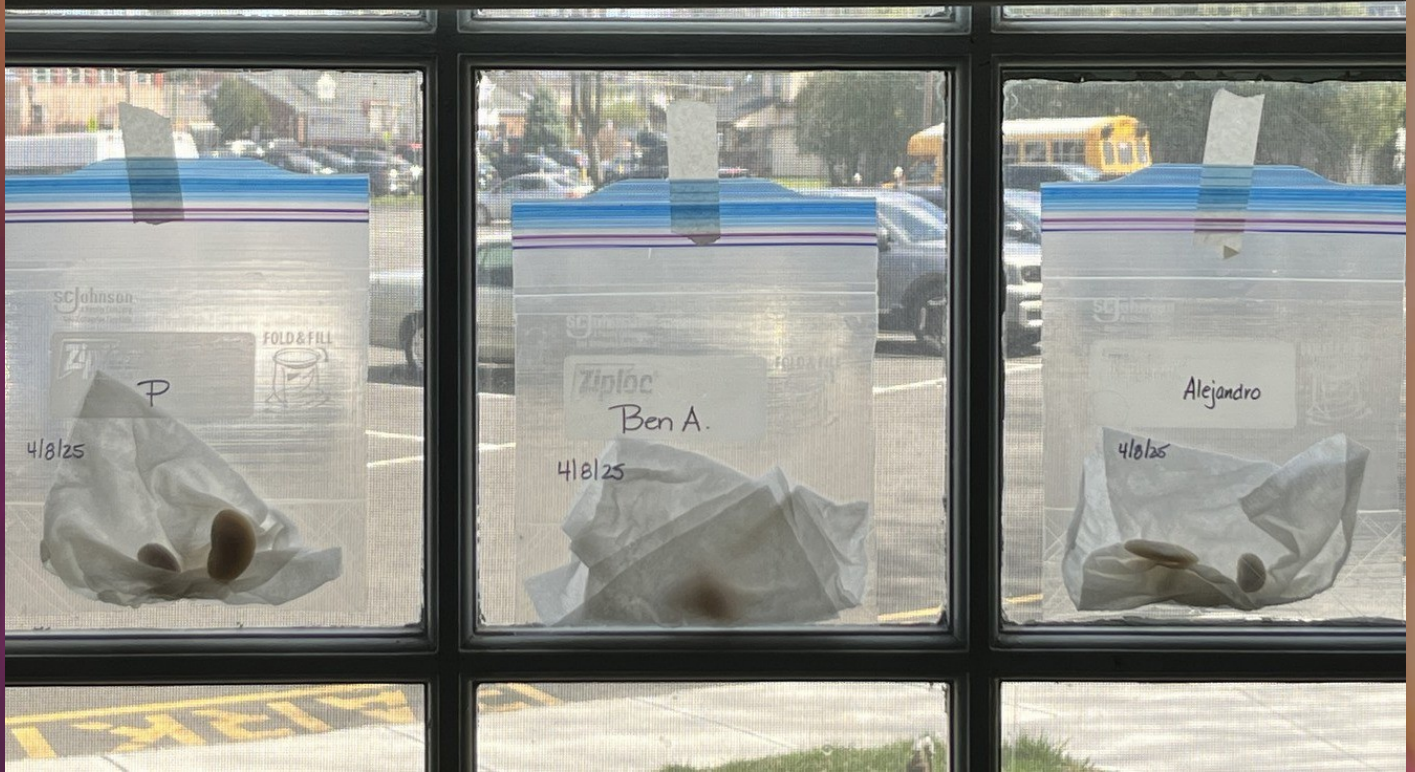
From finances to flowers, this month was all about growth—in knowledge, nature, and kindness. As the season of renewal continues, we look forward to watching both our plants and students flourish!

Jodi Klimko

Work Readiness Academy Teacher & WBL Supervising Teacher



Prepping our beans and our log sheets



Watching for beans to sprout

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Lesson on growing a Savings Account



Students are preparing to plant Marigolds



WRA Staff Spotlight

Tracie Wiebush

Current position at UCESC?

Teaching Assistant!

How long have you worked at UCESC?

This is the end of my 19th year!

What do you love most about your job?

The students and the staff - they're the BEST!

What do you like to do in your free time?

Reading, going to the beach, spending time with family and cuddling with my naughty dog, Riley :)

What is one thing that would surprise people about you?

I have 2 tattoos. One honoring my nephew who passed away and one honoring my home church.



Work-Based Learning Snapshots



Kiya at Home Power Yoga in Cranford



Herman at Walgreens in Union



Alfi at Mr. J's Deli in Cranford



Steven at South Ave Dental in Cranford



Erin at Sweet & Fancy in Cranford



Anthony at ShopRite in Clark

Project SEARCH Update

The Project SEARCH interns are now onto their third rotations. The staff report that the last internship is often the favorite! At this point in the school year, the students have a better sense for their SPINs (strengths, preferences, interests and needs) and are matched with departments that are a strong fit.



**Atlantic
Health System**
Overlook Medical Center

Also this month, the students enjoyed a fun and informational visit to Atlantic Health System's Corporate Headquarters where they had the chance to eat lunch with members of the AHS leadership team and ask questions about their career paths including why they chose to work in the Healthcare sector. The students also had the chance to participate in a scavenger hunt throughout the corporate office and visit AHS's television and broadcasting studio!

The Project SEARCH Program at Overlook Medical Center is now in its 9th year. The one-year immersive program provides intensive, hands-on training for students ages 18-21 with disabilities who are motivated to work and eventually seek paid employment in the community.

For more information about Project SEARCH, or to access the application for the Class of 2026, please visit our **newly update website at:**

<https://www.atlantichealth.org/professionals/residencies-fellowships/project-search>



Andy at his internship with the ISS Team



Christian at his internship with the Infusion Center





Work-Based Learning Community Business Partner Spotlight

This month we are pleased to spotlight **Overlook Medical Center's Union Campus**. Located at 1000 Galloping Hill Road in Union, New Jersey, OMC-Union has been a work-based learning partner for the past two years. The site hosts students for internships in two different areas of the hospital: the Rehab Department (assisting the Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists), the Emergency Department (working with the Equipment Technicians to stock critical supplies). OMC-Union is also home to WRA's "Can Do" Food Cart, located inside the lobby near the heavily trafficked "Red Awning" entrance. Students from UCESC's Work Readiness Academy and Westlake School operate the food cart four mornings per week. The cart provides staff and visitors at OMC-Union with a variety of quick snack options, but also give our students the opportunity to practice employment readiness skills such as greeting and communicating with customers, handling basic point of sale transactions, taking inventory, and reconciling the cash bank at the end of each shift.



OMC-Union houses a full-service emergency department and a variety of outpatient services and physician practices. The emergency department received a "Lantern Award" for exceptional and

innovative performance in leadership, practice, education, advocacy and research by the Emergency Nurses Association.

To learn more about Overlook-Union, please visit:

<https://www.atlantichealth.org/locations/overlook-medical-center-union-campus>







Introducing...Mindful Movement Elective!



Empowered Movement: Mind, Body & Beyond

We are thrilled to announce a new elective offering: Mindful Movement! This program will incorporate mindfulness practices to support both our minds and bodies. Students will engage in walking, playing games, and practicing breathing techniques—all while focusing on staying present in the moment.

In our recent SEL class, we learned that mindful movement increases beneficial endorphins and decreases cortisol levels, which can lead to a happier and healthier mindset. It's truly a win-win for our students!



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Hallways of Expression: Bringing Our Walls to Life



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Positive Affirmations

I am proud of the progress I am making.

I embrace challenges because they help me grow.

I accept myself and I accept others.

My grateful heart attracts goodness and abundance into my life.

Positive Affirmations

The more I focus my mind on the good in my life, the more good comes into my life.

I always stop to smell the roses.

I am capable of achieving my goals.

I accept myself and I accept others.

I am worthy of success and happiness.

I am nice and kind and great and good looking. I can be myself.

I am grateful to be alive, healthy and thriving.

I help people. This gives me great purpose and pleasure.

I make the best of every moment. Every day and every situation I am faced with.

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I am grateful to be alive, healthy and thriving.

I help people. This gives me great purpose and pleasure.

I make the best of every moment. Every day and every situation I am faced with.

I support whoever my friend may choose to be. I love them unconditionally.

I am worthy of love and love to do my self love rituals.

I always stop to smell the roses.

I'm always in the flow at the time!

I bring my positive vibe and a big smile wherever I go.

I see challenges in my life as opportunities for growth.

I am Great and can be Myself

Positive Affirmations

"Every day, I am becoming a better version of myself."

Positive Affirmations

I have a gift and I am responsible for sharing it with the world.

I won't let my fears stop me from having a good time.

I Radiate Positive energy from my being.

I choose to be patient and to trust the process.

I see challenges in my life as opportunities for growth.

I am Great and can be Myself

Positive Affirmations

"Every day, I am becoming a better version of myself."

I support whoever my friend may choose to be. I love them unconditionally.

I am worthy of love and love to do my self love rituals.

I always stop to smell the roses.

I won't let my fears stop me from having a good time.

I am here to live my best life. Don't be afraid to ask for what I need. I feel more calm in my own skin. I am free to be wild.



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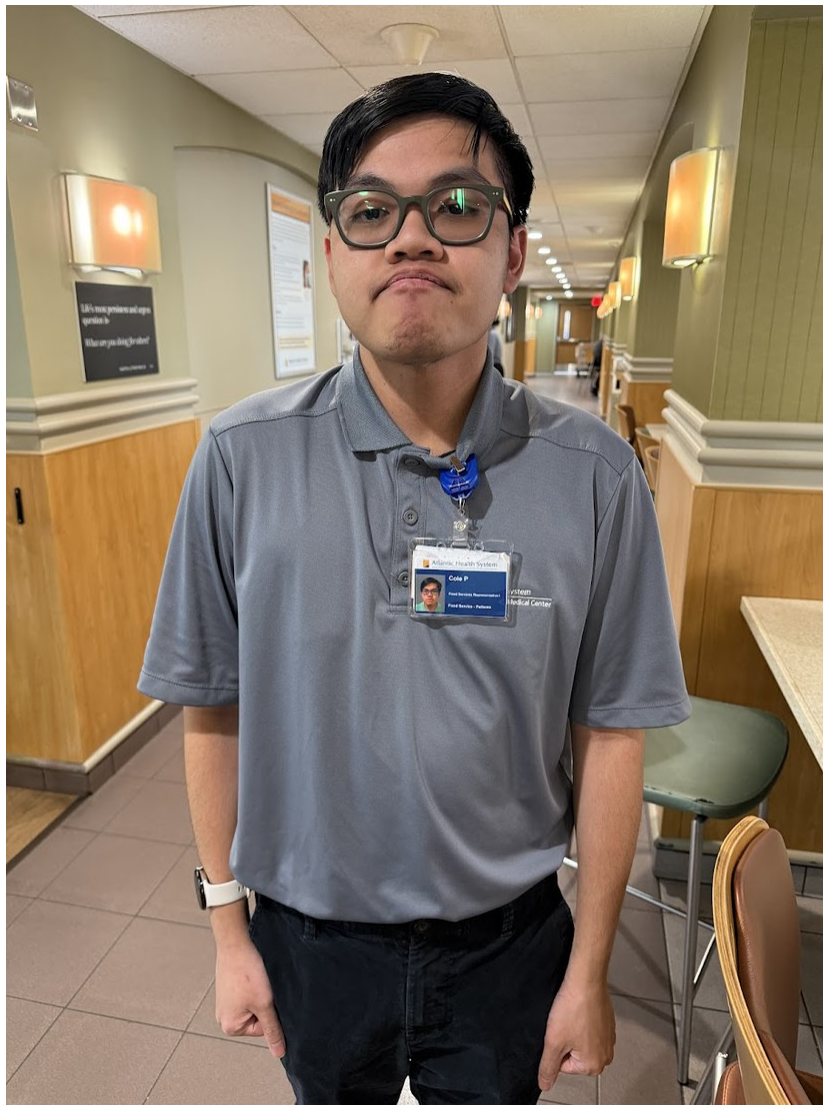


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Look Who Was Spotted in the Community!

Great to bump into **Cole** (or as he prefers, "**Cole-Slaw**"), a former WRA and Project SEARCH student who is now working as a dishwasher at Overlook Medical Center!



Picture of the Month

JENGA...Not just a game...it's architectural art!

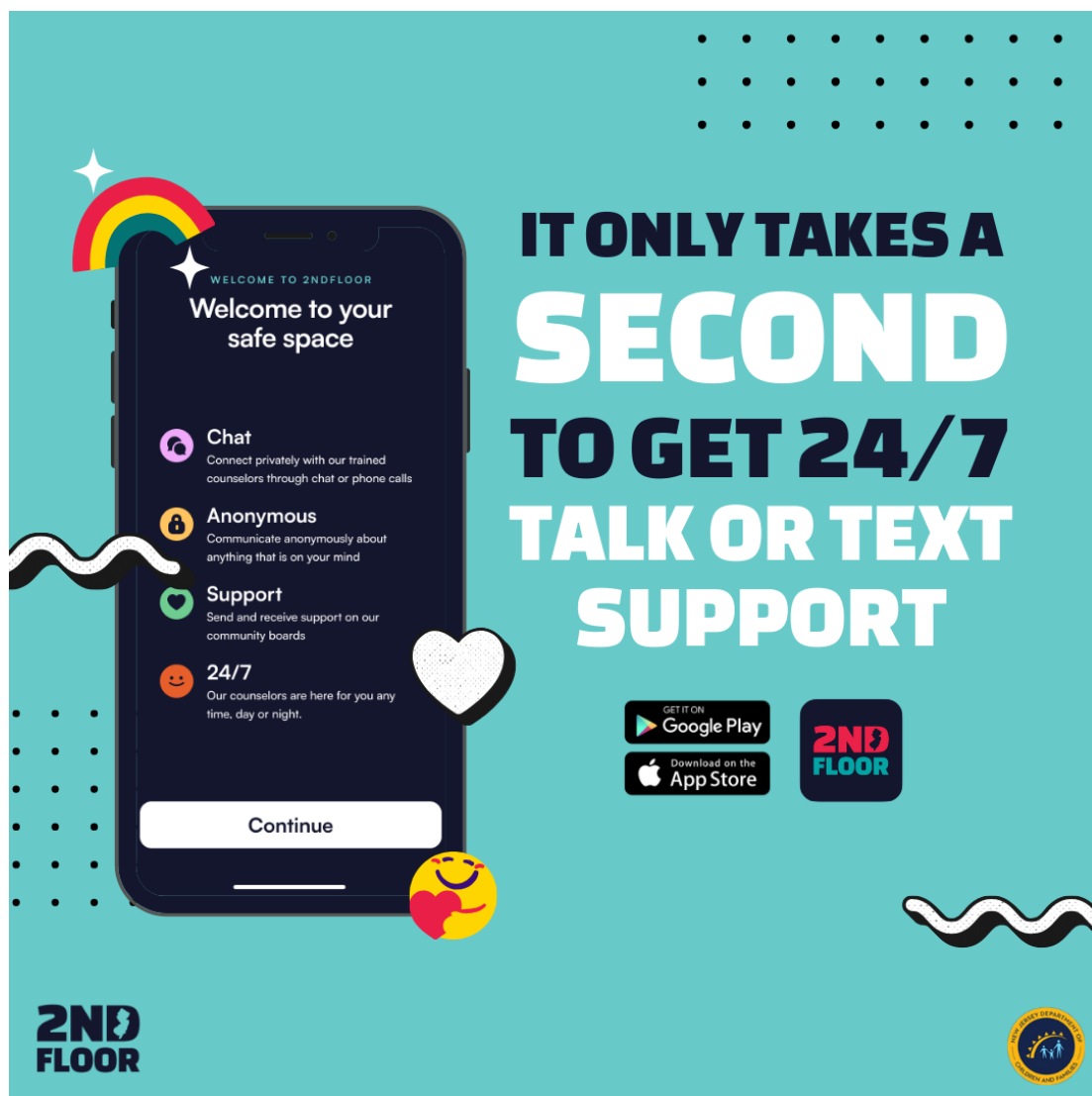


Community Resources/Events



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The new **#2NDFLOOR app** for NJ youth is here! It only takes a second to get free 24/7 mental health support with one-on-one chat, helpline, community conversations, and more. Get started at 2NDFLOOR.org/download #mentalhealth #support.



Understanding Supported Employment Options Available AFTER Graduation

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT IN NEW JERSEY

Supported Employment helps individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) secure and maintain **competitive employment**, or work in a setting to prepare for competitive employment. An individual's interests, likes, and dislikes are important factors when considering a job or career path.



KEY TERMS

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Federal legislation signed in 2014 to help individuals access education, training, and support services to succeed in the workplace.

Competitive Employment

Work performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting that is compensated at or above minimum wage.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)

The state agency which provides vocational services for individuals with IDD or other barriers to employment.

Check out our DVRS Go Bag: bit.ly/DVRSgobag

"Employment First" State

An initiative that outlines that competitive employment is the preferred post-education activity. It presumes that all individuals, including people with IDD, are capable of integrated employment.

EXAMPLES OF SERVICES

• **Pre-Employment Transition Services**

- Offered to high school students to plan and prepare for entering the workforce.

• **Job Development**

- Assists individuals with a job search, interview skills, and resume development.

• **Job Sampling**

- Gives the individual the opportunity to explore different types of employment and identify areas of interest and ability.

• **Job Coaching**

- Provides assistance with learning essential job tasks, transportation training, social skills, and can act as a liaison between the employer and employee.

• **Long-Term Follow Along**

- Ongoing support through worksite visits designed to help individuals maintain skills built during job coaching.

• **Trial Work Experience**

- A workplace readiness assessment administered by a Supported Employment provider agency, such as [Project HIRE](#).

*This is not a fully inclusive list. Services may vary between agencies, school districts, and funding sources.

REQUIREMENTS OF COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

Wages

Individuals are compensated at or above minimum wage, and at a comparable rate to coworkers without IDD performing similar duties with similar experience and education.

Benefits

Individuals receive the same benefits as other employees in a similar position with a similar level of service.

Scheduling

The schedule is determined by the needs of the employer, not the availability of the individual.

Integration

Employment takes place in a setting where individuals with and without disabilities have the opportunity to interact and work alongside each other.

Advancement

The same opportunities for promotion and advancement are available for employees with and without disabilities in similar positions with similar experience.

NJ WORKABILITY

NJ WorkAbility offers people with disabilities who are working, and whose income would otherwise make them ineligible for Medicaid, the opportunity to receive full Medicaid coverage.

Through NJ WorkAbility, individuals can earn up to \$65,196 of gross annual income and maintain less than \$20,000 in assets without threatening their Medicaid status. A couple cannot exceed \$87,900 in gross income and \$30,000 in assets. Learn more about NJ WorkAbility and eligibility requirements at: bit.ly/njworkability

April 2022



Supported Employment Fact Sheet Final.pdf

Click the link to download the attachment

Download

641.9 KB

Guardianship Resources

At 18 years old all individuals, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, reach the legal age of majority. This means that parents can no longer make decisions legally on behalf of their children. See the attached fact sheet from the Arc of New Jersey for more information about Guardianship and various alternative options.



Updated Guardianship Fact Sheet (3).pdf

Download

107.0 KB



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 Rachel Richer at rreicher@ucesc.org

Email: jbornstein@ucesc.org

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

Location: [970 Suburban Road, Union, NJ, USA](#)

Phone: [908-633-2704](tel:908-633-2704)



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WRA on Instagram!**



WRA Smore

WRA is using S'more to create beautiful newsletters



WESTLAKE APRIL MONTHLY REPORT

Message from the Administrators

"Someday we'll find it, the Rainbow Connection, the lovers, the dreamers and me." - Kermit the Frog

If April showers bring May flowers, then it also brings rainbows, sunnier days and the dawn of Spring hopes eternal. But It also marks the end of March and the madness that our annual March Madness Basketball Game brings. The gymnasium was bursting with energy and excitement as students passed, dribbled and shot their way demonstrating teamwork and sportsmanship, while the Westlake Student Cheer Squad kept the fandom and exuberance high in front of students' families, district representatives and Westlake staff members. The game was a true example of school spirit and the magic that can happen when school, community and families partner for a common "goal"....or in this case, "basket".



April's district theme of Responsibility was embraced in many different facets within the classrooms. Several classes took the opportunity to combine the celebration of Earth Day with the shared responsibility of conservation that we all have. Students researched and identified "One Little Thing I Can Do" to help protect our planet, from recycling to reducing electricity. Students also learned about the importance of trees, planting seeds and the pivotal impact trees play on our environment. Another form of growth that was in full bloom was a "Goals Garden", encouraging

students to challenge themselves with personal goals, as seeds of success to grow from such as “trying new things, reading more and being a good friend”. Student-created Vision Boards were displayed throughout the school showcasing personal goals, dreams and inspirations that reflect on their future and celebrate individuality. Whether helping a classmate, cleaning up their work area or following classroom and school rules and directions, students earned Responsibility Tickets, recognized by classmates and staff members when demonstrating acts of responsibility throughout the school day, which were redeemable for preferential prizes and activities.

Finally, some well-deserved staff members were honored, celebrated and appreciated during designated days, including our Teacher Assistants, who on a daily basis consistently demonstrate that they are vital parts of creating a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for students to learn, grow and flourish. We are extremely grateful for all of their hard work and the positive impacts they make for the well being of our students every single day! As well as our school secretary, Carrie Koch, who as the heart of the front office has the immeasurable ability to manage countless tasks with grace, accuracy, and dedication, which is essential to the smooth operation of our school. Thank you, Carrie, for all that you do for us here at Westlake!

Till Next Time My Friends....Be Good To Yourself and Each Other :)
Claudine T. and Bobby P.



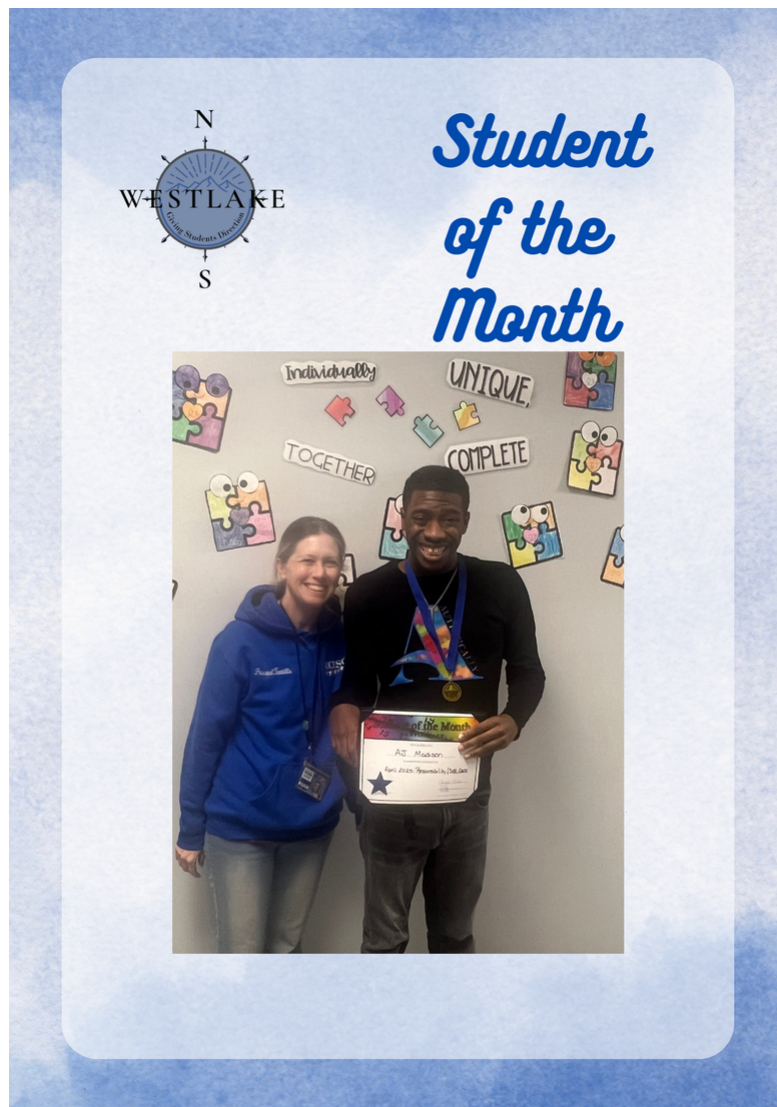
Westlake Information

- Current Enrollment: 53
- Referrals: 4
- Acceptances: 3
- Fire Drill: April 1
- Emergency Management Drill (Bomb Threat): April 16



April Spotlight!

Student of the Month!



A.J.M. has spent his last year at Westlake working in my jobs. He takes staff pizza and bagel orders every week. He is always happy and smiling! We so proud of all of his accomplishments this year!

Principal's Award Winner!



Principal's Award



S.M. has done amazing since starting here at Westlake. She has become proficient using her Communication device. She loves working on the SMART Board during Morning Meeting! We are so proud of her!

Staff of the Month,



Staff Member of the Month



We are so thankful for our Staff of the Month Ms. Carrie! Every morning she greets the staff as they come in! She keeps us all organized and running smoothly! She helps us put together all the new furniture! She is always will to help everyone!

Sunshine Cafe Employee of the Month!

SUNSHINE CAFE EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



J.B is the Sunshine Cafe Employee of the Month for April! She was chosen because she works hard and loves learning new things! She is hardworking, kind, responsible, and a great worker all around!



The Sunshine Cafe!



The Sunshine Cafe has a new special for April in honor of Easter! It is a Easter Egg Cupcakes and a Sparkling Dragonfruit Refresher!

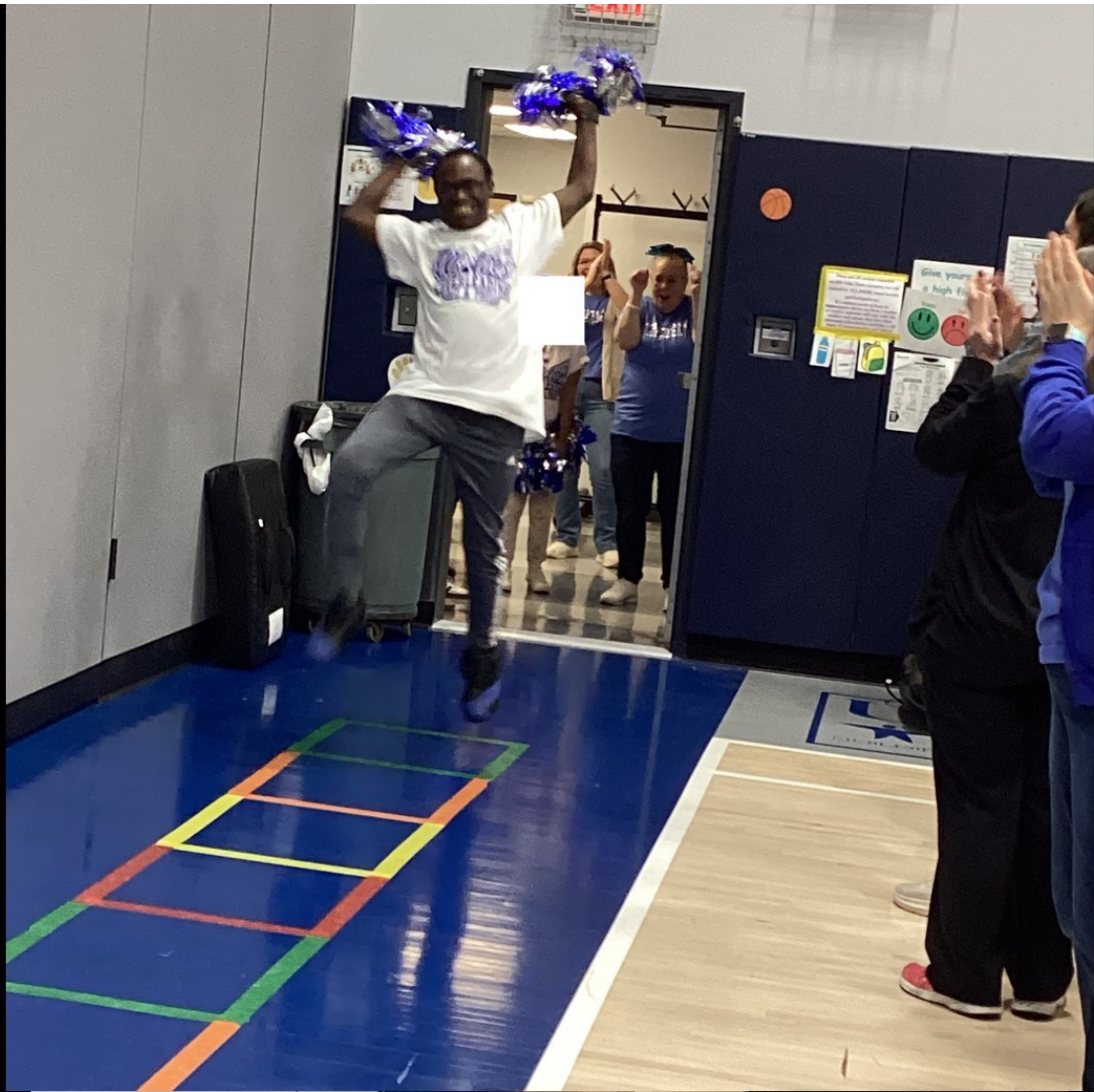


Westlake Basketball Game!

WESTLAKE BASKETBALL GAME

BLUE VS **WHITE**
26 18
FINAL SCORE













write up











Ms. Swisher's Vocational Class!



This month, our vocational work readiness program has continued to support our students in developing the essential skills needed to be successful in home, school, and community settings. Our students have been working on learning to follow a schedule to foster independence while at work. Students have made great progress with locating tasks, setting up their work station, maintaining an organized work area, and cleaning up when they are finished. This school year students have been working on both individual and whole class motivational plans for appropriate work behaviors. Upon completion of each individual card students are given a reinforcement of their choice. Choices include a tangible item, free period, craft period, and social time with a classmate or staff member. At the end of each vocational session students assess the entire class to decide if they have earned their star for the day. It has been motivating to see students encourage each other to make appropriate work choices. At the end of the year the class will vote to earn a reward based upon the number of stars earned. Reward choices will include a pizza, movies and a snack, make your own sundae, and crafts.

Students were also quite busy this month assembling eggs with candy and tickets. Students worked collaboratively to package over 2,000 eggs for the Cranford JayCee's egg hunt. We also packaged over 1,000 eggs for the Westlake students to gather and trade in for a special basket. A great time was had by all.

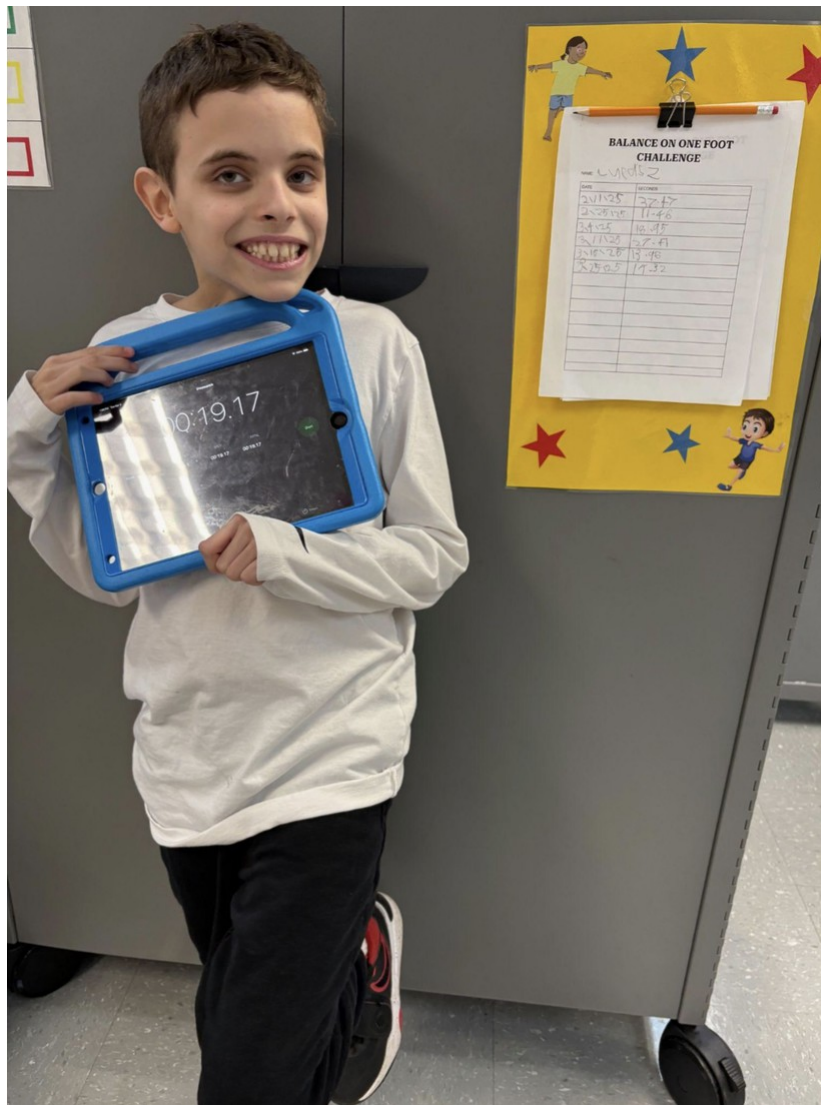








Westlake PT Department



We are having a great time in physical therapy (PT) this month working on our strength, balance/coordination and gross motor skills! In Westlake School PT services are provided both in individual and group sessions. During PT group we have a great time working together with our peers to move and strengthen. We also practice other skills in our groups such as; taking turns, waiting our turn, cheering on our peers and helping our friends.

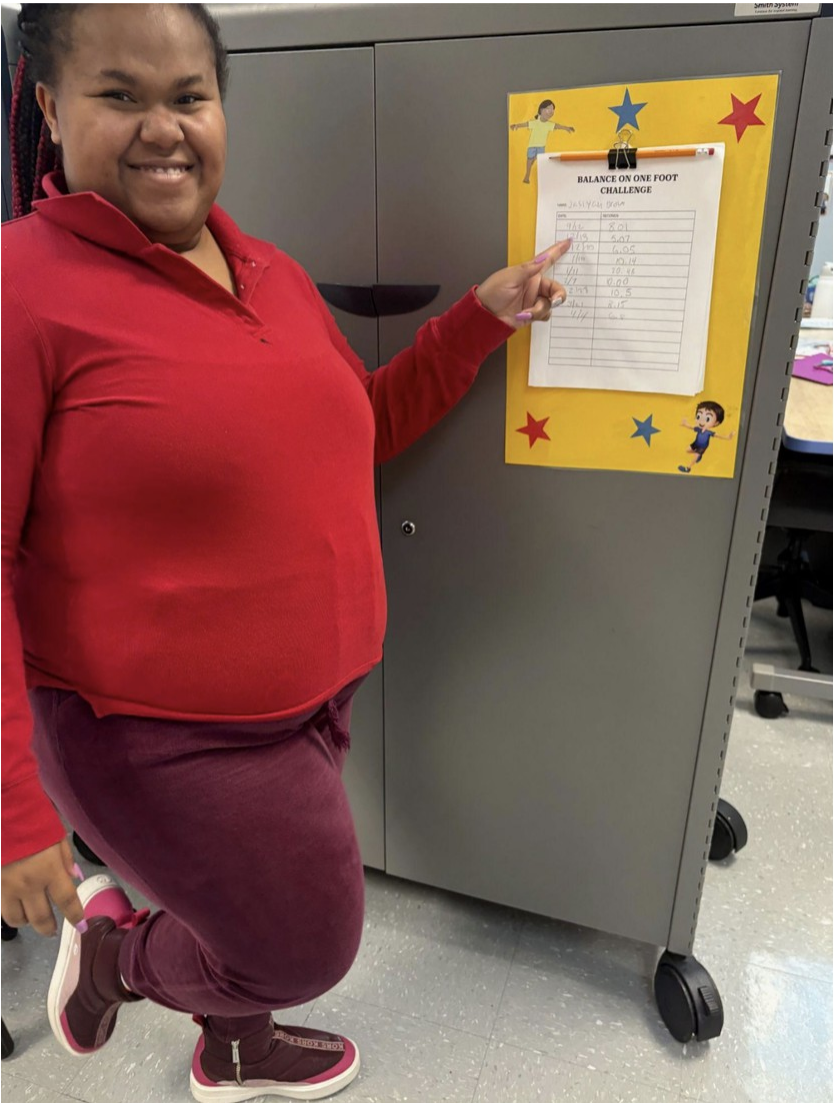
Our students are doing a great job tracking their progress with balancing on one foot on our balance tracking chart. It is so motivating to watch the numbers go up each week!

We are continuing to have a blast with our exciting new Blaze Pods! These pods are interactive lights that can be programmed for various exercises and games. They can be utilized to improve balance, coordination, and reaction time through activities where students tap or step on illuminated pods.

Our "Fitness Club" continues to meet once weekly to work on cardiovascular endurance on our treadmills. We chart our progress on a "treadmill tracker," practice lower extremity stretching and use a muscle chart to discuss which muscles are being engaged.

Overall our students are having a great month in PT and are continuing to make steady progress towards their goals!

Aliza Feuerstein PT, DPT, PCS







Our Work Based Learning Students working at the Walgreens! They are getting ready for the summer sunshine by setting up the sunscreen section of the store!



Mr. Kurt's Class!



The students in Room 79 have kept very busy so far this Spring! Our students enjoyed participating in the March Madness basketball game as either players, cheerleaders, or fans! It has become an early Spring tradition and a good time was had by all!

We also recently took a trip to Esposito Park. We were lucky enough to enjoy beautiful weather as the class walked two laps on the path, tossed a football and observed some of the local wildlife!

The boys and girls of Room W79 also like to go to the Sunshine Cafe! It is a Thursday morning treat for the students to take a break from their busy week to enjoy a snack and drink. It also provides a great opportunity to spend time with their friends from other classrooms and work on social skills.





Sunshine Club's Easter Egg Hunt for Staff and Students!

BIG THANK YOU TO OUR WESTLAKE SUNSHINE COMMITTEE!

They organized a Staff and Student Easter Egg hunt! Easter eggs were hidden all over the gym and collected by the students in two groups. At the end, the students, handed in the collected egg and they received an Easter Basket filled with treats! Staff picked 3 Easter Eggs out of a basket that were filled with treat! Each class had one special egg that contained a voucher for 2 slices of pizza for Pizza Fridays!











Westlake PTO!

Bowling Family Event!

The Westlake PTO organized an afternoon of bowling at Linden Lanes! Staff and Families had a fun afternoon!



A poster for a clothing drive at Westlake School. It features a central chalkboard with the words 'CLOTHING DRIVE' written on it. The poster is decorated with various school supplies like pencils, a ruler, and a notebook. The text on the poster provides details about the donation event, including the date, time, location, and items being collected. It also includes a note about how the school will receive money for the donations.

SUPPORT WESTLAKE SCHOOL

CLOTHING DRIVE

The WPO is hosting a used clothing donation event!

WE ARE COLLECTING: WEARABLE & USABLE CLOTHING, SHOES, BELTS, HANDBAGS, BEDSHEETS, TOWELS, STUFFED ANIMALS, SMALL HARD TOYS AND BIKES

OUR SCHOOL WILL RECEIVE MONEY FOR EVERY POUND WE COLLECT

DATE: Saturday, May 31, 2025

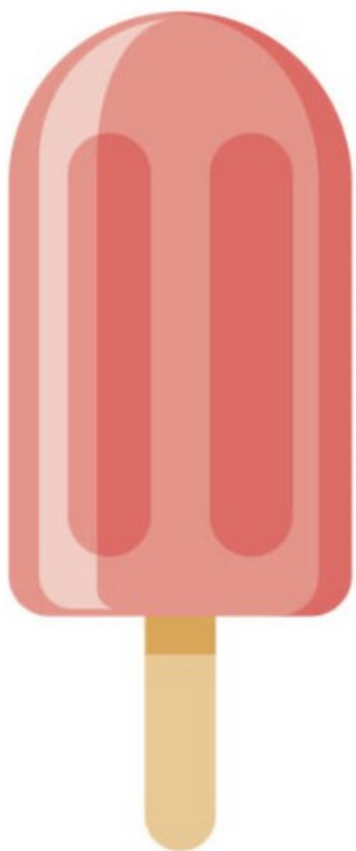
DROP OFF TIME: 10:00 to 1:30
LOCATION: Westlake School
1571 Lambert's Mill Road
Westfield, NJ 07090 (front of building)
CONTACT: Roberta Cadeau
908-494-1688

note:
Please put all that you are donating into tightly tied plastic bags

WolfPack Press

Favorite Ice Pop Flavor Survey!

It's getting warmer outside! A great way to cool off on a hot day is with a cold treat. We asked staff and students around Westlake what their favorite ice pop flavor is. Many people had a hard time choosing from all of the delicious flavors. Mango won by a landslide with 17 votes! Watermelon came in 2nd place with 7 votes. Blue-Raspberry tied with Cherry for 3rd place with 6 votes each! Orange and Strawberry came in 4th place with 5 votes each. Green Apple, Grape, and Lemon-Lime came in 5th place with 2 votes each. It was interesting to learn everyone's favorite ice pop flavor!



Parent Resource!

and Special Needs

Programs and Social Events for all ages

PROGRAMS

- Yoga
- Karate
- Zumba
- Ceramics
- Golf
- Spray Park & more

SOCIAL EVENTS

- Fishing Derby
- Paint by the Pond
- Summer Festival
- Summer Camp
- Barn Dance
- Skating with Santa & more



For more information or to be placed on our mailing list to
receive brochures and program details:

call: (908) 527-4781

email: opdsn@ucnj.org

visit our website www.ucnj.org/opdsn

Or scan the QR Code!



BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE



Bwo pou moun ki gen ankap ak bezwen
espesyal

Pwogram ak Evènman Sosyal pou tout laj

PWOGRAM YO

- Yoga
- Karate
- Seramik
- Dans Zumba
- Gòlf
- Espre Pak ak plis ankò

EVÈNMAN SOSYAL

- Konpetisyon Lapèch
- Penti bò Lak la
- Festival ete
- Kan ete
- Dans Granj
- Patinaj ak Santa akplis ankò



Pou plis enfòmasyon oswa pou yo mete sou lis adrès nou an
pou resevwa bwochi ak detay pwogram yo:

Rele: (908) 527-4781

Imel: opdsn@ucnj.org

vizite sit entènèt nou an: www.ucnj.org/opdsn

Oswa eskane kòd QR la!



BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE

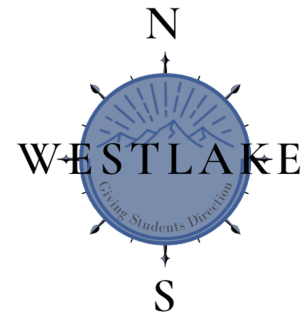


Contact Us!

Website: www.ucesc.org/schools/westlake_school

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

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



INSTAGRAM!

Visit us!



Robert Peneno

Robert is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

Let Every Voice Empower



NEWSLETTER 24-25 APRIL

April 2025 Monthly Report Monthly Report Enrollment Data

Enrollment-101 (as of 4/30/25).

New Students-3

Disenrollments-2 (Attendance/GED & Transfer).

Emergency Drill-4/16/25, Bomb Threat.

Fire Drill-4/1/25.

A Message From The Principal: Dr. Balsamello

April was filled with trips, events, and our spring break to enjoy Easter. Students enjoyed two field trips to UCNJ and the third marking period Honor Roll field trip. While in school, students celebrated Arab-American Heritage. Other school-wide events included an extremely successful Career Day with outside vendors, an EOF assembly, April Fool's day pranks, as well as visiting the Westlake Sunshine Cafe on Wednesdays and the Westlake Snack Shack everyday during student lunches. Please enjoy our newsletter and feel free to contact me with any questions.



April Important Dates

April 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 April Fools	2 • Wear Blue for Autism Awareness	3	4 Spirit Day - Tie Dye	5
6	7 End of 3 rd Marking Period	8 Start of 4 th Marking Period	9 UCNJ Trip	10	11 • Career Day • Spirit Day - School Spirit	12
13	14	15	16 EOF Assembly	17 • Spirit Day - Spring Colors • Honor Roll Incentive Trip	18 Spring Break	19
20	21 Spring Break	22 Spring Break	23 Spring Break	24 Spring Break	25 Spring Break	26
27	28	29 SAT Testing	30			

Student of the Month

April - Zamaiah C

Congratulations to Zamaiah C for being our overall Student of the Month! She has worked hard and been very dedicated in her classes to receive this honor. Keep up the excellent work!



Faculty "Getting to Know You"!

Mr Fritz' Favorites:

Favorite movie: Lord of the Rings

Favorite food: French Fries, Steak

Favorite color: Green

Favorite book: The Forgotten Soldier

Favorite travel spot: The Renaissance Faire



"Let Your Voice Empower" Teacher Recognitions

April - Cultivate

This year's district wide theme of "Let Your Voice Empower" was incorporated by teachers being awarded pins in different areas of empowerment. The April theme was 'Cultivate'. As role models for our students, it is important to be an example of what empowerment looks like and how we can empower others to do the same.

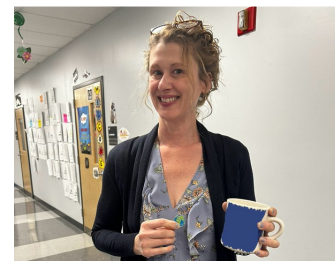
The faculty/staff picked for this month's honor have done their part to cultivate the school environment to make it fun, educational, and special for our staff and students.



Mr Shandroff



Ms Pradel



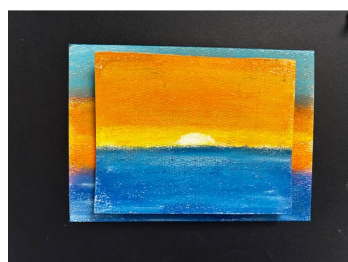
Mrs Picciano

Teacher's Corner

Ms Picciano - Art

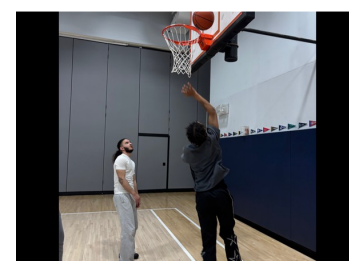
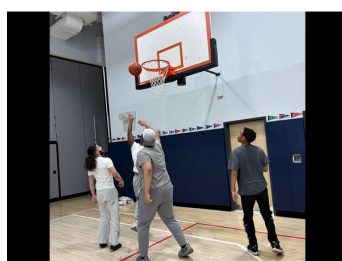
This month, Mrs Picciano's art class was all about color theory. Students experimented with various. The teacher stated that acrylics are much different than our initial work in watercolors and

inks, so there was also a lot to learn about their complexity and application. Color theory is always Mrs Picciano's favorite unit to teach. This is when students learn to mix all the colors from the three primaries. Students are intrigued how they can make so many colors and it is a pleasure to watch them explore and play with the viscosity of the paint. Also, students were introduced to how color affects mood, how color combinations are decided for logos, and how to use the color wheel to determine a set of hues in a scheme in order to limit the palette.



Mr Barone - PhysEd/Health

In Physical and Health Education classes, students often participate in sports like volleyball and basketball to improve their fitness, coordination, and teamwork skills. Volleyball and basketball help develop agility, reflexes, and communication as players work together to score points as well as to defend their side of the court. Alongside playing sports, students also learn important safety practices such as basic first aid. First aid training in Health classes taught students how to respond to common injuries like sprains, cuts, or bruises that may occur during physical activity. This knowledge helps students feel more confident and prepared to handle emergencies and by promoting a safer and more responsible environment during sports and exercise.



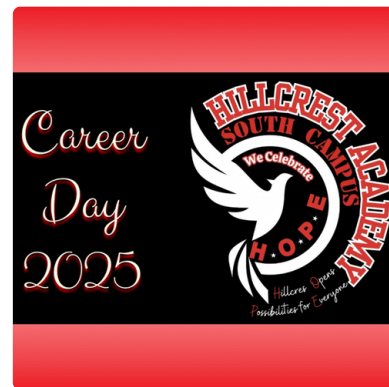
Career Day

HAS's Teacher Assistant, Ms. Pradel, planned and executed an extremely successful Career Day. With the help of staff, students met individuals from many different fields such as LPN (nurse), Waxer, Hair and Makeup Artist, Real Estate Agent, Therapist, Doctor, Photographer/videographer,

Barber, Police Officer, Construction/Paving, Professional Printer, and Home renovations. Students were able to ask questions and document their answers as part of their assignment:

- How and why did you choose this career?
- What is a typical day in your work life (work/life balance)?
- What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?
- What are the most challenging parts of your job?
- What education requirements and/or licenses are required for your career?
- What skills and abilities would prepare you for this career? How can we start preparing now?
- What advice do you have for someone who is interested in the same career?

It was so successful that a few students during their down time that same day, looked up and researched these professions and applied for available opportunities!



UCNJ Trip

School Counselor, Mrs Schulhafer, organized a trip to UCNJ where interested seniors could tour the campus and learn the benefits of attending a community college. UCNJ has campuses in Cranford, Scotch Plains, Plainfield, and even Elizabeth that will make commuting easy for these prospective students. College is an important right of passage for teens/young adults as it helps open doors into jobs and future endeavors. It shows that a person is committed to studying, personal growth, and ready to work toward a specialized area of knowledge. At UCNJ, students have the opportunity to either earn a degree, get a certification, or prepare for a new job skill.



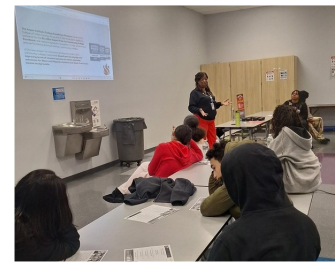
EOF Assembly

A representative from UCNJ came to speak to our seniors about their EOF Program. "Since 1968 The Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program has been instrumental in creating opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to pursue a college degree. EOF is a comprehensive student support service program that offers financial and academic assistance to eligible UCNJ students. The program's purpose is to help EOF scholars achieve their maximum potential and persist through graduation. The EOF Program offers a wide range of benefits and services including:

- An additional financial aid grant of up to \$800 per semester
- Free pre-college summer programs for incoming first-year students
- Registration, Career, Transfer, and Financial Aid advisement from a personal EOF Advisor
- Leadership Activities and Workshops
- Academic Support through tutoring and supplemental instruction
- Internship opportunities
- Opportunity to join the Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society"



The above information (and more) is found on the UCNJ website available here: [Educational Opportunity Fund Program – UCNJ](#)



Honor Roll Incentive Trip

Congratulations to all those students who made the third marking period Honor Roll! These students were treated to a trip to an arcade for all of their hard work, dedication, and good behavior. Students had the chance to play classic arcade games, more modern video games, physical games like DDR, driving games, and much more. Once they were done playing, honor roll students were then treated to a pizza lunch.





Arab-American Heritage Month

Bulletin Board

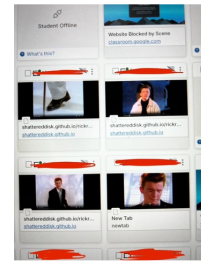
Arab American Heritage Month aims to honor the rich heritage, history, and hopes of the more than 3.5 million Arab Americans across our country. It began as a 2017 initiative that only involved a few states and cities, but recognition has been steadily spreading since then. In April 2021, President Biden became the first U.S. president to issue a proclamation acknowledging Arab American Heritage Month. HAS recognized Arab American Heritage Month in a hallway display that included notable individuals with roots in one of the 22 countries located in the Middle East and North Africa that are united by their primary language, Arabic, as well as by their shared history and culture.



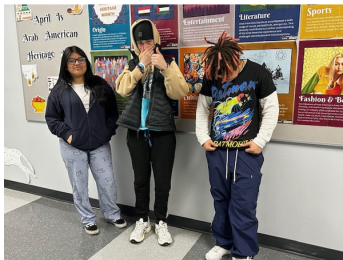
April Fool's Day

April Fool's Day is a day of practical jokes and hoaxes. So when April 1st hit, there was no short supply of fun at HAS. To start the day, silly eyes mysteriously popped up all around the Dr B's offices to watch the happenings of the main office. Next, our popular community mirror that is visited frequently by students was "tagged" up to make viewing one's self a bit more difficult. Then, in a strange turn of events, our English teacher, Ms Vlastaras, taught math and our math teacher, Ms Fern, taught English; it was a world gone mad! The best part of the whole day was when every single student got "Rick Rolled" while working on their Chromebooks. Finally, the day ended when Ms V and Ms Fern sprayed silly string at our Safety & Security Monitor, Mr DiOrio, as a surprise to both him AND Mr Whitehead, the 1571 head custodian! If you would like to see more pictures and videos of the fun had here at HAS, [click here!](#)





April Spirit Days



Wear Blue for Autism Awareness



Tie Dye

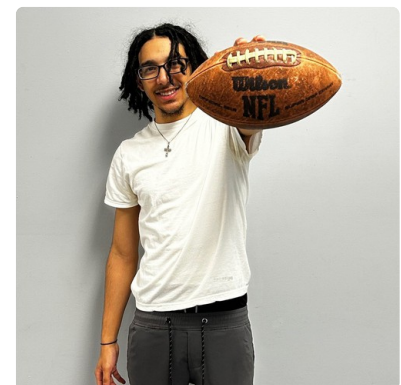


School Spirit

Students Outside of School

Bringing in the "Back" Up

Yanssel has been playing football for 4 years. He got started because he felt that he was undersize and lacked support. He was looking for an outlet but was unsure as to what; that's when he discovered football. Yanssel plays defensive backfield which is a skilled position where usually the "back" drops to coverage and potentially have to play defense against the best players on the other team aka the wide receivers. Being a part of a team makes Yanssel feel like he has a second family. The student stated "You wake up, top of the morning, to grind and hustle and get hit just to perfect your craft. At home I never got the support of my family because they didn't want me playing. However, I was willing to risk my body and mind for it and I feel not just part of a family, but as a teenager, the coaches mature you in a type of way that is unique; you seek victory by putting your foot down and being assertive. At the end, its an unexplainable feeling that only hits when I see yardage on green grass and a yellow goal post over a endzone. I describe this as the best feeling in my world."



Hillcrest Academy South Campus is an alternative high school for students from the Elizabeth Public School District. 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)

Visit us on Instagram



HAS Smore

HAS is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



Hillcrest North April 2025 MR

April 2025

Si usted desea leer "The Newsletter" en otra lengua que no sea inglés, hay un botón para traducir la página en la parte superior de la computadora (Translate). Le llevará a la siguiente página para que presione (Translated) y escoja la lengua en que usted desea leer.

Principal's Message



Dear Hillcrest Academy North Campus (HAN) Students and Families:

HAN did not let April showers get us "down and blue" inside and outside of the classroom. There is certainly an energy in the building that feels like the sun is shining! Students worked diligently to ensure that they finished the third marking period strong. We will be celebrating academic success and student self reflection and motivation with an incentive trip this Friday. Students have also been very busy organizing and planning HAN's Cinco de Mayo. This event has always been a time of combining learning and celebrating heritage.

As you will read in the Newsletter, HAN continues to grow and strengthen our school community by conducting Restorative Circles and taking part in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) classes.

These two important components to our curriculum have given students the ability to self-reflect and use their “voice” at HAN to make a positive difference in continuing to build a strong community of learners that care about themselves and others.

HAN continues to be a safe space for students where they can thrive academically and socially while individually soaring to new heights!

Keep it up, HAN!

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

Sincerely,

John Marquet
Principal

Monthly Data

Enrolled - 86

Accepted - 5

Disenrolled - 4

Fire Drill - April 29th

Evacuation Drill - April 17th

Upcoming Dates

May 1st - Cinco de Mayo Celebration

May 2nd - Roller Skating Incentive Trip

Week of May 5th - Teacher Appreciation Week

Tuesday 5/6 - Friday 5/9: NJSLA Testing

Week of May 12th School-wide "No laptop week"

May 26th - School Closed - Memorial Day

May 28th - Prom Safety Assembly

June 6th - Career Day

SAVE THE DATES - invitations to follow

June 4th - Senior Recognition Dinner

June 11th - Awards Night

Monthly Awards



March Principal Awards



**Perfect Attendance
Awards for March**



**Honor Roll Marking
Period 3**

Restorative Circles

In Lederman's Class

One of the most amazing things I've seen to come out of the Restorative Circles in my class this year, is the impromptu, unplanned circles one of my classes loves to have. When there is downtime during one of my classes, they request that we have restorative circles. I get out a folder I keep of possible questions. Students will go through the questions, each student will pick a question, and then they will take turns and lead the circle by asking that question. The students have impressed me with the questions they ask and their willingness to go deep and thoughtful with their responses. This is entirely student led, and I usually ask a question last, if there is time for me to ask a question at all.

In the Spotlight



SEL Class

This month's SEL lessons have been about positive affirmations. A positive affirmation is a statement that you repeat to yourself to reinforce positive thoughts and feelings, and to challenge negative self-talk. For the first activity, students were asked to pick their top ten affirmations from a list of 150. They then took the list home and were instructed to put the list somewhere they could see it everyday. The more you practice these statements, the more they will automatically come to mind! This week, students wrote one affirmation on a flower and we hung them up on the tree mural in the hallway. Students can now view these affirmations daily as they walk by. Some of the affirmations are: "If I fall, I'll get back up again", "I am good enough", and "I can and I will".

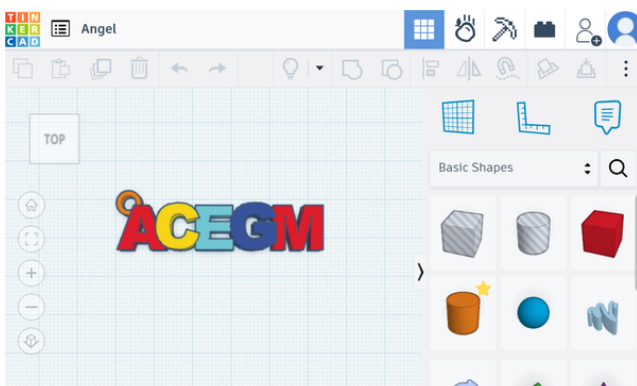


In the Classrooms

Computer Science

Computer Science at Hillcrest Academy North is using 3D-printing in a totally new way. All year the printer in the classroom has intrigued students - they have enjoyed the puzzles, fidgets and slinky-toys that they have seen being printed.

Recently the students have been introduced to 3D modeling using Tinkercad. For their first project, they used Tinkercad to design a personalized keychain. Almost immediately students were able to hold their own designs in their hands. I was impressed how the students embraced the new software and how they expressed their creativity and individuality in their work. The class will continue to develop their skills using the 3D modeling software with several more projects including a covered box and a phone stand. Each project will develop new 3D modeling skills, create a useful object, and provide an avenue to express their creativity and individuality.

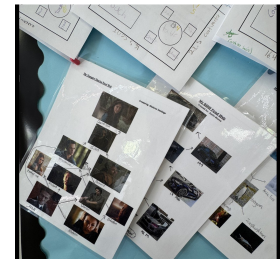


Exploring Energy Flow in Nature: Food Chains and Webs

This month in Ms. Silva's Environmental Science classes, our students embarked on an exciting science unit exploring food chains, food webs, and the fascinating ways energy flows through ecosystems. Through hands-on activities and engaging lessons, they learned how producers, consumers, and decomposers interact to sustain life in various habitats. From understanding how a single plant can support an entire chain of organisms to exploring the roles of predators and prey, students developed a strong grasp of how energy is transferred from one organism to another in natural systems.

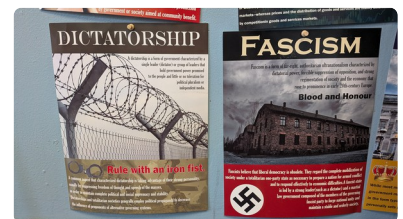


To deepen their understanding, students were given the creative opportunity to design their own food webs. Using either real-life ecosystems—like the rainforest, ocean, or desert—or imaginative themes of their own, they mapped out detailed networks showing the relationships between different organisms. This project not only allowed them to apply scientific knowledge, but also encouraged creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork as they visualized how life is interconnected. The results were both educational and inspiring, showcasing the students' growing appreciation for the complexity and beauty of nature.



US History II - Universe of Obligation

In a recent lesson about WWII, students explored the Nazi party's platform and how such a hateful political party could be elected. Students attempted to answer this question by analyzing the policies promised during the Nazi election campaign and why these policies despite being terrible to so many minority groups, were accepted by the population at large. Building on the students prior understanding of "Universe of Obligation," a sociological concept, we as a class examined how the Nazis tailored their platform to appeal to the majority at the expense of the minority. To do this, Students were split into groups where they listed the Nazi policies between "affects majority" and "targets minorities." Students engaged in detailed discussions, delving into how the polices influenced German citizens' perceptions and why the majority of German people were willing to overlook atrocities because their "care" was limited to who and what they felt obligated to. After their discussion, students using claim, evidence, analysis, were able to express their understanding by answering the question "How did people's 'universe of obligation' allow the Nazi party to be elected."



Upcoming Event - Career Day

Hillcrest Academy North is excited to announce that we will be hosting our annual Career Day on June 6th. This special event will bring together a wide range of professionals from various fields to share their experiences, insights, and advice with our students. Throughout the years, Career Day has given our students the opportunity to learn about a variety of career paths, hear from professionals, and gain valuable insights into their future possibilities. Hearing real-world success stories can ignite passion and drive among students to pursue their goals. At North, we believe Career Day will be a valuable and inspiring experience for all students, helping them envision and plan for bright, successful futures.

For Career Day, we have planned to invite individuals from different professional fields who will provide insight on their careers, how they started and their day to day experiences. During this planning process, we have noticed that the students are becoming more engaged in the event as we plan to bring in individuals from fields the students are most interested in. This event will be most beneficial for our senior class as they can encompass different professions while also receiving real and reliable feedback and opinions. Career Day is meant to inspire students to think about their futures, discover new interests, and better understand the steps needed to achieve their career goals. It's an exciting opportunity for our students to connect classroom learning with real-world possibilities!



From Career Day 2024



From Career Day 2024

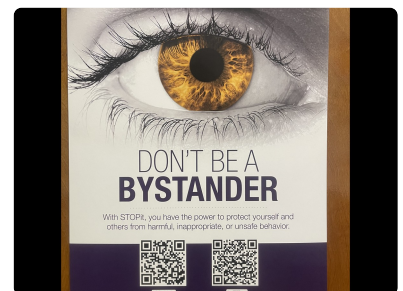


From Career Day 2024

STOPit Solutions

Students and staff were introduced to STOPit Solutions, a program that allows students and staff to report any concerns about unsafe, harmful, or inappropriate behavior to the HAN Safety Team.

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to download the STOPit App onto their phones.





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



Lamberts Mill Academy

April Monthly Report 2025



"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending."

— Carl Bard

Administrators' Message

April 2025

Good Morning,

As April draws to a close, we want to reach out and acknowledge the swift passage of this month, which was thankfully punctuated by a well-deserved Spring Break. We hope that all our students, families, and staff at LMA had the opportunity to relax, recharge, and return with renewed energy for the final stretch of the 2024-2025 academic school year.

We are incredibly proud of the academic achievements we have witnessed throughout the year, and especially the recent recognitions and honors our students have earned. Your dedication and support have played a vital role in their success. Congratulations to all our students who have achieved academic honors for the 3rd marking period!



As we look ahead to the remaining weeks, we have several important and exciting events on the horizon:

- **New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) Testing:** We will be administering the NJSLA in the coming weeks for 7th/8th/9th and 11th graders.
- **Java Joint:** Our popular Java Joint will be making a return, offering students a fun and engaging way to express themselves through various arts, and amplify student voice. It was also allow for students to appropriately socialize, and enjoy some treats.
- **Various Field Trips:** We are excited to provide enriching learning experiences outside the classroom through a variety of upcoming field trips, and our senior field trip at the end of the year.
- **Graduation Commencement Services:** For our graduating seniors, and 8th graders being promoted to high school, we are eagerly preparing for their commencement ceremonies. These events will celebrate their accomplishments and mark the beginning of their next chapter.
- **Getting Ready for Extended School Year (ESY):** Planning is well underway for our Extended School Year program which will be here before we know it. We are proud to offer this service, and to continue with academic and therapeutic supports for the students of LMA.

As we navigate these final weeks, we encourage students to remain focused on their studies, participate actively in all activities, and continue to express yourself using your voice. Your ongoing support and collaboration are invaluable as we work together to ensure a successful and positive conclusion to the school year for every student at LMA.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us!

Sincerely,

Reed & John

Monthly Data

1. Enrollment - 44
2. Acceptances - 2
3. New Students - 1
4. Intakes - 3
5. Referrals - 5
6. Disenrollments - 0
7. Fire Drill - 4/1/2025
8. Other Drill (Bom Threat) - 4/16/2025

Upcoming Events

May 2025 Important Dates

May 5 - Field Trip - Student Council Tamaques Park

May 6 - 14 - NJSLA State Testing

May 15 - Java Joint

May 19 - Outstanding Scholar Breakfast

May 23 - Field Trip - Dare to Dream 2025 Student Leadership Conference - Kean University

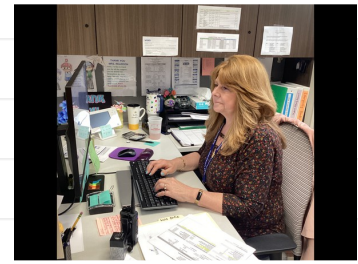
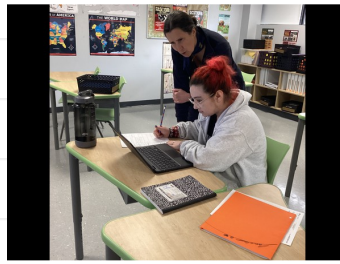
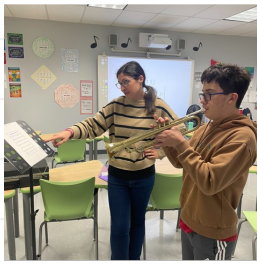
May 26 - No School - Memorial Day



Staff Spotlight

LMA Is spotlighting our 3 staff members who won the Staff (Teacher) of the Year Award for the 2024-2025 school year. Please review what some of the students and colleagues at LMA had to say about each recipient.





Teacher of the Year - Ms. Schneider

I appreciate how understanding you are about my academics.- Beirah M.

She is understanding and kind- Skye G.

I love you so much, you're so nice and always willing to help an do things just to see people smile- Briana B.

Congrats! You are such a helpful coworker, well deserved!- Ms. Van Clief

Her musical knowledge is phenomenal and how she can convey that to our students is truly wonderful.- Ms. McMahon

I appreciate all your help with my classes and all the knowledge you have shared with me!- Ms. Delgado

Instructional Support Staff of the Year - Mrs. Horn

I love going on walks with you to help myself regulate - Emma S.

THANKS FOR TEACHING ME GERMAN- Dennis E.

My first friend at LMA! Working with you has been an absolute pleasure. You make everyone's day brighter!- Ms. DeCarlo

Mrs. Horn always does what is best for the students. She is kind, caring, and supportive to all students.- Ms. Miller

Non-Instructional Support Staff of the Year - Mrs. Reardon

You make us smile- Alex C.

You always help us out and make our day. Also, you order Amazon to reward students.- Jordyn M.

You keep me and my paperwork organized and together.- Mr. Murphy

You were great at helping me with working here for the past few years. Congrats-Ms. VanClief

You're always so very helpful whenever I need help with anything, no matter what.-Ms. Oprah

You made my transition to LMA as smooth as possible! Thank you!- Ms. York

LMA Student of the Month - April 2025

Emma S - April Student of the Month at LMA

We are proud to present Emma S. as April's student of the month! Emma has demonstrated progress towards her goals here at Lamberts Mill Academy. Emma has been able to use her coping skills and communication skills to help strengthen her relationships with peers and staff. Emma has earned High Honor Roll for every marking period so far this year. Emma has various strengths like her resilience and outgoing personality. She is always willing to lend a helping hand and help with projects around the building. Emma enjoys fashion, dancing, and music.



Union County Teen Arts Festival UPDATE

LMA is proud to announce that two LMA submissions: one for creative writing and one for poetry we're nominated to be reviewed at the state level of the Teen Arts Festival. We are proud to have not 1, but 2 individuals from the LMA school community not only representing LMA and the UCESC, but Union County as a whole! Congratulations to Maria H (Creative Writing) and Jordyn M. (Poetry) for this wonderful accomplishment! We wish you the best of luck in June!



TANJ STATE TEEN ARTS FESTIVAL

SAVE THE DATE

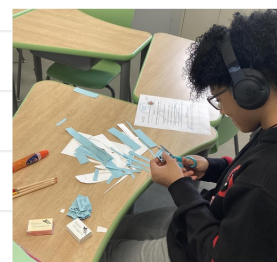
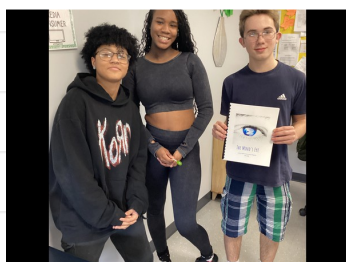
JUNE 2-4, 2025
MIDDLESEX COLLEGE
REGISTER TODAY AT
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 ✉ Marisell@teenartsnj.org

njea R | RUTGERS UNIVERSITY Continuing Studies TANJ TEENARTSNJ MIDDLESEX COLLEGE

April at The Mill





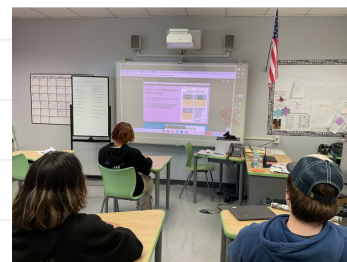
Ms. York's WIN Class

The monthly topic and theme of April were SEL and Autism Acceptance. Each student made a puzzle piece that fit together in our hallway and within their piece they answered the following questions; what activity brings you the most joy?, what activity helps you relax, rest, or reset?, what's the best thing about you?, and who is an important person in your life? In the middle of the puzzle piece the letters "LMA" were listed vertically and the LMA lion was underneath the letters. This project allowed our students to reflect on our varying needs and interests but also appreciate that we all are members of the LMA community. We learned where feelings come from and about how they are emotional energy. We discussed how people who have trouble with tasks that require executive functioning skills have not yet developed the ability to handle strong emotions that can arise during various circumstances. We thought of how when you input data into a computer, the computer processes the data and then outputs a



Updates from Mr. Peter's PE/Health class

For the month of March students participated in the fast-paced game of Pickleball. Combining all the elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis, pickleball has taken off and become quite the popular sport. Using a paddle and a small wiffleball students need to strike the ball across the court and score points to defeat their opponent. Students have been working on mastering serving, striking the ball, gameplay, and strategy. Piggybacking off the Pickleball Unit we jumped right into a short unit of Tennis. Due to size constraints students were only able to participate in drills and lead-up activities. Students really enjoyed the game and hopefully next year we will be able to arrange a class trip to a local tennis facility. We are now finishing up our Week of Fitness Unit to end the month of March. Students have been taking part in miscellaneous workouts to enhance their physical fitness. Workouts include Zumba, Tae Bo, P90X, Insanity, and Hip-Hop Dance workouts.



Transition Prep gets ready to close out the year

The Transition Prep students have just wrapped up a unit on soft skills and the importance of these skills in both everyday life as well as being successful in a career. We are set to begin a unit on building personal resumes by taking a close look at qualifications students possess, experience (work and volunteer), as well as possible references to be used on a resume! Upon completion of this unit all students will have their own personal resume to present when applying for future jobs!

command/final product.

Similar to a computer, when we experience an event, our personal beliefs (consisting of irrational & rational thoughts) then create an emotional consequence (feelings/behaviors). Students were given scenarios and had to determine irrational and rational responses.

For Health we have been working hard in the CPR/AED/First Aid Unit. Students have been learning about the importance of knowing all the skills involved in CPR and being a first responder. Students are following along with the American Red Cross training manuals and videos and are working hard on mastering their life-saving skills.

LMA Revisits Crossroads School



Five students from LMA recently extended their learning beyond the classroom walls with a meaningful visit to Crossroads School, an elementary school dedicated to students with Autism with in the UCESC. Deeply engaged in lessons about responsibility and self-care, and mindful of Autism Awareness Month, the LMA students actively participated in Crossroads' annual Egg

Contest search, bringing enthusiasm and support to the event. Furthermore, they generously assisted with a variety of arts and crafts activities, contributing their creativity and care to help make the day a truly special and enjoyable experience for the Crossroads students. Having UCESC programs integrate on days like today truly is a wonderful learning experience for all! Here is what some of the LMA students had to say about their experience:

"The kids were very respectful and I liked working with them at their school." - IW

"The kids were really nice, I enjoyed the experience!." - TV

"I liked how happy they were to participate. I liked the different activities." - JC

"I was happy I could help and the staff were very kind to us." - EC

"I had fun and enjoyed helping the kids with the egg hunt." - AW



Clinical Corner

Clinical Corner -

Self care is the act of engaging in activities that nourish our mind, soul, body, and hearts. Here are 5 ways to participate in self care.

1. Nurture social connections- Spend quality time with friends, family, and loved ones to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.
2. Prioritize sleep- try to aim for 7-9 hours of sleep each night to promote physical and mental well-being.
3. Engage in physical activities- whether it's a brisk walk, a yoga class, or a workout at the gym, physical activity helps reduce stress, boost mood, and improve overall health.
4. Engage in hobbies and activities of interest- Dedicate time to activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as reading, listening to music, spending time in nature, or pursuing a creative hobby.
5. Maintain good hygiene – Practice good hygiene habits to maintain health and well-being.

Group Therapy

Group therapy continues to run smoothly and successfully as students demonstrate group cohesiveness with their peers and are eager to attend.

With this month's theme as responsibility and self care, the students engaged in discussion questions related to prioritizing, time management and responsible decision making. With the weather getting warmer, the clinicians have also started taking groups outside to practice self care in nature. As this month is also Autism Acceptance month, students have held discussions to increase knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorder, challenged stereotypes and misconceptions, and celebrated autistic strengths and contributions.



Students Outside of the Classroom / Alumni

Owen C. wraps up his first year at ECC

LMA was happy to hear from Owen C. (Class of 2024) earlier this month to learn that he is wrapping up his first year at Essex County College in West Caldwell, working on a computer skill. We are proud of the progress he made at LMA, and continue will be proud of his accomplishments after LMA.



Upcoming Community Events



TOWNSHIP OF SCOTCH PLAINS
In Partnership with FSP Rotary, Lifestyle Studio, and Resolve
Community Counseling

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WALK

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2024 AT 10AM
ALAN AUGUSTINE VILLAGE GREEN

<https://allevents.in/scotch%20plains/scotch-plains-mental-health-awareness-walk-2025/100001280402902549>



Special Guest
Maria Taylor

Television Host and Producer

BROKEN

Date: May 2, 2025

Exploring Mental Health, Addiction and Disabilities through art and dance

Plainfield High School
950 Park Avenue
Plainfield, NJ
Time: 6:00 - 8:30 pm

Art Exhibit
Dance
Resource Fair

Scan to RSVP

sponsored by



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/project-broken-2025-movement-healing-and-mental-health-tickets-1280303755999>

Join us for the MHANJ's
18th Annual Walk!

**Strength
through Healing,
One Step
at a Time**



**Saturday, May 31, 2025
Nomahegan Park,
Cranford, NJ**

To benefit:



**Mental Health
Association in
New Jersey, Inc.**

In partnership with:

Rotary
Club of Mental Health Advocates



<https://www.mhanj.org/emergency/ready-set-walk-with-mhanj-may-31-2025/>

Community Resources



<https://naminj.org/>



<https://988lifeline.org/>



<https://nj4s.nj.gov/s/>

School in the Community

1. Union County Teen Arts Festival
 2. NJ4S Assemblies at 1571
 3. Monthly Community Meetings celebrating student awards.
 4. WBLE at Walgreens (Clark), Hilton (Springfield) and Chili's (Clark)
 5. Field Trip to ShopRite of Clark
 6. LMA Recycling Initiative with Westfield Conservation Center
-

About Us

Contact Information:

Phone: (908)-233-7581

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

Website: https://ucesc.org/schools/lamberts_mill_academy

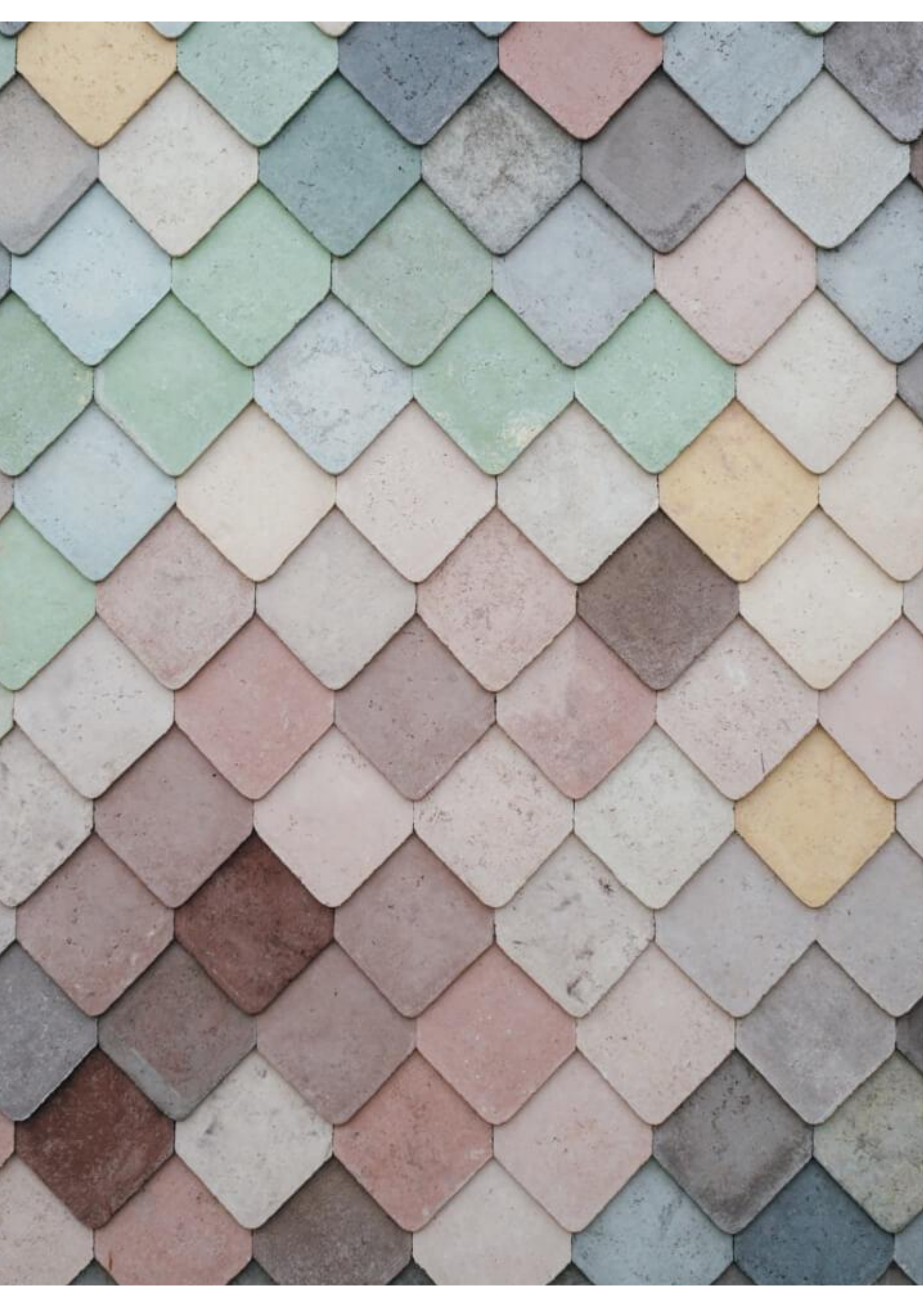
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ucesc_lma/?hl=en

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





Crossroads Monthly Report

April 2025

Message from the Administration

Dear Crossroads Community,

Welcome back! We hope everyone had a relaxing and joyful spring break and enjoyed the warm, sunny weather. As we begin the final stretch of the school year, we continue to embrace our guiding theme for the year: "Let Every Voice Empower." At Crossroads, this message is more than words—it's a commitment to honoring every student's voice, celebrating their unique ways of communicating, learning, and connecting with the world around them.



This was especially evident throughout April, Autism Acceptance Month, as our students and staff engaged in a variety of joyful, inclusive activities that celebrated neurodiversity and reinforced our belief that all voices matter. From wearing colorful tie-dye for *Neurodiversity Tuesday* to dressing in cozy pajamas for *Sensory-Friendly Friday*, the Crossroads community came together to show support, build acceptance, and further understanding. These moments reminded us how empowering it is when we create space for every student to feel seen, heard, and valued.

We were also thrilled to welcome a group of students from Mount St. Mary's Academy as part of their service learning day. Their visit was a wonderful experience for everyone. The girls spent time reading stories and doing crafts with our students, creating meaningful connections and lots of smiles throughout the day.

Before the break, we were lucky to have beautiful weather for our Easter Egg Hunt, where students enjoyed searching the playground for colorful eggs with a special visit from the *Spring Bunny*! In

addition, students had a blast painting flower pots and planting spring blooms — and we were so happy that many families were able to join us for this joyful event.

This month also brought a spotlight to our incredible Occupational Therapy team as we celebrated OT Month. Our OTs organized a day full of engaging and purposeful activities tailored to our students' unique needs and strengths. These experiences promoted both self-care and responsibility—our monthly character themes—and supported student growth in ways that were both meaningful and fun.

Thank you for being part of our inspiring community. Together, we're building a school where every student's voice truly empowers us all.

Warm Regards,

Matt, Danielle, and Stacey

General Information

Enrollment as of April 30, 2025

Actual: 57

Changes: Entered: 0 Exited:0

Referrals:4

Intakes Scheduled: 3

Accepted: 3

Fire Drills: 4/15/25

Emergency Drills: 4/16/25 (Active Shooter)

Upcoming Dates

May 5, 2025 - May 9, 2025 - Staff Appreciation Week

May 14, 2025 - Parent Education/Support Meeting (Safety Presentation)

May 26, 2025 - School Closed (Memorial Day)

June 6, 2025 - Field Day (More Information to Come)

June 11, 2025 - Crossroads 8th Grade Commencement (1:00 PM)

June 12, 2025 - Pre School Stepping Up Ceremony (1:30 PM)

June 16, 2025 - 1:00PM Student Dismissal

June 17, 2025 - 1:00PM Student Dismissal

June 18, 2025 - 1:00PM Student Dismissal (Last Day of School)

Crossroads Staff and Student Spotlight



Student of the Month - Terrence

Now presenting our adorable Student of the Month, Terrence!

Terrence joined Crossroads school in January and has already made his mark in less than 4 short months. Terrence can often be seen taking strolls through the hallway with his friends and teachers, and greetings can always be heard from the classroom as we pass by, as everyone adores his infectious smile. He loves to play outside on the playground where he can climb all of the equipment and he also loves visits to our Motor Room where he can jump high on the trampoline while holding a purple cone- his favorite color! Terrence has acclimated so well to his brand new school and we know that he will continue to make tremendous success in Pre-K and beyond.



Staff Spotlight - Alison Mebes - Classroom Teacher

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

I have been working here at Crossroads since September, so less than a year! It has been a great experience so far. I have felt supported here and will continue to grow.

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

I think that you would be surprised, but not too surprised that I am finishing up my certificate to become a yoga instructor! I eventually would love to have my own after school program at a local library for kids! The objective would be to learn different self regulating skills through yoga, meditation and breathing exercises.

3. What is your dream vacation?

My dream vacation would be a month-long vacation to different countries in Europe. I would love to bop around the continent and experience the different cultures. I would be most excited to try the different cuisines.

4. What is your favorite meal?

My favorite meal currently is inspired by the spring season. It would have to be an extra-green pesto pasta salad. In my free time I love to bake and cook using NYT cooking recipes. I just made this pasta salad the other day and it was delicious!

5. What is your greatest accomplishment?

My greatest accomplishment would have to be becoming a teacher! The process took lots of patience and time. Through the seven different praxis exams, student teaching for four semesters and completing the edTPA assessment it was challenging. Crossing the finish line and now being a teacher it was all worth it.

There is nothing like having your own classroom to spread love and kindness to staff and students.



Staff Spotlight - Helena Fowley - Teacher Assistant

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

I have been working with the commission since September 2011.

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

I am an advocate for New York City Theater. It all started when my parents took me to see Jesus Christ Superstar in 1971. It still continues to today when I saw Cabaret with my family.

3. What is your dream vacation?

I LOVE vacationing in Hawaii!!

4. What is your favorite meal?

One of my favorite meals is a Chinese Hot Pot which I make at home for special occasions.

5. What is your greatest accomplishment?

I am most proud of my two grown sons Michael and Sean....and my husband said "him too!"

Honors and Accolades



Seton Hall student and Crossroads BCBA candidate Andrew Weiler successfully defended his thesis project, titled "Evaluating the Effects of Social Interaction on the Results of Preference Assessments for Leisure Items for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder." This study helps inform caregivers of Crossroads students regarding the importance of including social interactions with tangible items (such as toys) when evaluating whether the preferred stimuli functioned as reinforcers, suggesting these methods could help in identifying effective reinforcers for students and provide caregivers with social interactions that they can use at home to help include their children in their home communities.

Classroom Spotlights

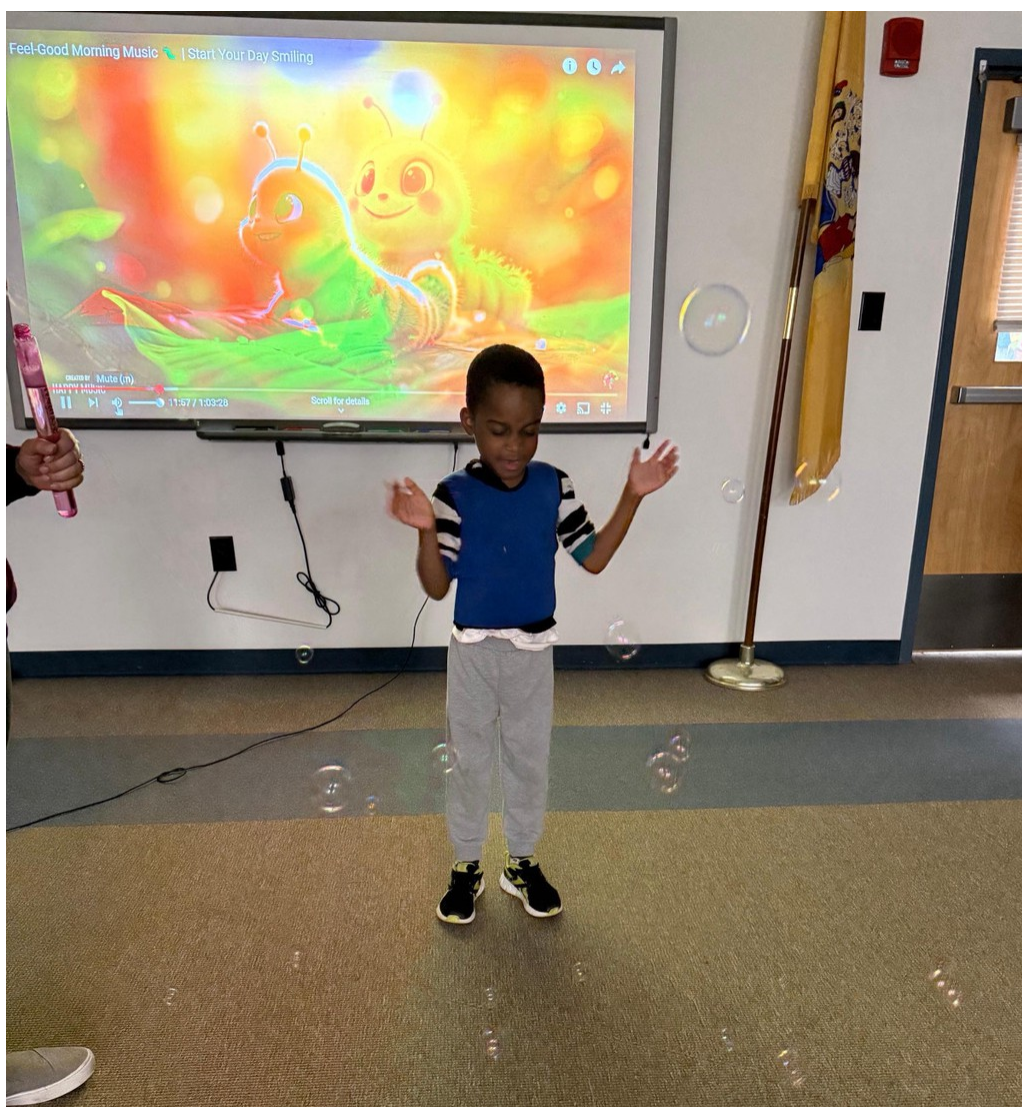


Ms. Lauren's Classroom

What an exciting start to Spring we have had in 101! Our theme for this month is all things Plants and Seeds and we have been diving right in with read-alouds, sensory activities, and visual recipes. We read and learned all about parts of a sunflower, sorted different vegetables in our kinetic sand "garden," and even practiced our sequencing steps for following a recipe to make "plant" dip.

April also brought many fun events to Crossroads like our special OT event and our Spring egg hunt and painting celebration. What a blast we had jumping, exploring, coloring, and dancing at our OT event! We also loved getting together for our Spring gathering where we saw the Spring Bunny and got to use our fine motor skills to paint. We love to be outside in the sunshine! Our friend Jacob also got to participate in a food tasting and survey with our breakfast/lunch program, Maschio's. He enjoyed trying a churro and requesting that cake be added to our menu in the future!

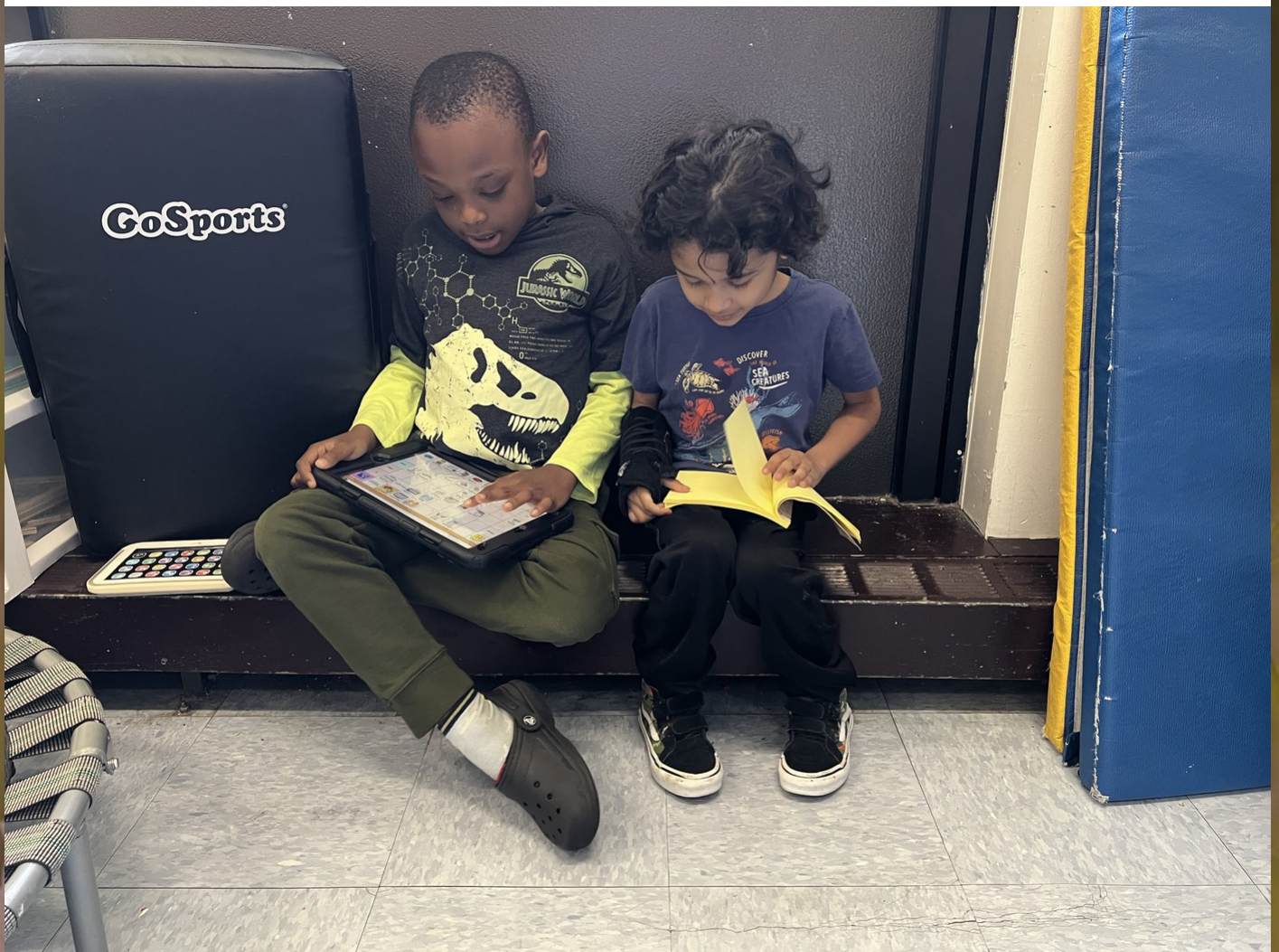
April was also Autism Acceptance month and we had a week of expressing our support by wearing different clothing that represented World Autism Day, Neurodiversity Day, What's Your Passion Thursday, and Sensory Friendly Friday.

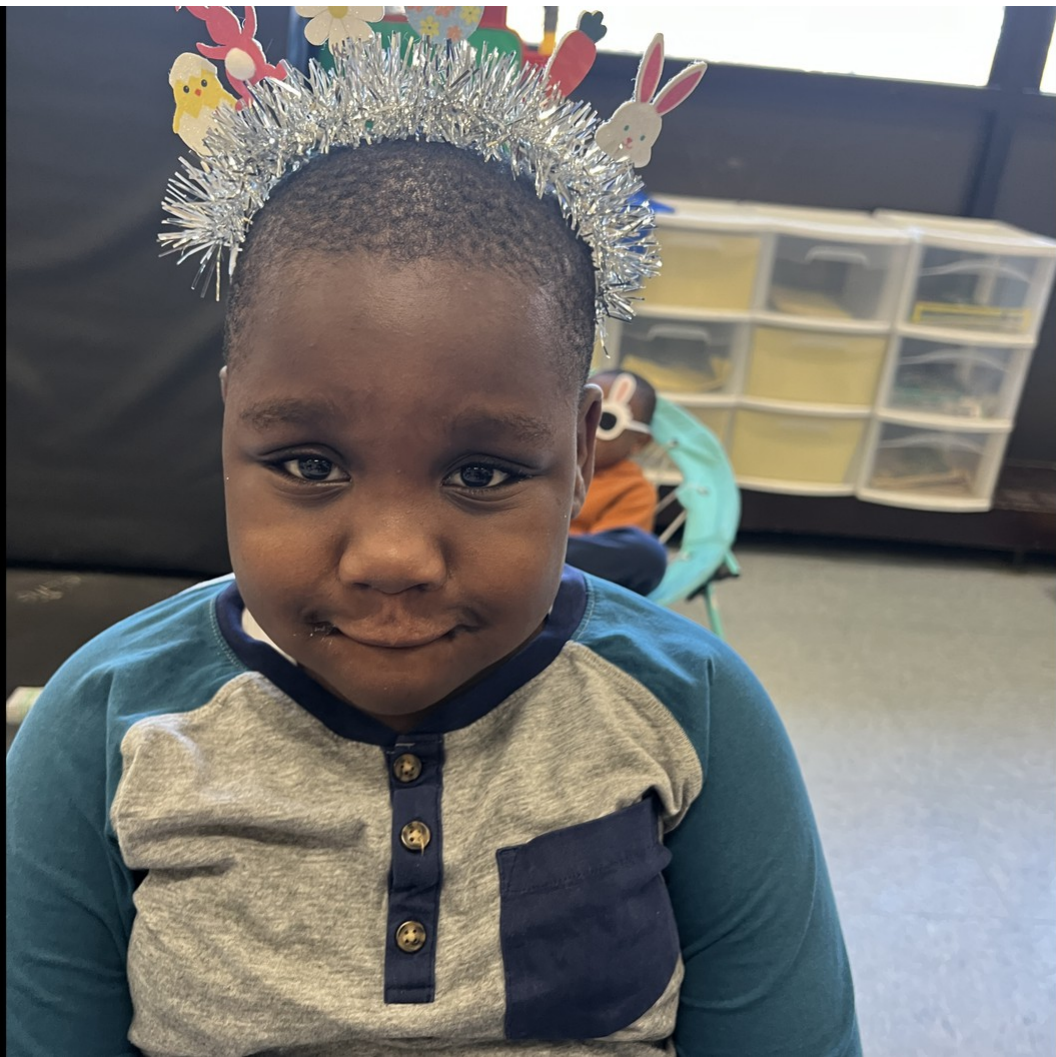




In April, Room 104 has been working on their independent skills. We've been practicing completing work by ourselves as well as playing with toys with others and bathrooming on our own. Our kiddies let us know when they need a break from work and make choices of what toys they want to play with or what color they want to paint. One of our boys loves to ask for specific animals to color and add to our classroom art gallery!

This month was a month full of birthdays, field trips, and special holidays. 104 got to take our skills to the movie theatre and enjoy some snacks and a good time with friends. We celebrated by singing our friends Happy Birthday! and eating cake together. Our amazing occupational therapist set up a fun day to appreciate all the hard work they and our students do together for Occupational Therapy month. And of course, many eggs were collected, seeds planted and painted, and overall fun was had during our Easter Egg Hunt before Spring Break! Now that we're back fresh and new, we are getting right back to working and playing hard. We can't wait to see what the rest of the school year has in store!





Occupational Therapy Report



April is National Occupational Therapy month. We decided to include some OT information in our newsletter article:

How Can an Occupational Therapist Help a Child?

Occupational Therapists are highly-trained healthcare professionals that evaluate and assist children that are having difficulty participating in meaningful activities or “occupations” that are needed to conduct their daily routines and live their life to the fullest.

For a child, this may include the development of life skills such as learning at school, playing, completing self-care tasks, relating to others, and fulfilling their role as a family member. In the schools, Occupational Therapists address the needs of students experiencing delays, disabilities, or health challenges through therapeutic intervention to promote skill advancement, the use of compensatory strategies, adaptations to the child’s educational environment, and/or modifying the curriculum or activity.

Occupational Therapists also collaborate with teachers, parents and others to identify and modify barriers that restrict a child’s success and model strategies for others to use that will extend the benefits of direct intervention.

Occupational Therapy Skill Areas:

Fine Motor: Holding crayons, pencils and other small objects, stringing beads, using clothing fasteners, manipulating toys

Eye-hand Coordination: Scissor use, puzzles, ball skills

Visual Motor: Printing, drawing, forming shapes, coloring

Visual Perceptual: Sorting, matching, figure ground, scanning, letter reversals

Self-Care: Dressing, feeding, using utensils, tying, bathing & shampooing, grooming

Sensory Processing: Delays in adaptive responses to sights, sounds, movement, taste, touch

Strength: Manipulating resistive materials, moving against gravity, sustaining body positions

Social: Interacting with others, following routines, play skills

To celebrate OT month the Crossroads therapists held an OT Fun Day on April 16th incorporating several skill areas including sensory processing, fine motor, social skills, and play skills. The students participated in a gross motor obstacle course, bubble play, coloring activities, and a play dough-making station.

With the break in the weather, the therapy sessions are beginning to focus on sensory motor outdoor play. The students all love bubbles, sidewalk chalk, digging in the dirt, and using kick scooters.





Specials Report - Behavior Team

The behavior team has been busy this month between supporting our classrooms and attending professional development events. We celebrated autism awareness/acceptance with our spirit week. Karly Barreto (BCBA) and Spencer Powers (RBT) attended the Felician Autism Conference & Training at Felician University, where they learned about clinical and practical applications of applied behavior analysis, classroom behavior management, and compassionate care. Stacey Kodack (Supervisor of Behavioral Health) and Karly Barreto (BCBA) attended the NJ Association of School Administrators Women in Leadership Conference, where they learned about team building, wellness, and effective meeting strategies. During spring break, Karly Barreto (BCBA) and Halley Daniels (RBT) attended the New Jersey Association of Behavior Analysis Annual Conference. Andrew Weiler (RBT) also defended his thesis to complete his Master's degree at Seton Hall University. The entire behavior team completed a training activity on the history of applied behavior analysis with autism. Additionally, the behavior team has been busy updating skill assessments for all of our students, as well as assisting with behavior management.



Nurse Note with Nurse Lynn

Allergy Season Is Here – A Helpful App for Families

Allergy season is in full swing, and we're definitely seeing the impact on our little ones. If you or your child are struggling with seasonal allergies, there's a helpful (and free!) resource we wanted to share: **Allergy Plus** by [Pollen.com](https://www.pollen.com). It's available for both iPhone and Android devices. **Allergy Plus** gives you real-time, location-specific allergy information to help you make informed choices about when it's safe to play outside and when it might be best to stay indoors. It can be a game-changer for families managing seasonal allergies.

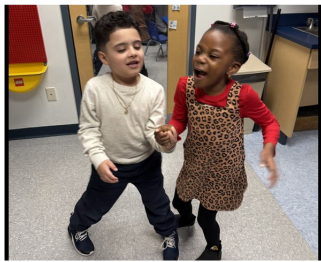
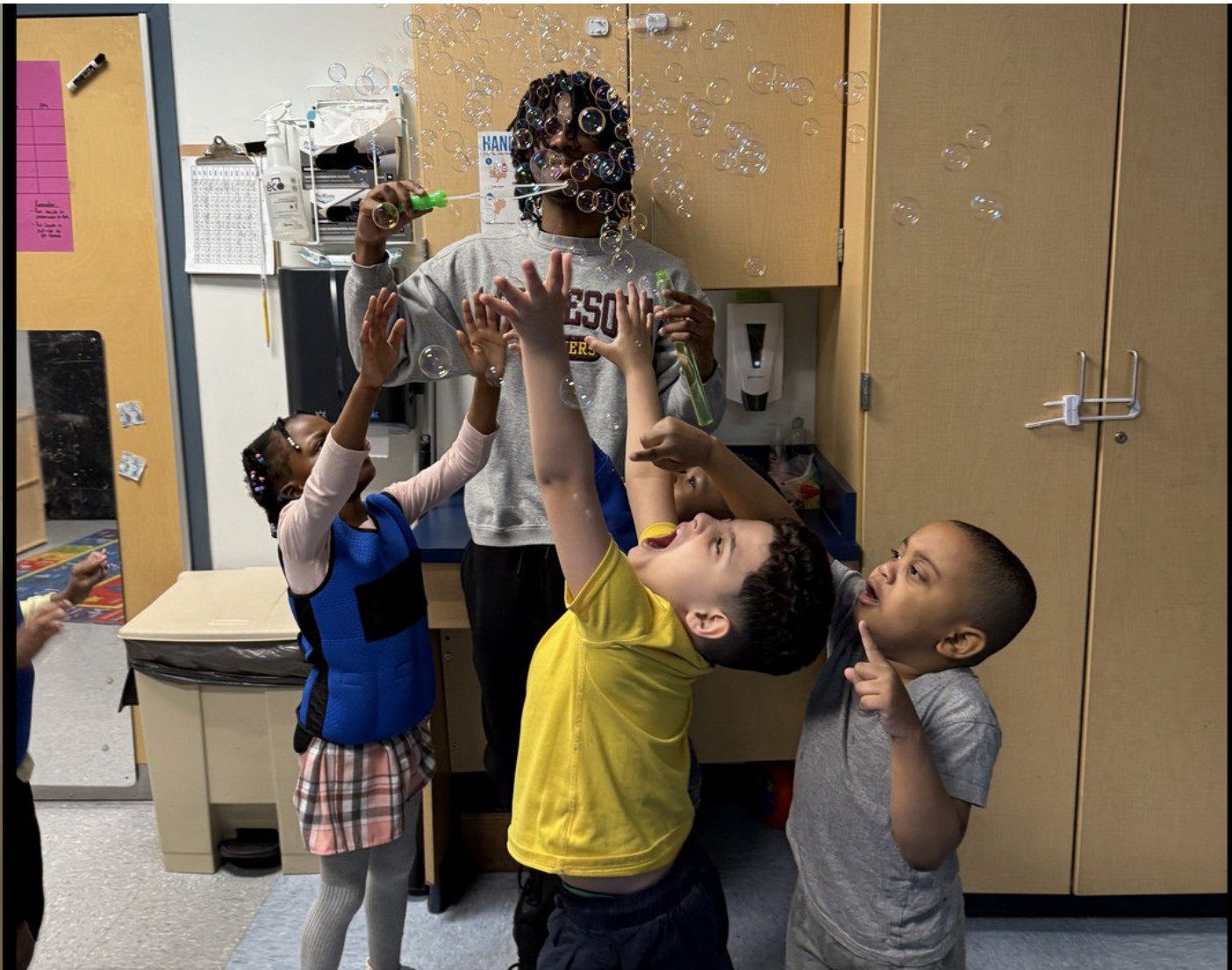


App Features Include:

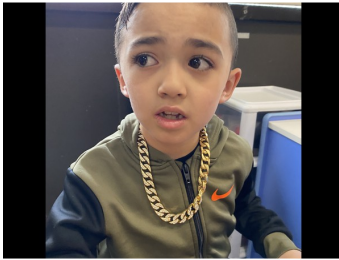
- Up-to-date allergy, air quality, and weather forecasts for multiple locations
- Custom notifications when allergy levels are expected to change
- Side-by-side 5-day allergy and weather forecasts
- Easy sharing of forecasts with friends and family
- In-depth details on allergens affecting your area
- Full integration with [Pollen.com](https://www.pollen.com) for the most accurate data available

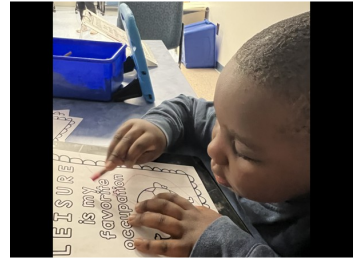
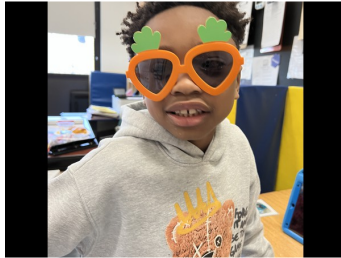
Consider downloading **Allergy Plus** to stay one step ahead this allergy season!

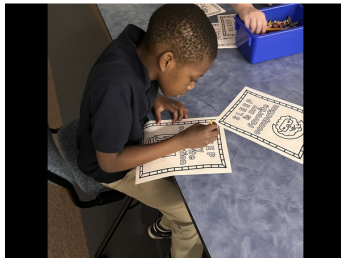
April at Crossroads



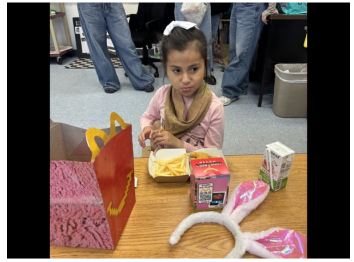




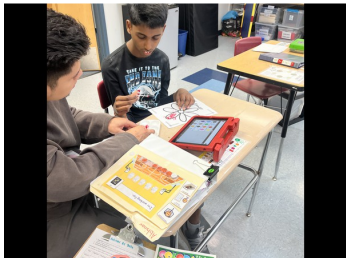








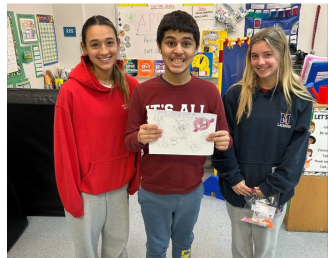






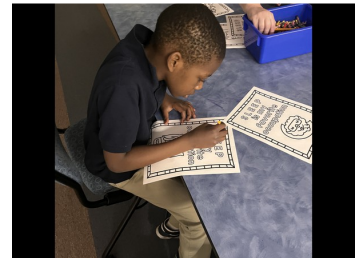
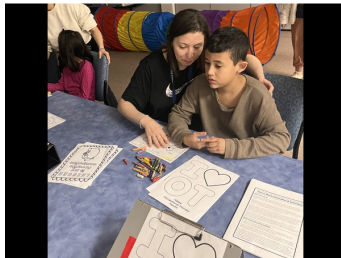
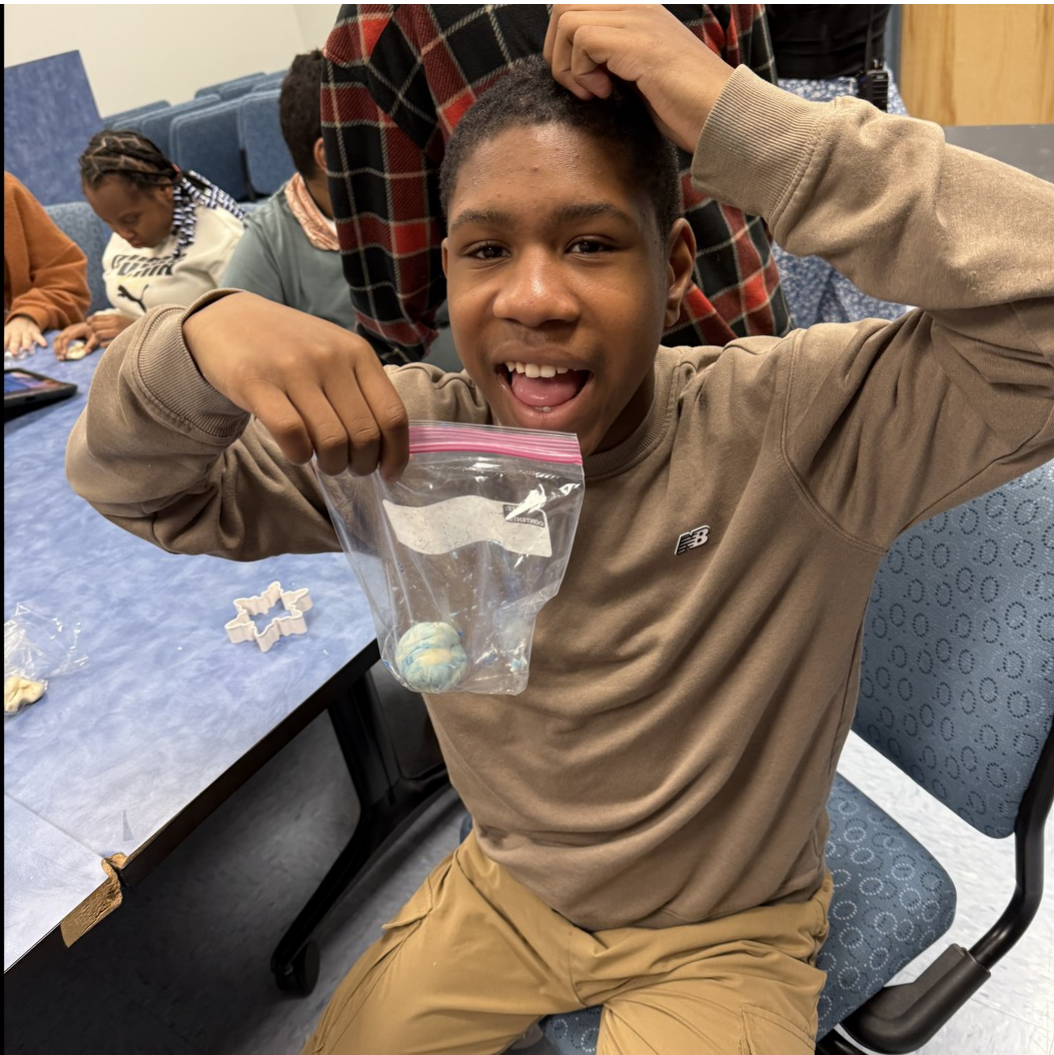
Crossroads Events and Activities

Visit with the students from Mount Saint Mary's Academy





OT Activities



Spring Activities and Bunny Visit







Parent Resources

Tips and Tricks for home from the Crossroads Behavior Team- April

April Tips and Tricks From the Behavior Team: Bedtime Battles

If you're a family struggling with bedtime battles, you've likely seen it all including screaming, elopement (running away), refusal, and full-blown meltdowns. The instinctive response? Develop a behavior plan.

But here's the reality: Behavior plans alone don't always solve the problem.

Before diving into reinforcement schedules, extinction procedures, or token economies, we need to step back and look at the bigger picture. Bedtime struggles aren't just about behavior. They're often the result of misaligned expectations, environmental factors, and skill gaps that only become obvious at the end of the day.

The Science Behind Bedtime Resistance

Sleep isn't just a behavior, it's a biological process. Yet, bedtime struggles are often approached through the lens of behavior modification without considering whether the sleep schedule, environment, or expectations are setting the child up for success.

Understanding Sleep Pressure

Sleep pressure (also known as homeostatic sleep drive) builds up throughout the day as adenosine accumulates in the brain. If bedtime is scheduled too early, before enough sleep pressure has built up, the child simply won't be ready to sleep.

Forcing an early bedtime can lead to:

- Long delays in falling asleep (excessive sleep latency)
- Increased behavioral resistance (because they're not actually tired)
- Unsustainable sleep dependencies (like needing a caregiver to stay with them until they fall asleep)

Before Addressing Behavior, Ask These Questions

Is bedtime age-appropriate? If a child isn't biologically tired, no amount of reinforcement or redirection will make them fall asleep. Adjust bedtime to align with natural sleep pressure rather than an arbitrary schedule.

Does bedtime follow a high-stimulation activity? Transitioning straight from an exciting activity (video games, TV, rough play) to bedtime can feel like a punishment. Instead, introduce a calming buffer activity (reading, stretching, listening to soft music, light sensory play) to help ease the transition.

Is wake-up time consistent? Sleeping in after a rough night can delay sleep pressure buildup for the next night, creating a cycle of sleep struggles. Keeping a consistent wake-up time, even after a bad night, helps regulate sleep pressure.

Are transitions practiced throughout the day? If structured transitions only happen at bedtime, resistance is inevitable. Daily transition practice (ending preferred activities, following visual schedules) builds tolerance and readiness.

Are bedtime expectations introduced earlier in the day? Bedtime demands skills like calming the body, independent transitions, quiet play, and separating from caregivers. If these skills aren't practiced during the day, they'll be difficult to implement at night. Embedding these expectations into everyday routines makes bedtime smoother.

How We Can Support Better Sleep

Rather than relying solely on reactive behavior plans, we can set children up for success by:

- Aligning bedtime with biological readiness
- Practicing transitions throughout the day—not just at night
- Creating structured, predictable bedtime routines with clear sleep signals
- Helping caregivers introduce calming buffer activities before bed
- Encouraging consistent wake-up times to support sleep regulation

The best way to manage "big behaviors" at bedtime? Prevent them before they start.

Yon mesaj ki soti nan
Konsèy Komisyone Konte Union

Biwo pou moun ki gen andikap ak bezwen
espesyal

*Pwogram ak Evènman Sosyal
pou tout lag*

<p>PWOGRAM YO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoga • Karate • Seramik • Dans Zumba • Gòlf • Espre Pak ak plis ankò 	<p>EVÈNMAN SOSYAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Konpetisyon Lapèch • Penti bò Lak la • Festival ete • Kan ete • Dans Granj • Patinaj ak Santa akplis ankò
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Pou plis enfòmasyon oswa pou yo mete sou lis adrès nou an
pou resevwa bwochi ak detay pwogram yo:

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Oswa eskane kòd QR la!



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About Us

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