

# WORK READINESS ACADEMY

June 2025 Monthly Report



Dear WRA Families & Supporters,

**“Reflection... looking back so the view looking forward is clearer”  
-unknown**

As our school year comes to a close we want to take this time to look back on our journey to remind ourselves that progress and growth is not always noticeable in the moment. While reflecting we are able to focus on our successes and take pride in the effort, commitment, and dedication it took to not only meet our goals, but to exceed them! As this chapter in our lives comes to a close we want to remind our school community that although this feels like an ending, it is also an exciting new beginning! We are so very proud that our students are ready to set out to become the very best version of themselves, inspiring all those they meet and work with, that anything is possible! No matter the direction they chose, the path they take, or how far they go, we here at the Work Readiness Academy (and Project SEARCH) will always be home. We want to thank our students, staff, and families for an unforgettable year filled with memories and joy that will last a lifetime.

Just a reminder that our **Extended School Year (ESY) program** (for approved students) **begins on Monday, June 30th!** Students should dress comfortably and bring lunch and a water bottle. Please contact us on Thursday at [dblajsa@ucesc.org](mailto:dblajsa@ucesc.org) if you have not yet heard from your transportation provider.

Please enjoy the last newsletter of the school year, including some pictures from our graduation and year-end recognition ceremonies.

Wishing you all a restful and relaxing summer!

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



## June 2025 Data

Enrollment as of June 24, 2025

Actual: 26

Changes: Entered: 0 Exited: 0

Referrals: 1 (SY 2025-26)

Intakes Scheduled: 1

Accepted: 1



6/5/25 - Fire Drill

6/18/25 - 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](mailto:AttendanceWRA@ucesc.org).**

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

## Congratulations ~ WRA Class of 2025!

Thank you to all of our families, friends and staff at the WRA for attending our Year End Recognition Ceremony and Graduation on Wednesday, June 18th! We were pleased to honor our two "Community Business Partners of the Year" - **Cake Artist Cafe (Cranford, NJ and Jewish Family Services of Central New Jersey (Elizabeth, NJ).**

Congratulations to this year's graduating class:

Penelope

David

Hernan

Ben  
Alejandro

We also want to wish **Charlie** and **Alfi** good luck next year as they transition to the Project SEARCH program at Overlook Medical Center!















## Project Search Graduation!

Graduation for the **Project SEARCH Class of 2025** was held in the Bouras Auditorium at Overlook Medical Center on Monday, June 16th! We are so very proud of this year's group of interns:

Eeshan  
Lucy  
Christian  
Shannon  
Alvin  
Sadiyah  
Andy  
Layla

Wishing you all success as you pursue competitive employment following your intensive training at the hospital. We know you will all do great things!

**OVERLOOK  
AHEAD**

Touch lives. Change lives. Save lives.

## THE CAMPAIGN TO TRANSFORM HEALTHCARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY



IUM

**OVERLOOK  
AHEAD**  
*Touch lives. Change lives. Save lives.*

**THE CAMPAIGN TO TRANSFORM HEALTHCARE  
FOR OUR COMMUNITY**



“  
”



The Time to Make a  
Difference is Now





## Graduate Outing

Our graduates and those students who are transitioning from the WRA to Project SEARCH enjoyed a special "outing" to downtown Westfield that included an hour of fun at Yestercades and lunch at DiFarina Pizzeria!



## WRA End-of-Year Classroom Spotlight



### Learning Beyond the Classroom: Community-Based Instruction in Action

This school year, our students had the opportunity to take their learning out into the community through a series of Community-Based Instruction (CBI) trips. These real-world experiences were designed to teach practical life skills, build independence, and reinforce classroom lessons—all while having fun and exploring the world around us!

A major highlight of our CBI program was travel training. Students learned how to navigate the community using New Jersey Transit buses, gaining confidence and essential skills in public transportation safety, scheduling, and etiquette. Each trip had a unique learning goal:

- At Lowe's Hardware Store, students explored home improvement tools and materials, learning how to find items and ask for help.
- A visit to Ashley Furniture challenged students to design and furnish both a bedroom and a living room—putting decision-making and budgeting skills to the test.
- We visited a local laundromat, Bubbles & Baskets in Kenilworth, where students learned the step-by-step process of doing laundry, from sorting clothes to selecting wash settings based on reading clothing labels, folding and ironing.
- A trip to Marshalls focused on clothing choices. Students shopped for outfits for different life scenarios, including casual wear, business attire, and fancy occasions—a fun and practical way to learn about appropriate dress.
- Our grocery store visit to the Clark ShopRite was extra exciting thanks to their interactive food carts, which allowed students to experience a more engaging way of shopping while applying money skills.
- At Blue Foundry Bank, located in the Vermella Shopping Complex, students got a behind-the-scenes look at banking. They learned about the differences between checking and savings

accounts, the documents required to open an account, and how to use ATMs—both at the bank and off-site at a QuickChek location.

- A stop at CVS offered insight into the resources available at local pharmacies, including over-the-counter medications, prescriptions, and health essentials.
- We wrapped up our CBI year with a visit to Kean University, where students practiced map skills while navigating the campus. Students used both paper maps and google maps to find different buildings and structures on our campus.

Each trip was planned to build independence, social skills, and real-world experience. While we had plenty of fun along the way, these adventures also planted the seeds of confidence and capability in our students. We're so proud of all they've learned and pushing outside their comfort zone (and mine!) in using public transportation.

**Jodi Klimko**

**Work Readiness Academy Teacher & WBL Supervising Teacher**



*Anthony on a price-finding mission at Ashley Furniture*



*Alfi found the perfect pair of pants on our trip to Marshall's*



*Alfi & Penelope getting advice from customer service at Blue Foundry Bank*

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### **That's a Wrap!**

The amount of growth, confidence, and skills the students have displayed this school year has been amazing. The students were able to practice and improve on the various soft and hard skills learned in the classroom and transfer them to their internships out in the community. They identified their post secondary goals to help guide them as they progressed through the school year and helped them identify what they would like to do after they leave our program. The amount of teamwork, hard work, and fun displayed was an absolute joy to be a part of! No matter what the Friday community trip was, the Friday elective they chose, or the class trip/special event the students participated in, they were focused, creative, and engaged throughout! Thanks for a wonderful year!

**Sharlene McQuade**

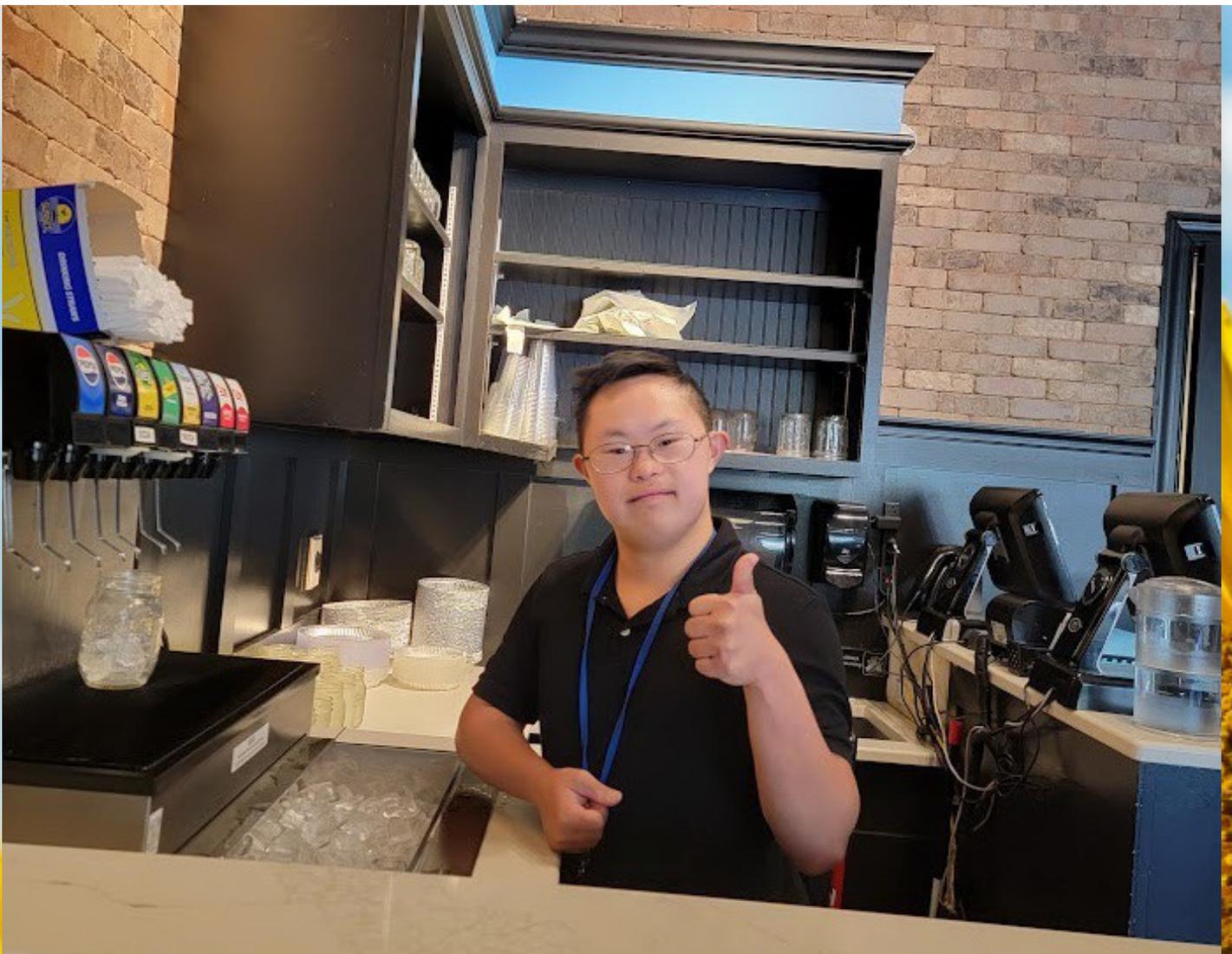
**Work Readiness Academy Teacher & WBL Instructor and Coordinator**



*Marshmallow Team Building Challenge*



Anthony and Hernan in the mix of creating "Furlicious" Treats



Ben F. enjoying his WBL at Bovella's



Matt and Kevin doing their part in the kitchen



Kiya and Alfi are Fieldtrip Friends!



Matt and Steven setting up some veggies in our Hydroponic Gardens

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## May Student of the Month

### Ben A.

We are excited to announce **Ben** as our June student of the month! Ben has made tremendous progress in all areas during his time at the Work Readiness Academy! His perseverance, determination, and grit is always on display when he learns new skills, and with support and encouragement, **Ben** has been able to overcome any obstacles in his way. Ben demonstrates his ability to use his voice to advocate for what he needs to be successful, as well as expresses his thoughts and feelings when he needs help. **Ben** has made lasting friendships with his kind smile and genuine care for others. He keeps us all laughing with his wit and humor and with his persistence and drive has taught us all that nothing is impossible! Congratulations **Ben!**



## WRA Staff Spotlight

### **Donna Kiritcheva**

**How long have you worked for UCESC?**

16 years

**What do you love best about your job?**

The positive impact that my students have over me and the great results we achieve together.

**What do you like to do in your free time?**

I like to travel, read, watch tennis, soccer etc.

**What is one thing that people would be surprised to know about you?**

I was born in Bulgaria



# Work-Based Learning Snapshots



*Charlie at ShopRite in Clark*



*Ben at Kean University Athletics*



*Kevin at Walgreen's in Cranford*



*Matt at Atlantic Health Overlook Union Emergency Department*



*Alejandro at Toast in Downtown Cranford*



*David at Walgreen's in Union*

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## Work-Based Learning Community Business Partner Spotlight

This month we are pleased to spotlight **South Avenue Dental**.

This is the third year that South Avenue Dental has been hosting student interns from the Work Readiness Academy. Dr. Patel and her staff are always friendly and supportive of our students during their work-based learning experiences. Interns from the WRA have had the chance to learn how to sterilize equipment, reset dental procedure rooms, re-stock supplies, and assemble patient bags.

South Avenue Dental is a fun and vibrant place to be - it feels more like visiting a friend's house than your neighborhood dental office!



To learn more about South Avenue dental, please visit: [www.southavenuedental.com](http://www.southavenuedental.com) or call (908) 721-5510 to schedule an appointment!







## WRA's Got Talent That Shines Bright!

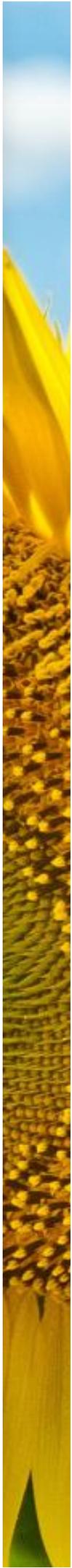
The **3rd Annual "WRA and Project SEARCH Got Talent"** exceed our expectations. We are so proud of all of the students and staff who took a risk and put themselves on stage to share their talents with our community - including singing, dancing, playing guitar or piano, telling jokes, and showing off personal artwork. Many thanks to our incredible stage crew as well that helped behind the scenes.

Click this link to watch our highlight reel:

<https://youtu.be/EI38ExETzvg>

Can't wait until next year!













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## Look Who Was Spotted in the Community!

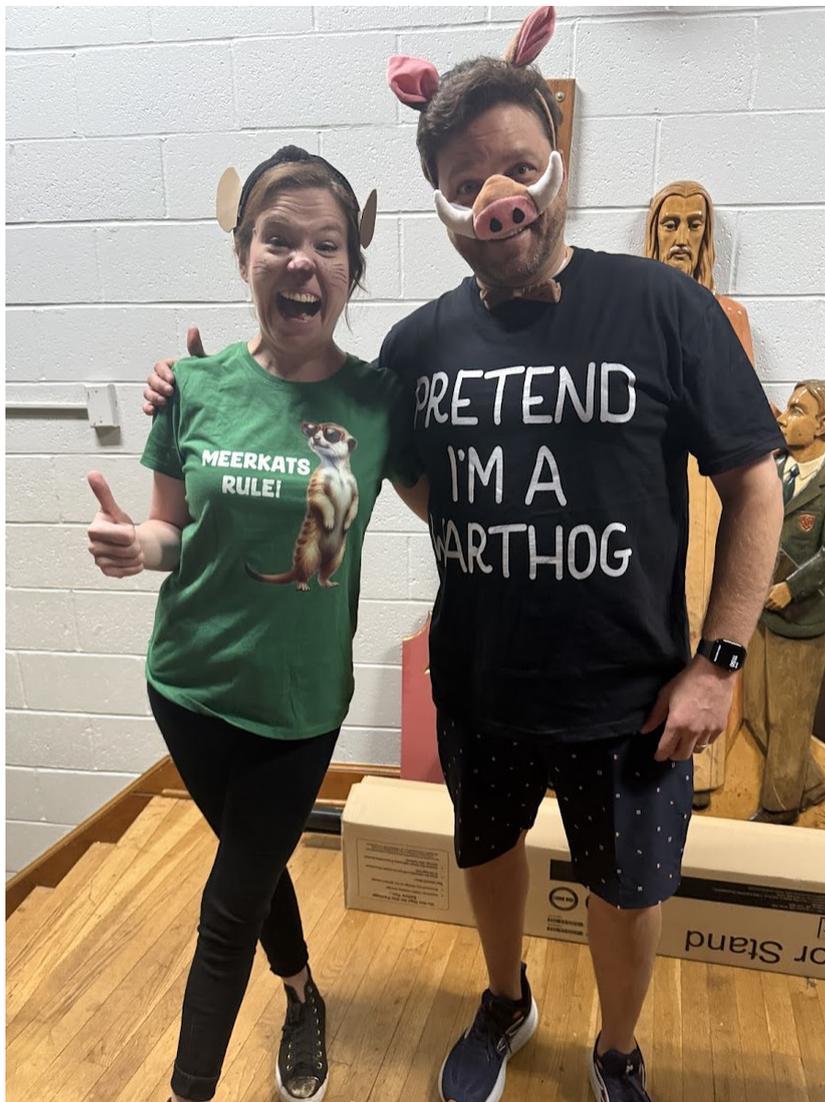
Great to run into former WRA Student, **Eric**, who has been employed at Walgreens in Cranford for 10 years!



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## Picture of the Month

**Josh & Betty** had way too much fun at the WRA's Got Talent Show performing their version of Hakuna Matata from the Lion King



Community Resources/Events

The Union County Board of County Commissioners & The Dept. of Human Services Invite you to Apply for:

# 2025 SENSORY FRIENDLY SUMMER CAMP

**FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG ADULTS AGES 12 TO 21**

**AUGUST 18 -22, 2025**  
**9:00 AM - 2:00 PM**  
 Trailside Nature & Science Center  
 452 New Providence Rd.  
 Mountainside

**Eligibility requirements for all participants:**

- Union County resident
- Have a documented disability
- Does not engage in threatening or aggressive behaviors
- Are able to independently use the toilet and feed themselves
- Does not require 1:1 staffing

SCAN TO APPLY, OR VISIT  
[UCNJ.ORG/OPDSN-REG](http://UCNJ.ORG/OPDSN-REG)

Space is limited and application does not guarantee enrollment.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE  
**UNION COUNTY**  
 BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
 Department of Human Services  
Office for persons with Disabilities and Special Needs

For more information  
 call 908-527-4781  
 or email [opdsn@ucnj.org](mailto:opdsn@ucnj.org)

The Sensory Friendly Summer Camp will run from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. during the week of August 18th through August 22nd, and will be held at the Trailside Nature and Science Center, located at 452 New Providence Road in Mountainside.

### LEARN MORE...

Prospective campers must be Union County residents with a documented disability, demonstrating independence in basic self-care tasks, such as using the toilet and feeding themselves. While the camp warmly welcomes individuals who may require occasional prompting or redirection, it is not suitable for those with a history of fleeing, aggressive, or threatening behavior, who require restraints to manage or stop behaviors, or who require 1:1 staffing.

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN** and space is limited. The application does not guarantee enrollment. In order to ensure compatibility and accommodate individual needs, the camp administration will conduct interviews prior to admission. The administration reserves the right to determine whether they can adequately meet the needs of the applicants.

**Union County Office for Persons with Disabilities & Special Needs (OPDSN)**

The Office for Persons with Disabilities & Special Needs offers a range of social and recreational opportunities to help individuals with disabilities connect with others and engage in meaningful activities.

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](https://2NDFLOOR.org/download) #mentalhealth #support.

WELCOME TO 2NDFLOOR

Welcome to your safe space

- Chat**  
Connect privately with our trained counselors through chat or phone calls
- Anonymous**  
Communicate anonymously about anything that is on your mind
- Support**  
Send and receive support on our community boards
- 24/7**  
Our counselors are here for you any time, day or night.

Continue

IT ONLY TAKES A SECOND TO GET 24/7 TALK OR TEXT SUPPORT

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store

2NDFLOOR

2NDFLOOR

*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](http://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](http://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](mailto:rreicher@ucesc.org)

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

Website: [https://www.ucesc.org/schools/the\\_work\\_readiness\\_academy](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 Smore**

WRA is using S'more to create beautiful newsletters



# Lamberts Mill Academy



## July 2025 Monthly Report

*"I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work the more of it I seem to have."*

– Coleman Cox

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## Administrators' Message

### July 2025

Good Morning LMA School Community,

As July unfolds, we hope you're all enjoying a wonderful summer filled with relaxation and quality time together. Here at Lamberts Mill Academy, it's been a vibrant month, particularly with our Extended School Year (ESY) program in full swing!



Our ESY program has been a tremendous success, providing an engaging and supportive environment for students to continue their learning journey. The progress we've seen is a testament to their hard work and the commitment of our dedicated LMA Staff.

Even during the summer months, our commitment to nurturing a positive school culture remains a top priority. We've seen incredible collaboration among students and staff in the ESY program, demonstrating respect, empathy, and enthusiasm for learning. These interactions reinforce the strong community spirit that defines Lamberts Mill Academy and lay the groundwork for an even

more connected and supportive school year ahead. It's truly heartwarming to see these values shine through.

The learning experiences this July have been rich and diverse. Beyond the structured lessons of ESY, we've also focused on providing opportunities for students to grow in various ways. Whether it's through hands on application in the LMA Garden, Peer-to-Peer tutoring with Westlake School, or continuation of group therapy settings, every day at LMA looks different!

As we look ahead to August, and the continuation of refining, planning and improving the start of the new school year, we're energized by the positive momentum from July. We wish you all continued joy and rest throughout the remainder of the summer.

Reed & John

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## Monthly Data

1. Enrollment - 43
  2. Acceptances - 3
  3. New Students - 1
  4. Intakes - 9
  5. Referrals - 10
  6. Disenrollments - 1
  7. Fire Drill - 7/9/2025
  8. Other Drill EM: (Lockdown) 7/14/2025
- 

## Upcoming Events

### August 2025 Important Dates

- August 1- School BBQ
- August 6- Creature Comfort Pet Therapy
- August 7- Trip to Tamaques Park
- August 8- Last day of ESY



## Staff Spotlight

### Ms. Oprah Dohman

Ms. Oprah has been working at LMA for 7 months. She started working here as an ESS substitute but liked it so much that she decided to join us full-time! She works as a TA in our WIN classroom.



One of the most rewarding experiences she's had here at LMA is getting to know each student on an individual level. She appreciates how each student is so very different and interesting in their own way. In her spare time she enjoys hiking and going out to eat.

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## LMA Student of the Month - July 2025

### Briana B - July Student of the Month at LMA

We are proud to present Briana B as our student of the month for July 2025. Briana has recently fulfilled all of her graduation requirements, and has recently been accepted to Kean University. Briana is a very hardworking, dedicated and respectful young lady, and serves as a mentor to the LMA community. She is extremely talented in both art and musical creations.



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## LMA continues it's mentoring program

Mr. Soto, one of the LMA RBTs, has chosen 3 students to be mentors at the Sunshine Cafe. The Sunshine Cafe is student-run by Westlake School students. Mr. Soto selected Taylor, Briana and Emma for their strong desire to help others and their interest in gaining work experience. At the end of ESY, these students will receive a letter of service hours that they can utilize with job and college applications. LMA students support the Westlake Sunshine Cafe workers in the preparation of baked goods and beverages as well as the sale of these items to staff and students from both schools. LMA students support at the cash register, taking orders/customer service, following directions/instructions while baking items and creating hot and iced drinks!



We were able to interview one of the student mentors to hear about how it's going:

**Emma, how has your experience been mentoring students at the Sunshine Cafe?**

It has been very productive and I enjoy helping the kids, they're very sweet.

**Have you learned anything from this experience as we hit the halfway point of ESY?**

I've learned to have more patience. When supporting students who are learning something new for the first time I've noticed that it might take a few tries until they get it right so you must remain positive.

## What would you tell a classmate if they were considering volunteering as a mentor?

I would tell them it's a lot of work and you have to be committed to the experience but it's very rewarding. It makes you feel good about yourself.

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## July at The Mill

### Rizzo's Wildlife World

A handful of students were chosen to attend a presentation from a reptile specialist in the Westlake School gym. The Rizzo's Wildlife performers provided the students with an interactive, educational wildlife show!



### Tamaques Park Trip

LMA students brought tennis balls/rackets as well as basketballs to the park on July 17, for a fun filled morning. Students had a boys vs. girls basketball game and some students chose to go on a group walk. Students and staff practice their skills on the tennis courts before returning to LMA for lunch.



### School Barbecues

Staff members have taken turns barbecuing hot dogs and hamburgers for the students on Friday afternoons. So far Mr. Leibfried, Mr. Lopreiato and Mr. Flamini have taken turns being the unofficial "grill masters" of the summer.



### Creature Comfort Visit

We were lucky to have Josie the Golden Retriever visit us for pet therapy this month. The students took turns engaging with Josie throughout the morning. Pet therapy is a therapeutic approach that utilizes animals to enhance physical, emotional, and social well-being.





**Basketball at the park**



**Enjoying an iced drink from Sunshine Cafe**



**Giving Ice Cream Summer "Shout Outs"**



**Beginnings of our Zen Garden**



**Working on the garden**



**Soccer Game**



**Art Elective**



**Free Drawing**



**Home Run Derby**



**Mr. Murphy and a student working on math**



**Students preparing our garden**



**Playing with a therapy dog**

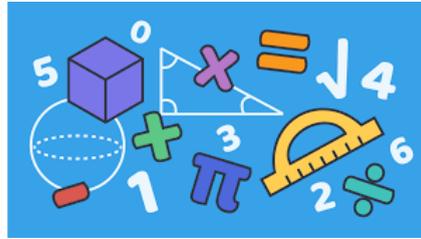
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## **Classroom Spotlights**



## Social Studies

In Social studies we have been learning about Geography as it relates to our ESY theme- Earth! Students have been learning about the history of the study, branches of geography as well as notable geographers! Each class has enjoyed our weekly "Geography Jeopardy" games as well as our CNN 10 current events activities!



## Mathematics

It has been a fun learning experience for our math students this summer. We have been focusing on improving fundamentals necessary for Algebra and Geometry. Students are encouraged to work at their own pace and lessons are group oriented with 1:1 instruction always provided, when needed. Math games are used to reinforce topics, such as the 24 game that strengthens the understanding of order of operations.



## ELA

The first week of ESY had the students creating "cros" that had "jibbitz" displaying their unique preferences and interests. We have also started reading the novel Treasure Island. The students have been captivated by the young Jim Hawkins who discovers a treasure map and embarks on a perilous voyage with pirates to find the buried treasure of Captain Flint.



## Physical Education

Students enjoyed staying physically active and healthy with our gym teachers. They were extremely competitive during basketball games and home-run derby.



## Careers

In Careers we have taken some interest assessments that are helping us learn about various career paths that we may be matched with. We have learned about a variety of "Cool Careers" in an attempt to expose students to various career opportunities! Students have learned about automation and robotics, drone pilots, and a plumber to name a few! We highlighted each career and provided information on what it takes to be successful in each



## Science

ESY students are viewing several different documentaries involving regenerative agriculture and sustainability efforts of countries around the world in an effort to combat greenhouse gas emissions and raise awareness. We are also excited to start constructing our Zen garden space and pond. We have begun clearing the way for our flower planter, which will be growing lavender, rosemary and lemon balm as

field! We have also watched “Dirty Jobs” to learn more about professions that make “civilized” life possible around the world. So far we have learned about sugar makers, sea lion rescuers, ostrich farmers and various careers at zoos and aquariums.

well as marigolds. Our pond will contain a solar fountain and water plants that will clean the water naturally. This is an ongoing effort and students have been involved in the entire process.

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## Supporting Students in 'Future Planning'

Over the course of the school year and ESY Program upperclassmen have been utilizing the Lamberts Mill Academy SAT practice workbooks and digital resources to help them prepare for taking the test this upcoming school year. Students have been advocating for themselves by seeking out staff support to help them answer various math questions correctly, and to better understand how they got a question incorrect. These students have also started researching various colleges and universities that have courses in the field of study that they'd like to major in.

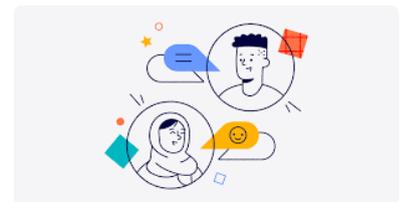


Emma has advocated for herself extremely well and has consistently sought out support from our math teacher Mr. M. She continues to do research on what colleges have her preferred area of study and will be setting up visits to these schools in the upcoming months!

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## Clinical Corner

As we are half way through the summer and with the new school year on the horizon, it's important to consider these tips for the upcoming school year:



1. Develop a healthy sleep routine with school hours in mind. School aged children should receive 9-12 hours of sleep per night
2. Establish healthy eating habits. Incorporate more vegetables, protein, and fruits into your diet. Stay hydrated and limit your junk food intake.
3. Communicate appropriately with your family/friends or school staff about your thoughts on returning to school. Communicate openly and respectfully. Respect others' boundaries. Practice active listening.
4. Consider implementing healthy coping strategies to reduce any stress or anxieties about returning to school. For example, exercising, going for a walk, meditating, and participating in hobbies.

5. Start setting productive academic and personal goals. Break down large goals into smaller, more manageable tasks.
6. Set out SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).

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## Group Therapy

We kicked off our ESY program by introducing new students while welcoming back our existing students and encouraging new connections. Throughout our daily pull out groups students have been working on identifying their emotions and coping skills and practicing individual development. In addition, the students continue to participate in practicing appropriate social skills, recognizing social cues, processing their emotions, and setting boundaries with others.



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## Students Outside of the Classroom / Alumni

We are proud to shine a spotlight on Briana B, a talented student who has recently started an exciting journey in the world of barbering. Briana began working at a local barbershop two months ago and has been enjoying and excelling there. Some of her duties include, "cutting hair, doing braids, styling dreadlocks." Briana would like to continue this as a side job in the future. Briana is very happy to be working there and we are excited to see her continued success there.



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## Upcoming Community Events

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### Online Family Support Group

NAMI Middlesex County & IFSS Online Family Support Group  
August 28 @ 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm



<https://naminj.org/event/nami-middlesex-county-ifss-online-fsg/2025-08-28/>

### Anxiety/Mood Disorder Affinity Group

Free peer-led support group, navigating the ups and downs of anxiety and/or mood disorders.  
Hosted by Kim Bosse. Ages 18+.  
Last Monday of every month, 6:00pm-7:00pm.  
Location: Peace of Mind Yoga, Counseling, and Wellness Center.  
395 Springfield Avenue #Suite 1-5 Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922  
Register at this [link](#)



### Partnering with Your School: Collaborative Problem-Solving Family Engagement Edition



Are you a family member, educator, community-based organization, or youth passionate about fostering positive relationships and boosting student achievement? This is the webinar for you!

Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025.  
Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
Location: Virtual

### Intro to Free Flow Journal Writing

Join us for a one-hour virtual journaling workshop where we'll explore the art of free flow writing – a simple yet powerful practice that helps you connect with your thoughts, feelings, and creative self without judgment or overthinking.



Whether you're a seasoned journaler or just getting started, this workshop is for you.

Get tickets [here](#)

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[https://support.iocdf.org/event/clark-nj-ocd-walk/e673382?c\\_src=affiliate](https://support.iocdf.org/event/clark-nj-ocd-walk/e673382?c_src=affiliate)

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<https://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/find-programs-and-resources/parks-and-recreation/music-in-the-park>

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<https://naminj.org/>

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<https://988lifeline.org/>

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

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## School in the Community

1. Monthly Community Meetings celebrating student awards
  2. Field Trip to Tamaques Park
  3. 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](https://ucesc.org/schools/lamberts_mill_academy)

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

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





## LMA Smore

LMA is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters





# CROSSROADS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

ESY 2025

## Message from the Administration

It's hard to believe that our 2025 ESY program has already come to a close—and in just a few short weeks, we'll be welcoming everyone back for the 2025-2026 school year!

This summer's theme, *The Five Senses*, gave our students plenty of opportunities for hands-on, engaging activities. They took part in a five senses scavenger hunt, created their own tasty trail mix, guessed mystery items hidden under shaving cream, tested their taste buds in a fun food challenge, and explored different scents while playing with scented oobleck.

Of course, summer at Crossroads wouldn't be complete without some time in the garden and our always-popular waterplay. Splashing around in the pools remains a crowd favorite! Students also helped water the garden and watch our vegetables grow—although *unfortunately*, the Crossroads groundhog clearly enjoyed our harvest a little *too much*, stealing every last pepper and cucumber before we could get to them. Luckily, Chef/Vice Principal Danielle still had plenty of zucchini to bake her delicious zucchini cake!

We were also excited to welcome the Boy Scouts this summer for their annual Rain Gutter Regatta. Students had a blast sailing their boats and cheering each other on. To top it all off, we wrapped up ESY with a sweet treat from the Kona Ice Truck—a perfect ending to a great summer.

As a reminder, the first day of school for students for the 2025-2026 school year is **Friday, September 5th**. We wish everyone a wonderful summer break and a few well-deserved weeks off.



We can't wait to see you all soon for another amazing year at Crossroads!

Warm regards,

Matt, Danielle, and Stacey

---

## Upcoming Dates

**September, 2-4, 2025** - Staff Development Days

**September, 5, 2025** - School Opens for Students

**September 23-24, 2025** - School Closed - Rosh Hashanah

**October 2, 2025** - School Closed for Students - Yom Kippur

**October 13, 2025** - Student 1PM Dismissal (Staff Development Day)



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# August Behavior Tips and Tricks

## Easing Into the School Year

Dear Families,

August is here—a month that brings both the final stretch of summer and the first signs of back-to-school season. Whether your child is returning to school or starting in a new classroom, this transition can feel big. The good news is: we can use lots of strategies to make it smoother and even fun!

Here are some helpful tips to support a successful August at home and in the community:

### 🕒 1. Ease Back Into Routines

Start shifting your child's schedule slowly toward the school-day routine. This includes:

- Earlier bedtimes
- Consistent morning wake-ups
- Mealtimes closer to the school day

Use visual schedules, timers, or checklists to build independence in routines like brushing teeth, packing a backpack, or getting dressed.

🗨️ Behavior Team Tip: Reinforce each step completed (“Nice job getting dressed on your own!”) and build up to the full routine gradually.

## 🗒️ 2. Practice School-Readiness Skills

You can use August to refresh or introduce functional school skills:

- Sitting for short periods
- Waiting for turns
- Following simple directions
- Using communication tools to request help or breaks

💡 Behavior Team Tip: Create short, structured “practice sessions” that mimic parts of the school day—like circle time, lunch, or transitioning from one place to another. Use clear prompts and lots of reinforcement!

## 🗓️ 3. Talk About the Transition (Even If It’s Weeks Away)

Start conversations early about returning to school. Use:

- Social stories
- Photos of the building or classroom
- Crossroads Instagram

Revisit these frequently to help your child become familiar with what’s coming next.

💡 Behavior Team Tip: For students with limited language, use visual countdowns or calendars to help them understand “how many days until school.”

## 🎯 4. Revisit Goals and Celebrate Growth

Take time to reflect on your child’s progress this summer, big or small! What new skills emerged? What still needs support?

Set a simple, doable family goal for the start of the school year:

- Use visuals more consistently
- Support a smoother morning routine
- **Increase independence with self-care tasks**

💡 Behavior Team Tip: Small, measurable goals with frequent positive feedback can build confidence for both you and your child!

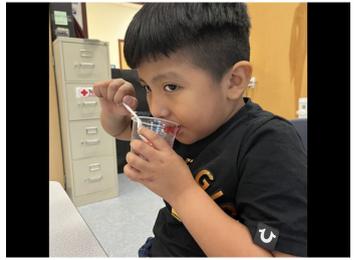
## ✦ August Affirmation

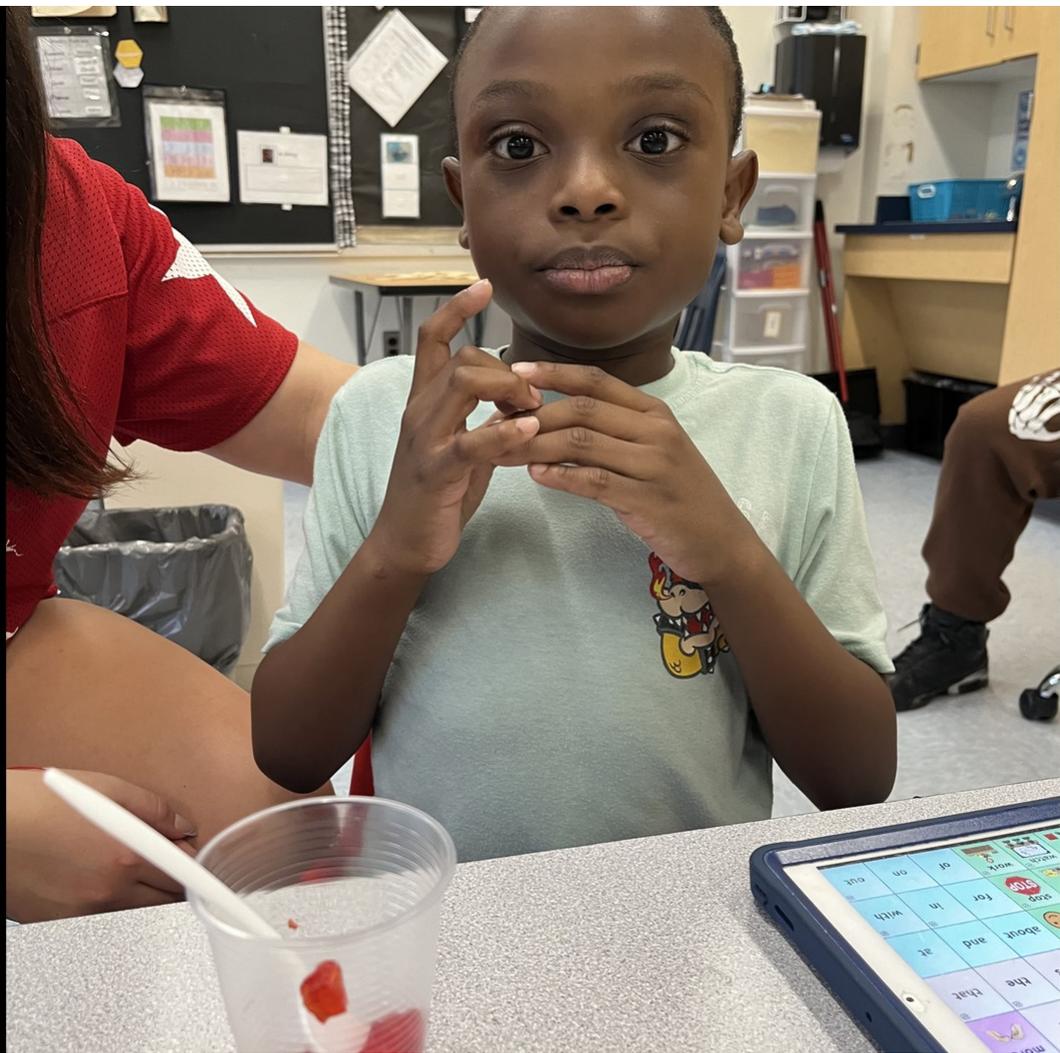
Transitions can be hard, but with structure, patience, and praise, our students can move into new routines more successfully. Every effort you make now—no matter how small—builds confidence for the year ahead.

We're excited to work with you this school year. If you'd like help creating personalized visuals or supports, or transition plans, please don't hesitate to reach out.

# ESY 2025 at Crossroads













## About Us

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

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

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

Visit us on Instagram



**CR Smore**

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# Hillcrest North June 2025 MR

June 2025

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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

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

It is always rewarding for me at the end of the school year knowing that HAN has made a difference in the lives of students. That is how I feel at this moment! I'm so grateful to have all of you at HAN and love what I do for a living because of my interactions with you all. You are valued and appreciated by all of us here at HAN and I commend you for your continued belief in yourself.

I would like you now to take a moment to reflect on how the graduating seniors will use your experiences from HAN to better yourself and your outcomes in life. Use your voice, talents, demonstrated work ethic, charm, and your education and make a difference! This world, while as challenging and fierce as it is at times, is ready for you and getting tougher for young people to get a good start in life every year. I am

confident that you will continue to use what you have learned at HAN in reaching your personal and professional goals and be successful in whatever you choose to do!

It's been a wonderful and meaningful year. Thank you to all students, parents and staff for making it so.

Graduates- please visit soon!

Returning Students- Enjoy the summer and see you in September!

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

Sincerely,

Mr. Marquet

Principal

### **Monthly Data**

Enrolled - 87

Accepted - 1

Shelter in Place Drill - June 12th

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## **Upcoming Dates**

September 5th - First Day of School  
September 23rd & 24th -School Closed - Rosh Hashanah

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## **HAN Award's Night**

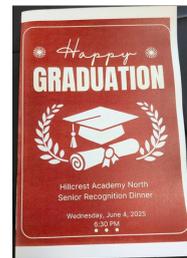
Congratulations to all our students on Award's Night. It was an amazing night made extra special with speeches from seniors Maylesse and Carla. Dr. Marquet gave out a special award to Mrs. Maria Prieto, who is retiring after being with the Hillcrests (both of them) for twenty years. He also gave out an award to Winston Jones, our custodian, for being amazing. Thank you to Dr. Carrie Dattilo and Mrs. Lorraine Aklonis, our superintendent and UCESC board president, respectively, for being there and their kind and inspiring words.



## Senior Dinner

HAN ended this school year with our yearly tradition, the Senior Recognition Dinner. HAN teachers and staff honored our seniors and their families with a night out with dinner and speeches. Every senior heard a speech written by a teacher or staff member about their accomplishments during their time at Hillcrest Academy North, how much we have seen them grow, and their hopes and plans for the future. There were plenty of laughs and a few tears. Some of our seniors have been with us for years, and some have only been with us for a few months. Either way, we are proud of the work they have done. Congratulations Class of 2025!





# Monthly Awards



Principal Awards for May



Attendance Awards for May



Honor Roll Awards for May

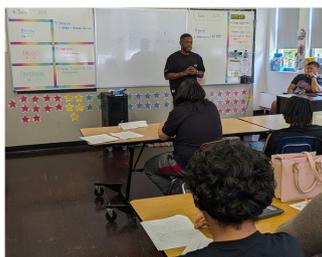
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# Career Day



On June 6th HAN had our annual Career Day. Students were able to listen to people who have careers in many fields they are interested in. We had speakers from the military, a small business owner, a corporate Amazon media buyer, a United Nations banker, a real estate flipper, a construction worker, and an electrician (who graduated from HAN). Students learned about how the speakers got into their fields, how much education they needed, and how much they enjoyed (or not) their work. Students asked many questions and came away with new ideas of what they may want

to do with their lives after HAN.



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# 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.



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# About HAN



Hillcrest Academy North assists students from the Elizabeth Public School District in reaching their full potential by providing an alternative to the traditional high school setting. We offer smaller class sizes with a rigorous and challenging high school curriculum that is aligned to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and prepares students for college and career. Our goal is to provide a safe, supportive, and empowering school

environment that fosters lifelong learning, mutual respect, creativity, and the joy of learning, with an effective, caring, innovative staff, in partnership with home and the community.

Mr. John Marquet, Principal

Mr. Thomas Van Cleef, Supervisor of Instruction

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

Phone Number: (908) 233-9366

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

## Visit Us On Instagram



### Mission Statement

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

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



**John Marquet**

John is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



## Message from the Administrators

### "Summer, Summer Had Me a Blast"-Grease the Movie

This summer, Westlake School proudly ran its Extended School Year (ESY) Program, designed to support student learning, independence, and enrichment through a variety of engaging academic and experiential activities.

While academic goals aligned with student's IEP's were addressed through hands on learning activities during ESY. Themed Fun Days such as Favorite Sports Team Day, Superhero Day, and Wacky Sock Day were included to keep the school spirit flame lit and burning! While ice cream and Italian Ice Days kept us cool and comfortable!



Students were also treated to experiential learning opportunities and fun activities, such as "Rizzo's Wildlife" combining animal facts and safe student to animal interaction with a variety of animals such as turtles, ferrets, and various reptiles. A Skateboarding presentation demonstrating amazing skating skills, while reminding students to maintain a healthy lifestyle, both physically and mentally. And a soccer demonstration performed by a semi-professional soccer player providing an enthusiastic and engaging soccer experience through displays of amazing soccer skills and audience participation.

We wish all students, their families and staff members a relaxing, safe and enjoyable rest of the summer till we meet again in September :)

Claudine, Bobby and Stacey









# Westlake Information

## Dates to Remember!

September 5: First Day of School  
September 23rd and 24th: Closed - Rosh Hashanah  
October 2, 2025 - School Closed - Yom Kippur  
October 13, 2025 - 1 pm Dismissal - Staff Development



Attached please find a copy of our 2025-26 School Year Calendar!

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1741368317/ucescorg/zjiy3lg2dy8m21qaxy1/25-26DistrictCalendar.pdf>

## August Tips from the Westlake Behavior Team: Easing Into the School Year

Dear Westlake Families,

August has arrived—the final stretch of summer and the start of back-to-school season. Whether your student is returning to a familiar classroom or starting in a new room, this time of year brings big transitions. The good news? With some planning and patience, we can make the transition smoother and more successful for everyone.

Here are some helpful strategies to support your student at home and in the community as they prepare for a positive start to the school year:

### 1. Ease Back Into Routines

Begin gradually shifting toward a school-year schedule to reduce the stress of sudden changes.

This can include:

- Earlier bedtimes and consistent wake-ups
- Adjusting meal and snack times to match the school day
- Practice morning and evening routines using visuals, timers, or checklists
- Break tasks like personal hygiene, packing bags, or getting dressed into manageable steps

 Behavior Team Tip: Praise every step completed! For example, “Thanks for brushing your teeth without reminders!” This builds motivation and independence over time.

### 2. Refresh Functional School-Ready Skills

No matter your student's age, practicing foundational skills can set them up for success. These might include:

- Tolerating brief periods of work or structured activity
- Waiting, sharing, or transitioning between tasks
- Following basic directions or classroom expectations
- Using AAC or communication supports to ask for help or breaks

💡 Behavior Team Tip: Try a short, low-stress “practice session” at home—like organizing supplies, setting a timer for a simple chore, or transitioning between two preferred activities with a countdown.

### 📅 3. Preview the Return to School

Even if your student has been in school before, revisiting what to expect can ease anxiety. You might use:

- Social stories or visual guides
- Photos of the school, classroom, or staff (ask us—we're happy to share!)
- A simple calendar countdown to the first day

💡 Behavior Team Tip: For students who prefer less talking and more visual support, use a dry-erase calendar or visual timer app to show “how many days” until school starts.

### 🎯 4. Reflect on Progress & Set a Fresh Goal

Celebrate growth from the summer—big or small! Did your student learn a new skill? Try something challenging? Take note of progress and use it to set a small, realistic goal for fall, such as:

- More independence with morning routines
- Improved flexibility during schedule changes
- Using coping strategies or requesting breaks when upset

💡 Behavior Team Tip: Choose one goal, and celebrate every step toward success. A little positive reinforcement goes a long way for motivation—at any age!

### ✨ August Affirmation

Transitions aren't always easy—but with structure, encouragement, and practice, our students can build the tools they need to feel successful. Every small effort you make now supports your child's confidence, comfort, and independence in the year ahead.

We're looking forward to working with you this school year! If you'd like help with visuals, schedules, or custom behavior supports, don't hesitate to reach out.

With appreciation,

The Westlake Behavior Team



# 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](mailto:opdsn@ucnj.org)

visit our website [www.ucnj.org/opdsn](http://www.ucnj.org/opdsn)

Or scan the QR Code!



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Biwo pou moan 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](mailto:opdsn@ucnj.org)

vizite sit entènèt nou an: [www.ucnj.org/opdsn](http://www.ucnj.org/opdsn)

Oswa eskane kòd QR la!



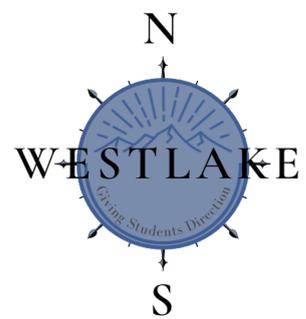
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## Contact Us!

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

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

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



## INSTAGRAM!

Visit us!





**Robert Peneno**

Robert is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



++  
Let Every Voice Empower  
++

# Newsletter 24-25

## June

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### June 2025 Monthly Report Enrollment Data

Enrollment-93 (6/17/25).

New Students-0

Disenrollments-6 (1-Transfer to Florida, 2-Refused to attend school, 3-Assault).

Emergency Drill-6/11/25, Shelter In Place.

Fire Drill-6/2/25.

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## A Message From The Principal: Dr. Balsamello

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This was another successful year at Hillcrest Academy South Campus (HAS)! Our culminating events included our annual Senior Recognition and Awards Ceremony, distribution of the yearbook, finalizing last minute assignments and grades as well as the Year End BBQs. We are looking

forward to the 2025-26 school year with our returning and new students. I would like to dedicate this final newsletter to all our seniors!



## June Important Dates

JUNE 2025						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 • HAS Pride Day	3 • Let's create a rainbow	4 • Proud of our Staff & Students day	5 • Proud of your Team	6 • Rainbow Day	7
8	9 • Proud of your efforts this year, and get excited for summer break	10 • Be Proud of Yourself Day	11 • Be proud of your skills and what makes you special	12 • Senior Recognition & Awards Night • Proud of our HAS Seniors	13 • Senior Lunch Trip • Rainbow Day	14
15	16 • End of school BBQ	17	18 • Last day of school • Beginning of summer break	19	20	21
22	23	24 Senior Graduation • STEM • Jefferson • Halsey • Dwyer	25 Senior Graduation • Hamilton • Edison • Correll • Bellwage	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

## Student of the YEAR!

### Martha

Congratulations to the HAS Student of the Year! Martha isn't just a student with the highest grades, she is a standout individual who embodies excellence across multiple facets of high school life. This student represents the ideal blend of academic prowess, leadership, community involvement, and strong character that is leaving a lasting positive impact on their school community. Martha has demonstrated strong academic performance, often being on honor roll. Her extensive volunteer work for the school and character values make her the kind of student that teachers enjoy having in their class and



peers admire. In essence, Martha is an all-around exceptional individual who not only excels in various areas but also uplifts and positively influences those around her.

---

## Faculty/Staff "Getting to Know You"!

### Dr Balsamello's Favorites:

Favorite movie: Dawn of the Dead (1978)

Favorite food: Linguini with Clam Sauce

Favorite color: Black

Favorite book: The Bible

Favorite travel spot: Clinton, NJ

Favorite people: His wife, daughter, and puppy



---

## "Let Your Voice Empower" Teacher Recognitions

### May - Teamwork

This year's district wide theme of "Let Your Voice Empower" was incorporated by teachers being awarded pins in different areas of empowerment. The May theme was 'Teamwork'. 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.

Ms Shirley, our substitute nurse, was picked for this month's honor after the May newsletter was published. Since she has been such a team player, working well with others to make HAS a place both staff and students want to come to, we wanted to make sure she was recognized.



### June - Inspire

The June theme for "Let Your Voice Empower" was 'Inspire'. The faculty/staff picked for this month's honor have inspired all of us here at HAS to be better, do better, and inspire others ourselves.



Mrs Lobosco



Mrs D'Emilio



Ms V

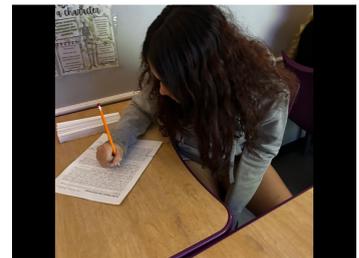
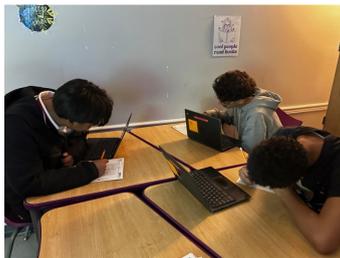
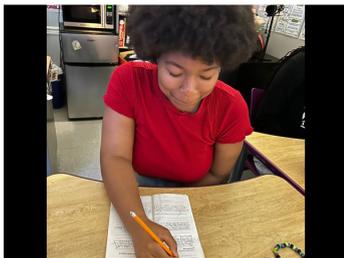
# Teacher's Corner: English

## Ms Vlastaras- English/Creative Writing

This marking period in English, students explored a series of powerful short stories, including *The Most Dangerous Game*, *The Lottery*, and *The Veldt*. Through these texts, we examined essential questions such as: What does it mean to be human? How do fear and control shape society? and In what ways do authors use setting and suspense to explore deeper truths? These stories sparked rich discussions and thoughtful analysis as students practiced critical reading and writing skills.

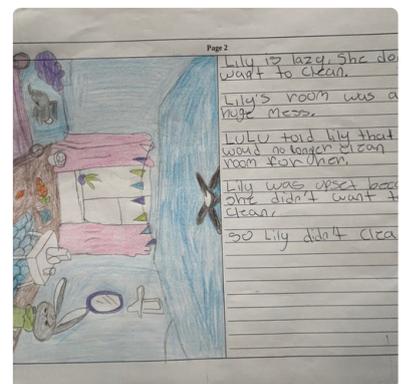


In Creative Writing, students explored "Creative Writing Through Art" where they used famous works from movements such as Impressionism, Surrealism, Expressionism, and Abstract Art to inspire their own writing. Each week, students learned about the art period, made inferences, and responded to paintings with poetry and prose focusing on sensory language, symbolism, and the emotional response that art evokes.

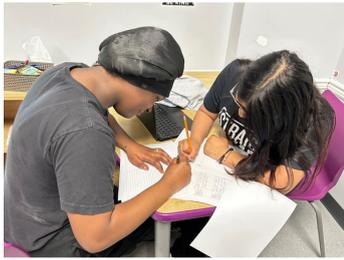


## Mrs Lobosco - English

In English class, students went beyond simply understanding what happens in a story, poem, or play. They delved into the 'so what?'. The deeper meaning, the universal message, or the central insight the author wants us to glean. Students discovered the difference of theme vs. topic, the universal truths that themes often explore what resonates with readers across different times and cultures. This also included how themes are inferred, not stated through character development, conflict and resolution, symbolism and imagery, settings, and author's purpose. Students then read the stories *The Terror* and *The Leather Jacket*

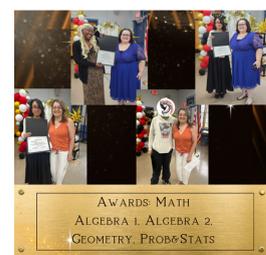


and as they read, students identified and summarized important plot details that may be related to a theme/message in the text. As the end of the marking period project, students created their own children's book complete with a theme, story, and illustrations.



## Awards Night and Senior Recognition!

The Hillcrest Academy South Campus Senior Recognition and Awards Night event was a significant occasion in our academic year. It served as a celebration with faculty, staff, students, and families to recognize student achievement and a formal farewell to the graduating class. It was a night filled with pride, reflection, and anticipation for the future. We also acknowledged the hard work and dedication of our seniors as well as selected underclassmen for their countless hours of effort, perseverance, and commitment to their goals. The night began with a welcome and opening remarks by our principal, Dr Balsamello. Next our district Superintendent, Dr Dattilo, provided a commencement speech that congratulated our seniors and wished them all the best in the future. She closed out her time by presenting senior Amaya with a Union County Educational Services Foundation scholarship award. Following the opening ceremonies came the academic awards that recognized top students in the subjects of English, Math, Science, History, Foreign Language, Art, and PhysEd/Health. Students also received awards in Respect, Citizenship, Outstanding Attendance, and a special Federal award went to seven students who excelled in Community Service. One of those students, senior Sanaa, served 147 hours which earned her the bronze award for Community Service. The last award of the night went to senior Martha for being our Student of the Year! The night ended with the Senior Recognitions and a catered buffet dinner. Senior Rayquan stated to Dr. Balsamello, "If it wasn't for you and the staff I would've never graduated high school".





AWARDS:  
PHYS ED/HEALTH



AWARDS: SCIENCE  
COMPUTER SCIENCE, BIOLOGY,  
ENVIRONMENTAL, FORENSICS



AWARDS: SOCIAL STUDIES  
WORLD HISTORY, US HISTORY 1,  
US HISTORY 2, ECONOMICS



AWARDS: FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
SPANISH



AWARDS:  
OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE,  
CITIZENSHIP, RESPECT



AWARDS:  
SERVICE HOURS  
124.5, 123, 115, 112, 110, 100, 147



AWARDS:  
SCHOLARSHIP



SENIORS, FRIENDS, &  
FAMILY



AWARDS:  
STUDENT OF THE YEAR

## Senior Luncheon Trip

As high school seniors prepare to graduate, a celebratory lunch outing is a time-honored tradition here at HAS! It's a fantastic way for the seniors to mark the end of one chapter and look forward to the next as well as sharing memories and excitement for the future. Principal Dr Balsamello, along with Administrative Assistant Ms D'Emilio and Phys. Ed. Teacher Mr Barone took the senior class to Oh Brian's on the Green in Clark. The atmosphere was relaxed and one of joy, camaraderie, and a touch of bittersweet nostalgia. There was a tangible sense of excitement for the future mixed with the understanding that this part of their lives was closing. It was a great chance for these young adults to celebrate their hard-earned freedom and the bonds they've formed before embarking on their next big adventure.



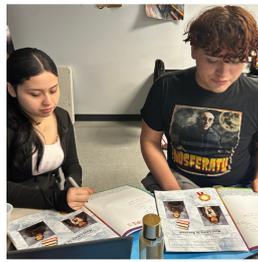
## Yearbook Distribution

Yearbook distribution is one of the most anticipated events of the high school year, especially for our seniors. It's a day that transforms months of hard work by Ms W into a tangible keepsake filled with memories, inside jokes, and signatures from friends and teachers. Yearbooks were distributed the last full week of school when the seniors returned from their celebratory lunch out.

Students were called out by class to line up in Ms V's room where names were checked off as students received their book. The rest of the school day was designated for students to look through and sign each other's books; classrooms were filled with a lot of chatter, laughter, and sentiments.

Overall, yearbook distribution is more than just handing out books; it's a vibrant positive social event that culminates the school year, provides a cherished memento, and reinforces the bonds of friendship.





## End of the Year BBQ!

Our Annual End of Year BBQ is designed to celebrate the culmination of the academic year, foster relationships, and provide a relaxed environment for students and staff to unwind before summer break. It is the last big social gathering for the entire school. Mr Barone was our designated grilling master, cooking up hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and hotdogs for the entire school to enjoy. Students had an opportunity to sit outside under our tents and enjoy the weather while others were entertained in movie rooms, video game tournaments, henna art, students making up missing assignments, work on art projects, and socialize. There was also a basketball tournament in the gym while others were able to visit the Fitness Center to play pool, foosball, and table tennis.

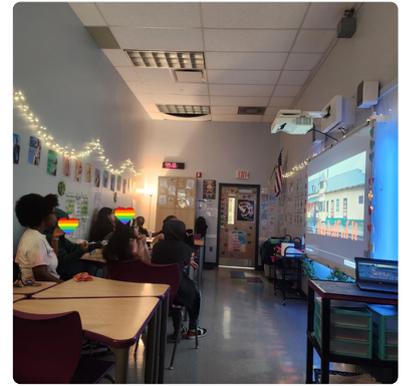


# Pride Month

## Movie Day

Pride Month is a vibrant celebration of LGBTQ+ rights and culture, typically observed in June. During our movie day for Pride Month, students got to pick movies that highlight LGBTQ+ themes, stories, and experiences. The purpose of this is for celebration and visibility, education and awareness, community building, and advocacy. Incentive movies shown were:

- *Love, Simon*
- *Rent*
- *A Secret Love*
- *Milk*
- *The Half of It*
- *Fried Green Tomatoes*



## Spirit Weeks

Spirit days for Pride Month at HAS were a fantastic way to celebrate diversity, promote inclusivity, and foster a supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students and allies. These events aimed to educate, raise awareness, and simply let students express their pride and solidarity in a fun and visible way.



# Students Outside of School

## Class of 2025!

High school graduation is a monumental step, opening up a wide array of opportunities for what comes next. The "right" path is unique to each individual, depending on their interests, career aspirations, financial situation, and personal goals. Our students are on their way to a four-year college/university or a two year community college, a vocational/trade school or certificate program, the military, and some will enter the workforce right away. Ultimately, choosing a path

after high school is a significant decision. It's often helpful to explore different options and consider what truly aligns with one's aspirations and strengths.



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## Important Resource Info



**SchoolEndResourceParentsandStudentsJune2025part1.pdf**

**Download**  
15.1 MB



**SchoolEndResourceParentsandStudentsJune2025part2.pdf**

**Download**  
17.6 MB

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### About Us

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](http://www.ucesc.org)

**Instagram:** [ucesc\\_has](https://www.instagram.com/ucesc_has)

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

**Location:** [1571 Lamberts Mill Road, Westfield, NJ, USA-Door 3B](#)

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

**Visit us on Instagram**



## HAS Smore

HAS is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



# WORK READINESS ACADEMY

Summer 2025 Newsletter



Dear WRA and Project SEARCH Community,

As we close out another fantastic summer, we want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible efforts and accomplishments of the students and staff who participated in this year's **Extended School Year (ESY) program**. It was a jam-packed season full of learning, exploration, growth and of course, fun!

## **Hard Work and Dedication**

First and foremost, we commend our **students** for their enthusiasm, resilience, and commitment to learning throughout the summer. Whether they were participating in classroom activities, venturing out into the community, or stepping into new professional environments, their energy and curiosity made this summer truly memorable.

We also extend a heartfelt **thank you to our dedicated staff... Diane, Shalini, Steve, Mary, Marguerite, Mike, Erin, Ian & Jimmy**, whose tireless dedication and creativity helped bring each experience to life. Their support made all the difference in helping our students thrive both academically and socially during the ESY program.

## **Work-Based Learning Internships**

One of the standout features of our summer program was the opportunity for students to engage in **work-based learning internships**. These real-world experiences provided students with valuable insight into various industries, professional expectations, and workplace etiquette. This summer, our students proudly interned at:

- **Cranford Swim and Tennis Club**
- **Hilton Garden Inn Hotel**
- **Barnes & Noble Bookstore**
- **Suburban Golf Course**
- **Jewish Family Services of Central New Jersey**

These placements offered meaningful, hands-on experiences that helped students build confidence, communication, and job-readiness skills.

## Community-Based Instruction and Trips

Our students also had the opportunity to explore and engage with the broader community through a variety of **off-campus learning experiences**. These trips allowed students to practice independence, navigation, and social interaction in real-world settings. This summer's outings included:

- **Downtown Westfield**
- **Menlo Park Mall**
- **Jersey Gardens Mall**
- **Cinemark Movie Theater**
- **Jersey City Waterfront**
- **Pool Party at Cranford Swim and Tennis Club** 🏊

Every outing was filled with teachable moments and unforgettable memories.

## Instructional Focus

Our instructional emphasis this summer was centered around essential life and interpersonal skills, including:

- **Communication**
- **Self-Advocacy**
- **Social Skills**
- **Teamwork**
- **Survival Skills**

Students worked on these core areas across various settings, with many opportunities to apply their learning in both structured and unstructured environments.

## Electives That Sparked Curiosity

Our **elective classes** gave students a chance to explore new interests and build connections with peers in fun, engaging ways. Some favorites this summer included:

- **Camping & Survival Skills 101** 🏕️
- **Exploring Nature** 🌿
- **Art** 🎨
- **Video Game Tips & Tricks** 🎮
- **Board Game Etiquette** 🎲

These sessions were a hit, fostering creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving.

## A Final Word

As we look ahead to the upcoming school year, we carry with us the momentum and positivity from this vibrant summer session. The growth we witnessed in confidence, independence, and skill development was nothing short of inspiring. Thank you again to our students, families, staff, and community partners for making our ESY 2025 program a true success. See you in September!

Sincerely,

**Josh Bornstein, Director**

**Rachel Richer, Supervisor**

**UCESC Work Readiness Academy**

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## Dates to Remember

**September, 2-4, 2025** - UCESC Staff Orientation

**September, 5, 2025** - Students First Day of School at WRA & Project SEARCH

**September 23-24, 2025** - School Closed - Rosh Hashana

**October 2, 2025** - School Closed - Yom Kippur

**October 13, 2025** - 1pm Dismissal - Staff Development



Attached please find a copy of our 2025-26 School Year Calendar!



**25-26 UCESC District Calendar.pdf**

**Download**

122.6 KB



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### New Attendance Reporting Email!

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

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

---

## ESY Work-Based Learning Experiences



**Can Do Food Cart!**



**WRA School Office!**



**Learning to test the pool water at CSTC**



**Breakfast Prep at the Hilton!**







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## ESY Community Trips





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# Exploring Elective Classes!

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# Special Visitor!

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# Summertime at Project SEARCH



The Class of 2026 Project SEARCH Interns and their families received a warm welcome to Overlook on the evening of July 24th by our host business liasions - **Monique Byrne** and **Carl Dudley**. The evening program included learning about Overlook Medical Center's Mission, reminders about medical on-boarding

requirements, a fun human bingo icebreaker activity, and an overview of our summer travel training program by **Louis Hoffman** from **Come Ride With Us NJ**.

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## Community Resources/Events

Head to Mindowaskin Park in Westfield for an inclusive event with friends and family! Canvas and paint will be provided. Click the link to register! <https://secure.rec1.com/NJ/union-county-nj/catalog>

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## Understanding Supported Employment Options Available AFTER Graduation



**Supported Employment Fact Sheet Final.pdf**

Click the link to download the attachment

**Download**

641.9 KB

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## 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 shet 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

## ABLE Accounts

ABLE Accounts provide eligible individuals with disabilities a better way to save money for today's needs or invest for tomorrow. ABLE accounts:

- Do not jeopardize eligibility for most benefit programs, such as Medicaid and SSI.
- Are tax-advantaged, so earnings grow tax free.
- Can accept contributions from anyone: the account owner, family and friends.
- Include online account management tools and a top-rated mobile app.

For more information, click the link below.



### - NJ ABLE Frequently Asked Questions

New Jersey Division of Disability Services answers some of the most frequently asked questions about ABLE accounts.

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

## Picture of the Month

Ben cooling down after a hard day of interning at the CSTC!



### About the Work Readiness Academy

The Work Readiness Academy serves students ages 18-21 with disabilities and provides a comprehensive employment training experience that incorporates both classroom-based instruction and community-based work-learning experiences. While in the

training classroom, students work cooperatively with similar aged peers to learn critical skills related to employment and socialization. Students also work on career exploration and planning, including the development of a person-centered, post-secondary vision and plan with clear goals and action steps. Program staff remain on-site during the internships to provide and fade support and assistance as needed. Students also participate in field trips focused on career discovery, independent living skills, recreation and independent travel training.

For more information or to make a student referral, please email Josh Bornstein at [jbornstein@ucesc.org](mailto:jbornstein@ucesc.org)

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

**Website:** [https://www.ucesc.org/schools/the\\_work\\_readiness\\_academy](https://www.ucesc.org/schools/the_work_readiness_academy).

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

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

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



**WRA Smore**

WRA is using S'more to create beautiful newsletters



## Message from the Administrators



**As the school year winds down, let's take a moment to reflect, appreciate and celebrate many moments and milestones that our school year has brought us.**

**The Westlake School community is proud to acknowledge and celebrate the following 2024-2025 Westlake School graduates: Azan C., AJ M., Ashanti F., Matias M., Kimmeon O., As well as Jonathan D. who is moving onto the UCESC Work Readiness Academy.**

**We thank you for allowing us to be part of your amazing journey filled with personal growth, incredible achievements and countless moments of joy, pride and inspiration and look forward to seeing where your exceptional dedication and resilience take you as you begin your next chapter.**

**We also would like to honor, acknowledge and congratulate our school Social Worker Ms. Phyllis Sandrock and teacher, Mr. Bob Carten , who after a combined 5 plus decades will be retiring at the end of the school year. The Westlake School Community will miss both Ms. Sandrock and Mr. Carten's commitment to academic excellence, preparation of social emotional tools for student's well-being and lasting contributions and the profound impact they have made on their students for years to come. Thank you, Phyllis and Bob - we wish you a rewarding and fulfilling retirement just like your educational career! :)**

**The School year provided a vast number of opportunities for students to get involved and participate in special events such as the March Madness Basketball game and cheerleading, Westlake School Carnival, Annual BMW Car Club Race, Westlake Parent Association fund raising and social events and the "Wicked" themed Prom, to name a few.**

**As the school year comes to an end, we would like to thank all of our Westlake School staff for their continued, unwavering support in providing an inclusive and supportive learning environment for our students to thrive and grow to reach their fullest potential and all our students families and**

sending districts for your ongoing teamwork and collaboration allowing us to have the privilege to work with your kids.

Till Next "School Year" My friends, Be Good to Yourself....and Each Other!  
Claudine T., Stacey K. and Bobby P.



## Westlake Information

- Current enrollment: 53
- Referrals: 4
- Acceptances: 0

Emergency Management Drills:

- Fire Drill: June 2 at 9:45 AM
- Shelter in Place: June 11 at 10:30 AM

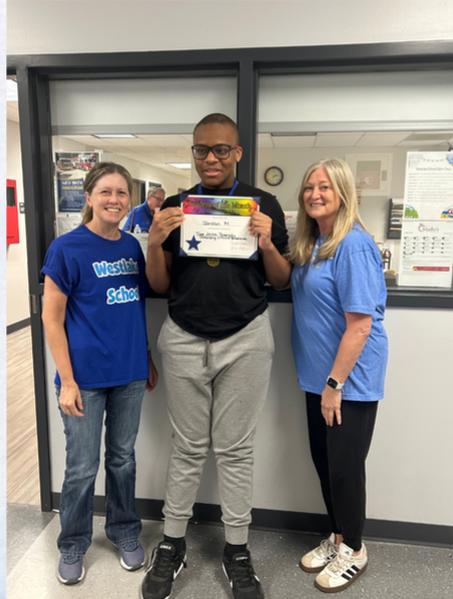


## June Spotlight!

### Student of the Month!



## *Student of the Month*



**We are so proud of J.M., he had an awesome school year! He was in a new class where he made new friends! He also made many advancements in his academics!**

**Principal Award Winner!**



**K.M. is our newest student and our Principal Award winner! She has worked hard on her transitions and learning how to make chocolate pop and curl ribbons!**

**Staff of the Month!**



# Staff Member of the Month



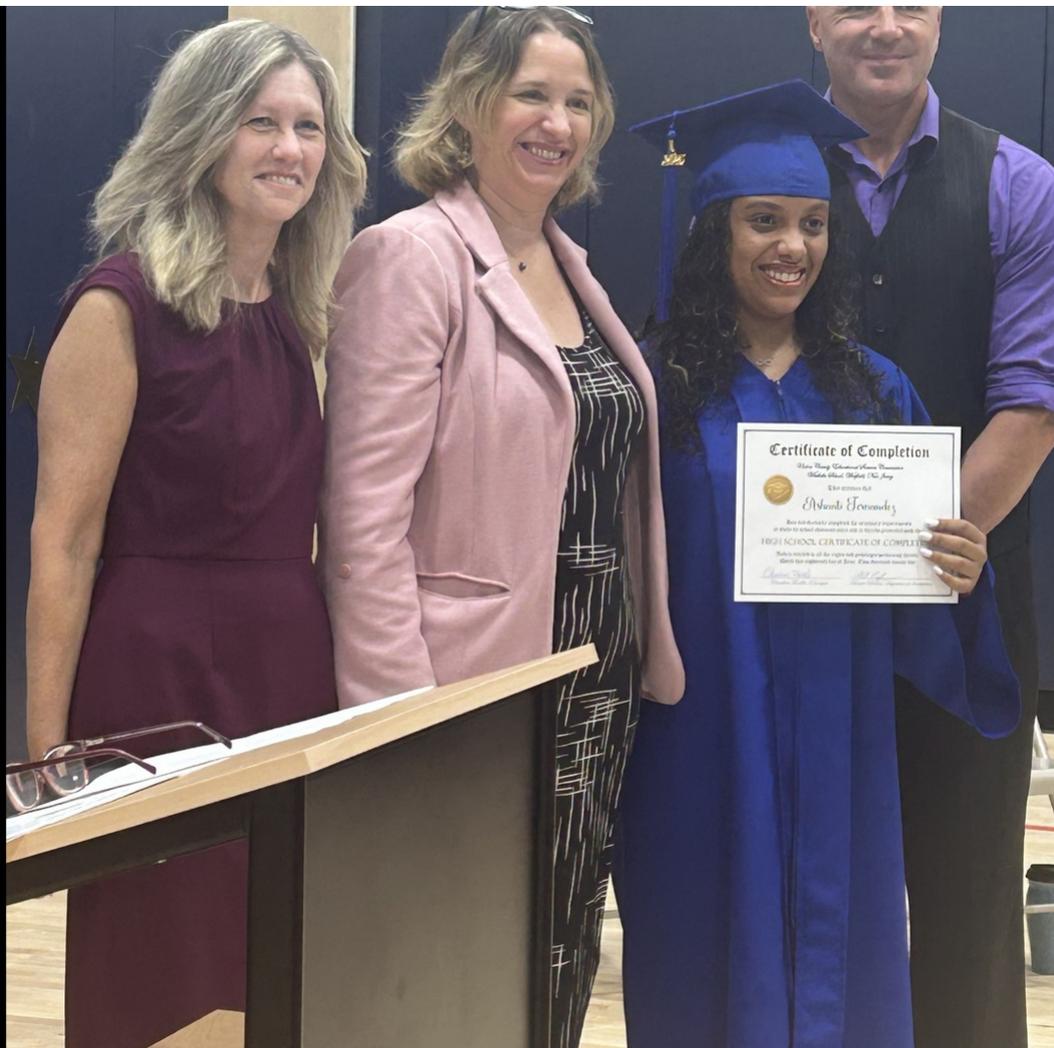
Ms. Donna is one of our BCBA's. Her caring nature shines in the way she interacts with the students and the staff!



## Westlake Graduation!



On June 18th, Westlake celebrated our graduates! This year we had 4 students graduating, as well as one student moving on to UCESC Work Readiness Academy. During their time at Westlake, they learned not only academic skills but important job skills. We are going to miss everyone and wish them luck in the future!



## ASHANTI F.

You are sweet, kind and hardworking person. Good luck with your future! Miss you Ashanti

*Ashanti, it's been a pleasure working with you at the library this year and watching you shine at the Sunshine Cafe! I hope all of your dreams come true! Fondly, Mrs C*

Ashanti we are certainly going to miss your smile and willingness to help wherever you are needed

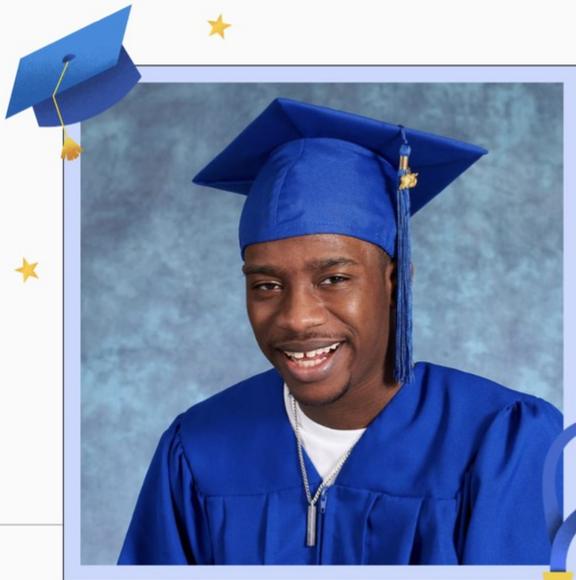
*I'll miss your beautiful smile, your sunny personality and your hugs! You have matured into such a wonderful young woman. I wish you lots of happiness in your future. I'll miss you! Love, Ms. Karen*

Ashanti is a very sweet and caring young lady. She always comes to school with a big smile and is willing to do any tasks given to her.

Ashanti is a great asset at the Sunshine Cafe. She did a great job completing various job responsibilities. It was a great pleasure to have Ashanti in my class this year. Anywhere she goes, everyone will love her. Hoping for the best luck! Ashanti.

*You have thrived during your time at Westlake. You are a true role model to everyone around you. You are always there to lend a helping hand and are willing to take on a challenge. we will miss you!*





## AJ M.

AJ you are so handsome and cool guy good luck with your future! We miss you AJ

AJ, it has been so nice working with you the past few years and watching you grow! I am going to miss your great sense of style! I wish you all the best!  
Fondly, Mrs. C

AJ your infectious smile will be missed

AJ, You always bring the fashion and that killer smile to Westlake! I'm really going to miss your sweet demeanor and the warmth you brought to the classroom. It's been such a joy having you over the past couple of years. Wishing you endless happiness and success in everything you pursue—go shine bright! Love, Mrs. Stephanie



## MATIAS M.

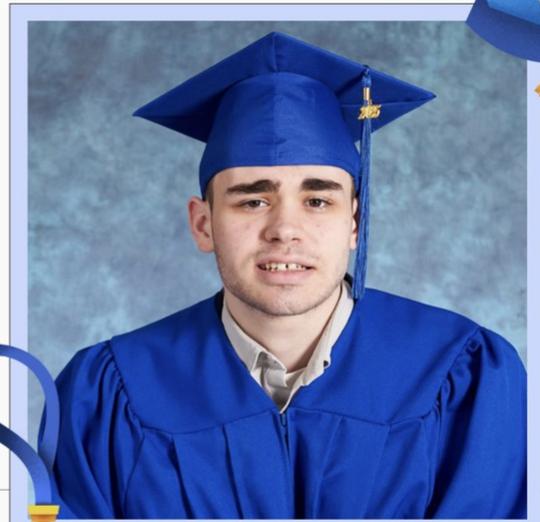
Good luck with your future! We miss you Matias

*Matias is very caring and kind. He's a great artist and super creative, too. We will all miss him!  
Good luck, Matias!*

Matias I will miss your creative drawings and our fun conversations

*Matias is a wonderful artist and full of imagination. He loves his peers and family. I enjoyed working with Matias. He has grown and matured this year. I will miss your honest comments that make me laugh.  
Wishing the best and you will be missed!*

Matias, you will always be remembered for your creativity, amazing artwork and vivid imagination. You have grown a lot over your years at Westlake and we are very proud of all that you have accomplished. We will miss you'





# CONGRATS ON MOVING UP TO WORK READINESS!

JONATHAN D.



Work Based Learning!



After making the Thank You Bags, our WBL students got to hand them out. We are very grateful to have our students working at Walgreens, Clark Library, Overlook Hospital, Suplee, Clooney & Company, Lido Cafe, Cranford Movie Theater, Complete Care, and more.



Westlake Annual Carnival!



**Westlake School Carnival was a fun day for all! There were lots of games, bounce houses, and fun snacks. The Carnival committee worked to plan a whole day of activities for our students. The volunteers from Goldman Sachs ensure that games were running smoothly and all the students were having fun!**







# Behavior Department's Guide to Fun Summer Activities!

As summer approaches, check out some fun places to go as a family that are inclusive for families with autism and other disabilities. This summer, families can enjoy sensory-friendly events at various amusement parks.



**\*\*Six Flags Great Adventure\*\*** in Jackson, NJ will host sensory days on select weekdays in June and July, featuring low crowds and reduced noise. They also offer a Ride Accessibility Program, which allows individuals unable to wait in line to use a pass to skip queues for attractions.

**\*\*Adventure Aquarium\*\*** in Camden will have a sensory-friendly evening on August 17, from 5 PM to 7 PM, providing a calm atmosphere for exploring marine life.

**\*\*Sesame Place\*\*** includes special accommodations like a sensory guide, quiet rooms, and sensory-friendly character meet & greets, along with their Ride Accessibility Program.

**\*\*LEGOLAND New York\*\*** offers a similar ride accessibility program, enabling guests with disabilities to bypass lines to enhance their experience. Additionally,

**\*\*LEGOLAND Discovery Center\*\*** has locations in Somerville and at the American Dream Mall, both featuring disability access programs. The indoor water park and indoor amusement park at American Dream also provide accessibility options, ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable experience for all guests. These programs work together to create enjoyable and inclusive environments for children with autism and other disabilities.

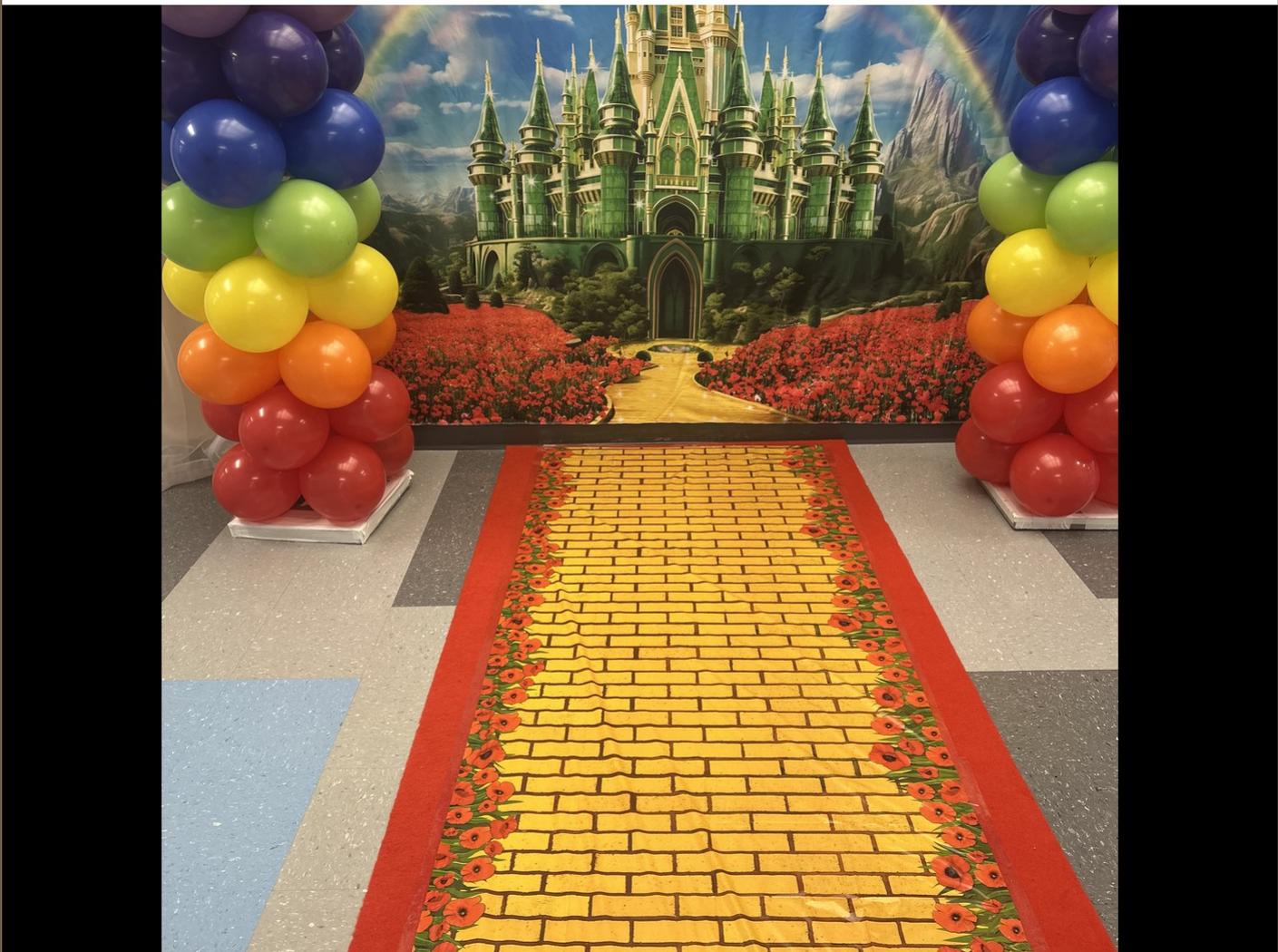


## Westlake Prom!



Ms. Karen did an incredible job planning and setting up the perfect night. The Prom Committee transformed the hallway and our cafeteria into the land of OZ. All of our students, alumni, and staff

had an amazing night dancing and have Wicked themed snacks! It was so fun to see everyone dressed up!











★



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Please see our instagram for more photos!



## Ms. Schiumo's Class!



This month has been full of engaging activities. To celebrate the end of the school year, our class attended the Westlake Carnival. The students had a wonderful time participating in the activities and enjoying social time with their peers.

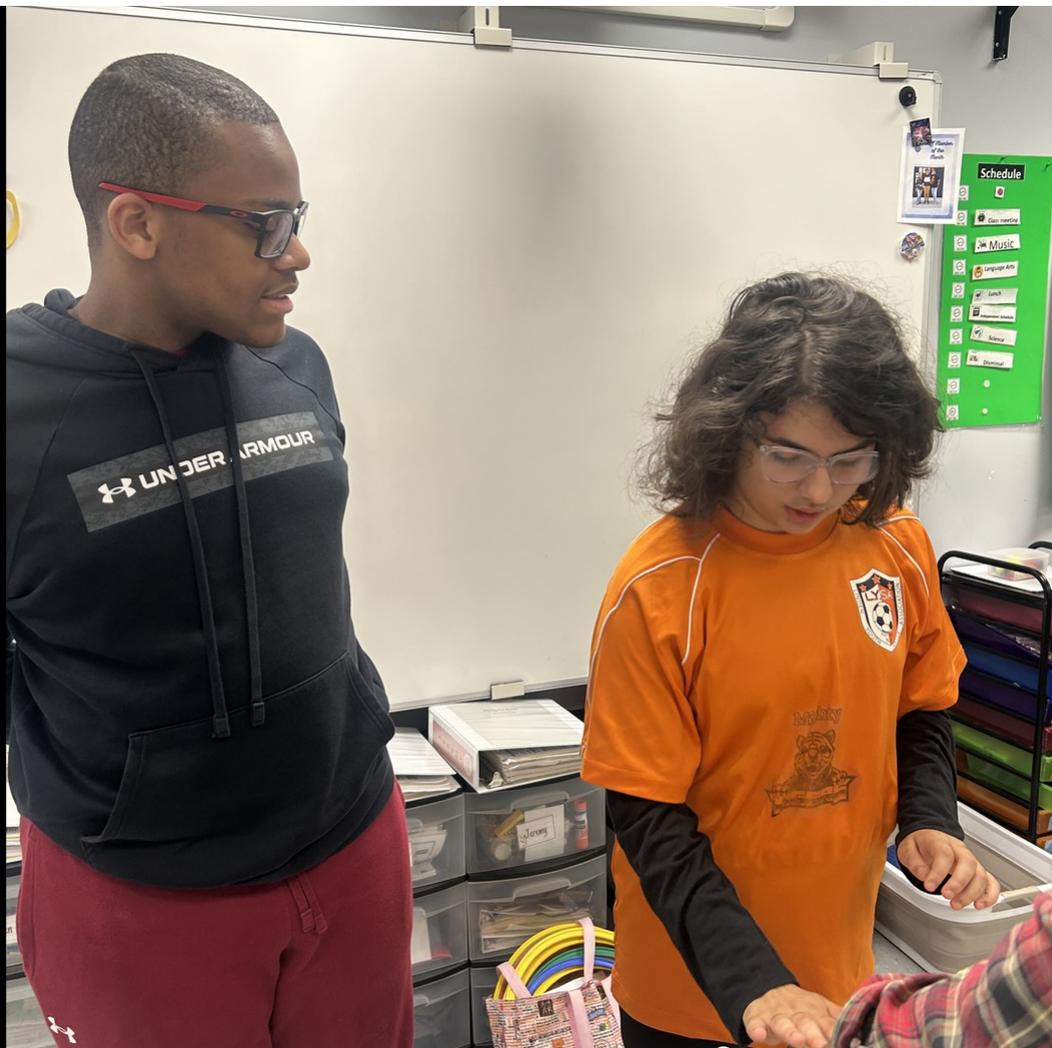
In reading and social studies we focused on the monthly themes of Diversity and Tolerance. Our take away was that everyone needs love and deserves peace. We then worked together to create a beautiful wreath highlighting these values.

Our math and life skills lessons centered around the basics of earning, spending and saving money. Students explored real-life scenarios and applied their knowledge with a visit to the Sunshine Cafe. They used calculators to update their earnings from the Jewelry Shop.

In science we conducted a seasonal comparison of rainfall between fall and spring. The students made predictions, analyzed the data and discovered that spring had a higher accumulation of rainfall. We want to thank Ms. Sandrock for providing the materials for us to complete this project.

It has been a productive and meaningful school year for our class. Our students have shown growth in so many areas and we are extremely proud of all that they have accomplished.





## Ms. Marshall's Class!



The students in Ms. Marshall's class have been hard at work from late May into June, transforming our outdoor space. They've successfully leveled and replaced an old garden bed with a brand-new, three-tiered planter! We're excited to see it bloom with colorful flowers, crisp lettuce, and vibrant peppers in the coming weeks. We've also added a tree next to our benches to commemorate Arbor Day!

On June 6th, the class joined in the fun at the school's annual carnival. A huge thank you goes out to the teachers, administrators, and volunteers who made the day such a success—W84 had an amazing time! A highlight for many was the Kona Ice Truck, where students enjoyed customizing their own syrup flavors.

As the school year winds down, students are rehearsing for the upcoming talent show. Our class will be performing a lively rendition of *Ghostbusters*, featuring a student DJ, and a bell performance—it's sure to be a hit!

Finally, we want to extend heartfelt congratulations to our classmates Abdul and Azan, who will be graduating on June 18th. Their smiles and energy will be greatly missed at Westlake, and we wish them all the best on their next adventure.













**On June 3rd, a group of staff and students visited the BMW Car Club of America. Students got to ride in the cars around the track! Some staff even got to drive a car!**







# Celebrating Westlake Staff!



In June, Westlake staff had many reasons to celebrate each other. We have 3 special breakfasts over the last few weeks to show these staff members how important they are to everyone. We celebrated the retirement of Mr. Carten and Ms. Sandrock. They have played a very important role at Westlake and we are going to miss them!

We also celebrated Ms. Sara who will welcome a baby in the fall!





# HONORING OUR RETIREE!

MS. PHYLLIS SANDROCK

Thank you for 35 years of service!



# HONORING OUR RETIREE!

MR. BOB CARTEN

Thank you for 20 years of service!



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](mailto:opdsn@ucnj.org)

visit our website [www.ucnj.org/opdsn](http://www.ucnj.org/opdsn)

Or scan the QR Code!



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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](mailto:opdsn@ucnj.org)

vizite sit entènèt nou an: [www.ucnj.org/opdsn](http://www.ucnj.org/opdsn)

Oswa eskane kòd QR la!



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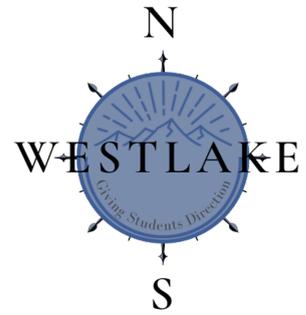


# Contact Us!

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

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

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



## INSTAGRAM!

Visit us!



**Robert Peneno**

Robert is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters



# Lamberts Mill Academy



## July 2025 Monthly Report

*"I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work the more of it I seem to have."*

– Coleman Cox

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## Administrators' Message

### July 2025

Good Morning LMA School Community,

As July unfolds, we hope you're all enjoying a wonderful summer filled with relaxation and quality time together. Here at Lamberts Mill Academy, it's been a vibrant month, particularly with our Extended School Year (ESY) program in full swing!



Our ESY program has been a tremendous success, providing an engaging and supportive environment for students to continue their learning journey. The progress we've seen is a testament to their hard work and the commitment of our dedicated LMA Staff.

Even during the summer months, our commitment to nurturing a positive school culture remains a top priority. We've seen incredible collaboration among students and staff in the ESY program, demonstrating respect, empathy, and enthusiasm for learning. These interactions reinforce the strong community spirit that defines Lamberts Mill Academy and lay the groundwork for an even

more connected and supportive school year ahead. It's truly heartwarming to see these values shine through.

The learning experiences this July have been rich and diverse. Beyond the structured lessons of ESY, we've also focused on providing opportunities for students to grow in various ways. Whether it's through hands on application in the LMA Garden, Peer-to-Peer tutoring with Westlake School, or continuation of group therapy settings, every day at LMA looks different!

As we look ahead to August, and the continuation of refining, planning and improving the start of the new school year, we're energized by the positive momentum from July. We wish you all continued joy and rest throughout the remainder of the summer.

Reed & John

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## Monthly Data

1. Enrollment - 43
  2. Acceptances - 3
  3. New Students - 1
  4. Intakes - 9
  5. Referrals - 10
  6. Disenrollments - 1
  7. Fire Drill - 7/9/2025
  8. Other Drill EM: (Lockdown) 7/14/2025
- 

## Upcoming Events

### August 2025 Important Dates

- August 1- School BBQ
- August 6- Creature Comfort Pet Therapy
- August 7- Trip to Tamaques Park
- August 8- Last day of ESY



## Staff Spotlight

### Ms. Oprah Dohman

Ms. Oprah has been working at LMA for 7 months. She started working here as an ESS substitute but liked it so much that she decided to join us full-time! She works as a TA in our WIN classroom.



One of the most rewarding experiences she's had here at LMA is getting to know each student on an individual level. She appreciates how each student is so very different and interesting in their own way. In her spare time she enjoys hiking and going out to eat.

---

## LMA Student of the Month - July 2025

### Briana B - July Student of the Month at LMA

We are proud to present Briana B as our student of the month for July 2025. Briana has recently fulfilled all of her graduation requirements, and has recently been accepted to Kean University. Briana is a very hardworking, dedicated and respectful young lady, and serves as a mentor to the LMA community. She is extremely talented in both art and musical creations.



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## LMA continues it's mentoring program

Mr. Soto, one of the LMA RBTs, has chosen 3 students to be mentors at the Sunshine Cafe. The Sunshine Cafe is student-run by Westlake School students. Mr. Soto selected Taylor, Briana and Emma for their strong desire to help others and their interest in gaining work experience. At the end of ESY, these students will receive a letter of service hours that they can utilize with job and college applications. LMA students support the Westlake Sunshine Cafe workers in the preparation of baked goods and beverages as well as the sale of these items to staff and students from both schools. LMA students support at the cash register, taking orders/customer service, following directions/instructions while baking items and creating hot and iced drinks!



We were able to interview one of the student mentors to hear about how it's going:

**Emma, how has your experience been mentoring students at the Sunshine Cafe?**

It has been very productive and I enjoy helping the kids, they're very sweet.

**Have you learned anything from this experience as we hit the halfway point of ESY?**

I've learned to have more patience. When supporting students who are learning something new for the first time I've noticed that it might take a few tries until they get it right so you must remain positive.

## What would you tell a classmate if they were considering volunteering as a mentor?

I would tell them it's a lot of work and you have to be committed to the experience but it's very rewarding. It makes you feel good about yourself.

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## July at The Mill

### Rizzo's Wildlife World

A handful of students were chosen to attend a presentation from a reptile specialist in the Westlake School gym. The Rizzo's Wildlife performers provided the students with an interactive, educational wildlife show!



### Tamaques Park Trip

LMA students brought tennis balls/rackets as well as basketballs to the park on July 17, for a fun filled morning. Students had a boys vs. girls basketball game and some students chose to go on a group walk. Students and staff practice their skills on the tennis courts before returning to LMA for lunch.



### School Barbecues

Staff members have taken turns barbecuing hot dogs and hamburgers for the students on Friday afternoons. So far Mr. Leibfried, Mr. Lopreiato and Mr. Flamini have taken turns being the unofficial "grill masters" of the summer.



### Creature Comfort Visit

We were lucky to have Josie the Golden Retriever visit us for pet therapy this month. The students took turns engaging with Josie throughout the morning. Pet therapy is a therapeutic approach that utilizes animals to enhance physical, emotional, and social well-being.





**Basketball at the park**



**Enjoying an iced drink from Sunshine Cafe**



**Giving Ice Cream Summer "Shout Outs"**



**Beginnings of our Zen Garden**



**Working on the garden**



**Soccer Game**



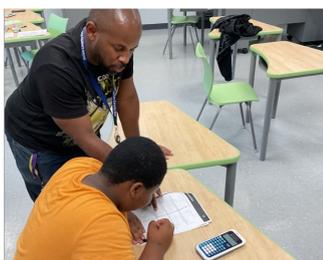
**Art Elective**



**Free Drawing**



**Home Run Derby**



**Mr. Murphy and a student working on math**



**Students preparing our garden**



**Playing with a therapy dog**

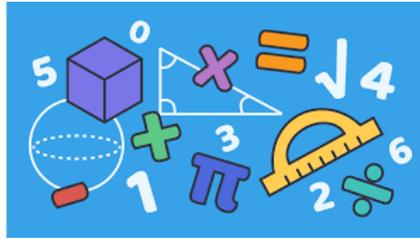
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## **Classroom Spotlights**



## Social Studies

In Social studies we have been learning about Geography as it relates to our ESY theme- Earth! Students have been learning about the history of the study, branches of geography as well as notable geographers! Each class has enjoyed our weekly "Geography Jeopardy" games as well as our CNN 10 current events activities!



## Mathematics

It has been a fun learning experience for our math students this summer. We have been focusing on improving fundamentals necessary for Algebra and Geometry. Students are encouraged to work at their own pace and lessons are group oriented with 1:1 instruction always provided, when needed. Math games are used to reinforce topics, such as the 24 game that strengthens the understanding of order of operations.



## ELA

The first week of ESY had the students creating "cros" that had "jibbitz" displaying their unique preferences and interests. We have also started reading the novel Treasure Island. The students have been captivated by the young Jim Hawkins who discovers a treasure map and embarks on a perilous voyage with pirates to find the buried treasure of Captain Flint.



## Physical Education

Students enjoyed staying physically active and healthy with our gym teachers. They were extremely competitive during basketball games and home-run derby.



## Careers

In Careers we have taken some interest assessments that are helping us learn about various career paths that we may be matched with. We have learned about a variety of "Cool Careers" in an attempt to expose students to various career opportunities! Students have learned about automation and robotics, drone pilots, and a plumber to name a few! We highlighted each career and provided information on what it takes to be successful in each



## Science

ESY students are viewing several different documentaries involving regenerative agriculture and sustainability efforts of countries around the world in an effort to combat greenhouse gas emissions and raise awareness. We are also excited to start constructing our Zen garden space and pond. We have begun clearing the way for our flower planter, which will be growing lavender, rosemary and lemon balm as

field! We have also watched “Dirty Jobs” to learn more about professions that make “civilized” life possible around the world. So far we have learned about sugar makers, sea lion rescuers, ostrich farmers and various careers at zoos and aquariums.

well as marigolds. Our pond will contain a solar fountain and water plants that will clean the water naturally. This is an ongoing effort and students have been involved in the entire process.

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## Supporting Students in 'Future Planning'

Over the course of the school year and ESY Program upperclassmen have been utilizing the Lamberts Mill Academy SAT practice workbooks and digital resources to help them prepare for taking the test this upcoming school year. Students have been advocating for themselves by seeking out staff support to help them answer various math questions correctly, and to better understand how they got a question incorrect. These students have also started researching various colleges and universities that have courses in the field of study that they'd like to major in.



Emma has advocated for herself extremely well and has consistently sought out support from our math teacher Mr. M. She continues to do research on what colleges have her preferred area of study and will be setting up visits to these schools in the upcoming months!

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## Clinical Corner

As we are half way through the summer and with the new school year on the horizon, it's important to consider these tips for the upcoming school year:



1. Develop a healthy sleep routine with school hours in mind. School aged children should receive 9-12 hours of sleep per night
2. Establish healthy eating habits. Incorporate more vegetables, protein, and fruits into your diet. Stay hydrated and limit your junk food intake.
3. Communicate appropriately with your family/friends or school staff about your thoughts on returning to school. Communicate openly and respectfully. Respect others' boundaries. Practice active listening.
4. Consider implementing healthy coping strategies to reduce any stress or anxieties about returning to school. For example, exercising, going for a walk, meditating, and participating in hobbies.

5. Start setting productive academic and personal goals. Break down large goals into smaller, more manageable tasks.
6. Set out SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).

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## Group Therapy

We kicked off our ESY program by introducing new students while welcoming back our existing students and encouraging new connections. Throughout our daily pull out groups students have been working on identifying their emotions and coping skills and practicing individual development. In addition, the students continue to participate in practicing appropriate social skills, recognizing social cues, processing their emotions, and setting boundaries with others.



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## Students Outside of the Classroom / Alumni

We are proud to shine a spotlight on Briana B, a talented student who has recently started an exciting journey in the world of barbering. Briana began working at a local barbershop two months ago and has been enjoying and excelling there. Some of her duties include, "cutting hair, doing braids, styling dreadlocks." Briana would like to continue this as a side job in the future. Briana is very happy to be working there and we are excited to see her continued success there.



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## Upcoming Community Events

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### Online Family Support Group

NAMI Middlesex County & IFSS Online Family Support Group  
August 28 @ 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm



<https://naminj.org/event/nami-middlesex-county-ifss-online-fsg/2025-08-28/>

### Anxiety/Mood Disorder Affinity Group

Free peer-led support group, navigating the ups and downs of anxiety and/or mood disorders.  
Hosted by Kim Bosse. Ages 18+.  
Last Monday of every month, 6:00pm-7:00pm.  
Location: Peace of Mind Yoga, Counseling, and Wellness Center.  
395 Springfield Avenue #Suite 1-5 Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922  
Register at this [link](#)



### Partnering with Your School: Collaborative Problem-Solving Family Engagement Edition



Are you a family member, educator, community-based organization, or youth passionate about fostering positive relationships and boosting student achievement? This is the webinar for you!

Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025.  
Time: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
Location: Virtual

### Intro to Free Flow Journal Writing

Join us for a one-hour virtual journaling workshop where we'll explore the art of free flow writing – a simple yet powerful practice that helps you connect with your thoughts, feelings, and creative self without judgment or overthinking.



Whether you're a seasoned journaler or just getting started, this workshop is for you.

Get tickets [here](#)

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[https://support.iocdf.org/event/clark-nj-ocd-walk/e673382?c\\_src=affiliate](https://support.iocdf.org/event/clark-nj-ocd-walk/e673382?c_src=affiliate)

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<https://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/find-programs-and-resources/parks-and-recreation/music-in-the-park>

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<https://naminj.org/>

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<https://988lifeline.org/>

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

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## School in the Community

1. Monthly Community Meetings celebrating student awards
  2. Field Trip to Tamaques Park
  3. LMA Recycling Initiative with Westfield Conservation Center
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## About Us

### **Contact Information:**

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

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

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





## LMA Smore

LMA is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

