

ESC CONNECTION



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As we continue through this school year, I keep coming back to the LEGO theme that has guided us from the very beginning: every piece matters. Each of us brings unique strengths, perspectives, and talents that help build something stronger for our students, staff, and schools.

As we reflect on our STAR values, the "A" for Attitude reminds us how much our mindset shapes the work we do each day. Challenges will always be part of our journey, but a positive attitude helps us face them with resilience, teamwork, and purpose. It allows us to support one another, focus on solutions, and continue moving forward together.

Just like LEGO pieces connect to create something meaningful, our attitudes influence the culture we build across our ESC. When we lead with positivity and purpose, we strengthen not only our teams but the impact we make in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for continuing to bring your best each day. Together, we are building something extraordinary.

-Mary Mitchell

YouUplift Kindness Wall

Remember to share to the Kindness Wall!

This space allows us to submit short shout-outs recognizing coworkers for teamwork, going above and beyond, or simple acts of kindness.

View the wall or submit a message:

<https://youuplift.com/madison-champaign-esc-kindness-wall/>

Thank you for helping make our workplace a place where kindness is seen, shared, and celebrated.



Senior Spotlight

If you have a graduating senior - high school or college - in your life, please send in their picture, and share a little about them and their plans for the future to [Ashley Carey](#). We will then showcase them on the ESC's Social media platforms.

This includes students we have graduating this year! If we are allowed to post their image, please send their information!!!

Please have these to Ashley by May 1.



The Tallest Oak Tree Award

Congratulations to Champaign County's Parent Mentor, Jacqueline Howley. At the Parent Mentor Spring Conference, Jacqueline was presented with a certificate for being "The Tallest Oak Tree"- the wisest and most experienced Parent Mentor. We are so honored to work with Jacqueline as she supports our local students and families. She is a great mentor to others. She is the perfect fit for her role, and we are happy that she also has the respect of her colleagues.



Congratulations

Learning for Life:

Inside Our Life Skills Lab

Exciting things are happening in the Life Skills Lab! This dynamic program provides students with meaningful, hands-on opportunities to build the skills they need for everyday life, independence, and future success.

The Life Skills Lab is operated through the Educational Service Center and serves students from six classrooms across four different school districts. Students travel to the ESC building once or twice each month to participate in engaging, real-world learning experiences in a collaborative and supportive environment.

Throughout the year, students have explored a wide range of practical and engaging themes designed to connect learning to real-life situations:

- All Things Grocery – creating shopping lists, practicing shopping, and working in roles such as cashier, bagger, and stocker
- Food Trucks and Restaurants – ordering meals, paying bills, and taking on roles like host/hostess, server, busser and cashier
- Cleaning and Laundry – washing windows, cleaning floors, and using tools such as a shop vacuum, also sorting, washing and folding laundry
- Holiday Giving Projects – making Christmas gifts, designing wrapping paper, and creating cards for family and residents at Vancrest Health Care Center
- Sewing Skills – learning hand sewing, making small stuffed items, and sewing on buttons
- Handyman and Tools – safely using tools like screwdrivers, hammers, and drills while assembling tool kits, PVC projects, and simple circuit boards
- Nutrition and Fitness – preparing fruits and vegetables, cooking simple recipes, and exploring healthy choices
- Home Safety and First Aid – learning about smoke detectors, safety plans, when to seek medical care and what type of care (911/ER/Urgent care/doctor), and practicing basic first aid
- Gardening and Planting – planting vegetables to monitor growth and planting a flower bulb for gifts for Mother's Day
- Disability Awareness – learning about tools and supports individuals with disabilities may use
- Outdoor Recreation and Leisure – planning and enjoying activities such as picnics and outdoor games, setting up a pop up tent and a camping tent

In addition to themed activities, many classrooms incorporate cooking into their visits. Students take on important responsibilities such as setting the table, preparing food, washing dishes, doing laundry, sweeping, and vacuuming. These repeated routines help reinforce independence, responsibility, and pride in their work. They have also made decorations and other cards for Vancrest Health Care Center residents to enjoy!

Beyond daily living skills, the Life Skills Lab also supports communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Students practice working together, following directions, and building confidence as they complete tasks and try new experiences.

The Life Skills Lab is more than just a classroom – it is a place where students gain essential life skills, build confidence, and celebrate success. We are proud of the growth our students demonstrate each day and the collaboration that makes this program such a valuable experience for all involved.

Supporting Student Transitions Through Occupational Therapy Partnerships

Our Occupational Therapy team is excited to share the success of a new partnership supporting transition students as they begin navigating real-world work tasks at our local hospital. This collaboration provides students with meaningful, hands-on opportunities to build skills, confidence, and independence in a professional environment.

To ensure students are set up for success, our team has implemented a variety of targeted supports. Students and staff have been introduced to strengthening activities designed to improve endurance, coordination, and overall work performance. In addition, we developed work simulation tasks that mirror the demands students encounter on-site, allowing them to practice and refine skills in a structured and supportive setting.

Equally important, we have provided staff education to promote understanding of each student's unique needs and strategies for success. Visual supports and task-specific supplies were also created and distributed to enhance consistency, independence, and ease of task completion throughout the workday.

This partnership reflects our commitment to empowering students during this important transition period. By combining therapeutic expertise with real-world experiences, we are helping students build the skills they need to thrive in the workplace and beyond.

Happenings at the ESC

Yoder Learning Center has been filled with exciting momentum as they continue working toward the goal of building an adaptive playground for our students. Thanks to the incredible support from the community and district partners, they have hosted several successful fundraising events, including a fun-filled bowling night, a well-attended Breakfast with the Easter Bunny, and a Little Caesars fundraiser. In addition to these efforts, they have been fortunate to receive generous donations and are actively pursuing grant opportunities to help bring this vision to life. We are so grateful for the ongoing support and look forward to continuing this journey together to create a safe, inclusive outdoor space for all of our students



Matt Harper and Chasity Gregork have been creating some fun gym activities for the students and staff at Yoder!



Happenings at the ESC continued...

Students in Mrs. Ferryman's class were visited by Fire Marshal Jones of the Urbana Fire Department, while at the Life Skills lab. He talked about fire safety and allowed students to practice using a fire extinguisher. Students participated in a safety scavenger hunt - finding and discussing safety items in the building.



Mrs. Mounce's class from Urbana High School celebrated a birthday and made dirt pudding.



Happenings at the ESC continued...

Students from Urbana High School completed nutrition projects and shared their presentations.



Holly Kramer is our gifted intervention specialist who supports students at Graham, Mechanicsburg, and West Liberty-Salem. Fifth grade students at Mechanicsburg made their own paper while learning about the pros and cons of technology.



WHO'S WHO AT THE ESC

Main Office: 937-484-1557 Fax: 937-652-2221

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent	Ashley Carey	ext.111
Change of Address	Kristie Suchland	ext.119
City Taxes	Kristie Suchland	ext.119
Contract Questions	Matthew Ketcham	ext.103
Employment Verification	Kristie Suchland	ext.119
Front Desk Administrative Assistant	Sonia Hackathorne	ext.100
Home School	Sonia Hackathorne	ext.100
Human Resources	Sheila Roberts	ext.105
Insurance	Kristie Suchland	ext.119
Licensure	Teresa Barr	ext.110
LPDC	Mary Mitchell	ext.101
Operations	Don Burley	ext. 115
Payroll	Kristie Suchland	ext.119
Personal, Sick & Vacation Days	Kristie Suchland	ext.119
Job Openings	Ashley Carey	ext.111
Personnel Questions	Ashley Carey	ext.111
Professional Development	Melissa Scoville	ext.106
Purchase Orders	Teresa Barr	ext.110
Purchasing	Matthew Ketcham	ext.103
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Web Check (BCI & FBI)	Sonia Hackathorne	ext.100

