



GEAUGA COUNTY ESC

HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER 2017



Message from the Superintendent

Dear GCESC Staff and Schools,

I wanted to take the time to wish all of you a very happy and healthy holiday season. As we enter 2018, I have been reflecting upon the past year and a half in my position as county superintendent. Each month in my position I have watched our staff grow and become stronger for our students, schools, and communities in Geauga County. I am very proud to be a part of this county and have appreciated the support and dedication our staff and schools have for our programs and services.

Our Governing Board, school superintendents and treasurers have offered encouragement and advisement to assist in strengthening our organization. As we have put forth a plan for reorganizing and assessing our strengths and areas of improvement, many decisions have had to be made. Some decisions obviously more difficult than others but overall I feel we have become an organization that can meet the educational needs of our students as a cohesive team with our schools. This only happens because we have built strong relationships and have on-going communication with our schools and families. These two elements are essential to our student's success. I look forward to 2018 as a year filled with opportunities, essential change, and challenges I know we will tackle and problem solve for positive outcomes.

I encourage all of you to spend quality time with family and friends during this holiday season and most definitely take time for yourselves. I appreciate everything you do for our students, families, and communities in Geauga County.

Happy Holidays and I wish you the best 2018 ever!

Jennifer Felker
County Superintendent



Congratulations to our Board Members

Geauga County ESC Board Members received awards at the Ohio School Boards Association Conference in October, 2017 in Columbus.

They both received service awards for 20 and 30 years of service in Geauga County.

Mrs. Janice Koster received the "Distinguished Service Award" for 20 years of board service in Geauga County. Mr. Kenneth Burnett received the "Special Distinguished Service Award" for 30 years of board service in Geauga County.





Carrington School Program ~ Michael Abraham

As part of the Carrington School's focus on Northeast Ohio natural resources, residential program students had the opportunity to participate in field trips to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History as well as multiple field trips to Cleveland Metroparks and Blue Hen Falls in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Many of our students have not had the opportunities to experience the outdoors. At the Cleveland Museum of Natural History the students showed particu-



lar interest in the moon rock display and the outside live animal exhibit, with its walkways and Ohio wild animals such as foxes.

Students hiked approximately eight miles to see the Blue Hen Falls, walking part of the way in the creek bed. Another trip particularly enjoyed by students was to go running along a Cleveland Metroparks trail.



Students use Chromebooks to access GoogleDocs for writing assignments and to use Edmentum Courseware for on-line curriculum and assessments.



Job Training West

Jaina Gandolfi , Director

The Job Training West Program is off to a great start! Thank you to all our dedicated staff and districts (Kenston, West Geauga, Newbury, and Chagrin Falls) for our students and your commitment.

A special thank you to all of our employers including our newest partners Bed, Bath, & Beyond in Solon and The Lantern of Chagrin Valley in Chagrin Falls, for welcoming our students into your facilities and giving them hands on work experience . Your dedication to our students and the program is appreciated.

During the month of October, the students enjoyed selling fundraiser tickets not only to their family and friends, but to community members as well!



Thank you for your support.

Job Training East



Great things are happening in the Jobs Training Program East! On behalf of the staff and students, we would like to express our gratitude for the ongoing community support! Beginning January 2018, we are excited to announce two new worksites, CVS in Chardon and Heather Hill Nursing home. These work sites will provide our students important opportunities for developing the skills needed when working with the public, not to mention the intrinsic value of working with our aging population. We would also like to recognize the hard work and dedication that all of our students continue to show this year. In particular, our very own student Marah Durman was asked by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), a work site she attends, to explain why she enjoyed volunteering.

From all of us to yours, have a wonderful and safe holiday season !



Experience From The Field

What have been your three Favorite experiences during your job training?

"I'm Max Loucas from West Geauga High School. This is my first time doing the program. My three favorite experiences during my job training are organizing shelves of food from Heinen's, sanitizing and unloading dishes at University Hospitals in Geauga County. I also enjoy Rescue Village where I make a new motto for the black board, take donations to the donation room, fold and put away laundry, take litter boxes to cat box closet, put away cat bowls, dog bowls, put cat toys on the left side and dog toys on the right."



What have been your three biggest challenges?

"My biggest challenge is being around smells I dislike from Heinen's and Rescue Village. Another big challenge was everything new to me that I did not understand because I was lost of what my job coaches were trying to tell me which really confused me. The last big challenge was the barn at Rescue Village which was scary and I was around noisy chickens, roosters, pigs, and barking dogs inside the building."



Geauga Preschool ~ Alanna Hruska



As the snowflakes start to fall, the Geauga County Educational Service Center Preschool Program is bundling up for a season filled with laughter, learning through play, exploring out in the cold, learning about winter and all the wonders it brings, and so much more!



We are preparing to roll out the enrollment process for the 2018-2019 school year in a few months. The center-based and itinerant enrollment packets are in the process of being revamped and updated. These new enrollment packets will be shared with staff and local districts once they are completed. The ESC Preschool Program would like to recruit the assistance of the local school districts to help spread the word of 2018-2019 enrollment so we can fill our classrooms next year with role models. If you have any questions or suggestions for next school year, please do not hesitate to contact Alanna Hruska at 440.729.0137 or at alanna.hruska@geaugaesc.org.



The Geauga County Educational Service Center Preschool Program would like to recognize the Geauga County United Way. The Geauga County United Way awarded the ESC Preschool with a grant this school year that covered the tuition for eleven (11) preschool students! The staff, parents, and students truly appreciate the generosity of the Geauga United Way.



Thank you, Geauga County United Way! You have made a positive impact in the lives of many preschool students and families!

Carol Colombo, the Music Therapist from the Metzenbaum Center, is working with our preschool students to create winter musical programs for families. These fun-filled programs will be conducted during the school day. If you are interested in attending, please contact one of our friendly preschool teachers or you can contact Alanna Hruska for the information.





Geauga Youth Center School ~ Donna Cook

Once again the students of the GYC School showcased their imagination and creativity during the Burton Public Library Gingerbread contest. This year's students worked hard to defend the title of first place in the teen category won by last year's GYC students. They worked collaboratively from concept through to construction, having some holiday fun along the way. They chose a more traditional theme this year; highlighting a nativity scene in the yard of a simple white church. Pretzel rods were transformed into a stable complete with three sheep, a donkey and a camel. Dyed shredded coconut provided the hay for the animals and lined the graham cracker manger where baby Jesus lay. After the Thanksgiving holiday the students were notified that their entry won second place in their category. They plan on having an ice cream party with the \$25. Walmart gift card they received.



Gaitway ~ Phil Hatton



Gaitway High School has been a busy place this fall. We had a guest speaker from Bainbridge Police Department speak to our students about different issues that the police see with teenagers. Patrolman DeSanto talked about the dangers of sexting, inappropriate uses of social media, bullying and other teen issues. We also had the UROK presentation from LifeAct that addressed teen depression and suicide.

In Equine Science, students have had the opportunity to work and learn alongside Fieldstone Staff as they help Equine Partnership, a group of veterans who work on horsemanship skills weekly.

Our **Students of The Month** are Will G. for September, William J. for October and Jeremyiah C. for November. They earn this recognition by being "On Par" the most consistently for the month. We also recognized Eric W., MacKenzy S., and Will G. for their consistent attendance. These three students attended the highest percentage of minutes available to them for the first semester.

We are especially excited to have received the **Gold Award for PBIS Implementation** from the Ohio PBIS Network. Mr. Hatton was privileged to attend the PBIS Showcase to receive the award on behalf of the staff and students of Gaitway and the Geauga County ESC. Gaitway students also won the first PAR Game which was "2.4 for 4.5". The object was for the entire student body to average a 2.4 behavior rating for 4.5 days. Their prize for winning was a movie/activity/snack time for an afternoon. Our next schoolwide PAR game will take place after the holidays.

Gaitway Senior Sarah Spector was recognized at the annual dinner of the Geauga County Soil and Water Conservation District on Thursday, November 2, 2017. At the end of last school year, Sarah submitted a poster on the topic Healthy Soils are Full of Life. Sarah won first place on both the local and state levels in the 11th and 12th grade division. Her poster, which stressed the importance of healthy soils, was creatively done on cork sub-flooring that she recycled and painted. Her poster is currently on display in Columbus.

Sarah researched the materials in English and Environmental Science class. Her creative abilities have found expression in paintings that can be seen throughout the Gaitway building and even in a local business! Congratulations, Sarah!

We had a wonderful Thanksgiving Feast on November 21st. Heinen's donated two turkeys while students and staff brought many delicious side dishes and desserts. After dinner, we all shared the things we were thankful for.

We are very excited to welcome Melissa Barnhill as our new Job Training Coordinator! Melissa has been on the job since late September and has been working very hard to get up to speed with everything that she has to do. She has a background in Art and is an Intervention Specialist who has a wide variety of experiences in education. Ms. Barnhill has introduced several hands on activities that both students and staff have enjoyed. Although Mr. Kennedy and Mrs. Terrill did a wonderful job with keeping the job training component going, we are all glad to have Ms. Barnhill onboard.



Happy Holidays everyone!





STARS ~ Dana Eggers



'Tis the season to be thankful, and we have many things to be thankful for! Thank you to our Geauga Districts who choose to host our STARS classrooms! Cardinal, West Geauga and Kenston we are so appreciative of your staff. Our students benefit daily from the inclusion opportunities and from our continued collaboration. A specific Thank You to the students in all of your buildings. They are amazing role models and teach our students more than they realize!



Thank you STARS students and families. We love and admire each of you and have the utmost respect for ALL of you!

Thank you STARS staff. There are not enough kind words that could ever truly describe what you mean to our students. Your devotion and love for students and families is apparent in every interaction from the moment a student arrives on his/her first day of school and lasts forever. Thank you for your patience and your hard work each day!



Here are some communication holiday tips if you find yourself lucky enough to celebrate the season with an individual on the spectrum.

1. Be clear and direct in your communication.
2. If asking questions, allow processing time before repeating your question.
3. Refrain from using sarcasm or jokes.
4. Most importantly, don't hesitate to engage in a conversation. I have no doubt, you will learn something.



STARS staff wish you the merriest holiday and an amazing New Year!

ACHIEVE ~ Robin Ludwig

There has been so much happening in the ACHIEVE classes since our last newsletter. It has been so exciting to see our students growing in so many different ways. Many of our classrooms had gatherings for Thanksgiving. Having families of students and staff together to celebrate was heart-warming. The students love showing their loved ones all of the things they do at school. Most recently our students have been participating in the holiday shows and concerts in the school buildings. It is always great to see our ACHIEVE students taking part in these building wide events. During this holiday season we wish you and your loved ones joy, peace, and happiness and know that we are truly thankful for all of your support! We will wrap up 2017 and head into an exciting new year as we welcome 2018!



Happy Holidays From Geauga ACHIEVE!





Lindsay Watson, Physical Therapist Receives \$25,000 Grant

The Geauga County ESC is very excited to share information from our Physical Therapist, Lindsay Watson. Mrs. Watson has long believed that the physical therapy delivery of service could and should be streamlined in order to maintain value in the current healthcare market. Mrs. Watson has a strong belief that children undoubtedly benefit from the therapy they receive, and technology can be used help this vital service reach more and more children. Her goal is to cast a wider net for therapy that more people can afford and from which more people can benefit. From her perspective, telerehabilitation services is the only way to



achieve these objectives for hospitals, clinics, and schools. Mrs. Watson has stepped up within the field of Physical Therapy and is working to develop just this technology. She has recently received a \$25,000 grant for Augment Therapy which is a telemedicine solution for pediatric physical therapy that includes automated data collection for therapists while engaging pediatric patients through augmented-reality based exercise. The software can be used in both the clinical and home setting to support and augment the performance of therapeutic pediatric exercise. Children interact with digital content on the screen in front of them while simultaneous data collection takes place and is stored and forwarded to their corresponding therapist. Augment Therapy has recently completed their proof of

concept and will use the funding to secure intellectual property and further develop the pilot version of the software. Thank you Mrs. Watson for your dedication to your profession and students, and for sharing your talents with us at the Geauga County ESC!



Holiday Staff Social ~ 2017



Happy Holidays!