



# GEAUGA COUNTY ESC HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

I wanted to take the time to thank all of our staff for their hard work and dedication to the students in Geauga County and beyond. Over the past four months, I have appreciated learning about our schools, programs, and services. The staff has been so supportive during my transition, as well as our school districts in Geauga County. I am looking forward to continuing to visit all programs and schools the first of the year. Please have a wonderful holiday season and enjoy time with your families.

Jennifer Felker, Superintendent



Front row L to R: Dana Eggers, Steve Young, Frank Scarano, Michael Abraham, Tina DeMattia. Back row L to R: Brenda Harriss, Crystal King-Morrison, Sharon Knotek, Robin Ludwig, Lindsay Baar, Jaina Gandolfi, Jennifer Felker, Suzanne Allen, Shelby Kaminski, Donna Zoldak-Cook, Sue Sotkovsky, Tammy Kuhn, Cathy Manning.

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE GEAUGA COUNTY ESC

### Geauga Preschool—Shelby Kaminski

Geauga ESC Preschool students continue to engage in fun and age-appropriate activities. They have been making works of art, interacting with other students and adults, and learning important safety information from local fire departments. New opportunities have been offered for students and their families. In October, we hosted our first Friday Preschool Playgroup which was open to any student enrolled in our program.

These playgroups will continue to be offered monthly and will focus on building specific skills including social skills development and language. Parents have also been offered numerous parent information sessions including topics such as potty-training, kindergarten transition, and many other developmental skills.



## Geauga Youth Center ~ Donna Zoldak-Cook

The Group Home Students entered into the Gingerbread House contest at the Burton Public Library.

**WE WON FIRST PRIZE IN OUR DIVISION!!**



## Geauga Academy @ Auburn Career Center ~ Donna Zoldak-Cook

Geauga Academy hosted students and parents on November 16, 2016 for student-led conferences. This year's students had much to share with their parents about what they have been learning. Students gained practical experience in regards to speaking on their own behalf when they shared items they had chosen to be a part of their portfolio. They also problem solved with teachers and their parents to correct bad habits so they could increase their success. We were extremely pleased with our 91% turn out for the evening.



Carly Pamoncitt working on the power point presentation for Student Led Conference Night



## Vocational Consortium Jaina Gandolfi, Vocational Director

On Friday, November 18, 2016 Geauga County ESC Vocational Consortium hosted its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Career Day at Gaitway High School located at Fieldstone Farms Therapeutic Riding Center. Career Day is a unique opportunity for students with disabilities to ask questions about many careers in the comfort of a familiar environment.

We had two Key Note Speakers from CVS Corporate as well as Fowlers Mill Golf Course. They presented to the students on appropriate employability and soft skills in the workplace.

Often at Career Fairs, students do mock interviews for experience, as if they were interviewing for a position. At this event, the students conducted information interviews to the employers. Each student interviewed at least 2-3 employers and gained information about multiple careers.

The students asked questions about entry level positions, education needed, whether the field was growing, and what "people skills" were needed. The students did a great job engaging with the employers and completing their interviews.

A wide range of careers were represented by the employers. Thank you to all of our community employers who volunteered their time to support our student programs!



## From the Social Work department

Holiday greetings to the Geauga County community. With the holiday season approaching, it is fun to engage with family, friends, and traditions that are dear to our hearts. Picking up your cell phones to order that last minute gift on Amazon and finding that last minute cookie recipe on Pinterest are benefits of modern day technology. As wonderful as these technologies are, we need to make a special effort to set them aside and be in the moment to witness our children's' smiles and experience their joy. Put down your phone, close your laptop and create some new traditions with your family and friends. Your children would love to hear favorite stories from your childhood. Remember to include your children into the discussion of finding new ways in celebrating this holiday season!

## Happy Holidays from the S.T.A.R.S. Autism Program—Dana Eggers

We are excited to report many success stories so far this school year:

Unique Learning Curriculum (purchased through our fundraiser) is being utilized in all STARS classrooms. All students are actively gaining content knowledge through provided modifications and accommodations.

Nineteen students participate in general education specials and 6 students attend inclusion classes for one or more academic courses.



Our high school students are working at MSI Industries and successfully exploring vocational job sites via community outings/events.

One of our high school students had a small role in the school play!

Students are building awareness of technology and increasing leisure skills through iPod Touches, iPads, and display boards (all purchased via fundraiser).

We are excited for all of our student accomplishments. We are grateful for the positive relationships we have built with building staff and the positive impact that these relationships have had not only on STARS students, but on all students in the inclusive environments.

Our students are currently fulfilling Holiday Boutique orders. Thank you to those who supported our program through this fundraiser. Your tasty treats and gifts will be delivered shortly.



Mark your calendar: Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> for our Annual Fund-raiser Luncheon Event at Fowler's Mill Golf Course. Tickets will go on sale in March. We look forward to seeing you there!

Happy Holidays!



**iSTEM Early College High School** is continuing to reach out to the community and businesses to connect the school's learning environment to the real world. Leadership Geauga Class of 2016-17 visited the school recently as well as Ohio Senator John Eklund. Sifco Applied Service Concepts' management team spent the morning of December 7, 2016 discussing with **Tamee Tucker, Chief Academic Officer**, Amanda Lowe, Engagement/Marketing consultant and Suzanne Allen, GCESC, how they could work with the school to integrate informational sessions and design challenges. The first order of business with Sifco will be activating a robotic arm which was donated to iSTEM.



Sifco engineers will work with the students in the use and application of this technology. Mock interview day was a success thanks to all those companies assisting: *Kennametal, the Cleveland Clinic, Gold Key Processing Inc. a HEX-POL Company, Lake County Sheriff, Leadership Lake County, Progressive, CVS Health, Cometic Gasket Inc., Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel, Forbes House, and the Marous Brothers.*



*the Marous Brothers.*



## Season's Greetings from Geauga Achieve—Robin Ludwig

It has been a wonderful first half of the school year, and the support for our students and classrooms throughout the districts has been amazing! We have welcomed new friends, both staff and students, joined new buildings, and worked hard to learn



new skills. This is such a fun time of year in the schools with the holiday shops, special musical programs, and holiday meals. Our students and staff of Geauga Achieve are excited to be a part of these seasonal experiences. At the same time we are working with our students to prepare for the break from school. Although these are fun

Happy Holidays!

times, they also present challenges for our students who thrive on structure, routine, and predictability. Learning coping strategies to handle change is part of what we work on every day. It is our hope from Geauga Achieve that staff and students alike are able to experience a joyful holiday season with family and friends.

From our Geauga Achieve family to yours, Happy Holidays! We will see you soon for another amazing year!

## Gaitway High School—Lindsay Baar



Currently, Gaitway High School is servicing students from 13 different school districts within Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga and Summit Counties. During this first semester we have seen a tremendous amount of growth from all of the students. At semester break three students will either be fully graduating or transitioning back to their home school full time because of their personal successes. Throughout this semester the student body has had presentations from the Bainbridge Police Department, The Geauga County Sheriff Department and participated in the Geauga County ESC Job Fair and See Something / Say Something Week hosted by the Sandy Hook Promise. Our students continue their volunteer work in the community and at Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center. Currently, 10 of our students are volunteering weekly at Fieldstone Farm TRC. Our student council has organized events during the school day and have taken it upon themselves to research different fundraising opportunities that would benefit the entire school. The buzz word for student council right now is “positivity”. They have created positive punch cards for all students. Students receive punches on their card if they are caught going above and beyond. Once the punch cards are filled the student receives a prize. Our Project Based Learning Wednesdays have been ongoing as well. Some of the projects have been based around the election, games through the ages and planning a trip. After the holidays, our core academic classes will change to Math and English. Students in the vocational program will continue with the same schedule. January and February is already starting to fill up with presenters scheduled from Women Safe and the OSU Extension Branch. Gaitway continues to “think outside the box” as we engage and push our students to reach their academic and behavioral goals throughout the school year.



## Carrington School in East Cleveland - Michael Abraham



The Social Studies residential students will be going on a field trip to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame’s educational program on modern culture. Female students are scheduled to go on the field trip on December 5th and male students are scheduled to go on the field trip on December 12. The program is titled “The Message: The History of Hip-Hop Culture.”



The English Language Arts classes have been working on developing their own reader’s theater pieces from Langston Hughes’ poem “The Weary Blues.” Students created and performed their reader’s theater script, using drums, keyboard, reading, singing and figuring out how to incorporate a call-and-response pattern into their interpretation. This was done in the newly completed music room, a small stage space complete with stage, microphone, keyboard, drums, etc.



Math classes continue with a weekly unit on Financial Literacy that is done collaboratively with Social Studies, in addition to using the Hands-On Equations manipulative system for pre-algebra students and for foundational work for other students.

Science classes have a number of interesting side experiments going on, such as mason jars with different liquids and eggs floating in them, to see how the eggs and their shells react to different liquids.

Geauga County Spelling Bee will be held on **Tuesday, February 7, 2017** at

Geauga County Offices – Building 8,  
470 Center Street, Chardon, OH 44024.

The competition begins at 7:00 pm.



## Geauga County Parent Mentor ~ Jennifer Cooper

I would like to wish everyone a festive Holiday and a Happy New Year. This time of year is always magical with a special needs child. My 18 year old son still believes in Santa and wants to “jam” the Christmas carols (over and over...for those of us that have compulsive special needs children). Watching my child always reminds me how special being a Parent Mentor is. It’s hard to believe my first year working for the ESC and helping families navigate the special education process is nearing an end. Looking back, I can sum up the 2016 year in 5 sentences.

1. It was an honor working with parents and their student(s).
2. I enjoyed working with District and ESC Special Education Directors.
3. The fun never ended meeting special adults and children that enrich our lives.
4. It has been a privilege working with our community partners and sharing Geauga County resources.
5. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue professional development by attending a multitude of educational seminars.



I am excited to ring in the New Year as the Parent Mentor. First, I will continue to help families with their child's educational concerns. Second, I will be teaming up with the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities to bring educational programs to parents, caretakers, and professionals. **Warm Holiday Wishes!**

### Winter Health

- If your child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops or petrolatum may help keep nasal tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your pediatrician.
- Many pediatricians feel that bathing two or three times a week is enough for an infant's first year. More frequent baths may dry out the skin, especially during the winter.
- Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of his/her elbow may help reduce the spread of colds and flu.
- Children 6 months of age and up should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu. It is not too late to get the vaccine! Around 80% of all influenza illness generally occurs in January, February, and March.

With our busy schedules and running around this time of year I wanted to share a healthy recipe that I found helpful to keep your energy up while you're on the go! Hope you enjoy!!

#### NO BAKE ENERGY BITES:

1 cup oats

½ cup ground flaxseed

½ cup natural peanut butter

1/3 cup honey

1 tsp vanilla

½ cup mini chocolate chips

\*Mix all ingredients together and roll into ½ inches balls

**Wishing you all a wonderful and safe holiday season!! ~ Nurse Jennifer Klock**



The Felker Triplets



## Resident Educator Support Sessions ~ Brenda Harriss

**Newbury Local School District  
Between 7:30-9:30 am Thursdays**

January 12      January 26      February 2      *May 4 ALL Celebration*

**Berkshire Local School District Jr/Sr High School (staff lounge)      Between 2:00-4:00 Thursdays**

January 12      *May 4 ALL Celebration*

**Burton Elementary School  
Between 2:30-4:30 Thursdays**

January 19      February 9      *May 11 All Celebration*

**Ledgemont Elementary  
Between 2:30-4:30 Thursdays**

January 26      *May 18 Celebration*

**Geauga County Educational Service Center  
Between 3:00-5:00 Wednesdays**

January 11      January 25      February 1      *May 3 Celebration*

*All Resident Educators are invited to attend any of these sessions as a means of support as you move through your Resident Educator Program. Come join in networking, use this time as your collaboration work time, and receive support and resources. These are open sessions - drop in at the time that works within your schedule!*

### **Graduate Studies/Professional Development Opportunities Dr. Stephen Young, Geauga County ESC Higher Education Liaison**

The Geauga-Lake-Auburn CC Collaborative (GLA) school districts can be involved in three primary types of professional development. One type is the **Lake Erie College/GLA Wrap-Around Course Program**. The courses and independent study projects in this program are basically “wrapped around” or customized according to the day-to-day professional tasks of GLA educators. Courses (and independent study projects), usually ranging from one to three graduate semester hours of credit, are created for on-the-job experiences such as professional learning communities, book studies, curriculum development, lesson planning, student learning objectives development, etc. Currently this Fall semester, there are 25 courses representing more than 40 semester hours of graduate credit in operation.

The second source of professional development for GLA districts involves participation in the programs planned by the **GLA Collaborative CORE Committee** chaired by Dr. Tony Podojil. The Committee’s current areas of emphasis include: Learning and the Brain; discussions related to the State Report Cards; and Lake/Geauga Educator Think Tanks for Mathematics and Social Studies.

The third type of professional development involves enrollment in a **graduate-level college or university-level licensure or endorsement cohort program**. GLA educators have completed locally-based (courses conducted at Lake/Geauga sites) licensure/endorsement curricula in the areas of:

- Superintendent licensure
- Building Principal licensure
- Teacher Leader Endorsement
- Masters Degree in Education Administration