



GEAUGA COUNTY ESC 2017 SPRING NEWSLETTER



Geauga Achieve ~ Robin Ludwig

A huge thank you to all of our districts, parents, and friends who supported the March 11th Geauga Achieve fundraiser!

The enthusiasm shown for our students was remarkable with 300 people in attendance!

There was something for everyone from the balloon pops and auction baskets all the way to the highlight of the evening, the jersey auction featuring our very own students.

This event helps to support the wonderful things that are happening each and every day in our classrooms as our students grow academically and socially in ways that are beyond imaginable.

Thank you for joining us on this journey with our students in Geauga Achieve!



Geauga Achieve student Kelly being escorted by her brother for the jersey auction.

EDUCATOR LICENSE RENEWAL

If your license is expiring on June 30th, make sure you are taking all the needed steps to get it renewed in a timely manner.

Meet & Greet

The 2nd Community Forum hosted by Geauga County Superintendent, Jennifer Felker and Cardinal Local Schools. The “Program and Services Update” will take place Wednesday, May 3, 2017, 4:00—6:00 p.m. at Cardinal High School, 14785 Thompson Ave., Middlefield. Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP by April 27th to tammy.kuhn@geaugaesc.org

Carrington School Program ~ Michael Abraham

The Carrington School benefited from a generous donation of classroom supplies with a focus on science materials and classroom literature. Students participated in hands-on science activities related to Chemistry by making ice cream in class as well as building simple Rube Goldberg-type machines to demonstrate energy transfer.



Math and Social Studies classes continued their joint weekly exploration of financial literacy. In addition, the English Language Arts and Social Studies teacher completed a joint teaching project related to the Holocaust. Students created a timeline of events leading up to WWII and the events during the war and read the memoir “Night” by Elie Wiesel describing his experiences in a concentration camp.



Happy Retirement Wishes to:

- Suzanne Allen
- Cathy Manning
- Frank Scarano

Preschool ~ Shelby Kaminski

The Geauga ESC Preschool is currently enrolling students for the 2017-2018 school year. All of our locations have been rated by Step Up To Quality which is Ohio's tiered quality rating and improvement system. Our preschool programs have earned the highest possible rating of five stars. Interested families can learn more and obtain enrollment information by visiting the ESC website or by calling (440)-729-0137.



**Quality education
is worth more than gold.**

Our parent presentation series was a success. These informative sessions were held throughout the school year and provided parents with the opportunity to learn more about child development and interact with preschool staff. Our preschool playgroups



were also well attended. These groups allowed children to interact with peers and practice social skills.

As the season changes, children will begin to learn about spring related topics including lifecycles of plants and animals. If you would like to learn more about how our students grow and bloom, visit our

Facebook page (Gauga Preschool) to see pictures and learn exciting details about our classrooms.



Staff must follow preschool licensing guidelines established by the ODE. Each special education preschool classroom is able to provide services to children utilizing a 1:6 staff to student ratio. In addition to maintaining ratio at all times, preschool staff must complete online training modules related to child development, licensing rules, and the quality rating system. Preschool teachers utilize the Early Learning Assessment (ELA) to determine a child's readiness for kindergarten. This assessment is part of Ohio's Ready for Kindergarten Assessment System. The window for this assessment closes May 14th.



Parent Mentor ~ Jennifer Cooper

Spring is such an inspirational time of year. The warm weather, flowers in bloom, and the thought of graduation around the corner. Most individuals look forward to graduation with such pride and joy for their child. For a parent of a child with a disability or a learning disability it can be an emotional and confusing time. Children on an IEP start at age 14 (or earlier if appropriate) for future planning. Sections 4-5 are just as important as other parts of the IEP. As a parent you need to start thinking and educating yourself about your child's needs, strengths, and programs available through the school districts. Is your child college bound needing resources, interested in career tech programs, or needing job skills training that will continue beyond graduation? The planning needs to begin earlier than a typical child to ensure the proper resources are utilized to maximum program benefits for your child. Children on 504's that are college bound need to research colleges that offer strong resources for accommodations. Resources you may reach out to include: Parent Mentor, districts Special Educa-



tion Directors, Geauga County agencies, local organizations such as Up Side of Downs/Milestones, and the Geauga County Education Service Center. This organization offers multiple levels of programs to meet your child's needs. I am very proud of my son's growth and development in the ESC's Vocational Transition Consortium directed by Jaina Gandolfi. He is gaining job skills, maturing into an adult, learning task transitioning, and improving work place social skills while working at 2 locations in the community. All this from a child, that when he was born, I was asked if I was going to place him in an institution because of his level of disability. Here is Nick, accepting the "Employee of the Month" award. This is true inspiration that is year round!



Getting Back to Nature~Social Workers: Joe Cirino, Donna Fischer, & Kathy Schmelzer

Spring is here and there is no better time to reconnect to your family and to nature. There are plenty of events and activities that are no cost or low cost that can educate, relax, and bond a family together.

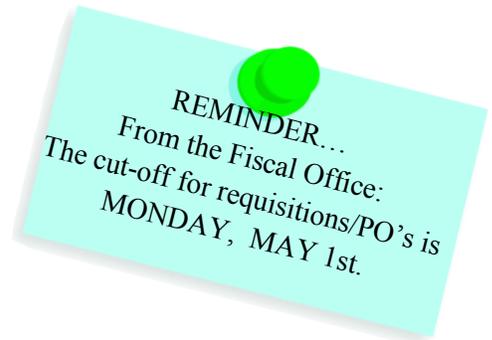
Geauga Park District at www.geaugaparkdistrict.org and Lake Metroparks at www.lakemetroparks.com offer a wide variety of activities throughout their multiple park facilities. You could venture out on your own to hand feed chickadees, try a family hike with a nature scavenger hunt or collect fallen natural elements to create a nature collage together.



Ever hear of “geocaching”? Geocaching is a family-friendly outdoor treasure hunting game in which participants use a GPS to hide and seek trinkets.

Check your local park system or www.geocaching.com to get started.

Get out, get some fresh air and have fun together!



Vision Services Coordinator ~ Michelle Szastak

University Circle in Cleveland, Ohio is the perfect place to enjoy your family over spring break. The Cleveland Botanical Garden, located at 11030 East Blvd., Cleveland would be a great place for children to explore. The Cleveland Botanical Garden's imaginative celebration of spring. “**Big Spring**”, opens on March 18th and runs through April 23rd. The family-friendly event welcomes the spring season with indoor activities such as puddle bug boats, Toadstool Theatre, mealworm races, and daily butterfly releases, as well as



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outdoor activities in the Hershey Children's Garden. Admission is \$12.00 for adults; \$8.00 for children ages 3-12; free for children age 2 and younger. “Groupon” frequently offers Garden and Arboretum discounts. The Botanical Garden is closed on Mondays.



Attendance & Home School Review ~ Officer Pat Willis

Geauga County is quite diligent in having our school age children receive the best education opportunity available. My role in making sure our students are receiving the best possible education follows many avenues. Home Education Coordinator; tracking attendance; meeting with parent; to discuss attendance issues to avoid court involvement; liaison with Juvenile Court on truancy issues; reporting concerns to Children Services; and providing residency verification to our school districts are all the ways I attempt to save taxpayer dollars while getting our children to be the best they can be.

All Home Education paperwork is handled through the GCESC. We currently have 213 families and 444 children home educated in Geauga County. It has been a pleasure dealing with and getting to know the parents while observing the

extraordinary education they provide to their children. I want to thank Jennifer Gorton, a longtime home education parent, for her support and being the go-to person for many new home education parents.

Meeting with parents provides an opportunity to understand difficulties that can get in the way of proper school attendance. Being able to meet and discuss these issues allows a proactive, collaborative effort with parents and students while figuring out a plan that will avoid meeting again in court.

Working with the court supports the proactive approach of getting our children to attend school as required by the law.

My experience with our Juvenile Court has shown time and time again the dedication and positive approach taken to help our children get the education needed to become successful citizens.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the tireless effort made by our schools to provide the best possible education to our students. Working with such a dedicated group of professionals has been a pleasure. There is no question that this great group of professionals show an inordinate amount of love, support and concern for the children, and are dedicated to providing each student a fine education. I believe we could not entrust our children to a finer group of professional educators than those in our Geauga County schools.



Geauga Academy ~ Donna Cook

The End Of An Era



As we began the fourth quarter, our seniors are working hard to finish strong. They are so close to graduation but there is still work to be done. This sentiment is felt by the Geauga Academy staff as well. It is not just the seniors who will be moving on. The class of 2017 will be the Geauga Academy's last. Over the past 18 years, the Geauga Academy has held true to their mission by supporting students as they reclaimed their education through the utilization of technology, evidenced-based instruction and intervention. The Academy has helped to graduate several hundred students representing all school districts in Geauga County. Since its inception in 1999, the Geauga Academy has had very little turnover in teaching staff, only two social workers and one principal. In fact, the staff has been consistent since 2010. This is a testament to the commitment the staff has to reach, teach and empower the "at risk" students of Geauga County. Initially, The Academy was housed at Kent State University Geauga Branch. During the 2001-2002 school year, the Academy moved to Lake Erie College. The Academy moved once again in school year 2015-16, to Auburn Career Center. With each move, the Academy changed to fit the needs of the students with the resources of the location. Over the years, Geauga Academy Students have volunteered countless hours benefiting the S.T.A.R.S Program, WomanSafe, Nami Teddy Bear Patrol, and the Apple Butter festival just to name a few. Each year without exception, students have increased the number of credits earned while decreasing negative behaviors. May will be here before you know it and it will be bitter sweet. While the GA staff will rejoice and share in the many accomplishments of our students this year it will be hard to say goodbye to an institution that has helped so many.



Vocational Education ~ Jaina Gandolfi



We are excited to have the opportunity to work with several new employers across all of our programs this school year! Our new employers include: Parkside Church, Lantern of Chagrin Valley, Fellowship Church, Great Lakes Outdoor Supply, Kinetico, and YMCA Geauga. Our students have the opportunity to practice customer service skills, packaging, housekeeping, dining room set-up, retail work, and clerical skills. Our Vocational programs are designed for students to gain the necessary skills required to work independently in the community for a competitive wage. Students are held to the same standards set for all employees within a particular company, although necessary job skill training and accommodations are provided through our dedicated program staff. Students are able to earn credit towards their elective graduation requirements through their participation in this programming.



Results from the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study indicate that students with disabilities that participate in a non-paid/paid employment during high school significantly increase their post-secondary employment outcomes. The benefits to participating in a Job Training and/or Work-Study program reach beyond a paycheck and elective credits.



Prevention Services ~ Karen Lackey

Geauga Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) and Geauga Youth Led Prevention (YLP)

It has been a very exciting quarter for prevention services in Geauga County Schools. TPP began our 21st school year, providing abstinence-based Holistic Sexuality Education for students and parents. This year TPP also launched 'E-Risk, Relationships in a Cyber World' for 6th, 7th and 8th graders to prompt students to be sensitive to how their social media presence and behavior can impact their relationships and reputation now and in the future. In March, staff from Geauga Growth Partnership joined the fun in an 8th grade classroom by partnering with us to provide a future employer's perspective as well. TPP also welcomed a new instructor, Jennie Canganelli, M.Ed. in addition to Holly Jacobson M.Ed. OCPS II who coordinates the Youth Led Prevention Program.



Youth Leaders at Husky Family Fest

Geauga Youth Led Prevention had its most successful year in its seven year history by serving nearly 500 students and community members. Under the leadership of YLP's Certified Prevention Specialist, leadership students designed and organized the 7th annual Youth Leadership Summit in collaboration with Lake County YLP. This year's Summit was titled 'Youth Have a Voice', and featured two national speakers, a representative from Ohio's Voinovich School of Leadership who trained school advisers, and two youth-led breakout sessions.



Geauga's top leadership students (YAC) have since started Peer Mentoring programs in a third district, participated in organizing and running Husky Family Fest, and won a small grant from Ohio Drug Free Action Alliance to fund their future projects. Staff from YLP also kicked off ISTEM's Design Challenge Project for 2017 by training nearly 100 students on the Heroin Crisis in Ohio.





STARS ~ Dana Eggers

Happy 4th Quarter from the S.T.A.R.S. Autism Program. This year has been full of many success stories! All classrooms have access to the Unique Learning Curriculum and students are actively gaining content knowledge through provided modifications and accommodations. Many of our students are successfully attending inclusion classes (20 students participate in specials courses and 7 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.



One of our high school students had a small role in the Cardinal school play! And, our MS/HS students are mastering the world of technology by explicitly learning the hidden curriculum behind communication via technology (texting, email, Facebook, YouTube, etc.)

S.T.A.R.S. staff is hard at work collaborating with peer professionals, building positive rapport and relationships with building staff, and implementing new ideas into their classrooms. Our students continue to make gains due to this hard work and dedication. Thanks to our districts for their continued support of our program, and to Cardinal and West Geauga staff for welcoming and supporting our students in the inclusive environments.



Saturday, April 8th will be our **10th Annual Fundraiser Luncheon Event** at Fowler's Mill Golf Course. Our theme this year is *Building a Program of Champions*. Money collected from this event directly supports the S.T.A.R.S. students and classrooms by allowing for purchase of innovative technology, paying transportation costs for essential community outings, and purchasing classroom materials that are essential to our students' success (laminator, color ink, etc.)

Thank you for your continued collaboration and partnership.



Quote: **One thing about silence.....it can't be repeated nor misquoted.**

STARS Fundraiser Highlights



Dana Eggers, STARS Director and Jennifer Felker, County Superintendent



Hoppy Spring!



Gaitway ~ Lindsay Baar

Spring is in the air at Gaitway High School!

Gaitway students have been hard at work both academically and vocational as we wind down the 2016-2017 school year. Project Based Learning, PBL, occurs each Wednesday at Gaitway. All students participate in the cross curricular projects which focus on 21st Century Skills. Students are enhancing their skill set in the areas of communication, collaboration,



presentation and research skills. The last PBL had students building balloon rocket cars. The project began with students completing a web quest, followed by making a model and collecting data before they actually built their car and had a race.



Students were engaged throughout the entire process. Five of the cars actually moved! Academically, students are working on their English and Math requirements this semester. Romeo & Juliet and The Great Gatsby have been topics in English. Math students just held a math carnival with games based on probability. Vocationally, students continue their day to day job training at the following locations: Rescue Village, Heinen's, Geauga Hospital, The Weil's, Tractor Supply, Fowlers Mill Golf Course and Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center. Gaitway students also had the chance to earn a pizza party and movie afternoon for meeting their Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports goal. Twenty-four students earned this afternoon! Students are rated each day on a 1-4 rubric on how well they problem solve, are accountable and respectful. Another reward day is planned with Chipotle in May! Gaitway also continues to bring in speakers each month. In January and February, the OSU extension branch and volunteers came out and completed the Real World, Real Money simulation on two separate days. In March, a presentation was held about human trafficking with a local advocate. In April, CVS Corporate is coming to Gaitway to present on the Opiate Task Force.



Now is the time when we start planning transition for the next school year. The Gaitway staff has been busy visiting career centers and giving tours to perspective students. Please feel free to reach out to Lindsay Baar, (440) 708-0013, if you are interested in reserving a spot for the 2017-2018 school year.

Congratulations to Gaitway Teacher, Bruce Cline. He has been selected to be a published author by The Ohio Writer's Conference from the Ohio Literacy Resource Center. He is a winner in the poetry category. Way to go Bruce!!

Nursing ~ Jennifer Klock

If you are a fan of lemon, here is a tasty recipe for you to try.

LEMON DROP CAKES

1 box of Duncan Hines—Lemon Citron
Cake Mix



1 package vanilla instant pudding
4 large eggs
1 1/4 cups sour cream

1/2 cup milk
Mix and pour into mini muffin tins
Bake at 325 for 12 minutes,
Flip upside down onto a wire rack

Frosting

3 1/2 cups powdered sugar
2 teaspoons lemon zest
2 tablespoons melted butter
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 cup hot water

Mix, dip cakes into frosting, turn right side up and let set. ENJOY!

For a little added kick, try fresh blueberries or poppyseed to the cake mix.

Happy
SPRING

From the Felker Family

