



**Warren County  
Educational Service Center**

[www.warrencountyesc.com](http://www.warrencountyesc.com)



**MARCH 2024**



**Tom Isaacs, Superintendent**  
1879 Deerfield Road, Lebanon OH 45036  
513-695-2900

◆ **WCESC BOARD MEMBER RECOGNIZED** ◆



On March 7<sup>th</sup>, Jiles Farley, a long-standing governing board member, was recognized at the OSBA Southwest Regional Spring Conference for 40 years of service as a board member. Jiles previously served on the Wayne Local School District Board for 30 years prior to coming to WCESC in 2014. Thank you Jiles for your contributions to education and all you do for WCESC.



◆ **WORKFORCE CELEBRATION and SHOWCASE** ◆

WCESC hosted a day of celebration on February 1, 2024 as students and staff from John Lazares Alternative School and Warren County Learning Center shared their experiences and successes. The event is a result of our partnerships with Sinclair Community College, Warren County Career Center, and Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy Director of Entrepreneurship Stephen Carter. Leaders collaborated from these organizations to find new ways to create interest for students who have not always found success in school. The goal is to provide opportunities for student achievement by providing alternative pathways to graduation, demonstrating competency, and preparing for college and career readiness. The event was attended by school district personnel, community leaders, and elected officials, as well as participating students and their family members.

Other opportunities of mentorship are provided to students through the Miamisburg Art Guild Members to teach students art techniques and Greater Ohio Virtual School Superintendent Shawn Lenney in the form of music education via steel drums.



Cindy Bruner, WCESC Program Specialist and Student Participants



Christy Even, WCESC Assistant Superintendent



Dustin Goldie, JKL Alternative School Supervisor and Student Participant



Joel King, Warren County Career Center Superintendent



Mike Bidwell, WCESC Sr. Executive Director and Student Artist



Jennifer Maynard, Sinclair Community College



Stephen Carter, Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy/Entrepreneurship Program



Shawn Lenney, GOVS Superintendent

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◆ NIGHT TO SHINE ◆  
TIM TEBOW FOUNDATION EVENT

**Mason Students Cut the Rug at Night to Shine!**

On Friday, February 9, students from WCESC Mason Programming were invited to attend the Night to Shine prom sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. They were treated to a special time ahead of the evening event to meet and spend some time with Tim Tebow and his wife.

Night to Shine is a complimentary event for people with special needs hosted by local churches around the world. The event is open to anyone living with disabilities, ages 14 and older. Although each event is a little bit different, some activities included are a red carpet entrance, limousine rides, dancing, karaoke, gifts, a catered dinner, a Respite Room for parents and caregivers, a crowning ceremony where every honored guest will receive a crown or tiara, and more – Night to Shine is a celebration of God's love for YOU, our Kings and Queens!

2024 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the event's existence; and Mason Christ's Church is one of 12 churches worldwide to host the Night to Shine for all 10 years! While Night to Shine is sponsored by Mason Christ's Church, the heartbeat of the event comes from the hundreds of volunteers bringing the magic alive.



Jill Buffenbarger is the Multiple Disabilities Program Supervisor with Warren County Educational Service Center (WCESC). For the planning purposes of this year's Prom, Mrs. Buffenbarger served as event coordinator. Her leadership promoted the event which hosted 402 guests of honor, 600 volunteers, and 250 Parent VIPs. As a testament to her leadership, 65 of the 600 volunteers were employees of WCESC.



Former Heisman Trophy winner and NFL quarterback Tim Tebow and his foundation are the founders and annual sponsors of Night to Shine. While it would be impossible for Tim to personally attend all of this year's 720 annual proms worldwide, Tim was in Mason on the day of this year's local prom. In the morning of the event, Tim made an appearance at Mason Christ's Church and was welcomed by busloads of students enrolled with WCESC. Tebow showed love and kindness to the guests during his visit, along with his wife, Demi. After visiting each guest as they traversed the red carpet, Tim danced with the daytime attendees to tunes pumped up by the DJ.



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◆ Of this year's event, Mrs. Buffenbarger stated, "what an amazing way to give our guests a VIP experience. It was so much fun to see past and present WCESC students enjoying their special dance. Meeting Tim Tebow and his wife was pretty cool too!"

TLC was one of the programs able to attend the sneak peek and the interns enjoyed dancing and donuts with Tim Tebow! How fun!



WCESC Nursing Staff manned the nursing stations throughout the building and several nurses accompanied guests during the night's events.





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◆ **MULTIPLE DISABILITIES PROGRAM** ◆

**Students identified with Multiple Disabilities – Western Row MDESC  
Jill Buffenbarger, RN, Supervisor (Western Row Campus)**

**Western Row MDESC Students Visit Newport Aquarium**



In January, the high school classes in the Multiple Disabilities Program travelled to Newport, KY to visit the Aquarium.

Newport Aquarium welcomes your family to discover the wonder of an underwater world located in Newport, Kentucky right across the river from downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. SEA thousands of the world's most exotic aquatic creatures as you waddle with playful penguins, meet rare white alligators, be surrounded by sharks and surprised by smiling stingrays. Encounter thrilling adventures like the first-in-the-world Shark Bridge, where you can cross inches above a tank full of sharks on a rope bridge. Plus, experience the NEW exhibit Shipwreck: Realm of the Eels and explore a long ago-sunken ship and the creatures that call this accidental reef home. All while spending quality time together and creating lasting memories.



The Newport Aquarium is continuously working to improve the experience for each and every guest who enters our doors. The accessibility and comfort of every guest is a top priority, and, because of this, we have created an overview of the many services and access options available at Newport Aquarium.

At the aquarium, the students were able touch and feel various animals in the reef petting tank, as well as in the shark and stingray exhibits. Students were able to learn through touch about differences between vertebrates and invertebrates. Through this lesson, the students were able to learn about the vast amount of different species that share the waters around the globe.



Paraprofessional, Aliyah Narcisse commented about the outing, "I loved getting to pet the stingrays and sharks, plus the Shark Bridge over the Surrounded by Sharks exhibit was awesome and you can cross as many times as you like." Program nurse, Rachel Swafford added, "We had an amazing time at the aquarium! It's clean, organized, very accessible, super interactive for the students, and an all-around great time!"

Newport Aquarium  
One Aquarium Way  
Newport, KY, 41071  
1-800-406-3474  
Located at Newport on the Levee  
[newportaquarium.com](http://newportaquarium.com)

## Western Row MDESC Students Visit Mason Community Center

In February, students in the Littles Class in the Multiple Disabilities Program visited Mason Community Center. The Center is dedicated to bringing visitors the latest in family recreation at a reasonable price. From friendly and professional staff to unmatched amenities, activities, and offerings, Mason Community Center has something for everyone. No matter your age, Mason Community Center has everything you need to stay fit and keep active.

The Community Center features:

- exercise equipment with the latest technology, including a cardio theatre system
- three spacious indoor fitness studios
- an indoor competition pool with two diving boards and an adjustable depth floor
- a leisure pool with a water playground, body flume slide, and lazy river
- a large whirlpool for relaxing and soothing
- a massive 35-foot natural rock surface climbing wall
- a convenient four-lane indoor walking track
- a field house with four courts suitable for a variety of sports
- a spacious gymnasium
- a multipurpose area equipped for gymnastics, tumbling, and cheer
- convenient services that include a postal unit, gift shop, café, and meeting and party rooms
- men's, women's, and family locker rooms





Children can have fun in Kids Korner while parents work out or take a class. Kids can stay for up to 2.5 hours a day while their parents are using the center or visiting Group Health Associates or Bethesda Physical Therapy.

The Mason Senior Center, housed within the community center, gives seniors a wonderful place to gather with their friends and provides ample opportunity to stay physically, mentally, and socially active.

Program offerings, while quite varied, all have the same goal in mind—improving physical and emotional well-being. The staff at the Center want to help visitors feel happy, healthy, and fulfilled. Review CenterPoint to stay connected to current programs.

At the Community Center, the students and staff from the Littles Classroom were able to take a tour of the facility. Intervention Specialist, Jenny Bishop said of the day, “we experienced so many smiles and hellos from folks there at the Center. What a great experience for our students to have fun and exercise and play; and for other visitors to see our students out and about using all of their abilities and talents.” Paraprofessional Susan Chin added, “touring the Center showed our students there are things they are able to do and

Mason Community Center  
 6050 Mason-Montgomery Road  
 Mason, OH 45040  
 (513) 229-8555  
[Imaginemason.org](http://Imaginemason.org)

### **Mason Students are All Aboard at EnterTRAINment Junction**

In February, Mason students at the Western Row Campus visited EnterTRAINment Junction in West Chester. Like Newport Aquarium, EnterTRAINment Junction offers accessibility to our students, and their welcoming staff made our trip so enjoyable. Our group was provided a private room to gather in, free admission for chaperones, and a group tour guide.

EnterTRAINment Junction offers 80,000 square feet of fun featuring two attractions. We marveled at the world’s largest indoor train display; played in the children’s play area; and explored the railroading museum. The train display spans 25,000 square feet. We visited 44 the Coney Island exhibit and interacted



by running the coaster, carousel, and other rides. The American Railroad Museum taught us more about how trains shaped U.S. history.

The second attraction is the A-Maze-N Funhouse. The A-Maze-N Funhouse, designed like an old-time circus midway, was a great adventure for our group. We navigated our way through Curtain Chaos and the Mirror Maze; learned from the pros at Clown College and tried to access the secrets of the circus in the Crazy Caper. Finally, we explored outside of this universe in Outer Limits.

During the lesson, the students learned about how trains were used, expansion of the railroad tracks to run from coast to coast, how trains have changed overtime with the changing economy and how trains are used now. Additionally, our students learned about the job of a train conductor and about other jobs on a train.



Speech & language pathologist, Ashley Atkinson fondly recalls the experience: “This place is incredible. I could spend a whole week coming here every day and still find something in the scenes that I haven’t seen before.” Paraprofessional, Johnna Childs commented, “EnterTRAINment Junction is a great destination for a community outing. The staff are so welcoming and the facility is very accessible

EnterTRAINment Junction  
7379 Sauire Court  
West Chester, OH 45069  
(513) 898-8000  
[entertrainmentjunction.com](http://entertrainmentjunction.com)

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◆ **WCESC DEERFIELD CAMPUS (WELLNESS CENTER)** ◆  
Jared Kaiser, Director

Wellness Center students continue to have an outstanding school year as they make progress towards their own personal goals and Social and Emotional Learning. Each month students have the opportunity to be recognized by staff and peers for their hard work and dedication to personal growth. Highlighted below are our January and February award winners for Students of the Month, Caring Classmate, and Most Improved.



**JANUARY: STUDENTS OF THE MONTH AND MOST IMPROVED**



**FEBRUARY: STUDENTS OF THE MONTH AND MOST IMPROVED**





The Wellness Center K-3 celebrated Dr. Seuss Day with literacy/reading activities. First, Mr. Jared was our Mystery Reader who read *The Cat and the Hat* to students. Then, students composed a Thank You letter to Mr. Jared for being the best mystery reader ever! Next, students practiced decoding two syllable words, phonemes, and diagraphs. Learners used white boards to write, divide, and draw a bridge from vowel to vowel in each VCCV word. The day ended with a reading picnic in our reading nook where students read their favorite Dr. Seuss book. Students added and multiplied different U.S. standard measurements of cereals to create trail mix to enjoy as they read silently.





◆ JOHN K. LAZARES ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ◆  
Dustin Goldie, Supervisor  
Dan Baker, Assistant Supervisor

**Sinclair Students**

Students at JKLAS have completed their third rotation in the second semester 24-week cohort at Sinclair Community College. Our students are currently completing healthcare and advanced manufacturing rotations. Next, they will explore careers in information technology, travel, and tourism. They have also earned certifications in “Stop the Bleed” training and are currently working to become certified travel ambassadors for the greater Cincinnati area!



Jacob Luke (Springboro)



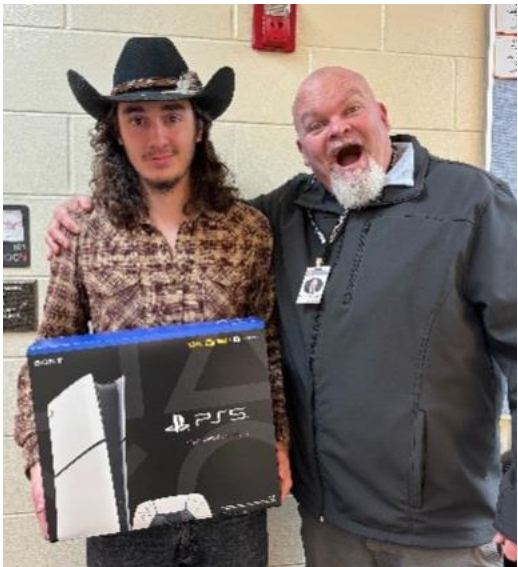
Aiden Griffin (Waynesville)



Carissa Gunter (Mason) and Kalie Smith (Lebanon)

### **PBIS Success!**

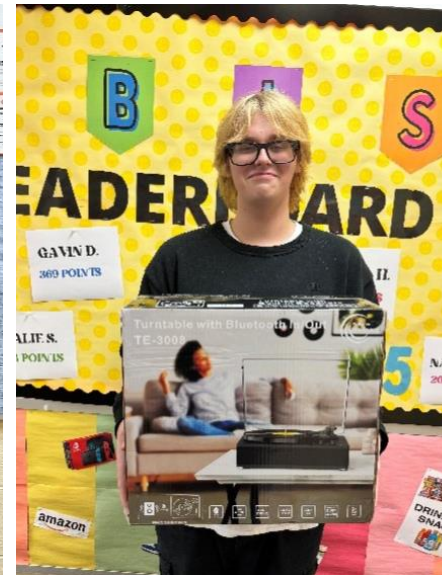
PBIS is continuing to be a great motivator for our students this semester! Students have been working hard to complete classes and earn points! They have “cashed in” on rewards like laptops, air pods, shoes, PS5 gaming systems, purchases from Amazon, Nintendo Switch’s and more!



Nick Franklin (Loveland)



Angela Hill (Lebanon)



Jacoby Taylor (Little Miami)

### **Workforce Development**

Our students have had the opportunity to tour and visit several different facilities and factories in the Warren County area to learn about job opportunities for after graduation thanks to our College and Career Pathways Coordinator, Shuronda Smith. They have been to Sibcy Cline Realtors, Atrium Medical Center, Lebanon Fire Department, Great Wolf Lodge, and more!



Pictured left to right:  
 Jaylin Davis (Sycamore), Dominic Dermer (Waynesville), Ethan Thorpe (Middletown),  
 Krystal Wood (Middletown), and Carissa Gunter (Mason).

**OSHA**

We have had three more students successfully complete their OSHA 10 training through the Warren County Career Center! Congrats to Ethan Thorpe (Middletown), Cameron Hill (Lebanon) and Gavin Daniel (Springboro)! We are so proud of our students; they have now moved on to getting their MSCC certification! This training will help set them apart from other job candidates!



Ethan Thorpe (Middletown)



Cameron Hill (Lebanon)



Gavin Daniel (Springboro)



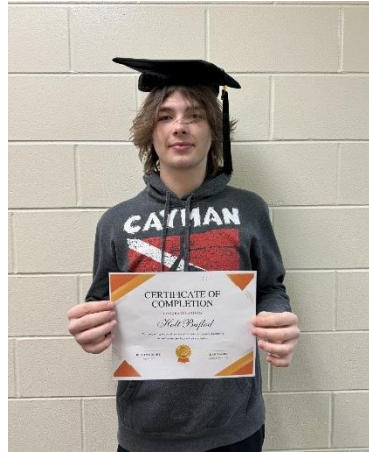
Congratulations to Krystal Wood (Middletown) for being our first student to complete the MSCC certification through the Warren County Career Center! We are so proud of her!

### JKLAS Grads!

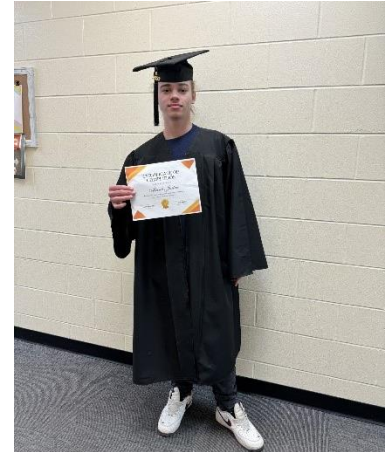
We have had several students graduate early from JKLAS already this year! We are so proud of them and know they will do wonderful things in the future! Congrats to Emma Winkler (Lebanon), Zoe Rice (Middletown), Aidan Rish (Lebanon), Ariana Adkins (Waynesville), Holt Bufold (Waynesville), Micah Justice (Middletown), Jaylin Davis (Sycamore), and Mathew Dickerson (Kings).



Ariana Adkins (Waynesville)



Holt Bufold (Waynesville)



Micah Justice (Middletown)

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### ◆ MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT ◆ Jessica Woody, Mental Health Supervisor

The mental health department ended the month of December with our annual Christmas party. This year we attended a late lunch at Warped Wing in Springboro. The food was awesome and the team enjoyed celebrating together.

During the months of January and February, the mental health teams have planned different items that reflect themes that we have in the department. During the month of January, our theme was wellness. In all ESC programs, we discussed what it means to have positive wellness. We discussed what students and staff feel like they need in order to be well utilizing different activities and surveys. Additionally, each program represented a "Blizzard of Kindness" during the month. In the month of February, our theme was kindness. Kindness activities were incorporated into all groups run in the ESC and districts served also had kindness initiatives presented by the Mental Health Consultants.

As a department, we attended four different job fairs in the area: University of Dayton, Miami University, Ohio State University and University of Cincinnati. It was great to engage with students from all fields of study and speak with them about potential jobs within the department for the upcoming school year!

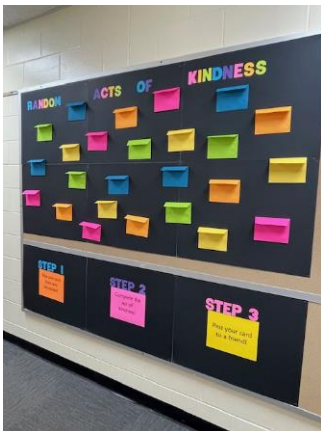




**WCESC Mental Health Department-Program Team**

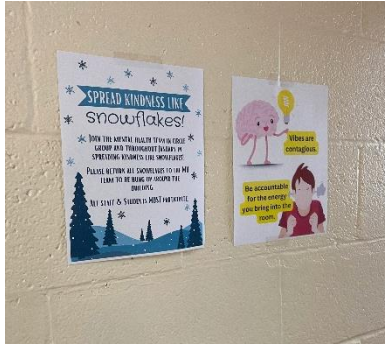
**Alternative School**

Emily and Katie are full time Mental Health staff members at JKLAS. This month they completed a random acts of kindness board for students. This allowed students to actively think about the different types of kindness they can and do show to each other. Additionally, Emily and Katie have worked hard with students to make sure that they are working towards graduation requirements as we hit the halfway point to the school year!



**Learning Center Campus**

Each Learning Center building participated in the Blizzard of Kindness as well as a number of other kindness activities during the past two months. Students participated in circle groups regarding kindness and ways to increase social skills.



Additionally, staff raffled off baskets at St. Mary's for students. The mental health team participated in the basket raffle by providing a Wellness and Fidget basketed-pictured.



Mental Health staff at Western Row created a Kindness Tree on the door for students to share ideas regarding how they spread kindness within the program.



**Phoenix Academy**

Abby and Amberia completed projects at Phoenix Academy for Black History Month and Kindness. See pictured Black History Month education regarding individuals and Kindness Chain.





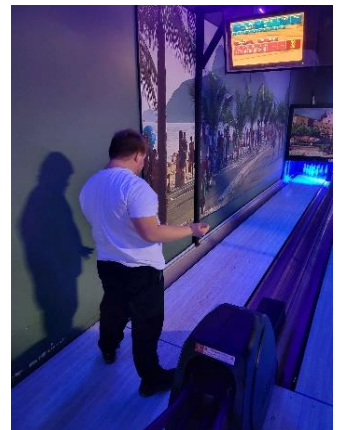


**Social Communications Classrooms**

At SCC, Holly and planned events for February regarding Kindness and created Kindness cards for staff!

**TLC**

At TLC, Rachel attended an event at The Web with students who earned enough PBIS points!



**Wellness Center**

The team at Wellness Center completed multiple student projects during the quarter. Students participated in reflection regarding coping skills in "How to Chill Out" and appreciation as a resiliency skill in "Things We Love."

**Mental Health Consultant District Team**

**Carlisle Local Schools**

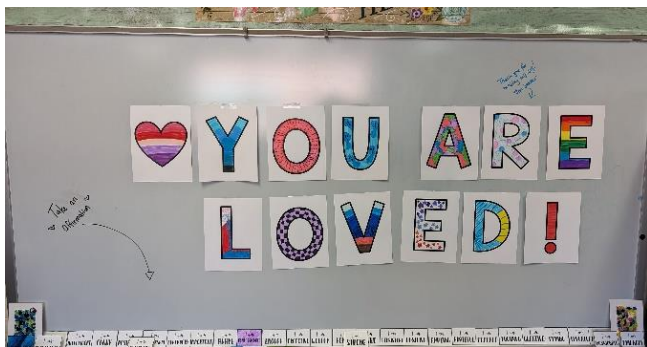
At the high school, Tiffany presented at the Kindness Pep Rally with the district. She also works hard on the PBIS boards with students. The theme pictured is regarding staff and their pets-what a great way to build connection!





**Greater Ohio Virtual School**

Jackie has worked with students who come for in person or groups on her Kindness Tree and You Are Loved Board!



### Little Miami

Amy and Meredith have been working hard with Hope Squad Students. They engaged with students regarding mental health at a basketball game by setting up a mental health awareness night with several other organizations to hand out swag and share resources. They invited the opposing teams Hope Squad with the goal of building relationships with other area Hope Squads. Both Hope Squads handed out bracelets and tattoos regarding mental health awareness and suicide prevention.



### Waynesville

At Waynesville, Liz had a week of teen dating violence awareness at the high school. At the elementary they had the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school that she helped to celebrate and they focused on self-love in February. Liz is also working on completing her internship for her Master's in Social Work by spending some hours at the Learning Center each week.



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◆ **SOCIAL COMMUNICATION CLASSROOMS** ◆  
**Molly Leicht, Supervisor**  
**Rachelle Yakumithis, Assistant Supervisor**

It seems as if every quarter of the school year goes faster and is busier than the quarter before! Enjoy some of our AMAZING moments from the third quarter of the school year.

SCC junior high and high school students can participate in a weekly Cooking Club. They learn how to prepare a simple meal from start to finish and then get to enjoy what they have prepared.



SPOT (**SP**eech and **O**ccupational Therapy) Group is a social group specific to students who use high tech assistive technology for communication. The therapists provide the students opportunities to interact with their peers while using their high-tech devices and engaging in fun activities. This group is also a great chance for staff to learn how to facilitate the use of high-tech devices.



Students in Ms. Kirsten’s science class at Lebanon Jr High have been learning about cells. As part of their hands-on learning, they created 3D models of a cell with felt and foam. Can you identify the nucleus and mitochondria of the cell?



Ms. Debbie’s high school health class has been learning about germs! As part of their hands-on learning, they created edible germs. Would you like to try some?



Dream to Reality Farms, LLC brought a little “goat therapy” to Western Row campus this quarter. Dream to Reality is a non-profit livestock rehab and animal therapy farm. Students met Rufus and Rowena and received hands-on learning about goats, fed the goats by bottle, AND played with these cuddly creatures. We are looking forward to our next visit with Dream to Reality Farms, LLC.



Say hello to Clementine, the newest member of the Lebanon Jr High classroom. Clementine is teaching the students (and staff!) how to properly care for a reptile. It has been fun learning about this leopard gecko.





Students in our Project Warren County (PWC) program participate in weekly community-based outings as part of their curriculum. These outings reinforce the skills the students are learning in the classroom in the areas of independent living, functional life skills, and recreation/leisure skills.



During our February Professional Development Day, SCC classroom teams competed in an Amazing Race! Teams completed sixteen (16) different challenges focused on Evidenced Based Practices (EBP). EBP are the teaching methods, strategies, and interventions researched and proven to be effective through rigorous scientific studies and empirical evidence.

<https://www.voyagersopris.com/vsl/blog/what-are-evidence-based-practices-in-education>

These challenges included Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Safety Care, visual supports, visual models, exercise (gross motor), sensory motor, and communication. Congratulations to all sixteen (16) classrooms for completing the Amazing Race!!!!



◆ SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY ◆

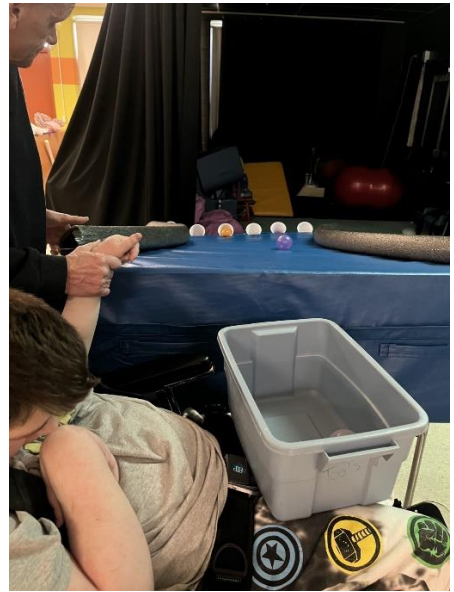
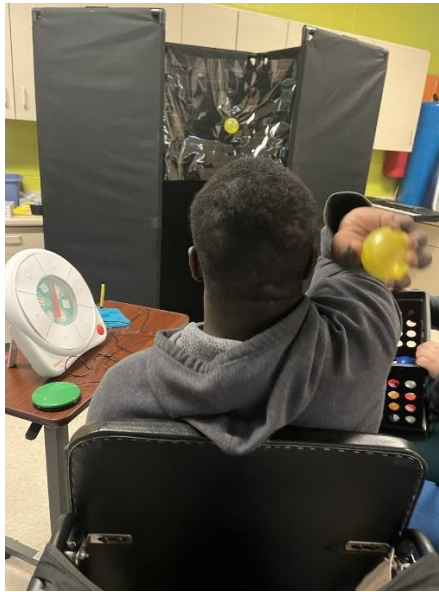
**Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Related Services & Preschool Programming**  
**Alana Jacobs, MS, CCC-SLP, Lead SLP**

*Great things happening in Speech & Language Therapy...*



**WCESC Multiple Disabilities Classrooms: Monthly Therapy Groups** “We continue to do monthly therapy groups in the MD program (PT, OT, and SLP). This month's group encompassed a lot of great skills including visual-motor, fine motor, bilateral coordination, and communication. Various switches were used, including Big Macs, to say things such as "up" to make the parachute go up and "I liked that station" or "I did not like that station". We also used a switch activated spinner/dice to determine the amount of turns the students took throwing balls towards a sticky surface. Classroom staff actively participated by assisting the students at their stations while the therapists floated from station to station to provide the needed support. The students who were able to stand stood at a few of the stations to participate. All staff and students enjoyed this month's group activity with smiles all around.”





Special thanks to Ashley Atkinson (SLP), Leah Bistor (OT), and Tonya Ellis (PT) for the great work that they're doing with students!

### **Related Service New Hire Bootcamp**

Each month, newly hired SLPs, OTs, and PTs have been meeting to discuss topics in school-based therapy. Topics have ranged from writing compliant ETRs, IEPs, and progress reports to using evidence-based therapeutic techniques. One of our monthly Bootcamp trainings involved a dynamic presentation by **Karen Crabb, SLP**, on the topic of Executive Functioning. Karen discussed practical ways to implement Executive Functioning strategies into therapy sessions with emphasis on *Get Ready, Do, Done, Get Done, the Zones of Regulation*, and using the EF clock. Thank you, Karen!



We have 11 SLPs new to WCESC this school year! Each of our new SLPs is doing a wonderful job and we anticipate continuing New Hire Bootcamps in the future.

### **WCESC Phoenix Academy: Social Language Groups**

“Social Language groups at the Phoenix Academy recently practiced describing the steps to make pancakes in a Lumberjack breakfast to celebrate reading the book *The Lumberjack's Beard* by Duncan Beedie. Prior to making pancakes, the students described the problems and solutions in the story, how the character felt and what they might be thinking. Students practiced describing their lumberjack breakfast to others in their class as they enjoyed their sweet treat! Thanks to Alana Jacobs and the SLP Department for donating a copy of this cute book to every SLP at the ESC.”



Submitted by *Kara Miller, SLP*.  
Thank you, Kara! Awesome job

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### ◆ SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT ◆ Kristie Strittmatter, Lead School Psychologist

This quarter, the school psychology department would like to feature a staff member in a Staff Spotlight. Dr. Ruth Markham will be retiring from the WCESC on March 28, 2024.

#### **What is your educational background?**

I got my Ed.S. and Ed.D. degrees in School Psychology from Ball State University.

#### **How long have you been in the field?**

I have been a school psychologist since 1982, with an internship in South Bend, IN. I love the field of school psychology, as it combines the two most amazing areas of study: education and psychology. I also am thrilled to work with children!

#### **Where have you worked?**

I've been licensed and worked in public schools in Indiana, Arizona, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Ohio. I also lived in the Philippines for one year, when my husband was superintendent at an international school in Manila. I also taught in the Psychology Department at Cedarville University for six years. I worked in the Clark County ESC for 9 years, and here at the Warren County ESC for the last 6 years.

#### **Since you have worked in so many places, what has been a favorite?**

Of all the places I've worked, my favorite is my current setting at Waynesville, where I now have the opportunity to be involved in individual and small group counseling, as well as the more traditional school psychology tasks. I enjoy being in one district long enough to see students grow and advance in their skills up to the point of graduation.

**Tell us about your family and favorite activities.**

My favorite place is here in Ohio, as five of my six children, and five of my seven grandchildren also live here. (I also have five grand-dogs and two grand-cats.)

I love to cook and bake alongside my husband, Bob. One of our favorite activities is to “MacGyver” a meal; looking in the freezer and pantry to see what is there to turn into a delicious meal. It has kind of a scavenger hunt feel to it. (I really should probably meal plan better.)

**What do you look forward to during retirement?**

In my retirement I am looking forward to spending time with the grands, of course. But I also am looking forward to spending time in our garden and with my chickens. I want to do more quilting, volunteering with the children at my church, taking piano lessons, possibly becoming an election worker, and volunteering at Hospice of Dayton. In my spare time, I have stacks and stacks of books to read.



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**◆ OCCUPATIONAL and PHYSICAL THERAPY ◆**

**Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Related Services & Preschool Programming**

**Becky Miller, MPT, PT, Lead Physical Therapist**

**Kim Steele, MOT, OTR/L, Lead Occupational Therapist**

**FIELDWORK AND CLINICAL STUDENTS**

Thank you to all the staff in our departments who have been supporting the growth of our professions by helping educate future therapists. Occupational therapy students from Milligan University, Kettering College, University of Cincinnati, and Xavier University have been completing their fieldwork with WCESC therapists this school year along with physical therapy students from the University of Dayton. These college students are gaining firsthand experience in the school buildings and learning alongside our skilled and knowledgeable practitioners. Thank you to occupational therapists: Sue Bault, Jessica Carter, Kristen Donay, Brooke Edwards, Madi Hodge, Melissa Miller, Beth Mixer, Catherine Nichols, and Carrie Nowak for serving as fieldwork educators for these students. Thank you to physical therapist Tonya Ellis for serving as clinical educator.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Members of the OT PT departments participated in a full day of professional development on February 1, 2024, to review legal updates for special education related to the roles of school based occupational and physical therapy providers. This training, "Beyond Compliance Legal Updates for Maximizing OT and PT Engagement in the Special Education Process," included legal updates from Erin Wessendorf-Wortman, Esq. (shareholder with Ennis and Britton) and tips on practical applications of IDEA from Bernadette Laughlin, M.A. J.D., Esq. (Education Program Specialist within the Ohio Dept. Of Education and Workforce's Office for Exceptional Children). Therapists were able to engage with these experts to better understand the legal framework and review the IEP and ETR process.



## BOW WOW BAKERY:



Occupational Therapist Melissa Miller is helping Kings High School students develop vocational skills as part of the Bow Wow Bakery. This is a class-run business that offers students with disabilities the ability to create healthy dog bones to sell to district staff, family, and friends. Melissa helps students participate in this endeavor through modifying activities and helping students improve task specific skills to increase their independence as students prepare and package treats each week.



## COLLABORATION WITH ROSE-HULMAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Tonya Ellis, physical therapist in the WCESC Multiple Disabilities Program, is collaborating with engineering students at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology on adaptive equipment for use in the MD program. Tonya provided three ideas for adaptive equipment projects. Three groups of engineering students will vote on a project to complete. In addition, they will be creating some adaptive toys! Work on these projects will be conducted through the current semester, with an anticipated delivery date in early May. Hopefully, the engineering students will be able to see our students in action with their creations. We are extremely excited to see what they create!



### ◆ COORDINATED CARE ◆

**Kevin Stevens M. Ed., LSW**

**Supervisor of Coordinated Care & Clinical Committee Coordinator**

## Coordinated Care Staff Are Now Certified Anger Management Providers



In order to better serve youth and families Coordinated Care has completed training to become certified anger management providers. The classes were through Century Anger Management which include 40 hours of online training, quizzes, a written test and one online test. Coordinated Care often receives referrals from schools, courts, parents and county agencies for youth who have demonstrated the need for intervention in dealing with anger issues. Many times these issues have led to violent behavior. Coordinated Care will be using the 8 Tools from Century Anger Management to help youth with their anger issues. We are hoping to assist youth to respond and not react, change the internal conversations that youth often have with themselves, helping youth adjust expectations, retreating to think things over and much more.

The classes will be done mostly one on one. Coordinated Care has already started receiving referrals for the service from various community partners. To make a referral or to learn more about the program you can call Kevin Stevens at 513-695-2900 Ext. 2916 or by email at [Kevin.Stevens@WarrencountyESC.com](mailto:Kevin.Stevens@WarrencountyESC.com) .

### Resource Coordinator Program Needs Increasing All Across Warren County



The Resource Coordinator Program is designed to eliminate non-academic barriers a student is experiencing that are hindering their school success. The Resource Coordinators receive referrals from school staff, parents and other community members. Due to increasing needs the Resource Coordinators are serving more students this school year than ever. During the first half of the 22-23 school year the Resource Coordinators served 1,671 students/families in need. During the same time period for 23-24 school year the Resource Coordinators have served 2,710 students/families in need.

The increase in need can likely be contributed to higher food, increased cost of rent and fuel costs that families are having to endure. In general, we are seeing families struggling to make ends meet. The Warren Co. Educational Service Center is very thankful to the Warren Co. Job and Family Services who provides the majority of funding to the Resource Coordinator Program.

To find out more about the Resource Coordinator Program you can contact Kevin Stevens at 513-695-2900 Ext. 2961 or by email at [Kevin.Stevens@WarrenCountyESC.com](mailto:Kevin.Stevens@WarrenCountyESC.com).

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### ◆ PHOENIX ACADEMY ◆ Tara Gee, Supervisor

The Phoenix Academy has been hard at work learning lots of different things and working on increasing positive behaviors. In January students earned a cookie decorating and hot chocolate party for their positive behavior. In February students earned a dance party complete with awesome music, snacks, and drinks.

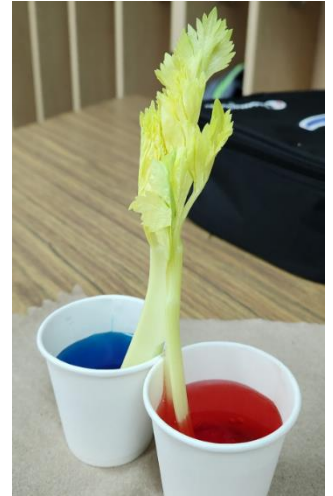


The staff participated in a professional development day on February 16<sup>th</sup> and were able to dig into different ways to improve their teaching and in turn help students learn. They also got to learn all about the child brain with a professional development through Character Effects.

- In Miss Ryan Classroom for Quarter 3, Students have been learning more about emotions, how their body feels with certain emotions, and coping strategies for these things. Students are coached to show safe bodies, and kind words, focusing on themselves, and being respectful and responsible people. In the classroom, we use the verbiage, “Is this a small or a large problem?” Then ask how students think the problem should be handled. We want to foster independent problem-solving, as well as boosting our students' confidence when they receive feedback about their problem-solving is what is expected! One of the activities we did was having students role-play different areas of the day in school and some scenarios outside of school. They enjoyed roleplaying! Especially when they could show unexpected behaviors safely. Pictures with students in front of their cubbies were to help students remember to take care of their things. We are excited to see what is to come during the remainder of the school year!
- In Ms. Wilson's room this quarter, we have been talking about arrays, place value, beginning sounds in words, CVC patterns, famous American music composers, food groups, and healthy food choices. For art, we have had fun with different seasonal projects: a handprint dove for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a 100<sup>th</sup> day of school gumball machines, Abraham Lincoln paper plates, and heart shaped mosaics. This week, we made edible rainbows with fruit loops on a pipe cleaner, held by clouds made out of powdered donuts.



- Mrs. Bennington's Class- Room 2 students have been busy this third quarter! In Reading, they are focusing on asking and answering questions and writing responses to various prompts. For Math, group one is focusing on angle measures and plane figures, while group two is focusing on fractions as numbers on the number line. Our Room 2 students are practicing for the spring AIR testing by taking paper practice tests and reviewing the released tests on the ODE testing portal. For science they have been working on plant and animal structures. They recently conducted an investigation in which they learned about the internal plant structure of a stalk of celery. In social studies they have been focusing on U.S. geography and are currently learning about colonial times.



- Our 5th-6<sup>th</sup> graders in room 4 have spent the month exploring the rich history of our Black brothers and sisters. Through a grid puzzle poster, we created a mural for the hallway that captured the many portraits of Black History. In class, we covered 14 different people that contributed to American history in amazing ways. We read their biographies, acknowledged their accomplishments, and discussed their impact of our American heritage. We incorporated the learning into our daily reading, math, music, science and social studies lessons throughout the month.



- We also had a surprise visit from the family farm. "Pumba" Brutus Gunther was a 4-week-old piglet from an ancient breed (Mule-foot+Red-rattle+Old-spot) that made his debut at school. He will grow up to 750 lbs., but we enjoyed his smaller self. Students were able to touch him and watch him eat. He provided another layer of understanding for our emphasis on perspective in reading and social-emotional learning. We discussed how a little creature might feel and see things.





◆ GREATER OHIO VIRTUAL SCHOOL ◆  
Shawn Lenney, Director

**Music Ensemble at GOVS**

The Greater Ohio Virtual School and Warren County Educational Service Center have created their first-ever music program for GOVS & WCESC students! A Steel Band Ensemble has begun to rehearse! The Steel Band Ensemble is a versatile band that plays everything from traditional pan music (Socca, Reggae, Calypso, Latin) to funk, rock, and even classical. A steel band requires students to play music on steel pan instruments. Steel pans are acoustic-tuned percussion instruments recycled from oil drums. The music is easy to learn even if you can't read music. Additionally, all the instruments will be provided, and there is no participation cost! For now, the Steel Band is rehearsing on Mondays with students from the Learning Center Program and on Thursdays with Greater Ohio Virtual School students. The goal is to learn a little music, have some fun, and maybe put together a performance at the end of the year. Next year, work will be done to offer the ensemble as a class that could earn a fine arts credit and help towards earning a Fine Arts Seal for graduation.

Check this Steel Band Informational Video to see what the instruments look and sound like!!!  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jj8SsFFRu0b\\_PGsljRV1up9PrLB3ytEo/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jj8SsFFRu0b_PGsljRV1up9PrLB3ytEo/view?usp=sharing)





### Student & Family Engagement

The Greater Ohio Virtual School continues to create new opportunities for students and families to engage while creating annual events that have now become traditions at the school. A **GOVS Cooking Class** has been created and is experiencing success. Students have been given the opportunity to visit the student center, learn cooking techniques, and experience recipes that they can take back and share with their families. The third annual **Valentine's Day Workshop** was held on Wednesday, February 14th! Greater Ohio Virtual School Academic Coaches continued this traditional student engagement events as students made Valentine's Day cards, ate Valentine's Day themed treats and were treated to a photo booth with their friends. Finally, the biggest engagement event of the year was back! **GOVS Bingo Night!** One hundred and thirty Greater Ohio Virtual School friends, families, and students attended the event. Five lucky students took home their own Chromebook to help with their studies and everyone was treated to dinner, a free garage sale, and over 600 prizes.





◆ **WARREN COUNTY LEARNING CENTER** ◆  
**Jason Boone, St. Mary Supervisor/Western Row**  
**Wiley Collett, St. Mary Supervisor/Franklin**  
**Julie Hunter, Laura Farrell Supervisor/Franklin**

**Laura Farrell Campus**

Family Engagement Night held at Laura Farrell was a night full of crafts, good food, pictures with Santa, Bingo, prizes, and even the Grinch! Family engagement night works to foster positive relationships between the school, students, families, and the community. This event helps to remove barriers and increase access and opportunities for families to take a more active role in their child's education.





### St. Mary Campus

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, the students at the St. Mary Campus had many life skill learning opportunities as well as hands on academic learning opportunities. The 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students were eligible to interview for a position to work at the Phoenix Brew. The students had to apply for a position to work in the school based coffee shop, then interview with the staff members that are the managers of Phoenix Brew. Students were then hired to work at the Phoenix Brew, and will be earning PBIS points for their hard work. Employment is based on the student's ability to maintain the Ash level of the school wide level system, and not have any major incidents.

The St. Mary Campus also hosted the Wings of the World program from the Cincinnati Zoo to teach students about animals that can fly. The students had to spend their PBIS points to attend the event, and over 75% of the students attended. Below are pictures of students with animals that the Cincinnati Zoo brought and gave the students the opportunity to interact with. The students enjoyed this visit, and learned new fun facts about about animals. Thanks to the Cincinnati Zoo for giving our students this opportunity.



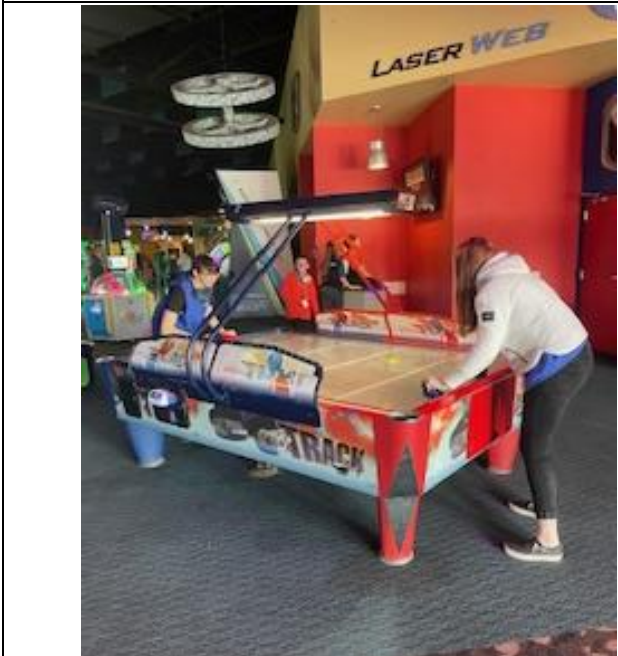
**Western Row Campus**

At the Warren County Learning Center- Western Row Campus, our students have had the opportunity to visit and tour Sinclair Community College in Dayton, and Miami University in Middletown. The students enjoyed visiting different college campuses and seeing the options available to them! We've also had some great success at our Pre-Professional Academy at Sinclair Community College in Mason. Several students completed the Certified Tourism Ambassador course and received their certification as a CTA! We are also very excited about starting our pizza oven business where we create our very own wood-fired pizzas. The pizzas taste delicious, and our students really enjoy getting involved in entrepreneurship! Workforce Development has also partnered with Cartridge Brewing where our students are completing internships. Students have the opportunity to help in the kitchen prepping pizzas and soft pretzels for the day, as well as helping out with cleaning and rolling silverware. The Workforce Development program is doing great things, and we are very excited about the opportunities we have each week!



◆ TRANSITION COORDINATORS ◆  
Amanda Pennix, Supervisor

**TLC**  
TLC interns earned enough tickets to attend an outing to the WEB Extreme in West Chester!! Interns earned tickets by demonstrating PBIS behavior expectations; be safe, be respectful, be responsible, be mindful and be ready to learn.



Surprise Valentines Day recipe: heart shaped pizzas!!



TLC started a coffee cart at our Western Row Campus!! Coffee or Tea from TLC provides interns with the opportunity to read and organize orders, prepare coffee, and deliver coffee to staff every Friday morning. This is a great way to learn about the food and beverage industry as well as practice social interactions. We are grateful to Biggby Coffee in West Chester for partnering with us and providing TLC with the coffee grounds.





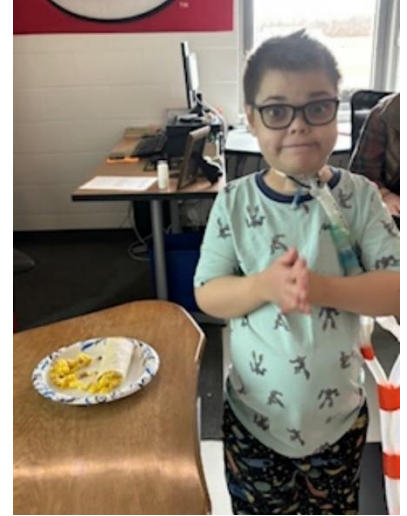
## Transition/Work Force Development Coordinators

### Carlisle High School



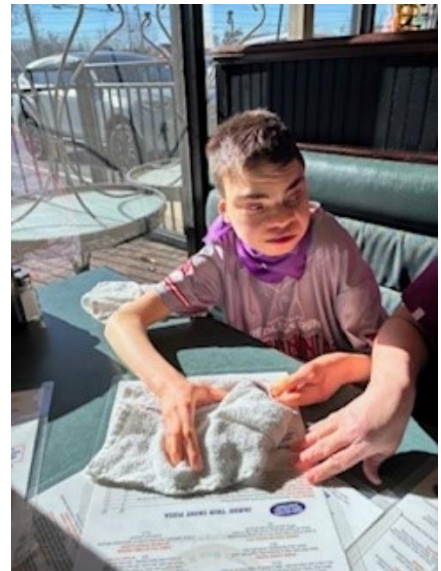
Project Search stopped by Carlisle and presented to Carlisle students about Otterbein and the Government Campus job rotations. Then, the students got to go on a tour of their campus site. They enjoyed the tour. Two senior students applied to Project Search, and they are in the process of preparing for an interview to get a spot in this Transition program. Wish them luck!





Mr. Tincher's class was working on continuing to enhance their life skills in cooking. The students learned how to make a breakfast burrito. They took the ingredients they wanted, mixed them in with the eggs, and cooked them in the skillet.

### Warren County Multiple Disabilities Program

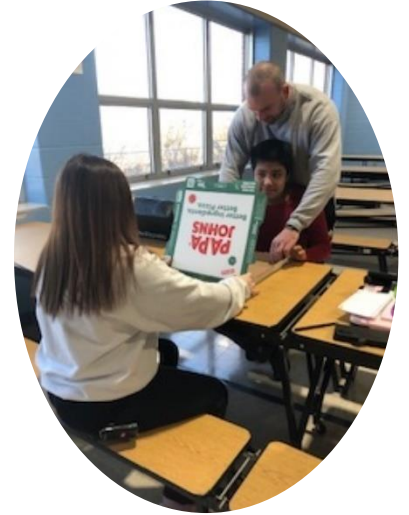


Every Thursday, the Warren County MD program goes to James Third Base to wipe down tables and chairs, refill napkin dispensers, and wipe down menus. They love going out to do work and bring a smile to all of the employees at their workplace.

## SCC – Social Communication Classrooms



SCC has a new in-school internship partnership with Papa John's Pizza. The students from Ms. Kelsey and Ms. Malinda's classes are to prep and assemble the pizza boxes to have them ready. Once it is done, it gets sent back for the workers to be able to grab the pizza box and do their work quickly and efficiently. At the end of the school year, they will get to tour Papa John's to see where their work goes and have a pizza party for their hard work.



DJ has applied to Project Search. He is hoping to get into the program to help him be career-ready and be successful in the future. At the end of March, DJ will be interviewing as part of the enrollment process of Project SEARCH.



Fourth-quarter students from Ms. Deb and Ms. Sue's class started their internship at Matthew 25 Ministries. Every week, they do different types of job rotations of sorting, counting, packing, and putting finished products on the pallets to be ready for shipment. Jeremy, in the picture, is pulling all of the latex gloves from the box and putting them together in pairs, then he is putting them in the Ziploc bag. Once the Ziploc bag is full, he closes it and places it in the big bin. This item will be sent out to various counties for them to utilize.

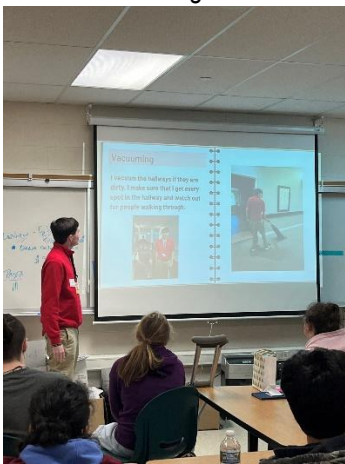


Safe on Main stopped by the WCESC SCC to present to students with information about internet safety. The students got to learn the importance of awareness and staying safe. They discussed what they need to look out for, online etiquette, and what information they should not share online.



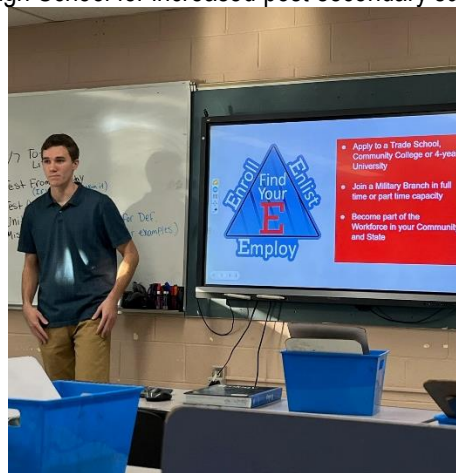
### Mason High School

Warren County Project Search presented their program to Mason high school students. Mason students enjoyed learning about Project Search and seeing their old classmates.



### Franklin High School

Franklin Seniors participated in the Career Quest kick-off. The Career Quest program offers seniors career coaching, opportunities for exploration, and assistance with next steps after High School for increased post-secondary success.



Franklin High School students run a student run business called Barkabilities. Students prepare, bake, package, and sell dog treats to Franklin students and teachers.



### Lebanon High School

The students at Lebanon High School are still exploring careers and working hard. The students have been exploring various careers through small group tours. Students have gone to Sibcy Cline, the fire station, GMi, and the Atrium Campus of Warren County Career Center. These experiences are assisting them make decisions about post-secondary jobs or careers they would like to pursue.



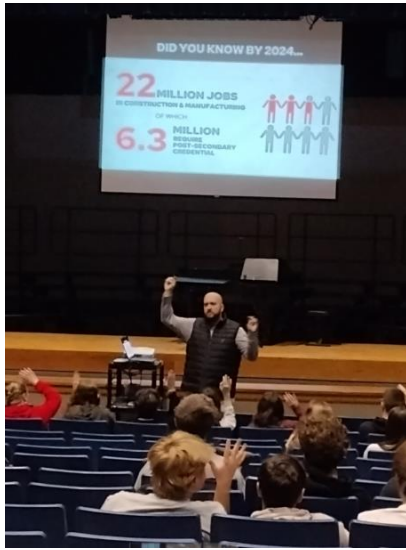


Lebanon High School also hosted an area wide transition fair for the Warren County Educational Service Center. Thank you to Dickey's Barbecue Pit of Springboro, Billie's Burgers of Lebanon, and Groceryland Waynesville for donating food for the presenters!

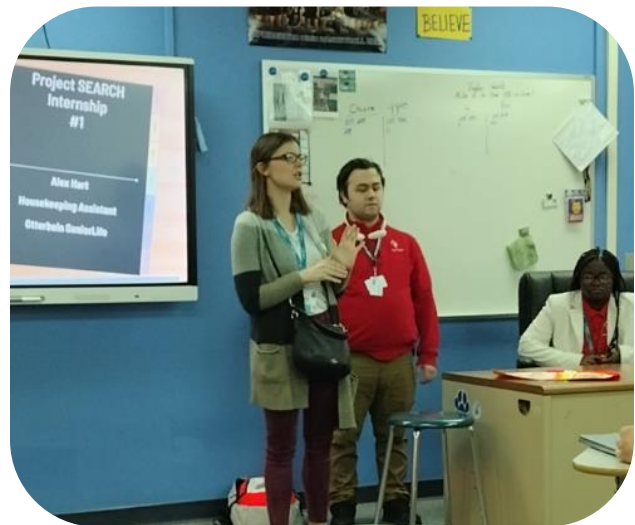


## Springboro High School

The students at Springboro High School have been learning about various job opportunities in the area. Students have gone to tour facilities that they have had interest in. Organizations have come to Springboro to discuss opportunities with them as well.



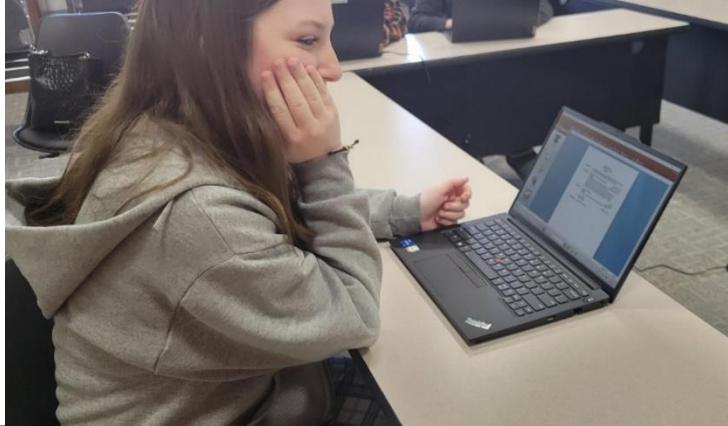
The Springboro students also welcomed interns from Project SEARCH to share their current experience.



## John K. Lazares Alternative School and Work Force Development Academy

Many workforce tours have occurred since John K. Lazares Alternative School students returned from Holiday Break. We started the year off touring FESTO, Ohio Means Jobs Tour-Lebanon, Warren County Career Center (WCCC) Atrium, Lebanon Fire House Station 41, Great Wolf Lodge, Sibcy Cline Realtor, GMI, Ohio Means Jobs (to work on students' resumes), ADVICS and conduct Mock Interviews.

The students received positive feedback from Scarlett at ADVICS regarding their resumes: "She was very impressed that students had their resumes, which she had never seen happen, and the students were able to articulate and ask questions."



Scarlett (ADVICS) and JKLAS Students



Lebanon Fire House Station 41



WCCC Atrium Visit



Ohio Means Jobs Tour and Resumé Writing

FESTO Tour



Mr. Kenneth Howard – Sibcy Cline



### Great Wolf Lodge

Western Row Learning Center students continued touring college campuses after their Winter Break. The first stop was Sinclair Community College – Dayton Campus, then Cincinnati State, and Miami University Middletown Campus. During their tours, they learned about degree programs, transfer programs, college credit plus, etc.



Two students created resumes this month, participated in Mock Interviews, and Travis landed a job at Dorothy Lane Market.

### Western Row Learning Center visits Sinclair Community College – Dayton Campus.



### Cincinnati State and Miami University – Middletown Campus



## PAES Lab

Students continue to explore careers and learn about their skills and strengths in the PAES Lab.



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### ◆ HELP ME GROW and EARLY INTERVENTION) ◆ Stefanie Post, Program Director



Transition planning involves discussions with parents regarding their vision for their child at age three when Early Intervention programming ends. These discussions may include ways to prepare the child and family for potential changes in service delivery, adjusting to a new setting, possible learning opportunities they want for their child and what the family wants access to when their child turns three. Some parents envision their child being at home with them, while others see their child in a more structured preschool setting playing with many friends. Planning allows for a smooth transition from early intervention services under Part C to preschool services under Part B, to the extent those services are appropriate, or to other appropriate services/places/activities. The following families recently transitioned from Early Intervention to Preschool Special Education services and graciously shared their story with us...

"We'd like to start by expressing our gratitude towards the Warren County Early Intervention team for the early intervention services provided to our family and especially to Gam. All specialists were very knowledgeable and dedicated to the service they provide, and it is very evident that everyone loves the work. We received a lot of great coaching, and it helped us with Gam's progress and continues to help us still because of the knowledge shared with us. We've learned a lot! Towards the transition to pre-school, the team did all the pre-work to get us connected and prepared with Mason pre-schools, it was a very seamless and painless process and with very minimal involvement from us. All we need to



do is to join the meetings and prepare the needed forms and/or additional supporting documents. We could not ask for more, overall, from the beginning of the engagement leading up to the transition to preschool, the services provided were exemplary and we felt all the care from the early intervention team. And for that, we are very grateful, and we know that your team will continue to provide help to other families with similar needs. Thank you very much!"



"It was nice to have our coordinator get us in touch with the school and start the process. Their professionalism seemed to set the tone. The transition was something we feared, but being surrounded by experience was a comfort. The first week went better than we expected."

"Our experience with Early Intervention from the beginning has been amazing. From beginning stages to help us get started with Andrea, to services with Stac and Margaret and then finally the transition when he turned 3 into Little Miami Preschool—everything was so smooth and we have seen Easton learn so much throughout this journey!"



We are so grateful for our experience with Early Intervention! Our daughter, Caroline, failed to hit most of her earliest developmental milestones. As new parents, we were feeling many things – concern, anxiety, and most of all, fear. We reached out to Help Me Grow right away, and we were met with incredible kindness and quick action. Our service coordinator, Angela, made all of the necessary arrangements to get our services started immediately. She was also amazingly patient and answered all of our questions along the way. We spent the next three years working with two incredible Physical Therapists – Kaki and Shenae. Their work was so important not only for Caroline, but also for us as a family. They spent each session working on Caroline’s developmental milestones, of course. But above and beyond that, they made sure to fill each session with so much positivity! They didn’t focus on what Caroline wasn’t doing or couldn’t do yet, but instead they always made sure to fully celebrate the things she was doing! In a medical world that too often focused on Caroline’s “failures”, Kaki and Shenae’s positivity truly made all the difference for us. Their impact will literally last a lifetime for Caroline and our family. What a blessing it has been to work with such incredible individuals at Help Me Grow! We will never be able to thank them enough!

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◆ **NURSING SERVICES DEPARTMENT** ◆  
**Terri Elam, RN, LSN, Supervisor**  
**Jill Buffenbarger, RN, Supervisor**

TLC students learned basic first aid from Nurse Belinda Carson LPN. The TLC interns learned how to clean scrapes, apply bandages, and learned what to do if someone has a bloody nose, burn, or muscle sprain.



**About WCESC Nursing Services**  
**One on One Care Nursing**

WCESC employs nurses who provide 1:1 care to students with complicated chronic health care needs throughout the school day. These nurses meet the student at their home, get report from the family or the student's at-home nurse in the morning, ride the bus to and from school with the student and spend the day with the student while continuously monitoring their condition and meeting their health care needs while at school. A few nurses meet their students when they arrive at school.

**School Clinic Nursing**

School clinic nurses are either Licensed School Nurse (LSN) or are directed or supervised by a LSN to provide care for students in their building. Some tasks of the clinic nurse include providing first aid, coordinating care of students with chronic or acute health conditions, administering medications, performing health care procedures, training staff how to recognize and respond to common health-related emergencies, providing vision and hearing screenings, educating families, immunization surveillance, and collecting health data for required reports submitted to the Ohio Department of Health.

WCESC Contacts / Nursing Supervisors:  
[Jill.Buffenbarger@WarrenCountyESC.com](mailto:Jill.Buffenbarger@WarrenCountyESC.com)  
[Terri.Elam@WarrenCountyESC.com](mailto:Terri.Elam@WarrenCountyESC.com)

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◆ MIAMISBURG STUDENT ART EXHIBITION ◆

The Student Art Exhibition is on display through March 16<sup>th</sup> at the Miamisburg Art Guild, 16 N. Main Street in downtown Miamisburg. Approximately seven area school districts participated this year including some WCESC programming. The students displayed some real talent! Thank you to the Miamisburg Art Guild for hosting this important event.

*Best of Show for 2024 was awarded to Abigail Withrow, Valley View High School  
Congratulations to all students who had entries!*

