



**Warren County
Educational Service Center**

www.warrencountyesc.com



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



MARCH 2025



◆ **WCESC HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT** ◆
Pat Paré, Assistant Superintendent

NEW EMPLOYMENT CONSORTIUM: The Warren County ESC is no longer using the Dayton Area School Consortium for our employment opportunities.

We are excited to kick off the NEW **Warren County Educational Service Center Consortium** to handle applications for certified, classified, and administrative positions. Any position we have available will be listed on our website and consortium.

Anyone who is interested in a position with the WCESC or Southwest Ohio Council of Governments should use our employment tab on our website [Current Openings - Warren County Educational Service Center](#)

Any questions, please feel free to contact HR Specialists Dawn.Schroeder@warrencountyesc.com or Dee.Wilms@warrencountyesc.com

◆ **WCESC CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN INITIATIVE** ◆

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN CONTINUES...

As our initiative continues, employees from each department of Warren County Educational Service Center, Southwest Ohio Council of Governments, and Greater Ohio Virtual School have been selected to be recognized as they have demonstrated a quality characteristic as part of our initiative for the month.

There are many employees who demonstrate numerous qualities, but individuals are selected based on their strong suit. Selected staff members are listed in no particular order.

JANUARY:

As we continue to celebrate our WCESC Champions for Children, the month of January was focused on the attribute of COMPASSION. **COMPASSION is defined as recognizing and responding to others' needs with kindness and a desire to help. It involves proactive actions to alleviate distress and improve the well-being of the individuals around them and with whom they work.**

We had an outstanding group of honorees submitted who clearly demonstrate compassion at the highest level and in all the work that they do. January honorees are as follows:

DEPARTMENT	NAME	DEPARTMENT	NAME
Attendance	Trisha Schultz	Occupational Therapy	Leah Bistor
Collaborative Coaching	Brenda McCoy	Preschool	Amy Tate
Coordinated Care	Angela Hensley	Physical Therapy	Ellen Cole
Educational Interpreters	Kristen McClelland	Resource Coordinators	Jenna Jewell
Greater Ohio Virtual School	Justin Smith	Social Communication	Kim Singer
Help Me Grow	Lauren Garrett	School Psychologists	Martin McGinley
JKL Alternative School	Laura Collier	Speech Therapy	Lillian Arthur
Learning Center	Whitney Bowermaster	Transition Department	Rebecca Dun Roseman
Multiple Disabilities	Rob Hamann	Transition Services	Natalie Campbell
Mental Health Therapists	Korey Copeland	WCESC Main Office	Kathy Frauenknecht
Nursing	Jackie Pittenger	Wellness Center	Felicia Burlile
WCESC Supervisors	Kim Gregory		

From this outstanding group of honorees, **Kathy Frauenknecht, Account Receivable Specialist in our Main Office fiscal department was chosen as the Spotlight Champion for January.** Kathy's interview is featured below which highlights the importance compassion plays in the work done within the fiscal department.

FEBRUARY:

The month of February was focused on the attribute of POSITIVITY. **WHAT DOES POSITIVITY MEAN? It's more than just a smile-it's the mindset that fosters a supportive, encouraging, and optimistic environment.** It's the belief that challenges can be overcome, goals can be achieved, and through gratitude and understanding, we can create a space where everyone thrives.

Once again, we received an incredible group of nominations, each showcasing unwavering positivity in their daily work. These individuals lead by example, spreading encouragement and optimism in everything they do.



JANUARY SPOTLIGHT
CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN
KATHY FRAUENKNECT
WCESC FISCAL SPECIALIST



For the month of January, **Kathy Frauenknect, WCESC Fiscal Team Specialist**, has been selected as our Spotlight CHAMPION, embodying the characteristic of **COMPASSION**.

Kathy has been an invaluable member of the Warren County ESC team for the past 18 years, dedicating the last decade to overseeing Accounts Receivable activities in the Fiscal Office. Before joining WCESC in 2007, she worked in the field of transportation. Kathy's keen understanding of finance systems quickly earned her recognition, leading the treasurer at the time to invite her to join the fiscal team after being impressed by her accurate estimates of costs, expenditures, and revenue.



When asked about her favorite part of the job, Kathy shared her love for creating invoices. She finds great satisfaction in ensuring everything is accounted for and fits together seamlessly to support the organization's mission of helping school districts and students. Kathy also emphasized how compassion aligns with the Fiscal Department's overall mission and goals, describing her team as a group of equals who come together to get the job done. **"When one hurts—whether because of work or personal challenges—we are all there for each other."**

Kathy consistently demonstrates compassion through her interactions with ESC team members, other departments, and external stakeholders. She is always available to assist district partners in understanding paperwork and processes. During times of transition, such as when districts onboard new staff, Kathy volunteers to bridge the gap, train others, and provide support as needed. Her compassion also shines through in her thoughtful acts of care for ESC employees facing difficult personal or family situations. Whether it's sending sympathy cards, organizing gift baskets, delivering flowers, or finding other heartfelt ways to show care, **Kathy ensures her colleagues feel valued and supported during challenging times.**

Her kindness extends beyond the ESC, as she frequently leads efforts to encourage and assist fiscal team members in surrounding school districts who are navigating tough circumstances.

Outside of work, Kathy enjoys shopping and engaging with her community. She embraces change and loves to update her home environment throughout the year to keep things fresh and inspiring.

Congratulations, Kathy! We are deeply grateful for all you do to uplift those around you. Your actions exemplify the true spirit of a Champion for Children, and we are proud to celebrate your dedication and COMPASSION!

QUALITIES OF CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN
GRIT ★ GROWTH MINDSET ★ REDEFINING FAILURE ★ OPPORTUNITY SEEKING
COMPASSION ★ ADAPTABILITY ★ POSITIVITY ★ TEAM PLAYER



**FEBRUARY SPOTLIGHT CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN
ALEXIS SOM
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST-KINGS LOCAL SCHOOLS**

We are happy to announce that for the month of February, **Alexis Som, School Psychologist at Kings Local Schools**, has been selected as our **Spotlight CHAMPION** for embodying the powerful attribute of **POSITIVITY!**

Positivity was defined as a mindset that fosters a supportive, encouraging, and optimistic atmosphere. It is characterized by optimism that everyone can overcome challenges and achieve goals with the right attitude.

Alexis has been an integral part of the WCESC school psychology department for the past 1.5 years. When asked about her journey into school psychology, she shared that she realized early on her innate ability to connect with children with disabilities. Through volunteering at out-of-district schools for students with Autism, she discovered her true passion and when she stumbled on the field of school psychology, she knew it was the best career path for her.

For Alexis, the best part of her job is clear: **“Being involved with the students and staff on a daily basis! I find it valuable to be an integral part of the building so students know who I am and how I can support them. Every month, I facilitate a social-emotional circle time where we learn how to identify feelings and learn coping strategies. I love being able to spend time with each classroom and focus on social-emotional learning!”**

Lead School Psychologist, Kristie Strittmatter, describes Alexis as a true source of positivity, highlighting how her encouragement fosters lasting relationships with both students and staff. “She always has a smile on her face and consistently goes above and beyond to offer a helping hand to anyone who needs it.”

Alexis actively works to create a positive, welcoming school environment by greeting students each morning, organizing themed staff luncheons, and planning activities to boost team morale. Mary Beth Fosse, Principal of KEC Preschool, wholeheartedly agrees—Alexis truly displays positivity throughout the building!

When asked how she maintains her positive outlook, even on challenging days, Alexis shared: **“On challenging days, I find myself spending more time with students in the classroom. Spending time with students in the classroom is one of my ‘bucket fillers’ and reminds me why I truly enjoy my career and placement at KECC.”**

Outside of work, Alexis enjoys exploring new parks with her husband and golden retriever, gardening, and traveling.

Congratulations, Alexis! You are a true **CHAMPION for CHILDREN**, spreading positivity and making a lasting impact every day!



QUALITIES OF CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN
GRIT ★ GROWTH MINDSET ★ REDEFINING FAILURE ★ OPPORTUNITY SEEKING
COMPASSION ★ ADAPTABILITY ★ POSITIVITY ★ TEAM PLAYER

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

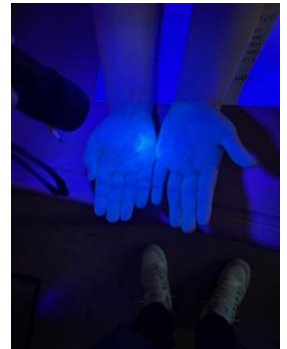
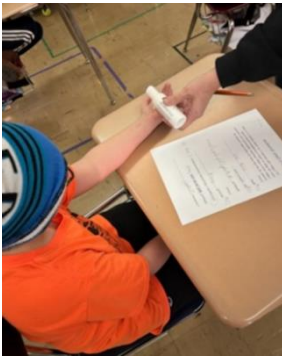
WCESC NURSES IN THE CLASSROOM

Nurse Lora Torrance LPN at the Warren County Learning Center, Laura Farrell Campus in Franklin helped teach students in Miss Flick's class about germs and the importance of washing hands the correct way. They discussed how germs are everywhere and invisible, and what happens when you don't wash your hands properly.



The students used a special lotion with pretend germs and a UV light to look at the germs on their hands.

The students were then instructed on how to properly wash their hands to get rid of all the germs using soap and water while singing the ABC song. The students then checked their hands again with the UV lights to see if there were any germs left behind. It was such a fun experiment!



WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN IT SNOWS?

YOU GO TUBING AT

PERFECT NORTH SLOPES!

A student attending Indian Hill Exempted Village Schools enjoyed a day of tubing at Perfect North Slopes with her classmates recently.

WCESC Nurse Chastidy Myers LPN is shown here having a blast with her student for an unforgettable adventure!



NURSE CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN NOMINEES

All nurses at the WCESC do amazing work for their students and families. This school year, the department is choosing just one staff member each month who demonstrates a chosen characteristic or attribute that is contributing to their success to recognize and encourage them in their efforts. Below are the Nominees from the Nursing Department for 2025 so far. Congratulations Jackie and Chas!



Jackie Pittenger, RN
Compassionate Mindset



Chastidy Myers, LPN
Positivity Mindset

WCESC Nurses volunteer to help make NIGHT TO SHINE a fun night for all!

Here are a just a few of the many WCESC nurses and other employees who had the privilege of volunteering to help make Tim Tebow's Night to Shine Event at Christ's Church at Mason a safe, fun event!



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 reports 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 a Licensed School Nurse (LSN) or are directed or supervised by an 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
Terri.Elam@WarrenCountyESC.com

◆ OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ◆

Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Related Services
Kim Steele, MOT, OTR/L, Lead Occupational Therapist

SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful occupational therapy staff members who are helping to shape the future of the profession by mentoring and educating future therapists. This school year, occupational therapy students from Eastern Kentucky University, Kettering College, the University of Cincinnati, and Xavier University, as well as an occupational therapy assistant student from Shawnee State University, have been completing their fieldwork alongside WCESC therapists. Through this hands-on experience, these students are gaining valuable insight into the field while learning directly from our skilled and knowledgeable practitioners in school settings. A special thank you to occupational therapists Sue Bault, Jessica Carter, Alex Combs, Brooke Edwards, Sara Erwin, Kristen Donay, Madi Hodge, Carrie Nowak, Julia Walsh, and Ellie Winterod, as well as occupational therapy assistant Deb Greutman, for their dedication as fieldwork educators. Your guidance and expertise are making a lasting impact on the next generation of occupational therapists!

ENHANCING SENSORY SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

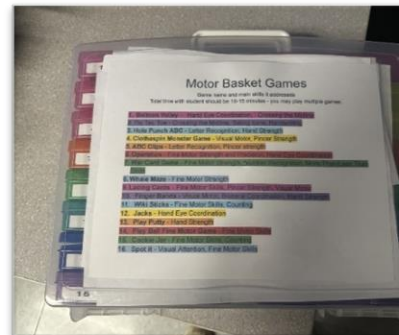
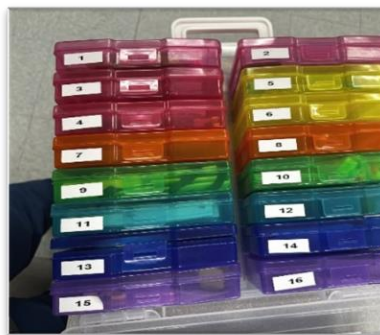


Occupational therapist Alex Combs has been working diligently to develop additional sensory support for students in the Warren County Educational Center's Social Communication Program. While collaborating with staff and students, including physical therapist, Tara Montgomery, Alex identified the need for elementary students to have more opportunities to engage in sensory-based activities that support self-regulation. Currently, students have the chance to participate in sensory activities through a structured motor room, managed by occupational and physical therapy staff and integrated into the classroom schedule. In addition, students now have access to their own elementary motor room, which is part of a Tier 1 sensory support. This new sensory space addresses significant needs—both sensory and otherwise—and serves as a designated area for students to perform their sensory diets. It also provides a space for students to access when needed, helping to eliminate barriers and ensure adequate sensory regulation for elementary students.



ENHANCING KINDERGARTEN SUCCESS WITH MOTOR SKILLS TOOLKITS

To better support kindergarten students at Loveland Early Childhood Center, occupational therapist Christina Kissick developed a motor skills toolkit as part of the school's MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) process. These kits include engaging games and activities designed to strengthen essential motor skills needed for classroom success. Taking a collaborative approach, Christina partnered with the school's gym teacher to integrate these toolkits into small group sessions, providing targeted support to students. This initiative serves as the second layer of intervention within the MTSS framework that Christina has worked to develop for the school. At the start of each school year, Christina enhances the MTSS process by providing weekly "Grab and Go" lessons for the first six weeks. These lessons cover key foundational skills, such as pencil grasp, cutting techniques, and sensory support, ensuring all teachers have access to essential strategies. As teachers implement these lessons, they can then utilize the motor skills toolkits for additional student support as needed.



ROSA PARKS SHOE TYING CLUB



Amy Whisman, occupational therapist, developed a creative solution to address a growing need for students at Rosa Parks Elementary by introducing a Shoe-Tying Club. Amy designed and implemented this program to support students who have never been taught how to tie their shoes or have struggled to learn the skill. Amy first launched the initiative with fifth-grade students, offering 15-minute sessions on Fridays based on teacher availability. Students met with Amy weekly until they successfully mastered shoe-tying and "graduated" from the club. Upon graduation, they received a fun pair of shoelaces and learned how to lace and adjust them properly. After working with fifth graders, Amy expanded the program to include fourth-grade students, with plans to reach as many students as possible before the end of the school year. Through this program, Amy is helping students gain independence with a practical life skill while also boosting their confidence.



◆ PHYSICAL THERAPY ◆

Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Related Services
 Tonya Ellis, PT, DPT, Lead Physical Therapist

BRINGING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION TO MOTOR LABS

Alicia Penwell, PTA (Springboro and Laura Farrell), has done an outstanding job implementing motor labs at our Laura Farrell location this year. She shared her expertise with new staff during our *New Hire Bootcamp*, providing a training session where she explained the various elements she incorporates to make motor labs engaging and effective. One of the activities she highlighted for a "cool-down" was *anchors*—a grounding exercise that encourages students to reflect on their favorite people, places, and things, sparking meaningful conversations.

ANCHORS



PEOPLE
 Family
 Friends
 Teachers
 Coaches
 Counselor

OBJECTS/THINGS
 Stuffed Animal
 Water
 Candy
 Picture of a Pet
 Walks



PLACES
 Favorite Chair/place to sit
 Favorite vacations spot
 Calming Corner



Beyond our school setting, Alicia extended her impact by training future Physical Therapy Assistants at *Sinclair Community College*, demonstrating how motor labs can be utilized to support student development.

Alicia's creativity was especially evident when a planned visit from the zoo was unexpectedly canceled. Without missing a beat, she transformed the motor lab into a zoo-themed experience, designing stations dedicated to different animals. Students could *swing like a bird*, *crawl through a fish tunnel in the "ocean"*, and engage in other imaginative activities.

Her ability to integrate play into movement-based activities not only makes motor labs more engaging but also helps students participate in tasks that might otherwise feel challenging. Alicia's innovation, dedication, and passion for her students are truly inspiring!

THE POWER OF SENSORY AND MOVEMENT: ENHANCING STUDENT SUCCESS

During the Professional Development Day on January 16, 2025, Physical Therapist Tara Montgomery partnered with Occupational Therapists Alex Combs and Ellie Winterod to present to the Social Communications program staff. Their session focused on sensory processing, sensory diets, the importance of movement and exercise, and the role of play in student development. The presentation was well-received, with SCC staff expressing their appreciation and sharing positive feedback on the valuable insights and strategies provided.





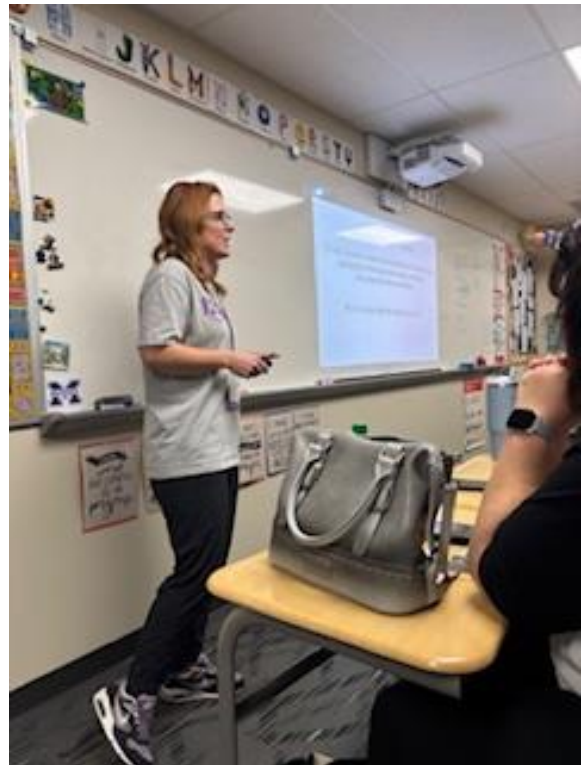
MIDDIE IMPACT: EXPLORING BEHAVIOR VS. SENSORY IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

During a recent Middle IMPACT Professional Development session, Physical Therapist Ellen Cole and Occupational Therapists Amy Whisman and Whitney Spradling led an engaging presentation on Behavior vs. Sensory in the School Setting. Their session focused on helping staff distinguish between sensory-related challenges and behavioral responses, offering valuable strategies for supporting students.

The presentation received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with staff highlighting the depth of information, practical strategies, and engaging content. Many found the session informative, with

comments such as:

- *“Great explanation in knowing what behaviors are sensory and what are choice! Great strategies!”*
- *“It was great to learn how to distinguish between sensory troubles and behavior.”*
- *“All 3 presenters were wonderful and very helpful explaining sensory issues”*
- *“Great session that helped us know the roles of OT and PT better.”*



◆ **SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY** ◆
Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Related Services
Denise Lacy, MS, CCC-SLP, Lead SLP

Allison Broderick Presents Capstone Research at ASHA Conference

This winter, Allison Broderick had the exciting opportunity to travel to Seattle to present her university capstone project at the **national American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conference**.

Her research explored communication development in toddlers with a history of very preterm birth. Key finds from her presentation included:

- ✦ Traditional predictors of communication development, such as **maternal education and household income, were not clear indicators** of communication outcomes at age 2.
- ✦ The **home environment played a significant role** in predicting early gestural and spoken communication.
- ✦ In the very preterm population, **medical factors or early intervention may have a stronger influence** on communication outcomes than previously assumed.

Allison's work contributes valuable insights into the field of speech-language pathology, emphasizing the importance of individualized approaches to early communication support.

Congratulations to Allison for this impressive achievement and for representing her university and Warren County ESC on a national stage!



Empowering Communication: AAC Training at SCC

SCC Speech-Language Pathologists Anna Koscielicki and Lexie Lopez recently teamed up with the mental health, occupational therapy, and physical therapy teams to deliver an impactful 45-minute presentation on **AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) and Communication Basics**.

During the session, staff members gained valuable insights into:

- ✓ Different types of AAC and their uses
- ✓ How to model and prompt AAC respectfully
- ✓ The importance of consistent AAC access
- ✓ Communication changes during moments of escalation
- ✓ Understanding the functions of communication

- ✔ Core vs. fringe vocabulary and their roles in meaningful interactions
- ✔ Practical ways to incorporate core vocabulary and communication functions into daily school activities

By equipping staff with these essential AAC strategies, the SCC team is ensuring that all students have the tools and support they need to communicate effectively in every environment.

Thank you, Anna and Lexie, for your dedication to enhancing communication access for all!



Addressing Disproportionality in Speech and Language Impairment

In January, **Angela Brouhard, MA CCC-SLP, Regional SLP Consultant**, led an important discussion on the **disproportionality of Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) in special education across Ohio**. SLI remains the most disproportionate category in the state, requiring districts identified with significant disproportionality to **redirect 15% of their federal special education funds toward comprehensive early intervening services** aimed at addressing contributing factors.

Ms. Brouhard’s presentation on eligibility guidelines was one of several professional learning opportunities conducted for the speech-language pathologists at the ESC and our affiliates this year. Key **learning objectives** from the session included:

- ✔ **Understanding the components of Comprehensive ETRs (Evaluation Team Reports).**
- ✔ **Deepening knowledge of Adverse Impact on Education.**
- ✔ **Clarifying eligibility and non-eligibility criteria for Speech or Language Impairment.**

This initiative ensures that districts have the knowledge and resources needed to provide equitable and effective support for students with communication needs.



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

This school year is flying by! Since returning from Winter Break, our school psychologists have been hard at work in their buildings. We were excited to host presenters from Green County ESC at our March Department Meeting for an engaging session on *The Language of Emotions*. Our school psychologists were actively involved and thoroughly enjoyed the presentation.

The department was happy to honor Alexis Som as the WCESC February Spotlight Champion for Children.





**WARREN COUNTY
 EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER**
"Champions for Children"

FEBRUARY SPOTLIGHT CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN
ALEXIS SOM
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST-KINGS LOCAL SCHOOLS

We are happy to announce that for the month of February, **Alexis Som, School Psychologist at Kings Local Schools**, has been selected as our **Spotlight CHAMPION** for embodying the powerful attribute of **POSITIVITY!**

Positivity was defined as a mindset that fosters a supportive, encouraging, and optimistic atmosphere. It is characterized by optimism that everyone can overcome challenges and achieve goals with the right attitude.

Alexis has been an integral part of the WCESC school psychology department for the past 1.5 years. When asked about her journey into school psychology, she shared that she realized early on her innate ability to connect with children with disabilities. Through volunteering at out-of-district schools for students with Autism, she discovered her true passion and when she stumbled on the field of school psychology, she knew it was the best career path for her.

For Alexis, the best part of her job is clear: **"Being involved with the students and staff on a daily basis! I find it valuable to be an integral part of the building so students know who I am and how I can support them. Every month, I facilitate a social-emotional circle time where we learn how to identify feelings and learn coping strategies. I love being able to spend time with each classroom and focus on social-emotional learning!"**

Lead School Psychologist, Kristie Strittmatter, describes Alexis as a true source of positivity, highlighting how her encouragement fosters lasting relationships with both students and staff. "She always has a smile on her face and consistently goes above and beyond to offer a helping hand to anyone who needs it."

Alexis actively works to create a positive, welcoming school environment by greeting students each morning, organizing themed staff luncheons, and planning activities to boost team morale. Mary Beth Fosse, Principal of KEC Preschool, wholeheartedly agrees—Alexis truly displays positivity throughout the building!

When asked how she maintains her positive outlook, even on challenging days, Alexis shared: **"On challenging days, I find myself spending more time with students in the classroom. Spending time with students in the classroom is one of my 'bucket fillers' and reminds me why I truly enjoy my career and placement at KECC."**

Outside of work, Alexis enjoys exploring new parks with her husband and golden retriever, gardening, and traveling.

Congratulations, Alexis! You are a true **CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN**, spreading positivity and making a lasting impact every day!



QUALITIES OF CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN
 GRIT ★ GROWTH MINDSET ★ REDEFINING FAILURE ★ OPPORTUNITY SEEKING
 COMPASSION ★ ADAPTABILITY ★ POSITIVITY ★ TEAM PLAYER

In addition to our ongoing partnership with the University of Cincinnati, which places interns with supervisors in our partner districts, we're excited to announce a new collaboration with Miami University. This partnership will place Graduate Assistants with supervisors across our districts. We're looking forward to welcoming three candidates to WCESC soon for interviews, and we're eager to continue supporting the growth and development of the school psychology field.



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

Great things are happening in the SCC program! Students and families participated in interactive academic and social activities including Family Engagement Night (FEN), therapy dogs, UC internships, and a carnival. Western Woof, our student run business, launched this quarter with great success.

Our February Family Engagement Night was a HUGE success. Returning and new participants participated in family game night. Many thanks to our Resource Coordinator Kim for planning such a fun evening.



Therapy dogs have been shown to have numerous benefits for individuals of all ages. From reducing anxiety and stress levels to improving social interactions and boosting overall mood, the presence of a therapy dog can have a profound impact on mental and emotional well-being. We are fortunate that dogs visit our students once per quarter.

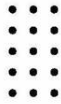


Our elementary student participated in carnival activities with students from the Multiple Disabilities program. Activities included a petting zoo and face painting.



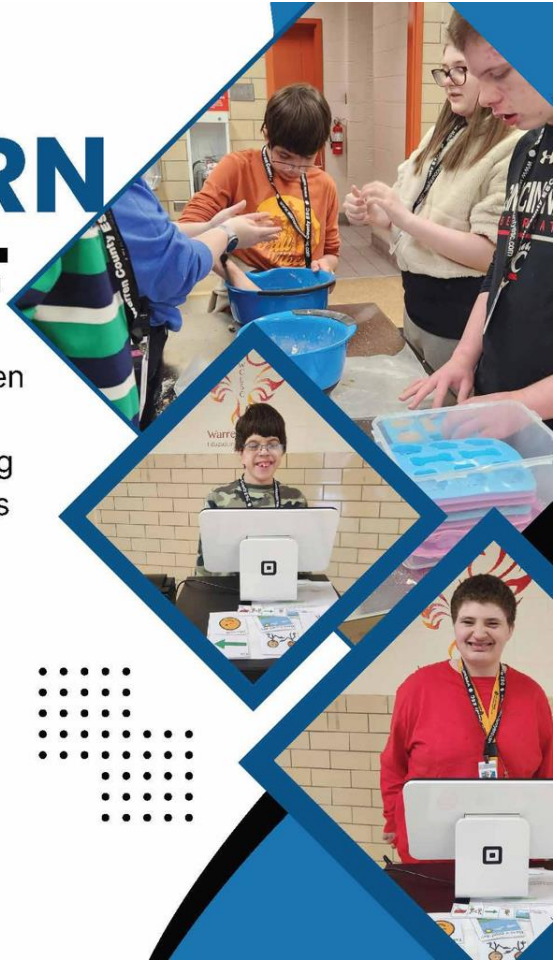
Students in our Project Warren County program participate in vocational internships at the University of Cincinnati. One of the internships is taking inventory of vending machines on campus.

The SCC program is excited to partner with Stephen Carter to develop an entrepreneurial mindset within our students. Stephen explains that entrepreneurship education is more than a program—it is about developing the entrepreneurial mindset in all learners, so they are radically transformed to impact their lives. It's about growth mindset, grit, redefining failure, and opportunity seeking. It's about engaging students with hands-on education that provides practical training for success in life. Western Woof opened for business this quarter.



WESTERN WOOF

Our SCC interns have been very busy cooking, packaging, and delivering dog treats. These interns have been gaining and practicing social skills, vocational skills, and employability skills. The interns demonstrated exceptional grit in their performance.



◆ COORDINATED CARE ◆

Kevin Stevens M. Ed., LSW

Supervisor of Coordinated Care & Clinical Committee Coordinator

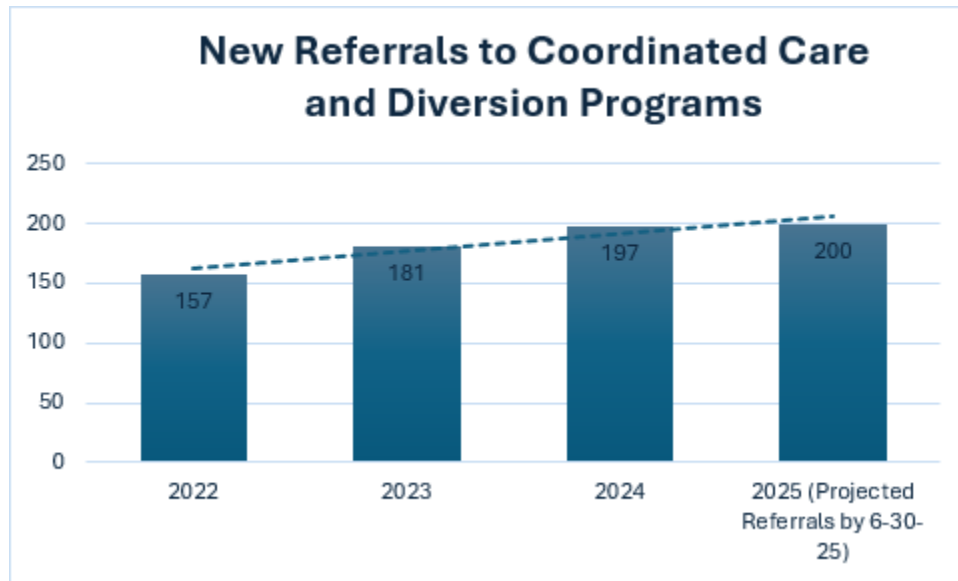
Referrals to Coordinated Care have been steadily increasing, with projections indicating that by the end of the 2025 fiscal year, the organization will have received over 200 referrals for services. Coordinated Care provides essential support to high-need youth who present a potential risk to themselves or the community.

Several factors contribute to this rise in referrals. The growing population in Warren County has led to an increase in the number of youth requiring support. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in youth experiencing trauma at a younger age. Heightened awareness among residents about the availability of support services has also played a significant role in the uptick in referrals.

One particularly concerning trend is the significant increase in the number of youth referred due to threats of harm towards others. This underscores the critical need for the services provided by Coordinated Care.

As the demand for support continues to grow, Coordinated Care remains committed to addressing the needs of high-need youth in the community, ensuring they receive the necessary care and intervention to promote safety and well-being.

For more information about Coordinated Care and their services, please visit their website or contact Kevin Stevens at 513-695-2900 Ext. 2916 or Kevin.Stevens@WarrencountyESC.com.



◆ **WARREN COUNTY LEARNING CENTER** ◆

Wiley Collett, Program Supervisor
Jason Boone, Assistant Supervisor
Julie Hunter, Assistant Supervisor

Laura Farrell Campus

Career Exploration at The Learning Center

Students at The Learning Center – Laura Farrell Campus have been busy exploring a wide range of careers this year, with exciting hands-on experiences and special guest visitors! So far, we’ve had the opportunity to learn from professionals such as U.S. Air Force Air Traffic Controllers, Highway State Patrol officers, and even beekeepers.



In addition to hearing from experts, students have also explored various career paths through interactive activities, stepping into the roles of donut shop workers, chefs, and dog groomers—just to name a few! These experiences help spark curiosity and provide valuable insights into different career opportunities. We look forward to continuing our journey of career exploration throughout the year!



St. Mary Campus

The St. Mary Campus hosted the Cincinnati Zoo's Birds of a Feather program. The students go to interact with birds from the zoo and learn fun facts about them. All students met the criteria for the event, and the Learning Center staff are proud of the students' behavior during this event and looking forward to hosting the Cincinnati Zoo again soon!

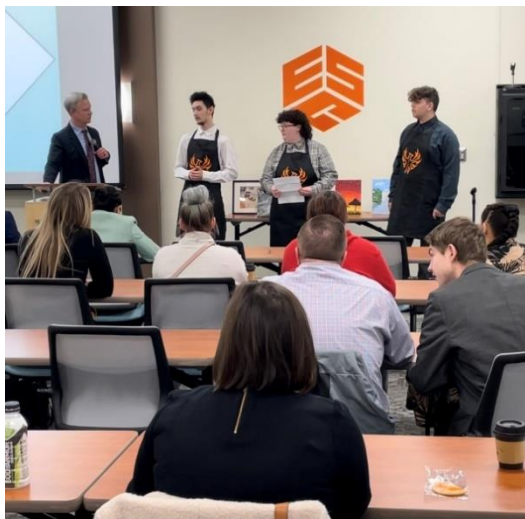


The Learning Center staff held a surprise staff versus student dodgeball game for students that were on the 3 highest tiers of the level system. Students got to partake in eating burritos for breakfast and participate in games of dodgeball. The staff and students all enjoyed the games, and the students displayed excellent sportsmanship throughout the event. The goal of the event was to teach students that you never know when fun events may be happening at school!

Western Row Campus

Our students at Western Row have had some awesome experiences this quarter! They were given the opportunity to tour Miami Valley Gaming to get a full experience of the different career opportunities available in the gaming industry. Our students got to work with robots at Sinclair and learned how to work with and program the robots so they can manipulate different objects and move items from one place to another. In February, a few of our students participated in the Workforce Development Showcase at the ESC where they were able to demonstrate some of the skills they've learned over the year regarding our student-run business, the internships they partake in, and their participation in Sinclair's pre-apprenticeship program. Our students have also started our new business, Phoenix Fire Bakery! We are excited for this new business opportunity where students can learn and apply the entrepreneurial mindset focusing on opportunity seeking, grit, growth mindset, and redefining failure! We are really looking forward to the 4th quarter and are excited to see how the school year wraps up!







◆ GREATER OHIO VIRTUAL SCHOOL ◆
Shawn Lenney, Director

GOVS participates in the 2nd Annual Warren County Workforce Showcase!

Congratulations to those students and staff members who participated in the 2nd Annual Warren County Workforce Showcase held at the Warren County Educational Service Center on Thursday, February 6th! GOVS Workforce Development Coordinator Laura Griffin talked about graduation seals and pathways to those in attendance. Laura was joined later in the program by GOVS Junior Jenna Haubner, who discussed her time at the Pre-Professional Academy. GOVS Technology Director spoke to the group about creating the Greater Ohio Virtual School Esports Team. The new team will participate in their first competition in March and is anxiously awaiting their new jerseys! The Showcase's grand finale was the first performance of the year by the GOVS Steel Band! GOVS students combined with Learning Center students to play three songs to end the event. You can watch two songs at the link below and check out some pictures from the event!

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KwRgMPBxGDpGPgWmwqrLU_kk7RrDPsfe/view?usp=sharing





Bingo Night is a Success!

Over 120 students, friends, and family attended the 3rd annual Greater Ohio Virtual School Bingo Night this year, which had to be moved to the Western Row Gym to accommodate the large number of participants. Food, prizes, and a Groovy seventies theme were all part of the action for the evening! Students and families walked away with prizes ranging from puzzles and games to Chromebooks

that students could utilize for their classes. Larosa's Pizza was catered for the event, and everyone walked away with a full stomach and a positive family engagement experience!



◆ TRANSITION COORDINATORS ◆
Amanda Pennix, Supervisor

TLC

TLC Interns participated in a carnival put on by students involved in the Cincinnati Christian Chick Fil A Academy. Interns enjoyed face painting, games, crafts, and visits with farm animals including Dominic the dog!!



TLC enjoys many great partnerships within the Mason Community. Interns are exposed to a variety of work experiences through these partnerships. This job rotation, TLC has been lucky to partner with Gordon Food Services, Hilton Hotels, and LaRosa's to name a few of our partners. The interns learn valuable vocational skills that help them work toward independence.



The TLC Gardeners have been hard at work!! They harvested their second crop of multi-colored lettuce. This lettuce was used in creating BLTs! The interns cut their own tomatoes, prepared their bacon and toast, and used the freshly cut lettuce to make their delicious sandwiches.



Transition/Work Force Development Coordinators

Lebanon High School

Lebanon High School students have been exploring various careers. Students have gone on several college and career tours. Students have gone to Paul Mitchell, Kettering College, Cincinnati State, and Macy's. They are learning about careers in the fields of cosmetology, medical, culinary, and retail. They have also been working with area agencies to prepare resumes and learn about on-the-spot interviewing.



Western Row Multiple Disabilities Classroom

Western Row Multiple Disabilities Classroom are still working hard in the community and creating fun times for the students at Western Row. They have weekly themes and celebrations. We are constantly looking for opportunities to spread joy to all. They have found a new site in which they are spreading joy. Matthew 25 Ministries has welcomed the group with open arms. They have reunited with former teachers and students. Pictures coming soon!

John K Lazares Alternative School

The John K Lazares Alternative School students continue to complete community outreach activities with Urbancrest Church in Lebanon, Ohio. Students go to the Countryside YMCA to work on culinary skills and overall health & wellness. Students are continuing their participation in the partnership with Sinclair Community College where they are exploring and preparing for their careers. Several have applied to the Warren County Career Center. Several students did a wonderful job presenting at the Work Force Development Student Success Showcase, as they shared information on all the great programming happening through Warren County ESC. Students have also met with local agency representatives to update or prepare resumes. Students have toured Paul Mitchell and

Rumpke. Good luck to our medical exploration group that have prepared for an upcoming tour and on-the- spot interview at the Atrium in Middletown!



Mason High School

Students at Mason High School and Franklin High School were able to see a presentation from Project Search. Project Search is a Transition program that focuses on gaining employability skills and work experience. Upon completion of the program, Project Search staff assists students in finding permanent employment.



Franklin High School

Students at Franklin High School participate in monthly career presentations hosted by Industry Professionals. They have recently been able to learn about careers within the Real Estate and Landscaping industries.

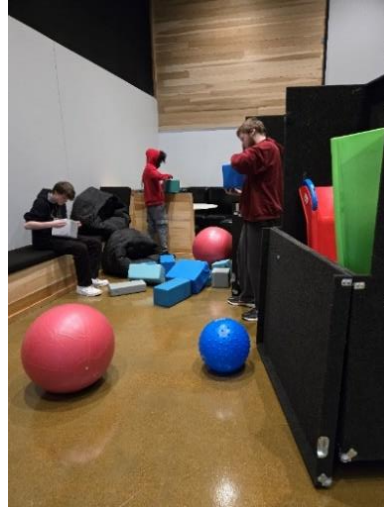


Students at Franklin High School completed an improvement project to earn a 12-point industry credential in Lean Six Sigma. Students completed teacher surveys, student surveys, observations to improve a 45 minute "Roar" time within the school day to make it more meaningful. Students came up with a fun monthly activity for students to participate in called "Cat Time". They listened to the voice of the students to create ideas for activities such as cooking, physical activities and sports, musical skills, and recreational hobbies where they can connect with their peers.



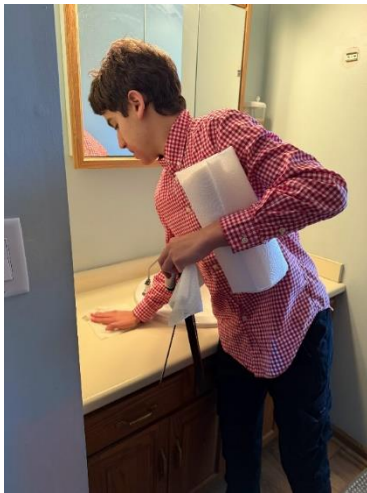
Kings High School

Our transition to employment students have been working hard this year! Check out these pictures of them at River's Crossing Church, where they help clean, organize, and prepare for events! These students also help with school events, like the career fair, and the end of year work-study celebration.



Waynesville High School

Need your space cleaned and organized? This is the student you want on your team! Here is a picture of him keeping his work site spic and span! This student takes pride in their work and has gained plenty of life and employability skills thanks to our partners at The Riding Institute.



Little Miami High School

What does it take to be an actor? Thanks to La Comedia, our Transition to Employment students now have a better idea! In Ohio, it's not often students get to meet someone who is a professional actor/actress, but on this trip, the students got to go backstage to see the behind the scenes of production, as well as interview the actors/actresses. Our students who are interested in going into acting have now gained more insight into what it takes to be an actor, and what their day-to-day would look like.



◆ WELLNESS CENTER – DEERFIELD and PHOENIX CAMPUSES ◆

Jared Kaiser, Director

Tara Gee, Supervisor of Student Services and Instruction

Angela Bamber, Program Specialist (Deerfield Campus)

Brooke Rice, Program Specialist (Phoenix Campus)

As the Wellness Center team has stepped into the second semester, we want to take a moment to recognize and celebrate student success as 13 students successfully graduated from programming. We are incredibly proud of their hard work and dedication and wish them the very best in their educational pursuits. At the same time, we extend a warm welcome to our new students! We encourage them to fully engage in our Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programming, which is designed to support growth, confidence, and success in achieving personal and academic goals.

Every Month Students are Recognized for Success In the Classroom and For Their Ability to Foster Positive Relationships With Those Around Them.

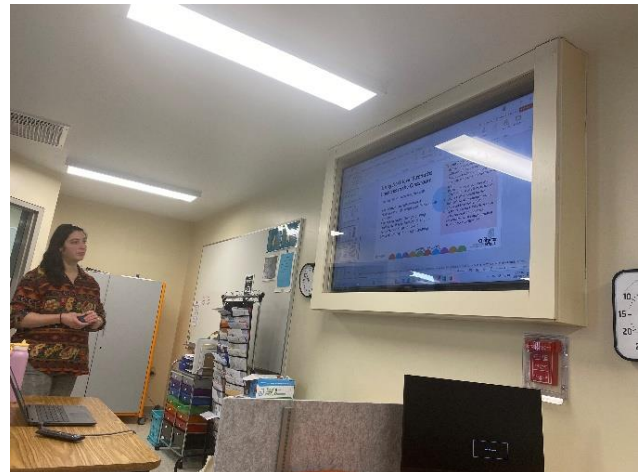
Congratulations to the Award Recipients!!!!



Always Seeking Growth:

Wellness Center Staff Engages in Continuous Professional Improvement Throughout the Course of the School Year Through Participation in Professional Development, After School Collaboration, and Coaching Cycles.

Staff Recently Participated in Character Effects Professional Development Training and The Team Continues to Engage in Learning through a Book Study Focused on "Help For Billy" - A Book Focused on Enhancing Behavioral Approaches in The Classroom and At Home.



Elementary Phoenix Campus Students Enjoyed Several Fun and Exciting Events Throughout The Last Few Months. The School Celebrated the 100th Day of School on February 11th by Students Dressing up Like 100 Year Olds With Fun Activities Throughout the Day!

Mystery Reader Time is Always a Hit for the Students. Classroom Three Recently Enjoyed a Reading Visit From Miss Brooke!

Madcap Puppets Made a Visit Where Students Enjoyed a Play of the Nutcracker Which All Students enjoyed!!!

One of the Most Exciting Activities of the Quarter Was an Opportunity to Celebrate The Success of One Of Their Peers Graduate From the Program. This Special Student Was Celebrated With a Building-Wide Clap Out as He Walked to the Bus On His Final Day!



◆ MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT ◆
Jessica Woody, Director of Mental Health Services

During the months of January and February, our mental health teams have been busy working on kindness and self-care activities. We have incorporated them throughout programs with both staff and students. Additionally, mental health staff have worked on additional mental health prevention groups and programs within districts!

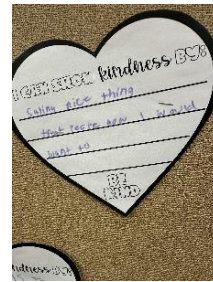
In addition to the work within programs, the supervisor team has been active in attending job fairs in order to continue to grow our department for the upcoming school year!



WCESC Mental Health Department-Program Team

Alternative School

JKLAS wrote ways they can be kind on hearts and posted them on the board. They also did a kindness coloring contest with students using their artistic talents to promote kindness.



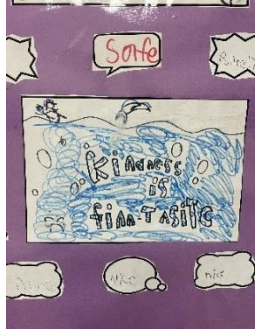
Learning Center Campus

Learning Center Laura Farrell, St. Mary's and Western Row Mental Health Team has been focused on kindness for prevention month across their school. Beth Brown led a Valentine's themed staff circle where staff wrote kind notes to other staff and students. They also discussed the importance of showing kindness to self and tangible ways staff can show themselves kindness.

Students have been working in groups on prevention posters on ways to show kindness to their peers and the school. St. Mary's and Laura

Farrell created a kindness chain with ways to show kindness. Laura Farrell students utilized their group to create pictures and words to promote kindness on posters hung in the hallways. WR also utilized kindness cards and pictures. The use of kindness as prevention helps increase social emotional learning, empathy, knowledge, and awareness of self and others





Social Communications

At Social Communications, the mental health behavior interventionists, Lindsey and Emily, updated the communication boards with kindness activities and resources for guardians. Our SCC therapist, Holly made handouts for a classroom that shared education and trauma informed approaches to help address behaviors related to Kleptomania within the classroom setting.



Wellness Center

Wellness Center staff have also been working on Kindness and have found unique ways to practice mindfulness with students such as these origami hearts!

Mental Health Consultant District Team

Carlisle Local Schools-Erica Ivey

During Kindness week Erica Ivey collaborated with the school counselor, Ms. Westfall, for some kindness fun! Students participated in Spirit Week to promote the power of kindness throughout the school. Additionally, Kindness Club that is ran by Erica had a fundraiser selling Kindness Grams to students and staff to "catch" each other being kind.





Carlisle Jr/Sr High-Lori Szabo

The past two weeks both the Jr High and High school have been participating in kindness week. It was a chance for students to spread positivity and encourage empathy. Students wrote positive messages on heart sicky notes and were encouraged to pass it on to another peer they normally would not associate with. The students were also given friendship bracelets and asked to take one and pass one on to someone else with a positive message. Students were encouraged to use whiteboards around the school to write encouraging messages and quotes. Teachers enjoyed helping them with this!



Greater Ohio Virtual School-Jackie Rusche

At GOVs, students took the initiative to create academic goals for themselves. They also created cut out hearts with directions to write something that you love inside the heart. Alongside, taking an affirmation or leaving one for someone else. Students are encouraged to take things on the string that they need and also leave an affirmation for someone else on the board.



Little Miami-Meredith Reuscher and Amy Anderson

At Little Miami, Meredith and Amy are working hard at the high school to make sure that Hope Squad is learning leadership skills. Pictured is the leadership group and one of the presentations by students.



Little Miami Middle School-Bethany Singleton

Bethany recently added two new groups for students in 6th-8th grade: Mindful Mondays and Feel Good Fridays. These groups are designed to support students in their transition to and from the weekend.

Little Miami Elementary-Kimberly Robertson

Kim conducted social academic instructional groups this year. This group targets a number of students who participate in the Tier-2 Check In, Check Out intervention and are not making adequate progress. The group session is 30 minutes one time per week for a total of six weeks. Group goals consist of increasing student skills in the social, emotional, and classroom function domains.

Little Miami-ECC and Primary-Jackie O'Reilly

Since winter break, Jackie's referrals have doubled at Little Miami Early Childhood Center and the Primary School. Jackie is in the middle of our social academic instructional group focused on building self-control skills. She is part of a response team for our high-needs students to offer breaks, additional support and aid in de-escalation. It has been a busy year serving both programs!

SMOY-Jessica Kerns

Jessica Kerns at SMOY has been facilitating a boys' group to build friendships, among the 2nd grade boys. Every Thursday morning the groups play a different game in the gym and focus on taking turns and good communication skills! It's been a lot of fun!

Waynesville-Elizabeth Kaufman

Liz assisted with implementing 1N5's Sources of Strength program across various school levels. At the high school level, the Spartan Mental Health Group has led initiatives like creating posters for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and continued conversations around mental health and well-being. In the other building, Liz introduced Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to elementary students, using ornaments placed on a tree to visually represent the different levels of human needs. This interactive activity helps students better understand how their basic needs impact their emotional growth. Liz, along with the students, also engage in activities like self-esteem tower building games and mindfulness painting techniques, which nurture self-confidence, emotional regulation, and creative expression. Liz has also provided several students with coping skill kits that they utilize in class. Several students have reported that they actively engage with these kits when feeling big emotions.



Trauma Informed Care Coach-Crystal Pergram

The Trauma Informed Care Coach (TIC) Coach position is located in the K-1 buildings of Franklin City Schools. Crystal has been working hard to implement classroom strategies that match mental health themes for each month. She was able to work with local resources to bring in free haircuts for students and have encouraged staff to look at the needs of the whole child in their classroom. Additionally, Crystal worked on Care Closets that are open to students and families to access what they need such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, laundry detergent, lotion and more. These items help build confidence and reduce stress for families and



students.



Tier 1 Coaching-Cindy Bruner and Karen Crabb

The Learning Center's PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) committee has developed an innovative rewards program that recognizes students for embodying our school-wide values: safety, mindfulness, readiness to learn, respect, and responsibility. Through a tiered system of Phoenix, Ash, and Wildfire levels, students earn daily points that unlock increasing privileges and opportunities.

Students look forward to monthly reward activities and special quarterly celebrations, with higher-level achievements earning more exclusive experiences. Recent events have sparked joy and creativity, from indoor snowball fights complete with s'mores to

artistic projects like painting rockets and birdhouses, and culinary adventures in making personalized trail mix treats.



Under the guidance of Tier 1 coaches Karen Crabb, MA CCC-SLP, and Cindy Bruner, M.Ed., this rewards program serves a vital purpose beyond fun. By incentivizing positive behaviors, we reinforce the social-emotional skills and mental health strategies students learn during their time at the Learning Center, creating a foundation for lasting behavioral success.

◆ JOHN K. LAZARES ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ◆

Kari Burris, Director of Related Services & JKL Alternative School
Jon Kuehnle, Interim Supervisor

Student of the Month – Krystal W!



For our March Student of the Month, JKLAS is proud to recognize Krystal. Krystal is consistently helpful and respectful, always putting in a lot of effort in her work. She frequently seeks assistance from the Intervention Specialists, showing her dedication to improving and learning. When she faces challenges or feels overwhelmed, Krystal handles it well by using mindfulness and coping skills. Her ability to stay calm and focused under pressure is truly impressive.

Rockin' the Steel Drums!



No one can "beat" JKLAS students! Every week, as a PBIS reward, our students have the opportunity to learn how to play the steel drums. Mr. Lenney teaches them the "bass"-ics, and students learn valuable skills that can have positive reper-"cussions" later in life!

Family Engagement Night

JKLAS celebrated our 3rd Quarter Family Engagement Night on March 4. Students, staff, and families enjoyed card games, board games, and a free BBQ dinner. Thanks to all who attended. We can't wait to see you next quarter!



JKLAS students are the G.O.A.T.!

Thanks to [Goat Country, LLC](#), for bringing in their kids to meet our kids. Students got the opportunity to benefit from some great goat therapy, and were able to pet, and play with the goats, and to learn more about our community's connections with agriculture and animal husbandry.



Champion for Children

For our March Champion for Children, JKLAS is proud to recognize Mr. Lonzy Addison, Behavior Interventionist, in his first year with JKLAS and the ESC. Mr. Addison exemplifies this month's trait of adaptability through his cheerfulness, professional flexibility, and his spirit of collaboration. He is always able to go with the flow and adjust on the fly to any number of situations. He frequently takes the initiative and looks for the best ways to proactively work with our students. He is a tireless worker who genuinely cares about our students. Thank you, and congratulations, Mr. Addison!



JKLAS Got Game!

Recently, JKLAS Director Kari Burriss faced off with a student in a 1-on-1 basketball contest. Students and staff cheered on their favorites, while other staff officiated.

And the winner is...
Ms. Burriss, by a score of 5-4!
Better luck next time, students!

◆ MULTIPLE DISABILITIES PROGRAM ◆

Students identified with Multiple Disabilities – Western Row MDESC
Kara L. Dirksing, M.Ed., OTR/L: Director of Special Education Programs
Jill Buffenbarger, RN: Program Supervisor

Mason Students Learn at 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 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 to 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 number 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

Mason Fire Station 52

The City of Mason Fire Department handles over 4,800 fire and medical emergency responses each year. The department provides primary Fire and EMS protection within the corporate limits of Mason along with mutual aid assistance to neighboring communities 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Dispatching is through the Warren County Communications Center, located in Lebanon, a city 5 miles north of Mason.

The Fire Department operates from two stations located on the north (Station 51) and south (Station 52) ends of the city. Fire and EMS personnel are customer service oriented and work closely with the residents, businesses and City administration. The department is committed to a stringent training schedule including EMS, Fire and Technical rescue training drills. The City of Mason Fire Department is a part of the Northeast Fire Collaborative, uses the Blue Card Command System, and operates under the Greater Miami Valley EMS Council Protocol.





Fire Station 52 is located at 5500 Cedar Village Drive. Ladder 52, Medic 52, and Medic 53 are the primary response units in the areas south of Tylersville Road. This station is staffed with 6-8 personnel, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The City of Mason employs a full-time fire safety inspector who enforces state and local fire codes in the city. The City of Mason Fire Department's goal is to work with businesses to ensure their continued success by minimizing losses through loss control and fire and emergency prevention. At least once a year, the inspectors visit all businesses in Mason to ensure that they provide a safe work environment and are following state and local fire codes. If violations are found, the owner/occupant is given notice to correct the items and is given an appropriate amount of time to make the changes to obtain compliance.

The fire safety inspector also works closely with the city's Engineering & Building Department to review plans for new subdivisions, buildings, and additions to existing structures. Their goal is to make sure these meet fire code regulations and are easily accessible for fire and EMS equipment, and to help ensure that all fire safety items are addressed prior to the start of construction.

A significant part of Mason's Fire Department services is public education programming taught by on-duty Fire and EMS personnel. Please contact the Fire Department to set up Car Seat Inspections, Station Tours and Fire Safety Talks.

Mason's Campus Safety Team initiative improves safety and advances the partnership between the city, Mason City Schools, business partners and the community. The Campus Safety Team is made up of individuals within the Fire and Police Departments and continues to build upon Mason's culture of wellness and positive relationship building. As a community partner, the Team serves as a resource for your safety training needs. The following training programs are provided free of charge and can be tailored in length depending on your specific needs: CPR/AED Training, Emergency Action plan Review, Fire Extinguisher Training, and Stop the Bleed.

Of the outing, classroom nurse, Samantha Wolf stated, “as a person who works in the medical field, I always find it so impressive how our first responders are so well trained and prepared to rush to emergency situations and help people in desperate need.” Intervention specialist, Jenni Carr added, “there are unfortunate times when people who are medically fragile like our students require help from first responders. It was an honor to visit Fire Station 52 and meet some of our local heroes.”

Fire Station 52
5500 Cedar Village Drive
Mason, OH 45040
(513) 229-8500
imaginemason.org

MDESC Has Talent!

On Thursday March 6th, the five classes in the Multiple Disabilities Program collectively performed in the 2nd Annual MDESC Talent Show. Students in Kelly Zhao’s classroom showed their skills riding bicycles through an obstacle course, dancing to Taylor Swift’s hit “Shake It Off,” and Kids Bop’s version of 2025 Grammy award winner Beyonce’s hit, “Texas Hold ‘Em.”



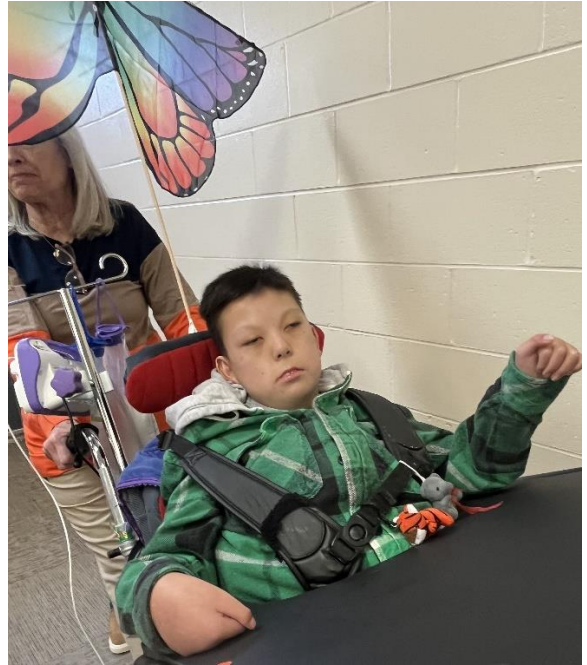
Students in Jenny Bishop's class led the audience in an "out of the park" performance of the Hokie Pokey, sang the song "You're Welcome," from the movie *Moana*, and demonstrated some outstanding tether-ball skills that would make Napoleon Dynamite jealous. Students from Jenny Carr's class jammed to Miley Cyrus' Grammy award winning song, "Flowers." And the students in Rob Hamann's class performed a sign language version of Walt Disney's, "It's a Small World Afterall."



Students in Samantha Martin's classroom broke a leg to R. Kelly's single, "I Believe I Can Fly." They danced to the Macarena and played to the beat of "Wipeout," by the Sufaris. Ms. Martin's students closed the show with jokes and magic tricks.

Of the talent show, cafeteria manager April Dye exclaimed, "It really moves my heart and soul to see ability, not disability in our students. The students in the Multiple Disabilities Program have such compassionate, dedicated, and professional staff. It is always such an honor and joy to interact with the program."

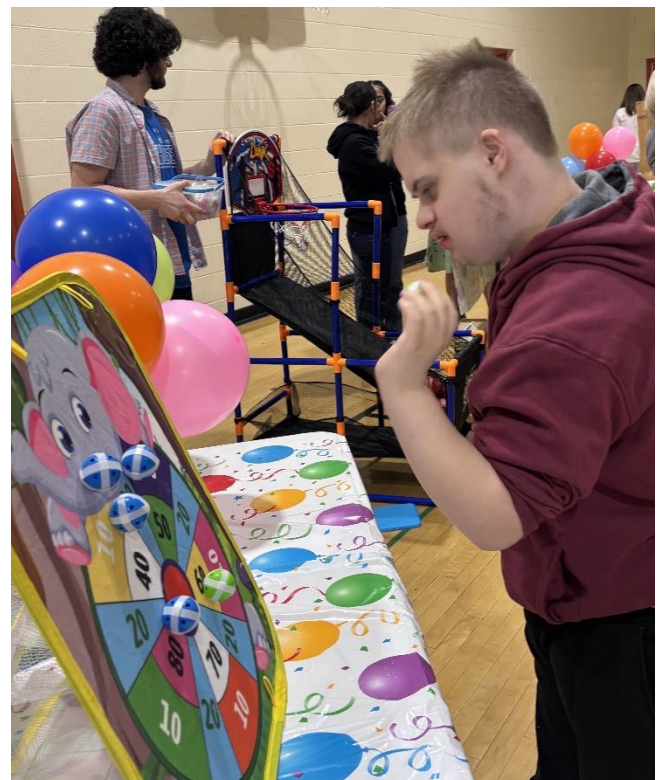






CCS Carnival Comes to Western Row

On Friday February 28th, students from Cincinnati Christian School (CCS) brought a carnival to the Western Row Campus of Warren County Educational Service Center. The students from CCS are members of the Chick-fil-A Leadership Academy. They brought several carnival games and prizes for our students to play and win. They also brought a very friendly dog, a goat, and a cow for everyone to pet. After the carnival, all the students from CCS and Western Row returned to the Multiple Disabilities wing to enjoy lunch together and socialize. Lead paraprofessional, Bobbie Steele said of the carnival, "I love it so much when young adults from typical schools offer their service to our students and spend time with them. It is always so great when our students can spend time with typical peers. The students and teachers from CCS were fantastic."





Mason Student-Interns “Like Sand Through the Hourglass” Part 3

This school year, the Mason students in the Transition classroom have been busy engaging with their transition goals as they intern at various local businesses every day of the week. Every Monday, the transition students work at SPCA Cincinnati filling gallon Ziplock bags with kibble. On Tuesdays the students work at James’ Third Base Restaurant cleaning menus and chairs, and stocking napkin dispensers. On Wednesdays, they work as greeters at Bigby Coffee West Chester. And on Thursdays, they volunteer at Mathew 25 Ministries. Once a month, they work at Joshua’s Closet inside Mason Christ’s Church stocking groceries in their pantry.

When asked about partnering with the students, James Third Base owner, Jim Horning reflected, “When I opened our Sports Bar, James’ Third Base, ‘The Last Stop Before Home,’ many people assumed it was named after me. However, what they didn’t know was that we named it in memory of our son, James, who we tragically lost in a car accident during his senior year of high school. James had an immense compassion for those less fortunate, and his memory drives our mission.

To honor James, we opened and supported various memorial foundations, organized wrestling invitationals, golf outings, supplied families with Thanksgiving dinners, given families Christmas when they were not able, and engaged in numerous philanthropic endeavors. And then, we crossed paths with the Multiple Disabilities Program from Warren County Educational Service Center, and Mason High School. When we were asked if students in the Transition classroom could intern at the restaurant a few days a week, we jumped at the chance. We felt like it was a sign from our son, urging us to make a meaningful impact.



Two years ago, we met the students and staff from the Transition classroom. It was a heartwarming experience for both my staff and me. Joining forces with these wonderful individuals from Warren County Educational Service Center and Mason High School has helped us find a sense of purpose again, as we continue to move forward in life. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to this special group of volunteer interns for being part of our restaurant and playing a significant role in this small yet meaningful community.

Susan Simendinger is the Programs Director at Joshua's Place. Of the partnership, Susan remarked, "The students from WCESC come once a month and help re-stock our shelves at our food cooperative in Mason. They go to Kroger and pick up our Clicklist and then bring the order back and stock us up. I have never had the pleasure of being there when they are delivering the order, but I have seen a couple of great pictures with their smiling faces. I know when it's their week to do it because it's the tidiest the stockroom has been all month long. Everything is nice and neat and in order! They even make sure the snack basket is filled and ready for our families when they come. Thank you so much to Jill Buffenbarger and her students for doing such a great job each month!"



Nyketa Gaffney is the Senior manager of Public Relations & Communications with SPCA Cincinnati. Of the partnership with WCESC, Nyketa commented, "At SPCA Cincinnati, we are a community built on respect and love for all living beings. We are driven by our passion to improve humanity through animal welfare, with an understanding that animals reveal so much about who we are as people. Working

alongside students with disabilities collaboratively empowers our entire organization and strengthens our humane efforts. These students remind us that all things are possible and that success is in togetherness.”

SPCA Cincinnati
1900 Conrey Road
Cincinnati, OH 45249
(513) 541-6100
spcacincinnati.org

James Third Base
1079 Reading Road
Mason, OH 45040
(513) 330-9109
jamesthirdbase.com

Mathew 25 Ministries
11060 Kenwood Road
Blue Ash, OH 45242
(513) 793-6256
m25m.org

Joshua's Place
83 North Section Road
South Lebanon, OH 4565
(513) 617-9099
joshuasplace.cc

Western Row MDESC Students Host Families at Family Engagement Night

On Wednesdays February 12th, students enrolled in the Multiple Disabilities program joined the school-wide programs hosting families for Western Row's third quarter Family Engagement Night. This quarter's theme was "Game Night." Families were invited to visit the school from 6:00-7:30. Dinner catered by Papa John's was served in the cafeteria.





Heidi Isbell is a paraprofessional in the transition classroom. Of the evening event, Heidi stated, "Family Night was a great time. I loved the Game theme. Fun was had by all who participated." High school classroom paraprofessional, Jenifer Smith added, "It is always so nice to have the opportunity to have informal conversations with the parents and families of our students."

Resource Coordinator Kim Bolin is the manager of Family Engagement Night. Kim states, "I truly enjoy watching the students have such a great time with their families and/or caregivers. There's nothing better than smiling faces lighting up a room! I have to give all the credit to the amazing staff from all three programs that provide a welcoming, comfortable, and positive atmosphere causing all those beautiful smiles."

Western Row Students Defy Gravity

When the heavy snow fell in February, students in the Multiple Disabilities Program bundled up in their winter clothes and boots and braved the elements on snow sleds. Taking turns, they zoomed down the hills of Mason cheering and laughing all the way! With the help of a 100-foot extension cord, and several staff members, they zoomed up the hill as well.



Program nurses Jacqui Pittenger and Samantha Wolf, and lead paraprofessional Bobbie Steele coordinated the sledding activity. Of the day, Bobbie stated, "As always, we focus on ability not disability. Everyone can have access to winter sledding fun." Jacqui added, "Seeing the smiles, and hearing the joyful screams made me so happy. I love my job!"

◆ **HELP ME GROW and EARLY INTERVENTION HOME VISITING** ◆
Stefanie Post, Program Director

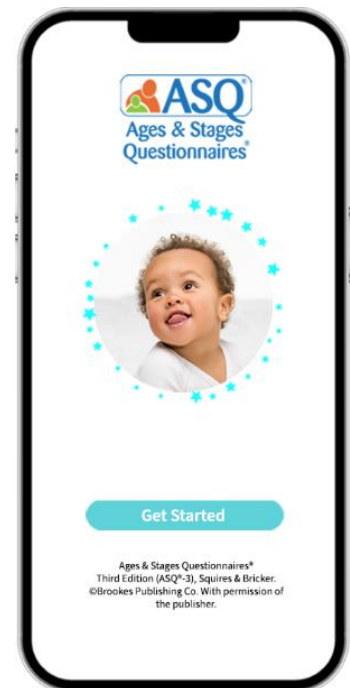


**CHECK
THIS
OUT**

Ohio's Help Me Grow program officially launched Sparkler, a new platform for both families and providers to complete developmental screenings, receive results, and access play activities.

Parents and caregivers can use the Sparkler: Play for Parenting app on their mobile device to:

- Complete free Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) with their child
- Share the screening results with their child's providers
- Access age-appropriate activities to foster growth and development
- Get parenting tips
- Add one or more children
- Upload pictures to their Sparkler account that can "scrapbook" a child's progress and help parents see that what they're doing day to day is having an impact on their child's development.



Once a completed ASQ is submitted via the Sparkler app, a Help Me Grow Developmental Screening Specialist will contact the family to review the results and connect them to additional resources.



Scan QR code to download the Sparkler app

Use the access code **OH** to register after downloading.

Use the access code **OHWCHMG**

Fast Facts

Why Developmental Screening and Early Intervention are Critical

- ★ **80%** of a child's brain develops between **birth and age 3**.
- ★ **90%** of a child's brain develops **before age 5**.
- ★ **Between 16-18%** of children have **developmental delays or disabilities**.
- ★ **1 in 36** children has **autism spectrum disorder**.

7.5 months is the average age at which families report concerns about their child.

1 in 3 infants and toddlers who received early intervention services did not later present with a disability or require special education in preschool.

93% of families receiving early intervention services for their child report that the services are either good or excellent, according to a study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Intervention BEFORE kindergarten is crucial!



Studies have shown that children who receive early intervention for developmental delays are more likely to:

- ✓ Graduate from high school
- ✓ Hold jobs
- ✓ Live independently
- ✓ Avoid teen pregnancy, delinquency, and violent crime

Identifying and addressing social-emotional problems early reduces the need for special education.

All infants and young children should be screened as part of their ongoing health care to ensure they are meeting developmental milestones. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends screening using standardized, validated tools like the Ages & Stages Questionnaire.