



**Warren County  
Educational Service Center**  
*"Champions for Children"*



**DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER**



**Tom Isaacs, Superintendent**

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

**1879 Deerfield Road, Lebanon, Ohio 45036  
513-695-2900**



**WCESC'S JILL BUFFENBARGER NAMED  
2025 GEMS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION WINNER  
BY MASON DEERFIELD CHAMBER**



WCESC could not be happier to announce Jill Buffenbarger as the 2025 Excellence in Education winner. She is not only a valued asset to our organization but an overall quality individual who quietly leads behind the scenes shaping futures, building systems of care, and lifting voices that often go unheard.

Every child deserves a champion, and for more than a decade, Jill Buffenbarger has been that champion—ensuring students with profound medical and complex needs have the support to learn and thrive. As Nursing Supervisor at Warren County ESC for 12 years, Jill has matched highly skilled nurses with students across 25+ districts, ensuring children with medical needs receive the care required to attend their local schools.

For the past five years, Jill has led the Multiple Disabilities Program, reshaping the educational experience for medically fragile students, including those who live at Brookside Extended Care. Under her leadership, the program has expanded access to assistive technology, empowering students with the most significant physical limitations to communicate their wants and needs. She has also increased community engagement by opening doors for authentic learning and inclusion.

Jill's influence extends far beyond the ESC. She is an active member of Christ's Church in Mason and is a hospice volunteer and medical missionary. Alongside her husband Dave, she co-leads Tim Tebow's Night to Shine prom experience in Mason and actively volunteers with Cincinnati TOPSoccer and the Mason Challenger League, creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities to connect, grow, and thrive.

Determined, compassionate, and unwavering, Jill inspires everyone around her to lead with purpose. Her ability to connect resources, elevate students, and strengthen her community reflects the very essence of a Gem of Excellence.

As a connector and caregiver, Jill Buffenbarger's work leaves a lasting impact on every child, family, and neighbor she serves, making her a well-deserved recipient of this recognition.

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## ◆ JOHN K. LAZARES CAREER EXPLORATION CENTER ◆

Jennifer Maynard, Director

As we finish the first semester at the Career Exploration Center, our students are locking in, finding their stride, and making meaningful progress in their pathways. The routines are set, confidence is growing, and classrooms and labs are buzzing with hands-on learning, problem-solving, and real-world skill building. From strengthening durability skills to gaining deeper insight into high-demand careers, our students are showing what focus, curiosity, and hard work can accomplish. We're proud of their momentum - and excited for what's ahead.

At the JLCEC, students explore hands-on, career-connected learning across every grade:

**7th–8th Grade:** Students are working through the Food Truck Entrepreneurship module where they are learning about food trucks and designing their own food truck. The experience will end with a guest speaker who owns and runs a food truck and catering business (Twisted Greek) and samples of his wares.

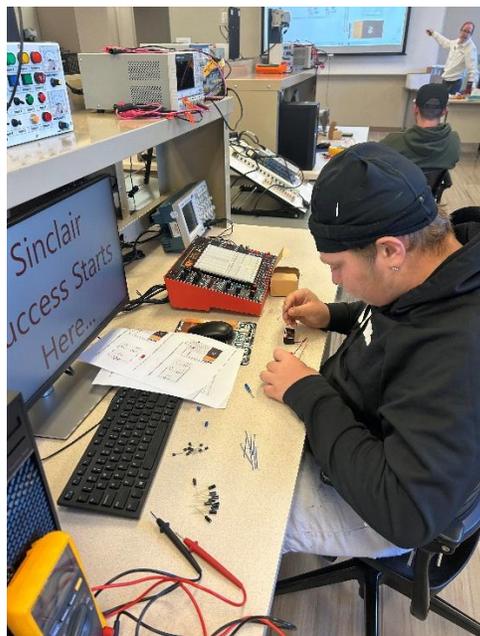


**9th Grade:** Students successfully filled a LARGE pizza order and a LARGE cookie catering order – teamwork is making the kitchen work!



**10th Grade:** Continue to explore commercial drone piloting – becoming more confident with every flight. They are also wrapping up the Junior Achievement Rapid Business Planning module. We are also excited to launch Hope Reins for 2025/26 – which is an immersive learning experience in partnership with *Miracle Horses, Healing Hearts* at Sarajevo Farms. Through this unique equine-assisted learning experience, students work one-on-one with horses in a safe, supportive environment, building trust, practicing emotional regulation, and discovering career possibilities in farming and equine care. Six students have been identified to participate in this year's program.

**11th Grade:** Attend the WCESC Pre-Professional Academy at Sinclair, engaging with 30+ employer partners through interactive sessions, lunch & learns, and site visits. So far, students have explored healthcare and skilled trades through one day workshops. They are also wrapping up the Advanced manufacturing Rotation where skills learned apply toward the pre-apprenticeship and OhioMeansJobs Career Readiness Seal. Industry site visits include TriHealth Clinton Regional Hospital, Kraft Heinz, and Festo.



**12th Grade:** Students participated in a vision boarding session (Visioning a Successful Life) – visually creating their ideal life, expanding their belief in possibilities and are spearheading a student-run coffee delivery service on the first Friday of each month that celebrates ESC students at the Wildfire and above levels (launched 11/14).

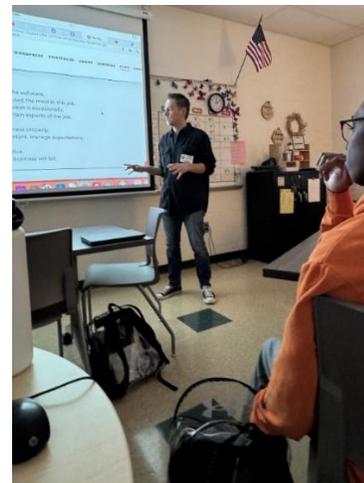
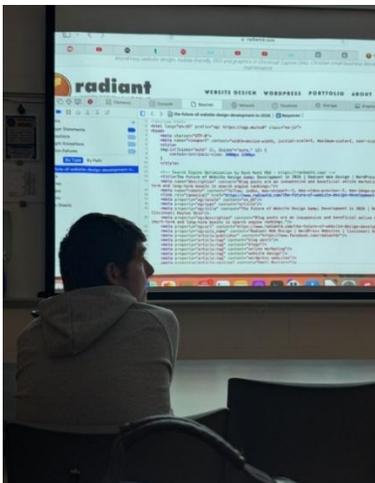
Professional Skills in Action - Alongside career exploration, students are practicing the basics of professionalism - handshakes, thank-you, eye contact, and smiles. They're off to a fantastic start!



◆ **TRANSITION COORDINATORS** ◆  
Amanda Pennix, Supervisor

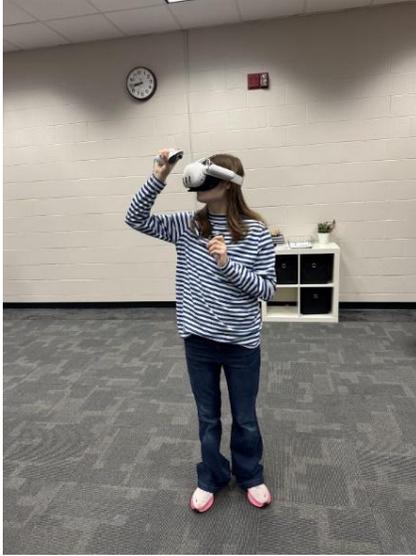
**Little Miami-**

This quarter at Little Miami High School, we were able to introduce our students to a local web designer! The students that participated in the guest speaker presentation all have an interest in web design/development, or a general interest in coding! The students learned more about coding, developing a website, designing a website and career opportunities! As a bonus: The students also got to learn what it is like to own your own business!



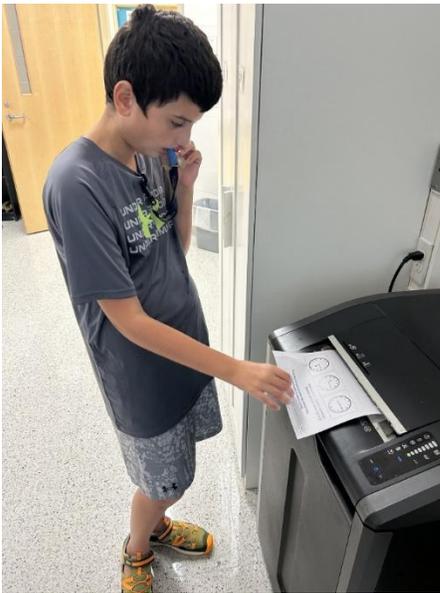
**Waynesville-**

This quarter at Waynesville JR/SR High, the students had the opportunity to meet with Ohio Means Jobs to discuss/explore career opportunities! This opportunity came with support on building a resume, information about how OMJ can remove barriers to a student's success, and of course, the virtual headset career exploration!

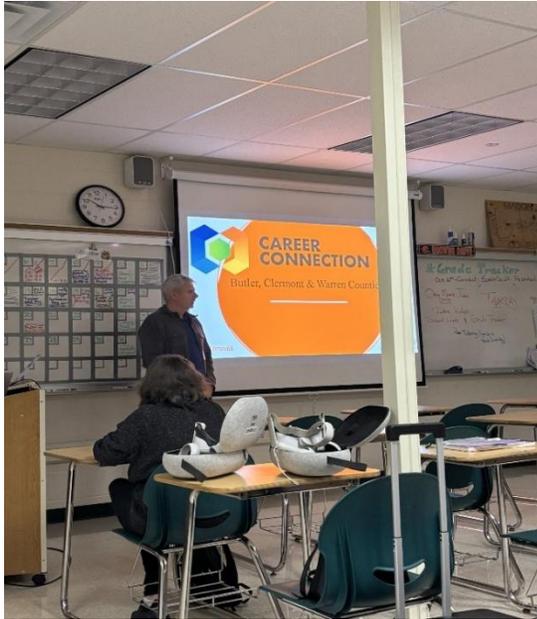


**Mason-**

This quarter we are spotlighting our Mason Middle School students. Over at the middle school, students are already connected to a school-based job where they are constantly gaining new skill-sets! Our students love helping the custodians clean up after an event by clearing the scuff marks in the hallways!



Mason Students participated in a presentation from Career Connections to learn more about services that can support them on their post-secondary journey. Students and Teachers also got to have some fun with Career Exploration VR.



### Lebanon High School

The students at Lebanon High School have been busy. In addition to work study, Lebanon students have participated in college tours and career exploration tours. We have visited Sinclair. We have explored the areas of construction, manufacturing, nursing, cosmetology, and hospitality and tourism. They have also listened to career speakers that have come into the school.





### Kings High School

The students at Kings High School participate in both on and off campus work experiences. They deliver treats to various staff members with the Jolly Trolley. Students are working on their communication and customer service skills. Some of our pizza lovers are becoming pizza chefs as they go to Donatos to prepare both pizzas and salads! Of course, we have our career explorers that are combining with other groups to explore various careers. Our most recent outing was to explore careers in the medical field.





### Franklin

Students learn team problem solving skills and earn Industry Recognized Credentials in the Leadership Problem Solving Class at Franklin High School.



Franklin High Students highlight student run businesses at the Transition Fair & Student Expo. The Transition Fair & Student Expo hosted local agencies and groups that can provide resources and services to Franklin and Warren County Students.





WCESC Supervisor of Transition Services, Amanda Pennix, presented at the Journey Into Adulthood Expo as part of a panel made up of professionals and parents. The WCESC Transition Coordinators were able to attend the Expo to learn more about support for students as they transition into Adulthood.

## TRANSITION LIVING CLASSROOMS (TLC)

### Worksite activities

TLC interns have been hard at work this season, gaining valuable hands-on experience at a wide range of community businesses. They've taken on roles at Red Robin, Marriott, Hilton, McDonald's, LaRosa's, Tractor Supply, and Gordon Food Service, building practical job skills while learning the expectations of professional workplaces. Closer to home, they've also been developing customer service and organizational skills through our Coffee Cart program. These diverse work experiences give interns the chance to explore different career paths, strengthen their independence, and contribute meaningfully to the community. We're incredibly proud of their dedication and growth at each site.

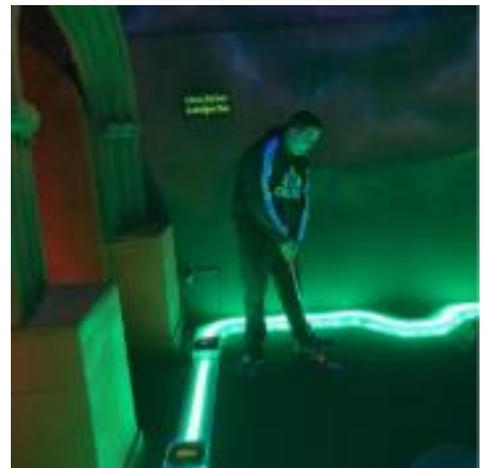




### Outings

TLC interns have been busy making memories and strengthening connections through a variety of fun community outings within our first trimester. From lively fall parties and shared meals at local restaurants to energetic bowling days, each experience has brought the group closer together. They've also enjoyed quiet moments of discovery at the library and high-energy adventures at Web Extreme, creating a perfect balance of learning, teamwork, and excitement. It's been a season filled with exploration, friendship, and laughter—and we're thrilled to see how these meaningful moments continue to enrich their internship experience.

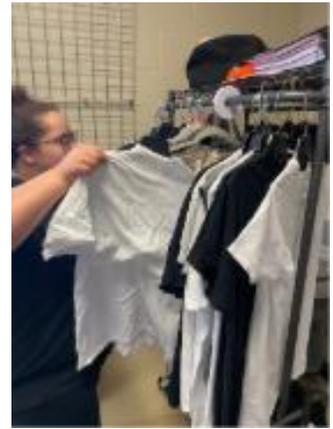




## Apartment setting

Alongside their community outings, our interns have been actively developing important daily living skills this fall. They've been practicing identifying community signs, learning how to navigate safely and confidently in different environments. In the classroom and workspace, they've taken on responsibilities like cleaning tools, completing laundry, and keeping shared areas organized—skills that build independence and teamwork.

In the kitchen, they've explored a variety of practical cooking tasks, preparing sandwiches, parfaits, pizza, and even full breakfasts. Each activity gives them a chance to strengthen confidence, follow steps, and work together while enjoying the results of their efforts. We're proud of their progress and excited to see their skills continue to grow.





## ◆ SOCIAL COMMUNICATION CLASSROOMS ◆

Rachelle Yakumithis, Supervisor  
Kelly Buelt, Supervisor  
Ashley Haley, Asst. Supervisor

### **A Busy and Exciting Start to the SCC School Year!**

It is hard to believe how much the students in the SCC program have already accomplished this school year! From exploring science and learning about voting to celebrating Halloween and building life skills, our classrooms have been full of fun, learning, and laughter.

#### **🎃 Halloween and the Great Pumpkin Drop**

Halloween was full of excitement as students dressed up in costumes and took part in our annual Pumpkin Drop! This favorite event was the perfect mix of fun and science—students learned all about gravity as they watched their pumpkins fall and splatter to the ground. Lots of laughs and learning all around!



### Science Fair Fun

In October, the SCC students learned about the scientific process and participated in our school Science Fair, and our students did an amazing job showing what they've learned about the scientific process. They asked great questions, tested their ideas, and shared their projects with confidence and pride. It was wonderful to see their curiosity and creativity shine!



### Learning to Vote

Our students also got hands-on experience learning about how voting works. One classroom demonstrated the voting process by holding an election to decide on their December classroom reward! Students learned that voting is not only fun but also an important part of being responsible members of their community.

### Mini-Horses and Life Skills

One of the biggest highlights for the SCC staff and students this fall was meeting the visiting mini-horses! The smiles on our students' faces said it all. Along with these special moments, students have been busy practicing important functional life skills like cooking and cleaning—helping them gain independence and confidence every day.



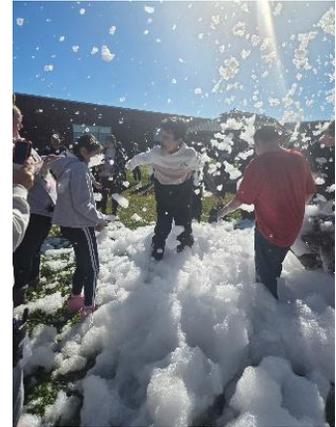
### PBIS Celebration: Foam Party Fun!

SCC students also recently enjoyed an exciting **PBIS Foam Party** to celebrate their hard work in meeting our school-wide expectations. By consistently demonstrating what it means to be **safe, and responsible**, students earned this special reward—and they definitely made the most of it!

Laughter and mountains of bubbles filled the space as students played and celebrated together. Events like this are a great reminder that positive choices matter and that our students are building a strong, supportive school community each day. We are incredibly proud of their efforts and look forward to more PBIS celebrations throughout the year!



It's been such a busy and rewarding first semester this year, and we couldn't be prouder of our students. We're excited to see all the growth and adventures that the rest of the school year will bring!



◆ **COORDINATED CARE** ◆  
Kevin Stevens M. Ed., LSW  
Supervisor of Coordinated Care,  
Resource Coordinators, and Student Attendance

### **Coordinated Care Continues Anger Management Services for Warren County Residents**

For the past two years, Coordinated Care has been providing specialized anger management services to residents of Warren County, and the program continues to grow in strength and credibility.

All Coordinated Care staff are trained through **Century Anger Management**, a globally recognized leader in anger management education. To maintain the highest standards, staff will soon undergo **recertification training**, which includes eight hours of coursework and a competency test. This ensures that every team member remains fully equipped to deliver effective interventions.

The program utilizes the **Century Anger Management model**, a widely accepted approach used by courts, probation departments, hospitals, mental health and substance abuse facilities, major corporations, government agencies, and private practices across the country.

Importantly, Coordinated Care's anger management services are **not intended to replace traditional therapy**, but rather serve as a complementary resource for individuals seeking to better manage emotions and behaviors. For Warren County youth, these services are offered **at no cost**, with all classes conducted **one-on-one** and tailored to meet individual needs.

By continuing to invest in staff training and evidence-based practices, Coordinated Care reaffirms its commitment to supporting the emotional well-being of the community.

To make a referral for anger management services for a youth contact Kevin Stevens at [Kevin.Stevens@WarrencountyESC.com](mailto:Kevin.Stevens@WarrencountyESC.com).

## Resource Coordinators

### Resource Coordinator Department Partners with Giving Angels to Brighten Holidays for Local Students

The Resource Coordinator Department is once again teaming up with the **Giving Angels Program** to ensure that Christmas is a little brighter for students in need. Giving Angels is part of **HTC**, formerly known as Hannah's Treasure Chest, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing essential items to families facing hardship.

Founded in 2001, HTC has grown into a vital community resource with eight employees and more than 75 volunteers who work tirelessly to fill care package orders for those in need. Their mission is simple yet powerful: to make sure local families receive the items they need, especially during challenging times. HTC credits its success to the generosity of donors and community support, which has fueled its growth and impact over the years.

In 2024 alone, HTC served **6,454 children** and delivered an astounding **374,100 items** to families across Southwest Ohio. Each week, they provide hundreds of care packages, offering essentials and comfort to those who need it most.

The Giving Angels Program plays a special role during the holiday season, helping provide Christmas gifts to children who might otherwise go without. This collaboration ensures that the spirit of giving reaches every corner of the community.

To learn more about Giving Angels and HTC—or to find out how you can help—visit [htcdayton.org](http://htcdayton.org).

## Attendance Department

### Warren County ESC Attendance Department Strengthens Efforts to Prevent Truancy

The Attendance Department at the **Warren County Educational Service Center (WCESC)** is taking proactive steps to combat truancy by building strong relationships with students, parents, and caregivers. Their approach focuses on support rather than punishment, offering families practical assistance to keep students engaged in school.

Attendance officers work closely with families to identify individual needs—whether that means connecting them to community resources or providing something as simple as an alarm clock. The goal is to avoid filing charges whenever possible. Families are encouraged to share their concerns during intervention meetings, ensuring their voices are heard in the process.

Since the start of the school year, WCESC has held **over 580 intervention meetings** with families. Before any legal action is considered, families are offered participation in the **Truancy Education Group (TEG)**, a program designed to prevent future absences.

WCESC also collaborates with **Warren County Juvenile Court** to provide education and support for parents and youth working to improve attendance. Truancy Education Groups are held monthly for those court-ordered to attend, and an **online mini-course** is available to anyone seeking guidance—regardless of court involvement.

For more information visit the following link: [Truancy Services](#) or refer to [www.warrencountyesc.com](http://www.warrencountyesc.com) under the Student Services Tab.

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## ◆ WARREN COUNTY LEARNING CENTER ◆

Mike Bidwell Montaniz, Sr. Executive Director of  
Social Emotional Learning  
Jason Boone, Assistant Supervisor  
Julie Hunter, Assistant Supervisor

### The Warren County Learning Center has Another Successful Family Engagement Night!

We are thrilled to share that our most recent Family Engagement Night was another huge success! Families came together for an evening filled with fun, connection, and community. Students and caregivers enjoyed BINGO, free haircuts, and family portraits, along with special moments taking pictures with Santa. Our Book Fair was a big hit as families selected new books to take home, and the night wrapped up with excitement over our fantastic raffle baskets.

Thank you to all who attended and helped make the evening so memorable—we love partnering with our families!





### Learning Center Laura Farrell Campus

We want to extend our deepest appreciation to the City of Franklin for visiting our students' multiple times during Career Exploration class. Their ongoing partnership has made this experience both exciting and meaningful for our kids. Students had the unforgettable opportunity to sit inside a real excavator and dump truck, complete with photo ops for each child. We were also honored to welcome Mayor Brent Centers, who shared insights about his role, answered thoughtful student questions, and helped spark curiosity about civic leadership. To top it off, the K9 units visited with their dogs and gave impressive demonstrations of how K9 partners help locate items and assist officers in keeping communities safe.

Thank you, City of Franklin, for allowing our school to be part of the Franklin community!





### Learning Center Western Row Campus

Students at the Learning Center have been thriving through their involvement with a variety of powerful experiential learning opportunities. Through Hope Reins, a horse therapy program, students are building confidence, emotional awareness, and meaningful connections as they learn to communicate with and care for the horses in a supportive, nurturing environment. These sessions help students develop patience, responsibility, and self-regulation, all while giving them a space to feel calm and valued. In addition, hands-on learning at Sinclair Community College is exposing students to the construction industry, where they are gaining practical skills, exploring tools and equipment, and engaging in real-world problem-solving alongside industry professionals. These opportunities help students discover their interests, broaden their understanding of potential future careers, and build the confidence needed to pursue their goals. Together, these partnerships are empowering students academically, socially, and professionally, creating a foundation for long-term success. A huge thank you goes out to Sinclair Community College for giving our students different experiences in a multitude of industries. Another huge thank you goes out to Hope Reins. Our students loved the experience and are excited to start riding the horses! Our students also enjoyed a special Thanksgiving lunch thoughtfully provided by our dedicated staff. To make the celebration even more meaningful, four beautifully decorated rooms were set up so students could share a warm, welcoming space together. The event created a sense of community, gratitude, and togetherness that our students truly appreciated. Thanks to all of the staff that made this event successful and helped our students feel special!



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## ◆ OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ◆

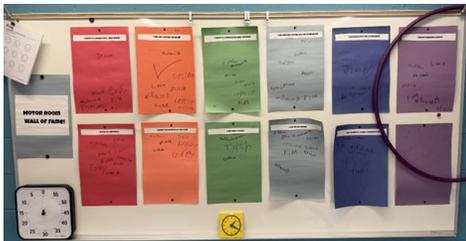
Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Related Services  
Kim Steele, MOT, OTR/L, Asst. Supervisor of School Based OT/PT's

### Building Skills Through Creative Group Work:

Occupational therapist Amy Wishman is using creative groups to support growth for students in the Multi-Sensory Learning Environment at Rosa Parks Elementary. Amy recently led a classroom group using a seasonal craft to build both fine motor skills and executive functioning abilities. The activity offered a meaningful way for students to practice sustained attention, follow multistep directions, and complete a task from beginning to end. The group rose to the challenge, remaining engaged for twenty-eight minutes. This extended



work time created a natural opportunity for students to strengthen attention, persistence, and sequencing while enjoying a hands-on creative task and provided a natural context for collaboration with the whole classroom team, staff and students included. Students proudly showed their completed projects and practiced saying “Hoo-Hoo” for a fun group photo.



### Celebrating Skills and Motivation Through a Student “Wall of Fame”

Occupational therapist Rachel Mascheck is introducing a creative way to boost motivation, independence, and purposeful engagement for fifth and sixth grade students at Berry Intermediate School in Lebanon. Noting how strongly students at this age respond to recognition and friendly competition, Rachel designed a “Wall of Fame” to highlight functional, motor, and school readiness skills learned during therapy sessions and motor breaks. The display features a checklist of at least ten meaningful skills, and students have the opportunity to sign their names under each skill they master. This approach allows learners to see their progress, celebrate achievements, and be inspired by peers while also encouraging them to use their motor break time with intention and confidence. She already has quite a few famous students!

### Supporting the Next Generation of Occupational Therapists

Our occupational therapy team continues to invest in the future of the profession by providing meaningful fieldwork experiences for university students preparing to become occupational therapists. Jess Carter, OT, has been supporting fieldwork student Drew Pitz (Wilmington College) at Wayne Local Schools, giving him opportunities to learn the daily routines of school-based practice and work with students across a wide age range (pictured bottom left). At Little Miami Early Childhood Center, Sue Bault, OT, has been mentoring Anne Pleoquin (University of Cincinnati). Anne (pictured top left/right) has gained valuable experience with Kindergarten and First Grade students, contributed to ETRs and IEPs, and participated in team meetings. At Putnam Elementary in Blanchester, Carrie Nowak, OT, has been guiding Paige Finscally (Kettering College), where Paige has learned how to support motor lab implementation and has completed a fieldwork project centered on assistive technology (pictured bottom right). These partnerships strengthen student learning, enrich clinical training, and reinforce the vital role school-based OTs play in developing future practitioners.



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◆ **PHYSICAL THERAPY** ◆

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

Spotlight: Growing the Future of School-Based Physical Therapy



Ellen Frame, SPT



Selena Garcia, SPT



This quarter, our department had the chance to support the next generation of physical therapists while continuing to meet the needs of our districts and their students. Two of our therapists, Megan Robinson, PT, MSPT (Springboro) and Valerie Szakal, PT, DPT (Waynesville and Franklin), opened their doors to host University of Dayton DPT students for their clinical rotations.

Selena Gracia and Ellen Frame joined our team as part of their doctoral training, spending several weeks learning how school-based PT blends mobility, access, participation, and collaboration across educational settings. Under Megan's and Valerie's guidance, the students observed and practiced the art of adapting therapy for classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, and community environments. They engaged in problem-solving for real student needs, contributed to treatment planning, and saw firsthand how strong relationships with teachers, families, and district staff help students reach their goals.

By welcoming clinical students into our work, we strengthen the profession and help more therapists understand the unique opportunities within school-based practice. Experiences like this support our mission to serve students well, collaborate with our districts, and contribute to a field that continues to evolve in meaningful ways.

### **December Staff Meeting: Supporting Students Through Evidence-Based Practice**

In December, our physical therapists gathered for an afternoon focused on one shared goal: improving how we support students across our districts. Building on our Fall course, *Trauma-Informed Care for the School-Based Physical Therapist*, the team spent time reflecting on what trauma-aware practice looks like in real school settings.

Therapists discussed ways to involve students in their plans, build trust through intentional conversation, and connect through individual interests. They also emphasized the importance of a whole-child perspective, especially understanding how trauma can influence a student's school day.

Key takeaways included being mindful that trauma may affect behavior or engagement, offering choices to help students feel safe, using consistent trauma-informed strategies across settings, and sharing information with school staff to support calm and coordinated responses. The group also highlighted the value of clear, validating language and positive reinforcement systems that encourage engagement.

The team then reviewed three recent research articles and explored how these findings can be applied in treatment sessions. This discussion helped therapists identify new strategies to incorporate into their work and reinforced our ongoing commitment to evidence-based practice and strong outcomes for students.



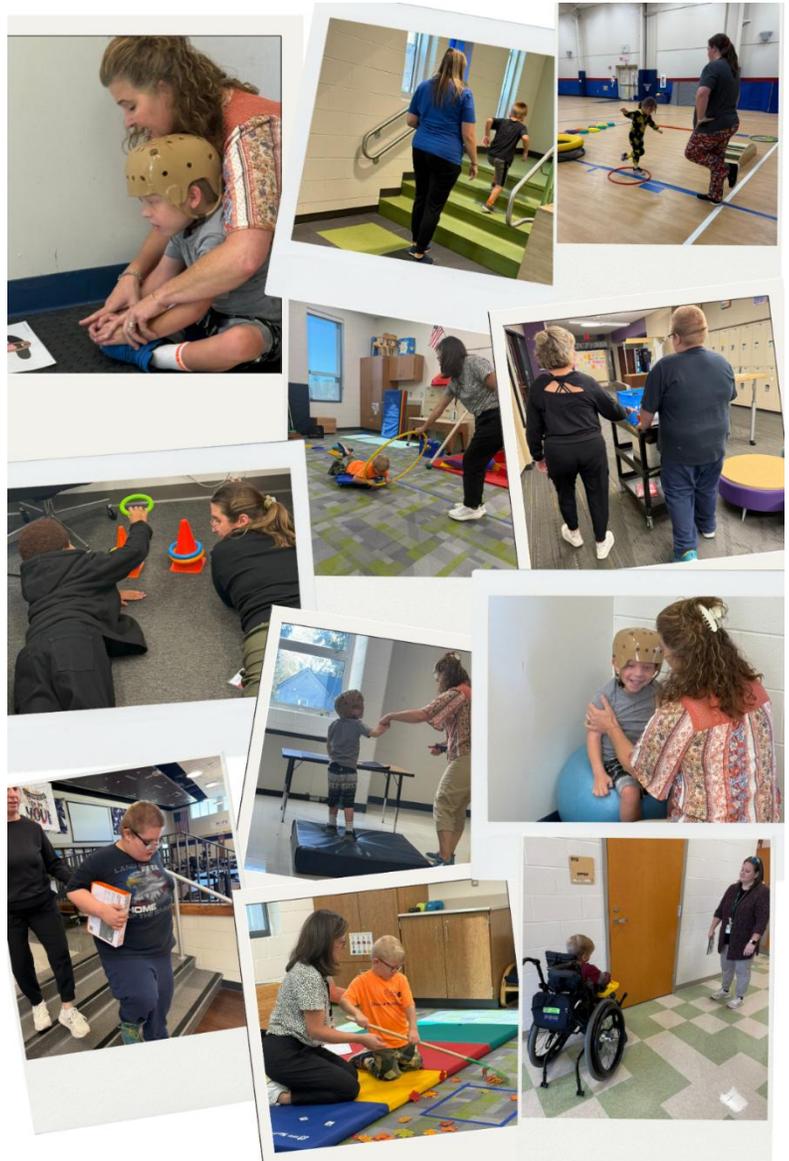
This meeting highlighted the dedication our therapists bring to understanding student needs, strengthening relationships, and partnering with school teams to create supportive learning environments.

## Therapy in Action Across Our Districts

This quarter, we captured moments from across our districts that highlight the many ways physical therapists help students build strength, confidence, and functional skills. These glimpses reflect the purposeful movement and individualized skill-building that take place during therapy sessions as PTs work to support access, participation, and independence in school.

School-based PT goes far beyond exercise. Therapists look at how students move through their day, what tasks are meaningful to their learning, and what supports can help them participate more fully. They problem-solve mobility challenges, build foundational motor skills, and collaborate with teachers and staff to help students navigate both academic and functional routines.

The work happening across our districts demonstrates how physical therapy contributes to safe movement, increased independence, and strong student engagement. Our therapists bring clinical skills, creativity, and a team-centered mindset to every building they serve, helping students gain the confidence they need to succeed.



## ◆ SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY ◆

Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Related Services  
Carrie Boyd, M.ED., M.A. CCC-SLP, Assistant Supervisor of SLP's

### Speech Therapy Spotlight: Giving Every Student a Voice "AAC Strategies in Our Schools"

Our speech-language team is expanding access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to support student participation, reduce frustration, and build meaningful communication across grade levels. A professional development session was led by WCESC speech-language pathologists **Scarlet Baird, M.S., CCC-SLP** and **Nick Philpott, M.S., CCC-SLP** alongside **Emily Simon, M.A., CCC-SLP (PRC-Salttillo)**. Together, they shared hands-on strategies, device demonstrations, and real examples from local

classrooms to help our staff feel confident identifying students who might benefit from AAC and implementing tools that foster meaningful communication.



### AAC Fast Facts!!

#### Did You Know?

- AAC supports speech rather than replacing it. Research shows AAC often increases verbal communication by reducing frustration and giving students a reliable way to express themselves.
- There are *no prerequisites* for AAC. Students do not need to match pictures or demonstrate a certain cognitive level before AAC can be introduced. Those skills can be taught through AAC .



- Communication “red flags” can appear early. Minimal spoken words by age 2–3, heavily relying on gestures, or speech that isn’t understood even by familiar listeners may indicate a need for AAC supports.
- AAC comes in many forms, including low-tech core vocabulary boards, speech-generating devices, and adaptive access methods such as keyguards, switches, and eye-gaze systems, allowing teams to match tools to individual student strengths and needs.

### Speech Therapy Spotlight: Little Miami School District “Trunk or Treat AAC Success!”

The recent Trunk or Treat event was a tremendous success, drawing a large crowd of students and their families. Paige had the opportunity to connect with several of her students, representing a wide range of communication needs. She brought a voice-output button, bucket labels with picture icons, and a paper communication board so students could communicate at different stations throughout the event.

The voice-output button quickly became a favorite! Many children were eager to try it, and it offered a fun, low-pressure way to make requests, greet peers, and participate. It also served as a meaningful opportunity to introduce and educate others about AAC.

Several young, shy students benefited from having a supported way to express themselves during the activities. Paige shared that it was incredibly rewarding to see students confidently accessing communication in such a fun environment, and she plans to bring this support again next year.



## ◆ SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT ◆

**Kathie MacNeil, Ph.D. – Sr. Executive Director of Cognitive and Behavioral Health Programs**

As we move into the fourth month of the school year, we recognize the incredible work of our school psychologists. Their presence in each building strengthens the capacity to meet diverse learner needs and foster safe, supportive environments for all students. This year, our team of 15 school psychologists, 1 case manager, 1 intern school psychologist and 3 school psychology graduate assistants have been placed in five districts, where they are providing essential services in consultation, intervention, collaborative problem-solving, and assessment.

We welcome Lisa Arcure as our intern school psychologist. Lisa is completing her graduate studies in school psychology at the University of Cincinnati. She has already gained a wide range of experiences with students, families, and staff in both Kings Local and Wayne Local Schools this school year.

Lisa Moore continues to support the school psychology team as a case manager supporting the work of those assigned to the elementary schools in Kings Local Schools.

We also welcome three graduate assistants from Miami University: Lucas Fields, Kaitlin Husic and Sonali Ray. These first-year school psychology students are gaining valuable experiences while supporting the work of school psychologists in Carlisle, Kings and Wayne Local Schools

Finally, we are pleased to transition Hayley Curtsinger into her first year as a school psychologist after completing her internship with WCESC last year. Since August, Hayley has established herself as a valued member of her preschool team. Placements for our school psychologists for the current school year are as follows:

**Carlisle Local Schools**  
**Kings Local Schools**

**Little Miami Local Schools**  
**Wayne Local Schools**  
**Greater Ohio Virtual School**

Brooke Fett & Martin McGinley  
Brooke Brunner, Libby Hagen, Addison Lindsey, Regina Meeker, Matt  
Rohrkemper, Alexis Som, Soula Wooley & Lisa Moore  
Mary Kamphaus, Heather Kirby & Hayley Curtsinger  
Steph Ghantous & Erin Kefalos  
Cheryl Czulewicz

In November, we celebrated **National School Psychology Week**, a time dedicated to honoring the commitment, compassion, and expertise our school psychologists bring to their work every day. This year's national theme emphasized the power of connection—and our school psychologists continue to embody that through their daily partnerships with educators, families, and students.



In addition to their day-to-day services, our school psychologists have devoted professional development time this fall to exploring artificial intelligence and its responsible use in their work. Through guided learning, discussions, and hands-on exploration, they are building their understanding of how AI can enhance efficiency, support student services, and streamline documentation—while maintaining the highest standards of ethics, confidentiality, and professional practice.

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◆ **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)

Our Wellness Center students continue to make meaningful progress toward their social-emotional learning goals. Each day, students are building skills that strengthen their self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal communication. Through individualized support, group sessions, and consistent collaboration with staff, students are learning to recognize their emotions, manage stress in healthy ways, and develop positive relationships with peers and adults.

Students are also exploring a variety of wellness-based tools to help manage difficult emotions. They are practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, grounding strategies, and mindfulness activities. Many students find comfort and regulation through spending time with our therapy animals, which offers a calming and supportive experience. Additional coping strategies—like movement breaks, creative expression, and sensory-based supports—empower students to understand what works best for them in moments of stress.





The Wellness Center Team continues to think outside the box and provide opportunities for families to have fun and connect. Each quarter ESC Programs host family engagement night events. Resource Coordinator, Christy Panzarelladunbar planned a Santa themed evening where students got the opportunity to meet Santa Clause, Drink Hot Cocoa, Eat a Warm Meal, and spend some time with two friendly Reindeer. This was an absolute hit with the students and parents alike!!!





◆ **NURSING SERVICES DEPARTMENT** ◆

Terri Elam, RN, LSN, Supervisor  
Jill Buffenbarger, RN, Supervisor

**WCESC Thanks Our United States Military Veterans!**

The WCESC Nursing Department was honored to recognize our military veteran, Michele Phillips RN. Michele served in the United States Air Force. She currently is a nurse for the SCC program at our Western Row Campus. Thank you, Michele, for your service!



Michele Phillips RN  
US Air Force Veteran  
Clinic Nurse Western Row Campus

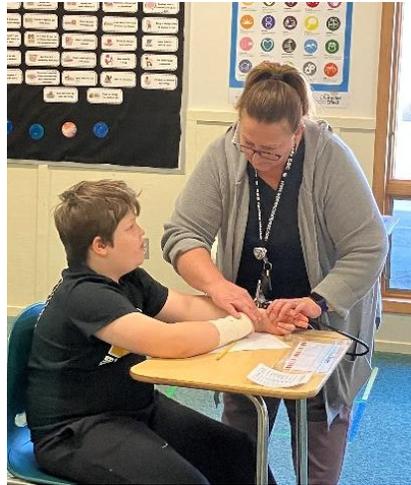
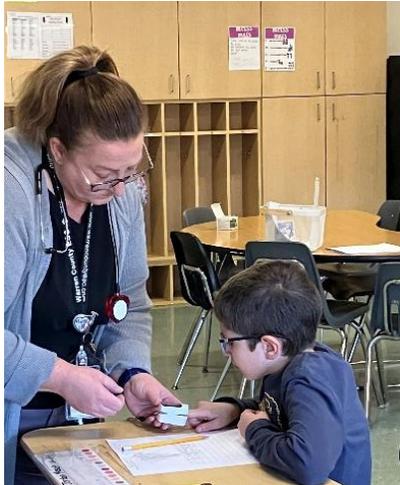


## WCESC NURSES IN THE CLASSROOM

WCESC Program Nurses are busy in the clinics taking care of their students with health needs from the simple to the complex. Sometimes they get to step into the classroom and teach students things they can do every day to take care of themselves. Here are just a few examples:

### Sheila Hubbard LPN – Wellness Center Phoenix Campus

Nurse Sheila teamed up with staff to teach students about activities and emotions that can cause their heart to beat rapidly and how to measure their own heart rate. They talked about ways to calm themselves, their bodies and to slow their heart rate back to a normal, calm resting rate. Sheila helped students find their pulse and count the number of heart beats per minute before and after running in place, and then again after performing relaxation techniques. The students loved using the pulse oximeter too! Nice job Sheila and Phoenix team!



### Kelly Lackey LPN – TLC Transition Living Classroom Western Row Campus

Nurse Kelly and the TLC interns and staff had a blast as she and staff reviewed with them how important it is to wash their hands properly to prevent the spread of germs! The interns applied a special lotion that can be seen with a UV light. Nurse Kelly showed the interns how to properly wash their hands to get rid of all the germs (the special lotion) using soap and water. Each intern took turns washing their hands and then viewed their hands under the UV lights to see how well they did! It was such a fun experiment!



**Congratulations to Melissa Jones, RN for being nominated for the FaminGO Award for displaying *Amazing Grace* at Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School!** WCESC Nurse Melissa was nominated for the school's award by another staff member who states, "Melissa is so kind and caring when she takes care of our students... She is a blessing to our school."



Melissa Jones, RN  
Mother Teresa Catholic  
Elementary School

**Congratulations Melissa!**

**Nurse Spotlight – Champions for Children Nominees:**

Congratulations to the Nursing Staff Champions for Children nominees for October and November 2025 for demonstrating the attributes of Collaboration and Proactive.



**Champion for Children Nominee:** Sam Wolf  
**Attribute:** Collaboration  
**Assignment:** 1:1 Nurse MD Western Row Campus



**Champion for Children Nominee:** Tammy McPhail  
**Attribute:** Proactive  
**Assignment:** 1:1 Nurse SCC Western Row Campus

**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 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](mailto:Jill.Buffenbarger@WarrenCountyESC.com)  
[Terri.Elam@WarrenCountyESC.com](mailto:Terri.Elam@WarrenCountyESC.com)

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**◆ MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT ◆**  
**Jessica Woody, Director of Mental Health Services**  
**Casie Poore, Mental Health Supervisor**

The first quarter in our department was a busy and productive time! Our team successfully organized multiple prevention days that were implemented across the programs and districts we serve. These events not only highlighted our commitment to student well-being but also created valuable opportunities to strengthen our presence in school communities. Throughout the quarter, we built meaningful relationships with students in their buildings and connected with new staff members who have joined our partner districts. We are excited to continue developing these partnerships as we move into the next half of the school year!



**WCESC Mental Health Department-Program Team**

**Learning Center Campus-Laura Farrell**

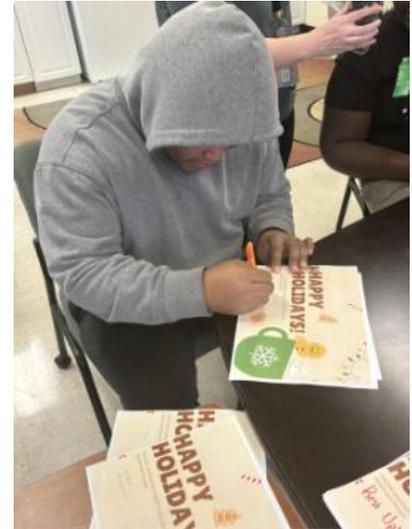


The MH Team has been hard at work this month- seeing new students, running Erin's Law groups, participating in family engagement night, and, of course, celebrating Halloween- on top of their regular individual and group therapy! They have been leading prevention initiatives such as having staff participate in wearing orange for Unity Day- a day that brings awareness to Bullying Prevention. They have also been working in groups on setting "one word goals" and creating "thankfulness trees." These reminders help students discuss and visualize positive concepts that help them remember what they are working toward and their individualized supports. The team continues to work together to keep students safe through crisis de-escalations as well as working on various therapy modalities together with students on their individual treatment goals.



## Learning Center Campus-Workforce Development

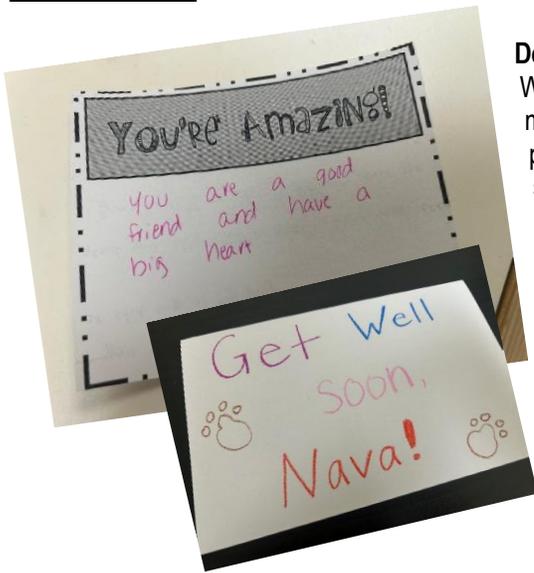
The Middle School and High School Mental Health team has had a busy quarter. They have welcomed new students into therapy services, completed Erin's Law training, helped with family engagement night, and had Halloween fun! They continue to focus on school-wide prevention initiatives with students such as bullying, unity, thankfulness, and encouragement. Our Prevention BI, Sam, also started a student-lead prevention group. This group meets once a month and is run by the students who work on prevention initiatives in their program. This quarter, they have decided to focus on unity by planning holiday games that encourage camaraderie, teamwork, and friendship amongst the classrooms. They also created positive holiday cards to hand out to staff and students during this time. As always, Middle School and High School continue to work with students to help them reach their mental health goals in order to maintain safety and success in their school and home environments.



### Social Communications

SCC staff has continued to make good strides with the students over the past few months. Thrive groups have been going well, and students made "S.M.A.R.T" goals to help them identify an achievable goal they wanted to accomplish by the end of the school year. In the weeks leading up to Halloween, our group behavioral interventions completed a Halloween social skills activity, which allowed students to identify different aspects surrounding Halloween, such as safety, the use of manners, and appropriate ways to interact with peers and adults. Also, this past quarter, friendships groups started back up in the clubhouse. These small groups allow a few students to come together to the clubhouse, and work on social skills and interactions with the guidance of an adult. In therapy, they completed an expressive turkey on what they are thankful for before leaving for Thanksgiving break. The kids are still enjoying using the sand tray and engaging in play therapy techniques to help express and work through emotions that are hard to identify.

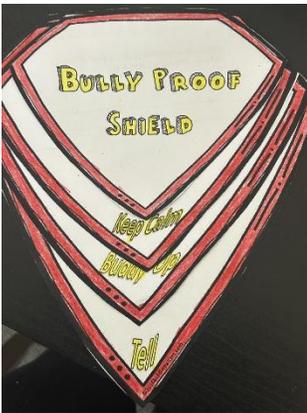
## Wellness Center



### **Deerfield Campus:**

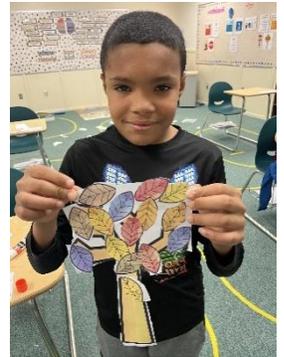
Wellness Deerfield has been engaging in a lot of fun activities over the past few months. For Kindness week, building staff wrote messages to each student highlighting positive aspects about them. By doing this, it allowed for continued rapport between staff and students and increased self-esteem. Therapists are continuing to make progress with the students, and noticing students asking for breaks, using coping skills, and confiding in their trusted person. Over the past quarter, "Cool Critters" as well as "Mini Moos" made an appearance. Having these animals come to the program allows students to practice their mindfulness and follow directions from both staff and therapists. During the circle group, students made "Get well soon" cards to give to Nava, the therapy dog after her surgery.

### **Phoenix Campus:**



Phoenix has been working hard with the students to help with emotional regulation, social skill building, building frustration tolerance, and providing psychoeducation surrounding bullying. During circle groups, the students completed a "bully proof shield" that allowed the students to identify aspects such as coping skills to use if someone picks on them, safe people they can talk to, and who they can "buddy up with" if a bully is around. This allowed the students to be able to recognize signs of bullying, and ways to respond, which in turn helps create a safe place for everyone. Thankful trees were also completed in groups, where each kid got to decorate trees and identify different aspects of their lives for which they were grateful. In October, the students completed expressive emotions activities surrounding emotions. This allowed them to identify different emotions and be able to recognize cues related to the

emotions they experience on a daily basis. Phoenix building staff also launched a new program (plant patrol). To support the program, our therapist completed "plant friends" with the students and explored how they felt when helping with plant patrol!



## Mental Health Consultant District Team

### **Carlisle**

The Mental Health Consultant at the middle and high school shared that an encouragement letter was recently distributed to staff to help foster positivity, connection, and support throughout the building. In addition, the consultant will be participating in this week's PBIS Gratitude Week activities on Thursday and Friday, providing another opportunity to highlight acts of appreciation and celebrate the exceptional work taking place across the school community. These combined efforts continue to strengthen a culture of gratitude and reinforce the shared commitment to maintaining a supportive, uplifting environment for both students and staff.



At the elementary level, the Mental Health Consultant worked as a lead of the Carlisle Kindness Club Support Team that recently organized a schoolwide canned food drive to support both our local food pantry and ongoing hurricane-relief efforts in Jamaica. Thanks to the generosity of students, families, and staff, the initiative helped provide essential resources to community members in need while also extending compassion beyond our borders.

### Little Miami

The Little Miami High School Hope Squad has been spreading encouragement through a simple but meaningful initiative: writing positive mental-health messages on restroom mirrors as reminders that every student is seen, valued, and supported. Notes like “You are worthy of love” and “Take a breath—you’ve got this” aim to brighten students’ days and spark conversations about wellness. This effort supports the Hope Squad’s mission to promote kindness, reduce mental-health stigma, and foster a culture of hope. Additionally, the mental health therapist position at the high school has continued to grow their case load!



At the middle school, the Mental Health Consultant and her intern are halfway through their anxiety support group for 6th-grade girls. Recent sessions have focused on identifying healthy versus unhealthy coping skills and completing a cognitive behavioral therapy-based activity exploring the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. These lessons are helping students build awareness and develop stronger emotional regulation skills.



At the elementary school, the Mental Health Consultant is supporting students through regular check-ins designed to strengthen their mental health and school functioning. Services include teaching coping strategies, guiding problem-solving skills, helping students build task-completion habits, and supporting overall academic performance. While at LMES, the consultant also facilitates a social-academic intervention group that equips students with the skills needed to successfully transition out of the check in, check out system.

Students at the Primary are buzzing! They celebrated their 67<sup>th</sup> day of school with a “6 7” day. One class held “6 7”s funeral and created an obituary together. The mental health consultant in the primary school assisted with Erin’s law presentations, is midway through a Star Students group and has become the anchor person for several students on check in, check out, and continued to meet with students daily.

The mental health consultant at the ECC has started the Social-Academic Instructional Groups (SAIG) in the building and reports that the students are doing wonderfully! The first two group sessions involved feelings identification/how to appropriately express said emotions, and coping strategies to managing different emotions. During SAIG, students practice important skills such as taking turns and sharing, using kind words, managing big feelings, working together in groups, and following directions.

### Greater Ohio Virtual School

GOVS new student lab tutor and mental health consultant developed a new student engagement event that features a screening of *Jane Goodall: The Hope*, followed by a guided group discussion. By selecting this documentary, they hope to inspire a sense of hopefulness and connection among students. The event will take place in person at the Franklin Student Center, with a virtual option available. Students will be provided with a healthy lunch, along with snacks and drinks.



## St. Margaret Of York



This month, the mental health consultant facilitated *The Crumpled Heart Activity* with a 4th-grade classroom. Through this lesson, students learned that words can have a lasting impact. Even when we apologize, we cannot undo the hurtful things we say—just like a crumpled heart that can never be fully smoothed out again.

Students engaged in a discussion about appropriate and respectful ways to express their feelings, and they reflected on how their words and actions affect others. The activity emphasized the importance of kindness, empathy, and positive communication. By the end, students had a deeper understanding of how to treat their classmates with care and compassion.

## Oakwood

In both Oakwood Elementary Schools, the mental health consultant has been working on building up her caseload, making connections with parents, and collaborating with school staff to ensure the students have the best supports available. The junior high and high school mental health consultant has been providing ongoing support to students within the buildings. This includes regular check-ins, individualized academic and social-emotional support, crisis response when needed, and close collaboration with teachers, families, and administrators to ensure each student has what they need to be successful. She works with students on issues ranging from mental health and behavior to attendance, motivation, and goal setting, offering a consistent and reliable space where they can feel heard and supported.

### Prevention Department

#### Trauma Informed Care Coach-Franklin

Crystal Pergram (TIC Coach) and Jessica Woody (Director) completed the HOPE train the trainer course and worked with the Social Communications Classroom team to train the staff on HOPE.

Crystal has worked with staff at the elementary to make sure that her care closet is stocked and that students are being connected to resources in the community. Crystal has created lessons regarding emotions and coping skills, utilizing *Little Spot of Feeling* books, in order to teach emotions and self-regulation in the classrooms.

#### Substance Abuse Prevention

Our prevention specialist has been working with multiple students to teach healthy alternatives to substance use and prevention skills. She will begin working with our younger grades during the next quarter with the curriculum, *Keeping It Real*. The *keepin' it REAL* curriculum offers a research-backed, culturally adaptable, interactive, and youth-centered approach to substance-use prevention. By helping young people build real-life skills — decision-making, communication, resistance strategies, self-awareness — it does more than just say “don’t use drugs.” It helps them navigate peer pressure, make healthy choices, and resist risky situations with confidence.

### Child Advocacy Center

The Child Advocacy Center of Warren County is proud to share continued growth within our mental health department, particularly in our ability to provide individualized counseling services for youth who have been interviewed at the CAC. By offering ongoing, trauma-informed support, we aim to ensure that every child who walks through our doors has access to a safe, consistent, and compassionate space to begin healing.

Our clinicians utilize a variety of evidence-based therapeutic approaches—including play therapy, trauma-informed cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), and several additional best-practice interventions—to meet each child’s unique needs. This comprehensive

approach enables our mental health staff to deliver high-quality, developmentally appropriate care that supports emotional processing, recovery, and resilience.

In addition to direct services for children, parent education has become an essential priority for our team. Recognizing the critical role caregivers play in a child’s healing, our staff are actively developing and expanding resources for parents and caregivers. These materials are designed not only for families served at the Child Advocacy Center but for use across the entire department, ensuring that caregivers have access to practical guidance, education, and support as they navigate the challenges of trauma recovery alongside their children.

Together, these efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to strengthening services, supporting families, and fostering healing throughout our community.

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



In less than a year, more than 10,000 children across Ohio have been screened for developmental milestones—an incredible achievement made possible by the Department of Children and Youth’s (DCY) commitment to reaching children earlier. This milestone marks a major step forward in helping families understand their child’s growth and connect with support when it’s needed most.

The early years are filled with wonder, discovery, and rapid development. It’s also a time when parents may have questions or concerns about how their child is growing. Thanks to

Sparkler, a free app designed for families, those questions are easier to answer. Sparkler helps parents track their child’s development, celebrate milestones, and get connected with professionals who can offer guidance and resources.

Sparkler’s success is rooted in its simplicity. Families simply download the app, complete a screening, and receive instant feedback. If a child needs extra support, Sparkler helps connect families with services sooner—making sure no child falls through the cracks. This early connection can make a big difference in a child’s future, from school readiness to long-term success.

DCY’s focus on early screening means more children are being supported during the most important years of their development. Sparkler also benefits providers, helping them engage with families, share resources, and reduce paperwork. With automatic reminders and a dashboard that tracks progress, Sparkler is helping everyone—parents, educators, and healthcare professionals—work together to give children the best possible start.

Click here to watch a video introduction to the Sparkler App and how to sign up! <https://www.helpmegrow.org/ASQ>



The Warren County Help Me Grow Early Intervention team is excited to share some wonderful news—three of our staff members have recently welcomed beautiful new additions to their families! As a program built on supporting infants and toddlers, it brings us special joy to celebrate these moments within our own EI family.



Lauren Garrett welcomed her first child Daisy in August. A sweet and healthy arrival who is bringing so much joy to their family with her cute smile!



Andrea Bullman welcomed her first daughter in November. She is the sweetest addition to their family who is already adored by her two proud big brothers.



Samantha Appelbaum welcomed Penelope in September. She is already so loved, and her family is so thrilled to start this brand-new chapter in their lives.

We are grateful for the dedication each of these team members brings to their work, and we're delighted to celebrate this happy season with them. Please join us in sending warm congratulations, well wishes, and lots of love to each family. ❤️



## ◆ GREATER OHIO VIRTUAL SCHOOL ◆

Shawn Lenney, Director

### Student Center Open House

The Greater Ohio Virtual School staff hosted an open house for the new GOVS Student Center in September, and it was an absolute success! A video was created to commemorate the event; you can access it at the link below. There were many positive comments from students and families throughout the event, but the best one was: "I am so impressed with how passionate everyone on your staff is!" This was from the father of a new student, and it is so true about our staff. Everyone on the GOVS staff is at the school for the right reasons! To help students!

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VyPjc\\_o3jaHalP0zinBT0Cv62GVf7Jfd/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VyPjc_o3jaHalP0zinBT0Cv62GVf7Jfd/view?usp=sharing)



### GOVS Selected to Present at Digital Learning Conference!

Over the past few years, the GOVS Administrative team has been attending the Digital Learning Annual Conference. After finding it difficult to find professional development specifically for Eschools, this conference was the most relevant to our work. We have applied and been accepted to present at the conference in Sacramento in February. The title of the presentation will be **"Virtual, not invisible: engaging at-risk learners in an asynchronous environment"**, and we will be sharing some of the fantastic events, processes, and programs our staff has developed to increase student and family engagement at GOVS!

## Student Engagement Activities

Since the creation of the GOVS Student Center three years ago and the development of the new Student Center this year, GOVS has created numerous opportunities for students and families to engage in activities beyond the classroom. The Steel Band and Esports Team have both begun rehearsing and practicing on Tuesdays and Thursdays in a brand-new room at the student center, specifically designed for both groups. In addition to these two groups, the Student Center has hosted a fall event for students near Halloween and a six-week "Job Skills for Life" program, helping students explore careers, develop money-smart skills, write resumes, interview, use technology at work, and communicate.



## ◆ MULTIPLE DISABILITIES PROGRAM ◆

Students identified with Multiple Disabilities – Western Row MDESC  
Kari Burris, MOT, OTR/L, Director of Multiple Disabilities Programming  
Jill Buffenbarger, RN: Program Supervisor

### It's the Great Pumpkin Western Row!

The Multiple Disabilities (MD) Program enthusiastically began the second quarter of the 2024-2025 school year by visiting Irons Fruit Farm in October. In the early 1900's, the Irons family did general farming. The second generation began growing potatoes and apples. The first orchards were planted in the late 1930's and the first apple crop was sold in the early 1940's. Apple cider was made and sold also. Later, a large cold storage was built, and a large horse barn was transformed into a salesroom, which is still in use today.

At the farm, all the students and staff were able to sample some fresh apple cider and apple cider donuts. The gracious staff at Iron's helped load students in their chairs onto tractor-pulled wagons to tour the pumpkin fields. Everyone was welcome to pick a pumpkin or gourd to take home. Back at school, each class carved/decorated jack-o-lanterns. Mrs. April Dye was the judge and awarded the Littles Classroom the first-place ribbon!

Irons Fruit Farm  
1640 Stubbs Mills Road  
(513) 932-2853  
[www.ironfruitfarm.com](http://www.ironfruitfarm.com)



## Lessons Learned at Jungle Jim's

Students enrolled in the Multiple Disabilities Program at Western Row Elementary School visited Jungle Jim's in Fairfield in October. With two locations, more than 500,000 square feet combined, hundreds of thousands of products, and over 70 countries represented, Jungle Jim's International Market is locally grown, but internationally known. Jungle Jim's is a destination for foodies, tourists, weekly shoppers, and class fieldtrips from around the corner to across the pond. Visitors can shop without borders and share their experiences.



The students in the Littles class extended their classroom lesson to the classroom grocery store. To support their cooking unit, the students travelled to Jungle Jim's to shop for ingredients for the soup they planned to make. In class, they have been practicing selecting recipes, making shopping lists, and learning to measure and mix. The lesson culminated in the sharing of a delicious lasagna soup.

Jungle Jim's International Market  
5440 Dixie Hwy  
Fairfield, OH 45014  
(513) 674-6000  
[junglejims.com](http://junglejims.com)

Jungle Jim's International Market  
4450 Eastgate South Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45245  
(513) 674-6000  
[junglejims.com](http://junglejims.com)

### Rolling Artwork

During the second quarter of the 2025-2026 school year, students in the MD program literally rolled out butcher paper canvasses and rolled their wheelchairs and scooters through paint to create some of the most unique pieces of original art. It was so much fun getting all messy and then clean while painting on the floor. Connie Jean Smith is a paraprofessional in the MD program. Of the activity, she states, "The students had a wonderful time bonding with each other. Two of our students got on the ground and counted how many times they could roll on the paint." Paraprofessional Kandy Clark added, "We loved watching the students having fun and expressing themselves."



## Mason Students Explore and Learn at the Cincinnati Museum Center

In January, high school students at the Western Row campus visited the Cincinnati Museum Center.

The Cincinnati Museum Center has a legacy of discovery 200 years in the making, from the founding of the Western Museum Society in 1818 to today's award-winning multi-museum complex. Housed in Union Terminal, an art deco train station and National Historic Landmark, Cincinnati Museum Center continues to bring the world to Cincinnati through its more than 3 million artifacts, archival materials, and artworks.





At the Museum Center, the students' lesson focused on space exploration. They visited the Space exhibit and learned about astronauts, space travel, rocket ships, and planets. The community outing was a learning extension to the classroom unit about outer space.

Cincinnati Museum Center  
1301 Western Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45203  
(513) 287-7000  
[cincymuseum.org](http://cincymuseum.org)

### Shopping at Kenwood Mall

In December, students at the Western Row Campus travelled to Kenwood Towne Center to put lessons they are learning in class to practical use. They have been practicing making a budget and balancing needs v. wants; and making informed choices. With a budget in hand, the students explored the mall to make a personal purchase. They had to determine how much money they had to spend, and if they could afford to purchase the item they selected. If they did not have enough money (including tax) to purchase the item, they had to make a different choice. It proved to be a valuable learning experience.





Kenwood Towne Centre  
7875 Montgomery Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45236  
(513) 745-9100  
[Kenwoodtownecentre.com](http://Kenwoodtownecentre.com)



### **MD Makings Holiday Market**

The Multiple Disabilities Program Student Council planned a lesson on for-profit businesses v. non-profit businesses. With the money they raised from 1<sup>st</sup> quarter's t-shirt fundraiser sale, they were able to purchase food and non-food items to be sold at the first-annual MD Makings Holiday Market. Baked goods (including allergy and gluten free items) and non-food items were on display in the gym for purchase. Every student at the Western Row Campus was given 3 "Jesi Bucks" (Jesi is this year's student council president) to purchase 3 items of their choice from the market. Program Supervisor Jill Buffenbarger said of the lesson, "the lesson and the market exceeded my expectations. I loved the slow pace and getting to see friends from other parts of the building." Cafeteria Manager April Dye added, "There is so much love and joy in Multiple Disabilities Program! My heart smiles every time I visit. The students truly shine!"

## ◆ WCESC CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN INITIATIVE ◆

This fall, our Champion for Children employee recognition program has highlighted two traits that are essential to the work we do each day—Collaboration and Proactive Leadership. Throughout the fall, our staff have demonstrated what it means to work together with purpose, share expertise generously, and build strong partnerships that support students and one another.

### OCTOBER CHAMPIONS EMBODYING COLLABORATION

Collaboration shines when staff come together with shared purpose, communicate openly, and leverage each other's strengths. This trait reflects our commitment to teamwork that fuels creative solutions and supports students through collective expertise.

<b>Caitlyn Spears</b> Attendance	<b>Ariella Siegel</b> Collaborative Coaching	<b>Tiffany Tuttle</b> Coordinated Care	<b>Marianne Scheppe</b> Educational Interpreter	<b>Grace Hill</b> GOVS	<b>Cheryl Hickie</b> Help Me Grow/Home Visiting
<b>Britnee Bowlin</b> Learning Center- Laura Farrell	<b>Timothy Derickson</b> Learning Center- Western Row	<b>Tammy Liming</b> Multiple Disabilities	<b>Angie Brown</b> Mental Health	<b>Sam Cozort</b> Mental Health	<b>Samantha Wolf</b> Nursing
<b>Melissa Miller</b> Occupational Therapy	<b>Carrie Webb</b> Occupational Therapy	<b>Alisa Bowling</b> Physical Therapy	<b>Janelle Stone</b> Preschool	<b>Chloe Socha</b> Resource Coordinators	<b>Lawrence Floyd</b> Workforce Development
<b>Abby Mobley</b> Social Communications	<b>Megan Haber</b> Social Communications	<b>Brooke Brunner</b> School Psychologist	<b>Anna Koscielicki</b> Speech Therapy	<b>Savannah Kirkland</b> Transition Living Classroom	
<b>Dawn Schroeder</b> WCESC Main Office	<b>Abby Gorman</b> Wellness Center- Phoenix	<b>Amber Ploof</b> Wellness Center- Deerfield	<b>Jeff Harper</b> Western Row Building	<b>Jason Boone</b> WCESC Supervisors	

### NOVEMBER CHAMPIONS EMBODYING PROACTIVE LEADERSHIP

Proactive leadership is about anticipating needs, acting before challenges arise, and creating pathways for success. It reflects initiative, foresight, and a student-centered mindset that keeps our work responsive, efficient, and effective.

<b>Mary Beth Garner</b> Attendance	<b>Anna McKinney</b> Collaborative Coaching	<b>Olivia Taylor</b> Coordinated Care	<b>Payton Myszka</b> Educational Interpreter	<b>Jackie Merk</b> GOVS	<b>Karen Stumpf</b> Help Me Grow/Home Visiting
<b>Ashlyn Wilson</b> Learning Center- Laura Farrell	<b>Kloe Young</b> Learning Center- Western Row	<b>Aaron Clark</b> Mary Haven/JDC	<b>Hannah McManis</b> Mental Health	<b>Abby Elam</b> Mental Health	<b>Aliyah Narcisse</b> Multiple Disabilities
<b>Tammy McPhail</b> Nursing	<b>Alex Combs</b> Occupational Therapy	<b>Jess Carter</b> Occupational Therapy	<b>Megan Robinson</b> Physical Therapy	<b>Amy Tate</b> Preschool	<b>Christy Panzarella Dunbar</b> Resource Coordinators
<b>Allen Suit</b> Social Communications	<b>Felicia Beatty</b> Social Communications	<b>Hayley Curtsinger</b> School Psychologist	<b>Bethany Hoblet</b> Speech Therapy	<b>Liz Scherzinger</b> Transition Living Classroom	<b>Jenny Dameron</b> Workforce Development
<b>Cindy Loesch</b> WCESC Main Office	<b>Katri Wirick</b> Wellness Center- Phoenix	<b>Minyette Burke</b> Wellness Center- Deerfield	<b>Jennifer Melzer</b> Western Row Building	<b>Kelly Buelt</b> WCESC Supervisors	

**THANK YOU TO EACH OF YOU!  
YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN!**

*Well done!*