



ESC NJ Update

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

New Jersey's Leader In Shared Services

Positive Response To 4th Annual Vendor Expo

They had everything there but the kitchen sink," is how one municipal purchasing official characterized the ESCNJ's fourth annual Vendor Expo.

Having outgrown the space at the ESCNJ's Piscataway Campus, where the three previous Expos were held, School Business Administrator Patrick M. Moran determined it was time for a larger venue to accommodate more participants.

"With increasing attendance, we required more room, and the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center in Edison met our additional space needs and our desire to remain centrally located," said Mr. Moran.

"I thought it was a great move," said Adelphia Regional Sales Manager Joseph Storck, whose company sells school and office furniture, and storage products.

Approximately 100 vendors, and nearly 300 school and business officials had numerous products to review including: grounds and maintenance equipment; security cameras and card access systems; flooring options, document management systems, painting services, and computers. A number of lease-purchase items were also available, including school busses, tractors, and snow removal equipment.

Free for ESCNJ's 1,000 plus Co-op Pricing System members, the Vendor Expo provides decision-makers with access to reduced and competitively priced products and services from reliable vendors with a proven track record.

"The event benefits every taxpayer in New Jersey because

public officials are often able to make purchases at lower costs than normal due to the cooperative buying power of the Co-op," said Mr. Moran.



Participants also had opportunities to attend free New Jersey Division of Local Government Services courses and earn Continuing Education Unit credits.

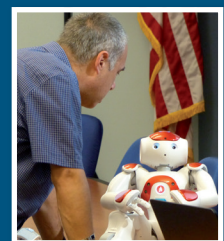
A complimentary lunch, light refreshments, and a chance to win vendor donated raffle prizes was also part of the Vendors Expo. Raffle prizes included three Amazon Gift Cards (\$75 each), from AccuScan, a Toshiba Laptop courtesy of Atlantic, Tomorrow's Office, and two \$100 iTunes gift cards, donated by RFP Solutions.

The ESCNJ's Co-op Pricing System is the largest cooperative pricing system in New Jersey. Participants include school districts, colleges, universities, municipalities, county governments, housing authorities, libraries and fire

(See **Expo** on page 5)

**Robotics Elective
For
Special Needs
Students**

See page 5



Around The ESCNJ



Physical Education time for some NuView Academy students.



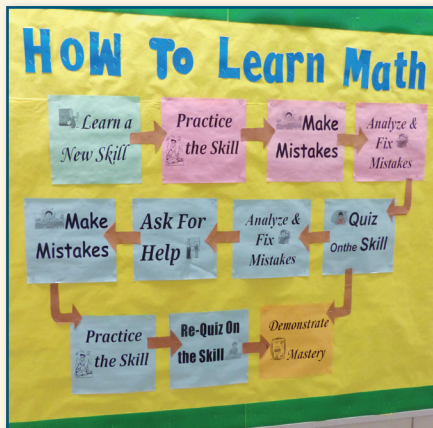
Parent-teacher conferences taking place at PRDS.



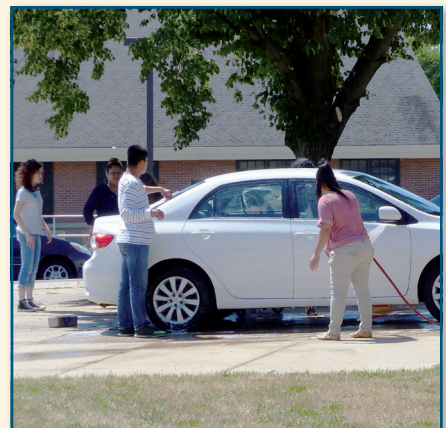
Nonpublic principals from around the state participating in a workshop hosted in ESCNJ's Media Center.



BBLC Preschoolers seemed to get the message during one of BBLC's "Having Fun Versus Making Fun" activities.



NuView Academy Annex bulletin board offers students helpful math tips.



PRDS students learn about working collaboratively while washing a car as part of the CBI program.



Central office staff demonstrated strong support by purchasing items on behalf of this year's Autism Awareness Swim-A-Thon.



ESCNJ's Nonpublic therapists attended the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association's convention.



Teacher Olga Lepkowska, points out information about animal habitats to a BBLC student on "Fun with Science Day."

Congratulations To Our 2015-2016 Graduates



ACADEMY LEARNING CENTER

GRADUATES

Brian Finch
Michelle Podolski
Genare Valiant
Skyler VanOrden
Jeffrey Volante



BRIGHT BEGINNINGS LEARNING CENTER

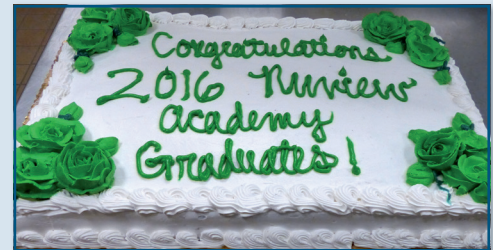
GRADUATES

Martin Pina
Gerald Stephon Reid
Shamecca Jehodah Taylor



ELEMENTARY GRADUATES

Joshua Davis
Britney Delcampo
Josiah Fisher
Seth Glanton
Timothy Gluch
Randeep Kehal
Bryan Martinez
Matthew Mendez
Ede Ogbevi
Anthony Padilla
Nanda Ranganathan
Jason Raymond
Jose Rojas
Juan Savinon
Aarush Singh
Kishan Srinivasan
Amerila Tavares
Gabiél Vasquez



CENTER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

GRADUATES

Brandon Lew
Christopher Hines
Albert Piccinini
Michael Solahno



NUVIEW ACADEMY

GRADUATE

Jerry Russomano

MOVING UP

Damien Crespo
Joseph Iarrapino
Bulfrano Ramirez-Reyes
Nasir Sessoms
Zachary Strubel



PISCATAWAY REGIONAL DAY SCHOOL

GRADUATES

Aku Shika Ashie
John Bekhit
Hakeem Benjamin
Alanna Collins
Brian MacWilliams
Anna Lee Perez
Mateo Perilla
Joseph Serianni
Anthony Suriel
Christian Ugalde



Successful Swim-a-Thon For Autism

Swimmers went through their paces at \$20 a lap, vendors donated funds, and others bought tee shirts, fruit, candy and other items as part of the ESCNJ's 4th Annual Autism Awareness Swim-a-Thon.

All of the effort proved worthwhile, with over \$14,000 raised on behalf of Autism New Jersey, the state's leading Autism resource, which provides essential information, advocacy and support to children and their families. Last year's Swim-a-Thon raised about \$7,500.



Piscataway Regional Day School Principal Phyllis Delucia with one of her school's Swim-a-Thon participants.

Held at ESCNJ's Aquatics & Fitness Center in April during Autism Awareness Month, the Swim-a-Thon was dedicated to Marika (Rickie) O'Rourke, a much beloved friend, teacher, and supporter

of Autism Awareness, who passed away recently. A Community-Based Instruction Teacher at the Piscataway Regional Day School, the Swim-a-Thon included a moment of silence, and comments about Mrs. O'Rourke, whose mother and husband were in attendance. Mrs. O'Rourke completed 128 laps in the Swim-a-Thon two years ago.



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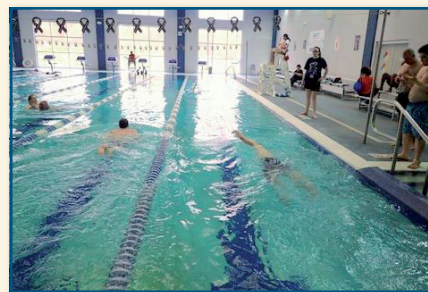
"Marika was a terrific teacher and Swim-a-Thon participant, so we wanted to dedicate this year's event to her

memory," said Academy Learning Center Principal Erik Solberg. Dr. Solberg is a Trustee for Autism New Jersey, and was one of the coordinators of the event along with Kate Dauphinee, Site Director.

Completing the highest number of laps were swimmers Anthony Tramontana, from Sayreville War Memorial High School, and Kristen Policastro, from CLL, who completed 200 and 184 laps respectively. There were many individual donations, with the largest, \$2,040 coming from Douglass Woodard on behalf of Julie Sakowicz's swimming 102 laps.

"Each year the participation and enthusiasm for the Swim-a-Thon has increased, and this year was no exception," said Ms. Dauphinee.

"We are extraordinarily grateful for the support of the community," she added. •



This year's Swim-a-Thon raised over \$14,000 for Autism NJ.

L'Oréal Cranbury "Gives Back" To The Academy Learning Center

The Academy Learning Center was delighted to be a recipient of "Give Back" day recently, an annual event where volunteers from L'Oréal Cranbury, a part of the international L'Oréal cosmetics firm, offers a helping hand to nonprofit organizations in the community.

"One of our parents works at L'Oréal Cranbury and volunteered our school to be part of their "Give Back" program," said ALC Principal Erik Solberg.

"I followed up and was delighted with their offer to help in any way they could," Dr. Solberg added.

Seven L'Oréal volunteers participated in the day, which began with a brief orientation, followed by a tour of ALC, a school for students with Autism and Multiple Disabilities ages 3-21.

The volunteers then rolled up their sleeves and got to work on several gardening projects, including mulching evergreen beds in front of the school, and planting 15 Hostos plants around ALC's flagpole.

Additionally, the volunteers took part in a project coordinated by Occupational Therapist Lynette Huth, working with several students to place flowering plants in ALC's "Student Garden,"

a 10-foot diameter flower bed.

After a well-deserved lunch break, the L'Oréal volunteers took time to further organize ALC's student library.

"It was an inspiring and beautiful day," said L'Oréal Consumer Products Division Manager Stacey Violante.

Dr. Solberg, a longtime trustee for Autism New Jersey agreed, adding: "We were grateful for their support, and the volunteers appeared to enjoy the experience as well." •



Sheri Vegso and Sue McCloskey were two of the seven volunteers from L'Oréal Cranbury who helped out at the Academy Learning Center as part of the international cosmetic firms "Give Back" day.

Robotics Elective Coming To ESCNJ

Summer is when most school districts restock their supplies and equipment in preparation for the start of the new school year. However, this year, the ESCNJ received one of its more unusual orders – three autonomous, programmable NAO Robots, developed by Aldebaran Robotics, based in Paris.

NAO (pronounced *now*) robots, as they are typically referred to, are 23 inches tall, weigh 9.5 pounds, are powered by a lithium battery, and are compatible with Windows and Mac. The NAO has two eyes (two high definition cameras), a mouth (four microphones), two arms, two legs (nine touch sensors and eight pressure sensors), along with a sonar rangefinder, and two infrared emitters and receivers. When properly programmed, the NAO can speak, identify objects, help students with homework, walk, tell jokes, and even sing and dance to name just a few functions.

The NAO's were ordered for the new Robotics Elective being offered at NuView Academy and NuView Academy Annex, and to supplement the Computer Coding Club at Bright Beginnings Learning Center this September. The ESCNJ will lead a "Running Robots: Computer Coding & Special Education" Action Lab at the NJSBA 2016 Workshop in Atlantic City in October.

In late July, several educators participated in a five-day training in preparation for the new elective.

"The Robotics Elective offers our students with an engaging process to help them begin learning coding skills," said Assistant Superintendent Gary Molenaar.

The learning process is particularly engaging as students see how their coding impacts the movements and speech of the NAO, he added.

"Employers need more people with computer coding skills, and the Robotics Elective will help students become more employable in the technology sector," said Mr. Molenaar.



Robotics Elective at NuView Academy engages students and Teacher Laura Cagle.

Mr. Molenaar pointed out that the world has dramatically changed, which is why computer coding skills are in such demand.

"In today's world, without talking to a person, you can access your bank account, make reservations, report a power outage, or pay your cable bill through high tech, voice recognition computers, and computer coding skills are required to implement those services," he said.

The NAO works by downloading a variety of applications, depending on what function is required. For example, an application can be downloaded to prompt a student with a question, like "what time is it?" The NAO waits for the appropriate response, and provides a reward when the response is correct. An incorrect response prompts the NAO to offer clues and encouragement until the question is answered correctly. Teachers can also personalize the applications so they are based on student skill levels, goals and personality.

"Guess Emotions," is a social skill building application that can be programmed so the NAO imitates an emotion like crying, or laughing, and the student is asked to identify the emotion.

Distributed by Teq, an educational, technology and professional development company based in Huntington Station, New York, the NAO's ability to engage students in complex learning, including STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) has made it the most widely used humanoid robot for academic purposes worldwide. •



Robotics training participants standing behind the NAO Robots: Front Row L-R, Teachers Jennifer Alberici, Laura Cagle, Naomi Glassman and Kate Johnson. Back Row L-R, Asst. Supt. Gary Molenaar, Teacher Michael Hannel and Tech. Coord. Bob Reinke.

Expo (Cont'd from page 1)

districts. There is no fee to join or obligation to purchase any items or services. To learn more about the Co-op, please visit: www.escnj.k12.nj.us/pages/Middlesex_Regional/Cooperative_Pricing/Co_op. •

The ESCNJ needed more space and a central location for its growing Vendor Expo, and chose the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center in Edison.



Board Members Honor 2015-2016 Governor Educators

Certificates were presented by Board members in recognition of their being selected for the "Governor Educator of the Year" program.



ALC: Abigail Wilman and Board Vice President Bill Petscavage



ALC: Susan Garbowski and Board Member Victor Valeski



BBLC: Julie Sakowicz and Board Member Donna Andriani



BBLC: Rowena Joy Figueroa and Board Member John Walsh



CLL: Jessica McGurr and Board President Dale Caldwell



CLL: Stephanie Shamin and Board Member Linda Madison



Nonpublic Department: Harrison Fox and Board Member Frank Alfano



PRDS: Elizabeth Santo and Board Member Susan Genco

Change To Composition Of ESCNJ Board

With the State Board of Education's unanimous approval of the name change request from the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission to the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey, the configuration of the Board of Directors has changed to allow for statewide representation.

Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, in addition to one Board Member from each Middlesex County school district, five additional Board Members outside of Middlesex County will serve one year terms on a rotating basis. The new alignment means each county in New Jersey will be represented on the ESCNJ Board over the course of four years. The five school districts and counties serving on the 2016-2017 Board are: Bergen County Technical Schools/Special Services; Cape May County Special Services; Pemberton (Burlington County); Somerset Hills (Somerset County) and Voorhees (Camden County).

The monthly Board meetings are also being broadcast via webinar so out-of-county members can participate without facing significant travel time. •



Mr. Dale Caldwell (L) and Mr. Bill Petscavage were reelected president and vice president respectively for the newly constituted ESCNJ Board of Directors.

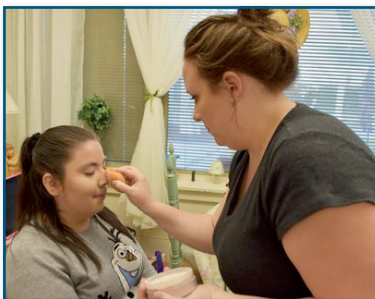
PRDS Students Enjoy Staying Late

Several PRDS staff, led by Principal Phyllis DeLucia, voluntarily spent the night with about 12 students enrolled in social skills courses as part of the 14th Annual PRDS Girls Sleepover. The students stayed up a bit past most of their bedtimes engrossed in several activities including nail polishing, makeup application, cooking and cleaning up.

"It is a great way to connect with students and continue working on their social skills," said Mrs. DeLucia. •



Aide Mariam Altair helps a student make earrings at the 14th Annual PRDS Girls Sleepover.



Applying makeup, along with cooking and cleaning up were part of the PRDS sleepover activities.

Transition Planning For Students With Disabilities



"Transition Planning for Students With Disabilities" included a presentation "Empowering Youth Towards Independence" led by Princeton House Behavioral Health's Senior Primary Therapists Kyle Simons, and (standing) Marci Wishner.

Overcoming adversity is a given in life, made exceedingly more difficult for those having to deal with multiple disabilities, mental health issues, or autism. Fortunately, the ESCNJ's free workshop, "Best Practices in Transition Planning For Students with Disabilities" offered some support for educators and family members who face particularly acute challenges when confronted with even routine tasks.

The half-day workshop took place at the ESCNJ's Professional Development Academy, and included two programs. Princeton House Behavioral Health (PHBH) Senior Primary Therapists Kyle Simons and Marci Wishner facilitated the first, "Empowering Youth Towards Independence".

While readily acknowledging there were "no easy answers," regarding transition planning, the therapists talked about first being sure to correctly identify psychological disorders like depression, anxiety, or drug and alcohol dependencies in special needs students and loved ones stepping out of the classroom

and into the world of adulthood. The therapists also reviewed valuable resources, including "Structuring My Time," "Supporting Someone With Mental Illness," and "the Beck Depression Inventory."

The second workshop "Connect to Transit," focused on practical issues, particularly public transportation, and was led by Rutgers Program Manager/Travel Instructor Louis Hoffman MSW. The workshop dealt with the complexities that young adults with special needs face in accessing New Jersey's buses, trains and light rail vehicles, often challenges to people under the best of circumstances. Mr. Hoffman shared tools for planning trips, several helpful resources, and public transportation options people with special needs and their families may be unfamiliar with.

For those who missed the workshop but would like some information, please contact Ms. Stacey Rieger, of the ESCNJ Advisory Council, and Vice Principal at ALC by email at sreiger@escnj.k12.nj.us, or 732-605-9100, Ext. 4020. •

Senator Kean And Mayor O'Brien Visit CLL

Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean, along with Sayreville Mayor Kennedy O'Brien spent some time at CLL recently, and had high praise for the students and staff following the visit.

"The students are clearly receiving a world class education at the Center for Lifelong Learning," said Senator Kean.

"Through shared services and purchasing opportunities, the students who need it most are being well served, while limiting the tax burden on New Jersey residents," he added.

Among the highlights of the visit were:

- A "CLL waves you a welcome" banner, which included student handprints and was displayed in the media center;
- A comprehensive tour of the school, including the vocation room and several classrooms to observe student activities and the application of physical therapy;
- A tour of the pool area and fitness center;
- A walk through the greenhouse and courtyard, where students presented Senator Kean and Mayor O'Brien with a plant grown in the greenhouse in celebration of Earth Day.
- Light refreshments and muffins made by "Café Connections" students, and a student sung rendition of America the Beautiful.

CLL Principal Mary Beth Conley said she appreciated the visit and felt the officials left with "a greater understanding of the students we serve and the services we offer."

Superintendent Mark J. Finkelstein said "it was an honor to have Senator Kean and Mayor O'Brien take time from their busy schedules to visit one of our schools."

"Mr. O'Brien was instrumental in allowing us to build the CLL in 2009, and Senator Kean showed great understanding and compassion for the work we are doing to help students become productive members of society." •



Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean congratulates a CLL student for a job well done.



Sayreville Mayor O'Brien with CLL student who presented him a plant grown in the school's greenhouse to celebrate Earth Day.



Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean viewing the positive impact technology has in the classroom for students.



The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

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Wendy Eaton, Principal, BBLC
Cindy Borell, Supervisor, BBLC
Mary Beth Conley, Principal, CLL
Michael Kane, Vice Principal, CLL
Meena Pasupathy, Supervisor, CLL
Chastity Rivera, Principal,
NuView Academy Annex
William Walsh,
Principal, Nuvview Academy
Phyllis DeLucia, Principal, PRDS
Nancy Armbruster, Director of
Nonpublic School Services
Barbara Pezzuto, Supervisor of
Nonpublic School Services
Fredrika Schwerin, Supervisor of
Nonpublic School Services/PSDA

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South Plainfield, Johanna Ruberto
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Spotswood, Scott Rocco
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• Gary Molenaar,
Assistant Superintendent
• Patrick M. Moran, Business
Administrator/Board Secretary
• Kai-Li Pao, Assistant Business
Administrator/Board Secretary
• Lorraine Small,
Director of Human Resources
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Principal of Special Projects