



ESCNJ *Express*

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Spring 2022

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey



ACS Makes Two Years of Serving Young Men and Women

The Adult Community Services (ACS) program, for adults 21 and over, just celebrated its two-year anniversary and is eager to grow its roster of participants.

Located on the Piscataway campus, ACS offers an array of daily activities for young men and women with disabilities to develop their social, emotional and life skills while exploring personal interests.

Daily activities include pre-vocational learning skills, community inclusion experiences, shopping skills, art classes, computer skills, day-to-day life skills and so much more!

Openings in the program are available. For more information visit www.ESCNJ.us

Save the Date

June Graduation and Celebrations - See Page 5

On The Inside

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NJ Governor's Educator of the Year Award" p4

Anthony La Marco Promoted to Business Administrator of ESCNJ

Anthony La Marco is the newly-appointed Business Administrator, overseeing day-to-day operations and identifying ways in which to expand and enrich the services the Commission provides.

Previously, Mr. La Marco served as the Assistant School Business Administrator.

“Mr. La Marco has grown into a tremendously valuable addition to our administrative staff; his knowledge and experience is critical to the daily operations of the Commission,” said Schools Superintendent Mark Finkelstein. “As the previous Assistant Business Administrator with ESCNJ, along with his experience in dealing with both educational and business entities, Mr. La Marco will be a key team member for the long-term growth of ESCNJ.”

Mr. La Marco has more than 20 years of experience in both the educational and business arenas.

He began his career as an audit supervisor in the public accounting field, managing financial and operational audits for various municipal, school and other non-profit entities. He was then hired as the Assistant School Business Administrator of the Bernards Township Board of Education.

Mr. La Marco replaced Mr. Patrick Moran, who retired as ESCNJ's long-time business administrator in December.



Academy Learning Center Welcomes Nicole Paturzo as Supervisor

ESCNJ is announcing that Ms. Nicole Paturzo has taken on the role of Supervisor at the Academy Learning Center (ALC) in Monroe.

In 2013, she began her career at the Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL) as an Instructional aide while studying for her undergraduate degree in special education at Kean University. After graduation, Ms. Paturzo became a teacher and through continuous education, earned her master's degree from Georgian Court University.

In 2020, she earned her Supervisor Certification from Monmouth University.

In her new position, Ms. Paturzo is using her experience and skillsets in working with students, staff, parents and school districts to continue to support and enhance ALC programming.

“ESCNJ is full of extremely talented teachers and staff who care deeply about the educational, behavioral and therapeutic needs of the students,” Ms. Paturzo said. “My goal is to continue to support the staff at ALC in its efforts to make meaningful change for the students.”



NuView Academy Receives a Grant from the American Heart Association

Leaders of NuView Academy are pleased to receive a \$1,500 grant from the American Heart Association (AHA) to support the school's athletic department.

A big "thank you" goes out to Mr. Kyle Thomas, the adapted physical education teacher and ESCNJ CPI Instructor at NuView, who applied for the grant. Mr. Thomas worked with an American Heart Association representative, Heather Lopardo, Regional Director of the Youth Market, supporting Burlington, Camden and Middlesex county school.

Mr. Thomas and the students from NuView participated in the "Kids Heart Challenge" and created a video of the students completing daily heart-healthy challenges. Once the video was complete, the students had to pick a New Jersey athletic team to view the video. They quickly choose their favorite team, the New York Giants.

There were 32 schools across the country that participated in the event.

After seeing the video, the Giants chose NuView to be one of the recipients of this year's grant award.



Erynn Dakin Joins ESCNJ as Professional Conference Center Coordinator

Erynn Dakin is ESCNJ's first-ever Professional Conference Center Coordinator.

She promotes the 4,484-square-foot, state-of-the-art Professional Conference Center at ESCNJ's Piscataway campus.

"Our conference center is easily accessible, and centrally located in Middlesex County and has all the amenities of a modern facility for professional gatherings," Ms. Dakin said. "With more in-person events occurring now, this is an ideal venue for all types of events."

Ms. Dakin is a graduate of Johnson & Wales University, with a bachelor's degree in Event Management. Upon graduation, Dakin worked at Monmouth Park in its food & beverage department and as an Event Producer.



The Conference Center is Open for In-Person Events

The Professional Conference is open for business, able to hold up to 300 guests. It can be divided into two large breakout rooms.

The center is a beautiful space. But don't take our word for it. Reach out to Erynn Dakin at events@escnj.us for your personalized tour.



AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

ESCNJ Celebrates The 2022 Middlesex County Unsung Heroes

Academy Learning Center

Anish Meral
Alexander Zhong

Center for Lifelong Learning

Kayla Boykin

Future Foundations Academy

Edward Matthaey

NuView Academy

Hudson Costa

Piscataway Regional Day School

Elibaneth Tiburcio
Sanche
Merlin Rijo-Moreta

ESCNJ Congratulates its “NJ Governor’s Educator of the Year Award” Recipients

Congratulations to all of this year’s recipients; we thank you for your contribution and hard work. ESCNJ is proud to have so many terrific and talented teachers who have won this prestigious award.



KAREN JOHNSON
Educator of
the Year, ALC



ALLISON MAROTTA
Educator of
the Year, PRDS



KYLE THOMAS
Educator of the Year,
NuView Academy



MARISA MARTIN-VARGO
Education Specialist
of the Year, BBLC



CHRISTIE FARMIGA
Educator of
the Year, BBLC



GINA GAUGHAN
Educator of
the Year, FFA



DANIEL GROTHUES
Educator of
the Year, CLL



NICOLE AXELROD
Education Specialist
of the Year, CLL



GERALYNN KENYON
Educator of the Year,
Non-Public



DONNA ZEHNBAUER
Education Specialist
of the Year, Non-Public

ESCNJ Gives Back to the Middlesex County Community

Several ESCNJ schools participated in the REPLENISH food drive. REPLENISH, located in East Brunswick, provides food and other basic necessities to county residents. The students and staff collected, counted, sorted and checked expiration dates - a valuable tool for independent living.

FFA donated more than 880 items.



BBLC collected more than 600 items.



CLL donated more than 435 items of food.

PRDS collected and checked expiration dates.



A huge "Thank You" goes out to all the students and staff who are helping to end hunger in Middlesex County.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Graduations & Moving-Up Ceremonies



- NuView Academy Graduation
- Future Foundations Academy Graduation
- Piscataway Regional Day School Graduation
- Bright Beginnings Learning Center-Moving Up Ceremony
- Center for Lifelong Learning
- Pathway to Adult Learning Celebration
- Academy Learning Center

- June 14, 2022 at 11 am
- June 15, 2022 at 10 am
- June 16, 2022 at 10 am
- June 17, 2022 at 10 am
- June 17, 2022 at 1 pm
- June 17, 2022 at 1 pm
- June 20, 2022 at 10 am

Visit www.ESCNJ.us for more information

HAPPENINGS THIS PAST



Two NuView Academy students, Autumn and Jaxson, submitted artwork to the Change 2022 Colloquium, 8th Annual Student Art Installation. This year's theme, "Historian of Ourselves," was the inspiration for the artwork.

Ms. Lisa Burger, art teacher, handled project submissions. Autumn's artwork (L) is called "Re-Fantization of Realty" and Jaxson's (R) is "Make A Change." The artwork will be displayed at Brookdale Community College's art gallery through the summer.

February was Healthy Heart Month. Students from CLL participated in the "Kids Heart Challenge". Adaptive Physical Education Teachers, Mr. Dan Grothues and Mr. Anthony Zammit, set up obstacle courses for both students and staff, helping increase everyone's heart rate while having fun!



The students at PRDS were busy beavers this winter, brushing up all their independent living skills. Looks like they have a good start on spring cleaning.

The staff and students in classrooms C3 and J11 at FFA created the *Firecat Gazette*, FFA's monthly newsletter highlighting all the wonderful things that happen in the FFA school community! The first edition was published in January.



The Fueled for Purpose Café at Academy Learning Center (ALC) is now open for business. Ms. Maggie DeGroat, ALC teacher, coordinates with the students and staff to run the eatery. Currently there are two choices on the menu: a sandwich or a salad. Once the orders are placed, the students make a list, shop, prepare and sell the lunches to the staff at ALC.

WINTER at ESCNJ

National Read Across America was celebrated this March at BBLC with several guest readers, including a dog, a bunny and a penguin.



The PAL students spent much of the winter concentrating on their transportation and employment skills. The manager from Applegreen spoke about the importance of working hard, listening to directions and taking the initiative to help succeed at a job. Several students work at Applegreen, the company that operates concessions at local Turnpike and Parkway service areas.

ESCNJ Hosted the Middlesex County Educator's Summit on Partnerships in School Safety

In February 23, ESCNJ was pleased to host the Middlesex County Summit on Partnerships in School Safety event. The event was a joint venture between ESCNJ, the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, and law enforcement. Local and county officials were in attendance to listen to topics which included ways in which to strengthen school safety, the important role of school resources officers and the value of ongoing communication with law enforcement. The event was held at the Professional Conference Center on the ESCNJ Piscataway campus.



Mark Finkelstein, Educational Services Commission of New Jersey Superintendent; Ronald G. Rios, Commissioner Director, Middlesex County Board of Commissioners; Yolanda Ciccone, Middlesex County Prosecutor; Shanti Narra, Middlesex County Deputy Director, Chair of Public Relations and Health Commissioner



Keynote Speakers and Panelists from the Middlesex County Summit on Partnerships in School Safety



The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

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Dr. Dale Caldwell, *President*

Dr. David Roman, *Vice President*

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Additional Counties Represented

*Bergen County Technical Schools/
Special Services, Howard
Lerner*

*Clementon, Kathleen Haines
(Camden)*

*Jackson, Nicole Pormilli
(Ocean)*

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(Cumberland)*

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(Mercer)*

*Somerset Hills Regional, Gretchen
Dempsey (Somerset)*

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*Sharon Marinello, Supervisor of
Nonpublic School Services*

*Katherine Blades, Supervisor of
Nonpublic School Services*

*Phyllis Lewis, Supervisor of
Education, TPA*

*Allison Sanchez, Executive
Director of the Adult
Community Services Program*