

MRESC Update

MIDDLESEX REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Cooperative, Cost Efficient, Quality Services

The CLL Receives Top LEED Certification



The US Green Building Council's N.J. Chapter Executive Director Florence Block (L) presents LEED Platinum level glass sculpture to (L to R) MRESC Board President Dale Caldwell, Superintendent Mark Finkelstein, Business Administrator Pat Moran and Board Vice President Rosemary Walsh. ▼



▲ N.J. Chapter Executive Director Florence Block described the CLL as a "model of a healthy school environment," that all schools should strive towards.



▲ Board President Dale Caldwell spoke passionately about the "culture of caring" demonstrated by the many people involved with the vision and construction of the CLL.



Congratulations to Graduates and Teachers of the Year

(See page 4)



▲ Christopher Rafano, Freeholder Director, Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, expressed his appreciation for the "outstanding facility" built to meet the needs of students and community members.

Sayreville Mayor Kennedy O'Brien emphasized ▲ how significant it was to have a school built in the community that was so dedicated to meeting the highest of environmental standards for the sake of its special needs students.

Please see P. 3 for more on the LEED ceremony!

"Gait Program" Developed at ALC

The Academy Learning Center created "The Gait Program" during the 2011-2012 school year for students not requiring physical therapy yet have minor deviations in their walking patterns. The program consisted of four high school students to help them improve their walking technique before transitioning from ALC to adult workshops and employment.

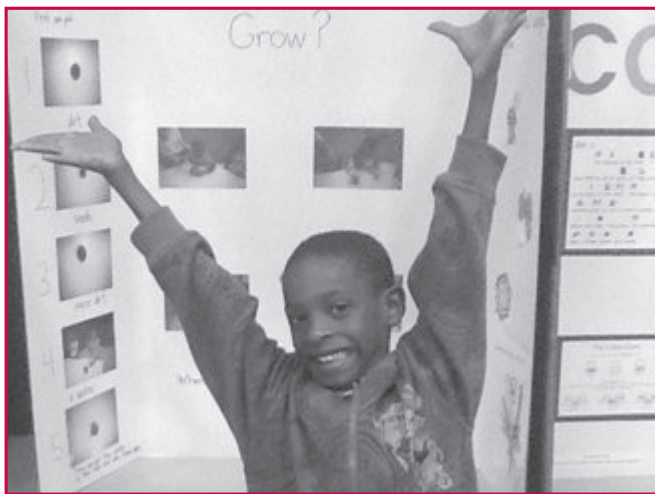
It was ALC Principal Dr. Erik Solberg who first suggested that the school's physical therapists apply "video modeling," an effective approach in strengthening autistic student learning and social skills, to improve walking patterns. A demonstration video featuring ALC Custodian Bill Horodeski walking in the hallway was created to illustrate a typical walking style. Over the course of the year, Gait Program participants watched the video several times prior to ALC's daily "wellness walking" exercise that most students participate in.

"We have seen significant improvements," said ALC Physical Therapist Dr. Deborah Eisenberg, who along with her colleagues, Physical Therapists Carol Binen-Sokol, and Dan Steinhauser, have been instrumental in implementing the program.

"It has already had a powerful impact on the physical and social skills of participants," said Dr. Eisenberg.

"We are looking to expand the program over the 2012-2013 school year to benefit more students, including our younger students as well," she said. ●

Spectacular Science Fair



Josiah F. enjoyed the first BBLC Science Fair. Spearheaded by Teacher Kate Johnson, students researched topics and completed experiments at home under the guidance of their parents.

Students at BBLC take time for physical fitness with the help of zumba fitness Instructor Joanne Ballack

Donation From Amelia Zarro Trust Fund



Anthony Zarro, father of BBLC student Amelia Zarro, presents donation to Principal Wendy Eaton.

Anthony Zarro donated \$2,500 raised through the Amelia Zarro Trust Fund to Bright Beginnings Learning Center. Mr. Zarro is the father of BBLC student Amelia Zarro, who was diagnosed with Chromosome 22 Ring, a rare genetic disorder that has severely impaired her mental and physical development.

According to Principal Wendy Eaton, the donation will be used to help purchase a TAP-it®, Touch Accessible Platform for Interactive Technology, an ADA compliant interactive learning station that reinforces skills needed for operating computers and other communication devices.

Mr. Zarro said Amelia has made significant progress at BBLC, noting on the Amelia Zarro Trust Fund web site:

"She is learning basic sign language, gaining exposure to everyday tasks of life, fundamentals of basic educational subjects, and how to walk independently... We were told that Amelia would never walk and today she can walk 20 steps on her own. We are optimistic that we have only tapped into a small amount of Amelia's potential and look forward to so much more."

The Amelia Zarro Trust Fund was created in 2010 by the friends of Anthony Zarro to "raise funds for Amelia and others with similar challenges." ●

Students Are On The Move



Special Day For A Special School

With emotion and gratitude, US Green Building Council's N.J. Chapter Executive Director Florence Block presented the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission with a glass sculpture in recognition of the Center for Lifelong Learning being awarded the LEED Platinum certification.

"Students spend 95 percent of their school day indoors," said Mrs. Block, whose youngest son was diagnosed with Autism, and was one of several "founding families" of the Somerset Hills Learning Institute in Gladstone.

"It is a great honor to be here and help recognize your commitment to building a school where the health of special needs students and environmental awareness were the highest priorities," she said.

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification is the highest of four certification levels, and the CLL is the first New Jersey public school to receive the award.

The ceremony at CLL included comments by Christopher Rafano, Freeholder Director, Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders; Kennedy O'Brien, Mayor, Borough of Sayreville; MRESC Board President Dale Caldwell; School Superintendent Mark Finkelstein, and Mrs. Block.

The speakers noted that many people contributed to the success of the school, with special credit given to School Business Administrator Pat Moran for bringing the project in on time and within budget, along with the Somerville based USA Architects, headed by project manager Peter C. Campisano, AIA.

The CLL's ecodesign features include: recycling of rain-water, control flow meters on appliances, white roofs to reduce heating and cooling costs, drought tolerant landscaping such as wildflowers, and preferred parking for hybrid vehicles. ●



MRESC Business Administrator Pat Moran, holding LEED Platinum glass sculpture, flanked by members of the Somerville based USA Architects, and US Green Building Council's N.J. Chapter Executive Director Florence Block (2nd from right).



In the foreground at the ceremony were Supervisor Danielle Chryssikos (L) and Principal Debra Nappi, two key people involved with the-day-to-day operation of the CLL.



MRESC Superintendent Mark Finkelstein thanked people for "embracing the value of this project for our students and staff."



Executive Director Florence Block joined a tour of the CLL, which included a stop at the school's greenhouse.

Congratulations 2012 Graduates!

ACADEMY LEARNING CENTER

Andy Zhang; Ashley Petrone; Nikolaos Polihros; Carlos Alicea; Christian Rivera; Tyrell McDade; Michael Strauss-Goldfarb; Stephanie Aquino and Steven Scardilli

CENTER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Eighth Grade Graduates
Anthony Cameron; Casimo Medoro; Kyle Hansell; Brandon Brzezniak; Edward King and Jeremiah Rosier Clark

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ACADEMY

Charles Dunn; Carl Reece; Jahvar Dodson; Zainabu Whyte; Thales Marques and Austin Robinson

NUVIEW

High School
Ricardo Almeida and Miguel Placeres

Eighth Grade

Jerry Franco; Nicholas Guasco; Angel Herrera; Niem Jefferson; Saul Ortiz, Jared Washington and Maurice Foster

PISCATAWAY REGIONAL DAY SCHOOL

Marvin Agyeman; Victoria Augusto; Anthony Betancourt; Dilenia Caba; Alia Davis; John Franklin; Trevor Inglin; Ahmad Jawed; Rebecca Kennedy; Rebecca Laffoon; Eric Orazi; Ilajah Rawlins; Katie Roberson and Chaina Smikle

RARITAN VALLEY ACADEMY

Derek Granger; Johenssi Mena; Alexandra Cotto; Anthony Rogers; James Washington; William Krieger and Michael Robinson

Commission Honors 2011-2012 Outstanding Teachers

The following are MRESC's "Outstanding Teachers of the Year!"

- Academy Learning Center - *Colleen Hopfensperger*
- Bright Beginnings Learning Center - *Tonya Shearin*
- Center for Lifelong Learning - *Regan Beeler*
- Nonpublic Department - *Dawn Miller*
- Piscataway Regional Day School - *Lisa Parker*



Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission

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