



MRESC Update

MIDDLESEX REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Cooperative, Cost Efficient, Quality Services

Award Recipients

Each year we acknowledge employees who reach five year milestones in their service to the Commission. This year's employees include:

ACADEMY LEARNING CENTER

5 Year

Diana Tauriello	Barbara Frycz
Trevor Eckman	Jill Sykes
Rachel Beer	Mary Wright
Abigail Wilman	Lois Prestridge

10 Year

Donna Magnavita	Marie Miessler
Lisa Santomaro	Karen Warga
Deborah Stephens	Kathleen Collins
Janice Kester	

20 Year

Barbara Muglia	Marie Kentzel
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30 Year

Marie Rocco	
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BRIGHT BEGINNINGS LEARNING CENTER

5 Year

Belinda Vaughn	Abigail Saria
Hansa Singh	Jodi Robinson
Lillian Jacobi	Zev Form
Heather Kwiatkowski	

10 Year

Lyubov Lunin	Tonya Shearin
Nellie Hannah	James Zarcone
Bharati Kavi	Cynthia Miller

25 Year

Shih Lee	
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CENTER FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

5 Year

Elizabeth Williams	Marisa Silvestri
Bakul Bhalla	Kalyani Kothari
Teresa Eriksen	

10 Year

Kathleen Woods	
Jennifer Hirsch	Corey Billy

CENTRAL OFFICE

5 Year

Luz Baerga	Vincent Torsiello
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20 Year

Lorraine R. Small	
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(See **Awards** on page 8)

Vice President Rosemary Walsh: Students Are Her Only Agenda

Even though she is stepping off the MRESC's Board of Directors in December, following two decades of service (the last 11 as Vice President), Rosemary Walsh has continued finding ways to positively impact students by reading and discussing stories with them.

"The teachers told me the students love it, and that it is good for them to have a new person to interact with," she said.

The students are already comfortable enough to call Mrs. Walsh "Mimi," the name she has her grandchildren use.

"It makes the experience more like a family gathering," she added.

Certainly, Mrs. Walsh has been a key member of the Commission family. As Board President Dale Caldwell put it: "Rosemary has served admirably, a terrific board member with only one agenda — quality education for students."

Mrs. Walsh was on the Middlesex Borough Board of Education when she was first appointed as its representative to the MRESC Board. Once she understood the mission of the MRESC, Mrs. Walsh never left.



Vice President Rosemary Walsh

"There is no organization in this state that does as good a job with the special needs population as the Commission," she said.

"Many students have limited options, but our staff does a great job helping them maximize their abilities."

A native of Liberty, New York, Mrs. Walsh earned her undergraduate degree from St. John's University, and her master's in secondary education from Kean University. She taught 5th grade for 20 years for the Middlesex Borough Public Schools. Her responsibilities included serving as a mathematics trainer across the country for the highly

regarded Project CLIMB (Coordination Learning Integration-Middlesex Basics), which became a national model for the K-12 basic skills curriculum.

Looking ahead, Mrs. Walsh is delighted the Commission is exploring ways to continue working with students and families after graduation.

"We are working to address the post graduation issue as they become young adults," she said.

(See **Board VP** on page 4)

Williams-Sonoma Donation Kicks Off School Year

"It made our year before it even began," was Bright Beginnings Learning Center (BBLC) Principal Wendy Eaton's reaction to a large school supplies donation courtesy of employees from the Williams-Sonoma Distribution Center in South Brunswick.

"It was incredible and completely unexpected," said Mrs. Eaton.

Williams-Sonoma is a San Francisco-based specialty retailer of home furnishings and gourmet cookware, generating approximately \$3 billion in sales.

"A survey among employees identified that many workers wanted a greater connection with the community," said Quality Assurance Administrator Joette Cronin.

With the new school year just around the corner, a school supplies fundraiser was a natural. Department also converted



BBLC students and staff enjoyed examining the school materials donated by Williams-Sonoma. Pictured are: (L-R) Zach Allen, Instructional aide, Students Autumn Pryor-Green and Dev Sidhu, Haley Glennon, Instructional aide and students Nigel Oglesby and Brian Alexander.



Representatives from Williams-Sonoma Distribution Center in South Brunswick received a Resolution in appreciation of their contribution from President Dale Caldwell at a recent Board of Directors Meeting.

shipping boxes into colorful, school related containers to store supplies.

When the Williams-Sonoma truck pulled up in front of BBLC on August 31, the initiative had yielded approximately 1,500 school supply items.

Representatives from the company attended a recent Board of Directors meeting to receive a Resolution in appreciation of the contribution. ●

MRESC Receives Green Team Award

The MRESC and USA Architects received the "Green Team Award" at the U.S. Green Building Council New Jersey (USGBC NJ) Chapter's 10th Anniversary Gala & Awards Dinner at the Revel Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City.

Each year USGBC NJ presents "Gala Awards" for "outstanding achievement in green building and sustainability."

The Green Team Award follows the Washington, D.C. based USGBC awarding the Commission's Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL), the "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum Level Certification," the highest of four LEED Certification levels.

The CLL is the first special needs school in the country to attain LEED Platinum Level Certification.

The keynote speaker at the dinner was Robert F. Kennedy Jr., one of Time magazine's "Heroes for the Planet" for his environmental advocacy efforts.

The MRESC Superintendent of Schools, Mark Finkelstein, said "it was an honor for the Commission, in

partnership with USA Architects, to be recognized for doing something in the best interests of students."

Paul Swartz, co-founder of the Somerville based USA Architects with Arnaldo Untoria, also emphasized the "positive impact the CLL is having on students," as the greatest reward.

The MRESC Business Administrator/ Board Secretary Patrick Moran, supervised construction of the project, and Peter Campisano, of USA Architects, was director of project management.

Mr. Moran said the driving force behind the MRESC's adherence to the highest environmental standards was its commitment to build a school to best accommodate special needs students.

"Our population is often more sensitive to toxins like formaldehyde and other contaminants," A green school ensures a healthy environment for students and staff."

Conservation efforts range from recycling of rainwater, appliance control flow meters, white roofs to reduce heating and cooling costs, and drought tolerant landscaping.

The CLL includes the MRESC Aquatics & Fitness Center, which is open for community use. ●



Many of the CLL's environmentally friendly elements, such as its greenhouse, are incorporated into the educational curriculum.

Learning More About The Special Students At ALC



Aaron Schifter, (right), is joined by his twin brothers sitting across from him, Justin (left), and Jason (right), and his sister Lauren, as they work on a food preparation project.



Participants at "Sibling Day," learned more about meeting the challenges of working with special needs students.

The Academy Learning Center (ALC), annually holds two events to help educate and support immediate and extended family members whose lives are touched by children with special needs.

Over the past summer, both "Sibling Day," and "Special Person's Day," provided participants with a chance to observe classes, and discuss ALC's Autism and Multiple Disabilities programs.

"Both days are designed help people better understand the strengths and challenges of special needs children," said ALC Principal Dr. Erik Solberg.

"They are two of my favorite programs of the year," he added. ●

MRESC Raises \$4,000 For American Cancer Society

Swimmers and donations from Commission staff combined to raise nearly \$4,000 in the American Cancer Society's "Swim for a Cure" held at the MRESC Aquatics & Fitness Center, located in The Center for Lifelong Learning.

The event was planned by Aquatics Coordinator Katelyn Dauphinee, Membership and Program Coordinator Nancy Drumm, and representatives from the American Cancer Society.

The unofficial "winner" for most laps completed (100), was Dr. Martin Weinapple, who has worked with Commission students at the NuView Academy for several years.

The event benefited the American Cancer Society's "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer" initiative. ●



Center for Lifelong Learning's Myra Scott, assisted by Aquatics Supervisor Julie Sakowicz, takes part in the "Adaptive Swim-A-Thon."

MRESC swimmers helped raise nearly \$4,000 in the American Cancer Society's "Swim for a Cure."



Student Art Used To Decorate Board Room



Under the direction of Art Teacher Audrey Roderman, the creative skills of several Academy Learning Center student artists served as a nice backdrop at a recent MRESC Board of Directors meeting.

Board VP *(Continued from page 1)*

“We never rest on our laurels, and are always thinking about what to do next for students and families.”

Mrs. Walsh has a great passion for travel, a trait she shared with her late husband Jack, a Middlesex Borough Councilman for nine years, and has visited all seven continents. She has successfully spread the travel bug to her four children and 12 grandchildren too.

“Every summer I take some of them someplace interesting like Mexico, Ireland or Kenya for instance. I have been very fortunate,” she said.

Reflecting on her service, School Superintendent Mark Finkelstein said: “Rosemary has been a guiding light, and her intelligence, compassion and dedication will definitely be missed.” ●



Mrs. Walsh, working with students recently at Piscataway Regional Day School.

Board Highlights

Middlesex County Vocational & Technical School Superintendent of Schools **Brian Loughlin's** Perth Amboy Extension was designated a “Blue Ribbon School” based on “its progress in improving student achievement,” according to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

Milltown Board Vice President Bill Petscavage was selected for a two year appointment to serve on the Middlesex County Professional Development Board.
Old Bridge Board Member Matthew Sulikowski and **Mr. Petscavage** were reelected to serve

on their respective school boards in the recent election.
Perth Amboy Superintendent of Schools Janine Caffrey's 4th grade teacher, **Lauren Marrocco**, was named the 2012-13 New Jersey Teacher of the Year. ●

MRESC Tech Symposium Draws Educators

Approximately 70 people, representing school districts from as far away as Egg Harbor, Point Pleasant and Sparta, to nearby South Brunswick and Edison Township, attended the recent MRESC 2012 Tech Symposium. The event was co-sponsored with the Illinois based CDW-G, whose \$9.6 billion in net sales last year makes it one of the leading technology service providers in the country.

The symposium featured presentations about how to successfully introduce "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD), and Mobile Device Management (MDM) programs in schools.

"People appeared engaged during the presentations," said MRESC Business Administrator/Board Secretary Patrick Moran.

- government agencies, and many businesses, is the preference most people have towards using their own equipment when receiving and transmitting information electronically. The challenge is to integrate the information so that it can accommodate whatever device (iPad, Smartphone, laptop, etc.) people are using, and establish protocols



Charles Magee (R) is the K-12 Regional Sales Manager for CDW-G, the firm that co-sponsored the Tech Symposium with the MRESC.



Presenters shared information to help attendees learn how to introduce Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approaches in schools.

"Districts are at various stages in their integration of technology. I think the symposium was helpful in identifying best practices for using technology to enhance student education."

Alex Inman, a presenter from Educational Collaborators pointed out "it is not about the device; it is about how the device contributes to student learning that is most important."

Driving the move to BYOD and MDM approaches in schools,

- to ensure that security and confidentiality issues are not compromised.

Charles Magee, K-12 Regional Sales Manager for CDW-G also emphasized that the overriding point of the technology is to "increase student achievement," adding:

"We knew the MRESC would do a great job with this symposium, so we were delighted to be involved,"

Video Production Teacher Mike Padilla, who chairs the West Milford Township School District Technology Committee, said the symposium was beneficial for him to attend.

"We are definitely moving in the BYOD direction," said Mr. Padilla.

"I need to make recommendations for the future, so it was important for me to be here."

In addition to a Q&A session and a roundtable discussion on network infrastructure, the symposium included presentations by AirWatch, Meraki (recently acquired by Cisco), Citrix Systems, Educational Collaborators, Lenova, Stoneware, and Veeam. •



Mike Padilla (center), who chairs the West Milford Township School District Technology Committee, said the symposium will help him make recommendations in the future.

Uncle Makes Sure The Memory Of Former PRDS Student Lives On



Gathered around the OneManOneBikeOneChild tee shirts are (L to R): Uncle William Zuppa, Case Manager Debbie Bussiere, Principal Toba Knobel, Sara's sister, Social Worker Nancy Michaels, and PRDS student Sara (seated).

Georgie Caunt, a former student at Piscataway Regional Day School (PRDS), was only 14 with cerebral palsy when he passed away in 1995.

Since then, William Zuppa, Georgie's Uncle, has driven thousands of miles to raise funds each year for a modest-income family whose child attends PRDS. The funds are designed to help families pay for items like adaptive equipment and communication devices.

This year, the PRDS student selected was Sara, who, along with her sister, burst into tears when Mr. Zuppa surprised them with a check for \$6,500. An emotional reaction was also heard from Sara's mother, listening in on speakerphone from work during the presentation.

"Mr. Zuppa does this to make a difference in the life of a child, and he does this out of the goodness of his heart," said PRDS Social Worker Nancy Michaels.

A PRDS selection committee, consisting of Mrs. Michaels, Principal Toba Knobel, Case Manager Debbie Bussiere, and various teachers, determine which student will receive the proceeds each year.

"It's not any easy decision, but we select someone whose family we know will use the funds appropriately," said Mrs. Michaels.

Mr. Zuppa's most recent ride began at the September 11th Memorial in Essex County Eagle Rock Reservation, ending 100 miles later at the Opus sculpture in the Catskill Mountains. Previous rides have included Mount Washington in New Hampshire, North Carolina's Mount Mitchell, and the Swiss and Italian Alps.

Donations to the OneManOneBikeOneChild not-for-profit organization can be mailed to PO Box 1172, West Caldwell, NJ 07006. •

Uncle William Zuppa (L) moments after presenting the \$6,500 award to Sara (middle), who was accompanied by her sister.



Ongoing Support From The Rotary



A Resolution in appreciation of the Old Bridge-Sayreville Rotary Club was presented at a recent Board of Directors meeting. The organization provided funds so The Center for Lifelong Learning could purchase a Gazebo so students and staff have a shaded area in the playground. The Old Bridge-Sayreville Rotary Club gave an extraordinarily generous \$250,000 donation to the CLL when it first opened to purchase playground equipment appropriate for special needs students. •

Pictured (L to R) are: Superintendent Mark Finkelstein, Old Bridge-Sayreville Rotary Club Past President Bill Kurtz, current President Glenn Davis, Board Vice President Rosemary Walsh, and Board President Dale Caldwell.

The Energy Cubs: A Powerful Club



BBLC Teacher Cindy Miller who founded the Energy Cubs in 2009, displays the \$2,000 check the club received as part of an ING Unsung Heroes Grant.

The Bright Beginnings Learning Center's (BBLC) Energy Cubs have received significant recognition as a result of its ongoing effort to design programs and activities that promote energy efficiency.

Last May, the Energy Cubs were named one of 10 recipients of the 2012 Innovations in Special Education Award, sponsored by the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), and ASAH, a non-profit organization of schools and agencies for special education.

Then, last October, the Energy Cubs received an ING Unsung Heroes Grant of \$2,000 from Regional Manager Ben Balkaran. A financial services firm, the ING funds will go towards the Energy Cub's Green House project.

Formed and led by BBLC Teacher Cindy Miller in 2009, the Energy Cubs have grown from eight to 21 students. The Cubs promote energy efficiency in the classrooms and throughout the school, in addition to learning about solar power, energy efficient light bulbs and recycling.

The Bright Beginnings Learning Center's PTO, along with area businesses, also support the Energy Cubs by donating time, funds and materials. •

Talented Young Artist At NuView

The three photos below show the considerable talents of NuView student Luis Reinoso Rodriguez, who has learned a great deal working with Art Teacher Audrey Roderman. The photos are (1) A reproduction of Gustov Klimt's gold "Tree of Life." (2) A cardboard architecture project of a 3D haunted house spray painted black by Luis. (3) Luis with his finished project. •



Surviving Hurricane Sandy

For Thanksgiving, PRDS families and staff wrote stories about their Hurricane Sandy experiences, and all that they are thankful for in surviving.



Awards (Continued from page 1)

NONPUBLIC DEPARTMENT – IDEIA – B AIDES

5 Year

Joan Sacchi Lauren Staib-Weingartner
Laurie Patterson Sandra Casares Lavalle

NONPUBLIC DEPARTMENT – REGISTERED NURSES

5 Year

Mary Lynn Chiera Gabriela Smierzynski
Valerie Lasalla Nancy Bergen

NONPUBLIC DEPARTMENT – IDEIA – B TEACHERS

5 Year

Barbara Pezzuto Janet Nielsen
Fredrika Schwerin Lisa Quartararo
Claudia Kaiserman Renee Bader

10 Year

Kerry Walsh Donna Zehnbauer

20 Year

Paula Hessek

NUVIEW ACADEMY

10 Year

Phyllis Lewis William Walsh

PISCATAWAY REGIONAL DAY SCHOOL

5 Year Awards

Michelle Graci Carolyn Relyea
Benjamin Veal Camille DeGironimo
Christine Ivak Jessica Kligman

10 Year Awards

Rubina Khan Phyllis Delucia
Barbara Polston Robyn Atcachunas
Sanam Warasat Anna Mary Verduci
Ellen Billard Marika O'Rourke

RARITAN VALLEY ACADEMY

5 Year

Sally Isaacs



Colleagues of BBLC's Shih Lee hosted a surprise "reception" to thank her for 25 years of service.

10 Year

Jennifer Alberici

20 Year

Arthur E. Francis

Graduate Update

Featured this issue: John Drgalla

School: Raritan Valley Academy

Graduated: 1997

Current status: A firefighter employed by the Old Bridge Fire Department District. Also attended Lincoln Technical Institute.

Favorite Hobby: Cooking, and has taken courses at a culinary school.

Thoughts on RVA: It was a positive experience overall because it helped me become more motivated. •



Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission

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Dunellen, Phillip Heiney
East Brunswick, Kathleen Spiegler
Edison, Richard O'Malley
Highland Park, Frances Wood
Jamesburg, Gail Verona
Metuchen, Rose de Vries
Middlesex, Rosemary Walsh
Milltown, Bill Petscavage
Monroe, Amy Antelis
New Brunswick, Dale Caldwell

North Brunswick, Brian Zychowski
Old Bridge, Matthew Sulikowski
Perth Amboy, Janine Caffrey
Piscataway, Mark Okamoto
Sayreville, Frank Alfano
South Amboy, Robert Sheedy
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Fredrika Schwerin, Supervisor of Nonpublic School Services
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William Walsh, Principal of NuView Academy
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