

Elizabeth Stuffs A Bus for Children in Need



The Elizabeth Board of Education and City of Elizabeth partnered to initiate a “Stuff-A-Bus,” collecting toys and daily necessity items during the month of December at six designated school drop off locations in each of the city’s six wards to benefit the children of Puerto Rico impacted by Hurricane Maria. Not among the initial six drop off locations, Joseph Battin School No. 4 contacted the Elizabeth Public Schools transportation department and requested to participate. Students and team members proceeded to collect more than 850 toys donated solely by members of the School No. 4 learning community. Their tremendous efforts alone were enough to stuff an entire large Elizabeth Board of Education bus .

Elizabeth City Council President Carlos Torres (1st Ward) joined 2017 Board President Stanley Neron and Board members Diane Barbosa and Charlene Bathelus in coordinating the delivery of several loaded pallets of donated supplies to the children and families in Puerto Rico.

School No. 28 Recognized by Eco-Schools USA as a Green Flag School



Juan Pablo Duarte – José Julián Martí School No. 28 had the distinguished honor of being one of only 30 schools throughout the United States to be awarded the Green Flag by National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA Program for making significant changes that impact environmental sustainability within the school and greater community.

Through school-based action teams of students, administrators, educators, and community volunteers, the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA combines effective "green" management of the school grounds, the facilities, and the curriculum; truly providing students with a unique research and application based learning experience.

Once a school has registered and implemented the Seven Steps as outlined by Eco-Schools USA, they can apply for an Eco-Schools award on their very own personalized dashboard. The Seven Steps include forming an eco-action team, conducting an environmental audit, creating an eco-action plan, monitoring and evaluating progress, linking to existing curriculum, involving the community, and creating your eco-code.

The three levels of the award system are Bronze, Silver, and the prestigious Green Flag. The Bronze and Silver awards are self-assessed, and can be achieved by meeting specific criteria and then submitting the online award form. The top award is the Green Flag, which must be evaluated by an Eco-Schools USA assessor and renewed every two years. A school is considered to be a permanent Eco-School once it has gained its fourth Green Flag.

Thanks to the hard work of their Green Team Committee, teachers, administrators, and students, the culture of School No. 28 has changed to be more environmentally conscious in becoming Elizabeth's first Green Flag School.

A Warm Gesture by School No. 27 Learning Community

As the days were getting colder during the holiday season, WE were giving the gift of warmth by donating winter weather clothing items to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for refugee families. The Dr. Antonia Pantoja School No. 27 Family donated over 100 items such as scarves, hats, and gloves.

WE is a movement that believes when we come together, we can create an even better world. Through domestic programs like WE Schools and internationally through WE Villages, WE Charity empowers change with resources that create a sustainable impact.

Students in Ms. Walker's and Mr. Felipe's after school enrichment program wrapped these items and created cards to give to all the recipients of these packages.



EPS, Community Foodbank of NJ Provide Farmers' Market

In December, the Division of Food and Nutrition Services partnered with the Community Foodbank of New Jersey to hold a farmers' market at the cafeteria of George Washington Academy School No. 1 and Jerome Dunn Academy School No. 9.



Fresh produce, dry goods, baked goods and beverages were donated to approximately 170 families in need of food.

The Community Foodbank of New Jersey, based in Hillside and Egg Harbor, is the state's largest anti-hunger and anti-poverty organization. Founded over 40 years ago, the food bank works with volunteers, donors, and partners to fill the emptiness caused by hunger with food, help and hope.



Volunteers from Shaping Elizabeth, a coalition founded in 2013 that focuses on health equity and the goals of diabetes reduction, HIV-prevention, and improving residents' access to healthy foods, also participated in the operation of the farmers' market.

The Farmer's Market will be held the fourth Friday of every month at the cafeteria of School Nos. 1 and 9 from 3:10 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

School No. 14 Psychologist Spreads Wellness Through the EPS Community and Beyond

Dr. Ruben Lambert, a certified school psychologist and clinical psychologist who is presently a member of the CST team at Abraham Lincoln School No. 14, manages the district's Behavior Improvement Program for children with negative behaviors that impede them from success in the classroom. The program integrates traditional academic learning with social emotional skills so that children can learn healthy ways to express their emotions and regulate behaviors. The program has flourished because of Dr. Lambert's dedication and techniques to keeping our students on the pathway to success.

Dr. Lambert's impact has also extended beyond the Elizabeth Public Schools community. As an instructor, has taught courses at Kean University Such as Psychology of Learning, Psychology of Adolescence, and graduate courses in the school Psychology program; conducted educational and wellness workshops for the Elizabeth and Union Boards of Education; and provided consultation regarding wellness, problem solving, stress management, and motivation to organizational staff and management.



As a lecturer, Dr. Lambert was the Keynote speaker at the NJ Spring Conference for School Social Workers, delivering a presentation titled, "From Worrier to Warrior: Learn to Combat Stress. Your Mind Back Guaranteed." Additionally, he served as a TEDx speaker in Newark, New Jersey, presenting on "Perseverance and Resilience on the Road to Success" and has presented at Rutgers University-New Brunswick and Drew University on "The Use of Meditation for Stress Reduction and Overall Mental Health" as well as at the Woodbridge Housing Authority, Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center, DAWN Center for Independent Living, and Nurturing Den Daycare Center on Optimal Health and Wellness.

Dr. Lambert has also co-developed a 10-week meditation program that focuses on diaphragmatic breathing. The program is currently being researched by a team of Psychologists and Exercise Physiologists at Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

Dr. Lambert's specialization and life passion of utilizing meditation, positive thinking and compassion in order to achieve optimal health is helping to keep the EPS community well on its way to becoming one of the highest performing urban school districts in the nation.

Students Are Filling Buckets with Kindness at School No. 50

France C. Smith Early Childhood Center School No. 50 teacher Saribel Aguirre was looking for a topic to do for the school's Project Approach in her classroom last winter. She noticed her students were frequently talking about not being friends with each other and decided to look for resources that would help children act positively toward one another by demonstrating kindness, a foundational aspect of social and emotional development in children.



"As educators, we are big with treating our students with love and respect, but sometimes it's a challenge to get them to treat each other in this manner," said Aguirre.

In her research, she found "Bucket Filling," a concept in which children are taught how to be loving and caring by being encouraged and given the opportunity to express kindness to others, including classmates, family and members of our community.

Aguirre was very excited to try it out with her students and began implementing this concept in our classroom after speaking with her school's Child Development Associate, because she really wanted to alleviate the lack of positive interaction.

She began her students' journey of being 'Bucket Fillers' by reading the book *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud. The class then made a chart detailing how a Bucket Filling classroom looks, sounds, and feels. The children began to understand that they were "bucket fillers" when they treated all people, including ourselves, with love and respect.

Through the process, the children grew to really enjoy being bucket fillers and continued to fill their classroom bucket and each other's buckets by performing acts of kindness. For Aguirre and her classroom assistants, it was a fun and wonderful experience to see how her students could treat one another in a loving way and even extend this behavior with family members at home.

"While we cannot control events outside of ourselves, there are three things that we can control: Our thoughts, our words and our behavior," said Aguirre. "The positive thoughts we think, the words we speak, and the actions we take to make life better for ourselves and others are the very things that raise our happiness level and fill our buckets."

As a result of the growth experienced through this project based lesson, all students who attend School No. 50 are now filling buckets in their classrooms with acts of kindness.

School No. 22 Dance Instructor, EPS Dance Education in ARTS ED NJ Spotlight

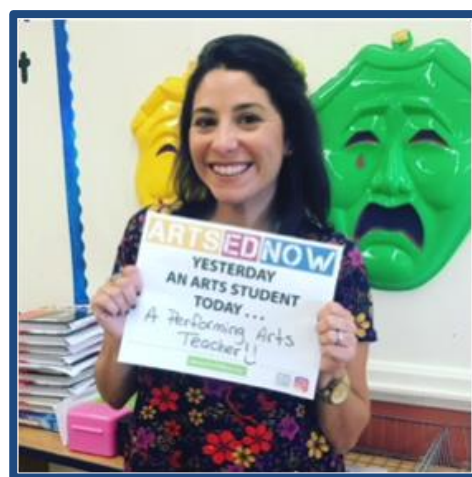
William F. Halloran School No. 22 dance instructor Alyssa Fisher and the dance program of Elizabeth Public Schools were recently spotlighted in a December 2017 ARTS ED NJ blog.



Arts Ed NJ, previously the New Jersey Arts Education Partnership, was established in 2007 following years of planning and input by arts and education leaders statewide and created to be the unified voice for arts education. The organization was originally a cosponsored program of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, with additional support from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, New Jersey Department of Education, and Music for All Foundation before becoming an independent non-profit organization in July 2015.

The blog highlights the importance of dance education and the ways in which Elizabeth Public Schools has worked to bring the art of dance to its students. The full blog post can be read by visiting:

<http://artsednj.org/blog-spotlight-on-dance-education-in-elizabeth-nj-alyssa-fisher-dance-teacher-eps-william-f-halloran-22/#>



School No. 7 Performing Arts Instructor Featured on ARTS ED NJ

Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 performing arts teacher Tiffany Festa-Sneddon recently wrote an article for ARTS ED NJ about the importance of arts education.

In her article, Festa-Sneddon suggests that educators can find better and creative ways to reach all learners through arts education, which can help disconnected and disinterested students make connections to learning by using different intelligences and various parts of the brain.

Her article can be read by visiting:

<http://artsednj.org/arts-education-new-buzz-word-or-new-approach-by-tiffany-festa-sneddon/>

Dwyer Technology Academy Alumna Returns to Speak About Heroin and Opioid Abuse



John E. Dwyer Technology Academy Class of 2008 graduate Victoria Smith, now an officer at the Union County Sherriff's Office, visited JEDTA students in December to speak with students about the risks and dangers of heroin and opioid abuse and how they are affecting our community.

According to an NJ.com article published in September 2017, at least 1,901 people died from opioid overdoses in New Jersey in 2016 and deaths involving heroin have more than doubled since 2013, while fentanyl-related deaths have risen an eye-popping 2,000% in the same span.

The Elizabeth Public Schools community is proud of Officer Smith's accomplishments, including her service as chair of the Union County task force for Heroin and Opioids Meet Education (H.O.M.E.).

**ADDICTION IS A DISEASE.
DON'T SUFFER. DON'T WAIT.
HELP IS WITHIN REACH.**

RECOVERY STARTS NOW

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EQUITY

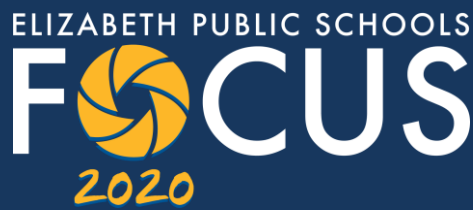
As a nation, America's Promise is that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity or social class, should receive a high quality, academically rich and rigorous public education.

EXPECTATIONS

The concept of high expectations is premised on the philosophical and pedagogical belief that a failure to hold all students to high expectations effectively denies them access to a high quality education, since the educational achievement of students tends to rise or fall in direct relation to the expectations placed upon them.

EXCELLENCE

Educational Excellence is defined as students performing at high levels or where students are making significant gains in academic achievement helping to prepare every child for global competitiveness.



Student

We believe ALL students can learn and achieve at high levels regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income or home language.

ALL Means ALL. We will narrow the achievement gaps of students by providing a high quality education to ensure that ALL of our students are college and career ready.

Teacher

We believe teachers make a positive difference in student achievement. Teachers will prepare ALL students for success in college, career, and our technological global society.

We believe that teachers are central in a child's life. Having an effective teacher is the single most important factor in student success.

Leader

We believe that effective leaders demonstrate unwavering commitment to high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Leaders will exemplify and support practices that promote high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Family

We believe that parents and caregivers are both valued partners and active participants in their children's learning. A shared sense of mutual responsibility for learning is the foundation for family involvement to ensure student success.

We are committed to engaging parents and caregivers in their children's education. We will develop a coordinated strategy that enables parents and caregivers to play an active role in building and sustaining family support for their children's learning and academic success.

Team

We believe that every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools Team has a responsibility in producing and supporting high levels of achievement for ALL students.

Every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team will make a measurable contribution to the success and achievement for ALL students by ensuring equitable distribution of resources throughout the organization.