

# Special Education in Action

Engaging Stakeholders through Communities of Practices and Program Development

Click here for the **special edition feature** on Autism Awareness Month.



## "Small Town, Big Impact" Monmouth County

### Manasquan High School, 18-21 Program "The Center for Learning and Independence (CLI)"

On a stroll down Main Street, a trip to the local supermarket, or while taking in a Blue Claws baseball game, it is likely you have been helped by, greeted by, or have shopped alongside one of the students in Manasquan High School's newest program for students with special needs, The Center for Learning and Independence. "CLI", as it is known on campus, is an educational program for students with various abilities with a focus on community-based instruction and work-based learning. Students in the program learn meaningful skills through the completion of purposeful tasks, including soft skills such as how to successfully navigate social interactions, solve problems, and effectively manage their time. The program can best be described as "a classroom without walls." Students are taught the skills they will need for the rest of their lives in their local communities, promoting generalization and maintenance of acquired skills in the process.

Key features that make Manasquan an ideal location for such a program is the small town's walkability, its easy access to nearby towns through public transportation, and the welcoming spirit of its residents and business owners. In only its debut year, the CLI program has partnered with close to 30 businesses in Manasquan and the neighboring communities to provide a variety of work-based learning experiences to their students in the retail, hospitality, and food service industries.

So, next time you are in town, at the supermarket, or at a baseball game, feel proud that there are school programs such as the Center for Learning and Independence ensuring that individuals with various abilities are included in their local communities and best prepared for their road ahead.

Click on the "Resource Icons" below for direct access to updates, spotlights and opportunities.

## Table of Contents



Focus: New Jersey Department of Education Website Resource  
The NEW NJ Transition Toolkit

Learning Opportunities:

**National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)**  
**Back to School Special Review**



Series I: Guide to setting up your classroom  
Series II: Guide to building confidence in the classroom



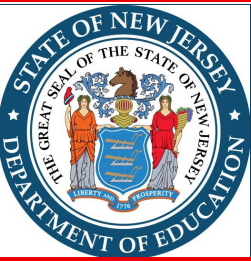
Resources for Innovative Practices  
*Starting the Year with a UDL Aligned Classroom from OSEP Ideas That Work*  
Tool Kit on Universal Design for Learning UDL Instructional UDL Practices Resource List

### The Parent Corner

Statewide Special Education Parent Leadership Roundtable - Summer 2022

Student Led IEPs: The Path to Success, July 20th





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## Special Edition Feature



**Little Ferry School District**  
Bergen County

Little Ferry School District celebrated Autism Awareness across the month of April. They began the celebrations by wearing blue in support of students with autism, followed by monthly celebrations that included: "Team Up for Autism", "Hat Day", "Get Comfy with Autism", and "Royal Knights Together." Each event was purposefully selected to show the student body that they are all on the same team, everyone is welcomed, and they are all Mighty! #BeMighty. Little Ferry noted that "this event was able to highlight our amazing students and everything they have to offer no matter what their challenges may be."

Schools throughout New Jersey share how they celebrated

# Autism Awareness Month

April 2022



Parsons Elementary School in North Brunswick celebrated Autism Awareness with local author Lisa Jacovsky. She provided a free assembly where students listened to two books in her Let's Talk series, *A Story of Autism and Friendship* and *Going to the Zoo*. Students were able to interact with Lisa and ask questions and share stories of acceptance and inclusivity which are pillars of their school community. After the assembly, each class had discussions around celebrating differences, different types of communication and kindness.



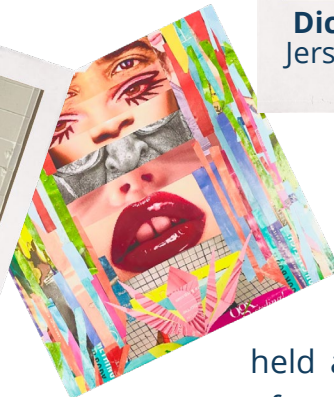
**Parsons Elementary School**  
North Brunswick Township Schools  
Middlesex County



**Dickinson High School**  
Jersey City Public Schools  
Hudson County

"The New Now" exhibit was on display at The Art House Gallery in North Jersey.

This public event held a month-long showcase of student art from the PLACE and STARS Program out of Dickinson High School in Jersey City.



The show reflected the identity, spirit, and imagination of students on the Autism Spectrum. For more information of this wonderful event, check out the Instagram page @ahpgallery.