



### Project SEARCH Interns at The Renaissance World Golf Village Resort

Project SEARCH and the new 2018-2019 interns are back in action at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort. The interns have undergone numerous team building activities and hands on training in several different departments. They have also had intensive instruction that covers self-advocacy, communication, task analysis and the different department roles and responsibilities, preparing the interns to transfer what they've learned so far in their orientation weeks and begin shadowing different department employees, supervisors and managers. Soon after, everyone will be placed into their first of three internships. We could not be more proud of our group of interns this year and we can't wait to celebrate all their future successes!



*Contributed By:*  
*Byron Pennington,*  
*ESE Teacher,*  
*Project SEARCH*

#### Our Goals:

To prepare students for competitive employment through student centered planning and supported employment skills practice throughout the community. We are constantly working to develop additional partnerships throughout the community to provide students a variety of locations and work experiences while they search to discover their personal career interests and skills.

#### Important Dates:

11/15, 6:30-8:00 pm– Gifted Parent Advisory  
Committee Meeting, Hickory Creek Elementary  
Media Center

12/4, 5:30-7:30 pm– Parent Advisory  
Committee Meeting, Fullerwood Center,  
10 Hildreth Drive





# Disability Employment Awareness Awards



The World Golf Village Renaissance Resort,  
St. Augustine, home to the St. Johns County School

District's Project SEARCH site, was honored as an exceptional employer for adults with disabilities by Florida Ability Works. Byron Pennington, Project SEARCH instructor, represented the hotel and school district at the ceremony on October 4<sup>th</sup> in Tallahassee, which was hosted by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Division of Blind Services. Florida was designated as an Employment First State with the intent to raise expectations that employment should be prioritized for individuals with disabilities and to change systems to better support integrated employment.

The St. Johns County School District Project SEARCH site had a 100% employment rate with the 9 student-interns at the end of their first year and are starting strong into year 2 with 8 student interns who are already making great progress and assimilating nicely into the hotel environment.





# THE GROWTH MINDSET

In the first quarter of school, gifted services have focused on self-awareness by exploring our talents, gifts, and positive attributes. Perseverance, goal setting, a growth mindset, and accepting challenges to become our academic, social, and emotional best have been the objectives of our lessons: through STEAM lessons, creativity tasks, and social emotional support.



Growth Mindset Sculpture from Osceola Elementary School



## Parent Tips for a Growth Mindset:

1. Pay attention and verbally praise your child for skills that don't sound predetermined: hard work, persistence, rising to a challenge, learning from a mistake, etc. rather than being "smart", "brilliant", or "gifted".
2. Be a growth mindset role model. Make sure you're sending the right message—maybe even take on something new!
3. Encourage your child to forget taking the easy route and embrace challenges. Frustration, perseverance, and mistakes GROW and S-T-R-E-T-C-H the brain!



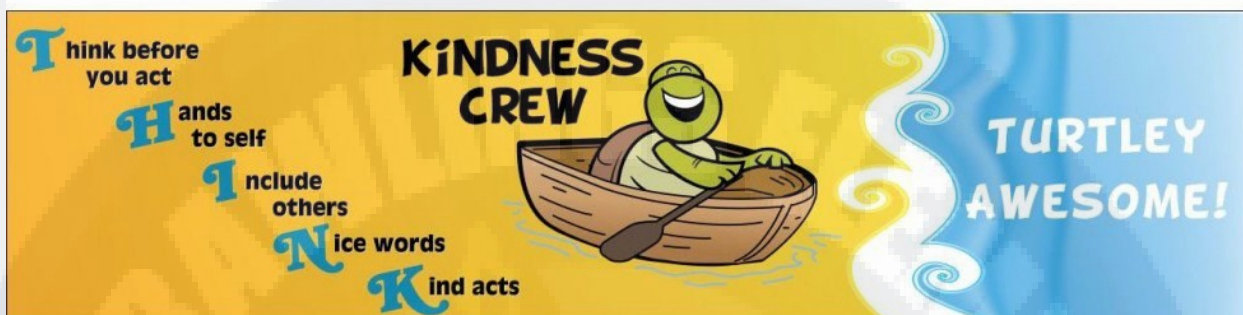
STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics)  
at PV/PV Rawlings Elementary School

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★  
★ The first GPAC ★  
★ meeting, in October, ★  
★ provided parents ★  
★ with support in frus- ★  
★ tration and persever- ★  
★ ance. Our next GPAC ★  
★ meeting, scheduled ★  
★ for November 15th ★  
★ at Hickory Creek ★  
★ Elementary, will be ★  
★ focusing on grati- ★  
★ tude. We'd love to ★  
★ see you there: ★  
★ 6:30-8:00 p.m. ★  
★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

*Submitted by: Amy Brim, Gifted Teacher*



## THE KINDNESS CREW AT PVPV/RAWLINGS RECOGNIZES ACTS OF KINDNESS



Here at PVPV/Rawlins our ESE students are working alongside their peers in a school wide program promoting kindness. The Kindness Crew is a new school wide positive behavior support program that offers many opportunities for our students to be recognized for their kind acts, comments and character. The program's purpose aligns nicely with many of the social/emotional goals our ESE children are working toward. We have had many students be recognized for their kindness when they thought "no one was watching". Many students have already placed their turtle on the wall of kindness and in turn they are starting to recognize kindness in others.



*Contributed by:*  
*Mary D'Errico,*  
*ESE Teacher,*  
*PVPV/Rawlins*  
*Elementary*





# WHO WORKS AT OUR SCHOOL?



Miss Lissa's PreK/VPK class at Wards Creek Elementary discussed "who works at our school" during their Beginning of the Year Study.

Mrs. Puyau from the cafeteria came to our classroom to tell us about her job. She showed us some of the tools she uses to make the food, and we got to wear gloves and hair nets!



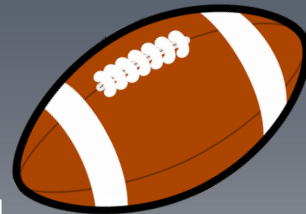
*Contributed by Lissa O'Rourke,  
ESE PreK/VPK Teacher,  
Wards Creek Elementary*







# LET'S CHEER!™



## Pedro Menendez Sparkle Cheerleaders kick off 2018 season

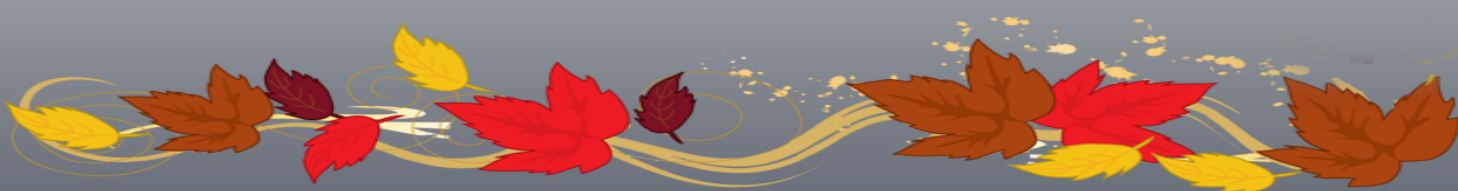


Pedro Menendez Sparkle cheerleaders kicked off their season on September 20th, cheering for their football team! The Sparkle Effect is a non profit organization that helps students nationwide create cheer teams that bring together students with and without disabilities. Since 2009, students on Sparkle Effect teams have worked together to create an environment of courage, compassion and connection where *all* students can learn and grow together.

Gooooooo Falcons!



*Contributed by Ms. Bonvallet, ESE Teacher, Pedro Menendez High*





## Reading at Wards Creek Elementary School

The mission of the SSYRA Jr. program is to develop student interest in reading for pleasure by exposing them to a wide range of appropriate literature. Students are encouraged to listen to these books read to them, read them in a small group setting, or read independently to develop skills in fluency and comprehension. Students in Mrs. Baker's class recently read I Am Not a Chair by Ross Burach. They drew a picture of the main character and wrote about him. They were so excited to receive their brag tags and can't wait for the next book adventure!



Students in Ms. Baker's ESE Grades 3-5 Class recently read 10 books and all received certificates for becoming Reading Warriors!!

*Submitted by Dianne Baker, ESE Teacher, and  
Kim Hinman, Media Specialist  
Wards Creek Elementary*





# OCTOBER'S ESE PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ANNUAL TRANSITION PLANNING MEETING

## Annual Transition Planning Parent Advisory Meeting

As of 1997, federal law mandates that students with disabilities who have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) must begin a process called transition planning at age 14. This program is designed to connect students with the proper transition planning services that give them the important skills and career planning tools to better prepare them for a successful life after high school, whether it be in a college setting or in the community.

As a method of ensuring parents and students are informed, on October 2, 2018 at Fullerwood Training Center, the Parent Advisory Committee brought together SJCS D ESE Transitions and community-based organizations to support students that are beginning or already involved in transition planning.

SJCS D Transitions Programs: Life Work and Project Search, The ARC, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) and Project 10 all shared pertinent information for parents, students, teachers and administrators. Parents and students left with additional knowledge about transition planning services in SJCS D schools and community.

If you missed this event and would like to know more, you can access the presentations via the following link.

<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/ease/advisory/>

### Target Audience:

Parents of students with disabilities

Students with disabilities age 14 and up

Teachers & administrators of students with disabilities

The purpose of the committee is to provide input to district staff regarding our ongoing effort to continuously improve services for students with disabilities.





# ESE PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

December 4, 2018

Fullerwood Training Center

6:00 to 7:30

ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION

WELCOMES GUEST SPEAKERS

## **Nata Salvatori PT, DPT, OCS, SCS, FAAOMPT**

Dr. Salvatori completed her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the Medical College of Virginia followed by her Orthopedic Residency and Manual Therapy Fellowship from the Brooks/UNF program. She holds dual board certifications in both Orthopaedics and Sports. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Physical Therapists, a certification held by less than 1% of the Physical Therapy profession. Dr. Salvatori holds an adjunct faculty position at the University of North Florida and currently teaches continuing education courses to other healthcare professionals through the Brooks Institute of Higher Learning. She is a Coordinator for the Sports Residency program at Brooks and is the Center Manager at the Brooks Center for Sports Therapy clinic. Dr. Salvatori is originally from Brazil where she worked as a professional athlete before moving to the United States and becoming a Physical Therapist.

## **Sarah Lahey PhD**

Dr. Lahey is a neuropsychologist practicing in both the inpatient and outpatient settings with Brooks Rehabilitation and is the lead neuropsychologist with the Brooks Concussion Program. She also serves as a neuropsychology consultant at both the collegiate and professional athlete level. Dr. Lahey graduated from the University of Florida with her doctorate in clinical psychology. Her residency was completed at Kennedy Krieger Institute/ Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and her fellowship in pediatric neuropsychology was completed at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta/Emory University College of Medicine. She holds leadership positions in several national organizations and frequently presents at national conferences. Her areas of research include recovery trajectories following severe traumatic brain injury resulting in disorders of consciousness. She has published in the area of physical medicine and rehabilitation and recently served as a guest editor for a special pediatric section in the journal, Rehabilitation Psychology.

Parents, Educators, Administrators, & Business Representatives are invited and encouraged to attend. Our next meeting will be held on December 4th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Fullerwood Training Center, 10 Hildreth Drive, St. Augustine



### **Important Dates**

**Monday, Nov. 12 Veterans Day/Student-Teacher Holiday**

**Wednesday-Friday , Nov. 21-23 Thanksgiving Holiday/Student-Teacher Holiday**

**Monday-Friday, Dec. 24, 2018—Jan. 3, 2019 Winter Break/Student-Teacher Holiday**

**Friday, Jan. 4, 2019 Teacher Planning Day/Student Holiday**

**Friday, Jan. 18, 2019 Report Cards**





Florida  
Consortium  
on Inclusive  
Higher Education

### The Self-Advocate & Family Symposium

is designed to provide self-advocates interested in college options (must be in middle school or above) and parents and guardians information and resources to Florida's explore college options.

For a sneak preview and to **register**, visit our website and begin to explore some of the multitude of resources [www.FCIHE.com](http://www.FCIHE.com) available.



### SELF-ADVOCATE & FAMILY FOCUS SYMPSIUM

2/20/19 Tampa, FL

One-day parallel track symposium—A **Self-Advocate** track with sessions tailored to self-advocates with intellectual disabilities and **Family Focus** track with sessions tailored to families and guardians of high school and college-bound students with intellectual disabilities.

# SAVE THE DATE

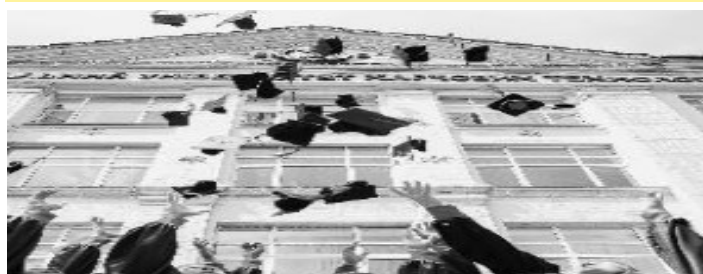
Hartwick Symposium Series  
2019  
February 20, 2019  
Tampa, FL



## College Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Visit [www.FCIHE.com](http://www.FCIHE.com) for information updates related to the 2019 Hartwick Symposium Series, including travel reimbursement, eligibility and previous symposium proceedings.

Details will be  
Forthcoming!





# CHESS TOURNAMENT AT MURRAY MIDDLE SCHOOL



Mr. Kirsimagi's class at Murray Middle School has been utilizing chess in the Behavior Unit for the past 4 years, as a coping strategy and to teach positive peer interactions. Most of the students had never played chess before, but quickly became excellent players.

On Friday, September 21, a chess tournament was used as a positive incentive; it was an event that had to be earned with consistent positive behaviors during the week. The winner won a \$25 gift card, and the runner up won a \$10 gift card!



*Contributed by Thomas Kirsimagi, ESE Teacher,  
R.J. Murray Middle School*





## LEND AN EAR OUTREACH



Did you know that we have almost 150 deaf or hard of hearing students in St. Johns County Schools? Many of these students wear hearing aids daily to help them hear and learn. Hearing aids are very expensive and often not covered by health insurance. This is why St. Johns County Schools is proud to have partnered with Lend An Ear, a local non-profit organization, that provides the gift of hearing by furnishing Quality Hearing Aids to those with limited or no means in a atmosphere of dignity and compassion.

You can help our deaf and hard of hearing students by donating your gently used hearing aids today. You can drop off hearing aids at the St. Johns County School District Office at 40 Orange St., St. Augustine, FL 32084 or at a site near you. Please check the Lend An Ear website for additional drop off locations near you. All donations are tax deductible! Thank you so much for supporting this wonderful organization & the deaf/hard of hearing students in St. Johns County.

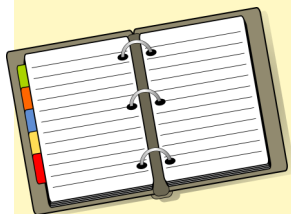
Drop off locations are listed on the Lend An Ear website:

Phone: 904-241-HEAR or 904-241-4327 E-mail: [Lendanear@vicarslanding.com](mailto:Lendanear@vicarslanding.com)

<https://lendanearoutreach.org>







# How to Organize Your Child's IEP Binder

Understood is offering a fantastic, free resource, along with detailed instructions, a how-to video, and printables available for download to create and organize an IEP binder for your child.

1

Start with an IEP Binder Checklist

[Download Here](#)

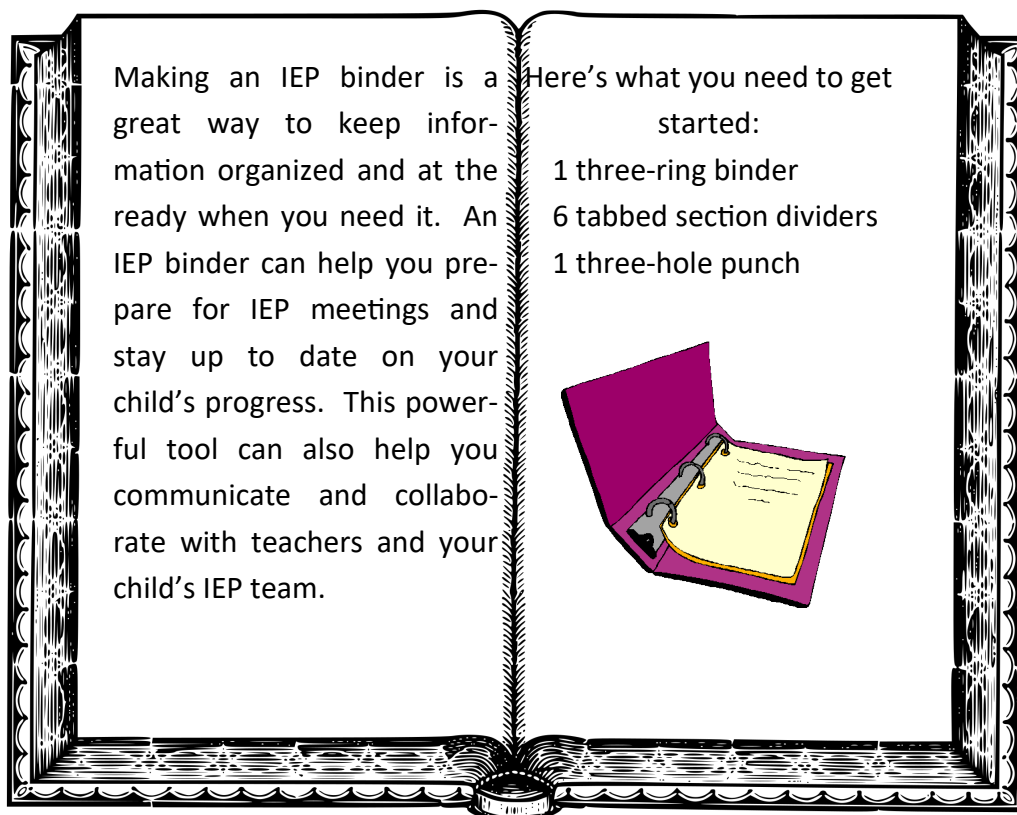
2

Label Sections:

- ◇ Communication
- ◇ Evaluations
- ◇ IEP
- ◇ Report Cards/Progress Reports
- ◇ Sample Work
- ◇ Behavior

3

Consider including a supply pouch to keep pens, sticky notes, etc.



[Download all IEP binder resources](#), including the IEP Binder Checklist, School Contact Sheet, Parent-School Communication Log, and IEP Goal Tracker.

Source: [Understood.org](http://Understood.org) Written by Amanda Morin, a parent advocate, former teacher, and the author of *The Everything Parent's Guide to Special Education*, and reviewed by Bob Cunningham, Ed.M., who serves as advisor-in-residence on learning and attention issues for Understood.



# REGISTRATION for the Spring 2019 FIELD OF DREAMS Season is officially OPEN

You can sign-up for **FREE** online

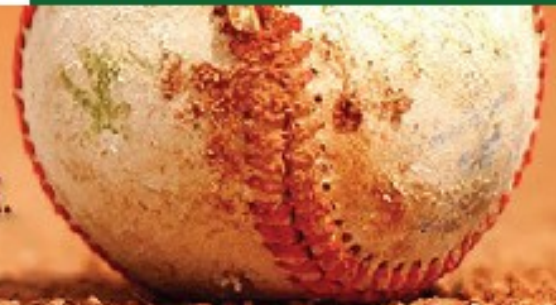
[WWW.FODBASEBALL.COM](http://WWW.FODBASEBALL.COM)

The FOD Baseball League enables children with special needs (mental or physical disabilities) with the opportunity to play baseball in an organized league; to wear a uniform; to have their names announced; to participate in the singing of the National Anthem before each game and to be a player on an athletic team. A non-profit organization, 501(c)(3).

*Please register by Dec 1st*



IF WE BUILD IT,  
THEY WILL COME.



*The mission of the Field of Dreams (FOD) Baseball League is to provide a sustainable voluntary organization that provides a safe ADA certified facility where special needs children (ages 5-19 if still in school) can play baseball FREE and be an active part of a thriving athletic association.*

*Please Visit Our Website To Learn About Sponsorship Opportunities: [FODBASEBALL.COM](http://FODBASEBALL.COM)*



# Upcoming Events

## Make Money Work: Fraud Alert

**November 6, 5:30 P.M.-6:30 P.M.,** A financial literacy workshop for students ages 15-20 who want to learn about money management and steps they can take to protect themselves from identity theft and fraud. The Make Money Work program is designed for students who want to learn about the value of money, developing a healthy banking relationship, wise borrowing and spending, and protecting oneself from identity theft and fraud. There are a limited number of spots available. These workshops are open to students with various disabilities, as well as existing CARD constituents. Location: UF Developmental Pediatric Center, 6271 St. Augustine Rd., Suite 1, Jacksonville, 32217. Click [here](#) to register or for more information. Questions? Contact [audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu).

## Discovering Capabilities: Career Exploration & PATH Plan I

**November 13, 5:00 -6:30 P.M.,** Discovering Capabilities is a set of proactive and positive guided approaches used to plan for a meaningful future. Designed for students age 15-20 who want to engage in Person Centered Planning, Self-Determination, and Career Exploration activities. There are a limited number of spots available. Students must register for each session they wish to attend using the links below. These workshops are open to students with various disabilities, as well as existing CARD constituents. Registration is required. Register online by clicking [here](#). For more information contact [anne.wilson@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:anne.wilson@jax.ufl.edu).

## Girls' Circle Support Group

**November 20, 5:30 P.M.-6:30 P.M.,** Girls' Circle is a support group and informational session, facilitated by Anne Wilson and Audrey Bringman, designed to engage young girls ages 14-19 with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The sessions will include discussions of topics such as personal grooming and hygiene, self-esteem, healthy friendships, social media safety, nutritious eating, and more! This group will be a forum to learn valuable independent living skills and to enhance social skills. We will also invite guests from partner agencies to offer advice, training, model good practices, and provide helpful tips. Girls must be active CARD Constituents, must commit to attending every session, and must register online [here](#). For more information contact [audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu).

## Make Money Work: Ways to Earn Money

**December 4, 5:30 P.M.-6:30 P.M.,** A financial literacy workshop for students ages 15-20 who want to learn about money management and ways they can earn money. The Make Money Work program is designed for students who want to learn about the value of money, developing a healthy banking relationship, wise borrowing and spending, and protecting oneself from identity theft and fraud. There are a limited number of spots available. These workshops are open to students with various disabilities, as well as existing CARD constituents. Location: UF Developmental Pediatric Center, 6271 St. Augustine Rd., Suite 1, Jacksonville, 32217. Click [here](#) to register or for more information. Questions? Contact [audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:audrey.bringman@jax.ufl.edu).

## Microsoft Gaming Party

**December 8, 9:00 A.M.-10:00 A.M.,** Join us for a Gaming Party at the Microsoft Store at the St. Johns Town Center. Xbox One consoles will be set up in the theater space for gaming. While the children are gaming the parents have a breakout session on internet safety and parental controls. 40 spots available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Register online by clicking [here](#).

## Discovering Capabilities: PATH Plan II

**December 11, 5:00 -6:30 P.M.,** Discovering Capabilities is a set of proactive and positive guided approaches used to plan for a meaningful future. Designed for students age 15-20 who want to engage in Person Centered Planning, Self-Determination, and Career Exploration activities. There are a limited number of spots available. Students must register for each session they wish to attend using the links below. These workshops are open to students with various disabilities, as well as existing CARD constituents. Registration is required. Register online by clicking [here](#). For more information contact [anne.wilson@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:anne.wilson@jax.ufl.edu).



Golden Globe and Academy Award-winning actress, Marlee Matlin, was first discovered for her role as Sarah Norman, a deaf teacher, in "Children of a Lesser God". Deaf from infancy, she went on to become a well-known film and TV actress, most recently starring in the TV-series, "The L Word", and competing in season 6 of the popular reality TV series, "Dancing With the Stars," where her vivacious personality and uncanny sense of rhythm wowed audiences in the U.S. — and around the world. This is one of the famous people with disabilities who didn't let anything get in her way.

Source: <https://www.alleducationschools.com/blog/famous-people-disabilities/>

Photo credit: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0559144/>

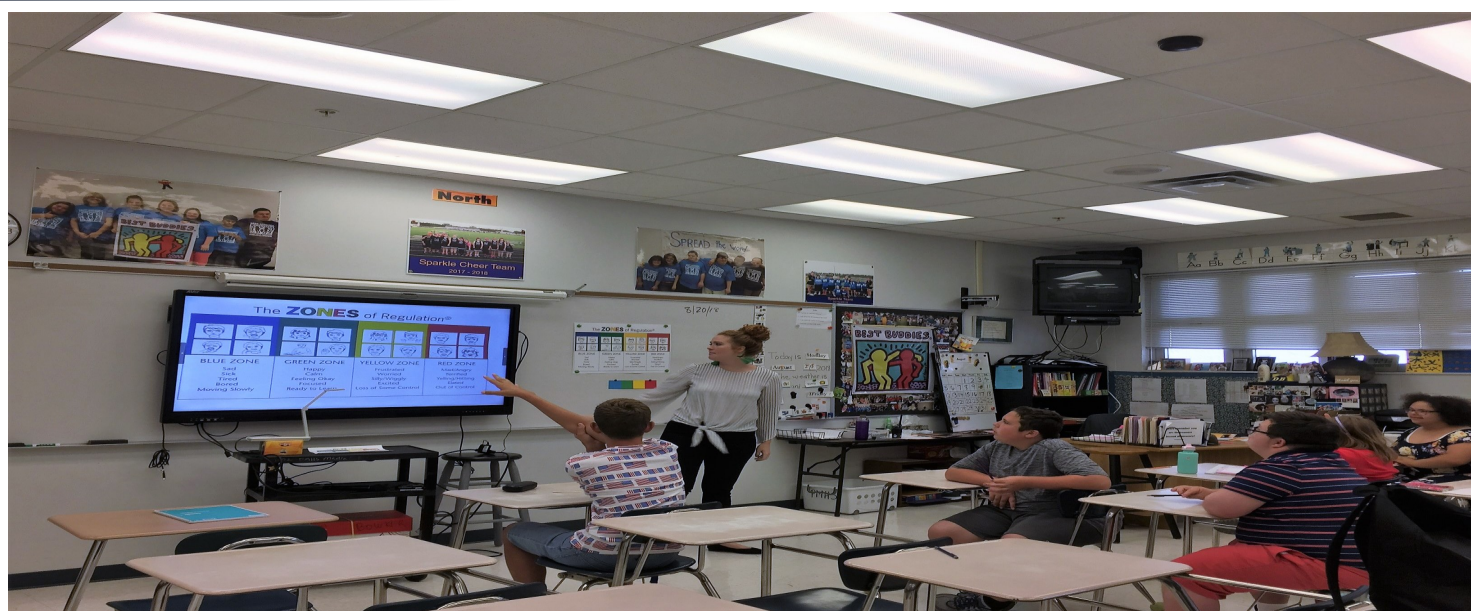
The Gifted Parent Advisory Council (GPAC) meets four times per year to exchange information between the community and the school district about ways in which we can improve our efforts in serving our gifted students. Learning opportunities are provided at each meeting.

Parents of K-12 gifted students from throughout the district are encouraged to come to all of the meetings.

We meet from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Here are the remaining dates for 2018-19:

### **Gifted Parent Advisory Council and Parent Trainings** 2018-2019

Thursday, November 15	<b>Hickory Creek ES</b>	6:30-8:00 p.m. Media Center
Thursday, February 28	<b>Freedom Crossing Academy</b>	6:30-8:00 p.m. Media Center
Tuesday, April 23	<b>Palm Valley Academy</b>	6:30-8:00 p.m. Media Center



Ms. Bonvallet's, Mrs. Bowker's and Ms. Wolfe's classes at Pedro Menendez High School are learning about the Zones of Regulation. This curriculum is designed to help students develop self-awareness and control behavior through brain-based skills such as sustaining attention, impulse control, planning, problem solving and self-talk.

*Contributed by Ms. Bonvallet, ESE Teacher, Pedro Menendez High School*







Jill Tabala, Executive Secretary  
(904) 547-7672 Jill.Tabala@stjohns.k12.fl.us

### **Program Specialists**

**Lynn Adkins** (904)547-7697 (office)  
Lynn.Adkins@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Specific Learning Disabilities, Learning Strategies,  
Other Health Impaired, FSA/EOC Waivers

**Helen DiMare**, (904) 547-7692 (office)  
Helen.Dimare@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Gifted Services

**George Freeman**, (904) 547-7704 (office)  
George.Freeman@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Emotional Behavioral Disorders,  
Mental Health Counseling, Behavior Specialists

**Avery Greene**, (904)547-7557 (office)  
Avery.Greene@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Hospital Homebound, Orthopedically Impaired,  
Traumatic Brain Injured, Visually Impaired, Virtual  
School, Surrogate Parents, Private Instructional  
Personnel, Parent Advisory Meetings

**Leigh Ann Hale**, (904)547-7678 (office)  
Leigh.Hale@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Transition, Intellectual Disabilities, Alternate  
Assessment, Diploma Options/Deferrals

**Sonia Howley**, (904) 547-7543 (office)  
Sonia.Howley@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Speech/Language Impaired, Deaf Hard of Hearing

**Lisa Thacker**, (904) 547-7530 (office)  
Lisa.Thacker@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
Autism Spectrum Disorders,  
Access Points Curriculum

### **St. Johns County School District** **Exceptional Student Education Department**

**Lisa Bell, Director**  
Lisa.Bell@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
(904) 547-7672 (office)  
(904) 547-7687 (fax)

**Tina Kennon, Assistant Director**  
Tina.Kennon@stjohns.k12.fl.us  
(904)547-7546 (office)  
OT/PT, Assistive Tech, 504, McKay Scholarships

## **CHARACTER COUNTS!**



Lori Stich, Confidential Staff Secretary  
(904) 547-7712 Lori.Stich@stjohns.k12.fl.us

**Mission Statement: To identify and meet the unique educational needs of exceptional students and to provide support and resources to enhance educational opportunities so they become productive citizens.**

ESE programs and services address the unique needs of students who are gifted in kindergarten through 12th grade and those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities from age three until they graduate with a regular diploma or until their 22nd birthday. ESE programs and services are designed to assist students in reaching their educational goals through the use of instructional and behavioral approaches which are research-based and exemplify best practices. Technology is used in many creative ways to meet student needs as well.

ESE services are available at all district schools for gifted students and students who have mild to moderate disabilities. PreK students with disabilities and students with more significant disabilities are served in cluster programs at selected sites. Program support is provided to students, parents and school personnel by program specialists based at the district office. Students with disabilities who are not eligible for services through the ESE program may be eligible for an accommodations plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful. *Parents As Partners Newsletters* are posted to the St. Johns County School District web site at <http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/ese/>

