



# *Morris-Union Jointure Commission Board of Education*

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April 3, 2017

Dear DLC Parents:

## **Autism Awareness Month**

April is Autism Awareness month and our DLC students have several events planned in recognition. DLC – New Providence students will be distributing informational pamphlets and posters to our structured learning environment employers in the community who provide our students with job sampling opportunities. We are very grateful to all of our local businesses who so generously offer our students a variety of community-based work activities. DLC – New Providence students will also be making puzzle piece cards and bookmarks to be delivered to a local assisted living facility. Additionally, as part of their celebration, DLC – New Providence students and staff will be designing a “Growing Acceptance Tree.” DLC staff, families, and our Buddies from Salt Brook Elementary School in New Providence will design puzzle pieces to describe their favorite memory of a student. Puzzle pieces will be assembled to form the Growing Acceptance Tree, which will be located in the student cafeteria.

As part of an annual tradition, DLC – Warren students will display their artwork at Morristown Medical Center and Overlook Hospital in recognition of Autism Awareness Month. Students have also made Autism Awareness buttons that will be given to visitors at the hospitals. DLC – Warren students and staff will create t-shirts to wear weekly and at the Walk for Autism. Additionally, students will cut out large puzzle pieces to take home to a special person, who will then write a message to the student and post it where the student can see it. Finally, students will create a special wreath to sell on DLC creations. Thank you for supporting our autism awareness activities!

## **ShopRite**

We are thrilled to announce the Grand Opening of “The ShopRite Supermarket Careers Program” at DLC – Warren on April 27, 2017. Since the inception of DLC – Warren in 2007, our storefront ShopRite has provided many learning opportunities for our students. Students have practiced stocking shelves and pricing items with simulated produce and grocery items. In April we are taking a major leap forward in preparing DLC students for the real world of work. Our fully functioning mini ShopRite will allow students to practice skills with grocery items, currency, and customers. ShopRite will offer students and staff the opportunity to shop,

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Union Township • Warren Township • Watchung Borough • Watchung Hills Regional • West Orange • Westfield*

purchase “to go” items, or to sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee and a snack at the bistro located in ShopRite. Initially, ShopRite will be open to staff and students several days each week during the morning or afternoon hours. We anticipate extending the store hours based on customer feedback. DLC – Warren has partnered with the ShopRite in Stirling which will provide DLC staff with guidance and assistance as we initiate the ShopRite program at DLC – Warren. Look for the invitation to join us at the grand opening at 10:00 a.m. on April 27. Please join us!

### **DLC Student Video – SLE at Work!**

New Providence High School students, under the direction of Philip Cook, video production teacher, taped and edited a fabulous short video clip featuring our DLC students job sampling in the community at Spring Cleaners and Coppola’s Ristorante & Pizzeria in New Providence and The Berkeley Plaza in Berkeley Heights as well as performing a variety of jobs at DLC – New Providence. We will use this very professional video clip to highlight our students’ talents to prospective job sampling employers in an effort to secure additional venues where our students may job sample. New Providence High School students will be sharing this video clip with the MUJC Board of Education at its May 4, 2017 Board meeting. We give a very special thanks to the New Providence High School students for producing this video clip for us! The video clip may be viewed on the MUJC website homepage at <https://www.facebook.com/386084684933598/videos/564550120420386> and on the MUJC Facebook page, which can be accessed by using the Facebook shortcut on the right side of the MUJC website homepage.

### **DLC Tours**

With plans for the DLC – New Providence and DLC – Warren reconfiguration underway, our DLCs have scheduled tours for students, parents, DLC staff as well as sending school districts’ directors of special services and case managers. DLC – New Providence students who will be transferring to DLC – Warren as of September 1, 2017 will be able to visit their new school location on May 22, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon. DLC – Warren students who will be transferring to DLC – New Providence as of September 1, 2017 will tour their new school location on May 24, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon. Socials will be held for staff transferring to new locations, so that they may tour their new school and meet their fellow staff members. Finally, tours will be given to DLC parents, directors of special services, and child study team members on two dates: May 31, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon and June 1, 2017 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. We hope you are able to join us! Parents and districts of students who will be changing sites will receive invitations for the tour in the mail.

### **What’s Happening at the DLCs**

#### **Artists in Education Residency Grant**

DLC students are looking forward to their upcoming culminating activity for the Artists in Education (AIE) Residency Grant. The Artists in Education Residency Grant is cosponsored by Young Audiences New Jersey & Eastern Pennsylvania and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. Students from both DLC – New Providence and DLC – Warren have been practicing African dance and storytelling each week with the teaching

artist. Students outside of the weekly class have been participating by researching African culture and customs. The culminating activity will take place on April 3 at 10:00 a.m. in the DLC – Warren’s gymnasium, which will be decorated with posters of African flags made by each of the classes. Students will also be able to participate in a simulated street festival that will take place on “Main Street,” the secondary hallway in the school. Students have been busy planning activities, such as African music, games, and cuisine, that will take place at the street festival. We look forward to the students highlighting all that they have learned throughout the residency. A special thanks to Candace Hundley Kamate, the extraordinary teaching artist who has developed a wonderful relationship with the students and staff. Look for pictures on Facebook and the MUJC website!

### **Creature Comforts**

Students at both DLCs are working on a very special community service project for Creature Comfort Pet Therapy, the not-for-profit organization that provides our students with visits from its therapy dogs. Creature Comfort Pet Therapy is sponsoring a fundraising event, “Tails on the Trail,” a one-mile dog walk in May. As you may know, last month we collected water bottles and clean socks, which DLC students will now use to make dog toys. At the completion of the one-mile walk, dogs will be rewarded with toys made by our DLC students!

### **DLC – New Providence**

On April 18 the Department of Dentistry at Morristown Medical Center will be providing dental screenings for DLC students. Our DLCs have been participating in this program for several years and have found it to be a tremendous benefit to our students. The purpose of the program is to make students comfortable in the presence of a dentist and accepting of dental instruments which are used by a dentist to look inside the mouth.

### **DLC – Warren**

On April 5 DLC – Warren will, once again, be hosting visitors from the Netherlands! Eleven teachers will learn about our DLC program by touring the school and speaking with our administrators and teachers. This is a featured annual visit through the William Paterson University in Wayne and is always a terrific international exchange of information about programs for students with autism.

Earth Day will be celebrated on April 22 and, as part of this year’s theme, “TEAM” (Together Everyone Achieves More), staff and secondary students will be making terrariums to present to DLC secretaries on Administrative Professionals Day.

As part of our STEM program, DLC – Warren students will be learning about the Seven Wonders of the World this month. Each STEM class will choose one of the Wonders and display their understanding of that natural wonder, collaborate to make that Wonder, and construct a golf course. When finished, classes will be invited to join the STEM classes for iced tea and a round of golf.

Finally, DLC – Warren students are working on several community service projects. Color A Smile is a nonprofit organization that has coloring pages on its website for individuals to color and give to the organization for mailing to military troops overseas, senior citizens, and nursing homes. DLC – Warren students assist by doing work in school – opening envelopes, sorting drawings into categories, folding drawings, putting them in envelopes, and applying labels and stamps. Once completed, the student work will be returned to the organization and another job will be picked up. DLC – Warren students are also collecting coupons and using them to get free items from stores to donate to places such as the VA Hospital. To date, students have collected and donated lotions, shampoos, conditioners, and hair gel.

### **Dinner “Under the Sea” Fundraiser**

As a reminder please save May 12, 2017 on your calendar, which is the date of the Autism Foundation of New Jersey’s “Under the Sea” fundraiser dinner at The Berkeley Plaza in Berkeley Heights. This fundraiser will help to “fill the DLC aquarium.” There will be performances by DLC students and from the Clark School District’s Arthur L. Johnson High School Tri-M Music Honor Society students. Attendees will enjoy dinner and dancing to music provided by a D.J. in an aquatic-themed atmosphere. Registration information may be found each week in the Electronic Bookbag. We hope you can join us at this exciting event! If you are unable to attend the Dinner “Under the Sea,” there will be other ways you can support our DLC aquarium, which will be featured on the Autism Foundation of New Jersey’s website at <https://autismfoundationnj.org/>.

### **Commissioner of Education Kimberley Harrington’s Visit on May 15, 2017**

I am pleased to announce that Commissioner of Education Kimberley Harrington has graciously accepted the MUJC’s invitation to visit the DLC – Warren on May 15 to meet our students, see the fabulous work that they do, and celebrate Special Education Week. There will be a musical performance for Commissioner Harrington by our students and she will then tour classroom areas, including ShopRite and the aquatic center. In addition to Commissioner Harrington, Susan Martz, Assistant Commissioner of Education, and Peggy McDonald, Deputy Chief, New Jersey Department of Education, as well as Juan Torres, Interim Executive Union County Superintendent of Schools, will be accompanying Commissioner Harrington. We are so excited and honored to be selected for Commissioner Harrington’s visit and I know that the entire team will be incredibly impressed with our students and staff.

### **Important Dates**

As a reminder, there is an early dismissal at 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, for parent/teacher conferences. Spring break will begin on Monday, April 10, and students and staff will return to school on Monday, April 17.

I hope that our DLC families enjoy the spring break, and we look forward to the exciting activities and events we have planned during the month of April! As always, thank you for your support of our students and staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janet L. Fike". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light blue rectangular box.

Janet L. Fike

JLF:kgb