



# **Department of Exceptional Student Education Clinical/Behavioral Services Spring 2016 Newsletter**



## **Building Bridges for our Students**

**SOUTH DADE SENIOR  
HONORS THEIR LEADER**

**PBS ANNUAL SHARE FAIR  
AND PARENT SUMMIT**

**HIALEAH SENIOR -  
EXPANDING LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**PINE LAKE ELEMENTARY -  
MINDFUL ACTIONS**

**MIAMI SUNSET SENIOR -  
SAILING AWAY**

### **IN THIS ISSUE:**

**RICHMOND HEIGHTS  
MIDDLE—ENGAGING  
STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**HOMESTEAD SENIOR -  
CHECK AND CONNECT  
AT WORK**

**RESIDENTIAL WIRING PROGRAM  
- GRADUATION 2016!**

**PONCE DE LEON MIDDLE -  
SPREADING THE LOVE**

**AND MUCH MORE!**

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Mr. Craig Siegel



The Clinical / Behavioral Services Newsletter wants to hear from you. Please send in articles and photographs highlighting the exceptional work you and your colleagues are doing.

The deadline for submissions for the next issue of the newsletter is:

**December 2, 2016**

Please send all items to  
Mr. Craig Siegel at:

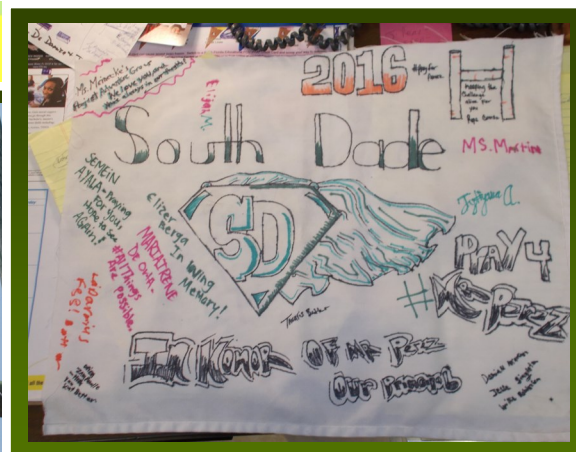
[csiegel@dadeschools.net](mailto:csiegel@dadeschools.net)

## SOUTH DADE SENIOR HONORS THEIR LEADER



I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to our Principal at South Dade Senior, Mr. Javier Perez, who so desperately needs all our positive thoughts and prayers at this most critical time. Mr. Perez has always gone above and beyond in his support of the E/BD Program, finding funds in order to make field trips happen, even dipping into his own pocket to award two very deserving students with brand new bicycles at our annual Holiday Celebration. With heartfelt thoughts and gratitude, Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician.

## SOUTH DADE SENIOR - LEARNING THE ROPES



Mr. Greg Affleck, Ropes Course Instructor, is now back at Ruth Owens Kruse Educational Center and students at both South Dade Senior and Homestead Middle are tremendously grateful for having the privilege of experiencing the challenge of a life-time. Climbing the high elements became not just a physical challenge, but one with emotional impact as well, and grounds for true team building. When the group was asked by Mr. Affleck to create a team flag, the students bonded together, deciding the theme should honor South Dade Senior's principal, Mr. Javier Perez. The flag was carried across the Ropes Course by each team member, keeping the challenge alive and sharing the message, "Javier Strong". The experience was summed up by senior Maria Deorta who stated, "All things are Possible".

By: Ms. Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician



## HIALEAH SENIOR - EXPANDING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In an effort to get community professionals to share their messages with students, I invited members of the Hialeah Police Department to share information addressing National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This was a great opportunity to expose students participating in the E/BD and other ESE programs as to the problems that exist in the community and that they, themselves, may experience in their own lives. The two representatives presented a slideshow, flyers, and sweet surprises for our students. Students were allowed to role play and participate in a "Q & A" session at the end. The presentation went on without a hitch and very rewarding and eye opening. I am looking forward to getting more city officials and community agencies to visit the school.

By: Mr. Anthony Lorenzo, E/BD Clinician



## PINE LAKE ELEMENTARY - MINDFUL ACTIONS



At Pine Lake Elementary, we believe in the power of MINDFULNESS! This can be described as "a state of active, open attention to the present", and it has been proven to offer significant benefits (physical, social, and emotional). As the E/BD Clinician, one of my goals is to assist students in examining their feelings, behaviors, and choices in a relaxed and calm manner. Mindfulness exercises help us to achieve this goal.

As seen in the picture, the students in Mrs. Dominguez and Mrs. Faison's classroom remind us that interacting with nature is a great way to exercise mindfulness. Some students are listening to the sounds of a woodpecker, while others are focused on the feeling of the bright sun against their skin. Some are observing the bright blue sky while others are just experiencing the happiness of being together. These simple exercises offer profound benefits, and they help students reach their academic and social potential.

By: Ms. Idalia Vargas, E/BD Clinician



# PBS ANNUAL SHARE FAIR AND PARENT SUMMIT

The Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Share Fair and Parent Summit took place on January 12, 2016 at Miami-Dade College, North Campus. We were pleased to welcome parents to join over 140 attendees including PBS Coaches and Team Leaders, presenters, M-DCPS personnel, and community stakeholders in a day focused on violence prevention within our schools and communities. Guests arrived to breakfast graciously donated by Homestead Middle School. The day's events included the opportunity to visit several areas filled with display boards and deliverables with helpful interventions, strategies and ideas from various community agencies. Ms. Robin J. Morrison, Executive Director and Ms. Alina Rodriguez, SEDNET Project Manager, provided all attendees with a brief welcome and overview of progress made thus far this year with more schools becoming trained in PBS.

The morning presentations were positive and included a range of valuable information including the following: An inspiring message from a student regarding the daily challenges that students face and the positive impact of the PBS Program, Restorative Practices and how they have a positive impact on schools, an overview of the Parent Academy's outreach and services to help parents become full partners in their children's education, and a motivational speech on the meaning of commitment, responsibility, possibility, and support. Guests were able to select from a variety of afternoon sessions in the topic areas of Student Engagement, School Presentations, or Parent Involvement. Overall, our 2016 PBS Share Fair and Parent Summit was a huge success to help attendees acquire information regarding Positive Behavior Support (PBS), gain knowledge on violence prevention in schools and the community, connect with mental health agencies in the area, and learn about initiatives being implemented by M-DCPS and/or universities. It was truly a day demonstrating that truly "Together, We Can Build Bridges That Last A Lifetime".

By: Ms. Keisha Johnson, E/BD Clinician/Curriculum Support Specialist





## MIAMI SUNSET SENIOR - SAILING AWAY

Miami Sunset Senior High Seniors from the Knighthood Program went sailing on April 22, 2016. Coach Jeanine McCleod, a PE teacher from the M-DCPS Swim Program, taught our students how to assemble and sail their boats. Students enhanced their employment, team building and social skills as we sailed from the Coconut Grove Sailing Club dock. It was an amazing day and we were even lucky enough to spot a manatee!

By: Ms. Lissette Casteleiro-Terron, E/BD Teacher



## MIAMI SUNSET SENIOR HIGH - SENIORS SHARK TAG WITH UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI



The Knighthood Program Seniors were able to go sharking tagging with the University of Miami thanks to several donors who helped us fund our project. Many of our seniors are not able to participate in Senior activities, so I wanted to give them an experience that would help them end their high school career with a bang! Students assisted the UM team in baiting hooks, throwing out lines, measuring the sharks, gathering cartilage for testing, and tagging the sharks. We were lucky enough to hook five sharks. A bull, sand bar, hammerhead, and two nurse sharks! The students also participated in gathering environmental data including testing for saline levels and water temperature. Many of our students have faced and overcome several obstacles, but have persevered and will be high school graduates next month! It was an awesome experience and I hope to be able to fund this trip annually for my seniors.

By: Ms. Lissette Casteleiro-Terron, E/BD Teacher

## HIALEAH SENIOR HIGH - STUDENTS ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY AWARENESS ACTIVITIES



After several years of observing significant amounts of wasted food in our cafeterias, I worked with students in the E/BD program to create a food collection initiative. With the consent of our principal and cafeteria personnel, students helped me place a table with several containers where edible items could be recycled or donated. Items collected were offered to students in need or given to local charities such as a geriatric facility in the community or homeless people near the school. The main purpose of the project is to provide students with a sense of communal awareness and resource value. They realize that they are doing something good for our community while at the same time diverting items that would otherwise end up being wasted.

By: Mr. Anthony Lorenzo, E/BD Clinician

## RICHMOND HEIGHTS MIDDLE - ENGAGING STUDENTS AND PARENTS

On March 30<sup>th</sup> we were honored to have parents come to the Parent Breakfast. The parents were able to learn how their children were doing in school. It was also an opportunity to educate parents about different aspects of the E/BD program.



We had 40 students on the fieldtrip to Camp Owaissa in Homestead. Some of the students were hesitant to attending because it was located in the woods. Fortunately, the trip was a success and included activities such as archery, scavenger hunt, hay ride and cave exploration.

By: Ms. Fidji Durosel, E/BD Clinician





## PONCE DE LEON MIDDLE SCHOOL - SPREADING THE LOVE

The staff at Ponce De Leon Middle School E/BD Program celebrated Valentine's Day by offering a breakfast for our students and their families with the theme of "Sharing Love of Family and Friends." This was a time where parents, students and staff were able to communicate their goals and expectations. The setting was relaxed and allowed for parents to share any concerns they had and to ask questions.

The staff spoke with parents about their student's progress and about strategies they can implement at home for continued success. It was a fun and positive environment allowing everyone to mingle and learn from each other.

By: Ms. Charlotte Terrell, E/BD Clinician and  
Ms. Marcia Velazquez, Behavior Management Teacher



## POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT - RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE

We would like to congratulate Miami MacArthur South and Pinecrest Academy South for obtaining Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Model School status for the 2014-2015 school year. The Florida Positive Behavior Support: Multi-Tiered Support System Project bestows this award to schools who are implementing the initiative with superior levels of fidelity. The award distinguishes schools as a state model and must be applied for on a yearly basis.

Both these schools have engaged students, staff, and families in the process of ensuring a positive school climate together with high expectations and student achievement. Administration at both sites truly supports the initiative and staff believes in the benefits of its implementation. Again, congratulations on a job well done!

By Ms. Alina Rodriguez, SEDNET Project Manager



Miami MacArthur South – Gold Model Status

Pinecrest Academy South – Bronze Model Status



## RESIDENTIAL WIRING PROGRAM - GRADUATION 2016!

Miami-Dade County Public Schools in conjunction with Florida International University (FIU) held their 2015-2016 Domestic Wiring Graduation Ceremony on May 20, 2016. The program, currently available at three schools (Barbara Goleman Senior High, Homestead Senior High, and Robert Renick Educational Center), aims to increase student attendance, the graduation rate and successful transition into adulthood, while also providing educational and vocational experience. This year, fourteen students completed the program.

Students participated in a walking tour of the FIU main campus for which many expressed an interest in attending in the future. The festivities continued in the Engineering Building where they were joined by their parents/guardians for the Graduation Ceremony. Students were able to showcase their hard work, presenting sample projects. This year was the first year that the program had a Valedictorian, G. Edward Burns, from Homestead Senior High. He spoke eloquently on how the program has been a great experience for him and the positive impact that his teachers have made in his life. Each school was also able to showcase a "Year in Review" through videos and PowerPoint presentations. Every student was presented with a certificate and tool-kit from FIU.

Upon conclusion of the graduation ceremony, everyone enjoyed refreshments donated by the J. R. E. Lee Baking Program. Under the supervision of coordinator, Ms. Robin Matusow and Chef Jose Fuentes, their students baked all of the sweet treats. A special thank you to Ms. Jasmine Brown-Grocher Curriculum Support Specialist; Mr. James Medina, E/BD Clinician; Dr. Alex Azan, E/BD Clinician; Mr. John Walker, E/BD Teacher; and Dr. Amaury Caballero, Assistant Professor at FIU who collaborated together in order to make this event a huge success!

By: Ms. Adrienne Cook, Curriculum Support Specialist





## MIAMI PARK ELEMENTARY - DELAYED GRATIFICATION

The goal of delayed gratification is to teach self-control and responsibility to students participating in the E/BD program at Miami Park Elementary.

On a weekly basis, each student receives a ticket that is punched once for each of the five rules followed for a total of twenty five points. Students look forward to the end of the day to cash in their tickets. At the beginning of the school year, it was observed that the younger the student, the more difficult it was to delay their reward. This was the impetus for the a project to help all of the students manage control of their impulses for more successful outcomes. As the end of the school year approaches, we started a culminating project to demonstrate growth in their ability to delay gratification. Each student designed a bag to store their treasures to take home at the end of the day. Now, as they cash in their tickets at the end of the week, I watch in amazement at the changes they have demonstrated.



Students are free to take their bags home; but so far all bags are still here growing and awaiting the last day of school. It was originally hard for the students to claim their rewards at the end of the day, but now they are patiently awaiting the end of the school year.

By: Ms. Marie Colin, E/BD Clinician

## CHECK AND CONNECT - MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is currently implementing Check and Connect in seven district schools. This research-based initiative is used with students who are at risk of dropping out. Our school district is providing identified students with disabilities (SWD), in participating schools, an assigned mentor who is trained by the state-wide project. These mentors “check” and “connect” with their mentees and their families weekly.

Here in Miami-Dade we have over 30 mentors who are currently providing services to SWD. Their time and effort are sure to show increased engagement and student achievement. We would like to take this time to thank the following schools for implementing Check and Connect at their sites:

**Miami Norland Senior High School**  
**Norland Middle School**  
**Miami Jackson Senior High School**  
**Georgia Jones-Ayers Middle School**  
**Southwest Senior High School**  
**Homestead Senior High School**  
**Homestead Middle School**

By: Alina Rodriguez, SEDNET Project Manager and Check and Connect Co-coordinator



**Check & Connect**

*The Institute's research-based intervention model to increase student engagement at school and with learning*

## SEDNET - LINKING KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

During this past school year the SEDNET Administration Project, in collaboration with the SEDNET Regional Project serving Miami-Dade, provided all Positive Behavior Support Team Leaders and Coaches, Behavior Management Teachers, and School Social Workers training on Trauma Informed Care (TIC). This training provided in-depth information on what is the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study and how individuals working with children and youth can refer to the ACE in order to provide services to the students whom they serve.

We would like to take the time to thank Ms. Nickie Zenn, SEDNET Statewide Director, for facilitating the training. If you would like more information on Trauma Informed Care or the ACE Study please contact your local SEDNET Project Manager, Alina Rodriguez at 305-598-2436.

For more information please visit us at: <http://sednet.dadeschools.net/>

By: Ms. Alina Rodriguez, SEDNET Project Manager



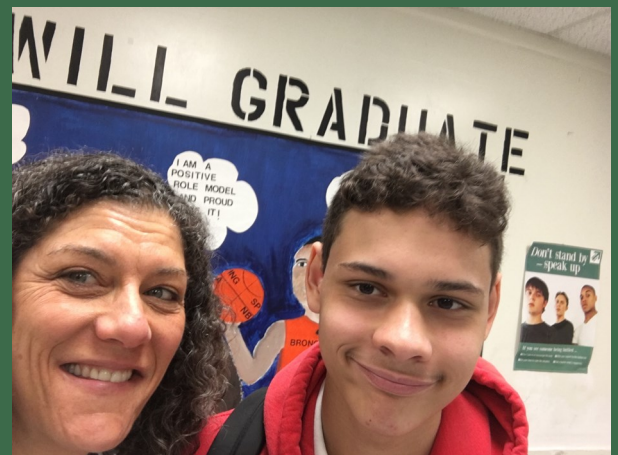
## HOMESTEAD SENIOR - CHECK AND CONNECT AT WORK



Research on Check and Connect began in 1990 and is now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year of funding for Drop-out Prevention for Youth. I have worked with my mentee who is in the tenth grade since January 5, 2016.

My mentee had over 21 unexcused absences in the second grading period and 2 failing grades. Now, I am thrilled to report that he has 1 excused absence this month and no failing grades. Thanks to the support of his family, his teachers, the Saturday school staff and our Check and Connect relationship, this student is back on course to graduate in 2018!

By: Dr. Patricia Isis, Clinical Art Therapist

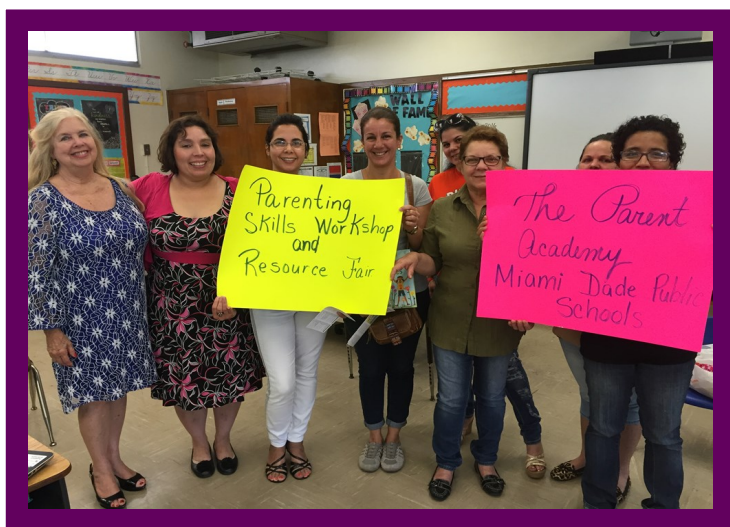
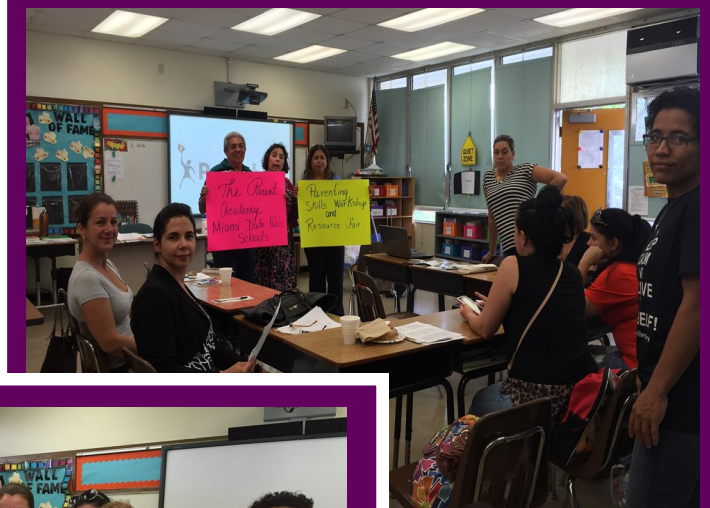
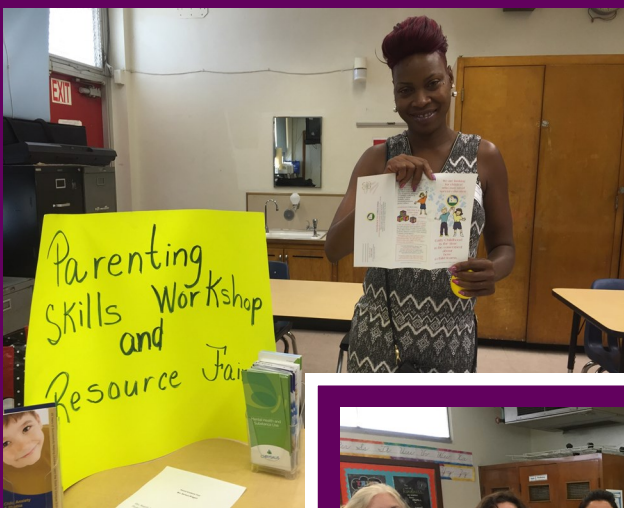




## NORTH COUNTY K-8 CENTER, SCOTT LAKE ELEMENTARY AND JOHN G. DUPUIS ELEMENTARY - CONNECTING PARENTS WITH TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Parents at North County K-8 Center, Scott Lake Elementary, and John G. DuPuis Elementary participated in a Self Esteem Workshop and a Resource Fair. These energetic and committed parents learned the four main factors that are important for a child to develop and maintain high self-esteem. The four factors explained and discussed during the workshop were:

- \* Positive Role Models to provide meaningful goals, values, ideals, and standards.
- \* Personal Strength that gives one the ability to influence life's circumstances.
- \* Uniqueness and Individuality that provide a special personal sense of individual worth.
- \* Sense of Connectivity and Belonging that foster satisfaction from associations that are significant.



In another opportunity to reach out to parents, I helped coordinate The Parent Academy to visit North County K-8 Center, Scott Lake Elementary, and John G. DuPuis Elementary. Mrs. Barbara Biggart from the Miami-Dade County Public School Parent Academy provided a wonderful seminar to our parents. Mrs. Biggart's seminar focused on the plasticity of the Brain; teaching parents that the brain is flexible and children can change and transform their inappropriate behavior into appropriate behaviors. In addition, Mrs. Biggart provided the parents with strategies to help optimal brain development and mitigate negative influences.

By: Ms. Susana Puig, E/BD Clinician

## RICHMOND HEIGHTS MIDDLE - LARGE SCALE GROWTH

Ms. Leah Guzman, Clinical Art Therapist, works side-by-side with the students at Richmond Heights Middle School designing and painting large scale murals to increase academic engagement and raise school spirit. Mural making increases student self-esteem and problem solving skills. Mural making provides students with a creative outlet.

Last year Ms. Guzman and the students created a 60 foot mural titled, "Education is the Key to Success". The mural is located in the back of the school and includes a young boy who holds a key to unlock his potential. Ms. Guzman's intention is to empower the youth through imagery and words. The mural has text such as "reach for the stars" and symbolism such as music notes, flying books, and the earth with a keyhole to connect with the viewers. The painting not only beautifies, but also engages viewers to stop and think about the message. This year they are creating another large scale 48 foot mural in the front of the school. The new mural's message is "Values Matter." The mural includes animals for the school's Zoo Magnet program, Scales of Justice for the new law program, an abundant fruit basket, and, of course, the school board's initiative of values: respect, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, honesty, integrity, responsibility, kindness and the pursuit of excellence. The mural is playful and brings life to the walls of this institution.

By: Ms. Leah Guzman, Clinical Art Therapist





## MIAMI MACARTHUR SOUTH - PBS MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Miami MacArthur South was recognized for the second consecutive year as a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Gold Model school and again the only school in Miami-Dade County Public School district to receive the award during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years. This recognition demonstrates a decrease in outdoor suspensions, effectiveness through all the behavioral tiers, applying Response to Intervention for Behavior (RtI:B) data in the problem solving process, utilizing consistent and proactive strategies to prevent problem behavior, teaching appropriate behavior, and utilizing effective rewards and consequences with fidelity.

Students that are assigned to Miami MacArthur South due to expulsion from a traditional school setting easily adjust to a welcoming environment in which the focus on what a student is doing right is more important than what a student is doing wrong. Students, along with their parents, are oriented to our PBS expectations during the initial intake process. Students quickly learn the G.R.O.W.L school-wide behavioral expectations, an appropriate acronym for the school mascot, a tiger. The G.R.O.W.L expectations stands for **G**-Get in the Game, **R**-Respect Self and Other, **O**-Own your Choices, **W**-Work Hard and **L**-Learn to Lead. By learning and following the school-wide expectations, students earn 5 points per class per day. At the end of the week students that earned at least 80% of their points are rewarded with a special activity in the PBS Game Room. Students can also earn PBS Tiger Bucks for demonstrating positive behaviors in any area of the school. All teachers and staff can acknowledge positive behavior by rewarding students with a Tiger Buck as soon as a desired behavior is demonstrated to reinforce these behaviors. Students look forward to earning and saving their Tiger Bucks to use at the PBS Snack Store or the PBS Gift Shop! These weekly incentives encourage students to improve behaviors and feel their efforts are being recognized.

Faculty and staff buy-in for the PBS program is high as teachers and staff are recognized during faculty meetings for PBS fidelity implementation in the classroom, donations to the PBS Store, participation in the PBS activities, and attending PBS team meetings. Teachers are also treated to delicious treats in the Teacher's Lounge on Fridays for their enjoyment. Along with having teacher and faculty backing, we have community support through goods and monetary donations that help the PBS program to be rewarding and possible.

Even though working in alternative education can have its challenges, it's thanks to the support of teachers, administrators, and the community that Miami MacArthur South PBS program was able to achieve PBS Gold Model recognition two years in row.

By: Mailyn Rodriguez, School Social Worker and PBS Team Leader



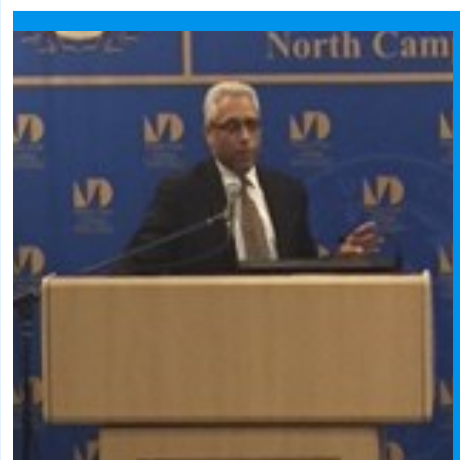
## CBS END OF THE YEAR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION

On May 13, 2016 the Clinical/Behavioral Services Joint meeting was held at Miami Dade College-North Campus to address programmatic strategies, interventions, and development to support the E/BD programs throughout the District. After a warm welcome by Ms. Andrea Plunkett, Miami Dade College North Director of ACCESS Services, informative District updates were provided by Ms. Robin J. Morrison, Executive Director, Department of Exceptional Student Education. The day was filled with rotating breakout sessions whereby Behavior Management Teachers and Clinicians joined together to hear, participate, and engage in sessions facilitated by the CBS staff focusing on the following: Team Building, Problem Solving with Solutions, and the 2016 Needs Assessment.

After participating in the enlightening morning sessions, all attendees reconvened together to receive recognition and acknowledgement by Ms. Morrison for a wonderful year of hard work and dedication to servicing students, parents, and stakeholders in our various E/BD programs. In addition, special recognition and retirement plaques were given to Ms. Brenda Benitez, E/BD Clinician and Mr. Chuck Ochipa, BMT for their years of dedication and support. Ms. Morrison was also recognized for her years of supervision and dedicated support to staff.

In the afternoon, attendees were treated to a thoroughly engaging session entitled "Work/Life Balancing: From Distress to Eustress" from Dr. Michael J. Alicea, Medical Social Worker from South Miami Hospital. Overall, the E/BD Joint meeting was truly a beneficial session for BMTs and Clinicians to join together to receive helpful updates on working together, review data to gain awareness and stay informed, receive insight and strategies to problem solve with solutions, and gain the opportunity to reflect on a great year in order to refresh and rejuvenate to work collaboratively again for the upcoming school year!

By: Ms. Keisha Johnson, Curriculum Support Specialist





## ROBERT RENICK EDUCATIONAL CENTER - SPOTLIGHTING SERVICES

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) Clinical Art Therapy Program is dedicated to helping at-risk students reach their maximum cognitive and emotional potential through the vehicle of creative expression. At Robert Renick, Art Therapy is offered in addition to traditional counseling to help students find an outlet for thoughts and feelings that interfere with their ability to focus on academic opportunities. During Art Therapy sessions, students use various materials such as paint, clay, wood, and paper mache to create art

pieces about feelings,

issues or challenging problems that they may be facing. This approach helps students to learn how to identify and express their feelings. Students also learn to make positive independent decisions about how to handle their frustrations. This builds skills needed to help them successfully navigate their way in the classroom.

By: Ms. Paula Hammond, Clinical Art Therapist



## SOUTH DADE SENIOR - PEER LEADERS SETTING THE STAGE

Select students at South Dade Senior, mostly juniors and seniors, volunteer to become Peer Leaders. The peer leaders are selected for both their leadership abilities and role model behavior. In their role, they assist students in peer mediation and are part of group sessions. They also perform outreach services annually at the middle school, performing socio-drama, giving personal testimonies of change, and engaging in Project Adventure activities with the middle school students. This year, they performed the play "Pressure", which dealt with peer pressure and family violence. It was huge success!

Homestead Middle School students are now carrying on this tradition; going out to Laura C. Sanders Elementary School and leading the younger students in Project Adventure activities.

By: Ms. Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician

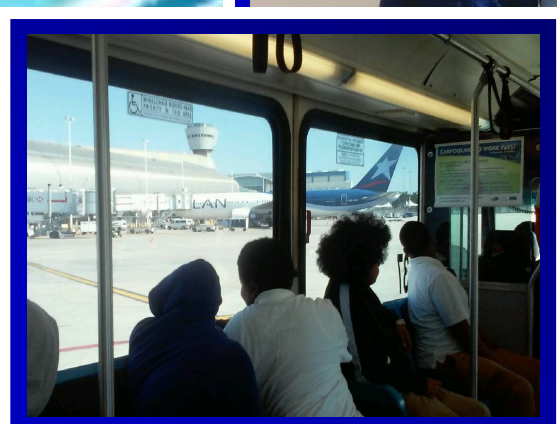




# GEORGIA JONES AYERS MIDDLE SCHOOL – MUSTANGS TAKE FLIGHT

Our friends at the 100 Black Men of South Florida believe in mentoring and developing young men. Together, our students at Georgia Jones-Ayers Middle explored the Miami International Airport, met professionals working in the aviation industry, and watched a demonstration by the firefighters of the Miami Aviation Fire Department. The tour guide spoke with our students and related concrete examples of how aviation plays an important role in our community. This wonderful field trip provided our students with a better understanding of the role of airport transportation related careers. After the students completed a behind-the-scenes tour, including the best views of Miami International Airport, the students dined in one of the many food courts. The Mustangs wholeheartedly appreciate the support of the 100 Black Men, the E/BD Department and our PBS Coach, Dr. Shanika Brown for making this day possible..

By: Ms. Dallas Rivers, E/B/D Clinician







**THE  
CLINICAL BEHAVIORAL  
SERVICES DISTRICT TEAM  
WISHES YOU  
A FANTASTIC SUMMER  
RECESS!**