

Exceptional Student Education Clinical/Behavioral Services



Spring 2017 Newsletter



Building Bridges for our Students

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HELPS TURN IT AROUND

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SADDLE UP!

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HAVING A WHALE OF A TIME

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Newsletter Editor
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 8, 2017

Please send all items to
Mr. Craig Siegel at:

csiegel@dadeschools.net

MIAMI SUNSET SENIOR HELPS TURN IT AROUND

One of the students participating in the emotional/behavioral disabilities program (E/BD) at Miami Sunset Senior High School, Elizabeth Aguilar, was honored at the Turn Around Awards on May 16th at the Fire Tower in Doral for overcoming both behavioral and academic obstacles. She is a true model of success, demonstrating that, with support, one can get their life back on track.



Elizabeth entered Miami Sunset Senior High four years ago. As far as she was concerned, the rules didn't apply to her and she was not interested in "following the program". It was both frustrating and heart breaking. For her first two years in high school, her defiance was met consistently by the team letting her know that they were always there for her. As time went on, Elizabeth realized she had made several mistakes and had only one thing on her mind...fixing it. In her Junior year, Elizabeth hit the ground running, working hard to make up the credits she needed and to improve her GPA. Not only did Elizabeth accomplish this goal, but she also got a job and volunteered at Mercy Hospital over the summer.

Elizabeth is now a mature and responsible young lady, ready to take on the world. I was truly honored to accompany her to the Turn Around Luncheon to be a part of this very special moment with her and her family. Elizabeth was awarded medals, certificates, and a \$1000 scholarship to Miami-Dade College. She plans on studying Sports Medicine and continue to work part time. I have no doubt she will succeed.

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

NEWS

JORGE MAS CANOSA MIDDLE - SADDLE UP!

With the support of our Principal, Mr. Elio Falcon, and the assistance of Mrs. Anne Seide, Paraprofessional, and Mrs. Marlene Guido, E/BD Teacher, students at Jorge mas Canosa Middle School were able to enjoy the benefits of Equine Therapy. The school provides the transportation to and from Whispering Manes Therapeutic Riding Center, which is only a few miles east of the school.

The program began March 7th and ran for eight weeks. Students gather at Whispering Manes every Tuesday for two-hour sessions. During the sessions, students can participate in unmounted and mounted activities, all the while being supervised by certified professionals. The program's goal is to improve muscle strength, balance, gross and fine-motor skills, as well as communication skills. The program is also known for helping students achieve a sense of self-accomplishment and self-esteem.

The smiles on the faces of students speak to the incredible bond between humans and horses. It is a real joy to see the students' progress each week and utilize what they are learning.

By: Mrs. G. Mimma Gelsomino-Seaborn, E/BD Clinician

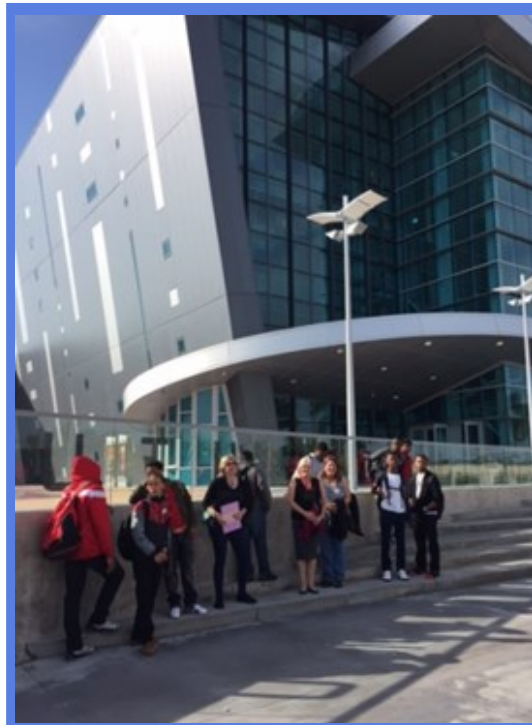
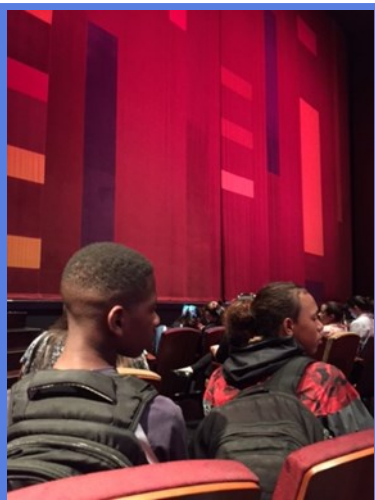


MIAMI SOUTHRIDGE SENIOR - BROADENING CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

**“Imagination is the only weapon in the war against Reality.”
- Lewis Carroll (from “Alice in Wonderland” 1865)**

The “E/BD Dream Team,” from Miami Southridge Senior, comprised of Ms. Joan Astigarraga, E/BD Clinician, Ms. Morgen Chesonis-Gonzalez, Clinical Art Therapist, and Ms. Holly Campbell, Behavioral Management Teacher, were able to collaborate with the South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center for FREE student tickets to 3 performances. Southridge Senior’s Principal, Mr. Humberto Miret, generously agreed to provide funding for the 3 field trip buses. Through these kind and heroic efforts, there was absolutely no cost to the students. These fieldtrip opportunities were woven into the program’s behavior management criteria and served as reinforcement experiences. The students were treated to the “The Aspen Santa Fe Ballet” (a dance performance), the “Vocalosity” (an a cappella singing performance), and “The Mayhem Poets” (a spoken word performance).

By: Ms. Morgen Chesonis-Gonzalez, Clinical Art Therapist



FIENBERG FISHER K-8 - BRINGING DREAMS TO LIFE!

The students identified with emotional/behavioral disabilities at Fienberg Fisher K-8 deserve an inviting environment; one where they can feel safe to express their feelings in counseling, learn how to socialize, and celebrate their successes. This year, we decided to make it happen. With the support of our Administration, our E/BD department was given a classroom space to fill with donated items.

Donorschoose.org is one of our best resources. We obtained items including therapy games, bean bags chairs, food, and positive reinforcement prizes. The grant process is simple with only one page to be written. **Target Field Trip Grant** (another single page grant) offered us monies towards a field trip to Bowlero Bowling Alley that the kids will never forget. **City of Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce** came through for us this year with a grant for Bully Prevention that allowed us to encourage positive peer interactions, reinforcement activities, and supplies to spread the word that bullies should not be tolerated. Dearest to our heart, are all **our parents and PTA members** who have supported our weekly celebrations of positive behavior and academic success with pizza, drinks, chips, and “love”. Money is out there if you are looking for it!

By: Ms. Eleanor Downs, E/BD Clinician



GEORGIA JONES AYERS MIDDLE - A DAY IN THE LIFE

Georgia Jones Ayers Middle School strives to provide a variety of educational services and opportunities for our students to achieve personal, academic and social goals. Through collaboration, the PBS Program and the E/BD Special Education Department hosted the Middle School Reform meeting at Georgia Jones Ayers Middle School.

M-DCPS District personnel arrived early and were paired up with eager 7th and 8th grade students for a day of school site shadowing. After the pairs were formed, each Staff member followed their student around for an entire day. The activity culminated with a “compare and share” meeting between both MDCPS Staff members and our students. During this empathy building experience District personnel logged notes about what they observed, heard, learned and wondered. Many were surprised to learn that they knew a lot less about middle school students’ internal lives or school experience than they thought. After an exhausting day of shadowing students upstairs, downstairs, to core courses and electives, the duos assembled for the Middle School Reform Meeting and shared their wonderful observations and hands on experiences.

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

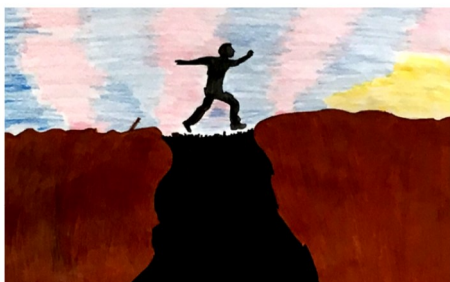


SOUTH MIAMI SENIOR - DRAWING ON STRENGTHS

At South Miami Senior High School, seven students participating in the emotional/behavioral disabilities program contributed artwork for the **All Kids Included** art exhibit. The theme was based on the book **"Firebird"** by Misty Copeland, the first African American ballerina to lead the New York City Ballet Company. Her story is based on determination and overcoming adversity. These qualities were emphasized in the imagery created by the students. Two students won Honorable Mention prizes for their work and everyone received a copy of the beautiful book signed by Ms. Copeland.

The artwork was displayed at the South Dade Regional Library, the Main Library, and at the All Kids Included Family Festival. at the South Dade Cultural Arts Center.

By: Dr. Patricia Isis, Clinical Art Therapist



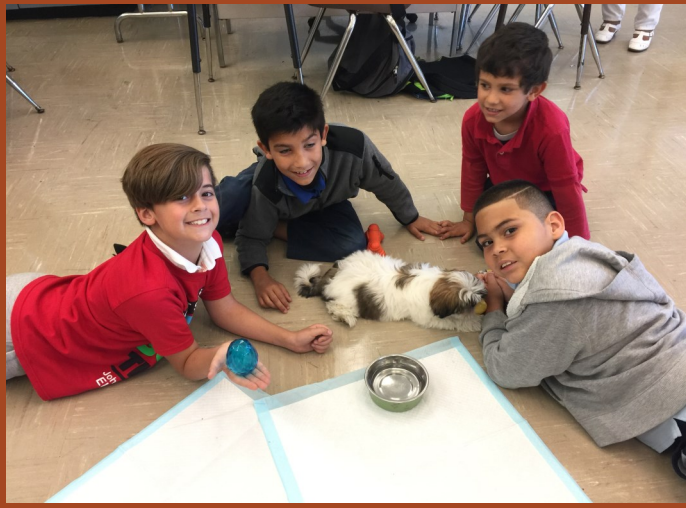
MIAMI SUNSET SENIOR - GROWING SKILLS



The Garden Club, comprised of students from various exceptional student education programs at Miami Sunset Senior, has grown sprouted onions, peppers, tomatoes, lettuce, tons of herbs, and beautiful flowers. The Garden Club hosted a luncheon to showcase our crops. The students from our culinary program made pasta with our herbs and a salad with our vegetables. Students and staff enjoyed a delicious meal together and discussed plans to expand our garden next year. Students in the Garden Club are learning and teaching healthy eating habits throughout our school. We are currently prepping the beds for summer and will replant using the seeds we harvested this year.

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

PET THERAPY - HELPING SMOOTH OUT THE “RUFF” EDGES



Pet Therapy has been demonstrated to be effective with students identified with emotional/behavioral disabilities. Simply playing with a pet can bring students plenty of joy. Beyond, that, however, there are a multitude of therapeutic benefits when incorporated into counseling sessions. Students learned that pet ownership comes with responsibility. They learned to share and take turns, and to cope when the animal did not respond to their “commands.” They also had the opportunity to improve academic skills by reading to the animal.

The students seemed actively engaged in counseling and this translated to improved behavior throughout the school day.

By: Ms. Susana R. Puig, E/BD Clinician

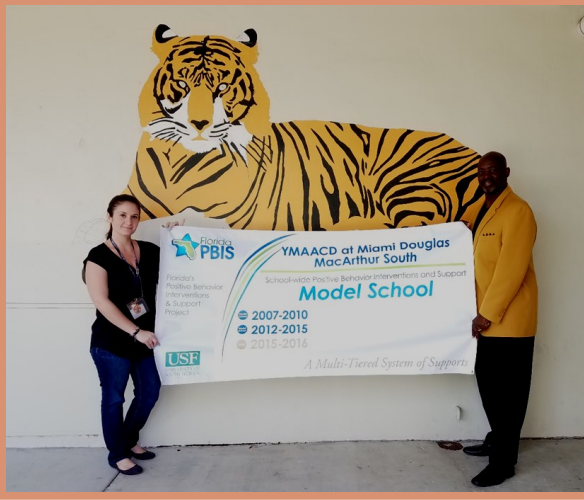
SOUTH DADE SENIOR - REACHING OUT TO PEERS

The Peer Leaders at South Dade Senior were very active this year. They performed socio-dramas and shared Project Adventure activities at both Homestead Middle and Redland Middle. They also co-lead Project Adventure activities for students at Laura C. Sanders Elementary. The Socio-dramas involve students performing a skit they've helped to create, and although some humor is added in, the message sent is about real life challenges, usually involving "He said, she said" scenarios. These opportunities are great learning tools for all involved.

By: Ms. Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician



PBIS AT MIAMI MACARTHUR SOUTH



At Miami MacArthur South we strive to give each of our students an opportunity to be heard and embraced as the capable individuals we can see in each of them. As a PBIS Gold Model School three years in a row, we continue to work hard to create a positive environment and see the potential in each of our students. Students that are assigned to us from traditional school come in nervous, scared and angry; however, through our PBIS school culture they quickly adjust with teachers and support staff that are welcoming and understanding. Parents are also oriented to PBIS during the intake process and encouraged to use positive reinforcements at the home as well. Being a PBIS school we try to focus

on teaching our expectations and rewarding our students with PBIS Tiger Bucks or by earning their PBIS points into the weekly PBIS activity in our newly updated game room. At Miami MacArthur South we all truly feel like one family!

By: Mailyn Rodriguez, MSW, PBIS Team Leader

PBIS AT PINECREST ACADEMY SOUTH CHARTER SCHOOL

Through our PBIS program, we create a positive school climate where students learn to behave properly by following the school-wide expectations of being safe, responsible, and respectful. In turn, students receive positive reinforcement which continues to motivate them to do the right thing. We teach values through PBIS lessons that enable students to demonstrate expected behaviors. Our "Pirate Expectations" are posted throughout the school building, which serves as a constant reminder.



We showcase positive behavior through positive referrals, morning "shout outs," and "Pirate of the Month" ceremonies, where parents are invited to hear all the wonderful ways in which their children are meeting and exceeding expectations. In addition, students earn "Pirate Loot" as a reward which can be redeemed for dress down days, lunch with the principal, various celebrations, and "buying" items from the treasure chests. Our staff is also rewarded for using the PBIS program with special lunches and treats in order to create a positive atmosphere all around the school.

By: Ms. Patricia Horvath, School Counselor

SEDNET - HOW CAN WE HELP?



The Miami-Dade/Monroe Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET) is a regional interagency networking project, which has been established to improve the range and quality of programs for students at risk or with emotional/behavioral disabilities (E/BD) in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. In the Florida system of care, SEDNET works with education, mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice professionals; along with other agencies and families, to ensure that children with mental, emotional and behavioral problems, and their families, have access to the services and supports they need to succeed.

For referral of students, please submit student's initials, ID number, location of the student, and a copy of the Mutual Exchange of Information via email or fax (305) 598-4639. If you should need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact one of the personnel below or visit the SEDNET website: <http://sednet.dadeschools.net>

By: Ms. Marie Castor, SEDNET Project Manager

HOMESTEAD MIDDLE - BUILDING TRUST

The Project Adventure group at Homestead Middle, co-lead by Ms. Katherine Meinecke and Ms. Filomena Martin, E/BD Clinicians, truly exemplified the meaning of trust and teamwork, as evidenced in the pictures below. One depicts students doing the "Stepping Stones" activity, where although their supply of safe "stones" have been depleted, that did not deter them from being able to achieve success in their mission to cross together as a group. The other activity seen is called a "Trust Dive." Through group skill development, students improve peer relationships, which, in turn, promotes a more positive and successful school environment.

By: Ms. Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician



HIALEAH SENIOR - BEAUTIFICATION OF A FORGOTTEN SPACE

Hialeah Senior High School has a history that dates back over 60 years. The courtyard is lined with beautiful mature trees and has multiple corners that commemorate events from the past such as memorials and benches. There is also a built-in display case that lines the hallway of the North entrance. Being that this one of the first sights visitors see when they walk into the building, it was definitely in need of attention. Fortunately, Mr. Anthony Lorenzo, E/BD clinician, and Ms. Monika Hurter, Clinical Art Therapist, were looking to create a space to highlight the Exceptional Student Education Department. Through conversations with students and ESE teachers the idea to use this display space to showcase student work. The response to the newly decorated display case has been overwhelmingly positive. People are enjoying the welcoming atmosphere that sends the message to all visitors that Hialeah Senior values inclusion and a holistic approach in education. The highlighted projects show the many talents of our students.

By: Mrs. Monika Hurter, Clinical Art Therapist

BEFORE



AFTER



M-DCPS & VSA-FLORIDA MAKE THE ARTS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL



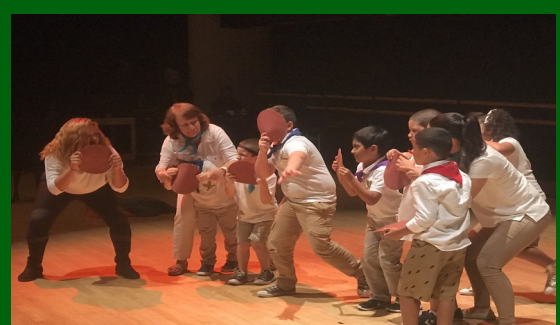
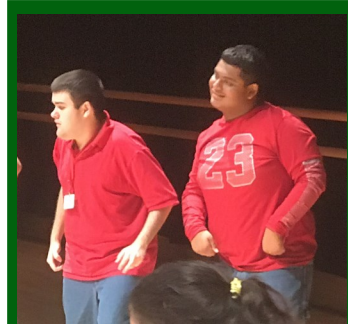
Miami-Dade County Public Schools worked collaboratively with VSA-Florida in an effort to make the arts accessible to students of all abilities. This spring, M-DCPS hosted 8 different Artists in Residence programs. Each participating program met for 8 sessions with their teaching artist focusing on either visual arts, dance, movement, or drama. Sessions focused on developing skills in the areas of creative thinking, social skills, and self-confidence. Each residency culminated in either group performances at the Adrienne Arsht Center for Performing Arts or an art exhibit at HistoryMiami Museum. A

huge “Thank You” is extended to the Principals and teachers from the following schools for their commitment to the VSA-Florida My Art My Way program:

Bunche Park Elementary, Gloria Floyd Elementary, Oliver Hoover Elementary, American Senior, Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior, Hialeah Senior, Miami Carol City Senior, and Miami Northwestern Senior.

We encourage all schools to participate in this incredible and enriching program!

By: Mr. Craig Siegel, District Chairperson



JORGE MAS CANOSA– HAVING A “WHALE” OF A TIME!

Thirty-three students were excited to participate in a field trip to SeaWorld Orlando on April 28, 2017. The trip was made possible, financially, with the help of our PTO President, Mrs. Melinda Mizrahi. This Field Trip marked the cumulative reinforcement activity for students who have progressed in the program. Students marveled at the sea life. One student, Melissa, pictured below, stated, “I can’t believe I touched a manta ray!” Students and staff had a great time visiting and learning at SeaWorld!

By: Mrs. G. Mimma Gelsomino-Seaborn, E/BD Clinician



A REMINDER MESSAGE FOR SUMMER...

**Have A
Great
Summer!**

No matter your job title you have been a *caregiver* on a daily basis for the students, their parents, and each other during the 2016-2017 school year. Giving to make the school, classrooms, and offices spaces welcoming places conducive to learning; giving resources, making recommendations, and utilizing effective listening to help others maintain positive mental states. *You* also need to *care* for you. During this summer break, give yourself time to relax, do some deep breathing, think of a calming place or picture in your mind; take a stroll at a botanical garden or just enjoy sitting down and putting your feet up!

Remember caregivers need to take care of themselves!

Have a great summer and see you for the 2017-2018 school year.

By: Mrs. Nadyne Floyd Grubbs, District Chairperson