



# Division of Special Education Clinical/Behavioral Services

## Spring 2014 Newsletter

### Building Bridges for our Students

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Newsletter Editor  
Mr. Craig Siegel, ATR-BC

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 15,  
2014**

Please send all items to  
Mr. Craig Siegel at:

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

## M-DCPS Clinical Art Therapy Department Annual Student Art Exhibit



The M-DCPS Clinical Art Therapy Department collaborated with The Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum for the sixth annual student art exhibit on display from May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme, **ARTWORKS!: The Building Blocks of Emotional Literacy**, encouraged students to recognize, express, and manage feelings to enhance their overall well-being and quality of life.

The exhibit opening was held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> to coincide with Children's Mental Health Awareness Week. Student work submitted for the exhibit represents the culmination of art therapy sessions throughout the school year in which students use a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials to address thoughts and feelings that impact their social, emotional, behavioral, and academic functioning. Each work of art includes an artist's statement explaining how the piece relates to each student's life.

The opening event was well attended by students, parents, teachers, and community members throughout the South Florida area. Some attendees drove more than 70 miles to view the art work and support school art therapy.

Dr. Carol Damian, Director of the Frost Museum and Ms. Miriam Machado, Curator of Education were so impressed with the installation that they have already reached out to the Art Therapy Department Chair, Mr. Craig Siegel, about scheduling for next year's exhibit.

M-DCPS Clinical Art Therapy Department is excited about continuing such a positive collaborative relationship with the Frost Museum to showcase the incredible strengths and talents of those students participating in our E/BD Programs.

By: Mr. Craig Siegel, Art Therapy Department Chair



## Southridge Senior High Student Field Trip to AT&T Headquarters



The topics of career planning, job interviewing skills, and resume writing have oftentimes presented challenges for the students participating in the E/BD program at Southridge Senior High School. When a field trip offered by Junior Achievement to “Job Shadow/Job Mentor” at the AT&T Headquarters in Miami became available (with free transportation and lunch included) the E/BD clinical team jumped at the chance. Ms. Morgen Chesonis-Gonzalez, Ms. Joan Astigarraga, and Dr. Javier Berezdivin specifically targeted 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to take a glimpse into the world of post-graduation work. An additional motive for scheduling the field trip was to network with AT&T as a potential employment resource in the community, since many of our students already use AT&T for their internet services, cell phone services, and technology devices. In preparation for the field trip, all 3 clinicians lead our students through several discussions and assignments focusing on interviewing skills, body language, resume writing, and career interest inventories provided by Junior

Achievement. When visiting the AT&T Headquarters, students shadowed actual employees as they performed their duties, were able to ask specific questions related to their salaries, benefits, and responsibilities, and witness a mock job interview with the actual AT&T hiring pre-screener. All of the students agreed that the fieldtrip was a valuable learning experience.

By: Ms. Morgen Chesonis-Gonzalez, Art Therapist



## Miami Palmetto Senior: Enhancing Civility through Bibliotherapy

At Miami Palmetto Senior High, students participating in the separate class for E/BD read four books this year in their reading class. The E/BD Clinician, Ms. Jennifer Santino-Slawson, the Behavior Management Teacher, Mr. Lamond Morrison, and E/BD Teacher, Ms. Lucia Acosta, incorporated counseling component discussions into the reading lessons. Students learned about life issues by placing themselves into the role of the characters. The four books were The Pact, Tuesday's with Morrie, Julius Caesar, and Bodega Dreams. As a result, the students were able to increase their pro-social and interpersonal skills through having a better understanding of the hardships of others.

By: Ms. Jennifer Santino-Slawson, E/BD Clinician

## Carol City Middle: Highlights from the Year

Carol City Middle has helped nurture brilliant minds and positively engaged students throughout the 2013-14 school year. We are proud of our accomplishments this school year and want to highlight a few of our successes.

Our students revitalized and maintained a fruit and vegetable garden sponsored by Fairchild Gardens. They created the format for the garden and planted the seeds, watered the area, and picked the vegetables that were grown.

In addition, we added a reflection corner in the E/BD classroom where students can study or read on wonderful "bean bag" chairs purchased by some of our wonderful parents.

Also, we were proud of our students who participated in the KIDS ING. Marathon 2014. Carol City Middle student Lance Sterling was the 4<sup>th</sup> place overall winner in the Kids ING 2014 race. "Woo-hoo!"

We also hosted a Parent Coffee Chat on February 13, 2014 to bridge the gap between parents and three of our community support agencies. It was a wonderful experience filled with positive dialogue.

Last but not least, we concluded our wonderful school year by participating in **Piano Slam 6**. Carol City Middle's very own John Henry was the **Winner** of the Language Arts Middle School division this year.

Our E/BD program is filled with brilliant students who will continue to make a positive impact on the world.



By: Ms. Tonjeria Hammond, E/BD Clinician





# Homestead Senior: Drop Out Prevention Mural Helps Paint a Path Toward Graduation

The idea of a drop out prevention mural was sparked by an Urban Art field trip to Little Haiti and the Wynwood District in December 2013. The murals and muralists inspired the students to consider being part of a mural that would be:

- beneficial to the school,
- offer them opportunities to leave their mark,
  - and reinforce transitional skills.



Once receiving approval from our Principal to paint a mural on the wall of the art therapy room, students decided to create a mural addressing Drop Out Prevention. Several students submitted design ideas, and the final product incorporated something from everyone who created a design.

The mural is primarily dominated by our school colors (orange and blue) and reflects the multi-cultural make-up of the student body along with significant reasons that participating students came up with to graduate. The photo attached depicts two students putting on the finishing touches. Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors all collaborated to complete this project.

By: Dr. Patricia Isis, Art Therapist

## Campbell Drive Middle: Students Receive PBS Recognition

The Campbell Drive PBS Team had the pleasure of recognizing fifteen students for exhibiting exemplary behavior and academics. These students earned Samsung Tablets and other great incentives. Criteria for the recognition included the following:

- Improved academic performance as evidenced by:
  - an increase in academic grades, scores on interim assessments, improved reliability with home learning, increase in class participation,
  - an observable increase in effort as demonstrated by punctual attendance,
    - improved organizational skills,
  - and willingness to re-do assignments as directed.

Additionally, an increase in meeting school-wide expectations reflected in improved conduct grades, a reduction in referrals, and the demonstration of a positive attitude. These deserving students include Ricky Cartwright, Yeimi Garcia, Steven Guzman-Rosado, Ester Pierre, Anthony Cousins, Anthony Messa, Raymond Cruz, Luz Beato, Trema Baptiste, Frankeil Nottage, Yvania Muscadum, Jacquis Howard, Goddeen Pierre, Francisco Chavez and Demetrius Ivey.



In addition to the above recognitions, the Campbell Drive Middle Family is proud to announce the nominees for the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual District PBS Day. Students Ricky Cartwright, Yeimi Garcia, Anthony Massa, Luz Beato, Yvania Muscadum, and Jacquis Howard will be recognized at the event on May 27 at Miami Edison Middle School along with select students from ETO's elementary, middle, and high schools. These students have demonstrating marked improvement in academics and behavior. Parents, teachers and district officials will be on hand to congratulate and encourage these students towards continued success in their academics and behavior. High school and middle school award recipients will receive gift cards (sponsored in part by Coca Cola), elementary recipients will receive customized backpacks with goodies inside. Schools represented will receive special recognition for making the commitment to the implementation of school-wide positive behavior support systems. GREAT JOB WILCATS!!!!!! KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.



By: Mr. Edward McClain, Dean of Students/PBS Coordinator



## Silver Bluff Elementary: Collaborative Work Leads to Positive Outcomes

As we close 2013-2014 School Year, we reflect on the highlights. This year brought back Project Adventure, a group intervention for building community and awareness of self and others. Twenty staff members that included clinicians, Behavior Management Teachers, and Curriculum Support Specialists from the district were selected to become trainers of Project Adventure. We were among those selected clinicians. Together we decided to use Project Adventure with the entire E/BD program at Silver Bluff Elementary. Art Therapist, Ms. Cicely Comandari and E/BD Clinician, Mr. Erik Peterson, combined approaches from both disciplines when using Project Adventure activities.

Students played together, laughed together, and cried together, through the process of these activities. While we may not have the statistics to prove it, the results were encouraging. Overall, Project Adventure has given us an avenue to promote healthy social skills, teamwork, goal setting, and leadership. We are looking forward to continuing to implement the program, and creating new memories at Silver Bluff Elementary for many years to come.

By: Ms. Cicely Comandari, Art Therapist and Mr. Erik Peterson, E/BD Clinician



## Miami Sunset Senior: ESE Strategies in Action...and Working!

Too often I hear my students say "This is too hard, we are E/BD." My response is always the same, "You are earning a standard diploma and you are expected to complete the same assignments as everyone else."

Many of our students fall behind because of their behaviors and sometimes try to manipulate the learning environment to produce as little work as possible. I have found that providing a safe and predictable (with a little flare) classroom environment brings out the best in my students. We all need structure and routine. This could not be more evident for students participating in E/BD Programs. I do this by listing daily assignments on the board and placing their assignments on their desks before they walk in. Greeting my students every class period lets them know that I care and helps me get a feel for their mood and how I should approach them that day. Enforcing school and classroom rules consistently is also key to providing external structure and known expectations. Whenever there will be a change in the schedule, I make every effort to tell the students ahead of time. Implementing these simple strategies in the classroom will make a world of difference.

Many of our students experience chaotic lives outside of school. Therefore, it is important to provide a stable and calming environment in the classroom. By placing assignments on their desks, greeting them, and establishing a routine, students are able to focus better and get themselves into the frame of mind needed for learning."

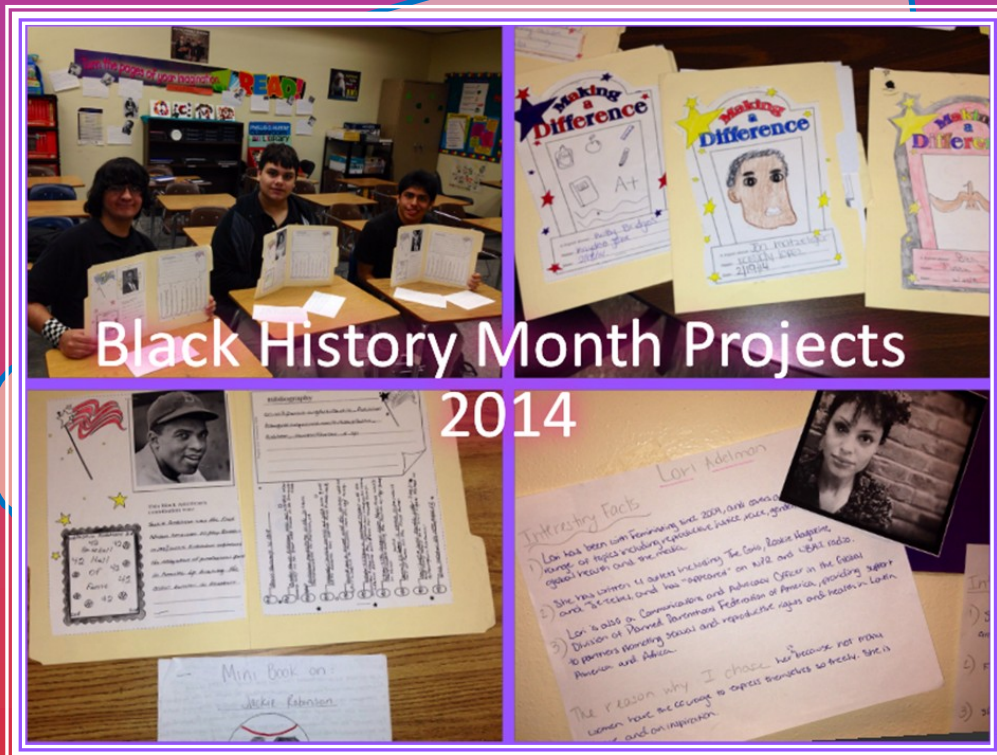
## Miami Sunset Senior: ESE Strategies in Action...and Working! (continued)

Forming a connection with the students (not too personal, but just enough to let them know you are human too) goes a long way and will make classroom management easier. One of my students said, "You're caring and annoying in a good way." Another one said, "I know what I'm expected to do, I don't have to guess and I'm motivated to learn when I walk in your classroom."

Step one in teaching students participating in the E/BD Programs is maintaining an inviting environment which quickly diffuses inappropriate behaviors and allows teaching and learning to take place. Step two is letting students know what is expected and push them to achieve. Hands on, high interest assignments are also key. I have found that adding "spice" to their day with an occasional project assists with engagement and allows them to showcase their artistic side. These projects also help develop skills they will need to master when they graduate and join the workforce. Being socially appropriate, using technology, and not being afraid to show their artistic/creative side are all important skills needed for employment.

We recently completed Black History projects. These projects encouraged students to look up information online and in books, create timelines and postage stamps to honor historical figures, and present to their classmates. It is extremely important to plan accordingly before assigning a project so students know exactly what they are expected to do and how they will be graded. Yes, this does take some extra time that we are all short on, but the outcome is well worth it. Watching their faces glow when they share their project with the class or when they see the grade they earned is an enlightening experience. I strongly believe that school needs to be both challenging and motivating. If we are successful in creating an engaging and supportive environment for our students then they will want to come to school and be successful too.

By: Ms. Lissette Casteleiro-Terron, E/BD Language Arts/Intensive Reading Teacher





# Laura C. Saunders Elementary: Highlights of Our Amazing Work

A day in the life at Laura C. Saunders' E/BD Program is more like a day spent with family. We are a unified group of professionals and students working to achieve one common goal, "Student Achievement". The E/BD team works daily to ensure that the students receive the instruction and social skills needed to be successful both in and out of school. We represent and demonstrate cooperative groups, getting along, showing respect towards each other, and model of a loving family.



The E/BD Program at Laura C. Saunders is so successful at accomplishing this positive, friendly atmosphere for learning because each and every member of the team places their focus on the ideal of "what is best for the students".

During meetings, case conferences, and interventions, the team strives to work together, assisting one another to come to an agreement on issues. We are blessed to have one another and look forward to working together for years to come.

By: Ms. Rose Ann Farrell, E/BD Clinician



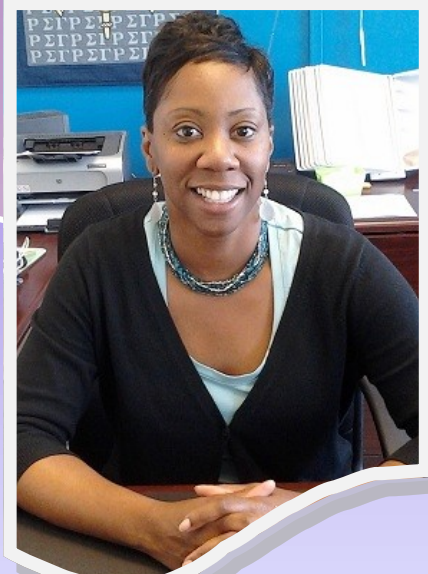
## A Special "Thank You!"

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to Mrs. Jamila Beckford, Assistant Principal at Laura C. Saunders for all she does for our E/BD staff and program. Her efficiency and work habits are exemplarily and recognized by each team member within the E/BD Program. We are aware of the tireless efforts she puts into the program to make it the success it is. Mrs. Beckford goes above and beyond for both students and staff. Even with the multitude number of tasks and responsibilities, she still devotes enough time for any program need or concern; always assisting us with a smile on her face. Her welcoming manner and warmth is an asset to our program and we are all fortunate to work with her.

I can truly say that I have never worked with a more dedicated person; one who puts all her heart and soul into everything she does. It has been a great pleasure working with Mrs. Beckford and I look forward to continuing working with her for years to come.

With Gratitude,

Mrs. Rose Ann Farrell, E/BD Clinician





## South Dade Senior and Homestead Middle Team Building

Students at both Homestead Middle and South Dade Senior High meet weekly at their respective sites, engaging in team building Project Adventure Counseling. As their level of trust increases, the groups participate in ever more challenging exercises, including low elements, which are off the ground. Eventually, select students meet together from both schools to participate in the end of the year field trip to the Ropes Course at Ruth Owens Kruse Educational Center.

By: Ms. Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician

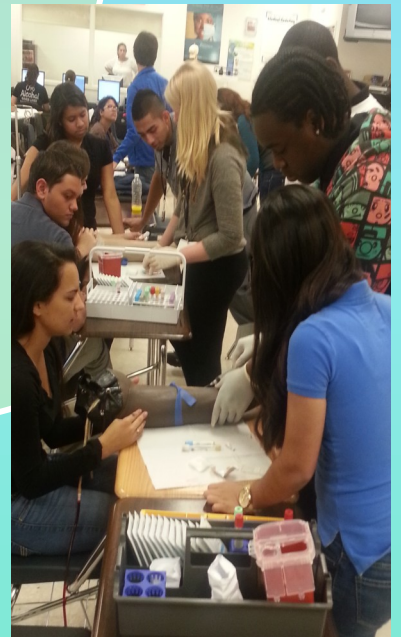


## Homestead Middle Students Tour South Dade Senior



A yearly field trip is arranged by Ms. Katherine Meinecke, and co-facilitated by middle school teacher Mr. Bryce Bishop, for 8th grade students promoted from Homestead Middle to South Dade Senior, which includes a tour of the academies and buffet luncheon at Pizza Hut. Peer Leaders from South Dade are available for questions and join the students in touring the various academies. Students enjoyed participating in demonstrations, such as learning about the EKG monitor and phlebotomy in the Medical Academy, judging cookie contests in Culinary Arts, and sampling vegetables in the Agriculture Academy. It is a great way to prepare these students for the transition to high school.

By: Ms. Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician





## Miami Palmetto Senior: A Humble Leader

At Miami Palmetto Senior High, the E/BD Clinician, Ms. Jennifer Santino-Slawson and the Behavior Management Teacher, Mr. Lamond Morrison decided to pilot a mentor program in which a senior would mentor a freshman in the E/BD program who was exhibiting behavior concerns. Travis Howard was selected as the mentor because he has overcome past hardships and has emerged as an excellent student with a welcoming demeanor and a friendly smile. His exuberance for life is contagious. His specific role was to mentor a freshman student and to give motivational speeches to students participating in the separate class setting (which he was a part of last school year).

He took his role seriously; even choosing to eat breakfast with the freshman student each morning and walk him to class. Travis has been an active member of the 5,000 Role Models this year, serving as a Sergeant at Arms. He even taught some students chess as a way to focus and develop problem-solving skills. We have decided to expand the mentor program next school year to include more senior mentors paired with freshman.

By: Ms. Jennifer Santino-Slawson, E/BD Clinician



## A Quick and Generous Response

At Miami Palmetto Senior High, the E/BD Clinician, Ms. Jennifer Santino-Slawson and School Social Worker, Ms. Ana Garces asked the PTSA to have an anonymous clothing drive for a homeless student participating in the E/BD Program with no immediate family members. They quickly responded. The clothing was dropped off at the Activities Office and picked up and distributed to the student by the Clinician and Social Worker to keep the student's identity confidential. It resulted in \$350 in Winn Dixie

gift cards, gift cards for clothing stores, personal hygiene products, and 8 huge bags of brand new clothes with tags and receipts (in case they needed to be exchanged). The student was speechless and overjoyed that there are so many caring people at the school

By: Ms. Jennifer Santino-Slawson, E/BD Clinician



## South Dade Rewards Student Efforts

South Dade Senior Peer Leaders and top performing students in participating in the E/BD program reap the rewards of their efforts by spending the day at Game Time in the Sunset Mall.

By: Ms. Katherine Meinecke, E/BD Clinician



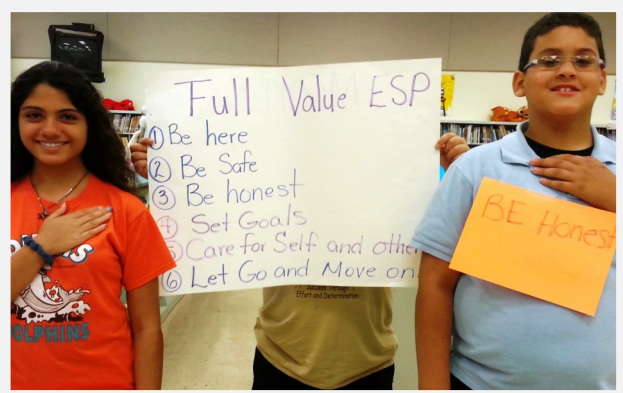
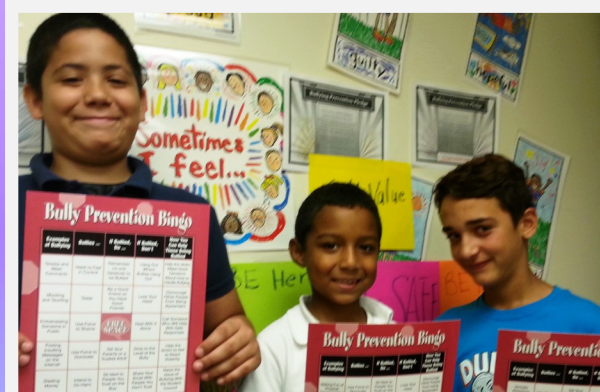
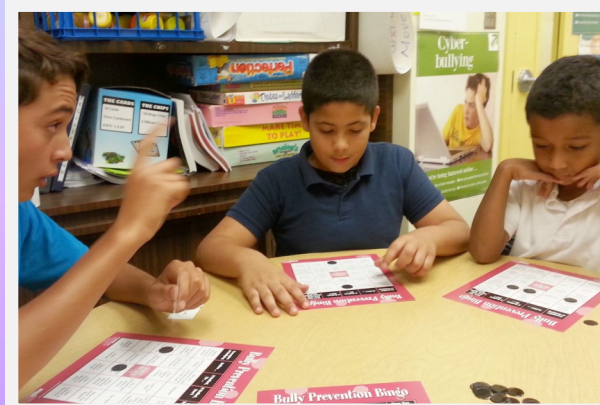


## John G. Dupuis Elementary: Implementing Project Adventure

During this school year, Youth Crime Watch along with Officer McGruff from Miami-Dade Schools visited our students with the objective of teaching them the importance of reporting any kind of bullying behavior and not to be a bystander. As part of an educational game called “Bully Prevention Bingo” targeting Bullying Prevention, the students enjoyed learning about bullying behaviors and most effective ways to deal with bullies.

In addition, during anger management counseling sessions, our students learned and practiced a technique called “Breathe Out/Breathe In” to help them release anger and “chill out”. Finally, our students were engaged in therapeutic activities such as “Moon Ball”, and “Full Value ESP”, all of which are derived from Project Adventure. Such activities set the stage for students to practice achieving goals together in a respectful atmosphere while having fun.

By: Ms. Susana Puig, E/BD Clinician





## Campbell Drive K-8 Center: Why Not Let the Church Step In? We Did.

Let me introduce you to a man and his church. His name is Pastor Brock Shiffer and his church is known as the Speedway Community Church located in Homestead, Florida. The church is not a well known one, and with a congregation of only 65 members, not a large one. However, the impact they have made to the students and staff at Campbell Drive K-8 Center is immeasurable...priceless to say the least. The coordination between Ms. Fornell, the school principal, and Pastor Brock, has brought a positive change to the school environment. To highlight just a few events, there was a school beautification initiative, a coat closet project to get jackets for students who needed them, a shoe give away in which Bobs shoes (similar to Crocks) were distributed to all Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and lastly, volunteers for a weekly Pre-K story time.

The generosity of Ms. Fornell, Pastor Brock, his congregation and that of the Kiwanis Club, has trickled down and has changed the way the students in the E/BD program are motivated to be successful. Friday's Social time will never be the same. After combining all of their resources, they were able to make a donation to the E/BD program for \$805.00! With the donation, I was able to go on a shopping spree during the winter recess and purchased:

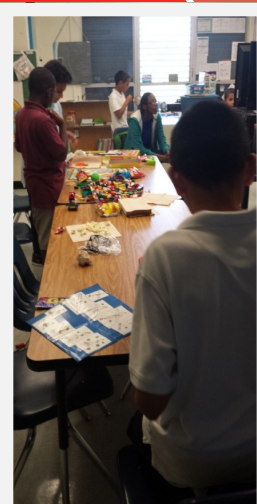
- Two 32" flat screen televisions,
- One Wii system with six video games,
- One X-Box 360 with 4 video games,
- Assorted controllers, skins and cables

Now, when the end of the week comes, the students who have met the requirements for positive behavior and growth are invited to participate in the Friday Social Activities. During this time, the students are able to come to the "game room" where we review rules and expectations. Afterwards, they are allowed to play the video games and enjoy snacks, drinks and candy that were donated by the teachers, paraprofessionals, clinician and the BMT. As a special treat, I get to use the snow cone machine, ice, and flavored syrups to make snow cones outdoors for the students.

So, does it really take a village to raise a child? I believe so.

By: Mr. Juan deArrigunaga, E/BD Clinician

Photos by: Ms. Rosemarie Harvey, Behavior Management Teacher



## Residential Wiring Programs Light a Spark Toward the Future

Celebration was in full swing for students participating in E/BD Programs who successfully completed the 2 year FIU Residential Wiring Program. Thirteen graduates and their families attended celebration festivities at Florida International University. Students received a walking tour of the campus and filled-out contact cards for FIU representatives to contact them. Several students expressed that they were interested in possibly attending FIU. Graduates ended the tour at the FIU Engineering Building where they were recognized by FIU Residential Wiring Program instructors and M-DCPS District staff and teachers. Several student demonstrations and a "year in review" video were presented prior to certificates being awarded to each graduate. The works of these students were impressive and each student presented themselves in an articulate manner. There was evidence of the use of critical thinking skills and higher order thinking. Each graduate also received a start-up tool kit and carrying case. Thank you to Mr. James Medina, Dr. Alex Azan, Mr. Sean Mooney, Mr. John Walker, and Ms. Ethelene Johnson for making this program a success!

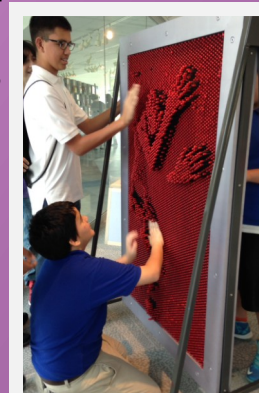
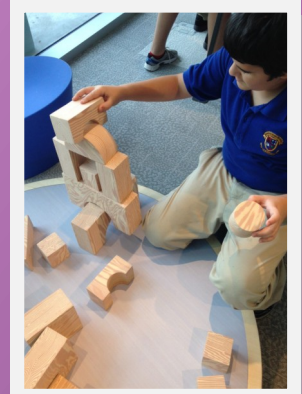


By: Ms. Patricia Moore and Ms. Jasmine Grocher, Curriculum Support Specialists

## Bowman Ashe/Doolin K-8 Academy: Building Upon their Experiences

Quest students from Bowman Ashe Doolin K-8 Academy enjoyed a field trip to the beautiful Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum on the campus of Florida International University. Accompanied by Department Chair, Ms. Ronnit Branciforte, Art Therapist, Ms. Leah Guzman, and Behavior Management Teacher, Ms. Kelli Jones, students viewed the exhibit *ARTWORKS! The Building Blocks of Emotional Literacy*. This is the sixth annual student art therapy exhibit by MDCPS students. In addition to viewing their own work on exhibit, students and a knowledgeable museum guide toured the Sculpture Park, viewed Pre-Columbian objects, saw paintings and sculptures by contemporary Latin American artists, enjoyed paintings by Haitian artist Philippe Dodard, and walked through an installation art exhibit. Students also engaged in various art activities in the interactive Discovery Gallery. And finally, students got a taste of college life by eating lunch in FIU's Graham Center food court and visiting the bookstore and gift shop. The field trip served as one more "building block" toward positive post-school outcomes.

By: Ms. Kelli Jones, Behavior Management Teacher





## SEDNET Updates and Resources

The Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities ([SEDNET](#)) creates and facilitates a network of key stakeholders committed to assisting in the provision of a quality system of care for students with or at-risk of emotional and/or behavioral challenges.

SEDNET is a regional network of the major child serving agencies, community-based service providers, and students and their families, focused on developing interagency collaboration and sustaining partnerships.

SEDNET provides information, technical assistance, and training in many areas. One main area of focus is **Trauma Informed Care**.

### What is **Trauma Informed Care**?

Early experiences and environmental influences can leave a lasting signature on the genetic predispositions that affect emerging brain architecture and long-term health impacts of toxic stress. **Trauma Informed Care** offers insights into causal mechanisms that link early adversity to later impairments in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental well-being.

When administrators, teachers, and staff:

- *practice* identifying triggers and early warning signs in students to help implement strategies that will keep a situation from escalating
- *assist* students who have poor verbal expression or other communication deficits due to their disabilities
- *prevent* students from being traumatized due to prior events that they have experienced

**Trauma Informed Care** is being practiced.

For more information on SEDNET or **Trauma Informed Care** please visit us at:  
<http://sednet.dadeschools.net>

By: Alina Rodriguez, SEDNET Project Manager Region 11

