



COLLABORATIVE QUARTERLY

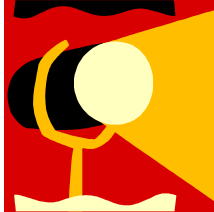


Lower Pioneer Valley
Educational Collaborative

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Spotlight on COMPASS Middle School



While visiting the COMPASS Middle School program at Glenbrook Middle School in Longmeadow this month, I had the pleasure of observing a speech therapy group session. I also had a chance to speak with students

and staff about the COMPASS program and what makes it special.

Ms. Felzenstein, the teacher, spoke with me about her efforts to foster a strong sense of community this year. One of the ways that she does this is with luncheons for students and their families throughout the year. Last year, students worked on cooking to learn independence, taking turns and pragmatic language skills. *"Students go on-line, select recipes, create a cookbook and cook one thing at home with their family. When parents came for the luncheon, students prepared food, served and ate with parents, grandparents. Last year, one student also played guitar. This year students might do a play from the Scholastic Scope magazine with the first luncheon planned for Thanksgiving"*, Ms. Felzenstein commented.

In addition to fostering a sense of community within the program, the COMPASS Middle School program participates in the larger Glenbrook community. Students in COMPASS participate in the Bookworm Club which rewards schools whose students read 1,500 books with an all-school ice-cream sundae party.

During my visit I asked staff members and students what makes COMPASS special. Below are comments from our COMPASS students:

Jess said *"I enjoy taking art class at the end of every day at West Springfield Middle School."* She participates in a mainstream art class through the WS Public Schools.

Noah says *"I like having friends in the classroom."*

Alyssa commented on the appropriateness of the program. *"The program is good with kids with Autism and Aspergers. Teachers are patient and very understanding"*, she said.

Charles said, *"people in here are calm."*

Adam echoed these sentiments when he said *"the schedule is not rushed."*

When I asked the staff what they enjoyed, staff members Shanna DelPrete, Speech Therapist, and Cindy Williams, Classroom Assistant, discussed how the program stretches them professionally and how working in the program is a pleasure because of the students. Shanna stated that she *"loves the challenges, and being in a classroom allows for creativity and flexibility"*. Cindy, a 14-year employee with 3 years experience in the COMPASS program told me that she thinks the *"students are fun, challenging, and so intelligent"*. Cindy's greatest pleasure is watching students progress. Cindy said, *"I love to see their faces when they get something and to see the students improve. They love to help each other out. The students are very bright"*.

My hat is off to the COMPASS program—the students and staff have created a wonderful, hard-working and caring classroom community.

Anne McKenzie
Executive Director



CAREER TEC

The Landscape Technology/Horticulture Program at Career TEC participated in the Landscape Exhibit at the Big E as part of their FFA (Future Farmers of America) chapter activities. The theme for this year's competition was "Butterfly Garden". The Landscaping and Horticulture program received a 3rd Place ribbon for their entry competing against schools from MA, CT and RI.

The students began the project in the winter of the 07-08 school year by constructing a butterfly rearing cage that was to be incorporated into a garden space. The plantings included varieties that butterflies use for feeding and egg-laying. Landscape paving materials and landscape lighting were added as design features. The completed display featured 18 live butterflies that were released into the cage.



Butterfly Garden



2008 National FFA Convention

Kenneth Ruby, Jr. from the Landscaping Technology/Horticulture Program (Class of 2008), attended the 2008 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana October 21-24. Advisors Dan Plourde and Vicki-Lynn Toro accompanied him. Ken competed in the Job Interview Career Development Event (CDE) as the Massachusetts representative for his first place in that CDE at the State Convention held in March of 2008. The Job Interview CDE included two days of activities including job application, phone interview, personal interviews, and a follow-up letter. Participants were required to submit resumes, cover letters and three letters of reference in advance of the convention. At the Awards Breakfast, Ken received a silver medal for placing in the middle bracket.

Approximately 45,000 students and advisors attended and highlights of the convention included the Career Show, a Taylor Swift concert at Lucas Oil Stadium, and a live rodeo at the Indiana Fairgrounds. Ken accompanied Mr. Plourde on the weekend to tour Purdue University to attend a Big Ten football game against Minnesota. Prior to departing they toured the Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway.



The Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust Wellness Program
presents

A "MINI HEALTH FAIR"

The health fair will offer screenings, educational information and programs to help you reduce holiday stress and prevent weight gain.

- Blood pressure and body composition screenings by Health New England
- Holiday stress tips and healthy recipes
- Registration for the Maintain Campaign
- 20lb. TURKEY GIVEAWAY!!!



LPVEC East Longmeadow - 159 Denslow Road, Wednesday 11/19, 9-11am
LPVEC West Springfield - 174 Brush Hill Avenue, Thursday 11/20, 1:30-4pm

Contact Amy Higgins, Wellness Coordinator to pre-register by Friday, 11/14. Amyhiggins2003@yahoo.com or 323-4309.



VOLUNTEER MENTORS NEEDED

The Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative in West Springfield is in need of male and female volunteer mentors to give just ONE hour a week, ONCE a week, of their time to a student. In just ONE hour you can impact a teen's life and future by simply listening and being non-judgmental, a positive role model and friend. Studies have shown that if teens have a positive role model in their life who they can trust, their grades increase, absences decrease and they are less likely to engage in high risk activities. Mentoring is done on school premises on Brush Hill Ave. in West Springfield during school hours. No special skills are needed. If you would like more information about this opportunity please call Maurine Albano at 413-735-2200 ext 1310 or email malbano@lpvec.org.



LPVEC Employees are eligible for a 15% discount if you are a Verizon Wireless customer. Check their website www.verizonwireless.com for more information on employee discounts.

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Submit article suggestions to your supervisor or email to HR@lpvec.org.