

# Inside the Halls of Linwood



Nov 2013-Dec 2013

Issue 1

## School News

Welcome to "Inside the Halls of Linwood". This is the premier of the first newsletter from the Linwood Center, and we are very humbled to be putting it out to press. Not only are we excited to establish our first newsletter, but there have been exciting happenings around the school as well.

Linwood's school program has been consistently growing, and expanding as the months progress. In recent news, the school program has just opened our 6th classroom. We are very excited for this expansion and opportunity to grow and establish the school within the community and surrounding areas.

There have also been two

new additions to the school that have been completed. The new gym floor has officially been replaced and is now able to be used by our students. The students love having it available and are enjoying every moment they are able to utilize it.

The second addition for our facility is a sensory room. The sensory room now includes a swing, tactile walls, and a rocker. It has been great to see that room transformed.

We are also extremely thrilled for our first annual winter concert in the new building. Our music teacher, Ms. Rosebelle, has been preparing the students and we are all looking forward to seeing the finished product.

The winter concert will be held on Friday, December 20th, 2013 at 1:00pm. It will take place in the new dining hall, on the lower level of the new facility. The students will be performing various holiday songs, as well as playing instruments for each piece. There will also be a special dance performance from one of our students as well.

As you can see, there are so many exciting things going on here at Linwood, and we are looking forward to sharing more as the school year progresses.

-Genese Neal  
Education Director

## Residential News

The Residential Program at Linwood has been growing and experiencing many new happenings and fun activities. One such activity is the Family Fun Night. This activity allows residents and their families to come together one night a month, have some dinner, a few laughs and some fun. Our new tradition began October 2013. Both 5 and 7 day residents were in attendance along with some

family members. Staff served dinner and later participated in carving pumpkins with the families. This was an enjoyable night for all. The theme for November's Family Fun night was "Giving". A new happening would be the introduction of Skype in all residences. Each home has been provided with a camera along with a Skype ID. The communications soft-

ware allows the children to connect with parents and/or other relatives regardless of where they are in the world. Talk between Skype users is totally free and has been a great addition to our program. We are looking forward to the things to come in the Residential Program.

-Shenell Sowers  
Residential Director

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### Calendar of Events Coming up!

<p><u>December</u> 13th- In-Service for Staff (half day)-School closes at 12:00pm</p> <p>20th- Holiday Program at 1:00pm in the new dining hall</p> <p>23rd through January 1st— Winter Break</p>
<p><u>January</u> 2nd- Welcome Back!</p> <p>17th- In-Service for Staff (half day)- School closes at 12:00pm</p> <p>20th- Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday- School Closed</p>

# Classroom Adventures

Throughout the school, we have six classrooms. The students in each of these classrooms have been learning and excelling in each of their educational endeavors. Below is a snapshot of the learning activities in each classroom.

Ms. Erin's classroom has just finished their unit on Natural Disasters and has been working very hard on all of their Alt-MSA objectives! They are studying Native Americans and have made two Native American



Pictured above is "Timmy the Turkey", which was created by the students in order to make our hallway festive for the holiday seasons

crafts: clay pots and "turtle shell" rattles.

Ms. Christie's class has been diligently working towards mastering their Alt MSA objectives. In December we will continue to do so, but we will also take a look at different cultures around the world. We will focus specifically on the traditions and customs associated with several different holidays celebrated during the winter.

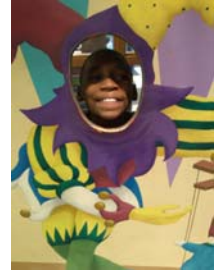
Mr. Ben's class has been learning about trees and their different parts. They explored nature on a short walk, and collected leaves, bark, pine cones, and sticks. Afterwards, they made bird feeders out of cardboard tubes, peanut butter, and birdseed.

Ms. Harriet's class has been pondering non-fiction texts about famous scientists for reading and science. They have been exploring Thomas Edison and conducting electrical experiments based on light bulbs. In math they're studying pictographs and bar graphs, and line plots. They're also taking adventures in cooking pizza, brownies, and chocolate chip cookies. (pictured on the right)



Mr. Sam's

classroom will spend December learning about the different cultures that celebrate winter holidays. (pictured on right—one of Mr. Sam's students at Port Discovery)



Ms. Wendy's classroom has been learning about different animals as they apply research skills. Please look for emperor penguins around the school to see the students' work. They also visited the Howard County Animal Shelter to learn about the wonderful services provided for the animals there



(pictured on left). The students look forward to continuing to practice and apply research skills in December as they learn more about the scientific process.

Everyone is very excited about the educational adventures that the students are taking in each classroom.

# Student's Corner- Thoughts about Thanksgiving

"At Thanksgiving, my favorite food to eat is apple pie. My favorite activity on Thanksgiving Day is to talk to friends. During the Thanksgiving break from school, I plan to sleep."- Andrew Jeske

"At Thanksgiving, my favorite food to eat is turkey. My favorite activity on Thanksgiving Day is to watch the parade. During the Thanksgiving break from school, I plan to go to the Columbia Mall."- Kahlil Forbes

"At Thanksgiving, my favorite food to eat is turkey. My favorite activity on Thanksgiving Day is to play games and watch the parade. During the Thanksgiving break from school, I plan to play outside and sleep."- Colin McLeod

"At Thanksgiving, my favorite food to eat is turkey. My favorite activity on Thanksgiving Day is to cook. During the Thanksgiving break from school, I plan to have a feast after school."- Erol Orstan



## Meet Our Education Director



Given that the newsletter is making its debut, we thought it would be fitting for everyone to get to know our staff at Linwood. The first person that we would like you to meet would

be our Education Director, Genese Neal.

Ms. Genese attended Towson University and received her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education as well as Special Education. She did her student teaching in

Baltimore County Public Schools for a class for children with autism at Catonsville Middle School.

She has also worked privately in-home with a child who has Cerebral Palsy and also for a family who had a child with Angelman's Syndrome.

Having a plethora of experience working with students, Ms. Genese worked two and a half years for Trellis Services, taught children with autism and other disabilities at the Forbush School in Hunt Valley, and worked as an in-home ABA tech for Verbal Beginnings while teaching at Forbush. After those opportunities, she then came to Linwood and taught, before received her promotions to Instructional Facilitator, and now to our Education Director.

Ms. Genese's Master's Degree is in Special Education Severe Disabilities with an Emphasis in Autism Spectrum Disorders through Johns Hopkins University. She will begin a Post-Graduate Program to obtain certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) focusing on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis.

Ms. Genese is very excited to take on her new role as the Education Director at the Linwood School, and cannot wait to see the school grow to its fullest potential.

## Tips from Kim to Help Reduce Holiday Stress



Holidays can be stressful with changes from routine and over-stimulating activities. Below are some helpful strategies that will less-

en everyone's anxiety and increase the enjoyment of the holiday season:

- Decorate gradually, so that there is not a sudden change in familiar surroundings.
- Before setting up, see how your child will respond to flashy and/or noisy decorations
- Meet as a family to discuss how to minimize disruptions and support

positive behavior when disruptions become inevitable.

- Continue to use behavior support strategies during the holidays. Try social stories and visual supports to help your child prepare for more complicated days.
- Use a visual schedule if you are celebrating holidays on more than one day (e.g. Hanukah) to show when there will be parties/gifts and when there will not.
- Wait just before the holiday to set out gifts, especially large tempting ones.
- When opening gifts, try passing

around an ornament to signal whose turn it is to open the next gift; this should help with the chaotic opening of many gifts at a time as well as with the frustration of waiting.

- Consider giving your child a quiet space to play with his/her own gifts, away from a possible over-stimulating environment of multiple children playing with a variety of toys.

**Happy Holidays!!**

- Kim Brackeen

## Talking about Speech!



Greetings from the Speech and Language room of Linwood!

As the speech and language pathologist here at The Linwood School, it my job to ensure that every child is developing, maintaining, and increasing their speech and language skills. However, it is also my job to ensure that all parents and caregivers of our students are also participating in aiding their development. As the holiday season approaches, and school is closed more than usual, there are some simple and highly effective ways parents and caregivers can encourage

speech and language growth.

Step 1- Wait, wait, WAIT! It sounds very simple, I know. However, it is the most crucial step. Allowing plenty of time for each child to respond is a vital aspect of speech and language growth. If you do not feel like the silence has dragged on, and on, and on; you have not waited long enough!

Step 2- There are ONLY correct answers. We all can give wrong answers; however, as the adult we must not say "wrong" or "right." Re-direct the student in a positive

way that will allow them to reach an answer independently.

Step 3- Provide help -BUT- only as much as needed. Do not provide more help than is necessary. You know your child and when they are truly stuck.

I hope these tips are helpful and ALWAYS feel free to e-mail!

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## Exciting News! Linwood Starts a PTO



Parents!

We have some exciting news to share! Linwood has started a Parent Teacher Organization for the school.

This organization is open to all parents who have students in the school and residential programs.

All parents/guardians are encouraged to sign up. There will be a booth with more information at the Holiday Program on December 20th, which starts at 1:00pm in the New Dining Room.

We are very excited and hope to see you there!



*Have a great Holiday Season!*



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