

# Parents as Partners

St. Johns County School District-ESE Department



## Holiday Traditions and Life Skills Unit

Every year, the students in the Varying Exceptionalities 3rd-5th grade Self-Contained classroom at PV/PV Rawlings Elementary School participate in a December Holiday Traditions and Life Skills Unit.

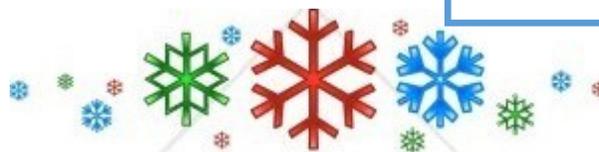
The students learn about different holiday traditions through literature, songs, and crafts. Students also make snowflake ornaments, decorate cookies and write, address, stamp and mail holiday cards to friends and family.



*Contributed by: Jennifer Nunes, ESE Teacher,  
PV/PV Rawlings Elementary*

### Dates To Remember:

- 2/2** Parent Advisory Meeting  
6:00-7:30 p.m.  
Pedro Menendez High School
- 2/25** Gifted Parent Advisory Meeting  
4:30-5:30 p.m.  
Gamble Rogers Middle School



# Learning Strategies at Murray Middle School



At Murray Middle School, teachers are utilizing creative and innovative strategies to motivate and reward their students for positive behavior. Ms. Bapteus, 6<sup>th</sup> grade ESE teacher, utilizes a web-based application called “Class Do-Jo” to recognize and reward her students in her Learning Strategies and support facilitation classes. Students can earn “dojos” for helping a peer (buddy dojo,) starting a task without a teacher prompt (Eager beaver do-jo,) remaining on task (scholarly dojo,) and finishing a task (champion do-jo.) Students have the opportunity to earn and lose dojos throughout the class period. Rewards and incentives are provided daily to keep students engaged and motivated. This awesome tool also provides an opportunity for parents to view their child’s behavior throughout the day by accessing “Class Do-Jo” on their phones or computers. Parents can communicate with the teacher using the Class Do-Jo group chat and personal chats to gather more information about their child’s behaviors.

According to Ms. Bapteus, “My students love Class Do-Jo! They are always aware of their current on-task and off-task behavior. The best part is that my students also have a login so they can monitor and reflect on their own behavior. Class Do-Jo has been a time saver in monitoring, recording student behavior and communicating with parents. It keeps everything simple and concise with just a click of a button.”

Mr. Robinson and Mr. Pavluchuk, ESE teachers in the Behavior Unit, have also designed a creative positive incentive program using a token economy to extrinsically motivate their students. The “Bulldog 7 Eleven” store gives students the opportunity to earn tickets when they are producing exemplary collaborative work and cultivating a positive classroom atmosphere. Cultivating positive classroom atmosphere is represented by good behavior and positive social actions. This is pertinent for students in the Behavior Unit because it reinforces social skills. Students have the ability to purchase a multitude of items from the store using their tickets. This wonderful incentive program has created a very motivated and productive classroom environment.

*Contributed by: Melissa Lime, Assistant Principal, Murray Middle School*



**Peyton Manning** - Peyton Williams Manning (born March 24, 1976) is an American football quarterback who currently plays for the Indianapolis Colts of the National Football League (NFL). He was born with a cleft palate. He is widely regarded as one of the best active quarterbacks in the NFL. He previously played college football for Tennessee. Manning was drafted by the Colts as the first overall pick in 1998. He is the son of former NFL quarterback Archie Manning and the older brother of current New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning.



## Coming Soon to St. Augustine High School



SAHS is working with Mrs. Janet Cunningham and Mrs. Leigh Anne Hale to begin a High School High Tech (HSHT) after school club.

A presentation regarding the HSHT after school club was shared out by Mrs. Cunningham, HSHT coordinator, on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

About 40 students attended the presentation and completed applications for the after school club. The applications will be reviewed and 10 students from St. Augustine High School will be selected to participate.

The HSHT program is designed to provide youth with disabilities between the ages of 14-22 the opportunity to explore science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) related postsecondary education, training and careers. HSHT links youth to a broad range of academic resources and career development experiences that will enable the students to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce.

We look forward to seeing our students participating in this after school club soon.

*Contributed By: George Mastoridis, Assistant Principal, St. Augustine High School*

## Valley Ridge Academy and the Best Buddies Program

**BEST BUDDIES**



Valley Ridge Academy is proud to announce our first year of being a part of the Best Buddies organization. We have over 23 members and many more students inquiring about joining. Our students have been wonderful, often volunteering in our two Pre-K and K-2 ESE classrooms. They assist with recess, lunch and classroom center time. In the middle school setting, the students are making sure their buddies are never sitting alone during lunch time and often escorting the students to their busses in the afternoon. We are currently planning a movie night with Landrum's Best Buddies as well as coordinating a joint end of the year field trip. It's only the beginning. Valley Ridge Best Buddy students couldn't be more excited to be a part of such a giving, caring organization!

*Contributed By: Jodi Johnson, ESE Teacher, Valley Ridge Academy*



## Parent Resources

- ⇒ St. Johns County School District-ESE Dept.-  
<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/depts/ese>
- ⇒ Central Florida Parent Center– [www.cflparents.org](http://www.cflparents.org)
- ⇒ FDLRS/NEFEC– [www.fdlrs.com](http://www.fdlrs.com)
- ⇒ Family Network on Disabilities– [www.fndfl.org](http://www.fndfl.org)
- ⇒ Exceptional Parent Magazine– [www.eparent.com](http://www.eparent.com)

The Florida Atlantic University Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) has a variety of excellent tutorials available for online viewing. Topics range from *Toilet Training, Behavior Basics, and Using Visual Supports in the Home* to *Developing Leisure Skills and Enhancing Engagement in Science*. You can access the full list of tutorials from the CARD FAU website at <http://www.coefau.edu/centersandprograms/card/tutorials.aspx>.

The Exceptional Advocate is a newsletter for military families with special needs. Visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/efmp/news> for more information.

The United Healthcare Children's Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity dedicated to facilitating access to medical-related services that have the potential to significantly enhance either the clinical condition or the quality of life of a child and that is not fully covered by an available commercial health benefit plan. Visit <https://www.uhccf.org/aboutus.htm/> for more information.



## Upcoming Events

**Field of Dreams Baseball– Registration is Free and Now Open!!** Registration is now open and will remain open during the entire season. Any child with special needs from ages 5 to 18 or up to age 21 if still in high school can play. 2016 Opening Day will be Saturday, February 6th. Games will be held each Saturday until April 21st. For more information visit [www.FODBaseball.com](http://www.FODBaseball.com).

**20th Annual Tools Family Conference - February 26, 2015–** For and about families of children with special needs (ages birth to 22). Located at University of North Florida, Adam W. Herbert University Center, 12000 Alumni Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32224, 8:00 am to 3:15 pm. Pre-registration is required. To register online please use the following link: <https://eventbrite.com/event/14727617701/> or visit our website [www.fdlrscrown.org](http://www.fdlrscrown.org) . For more information call FDLRS/Crown 904-346-4601 ext 119.

**Growing Up Dyslexic Seminar- February 18, 2015–** Jonathan Mooney is a dyslexic writer who only learned to read at age 12! He is co-founder of “Project Eye-to-Eye”, a widely duplicated mentoring program for disabled students. Jonathan is a graduate of Brown University and holds an honors degree in English Literature. He was a national Rhodes scholarship finalist and won the prestigious Truman Scholarship for graduate studies in creative writing and education. We’re sure he will be enlightening and entertaining. The seminar is located at the Jacksonville Jewish Center, 3662 Crown Point Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257 from 7:00 pm-9:00 pm. Free and open to the Public.

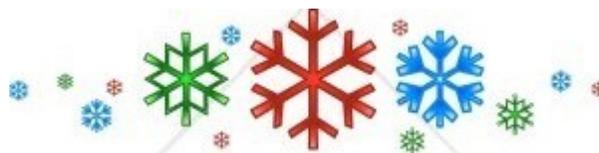
**Deliver The Dream Retreat - February 27-March 1, 2015-** This retreat is for families who have a child with Spina Bifida. Visit [www.deliverthedream.org](http://www.deliverthedream.org) or call 1-888-OUR-DREAM (687-3732) if you are interested in applying for a retreat or would like more information for other upcoming retreat dates.

**Heart & Hope Family Conference – February 28, 2015–** The theme is planning for beyond high school and you won’t want to miss it. Register today: Contact Family Network on Disabilities if you have questions or would like additional information. 800-825-5736 or 727-523-1130 or email [www.fndfl.org](http://www.fndfl.org).

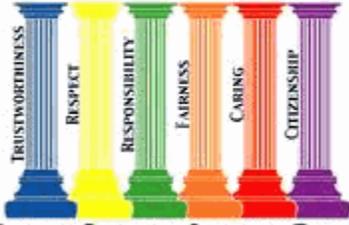
**2 Day Parent Workshop at UNF – March 5-6, 2015-** This FREE 2 day parent workshop is for Teaching Language to Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities. Hours are 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Registration is mandatory. The deadline to register is February 27, 2015. For more information please contact Cassandra Tuohy at (904) 744-5110 [jerichoschool@yahoo.com](mailto:jerichoschool@yahoo.com) . You may also visit [www.TheJerichoSchool.org/Outreach](http://www.TheJerichoSchool.org/Outreach).

**Deliver The Dream Retreat - March 20-22, 2015-** This Retreat is for families who have a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder or a related disability. Visit [www.deliverthedream.org](http://www.deliverthedream.org) or call 1-888-OUR-DREAM (687-3732) if you are interested in applying for a retreat or would like more information for other upcoming retreat dates.

**Visual Aid Volunteers of Florida (VAVF) Scholarship – March 30, 2015-** The deadline for submitting VAVF Scholarship applications is fast approaching. Applications must be received no later than March 30, 2015. Graduation seniors are eligible if they are: legally blind, Florida residents, who are continuing their education and submit a completed application. The application form can be found at the VAVF website [www.vavf.org](http://www.vavf.org).



# CHARACTER COUNTS!



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## Mission Statement: To identify and meet the unique educational needs of exceptional students and to provide support and resources to enhance educational opportunities so they become productive citizens.

ESE programs and services address the unique needs of students who are gifted in kindergarten through 12th grade and those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities from age three until they graduate with a regular diploma or until their 22nd birthday. ESE programs and services are designed to assist students in reaching their educational goals through the use of instructional and behavioral approaches which are research-based and exemplify best practices. Technology is used in many creative ways to meet student needs as well.

ESE services are available at all district schools for gifted students and students who have mild to moderate disabilities. Students with more significant disabilities are served in cluster programs at selected sites. Program support is provided to students, parents and school personnel by program specialists based at the district office. Students with disabilities who are not eligible for services through the ESE program may be eligible for an accommodations plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY?

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful. The next issue of the Parents As Partners Newsletter will be posted to the St. Johns County School District web site at [www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/dept/academicservices/ese](http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/dept/academicservices/ese).

If you would like to receive a copy via email, please send your email address to [Sarah.Coffin@stjohns.k12.fl.us](mailto:Sarah.Coffin@stjohns.k12.fl.us) and we will gladly add you to our Parent Newsletter email list.

