



WELCOME TO WESTFIELD...Margaret Dolan, superintendent of the Westfield public schools, greeted new teachers at a breakfast in their honor. Seated, from left to right, are: Matt Kalafat, Lori Simpson, Joe Marino (a veteran teacher in the district who serves as a mentor) and Mirjana Banic.

New Westfield Teachers Welcomed and Ready

WESTFIELD – A total of 23 new teachers and support staff, as well as four new administrators were welcomed to the Westfield public schools at a breakfast held in their honor, following their four-day participation in the New Teacher Institute, the orientation and training program for educators new to the district.

Earlier this year, the district eliminated 24 positions due to budget cuts, and while those positions remain unfilled, the newly hired staff members are filling positions created largely by retirements or as leave replacements.

Board President Ginny Leiz welcomed the new hires and noted that many factors contribute to the success of the Westfield public schools, with the quality of the staff representing one of the district's greatest strengths.

She announced that the new staff members were selected from more than 1,600 résumés. The new hires represent 102 combined years in education, and two-thirds hold advanced degrees.

Kim Schumacher, president of the Westfield Education Association, greeted the teachers and assured them that they were entering a community where education has a tradition of high standards, where students are challenged, and where staff are respected.

Westfield Parent-Teacher Council President Rose Hughes, representing the parent community, told the new teachers that parents are helpful resources for them and announced a new recyclable water bottle program available to the entire district.

Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dolan welcomed the new staff at the breakfast and once again on September 8, when she addressed all teachers and administrators.

"You, the teachers, are guiding lights, beacons, catalysts in our students' quest for knowledge and understanding, as well as in the development of the skills necessary to aid them in becoming productive adult members of society in the 21st century," said Ms. Dolan.

The new teachers completed their four-day orientation program within Westfield's New Teacher Institute,

focusing on technology, district philosophy and special education. Following those sessions, they received orientation at the school level from their principals and mentors.

The new teaching and support staff for the Westfield Public Schools includes: Mirjana Banic, Physical Education – Roosevelt Intermediate School; Lindsay Bogachuk, Science – Roosevelt Intermediate School; Steven Cohn, English – Westfield High School; Colleen Coyle, Speech Language Specialist – Jefferson Elementary/Edison Intermediate School; Kim Demetrios, Special Education – Edison Intermediate School; Joseph Farrell-Ingham, Learning Disability teacher – Westfield High School; Steven Galgon, TV Production – Westfield High School; Anne-Marie Heard, Leaps and Bounds – Lincoln School; Kathleen Hopkins, English – Westfield High School; Lauren Ilg, Speech Language Specialist – Tamaques Elementary; Matthew Kalafat, Language Arts – Roosevelt Intermediate; Jennifer Lendvai-Lintner, Journalism – Edison Intermediate; Lillian Pabon-Correa, Spanish – Tamaques/McKinley Elementary Schools; Yetunde Rubinstein, Guidance – Westfield High School; Nancy Rygiel, Achieve teacher – Franklin; Kathleen Salvo, Learning Disability teacher/consultant – Special Services; Amanda Samaha, Music – Franklin/Wilson Elementary Schools; Vicki Sarnoski, Social Worker – Special Services; Douglas Schwarz, Music – Westfield High School/Edison Intermediate; Lori Simpson – Special Education, Roosevelt Intermediate; Vivian Suchy, Spanish – Roosevelt Intermediate; Stephanie Thompson, Guidance – Roosevelt Intermediate; and Jennifer Youssef, Mathematics – Roosevelt Intermediate.

Westfield welcomes four new administrators at Westfield High School for 2009-2010, including Colleen White, supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services/Guidance, K-12; Lydia Suarez-McNulty, assistant principal of Westfield High School; Andrea Brennan, supervisor of Social Studies, K-12, and Brian Auker, chief technology officer.

Heroism Scholarship Welcomes Nominations

STATE – The New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) are announcing the start of the 2009 application processing cycle for the Dana Christmas Scholarship for Heroism. Instructions, applications, and nomination forms are available at hesaa.org.

A completed application and at least one supporting nomination form must be submitted to HESAA no later than October 15.

The statewide Dana Christmas Scholarship for Heroism honors the heroic deeds of up to five young New Jerseyans each year. Scholarship recipients will receive a one-time award of up to \$10,000. To be eligible for the scholarship, recipients must be New Jersey residents both at the time of the act of heroism and upon their

application. They must be 21 years of age or younger at the time of the heroic act, a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen and registered with the Selective Service (if required).

The Scholarship Committee will review submissions of all eligible applicants and select 10 semifinalists. The executive committee of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority Board will then review the semifinalists for final recipient selection. Recipients will be notified in writing of their selection.

Click on the 2009 Dana Christmas Scholarship link under the homepage and submit all required forms by October 15. For further information pertaining to this scholarship program, contact Gloria at (609) 588-3214.

Redeemer Lutheran Offers Mixed-Age Classrooms

By JOY WAGENBLAST
Principal of Redeemer Lutheran School, Westfield

WESTFIELD – Faced with a challenging economic climate and the ensuing decline in enrollment this year, Redeemer Lutheran School in Westfield has begun its 57th school year with an innovative approach to traditionally structured classes and staffing.

Redeemer has consolidated classes by grouping students according to ability level rather than just grade level. The fluidity to progress at individual academic levels within each subject rather than grade levels are expected to bring the favorable results evidenced in the past year's achievement tests.

For example, when a group of fourth graders have met the fourth-grade standards (as set forth in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards), they are moved to the next level in that content area. Similarly, students who struggle in an area work within peer groups for mastery.

A certified teacher and a classroom assistant monitor groups. Generally, the staff:student ratio is 1:6.

Mixed-age group interaction elicits specific pro-social behaviors such as helping, sharing, and taking turns. These are traits of emotional intelligence, essential for becoming a healthy and responsible adult.

Society tends to focus much on the cognitive brain because IQ is more easily measured and rewarded. Emotional intelligence abilities include motivation, compromise, generosity, honesty, persistence in adversity, mood regulation, impulse control, gratefulness, empathy and hope. Teachers in small, multi-age classrooms are able to use that envi-

ronment to grow "EQ" as well as "IQ."

Another social-emotional advantage is that there are many areas in which students can find their "niche" as individuals. Strengths are affirmed, and weaknesses are understood and strengthened. Some students have been finalists in the local spelling bee, while some have won awards in art, while others have earned the Presidential Fitness Award.

The success of such an alternative model is made possible by the intentionally-small class sizes at Redeemer. Most of the students and staff have been at the school for years, so the students' abilities are well understood. The teaching staff screens new students for acceptance and placement.

Parent-partnership is essential. Even the "big-neighborhood" feel of the wrap-around care program is designed to grow students' social development.

Another innovation has been the redesign of classroom space. The classrooms not needed for individual grades have been turned into multipurpose classrooms housing a science lab and a tech center.

The school has applied for a grant from the local church body for equipment that will enable video-conferencing and distance-learning. For early childhood students, the staff is offering two afternoon enrichment opportunities for children ages 3 through kindergarten.

Redeemer continues to provide financial assistance and is able to access non-public school services for any students with remediation needs. The professional staff team has worked together to develop and implement a balanced and effective educational plan.

Parenting Seminar for Parents with Kids 0-18

MOUNTAINSIDE – Parenting is a tough job. So whether you have children, or they're just a twinkle in your eye at this point, you don't want to miss "ParentHood," a parenting seminar sponsored by Oasis Church-NJ.com on Saturday night, September 26, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. The event occurs at the Oasis Coffeehouse, located at 1180 Spruce Drive in Mountainside.

The parenting seminar presenter is a certified parenting education teacher and mediator, with over 25 years of experience in public service dealing with parents, their kids and the tough issues families face today. Why attend this parenting seminar? The evening will take place in a warm, coffeehouse setting, with drinks and desserts.

Among the learning and laid-back fun, relevant topics that will be discussed include: The top 5 gifts you can give your kids in the 21st Century; How to keep warm heart lines of communication open with your kids; How to build your kids' self-confidence and yours as a parent; How to protect your kids in the Internet, Facebook, MySpace age. The cost is \$10 per parent, but if you bring another parent (including hubby or wife), you get in free!

Safe child care by NJ state certified teachers is provided for kiddies ages 0-3. Whether they're bawling, crawling, walking, talking, driving you crazy or asking to drive your car, kids are a gift from God, but we could probably all use some clear guidance and insight on how to raise them to be happy, focused and full of good

old common sense, rather than leaving you frustrated, frazzled and fatigued. So overall, whether a single parent or married with kids, this parenting seminar is a great night out and will benefit your family life.

"Nough said. Those interested in attending the parenting seminar can register online at <http://oasis-church-nj.com>, or by calling David Butler at (732) 406-7821. Door-to-door directions can be found on our site. Get ready for a great evening filled with fun and learning. Hope to see you there!

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LEARN AND SERVE...Stephen Izzo, manager of Grants and Special Programs, Cranford Public Schools, stands alongside Linda Rivera, program manager for New Jersey Learn and Serve America, who is holding the LSA logo.

\$100,000 in Grants Helps Students Learn, Serve

CRANFORD – New grants to the Cranford public schools are improving the education students receive by improving the service they provide to others.

The centerpiece is an \$85,000 award from Learn and Serve America (LSA) for the 2009-2010 year, estimated to pay the district an additional \$100,000 for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years.

The Service-Learning Regional Center Grant (SLRC), which follows over \$200,000 in service-learning grants won by the district in the past five years, was likewise prepared by the district's manager of Grants and Special Programs, Stephen Izzo, and is one of only three awarded in the State of New Jersey.

It makes Cranford public schools a "regional service-learning center," supporting schools and other non-profits in New Jersey's central region as a service-learning mentor, information clearinghouse and provider of professional development for teachers. A major end-goal of the program is to encourage young people to pursue further education, training, and roles serving others.

"Learn and Serve has and continues to help our students do just that," said Mr. Izzo. "We thank them for enabling us to help other districts and non-profits in central New Jersey formulate and improve service-learning initiatives."

Funds for the grant are provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a federal organization promoting service-learning activities through Learn and Serve America, AmeriCorps, and the Senior Volunteer Corps.

The grant will continue to support service efforts at Cranford High School (HolidayFest), Brookside Place School (Stamp Out Hunger), Livingstone Avenue School (Bringing Nature Indoors) and Walnut Avenue School (Outdoor Classroom), as well as during National Make a Difference

Day, MLK Day of Service and Youth Service Day.

Other grants awarded this summer and programs supported include those from: Exxon Mobil Corporation (\$1,000—math/science initiatives); Target Corporation (\$3,000—Peer Leadership Program); CVS Foundation (\$1,500—SNAPPY Program); and over \$8,000 in grants funding the Cranford School District Academy (CSDA)—a weekend remedial program helping students overcome severe reading issues.

Recent grantors to the CSDA include: The Friends of the Cranford Public Library (\$1,875), Elberon Development Corporation (\$1,875), Investors Saving Bank Foundation (\$1,000), and The United Way of Greater Union County (\$3,500).

Beyond this, the following donors provided nearly \$6,000 in funds/goods to the district this summer, defraying costs associated with the restoration of historic murals discovered at Cranford High School, professional development and special services:

A&J Automotive; Breen's Discount Wines and Liquors; Cranford Family Practice; Cranford Fire Department; Fink, Rosner Ershow-Levenberg, LLC; Gary S. Cutler, D.M.D.; Gutterman Services; Jaclo Industries; Kilkenny House Restaurant and Pub; Kleespies and Associates, LLC; Mary Rose and Richard Duffield; Mears and McCullough, CPAs; Miriam P. Moody; Pamela and Peter Crane; Pizza House; QDx Pathology Services; Ray Catena Mercedes-Benz of Union; Rosenberg, Neuwirth and Kuchner, CPAs; Shop Rite of Garwood; Simpson and Brown, Inc., Tony's Café of Cranford; Welby Brady and Greenblatt, LLP, and Verizon Corporation, which donated over \$3,000 in back-to-school supplies.

Those interested in learning more about grants and special programs supporting Cranford Public Schools can contact Mr. Izzo at (908) 709-6207 or izzo@cranfordschools.org.

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