



Selected as a NASET (National Association of Special Education Teachers) School of Excellence annually from 2014-2022.

Maryville Jen School

Graduation Issue

May, 2023

Principal's Address:

Dear Jen School Families and Friends,

As we wind down the school year, I would like to express how grateful I am to be a part of such an amazing community of students, families, and extraordinary educators. This has been another amazing year, and I am so proud of our students' accomplishments, which would not have been possible without our families and faculty's dedication and support.

May is a month of transitions, new beginnings, and celebrations. It is an exciting time of year here at Jen School. The warmer weather and longer days mean more opportunities for outdoor activities and field trips. Students and teachers alike are buzzing with energy as the end of the school year approaches.

May is particularly memorable for graduating seniors as they prepare to embark on the next chapter of their lives. They are celebrated and honored at events like awards and commencement, with their families, friends, and faculty cheering them on. At Jen School, we make sure that May is a month to remember, with fun and meaningful experiences that help our students grow and thrive. Whether through academic pursuits or vocational activities, we aim to make every moment count.

All of us at Jen School have also been preparing to transition from our current home on the Des Plaines campus to our new home and larger school in Niles. We are excited about all the possibilities that the move will bring. Our new school will have updated facilities and technology, expanded classrooms, and more space for students to learn and be creative.

Moving to a new campus will enhance our academic, social emotional, and vocational/career pathways curricula and programs. In addition, we look forward to developing new partnerships and collaborations with local organizations, businesses, and apprenticeship programs to provide our students with more educational resources and opportunities.

Of course, we understand that any change can be challenging, and we are committed to making the transition as smooth as possible for our students, families, and faculty. We are planning a thorough communication strategy to keep everyone informed and engaged throughout the process, and we will also be hosting events and activities to help everyone feel connected and part of the Jen School community.

Thank you and be safe,

Ann M. Craig
Director of Educational Services/Principal

Social Media

Like Jen School on Facebook!



Follow @jenschool on Instagram!



Tweet @JenSchool2 on Twitter!



CTE Year in Review

By: Stavros Kouriabalis - Para/Job Coach

Hello readers! It has been a great year so far in our CTE program. Just a little update on how everything is going in our work program. We have had so many new students come in eager to start working. Our enrollment is up from 3 students at the start of the year to 9 as we are approaching graduation!



Recently we have had much to do in our garden with the weather being so nice. Students assigned to that site have assisted with getting ready for our yearly plant sale. On top of that we had many students create new videos in our podcast room and also have had them create really amazing designs in our 3D lab. Chef has also been busy teaching the students how to whip up culinary delights in the kitchen.

With the increase in our student population we can't wait to see all the awesome things these guys and gals can do.



Earth Day

By: Mark Trerotola - Teacher

Earth Day is about raising awareness about the importance of protecting our planet and taking action. Jen School celebrated Earth Day along with a community of over 1 billion people who take part in this holiday every year. Here at Jen School we are always looking to enhance our garden and campus with staff and students working side-by-side. Our Earth Day activities included taking action with a campus clean-up activity that removed unsightly debris blown across fields and entangled in bushes or fences.



Many non-biodegradable items were removed from the shorelines of our ponds and sports fields. In addition to beautifying our campus, students have also been preparing our flowering plants in the greenhouse to be sold to the public. Every spring, the Jen School greenhouse provides top quality flowers that are guaranteed to bring a smile to anyone (mother or not) who makes a donation to Jen School on Thursday, May 11. Both our campus clean-up and the Mother's Day Plant Sale were a huge success!

CLASSROOM

ORNER

Field Trips

By: Moissette McNerney

Field trips and hands on learning make concepts more memorable. Just think back to what you learned in school, the field trips you took, and what you learned on field trips are still some of the clearest concepts. Additionally, field trips are important because students can engage with content in a variety of ways.

Why visit a museum? Museums conserve and curate important historical, artistic, cultural, or scientific artifacts. While these displays offer revealing explorations, there are numerous benefits to visiting these institutions. Museums provide inspirational connections to those who visit



Room 612 is taking Biology and learning about animal and plant classification and plan to visit The Grove, a nearby nature center. The students will explore indigenous flora and fauna including an area of ecologically diverse prairie land, animal exhibits, and varied geological features.

Educational trips create more engaged learning and a positive and lasting impact.



Recently Miss Khan's and Mr. Trerotola's classes visited the Museum of Science and Industry. Helping to build on developing knowledge from Earth Science and History, the students were able to see firsthand the devastation caused by crashing plate tectonics and erupting, exploding volcanoes; the Pompeii exhibit helped provide a real life and global perspective.



Mental Health Awareness Month

By: Donna Hoffman - School Psychologist

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, established in 1949 to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness. Nearly one in five Americans lives with a mental health condition, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Other well-known organizations that celebrate this cause include the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Mental Health America (MHA). These organizations provide numerous resources on their websites to help educate and support the millions of people in the U.S. affected by mental illness. While the stigma of mental health is diminishing, there continues to be resistance to advocating for help when struggling with mental health for fear of being judged.



However, as with physical health, if we are hurt, we should seek treatment to get better. This May more than 100 landmarks across the nation including the Wrigley Building in Chicago will be lit in green for mental health awareness.

Some familiar mental health disorders include depression, anxiety, mood disorders, personality disorders, psychotic disorders, trauma, eating disorders, and substance-use disorders. These illnesses can affect a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood resulting in poor daily living and socialization skills. Increased isolation, sickness, grief, and job loss during the Covid pandemic contributed to declining mental health issues for many students and adults. Moreover, mental health resources have become more difficult to access as the demand increases.

NAMI's theme for this year's awareness is called the "More Than Enough" campaign stressing that no matter our diagnosis, appearance, socioeconomic status, background, or ability level, you are more than enough. "Showing up, just as you are, for yourself and the people around you is more than enough." NIMH encourages people to practice self-compassion by finding things to be grateful for, staying connected to others, eating healthy and exercising, setting a routine, and practicing creativity through music, art, dance, and/or projects. MHA, the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing mental health, has adopted the "look around, look within" challenge for May encouraging everyone to look at how the environment and our communities may impact mental health.

An excerpt I found interesting on the MHA website outlines the benefits of the outdoors on mental well-being. Spending time in nature has been linked to improved focus, lower stress, better mood, and reduced risk of developing a mental health condition. Sunlight triggers the release of serotonin and vitamin D, which are both associated with boosting mood and reducing stress. Without enough sun, levels of serotonin can drop, leading to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. Light exposure also has a direct impact on the body's sleep-wake cycle, and consistent sleep is one of the most important factors in overall well-being. More time spent in outdoor light is associated with a lower likelihood of using antidepressants. One of the greatest benefits we can get from nature is connection, whether to self, community and/or purpose. Time in nature enhances personal growth, self-esteem, emotional regulation, and social skills. As the weather becomes milder and the days longer, there are more opportunities to spend time outdoors. Our students are encouraged to spend time in the school garden as a perfect way to relieve stress and promote emotional health.

Mental Health Hotlines

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

988 is the three-digit dialing code that will connect callers in crisis to trained counselors that will listen, understand how their problems are affecting them, provide support, and connect them to resources if necessary.

CARES & SASS

1-800-345-9049

Crisis hotline, mental health evaluation, and other services for youth and adults with Medicaid.

Crisis Text line

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a volunteer Crisis Counselor Free 24/7 support at your fingertips.

SPORTS PAGE

By: Dan Baffin - PE Teacher

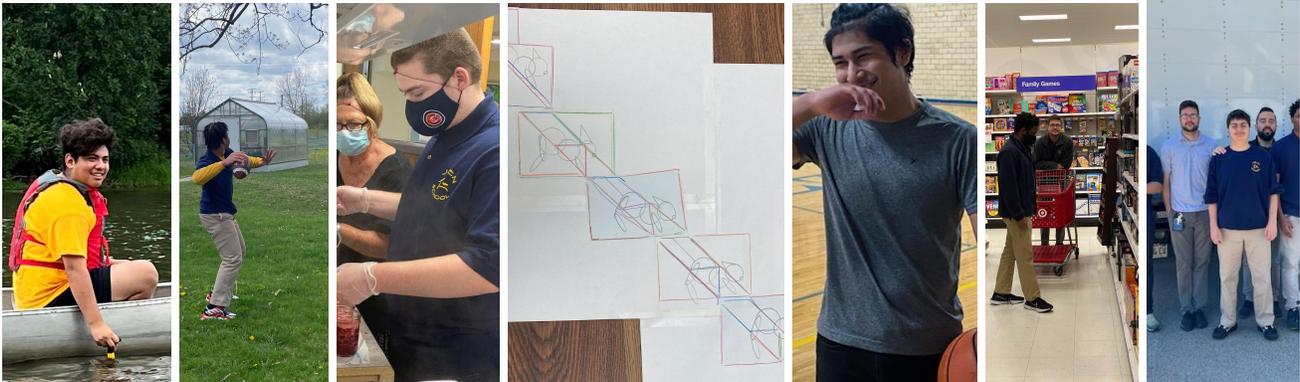
With the CAEL year winding down we find ourselves nearing the end of our spring softball season. We have had the pleasure of having great weather for all our games for the first time in a long while, and playing in close games against Banner, New Hope, and two High Road Schools. The turnout for softball has been great this year as we have averaged at least 10 students for each game as the season progresses. Jen School currently has a record of 2-2 with two games left to play against Cyd Lash and a rematch against Banner. Good luck the rest of the way and close out the CAEL season strong!



Student Spotlight Special Edition: GRADUATES By: George Nikolaou - Social Worker

With graduation right around the corner, we want to take the time to highlight this amazing accomplishment for our students at Jen School. From the moment a student tours our school, we like to ask them their plans for their future. Once enrolled, we have them fill out a transition inventory, which helps the student start thinking about those next steps after high school, if they haven't already. Sometimes an incoming student does not know what they exactly want to do after high school, and that is completely normal. Our teams work with the students to explore options and start to carve a path for them using their strengths and interests. They help them navigate the plan for these next steps through daily chats, career interest inventories, monthly transition activities, and other avenues.

We currently have 9 students slated to graduate for the 2022-2023 school year. The ceremony will be held on June 2nd in the Stevens Center. Students' plans for after high school vary from attending a college/university, to joining a trades school, to entering the job force right away. Their different interests in areas of study/work include animation, working in the mental health field, real estate, the military, food industry, fire science/EMT, veterinary tech, and different trades. We are very excited for all of them, and we truly wish them the best!

A graphic featuring the text "Class of 2023" in a large, purple, cursive font. The text is set against a background of numerous small, golden stars scattered across the white space.A graphic featuring the word "Congratulations!" in a large, purple, cursive font. The text is surrounded by several golden stars and short, radiating lines, giving it a celebratory feel.

A Plate From Our Kitchen

By: Maysaloon Alkhafaji - Paraprofessional/Job Coach

Breakfast is one of the most important meals that a person eats because it boosts our energy levels and alertness, in addition to providing other essential nutrients needed for good health, and it is of great importance in providing the body with the required energy that it needs, especially after a long sleep period. After a full night's sleep, the body has depleted large amounts of energy, so when waking up a person must eat a healthy breakfast that contains nutrients, such as calcium which can be obtained from milk and its derivatives, as well as vitamins, proteins, mineral salts, and others. Several studies have shown that eating breakfast makes you feel full and helps you stay hydrated, helps with weight control, improves mental abilities, increases focus, and reduces the incidence of heart disease and type 2 diabetes in the long term.

Today, we bring you a delicious breakfast, **Stuffed French Toast** with a variety of berries.

Chef started by giving cooking instructions to the students. The cooking went smoothly with attention from the participants. One of the participating students, Michael, shared his opinion on the cooking activity saying, "The stuffed French toast was so good! I enjoyed it when I ate it, too good to be true! Chef taught us the recipe and steps and now I can make the French toast since I have the directions. Also, I would rate it 12-15 out of 10! I would like to be in the kitchen again."



Try it in YOUR Kitchen

Makes 2 Servings

Ingredients:

2 Slices of Bread (about 2" thick)
3 Tbsp Cream Cheese
2 Tbsp Strawberry Preserves
2 eggs
¼ cup Cream
2 oz Maple Syrup
1 cup Sugar
1 tsp Ground Cinnamon + 1 tbsp Ground Cinnamon
½ tsp Ground Nutmeg
Pinch of salt
High smoke point, neutral oil to coat pan/griddle

Directions:

- With an electric mixer combine the cream cheese and preserves and put into a pastry bag with a round tip.
- Using a paring knife, cut a small slit on the bottom of the slice of bread just big enough to fit the pastry bag tip.
- Fill each slice of bread with the strawberry cream cheese filling and set aside.
- In a blender combine the eggs, cream, maple syrup, tsp of cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Pour it into a bowl.
- In a separate bowl, combine sugar with tbs of cinnamon and set aside.
- Soak each piece of bread in the egg mixture. Coat pan/ griddle with oil and cook on both sides until golden brown.
- Immediately after cooking, place one of the sliced sides of the French toast in the cinnamon sugar mixture.
- Serve with maple syrup and fresh berries.



Enjoy!!!!!!!!!!!!