



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

# Maryville Jen School

Back to School Issue

September, 2022

## Principal's Address: Welcome Back

We are so happy to be back and anticipate a great school year! I often contemplate our students' learning and our responsibility as educators to provide the best learning opportunities for each of our students. All of us at Jen School take this responsibility seriously, providing best practices in academic instruction, social-emotional learning, and vocational educational skills that are supported by research and proven to have positive learning outcomes. Jen School's responsibility is to prepare each student for the next phase of their journey. We want students to achieve their goals and hopes for themselves and to thrive within their families and communities.

To meet this goal, we must listen to and learn from each other, developing respectful relationships that foster a culture that inspires excellence for our students. We must also plan for the future of Jen School and future learning opportunities for our students. In August of 2023, we anticipate opening at our new location, 6935 W. Touhy Ave, Niles, IL. The current Jen School will move to the new location with the addition of eight vocational classrooms focusing on the following Career Clusters: Agriculture & Food Trades, Architecture & Construction Trades, Arts & Communication, Health Sciences, Information Technology, and Manufacturing Trades. In addition to the Career Technical Education expansion, there will be room for four additional academic classrooms.

In the coming months, we will share pictures of the renovation and information about this exciting next phase of the Jen School journey. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Welcome back and be safe,

Director of Educational Services/Principal



Our future home!

## Social Media

Like Jen School on Facebook!



Follow @jenschool on Instagram!



Tweet @JenSchool2 on Twitter!



# CTE (Career and Technical Education): Ramp Build

By: Stavros Kouriabalis - Para/Job Coach

After a long and relaxing summer vacation we are back at helping out around our community. We received a call from our expert ramp builder, Mr. Paul, explaining we have a new project. About 20 years ago he had helped a resident by building a wooden ramp. As you can imagine after 20



rotted and they were in desperate need of some help. With the help of a few staff and students from Jen School, after two days of hard work, we were able to take down that old ramp and replace it with a new aluminum one.



# Jen Events: Annual Jammin' Fundraiser

By: Mark Trerotola - Teacher

And we're off! Jen School 2022-23 school year is underway. Our annual **Jammin' with Jen** event, which usually occurs mid-September, was earlier this year and helped us to kick off the school year. It was also in person this year after a 2-year hiatus. Students continued their support for this fundraising event by decorating numerous bags for the luminaries (farolitos) that lined the walk to the garden and assisting with event set up and decor. As patrons and donors walked through the garden under a beautiful later summer sky, they were able to see the numerous fruits and vegetables grown by Jen School student gardeners. Several of the dishes served at the event contained ingredients from the Jen School garden that added to the artistic skills of Chef Zack. Musical entertainment was a hit, pun intended, performed by the party sensation, Two Beer Tommy Band. With the consistently amazing food and great fun, Jammin' with Jen proves to remain a highlight of the Jen School year. We hope to see you all next year!



# CLASSROOM CORNER

## Workplace Safety By: Moissette McNeerney

The Transition Classroom is always preparing for the next step in life. Post-secondary training typically includes work-related instruction. Recently Jen School purchased an all-encompassing online learning curriculum for OSHA-authorized safety and health training. The courses provide an expanded foundational knowledge of safety and health standards often required for general industry, construction, cosmetology, automotive, and many other fields. After taking the course, students can earn an OSHA 30-Hour card enabling them to transition to the workforce. The courses have audio and interactive components, enhancing their student interest with engaging, relevant course content.

Every job/industry poses safety risks. History has taught us the importance of implementing safety precautions. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is a large government regulatory agency that is part of the Department of Labor. It was part of a larger act signed into law by President Nixon in 1970, but dates to 1922 when the Department of Labor began to examine work related safety issues wrought during the Industrial Revolution.

While consistently monitoring student progress, Miss Beth individualizes lessons for optimal student growth. While completing CareerSafe modules, the students will learn that safety concerns prevail above all else, and that it is employer responsibility to ensure employees are working in a safe environment. Safety breaches need to be identified and corrected. The lessons covered in CareerSafe modules include awareness of surroundings, correct posture, regular breaks, proper equipment use, emergency exit locations, how to report safety concerns, effective housekeeping standards, and use of personal protective equipment.



# Health Beat

By: Donna Hoffman-School Psychologist

## Physical Health- National Childhood Obesity Awareness

National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month is in September and is dedicated to educating children and their families on how to prevent childhood obesity. Childhood obesity is a complex disease with many contributing factors, including genetics, eating patterns, physical activity levels, sleep routines, and medications. Conditions where we live, learn, work, and play can make healthy eating and getting enough physical activity difficult if these conditions do not support health.

According to the CDC, today around 1 in 5 children have obesity; that's 20% of all children aged 2 to 19! We know that children who are overweight are more likely to be bullied and being bullied can lead to depression. Moreover, obese children are more likely to become obese adults and may develop life-threatening diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. We are constantly challenged as parents, teachers, and caregivers of children to find ways to prevent obesity. We need to keep educating our adolescents on making healthy food choices for themselves. Teens snack a lot, especially when watching TV or playing video games; snacking can add many extra calories per day. Remind your child/student to drink plenty of water, limit soda (which is just extra calories), and choose healthier snacks like fruit, nuts, yogurt, cheese, vegetables with hummus or guacamole. Teens need to be encouraged to limit screen time and get outside for daily exercise whether through organized sports or by just taking walks/bike riding whenever possible.

(<https://nationaltoday.com/national-childhood-obesity-awareness-month>)

**Hunger Hotline:** For information about meal sites, food banks, and any other services near you, call 1-866-3HUNGRY (OR 1-877-8HAMBRE for Spanish).



## Mental Health- Suicide Prevention Awareness

Suicide Prevention Awareness Week is also in September. This time is dedicated to shift public perception, spread hope, and share vital information to people affected by suicide. One goal is to ensure that individuals, friends, and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help. An important step of suicide prevention is to recognize warning signs and take them seriously. Some signs include talking about suicide, looking for access to guns, pills, knives, etc., having a preoccupation with death, sudden mood swings or personality changes, feelings of hopelessness, self-loathing/hatred, neglecting appearance, changes in eating and sleeping patterns, saying goodbye, withdrawal, and self-destructive behavior. Suicidal thoughts can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background and can often be the result of untreated mental health conditions.

**988-** After years of advocacy by mental health organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 988 is now available nationwide as the new number to contact for mental health, substance abuse, and suicide crises- a simple and easy-to-remember way to get help. This new number will allow people to quickly connect with support during a crisis, 24/7, no matter where they live. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, call or text 988 or chat [988lifeline.org](https://www.nami.org) to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. (<https://www.nami.org>)

## SPORTS PAGE

By: Dan Baffin - PE Teacher

If you happen to hear your student talk about CAAEL, he/she is referring to the Chicago Area Alternative Education League of which Jen School is a proud member. CAAEL offers leagues and tournaments for chess, bowling, art, soccer, volleyball, softball, flag football, basketball, badminton, academic bowls, and spelling bees. Jen School participates in these activities against other alternative schools. The emphasis is not on winning or losing, but on sportsmanship and having fun!

CAAEL can be a positive motivator for our students as they have to be eligible each week to compete in our games against other schools. Students are chosen based on their daily behavior and how well they follow school expectations and keep up with their academics each week. They are expected to display leadership and character at CAAEL events by interacting positively with peers, showing respect for authority figures, working as a team, demonstrating compassion and tolerance, winning and losing gracefully, making thoughtful decisions, and accepting both positive and negative consequences of their decisions and actions.

We are about to kick off this school year with flag football and bowling for the 2022 school year. Games will kick off the week of September 12<sup>th</sup> as games are usually held on Fridays. Students have been practicing their football skills in PE while learning various routes, rules, and how to play together as a team. Sportsmanship is always our #1 goal out on the field, win or lose. For more information on CAAEL visit their website at [www.caael.org](http://www.caael.org).

# Staff Spotlight: Welcome Aboard!

By George Nikolaou - Social Worker

Jen School welcomes two new staff members to the team this year! Ms. Tanya is rejoining the Jen School team as an instructional assistant for the 2022-2023 school year. She began her career with at-risk youth 23 years ago at Maryville Academy as a youth care worker in a residential home. Ms. Tanya then left the field after 7 years to pursue her love for food, earning her culinary degree, and becoming an executive chef in senior living, working there for 12 years. She is currently also balancing a catering/meal prep company while at Jen School. Outside of school, Ms. Tanya enjoys cooking, coloring, listening to music and dancing. Her peers would describe her as hardworking, kind, and accommodating.



Mr. Russell is the newest member joining the Jen School team for the 2022-2023 school year. He will be working in the kitchen as a prep-cook, assisting Chef Zack. In the past he worked for Marriott for 43 years, and Denny's for 5 years. Russell grew up in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, and is currently living in that area as well. He enjoys visiting his grandparents in Florida, and volunteering at local hospitals and various food pantries. Three words that others would use to describe him are trustworthy, honest, and loyal.

## Getting to Know Tanya and Russell

What is your favorite color?

T: I don't have one favorite color.

R: Green

Have you ever had a nickname? What was it?

T: Yes, pancakes.

R: Rusty

If you were a superhero, what powers would you have?

T: Teleportation or fat manipulation (haha).

R: The power to help and heal other people.

What is your favorite holiday?

T: Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because it combines the two best things, food and family.

R: All the holidays in the year are equally my favorite.

What was your favorite subject in school?

T: Math

R: Math because I loved working with numbers.

What's your favorite movie and/or favorite book?

T: My favorite movie is *Italian Job* or *Four Brothers*. My favorite book is *The Alchemist* or *Where the Sidewalk Ends*.

R: My favorite movie is *Somewhere in Time*.

What motivates you to work hard?

T: My children are my motivation.

R: My upbringing and family.

What is something you've done that you are proud of?

T: Starting my own business.

R: I am proud about being a good person to my friends and family.