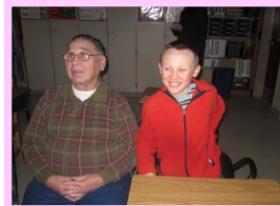


# APRIL AT RBS



Playground Friends



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# Rock Brook Family News April 2016

## Individualized Programs ~ Personal Success

Contributed by Mary Caterson

### Important Upcoming Dates May 2016

- May 2-6 Staff Appreciation Week (Schedule on page 2)
- May 3 Plant Sale Delivery
- May 4 Early Dismissal for Students 1:30 pm Staff Development
- May 5-6 Plant Sale & Pre-Order Pick Up
- May 6 Mother's Day Tea 1:00 pm
- May 7 LAST PNO 5:30 - 9:30 pm
- May 10 RBS Board Meeting 6:00 pm
- May 20 Family Night/Community Open House 5:30 - 9:30 pm
- May 27-30 RBS CLOSED - Memorial Day Weekend \*\*

**\*\* CALENDAR CHANGE**  
Rock Brook only used 1 of its allotted Emergency Closing Days for Inclement Weather this School Year. Therefore Rock Brook will be Closed Friday, May 27th as well as Monday, May 30th for Memorial Day Weekend.

### From the Director Mary Caterson

Dear Parents,

Today is Administrative Professionals Day and next week is Staff Appreciation Week. At Rock Brook all staff are involved in the school lives of our students from the office staff, bookkeeper, nurses, the teams in the classrooms, and the support and specialized services. They are special people who are intellectually driven and curious, committed to the work and are caring individuals to boot! We try very hard to be thoughtful, engaged and considerate of your children and their futures. When school was closed last Friday for Staff In-service we had two presentations. Speech therapists Liz Varall and Mariya Rakhmanchik presented about AAC devices and coached us on how to better facilitate use of "talkers" throughout the building. We also reviewed a Problem Solving Model by Margaret Searle that we will be using as we discuss issues about our students and with you.

Mary

### Understanding Autism

Barry Prizant, Director of Childhood Communication Services in Cranston, Rhode Island and an adjunct professor at Brown University has published a new book, "Uniquely Human." The book is about changing the conversation about autism. It is often referred to in conjunction with Steve Silberman's New York Times bestselling "NeuroTribes: The Legacy of Autism and the Future of Neurodiversity" which provides neurotypical people practical strategies for understanding and supporting people with ASD.

In the late 70's, Rock Brook hosted a conference on a new area of focus in the field of speech pathology, called Pragmatics i.e. understanding the function or use of language for communication. Dr. Prizant was one of the key note speakers and helped us understand that looking at how we use language to communicate was as important as how we produce speech sounds to communicate. He also did a lot of work with echolalia and documented that it is a strategy for acquiring language. Overtime this area of focus on use of language became more important as the number of students in the autistic spectrum grew. For individuals in the spectrum communicating to other people does not come easily, especially if you don't want to talk about the same things they do and if social interactions in themselves are difficult and overwhelming.

In the book Dr. Prizant encourages all of us to try to understand behaviors and how they are communicative events and not just "non-compliant" or manipulative behaviors. The approach is a compassionate one as we problem solve situations as language difficulties impact the ability to express feelings or needs. We try to do this for all our students regardless of their diagnosis and we all need to humanize people with autism and all disabilities. Behavioral reactions are often as a result of people who are more vulnerable, more sensitive and have difficulties communicating and seeking support.

Contributed by Katie Hardgrove

We welcome our new Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), **Christen Russell**, who also has a Master's of Science in Psychology. She has 18 years' experience in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and has worked with learners from ages 6 months to 65 years old with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, behavior disorders, and mental health diagnoses in home, school, community, residential and vocational settings. Over the last 11 years, she has provided behavior consultation in schools and has an extensive knowledge and experience in intensive teaching, language acquisition, behavior management, functional assessments and sociosexual education.

We look forward to working with Christen!



## Involvement & Support at Rock Brook School

PNO ~ Our last  
Parent's Night Out for 2015-2016  
Saturday, May 7, 2016 \*\*\* 5:30 - 9:30 pm



[May Sign Up Form](#)



**JOIN ROCK BROOK SCHOOL FOR ITS 2ND ANNUAL-FAMILY NIGHT/COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE**

**FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2016 5:30 - 9:30 PM**  
**109 ORCHARD ROAD, SKILLMAN, NJ**

**ALL WELCOME!! FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY**  
**DJ, Arts & Crafts, Kona Ice, Music**  
**Mr. C's Rutgers Grease Truck -**  
**(Featuring the "FAT SANDWICH!!") \***  
**\* Grease Truck Food available for a fee**



**STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK**

**Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> - Grab and go snacks for the staff kitchen\***

**Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> - Flowers for staff (send in with your child on 5/3)**

**Wednesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> - Staff luncheon (Provided by RBS)**

**Thursday, May 5<sup>th</sup> - Sweet treats**

**Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> - Note/ pictures from your child to thank their teachers and therapists (send in with your child on 5/6)**

**Guest Feature Article by RBS student Larry**



On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, classes 6, 7 and the High School went to Manville Reading Cinema to see Zootopia. After the movie, we went to Wawa and bought our lunches. It was a fun day.

*Mixedbag Designs - Thank you again for all of the orders that were placed by RBS Families, Friends and Co-Workers!! While we love our products - RBS had over \$1500 in profits!!!!*



**Run With Rotary**  
5 KILOMETER RUN AND FUN RAMBLE  
To End Hunger, Illness, Abuse and Poverty... In Our Community and Around the World



On Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> many RBS staff members participated in the Run with Rotary.



**Box Tops for Education**  
**Please continue to send in box tops.**

**Mother's Day Plant Sale & Tea**



**Plant Sale -** Thank you for your pre-orders!! We have over 400 plants being delivered on Tuesday May 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you can volunteer to help us sort please let Christy Tracey know. Pre-orders will be available to be picked up on May 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>. Staff, Students, Bus Drivers and Friends will be able to purchase small flowers and hanging baskets for their loved ones on May 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> as well.



**Mother's Day Tea -** This in-school event will take place on Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> between 1:00 - 2:00 pm. Details will be sent home soon.

**Please join us for the 2nd Annual**

*Rock Brook School Celebration*  
**An Evening of Creative Expression**

Sunday, June 5, 2016

4:00 ~ 8:00 pm

The Lodge at Montgomery

Invitations have been mailed out.

It is going to be a fun filled evening!!!

(Donors for the Auction as of 4/27)

More to come!!! Thank You!!

Princeton Yoga Classes	McCarter Theatre	Confectionately Yours
Salt Creek Grille	Peters Valley Art Studio	GNC
Wawa		Wegmans
Kelsey Theatre	Buffalo Wild Wings	Herrs
Somerset Patriots	Super Cuts	Von Thun's Farm
Trans Siberian Orchestra	Dusal's Pizzeria	Stagehouse Tavern
Rebarer Family Chiropractic	Jerz Jump	Philadelphia Flyers
NJ Institute for Neuro Feedback	Clydz	Moes
Jenkinson's	Stop & Shop	

## Speech Corner ~ By Miss Mariya - Classroom 3

As April is National Autism Awareness Month, we wanted to share with you this great resource. As you support children's success and provide needed accommodations, **REMEMBER**, children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs):

- Vary greatly from person to person; NO TWO children are alike!
- Often have difficulty paying attention; provide short and concise directions, verbal cues, visual supports (e.g., timers, visual schedules, reinforcement systems, etc...), and other prompts to secure their attention during spoken language activities.
- Often have difficulty coping with certain sounds, lights, smells, tastes, or textures. Please be considerate when children are exhibiting signs of intolerance to outside stimuli (hands over ears, squinting eyes, etc...)
- Often rely on visual stimuli – they have been reported to “think in pictures.” Provide visuals whenever possible to supplement verbal information or to teach/reinforce new concepts.
- Often need to be *shown* how to play or interact with others. Do not assume a child is “fine” if s/he is playing independently. Encourage peer interaction and provide role models for various play situations. Often children need visual supports (e.g., social stories, scripts, video modeling, etc...), verbal prompts, practice, or support to increase interaction with other children or to play a particular game or activity.
- May be placed on a “sensory diet” to help them focus or deal with the demands of a large classroom setting. Consult with the Occupational Therapist to implement any strategies and/or procedures as part of the child's plan.
- May use a visual board or device for communication. These methods are not usually to “replace” communication but help *stimulate* their language comprehension and expression. Communication partners should use these communication tools JUST AS MUCH as the child to provide language models for the child to follow.
- Please DO NOT place a communication board or device out of a child's reach. Doing so is comparable to taping a child's mouth shut... ALL children should have the option to communicate when they desire. Develop alternate ways of encouraging appropriate times to use communication devices (e.g., visual cues indicating, “time to listen”, etc...). Provide feedback if a child uses his/her communication device inappropriately, just as you would with a verbal child who is calling out of turn.
- Consult with your Speech-Language Specialist to develop visual supports and/or other strategies to facilitate successful support of children in the classroom and home settings.

**Content** from: Geary, Lisa M., MS, CCC-SLP. Strategies for supporting students with autism in the classroom. *LiveSpeakLove Pediatric Speech-Language Services*. Retrieved from <http://livespeaklove.com/2012/05/01/happy-better-hearing-and-speech-month/>

## Technology ~ By Miss Maggie

**Rock Brook Welcomes Osmo!** Rock Brook is pleased to announce that we now have Osmo, an award winning gaming accessory that changes the way our students interact with iPads by opening it up to hands-on learning.

Osmo fosters learning in key areas such as: social-emotional skills, creative thinking, art, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and common core. The gaming accessories include an iPad stand, a red reflective mirror for the iPad camera, and sets of game pieces (alphabet letters, number, dot tile sets and wood tangram shapes) that allow for the interactive hands-on learning. By integrating Osmo into our Tech program, our students now have access to a variety of creative and engaging games:



- **Tangram** - fosters spatial relational skills
- **Words** - teaches spelling and critical thinking
- **Newton** - fosters creative problem solving skills
- **Masterpiece** - teaches drawing and creative confidence
- **Numbers** - teaches counting, addition and multiplication

For more information about Osmo please visit:  
[www.playosmo.com](http://www.playosmo.com)