

A few friendly faces in January at Rock Brook



Gym with Class 3



A new friend in Class 2



HS students on the way to the farm on a cold day.



Helping a friend in Class 4



A speech lesson in Class 2



Gym time with friends



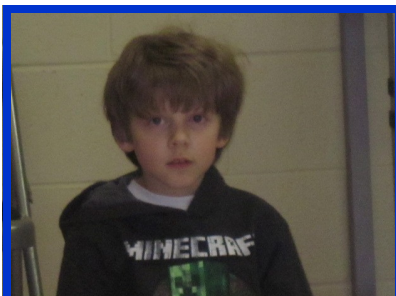
Working hard in Class 4



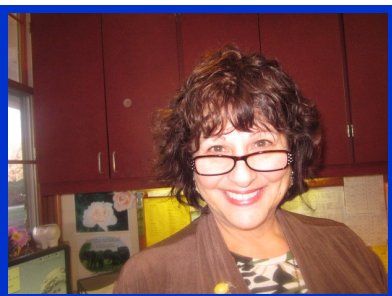
Speech in Preschool



OT with a friend



A new friend in Class 5



A very friendly friend



Lunchtime with Class 5 & 6



Individualized Programs ~ Personal Success

Contributed by Mary Caterson



ART

Our kids love art on Thursdays with Mr. Jon. Jon is an art therapist, not an art educator. Art Therapists are trained in art and therapy. Jon has a special sensitivity to the expressive and emotional needs of the students. He utilizes different media in art sessions to encourage expressions of feelings and provide an outlet for creativity. With the focus on the development of academic skills and technology abilities, art experiences should not be overlooked. This is especially important for people with communication difficulties.

Art studios for individuals with special needs are becoming more available such as Arts Unbound (www.artsunbound.org) in Orange, NJ. A recent NY Times article featured a nonprofit, Creative Growth, in Oakland, California that has helped developmentally disabled adults become productive and profitable artists. Creative Growth was started by two psychologists who were concerned by the mass closure of psychiatric facilities in California. They decided to start a center for former patients with developmental disabilities that included therapeutic support and vocational training but also “creation of work of the highest artistic merit” They wrote, “Even though a human being may be handicapped or disabled, this does not change his need to fulfill himself to the greatest of his capacity.”

The program moved to a storefront in Oakland in 1978, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and they opened a gallery. The gallery was the first in the United States dedicated to art by people with disabilities. The art began to be noticed beyond the typical circle of family and friends. An art professional who understood the art market was hired and the work was marketed and sold. Some pieces get \$200 to \$5,000. The art and not the disability of the person who created it is the focus of the gallery. Read more about it..... http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/20/magazine/a-training-ground-for-untrained-artists.html?_r=0



Save the Date ~ The 10th Annual Run Ramble & Raffle will take place on Sunday, April 24 in Skillman Park

Skillman Park is about 10 minutes from RBS. There is a 5K event and a 1 mile Walk/Ramble. Last year we had a team that participated in the Ramble and we will be having one again this year. We had a great time!! As soon as their web-site is open for registrations we will let you know our team name.

You are welcome to check out their web site at: <http://runwithrotary.org/>

Rotary is a service organization with commitments to local and global organizations. Mary Caterson is a member of the local Montgomery-Rocky Hill Rotary Club representing RBS as a local business.



Some of the RBS 2015 Team

Important Upcoming Dates
January 2016

- Jan 1-3 RBS Closed - Winter Break
- Jan 4 RBS Reconvenes - Regular Day
- Jan 9 PNO 5:30 - 9:30 pm
- Jan 12 RBS Board Meeting 6:00 pm
- Jan 18 RBS Closed MLK Day
- Jan 26 Pizza Orders Due
- Jan 29 Box Tops Due

February 2016

- Feb 6 PNO 5:30 - 9:30 pm
- Feb 8-11 Scholastic Book Fair
- Feb 9-11 Early Dismissal 1:30 pm
Parent Conferences
- Feb 12-15 RBS Closed Presidents Day Break
- Feb 26 mixedbag Fundraiser Starts

From the Director
Mary Caterson

Happy New Year!

We were happy to hear from many families at the holiday time. Thank you all for your picture greeting cards and donations. A special thanks to the adult student alumni who made donations to the program too. We are glad to hear news about new school programs, jobs, college and vocational training experiences as well as marriages.

At RBS we have new students starting and are getting to know them. Our preschool enrollment is increasing and it's a boys club right now. As we expand the class we are looking for donations of toys and equipment. These include a kitchen set, changing table and age appropriate toys and games. Give me a call or e-mail me if you have something you would like to donate that your children have grown out of.

The staff are getting ready for more standardized testing by completing the required online training. While the law has changed and No Child Left Behind is gone, the testing requirements remain....

Stay Warm,
Mary

Involvement & Support at Rock Brook School

Save the Date

for the 2nd annual Rock Brook Celebration
An Evening of Creative Expression

Sunday, June 5, 2016
4:00 ~ 8:00 pm
The Lodge at Montgomery



Box Tops for Education **** Submission Time ****

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR BOX TOPS
BY JANUARY 29th.

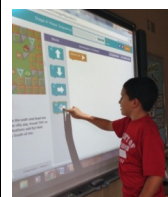
Also make sure they are not expired.

parentReach

Just as a reminder, we have the **parentReach Emergency Notification Alert System** that will notify you with a phone call when we have a delayed opening or are closed due to inclement weather. On the caller ID it will say Rock Brook. **You need to answer and say hello to hear the message.** We will also put an updated voice message on the school's main office line and update the Rock Brook website. **Call the Hotline if You Missed a Call or Want to Replay the Latest Message:**

parentReach Hotline - 1-770-406-5581
RBS Site Identifier: 6896

2015 Year End Annual Appeal



Our 2015 Year End Annual Appeal asks that you make a gift to invest in the current programming needs of our students. Your donations will allow us to purchase iPads, laptops, subscriptions to online education programs and software.

Visit <http://www.rock-brook.org/donate/>

Guest Feature Article by RBS Student Larry

On December 17th we had the holiday sing along. We sang holiday songs. It was fun! Every class performed their songs. Ms Jenny chose students to sing a Hanukah song.



Parent/Team Conferences/Early Dismissal 2/9/16 ~ 2/11/16

Our conferences will be held during the week of Feb 9 - 11th. Conferences are scheduled for 30 minute time slots. This is your mid-year opportunity to meet and discuss progress with the teaching teams. You will be receiving your child's progress report prior to your scheduled conference.

As with the previous November conference, this parent conference will be an overview of your child's total performance and progress. The teams will not go through each one of the rated objectives on the report. If there is a specific area you would like to talk about please let the team know prior to the conference to ensure concerns and questions are addressed within your allotted conference time.

Also, please remember RBS will have Early Dismissal at 1:30 pm on these 3 days. And then RBS will be CLOSED on 2/12 & 2/15 for Presidents' Day Break.

Speech Corner ~ Executive Function - Contributed by Brooke Garcia-Andrews Class 6

Executive function (EF) is a general term that refers to the cognitive processes that help us regulate, control and manage our thoughts and actions. Because executive function is such a complex concept, it can be hard to understand how it impacts our lives in practical ways. Students with EF issues may struggle with some or all of the following behavioral categories:

- **Impulse Control:** the ability to stop and think before acting
- **Emotional Control:** the ability to manage feelings by thinking about goals
- **Planning/Prioritizing:** the ability to create steps to reach a goal and to make decisions about what to focus on
- **Flexibility:** the ability to change strategies or revise plans when conditions change
- **Working Memory:** the ability to hold information in mind and use it to complete a task
- **Self-monitoring:** the ability to monitor and evaluate your own performance
- **Task Initiation:** the ability to recognize when it is time to get started on something and begin without procrastination
- **Organization:** the ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information of materials

*Retrieved from National Center for Learning Disabilities

Executive Function is like the CEO of the brain, it is in charge of making sure things get from the planning stages to the final deadline. In short, people who struggle with EF have difficulty engaging in independent, goal-directed behavior.

If you feel your child is struggling with EF, there are a few strategies that you may want to consider trying at home.

- **Make checklists.** Listing the steps involved will help your child see how to get started on a task as well as lessen anxiety around planning. Checklists serve as a visual reminder if your child gets distracted. Checklists are easy to make and can be utilized for a variety of tasks, from making a sandwich to completing a science project.
- **Set time limits.** Time management may be an area of weakness for your child. You can write an estimate of how long each step should take on a schedule. Timers can be set for the amount of time your child should be spending on everything from completing a homework assignment to brushing teeth.
- **Use planners and calendars.** You can hang up a large family calendar and give your child his/her own colored marker. Free or inexpensive apps are also available.
- **Explain yourself.** Children who are inflexible thinkers or who have difficulty controlling their emotions don't always take feedback well or see the point of learning new ways to do things. Explain to them why it's important to learn a new skill, or how it may save time and energy in the long run. And if the answer is simply, "Because that's the way it has to be done," don't be afraid to say that.
- **Let your child explain, too.** Just because children have trouble with executive functioning skills doesn't mean their way of doing something isn't viable. If the way your child is doing something doesn't make sense to you, ask them to explain their method before telling them it has to be done differently. It may actually be a creative approach that works for your child.

*Retrieved from Understanding Executive Functioning Issues

Technology - Contributed by Miss Maggie

One of the paramount goals of Technology class, here at Rock Brook, is to provide our students with a "technology tool box". The goal is for our students to interact with and learn to use various types of technological tools that they can access and implement independently. Our students are learning how to use technology for activities of daily living, to take on the challenge of computer coding exercises, as well as to use various research, word processing and presentation tools as a part of their daily classroom activities.

Accordingly, Technology class in the upper classes has been targeting the integration of various iPad applications into the student's programming so they can learn to be proficient with the various applications and include them too, as a part of their "technology tool boxes". One of the iPad applications we have been exploring is Popplet.

The students are learning how to use Popplet to organize and structure target information. Popplet can be thought of as a "mind-map" that supports students in thinking and learning visually. With the Popplet application, the students can generate and organize facts, thoughts, and images and learn to create relationships between them. Our students are using Popplet to brainstorm ideas, begin organizing and generating research projects and learn to balance text and visual supports within their projects. Popplet is available for iPads and through the web.

