



## Family Flyer

April 2026

### Reminders/Special Messages

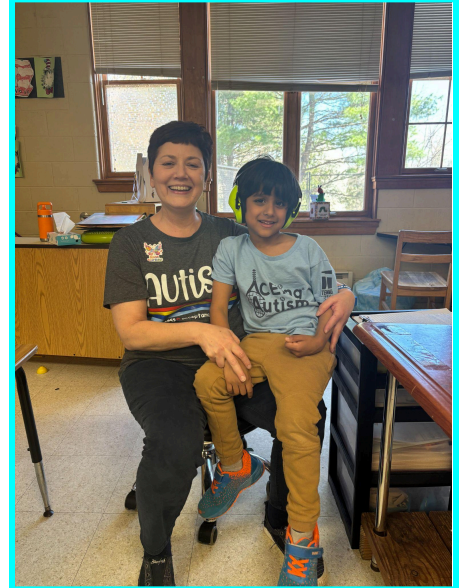
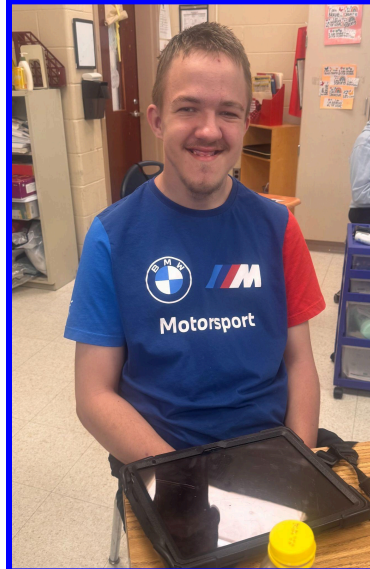
- **Mother's Day Celebration**
  - Mother's/Caregivers.... RSVP by Friday, May 1
- **Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week - 5/4 - 5/8**
- **Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Testing window remains open through 5/22- (Grades 3-8, and 11)**
- **Field Day, Thursday, 5/28 - Parent Volunteers Welcome - We look forward to our upcoming Field Day. As we did last year, we are seeking parent volunteers to participate in this fun day and help facilitate games for the students.**

If you are interested in joining us on this action-packed day, please be on the lookout for an RSVP in the coming weeks.
- **End-of-Year Celebration, Wednesday, 6/10**
  - Pre-K, ECC, Elementary, and Middle School Classes
  - RSVP to follow
- **Graduation & End of Year Celebration, Thursday 6/11**
  - High School & Post Graduate
  - RSVP to follow



## Autism Awareness Day

It is all about embracing differences, supporting acceptance, and celebrating the unique strengths of the autism community while working together to create a more inclusive society.



## Rock Brook is in the News!

- [Article from Montgomery - Special Needs Decal Program](#)



## Take Your Child to Work Day

We had an incredible day celebrating Take Your Child to Work Day at RBS! Our “Youth Associates” enjoyed a full day of engaging, educational, and fun activities. It was a wonderful experience for everyone, and we truly had a great day!



## High School 1 (HS1)

Spring is in the air, and we are enjoying our garden unit. HS1 students are exploring plants and the process of photosynthesis, focusing on how plants make their own food and use that energy to grow and survive. Students are learning about the different parts of a plant and their functions, as well as identifying common plants that we eat. We are also examining how specific traits of plant species help them survive in different environments, building an understanding of the relationship between structure, function, and adaptation.

We are connecting this subject area to functional life skills by having students apply their knowledge of plants and photosynthesis through hands-on, real-world activities. During math lessons, students are engaging in tasks such as measuring soil, counting seeds, and following simple budgets related to gardening materials. These activities reinforce key math concepts like counting, measuring, comparing quantities, and sequencing steps. In reading, students are accessing texts and using visual supports to build comprehension of plant-related vocabulary and concepts, such as life cycles, plant needs, and food sources. Through the integration of science concepts and functional math and literacy skills, students are strengthening their ability to apply academic knowledge in meaningful, everyday contexts.



## High School 2 (HS2)

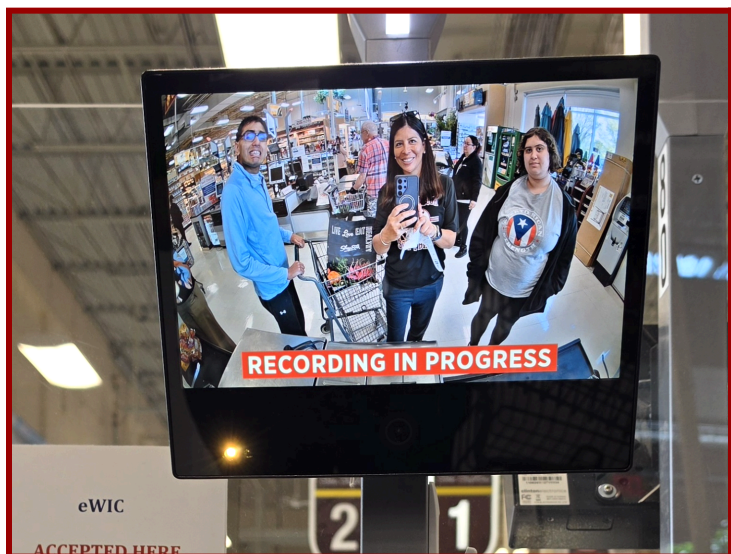
HS2 has been actively engaged in building essential functional life skills that support independence, confidence, and real-world success. Students have been practicing sorting coins, counting money, and determining how much is needed to purchase items. Each week, they proudly participate in the Rock Brook Dash, where they serve customers and practice real-time money exchanges. HS2 students also work in the Rock Brook Coffee House, preparing coffee orders accurately and serving each customer with a smile.

In addition to money skills, HS2 practices table setting and cooking every Monday. Students follow functional recipes that strengthen independence, sequencing, and confidence—skills they can also carry over at home with their families. So far, they have made chocolate chip muffins, quesadillas, french toast, pancakes, cupcakes, and even enjoy creating their own sundaes on Friday afternoons.

HS2 also participates in weekly trips to ShopRite, where students gather ingredients for Monday cooking and their lunches. During these trips, they practice making grocery lists, estimating and totaling costs, locating items, navigating a shopping cart, loading the conveyor belt, bagging groceries, carrying items, and putting them away in appropriate places like cabinets or refrigerators. These real-world experiences provide meaningful opportunities to apply academic and functional skills in everyday settings.

In addition, HS2 has been hard at work in their garden—digging, mulching, planting, and watering. The team is excited to watch wild flowers and herbs over the coming weeks.

The HS2 team is incredibly proud of the students' teamwork, growth, and increasing independence demonstrated each day. HS2 teamwork makes the dream work!



## Post-Graduate (PG)

Our students have been working with the Arc of Mercer, where they have been learning important workplace fundamentals. This includes developing a better understanding of work-life balance, managing cell phone use appropriately during work hours, and improving focus while on the job. They have also had the opportunity to explore different career paths, including retail and culinary fields. These experiences have been valuable in supporting their growth both professionally and personally.

The RBS Coffee House has been bustling with activity! These food items are sold to staff only. We recently introduced a new menu item, French toast sticks with sausage, which has been a great addition. Our menu also features favorites such as chicken and waffles, grilled cheese with tater tots, walking tacos, and chicken or cheese quesadillas. Each week, students are filling approximately 30 orders, gaining valuable hands-on experience in a fast-paced environment. In addition to food preparation and service, students are now learning how to roll silverware, an important task within the restaurant industry. These experiences continue to build practical skills and confidence in a real-world setting.



## Celebrating Matilda Oranje

We are happy to share that Matilda Oranje will be receiving the Rebecca S. McDonald Award. The Rebecca S. McDonald Award is presented to senior and/or aging-out students who have demonstrated success in transition activities as they prepare to move into the adult world. Well done, Matilda, we are all very proud of you!

Please read the nomination written by Monica Wall, Transition Coordinator, and Jessica Liu, South Hunterdon Case Manager:

*South Hunterdon Regional High School and Rock Brook School are proud to nominate Matilda Oranje for the Rebecca S. McDonald Award. This distinguished honor recognizes senior and/or aging-out students who have demonstrated success in transition activities and are preparing to move confidently into adulthood. Matilda truly embodies the spirit of this award.*

*Throughout her high school journey, Matilda has demonstrated remarkable resilience, motivation, leadership, and achievement as she prepares for life beyond school. She is an active participant in her own growth, consistently showing strong self-advocacy skills and a meaningful commitment to her future.*

*Matilda has taken part in a wide range of work-based learning experiences, including placements at Ocean State Job Lot, Dogtopia, Fitness Factory, and the Somerset Patriots. She has also contributed to numerous in-school work opportunities, including clerical tasks and roles within the Rock Brook School Coffee House and Snack Cart (DASH). In every setting, Matilda approaches her work with enthusiasm, determination, and a genuine desire to contribute.*

*Beyond her accomplishments, Matilda shines in her interactions with others. She brings positivity to every environment and has a natural ability to make others feel valued and appreciated. Her kind spirit, uplifting presence, and strong work ethic make her a joy to be around.*

*We are honored to nominate Matilda Oranje for the Rebecca S. McDonald Award and are confident she will continue to thrive as she transitions into adulthood.*



## 🌸 April is Occupational Therapy Month! 🌸

**What is Occupational Therapy (OT)?** Occupational Therapy helps children build the skills they need to participate in everyday activities at home, at school, and in the community.

OT supports areas such as:

- 🖋️ Fine motor skills
- 🧠 Attention and focus
- ❤️ Emotional regulation
- 🧸 Play and social skills
- 🧘 Sensory processing and body awareness
- 👁️ Visual motor skills

Our goal is to help children feel confident, capable, and successful in their daily activities and routines!

### 🏠 Fun OT Activities to Try at Home!

- [OT Month Activities](#)
- Play simple board or card games to practice turn-taking and following rules.
- Give your child a small job like finding items, delivering something, or following a simple direction.
- Have your child carry groceries, push a laundry basket, or help clean surfaces.
- Toss socks into a basket or throw soft balls at a target. Try different directions (underhand/overhand).

☀️ **Remember:** Every child develops at their own pace. OT is here to support their growth, independence, and emotional well-being while making it FUN!

### Movement Class:

In movement, students are participating in a unit that is focusing on balance in soccer! As students progress, they will benefit from increased coordination, increased core strength, improved posture, and bilateral coordination. Balancing has been shown to come with a variety of benefits. Many studies show that increased balance can influence decreased anxiety, increased focus, and increased strength. Studies specific to autism have shown that posture can be significantly improved through training balance skills. We started this unit by working on tapping a cone to imitate stopping a soccer ball. Now students are working on dribbling a ball, controlling the force of a kick to safely deliver a pass, and balancing on one foot to



place each kick cleaning at the instep of the foot. Students with mobility limitations have participated with PT support in various ways such as utilizing the upper body to approximate similar skills to peers while strengthening coordination, strength, balance and more. Students can benefit greatly from continuing to practice the balancing aspects of these skills at home as well! Please reference the articles below for further information.

- [Balance Performance in Autism](#)
- [The effects of balance training intervention on postural control of children with autism spectrum disorder: Role of sensory information](#)

### **The ARC of Mercer Presentation**

Jennifer Dinardi, Supervisor of Secondary Programs, and Monica Wall, Transition Coordinator, shared some wonderful information and incredible opportunities for our students with our Board of Trustees about our partnership with the ARC of Mercer County earlier this month.



### **Special Education Art Contest**

RBS students participated in the annual New Jersey Association of Special Education Partner Schools (NJASEPS) Special Education Art Contest, and this year's theme was "The Magic of Education."

Hundreds of pieces of artwork were entered from across the state to be judged for prizes. Janet Campbell, Art Teacher and Music Specialist, selected and submitted many creative pieces to enter into the art show. Although our students didn't win the top prizes, the following students will receive a certificate of Honorable Mentions

- Anna Liakopoulos
- Patrick "PJ" Williams
- Brandon Wittkop
- Johnny Brown



We are all very proud of our students for their creativity, time, and effort. Well done!

## Art & Music Highlights

Color and design have been the focus of our art projects this month. We began by welcoming spring with flower-themed coloring projects and have enjoyed displaying the finished work on our bulletin boards.

Last week, students explored a fun textured paper craft inspired by the abstract work of Wassily Kandinsky. Kandinsky, a renowned Russian artist from the late 1800s and early 1900s, is known for developing the concept of abstract art. He believed that art should express emotion and feeling, rather than simply represent realistic images such as landscapes or still lifes.

His paintings are characterized by bold, vibrant colors and energetic brushstrokes. Kandinsky believed that color could convey emotion and even spiritual meaning. Concentric circles and geometric shapes became defining elements of his work, which students enjoyed exploring in their own creations.

In celebration of Earth Day, students also created planet Earth projects using paint and paper plates.

In music, we continue to enjoy drumming, ukulele, and singing. Some of the songs we explored this month include:

- *“Never Gonna Let You Down”* by Colbie Caillat
- *“Edelweiss”* from *The Sound of Music*

Our younger classes have been enjoying books that can be both read and sung. Favorites include:

- *“Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?”* by Eric Carle
- *“Wheels on the Bus”* by Raffi
- *“May All Children”* by Ken Guilmartin

If your family has favorite songs or recordings to share, please feel free to reach out at [Janet.Campbell@Rock-Brook.org](mailto:Janet.Campbell@Rock-Brook.org). We would also love to hear about any experiences your child has had with music programs such as Music Together or private lessons.

## From the School Nurse

As the weather continues to warm up, please remember to send your child to school each day with a water bottle. Staying hydrated is important and helps support students throughout the day.

Please click the link below regarding healthy hydration habits for your child

- [How to Keep Kids Hydrated](#)



**RBS Facebook Page:** Please like, follow, and share today!  
→ [RBS Facebook](#)



### **New York Metro Disability Expo – May 1-3**

The New York Metro Disability Expo is happening May 1-3, at the New Jersey Convention & Expo Center! This event is free, but registration is required.

This free event offers a fantastic opportunity to explore cutting-edge disability products, technology, and resources. It's a great chance to learn, engage, and discover new innovations to support our community. Here's what you can look forward to:

- [Abilities Expo Information & Registration](#)

## **TRANSITION RESOURCE FAIR: BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE, TOGETHER.**

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller*

Transitioning to adulthood is a journey, and you don't have to walk it alone. We invite students with special needs and their loved ones to our Annual Transition Fair.



"This is a welcoming space to explore resources for every stage of the journey. Whether you are planning for life after high school or seeking support available right now, come chat with supportive professionals dedicated to helping your student thrive. From current community programs to future independent living, let's work together to turn uncertainty into opportunity."

**FAMILIES PLEASE USE THIS QR CODE TO REGISTER**



**VENDORS PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER**



### **EVENT DETAILS:**

**WHEN: SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2026  
12:00-3:00**

**WHERE: ANN VAN MIDDLESWORTH PARK  
17 PLEASANT VIEW RD, HILLSBOROUGH TOWNSHIP, NJ 08844**

**\*INCELEMENT WEATHER RELOCATION TO THE HILLSBOROUGH MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

**A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE HILLSBOROUGH EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FOR FUNDING ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS TO ENJOY!**

## Spring Carnival for Children with Special Needs – May 2

This year's Spring Carnival for Children with Special Needs will be held on Saturday, May 2, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

The event will take place at Drumthwacket, the historic site and official residence of the New Jersey Governor, located in Princeton. Rain or shine, the carnival promises a fun-filled experience for children ages 4 to 12, featuring a variety of activities including bounce houses, art projects, face painting, balloon twisters, pony rides, a signature treasure hunt, and much more!



The event is hosted by the Governor in partnership with the Drumthwacket Foundation. At this time, the Governor is scheduled to be in attendance.

Website: [www.drumthwacket.org](http://www.drumthwacket.org)

*Rock Brook School is not sponsoring these events and will not receive any monetary benefit from your attendance. We are sharing this information because we believe you and your family may enjoy these special community events.*



ROCK BROOK SCHOOL