



Education... for a Lifetime

GPA today



News and Information from Garfield Park Academy

GPA Staff Members Named ASAH Region IV Educators of the Year



GPA teacher Lindsey Pirillo (above right) was selected as Regional Educator of the Year for 2014, and Roberta Bankston-Leconey (below left) was honored as Regional Para-Professional of the Year by ASAH, the state association of private special education schools.



Building Momentum[®] for Transition

Winter 2015

GPA's approach to transition services is not typical. That's because making a successful leap from high school to adult life can be especially difficult for students with a history of learning, social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.



Over the years, GPA has moved away from common recipes for transition programming, in which students are fit into an existing set of programmatic models or placements," says Jeff Dalrymple, GPA's Transition Coordinator. "Instead, GPA and our community partners work with each individual student to identify specific situations and opportunities that will help him or her find take the steps that work best."

It's called Momentum[®] Transition. In addition to customizing each student's transition program related to career and/or college readiness, Momentum[®] Transition provides an array of personalized educational and therapeutic services designed to facilitate the student's advancement towards independence. These include:

- Intensive individual counseling
- Daily group counseling
- Family counseling
- Stress management
- Clinical social work services
- Neuro/biofeedback
- Psychiatric interventions

Services are provided throughout each student's transition years and across

continues on page 2



MOMENTUM® TRANSITION *continued from cover*

all transition-related activities, to help students build important skills they need as adults to be successful:

- ✓ Critical Thinking
- ✓ Collaboration, Teamwork and Leadership
- ✓ Personal Financial Literacy
- ✓ Self-awareness
- ✓ Self-regulation and Stress Control
- ✓ Conflict Resolution
- ✓ Personal Value Development
- ✓ Confidence and Optimism
- ✓ Future-oriented Motivation
- ✓ Persistence and “Grit”

GPA staff received training on community-based transition planning from Dr. Dan Baker, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, RWJMS.

“Community-based instruction allows us to follow the student’s individual interests, and research tells us programming to those interests — and doing it in the community — produces better outcomes,” Baker said.

As Transition Coordinator, Dalrymple’s works with the School’s expanding network of community partners, connecting them with GPA students, teachers and administrators, to leverage relationships in as many productive and creative ways as possible (*see Featured Community Partners examples, next page*).

“Working to maximize transition potential for the individual student requires a dynamic approach, and more relationships with organizations and individuals in the community helps ensure that we can find opportunities that provide a good fit,” said Dalrymple.

GPA also provides in-house employment for students as they prepare for jobs in the community. Students can work in paid jobs at the school in food services, clerical services, or work with instructional staff providing classroom support.

“Like our overall program philosophy, Momentum “uses a ‘whatever it takes’ approach to helping students make it to their individual goals,” concluded Dalrymple.

How Does the Teaching Family Model Facilitate MOMENTUM® TRANSITION at GPA?

The Teaching Family Model is instrumental in GPA’s ability to offer flexible and individualized Transition Services. “One of the most important factors in crafting an appropriate transition program for a particular student is understanding his or her current set of skills and readiness,” says Dalrymple, “Data is collected for each student under the TFA Model across various settings, and that helps us – and the student – make informed decisions about next steps, and what supports might be necessary for it to work.”

“Working to maximize transition potential for the individual student requires a dynamic approach.”

- Jeff Dalrymple
GPA Transition Coordinator

Momentum® Transition @ GPA

FEATURED COMMUNITY PARTNERS

An expanding and flexible array of partnerships in the community helps GPA provide a range of transition services, and work and vocational experiences for our students. Here are just a few. We'll be featuring additional partners in upcoming issues of GPA Today.

CAM WERCS

CAMWERCs assists GPA students of transition age in identifying and achieving vocational goals. They provide direct instruction in GPA classrooms, helping them to develop interest inventories, practice resume-building, and learn from guest speakers how to develop the skills and values needed for entering the workforce. Participants who are ready are placed in paid part-time employment onsite at GPA and in the community.

BURLINGTON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

GPA's School to College preparation helps students make the transition to higher education. Working with academic support staff at Burlington Community College, GPA students are able to receive support to help them with readiness, admission testing, and can receive academic remediation support to help them with the demands and workloads of the college curriculum. Other students make one-day visits to the BCC campus to learn about specific programs that interest them.

VIRTUA HEALTH SYSTEM

GPA students are gaining valuable work experience through a wide variety of volunteer opportunities at local Virtua Health facilities, in the areas of patient services, food services, and more.

CATHEDRAL KITCHEN

Cathedral Kitchen is a Camden-based social services organization providing essential life services that support the health and well being of those in the community. It's Culinary Arts Training program is working with GPA students to provide on the job training in culinary arts, and jobs to program grads.



CK chef Jonathon Jernigan and program participants (who are also GPA grads!) recently visited with GPA students to present their perspective on the values and skills needed for work and the importance of giving back to the community.



Learning History Through the Eyes of Those Who Lived It

GPA History students recently learned about the Holocaust using the new film "A Journey Into the Holocaust." The film, by Paul Bachow, brings the Holocaust to life through the eyes and voices of fourteen survivors, and an extensive collection of historical video, illustrations and photos. Students learned of the scale and scope of the genocide, and explored the antecedent social signs that lead to such atrocities.

"This documentary allowed the students to realize that genocide can happen anywhere and that no place is immune to the tragedy that can occur when a group of people label, stereotype and scapegoat another group of people," said Stephanie Lewis, GPA History Teacher. "As a result of this movie, the staff in the school have seen a higher level of empathy and thinking towards sensitive subjects from our students."

For more information go to:
www.AJourneyIntoTheHolocaust.com.

STEPS

Social Teaching for Employment
& Personal Success

STEPS at GPA is a New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities Approved Provider for Habilitative Services, Individual Supports, and Transportation Services. Visit Steps4Living.org to learn more.

Education... for a Lifetime





The Training Institute at Garfield Park Academy

The Training Institute at Garfield Park Academy offers free trainings to school leaders and other educators, with a focus on innovative, evidence-based approaches to

serving students with social, emotional, learning and behavioral challenges. Learn more at:

www.GarfieldParkAcademy.org/the-training-institute-gpa/

EUGENE MORSE GALA DINNER AND GOLF OUTING

SAVE THE DATE



Garfield Park Academy is a New Jersey state approved, not-for-profit school that provides effective, evidence-based special education services for students in grades K-12 who have a history of learning, social, emotional and behavioral challenges. Garfield Park Academy is accredited by the Middle States Association and certified by the Teaching Family Association. For more information, please contact Garfield Park Academy or visit our website.

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