

## From the desk of Catherine Cooper, SMEC Executive Director

Spring has finally sprung! Although we've had more than our fair share of rain these last few months, we have finally enjoyed a few nice days and it is so nice to see the daffodils blooming. Soon, the leaves will be back on the trees, more flowers will bloom and we will hopefully see some more consistently nice warm weather so that we can enjoy the outdoors.

This issue of the Spotlight covers the activities of some of our programs from January through March. We will be highlighting a few different programs in each issue of the Spotlight. We hope that you enjoy taking a look at what fun and productive activities our students and adult consumers have been doing.

We are excited to announce the opening of our new Early Childhood Program in the next few weeks! This program will serve students in PK-K in our SMEC building on Acushnet Avenue in the Sassaquin area of New Bedford. We are happy to be partnering with our member districts to add this new program to our growing list of services. We would like to thank all of the volunteers and the Friends of SMEC Board of Directors for another fun Fundraiser Dance on March 22nd. The dance was very well attended, lots of folks won great raffle prizes and the proceeds will be used by the Friends of SMEC to help support our student and adult program activities. We are beyond grateful for the support.

*Catherine*

## What's Inside This Issue



**MLC Students  
Celebrate 100  
Days & St.  
Patrick's Day**



**TSP Students  
Celebrate the Big  
Game in a Big  
Way**



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# MLC Students Celebrate 100 Days & St. Patrick's Day



This quarter, MLC celebrated the 100th day of school and St. Patrick's Day. Students and teachers also began their unit on weather.

On the 100th day of school, students practiced counting sets of 10 objects to 100. On St. Patrick's Day, students experimented with fizzy shamrocks using vinegar, paint, and baking soda.

MLC began their weather unit by talking about the types of weather including rain, sun, thunder and lightning, rainbows, etc. The students made their own shadows using a flashlight in a dark classroom. They explored shadows using their hands and a variety of preferred toys and objects.

Everyone at MLC agrees that they are ready for summer!

# SAIL Spotlight: Terrence Bigham

Terrence Bigham is part of the SAIL Residential Program. One of Terrence's personal goals is to master the art of cooking.

Terrence has been working with support staff member Jessica Couto once a week to plan a menu, gather ingredients, prep, and cook. Terrence is taking great pride in achieving each goal while building up his confidence weekly.

Jessica stated that Terrence needs minor assistance and verbal prompts as he is comfortable preparing his meals. Terrence is independently preparing his meals step-by-step and he seems to enjoy every moment.

Everyone at SAIL is proud of Terrence and wish him much success as he continues to reach his personal goals.



# TSP Students Celebrate the Big Game in a Big Way



Students in the Transitional Services Program donned their favorite team's colors and celebrated the Super Bowl by enjoying game-day apps and football-themed activities. Students helped by making their favorite tailgate treats for everyone to enjoy.

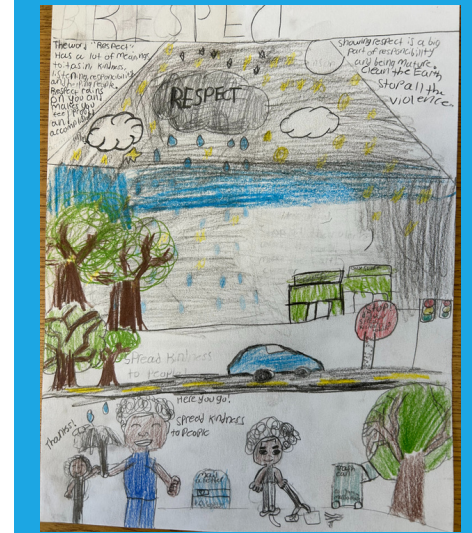
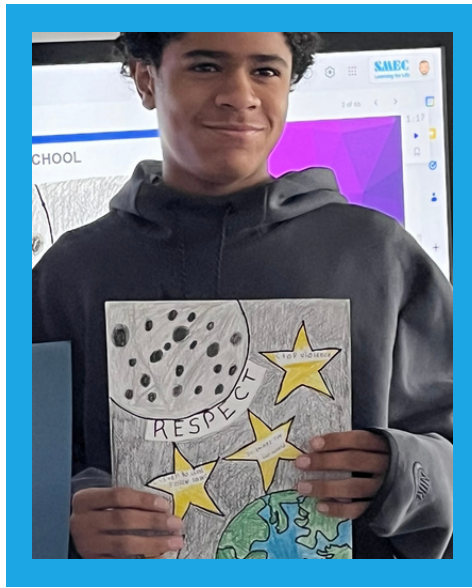
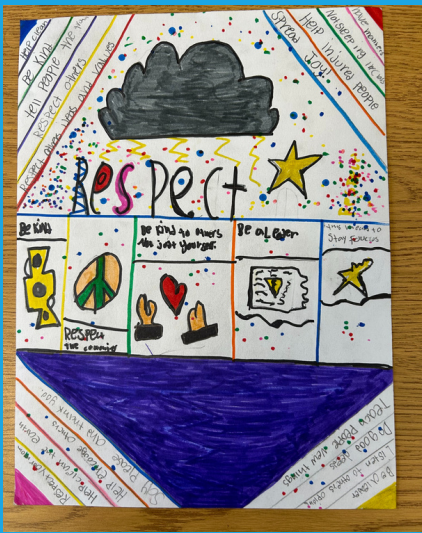
“The buffalo chicken dip was my favorite,” said Marcus DeLaRosa.

After the pregame meal, students put their game faces on and competed in intense games of cornhole, while others tested their arms and accuracy with the football throw. Some students created their own football-themed artwork.

“It was so fun designing my own football helmet,” said Sydney Rogers.

Students and staff enjoyed working as a team to create a fun day for everyone.





# ALC Students Participate in Group Counseling Sessions

ALC Students participated in group counseling sessions with Counselor Bill Sylvia, where they learned about personal traits and values including respect. Students worked together in groups in order to identify ways that they could demonstrate respect at school, at home and within the community.

Students then participated in art classes with Art Teacher Nicole Winning who helped them design posters. She then worked with each student to help them decide how they could convey their ideas about respect in the form of words and illustrations. Students then submitted their designs to the Massachusetts Youth Partnership poster contest. Eighth-grade student Alan Campos Gonzalez was selected as the first-place winner in the middle school category.



# OT Students Plant Sensory Garden

Spring is in the air and OT students have a favorite activity, planting a sensory garden! The garden is a great activity for the classroom and at home. Gardening can be done in a large pot, window box, or a raised garden bed. One plant is chosen for each sense including touch, vision, smell, and taste. Students used: lamb's ear for touch, and brightly colored flowers for vision. Students with vision impairment used yellow or red flowers, herbs were used for smell, and tomatoes, peppers, or strawberries were used for taste.

Besides awakening students' sensory systems, OT students love the tactile stimulation from the dirt, strengthening and bilateral work of scooping soil, planting plants, and watering. Small squirt bottles are great for hand strengthening and encouraging 3 finger grasp. A soda bottle or water bottle with holes poked in them are easier for some children to grasp. Water squirters are also great for encouraging students to use two hands. So many OT classroom goals can be reached with a sensory garden but most importantly, getting out and enjoying the Spring weather!

# TSP Student Tyler Amaral Gives Back to His Community



TSP students learn valuable skills while volunteering in their community that can lead to employment. Student Tyler Amaral expressed a desire to pursue a farming career and, through a volunteer position at the YMCA Share the Harvest Farm, gained valuable skills and experience that he was able to use while pursuing employment.

This spring, Tyler applied for a position at The Neighborhood Farm in Westport and was hired. When asked how he felt about his job, he replied “I love my job and I’m living my dream.” Tyler is so passionate about farming that he plans to continue volunteering at Share the Harvest Farm on his days off. Nice job!

# Alanis Sanchez Earns Christy Taber Award



Congratulations to Alanis Sanchez who was presented with the Christy Taber Award at the Friends of SMEC Fundraiser Dance on March 22nd. Alanis is a hardworking and dedicated student at SMEC's ALC II program who goes out of her way to help other students and make them feel accepted. Alanis future goals include college and working in a field where she can help others. She is also the recipient of the Abigail Adams Scholarship for achieving high MCAS scores and has been accepted to multiple colleges including Bridgewater State University, her top choice!



# Spotlight Article: BCBA

This month the BCBAs provided training to staff of the new preschool program, ECP. The training focused on prompting, reinforcement, and discrete teaching.

## 1. Prompting

- a. Prompts are instructions, gestures, demonstrations, touches, and other things that increase the likelihood of the individual picking the correct response.
- b. Prompt procedures are a way of providing and removing prompts so that the individual begins to perform skills independently.
- c. Your goal is to have the individual perform the task independently. So use the least intrusive prompts.

## 2. Reinforce DESIRABLE behaviors

- a. Common reinforcers:
  - i. Praise
  - ii. Tangibles
  - iii. Break

b. Reinforcement should be delivered immediately after the desired behavior occurs

## 3. Discrete teaching:

- a. Primary teaching method for a number of behaviorally based interventions
- b. 1:1 adult to student teaching
- c. Teaches skills in a planned, controlled, and systematic manner
- d. Used when a student needs to learn a skill, but requires the information taught in small, repeated, systematic steps

