



## Schramm Educational Center

December 2012



### Kristina Neville, TMCSEA Assistant Director and Jessica Willoby, Secretary

Hello! I have enjoyed meeting many families and participating in several special events in my new role coordinating services at Schramm Educational Center this fall. We took a school trip to the Pumpkin Festival in Morton on September 14 and celebrated our Homecoming Week October 22-26. I look forward to continuing to develop positive, collaborative relationships this school year.

Please visit our updated website at [www.tmcsea.org](http://www.tmcsea.org)



We developed vision and mission statements and identified core values:

- Vision Statement – Schramm Educational Center is the model public day school educating students with significant disabilities in Illinois.
- Mission Statement – Improve the quality of life for students and families through individualized, systematic instruction and community experiences to enhance independence, communication, social, vocational, and functional life skills.
- Core Values – Integrity, Caring/Empathy/Compassion, Respect, Commitment, and Honesty

We will be working toward 4 goals this school year:

- Improve student communication through use of core vocabulary across all settings.
- Meet sensory needs of students so they are ready to learn.
- Enhance instruction through technology.
- Improve safety/security of staff and students.

We have provided the following professional development opportunities for staff first semester:

- August 20- *Strategies, Adaptations, Modifications and Programs to Help Students with Sensory Processing Difficulties in the School Environment*
- September 21 – *Lifting and Positioning*
- October 5 – *Is it Sensory or Behavior? Part 2*
- October 26 – *Core Vocabulary Make-It-Take-It*
- November 21 – *Curriculum and Technology Integration*

I wish you and your family a joyous holiday season and Happy New Year!

Kristina Neville, TMCSEA Assistant Director

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I would like to introduce myself as the new School Secretary. My name is Jessica Willoby, and I am happy to be part of the Schramm Educational staff! I attended Eastern Illinois University and majored in Elementary Education. I previously worked at Grundy Elementary in Morton as a paraprofessional for 3 years and also served as the Assistant Director of School-Age Programs at the YWCA of Pekin for 1 year. I am excited to continue getting to know you and your families this school year. I want to wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year!

## Nurses Corner- Pam, Dianna, and Sheri

I would like to introduce myself as the new School Nurse. My name is Pam Phelps. I grew up mostly in the Southern states and relocated to Illinois to pursue a nursing career. I attended Illinois Central College and Bradley University to complete my Bachelor's degree in Nursing. I have 17 years of nursing experience and most of that experience has been working with children and their families. I am very excited about the opportunity to work with such dedicated and trained staff while providing care to your children. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns that may arise.

Sincerely,

Pamela Phelps R.N., B.S.N.



The holidays are a fun time of year for most children, with the anticipation of getting gifts, seeing family and being out of school. It is also an important time of year to be mindful of your children's safety. Holiday decorations, traveling, new toys, and visiting homes that may not be childproofed, can put your children in danger. Some simple precautions can help to make sure that your children have a fun and safe holiday.

Most parents understand the importance of childproofing their homes. Gates on stairs, using smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and keeping medicines and poisons out of reach are fairly standard in many homes. In addition to the risks of holiday decorations, younger children can get into trouble if they visit a home during the holidays (or any time of year) that isn't childproofed.

It is especially likely that a home isn't childproofed if you are visiting grandma and grandpa and they don't usually have children in the house. In addition to not having safety locks on cabinets, gates on stairs, covers on electrical outlets, etc., they may also have prescription medications that aren't in a child resistant container. Things to be especially watchful for, and which you may want to ask about, include:

- Do they have a pool? Does it have a fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate? Can the children get to the area where the pool is located?
- Are there guns in the house? Are they stored unloaded in a locked box with the bullets locked separately?
- Are there small objects, such as hard candy or nuts in candy dishes, where younger children can get them?
- Are there gates on the stairs?
- Are medications, poisons and household cleaners out of reach?
- Do they have a pet that may harm the children?
- If your child has food allergies, will they be serving that food?

You may think that you will just watch your child more closely, even if the house isn't childproofed, but this is hard if there are a lot of family members and friends present and the kids are all playing together. If there are going to be a lot of younger children present at a holiday gathering, you might consider volunteering to go over beforehand and childproof the house for them.



## Communication Center

**Chris, Carrie, Dave, Tammy, and Deb T.**

It's hard to believe that it is December already! The year has gone by very quick this year. We use a variety of different types of communication systems, such as Picture Exchange Communication Systems, switches with pre-recorded voice output, as well as choice making devices.

When we first got back to school in August and September, we did activities and lessons on coming back to school, as well as talking about some of the things we may have done this summer. Our first book of the month was "The Very Busy Spider." Everyone enjoyed seeing and hearing all the different sounds animals made and watching the spider build her web.

During the month of October we did several activities based on the season of fall and what comes with fall. We also started a book of the month where we read a story, and there were several lessons for the students to do that incorporated the story. The book of the month for October was "The Little Old Lady who was Not Afraid of Anything." The students really enjoyed this story.

In November, we finished up a couple of lessons on fall as well as talked about Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving. The book of the month for November was "Clap Your Hands." The students really enjoyed acting out some of the parts of the book and being able to act very silly.

Our students are really making progress and learning to use various modes of communication to communicate and participate. We are very proud of all their hard work. I hope that everyone has a safe and happy holiday season this year, and we look forward to coming back in January to work with all the students.

## Technology Center

**Tina and Julie**



I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. It has been a busy year already at school and I am sure for you at home. We had our annual Homecoming Bonfire night which the students and families enjoy. It is always great to visit with all the families. Our class participated in the Homecoming events by going to Wal-Mart to buy supplies for our Haunted House.

The newest change to the technology center this year is the addition of a Smart Board. The Smart Board is a large interactive whiteboard that uses touch detection for user input in the same way as a normal computer. Since the use of technology in the classroom is constantly increasing and evolving, the Smart Board is a great benefit to our students. With a Smart Board, we can reach out to those students who learn best through visual media. Smart Boards are interactive and hold the attention of students. In the classroom we have been able to witness the excitement that the students get when participating in a lesson with the Smart Board.



## Transition/Social Skills

### Sally and Bethany

This has been a very exciting year in the Transition center. Our biggest focus in this “back to school” time has been communication. We have been expanding our communication skills by adding more and more core vocabulary words and phrases. These include picture phrases on the chairs that say “sit here”, phrases on the table that say “do work”, phrases near toy storage that say “put here”, and phrases by the light switches that say “turn on”. We have seen the most increase in non-verbal and verbal communication in the bathroom with the use of the “help me” core vocabulary picture. This is an area of the room that we use multiple times per day and the students have a very appropriate time to ask for help with difficult tasks like buttoning and zipping and manipulating clothing. They have really responded to the “help me” icon in the bathroom. We continue to add more core vocabulary and push the use of communication to promote independence in daily living.

In the transition class and social skills learning center, we have put a major focus on work preparation this school year. When preparing students to work, it may look different for each individual. For some students, they need sensory integration to prepare their bodies for sitting and engaging. This has been done by using lotion massage on hands, deep body pressure, using the sensory room to calm, swinging, and low lighting. For others, work preparation is done by using a timer to count down the time before work begins and the use of schedules before and during work time. It is important for students to know the expectations, and preparing for work before beginning has helped reduce some problem behaviors during work.

## Speech-Language Therapy

### Marissa and Whitney



This school year has flown by! We continue to work on increasing communication opportunities throughout the day. Use of core vocabulary has become an integral part of our communication expectations throughout the school. Core vocabulary words are high frequency words that can be used across environments and activities to convey multiple meanings. The core vocabulary words that we consistently use are: more, all done, help, look, go, stop and put. We emphasize the use of these words across settings in order to aid in generalization.

We also continue to work on learning functional vocabulary items. These functional items are common in the everyday environment. They are often part of directions given to the students. For example, we are learning various clothing items, such as coat, hat, shoes, shirt, pants, and socks. Our students are often given the direction, “Go get your coat,” or “Put on your shoes.” Learning these functional vocabulary items helps expand the students’ language comprehension. Matching and sorting activities are also emphasized. These important language skills are vital for later vocational tasks. Matching tasks include matching object-to-picture, picture-to-picture, and part-to-whole. Sorting tasks focus on sorting by color, size, item, and shape.

As always, we continue to promote communication through the best means possible for each of our students during speech therapy and within their classroom. Use of various switches, voice output devices, picture exchange, sign language, and objects are all methods we explore to promote communication for the students. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

It has been a great semester! Have a great holiday season!



## Early Childhood Shelby, Johnica, and Nelena

Here we go....into one of the busiest seasons of the year. I know it is going to be one filled with loads of fun here at Schramm! This year has simply flown by. I am having a hard time with the fact that 2012 is coming to an end. This year has been filled with smiles, students maturing, increased independence and communication! We are continuously amazed by the amount of growth we see in our students.

This semester has been a blast; we have taken several trips out in to the community to explore new settings and environments. Our students are making gains in their ability to adapt to and enjoy the community adventures this year. We have had a significant amount of parent involvement this semester and we could not thank you enough for your commitment to your students! We had the chance to discover environments such as The Morton Pumpkin Festival, a Halloween parade around the neighborhood and our first visit to the Bloomington Discovery Museum. Within each one of these trips our students have had the ability to increase their communication in unknown settings as well as adaptation skills in new environments.

We are so excited for our upcoming Secret Shopping trip! Our students will have the opportunity to make choices between items to give as gifts for their family members to open for the Holidays. They will also have the chance to make wrapping paper to wrap their presents. We will be taking our shopping trip to Wal-Mart on December 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. We will take several community trips next semester as well, so please continue to join as we explore our community.

Our classroom as a whole continues to focus on core vocabulary words in order to communicate across all settings. We have also focused on overall independence, peer interactions, large/small group participation, self-help and appropriate play/interactions across all environments of our school. We continue to see an increase in communication from our students and could not be more proud of the gains they have made!

We are blessed by the work and love that Johnica and Nelena, our classroom Paraprofessionals, show to our students every day. The students really enjoy working with them, and we all love the joyful spirit they bring to our classroom!

We hope everyone has a wonderful and relaxing Holiday Season! Thank you for your commitment this school year. We are looking forward to next semester as our students continue to grow!

December is a busy month for us! Please keep the following dates in mind:

**Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup>** – Secret Shopping trip to Wal-Mart @ 9:00 AM

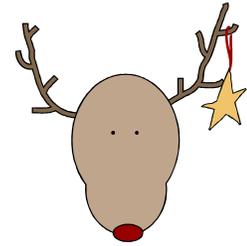
(Please send shopping form & money if you would like to have your child participate.)

**Thursday, December 20<sup>th</sup>** – Schramm Holiday Program @ 9:30AM

Family & Friends are invited - our classroom will be doing a short program.

## Living Skills

**Maribeth, Deb R., Julia, and Diana M.**



We have had a very busy few weeks. In September we got re-acquainted with our class with our "Who am I" unit. Everyone did great identifying each other by names and pictures. In October we learned a few new dance moves for the Homecoming dance, made Chex mix for the dance and had a great time during all of the activities for Homecoming week. In November we learned how to set the table for Thanksgiving & any other time also, and made new placemats to take home. In December we will be making our all school Christmas projects, so look for something special coming home closer to the holiday. We want to wish everyone a wonderful, happy & safe holiday season!



**Greetings from the Workshop Center!  
Kim, Joe, and Chit**

We have been focusing on core vocabulary this fall. Our students are using a variety of switches, communication devices, and other augmentative devices to communicate their core vocabulary needs. The students in the workshop center are primarily working on "more", "all done", and "put in". Each student has individual needs regarding their core vocabulary so we work with each of them one- on- one.

In addition to working on core vocabulary, we have a second iPad this year which is helping us across all student centers with instruction. Many students are using it as part of their instruction while others are using it as a reward when their vocational tasks are complete. We are continually searching for applications that are educational and that the students will also enjoy. This is an ongoing process that we are excited about.

The third area we are focusing heavily on this year is independence within the learning centers. We are trying through the use of core vocabulary, the iPad, the use of "now & then" cards, choice cards, etc. to develop the skill of choosing what they prefer when it comes to tasks. We use visual cues throughout the day across all environments to reinforce their selection skills.

It has been a very busy fall and heading into winter we will continue to focus heavily on core vocabulary, technology, and making choices to further independence. It is exciting to see some of the progress our students are making.

As always, our door is always open for a visit! May you all have a blessed holiday season and healthy New Year!

## Language Arts & Math

**Sue & Megan**



We welcome seasonal changes, holidays & traditions surrounding these special days. They become the focus each month for literature and related activities.

August- Literature connection focused on the theme of getting acquainted and everyone is special.

- The Crayon Box that Talked by Shane DeRolf
- The Best Friends Book by Todd Parr
- Students made a Friendship Quilt. Each square of their quilt represented a special friend in class.

September- Literature connection focused on patriotism/American heroes, and the first sign of fall...fresh crisp apples.

- America the Making of a Nation by Charlie Samuels
- Ten Apples Up on Top by Theo LeSieg
- Little Mouse and the Big Red Apple by A.H.Benjamin
- Students used the dial spinner to write their own apple story.
- Students used core vocabulary "I want more" and "I want all done" to make an acorn mosaic.

October- Literature connection focused on the beautiful colors of autumn and anticipation of Homecoming and Halloween.

- Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf by Lois Eklert
- Who Walks on This Halloween Night? By Harriet Ziefert
- Students used the dial spinner to describe what was hiding under a pile of leaves.
- Students made paper bag ghosts to flutter in the breeze.
- Students decorated a monster treat bag and filled it with monster mix.
- Students voted for Queen & King for 2012-2013 school year. The homecoming court was announced at the afternoon dance.

November- Literature connection focused on the elections, Veteran's Day & Thanksgiving.

- Veteran's Day by M.T. Ansary
- Thanksgiving Day: Let's Meet the Wampanoags & The Pilgrims by Barbara Ruberles
- Students used the dial spinner to choose pictographs to write their own story on a bear skin.

December- Literature connection will focus on December holidays (Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.), customs & traditions.

- Bear Stays Up by Karma Wilson
- The Night Before Christmas by Clement Moore & Jan Brett
- My First Kwanzaa by Henry Holt
- Students will make a Christmas tree from puzzle pieces.
- Students will make Rudolph the Reindeer.
- Students will make a snowman.

May we enjoy and appreciate our families and friends during the upcoming holiday season.

**Happy Holidays to All!**



## Job Coaches

### Jennifer and Heather

We have two new job coaches this school year, Jennifer Hill and Heather Cassidy. This is Jennifer's third year at Schramm and although it is Heather's first, she has been around for several years working as a substitute. We are both really excited to be here and have been enjoying learning about our students and becoming involved in our community.

Every day we go out to work at different locations with the students who are over age 18. We go to local businesses like Schnucks where the students help with cart collection and various other duties throughout the store and the Pekin Township Food Pantry where the students are responsible for gathering and bagging canned goods and groceries for families in need. We also had the opportunity to help with the Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Drive in September and enjoyed ringing the bells for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive this holiday season.

Other mornings we are busy helping at the Pekin Library cleaning books, rolling newspapers at TAPS to assist in the care of the animals at the shelter, wiping tables and setting up chairs at the Moose Lodge, and shredding documents at the Pekin Arena.

Our afternoons are spent with our students age 14-18 preparing them for their transition to community work. We work on jobs like folding clothes, shredding documents, filling the snack machine, counting money, and recycling within our building.

We are looking forward to the new opportunities and experiences that the remainder of this school year will offer us. Happy Holidays to you and your families!





## **Adapted P.E.**

### **Tony and Stephanie**

Adapted P.E. has been a busy center for the students. Many of our students stay on task with a variety of fitness and sport activities such as walking on the treadmill, shooting baskets, working on soccer kicking skills, as well as other skill building activities. Some of the non-ambulatory classes enjoy group games like baseball, bowling and table darts. We try to mix it up a bit and make up new games or variations of old ones.

Our holiday program on December 20<sup>th</sup> will be a collaborative performance with the students from Chris Erickson's class. The next 3 weeks I know will fly by. We have a lot of exciting activities planned with the holiday program, Rotary Luncheon and the Holiday Party with the Pekin Firefighters. Although it may be busy and stressful, our students really enjoy this time of year.

Mazel Tov, or in other words, good wishes to all.

## **Early Childhood**

### **Ramie & Jennifer B.**



We have had a super school year so far! We have enjoyed learning and all of the fun school activities. The children have loved working in groups with their friends and individually. In October, we went to Tanner's and had a great time! Thank you to all of the parents who came to help and enjoyed the day with us.

All of our class is getting into the holiday spirit! The children have loved the holiday lights, music, and fun crafts. We have St. Joseph 8<sup>th</sup> grade class coming on December 6<sup>th</sup> to do an art project with our class. The week before Christmas break is filled with Holiday shows, parties, visits from Santa and the Rotary luncheon. We are all looking forward to a fun month in December!



## Science/Social Science

**Katie, Tricia, and Jennifer D.**

Hello! My name is Katie Cooney and this is my first year teaching here at Schramm. While I was familiar with many of the students through volunteer work and subbing, it has been wonderful getting to know everyone better in Science and Social Science.

We have been working on some fun activities so far this year. I try to tie both science and social science together through the activities that I plan. I have been using News 2 You, which is a program that presents current event news articles at varying levels that are appropriate for our students. We have read about things such as the Mars Rover Curiosity and more. We have also used Weekly Readers to look at events like the Fall Harvest and Thanksgiving.

We have done a variety of activities including School Spear It!, a Sensory Haunted House, making Homemade Butter, Glow Worms, Glow in the Dark Putty, Edible Spider-Webs, Apple Prints, Balloon Powered Helicopters, Homemade Applesauce, Instant Snow, and Pumpkin Smoothies.

We will finish out the rest of the semester talking about different holiday customs, including Christmas, Hanukah, and Kwanza. We will be making some yummy treats including Marshmallow Menorah's and M&M Christmas trees. We will also make some festive holiday decorations such as Crystal Snowflakes.

I want to wish everyone a peaceful holiday and a happy New Year! I look forward to the New Year and many more exciting activities with the students!

**Happy Holidays From  
Schramm Educational Center!**

## Important Dates to Remember

### December

- Wednesday, December 19 = Holiday Luncheon with the Pekin Rotary and Santa 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- *Thursday, December 20 = Holiday Program performed by Schramm Educational Center Students @ 9:30 a.m. (Family and friends are invited to attend)*
- Friday, December 21= Pekin Fire Department visits with Santa & Dismissal @ 2:30 p.m. for Winter Break

### January

- Monday, January 7 = School Resumes
- Friday, January 11= Progress Reports
- Monday, January 21 = No School in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

