

SPRING '19

# outreach

"Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom."

**George Washington Carver**  
Visionary, Scientist, and Inventor.



**EA** education alternatives

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**END OF QUARTER**  
April 5

**GOOD FRIDAY/NO SCHOOL**  
April 19

**MEMORIAL DAY**  
May 27

**LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**  
June 7

**SUMMER CAMP BEGINS**  
June 10

## Spring forward together.

Spring is a time of new beginnings, fresh starts, and creative energy. In just a few short months, our students built on the considerable momentum from Fall and Winter to make significant social and academic gains. In Spring, we came together to explore and honor our history, celebrate our successes, connect to our community, and challenge ourselves to grow and innovate academically. Every EA campus has incredible stories of progress to share, built on a deliberate, daily practice of highlighting our students' strengths, collaborating to address their challenges, and building a way forward that invites all EA kids and families to learn and grow together. We can't wait to show you how much our teachers and students have accomplished, and in this newsletter we invite you to share our journey toward healthy children and healthy communities in Northeast Ohio.



Find us on Facebook for a full list of upcoming events.



# EXPLORING art and science

## Introducing STEAM.

What is STEAM? The acronym, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math, refers to the ways in which art can help illuminate concepts in the “hard sciences” by engaging students’ creativity. Education Alternatives campuses use art, recognized on its own as therapeutic for emotional regulation, as a way to excite students about everything from wildlife biology to chemistry. At Bedford, students used pipe cleaners to create multi-colored crystals while learning about how heat and time affect chemical reactions. In another lesson, they mixed brightly-colored sculpting clay to create layered “metamorphic rock” sculptures. Their final neon creations were a fun way to learn about the geological processes that create patterns in marble under pressure and heat. In Kent, students created tasty creatures out of marshmallows, candy, and pretzels to learn biology, including how our senses work and how organisms use them to explore

their environment. The final sense verdict? Tasty! Finally, Bedford used mixed media to create two-dimensional solar system models, learning about planets and their relative position, composition, and other characteristics.

## Getting Creative.

EA’s art program goes beyond science – art is a way to express, connect, regulate emotions, and decompress! EA classrooms heavily integrate art in every subject, including art for art’s sake! This year, Ravenna hosted their second annual art show, bringing families together to celebrate their students’ creativity and giving kids a fun goal to work toward. Having a culminating event teaches students to prioritize, manage their time, and focus longer term as well as giving our young creators a well-earned sense of accomplishment. This year, the visual art show was paired with a high school production of *10 Ways to Survive the Zombie Apocalypse*, a short comedy play by Don Zolidis. Building on the winter production of *The Outsiders*, EA’s performing arts program

gives students positive outlets for physical creativity as well as builds empathy by asking performers to step into someone else’s shoes. Visual arts are popular on every campus, and Bedford’s art room is a centerpiece of our local programming. Students created so many incredible projects this spring, including eye-catching stained glass, powerful pieces celebrating Black History Month, and small-replica long houses to bring American indigenous history to life. Painesville converted a spare wall to a sensory space where students can draw their thoughts and feelings to promote positive coping and creativity.



## Community Connections.

EA's mission is to enhance the health of our community by promoting mental wellness in children. We commit to infuse this philosophy of giving back, of connecting to our community, and of helping EA kids to understand themselves as part of something larger, in everything we do. What does this look like? This Spring, it meant everything from fostering our own EA community through campus-based family outreach to giving back to the greater community via student fundraisers to help others in need. This quarter, Ravenna continued their tradition of hosting monthly family community outreach nights with two great events: a winter event complete with a special visit from Olaf the Frozen snowman and a Valentine's-themed February event with games, snacks, and more! Students learned about love languages and radical acceptance while inviting their caregivers to meet teachers, explore their campus, and connect with their

classmates. At Kent, students attended "coffee with a cop" and shared snacks and pastries with local police officers. Together, they learned about how police keep communities safe, asked questions about what it's like to work in law enforcement, and even met some furry canine assistants for a fun photo op! Willoughby Hills promoted a positive environment by pairing staff and students to create colorful, positive messages to display inside the school - encouraging healthy self-image, acceptance, and more. Willoughby Hills also bid farewell to Willoughby Hills police officer Craig Anderson, who worked in the building for 8 years! Students and staff shared celebratory snacks and kicked off Officer Anderson's retirement with lots of love and gratitude. Finally, Elyria students held a friendly fundraising competition in support of "Pennies for Patients," a campaign by the Leukemia and Lymphoma society to raise money and awareness about blood cancers.

Numerous recent studies support the **benefits of mindfulness** in treating the **symptoms of trauma**.

**RESEARCH SHOWS** that mindfulness techniques can promote emotional regulation, and foster habits that give students more control of their mental wellness. EA schools both use and teach mindfulness to students as part of Day Treatment and group therapy. Several campuses are using Mind Mending to help students relax, check in, and focus during challenging transitions.

**MOVE AND BREATHE.** Elyria and Brook Park also introduced yoga for students as young as elementary age to help connect physical activity to mental wellness - and have fun stretching, bending, and playing together. Finally, Brook Park took an innovative approach to breathing exercises, teaching our littlest students calming breathing techniques with a little help from some bubbles!

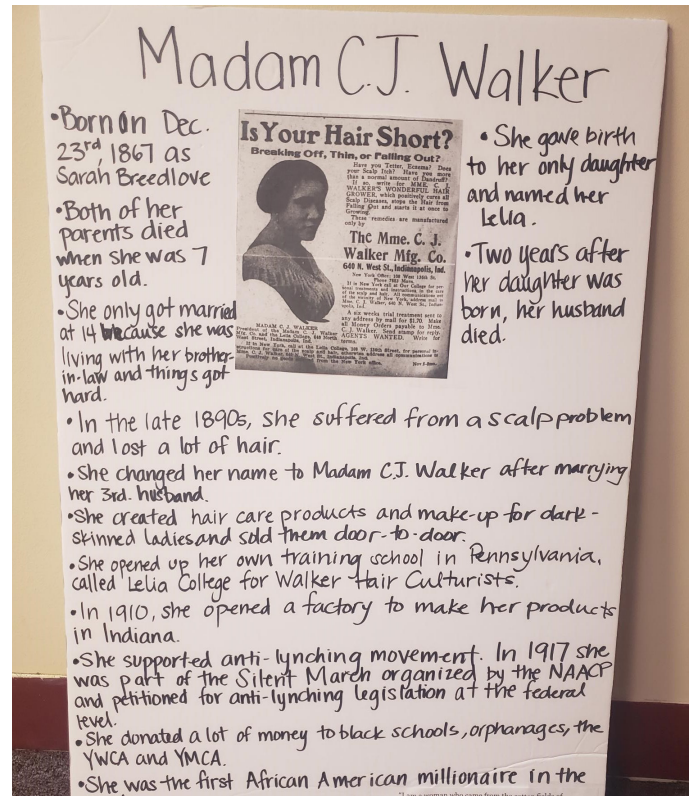


DEVELOPING  
social skills

# What's going on at EA?

## Black History Month.

February is Black History Month, and EA schools celebrated notable people, places, and stories in African American history all month long! Every campus focused history classes on special Black History Month lessons, integrating trivia, art projects, puzzles, and more to bring these stories to life! Bedford hosted a special assembly and invited each class to create a presentation that engaged the audience in Black History Month through art, poetry, and more. Two guest speakers, Donovan Young, a CWRU graduate student in Social Work and James Smith, an AT&T district representative, discussed their experiences as young, African American men. They shared with students how they successfully pursued their dreams despite systemic disadvantages and difficult circumstances growing up. These impactful presentations give our students the opportunity to see themselves in positive role models as well as access diverse voices in education. In February and beyond, EA celebrates and honors the contributions of African American thinkers, visionaries, revolutionaries, and more in our curriculum and on our campuses.



## Duct Tape Challenge

To kick off Spring quarter and welcome students back, Willoughby Hills issued a challenge to all EA campuses - the Duct Tape Challenge! Over several weeks, students earned pieces of duct tape for positive behavior. The goal? At the end, the students had an opportunity to tape their building director to the wall. The challenge? To keep them suspended above the ground for a total of 15 minutes. We're happy to report that every Building Director got some air, and most importantly students enjoyed a fun, tangible reward for all their hard work.



# Welcome, new friends.

## New Students.

John S.  
Austin L.  
Ja'shai B.  
Charles S.  
Casen H.  
Christopher H.  
Shannon P.  
Jessica W.  
Jahlante M.  
Justin W.  
Brittney G.  
Angel H.  
Logan R.  
Journey W.  
Caleb D.  
Andrew H.  
Jokwonn K.  
Robyn A.  
Devin M.  
Christian H.  
Christian H.  
John J.  
Anthony W.  
Raimere G.  
Dairyn S.  
Laci J.  
De'Quan M.  
Emma V.  
Makayla M.  
Alice D.  
Davian H.  
Samirah C.  
Amber L.  
Izzy G.  
Erika N.  
Rayvon L.  
Nathaniel C.  
M. El Jones  
Davon N.  
Tyrael B.  
Robert C.  
Abigail W.  
Bradley H.  
Mikyle A.  
Amir A.  
Christopher E.  
Jordan G.  
Satoshi K.  
Anthony S.  
Cayden J.  
Christopher R.  
Payton D.  
Isabella B.  
Travis T.  
Johnathan P.  
Loucks S,

Tyler W.  
Anthony A.  
Dominic H.  
Tylen G.  
Martin G.  
Elijah S.  
Tai P.  
Shania B.  
Dakarai R.  
Hailey K.  
Trent W.



# DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

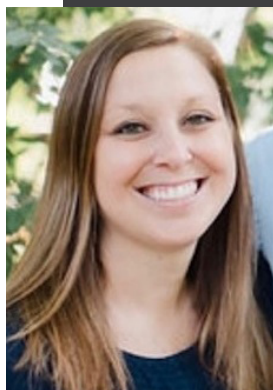
## Carrie Cercone

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EA Elyria Building Director, Carrie Cercone, has been with EA for 11 years. In fact, she shares, “it was my first job right out of college at OU, teaching special education.” Beginning in the classroom after a friend recommended EA as a great fit for her, Carrie has grown into the role of Building Director after years of practical experience – and some important lessons along the way. “My students come from many different backgrounds and have such diverse experiences and needs,” she says, “I learned that so much of it is just showing up every day, just being there. [Our on-site psychologist] Dr. Swartz taught me so much about ... listening, letting our kids go through their own emotions.”

It’s been a worthwhile journey. Carrie shares, “there are a few specific students that, when they started with us, they were non-verbal, they couldn’t be around other people. Now I see them in the classroom socializing positively, and it’s amazing how far they’ve come.” She credits EA’s unique model and support for these successes, and she’s passionate about empowering her teachers to implement these principles in a way that works for them. An amazing mentor, Carrie explains that she has “a lot of trust in my staff ... and I know they’re doing the best possible job.” That is by design. As Director, this confidence gives her more time to focus on her favorite part: bringing a child’s community – caregivers, school district staff, teachers, and more – together in support of that student’s growth.

We’re so fortunate to have Carrie on our team and, as a dynamic young mom of two girls ages 2 and 3 with one more on the way, she’s showing no signs of slowing down. “Every day is different,” she says enthusiastically, “the time has flown by.”





**EA** education  
alternatives

5445 Smith Rd.  
Brook Park, OH 44124

## LOCATIONS

### **BEDFORD**

270 Union Street  
Bedford, OH 44146  
440.232.0214

### **BROOK PARK**

5555 Smith Road  
Brook Park, OH 44142  
216.453.1111

### **CUYAHOGA FALLS**

1225 Orlen Avenue  
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221  
330.945.4944

### **ELYRIA**

333 Naples Drive  
Elyria, OH 44035  
440.324.1168

### **KENT**

6662 State Route 43  
Kent, OH 44240  
330.956.7182

### **PAINESVILLE**

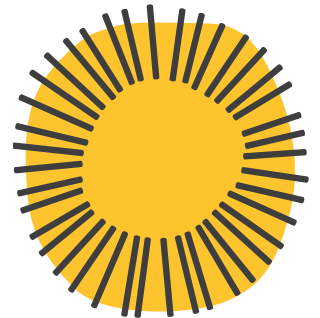
273 E. Jackson Street  
Painesville, OH 44077  
440.709.0053

### **RAVENNA**

310 Bennett Avenue  
Ravenna, Ohio 44266  
330.839.9966

### **WILLOUGHBY HILLS**

2882 Cricket Lane  
Willoughby Hills, OH 44092  
440.347.0716



Education Alternatives is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that serves children of all ages with emotional and behavioral disabilities through specialized educational and mental health services.

[easchools.org](http://easchools.org)