

WINTER '19/'20

outreach

"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.."

John Dewey

Philosopher, Psychologist, Educator.



EA education alternatives

EVENTS

END OF QUARTER 2
January 17

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY
January 20

PRESIDENTS' DAY
February 17

IN-SERVICE DAY
March 13

END OF QUARTER 3
April 2



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

New Year, New Goals.

On January 1, we welcomed a new decade and an opportunity to take a fresh look at Education Alternatives' goals. On the heels of our 20-year anniversary, we've had many opportunities to reflect, together as staff and with our clients' feedback, about what makes EA special. A consistent theme emerged in these conversations: EA educators invest in their role and their students, and they infuse our unique philosophy of Unconditional Positive Regard into every interaction. We talk about this concept often, and for us it means that trust is the most critical precursor to all positive change. Our clients believe that we see - and expect - the very best from them every day they go to school. Every day is a "clean slate" and a new opportunity to tackle their academic, behavioral, and interpersonal goals with our support. To begin the 2020's, we invite you to join with us in seizing these growth moments. Grounded in our timeless principles, we are eager to continue building, changing, and learning with EA kids. In this issue, we are eager to showcase how we build community in actions both large and small, as a daily practice, with a constant eye toward our clients' futures.





EA education
alternatives

5445 Smith Rd.
Brook Park, OH 44124

LOCATIONS

AKRON/SPRINGFIELD

2141 Pickle Rd.
Akron, OH 44312
234.867.8260

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.



Group Therapy

EA's mission is 100% academic and 100% therapeutic. We know that our clients need specific behavioral supports to stay on track in school, and for our Day Treatment program that means daily group therapy. In partnership with REACH Behavioral Health, EA teachers split academic time with active, engaging "group time" led by REACH's qualified mental health professionals. Therapy sessions focus on developing skills to process the sometimes overwhelming emotions kids experience. These emotions are often what's behind negative behaviors, and strategies for staying on track are the key to reducing "acting out" in school and at home. REACH therapists combine discussion with active time - trust exercises, cooperative activities that teach teamwork and conflict resolution, and more. We know that kids and teens need to move, to interact, and to be free to ask questions in order to put these skills into practice. The goals of group time are both short- and long-term. Every

successful school day builds coping skills that will continue to promote healthy relationships and academic achievement long after our clients graduate from high school.

Engineering

EA knows science, technology, engineering, and math ("STEM") fields are among the fastest-growing industries hiring recent graduates. A strong background in STEM can be the key to long-term success, and it starts with early exposure to age-appropriate STEM concepts at school. Many students find STEM intimidating, and it's important to challenge that perception. EA teachers create active, engaging, and hands-on STEM curriculum, and this fall we took a deeper dive into engineering. Students at Cuyahoga Falls learned about Rube-Goldberg machines and used upcycled materials to create their own. Afterwards, they discussed what worked (and what didn't) and why, using physics to make adjustments. Students at Elyria worked together to build model roller coasters, applying

similar principles. At Ravenna, clients learned ceramics and threw their own pottery, learning that engineering concepts are important beyond science class - they form the basis for art, spatial reasoning, and more.



What's going on at EA?

Holiday Celebrations

A school community that learns together, celebrates together! This holiday season brought lots of festive fun for EA students, from Halloween all the way through the New Year. In October, Brook Park clients visited the corporate office for an office-to-office trick or treat and showed off spooky costumes in a Halloween parade. Elyria clients joined the fun with some scary colorful vampire teeth, and Kent students took the fall festivities outside with a visit to an apple orchard. Each campus also hosts a Thanksgiving feast to share food and friendship campus-wide. Finally, EA's holiday giving tree program entered its 21st year with resounding success. Every year, EA clients submit a wish list of holiday gifts they hope to receive and staff get to work fundraising from local businesses, friends, family, and supporters to fulfill these lists. Each giving tree culminates with a special visit from Santa and his EA elves who deliver the gifts and some special treats along with a keepsake photo of each client to take home. This popular tradition is an important part of rewarding and celebrating our clients as well as making the holiday season brighter for all EA kids and families!





Life Skills

Regardless of what our clients plan to do after graduation, practical skills are an important part of their next step. As newly independent adults, nutrition can be a challenge. Selecting healthy, budget-friendly meals that can be easily prepared takes practice, and without formal guidance, many young adults struggle to make nourishing and positive choices. At Kent, the CORAL Autism Program regularly makes health snacks together, including seasonal "reindeer chow" and apple "donuts." Supervised practice builds familiarity and confidence in the kitchen and keeps classroom rewards and celebrations nutritionally balanced. At Ravenna, Vision Quest clients work in groups to prepare for independent living. Regular challenges like a bed-making competition introduce some friendly competition – and teamwork – to daily chores. Clients also tackle more complicated tasks. Working from a prompt such as "how do I make an appointment with the doctor?" or "how do I make a grocery list

and shop for a week?" clients team up to break each process into manageable steps. With staff guidance, they put together a plan and have an opportunity to execute all phases, from getting there and back to positive interactions along the way. These lessons go beyond the basics. Clients also learn what it means to be a force for positive change in their communities. Bedford Day Treatment students made thank-you cards for veterans this Veterans Day and personally delivered them, learning an important lesson about connection and gratitude just in time for Thanksgiving. Ravenna students packaged meals for families in need and learned about how communities support one another. Fostering a desire to give back is an important part of creating well-rounded adults, and EA educators work to build at least one philanthropy experience into each school year.

Director Spotlight. Painesville's Shaun Troup is EA's longest- serving Building Director.

WHEN Shaun Troup, Painesville's Building Director, started working for EA in 2003, he was an Intervention Specialist. He's now the longest-serving employee who is currently in a Director role. What keeps him coming back? "I enjoy working with this level of kids," says Troup. "You get to know them, when something good happens for them. I go to graduations every year. It's important to me that I can get them that diploma." Over time, he explains, he's seen many success stories. "I had a client, at the time he was sent to us, he spent all his time one-on-one with me. In a year, he spent a period a day upstairs, then half a day, then all day. He graduated. All these stories stick with me because they just make so much progress."

FOR Troup, the EA philosophy of Unconditional Positive Regard resonates. His campus, he says, is "not punishment-based. We do so much to build with those positives, getting them to recognize that they are making progress. We are doing their points every day, the level system, they always know their grades. It's motivating. We celebrate every victory."

WHEN he's not serving his school community, Shaun is coaching his son's sports teams or traveling. We're so thankful for Shaun and all he does to keep EA's (now 35 students and growing) Painesville campus community strong.

