



# NEWS



Formerly Child Development Center

## What's New

### Response to Intervention Presentation

April 8, 2011 • 9 am – 12 pm

You have probably heard about Response to Intervention (RTI), but what is it all about? How does it affect the educational environment? As a member of the Child Study Team, what is your role in RTI? This presentation will provide a general overview of RTI especially targeting the general education teaching staff.



Visit [WestbridgeAcademy.org](http://WestbridgeAcademy.org)



Call 973.429.8110

### We Have a New Website!



As yet another improvement in serving our districts and families, we are proud to unveil our new website to help you find out more about Westbridge Academy and stay current with school news.



Visit [WestbridgeAcademy.org](http://WestbridgeAcademy.org)

### PROJECT ACHIEVE

## Culinary Arts Projects Create Integrated Learning for Students

**W**hile staying true to its mission as it has for the past four decades, Westbridge Academy continues to provide a therapeutic learning environment for students in grades K – 12. Only now the dining options have become a little tastier.

Instructors from several academic areas, such as Community Based Instruction (CBI), World Cultures, Computer/Technology, Language Arts, Workplace Readiness, the Fine and Practical Arts coordinated their lesson plans to organize two fall projects. The first and larger project requires students to search for international recipes for our Westbridge Academy Student Recommended Cookbook, which will be featured on our new website. They prepare a shopping list and then, in teams of two with their teacher (and a carefully crafted budget), go shopping for the ingredients.

While at the supermarket, students put into action many of the academic skills they have been taught, as well as the social skills they are learning through Project Achieve, the nationally recognized social skills program being used at Westbridge Academy. Back at school, they must properly store and organize their purchases. Students also storyboard the steps of a recipe, adding photos of the food preparation, and script the recipe for final presentation. Once completed, the cooking and photo shoot begins (and so do the wonderful aromas coming from the cafeteria). When the cooking is finished, well, everyone knows what happens next! ■



Students learn about measurements, cooperation, process and other skills while creating a cookbook.

*"Students put into action many of the academic and social skills they have been taught,"*



## Sergio's Story

Making the leap from aggression to friendship

WHO SAYS PEOPLE CAN'T CHANGE? TAKE SERGIO. Once a hyperactive, explosive little boy who talked incessantly, threatened his peers and had little control over his mood swings and behavior, Sergio evolved and blossomed over his years at Westbridge. Today, he's doing well, in control and enrolled in community college." You can succeed, too!"

“Everyone wanted to be his friend – he was a very nice kid and very engaging.”

– Lee Buchanan  
Student Services Coordinator

The transformation was gradual – with plenty of ups and downs – but steady, thanks to his commitment to one-on-one instruction and counseling, and his mother's active support of her son's development at home. Sergio also loved (and needed) the structure at Westbridge Academy and eventually he began to win awards for his academic performance and positive behavior. He not only took pride in his achievements but he also became a star performer at the school's talent show as a dancer. The younger students looked up to him.

As he matured and grew, “everyone wanted to be his friend – he was a very nice kid and very engaging,” says Student Services Coordinator Lee Buchanan. Sergio was eventually able to be medication free and ready for his future. He recently came back to school to attend the talent show at which he once excelled, to let everyone know how he was doing and to see old friends and teachers. It was great to have him back.

## SUMMER PROGRAM

Helping kids keep pace with learning



**T**hose lazy, hazy days of this summer will be different for students at Westbridge Academy. Students will go on learning adventures filled with fun that will carry them from their town, across the Earth, to the icy edges of the solar system.

Over the years, extensive national research has shown that young people tend to have a drop in their academic ability during the summer. To reverse this natural tendency, Westbridge Academy created an innovative summer schedule. The program consists of four 4-day weeks held from 8:45 am - 1:15 pm, combining academics, music, art, gym, and social skills with field trips to reinforce key concepts which make learning fun. The programs will be customized for the elementary children from kindergarten to 8th grade and middle school students ages 13–18.

*Combining academics, with field trips reinforces key concepts and makes learning fun.*

Trips include visiting Bloomfield, NJ, home of Westbridge Academy to develop map skills, a

bowling alley to reinforce math skills, Turtle Back Zoo to learn about animals, as well as learning about bodies of water by exploring and enjoying swimming at the YMCA. Students will “rocket into space” during the last week and head to parts unknown in the solar system. They will simulate the planet by going to an ice skating rink or to the Meadowlands Experience or the Izod Center.

Yet another aspect of this new program is an opportunity for high school students who failed courses to make up those classes and earn credit toward high school graduation. ■

## Westbridge Academy Celebrates Read Across America Day

On March 2, students at Westbridge Academy joined with millions of other students around the country in participating in Read Across America Day. Headed by First Lady Michelle Obama, the annual reading motivation and awareness program calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on the birthday of beloved children's author



Dr. Seuss. At Westbridge Academy, the elementary classes got together to cook “Green Eggs & Ham” and listen to the teachers read Dr. Seuss' famous book. It's all part of our effort to foster a love for reading as a lifelong skill.

# Celebrating BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Documentary teaches students about African-American contributions to American culture

In celebration of Black History Month in February, the New Jersey Department of Education video-streamed a special documentary, *On the Shoulders of Giants* with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, to high school students across the state, including Westbridge Academy. The legendary basketball player, and the Skyhook Foundation, created educational materials to help students gain an increased awareness of the impact of the Harlem Renaissance on sports, music, literature and history. It was a live presentation and Newark Mayor Cory Booker introduced the program. After the screening, students were able to submit questions to Mr. Abdul-Jabbar and a panel of experts.

The program was intended to bring together education and sports in a way that is meaningful to kids. The film chronicles the first all-black team, which many students assumed to be the Harlem Globetrotters but rather the Harlem Rens who were founded by Bob Douglas in 1923. Students also learned how hard it was for African-Americans to not only rise above racism in the 1920s and 1930s, but to create their own identity.

The students were mesmerized and inspired by the film. They heard players from the past discuss the many challenges they encountered as well as from current players who expressed gratitude to their predecessors who paved the way for their success.

After the screening, students were assigned to create a collage of any individual in the film who impressed. The students conducted research and described why those figures were personally meaningful. The experience gave the students a better understanding of the contributions of African-Americans to society. ■



Students watched Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's documentary, *On the Shoulders of Giants*.



To make the film personally relevant, students created collages of individuals in the film who were meaningful to them.

## A Satisfied Parent

I have watched Jeremy grow and mature at Westbridge Academy. The way the staff teaches my child in such a caring way, it has eased his frustrations and helped him academically. My child is secure in an environment with experts who know how to deal with any situation. I have never felt alone with the problems that my child has because Westbridge Academy has eased my mind of all the worry I had about his future. If you have a child with challenges in school, Westbridge Academy is for you.

— Carolina Martinez, parent



Our technology allows our staff to stay connected at all times. Samantha Majak, Outreach Coordinator, keeps parents informed of students' progress.

## Upgrading Our Technology to Serve You Better

We're growing, and our technology is keeping pace. We recently upgraded our servers to give our employees the ability to work remotely from anywhere, after hours or on days when inclement weather makes travel difficult.

We implemented virtual servers improving server management which saved both time and money. This makes it easier to store and back up data and apply updates. And, in the event of a disaster, data is easy to replicate, reducing downtime.

The new technology gives our teachers, specialists, and administrators with the appropriate tools to support their work. This means better communication for parents and child study teams, so that ultimately, the students are served better.



## Sign up for our email newsletter

Stay informed about Westbridge Academy news, programs, events, and tips. Email us to be added to our list.

[info@westbridgeacademy.org](mailto:info@westbridgeacademy.org)



Have a question, want to refer a student or visit the school? We'd love to hear from you.

**Dr. Viviana Litovsky**  
**DIRECTOR**  
973-429-8110  
info@westbridgeacademy.org

WESTBRIDGE ACADEMY NEWS

# We Have a New Name!

## Child Development Center Changes Its Name to Westbridge Academy

Notice a difference? Last fall, we changed our name to Westbridge Academy to reflect our focus on helping kids reach their potential. We think it helps tell our story of how we believe in every child's potential. Our trained and compassionate staff is dedicated to ensuring that every child is heard, understood and supported. We help students cross the bridge into the real world with self-awareness, self-control and self-sufficiency.

Our new name is just one of the many improvements you'll see around school. We're still located at 60 West Street in Bloomfield, NJ, serving students from Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Union Counties.

### FAST FACTS

**STUDENT PROFILE:** Students in grades K-12 with emotional, behavioral and learning challenges from northern and central New Jersey

**APPROACH:** Combining individualized academics with therapeutic support

**PROGRAMS:** Elementary, Middle and High School; Community Based Instruction and Transition Services; Extended School Year (ESY)

**STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO:** 6:1

**AREAS SERVED:** Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Union Counties



## About Westbridge Academy

Created in a culture of caring, WESTBRIDGE ACADEMY is a unique special needs school in which students with behavioral and emotional disabilities are taught to face their issues so that they can have productive, fulfilling lives.

The WESTBRIDGE ACADEMY's progressive approach maintains a structured environment that is still warm and nurturing – one day, one student at a time – to support each student's well-being. WESTBRIDGE ACADEMY is accredited by the State of New Jersey to serve students from public schools in the state.

**WestbridgeAcademy.org**  
**info@westbridgeacademy.org**  
**973.429.8110**



Sign up for our email newsletter



Visit the school for a personal tour



Refer students at any time during the year



Ask a question, we're here to help