

# Ohio School Boards Association Honors Board Members with Award of Achievement

The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) honored Cuyahoga Heights Local School Board Members Reno Contipelli, Kenneth Perk and Ron J. Krzynowek as well as ESC of Cuyahoga County Governing Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr. with the 2011 OSBA Award of Achievement during its spring conference.

The OSBA Award of Achievement is presented to a very select group each year. Of more than 3,400 board members in Ohio, only 81 received the honor this year. Recipients are honored for earning continuing education credits received when attending seminars, workshops and conferences throughout the year. In addition, credits are awarded for leadership positions such as president, delegate, and serving on boards and state committees.



Congratulations to Cuyahoga Heights Board Members Reno Contipelli, Kenneth Perk and Ron J. Krzynowek and ESC Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr. for being recognized by the OSBA with the 2011 Award of Achievement.

# Northeast Ohio College Fair for Students with Learning Differences

Students and families are invited to the Northeast Ohio College Fair for Students with Learning Differences being held at two locations in the county. On Tuesday, October 11, 2011, colleges, universities, and other post-high school training programs will have representatives at the Holiday Inn in Strongsville. On Wednesday, October 12, 2011, colleges, universities, and other post-high school training programs will have representatives at Corporate College in Warrensville Heights. Both programs are from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Attendees may talk with postsecondary representatives and participate in breakout session. Topics include: rights and responsibilities in preparing for postsecondary education; panel discussion of high school to college transition; how parents can help their children prepare for post-high school education or training; and a

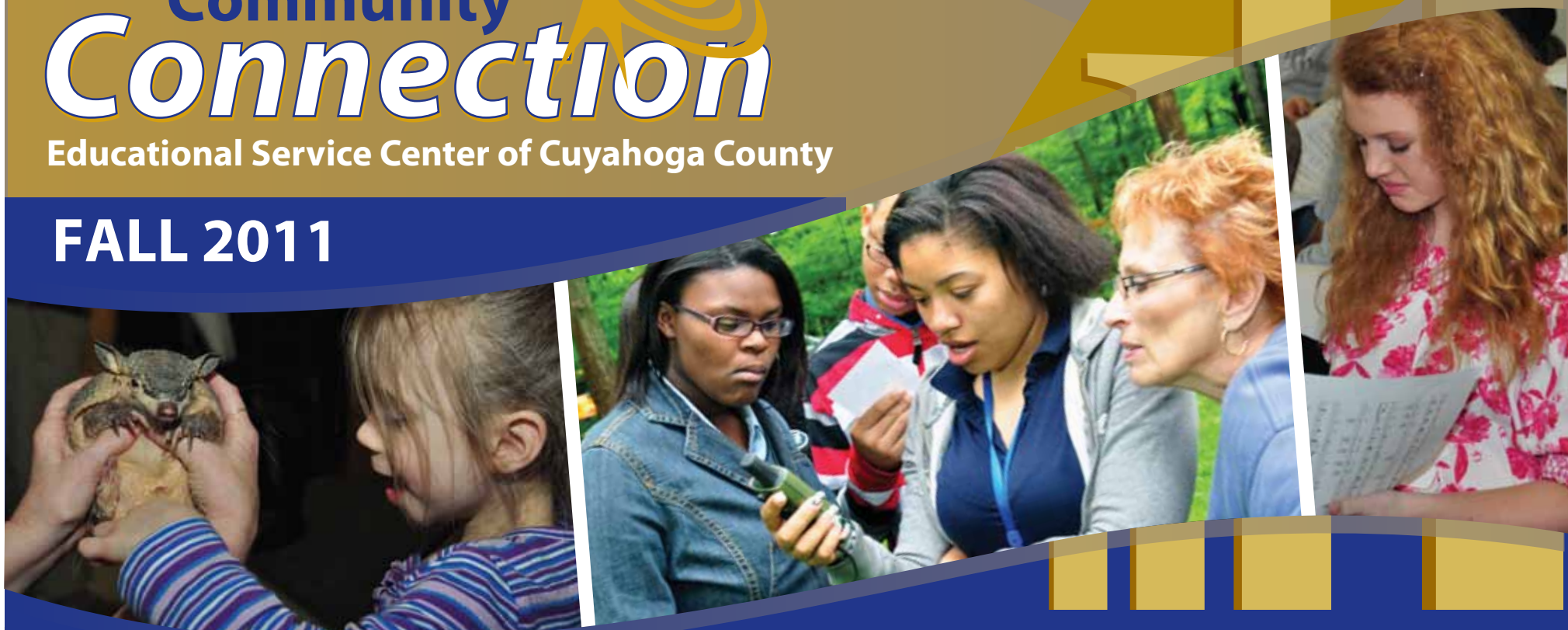
panel discussion by college representatives highlighting strategies to get the most from the college experience. There is no cost to attend these events. The format and speakers' topics will be the same at both college fairs. This is a great opportunity for families to begin preparing for the transition from the entitlement of a free public education to the world of higher education where eligibility determines assistance.

For more information call, Ed Flegel at 216-446-3819.

# the ESC Community Connection

Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County

FALL 2011



# ESC's Summer and Beyond Fair

Hundreds of families were able to explore the various camps, activities and programs available for their children this summer thanks to the 13th Annual "Summer and Beyond Fair" for students with disabilities. The fair is sponsored by the Educational Service Center (ESC) of Cuyahoga County in collaboration with The Arc of Greater Cleveland and the Northeast Ohio Parent Mentor Project. Held at St. Michael's Woodside Party Center in Broadview Heights this past February, exhibitors from camps and organizations from around Ohio were present to talk with attendees about what they have to offer to children and youth with disabilities.

organizations offer not only recreational opportunities but also academic and therapeutic choices throughout the year for students with disabilities." "For some students, nine months of learning is not enough for them to close the achievement gap and sometimes additional academic and therapeutic choices help level the playing field when they return to school in the fall," said McIntee. For information on the 2012 Summer and Beyond Fair, call Terri McIntee at 216-446-3810.

"Families want their children to experience all aspects of childhood," said Terri McIntee, a Family and Community Involvement Consultant with the ESC of Cuyahoga County. "Many local and regional agencies and

**FALL 2011**

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## ESC of Cuyahoga County Awards Humanitarian Scholarships

The ESC of Cuyahoga County presented its annual Humanitarian Awards to students from **Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, and Richmond Heights Local School Districts**. One student from each middle and high school received the award, presented by a member of the ESC Governing Board at each honoree's awards assembly. Recipients are nominated by their own school's administration for demonstrating outstanding character and service to the community throughout the past school year. In addition to a cash award of \$500 at the high school level and \$250 for middle school, the six students each received a personalized plaque, starfish pin, and starfish keychain. The starfish represents a short story about one person making a difference.

### This year's ESC Humanitarians included:

#### Recipients from Cuyahoga Heights Local Schools



Cristina Traffis was the 2011 Humanitarian from Cuyahoga Heights Middle School. Her entry states, "Cristina's spirit of kindness permeates our school community. Her random acts of kindness are performed continuously with students, staff and community. Cristina holds kindness and compassion in her heart. Her positive attitude is contagious. Many of our students admire and strive to imitate Cristina's ability to shun pettiness and gossip and encourage generosity and friendship. Cristina seeks to improve the lives of other people, expecting nothing in return."

Anthony Eder was the 2011 Humanitarian from Cuyahoga Heights High School. His entry states, "Anthony is a strong young man with huge helping hands. He knows how to give willingly and with joy. Two years ago, Anthony was one of the founders of our Boys to Men Leadership group. He has completed numerous service projects locally and for Ronald McDonald House." ESC Board Member Frank Mahnic, Jr. presented both Cristina and Anthony with their awards.

#### Recipients from Independence Local Schools



Jennifer Wisniewski was the 2011 Humanitarian from Independence Middle School. Her entry states, "Jennifer always has a positive attitude that has a wonderful effect on her classmates and staff members. She is always ready to help any teacher carry out a task. She demonstrates a high level of

participation in class. Jennifer is also very helpful to her fellow students that are having difficulty with an assignment. She can always be counted on to put aside her own responsibilities to help out others. Jennifer is a walking example of 'blue devil pride' every single day at I.M.S." ESC Board President Carol Fortlage presented Jennifer with her award.



Gabrielle Riley was the 2011 Humanitarian from Independence High School. Her entry states, "Gabrielle's accomplishments and positive attributes have been recognized by both her peers and teachers. She has been selected to multiple leadership roles in our student council, and has contributed

significantly to important committees such as Prom and Homecoming. During this, her senior year, Gabrielle has contributed greatly to the planning and facilitation of so many of our activities." ESC Board Member Dr. Christine Krol presented Gabrielle her award.

#### Recipients from Richmond Heights Local Schools



Seng Choi was the 2011 Humanitarian from Richmond Heights Middle School. His entry states, "Seng is a bright, talented young man. He is often seen explaining concepts to his classmates in ways that they can better understand the material. He holds court daily to ensure all students have completed their homework. He is well liked and respected by his peers and teachers." ESC Vice President Tony Hocevar presented Seng with his award.

Sara Dela Vega was the 2011 Humanitarian from Richmond Heights High School. Her entry states, "Sara will be another of my many former students who will fulfill their promise of tomorrow by becoming an outstanding success. Sara has aspirations of becoming a doctor. Doubtless, she will. And while I marvel at her academic achievements, it is the essence and personality of Sara that I admire most. She is kind, compassionate, caring, gentle, and humble. Without ever calling attention to herself, she is an example of what is good about America's young people." ESC Board Member Tony Miceli presented Sara with her award.



## Recognizing Excellence in Education for Students with Disabilities

On May 6, 2011, more than 200 people came together for the 25th Recognition of Excellence in Education for Students with Disabilities at St. Michael's Woodside in Broadview Heights. This annual recognition brunch is planned by the ESC of Cuyahoga County and the State Support Team-Region 3 to honor students, peers, parents, educators, paraprofessional and educational aides, and community partners, and to reward those individuals who go above and beyond merely doing their jobs.

The keynote speaker was Daniel Wilkins, president of the Nth Degree, who is an advocate, storyteller and visionary for people living with disabilities. He delivered a powerful thought-provoking message about expectations and stereotypes that people form when they hear about different disabilities. He talked about how it takes courage, not only to believe in yourself, but also in your vision of the ways things ought to be. He challenged the audience to find their courage, see through bigger eyes, share their vision, and change their world.

The audience also was entertained by a performance of students from Parma High School. It showed the shifting of one individual's insensitivity to a student with cerebral palsy to showing compassion towards him. In order to deal with the situation, their teacher wrote and directed a play, called "Challenged." The play showed how the two young men started to understand each other's challenges and ultimately became friends.

The recognition ceremony is meant to be a "feel good" affair, and organizers have heard countless times how beautiful, sensitive and personally rewarding it is for the participants. It means a lot when others recognize those individuals who "go the extra mile" to help others. In addition to the brunch with friends and families, honorees receive certificates of "outstanding achievement" and have their accomplishments noted in the recognition booklet. Congratulations to all those who were recognized this year.

### Playground Constructed for Rose-Mary Center School Students



The ESC of Cuyahoga County's Rose-Mary Center School, located on West 14th Street in Cleveland's Tremont neighborhood, educates approximately 42 multiple handicapped children from 21 Ohio school districts. Thanks to the ESC of Cuyahoga County, Catholic Charities and Meyer Design, a playground for the school's children has been built. The playground has a wheelchair accessible swing, a transferable swing, a ramp with multiple play areas, including drums, xylophones, interactive panels, and two slides.

"Our goal for this playground is to address the needs of the children at Rose-Mary Center School with different physical, developmental, cognitive and sensory abilities and have them navigate freely through the play area," said Bob Mengerink, Superintendent of the ESC. The new playground is being used by children who participate in Catholic Charities events during the summer and on weekends.

Family and friends of Rose-Mary Center, along with Tremont residents, volunteered their time to construct the playground. A ribbon cutting for the new adaptive playground is planned.



Randy Kuzilla, who recently graduated from **Independence High School**, was one of the peer honorees. Randy has been a coach for the city's ICAN! program for the last four years. This program is an adapted program for teenagers and adults with special needs. Randy has expanded the opportunity for students to interact with their peers by treating the students with dignity and respect; other peers in the high school have modeled their behavior after him. In 2010, Randy was recognized by Project Love and Governor Strickland during half time at a Cleveland Cav's game for his efforts that he has put forth by treating students with special needs with respect.



### Students Enjoy Learning at Beck Center for the Arts Program

The ESC of Cuyahoga County sponsors a field trip twice a year to the Beck Center for the Arts in Lakewood. Students have a chance to learn about the various fine arts. They have a chance to participate in classes such as classical voice, clay, improvisation, dance, acting, drums, and drawing. Students from **Independence and Richmond Heights Local Schools** were among those that attended.

