

# The Anchor

The Clayton School District Newsletter



Fall/Winter 2021-2022

Herma Simmons Elementary School

Clayton Middle School

Clayton High School

*Preparing Students for Present and Future Opportunities*

# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Board of Education

Mr. Koutsogiannis, Superintendent



Dear Clayton Community:

As we eagerly await the arrival of spring, I am reminded of the symbolism of this season - a time of new beginnings and renewal, when life awakens from a long winter. In many ways, this spring will be of particular significance as we emerge from Covid-19 and return to the life we knew prior to March 2020.

If someone had told me that our "Covid winter" would last two years, it would have been hard to hear. Sometimes, and I say this even though I'm an educator, ignorance is bliss, for how would we have navigated so many days of unknowns, had we been told we were on a two-year journey?

I am confident that our district will recover quickly from the challenges that arose when educating children during a world pandemic. As superintendent, I pledge that we will do our utmost to provide our students with whatever is required to ensure that these past two years do not define their academic paths. I am confident that our teachers and staff understand the importance of this mandate and will work with a sense of urgency to close any learning and social-emotional gaps that occurred. (Continued on page 2)



**Herma Simmons  
Elementary**



**Clayton Middle School**



**Clayton High School**

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Mr. Paul Connell, President**

**Mrs. Susan Giordano**

**Mr. Anthony Grafton**

**Ms. Crystal Greene**

**Mr. Jeremiah Long**

**Ms. Robin Roche, Vice President**

**Ms. Niamah King**

**Mrs. Nicole Shaw**

**Ms. April Ward**

[www.claytonps.org](http://www.claytonps.org)

Follow us on Facebook and  
Twitter

---

# DISTRICT NEWS AND EVENTS

---

## Superintendent's Letter to the Community (continued)

We have learned many lessons from this pandemic, and in my mind, one of the most significant is the importance of being resilient. Resilience, the ability to take whatever life hands you and still move forward with purpose, brought our district, our staff, our students, and our families through the Covid-19 pandemic. Resilience is what will sustain us as we move forward and embrace the hard work that lies ahead. We still may face some challenges and in all probability, perhaps a setback here and there, but I have every reason to believe that our district's brightest days lie ahead.

Sincerely,

Nikoloas Koutsogiannis  
Superintendent

# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Herma Simmons Elementary School**

**Mr. Scott Uribe Principal**

Message from Mr. Uribe:

After a calm, peaceful, and restful summer break, our students and staff returned on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, for another year of learning and growing at Herma Simmons Elementary School. The 2021-2022 school year is indeed off to a great start for our entire learning community, and it is our goal to continue focusing on rebuilding and reconnecting as a school community as well as identifying and revitalizing learning lost from past educational disruptions. Whether as a student or a teacher or a parent, everyone is enthusiastically involved in celebrating life-long learning and celebrating each other.

At this special time of year, all of us at Herma Simmons Elementary School wish you a new year filled with happiness and warmth and one that is brightened by light and love.  
*Nothing Short of Excellence!*



Mr. Uribe  
Principal



Ms. Kathleen Demaris  
Simmons Teacher-of-the-Year



Harvest Parade Fun

## ADMINISTRATION

**Mr. Scott Uribe, Principal**

**Ms. Alicia Fragoso, Assistant Principal**

**Ms. Tanya Clark, District Supervisor, Curriculum and Instruction**

**Mr. Greg Esposito, CST Supervisor**

**Ms. Taryn Simmons, Literacy Specialist**

**Ms. Elizabeth Winterburn, Early Childhood Supervisor**

**Mr. Joe Valentino, District Supervisor of Guidance**

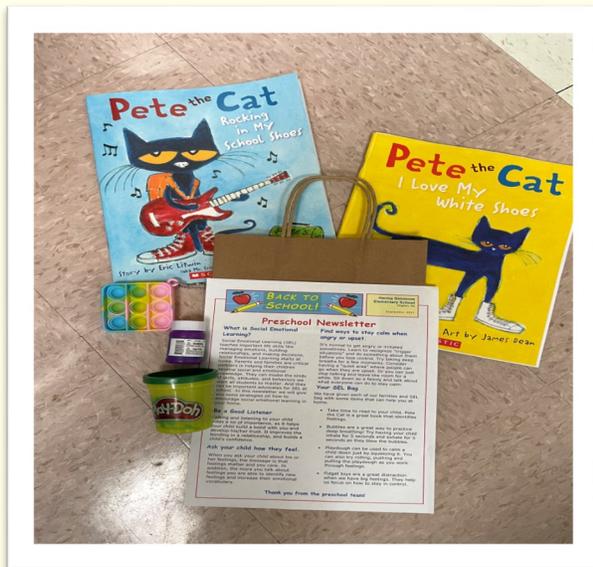
[www.claytonps.org](http://www.claytonps.org)

Follow us on Facebook and  
Twitter

# SIMMONS NEWS AND EVENTS

## Preschool Community Engagement project Supports Social and Emotional Learning

In an effort to support Simmons' youngest students, Elizabeth Winterburn, Early Childhood Supervisor, coordinated and facilitated a Preschool Communi-



ty Engagement Project supporting Social and Emotional Learning. Preschool Meet and Greet Conferences were held at the beginning of the school year, and goodie bags were created for our preschoolers and their families that coordinated with the transition into school. The Social and Emotional Learning Bags contained the book,

*Pete the Cat, Rocking in My School Shoes* for Prek to 4-year-old students or *Pete the Cat, I Love My White Shoes* for Prek to 3-year-old students. The bags also contained Play-doh, a Pop-it keychain, bubbles, and a Back-to-School Newsletter explaining the importance of Social Emotional learning, helpful tips for families, and the items to help families while at home. The goal of the project was to provide families with information to expand their learning at home, to help students with the transition into preschool, and to help families understand the effects of social emotional learning for their students.



---

# SIMMONS NEWS AND EVENTS

---

## *Reflex* Helps Students With Math Fact Fluency

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Graders have another tool for learning math facts, in addition to their regular math lessons. The *Reflex* system helps build math fact fluency. The goal of *Reflex* is to enable students to solve addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts quickly and automatically, much like a body's natural reflex. *Reflex* uses games and coaching to help students achieve mastery. One key component of *Reflex* is that it adapts to each student's individual skill level. It also allows teachers to monitor student usage and progress and celebrate success. As of December 3, 2021, students had already collectively answered one million math facts! On December 8, 2021, they reached an amazing milestone: 36,700

*new* fluent facts! A strong foundation of math facts means that students can use their time and brain power focusing on the more difficult parts of the math problem, such as the formula or the wording.

Each month, classes compete against other classes in their grade level, with a monthly winner. For the month of November, the class that increased their math fact fluency the most won the trophy for their class!

The November winners are as follows:

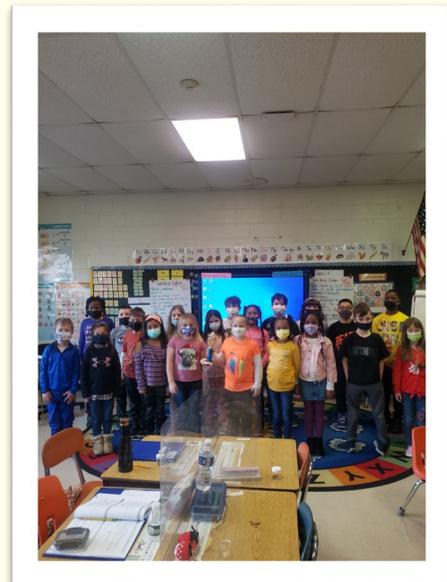
2nd grade: Mrs. Eddis' Class (pictured below-Right)

3rd grade: Mr. Hickman's Class (pictured below- Left)

4th grade: Mrs. Fallon's Class

5th grade: Miss Quigley's Class

Students can practice at home by logging in at <https://www.reflexmath.com/>



---

# SIMMONS NEWS AND EVENTS

---

## School and Community Basketball Court Open for Play

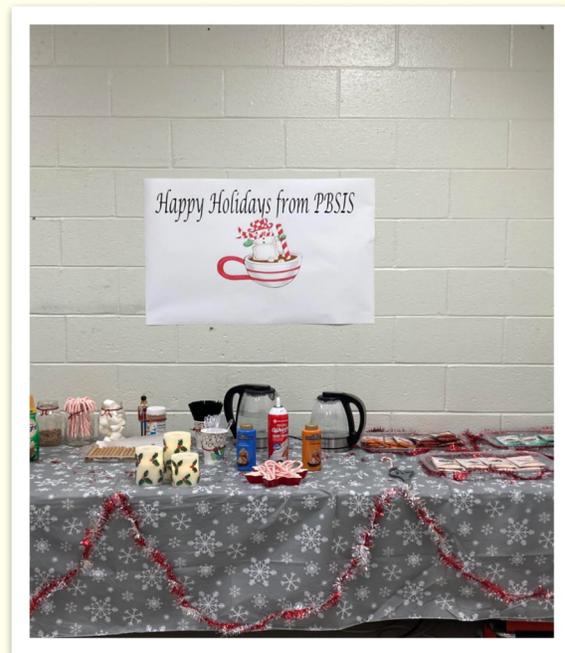
**T**hrough funding provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's New Jersey Health Initiative's Program, Herma Simmons partnered with the borough of Clayton to improve health and health equity in Clayton. A community survey determined that renovating the existing basketball court and adding exercise stations at D.J. Bentz Memorial Park would be the best use of funds. The newly renovated basketball court, located at Simmons Elementary, is available for community use when school is



A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in July for the newly renovated school/community basketball court.

## PBSIS Shows Appreciation to Staff with Hot Chocolate Station

**T**he PBSIS program (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) showed their appreciation to staff by setting up a Hot Chocolate Station on a chilly day in December. Staff were invited to visit the station throughout the day and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate along with their favorite toppings. PBSIS is a school-wide support system that promotes positive behaviors and fosters social emotional health.



---

# CCC NEWS AND EVENTS

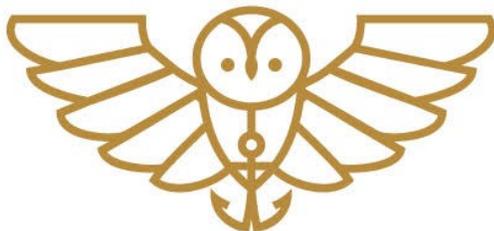
---

## CCC Offers Social Emotional Support (SEL) to Students at Herma Simmons

**T**he Child Connection Center (CCC) at Herma Simmons Elementary School facilitated eight small therapeutic groups with students this fall. The groups focused on a range of topics that were tailored to the students' current social emotional needs. Natalie Slaughter, CCC Counselor, facilitated groups for Pre-K, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade. The Pre-K, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade groups focused on feeling identification and emotion regulation. The 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade girls group explored the feeling of anxiety and how anxiety can affect various areas of our lives. The students in each group learned

how to identify and express their feelings in a healthy manner. Stephanie Chambers, CCC Behavior Specialist, facilitated small groups for Pre-K, Kindergarten, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The Pre-K and Kindergarten groups focused on respect and how to be a good friend to others. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade group explored complex topics such as perseverance and responsibility. All groups were facilitated using creative learning techniques such as therapeutic games, emotion storybooks, and art projects to have the students eager to participate in group activities. During these small groups, students learned a range of SEL skills to help them succeed not only in their classrooms but also at home and in their social relationships.

**If you would like information about how to connect your child with support from the CCC, please call 856-881-8700, ext. 3133**



**CHILD  
CONNECTION  
CENTER** A CLAYTON  
MODEL PROGRAM

---

# SIMMONS NEWS AND EVENTS

---

## Harvest Parade 2021



# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Clayton Middle School**

**Mr. Marvin Tucker, Principal**

Message from Mr. Tucker:

Students and teachers seem to have picked up where we left off last school year! Last school year culminated with a middle school field day filled with music, activities, food, waterslides, and fun shared with friends! It was a great way to end the school year. This school year has been moving along quickly. Just like the old saying, "Time flies when you are having fun!" Fun is learning and building relationships here at Clayton Middle School. We had a large turnout for Back-to-School Night. Parents had an option to come in person or access a video for information. This was the first in person Back-to-School Night since before the pandemic, so it was refreshing to return to normal operations. October ushered in mild weather as well as a plethora of activities and events. Spirit week is always fun with the dress up themes that end with the Fall Festival Dance. We also enjoyed a beautiful warm sunny day in late October for our outdoor middle school pep rally, in which two students won bicycles donated by the Clayton Police Department for participating in the Summer Reading Program. In addition, we also recognized our "Olympic Readers," students who went beyond the summer reading expectations, reading extras books and doing extra projects. They were excited!

November and December were just as exciting with several students being able to earn "virtual tickets" for showing acts of respect, responsibility, and integrity throughout the school day towards others. Students who used their tickets toward a movie in the Performing Arts Center were able to bring a friend. Many students like this incentive, which takes place at the end of the school day. Popcorn and other snacks are also provided. The VIP luncheon is another big incentive and a big hit for these students who display Clayton Middle School's overarching characteristics of respect, responsibility, and integrity. These students are able to bring a friend and receive the "VIP" treatment from several staff members who serve the students a special lunch in another room outside of the cafeteria during their lunch period. Permanent smiles seemed to be on the students' faces for the remainder of the school day during these events.

A return to class trips were also a plus! Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade class went to Washington D.C to visit the Smithsonian and tour numerous monuments. Students had a blast and many participated. To end 2021, Clayton Middle School's Band and Choir delivered a tremendous performance at our Winter Concert. It was refreshing to see a live in-person concert as opposed to seeing it online. Our students were able to display their talents and provide us with great entertainment. We are very proud of our students at Clayton Middle School.



*Mr. Tucker*



*Ms. Holly Harrington*

*CMS Teacher-of-the-Year*



*Spirit Week- Crazy Hat Day!*

## ADMINISTRATION

**Mr. Marvin Tucker, Principal**

**Mr. Wayne Copeland, 21st Century**

**Mr. Matthew Slater, Assistant Principal**

**Program Director**

**Ms. Tanya Clark, District Supervisor, Curriculum and Instruction**

**Ms. Susan Verrico, Literacy Specialist**

[www.claytonps.org](http://www.claytonps.org)

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

---

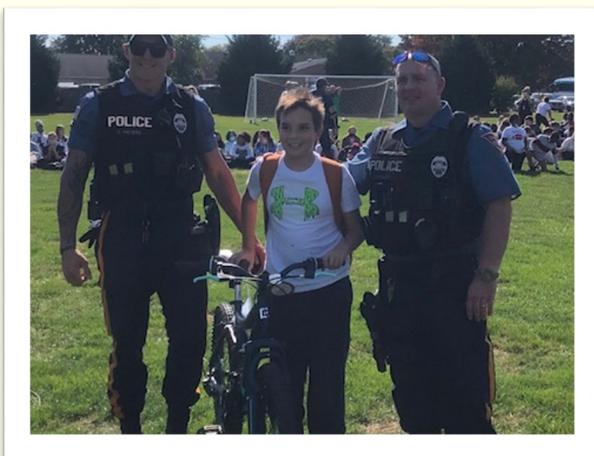
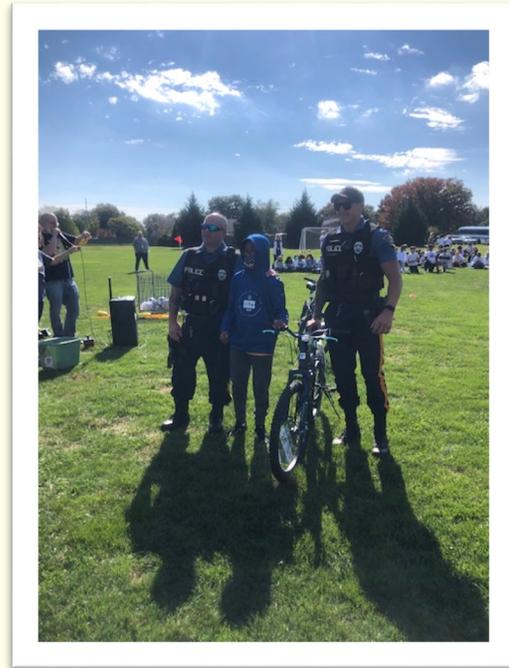
# CLAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## NEWS AND EVENTS

---

### Fall Ushers in Middle School Fun and Rewards at First Pep Rally

**I**n October, Middle School students gathered outside for the school year's first pep rally. They were able to enjoy the fall weather and spend time with their friends and teachers outside of the classroom. Staff and teachers worked hard to ensure the students had a great time, organizing games and activities. Two students who completed their Summer Reading projects won brand new bikes, donated by the Clayton FOP. In addition, our Olympic Readers, students who read two books and completed two projects, received gift certificates to Barnes and Noble.



**Thank you to the Clayton FOP for supporting our schools, our students, and our Summer Reading program.**



---

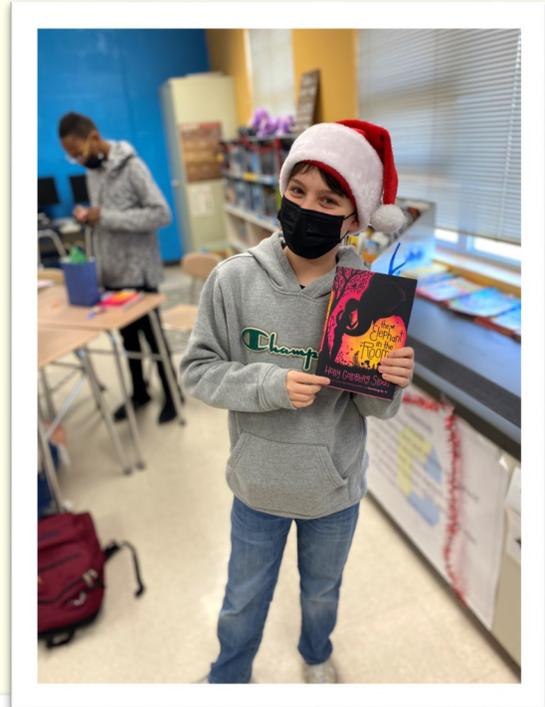
# CLAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## NEWS AND EVENTS

---

### ELA Teachers Surprise Students with the Gift of Books

**K**nowing that books make wonderful gifts, our ELA teachers assembled gift bags for every Middle School student and surprised them right before the holiday break! Students received their own copy of a book that was selected for them by their teachers as well as trinkets associated with their books. The gift bags also included pencils, pencil cases, bookmarks, and candy. As you can see, students were super excited to receive their books. Pictured are 6th Grade students from Ms. Cecil's class.



---

# CLAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## 21ST CENTURY LEADER'S PROGRAM

---

### 21st Century LEADERS Program Offers a Place to Go and to Grow After School

The 21ST Century LEADERS Program offers free after-school classes and STEAM activities designed to engage students and help them grow into tomorrow's leaders. This fall, students took classes in cooking, crafting, painting, fitness and health, travel, dance, financial literacy, and games and leadership. In addition, they visited the Edelman Planetarium at Rowan University to learn about astronomy and our universe. One hour of homework assistance is offered daily, and free busing home is provided. The program is set up to allow students to attend classes and participate in sports and clubs as well. To learn more about the program, contact Mr. Copeland at [wcopeland@claytonps.org](mailto:wcopeland@claytonps.org). Applications are available in the Middle School's main office.



*Academic assistance is available daily. Clayton teachers offer standards based mini lessons and help with homework.*



*Students learn about cooking and food handling procedures*



---

# CLAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

## 21ST CENTURY LEADER'S PROGRAM

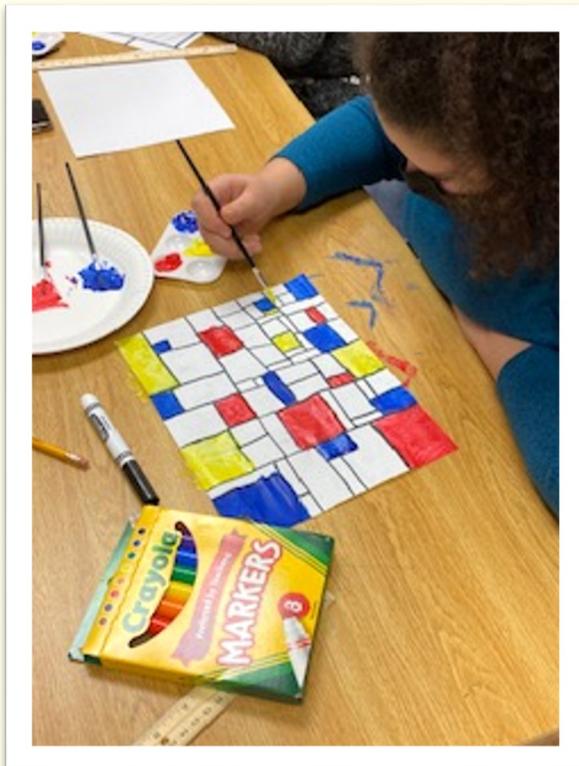
---

Students in the 21st Century LEADERS' Program explore their own creative talents while studying and emulating some of history's greatest artists .



Pictured Right: Students used markers to create art based on the work of French Post-impressionist George Seurat and his use of color theory and Pointillism.

Pictured Below: The students learned about the Dutch modern artist Piet Mondrian and then created their own masterpieces in his style.



---

# FAREWELL AND BEST WISHES TO CMS RETIREE—MS. DICRESCENZO

---



*Mr. Tucker, Mr. Slater, and the students and staff at CMS wish Mrs. DiCrescenzo a wonderful retirement after 37 years as an educator! She began teaching at Clayton in January 1995.*

## Ms. DiCrescenzo's future plans include...

- Perfecting some more homemade pasta and Italian dishes and taking a cooking tour of Italy.
- Creating charcuterie boards with a new one debuting every Friday night.
- Touring wineries and maybe taking a wine-tasting class.
- Reading by a pool or on the beach.
- Spending lots of time "being Simon's Nonna."
- Biking and walking many miles on a beach somewhere.

# CLAYTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Clayton High School**

**Mr. Joe Visalli Principal**

Message from Mr. Visalli:

As we began the 2021-22 school, we were happy to welcome students back to in-person instruction and return to as much normalcy as possible.

One of the first events we held this school year was our Back-to-School Night, where we welcomed parents back into our building. We were able to continue the tradition of the National Honor Society Induction ceremony. This year's event was held in the Performing Arts Center with parents and guardians in attendance. Student Council has done many activities, with one of the highlights being Homecoming week. In addition, we had our in-coming Freshmen Orientation night, Elective Showcase, and our Junior College planning nights. Events were held virtually with parents and students able to view videos from administration and teachers.

Ms. Denise Zambon, a 13-year veteran of our Business Department is this year's High School Educator-of-the-Year. Ms. Zambon has demonstrated her leadership by serving as our Elective Department's Chair. We are very proud to have her represent the High School this year.



Mr. Visalli  
Principal



Mrs. Denise Zambon  
High School Teacher-of-the-Year



Marching Band

## ADMINISTRATION

**Mr. Joe Visalli, Principal**

**Mr. Dan Antonelli, Assistant Principal  
and Athletic Director**

**Ms. Tanya Clark, District Supervisor,  
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Mr. Joe Valentino, District Supervisor of  
Guidance**

[www.claytonps.org](http://www.claytonps.org)

Follow us on Facebook and  
Twitter

---

# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

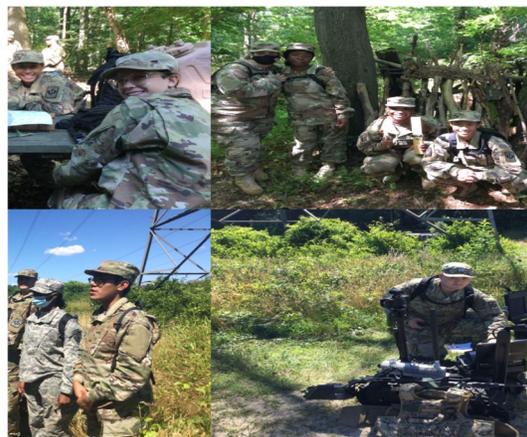
## JROTC NEWS AND EVENTS

---

### JROTC Involved in School and Community All Year Round

The Clayton High School JROTC program has been busy with numerous activities, some of which began in the summer. They came together to paint the anchor in front of the high school, making it look brand new again. In addition, they took several day trips. They toured the Naval Air station in Wildwood as well as the Cape May Zoo, where they participated in zip lining with Delsea High School's cadets. A very important trip was to Camp Roosevelt, where they worked together using survival strategies to complete a given task. They faced hard obstacles, but they lifted each other up and learned that they can do whatever they put their mind to doing. In September, cadets organized a ceremony to commemorate 9/11, and they performed as a color guard for the Lady Clippers soccer

team game against Gloucester Catholic. On Back-to-School nights for the Middle School and High School, cadets volunteered their time to help guide the parents through the school. The Clayton JROTC cadets are always trying their best to stay socially active within the community. On September 17th, Clayton received an invitation to help with the POW/MIA ceremony in Williamstown. Some cadets were directed to call out the names of fallen soldiers, while others rang the bell after each name. This was a good way to interact with some other JROTC cadets from different schools. Looking ahead, the cadets are planning their Military Ball on March 11th.



---

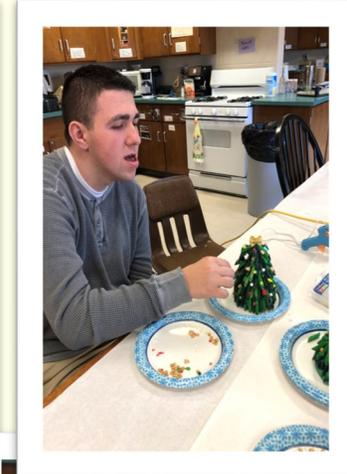
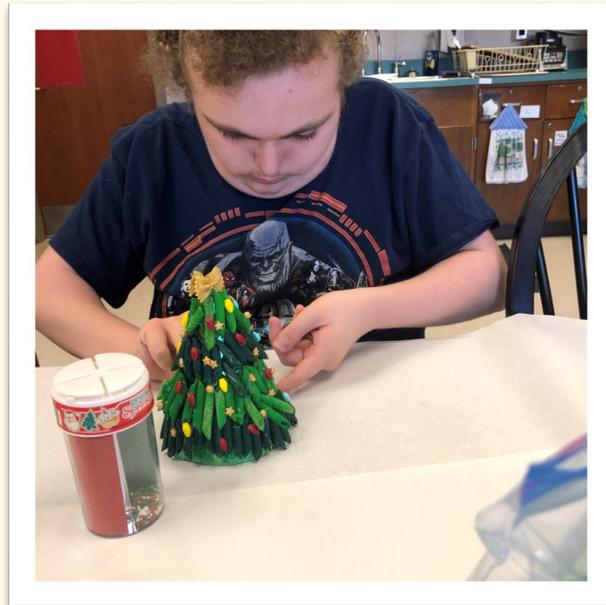
# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## NEWS AND EVENTS

---

### Unified PE Class Collaborates with MD Class to Create Holiday Projects

Anyone who has ever attempted to make a gingerbread house has quickly discovered that it's not as easy as it looks. It requires thoughtful planning, a strategy for keeping the walls together using frosting instead of glue, and of course, someone to help you make decorating decisions. In December, students in the Unified PE Class teamed up with the MD Class to create gingerbread houses and tree-toppers. Students collaborated on planning, measuring, cutting, and decorating. Their teamwork resulted in some awesome creations.



# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## ATHLETICS

Congratulations to the following Seniors who have committed to furthering their academic and athletic careers by committing to the following universities!



**Gianna Ettore**  
**Morgan State University**



**Madison Manera**  
**Stockton State University**



**Cassie White**  
**Morgan State University**



# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL BAND ACTIVITES



---

# CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL

## WINTER CONCERT

---

