

LASALLE SCHOOL

An Agent of Healing since 1854



July 2015 eNewsletter

Poised to learn more, teach more

As LaSalle's eNewsletter readers are well aware, LaSalle's in-depth study of brain science and the delivery of treatment to our youth and families has been evolving over the last several years.

In collaboration with key partners, presentations at professional conferences continue to increase, the intense interest in the first two Capital District symposiums on 'Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma, and Response' demands that it become an annual event, and localities are recognizing and seeking LaSalle's expertise as school districts, family courts, and others navigate the challenges of administering programs and services. Most recently, a request for proposals issued by the University at Albany on behalf of Albany County Department of Children, Youth, and Families resulted in LaSalle being selected to contract with the department to provide, upon request, complex information in understandable, tangible terms from instructors and trainers who can relate to the challenges and obstacles their peer professionals face when treating youth suffering from severe trauma.

Nationally, LaSalle's selection for two, 2-year, cohorts sponsored by the Alliance for Stronger Families and Communities is providing the agency with valuable information that is improving services.

LaSalle is now entering its final year of study in the Residential Transformation Cohort, and will launch the 'Change in Mind' Brain Science Cohort at an August convening to be held in Chicago. All initiatives continue to elevate LaSalle's profile as a provider of trauma-informed treatment practices in capable, efficient child care settings.

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Learning sustainable life skills from Farm to Market

Town of Stillwater look out!! This year a summer school course that is 80 percent hands on and life application is introducing eight to 10 LaSalle students to urban agriculture and sustainable farming techniques at Stillwater's Old World Farm.

During the summer school session, students are traveling to the Saratoga County located farm to spend four mornings learning about topics including food distribution patterns, the basics of plant propagation, raising healthy seedlings, the role of irrigation in farm systems, what shapes our ecosystem, and more.



"Building self-reliant communities through Community

Supported Agriculture farming encourages youth to take a personal responsibility for their careers and character development, build a sense of purpose and pride in what they can do, and provide our culinary classes and kitchens with fresh produce as a result of their labors," said Culinary Science Teacher Lorraine Clarke. Open to all, the class is targeted to LaSalle high school students who need to earn the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) certificate required for graduation by the New York State Education Department.

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Having fun is therapeutic

Last month, we reported on the annual - last day of school - Field Day. What we didn't tell you then is that while such a day appears to just be fun, it is actually much more purposeful. Another similar day was planned, coordinated and executed by 70+ staff from various direct care and management sectors at LaSalle. Working together, they provided a comprehensive, quality recreational experience for our Residential youth focused on only one thing: Providing them with the fun and games that every child deserves.

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Poised to learn more, teach more

As LaSalle's eNewsletter readers are well aware, LaSalle's in-depth study of brain science and the delivery of treatment to our youth and families has been evolving over the last several years. In collaboration with key partners, presentations at professional conferences continue to increase, the intense interest in the first two Capital District symposiums on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trauma, and Response demands that it become an annual event, and localities are recognizing and seeking LaSalle's expertise as they navigate the challenges of administering programs and services.

Locally, a request for proposals issued by the University at Albany on behalf of Albany County Department of Children, Youth, and Families resulted in LaSalle being selected to contract with the department to provide, upon request, complex information in understandable, tangible terms from instructors and trainers who can relate to the challenges and obstacles their peer professionals face when treating youth suffering from severe trauma. This ACDCYF contract is also in cooperation with the NYS Social Work Education Consortium, and offers LaSalle yet another opportunity to disseminate information about the importance of ACEs and the role of trauma informed approaches, including the issue of vicarious trauma in the workplace, to a larger audience.

Nationally, LaSalle's selection for two cohorts sponsored by the Alliance for Stronger Families and Communities is providing LaSalle with valuable information that is improving services. Now entering the final year of the two-year Residential Transformation Cohort, the agency is one of 15 residential treatment agencies collaborating to identify ways to become less dependent on residential care while also assuring that the residential care provided is consistent with the best practices in the field. At LaSalle, results have contributed considerably to strategic planning efforts to embed the best practices of family engagement into programming. 'Change in Mind' is the second cohort and focuses on the study of brain science. Announced to LaSalle eNewsletter readers in June 2015, this cohort will convene 10 United States and five Canadian sites to 'demonstrate the larger impactful role of the nonprofit sector as educator, advocate, and true influencer of getting appropriate systems aligned to the science.' The formal press release was issued earlier this month, and the first convening of the sites will take place next month in Chicago. Funders of both cohorts are committed to working with the Alliance to improve the health and health care of all Americans. They include the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Residential Transformation Cohort); and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Norlien Foundation ('Change in Mind' Brain Science Cohort).

All of these initiatives continue to elevate LaSalle's profile as a provider of trauma-informed treatment practices in capable, efficient child care settings. There promises to be much more to tell with regard to the lightening quick speed of the demand for residential treatment and brain science information. Updates on initiatives both underway, and in the pipeline, will be provided in future eNewsletter editions and on LaSalle's website - www.lasalle-school.org.

Learning sustainable life skills from Farm to Market

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During the summer school session, students are traveling to the Saratoga County located farm, to spend four mornings learning about topics including food distribution patterns, the basics of plant propagation, raising healthy seedlings, the role of irrigation in farm systems, what shapes our ecosystem, and more. The farm is operated by a former - 30 year-culinary chef from the Albany City School District.

"Building self-reliant communities through Community Supported Agriculture farming encourages youth to take a personal responsibility for their careers and character development, build a sense of purpose and pride in what they can do, and provide our culinary classes and kitchens with fresh produce as a result of their labors," said Culinary Science Teacher Lorraine Clarke. Open to all, the class is targeted to LaSalle high school students who need to earn the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) certificate required for graduation by the New York State Education Department.

Students are expected to create and maintain a portfolio of their experience throughout the course. Portfolios can range from simple reflective journaling to photographs of activities with verbal explanations. A rubrics and work readiness assessment checklist is being utilized, and the class will present a group multimedia presentation to the entire school body when classes resume in the fall. There is the potential for trips to Old World Farm in the fall to harvest crops.

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Last month, we reported on the annual - last day of school - Field Day. What we didn't tell you then is that while such a day appears to just be fun, it is actually much more purposeful. Last week, a similar day was planned, coordinated and executed by 70+ staff from various direct care and management sectors at LaSalle. Working together, they provided a comprehensive, quality recreational experience for our Residential youth focused on only one thing: Providing them with the fun and games that every child deserves.

The science of neurological development contributes significantly to the design of all program components at LaSalle. Activity calendars and schedules are planned by staff realize the benefit of frequent, holistic, high interest, physical activities for youth who have experienced toxic stress. While outside field days are not new to LaSalle, they are more frequent especially with the warmer weather and viewed as essential to a youth's healthy development.

The creativity and energy needed to pull off such an event was praised by fellow staff and administrators. Recognizing that not all kids may have enjoyed the entire day, Executive Director Bill Wolff congratulated staff saying, "I assure you that an event like yesterday is not a common occurrence in agencies like LaSalle, and that speaks to how much you care about kids, and also the pride you have in the place where you work."