



## Mission

The mission of the Education Division of Buckeye Community Hope Foundation is to establish strong public community schools by adhering to quality authorizing practices, ensuring responsible oversight, and setting high standards for school performance.

## Vision

The Education Division's vision is strong communities of healthy, well-educated students, and a future in which all students have access to a high quality public education. Ohio thrives as increasing numbers of schools graduate students equipped to assume a positive role in society.



# Integrating Restorative Practices in Small Ways for Big Gains

By Illie Massey, Accountability and School Improvement Representative

In recent years, restorative practices have gained attention as an effective framework for building positive school climates and addressing conflicts. While the concept can seem overwhelming or resource-intensive, integrating small restorative practices into daily routines can lead to significant improvements in relationships, trust, and overall school culture.

## Restorative Practices Defined

Restorative practices encompass a set of strategies aimed at repairing harm, improving communication, and fostering community within educational settings (Wachtel, 2016). Unlike traditional punitive approaches, restorative methods emphasize accountability and relationship-building through collaborative dialogue (Gonzalez, 2015).

## Small Practices, Big Impact

### 1. Restorative Circles for Check-Ins

Daily or weekly restorative circles provide a simple yet powerful space for students and staff to express feelings and build connections. These quick check-ins—taking as little as 10 minutes—allow individuals to voice concerns and celebrate successes, promoting a sense of inclusion and trust (Evans & Vaandering, 2016).

Example: A classroom circle asking, "What was a highlight of your day?" can create meaningful dialogue while encouraging empathy.

### 2. Affective Statements

Restorative practices often start with changing language. Affective statements express how a behavior impacts others, moving away from blame to reflection. For example:

Instead of: "Stop interrupting the class."

Try: "When you interrupt, it makes it hard for me to focus on everyone's learning."

Such small shifts in language foster understanding and reflection on behavior without confrontation (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013).

### 3. Restorative Questions in Conflict

Introducing restorative questions during minor conflicts encourages students to reflect on their actions and take responsibility. Simple questions like:

"What happened?"

"Who has been affected by this?"

"What can you do to make things right?"

These questions promote problem-solving and conflict resolution rather than punishment, leading to fewer repeat incidents (Gonzalez, 2015).

## Impact on School Climate

Research indicates that schools implementing restorative practices see reduced suspensions, improved relationships, and better academic outcomes. Even small-scale adoption can help shift schools from punitive environments to cultures of accountability and empathy (Gregory et al., 2016). Moreover, these practices contribute to equity by addressing disciplinary disparities often seen among marginalized student groups (Lustick, 2017).

While restorative practices are transformative, their implementation can be manageable and manageable. Small, intentional steps—like restorative circles, affective statements, and reflective questions—can foster a more connected, equitable, and responsive school community. By embedding these practices into daily interactions, educators create environments where students feel heard, respected, and supported.

## References

Evans, K., & Vaandering, D. (2016). *The little book of restorative justice in education: Fostering responsibility, healing, and hope in schools*. Good Books.

Gonzalez, T. (2015). Social justice, school discipline, and restorative justice. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48(4), 470-488. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2015.1062623>

Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2016). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 26(4), 325-353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2014.929950>

Lustick, H. (2017). Making discipline relevant: Toward a theory of culturally responsive positive schoolwide discipline. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20(5), 681-695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1150828>

Thorsborne, M., & Blood, P. (2013). *Implementing restorative practices in schools: A practical guide to transforming school communities*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

## The Steve Guthrie Memorial Award for Excellence

In late 2023, we unexpectedly lost Steve Guthrie, a great man who has served on the Buckeye Community Hope Foundation Board for over 20 years. Steve was a generous, kind, and loyal friend to many. He was always willing to help anyone and demonstrated that in his work with Buckeye, within his family, and his daily life. He left a hole in the hearts of all who had the pleasure of knowing him and working with him. In honor of Mr. Guthrie, the Board of Trustees of Buckeye Community Hope Foundation has created an annual employee award in his honor. One BCHF employee each year will be recognized for their contributions that exemplify the character of Mr. Guthrie and supports our Goal of improving the lives of others through housing, support, and education.

It is with great pleasure and admiration that we congratulate Brenda Jacques, Director of Corporate Compliance for the BCHF Development Division, on being selected as the first recipient of the Steve Guthrie Memorial Award for Excellence. This award is a testament to her unwavering dedication, exceptional contributions, and embodiment of the values that are at the heart of Buckeye Community Hope Foundation. We are thankful to have Brenda on our team



Brenda Jacques

2024 STEVE GUTHRIE  
MEMORIAL AWARD FOR  
EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT



Brenda Jacques joined Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) in June 2014. Brenda comes to us with over 15 years of experience in affordable housing including LIHTC, HOME, ARRA, NSP and HUD financing, and the closing of all real estate transactions.

Brenda was nominated by her colleagues for her commitment to going above and beyond, and her steadfast integrity in every aspect of her work:

"Brenda always goes above and beyond for Buckeye each and every day. And not only does our team recognize this, but all of the various partners that we work with on LIHTC deals always go out of their way to mention how great it is to work with her. I cannot speak highly enough about her commitment to Buckeye and about how valuable she is to our team."

"Brenda naturally wants to see her team, coworkers and BCHF, succeed and she truly understands this business. She is very knowledgeable and willing to help/assist and train anyone at any time. Even during her busiest times, she will reply to all emails and set up a schedule that works. Any issues or problems that arise do not go unanswered or unresolved - Brenda walks through the details from start to finish. She is an absolutely delightful and compassionate person - and deserving of this award."

## Global Ambassadors Language Academy Students Travel to China for Debate

For the second year in a row, middle school students and a teacher from Global Ambassador's Language Academy's (GALA) Mandarin immersion program embarked on an unforgettable journey to Chengdu, China. This weeklong trip, held from November 17 to November 25, was generously funded by the Foreign Affairs Office of Chengdu Municipal People's Government and the Chengdu Education

Bureau.

Eighth-grade students Kayden and Harrison had the honor of representing Ohio in the 2024 Sister Cities Youth Debate Challenge. Accompanied by their teacher, Zhangjie Chen, the students engaged in an enriching cultural and academic experience. The trip began with three days of immersive cultural activities, allowing the students to explore the history, traditions, and modern innovations of Chengdu. These experiences provided valuable insights into Chinese culture and helped build connections with peers from across the globe.

The highlight of the trip was the two-day debate competition, where Kayden and Harrison showcased their critical thinking and public speaking skills. The debate topic, 'Does fragmented information enhance or decrease people's cognitive abilities?', challenged participants to delve into complex ideas and present their perspectives with clarity and confidence.

As GALA continues to prioritize global education and meaningful international connections, opportunities like the Chengdu exchange program play a crucial role in preparing students for a diverse and interconnected world.

The trip was featured in Signal Cleveland - you can read the article [here](#).



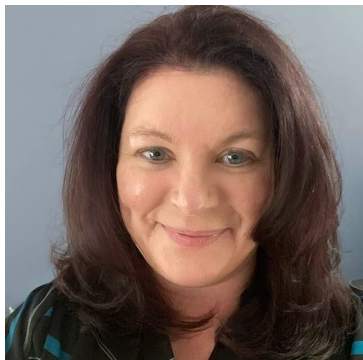
## Operation Warm

Columbus Noor Academy recently received over 100 brand-new winter coats from Operation Warm, a national nonprofit dedicated to providing high-quality coats and shoes to children in need. Through partnerships with compassionate individuals, community organizations, and corporations across North America, Operation Warm works to ensure that children have the warmth and confidence they need during the colder months. This generous donation will have a meaningful impact on the students at Columbus Noor Academy, offering both comfort and protection throughout the winter season. Thank you to Karen Rose, BCHF Compliance Representative, and Rachel Pfost, School Leader, for making this wonderful donation happen!



## Math Minds Monthly

## Board Member Spotlight



Buckeye Community Hope Foundation (BCHF) recognizes the important work that governing board members do in supporting their school community. In recognition and support of this hard work, BCHF is highlighting one board member each month in our sponsor newsletter.

This month we are featuring Heather Holliday, who serves on the Focus North High School board. Heather just reached her one-year anniversary of being a board member. As a former teacher, she had a few connections with people associated with Focus North High School.

"Even though my line of work changed, I've never stopped being a champion for students," Holliday said. "I was honored to join the board and serve our schools and our community in a new way."

Outside of her work on the board, Heather is a cybersecurity enthusiast! She assists people of all ages (from 7 to 70+) how to stay safe online. In addition, she loves travelling with her husband, Don.

"We have fun no matter where we go, from Hawaii to Wyoming (and even to Pittsburg)," Holliday said. "It's always fun to learn new things and visit new places. I'm a big supporter of our national parks and enjoy any time I can spend in nature. On the weekends, I spend my "spare time" gardening and writing."

### What have you learned over the years about running/being a part of board meetings?

Board members have such a significant responsibility. We are responsible for ensuring the school complies with a number of laws and regulations, from the way the finances are handled, to the management of the curriculum, and perhaps most importantly, the issues that affect our students' safety and privacy. I've learned a lot about the different regulatory agencies, laws and best practices that help our school to continue to meet the needs of our students.

### What are some of the proudest moments you have had as a board member?

I really enjoy seeing all the great accomplishments of our students and staff highlighted in each board meeting. It's wonderful to celebrate alongside our students when they win awards and recognition. Since graduation and attendance rates are so integral to the success of our students, it's also so important to recognize when these rates increase and to talk about the ways that we can continue to improve in this area. The teachers and staff work so hard and make an incredible difference for our students. So, it's also marvelous to see their work culminate in our ability to attain grants and support the implementation of critical programs like intervention, ELL and mental health.

### What part of the school's mission do you most connect with?

I'm deeply committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to learn. In order to do that, schools have to adjust to meet students according to their needs, while continuing to maintain high standards and meet state standards. For some students, traditional education practices pose a very real barrier to their learning, academic performance and ability to prepare for their future. I'm honored to be a part of a school that takes into account the whole student -- from their academic needs, to cultural and language considerations, to their mental health -- and understands how these factors may affect academic performance. It's very clear to me that the teachers and staff care very deeply about their students and they work diligently each day to help them succeed.

All of us in the Education Division of BCHF appreciate the commitment to students Heather Holliday has shown. We hope, in sharing these stories, others will consider serving as community school governing board members.

# Art Fest at Constellation Schools: Westside Community School for the Arts

Constellation Schools: Westside Community School for the Arts recently hosted its annual Art Fest, a celebration of creativity, culture, and community spirit. Each classroom adopted a different country, creating artwork inspired by that nation's unique traditions and artistic styles. Parents were given special "passports" to collect stamps from at least six "countries," adding an interactive element to the event. Once they met the requirement, families gained access to view the full art collection.

The festival also featured a musical performance, showcasing the students' talents. Beyond the art and music, attendees enjoyed browsing the student-run gift shop, which offered a variety of affordable items.

Check out some photos from the event below:



## Rapback Enrollment Timeline for Non-Licensed Employees and Contractors

Those non-licensed school personnel that are required to be enrolled in Rapback should be enrolled by **January 31, 2025**. Non-licensed school employees and contractors are required to be enrolled in Rapback if they have routine interaction with a student or regular responsibility for the care, custody, and control of a student. The school or district must determine the level of student interaction for a given position; however, the following positions are commonly included: food service personnel, custodians, building secretaries or administrators, and other contractors and employees who interact with students. Visit the [Rapback Expansion webpage](#) for more information.

## BCHF Schools Spread Holiday Cheer

**The Academy for Urban Scholars** hosted their annual toy drive, spreading holiday cheer and making a meaningful difference in the lives of local families. The event was made even more special with a surprise appearance from Santa, adding extra joy to the festive occasion!



**Bennett Venture Academy** hosted their "Gingerbread House with Your Scholar" event, thanks to donations from Vector Services. This cherished holiday tradition invites families into the school to create gingerbread houses alongside their students.



Kindergarten and first-grade students at **The L. Hollingworth School** filled the hallways with holiday cheer as they visited each classroom to sing Christmas carols!



Students at **Lincoln Park Academy** celebrated the day before winter break by creating holiday crafts!





Kindergarten through 7th students at **Main Preparatory Academy** created, colored, and wrote heartfelt Christmas cards, which were delivered to a nearby nursing home. The staff expressed immense gratitude and appreciation for the thoughtful gesture and extended a huge thank you to the scholars. A wonderful opportunity to spread holiday cheer!



Stambaugh Charter Academy hosted a Holiday PJ party! They watched a festive movie, drank hot chocolate, and had cookies and treats. The Grinch even made an appearance for the event.



## Upcoming Events

It is a new year and BCHF is happy to invite you to exciting, NEW professional development sessions. Our learning opportunities are an effective way for adults to get together and talk about educational practices. Relax, stay warm, and join in! Register for sessions via the link in the title, or go to BCHF's Professional Learning Opportunities Catalog, [available here](#).

**ASYNCHRONOUS -ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND OVERCOMING RESISTANCE IN IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES** – January 6 – February 6, 2025 – *Asynchronous – register to receive materials and instructions.*

Overcoming resistance is crucial for successfully implementing restorative practices in schools. In this asynchronous session, participants will explore shared challenges such as staff and student resistance, time constraints, and misconceptions. Through interactive discussions and real-world examples, you will gain practical strategies and insights from successful implementations. Participants will develop an action plan to address resistance in their own contexts, submitting it as a deliverable to earn credit for completion and ensuring they can effectively integrate restorative approaches into their educational environment.

**TEACHER BOOTCAMP-CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DE-ESCALATION** – January 7, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. *Online via Zoom*

Do you feel in control of your classroom? In this interactive session, educators will explore proven strategies for fostering a positive classroom environment while preventing and managing disruptive behaviors. Key topics will include Setting Clear Expectations: Learn how to establish rules and routines that promote a sense of safety and order. Building Positive Relationships: Discover strategies for connecting with students and creating a supportive, inclusive classroom culture. Recognizing and Responding to Escalation: Gain insight into the signs of escalating behavior and how to intervene early and effectively. De-escalation Techniques: Explore verbal and non-verbal strategies for calming tense situations and restoring focus. Restorative Practices: Understand how to repair harm and rebuild trust with students through restorative conversations and actions. Participants will leave with a toolkit of practical, research-based techniques to manage classroom dynamics, minimize disruptions, and de-escalate challenging situations with confidence and empathy. This session is designed for teachers, support staff, and anyone involved in creating a positive learning environment.

**TEACHER BOOTCAMP--LESSON STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY**– January 8, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. *Online via Zoom*

Now that your classroom is in order, let us talk about how to keep learning going! In this session, educators will dive into the art and science of effective lesson planning and delivery. Whether you are

looking to refine our approach or develop a more engaging classroom experience, this session offers strategies to design and deliver lessons that capture students' attention and foster deep learning. Key topics will include Understanding Lesson Components Designing for Engagement: Differentiation and Inclusivity, Effective Questioning and Discussion, Time Management and Pacing, and Reflection and Feedback.

**THIRD GRADE READING GUARANTEE DATA AND INSTRUCTIONAL IDEAS** – *January 14, 2025 – 9:30 to 11:30 A.M. - Online via Zoom*

The fall third grade OST results are in! Educators now can make instruction even more responsive to learner needs before Spring. We will review the results of the fall assessments and discuss how data can help leaders and teachers work together to address the instructional needs of students this Winter and into Spring. Come to learn ideas to help you plan for data-based instruction and intervention. Leave with a data-based plan for instruction!

**MATHEMATICS LEADERSHIP COHORT QUICK START--NEW!** – *January 14, 2025 – 2:00 to 3:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom*

NEW! If you have missed the first two meetings of mathematics leadership, the Cohort QuickStart is designed just for you. This session consolidates key insights from Sessions 1 and 2, specifically for mathematics leaders. Participants will review strategies for assessing and improving instructional practices, explore essential structural supports needed for a successful mathematics program, and begin to develop their Mathematics Program Improvement Plan (MPIP). This session will help you get back on track with the cohort and enhance your leadership impact on student learning.

**SPLASH! INTO PBL** – *January 15, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom*

There are many PBL "pretenders." Come find out what the PBL "CONTENDERS" know about how project-based learning will change your classroom and your teaching career. Help students learn how to think critically, solve problems, and find their own answers. Get a taste of the Gold Standard elements of a great PBL project. If this "taste" gives you an appetite for more, you will be able to join a group who would like to study this further.

**CAPSTONES FOR THE WIN! Designing an Impactful Capstone Project for Any Grade** – *January 21, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom*

Capstone projects for any grade are the culmination of a student's academic journey, offering a chance to showcase the skills and knowledge they have developed throughout their studies. This session will provide educators with essential strategies for creating meaningful and impactful capstone projects that foster critical thinking, creativity, and real-world problem-solving. In this interactive workshop, participants will explore the best practices for defining project scope, selecting relevant topics, and designing projects that align with academic and career goals. We will discuss key elements of successful capstone projects. Participants will also learn how to guide students in setting clear, achievable milestones and maintaining motivation throughout the project lifecycle. By the end of the session, educators and students will walk away with the tools and techniques to design capstone projects that not only demonstrate academic prowess but also prepare students for success in their future careers.

**ALL WRITE! ALL WRITE! ALL WRITE! Writing in the Content Areas (ASYNCHRONOUS)--Repeat Session** – *January 22, 2025 – Asynchronous learning – register to receive materials and instructions.*

ALL WRITE! ALL WRITE! ALL WRITE! Writing IS thinking. The more teachers can use writing in their non-ELA classrooms, the deeper the thought process will be in the classroom. This is an ASYNCHRONOUS session where you can work at your own pace! There is a unit planning guide which you will turn in at the end of your learning which will award your contract hours. This is a rare opportunity for you to work at your own pace and on your own timeline.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: 3 PART SERIES** – *January 23, January 30, and February 6 – 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. – Online via Zoom*

Is Artificial Intelligence an asset or a threat? Join middle school teacher Dan Jones as he discusses how to make Artificial Intelligence a teaching and learning tool. This three-part series meets on Thursdays at 3:30 P.M. on January 23, January 30, and February 6. Join us for specific strategies and examples to help you navigate AI!

**ETHICS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION** – *January 28, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – Online via Zoom*

May teachers accept holiday gifts from parents? Can they drive students home? Let's examine these and other questions about educators and Ohio's licensure professional code of conduct. This interactive session will examine the licensure standards and discuss scenarios that challenge us as ethical dilemmas as we teach. Educators will better understand the profession of teaching and the

ethical considerations and challenges we may face.

**HOW TO TEACH KIDS TO THINK: PARTS 1 and 2** – February 5 and March 6, 2025 – 4:00 to 5:30 P.M. – *Online via Zoom*

Can the thinking skills of our students keep pace with artificial intelligence? Critical thinking skills are more important than ever as we look into the future for our students. A technology-based and technology-dependent world requires its people to be able to analyze, evaluate and create information. How may teachers best prepare students for this world and for the rigorous demands of their futures? Join us as we discuss the development of critical thinking skills necessary for all ages of students.

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Have a story or event at your school you would like to share? Send it to Hana Chandoul, Strategic Communications Specialist: [hchandoul@buckeyehope.org](mailto:hchandoul@buckeyehope.org).

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