



Kingsway Learning Center and Services

# COURIER

3rd Quarter 2017

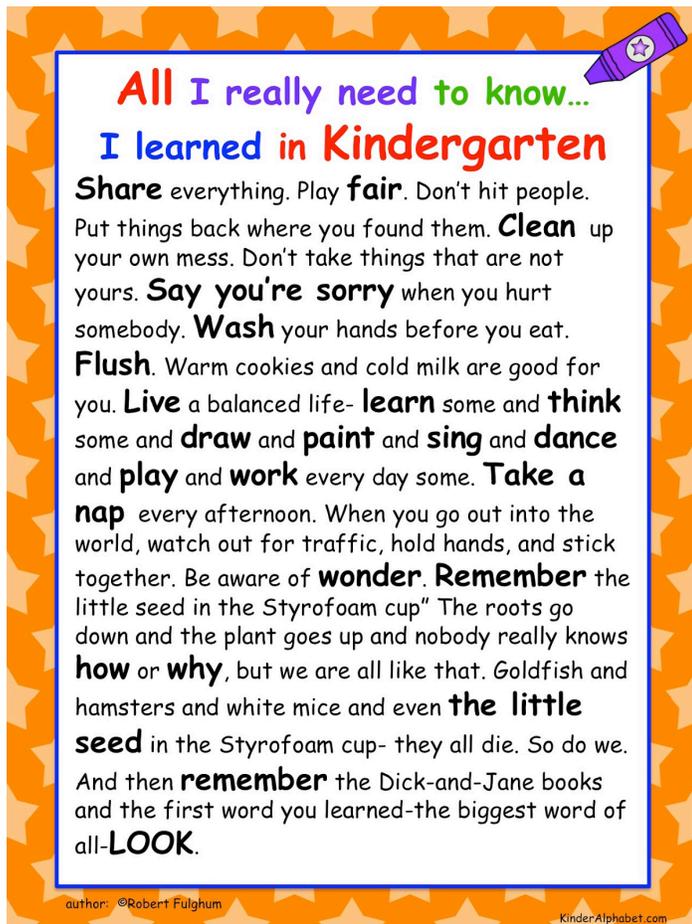


## WELCOME TO THE 2017/2018 SCHOOL YEAR!

In this quarter's Courier, we look ahead to another fun, successful year of education! There is no other time more important in a student's life than the start of the school year. It is a time when our staff ensures them that school is a safe place to be valued and where learning is challenging, engaging and fun. The foundation for fruitful learning and growing has been set and we are ready for another great year! Below, is a photo collage highlighting last year, celebrating numerous activities and events Kingsway has to offer!



My husband and I have strived to teach our elementary school aged boys the tenets of good morals and ethics, some of which are described in the poem by Robert Fulghum "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." (With the exception of cookies being good for you... if my 8-year-old hears that, he will want cookies for breakfast, lunch and dinner!)



**All I really need to know...**  
**I learned in Kindergarten**

**Share** everything. Play **fair**. Don't hit people.  
 Put things back where you found them. **Clean** up your own mess. Don't take things that are not yours. **Say you're sorry** when you hurt somebody. **Wash** your hands before you eat.  
**Flush**. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. **Live** a balanced life- **learn** some and **think** some and **draw** and **paint** and **sing** and **dance** and **play** and **work** every day some. **Take a nap** every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of **wonder**. **Remember** the little seed in the Styrofoam cup" The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows **how** or **why**, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even **the little seed** in the Styrofoam cup- they all die. So do we. And then **remember** the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned-the biggest word of all-**LOOK**.

author: ©Robert Fulghum  
 KinderAlphabet.com

But in our current environment, it seems as though every day there is some report on the news about an individual projecting their hatred onto another individual or group. Conflicting groups battling over human justices that many of us thought were only a part of history.

I struggle each day with how much to share with my own children. I've made every effort to raise them in a protected environment where they are safe and happy and don't have to be exposed to the hatred that exists



in the world. But I know that time is short, and their exposure to these injustices is forthcoming. How do we as adults who struggle to understand it ourselves, teach our children about the evil that exists in the world?

As my boys prepared to return to school, I knew I could no longer shield them from the horrific reports, so I approached the topic with them. I introduced the conversation by explaining that there are people in the world, in our own country, who think they are better than others. We talked about notable figures in history, one of which was Martin Luther King Jr.; my children knowing that he believed all people should be treated fairly and that he made a significant difference in the lives of so many.

Concerned, my youngest son asked, "What can I do? I'm only eight." So we talked about his responsibility in life being to uphold the beliefs that Dr. King held and acting in support of those beliefs: standing up for others and for what is right and just. It is paramount to me that my children are raised to respect and value others and to support those who are most vulnerable. But I wonder, do we, as adults, practice the same things we want our children to do?

## **Buddy Bench**

My boys' school has several Buddy Benches on their playground. A simple idea, the intention is to eliminate loneliness and foster friendship. Children who don't have anyone to play with take a seat on the bench, and others are encouraged to extend a friendly hand.

As adults, do we extend a friendly hand to those in need? Not the simple, sometimes anonymous monetary donations or gifts-in-kind. Do you have a buddy bench at your place of employment? Not a literal one of course, but do you, yourself, extend a gesture of friendship to that coworker who seems a little different or is not readily accepted by others? Do you invite him or her to sit with you for lunch?

Do you have any individuals with special needs at your place of employment? When you encounter an individual with special needs in the community, do you get frustrated when they don't perform to your expectation? Do you sigh or shift impatiently if they are slow to respond or complete a task? We tend to be very accepting of children with disabilities, but for adults, it is much more difficult.

## **Pay it Forward**

One of my favorite movies is "Pay it Forward" in which a Social Studies teacher challenges his students to change the world. One young man in the class comes up with the idea that if he extends a kindness to three people and then challenges them to do the same, the positive effect is infinite. While this emotionally charged film is a work of fiction, there is surely some truth in the concept that kind gestures have a positive impact on others. Remember the post 9-11 environment? Americans banded together like never before. It doesn't have to be just in times of turmoil and tragedy. We should be practicing this in our daily lives, just as we teach our children to do.

## **The Challenge**

So I challenge you to pay it forward.

You may be wondering, "So what does all of this have to do with Kingsway?" I'll tell you. Our students are the ones who need kindness and acceptance the most, especially as they get older and tolerance and acceptance aren't easy to come by.

- If your company does not employ individuals with special needs, contact us! We have many opportunities for partnerships that will enhance our programs and provide labor for your company.
- Find that individual at your workplace or school or anywhere in the community who is not readily accepted by others and extend a friendly welcome. It may just be the only friendly gesture that individual receives that day.
- When you encounter someone who is holding up your day, whether they are new in their position or just not quick enough for you, practice patience and be supportive knowing that they are trying their best.
- Most of all, be the person you want your own children to be. And remember, you learned it all in Kindergarten.



Christine Robinson, Executive Director

# MEET THE BOARD

Gracanne Hinski Ryan



Gracanne Hinski Ryan, Kingsway Learning Center's Board Secretary

Mrs. Gracanne Hinski Ryan is the Executive Director/Superintendent of HollyDELL School and Adult Programs. Gracanne was on the staff of Kingsway and, after leaving to pursue other career options, wanted to remain a part of the Kingsway family. She joined the Kingsway Executive Board in 1982. She lives in Haddonfield, NJ, with her husband, Thomas. They have four grown children. Aside from supporting Kingsway, Gracanne supports other organizations in the special needs community by serving on several other Boards including ASAH, National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC) and Say It With Clay, a non-profit organization that utilizes a hands-on therapeutic approach using clay.

Gracanne's history with Kingsway Learning Center extends before the existing Haddonfield building was a part of Kingsway. She attended high school in the current building when it was St. Mary of the Angels Academy. Kingsway employed Gracanne as a Speech-Language Pathologist for a brief time in 1980, but during that time, Gracanne said her experience working for Kingsway left a mark on her heart that would last forever. "I respected

the mission, the students and the staff and had the great fortune to continue my passion for Kingsway's vision in 1982 when I joined the Board of Directors," Gracanne said. "Kingsway, as a Private School for the Disabled, fulfills a critical need for parents of differently abled students who require highly specialized instruction and therapy."

She continued, "Kingsway is a school that challenges the child while focusing on their abilities; provides an environment that is inclusive all the time; employs a staff that truly and deeply love the students for what they can do and empowers students who feel their disability is not what identifies them but rather it is their unique abilities that make them shine."

Gracanne describes Kingsway in one word: Family. "As a Board member at Kingsway, I know the students they serve every day are part of a family that has the expertise to support them on their road to success, provides them the tools for a full meaningful life and instills in them a love of self and life. It's what every parent wants for their child."

"It has been an honor and a privilege to be associated with Kingsway Learning Center as a Board member for 35 years," she added. "I look forward to an exciting future for Kingsway as they continue to expand their services to meet the demands of the differently abled population."

# Longevity Awards

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We would like to take the time to recognize and honor this year's Longevity Award recipients. The talents and efforts of the recipients listed below have helped us achieve excellence in many areas in education. Our Longevity Award recipients were recognized in person this past July at orientation. The entire Kingsway staff applauds their performance!

## FIVE YEAR AWARD

Lynda Altadonna  
Rachel Doyle  
Dana Kahlbom  
William Lafferty  
Christine Robinson  
Jacqueline Schade

## TEN YEAR AWARD

Tiffany Atkins  
Donna Hadsall  
Theresa Monaco  
Deborah Reichert  
Kathleen Rollo  
William Sweeney  
Elizabeth Trout

## FIFTEEN YEAR AWARD

Sharon Borman  
Mary Fox-Beers  
Margaret Franecki  
Sharon Thornton  
Michael Byrne  
(Board Member)

## TWENTY YEAR AWARD

Jill Coughlin  
Stefanie Mis  
Philip Rodriguez



Lynda Altadonna receiving her five year award



Theresa Monaco receiving her ten year award



Michael Byrne receiving his fifteen year award



Stefanie Mis receiving her twenty year award

The South Jersey Young Professionals Association (SJYPA) donated \$5,500 to Kingsway this past August. Kingsway was the beneficiary charity for the organization's Night at the Ballpark Tailgate and Phillies game event at Citizens Bank Park. Thank you to the attendees and sponsors who made this night a success for Kingsway!

Pictured in this check presentation from left to right: SLE Coordinator Megan Olsen, Community Relations Specialist Matt Flowers, SJYPA President Kate Eisenmann, OT Andrea Di Giovanni, SJYPA Treasurer Regina Philips, Chief Operating Officer Philip Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer Christine Robinson.



## Special Visitors

Kingsway Learning Center hosted the Burlington County Regional Chamber of Commerce's Non-Profit group in July. Special guest speaker Joan Divor of the Burlington County Library System (far left) gave a presentation on funding research.

# THE STAFF LOUNGE

## A Q&A with Kingsway's newest SLE Coordinator, Robin Thompson



Mrs. Robin Thompson with  
Kingsway student Josh

**Question: Tell me a little bit about your experience at Kingsway?**

**Answer:** Prior to joining the Kingsway family, I completed my undergraduate studies at Rowan University and I taught in a plethora of positions including Junior High English and an Alternative Education Program. Since working at Kingsway Learning Center, I decided to go back to school to get my Masters in Special Education.

My first role at Kingsway was as a Job Coach. I had former teaching experiences, but never in the special education field. I quickly fell in love with the program, and within a year, I entered into a teaching role. However, after two years of teaching, I will be embarking on a new journey this September as an SLE (Structured Learning Experience) Coordinator. An SLE Coordinator works closely

with guardians, employers, teachers and administration to ensure our students are receiving the best possible workplace readiness skills needed to be successful upon graduation.

**Question: What does your role entail at Kingsway? Could you offer a day-to-day scenario?**

**Answer:** For the past two years, I taught in the W.E.S.T. program, which stands for Workplace Employability Skills Training. In my classroom, the goal was to practice the skills needed to be employable. My hope each day was to create an in-house environment with a variety of educator centers and activities that presented real-life, workplace situations so that students could be better prepared for their community experiences. This offered opportunities for creativity - which gets the students excited and motivated to learn. For instance, last year the students ran a Fall Food Drive in unison with our Food Pantry Center. Homerooms competed with one another, and we received 1,000 food items. This project opened up many jobs in the classroom from collecting food items, counting and taking inventory, stocking shelves, and making a bar graph to keep track of which homeroom was winning. At the end of the Food Drive, we donated 10 boxes of food

to a local Food Pantry and made 7 Thanksgiving baskets for families in need. Not only did students get to practice workplace skills, but they also were able to partake in community service.

**Question: What is your favorite thing about working at Kingsway?**

**Answer:** I love helping young adults become as independent as possible. What I love most is when I see my students overcoming obstacles, meeting goals, and even surpassing goals. They amaze me every day!

**Question: Why did you decide to get involved in this field of work and what do you hope to accomplish?**

**Answer:** My biggest inspiration that led me to become a special education teacher is my son, Mason. He was diagnosed with Autism at age 2, and the rest is history.



Mrs. Robin Thompson with  
Kingsway student Sara

# SUCCESS

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## Meet John Rosati, Kingsway CBI Program Graduate

Since graduating from Kingsway's CBI program in 2015, John Rosati has enjoyed an active life after graduation, with little time to spare. The 23-year-old son of Kingsway Board Member Stephanie Pratico currently works at Porfirio's Italian Market in Hamilton, NJ. Outside of work, John spends time at the Robert Wood Johnson Fitness Center working out a few times a week, playing basketball and hanging out with friends.

Kingsway job coaches worked with John to identify an area the staff thought would be successful for him and helped place him in with his current employer. John is happy working at Porfirio's, focusing on honing his skills instead of sitting at home watching T.V.

"Kingsway taught me a good work ethic and inspired me to be independent," John said. Looking back on his time at Kingsway, John said the hardest part was getting through graduation day. "It was sad to leave my friends and teachers," he said. "But I was proud of myself for taking the next step in my life."



Photo of John walking in his cap and gown during graduation in 2015.

## Thank you, from Kingsway

We want to thank every friend, parent, family member, former student or parent, local business and staff member for their generous donations we have received during the last quarter. These donations help Kingsway Learning Center students reach their fullest potential.

### General Donations

Richard Ackermann  
Sandra Betts  
Beth Borsuk  
Lisa Carney, Farmers Insurance  
Mr. and Mrs. Ben Catarinicchia  
Thomas Cerino  
Lillian Cooper through Exxon Mobil Lube Plant  
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### Anthony Rizzotte-

Mr. and Mrs.  
Anthony Rizzotte

### Memorials

#### Christina Bentsen -

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Campbell  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Clancy  
Susan Clearly  
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Reuter  
Ronald Shaw  
Marlene Snarr  
Eileen Sullivan



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Saturday, October 14  
Kingsway's Haddonfield Campus  
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm  
(doors open at 6:00 pm)  
Ticket Price: \$30, Must be 21 to play  
To purchase tickets, visit:  
[tinyurl.com/KLCBingo](http://tinyurl.com/KLCBingo)

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Pretty soon, 1,000 people will like our Facebook page! Help us reach this goal!  
  
The 1,000th follower will win a special basket of Kingsway goodies!  
  
#SupportKingsway  


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**Longevity Awards**  
  
Meet staff and Board Members celebrating special anniversaries with Kingsway

**The Staff Lounge**  
  
Structured Learning Experience Coordinator Robin Thompson tells us about her new role at Kingsway

**From the CEO**  
  
Treat Everyday with Kindness

Take a look inside for these stories and much more.

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