

# THE MENTA GROUP®

## Fall 2018 Semester Update

A not-for-profit organization serving students in Illinois and Arizona for over 40 years.



**36 Programs**



**250+ Classrooms**



**2000+ Students**



**150+ Districts**

**THE MENTA GROUP® NEVER GIVES UP ON EDUCATING A CHILD!**



*Innovative Academic Programming*



*Trauma Informed Practices*



*Technology Infused Learning*



*Citizenship, College & Career Ready Students*

**Who we are:** Our vision is to provide innovative solutions to critical problems in education and human services. We partner with parents and school districts making success a reality for high-risk and special education youth.

**Mission:** To provide innovative solutions to critical problems in education and human services.

**Vision:** We envision a society where all youth can be successful and are committed to making success a reality for high-risk youth.

## NEW PROGRAMS IN 2018

### CORE Sensory Playground & Early Learning Center – Illinois



In November of 2018, the sensory playground at C.O.R.E. Academy was officially opened for student use. Within this new addition to the school's atrium, there are endless opportunities for students to explore, enhance their fine, visual, and gross motor abilities, as well as participate in sensory regulation activities. Students in the Life Skills program and the youngest elementary rooms have access to this space, as well as students that have been identified by their related services team. Through structured usage of this space, students are able to participate in activities that will provide them with the additional sensory input they need in order to be successful in the classroom.

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## NEW PROGRAMS - Continued

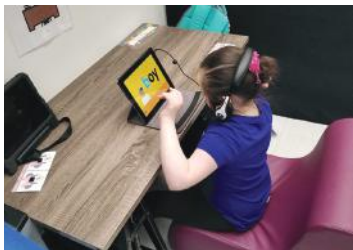
### Menta Sports Academy – Illinois



The Menta Sports Academy offers creative and challenging coursework that is thematically aligned to the sports industry for students grades 6-12. The program's low student-faculty ratio

ensures not only individualized attention to each student's needs, but encourages relationships between students and teachers. Students at Menta Sports Academy benefit from the smaller class size with specially trained faculty who help teach alternative learning methods and preparation for transition to future education or employment. Menta Sports Academy focuses on the student-athlete whose needs require a flexible schedule and whose interests lie within the sports industry. Through Project Based Learning, student areas of study include data analytics, marketing, sports medicine, athletic training, business management, accounting, sales, event planning, product licensing, and many other areas associated with the sports industry. This visionary approach to education provides students with learning focused on student interests, improving both body and mind.

### Menta Academy Midway – Illinois



Menta Academy Midway provides a unique learning experience for students grades K-12, and a bilingual program for students with autism. A major program goal is to provide

students with the tools necessary to function independently. The school's home-like setting, individualized classroom areas, and skilled clinical care helps build independence. The learning environment in our classrooms is carefully designed to decrease student dependence on the teacher and to encourage the development of skills. The program emphasizes building independence through individualization and planning, by understanding the whole child and developing effective and comprehensive programming to meet each child's unique needs.

### Menta Early Learning Program – Illinois



The Menta Early Learning Program is designed to meet all learners needs. The program serves students between the ages of 3-5 years old. Students explore various activity centers in the classroom. These centers include reading,

art, problem solving with puzzles, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), music, sensory exploration, and dramatic play. While students are exploring these centers independently, the teacher facilitator, along with support staff, model positive social interactions among students. Although students have time to explore independently, there are structured lessons for small groups that focus on student individual goals. The Menta Early Learning Program functions as a standard preschool classroom, but also includes lessons that are structured and modified to meet each student's individual needs.

### Menta Academy Verde Valley – Arizona



The idea of partnering with the Cottonwood Unified School District and opening the Menta Academy of Verde Valley all started after a presentation from the Menta Group to the Arizona State Education Committee in spring 2018.

After several meetings with representatives from the Cottonwood Unified School District and surrounding communities, Menta Academy Verde Valley opened their doors in August 2018. The program currently serves elementary students in grades 2-6 and opened a second classroom in February of 2019.

### Tempe S.E.L.F. and S.E.L.F. – A Programs – Arizona



In August of 2018, The Menta Group® opened programs at Compadre Academy and McClintock High School. Tempe Vice Mayor Lauren Kuby

and Council Member Jennifer Adams joined us to celebrate our opening! Programs serve special education students in grades 9-12 from the Tempe Union High School District.

## Apache Junction High School – Arizona



Special Education Services has provided clinical support for the Apache Junction School District for the past four years. In

spring 2018, the District met with the Arizona team to begin discussions on opening a classroom at the high school. The high school program opened in July and provides support to 9th - 12th grade special education students enrolled in the District.

## LEGISLATIVE EVENTS:

### Country Club Hills Tech and Trade – Illinois



In September, the students and staff of Country Club Hills Tech and Trade welcomed Mayor James Ford to their campus. The students had the opportunity to tour Mayor Ford and show all the wonderful

“back to school” projects that were underway as well as explain the plethora of programming opportunities at the school.

### Menta Academy North – Illinois



In November, Menta Academy North hosted its annual open house. This event offered the opportunity to visit the school and meet the staff and administrators who make Menta Academy

North such a special place. Mayor Sam Cunningham stopped by and met some friendly students, families and staff. It was truly wonderful to have him join us.

### Menta Academy Hillside – Illinois



In October, the students and staff of Menta Academy Hillside (MAH) welcomed Mayor Joseph T. Tamburino to their campus. Mayor Tamburino

was so impressed by the wonderful things happening at MAH that he asked the students from the

woodshop class to create an art piece to be displayed at the Village Hall that will be dedicated to MAH! He has also volunteered his team to co-host a trades fair for our students that will assist with College, Career and future employment opportunities.

### Menta Academy Midway – Illinois



Menta Academy Midway had the pleasure of touring Senator Antonio Munoz as well as State Representative Elizabeth Hernandez! This was a wonderful opportunity for the students, staff and administrators to show the wonderful things happening

in our program but also to discuss why we are so passionate about our wonderful MENTA students. They both left excited about our mission, vision and of course our students!

### CASE, Arizona CEC, and SEAA – Arizona



In October 2018, The Menta Group® partnered with the Arizona Council for Administrators of Special Education (CASE), Arizona Council for Exceptional Children

(CEC) and Special Education Administrators of Arizona (SEAA) to host a Special Education Forum. The event allowed individuals throughout the state to ask questions and hear the political views of Kathy Hoffman (Elected Superintendent of Public Instruction in Arizona) and Frank Riggs regarding Special Education in the state of Arizona.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

### Annual Thanksgiving Dinner – Arizona



In November, Mesa Center for Success East and West Campuses partnered with the Albertson's Foundation and Scottsdale

Community College Culinary School to provide a Thanksgiving Dinner to over 140 student and family members. Additionally, more than 30 boxed meals

## NEW PROGRAMS - Continued



were sent home for families to prepare and enjoy.

This year marked the 5th year that the event has been held. Over the past 5 years the event has been fine-tuned and has grown from hosting elementary families in a single classroom to a multi-sponsored event connecting staff

with elementary and high school families.

### Trauma Informed School Work Group – Arizona

The trauma informed school work group, a branch of the greater ACE Consortium, is co-facilitated by Laura Wiggins, Regional Director of Clinical Services. The group includes teachers, social workers, principals, superintendents, school psychologists and child advocates that are passionate about learning and expanding trauma informed practices in the schools of Arizona.

### AZCEC/AZCASE Annual Conference – Arizona

Laura Wiggins (AZ) and Aubrey Thornton (IL) will be presenting “Building Resilience Through Critical Service Learning” at the 2019 AZCEC/AZCASE Annual on March 1, 2019. The presentation will discuss how trauma and toxic stress negatively impact social, emotional, and cognitive development. Resilience, the capacity to adapt and recover from trauma, can be promoted and strengthened in the classroom.

### Raising Special Kids – Arizona

Kelly Carbone, Principal of Mesa Center for Success – West Campus, was nominated to the board of Raising Special Kids in December 2018. In her role as a board member, Kelly will work to advocate for the needs of special education students throughout the state of Arizona. The organization provides support, training, and information to improve the lives of youth diagnosed with disabilities.

### AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS:



### PBIS Awards – Arizona

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are utilized in our classroom programs. PBIS is a framework that guides data-driven decision making, implementation, and application of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving academic, social/emotional and behavioral outcomes for all students.

On November 8, 2018, the East and West Campuses of Mesa Center for Success, Southwest Academy, and Southwest Education Center were recognized for their PBIS initiatives at the 7th annual Arizona BET-C Conference.

For more information regarding our programs or to schedule a tour, please contact Nikki Paplaczyk (Illinois) at [nikki.paplaczyk@menta.com](mailto:nikki.paplaczyk@menta.com) or Kathy Burwell (Arizona) at [kathy.burwell@menta.com](mailto:kathy.burwell@menta.com).