

Employee Spotlight

A Conversation with Janice Masciarelli, Lead Teacher Newport Family and Child Opportunity Zone (NFCOZ)

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Janice Masciarelli, a preschool teacher in Newport Public Schools for over 30 years, has been a Lead Teacher with NFCOZ's out-of-school-time learning program for the past 13 years. According to her co-workers, she is adored by her students who love seeing her every day and rush to her with hugs as they all talk at once. Janice takes it all in with ease... letting the students surround her as they chat away!

Talk about your role within your program and how you contribute to its success.

"I have been employed by EBCAP since July 2012 and have served in many roles that contribute to the agency's success. One of my longest and most rewarding positions has been as the Lead Teacher in NFCOZ's 'Cubs' after-school classroom for Pell Elementary School kindergarten and first grade students. In this role, I facilitate a high-quality program that offers children a full range of experiences, including team-building games, academic enrichment, and opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

I have also been involved in the Bright Stars process, a RI quality rating system that evaluates childcare, early learning, and school-age programs. In 2023, NFCOZ's Champion Childcare Program at Pell Elementary received a five-star license for its before- and after-school program ... an accomplishment that was extremely rewarding for our team. In addition, I piloted and mentored colleagues through the Learn365RI and Project Wild programs that support the development of high-quality out-of-school-time learning programs. This work focused on literacy, math, and attendance.

Each year, I also facilitate programming in the Summer Learning Academy at Pell Elementary. This program is designed to extend learning time through intensive academic support blended with physical activity, cultural experiences, recreational activities, artistic opportunities, and service-learning projects. I have also supported vacation camps during school breaks, providing consistent and valuable assistance to children and families during school vacations."

What motivates you to help those we serve?

"One of the biggest factors motivating me to continue my career with EBCAP is the children we serve. I truly enjoy supporting their social-emotional development, as well as their academic, physical, and recreational growth.

After spending my days working as a Pre-K Special Educator at Pell Elementary, I transition to NFCOZ's Champion Childcare after-school program, where I am greeted with enthusiasm, excitement, and warm hugs. Working with these children feels like a natural extension of my commitment as an educator.

Another important factor is the NFCOZ staff. They are consistently supportive and approach every situation with a strong team mindset. I often feel as though they are my second family, and that sense of community makes my work even more meaningful."

What do you like best about EBCAP?

"What I appreciate most about EBCAP is its commitment to offering high-quality before- and after-school programs, vacation camps, and summer learning opportunities that help students

and families stay engaged with their school community. When students feel connected, their attendance improves and they become more motivated to succeed academically.

EBCAP also plays a vital role in supporting families by connecting parents with essential community resources, strengthening parenting skills, and providing meaningful educational opportunities. These services help families become more involved in their children's education, encourage consistent school attendance, support children through important transitions, and reduce social isolation."

What's your proudest moment as an EBCAP employee or particular experience that was inspiring?

"I feel that the most inspiring moment in my time with EBCAP was piloting the Project Wild initiative which provides wildlife-based conservation and environmental education to students from Pre-K to 12th grade. I had the opportunity to watch children grow as they engaged in simple yet meaningful activities such as science observations, math dice games, social studies, read-alouds, and early literacy games. This program allowed our team to reinforce the learning taking place during the school day.

The program also encourages children to build upon their existing skills and background knowledge, helping them continue their growth and become more proficient in literacy, science, and math.

After piloting Project Wild, I continued to support NFCOZ by mentoring my colleagues so that more classrooms could open — allowing us to support additional children at Pell Elementary and deepen the impact that NFCOZ has on the school community."