

KIDS WITH HEART

The **Kids With Heart** program at CRHS North continues to draw support and interest, and Cemantha Giulian, Teacher and Club Advisor, looks forward to continuing the club next year. **Kids With Heart** is an after-school club designed to facilitate relationships between students in the self-contained Autistic Support (AS) program and their high school peers. Most afternoons, up to 20 CRHS students participate in the club, and those students became frequent visitors to the AS classroom. The CREF Grant enabled Mrs. Giulian to expand

the program and to purchase items which helped to create activities for the students, both Autistic

Support students and their typical peers, to participate in together.



Linda Kuepper, parent and the founder of **Autism Cares**, whose son participated in the club, shared that *"Kids With Heart is an amazing program! It's wonderful to see our kids interact with their peers and it's a fantastic opportunity for them to take part in an after school activity." My son enjoyed seeing his buddy, and for both, it's a friendship. He is leaning new skills and participates in training opportunities to support socialization while out in the community or someday on the job. This program also benefits our typical peers. It teaches our student volunteers to be caring, compassionate,*

patient, and understanding, and it teaches them acceptance.

Even though we are different,

we still want the same things: a loving family, friends and acceptance. It also teaches them to continue to help others that are less fortunate. Another parent shared that "The Kids With Heart program was great for my son. It provided additional interaction with typical peers in a non-academic environment. The fun activities done during the club provided social opportunities that are fewer and fewer as my son gets older."

