

One record LOCAL

FATAL PLUNGE OFF PALISADES
Tenally municipal employee, 25, falls 275 feet. L-3
EMERGENCY ROAD REPAIR
Edgewater to repave Jumpy River Road today. L-3
DEATH NOTICES/OBITUARIES L-8, 9 EDITORIALS L-10

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One of Saddle River's security cameras, upper left above Christmas decoration, is near East Allendale and East Saddle River roads.

By EVONNE COUTROS STAFF WRITER

SADDLE RIVER

One camera can focus on stores in the town's only mini-mall. Another camera just up the road scopes out the exterior of the municipal building and Wendell School, the borough's only public elementary school. A third keeps its eye on the town's newly refurbished Rindlaub Field.

In all, the borough is adding seven video cameras. Monitored from within the police station, they will greatly widen the potential scope of the borough's video surveillance, until now limited to eight cameras at the police station and

the Department of Public Works

"In light of recent events, school security and security in general are key concerns," Police Chief Timothy McWilliams said. "We feel additional cameras will allow our communications officers to monitor areas of concern. These added cameras are another tool to help us better serve the community."

The cameras will be used only for surveillance and security of school and municipal property, but they do have the ability to pan, said Borough Administrator Chuck Cucca. For example, the camera that can scan the mini-mall and adjacent streets will be focused on the Police Department, which is across the street on East Allendale Road, officials said.

PETER MONSEES/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Residents and business owners in Saddle River, one of the nation's richest communities, are not unaccustomed to security measures. Many homes have interior and exterior security systems. Guards keep watch outside some mansions. Still, word of the new cameras came as a surprise to some this week.

"Mamma mia," said Franco Moretti, owner of Franco in Saddle River, a restaurant in the Colonial Shopping Center on East Saddle River Road, near one of the cameras.

"I didn't know the cameras are there," Moretti said. "No one told me." But he was not displeased by the news. "It's very important to have them today," See **SURVEILLANCE** Page L-5

School gives alternatives to children with autism

Fund raising helps finance programs

By **SONI SANGHA**
STAFF WRITER

GARFIELD — A little piece of paper, the size of a playing card, changed Rebecca Singer's life.

"If we're in a supermarket, and we're in line, we hand her the card, and she just waits," said her father, Jon Singer of Tenally, who says patience is not a virtue for his daughter. "She tries to hand it back, but we try not to take it."

The innovation, which is intended to remind Rebecca to stand still, came from the Resources for Effective Educational Development Academy, a school for autistic children started by six families, including the Singers.

"It's just amazing," said Singer, who recalled physicians telling him Rebecca wouldn't be able to walk or to live independently.

REED started with four students and now has 16. It has a waiting list of nearly 140, nearly three times what it was the day the

Autism: School provides alternatives

From Page L-1
school opened.

Rebecca, who loves to giggle, is severely limited in what she can do, but the academy has taught her how to fold her clothes and follow a schedule.

"It used to be like she was really in her own world," Singer said, adding his daughter wasn't used to interaction. "Now, it's like she's started living in ours."

John Brown, executive director of the school, isn't surprised.

"With good treatment, outcomes are much more promising," he said.

The New Jersey Education Department says there are 722 autistic students in Bergen County, but it doesn't know how many schools offer treatment.

Singer and Brown estimate only four or five schools in the county offer the same treatment that REED does.

Each student's town pays a tuition, which can be as high as \$50,000, but this year the school has a deficit of nearly \$20,000 per student.

Part of the expense comes from the large number of instructors. The school maintains a ratio of one student to one teacher. In addition, instructors visit each student's home once a week to ensure classroom lessons are being applied.

The difference is made up by fund-raising efforts such as the one on Thursday, where Whole Foods stores in Edgewater and Madison will donate 5 percent of their sales to schools such as REED, Alpine Learning Group and the Princeton Child Development Institute.

Families from REED, including the Singers, will be on hand to raise awareness about autism.

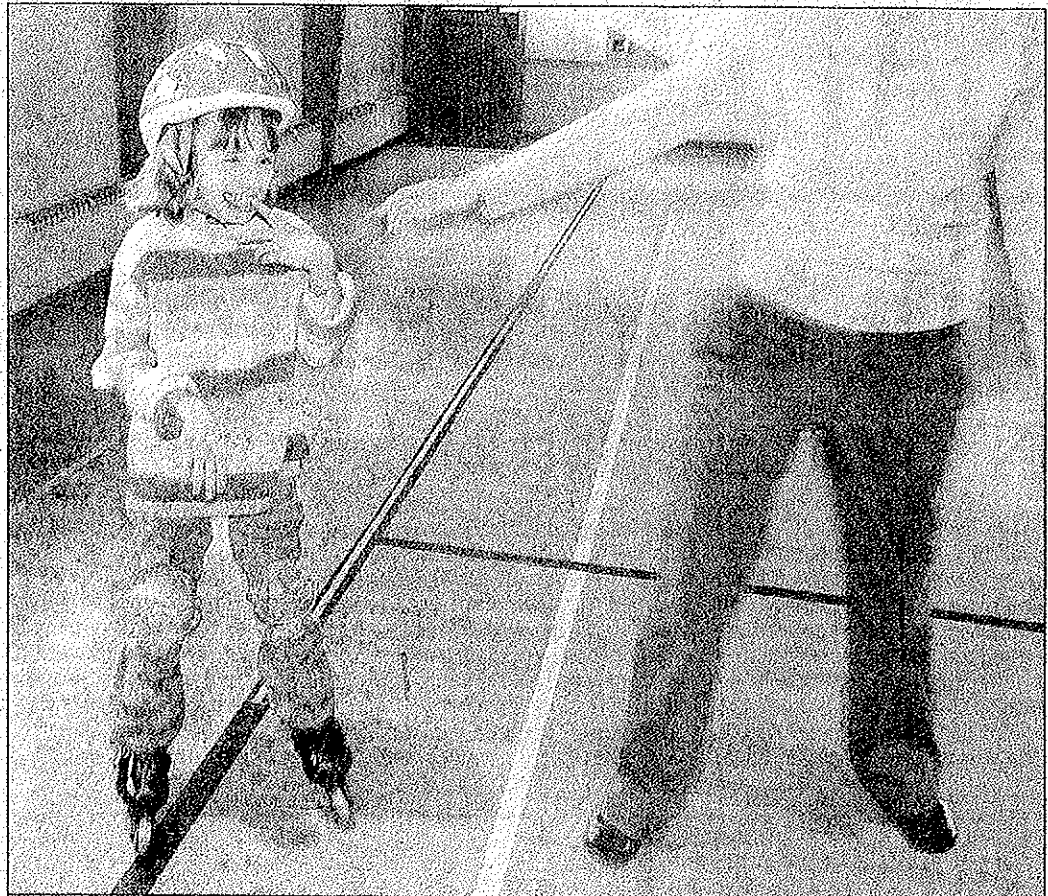
School officials estimate half their students will leave REED to attend a regular school.

The other half can stay at the REED Academy until they are 21. The goal is to help those students find a job and earn a paycheck.

Diane Marshall of Montclair remembers the day her son was diagnosed with autism.

Marshall noticed David didn't respond to his name when he was 16 months old. That's when she looked for a diagnosis.

"I'll never forget what one doctor said to me," Marshall said.



The parents of REED student Rebecca Singer, 8, say she has learned how to fold her clothes and follow a schedule since she's been at the school. "It's just amazing," Jon Singer said of Rebecca's accomplishments.

The school maintains a ratio of one student to one teacher. In addition, instructors visit each student's home once a week.

"She said, 'He'll need services — here's a number. If you're lucky, he'll probably be stacking shelves at McDonald's.'" David, who is a rosy-cheeked 7-year-old, joined the REED academy in April.

"When he first got here, he was very quiet," recalled his teacher, Kristin Nardini.

David was always drawn to physical activities like in-line skating, she said, but shied away from activities that required social interaction.

Now, David likes hugs. And he can ask for snacks. He



Instructor Dan Mesopotanese reassuring David Marshall, 7, during class Tuesday at the REED academy in Garfield.

can put on his own shoes and socks. He can even indicate when he wants to go for a bike ride.

For his mom, who has two non-autistic children, the little things are adding up to a big difference.

"For the first time this summer,

we took all three kids to the beach, with no baby sitter and no grandparents," Marshall said. "And I felt almost normal. That was a huge accomplishment."

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