



**Amalia Duarte, Public Affairs Director**

ECLC of New Jersey

Cell: (973-902-8390)

E-mail: [aduarte@eclcofnj.org](mailto:aduarte@eclcofnj.org)

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 3, 2015**

## **Chatham Cougar Players Team Up with Students at ECLC of New Jersey Special-Needs School**

**CHATHAM** – Getting students into the community as much as possible is strongly emphasized at ECLC of New Jersey’s school for children with special needs, but sometimes it’s the community that comes to them.

That was the case on May 8 when the Chatham Cougar Lacrosse Club walked a half-mile from the Chatham Middle School to the ECLC school on Lum Avenue for an afternoon clinic. Like a set-up for speed dating, the coaches lined everyone up and matched the eighth grade players with the ECLC youngsters. In no time, the initial shyness disappeared, and the enthusiastic Chatham players were off and running, teaching them some basic skills.

The Cougar players showed patience and sensitivity with the ECLC students, who are diagnosed with a range of disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities as well as medical challenges.

Lacrosse isn't an easy sport to pick up, but with help from the Cougar kids, the ECLC students were soon scooping up the ball, passing, shooting and even cradling the ball, while running. The afternoon was clearly a win-win for everyone!

“The idea for this clinic was for us to give back to the community via lacrosse,” said Cougar’s President Paul Garavente, who is also a girls’ assistant coach, “and we’ll definitely be back. It’s already on the calendar for next Spring!”

**About ECLC**

Established in 1970, ECLC of New Jersey is an accredited, nonprofit offering “Education, Careers and Lifelong Community” to children and adults with special needs, including those diagnosed with a range of disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities as well as medical challenges. ECLC runs schools in Chatham and Ho-Ho-Kus educating some 300 students, from ages 5-21. ECLC graduates can enter the P.R.I.D.E. adult centers in Florham Park or Paramus, or get find a job in their community through ECLC’s employment affiliate, Community Personnel Services, based in Chatham. Learn more about ECLC at [www.eclcofnj.org](http://www.eclcofnj.org).

**CAPTION:** The Chatham Cougar players (left to right) Daniella Groh, Alexis Chin, Marissa Sullivan, Millie Harris and MacKenzie Khan, with (center) ECLC student Casey Burke of Elizabeth, brought all the right lacrosse moves and their winning smiles to ECLC of New Jersey’s school for students with special needs.