

# Highlights



VOL. 23 WINTER 2010

## SALUTE TO VETERANS

A plaque is presented to Mr. Vince Curletta by Mr. Chuck Tatum, Gifted and Enrichment Teacher at Cecil Intermediate School.



# Patriotic praise

### CECIL INTERMEDIATE

For the second year, Cecil Intermediate School observed Veterans Day with the help of Mr. Vince Curletta. He discussed with students his experiences in the Korean War. Mr. Curletta was a staff sergeant in the U.S. Air Force at the end of his service. As a gift of appreciation, CIS gave him a plaque with a picture of the students in the shape and color of the American flag.

### HILLS-HENDERSONVILLE

Hills-Hendersonville staff and students use their writing skills to remember various people throughout the year. They sent cards and coloring sheets to veterans on Veterans Day. Cards were sent to Veterans Administration (VA) Hospitals, two Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, and to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The school received a beautiful letter from the director of development and public relations of the Pearl Harbor Memorial with appreciation for the school remembering them. Mahalo nui loa is Hawaiian for "thank you very much." They

also sent bookmarks for the students and staff.

The letter was read at the school on Dec. 7 with a history lesson concerning the attack on Pearl Harbor 68 years ago on Dec. 7, 1941. The school also sent letters to soldiers for Christmas, and cards will be sent for Valentine's Day.

Throughout the year, students send cards to nursing homes and on Memorial Day will send cards and letters to the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies to distribute to families who visit.

### SOUTH CENTRAL

South Central Elementary held its annual Veterans Day program to recognize America's 25 million living veterans. The students and staff not only honored the veterans with a school assembly, but learned from them as well.

The 4th-graders presented a play and a patriotic song. That was followed by a presentation with the assistance of

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South Central kindergarten student Cassandra Chappo stands beside her cousin, Staff Sergeant Christopher Houlihan.

### SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Future growth of district studied.

Page Two

## HIGH SCHOOL



Dr. Helen K. McCracken

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

### *Design group studying future growth of district*

future-focused decision making.

The Canon-McMillan School District has contracted with Hayes Design Group to complete a feasibility study. This study will be used to construct the footprint for the District's upcoming capital projects.

The firm will take into consideration the age and conditions of all of our buildings. They will implement their studies on-site to experience our needs firsthand.

In addition, this firm will look at demographic overviews, county health records, and other information sources as well as analyze census data to make reasonable recommendations to the District. It is the expectation of the administration that at the conclusion of this study, the district will have a defined footprint for construction projects for the next several years.

Although the concrete conclusion of this effort is uncertain at this time, I can assure our school community that our Board of School Directors, in combination with our Administrative Staff, are committed to providing the best facilities we can afford for our students' continued growth into the 21st century.

This is a very special time for me both personally and professionally. I can honestly remember the pride, anxious anticipation and butterflies in my stomach when I walked in as a student to (what used to be) the brand new "Canonsburg Junior High" (over time this has become Canonsburg Middle School). That same level of enthusiasm has been reignited as I anticipate our progress.

I am confident that we can offer our students and our school community the same excitement and level of anticipation for their future learning spaces!

I hope you share the exhilaration, pride and eagerness that the Board and I embrace as we move forward into this important phase of our district's development.

*Helen K. McCracken, Ed.D.*

With a small glimmer of hope that the current economic status of the area will slowly start to reinvigorate itself, the Canon-McMillan School District has its eye on the future!

Residential growth, although slowed to a degree, is still affecting our enrollment.

Our growth, in combination with the age, location and condition of our school facilities has been the underlying cause of our continuous re-evaluation. As a result, the Canon-McMillan Board of School Directors has demonstrated its commitment to goal-oriented,

*"I am so impressed with the interaction of the students and teachers (at Canon-McMillan)."*

Michael Hall,  
CMHS assistant principal

**MICHAEL HALL** has a new son and a new job, all in the same year.

Little Clayton is only 10 months old, but his dad is spending his days with teenagers as he has become one of the High School's assistant principals.

Now Mr. Hall can say that he has had experience with all ages of children. For a little more than the past three years, Mr. Hall has taught 4th-grade at South Central Elementary School, and previously was an assistant coach for 9th-grade baseball.

He graduated from high school in Ellwood City before receiving a B.A. in elementary education from Marietta College in Ohio and an M.Ed. in education from California University of PA. He holds a K-12 principal's certificate in administration and certifications in mid-level English and elementary education. His first job was teaching middle school English for five years in Colonial Beach, VA, where he also coached varsity football, baseball and basketball. That's where he met his wife, Dena, who hails from Wheeling, WV.

They moved back to Pennsylvania, where he taught 4th grade for one year in Propel East Charter School in Turtle Creek. His wife now teaches kindergarten at Borland Manor Elementary.

"While coaching in Virginia, I was involved with the kids in high school and it was not much different from my new position. There I also had to be involved in all aspects of the kids' lives," he said. "Spending these past years in the elementary school has taught me to realize that even though High School students are bigger, we have to remember they are still kids."

For now, he is learning his new job which includes doing observations, and dealing with student affairs, athletics and attendance. "My goal is to learn as much as I can as an assistant principal and positively affect as many children as possible. I still have a lot to learn, this being my first administrative position," he said.

What he has learned so far is the strength of the faculty. "I've found what a hard-working professional staff this is. They have been very accepting and welcoming. I am so impressed with the interaction of the students and teachers. With this tight-knit faculty, things run very smoothly.

"I'm excited to be in this new position. It is definitely different from elementary. I've enjoyed kids at every level and knew I would enjoy the high school students. These are just different challenges and responsibilities."



## HEALTHY GRANTS

# Healthy High 5 Challenge



Teachers in two Canon-McMillan schools have been awarded Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge grants for the year.

Cecil Elementary School 4th-grade teachers Ms. Lucy Moninger and Mrs. Jennifer Stealey have been awarded a \$10,000 grant to implement a "Wii Are Getting Fit at Cecil" program aimed at addressing the growing issue of unhealthy lifestyles and poor eating habits among our youth.

North Strabane Intermediate School special education teacher Mrs. Michelle Heiser received a \$9,999 grant to implement "W.I.S.E. Kids" (Wellness Is Self Empowering) aimed to address the growing issue of children's physical fitness.

Studies illustrate that the health habits children develop at a young age will continue with them through adulthood and the grants will support the schools' efforts in introducing programs that will ultimately create healthier, more successful students.

Cecil Elementary uses its grant to give all of the students at the school the opportunity to use fitness equipment on a regular basis. This will help build a sense of self-esteem and well-being by making them aware of their current lifestyle and helping them achieve their fitness goals, while having fun. This program will foster an improved attitude toward a healthy lifestyle including eating habits, body image and character building. The program is expected to reach all of the students in K-4th grade.

"We recognize the importance of providing our students with the resources that will encourage them to adopt healthy habits," said Mr. Robert Kleinhans, principal at Cecil Elementary. "This grant allows us to provide children with the ability to make positive lifestyle changes now that they will carry with them throughout their lives."

North Strabane Intermediate's objective is to teach, promote and expose stu-



Playing with the new Wii games are (photo at left), from left, Alyssa Calabrese at far left; Ben Hammers in front; second row, Josiah Weaver, Blake Lance, Courtney Bayne and Karly Krelic; back row, Bryn Dami, Katelyn Adamski, Jayden DeBar and Nathaniel Crum.

N.S.I.S. 4th-graders, from left (photo below), Matthew Mansfield, Alex Miller, Olivia Sadlek and Destiny Kelley.



create an exploratory station using the Wii which has been very successful.

"Students get to have fun while exercising and interacting with their peers as they play games on the Wii," says N.S.I.S. Principal Mark Abbondanza.

"Some of the games, such as 'The Price is Right,' require students to read and exercise. As digital natives, our students are getting to use technology tools that they use at home on a regular basis.

Embracing the tools they use daily has been a great experience for N.S.I.S. teachers."

Since 2007, the Highmark Foundation, through the Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge, has awarded \$3.5 million in grants to 496 schools in 47 counties across Pennsylvania for programs that

address bullying prevention and self-esteem, improve nutritional education, enhance nutrition choices and provide opportunities for physical activity.

"The Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge Grant Program is geared toward helping schools address their unique health and wellness challenges," said Yvonne Cook, president of the Highmark Foundation.

"These grants provide Cecil Elementary School and North Strabane Intermediate School with the resources and tools to implement innovative programs that will help their students establish lifelong, healthy habits."

dents to healthy living ideas, nutritious food choices, an active lifestyle, healthy exercises and a sense of well-being through a variety of activities.

The grant allows the school to purchase Nintendo Wii video consoles, Wii games, Wii Fits, DVD players, exercise DVDs, televisions for the classrooms, and water bottles for every student.

The televisions are used to broadcast morning news shows, which include an exercise or wellness segment along with announcements. The Wii games and exercise DVDs also will be used during the students' exploratory period when they will have the opportunity to play with the games as they rotate through the schedule. The program reaches 360 students in grades five and six.

"Students at N.S.I.S. are benefiting tremendously from the Highmark grant. For example, teachers brainstormed to

### For more information

on the Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge grant program, visit

[www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org](http://www.highmarkhealthyhigh5.org)

## Highlights

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Canon-McMillan *Highlights* is the community newsletter published by Canon-McMillan School District. If you know of anyone in the district who did not receive a copy in the mail, please call 724-746-2940 or write:

Canon-McMillan *Highlights*, One North Jefferson Avenue, Canonsburg, PA 15317

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## CANONSBURG MIDDLE

# Video game students aren't playing around

Canonsburg Middle School has implemented a number of initiatives over the past five years to provide a middle school experience for the "whole" child. The programming lives up to the school's motto, "Expect the Best," by providing educational opportunities in not only the core academic areas, but also the arts, global awareness, problem solving, technology education and digital citizenship.

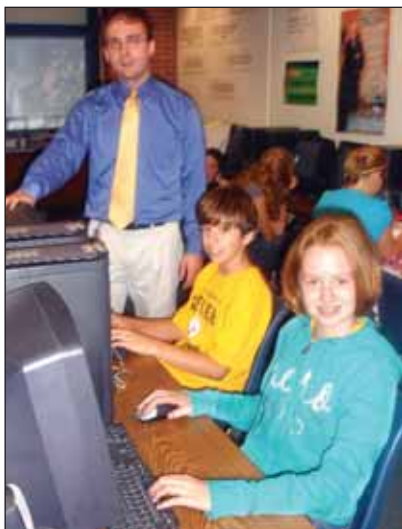
Principal Greg Taranto explains, "Today's student has to have the skill sets necessary to be able to live in a 'flat' world." It is for this reason that he and Mr. Brian Herrig, technology education teacher, brainstormed to find a way to incorporate a video game programming component into the 7th-grade technology education curriculum. After researching several programs and literature, Mr. Herrig presented a unique and creative unit plan to be incorporated into his Technology Applications class.

In an effort to incorporate more 21st-century skills and keep the classroom focus firmly on the students of the digital age, a new component was added to the 7th-grade curriculum at Canonsburg Middle School. A video game design unit was the answer! The concept not only teaches critical technology skills, but also does it in a vehicle that is developmentally attractive to adolescent learners. In addition, the class will provide a foundation for higher-level programming skills taught in the 8th-grade Automation Technologies class.

The video game design unit begins with a reverse engineering activity; the students are given a playable version of a basic video game and work to analyze the game play. Once the basic game is analyzed, the students work to recreate it, following teacher-created technical directions. The basic concept that all actions that need to occur in the game must be programmed by the students is reinforced throughout the unit.

Mr. Herrig says, "Helping 7th-graders at Canonsburg Middle School to develop a programming mindset is being done to help prepare them for future challenges that will require the same logical, sequential thought process."

Canonsburg Middle School 8th-graders are presented with content related directly to programming in the 8th-grade Automation Technologies class. Though the Computer Numeric Control (CNC) and Agile Robotics units are far from the ideas presented in the video game design unit, the mindset that is developed in the 7th grade provides a strong foundation students can use to understand concepts that can, at times, be very abstract to them.



Mr. Brian Herrig, Canonsburg Middle School technology education teacher, teaches two students, Jessica Francis and Shawn Fahey, about the gaming process.

## ELEMENTARY



From left, in front, Iyanna Stevenson, Douglas Chandler, Jonathan Hartley, David Nottingham, Jackson Kowalczyk, Madyson Bekkelund; in back, Attikin Rothacker, Tamara Mathis, Mariah Conn, Ashlea Daniels and Celine Bengochea

## MARTY OF THE WEEK

During this year's inservice session before school started, the faculty and staff heard a presentation by Mr. V.J. Smith, author of "The Richest Man in Town." The book is about Aaron "Marty" Martinson who showed

how much he cared for the people he met as a cashier in his hometown Wal-Mart. He was the richest man in town because he was loved, respected, and completely happy with his life.

At Cecil Elementary and First Street Elementary schools, the staff wanted to pass along that inspiration to their students in conjunction with their character education program.

### Program promotes peace, empathy, strength & friendship

Classroom teachers read the books "The Richest Man in Town" or "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" to students. Then they reviewed with students the characteristics that made Marty special and ways to fill someone's invisible bucket. A person can choose to fill another's bucket by doing good deeds and being kind or to dip into a person's bucket through bullying or unkind acts. In the process, their own bucket is filled or dipped into by their actions.

Each week the classroom teacher chooses one student that has displayed the character trait for that month. That student receives a Marty badge to wear for the week.

Students in kindergarten, 1st-grade and 2nd-grade help their teachers throughout the week with greeting students, passing out papers and other tasks. Students in grades three and four take turns reading daily guidance lessons which include student-inspiring role models, skits and tips to be used at home and in school.

This "Marty" program has promoted peace, empathy, individuality, strength and friendship among the students.

## HIGH SCHOOL

# Students part of historic Summit

While the world was watching the Group of 20 (G-20) world financial leaders meeting in Pittsburgh in September, another gathering earlier in the month was focusing on the same global issues. The Pittsburgh G-20 Student Summit was just as exciting for students around the world as they worked on solutions to the world's problems.

The local part of the event was sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh and included eight local high schools connected with schools in Brazil, Georgia (formerly a part of the U.S.S.R.), Italy, and South Africa.

Canon-McMillan was paired with Enrico Tosi school in Milan, Italy, and Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh.

CMHS juniors and seniors participating as panelists included: Trevor Allen, Chelsea Banks, Ashley Currey, Addison Galambos, Katie Galicic, Christine Gorman, Ben Lombardo, Alessandro Migiuolo, Alyssia Moss, Hannah Patterson, Stephanie Scarci, Josh Snyder, Ashley Staedfeld, Kamakshi Sharma, Steven Veydt, Alyssa Yarnell, Ashley Yarnell, Matthew Weldy, Jessica Zupancic and moderator Grant Strimel.

CMHS social studies teacher, Mr. Tom Olszewski, is a long-time member of the World Affairs Council. Because of the cost of time and transportation to Fox Chapel Area High School where the Student Summit was locally facilitated, and the fact that Canon-McMillan High School has excellent technology, Mr. Olszewski chose to keep his students at CMHS and connect them via videoconference with their partnering schools with the help of Canon-McMillan staff members Mr. Matt Harding, Technology Coordinator, and Mr. Casey Thompson, computer



CMHS participants in the Student G-20 Summit are, from left, front row, Hannah Patterson, Katie Galicic and Ashley Currey; second row, Kamakshi Sharma, Stephanie Scarci and Ben Lombardo; third row, Alyssa Moss, Chelsea Banks and Trevor Allen; fourth row, Matthew Weldy, Mr. Tom Olszewski, Christine Gorman and Addison Galambos; back row, Josh Snyder, Grant Strimel, Alessandro Migiuolo and Steven Veydt. Missing from photo are Ashley Staedfeld, Alyssa Yarnell, Ashley Yarnell and Jessica Zupancic.

technician.

Mr. Olszewski and other CMHS social studies teachers prepared the students in their classes with information from the World Affairs Council. The Summit students discussed global economic recovery, energy and the environment, similar to talks at the G-20.

Mr. Olszewski selected seniors Grant Strimel and Christine Gorman to be the speakers for the CMHS students who participated in the panel.

"The experience was awe-inspiring," says Grant. "When we first started learning about the Summit, I thought it was like the United Nations, and just interesting. But after the Summit, I was even more interested in learning what was happening at the real G-20. It was so exciting and I did just as much research after the Student Summit as before when I was preparing for it."

"It was a great opportunity to talk to students half-way around the world and to see how similar or different we are. We liked hearing their views," says Christine.

"I've taught for 38 years and I have never had students more enthusiastic and more involved than in this Student Summit. I was impressed by our stu-

dents' questions. They wanted to know more and study more when it was over. We did a video of their involvement which will be given to the Canon-McMillan School Board and the World Affairs Council," says Mr. Olszewski.

"The Student Summit showed us different views on issues that are causing the world troubles. One of our conversations with the students in Italy was on nuclear energy. The U.S. is in favor of nuclear energy and most on our panel found it a good alternative source of energy. The Italians had banned all nuclear facilities after the accident at Chernobyl," says Grant. "Also, they have socialistic tendencies and we are for free trade. The Italian students wanted a cap on trade and the introduction of a world currency. It was interesting to see their solutions vs. our solutions. We didn't realize how conflicting our views were going to be."

Christine adds that the CMHS students tried to convince the Italian students about the importance of nuclear energy. When the focus went back to the Student Summit's facilitator, Fox Chapel Area High School, the entire group of participants from all

## PITTSBURGH G-20 STUDENT SUMMIT

September 17, 2009

Canon-McMillan High School

### Lead Teacher:

Mr. Tom Olszewski,  
World History and  
Global Living Teacher,  
Member of World Affairs  
Council of Pittsburgh



## HIGH SCHOOL

# Helinski & Strosko: Natural leaders

Two Canon-McMillan High School sophomores are proving themselves to be real leaders. Joseph Helinski and Stephen Strosko, both 16, were selected to attend the National Young Leaders Conference in October which was held at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Washington, D.C.

The week-long program taught 250 sophomores, juniors and seniors from across the U.S. about government and then gave them a chance to simulate making high-level decisions.

Joseph and Stephen were among a group of students who were nominated by Mr. Rick Bell, chairman of the Canon-McMillan social studies department. Mr. Bell had taught both the students in his AP psychology class last year.

Joseph is the son of Dave and Maureen Helinski, and Stephen is the son of Sandra and Dennis Strosko. Both families live in North Strabane Township. Each family was responsible for the cost of the program. The students raised some of the money from outside sources.

Mr. Bell based his nominations upon his observations in the classroom seeing who has leadership qualities, maturity in discussions, activities, presentations in class and levels of responsibility. There have been some CMHS students who attended in previous years.

"I'm really proud of these boys. The (leaders of the program) were surprised that two young men from the same school were so impressive," said Mr. Bell.

The program was divided into three parts. First there was sight-seeing in the nation's capital. Next was Leadership in Government Management (LGM) in which students were placed in groups of about 20 to discuss issues. Lastly, there was the LGM Simulation divided into the Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches of government.

"In the Executive part, we were a president and cabinet during a fictional crisis," said Joseph. "In the Judicial, we were testing the Constitution. I was a Justice of the Supreme Court and had to decide on whether a ruling was constitutional. In the Legislative, all 250 of us served in a Model Congress. I was chosen Speaker of the House and got to run it."

During their week, the students studied a fictional bill and on the last day passed the legislation. They used information from current issues for the discussion such as with immigration - What should be done with illegal immigrants? Are caps needed for new immigrants?

The boys met with supervisors in the offices of Rep. Tim Murphy, Senator Arlen Specter and Senator Bob Casey.

"We got to sit in the House of Representatives and were addressed by a Texas Congressman, all 250 of us," said Joseph. "We each had faculty advisers in our sessions and guest speakers from the National Rifle Association, Exxon Mobil on green technologies, and a member of the 9/11 Commission."

"The best part for me was being Speaker of the House," said Joseph. "I had to be interviewed and nominated by my peers. It was a big honor to be accepted by my peers. I was nominated in my LGM. Then I was in a group interview with the curriculum director. They looked at how we debated. We were narrowed to just three or four who were interviewed one-on-one. We were asked: What do you think is your generation's biggest problem in today's society? Do you think people care about government as much as they used to?"

The group also had breakfast at the National Press Club where they saw reporters from ABC, CNN, *Politico* and *The New York Times*.

"I want to become a news journalist so this was really cool for me. We could ask questions and I was able to ask Elisabeth Bumiller, national affairs correspondent for *The New York Times*: 'What was the biggest news story you ever covered and how did it affect you?'"

Her answer dealt with taking off from JFK airport at about the same time the first airplane hit the World Trade Center on 9/11. She was in the air over it when it happened, and immediately began spreading the word.

Stephen found the friendships he made and learning about politics as the most impressive events during that week. "I had three

roommates from Alaska, Georgia and Philadelphia," he said.

Stephen was a Supreme Court Justice in his Judicial Simulation, and a General Caucus Debater in the group of 250. But the greatest learning experience for Stephen was being elected president of his LGM Simulation, and being among the youngest so honored.

"I was given a worldwide crisis situation - Russia and multiple other countries claimed land and oil rights in the Arctic region. NATO and the U.N. were involved. Russia said no matter what, they would start drilling in that region. They were fighting over oil and thus needed the land rights for the region.

"I was given this the night before and all 40 of us were given positions - Secretary of Defense to Press Secretary to ambassadors to various countries. Beforehand I heard that we had U.N. and NATO support, but I was not to provoke



*"The (leaders of the program) were surprised that two young men from the same school were so impressive."*

Mr. Rick Bell, CMSD social studies department chairman, about Joseph Helinski, above left, and Stephen Strosko

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

**WANT TO MAKE A DONATION?**

Individuals, businesses or organizations wishing to donate items throughout the school year for goodie bag gifts, door prizes or money for supplies for next year's program, contact:

**Mrs. Lori Hedderman**  
Canonsburg Middle School  
**724-745-9030**



# Girls Night OUT

From left are Celine Loether, Abigail Parry, Miranda Mills, Brooke Washington, Zoe Webster, Julianna Yarosh, Laura Kulbacki, Chelsea Holmes and Taylor Linke.

What do young teenage girls like to do? Make friends? Try on makeup? Learn self-defense? For the fourth year at Canonsburg Middle School, teachers and staff have held a Girls Night Out for the 7th- and 8th-grade girls. With a variety of activities, snacks, and giveaways, it has become the place to be for fun and socializing ... and learning. More importantly, it is about empowering females to make healthy and positive decisions in life.

Mrs. Lori Hedderman, school counselor, doesn't seem to mind the work in organizing the event that had 132 teenagers attending this year. She is quick to say she didn't originate the idea. She learned about it at a conference and adapted it to CMS.

At this year's event, the girls rotated through each of the five 30-minute sessions that included:

**SAMBA DANCING**, taught by Miss Meg Pankiewicz, 7th-grade language arts teacher

**SELF-DEFENSE**, Mrs. Lori Hedderman and Miss Sarah Kohlman, school counselors

**DECORATED PEN CRAFT**, Mrs. Marcie Killmeyer, special education science, and Miss Stephanie Kubik, 7th-grade science

**DECORATING COOKIES**, Mrs. Tina Miller, Spanish, and Mrs. Jade Morgan, French

**MINI-MANICURES**, Mrs. Melissa DalBon, 8th-grade language arts.

More than a dozen teachers helped as chaperones or taking care of the food.

Kyleigh Higie, 13-year-old daughter of Jon and Lisa Higie of Cecil Township, is in the 8th grade and attended for her second year.

"A lot of my friends were going and it really sounded like fun," said Kyleigh. "There were different activities and I could spend time with friends." She

added that it was fun to be with so many girls her own age.

Having a younger brother and no sisters, this was a good place to bond with girls she may not have known before as each team rotated through the sessions.

Guest speaker this year was Dr. Monica VanDieren, a pure mathematician based at Robert Morris University. In addition to being a professor at Robert Morris, she is co-director of the school's honors program, a wife, a mother of a daughter, and encourages girls to pursue studies in math and science.

Dr. VanDieren talked about women who have been successful throughout history and who persevered in what they wanted. "Women today still struggle but we have come a long way," Mrs. Hedderman also was impressed with the speaker who was both intelligent and down to earth.

"I thought the speaker was cool," said 8th-grader Emily Connor, the 13-year-old daughter of Michelle and Russell Connor of Canonsburg. "She taught us how to decode a message. I thought she was a strong influence (on the girls)."

"The speaker was very interesting," said Kyleigh. "She talked about cracking codes and that you need a lot of math to do it. She told us about careers

in mathematics. It was interesting to learn all the things you can do with math."

Kyleigh admits that she wants to go to college, but she doesn't know in what field. For now, she runs cross country, plays flute in the school band and is keeping her options open.

Emily is more set on her career path. She wants to be either a veterinarian or a cardiothoracic surgeon. "My Mom is a nurse in the cardiothoracic ICU at UPMC so I'm very interested in medicine," she said, "and I like animals."

She also runs cross country, swims, plays golf and tennis. She's on the yearbook staff, World Language Club and MathCounts.

Emily added that in the self-defense session, the girls learned how to get out of situations, such as when someone attacks from behind. "We learned how to get out of their grip. I showed my mom. I feel more confident after learning it." In her second year at the event, Emily says it is easier to talk with all girls in the program.

"I learned a lot about math, different self-defense moves, and also I liked the dancing part because I'm not a really good dancer, but it is a lot of fun," said Kyleigh.

Emily, who also has a younger brother and no sisters, recommends it to other girls. She made friends with girls she didn't know before and had an evening of fun ... just with girls.

The cost for each girl attending the program was \$3, which helped cover the cost of supplies. Many parents donated door prizes, cash to buy supplies, pizza, desserts and snacks.

"I think this is an important program for girls because girls at this age

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IN BRIEF



Elves working on the toy drive are, from left, Christopher Pidro, Joshua Hrip, Rachel Grasky and Gracie Roman.

**MUSE TOY DRIVE**

Second-graders at Muse Elementary conducted a successful annual toy drive. Notices were sent home asking students to donate to the toy drive, which lasted about three weeks. All collected toys were sent to the High School to be wrapped and distributed to local families in need.

The 2nd-graders enjoy this charity fund drive. They wore elf hats during December and got into the holiday spirit of giving and helping others. They realize that the holiday season is much more than seeing what they get for Christmas, but helping others enjoy Christmas, too.

**FOOD BANK**

Canonsburg Middle School Student Council gathered 2,215 items for the Canonsburg-Houston Food Bank, which asked for help raising 300-400 items during a desperately low period. They also donated to the food bank \$1,338 raised through a Chinese auction and CM vs. Washington School District Turkey Bowl.

Presenting the check to Barb Jones of the food bank, second from left, are CMS Student Council officers, from left, Josiah Hritsko, president; Emily Newman, secretary, and Bianca Kienzle, treasurer.



**SUPPLIES FOR SOUTH CENTRAL**

South Central Elementary School reaped the rewards when Canonsburg chiropractor, Dr. Scott Elliott, held his annual School Supply Drive in August 2009.

Dr. Elliott presented Mrs. Michelle Tomicek, South Central principal, with approximately \$2,000 in supplies collected from his patients and staff members.



From left are Principal Michelle Tomicek, Erin Lawrence, student in Mrs. Kelly Vayansky's PM Kindergarten class; Dr. Scott Elliott and Mrs. Jan Lawrence.



**'READY, SET, WHAT'**

Cecil Elementary School's first grade was visited by Pittsburgh Steelers Mascot Steely McBeam and members of the Steelers Kid Zone television crew. The classes of Miss Ashley Knizner, Ms. Stacie Scheidler and Miss Heather Marini were video recorded for a segment of "Ready, Set, What" that was broadcast in October on WPCW. The students were asked questions pertaining to football terminology and the Steelers players.

**FINAL TOUCHES FOR DINNER**

Cecil Intermediate School's 198 5th-graders created colorful placemats for residents at Town View Health and Rehabilitation Center in Canonsburg. Mrs. Lisa Stimpson, 5th-grade teacher, and Mr. Craig Barzan, school counselor, organized this service project with Town View's activity director, Bobbi Bower. The project was very meaningful and brightened Thanksgiving dinner for many residents at the center.

Students were greeted by Rose, a kind-hearted resident, who smiled at the sight of eight caring 5th-graders who were chosen to deliver the placemats.



Holding their Thanksgiving placemats, from left, in front, are Ryleigh Steadman, Rose, and Hayley Timko; in back, Harley Bellan, Rachel Cottrill, Rachel Jones, Matthew Houseman, Kayla Hopkins and Jessica Miles.

**BREAKFAST WITH MRS. CLAUS**

Borland Manor Elementary students enjoyed a special "Breakfast with Mrs. Claus," sponsored by The Nutrition Group, the company that is contracted to manage the district's food service department.

More than 135 students had their choice of Mrs. Claus's fresh-from-the-oven cinnamon rolls, Santa's breakfast pizza or Rudolph's cereal and toast. They anxiously awaited visiting with Mrs. Claus and giving her letters for Santa.

The Nutrition Group provided a complimentary photo of each child with Mrs. Claus to remember this special occasion.

After breakfast, Mrs. Claus thrilled the children with her rendition of "Twas the Night before Christmas." She also brought an early Christmas gift bag from Santa which contained more than 15 gifts. James Butka, a kindergarten student, was the lucky winner.

Due to the positive response to this event, it is hoped that it is the beginning of a new tradition at Canon-McMillan.

## DISTRICT

## Natural leaders

FROM PAGE SIX

violence. I went to bed thinking 'How can I solve this peacefully because Russia was essentially provoking war against all the countries of the U.N. and NATO?'

"I was up reading economic and political information they gave us. The adult leader gave me 15 minutes to meet with my cabinet members - war group, trade group, energy, ambassadors. Then it became more hectic. In three-minute intervals, other leaders would come in with confidential information for various people in the room. China would back Russia. Our fleet was missing. We were given public support to go to war. We were given multiple roadblocks and suddenly we were getting nowhere," said Stephen.

"Then we were given five minutes for groups to give us choices. I had to choose three people - the Vice President, Secretary of Defense and the Press Secretary - to make my final decision. Defense said we just lost half the fleet and need to reinstitute the draft. Energy group said we must preserve the region from drilling.

"I lost my composure when I walked

back in the room and everyone was looking at me, lots of questions and cameras going off. It was good that the Press Secretary got me back on track. It was pretty rough.

"I gave my speech - cutting trade with China, opening negotiations with Russia, NOT calling up the draft, but encouraging industries to make materials or ships. I threatened that if Russia went to any means of aggression against any countries in NATO or the U.N. that the U.S. would go to war against them."

Stephen learned that there was no real answer, but that his group had come up with a good possibility.

The decision included equalizing funds for war preparations with funds for seeking alternate energy sources. This seemed to appease the energy groups. Negotiations with Russia had not taken place yet, so there was hope that negotiations would ameliorate the situation.

Both boys recommend the program highly. "But if you don't plan on going with an open mind and wanting to learn, then don't go," says Stephen.

## Girls Night

FROM PAGE SEVEN

are struggling with who they are, who they want to be, what they want others to think of them," said Mrs. Hedderman. "This program empowers them to be themselves.

"This forms a good bond with teachers they didn't know. Mrs. Killmeyer teaches special education and is great fun. This makes her accessible to other girls in school, another person they can speak to in school. This is a safe environment and place to have fun," she said.

"In the self-defense session we also

said the girls have to be able to protect themselves by using their own gut reaction. You need to use your intuition - the little voice in your head that says this is a bad situation," added Mrs. Hedderman.

Even the girls who don't win a prize walk away from the evening with a heavy goodie bag filled with free items from businesses or items Mrs. Hedderman has purchased at big discounts from businesses supporting the event.

"We are grateful for help and contributions throughout the year for goodie bags or door prizes. Last year, a mother donated enough stress balls for everyone."

## Historic Summit

FROM PAGE FIVE

the schools heard it mentioned how CMHS students were using their persuasiveness.

"I also was struck by the importance of compromise," says Christine. "I realized that you must compromise more than you originally were willing to do so that an international solution can work.

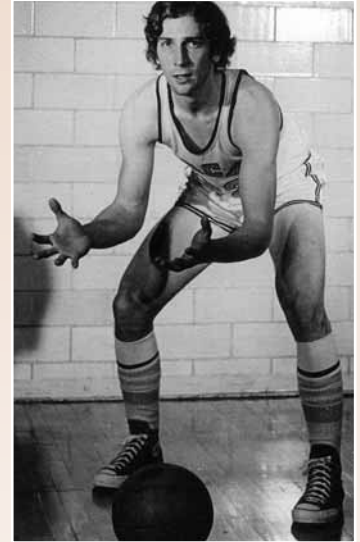
"I want to thank everyone for this great learning experience and hope that there will be more videoconferences like this. It gives us much more than work in

a classroom," says Christine.

"We live in a globalized society so I am glad that our students are excited about the future. It was a good educational experience, and these students may go on to help in changing the world," says Mr. Olszewski.

Christine is planning to major in economics on her way to law school.

Grant adds, "I want to major in computer engineering in college, but I am very interested in international relations. I may think about becoming a senator some day."



**MR. PIETRAS IN BOBCAT HALL OF FAME:** Ray Pietras, physical education teacher at both Cecil and North Strabane intermediate schools, was inducted into the Frostburg State University Bobcat Hall of Fame in October. Mr. Pietras was a four-year starter on the Frostburg State men's basketball team. He holds several single-game records and in 1970-71 was a member of the "greatest team" in the university's history.

## Patriotic Praise

FROM PAGE ONE

1st Lt. U.S. Air Force Reserve Shawn M. Walleck, a South Central parent. The students enjoyed seeing Mr. Walleck place some of the equipment he brought on Principal Michelle Tomicek.

At the end of the program, the servicemen and women who were in attendance introduced themselves and identified who they knew at South Central. Some of the guests had an interesting story to share or explained when they served and with which branch of the service.

The South Central staff believes it is their responsibility as citizens to educate the students about the acts of servicemen and women, past and present, and help them understand how that dedication and courage have made the United States strong.

**CALENDAR**

**FEB. 1-26** Online Kindergarten Registration

**FEB. 10** Elementary & High School Parent/Teacher Conferences (after school)

**FEB. 11** Middle School Parent/Teacher Conferences (after school)

**FEB. 12** Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences (early dismissal for elementary students)

**FEB. 15** Presidents Day (NO CLASSES)

**FEB. 25** PROGRESS REPORTS

**MARCH 12** Act 80 K-8 Staff Development & High School Graduation Project Exits for Seniors

**MARCH 12** Kindergarten Screenings (2010-2011 students)

**MARCH 31** End of 3rd Marking Period

**APRIL 1-5** Spring Break (NO CLASSES)

**APRIL 12** Report Cards Distributed

**MAY 5** Progress Reports

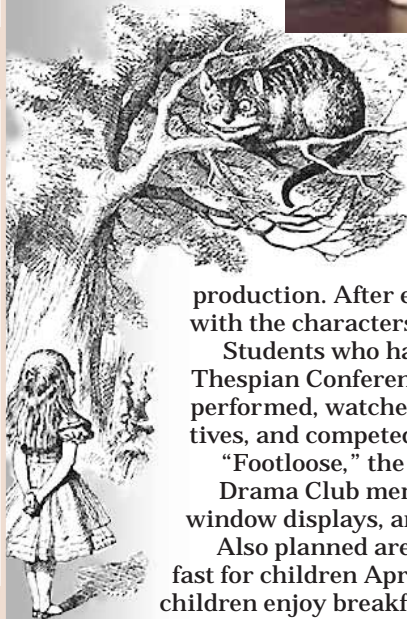
**MAY 31** Memorial Day (NO CLASSES)

**JUNE 9** Last Day of School (secondary dismissal, 11 a.m.; elementary 11:30 a.m.), Graduation at 7 p.m. (if inclement weather, 7:30 p.m. indoors)

**JUNE 10** Clerical Day (Teachers Only)

**HIGH SCHOOL**

Appearing in the CMHS fall play, "Alice in Wonderland," were, from left, Carina Iannarelli as the Cheshire Cat, Amber Mikec as the Queen of Hearts, Ashley Stadtfeld as Alice, Ryan Griffith as the King of Hearts, and Emily Dick as the White Rabbit



**CMHS becomes 'Wonderland'**

The High School's fall show was "Alice in Wonderland" with colorful characters larger than life. Many of the main costumes were rented from the Pittsburgh Playhouse. Others were created in school with students working on them in drama technology class. Mrs. Cynthia Berg, drama teacher, was in charge of the

production. After each performance, children were allowed to come onstage and talk with the characters.

Students who had attained International Thespian status participated at State Thespian Conference in York, Pa., in December, where students from across the state performed, watched performances, attended workshops, visited college representatives, and competed for scholarships.

"Footloose," the spring musical, will be performed March 3-6.

Drama Club members also participated in Canonsburg's Light Up Night as living window displays, and did Christmas caroling for St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Also planned are a Winter Masquerade Ball Feb. 6, and Storybook Character Breakfast for children April 24, 8-11 a.m., in which the characters will read stories while the children enjoy breakfast and student-directed one-act plays.

**State Poster Winners**

Two Cecil Intermediate School 5th-graders are winners in the 2010 Attorney General Drug-Free Poster Contest.

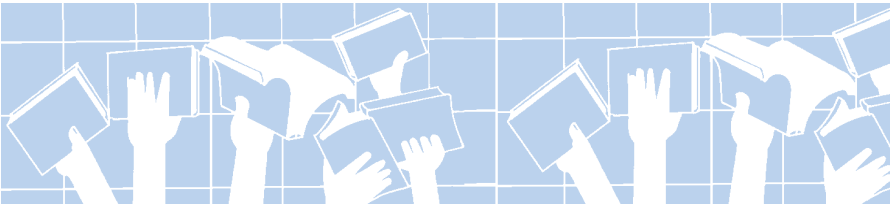
Grace Dahl and Thomas Vissman each won a \$200 savings bond and the opportunity to have their posters in the statewide calendar along with a trip to receive their awards in Harrisburg in December. For many years, 5th-graders throughout Pennsylvania have participated in the contest in which students are encouraged to create an original work of art illustrating a drug-free message of their choice.

Mr. Craig Barzan, guidance counselor, had his Cecil Intermediate 5th-graders take part in this activity as a required assignment for Red Ribbon Week. The 13 statewide winners represent each month of the 2010 calendar year and the calendar cover.

Grace Dahl, left, and Thomas Vissman show their winning posters. Grace's poster appears on February and Thomas' on October pages of the calendar.



## GREATER CANONSBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY



### Dear Friends,

**2010: IT'S A NEW YEAR, A NEW DECADE, AND A NEW ERA** for the Greater Canonsburg Public Library.

As always, there's good news & bad news. The bad news is that the state of Pennsylvania drastically cut funding to public libraries in the most recent budget. Because this community has always actively supported its library, we still plan to continue offering the best in library services and programs. Believe me, nobody can squeeze a buck like a public librarian! In addition to the free use of our books, magazines, DVDs and audios, we offer free Internet access, including WiFi; free introduction to computer classes; many free children's programs, and much more to our resident cardholders.

In the good news category, our remarkable staff and the Library Board of Trustees were honored with the 2009 Library Support Staff Recognition award from the Pennsylvania Library Association, a membership organization that serves almost 1,000 public, school, academic and special libraries in the state. This prestigious award is in recognition of our commitment to continuing education and training for staff members, and their participation in professional development activities. Our goal is to be the best public library staff in the state, so that we may properly serve the needs of our community.

The REALLY good news is that we look forward to an action-packed year ahead! On December 14, 2009, the Board of Trustees was officially presented with the deed to the property on which to construct a new building. Groundbreaking for the new 30,000 square foot, two-story brick library on the corner of Murdock and North Jefferson, was held January 8, 2010.

The new **FRANK SARRIS PUBLIC LIBRARY** will offer much more space for a growing collection, comfortable spaces to read, meeting and study rooms for library programs and for community use, a genealogical department, a Teen department, a computer lab for classes, WiFi throughout, and so much more. All those things will finally make it possible for the library to be the civic, social, cultural and educational center of our community. And please, if you have not yet made your personal pledge to the building fund, now is the time to do it. Thanks to the generosity of Frank and Athena Sarris, who donated \$2 million for the project, our dream has become a reality. It's time now for our community to show its support. We still have not reached 100 percent of our fundraising goal, and we need your pledges of support and continued contributions, both during the construction and for ongoing operations.

Coming up this spring and summer: For adults, 2010 will bring an adult book discussion program entitled "Detecting Women," thanks to grant funding provided by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. This four-session program will begin in mid-March, and will feature mystery books by and about women. We've also received grant funding for some science programming for the older kids, and will be developing that program. Our annual Summer Reading Club this year will invite students to "Make a Splash @ Your Library." Hmmm ... wonder what field trips will go along with that theme?

As always, the key to all the FREE resources that your library has to offer is your library card. It's FREE to residents of the Canon-McMillan School District, so get yours today.

Follow the building project and everything that's happening @ your Library at [www.cbpublib.org](http://www.cbpublib.org).

*Sincerely, Lyn Crouse, Library Director*

68 EAST PIKE STREET, CANONSBURG, PA 15317 • (724)745-1308 • [www.cbpublib.org](http://www.cbpublib.org)

## HIGH SCHOOL



Community Scholarship Foundation of Canon-McMillan Dollars for Scholars® officers for the 2009-2010 school year are, from left, Corresponding Secretary Greta Fahey, Past President Bev Pabian, Treasurer Tom Smith, President Markus Solobay, Recording Secretary Jill Shook and Vice President Danielle Blonar.

### Dollars for Scholars®

**For more information,** contact Danielle Blonar at 724-344-4796 or [dblonar@yahoo.com](mailto:dblonar@yahoo.com) or write CSFSM, PO Box 559 Canonsburg PA 15317

The Community Scholarship Foundation of Canon-McMillan Dollars for Scholars® is a non-profit organization which is locally operated by an all-volunteer board of directors. Its purpose is to provide scholarships to graduating Canon-McMillan High School seniors.

The Community Scholarship Foundation of Canon-McMillan Dollars for Scholars® holds its monthly meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Canonsburg

Borough Building on the second Tuesday of every month. Interested community members are welcome to attend to learn more about the foundation.

Fundraisers in the 2009-2010 school year include the Jack-O-Lantern Jog in October, a ticket raffle for "Two Nights of Champions" (Steelers/ Penguins) that was held in November, Max and Erma's Dining Fund Raiser, the ongoing Buy-A-Brick program, and other events to be announced. Funds also come from the generous support of local businesses, service organizations and individuals who desire to sponsor a scholarship in their name. The Awards Banquet is held in conjunction with Canon-McMillan High School prior to the end of the school year.

Scholarship applications for seniors going on to postsecondary education are available on the district's Web site:

[www.canon-mcmillan.org](http://www.canon-mcmillan.org)

# Highlights

CANON-McMILLAN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
One North Jefferson Avenue  
Canonsburg, PA 15317  
Web site: [www.canon-mcmillan.org](http://www.canon-mcmillan.org)

## DIRECTORY

### ADMINISTRATION OFFICE 724-746-2940

Superintendent: Dr. Helen K. McCracken

Assistant to the Superintendent:

Mr. Michael Daniels

Director of Business and Finance:

Mrs. Joni Mansmann

Director of Curriculum and Instruction:

Dr. Dawn Nicolaus

Director of Special Education:

Ms. Betsy Somerville

Special Education Coordinator: Mr. Robert Chuey

Psychologist: Ms. Lydia Kruse

Network Administrator: Mr. Matthew Harding

Director of Buildings and Grounds:

Mr. Randy Huddart

724-745-1502

Director of Transportation:

Mr. Jonn Mansfield

724-745-1502

### HIGH SCHOOL 724-745-1400

Principal: Mr. David Helinski

Assistant Principal: Ms. Marella Kazos

Assistant Principal: Mr. Michael Hall

Athletic Director: Mr. Guy Montecalvo

### CANONSBURG MIDDLE 724-745-9030

Principal: Mr. Greg Taranto

Assistant Principal: Mr. Kenneth Schrag

### CECIL INTERMEDIATE 724-745-2623

Principal: Mr. Scott Chambers

### NORTH STRABANE INTERMEDIATE

Principal: Mr. Mark Abbondanza

724-873-5252

### BORLAND MANOR ELEMENTARY

Principal: Mrs. Grace Lani

724-745-2700

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Christina Unitas

### CECIL ELEMENTARY 412-221-6808

Principal: Mr. Robert Kleinhans

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Tula Dziak

### FIRST STREET ELEMENTARY 724-745-3130

Principal: Mr. Robert Kleinhans

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Tula Dziak

### HILLS-HENDERSONVILLE ELEMENTARY

Principal: Mr. Tom Theodore

724-745-8390

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Shelley Brose

### MUSE ELEMENTARY 724-745-9014

Principal: Mr. Tom Theodore

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Shelley Brose

### SOUTH CENTRAL ELEMENTARY 724-745-4475

Principal: Mrs. Michelle Tomicek

### WYLANDVILLE ELEMENTARY 724-222-2507

Principal: Mrs. Grace Lani

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Christina Unitas

### CANON-McMILLAN BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Mr. Manuel Pihakis, President

Mr. Eric Kline, Vice President

Mr. Robert Malwitz, Treasurer

Mrs. Darla Bowman-Monaco

Mrs. Zeffie Carroll

Mr. Paul Scarmazzi

Mrs. Laura Grossman

Mr. Joseph Zupancic

Mrs. Debbie Link

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Nonprofit Organization

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Permit No. 50  
Canonsburg, PA

## DISTRICTWIDE

# Mini-Grant Award winners

Six projects were awarded Canon-McMillan School District Mini-Grants for the 2009-2010 school year. Each project received \$800 for implementation. They are:

**EARTH AWARENESS DAY:** A day-long science enrichment workshop at Canonsburg Middle School focused on earth/environmental science for gifted and advanced students at the middle school. They will learn about environmental protection, global warming, endangered species and climate changes. Teachers are Mrs. Tera Brownlee, High School English, and Mrs. Julie Gaetano, Middle School English.



**EDIBLE ECOSYSTEMS:** A project to create a garden on the grounds of South Central Elementary School to teach ecosystems. It will be tended and harvested by

4th-graders with hands-on lessons woven into regular classroom curriculum to meet science anchors. Mrs. Bethany West is the supervising teacher.

**POETRY AND ART THEMATIC UNIT PLAN:** Selected students from Mrs. Shana Porter's 8th-grade English class at Canonsburg Middle School will expand on knowledge gained in the poetry unit by incorporating art. They will experience the connections between art and poetry by virtually visiting The Museum of Modern Art in New York City online through education podcasts and visiting The Carnegie Museum of Art and The Mattress Factory, both in Pittsburgh, for a specially designed guided tour.

**I'LL JUST GET THE NOTES:** This project will use the Livescribe Smartpen, a technology tool that records written notes, pictures and diagrams along with audio, and converts the information to a computer file. The recorded files can be uploaded to the Livescribe Web site



North Strabane Intermediate School 5th-graders James Zukowski and Kayla Ruslavage are involved in "Exploratory: Problem Solved."

so that students can observe and review the real-time presentation of concepts at home. High School teachers in charge of this project are Mr. Steve Kropinak, science, and Ms. Kelly Brownlee, math.

**EXPLORATORY: PROBLEM SOLVED:** Ms. Lynne Douglas's project is to provide challenging problem-solving experiences for all 5th-graders at North Strabane Intermediate School during the 30-minute period following lunch. The problem-solving games and activities would allow the students to participate in cooperative learning activities rather than participate in passive learning. Ms. Douglas teaches math, science and wellness to the 5th-graders.

**EVERYONE CAN LEARN:** Miss Ashley Knizner, 1st-grade teacher at Cecil Elementary School, will provide 1st-grade students with fun and unique learning materials for the classroom to engage every type of learner. The materials will be used in center activities as well as throughout the day to help students learn and retain the basics needed as building blocks for future concepts.