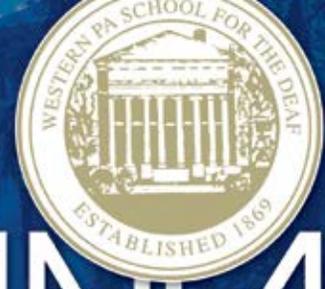


the western PENNSYLVANIAN



NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

VOLUME 132 #2 May 2020



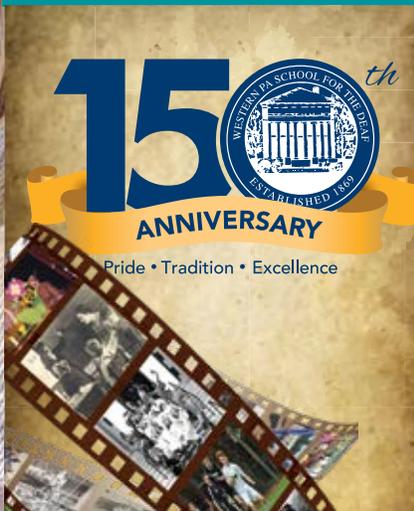
Harlem Globetrotter Visits WPSD

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Puckering Up
with Porcine
Friends For a
Good Cause

◀ PG 10



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PG 26

Breakfast With
Santa



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Editor: Dr. Steve Farmer
Managing Editor: Sarah Bartlebaugh

The Western Pennsylvanian is a publication of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. It is one source of communication with parents, alumni, teachers, friends of WPSD, and other schools for the Deaf.

Supervisions

A note from CEO, Steve Farmer

Dear Friends,

As I write this, we are experiencing unprecedented times after being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pennsylvanians remain under a stay-at-home order issued by Governor Wolf. Our programs have been closed since March 16th and will be closed for the remainder of the academic year. Without a doubt, we continue to experience much uncertainty.

Responding to these challenges, administrators, teachers, and staff have moved quickly and proactively to move our students into an online campus filled with digital classrooms ready to provide instruction and support. At this point, we have been conducting remote instruction for several weeks and will continue to host our online presence until the end of the school year.

Despite the uncharted landscape ahead, I am proud to say that our faculty and staff have stepped up to ensure that our students are being educated, and our campuses are being kept clean, safe, and protected. Although this is new to all of us, the administrators, faculty, and staff have done a marvelous job at crafting meaningful education strategies and doing what the best for our students. The spirit of innovation, creativity, and courage that established WPSD 150 years ago and brought us successfully to this point, is the same spirit that will guide us in the weeks to come.

For sure, our 150th anniversary year will be one to remember! As you pore through this issue, you will see that it is filled with many surprises, science experiments, student activities, athletic results, and some historical school pictures. There is a lot of energy and excitement coming from every program!

In close, I want to thank you for your continued support of our students and schools. We enjoy incredible gifts and resources from our Board, donors, lawmakers, alumni, parents, and other stakeholders and deeply appreciate the contributions and generosity from so many.

Enjoy reading. Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Steve Farmer, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer
Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf



Harlem Globetrotter Visits WPSD



WPSD was thrilled to welcome Harlem Globetrotters star Chris "Animal" Hyche to campus in December. As if his presence wasn't exciting enough, Mr. Hyche surprised our students with his use of American Sign Language during his presentation. Hyche grew up learning ASL as the son of two Deaf parents. He discussed the Globetrotter's "T.E.A.M. Up at School" program. The team created this school assembly program in conjunction with the National Campaign to Stop Violence. The program discourages bullying, cultivates empathy and assures the bullied that they are not alone. T.E.A.M. stands for Talk, Empathy, Ask, and Mobilize. After his inspiring presentation, Chris performed a few spectacular basketball tricks, all while making sure our students took part in the fun! What an amazing experience for our students! ■

Check out page six for more pictures from 'Animal's' visit.



Harlem Globetrotter Visits WPSD Continued



Surprise Encounter With NBA Player

By Megan Chopek

Students from the Middle School Applied Studies program visited a local grocery store to purchase snacks for classrooms. They worked on a variety of skills, including reading and math. Recently, the students were able to use their social skills and deductive reasoning skills upon meeting an international basketball player while shopping at Aldi! The students discovered that Chevon "Chevy" Troutman just flew back from Argentina, and has traveled the world internationally playing basketball for the past 14 years. He is also a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh! We even met another basketball player who played in college with him. Back at WPSD, the students used the information they gathered to do research on Chevon and found pictures of him playing basketball. We even got his autograph! He was very impressed by our students and their interest in what he had to say. ■

What's Happening?

Latest News Around the WPSD Campus

Making Space History

By Olivia L., 11th grade

Sign1News had an exciting opportunity for me on January 17. They invited me to be part of their video conference with two NASA historians and one of the participants from the Gallaudet 11 program, Dave Myers. There were two other deaf students from Atlanta School for the Deaf and Florida School for the Deaf and Blind there as well. Sign1News asked the NASA historians and Mr. Myers a few questions about the project that NASA did with 11 deaf students from Gallaudet. The reason NASA chose the Gallaudet 11 was because they had spinal meningitis when they were young, which caused deafness, but scientists also thought that the damage to their inner ears would reduce motion sickness for various space related tasks. They chose them to help the program prepare the first astronauts that were going to space. The deaf participants' inner ears were not impacted by the motions and so this helped the scientists figure out balance for the hearing astronauts. I got an opportunity to ask them a question. My question was, "How did the NASA scientists communicate with the deaf people during the project?" Mr. Myers said there were no interpreters and they just communicated by lip reading and writing back and forth on paper. That blew my mind because I cannot imagine how difficult that must have been because the deaf participants did some crazy experiments and to only communicate through writing back and forth must have been very tedious. Dave also said that some of the scientists learned some signs while they were there. I was just so shocked by his answer. It was interesting to be part of this video conference because I went to Space/Aviation Challenge Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, and this experience brought back a lot of those great memories. NASA did mention that they needed young people. Could that be me one day? This was such an inspiring experience for me! ■



A Look Back in Time...



15th ANNIVERSARY



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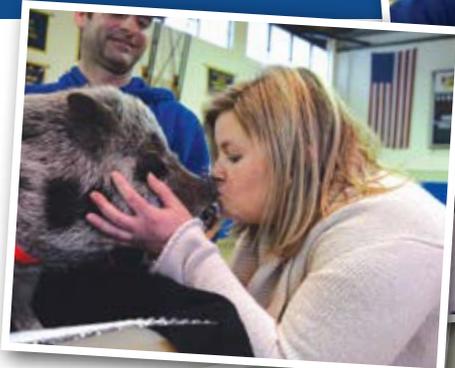
Puckering Up With Porcine Friends For a Good Cause

By Shari Gerlach

The Middle School Student Body Government and ninth grade students hosted a “Kiss A Pig” fundraiser throughout the month of November. All twenty-six WPSD staff members volunteered as contestants to have the honor of kissing a pig by generating the most donations.

On December 5th, at our school wide “Kiss A Pig” assembly, our WPSD staff and students were kept in suspense while watching our staff member, Jamie W. and her husband Pete, lead two of their own cute pigs, Tank and Petunia, to make their grand entrance across the gymnasium. Out of 26 contestants, the top 10 winners’ lips were puckered up and ready to kiss Tank/Petunia. It was a fun-filled event to witness the winners and the pigs make their kisses official!

The total amount of donations reached was \$535, which will benefit the PAART - Pittsburgh Aviation Animal Rescue Team. A BIG THANKS to our volunteers/contestants, staff members and students for their generous donations, Jaime & Pete for their time and dedication, Tank & Petunia for the smooches, and Middle School Principal-Greg Mendenhall, CEO - Steve Farmer, and CECO - Marybeth Lauderdale, for giving our students the opportunity to give back to their community. ■

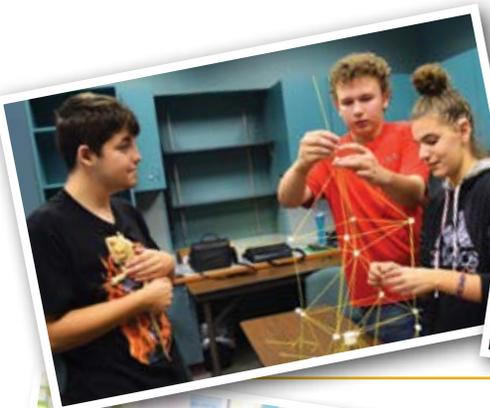


Schoolwide STEM Day Activities

High School

By Nick Catalano

On November 8, the high school students at WPSD celebrated a very important holiday - STEM (Science, Math, Engineering and Math) Day! During their math and science classes, students were able to participate in a variety of experiments that allowed them to test their critical thinking skills and creativity. What a fun experience! ■



Middle School

By Nicole Borelle

On November 8th, the Middle School students got to celebrate a special occasion, National STEM Day, with the collaboration of the Middle School science teacher, Mrs. Shari Gerlach, and the Middle School math teacher, Ms. Nicole Borelle. The two teachers presented about STEM Day and its meaning as well as provided various STEM activities in which the students would take part. The activities allowed the students to visualize first-hand how STEM incorporates concepts from the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields. One of the activities integrated geometry and engineering concepts. The students were challenged to create a 3-D pentagon globe with only drinking straws and tape without being instructed how to do it!

This proved challenging for the students as they desperately wanted to make a 2-D model of a pentagon and were unsure how to transform it into a 3-D model. With guidance and clues, a few students were able to successfully construct a whole 3-D pentagon globe.

The Middle School students also had the opportunity to experience a second activity where they were instructed to assemble a stack of 10 red cups into a pyramid without touching the cups with their bare hands and using only the materials given to them: rubber bands, cotton balls, drinking straws and a piece of string. The group of students were split up into teams to see who would be able to finish first! The students quickly became creative and worked together. Several teams were able to successfully create a pyramid using only those materials. After the first round, teachers confiscated the tool that they noticed each team used the most, leaving them with only three tools to use. Again, the students rose to the challenge by communicating with their team regarding their opinions on the best possible strategy and tackling the pyramid with no hesitation of making errors.

Throughout the activities, the students expressed how they enjoyed having to solve problems quickly and efficiently while using a hands-on approach and team work to successfully create the final product. At the end, the students eagerly asked when they would be able to do such a fun activity again. ■

Digital Fabrication Class

In February, eighth graders in the Digital Fabrication in the Arts class jumped into their first Tinkercad modeling class in the Cottage. In this introductory class, they learn basic 3D modeling. The students are learning so quickly and intuitively that the teacher needs to create extra assignments! ■



Worm Composting Experiment

By Erin Mascaro

The ninth grade Environmental Science class has been working on an inquiry experiment all semester long; after 95 days of observations it was completed just before winter break. The students created mini-composting bin habitats for 20 red worms and hypothesized which amount of food would be the best in terms of worm survival and population growth. Composting is an environmentally friendly way to dispose of waste. Worms decompose biodegradable waste, and their castings can be used as fertilizer. Many people use their compost fertilizer in their gardens to improve the soil nutrients. For our classroom experiment, students discussed elements that can impact a worm habitat and decided that for our independent variable we would change the amount of food we provided. Our dependent variable was the population of worms. The students observed over the semester how the worms (decomposers) consumed the waste (fruit and vegetable garbage) and transformed it into nutrient rich soil. At the completion of the inquiry, when they counted the worm populations for each compost bin, they found that the "half food" bin had only 16 worms in it. The "medium food" bin had 65 worms and 25 eggs! This was the bin that they hypothesized would have the highest population. But, their hypothesis was incorrect because the "double food" bin contained 126 worms and 83 eggs! In their analysis, the students discussed how to continue their

inquiry. They wondered about how much food would be too much food for the worms. They also wanted to know what would happen if they replaced the healthy vegetables with junk food and fed it to the worms. They were also curious about what would happen to the worms in different room temperatures and humidity. These are all excellent future experiments for our student scientists! ■





Math 24

In November, high school students had been trying out in class to qualify for the Math 24 competition held recently in the School's auditorium. The top 12 students competed in three rounds and the top scores overall made it to the final round. Jenna D., Wade D., Zaid A., and James C. battled it out in the finals. Wade came out on top! Congratulations to him on being named Math 24 Champion. ■



Wind Turbine Energy Experiment

By Erin Mascaro

In November, students in the Environmental Science class learned how mechanical energy can be converted to electrical energy by creating wind turbines in the lab. Each team tested to see which design could convert to the highest voltage. Great work! ■



Testing Water Quality in Our Local Park

By Erin Mascaro

Our chemistry students braved the below freezing temperatures on December 11 for their monthly water quality test at Frick Park. They efficiently (and quickly!) tested the chemical quality of the water and noted that over the past few months as the water temperature decreases, the dissolved oxygen increases. They have an inverse relationship. Nothing can stop these hard-working students! ■





Third Annual Dylan Zurawski Science Fair Competition



Students Impress at Annual Dylan Zurawski Science Fair

By Middle School and High School Science Teachers

Our Middle School and High School students participated in their Third Annual Dylan Zurawski Science Fair Competition. Students learning the Nature of Inquiry or Scientific Inquiry is an integral part of our school science curriculum and Pennsylvania Standards. It also provides them opportunities to experience how science is conducted in the real world.

Students used the scientific method by identifying a question, developing a hypothesis, devising an experiment by manipulating the variables, and collecting data to find true results. Three judges, with an astonishing career, expertise, and wealth of knowledge in the field of science, mathematics, and sports, judged the students' science project. Judges were Tim Flaherty, Zach Michael, and Todd McCurdy. Projects were judged on their scientific thought, originality, and clarity. Winners were recognized and awarded at our school wide assembly with the help of David and Joy Zurawski. Students, who completed their project were given a "Science Fair Participant" ribbon.



Middle School

- 1st Place:** Sarah V. - Not So Eggcellent Teeth
- 2nd Place:** Kierra O. - Liquefying Ice
- 3rd Place:** Kyrey T. - Nail Polish Survival - Pricy vs. Cheap
- Honorable Mention:** Elsie O. - Charcoal Water Purifying Experiment

High School

- 1st Place:** Makenna H. - Color Light Impact on Plant Growth
- 2nd Place:** Dania C. - How Much Sugar is in Pop?
- 3rd Place:** Emily O. - Does Construction Affect Water?
- Honorable Mention:** Olivia L. - Can Milk Be Plastic?

Much appreciation and thanks to the judges for volunteering. The students who participated in this science fair not only learned about science, but just may be inspired to join the next generation of scientists and engineers.



Elementary School Science Fair Students Shine

By Sheri Morgan

In December, the elementary students gathered to share their science experiment boards. Each science class worked hard as a class to choose, develop, complete and report on the results of their hypotheses to one another in the Learning Center mini max theater. The students enjoyed learning about venomous and nonvenomous snakes, magnetic objects, carbonation, how to prevent apple browning, and which paper towel is the best for absorption. Afterward, all of the students received participation ribbons for their hard work. ■



BotsIQ Builds 'Rampage Reborn'

Our Lions were hard at work at New Century Careers for months designing and constructing this year's bot -The Rampage Reborn. The team worked relentlessly to build the frame and floor panel of the bot, as well as side frames and the rear panel of the machine.

This year, the team spent a lot of time working on the wheel guards. They altered the design by using a heavier gauge metal. This design change was an attempt to make the guards a stronger and more powerful defense mechanism.

Our students also worked on reducing the weight of the bot to fit the 15 pound limit required for competition.

The weapon was designed and the team constructed bracket supports- which provide stability and security for the weapon during matches.

The students also drilled and tapped screw holes in order to secure two working pieces to be machined together at the same time.

Brilliance at work! We are so proud of our team! Go Lions! ■



Jr. NAD Students Learn About Civics And Cooperation

By Kristi Mosholder

In November, a few fortunate students (Olivia L., Xiaoli C. and Rebekah Q.) had a fabulous time at the Jr. NAD conference in snowy Rochester, NY. Twenty-six other schools were also in attendance. On the first night, the students took part in a few ice breaker activities and volunteered to be on stage to participate in the **#RocThat** skit/game.

On the second day, the students and staff spent all day on the RIT campus taking in various presentations from guest speakers discussing the importance of leadership, and, more specifically, Deaf leadership, in the community. The Daily Moth reporter, Alex Abenchuchcan stopped by campus during the conference and gave a few of the Jr. NAD members the opportunity to interview other members and create a Deaf Bing skit.

Olivia participated in the Jr. NAD ambassador competition along with 19 other students attending the conference. She was one of the top ten finalists! Although she did not win, she did earn the highly coveted All Around Participant award!

Overall, Olivia, Rebekah, and Xiaoli had an amazing time at the conference and made new friends. The girls enthusiastically took part in different activities, sharing their leadership skills, experiences, and knowledge with their groups. All three of them represented WPSD very well! What a great learning experience for all involved! ■



Read Across America Celebrations at WPSD



Children's Center

Students in the Children's Center celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday! The day started with Dr. Farmer reading *10 Little Rubber Ducks*, by Eric Carle, followed by the careful and delicate construction of a 'Cat in the Hat' cake tower built by Dr. Farmer and Mrs. Carrie Rain! Afterwards, stories and activities were dedicated to author Eric Carle. Those stories included *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. The students crafted caterpillar hats and enjoyed a morning snack of Dr. Seuss goldfish and cheese sticks as well as the 'Cat in the Hat' cake for the afternoon treat! Happy birthday, Dr. Seuss! ■



Elementary School

By Sheri Morgan

On Friday, February 28th, the elementary students started their day by celebrating Read Across America with a story - *Froggy Plays T-Ball* told in ASL by Molly Estes. Next, they got comfortable in their pajamas and read their favorite books in the hallways. Each time the students read a book, they moved their frogs to the next lily pads. Students were encouraged to read together and with staff members. While reading they enjoyed a special snack! ■





Leap Into Learning

By Margi Jo Patton

Elementary students had lots of fun celebrating and learning about Leap Day this year. In connection with Read Across America, our Reading Specialist, Sheri Morgan, began our celebration with a story about frogs leaping. Our 4th grade Science teacher, Mary Miller, then shared with students why we add an extra day in February every four years. There were four stations with activities related to the number 4! In one activity, students leaped down the hallway as they counted by four while another group of students challenged each other in a game of Connect 4. Another group chose four pages to color related to Leap Day. In the fourth activity, students counted out four snacks to munch. What a wonderful day of learning and fun! ■



Award Winning Author Visits WPSD

By Carolyn Kirkpatrick,
Coordinator of Library Services

On February 3rd, author Dan Gemeinhart visited WPSD to meet selected middle and high school students who are assigned to read his latest heartwarming novel, *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*. This novel was named a 2019 Parents' Choice Award Gold Medal Winner.

Mr. Gemeinhart was an elementary teacher/librarian for fourteen years. He is the author of five novels including *The Honest Truth*, *Scar Island*, *Some Kind of Courage*, *Good Dog* and *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*.

These selected students received a copy of his book about a month ago, preparing to read it for this event. Mr. Gemeinhart took the time to answer students' questions related to his personal experiences



as an author and with regard to his novel. After that, the students were excited to get their book autographed by Mr. Gemeinhart!

The visit was made possible through Pittsburgh Arts and Lectures. Having an established author actually present on the WPSD campus helped spark the students' enthusiasm and desire to read! What a great day for all involved! ■

Battle of The Books Teams Impress in Competition

By Mary Noschese

Our Middle School welcomed many new battlers to our Battle of the Books teams this year. Facilitated by Gallaudet University Youth Programs, each team was given three novels that were selected by the staff. For weeks, the students prepared for their day of battles by reading, discussing and filing out notes on their books with their teammates. They created their own questions and quizzed each other in meetings. Of the 10 students that participated this year, six of them were rookies. During the week of November 18th, each team battled other schools in their divisions during the Preliminary Rounds. The Buff and Green teams advanced to the playoff rounds! Both teams performed well during the playoffs with two Gallaudet judges offering compliments and useful feedback to the students. On December 13, Gallaudet University announced the National Teams for the Middle School Battle of the Books. Our Buff team sadly missed their chance to go to nationals this year. They should be very proud of themselves as this was a high-scoring division this year! They met and surpassed many personal goals and school records during their journey. Bravo, Buff Team! The green division revealed their national titles and we are proud to announce that our Green Team placed 4th this year! This is a rookie team made up of 5th and 6th graders. This is a great accomplishment for them and we couldn't be more proud of them! Great job, readers! We can't wait to see what you do next year! ■





Celebrating 100 Days of School!

By Emily Dickinson

In February, a few elementary classes celebrated the 100th Day of school! They participated in fun activities that related to the number 100. These activities included stacking cups to 100, counting snacks to 100, making a craft (involving counting by tens to 100), doing 100 movement exercises, making hats with 100 strips, and making a necklace with 100 fruit loops! What a wonderful and innovative way to celebrate a milestone in the school year! ■



Pennsylvania House Member Visits WPSD's Home

In February, Representative Brandon Markosek stopped by WPSD for a conversation with Dr. Farmer and a tour of the school. Rep. Markosek visited several classrooms, the Cottage, the Children's Center, the Residence, and the television studio. In the Cottage, he joined the high school Engineering Graphics class to watch the students work on various projects and stopped by the Children's House to say 'hello' to the students. We deeply appreciate the opportunity to show the Representative the school and some of the exciting things that are happening on campus. We are #WPSDProud! ■





Honoring Our Military Heroes

WPSD hosted a very special guest on Veterans Day. Students and staff welcomed Colonel Mike Anders to campus. He is on active duty and was promoted to his current rank in March. Colonel Anders reminded all of us to take time and thank veterans from all wars and those on active duty, who are fighting so that we can enjoy freedom. He also stressed the importance of remembering those who have been wounded and those who gave their lives so that we can be safe. Colonel Anders recognized WPSD staff members who had previously been in the military. He also discussed his own family and the types of sacrifices they make every day so that he can continue to be on active duty. It was a powerful and emotional presentation! Thank you to Colonel Anders for visiting with us and thanks to Dr. Farmer for arranging his visit! ■



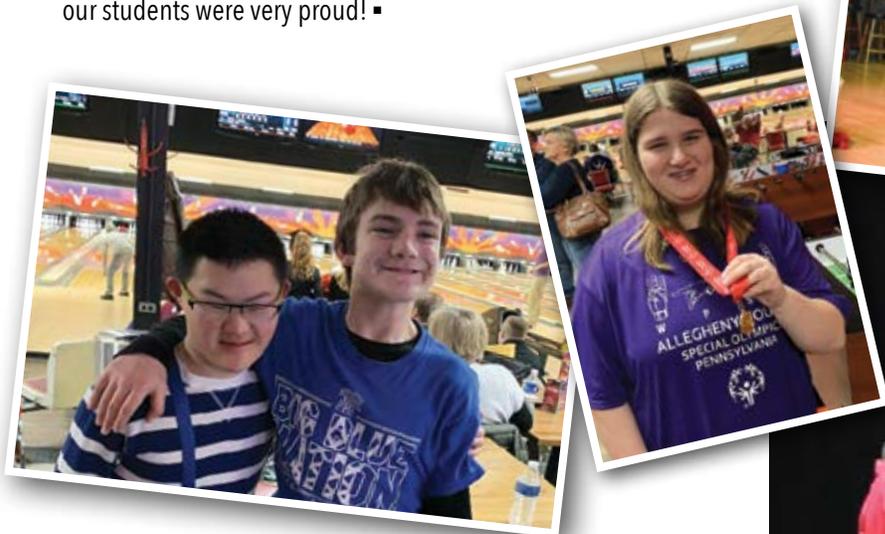


WPSD Students Compete in Special Olympics Bowling Tournaments

By Alisa Whyson

In January, five WPSD students participated in the Special Olympics of Allegheny County bowling tournament at Mt. Lebanon Lanes. This is a huge county-wide event with a lot of hot competition! Two of our students (Noah W. and Daniel K.) brought home bronze medals and Kieran T. and Marissa M. brought home gold!

In February, Special Olympics of Allegheny County held the annual bowling tournament for WPSD athletes. Our athletes enjoyed competing with their peers at Great Valley Bowling Lanes. Upon their return to WPSD, they received medals for their accomplishments. As always, our students were very proud! ■



The WPSD Family Gives Thanks

A Gathering of Friends

The annual WPSD Thanksgiving luncheon was held in November. The event honors our community partners and people outside of WPSD. These are people who help us throughout the year and we are thankful for their support! It included staff from our local borough, police, firefighters, food bank and the Blessing Board. It was a perfect combination of a delicious meal and a wonderful event of community togetherness. ■



Toddlers And Turkeys

By Shelley Zelei

The Children's Center started off their annual Thanksgiving celebration with a variety of fun activities between classrooms! Students enjoyed hunting and gathering food for the feast, rowing boats, completing an obstacle course and other movement fun! A Thanksgiving Chex Mix was enjoyed by all for a quick break before heading back to activities where they were treated to a reading of *The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Turkey* and *Turkey Trouble*. Students also enjoyed creating either paper plate turkeys complete with feathers or a turkey headband. The festivities wrapped up with our annual Thanksgiving feast where students had an opportunity to try turkey, corn, sticky buns and other yummy foods. ■





Preparing a Home-Cooked Meal

In November, the students who are part of the Independent Living Program learned some tips and techniques to successfully cook Thanksgiving dinner. The group invited Deans Mary Ennis-Blahut and Tom Halik to the dinner. The food was fabulous. The students were creative with the stuffing and ham. We had a great time enjoying each other's company and being thankful for our talented students. ■



Best Buddies Celebrate With Games

By Gina Leskovic

The WPSD Middle School Best Buddies got together before Thanksgiving break to compete in "Turkey Races." Our eighth graders "buddy up" with a friend from two of our applied studies classes to foster friendships and participate in fun monthly activities. There were lots of laughs (and dropped food) as they "served" turkeys on a platter, passed potatoes, and raced to "warm up" in our winter gear. All seemed to thoroughly enjoy our time together! ■



Celebrating The Spirit of The Season



Trimming The Tree

WPSD Children's Center students officially embraced the holiday spirit. Mrs. Jan Majocha and Mrs. Katherine Gracey shared a story named *Clifford's First Christmas* with the eager boys and girls. Following that treat, each student placed ornaments on the Christmas tree. This fun morning helped everyone truly appreciate the holiday season and the value of togetherness and friendship that is so important, not only during this time, but all throughout the year. ■



Holiday Card Art Contest With VITAC

WPSD was thrilled to welcome VITAC to campus on December 13. The company recognized nine students who created amazing artistic designs for the company's holiday card this year. The ceremony began with an ASL performance of the National Anthem by the HandVibes group. Of the nine finalists, one winner was chosen. Congratulations to Sarah V.! This is the 29th year VITAC and WPSD have partnered for this project. VITAC or VITACcess provides closed captioning for national television programming. VITAC generously made a donation to the Art Department and Sarah V. received an award for her achievement. Her design was the cover of the VITAC holiday card. Congratulations to all who participated! ■



Home Alone for The Holiday Show

On December 13, students of all ages took part in the annual holiday musical production - "Home Alone" - in front of a packed auditorium. The students worked hard on perfecting their parts both on the stage and behind the scenes, which was evident as the performance was truly entertaining. Congratulations to Amy Alverson, her talented students, and everyone who was a part of this outstanding production! ■



Breakfast With Santa

Before the holiday break, students, their families, and staff enjoyed a delicious breakfast including french toast and bacon as they awaited the arrival of Santa Claus! Some of our youngest students and their families were able to spend some quality time together over the delectable feast. All of a sudden, Santa made his big debut! As he rounded the corner to the dining room, the children had their faces pressed against the window, wondering what Santa had in his pack. As he entered the cafeteria, Santa was greeted by a roomful of excited children. He made his way through the crowd, greeting several children. Santa sat in his designated seat, then called up each student by name. Each lucky one received a present from good ol' Saint Nick. Such a fun event! ■



Holiday Festivities Warm The Hearts of Younger Learners

The Girls' Athletic Association (GAA) hosted a holiday party for the elementary students before the holiday break. Students constructed and decorated their own snowflake ornament for their Christmas trees at home. The group enjoyed *Snowmen at Christmas* by Carolyn Buehner, signed by the GAA members. Following these fun activities, the Man (and Woman) of the Hour arrived - Santa and Mrs. Claus - along with a few elves! They greeted the excited children and then Santa invited each one to come up and share their Christmas wishes with him. Each student also received a present! The party ended with cookies and milk. A great yuletide event for all involved! ■



Best Buddies Celebrate The Season

By Gina Leskovic

WPSD Best Buddies enjoyed drinking hot cocoa together over some friendly games of "Christmas Pictionary" and "Christmas Spot It" before the holiday break. Our eighth graders "buddy up" with a friend from two of our applied studies classes to foster friendships and participate in fun monthly activities. Competitive juices were flowing but it was all in good fun. A great time was had by all! ■



PSO Holiday Light Up Night

By Angel Maher and Holly Mendel

A very warm thank you to everyone who joined us in December for the WPSD PSO's Holiday Light Up Night that was held on the School's campus. The weather was just perfect for the gathering together of friends, families and staff to celebrate the season. It was a phenomenal evening for our WPSD community complete with a warm bonfire, yummy hot chocolate, cookies, Buffo - The World's Strongest Clown, beautiful holiday lights, and Santa Claus! Young children as well as older kids and adults alike had a great time. We are so grateful to everyone who so generously supported the mission of WPSD's PSO. We hope that everyone enjoyed the evening and hope to see you all again next year! ■

A Look Back in Time...



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Love is in the Air

Middle Schoolers' Hearts at Work

By Nicole Borelle, Shari Gerlach, Joni Rueby, and Elsie O.

Middle School 5th - 8th graders' hearts were put to work by earning their merit points to attend February 14th Middle School Valentine's Day Merit Activity in the Lion's Den. MS Student Body Government officers demonstrated excellent leadership by assisting with several fun and challenging Valentine's Day games. Students participated in several stations such as making creative valentine cards, coloring Valentine doodles, candy guessing jars contest, dancing, festive photo booth, and temporary Valentine tattoos. Students enjoyed decorating heart-shaped cut out cookies, which were made from scratch by Megan Chopek's class. It was an awesome team effort that made this fun event a success! ■





Sweet Arts And Hearts at the Children's Center

By Shelley Zelei

On February 14th, students from the Children's Center enjoyed celebrating Valentine's Day with many fun activities! They were so excited to not only pass out Valentine's Day notes and treats they brought to school, but to receive them from their friends as well! They enjoyed a snack of a Valentine's Day themed Chex Mix complete with strawberry milk. Students then completed several art projects such as graphing Valentine's Day candy, marble painting hearts and a cut and paste activity to create a heart-shaped person! The students also took part in some fun-filled games such as Pin the Heart on the Cupid and a Bean Bag Heart Toss! What a wonderful day of togetherness and friendship! ■



Class of 2022 Celebrates With Heart

By Shelley Zelei

On February 12th, the WPSD Class of 2022 and their advisors organized a Valentine's Party in the Lion's Den. Our high school students had a wonderful time participating in a variety of activities including The Dating Game. Students interacted with each other, enjoyed refreshments, and shared plenty of smiles and laughs. It was a good evening in the Lion's Den. Kudos to the Class of 2022 for a job well done. ■





Athletics



Joint Basketball Clinic With Chartiers Valley High School

In November, WPSD was thrilled to have the Chartiers Valley High School girls' basketball team on campus. The team, who are defending state champions, along with head coach, Tim McConnell hosted a three-day clinic at the school. Our girls' and boys' basketball teams took part in this special event. The Chartiers Valley players and coach helped our Lions improve fundamental skills - i.e. proper shooting form, strong defense techniques, effective passing, ball protection, blocking and rebounding, screening, and the list goes on. As part of this clinic, our WPSD players

and coaches had the opportunity to take in a college game in person on Saturday - the Point Park women's basketball team battled Bryant & Stratton - Buffalo. Point Park lost by one point in a heartbreaker of a game! What a wonderful experience for our student-athletes as they begin their season! Special thanks to Chartiers Valley High School girls' basketball team for helping us improve our game! Go Lions! ■

Cheer Clinic With Gateway High School

By Linda Langer

In November, The WPSD cheerleaders traveled to Gateway High School to take part in a cheer clinic. This is the second year WPSD has teamed up with Gateway for this informative and entertaining clinic. The Gateway High School cheerleaders taught our Lions new stunts, motions, and chants. It was such a pleasure collaborating with them again this season.

We are so appreciative of this partnership! ■





Special Recognition For WPSD Student-Athletes

January 29th marked Senior Recognition Night at the school. During this special ceremony, WPSD honored the accomplishments of our senior student-athletes and recognized the families for their support and commitment throughout the years. Dylan Zurawski would have been a senior this year. Sadly, he was taken from us too soon. His loving immediate family, as well as the WPSD family, were present that night to honor and remember him. Congratulations to our seniors for their hard work and dedication to academic and athletic excellence. ■



Traveling to Compete! Trekking to Tennessee

Competition Results

The WPSD boys' and girls' basketball team traveled to the Tennessee School for the Deaf in the beginning of December to take part in the Viking Classic tournament. Three other schools for the Deaf took part in this exciting event! Our Lady Lions took on the North Carolina School for the Deaf on Friday in the first matchup of the tournament. The blue and gold warriors defeated their opponent by a score of 32-12! Next up, our boys' team battled the same opponent. The Lions lost a heartbreaker of a game by a score of 42-40. On Saturday, our teams took on Tennessee



School for the Deaf and Indiana School for the Deaf. The WPSD boys' and girls' teams lost to Indiana School for the Deaf. The Lady Lions defeated the Tennessee School for the Deaf in their final matchup of the tournament. Our boys' team fought valiantly, but was unable to emerge victorious against the Tennessee School for the Deaf. Congratulations to all teams involved in this exciting tournament. Ashton J., David H., Olivia L., and Amy D. earned All Tournament honors. What a fun event! ■

Taking a Time-Out to Experience Women's Basketball History

By Kallie Mendenhall

Before heading to the Tennessee School for the Deaf campus to take part in the Viking Classic, our boys' and girls' basketball teams had an opportunity to visit the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, TN. We were able to explore the only facility of its kind dedicated to all levels of women's basketball. We were inspired to see many interesting facts about women's basketball history. Our players were even able to test their basketball skills on three different courts, a timed dribbling course and in a passing skills area. What a great experience! ■





A Clean Sweep in Ohio

In December, our girls' and boys' basketball teams took part in the Ohio School for the Deaf Homecoming weekend! Our Lady Lions were up first, battling Kentucky School for the Deaf and defeating them by a score of 38 to 18.

Afterward, the boys' basketball team went against Michigan School for the Deaf in their first matchup of the tournament. Our Lions defeated their opponent by a score of 48 to 18.

Both the boys' and girls' basketball teams emerged victorious in their last matchups of the weekend against Ohio School for the Deaf. The Lady Lions defeated their opponent by a score of 30-22 and our boys' team won by a score of 65-53. What a fantastic showing from our Lions! Congratulations to all teams involved for their hard work and efforts! GO WPSD! ■

Hooping It Up in Ohio

The boys' and girls' basketball teams traveled to Ohio School for the Deaf in January to take part in the Spartan Classic. Rochester School for the Deaf and, of course, Ohio School for the Deaf, were the other Schools that participated in this great event. Our Lady Lions opened the tournament, defeating Rochester School for the Deaf by a score of 45 to 25, after a hard fought battle. Next up, our boys' team took on Rochester School for the Deaf as well, emerging victorious by a score of 64 to 45.

On the second day of the Classic, the WPSD girls' basketball team went head to head against Ohio School for the Deaf. The Lady Lions roared to victory, defeating their opponent by a score of 35-25. Afterward,



our boys' team took on the same opponent - Ohio School for the Deaf. A valiant effort was demonstrated by both sides, but in the end WPSD fell to OSD by a score of 54-44. Congratulations to all teams that took part in this exciting tournament. Special shout out to the WPSD Lions! ■

Joining Our Neighbors Across the State for Homecoming

The boys' and girls' basketball teams traveled to the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf to take part in their homecoming event on February 1. Both teams took on PSD that day. Our Lady Lions defeated their opponent in a close game by a score of 26 to 22. Our boys' team emerged victorious in their matchup by a score of 33 to 23. Congratulations to both Schools for their hard work and efforts! ■





Girls' ESDAA Tournament

Competition Results

In the beginning of February, the girls' basketball team traveled to the Lexington School for the Deaf in New York to take part in the 44th annual ESDAA tournament. In their first matchup, our Lady Lions defeated American School for the Deaf. Next, they went head to head against Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. It was a nerve wracking game from start to finish but our blue and gold warriors were able to come away with the victory, defeating their opponent by a score of 36 to 30. This win landed WPSD a spot in the championship game.

Our Lady Lions put forth a valiant effort but ultimately lost a heartbreaker of a championship game in their final matchup of the tournament. Our blue and gold never gave up, even coming back to cut the lead to four in the fourth quarter, but unfortunately fell to Lexington School for the Deaf. Great effort by both teams. Olivia L, Dani F., and Amy D. earned all tournament honors. Dani F. took home the MVP! It doesn't stop there. Our Lady Lions earned the much sought after and coveted Sportsmanship Award!! We couldn't be more proud of this team! You're always winners to us! ■

Quick Stop at The Big Apple

After the ESDAA girls' basketball tournament had wrapped up at Lexington School for the Deaf on Sunday, our Lady Lions fit in a few breathtaking photo stops before heading home. New York was a beautiful sight that evening and our girls and the trophies they earned made it that much more spectacular! You will see in one of these pictures, our blue and gold wearing red Chartiers Valley shirts. As you may recall, Chartiers Valley hosted a clinic on the WPSD campus back in November. The team traveled back to WPSD a few weeks ago to support our Lady Lions by taking in one of their games. After that game, the team gave our girls Chartiers Valley shirts - a symbol of our partnership. The girls wore those shirts after the tournament last weekend in their honor. We appreciate their support! Thanks to them for helping us better prepare for our season and the main event - the ESDAA tournament. We wished good luck to the Chartiers Valley girls' team as they entered the playoffs! ■





Boys' ESDAA Tournament

Competition Results

The boys' basketball team and cheerleading squad traveled to Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in Philadelphia to take part in the 88th annual ESDAA tournament being held there in February. In their first matchup, our boys took on New York School for the Deaf - Fanwood. Our blue and gold battled valiantly and the score was close for most of the game. Unfortunately, our Lions fell to their opponent by a final score of 84 - 66.

After coming off of this tough loss, our WPSD Lions came out ready for battle. Our blue and gold took on Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf (New Jersey) in their second matchup of the tournament. WPSD fought hard and ultimately came away with the win by a score of 78-52.

Our Lions fought hard in their final game of the tournament. Despite WPSD's efforts, our blue and gold fell to their opponent, Ohio School for the Deaf, by a score of 67-56. Ashton J. earned a spot on the All-Tournament Team. We are proud of our Lions! ■



Cheerleaders Make Impressive Showing at Competition

The WPSD cheerleading also took part in this ESDAA tournament. They made an impressive showing at the competition! Our Lady Lions earned the third place spot AND the Spirit Award. Xiaoli C. earned a spot on the All-Tournament team. Amazing accomplishments! ■

League Results

During the season, the boys' and girls' basketball teams are part of the South-Western Christian Athletic Conference (SWCAC). Both teams secured spots in the league's playoffs this year! In the end, both teams clinched fourth place. Danielle F. and David H. were selected to the All-Conference Team! Special congratulations to those two student-athletes! Also, huge kudos to David H. for scoring his 1000th point this season. What an amazing feat to accomplish! We are so proud of each of our teams for their hard work and efforts throughout the season. Go Lions! ■





Children's Center: Hershey, PA

The Children's Center in Hershey had a very busy fall and winter. We moved into our new classroom, welcomed visitors and enjoyed field trips.

The Children's Center at Edinboro University

By Casie Lucas-Szumigala ~ Outreach Coordinator/Speech Language Pathologist

September

We hosted an open house with the Department of Ed. The theme was "Expressions", i.e., how we express ourselves (highlighted each program.... play, art, literacy and sign language) We had a food truck, balloon artist, art project, Clifford and a small book fair throughout the building. We debuted our virtual Handshape of the Week project in the halls using the HP Reveal app. We taught participants the signs for feelings when reading and signing "Today I Feel Silly" by Jaime Lee Curtis.

October

We hosted the Erie County Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children's Activity Committee on campus for a Planetarium field trip. Deaf/hh children from WPSD Pittsburgh, multiple schools from the Erie School District, Cambridge Springs School District, and Millcreek School District were in attendance. Dr. Hurd from the university did planetarium shows for the children. We had ice breaker games, activities related to the solar system and lunch.

Our first community ASL course began!

November

Christie and Sheri came to Edinboro for the Family Early Literacy and American Sign Language Workshop.

We conducted more hearing screenings with

the graduate students from the Communication Sciences and Disorders program in Erie.

December

We joined the Erie County Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Charlie's Pub & Eatery for a Christmas celebration. Signing Santa was in attendance!

January

We solidified our partnership with the Achievement Center to provide early intervention services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing children in Erie County.

February

Outreach Director Jessica Marks and I met with representatives from the Achievement Center, Erie Zoo and the ExpERIEnce Children's museum to discuss possible collaborations on future projects. VERY exciting meetings!! I can't wait to share some of the details.

March

Our class took a field trip to the Edinboro Library for Story Time, which was interpreted by our teacher, Kathie Sullivan.

I read and signed a story at Harding Elementary in celebration of Read Across America Day

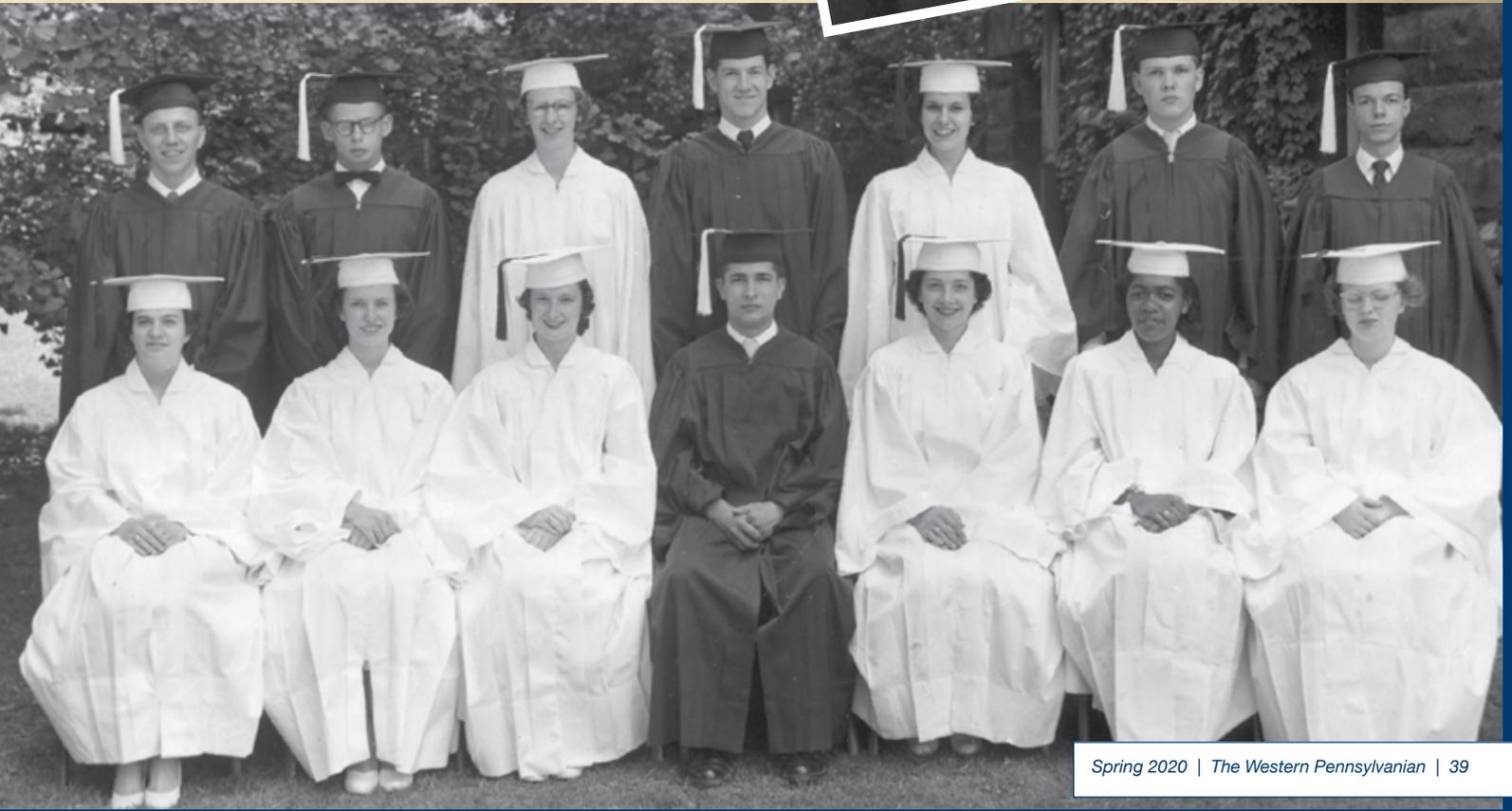
So many wonderful things going on up here!

Stay tuned for more of our adventures!



A Look Back in Time...





Exploring Pathways to The Future

WPSD Student Art Spotlited

By Victoria Vitullo, Transition Coordinator

Creative Citizen Studios (CCS) is a special needs art studio in Pittsburgh designed for young adults who possess artistic talent. This organization teaches these young artists how to earn income from their artwork sales. WPSD student Sam P. participates in a painting and drawing class held every Tuesday afternoon at CCS. Those who take part in this class constructed works of art, with Bob Ross inspired themes, which were spotlighted in a show in a show at Couch Brewery on Washington Boulevard in Pittsburgh. The paintings were on display through March 8. We are #wpsdproud of you, Sam! ■



Brewing Up Some Real World Experience

By Victoria Vitullo

Student Faith S. is feeling quite excited these days! Not because she's drinking coffee but because she is gaining real world experience working at Steel Valley Coffee Roasters (SVCR) in Homestead! Dan Kelly, the son of retired WPSD teacher, Wayne Kelly, is the owner of the shop. WPSD staff visited the shop and met with managers, Rhys and Luis, to discuss having a student with coffee shop experience gain employment experience in a real shop. Both men immediately stated it was an idea they would be pleased to accommodate. Plans turned into action and on February 13th, Faith brought her engaging personality along with her excellent communication skills and coffee knowledge to SVCR! WPSD staff stayed for Faith during her first three-hour shift to help facilitate communication between Faith and Rhys. She also had an interpreter for the first few shifts. Quickly, Faith and Rhys were communicating back and forth in great detail with the use of Faith's iPad (communication device). WPSD staff set Faith up for success by providing her with specific vocabulary related to SVCR prior to her first day there. Faith was aware of the tasks she would be completing. The day was full of unexpected



surprises! Faith stamps coffee cups and sleeves with the business logo. She washes the ceramic coffee cups and utensils and keeps the coffee bar and tables near and tidy. When she had down time, Faith was a hit with all of the customers, asking them if they were enjoying their drinks and chatting all about where they were from and how long they had been coming to the shop. Dan, the owner, made a surprise visit and quickly established a rapport with Faith and they had some good laughs together. Luis popped in to say hello as well and Faith pulled out her basic Spanish and greeted Luis with "Hola!" on her iPad! Faith will gain experience weekly in the shop and will learn more skills as she progresses. ■



Keeping it Clean

By Olivia L.

My name is Olivia L. and I am a current student at Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf as a junior. Let me tell you about my job. I have been employed at Seven Oaks Country Club as a housekeeper since 2018. Victoria Vitullo's next door neighbor, and friend of WPSD, Mr. Ted Trbovich, Esq., is the legal counsel for the Greek Catholic Union and spoke to the Director regarding me seeking employment in Beaver County. Mr. Trbovich helped set up the job interview for me. I was hired shortly after interviewing.

My job as a housekeeper is to make sure everything looks beautiful and spotless. I clean event rooms, the Grille Room, bathrooms, locker rooms, etc. I make sure that things look clean even if some things are not my responsibility to clean. I help out my other co-workers by helping with last minute setting up and decorating event rooms. I also help out with doing the dishes when it is needed. I love seeing people coming in

and out because they are so friendly. It is so easy to interact with them and communicate with them. My boss is so fabulous. He makes sure everything is okay and checks with me very often. If I have a problem, I can easily talk with him, and he will take care of it. If I need anything, he will make sure it happens. I love the job because of the people I work with and the schedule I have. Before I accepted the job, I told them that I had other commitments such as Emergency Medical Technician School and Fire Fighting training. They fully supported me and believed that I should still be able to commit to the job and trainings. I only work during weekends during school, but I work during the week during the summer. Sometimes, I will come in during the week if it is needed. I am very flexible and willing to do whatever they tell me to do. It is a beautiful place to work. I am very thankful that I have been working there since 2018! ■

In The Community



WPSD Peer Mentors Give Back

In December, Peer Mentors made a special effort to thank those in our community who protect us 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The high school students made stops at the Edgewood Police and Fire Department, Swissvale Police Department, Wilkinsburg Police Department and the Rite Aid Pharmacy in Forest Hills, bringing with them a full-course holiday dinner. All have been wonderful partners to WPSD. They truly care about the well-being of our students and staff on a daily basis. We thank you for your unfailing service, commitment and friendship! ■



It's a Hockey Night in Pittsburgh!

In January, fourteen very fortunate WPSD students had the opportunity to see our own Pittsburgh Penguins take on the Minnesota Wild up close and personal in the Crosby Charity Suite! How exciting! The group even got to meet the Penguins mascot - Iceburgh! If this experience wasn't thrilling enough, the black and gold nabbed a victory against their opponent by a score of 7-3! A great win for the Penguins and a wonderful win for WPSD! We are so thankful to the Pittsburgh Penguins Foundation for this amazing opportunity! ■



Literacy, Language And Love at The Family Literacy Workshop

By Sheri Morgan

At the end of January, we had a great turnout for our Family Early Literacy and American Sign Language Workshop at WPSD. Christie Homell, ASL teacher, and Sheri Morgan, Reading Specialist, shared insight and knowledge of the importance of using facial expression, tone, and specific ASL classifiers when reading to their children. These factors contribute to vocabulary development and awareness of emotions. Parents had a chance to practice "being dynamic" by mimicking the facial expressions and choosing classifiers to represent the two characters Gerald the Elephant and Piggie from Mo Willem's two stories *Can I Play Too?* and *Should I Share My Ice Cream?* The children then joined us and enjoyed watching the story *Can I Play Too?* in ASL. To wrap up, families then received two books and an activity that goes along with the books. We hope to see everyone again at our next workshop! ■



Breaking News: Video Production Class Tours WPXI-TV

By Olivia L.

Students traveled to the WPXI-TV studios to learn about some interesting weather reporting and data gathering techniques from a true professional! Meteorologist Stephen Cropper took time to share the valuable insight and knowledge he has collected over his many years in the weather business. The students asked lots of thoughtful questions and had a great time, including learning the complexities of a green screen! A fun-filled learning experience for all! We are #wpsdproud! ■



A Look Back in Time...





15th
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Celebrating a Momentous Night!

Enjoy some more snapshots from our 150th Anniversary Auction & Gala!





Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Presents

A NIGHT IN THE CITY OF CHAMPIONS

Auction & Gala

October 2, 2020 at the Rivers Casino

With Special Guest Jerome Bettis



Jerome Bettis



Monthly Giving

An Easy Way to Support Our Students!

Make a difference every month! Investing in the achievement and success of the students at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is now easier and more affordable than ever through our monthly giving program.

WPSD offers the opportunity to make contributions automatically through a credit card. Monthly giving provides a convenient, individual, and affordable way to support the School and its students.

How do I begin to make a difference each month? Simply determine a donation that fits your budget - \$5, \$10, \$20, or more. For the amount of money you might spend on a pizza each month, a lunch date, or a night at the movies, you can impact the quality of the academic and extracurricular programs and services that the students receive at WPSD.

Becoming a monthly donor is simple and easy. Click on DONATE NOW and choose an amount and frequency that fits best within your budget and goals. Every donation is a tax deductible contribution. Your donations can be stopped at any time by contacting Matt Campion - mcampion@wpsd.org. ■

