



BEAR TRACKS



A NEWSLETTER OF THE SCRANTON SCHOOL FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN



New Technology at The Scranton School

Thanks to the generous support of our partners, students at The Scranton School will benefit from upgraded educational technology in classrooms. The Margaret Briggs Foundation, Appalachian Regional Commission, and other organizations recently announced combined support of more than \$50,000 for the Technology Advancement Initiative Project. Technology including SMART panels, iMacs, TV studio equipment, and drone technology will provide the best possible education opportunities and keep the school on the cutting edge.

"The Scranton School is committed to preparing students for life," said Jon Konzelman, Director. "The recent donation of resources will allow our skilled faculty to instruct with high-quality equipment and provide students with tools they need to succeed both now and in their future career paths." The Scranton School wishes to express its utmost gratitude to each of these organizations for their support and belief in our students and our mission. ■

SPRING 2017



Our vision

It is the vision of our school to be a **Total Learning Environment**

for our students.

The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children is a special place where...

- Our students achieve at the same levels as other children in our society.
- Our students reach their highest potential in academics and citizenship.
- Our students achieve independence, high personal aspirations, and pride.

The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

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Dr. Seuss' Birthday



PSO Update

The Parent Staff Organization of The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children had a busy winter and looks forward to spring activities.

After a successful Gertrude Hawk Candy Bar sale, the PSO presented students with a special ornament before Christmas Break which marked the year and had a slot for the student's picture.

The new year saw the kickoff of an Easter candy sale, featuring the delicious treats of the Dunmore Candy Kitchen. The sale was extremely successful, thanks to parents and staff, earning the PSO more than \$550!

Money earned through the fundraisers helped PSO activities, including the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Bunny visit, and Field Day t-shirts for students. For the first time, the PSO sponsored a Mother's Day tea on May 12. Members are also working on a family day to bring families together over the summer.

Membership to the PSO is \$10 per year per family. This year's officers are Nicole Miller, president; Erica Stone, vice president; and Joy Zeiss, secretary. Director Jon Konzelman is treasurer. ■



100th Day of School

The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children recognized this year's 100th Day of School on February 6. Students and staff members alike enjoy celebrating this milestone in the school year.

Individual classrooms acknowledged the day in a variety of ways, including:

- taking 100 steps to see where they would lead
- stamping 100 gumball images into a gumball machine poster
- making colorful necklaces out of 100 Fruit Loops
- using an aging app to see what students will look like at age 100!
- imagining how one would look, what one would eat, and what one would be doing at age 100!
- making cookies in the shape of the number 100

The highlight of our 100th Day of School celebration was the design and creation of the "100 Acts of Kindness" bulletin board! Located outside of Principal Ward's office, the bulletin board consisted of 100 bright yellow paper pockets, each containing a PBIS "Bear Buck" (in keeping with our PBIS reinforcement system). Student acts of kindness, when noticed throughout the day by staff members, are rewarded with a handwritten "kindness ticket." The kindness ticket explains what the student did for someone else. These tickets are then placed in a pocket on the 100 Acts of Kindness bulletin board and the PBIS Bear Buck is given to the student. The student's name is then written on the yellow pocket. People walking by can look at the various names on the pockets, read the enclosed tickets, and learn about the wonderful kindnesses shown by our students to one another! The yellow pockets are filling up, and more and more names are being displayed on the bulletin board as new acts of kindness are recognized and rewarded.

We are proud of our very kind Scranton School students! ■





After School Activities

While basketball took a few “lumps” this season due to the winter weather conditions requiring a number of cancellations, it sure was fun to host our first-ever 3-on-3 basketball tournament. The tournament was complete with cheerleaders, spectators, and a pretty wild announcer! We learned a ton of new skills and had the same amount of fun. Next year, we just hope Mother Nature will be a little more cooperative!

The same weather that caused some challenges for basketball brought some terrific conditions for our Polar Bears Ski Club. With seven straight weeks of downhill skiing lessons, our students progressed quickly from the bunny hill to intermediate terrain! Thanks to our amazing Ski Instructors and dedicated club volunteers, every student made significant improvements in technique and ability each week. We can't wait to get working on some more advanced skills and even more challenging terrain next year!

Swim Club hit a record with 14 students attending – many of them taking lessons for the very first time! It was all smiles amidst the splashing as we learned the back float, how to doggy paddle, proper breathing techniques and even some competitive swim skills! The wonderful folks at the Jewish Community Center in Scranton have welcomed us with open arms – giving our students a terrific opportunity for developing a life-long skill and our students are thrilled! ■



Celebrating Our Kids

An Evening at The Scranton School

Thursday, April 6 marked The Scranton School's annual signature community fundraising event. Community members from across Northeastern Pennsylvania joined faculty and staff on the campus to enjoy "Celebrating Our Kids: An Evening at The Scranton School." Attendees enjoyed a progressive-style event that included fun games, delicious food, and a brief program featuring a video called "Aaliyah's Story" that highlighted the incredible journey of one our students and her family.

This event is such a success thanks to our many partners and supporters. We are especially grateful to Interprettek for being our presenting sponsor. Proceeds will support the school's Technology Advancement Initiative. ■





PBIS “Blow Outs!” Update

Our new PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) program is well underway! Students are learning the importance of Readiness, Responsibility, Respectfulness, and Safety each day at school.

In accordance with the PBIS Program, regular celebrations called “Blow Outs!” are held to recognize those students who have consistently met their behavioral goals. We have had three Blow Outs so far and all have been very successful!

Our first official Blow Out, held on February 3, was a SSDHHC Dance Party! We invited a professional DJ to campus, who hosted a series of PBIS dance parties, complete with a bubble machine! Three separate parties were conducted, in order to ensure that all students were treated to music and activities appropriate to their age. Everyone had a wonderful time putting on our dancing shoes!

The second Blow Out, on March 3, was a camping-themed movie extravaganza. Three separate movies were shown simultaneously across campus. Students had a great time spreading out their camping blankets/sleeping bags, and setting up their camping chairs to watch a movie with friends and staff members! Preschoolers gathered in the upstairs multipurpose room for their own movie showing. Movies were also shown in the cafeteria and the library, offering a cinematic choice for elementary and middle school students. Camp food, including hot dogs, macaroni salad, fruit, and s’mores, was served in each location. The movies were enjoyed by all and the food was fabulous!



Our most recent Blow Out on March 31 was a good old-fashioned ice cream social. Our marvelous chefs prepared an ice cream buffet, offering a variety of ice cream flavors and scrumptious toppings, all topped with whipped cream and a cherry! What a delightfully sweet way to celebrate good behavior at school!

We are looking forward to our next Blow Out, a “Minute to Win It” Gamefest! Students will be challenged by a number of competitive games and fun activities, the sillier the better, with just one minute to win it! This promises to be an exciting, fast-paced event! ■



Home Away From Home

Creating a home-like environment for students living away from their families is a daunting challenge indeed. Residential life at The Scranton School is driven by the ideal of keeping students connected with their families while maintaining a steady schedule of activities that feel like home. This starts with compassionate and caring staff members who invest personal time each day with each student and then communicate those experiences and details with parents. We love to see our students growing and learning new skills and we love to share those milestones with their families. This level of connection requires a steady flow of text messages, phone calls, video phone chats, and lots of emails. We believe it is vital for parents – entrusting their most precious treasures to us – to know that their children are safe, loved, encouraged, and challenged each day while in our care. We consider this a great honor and strive to fill the lives of our students with daily experiences that help them achieve their greatest potential as they grow. Interested in dorm life for your child? Please contact Mr. Doug Boersma, Dean of Students at dboersma@thescrantonschool.org ■



Outreach News: Central Pennsylvania

Hershey Preschool

We have already doubled our class size this year in Hershey. We have been learning about arctic animals, pirates and princesses, St. Patrick's day, and Dr. Seuss. Our favorite week was Dr. Seuss week! We are excited to start our transportation theme soon. We enjoyed the nice weather while it lasted. ■



Story Time in Camp Hill

We have talked about snowmen, arctic animals, winter clothes, and described snow. The afternoons allow the children to spend quality time together while the parents have the chance to catch up. ■



Family Literacy Workshop and Family Learning Day

On March 4 and 5, Ms. Sheri Morgan – Reading Specialist at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD) – joined the families in Camp Hill and Scranton for a day of literacy learning and family activities. Families learned about reading strategies, sign language and literacy development to assist their children in becoming more accomplished readers. Families also had the opportunity to engage in family activities and received books and DVDs that helped reinforce what they learned at the workshop after they returned home. Nicole Miller, mother of Carlene and Raelee, summed it up best when she said, "We would never miss a fun day like this!"

On March 25, families flooded our campus for our annual Family Learning Day. This year's theme was "Opening the Door to Your Child's Future." We are so grateful to Barb Phillips and Chris Lynch for starting our day off with a very informative presentation on the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the services that are available to Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. After a delicious lunch, families had the opportunity to enjoy a keynote address by Ms. Heather Snyder. Heather is a teacher of the Deaf and a member of the statewide committee called Educational Resources for Children with Hearing Loss (ERCHL). She shared her story in the field of Deafness and answered questions from parents. The day closed with a time for families to get to know each other and share experiences. A huge THANK YOU to our staff for all of the volunteer time they devote to these events – we couldn't offer them without their gracious support of their time! We are also appreciative of our families who include our programs in their busy weekends to support their Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and prepare them for successful futures. ■

