

the western PENNSYLVANIAN



NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

VOLUME 131 #1 FALL 2017



Camp Discovery Delights
Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Kids Forge New Friendships
PG 5



First Day
of School:
Welcome Back!
PG 10
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PG 16

Fall Fun on the Farm
for Early Childhood
Learners



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WPSD Dates to Remember

DECEMBER

- 8 & 9 WPSD Homecoming/Mid-American Classic Basketball Tournament
- 14 - 15 Craft Sale
- 18 - 19 Holiday Mart
- 19 Breakfast with Santa
- 25 - Jan 5 No School

FEBRUARY

- 9 - 10 ESDAA Boys' Basketball Tournament at WPSD
- 16 - 17 ESDAA Girls' Basketball Tournament at WPSD
- 18 - 19 Academic Bowl
- 19 No School - Presidents' Day

JANUARY

- 7 Residential Students Return
- 8 Classes Resume
- 15 No School - Martin Luther King Day
- 19 - 20 Ohio School for the Deaf Basketball Tournament
- 27 WPSD Literacy Workshop

MARCH

- 9 - 10 Battle Bots Preliminary Competition
- 12 No School
- 15 Deaf History Month Begins
- 23 - 24 Family Learning Weekend at WPSD
- 30 No School - Good Friday



Editor: Dr. Steve Farmer
Managing Editor: Sarah Bartlebaugh
Managing Editor: Jessica Marks

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, the fall season is in full swing. I love watching leaves change colors. The mountains in PA are amazingly colorful. As things continue to change and grow, our students also continue to change and grow.

Because of the tremendous support from our friends in the General Assembly, we are able to continue educating our children and seeing them change and grow into independent and productive citizens. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our lawmakers for their support of the Programs of WPSD throughout the budget discussions.

Coming from the General Assembly, we had the honor of having Representative Jason Ortity and Representative Guy Reschenthaler on campus to tour the school. They were impressed with what we do for our students.

Speaking of change and growth, our Children's Center is at capacity. We will be renovating the second floor of what used to be a part of our girls dorm into an expansion of our Early Childhood programs. We are excited about the growth we are experiencing at WPSD!

Throughout this issue, you will see how our students change and grow through various aspects of learning including but not limited to: Camp Discovery, Junior Police Academy, Space Camp, Solar Eclipse, Deaf Celebration Day, Marine Life, and so forth.

In order to experience healthy changes and growth, we reach out to various facets of our community and remain visible as well as educate them about the Programs of WPSD. The Community Block Party, Edgewood Community Day, Family ASL Night at Chick Fil A, and the list goes on and on.

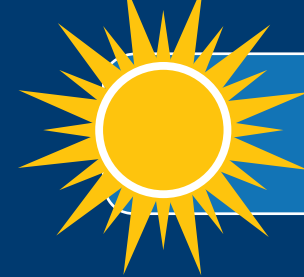
Our Transition Program is a critical component for our students to change and grow into responsible young adults. You will meet several students as they enter the workforce doing wonderful things!

Although the fall season lasts for a few months out of the year, it is always "fall season" for the Programs of WPSD, we love watching our students change and grow. None of this would be possible without the (1) high degree of dedication by our staff who truly care about our students and (2) the incredible support by our board of trustees. It is obvious that all of these individuals love what we do for our children. We continue to make a difference in the lives of our children and change the world for the better – one child at a time!

Until next time...



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



Summer 2017: Activities & Camps

Camp Discovery Delights Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Kids Forge New Friendships

WPSD campers had an extremely fun and busy week this summer. Partnering with the Carnegie Science Center, students learned about coasters, kinetic and potential energy, and the Laws of Motion. Using this knowledge, they built their own roller coasters! Later in the week, campers had the opportunity to visit the Carnegie Science Center and Sportsworks, and Idlewild and SoakZone. Campers traveled to Deep Creek, MD to the Adventure Sports Center International (ASCI). What an amazing experience! The students were so brave, battling the rapids and working as a team. After the white water experience, campers traveled to Deep Creek State Park to enjoy a cookout and play on the beach. The older group of campers took in a Pirates game at the beautiful PNC Park. The younger campers traveled to Lucky Top Ranch in Bentleyville to meet, brush and ride the beautiful horses at the ranch. After that the group enjoyed a wonderful dinner and took in a Washington Wild Things baseball game. 2017 Camp Discovery was an amazing adventure for every camper.

Our Camp Discovery ended with a huge celebration in the Alumni Pavilion on campus. During these festivities, WPSD was surprised and honored to host Mr. Frank Coonelly, President of the Pittsburgh Pirates, on campus. Mr. Coonelly spent time with our campers, their families, and camp staff. Students involved with the Leadership Camp explained to the group how Deaf people have impacted the game of Baseball through history and today. Later, the Leadership Campers and COO Aaron Noschese led Mr. Coonelly in a short lesson in ASL, teaching him how to sign "We love the Pittsburgh Pirates." Trevor Williams #57, starting pitcher for the Pirates, spent time signing autographs and sharing stories with our campers. In addition, two of the Pirates Pierogies joined Trevor and visited with campers and their families. Information about 2018 Camp Discovery will be available in the coming weeks! We are #wpsdproud! ■



What's Happening?

Latest News Around the WPSD Campus

More Summer Fun

Making a Splash at Creek Camp

WPSD students Antoine H. and Xiaoli C. were accepted as interns into Pittsburgh Parks 'Young Naturalist' program this summer. The program begins with a week of training and team building through the Creek Connections Camp at Allegheny College. This camp gives students the opportunity for hands-on experience and fieldwork in Northwestern Pennsylvania's waterways. The campers spent their days studying biology and freshwater ecology out in the environment!

For their week-long research investigation, the students collected data on water chemistry (pH, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, et al) and macro-invertebrates (overall diversity and pollution tolerance index scoring) from a section of creek downstream of the Woodcreek Dam. The campers repeated data collection activities in an upstream site in order to draw conclusions. They also analyzed the ecosystems' features, worked with scientists to electroshock fish and came into contact with other types of wildlife including turtles, snakes, and the much anticipated Hellbender, North America's largest salamander. This perfectly intersects with what the students studied throughout the course this school year. Teacher Erin McNeil-Mascaro and her class tested the water quality all year at the Frick Park Conservancy and discussed the importance of healthy, clean water with regard to the living organisms that call this water their home.

Back on Allegheny College's campus, the Creek Connection campers learned about student research projects. Through simulations and experimentation, campers discovered a great deal about coal mining and acid mine drainage remediation. In the evenings, campers learned how to use a handheld GPS navigation system for geocaching, searched for owls in the environment, observed bats and various bat boxes, and investigated telescope design before enjoying a presentation in the on-campus planetarium. Really an interesting few days! ■





Junior Police Academy

WPSD's second annual Junior Police Academy was a tremendous success this summer! Each day of the week, various law enforcement agencies presented to middle school-aged students from WPSD and the surrounding communities. The mornings began with registration and fun and creative icebreakers. Officer Fred Livingston from the Edgewood Police Department talked to the participants about general police operations and procedures along with the steps police take to keep the public and themselves safe. Officer Livingston even turned on the lights and sirens on his police car, allowing the children to explore the inside of the vehicle.

The University of Pittsburgh Police Bicycle Unit discussed and demonstrated the ways in which these officers travel around the city, the equipment and necessities they carry with them during the day and the types of calls to which they respond. The Allegheny County Police Mounted Unit stopped by, introducing the kids to one of their police horses - Milo. These officers help keep control and maintain safety in large crowds. The cadets visited with Milo and asked so many great questions!

Later that week, Churchill Police Department presented on DUI Awareness. Each cadet had the chance to wear Fatal Vision goggles. This contraption provides insight into what it feels and looks like to be intoxicated. Swissvale K-9 Officers David Zacchia and his police dog, Officer Brando, put on a thrilling demonstration in which Brando showed his obedience to Officer Zacchia's commands. Afterward, each student had a chance to visit with Officer Brando.

Students also learned about forensic science and the processing of fingerprints. The Pittsburgh Police visited with the group discussing the importance and intricacy of examining the various types of fingerprint patterns including loops, arches and whorls, as well as their similarities and differences. Fingerprints are very unique in that no two are alike. Therefore, fingerprints can provide helpful evidence and often lead to solving crime. The cadets also spent time learning how to process a crime scene.

Congratulations to each cadet for his/her hard work and commitment throughout the Academy. A very special 'thank you' to every presenter and volunteer for creating a heart-felt Junior Police Academy for our cadets. ■



Space Camp

This past summer, three WPSD students - Emily O., Shaila R. and Maggie G. flew to Huntsville, Alabama to attend Space Camp. Emily attended Aviation Challenge while Shaila and Maggie attended Space Camp. The Aviation Challenge team, called the "Jolly Rogers," participated in multiple simulations that had them flying important rescue missions, being rescued from a helicopter crash, going on a black ops mission, and using survival skills to build fires and filter water. They also climbed the pampole pole and zip-lined

over land and water. The Space Camp team called "S³" (S-Cubed) participated in space mission simulations where they performed duties in the control room, either in the Space Station made repairs on the Space Station during a spacewalk. They also made and launched rockets, created a mission patch, took a moonwalk and made heat shields. It was a fun and rewarding week for all three students. ■



Bugs and Bathing Suits Summer Learning at the Children's Center

WPSD Children's Center Summer School students enjoyed learning about bugs and insects! They enjoyed a variety of art activities, going on bug hunts, and reading stories including 'Come See My Bugs,' 'Bugs, Bugs, Bugs' and 'Bugs for Lunch.' It was so great to learn about the natural world around them!

In keeping with the outdoors theme, summer school students enjoyed the fresh air as much as possible. Students and staff beat the heat, cooling off in swimming pools, sprinklers and a water slide with ice cream in between! The Discovery Days toddler group joined in the fun too! They had a great time playing with the older kids and enjoying the warm summer days. ■



First Day of School!

Welcome Back

WPSD students and staff welcomed one another as they kicked off the start of the new school year on their official first day - August 21. Hugs and smiles were abundant as old friends reunited and new friends met for the first time. WPSD staff, including Dr. Farmer, greeted students as they arrived on campus, encouraging them to have a positive, wonderful school year. ■



Starting the Year Off Right!

Dr. Farmer met with elementary, middle and high school students, sharing a children's book entitled *Farmer Herman and the Flooding Barn*. This book is based on the inspirational true story of 344 people in Nebraska who worked together to physically move a barn! Another year of learning begins. A busy and exciting school year is officially underway! ■



Welcome New Members of the Family!

New middle and high school students were welcomed to the WPSD family during a delicious lunch in the School's Lion's Den in late August. These new students were joined by seasoned WPSD student mentors, who had been showing them the ropes around campus. Dr. Farmer and Director Marybeth Lauderdale made a point to welcome these students on their new adventure and encouraged them to make new friends and have a wonderful school year. ■



Students Dazzled by Solar Eclipse

It was a hot topic being discussed everywhere - the solar eclipse! All of North America was treated to an eclipse of the sun on Monday, August 21. Those living from Lincoln Beach, Oregon, all the way to Charleston, South Carolina enjoyed this astrological wonder. Observers outside the direct path, Pittsburgh included, saw a partial solar eclipse where the moon covered part of the sun. High school and middle school students and staff celebrated this celestial event by gathering together in the auditorium and participating in a wide variety of eclipse activities, while following its progress on NASA.gov/eclipse live. Elsewhere, at the Children's Center, the hands-on learning continued in the classroom, as students constructed replicas of the sun and moon. It was a truly unique and exciting experience for all! ■



Remembering 9/11

On September 11, WPSD middle school and high school students and teachers gathered together in remembrance of the tragic events that occurred on 9/11, 16 years ago, in honor of Patriot's Day. The students came together for a special ceremony at the flagpole in front of the School. Teacher Gary Freilino and a few students raised the flag to half staff. Mini Signshine gave a solemn and heartfelt performance of the National Anthem. A moment of silence was held for those who lost their lives on that fateful day. Later in the morning students and teachers gathered in the School's auditorium to discuss the events of 9/11 and the importance of honoring as well as remembering our first responders and those whose lives were taken from them that day. Never Forget. ■



Deaf Celebration Day

Culture and Language Come Alive

WPSD continues to cherish and celebrate Deaf Culture and its heritage on campus. On September 27, the School hosted a Deaf Celebration Day in recognition of Deaf Awareness Month. Students enjoyed a variety of activity stations, which highlighted the richness and significance of American Sign Language, signed languages throughout the world, and contributions by Deaf adults throughout history and in the world today. In the 'small gym,' students visited activity stations that included ASL Rhyme and Rhythm, ASL Handshape Game, ABC Stories, ASL Poetry, Deaf Mathematicians, Deaf Scientists, Deaf Authors, DeVia and much more!

Students journeyed to the 'big gym' to close out the day of celebration. Mini-Signshine opened with an ASL performance of the National Anthem. Dr. Farmer made a compelling presentation to the student body, stressing that ASL is an integral part of his daily life. Students in the 9th grade Deaf Culture class performed three interesting skits and Aaron Noschese closed the ceremony with the traditional chant, "ALWAYS REMEMBER, NEVER FORGET - WPSD IS #1!!" ■





Edgewood Police Share Self Defense Tips with Students

On September 7, WPSD was honored to host Edgewood police officer Mike Crow and some of his colleagues. The officers worked with students from the Independent Living Program, Prep for Success and the Peer Mentor Program, providing safety and self defense tips, including the use of the physical approach against an attacker. The students had the opportunity to put the information they had learned into action, practicing various self-protection techniques. Special thanks to Officer Crow and crew for sharing their time and expertise with our students! ■



Family Literacy Workshop

Fall in Love With Reading

WPSD hosted a Family Literacy and American Sign Language Workshop on campus in October. The workshop's overall theme was "Fall In Love Reading With Your Child!" The workshop was designed for children through the 4th grade and their families. The group discussed "How Rocket Learned to Read." All who attended enjoyed the workshop's presenters and interactive activities. It was a very successful, informative, and family centered fun-filled day! ■



Hands on Learning

Studying Marine Life

The RIT Environmental Science class and the 9th grade Environmental Science class had a rare opportunity to observe the electroshocking and collection of fish in the Nine Mile Run creek. The fish are shocked using electricity and then collected (no permanent damage is done to the fish). The scientists separate them by their species and collect data on the total population of each species. They also measure the length and weight of the fish. This project started in 2006 and they only found 15 fish total in the area. Since improving the water quality of the creek, their second data collection in 2012 found over 3,000 fish. This year they are hoping to find even more. Students had an opportunity to see and touch Creek Chubs, Green Sunfish, White Sucker fish, Bluntnose Minnows, and Western Black Nose Dace fish. They also experienced the technique of weighing and measuring the fish they collected. What a positive learning experience! ■



Little Learners' Big Adventures at Discovery Days

WPSD Discovery Days toddlers were very busy over the summer. The toddlers acted out the nursery rhyme 'Humpty Dumpty'. They built a wall with bricks and pushed real eggs off the edge! Their reactions were priceless. The students also artfully crafted their own individual versions of Humpty Dumpty, complete with band-aids! They acted out the nursery rhyme, "Itsy Bitsy Spider." The students made the spider (a ball) go up the rain spout and washed it down with pitchers of water (rain). What a fun and interactive way to learn! On another day during the summer session, Discovery Days toddler group participated in a science experiment. The students observed the chemical reaction of mixing vinegar with baking soda. The students used special spray bottles and paint brushes to make the reaction with the baking-soda-ice cube.

In the fall session, the WPSD Discovery Days students built rocket ships! The toddlers made one for snack with bananas, strawberries, and pineapples. They flew paper rockets into the air with straws in art class and launched rockets into the air in language class! On another day, the group went on a leaf hunt. The students discovered big leaves, small leaves, red leaves and brown leaves. A hike around campus was just what they needed on a beautiful fall day! What a great way to celebrate this wonderful season! ■



Fall Fun on the Farm for Early Childhood Learners

The WPSD Children's Center, the Children's House, and Discovery Days Toddler Group came together for a day of fun at Renshaw Farm this fall. The children went on a hayride, picked pumpkins and ran through the corn maze. They also played in the farm-themed playground and greeted with all of the farm animals. It was so much fun having ALL of the Early Childhood Programs together! ■



Partnering with Chick-fil-A to Increase Awareness of ASL

This October, Chick-fil-A at Miracle Mile in Monroeville hosted a Deaf ASL Family Night in the restaurant. The evening was filled with excitement, fun and great food. Chick-fil-A offered an ASL story time that featured four different children's books presented in American Sign Language to families along with a petting zoo in the parking lot. The Chick-fil-A cow socialized with everyone in the restaurant. Students, staff and families from WPSD joined the celebration and enjoyed a dinner together while sharing stories and laughs. As the evening came to a close, Chick-fil-A presented a donation to Dr. Farmer from the proceeds of the fundraiser they held for WPSD throughout the month of September. The School deeply appreciates the generosity, support, and kindness of the management and employees of the Chick-fil-A at Miracle Mile. Thank you for your partnership and friendship!! ■



Lunch With The Principal

Rewarding Positive Behavior

WPSD elementary students who demonstrate - through acts and deeds - that they are Ready, Organized, Accountable, Respectful and Safe (ROARS), are rewarded with tickets. Students place these tickets in ROARS boxes located in their homerooms. These tickets are used for random prize drawings, drawings at special activities, and drawings for lunch with the principal - Donald Mazreku. Lunch with Principal Mazreku occurs twice a month. At lunch, the students and Mr. Mazreku share good conversation and play a game of UNO. Students receive a special certificate, recognizing their commitment to the ROARS principles. The most recent lunch took place this October. A great time was had by all! ■



Dan Emerick Wellness Walk

By Kathy Bartholow

The WPSD Physical Education department hosted the annual Dan Emerick Wellness Walk. This annual event honors a great teacher, mentor, and Deaf advocate. He always said "keep them moving." Dan Emerick was a Health and Physical Education teacher at WPSD for 34 years. He was the son of two Deaf parents, was a gentle giant and always had a positive spin on life. Dan dedicated his time to the Deaf senior citizens group and supported many WPSD fundraising events. He was a fabulous husband to his wife, Nancy and a proud father of his daughter, Shannon. Dan loved WPSD as well as the University of Pittsburgh. The walk is also a way to promote physical well being and health at WPSD. We thank everyone who enjoyed the beautiful weather and participated. ■

A Demonstration of Promising Deaf Education at the ARC Summit

Students and staff from The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children and The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf partnered together this fall. They shared their story about the state-of-the-art technology that is available to students at both schools during the 2017 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) summit, which was hosted by Pennsylvania this year and held in Pittsburgh.

Dr. Farmer opened the presentation with an introduction from both Schools to the Commission and provided an overview of the importance of technology in the lives of our students. Afterwards, he introduced Christian and Tori, two WPSD students, who enthusiastically described their experiences with technology in the classroom and the positive impact it is making in their education and futures. Dr. Farmer then connected the Commission, through a live feed, with a classroom at WPSD, giving the members a first-hand demonstration of the distance learning class between WPSD and The Scranton School and the technology involved with that class.

Dr. Farmer closed the presentation by expressing his appreciation for the support and generosity of the ARC towards The Scranton School and the desire to continue this new partnership. A special highlight of the day was the opportunity for the group to meet with Governor Tom Wolf! The Governor graciously spent time visiting with the students and staff before the start of the ARC summit. Congratulations to everyone from WPSD and The Scranton School involved with this successful presentation and a big "Thank You" to the Appalachian Regional Commission for their support of our students! ■



Pennsylvania State Legislators Visit WPSD Campus

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf was thrilled to host Pennsylvania Representative Jason Ortity (pictured above) on campus this September. Dr. Farmer and Rep. Ortity made several stops during the tour, including a high school math class, the Children's Center, the Cottage (3-D STEM Lab), the Residence, the Lion's Den, and the TV studio. WPSD deeply appreciates the Representative taking time from his busy schedule to visit with Dr. Farmer and several of the staff members. Discover more about Rep. Ortity's district and his work at www.reportitay.com.

In addition, WPSD was pleased to host Pennsylvania Senator Guy Reschenthaler on campus. Dr. Farmer and Sen. Reschenthaler toured classrooms, the Cottage (3-D STEM Lab), the Children's Center, the student Residence, and television studio while visiting with students and staff. This was the Senator's first visit to campus and he was completely amazed by all that the School has to offer Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. Senator Reschenthaler represents the 37th District in the Pennsylvania Senate, which includes communities in portions of Allegheny and Washington Counties. More information about the Senator, his district and his work can be found at www.senatorreschenthaler.com. ■



Exploring Pathways To The Future

Learn and Earn

WPSD 13th year student Fauntaye B. took part in "Learn and Earn," which is a six week summer job program for teens and young adults ages 14-21 in the Pittsburgh region. Participants have the opportunity to earn money, gain valuable work experience, and develop soft skills to help them become college and career ready. Learn and Earn is made possible through a partnership between Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh and Partner4Work with support from local foundations. Fauntaye worked on several skills during her time there including modes to successfully communicate with her hearing peers and mentors, learning the importance and necessity of arriving for work on time, making a presentation in front of a group of people or in a meeting, as well as interacting and conversing with people she had never met before. Fauntaye felt good letting others know that through her work training that Deaf people can do anything hearing people can. "...I know nobody can stop me from moving forward to accomplish my goal, no matter what," she said. ■



The Lifeguard Experience

WPSD 13th year student Nick B. went on a job interview at the North Shore YMCA in September. His interview for a lifeguard position required an elaborate physical swimming test which included 12 laps performing the breaststroke and frog style stroke as well as completing a rescue and CPR drill. The entire Aquatics team was truly impressed with his skill and preparation. The Aquatics director even knew some ASL! Nick got the job! He now works there every Wednesday and Thursday. Nick is also working as a lifeguard in his hometown on the weekends. Kudos to him for a very productive start to the school year! ■

Auto Detailing Experience

Trenton L. got his hands dirty - literally - in an exciting job shadow experience at TC Customized, a car auto and detailing business, located in Jefferson Hills. He worked with owner Tom Campano during his time there. Trenton learned how to install lights, hubcaps, etc. What a tremendous success the job shadow was - a hands-on, amazing experience he will always remember! ■



WTAE-TV/UPMC Experiences

One of WPSD's students had a truly exciting experience on August 28. Sally Wiggin, host of WTAE-TV's "Chronicle," graciously led Christian C. and Media Coordinator Brian S. on a tour of the station, introducing Christian to editors, photographers, producers, anchors

and reporters. Christian was able to spend time in the control room and the TV studio during an actual newscast and meet the behind the scenes crew and on-air news team! Christian honored Sally with a name sign. She was thrilled! WTAE-TV invited Christian back on October 10 to see a commercial being edited. He loved every minute of both visits. Special thanks to Sally, Creative Services Director Tracy Acord Oliver, and everyone at WTAE-TV for being so warm and welcoming. It's great to have them as our neighbor!

Christian also took part in a 20-hour job shadow opportunity at UPMC with the media relations department and, more specifically, the professional videographer within that department. Here, he is pictured with John Dillard from the media relations department. Christian was provided a brand new Apple computer and was performing editing duties on a TV commercial that UPMC is filming related to hearing loss and senior citizens. Christian watched the shoots of the commercials and helped assist in the editing process. What a wonderful opportunity! ■



National Disability Mentoring Day

On Wednesday, October 18, six WPSD students participated in the National Disability Mentoring Day (DMD). Paola C., Cassie F., Zion H., Dennita L., Tori R., and Maddy T. visited BNY Mellon for this DMD event. Students were paired with mentors from BNY Mellon and toured the buildings, learned about various jobs, and about BNY Mellon in general. ■



Athletics



Fall Sports Highlights Volleyball Update

The WPSD girls' volleyball team has had a banner year! Their overall record for the season is 20 wins and 6 losses. A major highlight from this year was the team clinching the Division II championship in the "Spike Out" tournament at the Maryland School for the Deaf held on October 6 and 7. The Lady Lions defeated the Lexington School for the Deaf in the semifinals and beat out Marie Philip School in their final match-up of the tournament, earning the team first place honors. WPSD's other opponents included Michigan School for the Deaf, Rochester School for the Deaf, Marie Philip School and New York School for the Deaf (Fanwood).



Dr. Farmer invited the team out for a celebration dinner at Bravo restaurant at the Waterfront. The girls shared their memories with Dr. Farmer about the great opportunity and experience they had through the volleyball season and at the "Spike Out" tournament. Thank you Dr. Farmer!

At the end of October, the Lady Lions traveled to the American School for the Deaf (ASD) for this year's ESDAA volleyball tournament. Our blue and gold warriors dominated in their first round of matchups, defeating New York School for the Deaf - Fanwood, Lexington School for the Deaf, American School for the Deaf, and West Virginia School for the Deaf!

On the second day of the tournament, WPSD defeated the Delaware School for the Deaf in the semi finals. The Lions took on Marie Philip School for the championship game. WPSD emerged victorious, thus clinching the title for the second year in a row. Two-peat champions!

Olivia L. and Cassie F. earned all tournament honors while Cheyenne S. took home the MVP award! We are so proud of the team and their efforts! Way to go Lionesses! ■



Soccer Update

The WPSD Varsity soccer team fared well this season. Their overall record for the year was 16 wins and 6 losses. A standout moment of the season came when the Lions clinched the ESDAA championship for the second year in a row! The tournament was hosted by the Marie Philip School (MPS). The Lions defeated New York School for the Deaf - Fanwood by a score of 1-0 and beat out MPS in a shootout on Friday, October 20. These victories launched our blue and gold warriors into the semifinals.

The Lions beat out Lexington School & Center for the Deaf in a shootout and then went on to defeat the American School for the Deaf in the title matchup by a score of 2-0! Chad and Kyle D., Antoine H., and Kyle K. earned all tournament honors. Braden E. secured the coveted honor of Goalie of the tournament. We are so proud of the team's dedication and efforts throughout the season and during this tournament! Back-to-back champions! ■

In The Community

WPSD Block Party and Talent Show

Block Party

In September, WPSD hosted another successful Community Block Party on its campus. It was a perfect day to enjoy the outdoors along with the vendors, displays, activities, and food. Party-goers walked among the emergency response vehicles, fire trucks, and police cars on display from the surrounding communities. The walking tacos from the WPSD PSO, hot dogs from the WPSD Booster Club, Gosia's pierogies, and refreshingly cool treats from Steel City Shaved Ice were fan favorites. Turner's Dairy offered free drinks to help folks beat the heat. Spin art, games for kids and adults alike, and train rides were all bracketed by great music by DJs DiMenno entertained families throughout the afternoon.

WPSD was thrilled to have Barnyard Petting Zoo & Pony Rides participate in the event again this year. Families had the opportunity to feed and play with a variety of farm animals, including sheep, pigs, an alpaca, goats and a lovable puppy! Adults and children alike enjoyed the chance to visit, up close, with the animals, who were not shy and made fast friends!

WPSD was pleased to welcome representatives from the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium to the Block Party. Their mascot - Sharky -



danced to the music and greeted party-goers, bringing smiles and hugs to all. A chalk artist from the Pittsburgh Zoo also attended this event - what skill and talent! He made a beautiful creation that wowed the crowd. Additionally, our wonderful and supportive friends at Tender Care Learning Centers sent their mascot - Tender Teddy - to the event. Kids flocked to Tender Teddy to snag a hug or a high five. This great event is one more example of WPSD's long-standing commitment to invest in the communities that surround the School. ■

Talent Show

The youth talent show was a major attraction at WPSD's Community Block Party. Children in grades K-12, from the communities that surround the school, took the stage to showcase their outstanding talents in front of the crowd gathered in the WPSD auditorium. A panel of esteemed judges had the tough job of scoring each brave performer. The judges consisted of a mix of community leaders and



residents with musical backgrounds. Swissvale Mayor Deneen Swartzwelder, Edgewood Borough Council Member Jack Wilson, Barbara Thompson - the wife of Wilkinsburg Mayor John Thompson, WPSD Board member and former KDKA radio news anchor Barbara Boylan, Katherine Palumbo and Alice Sox (both having strong musical experiences) took on these tough roles. All performers gave valiant efforts, including students from our very own WPSD family, who gave a stunning ASL rendition of "World's Greatest" by R. Kelly. We were lucky enough to have WTAE-TV Emmy-award winning news anchor Shannon Perrine emcee the show. It was a great event! First place went to Alaina, second place to WPSD students Olivia, Victoria, Destiny and Jenna, and third place to Livia. Congratulations to all performers involved - truly great efforts and skill put forth by each and every one! ■

Edgewood Community Day

WPSD was honored to take part in the Edgewood Community Day in August. Local police and fire departments were in attendance along with area businesses and organizations. Some staff from the school worked with kids and adults, helping them to spell their names using American Sign Language letter cards. Mini-SignShine took part at the event, wowing the crowd with several performances including the National Anthem and their rendition of Taylor Swift's "Shake It Off." They did an outstanding job! Attendees enjoyed beautiful weather, music, games, food and so much more! Edgewood Community Day is truly a wholesome, fun event, and was enjoyed by all. ■



Swissvale Community Health Fair

WPSD was honored to take part in the Swissvale Health Fair in September. The weather was beautiful! The line at our Mobile Diagnostic Unit (MDU), which provided hearing screening for fair-goers, was steady for three hours straight! It was great to get to know residents and businesses in the area. Just another local community event that WPSD supports! ■

Senator Jim Brewster's Senior Wellness Expo

WPSD was thrilled to participate in Senator Jim Brewster's Senior Wellness Expo held in McKeesport in September. Vendors from all over the Pittsburgh area took part in the event, offering their services to senior citizens in attendance. The School brought the Mobile Diagnostic Unit, offering free hearing screenings to the attendees. WPSD Audiologists Dr. Jennifer Craig and Dr. Tatiana Prezioso provided their expertise and insights. It was a wonderful event and an opportunity to get to know some great people in the community. Thank you to Senator Brewster for his work to support our communities. ■



Spotlight

Zion Harper

Zion Harper, a senior at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, recently received a prestigious award from the NAACP. He was presented with the NAACP 2017 Young Entrepreneur Award at the 54th annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Ohio. Zion is a skilled photographer who already runs his own business! Congratulations! We had the chance to discuss this honor with him and the importance it holds for him.

Tell us about your award. How did you qualify to win this award?
This award is presented to youth who have made significant contributions to their communities. It's an award for being a role model and young entrepreneur.

How did you qualify to win this award?
I am a self-taught photographer. I am often invited to photograph many special events in my community, public events and/or personal photo sessions. I currently do work in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Why is this award so special to you?
It says to me I can do all things through Jesus Christ, who gives me the strength. My Deafness does not limit me. I have my own business and can be successful!

How have your classes and activities at WPSD prepared you for the photography field?
Last year I took a class at Forbes and I learned the different technological sides of photography. At WPSD I take many pictures for special events that are used in the yearbooks. This year I am on the Yearbook Photo Committee.

How does the award coming from the NAACP make it special for you?

It's a GREAT honor to receive this Award from an organization that is known nationally and all over the world. It says that they support young people who have dreams and visions!

What role has the NAACP played in your life?

When I was younger I would often go with my mom and grandmother to the NAACP events and dinners. I noticed the huge impact it had on our community and the ways in which this organization encouraged and supported people and provided them a voice.

What leaders of the NAACP do you try to emulate? Why?
I look up to Ms. Deanna Yarboro-Brown, because she is fearless, committed, successful, kind, educated, and she believes in the success of young people today and into the future. ■



“My Deafness does not limit me. I have my own business and can be successful!”



Together We Can Grow...

2017 Annual Appeal

To Our Friends and Family,

As the largest center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing [D/HH] children in the Commonwealth, we take pride in "Preparing Students For Life." From the toddler in the arms of their parents to the graduate ready to face the world after high school, we provide a wide variety of programs, services, and opportunities for D/HH children of every age and in every corner of Pennsylvania. Our early intervention program - Choices for Children (CFC) - serves children from birth to 3 years of age and is now working with more than 100 families statewide; and the number continues to grow! Whether the setting is urban, suburban, or rural, CFC staff visit with families in the home to provide the necessary resources to strengthen the family and help prepare the child to enter school.

At the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD) and The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (SSDHHC), we believe that access to new opportunities inside and outside the classroom, within a language rich environment, is vital to offering a high-quality education experience that is uniquely tailored to D/HH students at our schools.

WPSD provides a variety of academic experiences that integrate our curriculum, including access to our state-of-art TV studio, editing suite, and 3-D printing lab with a variety of STEAM activities designed to promote critical thinking and reasoning skills. In the classroom, each child has a personalized Chromebook to help build necessary skills for the future and assist in obtaining academic content during school hours.

At The Scranton School, teachers use classroom SMART panels to promote visual learning for students. They provide literacy activities for all children that will support them in lifelong learning.

The Communications class for Middle School students offers the opportunity to create and edit video projects, interact with and learn about drone technology, and improve their presentation skills.

Distance Education courses between WPSD and The Scranton School enable students to communicate with and learn from each other, foster their

creativity, and offer a streamlined approach to providing a top-notch education for students both in and out of the classroom on both sides of Pennsylvania.

Whether at WPSD or The Scranton School, students are met with a variety of extracurricular and athletic opportunities to keep them physically challenged and socially involved with their peers. For those students who reside on our campuses during the school week, our Residential housing offers students a home-away-from-home environment with academic supports during the evening and video phones that allow our students to remain in touch with their friends and families.

Ultimately, we want our graduates to enter the working world with the tools and training to be successful. As 2017 comes to a close, would you consider a gift to one of our programs? Your support will help us to bring quality academic, athletic and extracurricular opportunities to D/HH children across the Commonwealth. Please consider a tax-deductible gift to the program of your choice with the enclosed envelope or donate securely online at wpsd.org or thescrantonschool.org

Thank you for your kindness, generosity and support this season.

With deepest gratitude,



Steven E. Farmer, Ed.D.

Chief Executive Officer

Programs of the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf



A Night of Giving & Glamour at the Auction & Gala

Earlier this year, friends and family of WPSD gathered for the 2017 Auction & Gala at the Edgewood Country Club to celebrate the School and the success of its students. More than 240 guests enjoyed live music, good food and drinks, and more than 150 items up for either silent or live auction. The School was honored to have Senator Randy Vulakovich, Senator Jay Costa and Representative Paul Costa join the celebration. Senator Costa was recognized for his long-standing support of the School and its students. WPSD was thrilled to have WTAE-TV's Chronicle host Sally Wiggin emcee the event. All of the proceeds raised through the Auction & Gala will be dedicated to the expansion of the Children's Center on campus. The Children's Center provides programs and services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing children from 3 years old to 6 years old. "Thank You" to every sponsor and to the guests who purchased tickets, bid on items throughout the night, and made donations to the Children's Center. Your generosity and support ensured the success of this wonderful event! ■

