

West Allegheny Edition

# Allegheny West

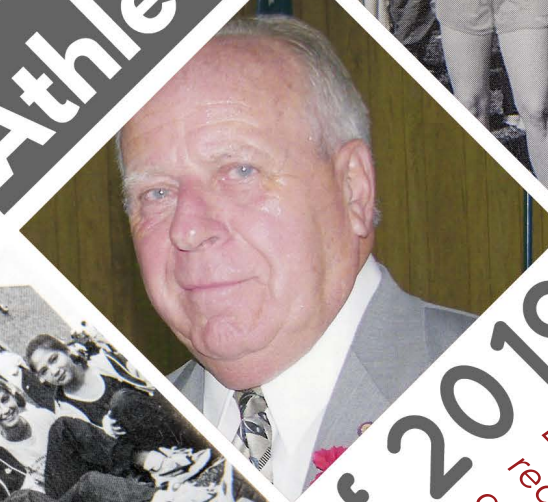
Volume 20, Issue 119  
April/May 2019

FREE Direct Mail Community Publication

# Magazine



## West Allegheny Hall of Fame



## Class of 2019 PLUS:

- Longtime Findlay recreation coordinator retires
- New Miracle League field on track for fall baseball
- Young philanthropist opens little free library
- Airport authority unveils new terminal design concept

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West Allegheny  
 School District  
 Official Newsletter  
 Inside  
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of Findlay, North Fayette, Oakdale, Sturgeon,  
and McDonald to connect communities, promote  
people, heighten awareness about the richness of  
the airport region, and build pride in the western  
suburbs of Allegheny County.



@AlleghenyWest



Participants in the West Allegheny basketball booster's little dribblers in-house program pose for a picture. The program had 120 participants this year in grades K through eight. The K through second grade portion focuses on ball handling skills and learning the rules of the game.

PHOTO BY BLINK OF AN EYE: SPORTS AND FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHY



## From the Publisher

Dear Readers,

Thank you for picking up our April West Allegheny edition of Allegheny West Magazine.

As we've done in years past in our April edition, we're once again bringing you a special section this month on the latest West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame inductees. This class marks the hall of fame's seventh and inductees will again be honored at a banquet in May. Funds raised from the banquet will benefit West Allegheny athletics. The individuals and teams selected for induction into the hall of fame have all contributed to West Allegheny athletics in their own unique ways. This month, those being inducted include a longtime football announcer, a standout volleyball player, a local philanthropist and youth sports manager, and two history-making cross-country teams. Read more, starting on page 26.

In this edition as well, our publisher emeritus Pat Jennette looks back on the career of longtime Findlay Parks and Recreation coordinator Darlene (Larson) Howell. Over the past two decades, Howell managed to expand the department's handful of offerings to numerous regular programs serving Findlay residents of all ages. Read more on page 16.

If you haven't seen the concept design for Pittsburgh International Airport's new terminal, be sure to flip to page 22. As pictured in the architectural renderings that we have published with this story, the new terminal will have a number of interesting aesthetic design elements. The new terminal will also have a number of new amenities and promises to cut down on the time it takes travelers to get from curb to gate.

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Then, on page 18, read about the two locals - including one West Allegheny alumna - who have managed to bring a new Miracle League field to the area to serve the western suburbs. With a number of fields already operating in the Pittsburgh region, this is the first to open in our area to serve athletes with special needs.

Read about the West Allegheny sixth grade basketball team that recently won a state championship, a recent donation by the Parkway West Rotary to the Western Allegheny Community Library and the West Allegheny Food Pantry's new location in this month's Locally Sourced section, starting on page 8. Be sure also to read the latest from West Allegheny School District in this month's official newsletter, WA Today, starting on page 31. Then get caught up on local upcoming events on page 42 in our On the Horizon section.

Look for our next edition in June, when we'll be bringing you our annual Summer Fun Guide. I know we're looking forward to it. I hope you are as well.

Doug Hughey,  
Publisher and Editor



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## ABOUT THE COVER

The 2019 inductees into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame are (from left) Bill Gamble, the 1995 girls cross-country team, George Kehm, the 1998 and 1999 girls cross-country teams, and Amy Palko (PHOTO COURTESY DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY). Read more on page 26. DESIGN BY SARAH KIZINA



## BusinessCare opens new location in Robinson Township

On April 1, Ohio Valley Hospital Business Fit became BusinessCare - Robinson and opened a new location within the Heritage Valley Robinson Township Medical Neighborhood. Heritage Valley BusinessCare works with employers that want to encourage and protect employee health. The Robinson location features a new, modern space with on-site laboratory and diagnostic imaging services and access to occupational medical services. BusinessCare - Robinson is located at 2201 Park Manor Boulevard, Suite 500, Pittsburgh, PA 15205. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Walk-in services are available. For more information, contact BusinessCare - Robinson at (412) 777-6369.



## The LifeSmart program helped her get off blood pressure meds and lose weight

Four years ago, Joyce set a goal to get off of her blood pressure medication. After a doctor's visit last year, she learned that she may have to go on yet another medication and decided enough was enough. She asked her doctor to give her a chance to work it out through diet changes.

"I was in the right mindset that I was determined that I was going to do something about my weight issue," she said.

That's where Heritage Valley's LifeSmart program came in. LifeSmart is a diabetes prevention program that is offered through a partnership between Heritage Valley Health System and UPMC Health Plan. It provides healthy lifestyle programs for adults within the Heritage Valley Health System community who have been identified as having risk factors for prediabetes or metabolic syndrome.

Joyce asked her doctor for a referral to the six-month program and started in March of 2018. Though she was enthusiastic and committed, she still had reservations.

"I was just so afraid I would come out on the other side and not have accomplished anything. Because you try so many times and you just don't get anywhere, it's hard to believe that something's going to work," she explained.

As part of the LifeSmart program, nurse educators and dietitians share information and suggestions on implementing simple changes in diet and increased physical activity to make long-term, healthy lifestyle changes. With these tools and a positive attitude, Joyce learned that she could in fact succeed.

At the beginning of the LifeSmart program, the recommended goal is to lose seven percent of your body weight. Joyce found this particularly helpful and not overwhelming.

"It just makes it easier and then you feel like you're actually succeeding," she said.

In addition to the realistic goals that the program sets, Joyce found that the support system was another huge motivator.

"You know you're not alone. People being in it together make a lot of difference," she said.

As the weeks went on, Joyce continued to have success with the tools and support that LifeSmart provided. Toward the end of the program, she remembers the moment that stood out most. Not only did she lose seven percent of her body weight, she lost an additional seven percent as well! Much to her surprise, her blood pressure was also much lower.

"The LifeSmart program was developed from national research, the Diabetes Prevention Project," said Erika Sheffield, nurse educator and dietitian, Heritage Valley Health System.

LifeSmart is modeled after the federally funded Diabetes Prevention Program, a landmark study that demonstrated lifestyle change is a winning strategy when it comes to diabetes prevention.

"The research showed that people who are high risk for type 2 diabetes can prevent or delay the disease by embracing a more active lifestyle and losing a modest amount of weight through sensible dietary changes," added Sheffield.

In addition to the LifeSmart program, Joyce swims at her local YMCA and enjoys walking when the weather is nice. She has continued to lose weight after the program ended and she completed her first 5K last year.

"It was cool to walk it and know I was going to succeed!" she said.

Joyce highly recommends the program to anyone who asks about her weight loss.

"It's like anything in life. You just try it. If you absolutely hate it, you never have to do it again. There are a lot of different programs out there and this one worked for me. It may not work for everybody, but you don't know until you try it!" she says.

"Heritage Valley has offered LifeSmart for nearly 10 years," added Sheffield. "Joyce is one of many, wonderful success stories. The program shows how small changes can have great impact on a person's overall health."

The LifeSmart program is offered by Heritage Valley Health System in conjunction with UPMC Health Plan. The program is free to eligible participants. For more information, contact Heritage Valley Community Health Services at 1 (866) 328-8389.







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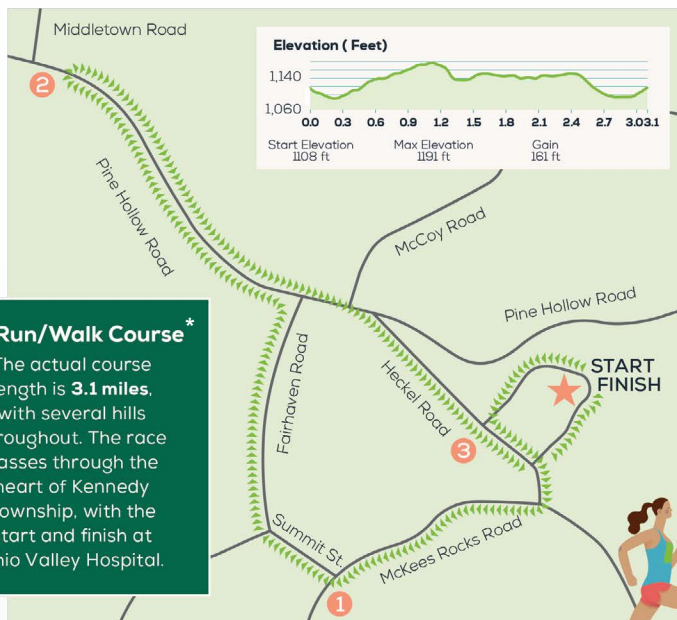
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### 5K Run/Walk Course\*

The actual course length is **3.1 miles**, with several hills throughout. The race passes through the heart of Kennedy Township, with the start and finish at Ohio Valley Hospital.

**\* Dog and Stroller Friendly Course!**



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2nd	\$100	\$100
3rd	\$50	\$50

### Age Groups

- 9 and Under
- 10 to 14
- 15 - 19
- 20 - 24
- 25 - 29
- 30 - 34
- 35 - 39
- 40 - 44
- 45 - 49
- 50 - 54
- 55 - 59
- 60 - 64
- 65 - 69
- 70 and over

## Heritage Valley offers Walk With A Doc Program

Heritage Valley Health System is partnering with the national Walk With A Doc organization to help you take a step in the right direction for your health! Throughout 2019, Heritage Valley will host dozens of walks around Allegheny County and Beaver County.

Walk with a Doc is a walking program for everyone interested in taking steps for a healthier lifestyle. Each hour-long Walk with a Doc event begins with a 10-minute health talk by a Heritage Valley Physician, followed by a healthy walk at an indoor, climate-controlled location. While you walk at your own pace, you'll have the opportunity to have questions answered by local physicians. Participants are invited to stay as little or as long as they like. Venues for the walks include the Sewickley Valley YMCA, Beaver County YMCA, The Mall at Robinson and Beaver Valley Mall.

Heritage Valley's Walk with a Doc events are free and all are welcome to participate. To see a list of future walks, visit [www.heritagevalley.org/pages/walk-with-a-doc](http://www.heritagevalley.org/pages/walk-with-a-doc).



## Let's Talk About Stroke Signs, Symptoms and Risk Factors May 21, 6-7 p.m.

Western Allegheny Community Library  
181 Bateman Road, Oakdale, 15071

**FREE COMMUNITY EVENT!** Come for an educational presentation. Learn the signs and symptoms of a stroke, how to identify if someone is having a stroke and what you can do to reduce your risk factors for a stroke. Presentation concludes with an "Ask the Expert" session.

Presentation by Kristen Ronosky, MSN, RN, Stroke Coordinator, Heritage Valley Health System

**Registration required to attend. Please call (724) 773-2045 to register. Space is limited: first-come, first-serve basis.**



## Youth WA basketball team wins state title

The sixth grade West Allegheny youth basketball team topped off an undefeated season by securing a state championship in March. The team went 32-0 on the season and also won three tournaments - Best of the West, Mars and Peters Township - along the way.

In the finals, the team defeated four teams at State College on their way to winning the gold division. The Indians upset Spring Ford in the finals to win, 50-48.

This was the inaugural year for the Pennsylvania Middle School Basketball Championship and the first time ever that a West Allegheny youth basketball team won a state championship.

"It took our entire team to pull off the state championship tournament win," says team coach Khristian Tisdale. "Through foul trouble and other limiting issues we had to have players play in situations that they were not used to and the boys certainly stepped up. It was awesome and something the coaches and I are very proud of."

The team was also coached by Dan Marshall and Khristian's father, Charles, who has been coaching at various levels at West Allegheny for over 32 years. Charles initially started out coaching at West Allegheny when Khristian was playing in sixth grade in the early 1990s. He has also, at times, been an assistant coach with the varsity team, including the WPIAL-winning 2007 team. This past season, the two coached Khristian's son, Sidney. Dan's son, Luke, also plays on the team.

Khristian says the coaches have been working with this

particular group of basketball players since the players were in fourth grade.

"We, the parents of the players and the WA boosters led by booster president Mr. Maltony are hopeful that we can build on the recent success to make the WA youth basketball program a place where kids can learn meaningful life lessons," says Kristian. "Such as, how to be a great teammate, how to serve others, how to compete as a team, and most importantly, how to have fun while doing it."



Pictured are coach Khristian Tisdale, Anthony Lanni #45, Tegan Ricketts #24, Noah Pfeffer #21, Ty Blatz #4, Luke Marshall #12, Roman Police #10, Conor Main #0, Jonah Buglak #30, Sidney Tisdale #13, coach Charles Tisdale, Brock Cornell #2 and coach Dan Marshall.



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## WACL receives check from Parkway West Rotary

Each year, the Parkway West Rotary brings together members of the community for their annual Gerry Dulac Charity Golf Classic. This past golf classic held in 2018 marked the event's 20th year. The sold-out event took place at Sewickley Heights Country Club.

On March 20, 2019, members of the Parkway West Rotary met at Western Allegheny Community Library to present the library with a check for \$4,000.

This year's Gerry Dulac Charity Golf Classic will be held on July 8 and will benefit the Coraopolis Train Station Project. The goal of the project is to remodel the former H.H. Richardson Company train station in downtown Coraopolis into a mixed use community center. Thus far, significant work - aided by grants and donations - has been completed on the station. For more on the project, see the story in the 2018 Fall Cornell edition of Allegheny West Magazine under the archives tab at awmagazine.com.

For details about the upcoming Gerry Dulac Charity Golf Classic, including registration information, visit the Parkway West Rotary website at parkwaywestrotary.com.



Parkey West Rotary members Sam Duerr and Fred Liechti - along with friend of the Rotary Gerry Dulac - present a check to Amanda Kirby, director of the Western Allegheny Community Library.

## Food pantry moves into new location

The West Allegheny Food Pantry has a new home. At the end of March, volunteers - including a number from Crossroads Church - helped move the pantry into a portion of a warehouse off West Allegheny Road in Imperial. The warehouse at 105 West Allegheny Road in Imperial is located directly behind Rite Aid Pharmacy. At the time of this writing the first distribution dates are scheduled for April 9 and 10, with two more to follow on April 23 from 9 a.m. to noon and on April 24 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The pantry will once again be holding distributions four times per month at the new location.

For about a year prior to the move, the pantry had been operating temporarily out of Valley Presbyterian Church in Imperial. Food pantry coordinator Linda Stoner says that, were it not for the church's accommodations, the pantry would have ceased operations.

"A big thank you goes out to Valley Presbyterian Church so we could keep the pantry open during the transition period," she says.

Prior to moving into the church, the pantry operated out of another location in Imperial.

Stoner says that, while the pantry once again will be able to hold its regular distributions there are no plans to reopen the thrift store.

Approximately 200 local families rely on the pantry's food distributions each month.

For more, including distribution times and to donate food items, call (724) 695-1305.



Volunteers help stock the shelves at the West Allegheny Food Pantry's new location.

## WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR BOSS A KIDNEY?

In April of 2014, I experienced serious kidney failure and, for a year, battled without success to the point where I was at the end of the road. My options were winding down and I was within days of a not-so-good ending. I needed a miracle!

Anita Alfonsi, a senior account executive who reported to me, had made a personal decision to be "our miracle." I can still vividly remember the day the transplant unit called to let me know that I had a kidney donor. We did not know who but, later that day, Anita came to me to inform me she was going to be "our miracle." Even more dramatic was the fact that she pushed aggressively for the transplant to take place immediately after being approved without ever realizing how important the "immediate" part was going to be for me.

It would be impossible to say how important this selfless act was to us and it is my hope that Anita's actions will make her an inspiration to others. If you are wondering if being a kidney donor can really make a difference, it can! If you have ever considered doing it, I can only tell you that you will become an instant hero, both to the person you are helping and anyone else who ever comes in contact with them. Anita did this for my wife, Carol, and I. She will always be "our hero." ~ Rick Vaccarelli

Meet "Our Hero"  
Anita Alfonsi



Over 100,000 people in the U.S. need a kidney but only 17,000 will receive one. You can make a difference. If you would like more information, please contact one of the following sources that can help you with the process:

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1 (877) 640-6746

National Kidney Foundation -  
1 (800) 261-4115,  
www.kidney.org

CORE - 412-963-3550

Allegheny Health - (412) 359-4441

PA License Gift of Life Program -  
(215) 557-8090

Thank you Anita for the gift of life.



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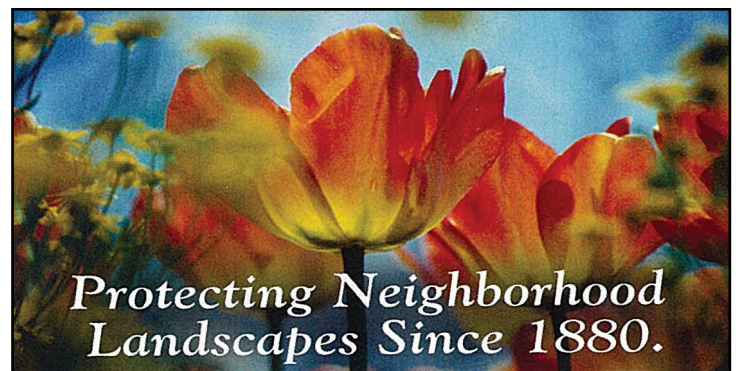
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## Whoa ... it costs a lot to die

One of the first calls a family usually makes after a loved one passes is to their attorney, at which point we begin to explain the process of settling the estate. And the response is unanimous - it costs how much?!?

Among the ever-increasing funeral expenses is the cost to settle the estate, which ranges from one to seven percent, between the court costs and attorney fees. Then, you need to factor in a reasonable executor fee,

which can be another five percent of the estate's value. On top of that, depending on the beneficiary's relationship to the decedent, Pennsylvania's inheritance tax can be as high as fifteen percent:



<b>Spouse</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Children/Grandchildren</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Siblings</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Everyone Else</b>	<b>15%</b>

We also must take into consideration other possible tax consequences, such as income tax and federal estate tax, plus any debts the decedent owed upon their passing or expenses incurred because of their passing. In addition to the above-listed expenses, if the decedent received governmental benefits from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (i.e. Medicaid) they must be reimbursed for benefits paid. Pennsylvania has a priority of creditors list which the executor must be aware of so that the correct creditors get paid in the correct order.

Settling an estate is time consuming and can be very complicated. The executor is a fiduciary under the law who must act in the best interest of the estate and who owes the utmost care while acting. Without a professional walking him/her through the process, there is not only the stress of missing a key step but, more importantly, paying more than what is legally required. Also, if the fiduciary breaches his/her duty, they may face personal financial liability. Add to that the complexities and sometimes strained dynamics of a blended family, second marriage and discord amongst siblings. Ornerly beneficiaries don't help matters, either. We often receive inquiries asking when they'll receive their share. But probate can be lengthy, averaging over a year. And, if there are creditors, we must factor in an additional court process concerning the audit of the estate. If a beneficiary contests, the estate faces the time and cost associated with defending the claim, too.

As estate and tax professionals, we assist our clients with all the necessary administrative steps and tax returns helping them reduce their stress and the applicable tax due with our expertise. What costs are permitted deductions? Which creditors get paid before others? Does an executor pay tax on their commission? All of these are factors in reducing the tax owed by the estate. And if we are proactive, the estate may receive an additional five percent discount if the return is filed within a timely manner.



The passing of a loved one is hard enough without having to worry about the settlement of their estate. We would rather family members rejoice in the memory of their loved one than struggle with locating documents, fumbling through files or dealing with family turmoil.

The proper plan can allow those family members time to grieve and reduce the likelihood that family relationships will be fractured due to procrastination. Contact us today to help you develop your estate plan or administer your loved one's estate.

*Michele P. Conti is an estate planning and elder law attorney. Conti attended Allegheny College in Meadville, Oxford University and Duquesne University School of Law. She received her LL.M. in taxation from Villanova University.*



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## Ergonomics of the workplace

“I don’t know what is causing my pain.”

This is a statement that is heard quite frequently in our office. Chronic pain patterns can develop for a variety of reasons and sometimes the reasons are not so obvious.

When an individual presents with this type of situation, workplace ergonomics should immediately be addressed.

Ergonomics is the science of fitting workplace conditions and job demands to employee capabilities. A series of questions are asked that can identify key areas that could be improved to make the workplace compatible with the employee. Some of these areas address issues with computer and mouse placement, chair height, lifting techniques and overall posture. Attention to these specific areas will improve the individual’s safety and productivity. It is hard to argue with the fact that when it is easier to do a job, productivity in the workplace also benefits.

When considering the impact of proper ergonomics on workplace safety, three basic principles are especially important:

- 1. Lift properly** - The largest muscle in the area should perform the task. The larger the muscle or muscle group used for lifting, the lower the stress placed on smaller, more vulnerable muscles.
- 2. Change positions frequently** - During any work activities, people should be able to comfortably assume a number of different postures and not remain in one position for any extended period of time. Muscles will fatigue and be more prone to injury when assuming a prolonged posture.
- 3. Keep joints in their neutral position** - When performing tasks, it is important to keep the joints of the spine and extremities in their neutral position or approximately halfway into their range of motion. This will help to minimize repetitive stress injuries placed on joints from prolonged abnormal positioning.

### 4. When working at a desk, try these suggestions for greater comfort:

- Choose a desk that is the proper height. All things on a desk should also be within easy reach.
- Your feet should touch the floor, with the legs and body forming an angle of 90 to 110 degrees.
- Keep your body straight with the head and neck upright and looking forward.
- Your eyes should be at the same height as the center of the monitor.
- When typing, keep your wrists straight, your shoulders perpendicular to the floor, and your forearms parallel to the floor.
- When reading at your desk, use a bookstand or a paper holder to keep your eyes in the same neutral position you use to read documents on your computer monitor.
- When talking on the phone, use a headset when possible, especially when talking on the phone for prolonged periods. Holding the phone between the shoulder and cheek will only lead to



neck pain and headaches.

- Stand up and stretch your legs with a short walk about every 20 to 30 minutes.
- Take micro-breaks often, stretching your neck, arms, wrists, back and legs. Simple stretches include neck rotations, fist clenches, arm dangles and shoulder shrugs.
- If your eyes concentrate on a particular object for long periods, relax your eye muscles by shifting your focus from objects that are close to you to objects that are farther away. This helps reduce eye strain.

*This information provided by Leslie Burns, DC, owner of Robinson Chiropractic. Visit them online at [myrobinsonchiropractic.com](http://myrobinsonchiropractic.com).*



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## Well-known area performance studio moving to WA community

Over the past 12 years, Karen Prunzik's Broadway Dance Studio has trained some of the area's premier young talent in performance.

Now, the studio, which has been located close to Crafton in Robinson Township since its inception, is moving to the West Allegheny community. The studio will be located at 7857

Steubenville Pike, Oakdale, in the Parkway Plaza. Co-Owner Karen Prunzik says they plan to be moved in and resuming the semester's classes following the Easter break. Prunzik operates her studio with her business partner Kailyn Henry, who holds a degree from Point Park University's pedagogy program.



Karen Prunzik (at right) and Kailyn Henry (at left), owners of Karen Prunzik's Broadway Performing Arts Center, pose for a picture with their students.

The studio's existing students from West Allegheny and their families are excited about the move.

"I started at BDS with my youngest child taking ballet and tap," says Tracy Emmett, who lives in the West Allegheny area. "Since then, my middle child has started to take piano lessons, and my oldest is looking into taking voice lessons. As a mother of three, it is wonderful to be provided all of these opportunities in one place, and it also saves me the trouble of running to multiple locations."

She says she's glad to hear that the studio is moving closer to her and that it will provide a needed service in the community.

With the move, the name of the studio will also be changing to Karen Prunzik's Broadway Performing Arts Center (BPAC) because, says Prunzik, "that's basically what we are."

The beautiful, large, newly remodeled studio will feature plenty of room with a vast inventory of costumes, sets and props.

To celebrate the move, the studio will host a grand opening party on July 28 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. with entertainment and refreshments. All new students who register for fall classes at that time will receive free registration, a \$35 value. Anyone

who misses the grand opening is encouraged to stop by for an open house the studio will be hosting on Aug. 24 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

As well, the studio is currently registering for its summer classes and its popular summer camps. Students who register for one of their camps get a 50 percent discount off summer classes.

The center will be continuing to offer all disciplines of dance as well as acro, acting, musical theater, voice, piano and even ukulele lessons. It will also be offering two new programs: a professional program for serious students who plan to pursue theater as a career and a recreational program for those who just want to have fun while singing and dancing. The latter will help students hone their musical theater skills to take on high school musical auditions. Professional faculty will teach both programs.

"We also have adult tap and ballet classes which have become very popular for our 25-75 age group. In the fall we will be adding yoga and "mommy and me" classes along with our Mini Movements for 2 year olds," says Prunzik.

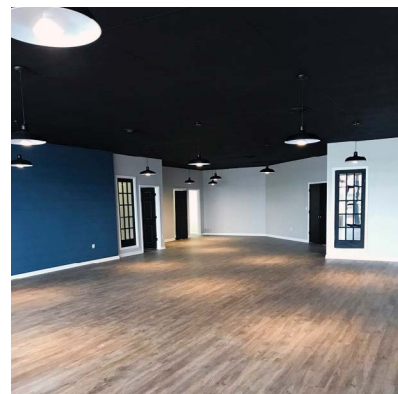
She says the studio doesn't host recitals but instead writes theme-based musicals that highlight its students' singing, dancing and acting talents and serve as a theater educational platform for both students and audience.

"No ordering costumes from a catalogue book," she says. "We costume the entire show from our vast costume inventory."

Prunzik, a former Broadway performer, originated the role of Anytime Annie in the Broadway production of "42nd Street."

For more, visit [www.prunikisbroadwaydancestudio.com](http://www.prunikisbroadwaydancestudio.com) or call (412) 920-1841.

STORY AND PHOTOS SUBMITTED



Karen Prunzik's Broadway Performing Arts Center is moving into a new studio along Steubenville Pike near Imperial.





## Paragon opens model home in new Collier Township community

Custom homebuilder Paragon Homes recently opened its newest model home in Parkside Meadows, a new community adjacent to Collier Community Park. Plans call for just 23 lots in this small, walkable community with tree-lined streets and two cul-de-sacs nestled in pastoral, rolling hills and farm fields.

Located in Chartiers Valley School District near other Paragon homes in Walkers Ridge and Nevillewood, Parkside Meadows' home plans have plenty of potential for large backyards and porches with bucolic views. The site also sits just minutes from busy shopping and dining areas in Bridgeville, Robinson Township and South Fayette Township. Greater Pittsburgh International Airport and downtown Pittsburgh are just a short, 20-minute drive away each. The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden is just six minutes away from the community.

Unlike the one-size-fits-all homes built by some companies, Paragon designs homes around the needs of each homeowner. Many of the amenities that other builders consider upgrades are standard to Paragon's homes, which have won 30 awards from the Builders and Realtors Association of Greater Pittsburgh and the Washington County Builders Association. The company has won multiple Single Family Home of the Year awards for homes ranging from \$500,000 to \$1 million. Paragon prides itself on crafting quality homes designed around each customer through a process that is easy and enjoyable for clients.



Parkside Meadows' plan is formulated around the idea of bringing the walkable, tree-lined streets of Shadyside and Sewickley to Collier Township. Each of community's home plans already call for unique custom designs, including front porches, gorgeous indoor and outdoor entertaining spaces, gourmet kitchens, and true master retreats with sitting rooms, private balconies, and spa-style baths. With construction just in the beginning phases, prospective homebuyers have the added benefit of getting in early before construction costs rise.

The site for Parkside Meadows is located at 4069 Thoms Run Road, Oakdale, PA, 15057. To schedule a viewing, visit [Paragon online at VisitParagonHomes.com](http://VisitParagonHomes.com) or call them to schedule an appointment at (412) 787-8807.



**Serving the Pittsburgh area since 1987, Paragon Homes proudly handcrafts custom, high quality homes like the ones seen here. Homes in Paragon's newest community in Collier Township will feature many of these same amenities.**





## Longtime Findlay recreation coordinator retires

She's a lady with a lot of spunk, a background in education and a head full of ideas. Darlene (Larson) Howell, Findlay Township's recreation coordinator, literally put the community on the map with her vision and nearly two-decade implementation of a recreation program that is a shining star in the area.

She retired in February.

"I actually started on September 10, 2001, yes, the day before 9/11," she says. "I remember thinking that I had to plan fun things for people. I wondered if anyone would feel like doing anything after the tragedy. There was a senior citizen trip planned at the end of October. Many people cancelled, some afraid of riding a bus. I decided to go ahead with the trip. It turned out good."

(Larson) Howell graduated in 1971 from Bellevue High School and in 1975 from Slippery Rock University with an elementary/special education degree. She lived in Findlay for about 15 years, raising her daughter, Casey, and son, Tanner. After marrying Cliff Howell, who also has a daughter, Sarah, they established a home base in Hopewell. She says, "Findlay will always be home to me though."

Prior to becoming Findlay's recreation coordinator, she was a teacher, doing a brief stint in special education before having her daughter.

"I also started a preschool at McKees Rocks Catholic, where Casey went. Then when we moved here, I took the 4-5-year-old preschool job at St. Andrews in Moon. I was there for 14 years and absolutely loved it!"

Despite her passion for the preschool environment, (Larson) Howell was looking for a job with benefits. After becoming aware that the recreation position was being developed, she applied for the job.

"I was starting a whole new career. They gave me an office and a budget and let me loose. The only activities that were happening were an Easter Egg Hunt, The Fair in the Woodlands, Fishing Derby and Halloween Parade. I expanded the program by starting with things I knew, like kids and exercise. I was always researching to find what was new around the recreation world. While cleaning out files, I couldn't believe how many things I had done over the years. It was like a walk down memory lane."

She said deciding to publish a recreation newsletter was a great decision. Under her guidance, new programs were being established for township residents and the newsletter was a great way to get the word out.

"Remember, this was way before Facebook and all of the social media," (Larson) Howell says.

"I was lucky to have so many families who supported programs and events. As those families grew older, there were always new supporters for recreation. Parents got involved and ran camps and other programs," she adds.

As with all good things that expand, however, the job was getting overwhelming. As the department's activities grew, she found herself in charge of not only the activities and programs, but managing the activity center, community center, pavilions and ball field rentals.

As part of her job, she also oversaw the fair board. During the first couple of years, (Larson) Howell watched and learned. Over time, she absorbed more responsibility with the fair.

"We have tried to keep the integrity of the fair intact, even though we are not involved in the Pennsylvania State Agricultural fairs anymore," she said, adding, "We like our small town-style country fair with its unique activities and events. I think one of the things we did that I am proud of is to make most of the children's activities free. A family can come and have a great time even if they don't have a lot of money. I've been lucky to have had excellent Fair Board members and volunteers to make it such a great family event. And a shout out to Steve Sarachine and crew; they are the meat of the event."

In 2014, the township hired Stephanie Strain as a part-time assistant to take over managing the Findlay Township Activity Center in Imperial, answer the phone and help with programs and events. Strain took over (Larson) Howell's position when she retired.

When asked what her favorite part of the job was, (Larson) Howell minces no words, emphatically stating, "The Findlay Senior Citizen Group has always been my favorite and I will miss them a lot." She adds, though, that she plans to get involved with the group now that she herself is retired. When the group was launched, she guesses there were around 60 to 70 members. Today, the group averages 120 to 130 at luncheons. She'd send out about 200 newsletters every month.

"Our Christmas dinner brought as many as 180 attendees. We have taken two trips to Branson, Missouri, numerous overnight trips and two or three day trips a year," she adds.

What one thing does she wish she could have accomplished during her career at Findlay?

"If I could have been younger and worked longer, it was my dream to work on getting a Miracle Park, one where handicapped children could be totally inclusive. Our Rainbow's End Playground is an amazing area, but it is wood and will not last forever. It would be my wish that when it be replaced that we could have a more maintenance free and inclusive facility."

As fate would have it, a Miracle League field and playground is slated to open in the area later this year. Read more on page 18.

She says, "I am most grateful for the thousands of people I got to know that I would not have known otherwise. It has been more than a job to me."

Among them, she cites the supervisors, parks, police, fire department, public works and administration for their unending support.

"I could not have been successful without them. Gary Klingman, our former township manager, started in recreation, and he was very much a mentor and supporter" she emphasizes.

The township's current manager, Chris Caruso, says that "Darlene took a new Parks Department from its inception to one that today provides something for all, from Toddlers to Seniors. She always came to work with a smile on her face. Findlay Township is forever grateful for her work and we wish her nothing short of the best in retirement."



Darlene (Larson) Howell



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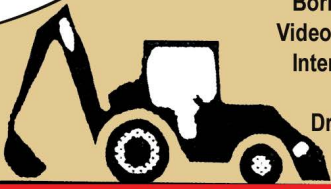
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STORY BY  
JILL BORDO

## Peoples Gas Park Miracle League Field on track for fall baseball games

Moon Township will get a miracle in 2019. The community will become the seventh in the tri-state region and one of hundreds around the country to house a Miracle League baseball field. The new field is being constructed with the goal of serving athletes with special needs in communities west of Pittsburgh.

Started in Georgia in 2000, the Miracle League's mission is to offer a safe and inclusive environment for all of those with disabilities who wish to participate in the sport of baseball. The effort to build a field in Moon Township was spearheaded by Mike and Christina Magulick, a local couple with two children, their younger of whom is 4 and has a rare genetic disorder, 5p minus.

The Magulicks say they were moved to begin the project largely because they had difficulty finding playgrounds and recreation areas that were suitable for both of their sons to enjoy together. Playgrounds that accommodated Luke, their younger son, were not challenging enough for his older brother Jack. Areas that appealed to Jack did not contain enough safety measures for Luke.

They also found that most restroom facilities at public play areas were not conducive to persons with disabilities.

Mike and Christina both grew up in sports-oriented families. Mike participated in hockey and golf at Bethel Park High School while Christina ran cross country and track for West Allegheny. As such, they wanted both of their children to enjoy the same opportunities. When the idea began to form to get a Miracle League field to come to the area, Mike was already coaching players at the Miracle League facility in Upper St. Clair. As the model for those with disabilities to play baseball had already been well-established by the Miracle League - and the Pirates Charities had been an integral force in building existing fields in the area - the Magulicks chose a Miracle League field as their special project.

Though the organization is a national entity, each individual field is managed as an independent franchise. Because the Pirates Charities sponsor more Miracle League fields than any other Major League Baseball team in the country, the Magulicks first sought the group's support, as well as that of Moon Township.

Mike stated that once the Miracle League headquarters learned that the Pirates were involved, the application process became easy. The Magulicks moved forward with the project and established a nine-member board of directors.

According to Mike, the timing of their decision couldn't have been better. The Pirates were looking to establish a field west of the city as three other Miracle League fields were already operating north, east and south of Pittsburgh. Those fields are located in Cranberry Township, Murrysville and the South Hills.

Additionally, Moon Township was in the process of making improvements and renovations to Moon Park to commemorate its 50th anniversary.

The township agreed to donate acreage for the field near the park entrance on Ewing Road and Pirates Charities gave a significant donation to kick start the project. Most of the additional funding and support to date has been provided by several large sponsors, including FedEx Ground, Robert Morris University, Moon Township, The Howard Hanna Free Care Foundation, the Edith Trees Trust, the Buncher Foundation, CJL Engineering, Lennon Smith Souleret Engineering Inc., 84 Lumber, ServiceLink, Zamagias Properties and Peoples Gas, which has acquired the naming rights.

An important connection to the project has been Mike's personal relationship with former Steeler running back Rocky Bleier. As Mike had previously coached Bleier's nephew in hockey, Bleier offered the services of his construction company, RBVetCo, for the new facility. Mike said the quality of Bleier's firm was the main reason they chose his company, but the couple also appreciated that RBVetCo has experience constructing facilities for persons with disabilities and is an employer of disabled veterans.

Acme Door & Hardware, Inc. has donated a considerable amount of building materials for the project such as specialized doors and baby changing tables. Mike stressed that all the restrooms at the Moon Township field will be completely ADA-compliant and will have state-of-the-art features, including showers, height-adjustable full size changing tables, multiple level sinks and water fountains, area for service dogs, and wave technology on some doors. They are also working with experts to help address and incorporate accommodations for those with sensory problems.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held last October and Mike is confident that baseball will be played at the new field this fall. The playground area likely will not be ready for use until 2020.

Though the project is slightly behind schedule, he stated that several new companies have offered to provide in-kind donations and that over 200 bricks have been sold as a fundraising effort. Bricks with engraved names and messages will be used at the entrance to the field and may be purchased for \$250 apiece.

In-kind donations that would be helpful for companies to provide at this time, stated Mike, are cement blocks, fencing, plumbing and building supplies.

A recent public service announcement donated by Edgar Snyder and Associates for the project featured not only Bleier but also former Pirates manager Jim Leyland (field spokesman) and well-known local attorney Edgar Snyder.

The Magulicks, who are expecting a third son in June, will be responsible for managing the leagues once the facility is complete. They will meet with life skills and special needs teachers at area schools to recruit athletes. The couple also plans to contact facilities such as Merakey Allegheny Valley School, The School at McGuire Memorial, and The Verland Foundation to establish adult leagues.



The Pirate Parrot, Allegheny Councilman Tom Baker, Allegheny Councilman Sam DeMarco, Edgar Snyder, Moon Township Supervisor Michele Santicola, Pirates owner Bob Nutting, Jack Magulick, Mike Magulick, Luke Magulick, Rocky Bleier and Christina Magulick break ground on the Peoples Gas Park Miracle League Field in Moon Township. PHOTO SUBMITTED





An architectural rendering shows the new Miracle League field. PHOTO COURTESY AVON GRAF ARCHITECTS

Rather than a dirt infield, the Miracle League field's diamond is comprised of a latex-free specialized surface. Each player on the team will get an opportunity to bat once per inning, reach all of the bases safely and have a chance at scoring before the inning is over. All games will be three innings long and both teams will always win.

When the new Miracle League field is completely operational, it will host not only baseball games for persons with disabilities but also soccer, flag football, golf and yoga. According to Mike, the Moon field will require several hundred volunteers

to serve as "buddies" for league athletes.

Mike stressed that the singular goal of the Miracle League organization is "making the athletes the star for the day." He emphasized that all families go through different emotions with a special needs diagnosis, but that access to such a facility "eliminates the loss of not being able to participate" in team sports.

"These athletes spend countless hours in therapy learning skills and milestones that most others reach with ease. Soon, the athletes will be able to show their skills, so the community better be ready to cheer these great athletic accomplishments," said Mike.

Last month, in celebration of women's history month in Pittsburgh, Christina was one of 25 local women to be honored with a Women of Achievement Award. Begun in 2002, the organization recognizes women for both excellence in their professional fields and accomplishments that improve their communities. Christina, an attorney for Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani, LLP, received an award for both her advocacy efforts for persons with disabilities and her philanthropy work surrounding the Miracle League project.

To learn more about the project and fundraising efforts to support it, visit [miraclesinmoon.org](http://miraclesinmoon.org). Those considering becoming volunteers for Miracle League sporting events should email Mike and Christina at [miraclesinmoon@gmail.com](mailto:miraclesinmoon@gmail.com).



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## Young philanthropist and entrepreneur bringing smiles to others

STORY BY PAT JENNETTE  
PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Eva Lutz, 12, of Walden Woods, has learned at a young age the value of helping others.

Eva established the Walden Woods Little Free Library, located at the entrance to Walden Way condominiums, last June.

She explains, "There are many types of books available. We like to have a book for every age/grade, which is most of the time. The community contributes often and keeps it circulating."

When the government shutdown happened over the winter, she decided to add a food pantry portion as a temporary fix. Even after the shutdown ended, Eva's food pantry continued.

"I decided to keep it going because people were using it," she says.

The food pantry is stocked with nonperishable items. Two shelves of food share the space with one shelf of books.

"It's a 'take what you need, leave what you can' concept," she explains.

She initially stocked it out of her own pocket, with help from neighbors Rocco Guido, Kevin Costa and his son, Alan Costa.

"I have seen a lot of food coming and going. If there is a shortage, however, I do usually try to donate, no matter if it is food or books. I like to keep the little free library/pantry replenished so people have a selection," she notes.

Anyone can use it.

The little free library/food pantry isn't Eva's first foray into philanthropy or entrepreneurship. Two years ago, at the age of 10, she established her own Etsy store online called Hope and Happy Hearts. Eva's "store" sells T-shirts with her own original designs that feature a heart and a smile.

She tells how it happened: "I had been inspired to create a clothing line since I was younger. When a family friend helped me get started, I was eager to create my designs. I create them myself digitally."

Eva says, "My original designs always include a smile. My logo is a smiling heart."

The T-shirts come in all sizes.

What's more, she donates 50 percent of the sale price directly to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. She submitted the money to the hospital online after the money was received through her online store.

Eva said she chose this charity because she loves the practices of St. Jude.



Eva Lutz is pictured next to the little free library she started in the Walden Woods community.

"They never make a family pay for cancer treatments or services. They rely solely on donations from the community and I believe they should be supported. Since they have opened, they always kept their promise, so it is the community's job to help them fulfill their promise," she emphasizes.

When not volunteering, designing or going to school, Eva participates in track and field, and cross country when it is in season. She's also in the school's student government and gifted program.

Outside of school, she plays the piano and babysits a 5-year-old neighbor.

She resides with her parents, Michael Lutz and Elizabeth Blair.

Her appetite for giving back is never ending. She eagerly adds, "I hope to open more little free food pantries and nonperishable food stops around the communities so everyone in need can use it."

Her advice for others? "If you are thinking about serving others, go for it. My business didn't get started right away. I never would have sold any T-shirts. But a little motivation got me further. When I first started requesting space for my little free food pantry, I had to make calls to the neighborhood officials and request the donation of wood from lumber companies. I had never talked to any of these people before, but I ended up enjoying talking to people who supported my endeavor."

To learn more about Eva's T-shirt program, visit her online store at [www.etsy.com/shop/hopeandhappyhearts](http://www.etsy.com/shop/hopeandhappyhearts).

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## Airport authority unveils new terminal design concept

The Allegheny County Airport Authority unveiled plans for its new \$1.1 billion update to Pittsburgh International Airport in February.

The plans involve doing away with the airport's current landside terminal and constructing a new terminal adjacent to concourses C and D. Once finished, travelers won't have as far to go to get to their gates or cars. The plans also call for expanded security checkpoints and will cut down on baggage wait times.

The architectural renderings unveiled in February depict a spacious, two-story open-concept terminal with plenty of natural light and green spaces, both inside and outside. The plans include plenty of room for vendors and retailers, including restaurants. Its rolling, ridged roof is supposed to be reminiscent of Pennsylvania's hilly landscape. The design team behind the plan is Gensler + HDR in association with luis vidal + architects.

According to the airport authority, the project will be paid for with a combination of bonds and airport revenue, including airline fees, natural gas drilling revenue, vendor fees and parking revenue - not tax dollars. It is expected to open in 2023.

Pittsburgh International Airport originally opened in 1992, at a time when the airport was still a hub for US Airways. Its history over the past decade has been one of transformation, as it has gone from a hub served largely by one airline to offering service from well over a dozen airlines offering upwards of 65 nonstop destinations. The airport has also seen increased flights and passengers, year-over-year.

The airport authority cites inefficient flow - particularly from the curb to the gate - as one of the primary motivations behind the renovation. The new design will not only do away with the current airport's tram linking the airside and landside terminals, but also eliminate many of its numerous moving walkways and escalators. According to the authority, the project will improve the overall curb-to-gate experience for passengers, stabilize costs to airlines, increase sustainability and better reflect the Pittsburgh region.

The project will also pare down the airport's various levels that can be accessed by the traveling public to two. The top level will be for departing passengers while the bottom will be for arrivals. As well, the terminal will feature new baggage and check-in facilities.

Adjacent to the new terminal, the authority is planning construction of a new, multi-level parking garage along with a new ground transportation center and roads.

Construction is expected to be a boon to the regional economy, with the authority estimating the project will create 11,000 direct and indirect jobs while injecting \$1.66 billion into the economy.

For more, visit [pittransformed.com](http://pittransformed.com).



These architectural renderings show how the new terminal at Pittsburgh International Airport will look once construction is complete. RENDERINGS COURTESY GENSLER + HDR IN ASSOCIATION WITH LUIS VIDAL + ARCHITECTS

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### April 2019 Milestone Anniversaries

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| <b>20 years</b>                             | Doing Better Business, Inc.                               |
| Ohio Valley Hospital                        | Holy Family Institute                                     |
| <b>15 years</b>                             | Sherwin-Williams/Robinson                                 |
| Key Bank Pavilion/Live Nation               |   |



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## Robinson Township Christian School

### Robotics club competes for first time

In a first for Robinson Township Christian school, three members of the robotics team competed Feb. 22 at North Allegheny High School. According to supervising principal and engineer-by-training Bryan Campbell, the team had a “great” showing as it progressed all the way to the elimination rounds. The team competed against 44 other high school robotics teams, placing 21st after the initial qualifying rounds.



These students and their coach, Bryan Campbell, were the first to compete for the school's robotics team.

Team members were pitted against large schools from across Pennsylvania. In each round, two teams' robots - which were constructed over the course of the year from a VEX kit - competed for two minutes on a 12-square-foot field. Each robot was evaluated on a variety of components.

On the RTCS team, 11th-grader Nathaniel Brown, the team's driver and captain, made programming changes in between matches. Eighth-grader Jimmy Kelsey switched out batteries and kept the batteries charged while eighth-grader Theo Campbell communicated with each team member to discuss robot strengths and strategies for each match.

“With one junior, two eighth-graders and only three months to prepare, our team was still able to advance to the elimination round where it lost a close match by a score of 13-9,” Campbell said. “This represented a very respectable finish for our school's first time at the event and has invigorated our kids to already start thinking about next year's competition.”

Beginning in April 2019, the school's robotics club will prep for another great showing in 2020.

Campbell gives special thanks to volunteer mentors Ryan Mott, Daniel Richards and Scott Ferguson, who shared their engineering skills and time with students to help them prepare. He also credits the students who put in extra hours outside of school time to build and learn about robotics.

### Celebrity tutor for an hour

Senior Max Boelcke remembers well when he was a first-grader and used to read with his teacher Grace Alouise. This year, he volunteered to help Alouise's students read the same book titles he opened 12 years ago as a part of RTCS's volunteer tutoring opportunity for older students. Once a week, Boelcke walks into his old classroom and heads straight for the bookshelf.

“The students love it when Max reads them dinosaur riddles and jokes!” Alouise said.

With the help of a high school tutor, the first-graders can read more challenging books aloud - and it's more fun, too.

“My first-graders love reading to older students,” she concluded.

Two RTCS students committed to tutoring for one hour three times a week, receiving one academic credit in return. Preschool teacher Heather Styer raves about the program.

“As someone who is passionate about education, it's so wonderful to see the positive impact it has on our preschool students to be mentored by an older student,” she said.

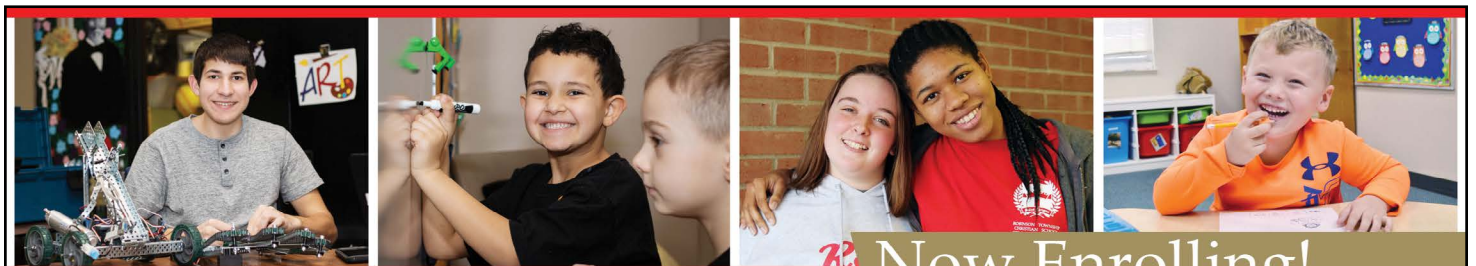
Styer delegates classroom tasks based on the tutors' skills. One student helps with arts and crafts in one-on-one time. The other, a “celebrity” with the kids, plays with the more active preschoolers.

“It's a delight to see the tutors grow in their gifts,” Styer reflected.

The mix of young preschoolers with dedicated, helpful older students reflects the interconnected culture of their school that Styer, who is also a parent of an RTCS student, loves.



Max Boelcke works with a student.



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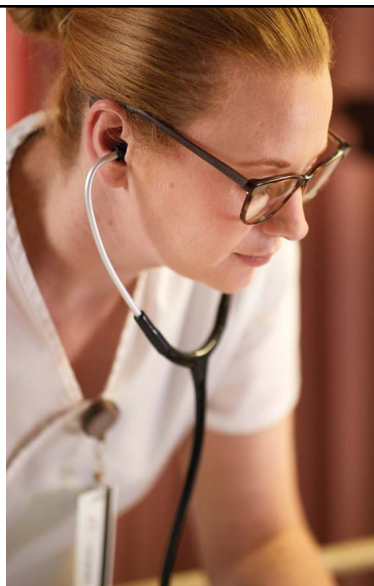
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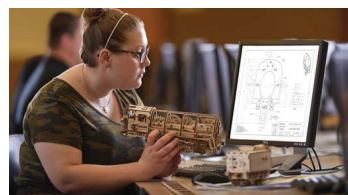
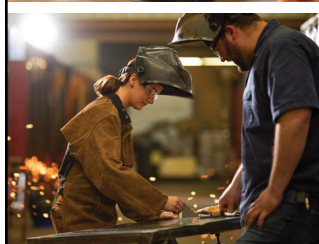
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# West Allegheny

# Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2019

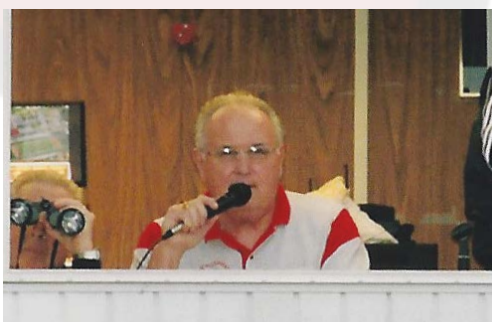
**The** West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame has announced its inductees for the class of 2019. Inductees will be honored at the seventh annual hall of fame induction ceremony May 18 at SNPJ Lodge 106 in Imperial. A social hour will begin at 5 p.m., with dinner served at 6 p.m. Admission includes dinner and is \$50 per person or \$350 for a table of eight. Ages 5 through 10 are half price and ages 5 and under are free. A cash bar will also be open. Sponsorships are available. Funds raised help financially support West Allegheny athletic programs. Reservations can be made by contacting Darlene Howell at dhowell65@comcast.net or by calling (724) 350-5586.

The following inductees were chosen based on their contributions to West Allegheny athletics and, in some cases, their success at the post-secondary level. All inductees are nominated via written letters from the public. Nominees must have at least two letters of recommendation to be considered. To nominate an athlete, coach/administrator, patron/contributor or team - and to view past inductees - visit [www.westahalloffame.org](http://www.westahalloffame.org).

## Bill Gamble

### Patron/Contributor

Over the past 60 years, Bill Gamble has announced over 300 West Allegheny home football games, earning him the moniker "The Voice of the Indians." During that time, he has missed announcing only three games.



Bill Gamble

As such, Gamble has been selected for induction into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame in recognition of his continuous dedication to promoting the West Allegheny football program.

Gamble says his interest in the school's football program started in 1949 when, at a young age, he began attending games. Later, he went on to play for the varsity team and quarterbacked his junior and senior years. After high school, Gamble served in the military and, in 1960, returned home. That same year he announced his first game alongside his brother, John. Bill says the opportunity fulfilled a longtime interest he had in sports broadcasting.

Over the next 24 years, the Gamble brothers announced West Allegheny home football games together, often from atop a temporary and unsteady painter's scaffolding. At that time, West Allegheny's football field was located at the site of the Imperial Shop 'n Save. When John retired, Bill became the sole announcer

and he has kept at it for the past 36 years simply because, he says, "It was lots of fun!" He does admit, though, that announcing games became more "exciting" and easier to announce once coach Bob Palko brought a winning tradition to the program.

A lifelong Oakdale resident, Bill's contributions to West Allegheny athletics do not begin or end with football. He has also coached various youth baseball and softball leagues, including the West Allegheny Little League, West Allegheny Pony League and the West Allegheny Girls Softball League. As well, he has served as president of the West Allegheny Baseball League and the West Allegheny Girls Basketball Booster Club. He has also served on the West Allegheny Board of School Directors Athletic Committee.

Outside of West Allegheny athletics, Gamble has served as mayor and as a council member in Oakdale for a combined eight years. He has also been a member of the Oakdale VFD for over 50 years and is a retiree from the Pennsylvania Governor's Center for Local Government Services.

In the past, Bill has declined attempts to recognize his 60 years of service to various West Allegheny sports programs. Rather, he has always said simply that it was "an honor" to support his alma mater in this manner and wanted no recognition for his efforts. However, this year he was nominated over his objections. As Palko expressed in his own nomination letter for Gamble, "In my 24 years as the Head Football Coach at WestA, I have never encountered such a diligence and dedication of spirit as Mr. Bill Gamble!"

Bill and his wife, Mary, of 52 years, have three daughters: Lisa, Sharon and Lori. The couple also has six grandchildren.

## • West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame

**Athletes**  
 2 Dave Chappell  
 Jim Hamilton  
 Ben Karcz  
 Ray Perko  
 Lauren Schaffer  
**Coach**  
 1 Ed Sarachine  
**Contributor**  
 2 Dennis Cornell Sr.  
**Team**  
 2001 State Champion  
 Football Team

**Athletes**  
 2 Michael Craig  
 Tyler Palko  
 Jim Quinn  
 Christine Taranto  
**Coach**  
 3 Guy Rippole

**Athletes**  
 2 Brian Cornell  
 Michael Johnson  
 Scott Patterson  
 Michael Polidor  
 R. Darrel Wilson  
**Contributor**  
 4 Richard "Dick" Glavier

**Athletes**  
 2 Dr. Kevin Coates  
 William Glass  
 Gary Hager  
 Ben Herbert  
 Ron Tarquinio  
**Coach**  
 5 Alex Kramer  
 Bob McFarland Sr.

**Athletes**  
 2 William Hager  
 Matthew Majock  
 Amanda Yothers  
**Coach/Administrator**  
 1 George Allison  
**Team**  
 2006 State Champion  
 Girls Volleyball Team



## Amy Palko

### Athlete

Amy Palko was selected for induction into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame for her outstanding accomplishments as a member of the West Allegheny varsity volleyball team. During her high school athletic career, Palko helped lead her teams to four WPIAL section championships, two consecutive WPIAL championship appearances and a state championship in 2006. Though she never sought or wanted individual recognition during her playing career, Amy was named first team all section three times and first team all state twice as a junior and senior. She was also a national qualifier for the Renaissance Volleyball Club in 2006 and 2007.

According to her physical education teacher Andy Barry, the success that Palko and her team achieved during her high school playing career was no accident. As Barry states, "her drive to succeed is what makes her elite in my own opinion, plain and simple, she will outwork everyone in all that she does." Barry further relates, "She does not know any other way." In addition, David McBain, West Allegheny's director of athletics, relates, "Amy's work ethic, leadership skills and personal qualities were above reproach." McBain continues, "Amy brought to our school her tenacious attitude to excel in the classroom as well as on the volleyball court!" Barry summed up Amy's high school playing career by stating, "Amy was a leader and tone-setter for the team that reached greatness (PA State Championship) and, together, they left their legacy at West Allegheny!"

Palko's success in the classroom and on the volleyball court did not end with high school. She received a full scholarship to Duquesne University and played for four years as a starter on the university's team. She also made the Dean's List, the A-10 Commissioner Honor Roll, and the Director of Athletics Honor Roll those same four years. During her college career, she fought through numerous injuries as she continued to excel on the court. She played in over 120 matches in both regular and post-season play. In addition, she held the position of libero/defensive specialist and left Duquesne University after setting a school career record for digs (1,713).

Palko graduated with honors with a degree in integrated marketing. She now works for the University of Pittsburgh Human Resources Department.



Amy Palko  
PHOTO COURTESY  
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

## George Kehm

### Patron/ Contributor

George Kehm's induction into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame recognizes his philanthropic efforts which have benefitted various local youth sports programs over the course of 50 years.

Back when the area's local communities were not as financially secure, Kehm helped maintain many of the area's athletic fields. He also bought uniforms, equipment and supplies for players and provided transportation for them to and from practice and games. For over 40 years, he financially maintained the Hankey Farms athletic fields and was the team's sponsor. He also maintained Oakdale's fields and sponsored North Fayette and Oakdale athletic teams for almost 50 years. As one of Kehm's nominators, John Bates, states: "Mr. Kehm sponsored the uniforms for all three Hankey Farms travel teams ..." Bates continues, writing, "This sponsorship continued for numerous years. The community baseball fields were never denied the attention they needed." As another example, Kehm's son, Jerry, remembers that George made arrangements each spring to have trucks of fresh topsoil hauled to the local athletic fields and spread on the fields to assure that the fields were properly prepared for the approaching baseball season. Jerry further remembers George taking many of the teams to dinner at Tonidale Restaurant at the end of the season.

One of George's proudest moments on the baseball field came in 1976 when he managed a team of talented younger players who were not selected as all stars because of their age in the Oakdale Bicentennial Tournament. The team defeated all-star teams from West Allegheny in the semifinals and Penn Hills in the championship game. The tournament trophy still sits prominently in the offices of Kehm Oil, the company George founded.

In addition to various youth baseball teams, George has also sponsored many West Allegheny football and baseball sports teams. As another nominator, Dutch Schmitt, relates in his letter of support, "Not many games were played in the area without a Kehm Oil sponsored team. If you look at any old program, whether sports related or school related either the front page, back page or the entire program was supported by George Kehm or Kehm Oil Co."

During his playing days, George was considered to be a standout baseball player who even signed a minor league contract with the Pittsburgh Pirates. Once he retired from playing ball, he coached from 1969 through 1981 in the Hankey Farms and North Fayette youth programs.

In closing, Bates writes, "When it came to the Youth in the community, Mr. Kehm would always step up to the plate!!"



George Kehm

## e Inductees •

2 Athletes  
August "Augie" Beyer  
Rocky McGeary  
0 Coach  
Pat Rheam  
1 Contributor  
Chris McGough  
Team  
7 2006-07 WPIAL Champ.  
Boys Basketball Team

2 Athletes  
Dorin Dickerson  
Jim Yanek  
0 Patrons/Contributors  
Dr. David Quinn  
1 Paul DeBor  
Team  
8 1996-1997 Girls Track Teams



## Girls Cross Country 1995 WPIAL Champion Team

### Team

The 1995 West Allegheny girls' cross-country team set the tone for the program's high achievements in subsequent years when they won the 1995 AA WPIAL title. Never before in school history had a girls cross-country team achieved such success. They were also a team comprised of young, eager individuals who had little previous competition experience. When describing the team, their coach, Jim Hamilton, describes the group as one that was highly motivated to learn how to compete and who were committed to following his training methods. However, as Hamilton further states, they quickly developed their own personality as they began experiencing success in competition, especially after a win over a highly successful Ellwood City team.

Hamilton says that there was no "superstar" runner on the team, which was comprised of Katie Cole, Lauren Northen, Carrie Antel, Michelle Buzon, Megan Boesenber, Kristin Coates, Lisa Shoup, Megan Carney, Heather Conn, Christina Dorsch, April Pepe and Melissa Klobchar. Rather, Hamilton recalls that they were motivated by a belief that they had "strength in numbers." As a result, they began calling themselves the "The Pack Attack" or "Vultures" who ran together as a team, taking on individual runners during each competition. Assistant coach Ernie Axton recalls, "I remember the girls on the team as being best friends and supportive of each other." In addition, Hamilton says they were a tough group of runners. He says he recalls Antel wearing a cast in order to keep competing even though she suffered from painful shin splints.

As the team became more successful during that winning season, Hamilton remembers that they were excited about the approaching WPIAL meet. However, they never expected to become the first girls cross-country team in school history to win that title. They continued their unexpected success the following week when they placed fifth in the PIAA state meet. During those same meets, Antel, while wearing her cast, placed fifth in WPIAL meet and 21st in PIAA competition.

As Hamilton summarizes, the 1995 girls cross-country team began the season as a group of individuals who quickly learned to run as a "pack of vultures" to become the first WPIAL girls cross-country champions in school history.



Carrie Antel, Katie Cole, Lisa Shoup, Michelle Buzon, Melissa Klobchar and Lauren Northen were among the members of West Allegheny's first-ever WPIAL-winning girls cross-country team.

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# Girls Cross Country 1998 and 1999 WPIAL Champion Teams

## Team

The 1998 and 1999 girls cross-country teams reached a collective level of success that may never again be replicated. They were considered “back-to-back” teams because they consisted primarily of the same core group of runners who, over a two-year period, achieved a sustained level of success. During that time, they became a group of highly motivated athletes who worked strongly to support one another and ultimately become championship-caliber teams. The 1999 team could count two eventual state champions and West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame inductees among its ranks.

“We always preached the team aspect of cross country to pull for each other,” assistant coach Mark Russo writes, “work hard and great things can happen!”

Russo continues, “It was awesome seeing the Pack pulling and working together!”

Both the 1998 and 1999 teams included Lauren Shaffer, Jenny Snyder, Vicki Hatton, Ashley Moore, Brielle Pearce and Tara Krajnak. Koelling and Northen graduated at the end of the first year. Christine Taranto, Autumn Shaffer, Erin Walk, Kelly Gilligan and Nicole Lesovitch were added to the 1999 team. Both teams effectively combined the unique talents of superstar runners like Shaffer and Taranto with those of runners such as Hatton and Krajnak who grinded out invaluable finishes.

As the 1998 team approached the end of the regular season, head coach Jim Hamilton knew that he had a strong team entering the WPIAL meet. He turned out to be right, because Lauren Shaffer, a junior that year, placed second while senior Koelling placed 15th. Moore placed 21st and Northen placed 22nd. After securing that WPIAL championship, the team placed 10th in the PIAA state meet the following week. At that meet, Shaffer posted the third-fastest time in statewide competition.

The 1999 team completed their regular season with even higher expectations as they entered the WPIAL meet. Again, the team won the WPIAL championship as Lauren Shaffer placed first and Taranto placed second. Autumn Shaffer placed ninth while Walk placed 14th. The following week, the team placed fourth in PIAA competition, with Lauren Shaffer finishing first to become the first girls cross-country state champion in school history. Taranto, just a freshman at the time, placed fifth overall. She would eventually become the second state champion girls cross country runner in school history. Shaffer was inducted into the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012 while Taranto was inducted in 2013.

Reflecting back to those back-to-back championship-winning teams, Hamilton laments that those runners collectively set a “high mark of excellence” in girls’ cross country competition that may never again be repeated.



**TOP:** Members of the 1999 girls cross-country team were (front) Jenny Snyder, Brielle Pearce, Tara Krajnak, Lauren Shaffer (back row) coach Mark Russo, Erin Koelling, Vicki Hatton, Ashley Moore, Lauren Northen and coach James Hamilton. **BOTTOM:** Members of the 1999 girls cross-country team were (front) coach Mark Russo, Tara Krajnak, Vicki Hatton, Kelly Gilligan, coach James Hamilton (back row) Autumn Shaffer, Lauren Shaffer, Erin Walk, Ashley Moore, Brielle Pearce, Jennifer Snyder and Christine Taranto.



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# TODAY

APRIL,  
2019  
VOL. 41,  
No. 4

INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS OF FINDLAY AND NORTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIPS AND OAKDALE BOROUGH

## High school claims coveted Teachers' Cup

Over 110 administrators, teachers and staff members came out on March 1 to compete for the coveted Teachers' Cup. At the end of the night, it was the high school team that came out on top while Wilson Elementary captured the Spirit Award and Donaldson Elementary claimed the Best Entrance Award. The highly anticipated annual event was once again sponsored by the West Allegheny Foundation and raised over \$4,000.

The night's spirited challenges included the head wrecker, birdies in the basket, joined at the hip, mummy wrap and balloon bang.

The West Allegheny Foundation provides financial support for specified educational and/or community initiatives that are designed to enhance the quality of the life of community residents. To date, the foundation has distributed over \$250,000 in the form of community and teacher grants.



ABOVE: The Teachers' Cup is hoisted by a proud high school team.

BELOW LEFT: Donaldson teachers Beth Schultz and Janet Burke call on audience participation to compete in the mummy wrap challenge.

BELOW RIGHT: McKee principal Melissa Wagner is joined at the hip by Dana Bacu as they try to score valuable points.



ABOVE: Wilson students and staff enthusiastically celebrate their Spirit Award win. RIGHT: Middle school counselor Melissa Rectenwald accepted the head wrecker challenge.



# #WeAreTeacherProud



## High school teacher earns doctorate

West Allegheny is proud to announce that high school media arts teacher Dr. Mike Shaffer successfully defended his dissertation to earn his doctorate degree from Robert Morris University. The university's graduation ceremony will be held May 10. Shaffer completed his doctorate in instructional management and leadership. Shaffer joined the District in 2005.



Dr. Mike Shaffer

## District team presents new student readiness model at state conference



The team of Kateri Meinert; Tammy Adams, assistant to the superintendent for special education and student services; Emily Wagner; Lauren Barry; Jessica Keys; Samantha Petrick; Cheryl McHone, high school assistant principal; and Krissy Bennett represented West Allegheny at the Pennsylvania Department of Education's state conference.

A team of West Allegheny administrators and educators traveled to Hershey in March to facilitate a session on the District's Career and College Readiness Teaming at the Pennsylvania Department of Education's state conference. West Allegheny was selected based on the District's exemplary work with inclusive practices focusing on the goal of improving post-secondary outcomes for students, specifically those with disabilities. The CCRT model allows time to develop and implement strategic interventions centered on closing the achievement gap while preparing students for post-secondary transition into college and/or a career. Participation was funded through an optimizing inclusive practices grant.

## #WACARES Middle School Spotlight

*From the desk of Mrs. Megan Huchko, Middle School Assistant Principal*

Spend some time walking through the halls of the middle school and you will easily see how the District-wide initiative #WACARES has impacted the learning environment and the culture of our school. Staff members have taken part in many projects designed to celebrate and support our students and each other.

The year began with the entire staff welcoming our students as they arrived on day one to kick off the 2018-2019 school year. Since then, our Attendance Counts committee has worked tirelessly to let our students know how important they are to us through homeroom challenges and the Attendance Buddy Program. Led by our Student Services Department, this committee has also organized attendance tunnels where students are welcomed with fanfare and special treats as they walk through the door upon arrival.

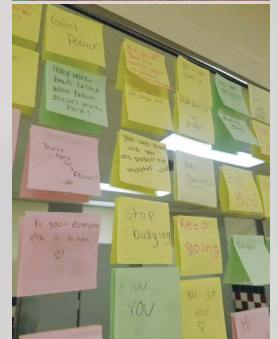
Once inside, our students are again reminded of the value they bring to WAMS through positive messages posted throughout the building. The staff has created and hung signs in the bathrooms, hallways and in the stairwells that spread messages of hope and kindness. This has led to students taking the initiative to create their own positive messages and post them around our school to lift and support their classmates. As a part of the Rachel's Challenge Program at WAMS, the Friends of Rachel club will also be opening Rachel's Closet in the spring. This project is designed to provide students in need with clothing and personal hygiene products in a confidential and fun "shopping" experience.

Our PBIS Team, whose hard work and leadership led us to achieve Pennsylvania Tier I Fidelity recognition, has helped create a culture where students strive to demonstrate behaviors that are safe, responsible and respectful. Our school theme "Pride in Myself, Pride in My School" is echoed in our classrooms, hallways and cafeteria.

Students who celebrate a birthday during the year are given a treat from the Welcome/Birthday Committee. The committee sends out an email to the staff every two weeks with upcoming birthdays so we can acknowledge students on their special day. It is fun to see the look of surprise and excitement on a student's face when we wish them a happy birthday. Students with summer birthdays are not left out! They get their acknowledgement and treat in May. The committee is also putting together WAMS Welcome Bags that will be given to new students who enroll in the District.

Our WAMS staff is also taking care of each other so they can be at the top of their game to support our students each and every day. Wellness challenges designed to get the staff moving included a November 30 Days of Thanks and Planks Challenge and a December Holiday Hustle Step Challenge. Now that the weather is warming up, we are sure to see more! The Welcome/Birthday committee also recognizes the birthdays of staff members who are given a special treat from the principals. The Staff Shout Out Board gives the staff an opportunity to acknowledge each other for their help, support or other outstanding contributions to our school.

The most important message we hope #WACARES spreads is that we love and support everyone who walks the halls of WAMS.



**TOP:** Students and staff implement fundraising programs to benefit others. **MIDDLE:** A #WACARES banner wash hung at the start of school to remind students that attendance matters. **BOTTOM:** Middle school students were inspired to share positive messages with classmates.



# Superintendent's Message - Transition Milestones

With this school year nearing to a close, we are looking ahead and making plans for the 2019-2020 school year. Over the past several months, we have been focusing on developing a comprehensive milestone transition plan for our students. For most students (and adults), significant transitions such as from one school to another may cause worry and anxiety. The goal of our comprehensive milestone transition plan is to minimize potential stress as our students transition to kindergarten, sixth grade, ninth grade, and from their senior year to post-secondary endeavors, thus ensuring they are able to focus on academics and enjoy the new opportunities afforded at their new school. In prior editions, I have focused on effectively transitioning students from high school to post-secondary with the goal of having every student connected to a viable pathway before they graduate, whether that is through West Allegheny's Early College in High School Academy, Advanced Placement Program, Career and Technology Education program, or our JROTC program. This edition will focus on the milestone transitions from eighth to ninth grade as those freshmen embark on their high school experiences.

The transition to high school is one of the more challenging steps a student will take during his/her K-12 educational experience. While working closely with our student advisors, high school students reported that it takes nearly a full semester to feel transitioned to high school. To support our students, West Allegheny has collaborated with students and parents to develop a focused and comprehensive transition program for rising freshmen. The following is a list of these transition activities:

- **Choosing Wisely Rising Freshmen Workshop** informs incoming ninth-graders on high school scheduling. Our rising freshmen students spend time with high school counselors and administrators in January reviewing their academic programming, college and career pathway options, and extracurricular opportunities. Choosing Wisely culminates with students completing their ninth grade schedule.
- **Academic and Activities Fair** supports our rising freshmen students as they tour the high school and learn about extracurricular and co-curricular activities and clubs available to them. These activities are intended to help rising freshmen assimilate to high school, learn more about what being a high school student entails, and to explore the many options available to our students.
- **Career Interest Project Presentations** support our rising freshmen as a culmination of their career exploration curriculum and the high school scheduling process. In the spring of their eighth grade year, students develop a tri-fold poster board based on significant career research and career inventories highlighting their chosen career and college pathway(s) in high school aligned to two careers of interest. Students present their career project to teachers, students, community members, parents, school board members and administrators in three- to five-minute speeches.
- **Rising Freshmen Shadow Day** is new this school year and provides the opportunity in the spring for eighth grade students to shadow a current ninth grade student. The goal is to provide our eighth-graders with an individualized opportunity to experience a typical day of high school while learning more about the expectations and experiences of being a high school student. This optional transition activity was based on feedback received from students and parents and is directed at strengthening our students' readiness for high school. Rising freshmen students are paired with a current ninth-grader with similar interests and schedule based on career and college pathway. Students begin and end their shadow day experience engaging with high school teachers who are predominantly ninth and tenth grade teachers. Feedback from both our rising freshmen and ninth grade mentors has been extremely positive.

- **Rising Freshmen Seminar, T.R.U.E. U** is a new half-day experience for every eighth-grader occurring in May. T.R.U.E. U is a 100 percent student developed and led program that supports high school students being T.R.U.E. to themselves as they start and matriculate through high school. As we reflected with our high school students on their middle school to high school transition, they voiced interest in actively supporting the transition process. As a result, our Varsity iLead students took the initiative to develop four T.R.U.E. U seminars that the upperclassmen feel would be most beneficial to rising freshmen:

- **Time management:** emphasizing the importance of being organized, providing strategies for time management
- **Relationships:** the importance of healthy and productive relationships with adults and peers
- **Unity:** developing and enhancing school spirit and pride and the bond of a class while supporting, encouraging and celebrating one another
- **Excellence:** emphasizing the importance of learning from mistakes and persevering when things are difficult

- **Senior Celebration and Declaration Day**, now in its third year, allows our rising freshmen to experience the unique celebration and send-off of our senior class. As part of the Senior Celebration and Declaration Day in May, all graduating seniors declare their post-secondary plans in front of the entire student body as they are celebrated for their milestone accomplishment in a pep assembly setting. As the seniors travel to the middle school and their respective elementary school, the rising freshmen remain at the high school and participate in additional transition activities such as meeting their English teacher, receiving their summer academic pre-work and learning more about clubs as well as co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

- **Schedule Move-up Day** is a new transition activity planned for the end of May. This opportunity will allow every rising freshmen to meet their new teachers and follow their new academic schedule through a shortened period schedule. All rising high school students will participate in this opportunity.

.....  
We are extremely excited to launch the new additions to our comprehensive milestone transition plan and are grateful to our student and parent leaders who helped craft and lead the implementation of these valuable transition activities.

*Dr. Jerrí Lynn Lippert, Superintendent*



## Empty Bowls fundraiser warms hearts



For the third year, high school art club students contributed to the Empty Bowls event, coordinated by local food charity Just Harvest. For the cost of a ticket, attendees select a ceramic bowl of their choice to keep and are treated to a simple meal of soup, bread and a dessert. All of the soups are donated by local Pittsburgh restaurants. Under the leadership of teacher Leah Shuck, art club members created and donated 37 ceramic bowls.

LEFT: Art club students start creating their bowls to be donated for a good cause. BELOW: A total of 37 bowls were ready for donation.



# #WeAreStudentStrong

## Silvis named National Merit finalist

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation has named senior Aaron Silvis a finalist in the 64th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Silvis received a Certificate of Merit and will compete with 16,000 eligible finalists for a 2019 scholarship award. The program honors individual students who show exceptional academic ability and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

Aaron Silvis receives Certificate of Merit.



## Seniors vie for the coveted Mr. West A crown

The much anticipated Mr. West A pageant was held on February 12. Six seniors entertained the crowd with their talents and charming personalities. The six contestants competing for this year's coveted crown were Alex Berhosky, Jake Costantino, Brandon Dale, Evan Ferretti,



Organizers and contestants gather following the crowning of Mr. West A.

Tanner Prevade and Eleon Wright. After several rounds, Costantino claimed the crown of Mr. West A, while Dale won the award for Mr. Congeniality. As the winner, Costantino will donate \$1,500 to the American Brain Tumor Association and Dale will donate \$200 to Shriners Hospital for Children.

The annual fundraiser was hosted and organized by the National Honor Society along with faculty advisors Sara Ferko and Jennifer Cook.



## West Allegheny well represented during JROTC trip



JROTC students and Sgt. Maj. Word (far right) visit the Virginia Science Museum.

A group of 49 JROTC students traveled to Quantico and Richmond, Virginia February 13 through 16 under the leadership of instructor Sgt. Maj. Word. The trip included visits to the National Museum of the Marine Corps, the Virginia Holocaust Museum, the Science Museum of Virginia, the American Civil War Museum and the Tredegar Iron Works. Students greatly enjoyed the onsite visits and exploration of citizenship and history.

## Two West Allegheny students earn top marks in SkillsUSA Competition

Through Parkway West Career and Technology Center, two West Allegheny students earned first place titles in the annual SkillsUSA Competition. Senior Kamree Kidder competed in cosmetology and junior Racheal Nuckels competed in the health assistant category. Both first place winners will move on to the state competition in the spring.

Kamree Kidder



Racheal Nuckels



## Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recognize talents of high school students

Art created by several high school students once again received awards through the annual Scholastic Art & Writing Competition. Their pieces were submitted and judged against other participating districts in the Pittsburgh Arts Region, which encompasses all of Allegheny and Butler counties.

The following students were honored and their artwork placed on display at a ceremony at CCAC North Campus on February 23:

### Gold Key:

Eva Lagard  
Austin Hemminger  
Alexis Fleet  
Lauren Bayer

### Honorable Mention:

Eva Lagard  
Taylor Loyer  
Brianna Ortiz  
Khusan Abdurakhimov  
Akira Littles  
Alexa Ledford  
Paige Sinclair  
Elyssia Lesko

### Silver Key:

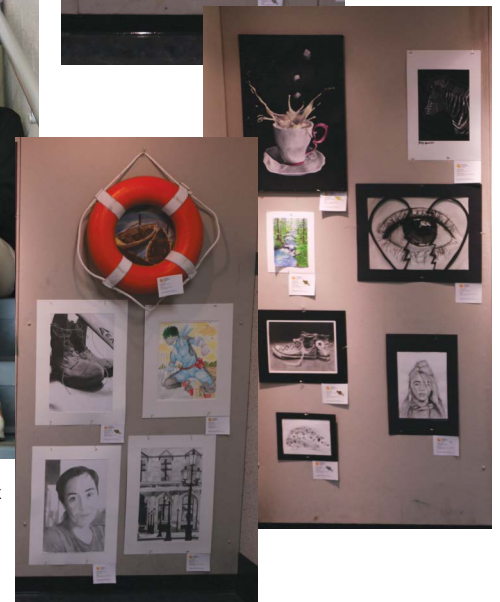
Derek Halbedl  
Alex Prevade  
Isabella Taddy



Award winners include (front): Alexis Fleet, Lauren Bayer, Brianna Ortiz, Akira Littles, and (back) Isabella Taddy, Alex Prevade, Austin Hemminger, Derek Halbedl, and Paige Sinclair. Missing from the photo were Eva Lagard, Taylor Loyer, Khusan Abdurakhimov, Alexa Ledford and Elyssia Lesko.



Winning artwork was on display in the halls of the high school.



This year, 1,611 works and 24 portfolios were submitted for judging, with seven percent of the entries receiving gold keys, nine percent receiving silver keys and 13 percent receiving honorable mentions.



## Middle school earns Pennsylvania Tier I Fidelity status

The Indian Pride Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program implemented at the middle school earned Pennsylvania Tier I Fidelity status with a perfect score of 100/100 following an extensive evaluation visit with state officials February 28.

Only 29 other middle schools in Pennsylvania have received this distinction, which awards a system of positive behavior supports for every student. These supports encompass expectations and outcomes for all areas of the school, including classrooms, hallways, cafeteria and assemblies. As part of the evaluation, students and staff were interviewed and shared how the Indian Pride program has built a positive school culture while motivating students to be more engaged in class.

The middle school core PBIS team of Sharon Lepri, Val Meehan, Krista Dapper, Todd Rasbach, Renee Treonze, Jess Henry, Jonathan Denk, Jeff Kiser, Megan Huchko and Dr. Frank Hernandez have played significant roles in making the Indian Pride program a key part of WAMS culture. The WAMS PTA has also been a key partner in supporting the Indian Pride program at WAMS.

WAMS will be recognized in Hershey in May and will be rewarded with a PBIS Fidelity banner to hang at the school.



## #WeAreInnovators&Designers

### Spotlight shines on middle school students and staff during Talent Show

The annual middle school Talent Show once again featured both students and staff during performances for families on January 24 and for the student body on January 25. The event featured 21 unique acts that ranged from ballet and modern dance to musical performances. Following tradition, the show closed with a special performance by the WAMS Rubber Band, a rock group consisting of current and former teachers. The event was coordinated by middle school teacher Dana McCaskey and several staff and student volunteers.



ABOVE: Students use American Sign Language to perform "Heal the World."



ABOVE: The WAMS Rubber Band showcases staff talents.  
LEFT: Cameron Hall perfects the moves of "Billie Jean."





## The bees have it

Middle school students put their geography and spelling knowledge to the test again this year during the annual bees. The geography bee, sponsored by the National Geographic Society, was held January 22 following a school-wide test to narrow the field of competitors. Following several live rounds, Tim Karvelis came out on top to claim the geography bee title and Max Roland finished as the runner up. The remaining top 10 finishers were Jase Smith, Eden Schotting, Bobby Kartychak, Nathan Galon, Aidan Porter, Owen Acitelli, Jackson Dicesaro and Connor Frank. World Geography teachers Nancy Watkins and Valerie Meehan organized this year's contest, which was hosted by Jeff Kiser.

This year's annual spelling bee took place February 4. The field was initially narrowed by a school-wide spelling test, which then advanced students to the live elimination rounds. Eva Lutz claimed the first place title and went on to represent West Allegheny Middle School at the Western Pennsylvania Spelling Bee at Robert Morris University. Second and third place winners were Joey Parker and Hope Fronczek respectively. This year's spelling bee was sponsored by ELA teachers Katherine Troup and Anita Berich with Jeff Kiser and Leda Niccolai serving as judges.

**LEFT:** The spelling bee top finishers were Hope Fronczek (third place), Eva Lutz (first place) and Joey Parker (second place). **RIGHT:** The top 10 finishers in the geography bee were (left to right) Nathan Galon, Jase Smith, Aidan Porter, Connor Frank, Bobby Kartychak, Max Roland (runner up), Tim Karvelis (winner), Jackson Dicesaro, Owen Acitelli and Eden Schotting.



# #WeAreWestA

## Career exploration takes center stage at middle school

As the District continues its focus on aligning students to a career and/or college pathway, the middle school students are getting opportunities to explore and share their pathways of interest. On February 27, students were privileged to engage with over 60 professionals during the school's second annual career fair, which seeks to connect students with community leaders and professionals to learn more about possible careers. Students in eighth grade were able to participate in five different career presentations and all middle school students visited career booths in the gymnasium. They were required to ask questions and to reflect on and connect what they learned at the Career Fair to future academic and career planning.

On March 19, eighth grade students completed their Career Interest Project with a school and community presentation on two careers that they would like to further explore. With their projects, students were required to overview potential careers

**Eighth-grader Gabriella Salvucci presents her Career Interest Project as a culmination of her months-long research and exploration.**



based on their skills, interests and aptitudes. The Career Interest Project is the capstone of their middle school career education and exploration and serves as a catalyst for high school transition and planning. As one of the focal points of the Career Interest



**ABOVE:** Students fill the middle school gymnasium to present their Career Interest Projects to students, staff, parents and community members. **BELOW:** Healthcare professionals share career information with interested students at the Career Fair.

Project, all students were required to align their potential careers to West Allegheny High School's College and Career Pathways in order to provide correlation between their goals and interests and a four-year plan of attainment. Students also researched and presented on potential colleges and universities, trade and technical schools, job demand and outlook, and daily job responsibilities for their interested careers.





## Elementary students earn honorable mentions at K'nex Challenge



Donaldson and McKee students wrap up their participation in the K'nex Challenge with a team from each school earning honorable mentions.

Several students from Donaldson and McKee elementary schools traveled to Duquesne University on March 6 to participate in the annual K'nex Challenge. Students used their creativity, teamwork and enthusiasm for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to create a machine capable of moving three objects at least six inches across a table. Teams from both Donaldson and McKee earned honorable mentions among a field of approximately 35 teams comprised mostly of gifted and talented students.

Teachers Leah Vestal and Kim Dawson worked with students prior to the challenge and accompanied them to the event.

Elementary students work together to make their design functional.



## Students learn black history through class projects

Black History Month was celebrated in classrooms throughout the District during the month of February. Teachers in art, music, social studies and ELA emphasized the history and achievements of African Americans as students learned the significant contributions made to shape our country and culture.

RIGHT: Donaldson students create Alma Thomas inspired artwork. BELOW: Middle school principal Dr. Frank Hernandez led student discussions about Martin Luther King Jr. and his short essay "The Purpose of Education."



## Read Across America spotlights reading and Dr. Seuss



ABOVE: Face painting was a huge hit for children of all ages at The Mall at Robinson event.

Elementary students and staff from across the District celebrated Read Across America with a weeklong schedule of activities. The week kicked off February 25 at the elementary schools with daily Dr. Seuss themes and guest readers that included school board members and administrators. The elementary school librarians sponsored the Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) program each day and students enjoyed the favored activity of eating green eggs and ham during lunch. The week concluded on March 2 at The Mall at Robinson with arts, crafts, face painting, treats, and Dr. Seuss stories.

The Read Across America celebration was a collaborative effort between the West Allegheny Education Association, the West Allegheny School District, and the West Allegheny Education Support Professionals Association. Kristina Tissue and Christiana D'Agostino served as the event co-chairs.

RIGHT: Superintendent Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert (right) and assistant to the superintendent Dr. Shana Nelson (center) enjoy reading to McKee kindergarten students in Amberleigh Werling's classroom.



# #WeAreStudentStrong



# #WeAreWestA

## Elementary schools mark 100 days

Elementary students and staff enjoyed celebrating a major milestone on January 25 as it marked their 100th day of school. In addition to dressing as centenarians, the day proved to be fun and full



of learning as they participated in several activities denoting the occasion, including counting, sorting, building and painting in increments of 100.

Wilson Elementary principal Rachel Gray joins Brayton Bell in celebrating the 100th day of school.

## Wilson students show their appreciation



Student council members display their kind messages that were shared with Wilson staff.

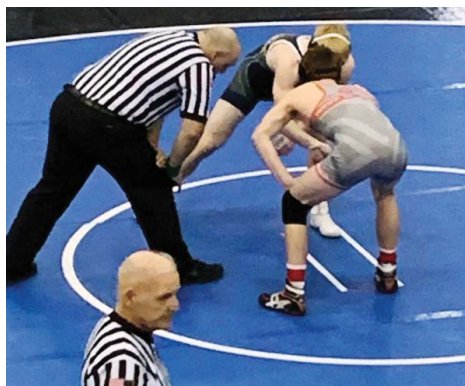
Wilson Student Council members thanked their teachers and staff for going above and beyond and demonstrated their appreciation through an act of random kindness. Tasty treats were delivered to staff members who were appreciative of the thoughtful gesture. Brittney Kuhn and Tania Garofoli serve as the Student Council faculty representatives.

## Indians advance to playoff rounds of winter sports

In swimming and diving, West Allegheny had several athletes qualify to compete in the PIAA state championships held at Bucknell University March 13 through 16. Those swimmers and divers who competed at the state level were: Jaden Beckett, diving; Mitch Gumbert, 200 individual medley, 100 breaststroke, and 200 medley relay; Scott Zanella, 50 freestyle, 200 medley relay; and Brian Bell, Kenny Krisovenski and Luke Roberts for the 200 medley relay.

After an impressive season, wrestler Ty McGeary qualified for the PIAA individual finals at Hershey in the AAA brackets.

After finishing the regular season with a 15-3 record, the hockey team earned the second seed in the Penguins Cup playoffs. After winning 7-2 against Indiana in the quarterfinal round, West Allegheny ended their season in the semifinal round by falling 2-1 to neighbor South Fayette.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** Six swimmers and divers qualified to move on to the PIAA championship in March. Coached by Bob Miller (front left) they were (front) Brian Bell, Luke Roberts, Kenny Krisovenski, (back) Scott Zanella, Jaden Beckett and Mitch Gumbert. **RIGHT:** Ty McGeary competed at the state level in wrestling. **FAR RIGHT:** Hockey captain Kellen Almay takes a shot during the team's semifinal game against South Fayette.



# Seniors sign to play at next level

The West Allegheny Athletic Department was proud to announce that several senior athletes have signed to play sports at the collegiate level.

Grace Faulk – West Liberty Univ. - Women’s Basketball  
 Emily Fullard – Point Park Univ. - Women’s Basketball  
 Hannah Lindemuth – Univ. of Rochester - Women’s Basketball  
 Patience Ashaolu – Tiffin Univ. - Women’s Basketball  
 Dakota Gerst – California Univ. of PA - Women’s Soccer  
 Claire Mercurio – California Univ. of PA - Women’s Soccer  
 Meghan Hardiman – Lackawana Jr. College - Women’s Soccer  
 Janelle Amadio – LaRoche College - Women’s Soccer  
 Nate Dragisich – Duquesne Univ. - Men’s Soccer  
 Gabe Haines – Marietta College - Men’s Soccer  
 Evan Blunkosky – California Univ. of PA - Men’s Soccer

Antonio Fiordilino – Geneva College - Men’s Soccer  
 Logan Rossi – Edinboro Univ. - Football  
 Mateo Vandamia – Univ. of Delaware - Football  
 John McArdle – Bethany College - Football  
 Logan Scheider – Wash. & Jeff. College - Football and Baseball  
 Mitchell Gumbert – Rochester Inst. of Tech. - Swimming  
 Dante Flati – Slippery Rock Univ. – Football  
 Rachel Kiss – Grove City - Women’s Tennis  
 Kimberly Davis – Univ. of Mt. Union - Women’s Tennis  
 Kellen Almady – Niagara Univ. - Men’s Ice Hockey  
 Missing from photos is Kellen Almady.



These student athletes recently signed letters of intent to continue their athletic careers at the post-secondary level.

## #WeAreWestA



Follow West Allegheny Athletics  
 @WestASports



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Mr. Mark Rosen, Vice President	Mrs. Tracy Kosis Mr. Chip McCarthy	Mrs. Tracy Pustover



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Dr. Christopher Shattuck, Assistant Superintendent of Schools	Dr. Frank Hernandez, Middle School Principal
Mrs. Tammy Adams, Assistant to the Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services	Ms. Megan Huchko, Middle School Assistant Principal
Dr. Shana Nelson, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning	Mrs. Patricia Nolan, Donaldson Elementary Principal
Mr. George Safin, Business Manager	Mrs. Melissa Wagner, McKee Elementary Principal
Mr. Kevin McKiernan, High School Principal	Mrs. Rachel Gray, Wilson Elementary Principal
Ms. Katharine McClelland, High School Academic Principal	Mrs. Toni Baldanzi, Supervisor of Ancillary Programs
Ms. Cheryl McHone, High School Assistant Principal	Mr. Kenneth Fibbi, Director of Facilities and Operations
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All material has been prepared,  
 written or edited by  
 Karen Ruhl,  
 School Community  
 Relations Coordinator,  
 West Allegheny School District  
 (724) 695-5274



*Findlay is kicking off Summer with these great events!*

**CRUISIN' IN THE WOODLANDS**  
Friday, May 31, 5-9 pm

Attention car lovers!  
Come to Clinton Park for the 17th Annual Car Cruise, hosted by Pittsburgh C.A.R.S. and sponsored by Findlay Township. There will be food for sale, a DJ and a 50/50 raffle. Dash plaques for the first 100 participating cars. Clinton Park, 86 Clinton Park Dr. (rain date June 7th)

**OUTDOOR FLEA MARKET**  
Saturday, June 1, 9 am - 1 pm

Do you have a lot of "stuff"?  
Want to make a little cash? Join us at the Outdoor Flea Market this summer! If you would like to be a seller, you may purchase a spot for \$5. There are plenty of spots available. This well-attended event is rain or shine and buyers come early! Call for details. Clinton Community Park parking lot 86 Clinton Park Drive, Clinton, PA 15026



**FOOD TRUCK THURSDAYS**  
4-8 pm

Not sure what to have for dinner? Come and check out our lineup of food trucks! This event will take place on the last Thursday of the month, April through September. The trucks will be parked in the Municipal Building parking lot. Chairs and tables provided, weather permitting.  
April 25, May 30, June 27, July 25, August 29 & September 26

For more info or to register, call:  
724-695-0500 x 240  
or email: [sstrain@findlaytwp.org](mailto:sstrain@findlaytwp.org)

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**(412) 498-3557**  
for available dates.



**The Rock Easter Egg Hunt, April 20, 11 a.m.**, preschool through fifth grade, The Rock Community Center, 150 W. State Street, Oakdale, **noon luncheon to follow**, prizes, Chinese auction, (724) 693-2777.

**Books and Brews, April 25, 6:30-9 p.m.**, Helicon Brewing, benefits WACL, see page 44.

**"Heidi," April 27, 8 p.m., April 28, 2 p.m.**, Andrew Carnegie Music Hall in Carnegie, \$18 adults, \$15 students and seniors, purchase at door, (412) 279-8887, [www.carnegieperformingartscenter.com](http://www.carnegieperformingartscenter.com).

**West Hills Symphonic Band Concert, May 5, 3 p.m.**, West Allegheny High School, "Portraits," [whsb.org](http://whsb.org).

**Pups, Princesses and Protectors Event and Parade, May 5, 12-4 p.m.**, Moon Park Amphitheater and Saturn Pavilion, pup parade featuring dogs dressed as superheroes, vendors, food trucks, meet adoptable dogs, magic show, balloon art, face painting, benefits National Canine Cancer Foundation, donations welcome, **purchase tickets by April 27**, [www.magicwandparties.wellattended.com](http://www.magicwandparties.wellattended.com), (412) 926-3472.

**Ohio Valley Hospital and Kennedy Township 38th Annual 5K Run/Walk, May 11, 8 a.m.**, see page 7 for details, rain or shine, share old race photos with: [meaton@ohiovalleyhospital.org](mailto:meaton@ohiovalleyhospital.org).

**Heritage Public Library Spring Auction, through May 23**, Heritage Public Library, baskets full of wonderful items, two tickets \$1, 12 tickets \$5, benefits Friends of Heritage Public Library, (724) 926-8400.

**Tai Chi, Thursdays through June 13, 10-11 a.m.**, Imperial Senior Resource Center, (724) 218-1669.

**McDonald Lions Club Rib Cookout, May 25, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**, pickup at McDonald Trail Station, one-pound ribs \$9, pre-order: Gene, (724) 622-3359.

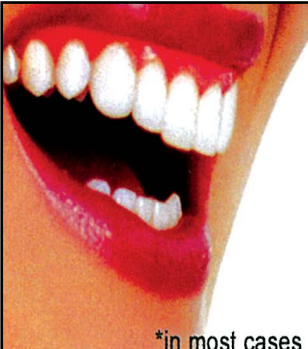
**Promises Never Broken Foundation Horse Rescue Bike Run, June 8, 10:30-11:30 a.m.** registration at Langeloth Community Center, noon start, 4 p.m. dinner, entertainment, food, Chinese auction, \$20/rider, \$10/passenger, \$10/dinner only, benefits Promises Never Broken Foundation, (724) 344-5312, [teddylewis@comcast.net](mailto:teddylewis@comcast.net).

## Jacob Ferree DAR Chapter

Meetings are held at the Montour Heights Country Club unless otherwise noted. RSVP to Ruth Pickett: (724) 538-4623, [rpickett12351@embarqmail.com](mailto:rpickett12351@embarqmail.com). Questions: Melissa Moore, [melissamar@gmail.com](mailto:melissamar@gmail.com).

**Union Presbyterian Church-Chapter Social/Potluck, May 4, 11 a.m.**, annual business meeting, **RSVP by May 1.**

**Chapter Meeting, June 8, 11 a.m.**, with Cyndy Sweeney (PA State Regent), **RSVP by June 5.**



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## Findlay Parks and Rec.

Register for any of the following programs by calling Findlay Township Parks and Recreation at (724) 695-0500 x 240 or by emailing [ssrain@findlaytpw.org](mailto:ssrain@findlaytpw.org), unless otherwise indicated. Programs take place at the Findlay Township Community Center unless otherwise indicated.

**Food Truck Thursdays, last Thursdays, April-September, 4-8 p.m.**, Municipal Building parking lot, see page 41.

**Walk 15, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7 p.m.**, cardio workout for all levels, \$5/class.

**Yoga for Beginners and Beyond, Fridays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**, \$5/class.

**Senior Yoga and Qi Gong, Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**

**Crochet for a Cause, fourth Thursdays, April-May, 6:30-8 p.m.**, create items for local area hospitals and patient care centers.

**AARP Safe Driving Classes**, Findlay Township Municipal Building Meeting Room, AARP Members \$15, non-members \$20, Findlay residents pay half, checks payable to AARP, registration required, eight-hour course: **April 23-24, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**; four-hour course: **April 18, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**

**Semi-Super Morning Bingo, Fridays, April 26, May 24, June 28, 9-10 a.m.**, \$10/packet, \$5 additional packets, jackpot sold separately.

**The Kindness Rocks Project - Rock Painting, May 11, 10 a.m.**, Findlay Township Municipal Building, \$2, all ages, under 16 with parent.

**Cruisin' in the Woodlands, May 31, 5-9 p.m.**, Clinton Park, see page 41.

**Outdoor Flea Market, June 1, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**, Clinton Community Park parking lot, see page 41.

**American Red Cross Babysitter's Training Class, June 5, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**, ages 11-15, learn how to be a safe babysitter, certificate awarded, \$105.

**Free Summer Concert, June 11, 7 p.m.**, Clinton Park amphitheater, John Reno performs Jimmy Buffet-style music.

**Annual Wine Trip, TBA**, Washington County Wineries, call for details.

## We'd like to hear from you!

As a neighborhood-based and community focused publication, Allegheny West Magazine encourages complimentary submissions of informational school news, as well as informational (non-promotional) news from community groups, nonprofit organizations and churches. Please submit via e-mail to: [info@awmagazine.com](mailto:info@awmagazine.com).



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## North Fayette Parks and Rec.

Programs take place at the North Fayette Community Center at Donaldson Park, unless otherwise noted. Visit [www.north-fayette.com](http://www.north-fayette.com) or call (724) 307-3725 for more information or to register.

### Adults and Seniors

**Tai Chi Ch'uan**, Saturdays, 9 a.m.

**Yoga**, Sundays, 12:15-1:15 p.m., Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m.

**Insanity**, Mondays, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

**Body Sculpt**, Mondays, 6-7 p.m.

**Total Body Strength**, Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m.

**PiYo**, Wednesdays, 6-7 p.m., Fridays, 9-10 a.m.

**Boot Camp**, Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Saturdays, 10-11 a.m.

**Volleyball League**, Tuesdays, [sfox@north-fayette.com](mailto:sfox@north-fayette.com).

**Softball League**, Sundays, April 28-Aug. 11,

[sfox@north-fayette.com](mailto:sfox@north-fayette.com).

**Pickle Ball**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8-10 a.m., Fridays, 9-11 a.m. and 5-7 p.m.

**Senior Luncheons**, second Wednesdays, call to RSVP, email [dhlildebrand@north-fayette.com](mailto:dhlildebrand@north-fayette.com) to receive monthly senior newsletter.

**Water Walking**, Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Donaldson Elementary, 6-8 p.m.

**Water Aerobics**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Donaldson Elementary, 5-6 p.m.

**Fitness Center and Walking Track**, available to members during open hours.

**Self Defense for Women**, ages 12+, April 29,

6:30-8:30 p.m., free.

### Youth

**Instructional Volleyball**, ages 9-15, Wednesdays through May 15.

**Super Kids T-Ball**, ages 3-5, Mondays and Thursdays.

**Parent and Child Swim Lessons**, Wednesdays through May 1, 5:30 p.m.

**Developmental Volleyball League**, ages 9-15, Wednesdays, June 5-Aug. 14.

**Youth Volleyball Summer Camp**, ages 9-16, June 10-12, 14.

**Super Kids T-Ball**, ages 3-5, June 3-July 8.

**Super Kids Soccer**, ages 3-5, June 4-July 9.

**Youth Floor Hockey**, ages 6-11, June 6-July 18.

**Preschool**, ages 2-4, [kromano@north-fayette.com](mailto:kromano@north-fayette.com) for details.

**Summer Camp**, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-6 p.m., June 3-Aug. 16, first through eighth grade, registration details online, [nkreutzman@north-fayette.com](mailto:nkreutzman@north-fayette.com) for details.

**Kits Camp**, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., June 10-Aug. 9, registration details at [www.north-fayette.com](http://www.north-fayette.com), [nkreutzman@north-fayette.com](mailto:nkreutzman@north-fayette.com) for details.

**Afterschool Programming**, Monday-Friday, 3:30-5:30 p.m., K-8 programs designed to provide a safe environment for children to come to after school, transportation provided from schools to community center when school is in session, registration details at [www.north-fayette.com](http://www.north-fayette.com), email [nkreutzman@north-fayette.com](mailto:nkreutzman@north-fayette.com) for more.

**PALS**, Providing Assistance Love & Support, recreational activities for individuals with special needs, email [dhlildebrand@north-fayette.com](mailto:dhlildebrand@north-fayette.com) to be added to email list and for upcoming events.



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### TEEN

#### Teen Anime Club

Mondays, 4:00 p.m.

#### Teen D&D

Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m.

#### Teen Maker Lab

Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m.

### YOUTH & FAMILY

#### Baby Circle Time

Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.

#### Little's Storytime

Tuesday & Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.

#### Sensory Storytime

Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.

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## A mission trip to Niger

No one was more surprised than Linda Hipkins Briggs when she raised her hand and said, "Yes, I will go to Africa." It was during a Sunday morning service at Clinton United Presbyterian Church and the church pastor, Rev. Laura Strauss, had just announced a mission trip to their partner church in Niger.

Briggs, 70, describes the experience as, "Nothing, I have ever done in my life, has been so shocking or so amazing."

Oren Boustead of Imperial, also 70, had been on mission trips but this was his first to Africa.

Strauss is friends with Rev. Don Dawson of Gibsonia. His daughter, Rachel, married another pastor, Rev. Michael Ludwig. They became missionaries and moved to Niger five years ago with their daughter Adeline, now 10, and son, Simeon, age 7. They have adopted two African boys, ages 6 and 2. The youngest has a hip problem and wears a brace. If he had not been adopted, the child faced possible abandonment. Don and his son, Andrew, were also on the trip and enjoyed reuniting with their family.

Departing wintry Pittsburgh on Dec. 28, the team of eight finally arrived after 33 hours. They stepped off their second plane in a desert airport in the Niger capital of Niamey.

"It was like going back in time 60 years," said Briggs. "We arrived at night. Part of the lighting for the landing runway was an old utility truck with its headlights on!"

"The capital was the most developed and prosperous place we visited," she says. "Roads were jammed with cars, trucks, motorcycles, carts being pulled by oxen, camels, sheep, goats, and people carrying all sorts of items on their heads. Of course, no traffic lights and very few stop signs added to the chaos."

The team's sponsor and protector was Isaaka. A Nigerian native, Isaaka is in his 30s and has served as a supreme court judge. He is also a Christian leader and speaks English.

Life expectancy in Niger is 55. One out of every seven babies born does not make it. Malaria is a serious ongoing threat to everyone.

The team traveled by van 450 miles to the province of Maradi. Briggs calls it, "One very rough, dangerous road with high speeds not controlled by law enforcement. Traveling through desert and looking out windows at the scattered village life was like traveling back in time 1,000 years."

Adults, children and animals were sitting by their huts or traveling by foot along the road. There was very little rain. People and animals were covered in a mixture of sand and dirt. Malnourishment was everywhere. There, girls and women walk for miles just to get water and carry containers of water on their heads.

"Then we stopped in a village," Linda says, "our van was surrounded with children begging for a handout. Some had items

of food they had somehow scrounged up and were trying to sell to us. We were warned that some



Don Dawson, Oren Boustead, Linda Briggs, Sarah Oberbeck, Matt Schramm, Nicole Baker, Chong Hee and Andrew Dawson all recently traveled together to Niger for a mission trip through their church.

people would try to sell us rats they had cooked and placed on sticks to look like roasted meat. We could only drink the bottled water we had brought with us."

In some places, bathroom facilities meant a hole in the ground surrounded by three short walls, if they existed at all.

"It was truly humbling to watch the Ludwigs and others who volunteered their lives to developing schools, clinics, clean water and sanitation

projects with only the most meager of funds and materials," she says.

The schools, churches and homes they visited were largely crude huts or block buildings lacking furnishings. Linda says, "They cook what little food they have, outside their shelters in the sand and over a crude fire built of sticks collected amidst chickens, goats, sheep running around freely."

All of the children's clothing has been donated from other countries.

Natives consider sheep brains and hooves a delicacy. In fact, Boustead was offered that delicacy at one of the suppers 'under the stars' that was prepared for them. His answer was, "As long as you do not tell me what it is, I will try it."

And how was it?

"Wasn't bad," he says.

Boustead also nibbled on fried grasshoppers. Briggs passed. Boustead looked forward to home and "a hamburger, glass of water and brushing my teeth with clean water."

In 1999, the government outlawed "tribal carving," the practice of carving tribal symbols onto the tiny faces of babies. One of the pastors on the trip was born before 1999, however, and his scars were a reminder of that cruel practice.

Less than one percent of the mostly Muslim nation is Christian, though the government is secular and welcomes Christian organizations because they bring aid and build the best schools and clinics. Muslim children also attend the schools.

"People were very friendly and flocked around us whenever we stopped," Briggs says. "I will never forget shaking hands with a man in one of the villages and, as I looked down, I realized his hand had no fingers. They had been eaten away by leprosy."

Briggs felt she was called to do this trip. She says, "Even if only one person was helped, it was worth it. I learned so much. I learned it is important to listen. I am not the same person."

"The differences were overwhelming from our way of life in the U.S. but I realized a strong bond, as we are all just human beings created by God," she says.







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# Heritage Valley Medical Neighborhoods

Heritage Valley Health System Medical Neighborhoods bring together important pieces of health care, under one roof. Conveniently access coordinated health care services including **primary care, walk-in clinics, lab draw** and **diagnostic imaging services, specialty care physicians** and more. Learn more at [www.heritagevalley.org](http://www.heritagevalley.org).



**Heritage Valley West Allegheny**  
Penn Lincoln Shopping Plaza  
300 Penn Lincoln Drive  
Imperial, PA 15126



**Heritage Valley Robinson Township  
NOW OPEN!**  
Robinson Town Centre  
2201 Park Manor Blvd  
Pittsburgh, PA 15205



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**HERITAGE VALLEY**  
HEALTH SYSTEM

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