

West Allegheny Edition

# Allegheny West

## Magazine

Volume 16, Issue 93  
December 2014/January 2015

FREE Direct Mail Community Publication

*Advancing through  
the ranks of Schutzhund*

*The Pineapple Prince*

*Veteran's Day  
commemorations*

*The ladies of  
West Allegheny Hockey*

*Christmas Light-Up  
unites community*



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Inside  
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PUBLISHER AND EDITOR

Doug Hughey

PHOTOGRAPHERS

G. Paul DeBor, Sarah Hughey

WRITERS

Jocelyn Grecko,

Carolyn Morrison, Heather Schiefer Murray,

Mike Stancil

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Sarah Hughey

ADVERTISING SALES

Michele Shrader

WEBMASTER

[www.ddswdesign.com](http://www.ddswdesign.com)

CONTRIBUTORS

Macaroni Kids Robinson

Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce

Findlay Township, North Fayette Township

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Allegheny West Magazine - West Allegheny Edition, is an all positive, good news publication mailed free into the homes and businesses of the West Allegheny School District communities 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.



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On Nov. 15, veterans attending a dinner at The ROCK in Oakdale were asked to sign yellow ribbons and pin their names to a map showing where they had served. The pins ranged all over the world, with many concentrated in Western Europe and southeast Asia, as can be seen here. The dinner, which has become an annual tradition, was one of several events organized the week of Veteran's Day in the area. Read more on page 20.



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# From the Publisher



Dear Readers,

It's hard to believe it's been almost a year since ownership of this magazine changed hands. With this edition, we've now got 16 issues under our belts.

Of course, as a whole, this magazine has 16 years behind it now. It started out as a community magazine that Pat Jennette, our publisher emeritus, grew into three editions, each serving a different school district. Maintaining a local focus and personal touch was always paramount for Pat, even as this magazine was expanding. Over the past year, we've worked hard to improve where we can while preserving what makes this magazine special. It's what keeps you, the reader, coming back to flip through every couple of months. It's also what keeps our advertisers coming back support us. They are the reason we exist, so as you read through, I ask that you please acknowledge their contribution to this trusted public resource.

As always, we have plenty of good news in this edition. On page 14, read about how a family's brush with leukemia has led to them working to give back and help others in similar circumstances. On page 20, read about the various Veteran's Day commemorations that occurred the week of Nov. 11, and the way they made sure to recognize our local veterans. On page 27, read the official West Allegheny School District newsletter, WA Today. On page 38, see our Shop the Neighborhood Gift Guide, and on page 50, read about some girls who are representing their school on the West Allegheny hockey team. On page 52, learn more about a longtime Christmas attraction in our area, and on page 56, get caught up on various nonprofit events in the area.

If you haven't gotten a chance, be sure to check out our newly redesigned website at [awmagazine.com](http://awmagazine.com). The site makes it easy to share featured content and even individual page spreads. Just copy and paste the url from your browser to social media or email.

As always, if there's something we missed in this issue, or something you think we should cover, I hope you will let us know.

Doug Hughey,  
Publisher and Editor

West Allegheny Edition  
December 2014/January 2015  
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## ABOUT THE COVER

Light-up deer decorations along the Christmas Light-up Celebration route at Clinton Park. It is open nightly from now until Jan. 4th, 5-10 p.m. Read more on page 52.

Photo by Sarah Hughey.



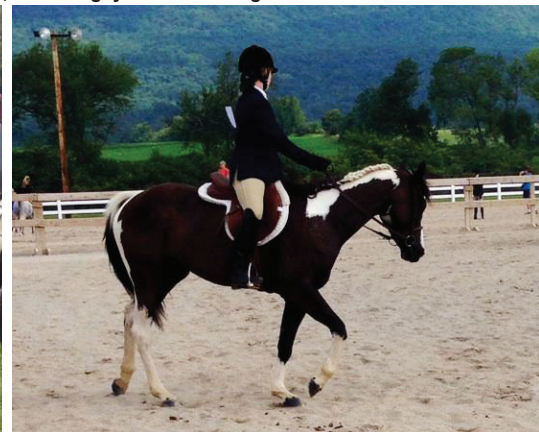
## Local horse club members compete at state level

Members of a local 4H horse club competed in statewide competition at the 4H State Horse Show Finals in Harrisburg Oct. 22-25. Competitors qualified after exhibiting their horses in a series of shows at the county and regional levels. The top two in each contest then advanced to compete in Harrisburg.

Among them, Sierra Higby of Western Beaver qualified in pony barrels and pony cutback. She finished in the top ten of both classes. Katie Borgo of Oakdale qualified with her five-year-old pinto filly, Xena. Jessica Collins of Clinton qualified in the beginner western pleasure class. Marissa Collins of Clinton qualified in the English showmanship junior division. Club leaders are Julie Beatty, Heather Miller and Michelle Wilson.

An educational program supported by Penn State University, 4H endeavors to help children ages eight through 18 learn more about land, nature and agriculture. Thundering Hooves 4H is a horse-based interest group located in Clinton. It meets the first Tuesday of each month. The first meeting for 2015 takes place Jan. 6 at 7 p.m. at Hebron Presbyterian Church. Anyone interested in membership is welcome to attend. Horse ownership is not necessary, but helpful. The group focuses on horse ownership, health care, riding, training and showing. Questions can be directed to Michelle Wilson at (412) 559-0989 or mwilson4@zoominternet.net.

FROM LEFT: Jessica Collins, Sierra Higby and Katie Borgo with their horses.



## Martial arts school fights cancer through fundraisers

Students at Getty's Elite Martial Arts broke from their traditional Tang Soo Do uniforms and replaced their belts with pink ones during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. By purchasing pink belts, students raised \$150, and the proceeds were sent to the American Cancer Society in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

At the same time, Tina Packer, whose children, Jessie and Jacob, are black belts at the school, worked with Shutterfly to create custom get-well cards. The school then mailed the cards to local hospitals, including Magee Women's Care Centers, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and St. Clair Hospital. The cards let patients and their caregivers know that they were in the thoughts of those who have family and friends battling breast cancer.

"The Breast Cancer Awareness month was very special to many of us, as we have had family members or friends affected by this disease," says Robert Getty, who runs the school. "For example, my mother went through a double mastectomy years ago. My wife Delana has a close friend who is experiencing a second fight with this disease. We sincerely hope that everyone's donations will assist with the research and eventually the eradication of all forms of cancer."

Also in October, the school participated in the ALS ice bucket challenge, and raised \$300 dollars for Lou Gehrig Disease research. The school originally intended to take on the challenge over the summer, but had to delay until October, when temperatures were around 40 degrees.



ABOVE: Damien Baskins pours ice water over Bob Getty, Gannon Mellett, Tom Mellett, Nate Roberts, Airielle Moulinie and Rob Stearns at Getty's Martial Arts for the school's ice bucket challenge.

BELOW: Black belts Darrien Petrakis and Gannon Mellett practice Korean sword fighting at the school. A number of students traded their belts for pink ones during Breast Cancer Awareness month.





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## West Allegheny alumnus appears again in Pittsburgh CLO's "A Musical Christmas Carol"

Like a lot of West Allegheny students, Patrick Cannon went on about a half dozen school trips to see the Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera's performance of "A Musical Christmas Carol." He says those trips influenced him as he went on to launch a stage career after high school that's included performing in nearly 40 productions with over a dozen different companies across the country. Most recently, he performed opposite



PHOTO BY FRANK VILSACK

two-time Emmy nominee Robert Newman of "Guiding Light" fame in a production of "Other Desert Cities" in September and October.

This December, Cannon returns to Pittsburgh to play a younger version of Ebenezer Scrooge in the Pittsburgh CLO's "A Musical Christmas Carol," which runs through Dec. 21 at the Byham Theater. It's his second consecutive season playing the role.

"I'm really grateful for the opportunity to be a part of something that influenced me," says Cannon. "It's come full-circle and hopefully it will become a tradition. There's nothing better than knowing I'll be home with my family in Pittsburgh for the holidays."

As a senior, Cannon performed with the WA show choir prior to the show's opening. His junior year was his first participating in West Allegheny musicals. While taking private voice lessons, he played parts in the school's productions of "Oklahoma" and "Honk!"

After graduation, Cannon went on to study acting at Columbia College in Chicago and later joined the Actor's Equity Association. His first contract with the union was for the role of George Gibbs in a production of "Our Town" at the Pittsburgh Public Theater. In Pittsburgh, Cannon also played Eteocles in the world premiere of "Oedipus and the Foul Mess in Thebes" with the No Name Players and Jack in HEADS at The Pittsburgh Playhouse REP. Throughout the country, Patrick has worked professionally with companies including Drury Lane Theatre, Steppenwolf Theater Garage Rep, The Strange Tree Group, Stage 773, Street Tempo Theater, The Barnstormers Theatre and Cape May Stage.

"In my short career, I've been able to explore a multitude of archetypes that have challenged me to become a more technically sound actor," says Cannon.

He says that every production and role, including young Scrooge, has been "crucial" to what he does now, as he continues to expand his repertoire and strengthen his craft. In "Other Desert Cities," which Cannon describes as a contemporary tragic comedy exploring family secrets and dysfunction, he played Trip, a Hollywood producer and peacekeeper within the family. He now goes on to play a role that lends depth and dimensionality to a classic character.

## Ohio Valley Hospital Dedicates rose for 2015 Rose Parade

In preparation for the 2015 Rose Parade prior to the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, Ohio Valley Hospital leadership and the Center for Organ Recovery and Education have dedicated a message for a rose that will appear on the parade's Donate Life Float. Each dedicated rose is placed in a vial that carries a unique, personal message of hope and remembrance to honor organ donors, recipients, and those touched by organ, tissue and cornea donation. Altogether, the roses create a Dedication Garden that is a featured design element on the Donate Life float each year.

The theme of the 12th annual Donate Life Rose Parade float is "The Never-Ending Story." It will feature butterflies emerging from storybooks to symbolize the enduring power of organ, tissue and cornea donation and transplantation.

Ohio Valley Hospital, located in Kennedy Township, is a 138-bed, not-for-profit community hospital with a medical staff of 250 physicians in 26 medical specialties. OVH has been providing specialized diagnostic services, advanced technologies, comprehensive treatments and truly personalized care to the residents of Pittsburgh's western suburbs for over 100 years. For more information, visit [www.ohiovalleyhospital.org](http://www.ohiovalleyhospital.org).



David W. Scott, FACHE, President and CEO of Ohio Valley Hospital (pictured) was joined by Mark A. Succeralli, Jr., from the Center for Organ Recovery & Education at the rose vial signing.

<p>Patrick Konieczny is the owner of Thomas-Little Funeral Service, Inc. with locations in the McDonald, Midway, Imperial, and Oakdale communities. He and his wife, Kristen, live in McDonald, North Fayette Township, with their two daughters, Mya and Allie.</p> <p>Patrick is a graduate of Thiel College and Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. He is a member of the West Allegheny Foundation, St. Alphonsus R.C. Church, McDonald Lions Club, Oakdale Merchants Association, and Oakdale F&amp;AM Lodge #669. He is a former member of the West Allegheny School Board, served as vice-president and is present superintendent of the Oakdale Cemetery Association.</p>	<h3>THOMAS~LITTLE FUNERAL SERVICE, INC.</h3> <p><b>Patrick Konieczny</b> Owner/Supervisor</p> <p><b>BUSINESS OFFICE</b> 314 West Lincoln Ave. McDonald PA 15057 (724) 926-2800 Fax: (724) 926-2821 <a href="http://www.thomas-littlefuneralservice.com">www.thomas-littlefuneralservice.com</a></p> <p><b>MCDONALD</b> <b>Aaron Lee Engel, Supv.</b> (724) 926-2800</p> <p><b>MIDWAY</b> <b>Phyllis Pensak Nagy, Supv.</b> (724) 796-3301</p> <p><b>OAKDALE</b> <b>Darla C. Thomas, Supv.</b> (724) 693-2800</p> <p><b>IMPERIAL</b> <b>Patrick Konieczny, Supv.</b> (724) 695-2800</p> <p>Serving All Faiths and All Areas with Exceptional Care and Quality</p> <p>Family and Locally Owned and Operated</p> <p>Advance Funeral Planning Specialist Available</p>
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## Advancing through the ranks of Schutzhund

Just about every day for three to four hours, Oakdale resident Ed Wiernik and his German shepherd, Kayn, head outside to train. Sometimes they go up to Donaldson Park to work on Kayn's tracking skills. Other days they stay in their backyard, where Wiernik has set up a training field with snow fencing, an A-frame and hurdles.

For much of the last two-and-a-half years, Kayn and Wiernik have kept to this strict schedule while training for a sport known as Schutzhund. During Schutzhund competitions and trials, handlers and their dogs are judged on a 300-point scale. Dogs have to track a scent, clear hurdles, engage potential threats, and respond to commands with exacting attention. In one phase, a dog has to sprint straight ahead, at nothing in particular, for 100 yards and stop dead in its tracks, all on the commands of its handler. Many of the tests are the same used to weed out dogs for police and military work.

Last year, Wiernik and Kayn passed the first hurdle in the Schutzhund sport by clearing a Begleithundprüfung, or obedience course. This year, they took second place in both the Mid East Regional IPO Championship and the Mid East Regional Conformation Championship. Wiernik and Kayn skipped the local trials, which are the usual precursors to regional competition.

"I want to fight the heavyweight right now," says Wiernik.

As handlers and their dogs progress in Schutzhund, they obtain certifications that both increase the value of their dogs and allow them to compete at higher levels. As they progress through IPO levels, from the regional to national level, judging gets more difficult. Along the way, they also complete various types of tests measuring a dog's stamina, temperament and courage. Recently, Kayn and Wiernik completed a 12-mile run for one trial. In another, Kayn had to show he wasn't startled when a man in a bite suit lunged at him.

"You wouldn't believe how many dogs run away," says Wiernik.

Dogs that obtain certifications with high scores are eventually allowed to compete at the national level. Those qualifying dogs get to continue on to international competition. The top dog among

that group is known as a Sieger, and can be worth millions.

"It's kind of like an Olympics for the dog and handler team," says Ed's wife, Leslie.

Ed, who was a sergeant in the Marines, says he's always been interested in training dogs, but didn't jump headlong into Schutzhund until after he retired from a job at UPS. In addition to training Kayn, he's also been applying what he's learned to train dogs for people in the area using positive reinforcement methods.

"Sometimes it's as much training the dog owner as it is the dog," he says.

Just about every day though, he and Kayn are out in the field training, learning new commands and reinforcing old ones. Not even the freezing temperatures dissuade them. The one thing that does present an occasional hurdle is finding someone to help with certain aspects of training.

"Believe it or not, it's hard to find people who will wear the bite suit," says Leslie.



ABOVE: Ed Wiernik and his German shepherd, Kayn (also pictured below), are awarded second place at the Mid East Regional IPO Championship Sept. 28 in Crittenden, Kentucky.

BELOW PHOTO BY DONNA HAYNES



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## Imperial American Legion post looking to attract new members



American Legion Membership Committee Chairman for western Pennsylvania Paul M. Kennedy with Post 355 member Charles Magnus. The two want to attract new members to the Imperial post, which operates out of the basement of Thomas-Little Funeral Service.

At one time, American Legion Post 355 in Imperial could count 85 individuals as members. Now, the post has five.

Among them is post commander Charles Magnus, who became involved with the post while serving as district commander from 2004 to 2007. Magnus says he's worried about the future of the post. In the past, he's seen some close. He and another legion member rescued one in Carnegie after it fell tens of thousands of dollars into debt. While that's not the situation in Imperial, he's concerned about the falloff in membership, and wants people to know that the post is more than just a clubhouse.

"We need to get past the reputation that we're just a bar," says Magnus.

While in many ways an organization for veterans to relate to each other, American Legion posts across the country also raise and donate millions of dollars for charities, scholarships and youth programs, as well as emergency funds for veterans.

The organization also helps veterans secure benefits and lobbies for them at the national level. With roots going back to the Civil War, the American Legion is perhaps best known for penning the first draft of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, or GI Bill. It also organizes various grassroots efforts. From June through October of 2014, following reports of delays, negligence, and backlogs within the Veteran's Administration, the American Legion organized town hall meetings and outreach centers at posts across the country. Their efforts helped over 3,000 veterans obtain benefits, including on-the-spot benefits that amounted to \$1 million.

Magnus says that, like a lot of veterans, he first joined the American Legion to "bend an elbow." The same goes for Paul M. Kennedy, the organization's membership committee chairman for western Pennsylvania. Kennedy credits the American Legion, and the camaraderie it creates, with saving his life.

Kennedy served in both Vietnam and Iraq, completing three tours from 1968 to 2008. Magnus served in Germany during the

Cold War.

Like 75 percent of American Legion posts, the one in Imperial does not have a bar. It operates out of a large room in the basement of Thomas-Little Funeral Service on Main Street. Patrick Konieczny, who owns Thomas-Little, says that the post used to meet at a house on the site before the business was built. An agreement between the business' original owners, Richard Thomas and Robert Little, arranged for the post to operate out of the basement, free of charge. Within the past decade, Thomas-Little has remodeled the space, says Konieczny. He says that in the past, he remembers the post having a thriving membership, with a ladies' auxiliary holding dinners and a local softball team sponsored by the post.

"There's a need for the veteran's groups," he says.

According to Kennedy, western Pennsylvania contains the densest population of veterans in the state. Despite that fact, and a growing number of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years, the post has had difficulty attracting new, and younger, members.

A number of initiatives are trying to reverse that trend, including a motorcycle club within the organization called the Legion Riders. With over 1,200 chapters across the country, the club has raised \$2.7 million for the legion's Legacy Scholarship fund. They've also been known to ride as a show of support at military funerals.

Non-military members can also join. Sons of military members can join as Sons of the American Legion. A ladies' auxiliary is also open to wives and daughters. Women veterans are also welcome, and urged to join. Some are taking prominent roles at area posts, says Magnus.

"We're not just a boys club," he says.

Anyone interested in joining Post 335, or learning more about the American Legion, can call Magnus at (412) 922-2182.



## Karate hall of fame members visit local dojo



USA international Black Belt Hall of Fame members hailing from around the U.S. and world visit The House of Martial Arts Karate Academy in Oakdale.

The USA International Black Belt Hall of Fame held its annual weekend event at the Embassy Suites Pittsburgh Nov. 14-16. The weekend featured seminars with karate experts in attendance from over 50 countries.

As has become tradition over the years, several attendees took time that Sunday to visit the House of Martial Arts Karate Academy in Oakdale to work with students and give demonstrations. The studio's owner, Gino Bovo, says that about 10 individuals from as far away as Ireland and Australia visited the school. Bovo, who was inducted into the hall of fame in 1998, says attendees usually make their way to the dojo to finish out the weekend. Among those to visit this year were two Germans who had studied ninjutsu.

"We call them the German ninjas, Sven and Mario," he says.

Also on hand was John Kanzler, executive director of the Eastern USA International Martial Arts Association, which sponsors the Black Hall of Fame. Bovo describes the organization as a professional martial arts organization that lends credibility and consistency to member schools. He says he's honored to be one of the few Pittsburghers who attend the event, along with friend Sean Martin, a professor at Point Park University and Duquesne University. Martin works with police and military teaching a lethal form of ninjutsu he developed called kage essensu.

## Clearview FCU donates \$5,500 raised during charity golf outing

Continuing to show its support and involvement in the Southwestern Pennsylvania community, Clearview Federal Credit Union recently presented a check for \$5,500 to Variety the Children's Charity. The funds were the proceeds from Clearview's Annual Charity Golf Outing, which was held in August at Beaver Valley Golf Club.

Variety enriches the lives of children with disabilities by providing them with enabling equipment, assistive technology and communication devices, thereby providing them with the opportunity to personally develop and participate in social, educational, artistic and recreational activities. Variety's Pittsburgh chapter serves children in Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland counties.

For more, visit [www.varietypittsburgh.org](http://www.varietypittsburgh.org).

Clearview President/CEO Mark Brennan (right) and Golf Outing Chairman Ron Gottschalk (left) present \$5,500 to Charlie LaVallee, CEO of Variety the Children's Charity of Pittsburgh.



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## Local family touched by leukemia reaches out to help others

Fighting cancer is no easy battle. Fighting cancer and winning the battle is a feat fit for a prince.

Six years ago, experiencing obstacles and turmoil of suffering cancer is something the Behr family never would have anticipated. That all changed when Kim and Phil Behr's eight-month-old son, Connor, was diagnosed with leukemia.

After a series of random low-grade fevers struck her infant, Kim explained that the "mom instinct" in her took over.

"[I] knew something was wrong," she says.

She recalls how she never expected, and wasn't prepared for, what would come after a trip to the pediatrician. It was a life-changing moment for Kim, Phil, and their son. They rushed Connor to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, and after days of tests, their son was diagnosed with leukemia.

Connor underwent a series of treatments to begin his battle. Surgery, chemotherapy, blood transfusions, spinal taps, bone marrow biopsies, and more, are what the eight-month-old faced.

"Even to an adult, it all sounds so awful, but our Connor was amazing!" Kim says.

"After three rounds of chemo, the leukemia resurfaced again and again," Kim says. "Each time our hearts broke, but Connor's spirit never did."

As Connor was fighting, his family and friends at home became inspired by him with each passing day. His grandmother, Carol Bonnar, says that finding out her grandson had been diagnosed with leukemia was "probably the worst day of my life." Yet she was optimistic that he would overcome his cancer. Carol told her daughter and son-in-law that somehow Connor would be alright.

During her years as West Allegheny School District's public relations coordinator, Carol had been in contact with the families of two West Allegheny students who had been diagnosed with

**Team Stupid Leukemia getting ready to walk for the 2014 Light the Night Walk this past October.**



leukemia, beat the disease, and gone on to live happy, healthy lives.

"I knew two other children who had been diagnosed with leukemia and were treated at Children's Hospital and were doing amazingly well," Carol recalled. "I prayed this would be true for Connor as well."

Through articles in district publications and press releases, Carol had hoped to raise awareness of the need for fundraising,



**Connor Behr after being named Pineapple Prince.**

tissue typed," she says. "This not only helped our son, but it could help many others who also needed a transplant."

After a few weeks, no match had yet been found for Connor, but the transplant team was also expanding its search to find a possible stem cell match.

"At that time, we didn't even know that the National Cord Blood Registry existed, or that people could donate their cord blood," Kim says, explaining that the stem cells from cord blood can be used to replace bone marrow and provide treatment for other diseases. "This realization started another awareness campaign by us and to our overwhelming joy, they found a match for Connor! Our hours of prayers had been answered."

At that point, it seemed like the hard part was over, but Kim recalled that it was actually easy compared to what lay ahead.

In order for the transplant to occur, doctors first had to get Connor's white blood cell counts down to zero - an incredibly difficult process for anyone, let alone a baby boy. This rigorous process would allow the doctors to perform the transplant.

On January 2, 2009, a day before Connor's first birthday, he underwent his transplant. Thanks to treatment research largely funded by the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, his life had been saved.

In the months following, the Behr family's schedule consisted of weeks during which Connor had to remain in the hospital and undergo home visits with weekly visits to the Hematology/Oncology Clinic at Children's Hospital. Connor entered remission. With the worst finally over, the family was left with a son who they could watch grow.

Not only did Connor grow, he helped others grow. His parents and grandparents saw the need and desire to give back by raising cancer awareness.

In 2009, Kim and Phil set out to give something back in return for the help that the LLS had given them during their time of need. They formed a fundraising team called "Stupid Leukemia," named after a slogan on a tee shirt Connor wore as a baby that read, "Stupid Leukemia - I'm too young for this." According to Carol, the team is one of the top fundraising teams for the society. In 2014, they have raised over \$10,000.

Those funds and increased awareness would not have been made possible without the help of many local residents and

STORY BY JOCELYN GRECKO  
PHOTOS SUBMITTED



organizations. Hankey Farms neighbors have made monetary donations. In addition, West Allegheny football players and cheerleaders traveled to Heinz Field for a number of years to walk with Connor's team at the Light the Night Walk sponsored by the LLS. JoJo's Restaurant and the Tonidale Marathon also made and collected donations, while The Mall at Robinson donated fountain coins. St. Columbkille Church advertised Connor's blood drive and Findlay Township allowed the use its community center for the blood drive.



Connor Behr with West Allegheny cheerleaders (above) and football players (below)



passed by and cheering them on!"

Connor is very aware that he once suffered a life-threatening illness, and his parents have tried to instill in him the desire to help others who are sick.

"This is the first year Connor really understood that he is raising money to help sick people," says Carol. Connor made chocolate-covered pretzels and went door-to-door in his neighborhood selling them so that he could really be a part of a cure this year.

"He has two birthdays we celebrate...Jan. 3, the day he was born, and Jan. 2, the day his life was saved."

Kim says Connor doesn't remember how sick he was or how awful he felt.

"But still, he does not want anyone to feel like that," she says. "He wants to help make anyone who is sick feel better."

It's a role fit for a prince, and with the help of his family and the community, he's helping others fight to win their battles, too.

Kim is a West Allegheny graduate and her parents, Ralph and Carol, are 46-year residents of North Fayette Township.

For more on how to contribute to the LLS on behalf of "Stupid Leukemia", please visit <http://pages.lightthenight.org/wpa/Pttsbrgh14/stupidleukemia>.



The Behr family: Ellie, Phil, Kim and Connor.

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## Five West Allegheny soccer players named to All-WPIAL team



West Allegheny soccer players Michael Cummings, Collin Wurst, Cooper Amos, Kyle McCracken and Patrick Harmon were all named WPIAL All-Stars for their play this past season.

Five players from this past season's West Allegheny soccer team were named to the WPIAL Class AA Section 5 All-Star team. Those players, Michael Cummings, Collin Wurst, Cooper Amos, Kyle McCracken and Patrick Harmon, were also named to the All-WPIAL team. Cummings additionally earned All-State accolades.

In four years at West Allegheny High School, their teams have won four section titles and a WPIAL championship. Those teams also reached a state championship, finished as a runner-up in the state, finished second in the WPIAL, reached two WPIAL quarterfinals and one state quarterfinal. Those teams' four-year record adds up to a combined 69-12-5.

## Know someone who should be in the West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame?

Nominate them by **February 6** and they'll be considered for induction into a group of esteemed individuals at the fourth annual hall of fame banquet **May 16 at 6 p.m.** Proceeds benefit the North Fayette PALS program, which provides recreational opportunities to children with special needs.

**Nominations are currently being accepted for individuals and teams that have significantly contributed to West Allegheny Athletics.**

### Categories are:

- Athletes
- Coaches/Administrators
- Teams
- Patron/Contributors

All nominations must be accompanied by **TWO LETTERS** of recommendation, along with supporting documentation, and be submitted by February 6.

Download a nomination form at: [awmagazine.com](http://awmagazine.com) or [north-fayette.com](http://north-fayette.com)

Stop by or call the North Fayette Parks and Recreation office at: (412) 693-3118.



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BY PAT JENNETTE

## Local woman ordained as Presbyterian minister

Imperial resident Nancy Stanny realized a life-long dream this year when she officially became a pastor. The 1984 West Allegheny alumna was formally commissioned into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church on Sept. 25 at ceremonies held at Crestfield Camp and Conference Center in Slippery Rock. She notes that the day was especially celebratory in that it was also her 21st wedding anniversary with her husband, Brian.



Nancy Stanny with her husband, Brian, and daughter, Jaime.

Also this fall, her commissioning was celebrated at Concord Presbyterian Church in Carrick, where she is now officially a full-time pastor.

Nancy's original passion was cosmetology. She obtained her associate's degree in cosmetology and salon management from CCAC and the Pittsburgh Beauty Academy in 1986. However, from the time she was young, she says that "doing God's work has always seemed to come natural to me."

Over the years, she has been deeply involved in Valley Presbyterian Church in Imperial, where she has taught vacation bible school, Sunday school, and sung with the choir. She served as an ordained deacon and elder at the church, and assisted with the church's youth group while her daughter, Jaime, was growing. She was also co-founder of the former Mothers of Preschoolers program, a project about which she was deeply passionate.

After spending seven years training in Christian leadership and counseling through MOPS International, Nancy felt the need to take her passion further.

"I really like the church atmosphere and it's where I feel the most at home," Nancy notes.

She graduated in 2007 with high honors after completing an associate degree in Biblical Studies from the International School of Ministry/Christian Leadership University. In 2010, she completed her commissioned lay pastor training through the Washington Presbytery in Washington County, and became a charter member of the Western Pennsylvania Presbyterian Lay Pastor's Network.

After preaching at many churches across the area for eight years, Nancy now uses her skills and training to focus on the church she calls her spiritual home in Carrick.

Although she's no longer a member at Valley Church, she remains active as a member of its weekly prayer ministry team. She continues to be part of the Imperial area with her husband, Brian, and her daughter, Jaime, who will graduate from West Allegheny this year.

When she's not involved with her pastoral duties, her involvement with Valley, or her role as a mom or wife, Nancy still finds time to enjoy oil painting, scrapbooking, reading, and golf.

## Tough loss closes out impressive Indian football season

The West Allegheny Indians lost to only one team this past season. That one team though managed to get the best of the Indians in both the last game of the regular season and a post-season matchup in the WPIAL Class AAA championship.

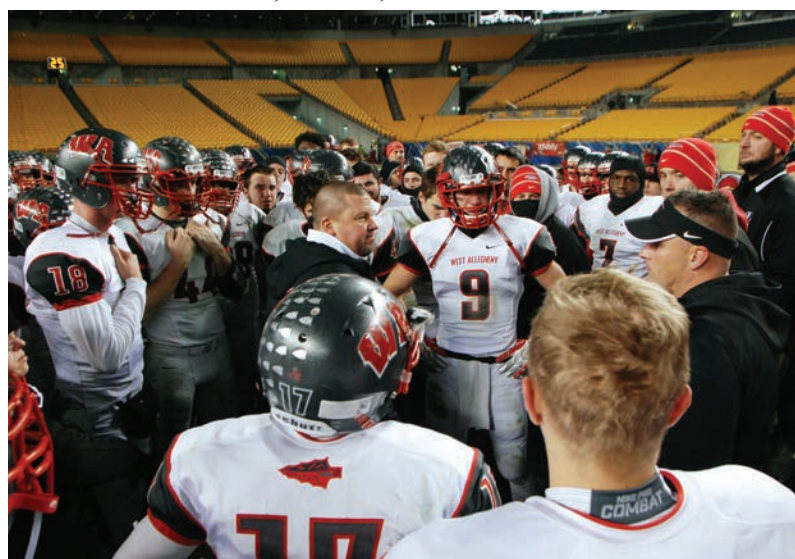
Riding on the back of one of the top college recruits in the WPIAL, running back Jordan Whitehead, Central Valley defeated the Indians in their first matchup Oct. 24 by a score of 28-17 to close out the regular season.

At Heinz Field for the WPIAL championship Nov. 21, the game hardly looked to be the knotted affair of the regular season when Central Valley jumped out to a commanding 21-0 lead in the first quarter. The Indians, though, managed to claw back in the second quarter with a pair of Chayse Dillon touchdowns and go into halftime with just a seven-point deficit.

After neither team managed to do much on offense to start the third quarter, linebacker Sean Orsini intercepted a John George pass and returned it to the Central Valley 22-yardline to set up Dillon's third touchdown and erase a seemingly insurmountable deficit. Just as the Indians looked as though they could pull off the impossible, and maybe hand head coach Bob Palko his eighth WPIAL championship, Central Valley blocked a 43-yard West Allegheny field goal and ripped off a 55-yard reception by Whitehead to go ahead by seven.

The Indians managed to tie with a Terrence Stephens two-yard run, but allowed Central Valley to drive to the West Allegheny 18 and score a touchdown with 19 seconds left. That would prove insurmountable, as Central Valley won the rematch from last year, 35-28.

Going into the playoffs, the Indians were every bit as formidable as they had been during the regular season. In the semi-finals, the Indians pummeled undefeated Thomas Jefferson - 41-7 - behind a bruising wild cat attack that resulted in Dillon, Whitney White and Terence Stephens combining to record five rushing touchdowns. Tyler Amedure tacked on another with a 68-yard punt return. The second half of that game started under the mercy rule. The win marked the Indians' 10th, and final, of the season.



West Allegheny head coach Bob Palko and offensive coordinator Brian Cornell address their team following a tough, season-ending loss in the WPIAL championship game at Heinz Field Nov. 21. PHOTO BY G. PAUL DEBOR



# Veteran's Day



When Imperial resident Howie Adams returned from Vietnam in 1969, he was warned to avoid crowds at San Francisco International Airport. Protestors against the war had turned their attention to service members heading to the airport from nearby Oakland Army Base, and were hurling things at them, including excrement.

Adams spent six months in Vietnam repairing radios and radio antennas at landing zones with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Though he never spent much time traveling on the ground, he was hit twice by U.S. planes spraying the defoliant Agent Orange.

Upon returning home, Adams suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder, which wasn't widely recognized at the time. Later on in life, he was also diagnosed with type II diabetes mellitus, which the Veterans' Administration has recognized as being linked to Agent Orange exposure. Over the years, he suffered a range of related health issues. In 2005, he lost most of the sight in his right eye.

Finally, in 2006, 37 years after he returned from war, he underwent an Agent Orange physical at a VA hospital and began receiving treatment.

Adams says he now feels better than he has in years, and to give back to the VA, he volunteers at the VA in Oakland once per week. Just as he says he is grateful for the VA, so too is he grateful for a general public that is increasingly recognizing the contributions of all veterans, including those who served in Vietnam.

"It really wasn't fashionable until 2004 with John Kerry and the swift boat guys," he says about recognizing Vietnam-era veterans.

On Nov. 11, Adams was one of seven local veterans honored during a ceremony at Donaldson Park's Liberty Grove, where second graders sang patriotic songs and read a history of Armistice Day. Joining Adams was Keith Colledge, Lyle Grover, Ed Graham, Ted Lewandowski, George Shaw and John Lee. The event was organized by North Fayette Township marketing and communications coordinator Sue Walls and township parks and recreation Director Darlene Hildebrand. Also in attendance were township supervisor Jim Morosetti, manager Bob Grimm and police chief Mark O'Donnell.

Following remarks from Frank Blaskowitz, who has headed up the Liberty Grove project, students high-fived service members. Adams says he was glad he was wearing dark glasses because he





# commemorations

got emotional.

"These guys really didn't get the acknowledgement when they came home," says Lee, a senior master sergeant in the Air Force Reserve. "So it's a lot for them to suddenly get this kind of attention."

The ceremony at Donaldson Park was one of a number across the community honoring local veterans Nov. 11. In Oakdale, Masonic Lodge 669 welcomed veterans for a dinner, as did VFW Post 7714 in Imperial. The post also held a missing man's table dedication, an idea that was new this year and introduced by Conrad Vashko, a veteran and social member at the club.

"You'll find a missing man table at any dining hall in the armed services," he says.

Washko says that the missing man's table is a grassroots effort that started around the time of the Vietnam War among service members returning home. The concept involves a table with a number of symbolic elements representing those still missing in action.

"We're not just looking at it from a Vietnam era," he says. "We have people from all eras missing overseas."

Among those joining post members for the dedication were Findlay Township Supervisor Tom Gallant, District Judge Anthony Seveikis and West Allegheny ninth grade ROTC member Victoria Crawford.

"I've always had a tremendous amount of respect for people in the military," says Crawford.

On that following Saturday, The ROCK Youth and Family Center in Oakdale welcomed veterans for a dinner organized by Cliff Elicker. Now in its fourth year, Elicker started arranging the event in memory of his father, a WWII veteran. The Oakdale Diner donated meatloaf, mashed potatoes and bread for the dinner. Additional contributions over the years have come from Oakdale Borough, Moore's Hardware and Ron Watters Automotive.

Each year, the night has an historical element. Last year, they welcomed a Holocaust survivor to speak. Rev. Mark Simonds and Tom McCoy assembled a mini museum of historical weapons, uniforms, equipment and objects for the event. Among them is an Arisaka rifle Elicker's father brought home from occupied Japan.

"The display grows a little more each year," says Elicker. "It gets the kids interested."



## OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:

A Color Guard made up of West Allegheny ROTC members marches prior to a ceremony at Donaldson Park; Donaldson Elementary School students gathered for a ceremony to honor seven local veterans; second graders read a history of Armistice Day; the missing man's table at VFW Post 7714 in Imperial honoring those still missing in action; local officials joined veterans and their families for the missing man dedication.

THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Memorabilia on display at The ROCK veteran's dinner Nov. 15. John Lee (left) shakes the hand of Henry Francheck, the post's last World War II veteran member; behind them are Conrad Vashko and George Francheck. Weapons gathered for The ROCK's Veteran's Day dinner, including an Arisaka rifle (bottom) brought back from occupied Japan. Local veterans present at The ROCK's dinner Nov. 15 pose for a group photo.

BACKGROUND: A world map on display during The ROCK's dinner showed where those in attendance had served.

PHOTOS BY DOUG AND SARAH HUGHEY.







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## Imbalance can be caused by a number of reasons, but it's important to identify them and get treatment

Experts from Ohio Valley Hospital's Balance and Fall Prevention Center explain the balance process, and why some people can feel uncomfortable performing simple tasks like walking across the yard to rake leaves, or while reaching or bending:

**The balance control process:** Many different body systems work together to maintain balance, but there are three major components. Sensory systems provide information about the body's position. The brain processes the sensory information and coordinates movement and reactions. Muscles and joints do the moving, and react to the brain's signals.

The sensory systems monitor sense of position from the joints, vision and the inner ear. Feet tell the body if the ground is smooth, bumpy, soft, hard, moving or still. Eyes tell if surroundings are still or moving, and help with orientation in space. The inner ear provides the brain with information about the position of the head, orienting it with the vertical or horizontal, while also sensing acceleration and deceleration.

**Loss of balance control:** Normally, the brain coordinates all of these inputs and outputs without an issue. When problems arise in any of the systems, it's because the "auto pilot" does not work. This causes extra effort to be expended, and closer attention paid to control balance. All of this extra work can result in fatigue and a shortened attention span. As problems progress, distraction or unexpected stimulation can result in a fall.

**Inevitable?** Balance problems are not an inevitable result of aging. Sometimes, an obvious medical problem is to blame for imbalance. Diabetes, Parkinson's disease, stroke, or peripheral neuropathy can make it harder to maintain balance. A history of injuries, such as concussions, ear

infections, serious sprains or fractures, can also contribute to falls. In addition, medications - both prescription and over-the-counter - can be detrimental to the senses and brain, causing temporary or permanent damage.

**Identifying and treating balance disorders:** Because balance is so complex, with many systems working together, it can be difficult to pinpoint an exact cause. Oftentimes, there are several causes. "A little of this and a little of that" might make a good stew, but two or more conditions that lead to imbalance can be a bad mix! Combine muscle weakness with inactivity, and tasks that were once easily done become difficult.

**Balance can be improved, but it takes work!** A thorough exam by a doctor may indicate the need to see a specialist, such as an otolaryngologist (ENT) or neurologist. Often, one or more tests may be needed. Treatment may be as simple as increasing activity levels and learning the appropriate exercises to address the problem. Physical therapists are the exercise experts when it comes to health conditions. For those who have experienced severe imbalance, it may take a while to see improvement, and will require hard work to improve. Those with relatively mild imbalance may see big improvements in as little as a month.

For anyone suffering from a balance disorder, however, it is important to seek out medical professionals who are qualified in this area. These services are available through The Balance and Fall Prevention Center at Ohio Valley Hospital.

### References:

Neurcom. "How You Control Your Balance."  
[www.resourcesonbalance.com](http://www.resourcesonbalance.com)

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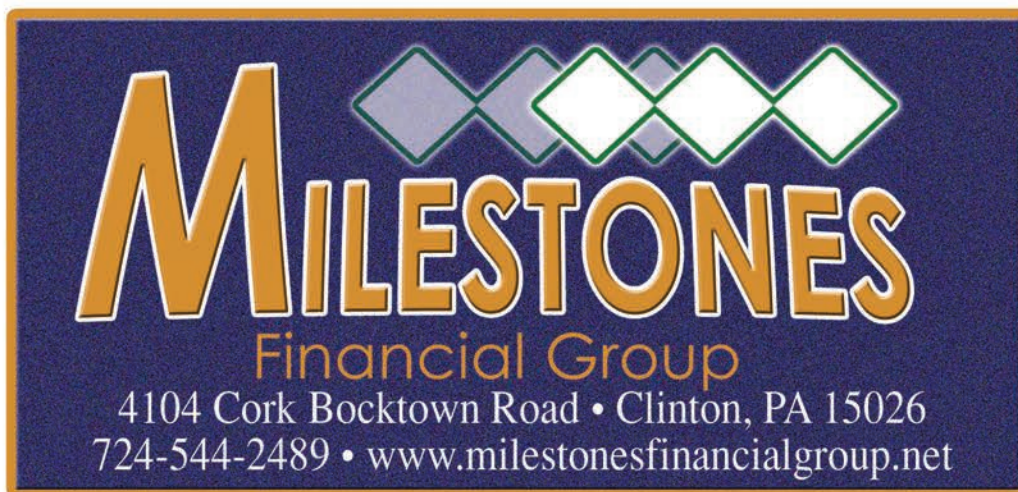




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## Gauging Your Financial Well-Being

### Six signs that you are in good shape.

How well off do you think you are financially? If your career or life takes an unexpected turn, would your finances hold up? What do you think will become of the money you've made and saved when you are gone?

These are major questions, and most people can't answer them as quickly as they would like. It might help to think about six factors in your financial life. Here is a six-point test you can take to gauge your financial well-being.

**Are you saving about 15% of your salary for retirement?** That's a nice target. If you're earning good money, that will probably amount to \$10-20,000 per year. You are probably already saving that much annually without any strain to your lifestyle. Annual IRA contributions and incremental salary deferrals into a workplace retirement plan will likely put you in that ballpark. As those dollars are being invested as well as saved, they have the potential to grow with tax deferral – and if your employer is making matching contributions to your retirement account along the way, you have another reason to smile.

**Do you have an emergency fund?** Sadly, most Americans don't. In June, Bankrate polled U.S. households and found that 26% of them were living paycheck-to-paycheck, with no emergency fund at all.

**Are you insured?** As *U.S. News & World Report* mentioned this summer, about 30% of U.S. households don't have life insurance. Why? They can't afford it. That's the perception.

In reality, life insurance is much less expensive now than it was decades ago. As the CEO of insurance industry group LIMRA commented to *USN&WR*, most people think it is about three times as expensive as it really is. How much do you need? A quick rule of thumb is ten times your income. Hopefully, you have decent or better insurance coverage in place.

**Do you have a will or an estate plan?** Dying intestate (without a will) can leave your heirs with financial headaches at an already depressing time. Having a will is basic, yet many Americans don't create one. In its annual survey this spring, the

budget legal service website RocketLawyer found that only 51% of Americans aged 55-64 have drawn up a will. Just 38% of Americans aged 45-54 have drafted one.

Why don't more of us have wills? A lack of will, apparently. RocketLawyer asked respondents without wills to check off why they hadn't created one, and the top reason (57%) was "just haven't gotten around to making one." A living will, a healthcare power of attorney and a double-check on the beneficiary designations on your investment accounts is also wise.

**Is your credit score 700 or better?** Today, 685 is considered an average FICO score. If you go below 650, life can get more expensive for you. Hopefully you pay your bills consistently and unfailingly and your score is in the 700s. You can request your FICO score while signing up for a trial period with a service such as TransUnion or GoFreeCredit.

**Are you worth much more than you owe?** This is the #1 objective. You want your major debts gone, and you want enough money for a lifetime. You will probably always carry some debt, and you can't rule out risks to your net worth tomorrow – but if you are getting further and further ahead financially and your bottom line shows it, you are making progress in your pursuit of financial independence.

Gary Klobchar, Jr. may be reached via telephone at 724-544-2489 or by email at [gary.klobchar@milestonesfg.com](mailto:gary.klobchar@milestonesfg.com). You can learn more about him and his company by visiting [www.milestonesfinancialgroup.net](http://www.milestonesfinancialgroup.net)

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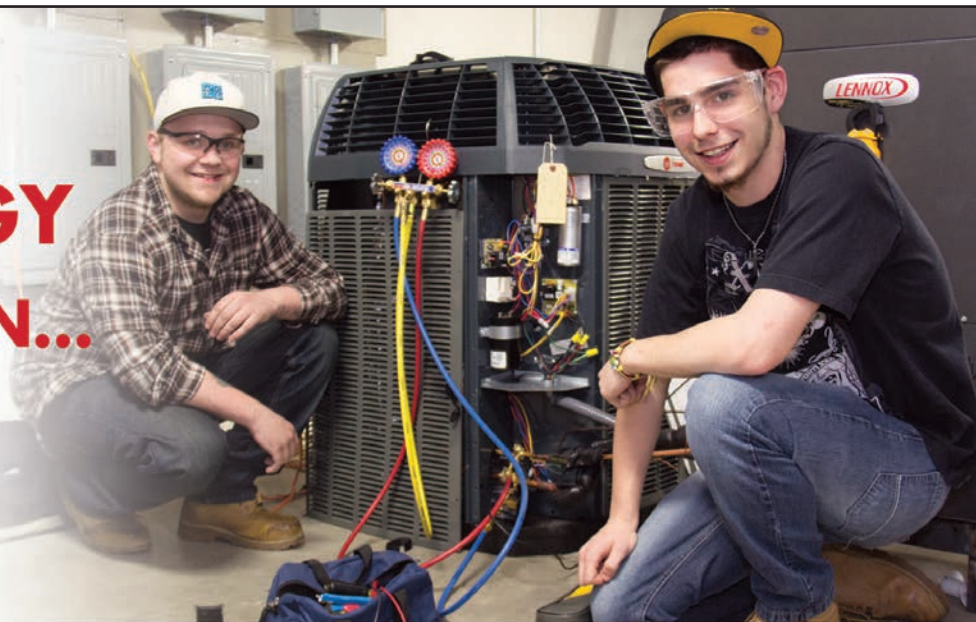
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## District adopts energy and cost-saving initiative

The West Allegheny administration and school board have adopted an energy saving initiative that is expected to save the District nearly \$830,000 over the next five years. The proactive effort is part of the District's financial sustainability priority, which explores cost-saving directives through operational efficiencies. This initial savings will be possible through a partnership with Cenergistic.

Cenergistic is a technology-powered, data-driven energy conservation company that helps organizations reduce consumption of electricity, natural gas, fuel oil and water. The company's approach helps save an average of 20 to 30 percent on utility expenditures, but will not impact the comfort of students or educators. Nor does it require the District to increase its utility budget, purchase new equipment or upgrade existing equipment. Instead, this long-term initiative will utilize comprehensive and sustainable solutions geared toward helping save money for years to come.

The energy-saving program kicked off in October, when Colleen Kartychak, a West Allegheny parent, was named by Cenergistic as its part-time energy specialist. Kartychak will receive extensive training and supervision from Cenergistic to ensure that all components of the plan are implemented. Cenergistic will create a database in EnergyCAP, its proprietary energy management software, to establish a baseline of West Allegheny's energy consumption.



In her role as energy specialist, Kartychak will identify ways for West Allegheny to operate its facilities in a more energy-efficient manner. Energy use points throughout the District's five schools will be analyzed. Regular energy audits will be performed to make sure all equipment is operating properly. Upon implementation, she will monitor energy conservation measures at each building by measuring the reduction in energy consumption and present day cost savings to the District.

The program is designed to preserve comfortable environments during class time and scheduled activities, and to conserve energy during down times.

"Our focused work on energy conservation with Cenergistics is one of the foci aligned to the District's Priority #3: Financial Responsibility and Operational Efficiency," said Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert, West Allegheny superintendent. "As we work to achieve a balanced budget, one of our key strategies is to identify cost-saving measures that have an impact furthest away from our classrooms and academic programs. We are excited to now have an energy specialist at West Allegheny so we may begin to identify and implement ways to save money on our energy usage."

"I look forward to our partnership with Cenergistic and working with Colleen," stated Ken Fibbi, director of buildings and grounds at West Allegheny. "We all have high aspirations for the success of the program."

## Speech and Debate team earns national accolades

West Allegheny's Speech and Debate team has continued to earn national accolades for its distinguished performances throughout the 2013-2014 school year. Based on points earned in the National Speech and Debate Association, the team was ranked in the top one percent of schools nationwide, and recognized with membership in the prestigious Société de 300.

In addition, West Allegheny placed among the top 100 schools in the nation for last year's competition. The school ranked 92nd out of more than 7,000. Participants earn points and degrees based on competitive and service-related activities. Recipient schools are published in "Rostrum," the national magazine of high school speech and debate.

"The Speech and Debate Team is a signature of excellence at West Allegheny, achieving the highest distinction of recognition at the national level," stated Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert,

West Allegheny superintendent. "I commend the coaches and students for a remarkable job. The model of excellence, team work, and commitment serve as inspiration and motivation for the entire West Allegheny School District."

"This milestone is remarkable because it demonstrates outstanding commitment to teaching students essential life skills – including communication, research, listening, writing and organization," stated J. Scott Wunn, executive director of the National Speech & Debate Association. "The hard work you have invested to achieve this distinction will pay dividends for years to come."

The National Speech & Debate Association is the largest interscholastic speech and debate organization serving middle school, high school and college students in the United States.

Last year's coaches were Michael Shaffer and Michael Quinn.



# Superintendent's Message

It has been an amazing first quarter at West Allegheny, during which time there have been many academic milestones as well as accomplishments on our athletic fields and stage!

In the September/October 2014 issue of WA Today, I shared our three District Priorities: first, Academic Rigor, Equity and Excellence for All Students; second, High Quality Instruction in Every Classroom, Every Day; and third, Financial Responsibility and Operational Efficiency.

Since then, we have also committed to expanding communication by supporting transparency and dialogue around issues that impact our schools, students, parents, teachers and staff. To that end, I have established formal superintendent advisory groups made up of ambassadors representing teachers, staff, parents and students.

Throughout the month of October, I participated in teacher/staff lunch talks in each school. The informal gatherings allowed teachers and staff during their lunch to sit and talk with me about anything on their minds. The conversations were insightful and enjoyable. We discussed everything from expectations about increasing rigor and accountability to teachers' interests outside the classroom. We talked about family, pets, and establishing a West Allegheny Pittsburgh Marathon relay team in each school. These talks created a forum to surface and address concerns, as well as build relationships and get to know each other. Providing an avenue for teachers and staff to dialogue around issues impacting them and their students is extremely important to me as we continue to move the District forward. I have committed to continuing quarterly lunch talks with staff in each school.

The first quarter of this school year also saw the kick-off of the first WA Parent Advisory Network for Educational Leadership, or WA PANEL, consisting of 14 parents selected by principals from each school. Our parent advisory group provides an important perspective: "the parent perspective." It is an opportunity to interact with parents in open discussions about District initiatives and concerns. Our parent advisory group is set to meet quarterly.

Our first meeting was held in mid October. We asked parents to share what they would brag about West Allegheny School District, and what they wish they could. The ensuing discussion validated the thoughtful collaboration reflected in the District's Framework for Excellence. It also corroborated our three District priorities.

Parent brags included: the caring and closeness of the community, great support services, opportunities for student and parent involvement, safety of schools, athletics and arts programs, anti-bullying campaigns, availability of administrative teams, D.A.R.E. officers, a Blue Ribbon School, and elementary education. When sharing what they wish they could brag about, several themes emerged, including: a more rigorous academic program of studies in middle/high school and expectations for our students, consistency in curricula and instructional programming within and across elementary schools, students achieving at advanced levels, achieving excellence in academics to mirror our athletic and arts success, full-day kindergarten, additional technology and support, teacher (educator) evaluation and accountability, and high quality (relevant) professional development for teachers.

Also in October, we launched our first student ambassadors meeting. The first session was with our high school student ambassadors, and the second was with our middle school student ambassadors. Both groups of students were highly engaged, energetic and eager to share their insights and personal experiences. Our students' perspectives add tremendous value to the conversation around the direction in which the District is moving. This first round of conversations focused on what they would suggest stopping, starting and continuing. A few main themes surfaced in both groups, including the desire for more academic press and college preparedness, as well as consistency across grades and instructional practices. A common theme across both student and parent ambassadors is establishing a similar legacy for academics that already exists for

athletics at West Allegheny.

Student ambassadors will continue to meet with me throughout the school year. Our elementary student ambassadors will have their first meeting with me in December.

Being the new superintendent of West Allegheny School District, the experience of listening to and dialoguing with parents, teachers, staff and students is not only extremely valuable but also incredibly insightful and enjoyable. Throughout this year of transition, which includes a new administrative team, implementation of PA Core Standards, academic programming modifications, contract negotiations and major construction projects, advisory and ambassador groups are critical to ensure all voices and perspectives are considered as decisions are made. In addition to offering credence to the strong foundation already established, they provide a pathway to support our continued growth as a District, as well as valued collectivism and collaboration. Throughout my interactions, staff, students and parents of West Allegheny have been exemplary. Together, we will nurture, inspire and support all of our students to realize tremendous success.

## PA School Performance Profile ranks West Allegheny High School fifth in Allegheny County

The Pennsylvania Department of Education recently released the 2013-2014 Pennsylvania School Performance Profile at <http://www.paschoolperformance.org>. The profile is based on statewide assessments; academic growth; and graduation, attendance and promotion rates. Rankings placed West Allegheny High School fifth out of 45 high schools in Allegheny County, with an overall score of 96 percent.

### Allegheny County Top 10 High School Rankings

1	Pine Richland - 99.4	6	Hampton - 95.1
2	Mt. Lebanon - 99.3	7	Upper St. Clair - 94.8
3	Moon - 98.4	8	Fox Chapel - 93.2
4	North Allegheny - 97.2	9	Quaker Valley - 91.0
5	West Allegheny - 96.0	10	Bethel Park - 90.0

"I am very proud of my assistants, staff and students," said Dan Smith, West Allegheny High School principal. "Through strategic planning, hard work and dedication, we were able to improve our score from one year to the next. Two years in a row at above 90% SPP demonstrates the commitment of the staff and students toward academic achievement."

Also scoring in the 90s for the second year in a row was the District's National Blue Ribbon School, Donaldson Elementary, with a score of 93.9. The score indicates significant evidence that the school exceeds standards. Both the high school and Donaldson Elementary will be receiving the Governor's Award for Academic Excellence for the second year in a row.

"The Donaldson SPP score continues to be evidence of our hard work and strong commitment to do everything we can to teach and add value to the education of our students," stated Patricia Nolan, Donaldson principal. "We will continue to study all aspects that contribute to our SPP score and tailor our efforts this school year to sustain and grow our students and all factors contributing to our SPP score. I encourage any member of our school community to visit our schools and see firsthand what we are doing every day in all of our schools. I am very proud of Donaldson and all of our West Allegheny Schools."

Overall, West Allegheny's five schools either exceeded or met the standards for PA Academic Achievement. Individual scores are indicated on the next page.

"These results show that, compared to 2012-13, the majority of our public schools are performing well even though the state has recently revised its academic standards and is transitioning to more rigorous assessments," Carolyn Dumaesq, acting secretary of the Pennsylvania



## Superintendent's Message, cont.

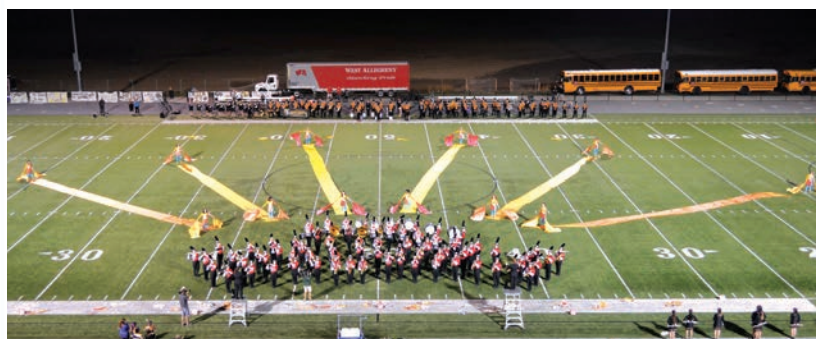
Department of Education, said in a statement. "I am pleased that our students and educators continue to meet the challenge of more rigorous academic programs, and I congratulate them for a job well done."

Teachers, administrators, staff and students are working very hard every day to get smarter and better. The District's SPP scores are only one measure used to determine if the District is meeting students' needs and preparing them for the rigor of college and 21st century careers. The SPP scores however also validate the excellent work underway at West Allegheny and illuminate areas where focus and refinement are needed to propel the District to new heights of academic excellence.

**Dr. Jerri Lynn Lippert,**  
Superintendent

West Allegheny - PA Performance Profiles	2013-14 SPP	2012-13 SPP
West Allegheny High School	96.0	93.9
West Allegheny Middle School	77.8	80.5
Donaldson Elementary School	93.9	96.9
McKee Elementary School	83.6	94.1
Wilson Elementary School	81.7	95.2

## Cavalcade marches into 35th year



The West Allegheny High School Marching Band and band parents hosted the 35th annual Cavalcade of Bands at the high school stadium October 11. The following marching bands performed: Knoch, Montour, Sto-Rox, West Allegheny and West Mifflin as well as the Robert Morris University Marching Band.

West Allegheny's 2014-2015 show is titled "Music Under The Sun." Pieces performed during the show include "You Are the Sunshine of My Life," "House of the Rising Sun," "Soak Up the Sun," and "Don't Let the Sun Go Down On Me." This year's drum majors are seniors Jordan Skank and Antonette Sutto. The marching band is under the direction of TJ Fox.

## Donaldson Elementary School recognized for National Blue Ribbon distinction

It has been a busy and rewarding time for Donaldson Elementary staff, as they have been recognized locally and nationally for being named a National Blue Ribbon School. Donaldson earned the National Blue Ribbon Award as an Exemplary High Performing school. The award is given to schools with the state's highest high school graduation rates and/or the highest achieving students. These students place within the top 15% in English and mathematics, as measured by state assessments.

The West Allegheny school board and administration hosted a staff appreciation breakfast October 24 to recognize the hard work and commitment necessary to earn the Blue Ribbon distinction. U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy, state Sen. Matt Smith, and state Rep. Mark Mustio were in attendance and presented principal Patricia Nolan with citations from their respective offices.

On November 10 and 11, Nolan travelled to Washington, D.C. with Donaldson teacher Dr. Erin Dierker to attend the official National Blue Ribbon School ceremony. On behalf of the school and District, Nolan and Dierker

were presented with a National Blue Ribbon School flag and plaque. School representatives also had an opportunity to share ideas about excellence in education and attend a networking reception. Nolan and

Dierker attended several sessions in which nationally recognized speakers talked to all representatives of the 337 schools in attendance.

"It was an amazing experience to have the opportunity to talk and network with principals and teachers of National Blue Ribbon Schools from all over the U.S.," said Nolan. "I enjoyed listening to some of the other schools' challenges and how they are addressing them. It made me realize that every school district has to work smart to find solutions to the ever-changing landscape of education. I left the National Blue Ribbon awards feeling very positive about my school, the school district, and the accomplishment of receiving this NBR designation. I think we are doing a lot of great things at West Allegheny, but we are also always looking for ways we can make improvements for the education of our students. But, don't get me wrong, we are going to enjoy the 2014 National Blue Ribbon designation as a school community!"



Donaldson Elementary staff are recognized at an appreciation breakfast by U.S. Rep. Tim Murphy, state Sen. Matt Smith, and state Rep. Mark Mustio, along with school board members and administration.



## Seventh graders presented with life-changing CHOICES

Seventh grade social studies classes were introduced to a variety of careers October 8-9 when the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce presented CHOICES. This interactive classroom workshop offers students a chance to look into their future and recognize the importance of the personal and academic decisions they make today.

Presenters consisted of volunteers from Chamber businesses and included Jocelyn Grecko, Range Resources; John Daley, Family Wealth Management Group, LLC / Lincoln Financial Advisors; Jackie Price, Justin Polosky, Lindsey Huet and Greg Burroughs, Embassy Suites Hotel; David Goldman, Goldman Organization; Deb Walenchok, McCormick Real Estate; and Doug Keeter, Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce.

Students explored time and money management, self-discipline and career choices through creative and participatory exercises. They were challenged to think about their future career options while considering the impact their choices will have on others and the world around them.

"I liked the program because they made me think of my life after high school," said seventh grader Brenna Downing.

"I liked the CHOICES program because it taught me that

self-discipline is the most important trait you can have to be successful," added seventh grader Samantha Cox.

Teachers Jessica Henry and Todd Rasbach organized the program in conjunction with Susan Hovanec, CHOICES Program Manager for Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce.

Students Paul Fedorka, Michael Baker, Keshawn Hildreth, and McKenzie Zeigler participate in a CHOICES workshop activity.



## Future educators Read for the Record

High school members of the Future Educators Association participated in Jumpstart's ninth annual Read for the Record® October 21. The nationally celebrated event brings adults and children together in an effort to jumpstart a child's future through reading. Kindergarten classes at Donaldson and McKee Elementary schools were visited by FEA members who read to students this year's book choice, "Bunny Cakes," by Rosemary Wellsand. FEA members also led students in several book-related activities.

Jennifer Jones is the high school FEA advisor, which currently has about 25 members.

FEA members Taylor James and Lexi Cogis read to Holly Smith's kindergarten class at Donaldson Elementary.



## Sophomores explore career opportunities at PTI



Nicole Kadlecik tries her hand at PTI's graphic design program.

On October 8, sophomores paid an annual visit to Pittsburgh Technical Institute in Oakdale for a day of hands-on career exploration. Students were divided into teams and spent the day rotating through programs that have proven popular as career interests for many students.

In each program, students participated in an activity that allowed them to experience a field firsthand. For instance, a criminal justice session offered students the opportunity to interact with video simulations of real-life crime scenes, and learn the correct way to gather evidence. Other activities focused on fields such as nursing, public safety, graphic design and electronics.

In keeping with the District's emphasis on career exploration and community involvement throughout high school, this is the seventh year the guidance department has partnered with PTI to sponsor the event.



## McKee students travel back in time

On October 24, McKee held its Early American Day Festival. Students were transported back in time for the event, which is an extension of the social studies curriculum. Textbooks came alive as students rotated through stations providing them with living history lessons. They explored slavery in Western Pennsylvania, learned how to make cornbread and churn butter, observed chair caning, danced a do-si-do, competed in pioneer games, interacted with a soldier dressed in full period regalia, ate mountain pies, took a hayride, and listened to a story teller.

The day proved a huge success with students, as noted by first grader James Dhans.

"Excuse me," exclaimed James, "this has been the best day of my whole life!"

Teachers Lorraine Burns and Terisa Sharlow were the main organizers of the daylong event, which was underwritten by a grant from the West Allegheny Foundation.



**ABOVE:**  
Temujin Ekunfeo of The Neville House Associates gave a presentation on the history of slavery in Pennsylvania.



**RIGHT:**  
Students enjoyed a hay ride from Sam Burns.

## Wilson students celebrate annual Love Our Log House Day

Wilson Elementary students celebrated Love Our Log House Day October 21. The annual event included a variety of hands-on activities transporting them back in time.

The historic log house, located on school grounds, provided the proper setting for the day's agenda. One highlight was storyteller Robin Moore, who engaged students with tales. Other activities included candle dipping, tin punching, applesauce and butter making, square dancing, pioneer songs and silhouette creations.

To round out the day, students enjoyed an array of pioneer games.

Students enjoy historic tales from storyteller Robin Moore.



## Students celebrate annual Mythology Day



Students on the Seven Wonders and Seven Ups teams came together to celebrate their annual Mythology Day November 3 as a hands-on extension of the social studies curriculum. In addition to students dressing in Greek costumes, they were also invited to participate in the play "Orpheus and Eurydice." Classes were visited by Zeus and Athena, as played by Todd Rasbach and Jessica Henry. The two organized the daylong event.



## SADD members show appreciation during National Red Ribbon Week

In recognition of National Red Ribbon Week, members of Students Against Destructive Decisions presented cakes to North Fayette and Findlay Township police officers to thank them for their efforts to educate students about driver safety. Students also created chalk messages on sidewalks around the school highlighting the dangers of distracted driving, drug and alcohol abuse, and health issues associated with smoking.

The 2014-2015 officers for SADD are Christian Stout, Sean Orsini, Alexa Boni, Alexis Juzwick and Lauren Bailey. Class representatives are Joshua Bahr, Carolyn Stout, Nick Ross, Michael Starkman and Mikayla Day. Faculty sponsors of SADD are Carol Bookmiller, Steve Nicola, Kateri Meinert and Wanda Wright.

In its 29th year as the nation's largest and oldest drug prevention campaign, Red Ribbon Week reaches 80 million people each year throughout the United States.

**RIGHT:** Senior members of SADD showed their appreciation by presenting a cake to school resource officer Sgt. John Bates of the North Fayette Police Department (top) and North Fayette police chief Mark O'Donnell (bottom).

**LEFT:** Tyler Gatchell creates sidewalk messages during Red Ribbon Week.



## Time-honored traditions of Hispanic culture on display

The high school Spanish Club and classes celebrated Day of the Dead (el día de los muertos) with activities throughout October that served as an extension of classroom learning.

In recognition of this Mexican holiday, the Spanish Club met after school October 27 to decorate miniature sugar skulls (calaveras de azúcar). These colorful skulls are considered folk art and are meant to celebrate life. Students used sequins, feathers and colored icing to personalize their creations.

As a class project, Allison McLaren's Spanish I and IV students constructed altars (ofrendas) to honor deceased loved ones. Ofrendas typically consist of a photo of the individual being remembered, personal items enjoyed in



Students Clay Rehm, Kyle McCracken, and Emily Alfonso created an altar to memorialize German teacher Karen Estermyer, who passed away in October.

life, food, flowers and candles. Students were asked to memorialize a deceased loved one or a famous Hispanic person. Fifty altars, including one honoring Frau Estermyer, were created and displayed in McLaren's room for students and teachers to enjoy.

All Spanish classes celebrated this special time of year by hosting a lively fiesta with traditional foods and dancing October 30. The menu included a taco bar and traditional dishes prepared by students.

Colleen Cunningham, Michelle Matoney and Allison McLaren are the high school Spanish teachers.



Pryclynn Kubatka-Campbell displays her sugar skull creation.

## German classes honor Oktoberfest traditions

High school German classes celebrated Oktoberfest with traditional songs, dances and foods October 17. Under the direction of German teacher Katie Zanella and substitute teacher Mike Serventi, students sang spirited songs of camaraderie and joined together to perform the Chicken Dance (a German Polka) and the Das Fliegerlied. Students also enjoyed sampling cultural dishes such as bratwurst, German potato salad and potato pancakes. Additionally, students were invited to participate in a sauerkraut-eating contest.

Students Raven Wahl, Rachel Buck, and Lydia Will don their traditional dirndls in recognition of Oktoberfest.





## High school presents fall play: "Elephant's Graveyard"

High school students presented "Elephant's Graveyard" by George Brant for the school's fall play October 18, 19 and 25. The production was primarily student-run. Actors, stage and costume crews, technicians and artists all consisted of high school students. The play was coordinated

under the guidance of teacher Mike Shaffer and high school staff members.

"Elephant's Graveyard" is based on a true story about the tragic collision of a struggling circus and a tiny town in Tennessee. Set in 1916, the play combines historical fact and legend, exploring the deep-seated American craving for spectacle, violence and revenge, while retelling the only known lynching of an elephant.



Senior Cameron Kehm plays the ringmaster in "Elephant's Graveyard."

## Wilson kicks off Olweus anti-bullying program

Wilson Elementary School kicked off its Olweus anti-bullying program September 22 with activities designed to reinforce the program's messages. In the morning, each classroom hosted meetings in which discussion focused on Wilson's anti-bullying rules and creating a positive classroom environment.

Throughout the day, school guidance counselor Kathy Taylor presented anti-bullying-themed activities. Third grade participated in the bullying circle, which identifies and demonstrates various roles in a bullying situation. Through participation, students discovered possible motivations for bullying behavior and identified possible solutions. The fifth grade participated in a lesson focused on cyber-bullying and text messaging safety.

The day ended with an assembly by Josh and Gab, who visit schools promoting anti-bullying. Through a musical program, they utilize humor, original songs, interactive exercises and energetic storytelling to share their educational message.



## Donaldson students expand their perspectives through webinar and videoconference

Donaldson Elementary students in fourth and fifth grade participated in Global Dignity and Respect Day October 22. The day's activities included a webinar coordinated by the AIU and UPMC that was broadcast to other schools, including one from Ireland. Each school gave a brief presentation. Donaldson students spelled out the words dignity and respect to highlight benefits of each character trait. Former Steeler quarterback Charlie Batch served as guest host and answered questions from students about respecting others, as well as oneself.

On October 27, Donaldson students welcomed author Mac Barnett and illustrator Jon Klassen for a videoconference hosted by Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures and the AIU. Barnett and Klassen discussed their books "Sam & Dave Dig a Hole" and "Extra Yarn." They also answered questions posed by students from Donaldson and other regional schools.

Both programs were brought to Donaldson by librarian Beth Schultz.



Students display posters and share thoughtful messages associated with each letter. Students include: (front) Jackson DiCesaro, David McKoy, Olivia Norris, Gabby Holtz, Madison Rieker, Olivia Hellman and Ty Watters; (back) Mrs. Schultz, KC Okoye, Dakota Rideout, Delaney McQuaide, Aiden O'Toole, Ella Chandler, Joey Cosnek and Kylie Stacy.



## Sixth grade walk-a-thon raises over \$10,000 for local charities

October 17 was a great day to go for a walk, while dressed as a toy, and to raise over \$10,000 for charity. That is exactly what sixth grade students on both the Fire and Ice teams did as they came together at the Joe P. DeMichela Stadium for the annual walk-a-thon, which followed the theme Teaming for Toys.

Students solicited sponsors, and funds collected will go to the family support committee to assist local families in need this holiday season. Sixth graders competed in teams named after toys to raise the most money. This year's winning team for the most money raised was the Wind-up Dolls, with a total of \$860. The Misfit Toys won for best costume and poster, and the Barbies were the runner-up for best poster. The Wind-up Dolls and Misfit Toys will each receive \$5 gift cards and will join the teachers for a pizza and ice cream sundae party after school. The Barbies will also each receive \$5 gift cards.

Sixth grade teachers from both the Fire and Ice teams helped coordinate the event. They included: Rachel Adair, Bill Britton, Tom Burke, Erin Clay, Brittany Killen, Brian Lambert, Bill Marx, Valerie Meehan, Gabrielle Monti, Melissa Riley, Jeannine Schuler, Nancy Watkins and Sami Yuretech.



Team Wind-up Dolls collected the most donations during a walk-a-thon fundraiser in October.

## Donaldson Elementary raises funds through Pasta for Pennies

Donaldson Elementary students raised \$2,243.75 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society during the month of October by participating in their annual Pasta for Pennies campaign. Along with providing financial support to people with these life-threatening diseases, the students in the top fundraising class were able to earn a pasta party provided by the Robinson Township Olive Garden restaurant. With a total of \$347.59 collected, Cindy Hensler's second grade class won the pasta party. Two mystery competitions were won by Debbie Hamilton's fifth grade class for donating the most pennies (2,144) and Diane Ordich's fourth grade class for donating the most quarters (427). Dr. Erin Dierker, teacher, and Kristen Tracy, elementary social worker, coordinated the project.

## McKee walks the walk

McKee Elementary School hosted its annual walk-a-thon September 26 to raise funds to support field trips and programs. Students, parents and teachers came together for a day of physical fitness, friendship and fundraising. Donations totaling \$2,800 were collected and the event once again proved a success.

Students, parents and teachers take a lap around the field.





## Tipping their hats to WA fundraising efforts

Middle school student government and Donaldson Elementary School participated in the 2014 Wear a Hat for Cancer campaign. For a donation, students were encouraged to wear their favorite hat to school to show support for the cause.

All funds raised at the middle school benefit the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and the Division of Blood and Marrow Transplantation (BMT) and Cellular Therapies at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC. Melissa Riley serves as the advisor for the middle school student government, which raised \$447.

Donaldson students donned their hats to support fellow fourth grade student Anya LaMar, who was diagnosed with Ewing's sarcoma earlier this year. A total of \$633 was raised and donated to the cause.



**TOP:** Members of Jacqui King's fourth grade class Skype fellow classmate Anya LaMar to show their support.

**RIGHT:** Middle school members of student government wear their favorite hat in support of Wear a Hat for Cancer program.



## Eighth graders mark 15th annual World Peace One Day

September 21 marked the 15th annual World Peace One Day, which was celebrated by eighth grade students in Deb Kazar, Jacob Minsinger, Marcella Selestow and Mary Jo Seybert's language arts classes and promoted throughout the middle school. While learning about the United Nation's Peace One Day, students watched a documentary created by Jeremy Gilley that launched the movement. The inspiring piece details Gilley's efforts to create awareness of the day, and shows how he mobilized thousands to implement active peace-making activities around the world.

A student-driven awareness campaign was implemented, and a PowerPoint presentation of the day shown to parents at an open house. T-shirts and posters were also created. A number of school-wide activities brought awareness to the efforts.



Students Elizabeth Vollmer, Tara Coulter, Lauren Bayer, Alexis Fleet, and Kaitlyn Uram put the finishing touches on their Peace Day posters.

## Powder puff game raises \$1,455 for local families

The West Allegheny junior/senior powder puff football game was held November 6, and raised \$1,455 for local families in need this holiday season. The National Honor Society sponsored the fundraiser.

A total of 102 girls participated in the game, which resulted in a 13-7 junior win. Senior Brandon Rossi announced the game and kept the crowd entertained.

Staff coaches for the junior team were Eric Shepard and Kennan Killeen. For the senior team, coaches were Jennifer Jones, Jessica Denk and Will Mills. The NHS would like to thank the coaches who donated their time and the families who attended.

Lynn Birnie and Lauren Barry are the NHS faculty advisors.

Junior Julianne Buterbaugh sets her sights on senior Lauren Costa.





## Fall sports wrap-up

It was an exciting fall season for West Allegheny's athletic teams, as the school witnessed cross-country, boys soccer and football all advance to the post season.

Following impressive performances in the WPIAL finals at Cooper's Lake in Slippery Rock, Alexis O'Shea, Maddie Salek, Zack White and John Artinger qualified for the state cross-country championships. The runners traveled to Hershey for the PIAA finals and their last race of the season November 1. The runners represented West Allegheny well, with O'Shea medaling in seventh place in the AAA girls division with a time of 18:33. White also brought home a medal for his 21st place finish in the AA boys final, clocking in at 16:49. Salek finished the race 64th, while Artinger placed 75th, both out of 225 runners.

After an impressive regular season, the boys soccer team met section rival South Fayette November 8 in a quarterfinal round of the PIAA championship. Despite a valiant effort, the team came up short in a 1-0 loss to close out their season. Overall, the team won their section, played in a WPIAL title game and reached the state playoffs.

In football, the Indians defeated the Thomas Jefferson Jaguars in a semi-final game of the WPIAL playoffs with a score of 41-7. The win advanced the team to the WPIAL finals for a rematch against Central Valley November 21 at Heinz Field. After falling behind by 21 points in the first quarter, the Indians came back to tie the game in the third, but were never able to take the lead. They lost, 35-28.

## Palko named Coach of the Week

Head football coach Bob Palko was named High School Coach of the Week by the Pittsburgh Steelers as part of the team's Youth Football Program. Palko was presented the award by sports announcer Stan Savran during halftime at a Steelers home game. By receiving the award, Palko is entered into consideration for High School Coach of the Year honors.



ABOVE: Cross-country coach Jim Hamilton with runners Maddie Salek, John Artinger, Zack White and Alexis O'Shea following the PIAA championship race November 1.

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All material has been prepared,  
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School Community  
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West Allegheny School District  
(724) 695-5274





# West Allegheny Youth Soccer Association

## Spring 2015 REGISTRATION

Season runs April 4th through late May

**DEADLINE: January 31st**

(Registration for In-house players only will be accepted until February 15 with a \$10 late fee.)

Travel players must register by January 31st

**Child must be 4 years old by 7/31/14**

**NO EXCEPTIONS**

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U8 Boys & Girls coed*	Tuesday 6:00 – 7:00 pm	Saturday 11:15 am-12:15 pm	Youthtowne	\$75.00
U10 Boys and Girls coed*	Monday 6:15 – 7:15 pm	Saturday 8:30-9:30 am	Argenta / Donaldson	\$75.00
*U8/U10 additional skills training by Youth Elite Soccer	Thursday 6:15 - 7:15 pm	5 sessions	Argenta	Included!
Travel (U11 and above)	TBD practice day and location	Sunday afternoon games	(U11/12) 2 additional skill sessions by YES	\$85.00

## Ways to Register:

- Go to: [www.pa-wallegheny.sportsaffinity.com](http://www.pa-wallegheny.sportsaffinity.com)  
(Register on-line and SAVE \$5.00)
- Print registration form on website and mail to P.O. Box
- January 24th at WA Community Library from 10-12.

Questions Call Heather Chappel (724) 693-2536 OR Michelle Abbott (724) 693-8073

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Wed., Dec. 24  
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## **Merry Christmas**

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## **New Year's Eve**

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## **Happy New Year**

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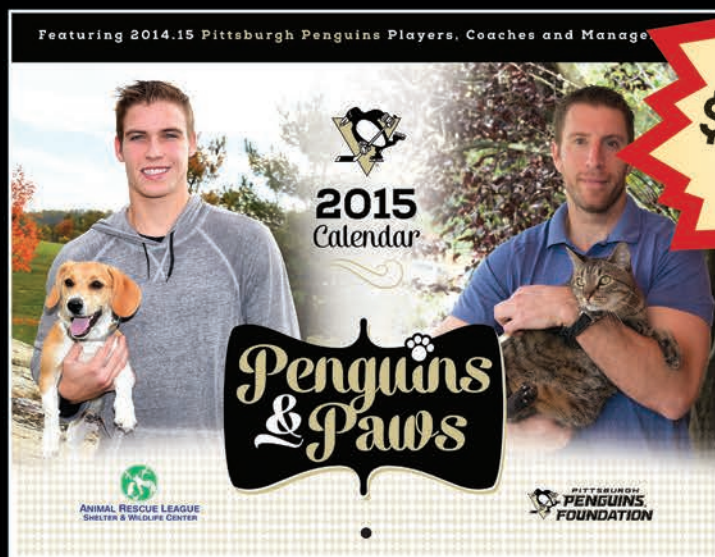




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## Our Lady of the Sacred Heart OLSH launches mobile app

At Our Lady of the Sacred Heart High School, delivering up-to-date, relevant information to parents and students is a top priority. In recent years, the school has dramatically increased its use of a variety of social media, created several electronic newsletters and e-blasts, and expanded its website content. The school's newly released OLSH mobile app was the logical next layer of support added to the mix, and serves as an easy-to-use dashboard that connects users to "all things OLSH," including quick access to mobile-friendly versions of all e-blasts, links to OLSH's social media feeds, sports schedules, OLSH videos and more.

Parents, students and alumni have been downloading and installing the app on their apple and android devices. Parent Jennie Cercone commented, "I downloaded the app the same afternoon we learned about it. I've used it each day since. I went through events to easily add reminders to my calendar, spent time on the faith tab, which I can see myself using often, and I really like the campus access module. It's evident that a lot of time and consideration went into the planning, design and implementation of the app."

The school partnered with Straxis Technologies to develop the app, which features a content management system, allowing OLSH staff to make updates to content and send push notifications to users. With features for alumni and prospective families in addition to those for students and parents, the new tool makes connecting with OLSH easier than ever.



A screen shot of the new OLSH mobile app.

## OLSH named Catholic Education Honor Roll School of Excellence

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart High School has been named a 2014 Catholic Education Honor Roll School of Excellence by the Cardinal Newman Society. The distinction places OLSH among the top five percent of all Catholic high schools in the U.S.

"Being honored as a Catholic School of Excellence is a wonderful honor that recognizes the OLSH community as a whole," said the school's principal, Tim Plocinik. "I am especially proud for our faculty and staff, who are committed to the mission and vision of the Felician Sisters and who are dedicated to providing an exceptional Catholic education for all of our students."

OLSH received the recognition after completing a rigorous application process, designed to assess each participating school's commitment to Catholic ideals and principles, determine the extent to which its administration, faculty and staff are mission-centered, and measure the strength of its policies and programs. Schools of Excellence demonstrate merit in the key areas, thereby ensuring continued expression, preservation, and enhancement of the school's Catholic identity.

"This distinction validates the strength of our

Felician Franciscan mission and our vitality as a Catholic community," said Terry O'Rourke Donoghue, OLSH president.



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# St Philip School

## Young students learn about economics through Junior Achievement program

Under the auspices of the Junior Achievement program, students from Bishop Canevin High School visited and spent the day teaching children about economics. Lessons were presented at all grade levels and included topics such as money use in kindergarten, business strategies in fifth grade, and communications and transportation in sixth grade. Children enjoyed being taught by students just a little older than themselves, and related well to the style of learning.

JA Worldwide is a partnership between the business community, educators and volunteers, who are all working together to inspire young people to dream big and reach their potential. JA's hands-on, experiential programs teach key concepts of work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy to young people all over the world. Bishop Canevin students train and present the event yearly, and seemed to enjoy being teachers for the day. Students especially loved to see St. Philip graduates come back as instructors.

The local JA program and Bishop Canevin offer scholarships to eighth graders who have attended Catholic school and participated in the JA program.

**Bishop Canevin students instruct second graders on businesses in the community.**



## Anti-bullying program launches

The St. Philip Step In anti-bullying program got off to a great start this year with a lively program presented by performers Josh and Gabby. The pair delivered powerful messages about the effects of bullying and how to deal with bullies through songs, music and rap. Children responded enthusiastically to the energetic performance with thoughtful answers to questions posed to them about the subject.

**A performer, Gabby, asks students how they could Step-In if they see someone being bullied during an anti-bullying performance.**



## KDKA weatherman visits with fun and factual message

KDKA weatherman Dennis Bowman brought his Classroom Weather Show to St. Philip School Oct. 8. Bowman and his puppet, Chester Drawers, gave students safety tips about severe weather, and demonstrated weather instruments such as balloons and sondes, which gather barometric pressure and wind speed. Children enjoyed the humorous way the rules were presented, but also appreciated the seriousness of the message.

Bowman also created a tornado from dry ice, heat, and wind to demonstrate how the destructive storms are formed. In appreciation of the program, the student council presented Bowman with a cake and check for \$1,274.13 for the KDKA Turkey Fund, which they raised through a dress-down day.



**Student council members present KDKA weatherman Dennis Bowman with a check for \$1274.13 for the KDKA Turkey Fund.**

## Students remember 9/11



**Boy Scouts unfurl the school's 9/11 Flag on the altar during a 9/11 prayer service Sept. 11.**

On Sept. 11, St. Philip schoolchildren held a remembrance prayer service to remember the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, an event which even the oldest students were too young to remember. They however showed both their compassion and patriotism with a recitation of the Rosary, by singing "America the Beautiful," and a observing a reverent unfurling of the school's 9/11 Flag made from handprints of St. Philip students and faculty. The flag has traveled internationally, particularly to schools in New York City, where students were most affected by the tragedy. The flag continues to hang in the church to remind all to pray for peace.



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## Holy Trinity Catholic School

### Girls' volleyball team tops in tournament

Holy Trinity Catholic School's girls varsity volleyball team won the St. Anne's Tournament by beating a formidable East Catholic squad in the championship match in three games Oct. 4. After finishing the regular season atop their section with a 13-1 record, the team beat St. Mary's of Glenshaw in the first round of the playoffs two games to none.

The team is coached by Diane Ritter.

### Moon Run Fire

#### Department visits with preschoolers

The Moon Run VFD paid a visit to Holy Trinity Catholic Preschool recently. Firefighters talked to students about fire safety and allowed them to get up close with their Fire Rescue vehicle and gear. Students were able to try on a fireman's coat and even operate a real fire hose. Students and teachers were grateful for the firemen's time and efforts.

**RIGHT: Moon Run VFD Assistant Chief and paramedic Michael Fashion outfits Holy Trinity Preschooler Lucas Workinger in firefighter gear as fireman Bill Frekker watches.**



### Celebrating 60 years

The 2014-2015 school year marks Holy Trinity School's 60th year of providing faith-based elementary education for students in preschool through eighth grade. Holy Trinity Catholic School opened for the first time in September of 1954. The first five grades were staffed by the Sisters of St. Francis, of the Providence of God. In 1957, a new wing was added with eight classrooms and an auditorium. A new gymnasium, complete with pullout bleachers, boys' and girls' locker rooms, gleaming hardwood floors, and a fine arts stage were all added in 2002.

Fully-equipped science and computer labs also have been added in recent years. The classrooms have been equipped with smart boards and laptops for teachers, along with handheld digital devices such as Nooks and Kindles for Middle School reading and literature.

Currently, 400 students are enrolled at Holy Trinity. Students live in the neighboring communities of Robinson, Kennedy, North Fayette, Findlay, Moon and Scott Townships, as well as Coraopolis, Imperial, McDonald, Oakdale, Green Tree, Crafton, Ingram, the City of Pittsburgh and others. Respect for all is reinforced through the school's Positive Attitudes Will Shine Anti-Bullying Program. Extracurricular activities include seven sports, violin, band, forensics, student council, battle of the books, academic team, art club, chess club, and opportunities to enhance knowledge and skills in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM, areas of study through participation in area competitions.

### Alumni wanted

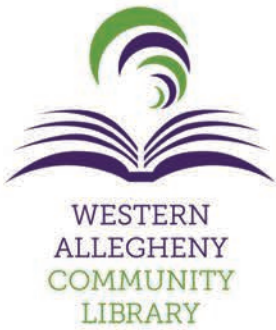
As part of the Holy Trinity's 60th Anniversary Celebration this year, Holy Trinity is reaching out to alumni to help them connect with their old school, former teachers and each another. Events are planned for later in the year. An alumni newsletter and society are possibilities. Anyone who has attended the school or worked there is encouraged to contact Holy Trinity Director of Advancement Dave Haseleu. He is compiling an alumni directory and is interested in receiving photos, memories and stories from the school's past.

Dave can be reached at (412) 787-2656 x 152 and at [advancement@holytrinityrobinson.org](mailto:advancement@holytrinityrobinson.org).



**LEFT: Holy Trinity Catholic School in 1957. RIGHT: The school as it stands today.**





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- ★ The new children's area has allowed us to increase our youth programs with a beautiful story time room and expanded collection.
- ★ The "Teen Zone" gives students a safe place to learn, study and grow.
- ★ Private computer stations give visitors a quiet place to access our computers free of charge, while our laptop computers allow users to find their own comfortable place within the library to work. And the opportunities don't end there!

As we look toward 2015 we know there is much more work ahead. We plan to continue to grow technology programs and offerings, increase outreach to younger audiences, and complete the building expansion. But we can't do it alone – **we need your support today!** Rooted in a growing community, the demand for our programs and services continues to increase. And we want to grow with our community!

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**January 15** - BizBlast @ Noon business networking lunch, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. at Valassis

**January 23** - Annual Celebration of Excellence 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh International Airport

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## PAACC SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The PAACC is pleased to offer two scholarship programs. The Sally Haas Scholarship Fund was established by the PAACC in memory of the late Sally Haas, who provided exemplary leadership as the PAACC's President/CEO for 14 years.

The fund provides two scholarships: one to an aviation student in the Airport Corridor region, and one to a student who is a member of a military family and is in need of financial assistance for post-secondary education. The deadline for Sally Haas Scholarship Fund applications was November 30 and the scholarship recipients will be announced in January, 2015. Missed that deadline? There is still plenty of time to apply for another scholarship opportunity the PAACC is offering through a special grant made by Consol Energy Inc. Consol's grant will support graduating seniors pursuing a post-secondary degree in

science, technology, engineering and math education. Through this grant, Consol will provide \$5,000 to a student from Moon High School, a student from Montour High School and a student from West Allegheny High School during the 2014-15 academic year. To be eligible, seniors from each of the three schools need to submit an application with an essay on one of two chosen topics, maintain a 3.0 grade point average, and establish acceptance into a school offering a degree in a STEM-related field. Applications are accepted November 1, 2014 through March 31, 2014. Visit paacc.com and scroll the "Programs and Events" menu bar for "Scholarship Programs" to learn more and to download the application. You may also contact the PAACC office by phone at 412.264.6270.



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Info Meeting

**December 10**

6 pm at the PAACC office in Moon Township.

To register or for more info:

412.264.6270 | paacc.com



# The Ladies of West Allegheny Hockey

The West Allegheny boys hockey team has been expanding lately to include a number of girls. Currently, four girls play for the JV team and three dress for varsity. Because there are no local high school-level girls hockey teams, they represent their school by playing on the boys team.

Sydney Foy is a sophomore and captain of the JV team. She also plays for a AA team, the Armstrong Arrows, which is currently ranked fifth in the nation among AA girls teams aged 19 and under. Emma Zeveney is a sophomore and goalie for the JV team. She plays on a traveling AA girls team as well, the Steel City Selects, which is ranked seventh in the nation for girls 16 and under. Both girls play on the Pittsburgh Predators, a 14 and under AA team ranked third out of 67 teams in the nation. Veronica Heyl, a freshman goalie, plays for the travel team Pittsburgh Aviators.

At West Allegheny, all three girls have been dressing for the varsity team. A new addition to the team, Abbey Layden is a freshman forward who didn't participate in her first game until November 13.

While this précis may seem unique to West Allegheny, hockey president Duane Foy says that it is not an anomaly.

"We do come across other schools that have girl players," Foy said.

Foy has two children playing on the team - his son Bailey, a senior, and daughter Sydney.

The West Allegheny team compares only with Quaker Valley in terms of number of girls on the team playing consistently. If the school had a middle school team as well, a minimum of six girls would be playing. One, Brianna Medved, is in seventh grade and missed her opportunity to play due to low enrollment in a sport that has been generating a considerable amount of interest.

Parent Monica Heyl says that there are a number of possible reasons for low enrollment among younger students. She however bristles at the notion that these young women are at all delicate.

"There's nothing fragile about my daughter," Monica said of Veronica. "She's bigger than some of the boys on the team. She gets along with everyone."

Although she was initially concerned to hear that her daughter would be dressing for varsity, she relented.

"I told my husband to buy her the best equipment," she said.

This would protect Veronica, both as a tyro player and as she performs at a level at which the pucks fly faster.

Neither Foy nor Monica were remotely surprised to find that their daughters wanted to play hockey.

"I kind of expected it," Monica said. "It's nice living in West A - there's no stigmatism because of the girl who started it," she added, referring to

Chelsea Burdzy, a standout former female player for WA hockey.

Burdzy played on the WA team that lost in the Penguin Cup championship in 2010, and then on scholarship for Robert Morris University.

"Chelsea Burdzy set the trail," Foy said.

Because of her, girls in this area are more inclined to pick up hockey and stick with it. Her influence is what got Sydney interested in playing.

"I truly believe that all of the girls enjoy the game," Foy said. "They also enjoy being unique in being on a traditionally boys team. The boys have accepted them as part of the team and genuinely cheer for them to be successful. They may not want to admit it, but Sydney and Veronica also enjoy playing with their brothers."

Bailey shares a slightly different outlook.

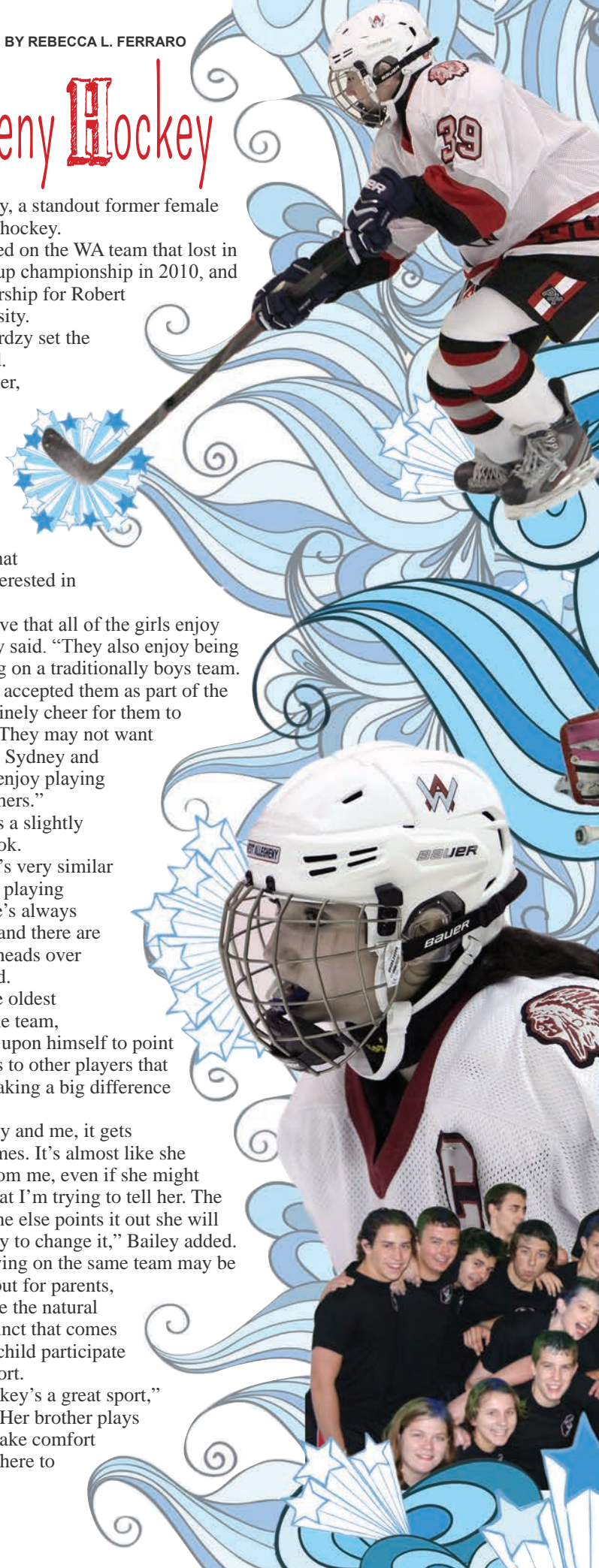
"I imagine it's very similar to any siblings playing together. There's always some tension, and there are times we butt heads over things," he said.

As one of the oldest members on the team, Bailey takes it upon himself to point out little things to other players that may end up making a big difference in the game.


"With Sydney and me, it gets heated sometimes. It's almost like she can't hear it from me, even if she might understand what I'm trying to tell her. The second someone else points it out she will immediately try to change it," Bailey added.

Siblings playing on the same team may be fun for them, but for parents, it helps assuage the natural protective instinct that comes with having a child participate in a contact sport.

"I mean, hockey's a great sport," Monica said. "Her brother plays defense and I take comfort knowing he's there to help her out."







This is particularly relevant because of an incident during a preseason scrimmage. One of the girls “got a little roughed up,” as Foy described it, and the boys were there to immediately defend her.

“I’d say they treat us like teammates but they protect us a little more,” Veronica said of the boys. “Any team that protects their goalies is fine with me.”

There are no rule changes as a result of girls playing on typically boy-dominated teams.

“When there’s a good group of guys it’s really easy to have the girls there,” Bailey remarked.

“When it matters most it doesn’t matter who is a boy and who is a girl. Everyone has the same goals so it’s easy to forget.”

Monica speculates that her daughter’s motivation stems from both a love of the sport and school pride.

“When they were playing in the garage her brother would always say ‘stand here and block the net’ and she was

the younger one so she did what she was told.

She’s been in front of the net ever since,” she said.

“She doesn’t even want to think about giving up playing for school.”

Foy said that the girls play on multiple teams, both because they feel a sense of pride representing their school and enjoy the competition of playing against boys. Though the regional girls teams offer a higher level of female competition, battling the opposite sex holds its own challenge.

“Sydney and Emma enjoy the high level of competition. Even though they play on nationally ranked teams, the speed and intensity of the high school game cannot be duplicated on their girls teams,” he said. “I can see a difference for Sydney when she plays with her girls team. The action slows down.”

The West Allegheny hockey team is a parent-sponsored program not affiliated with the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League. Foy says that the team - technically a club - falls outside the jurisdiction of the school district, but still receives considerable support from it.

“Playing high school hockey is truly a family commitment,” Foy said. “On average, a varsity player will cost his or her parents around \$3,000 to play high school hockey.”

That figure covers team fees, equipment,

jerseys, and travel, but not travel team fees. Additionally, the \$130,000 budget generated through fundraising and the aforementioned player fees covers practice fees for the ice - around \$1,000 per week per team - league fees, team equipment and coach salaries.

“We are lucky to be in the West A School District, which has been wonderful with their support of the hockey program,” Foy said. “Other schools aren’t as lucky.”

The West Allegheny School District has given considerable support to the team, while the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Hockey League requires participating students to adhere to all guidelines established by the school for its athletic programs, including grades, eligibility, physicals, and school attendance. The PIHL-crowned champion from Western Pennsylvania will play the winner from the eastern side of the state for the Pennsylvania championship title, which is on par with a PIAA title.

The hockey team has a board of representatives who oversee the functions of the organization, but each parent is given a voice in the team’s direction. Foy feels the organization has three primary responsibilities.

“First is, the kids who choose to play for their school. Representing your school in an activity should be one of the greater initiatives a student can do, be it an academic endeavor, athletics, or the arts,” Foy said.

The organization as a whole strives to ensure that the growth of each student is nurtured through his or her participation within the particular extracurricular activity.

“Second, we have an obligation to the parents. They have a great stake in this program, both through the financial commitment they have made and as the parents of their child. Lastly, West Allegheny hockey is committed to being the best representative of the West A school district and the citizens of its localities,” Foy said, adding, “We have a strong desire to be involved in the communities that support our teams and program.”

The organization has a few upcoming community fundraisers, including collections for the local food pantry, a blanket drive, Breast Cancer Awareness Night at a game - with events to generate financial support for the charity - and a Community Skate after the last game as a thank you to members of the district. For more information, see page 59.

“This organization truly enjoys giving back to the community, which has shown its support through the years,” Foy said. •

#### PHOTOGRAPHS:

**FAR LEFT:** Sophomore Sydney Foy is a forward on both the JV and varsity teams, and is captain of the JV team.

**TOP RIGHT:** Freshman Veronica Heyl is a goalie for the JV team.

**PHOTOS BY DARRELL MCCREA PHOTOGRAPHY**

**BOTTOM:** The varsity team shows support for Anya’s Army. The team held a fundraiser for Anya Lamar, 9, of Donaldson Elementary School, who was diagnosed with Ewing’s Sarcoma this past August. The hockey team raised \$1,000 for Anya’s care. PHOTO SUBMITTED



STORY BY PAT JENNETTE  
PHOTOS BY SARAH HUGHEY

# Spirit of Christmas Light Up unites community



# Imagine

going through the yearly tradition of putting up a Christmas tree and outside decorations, taking them all back down, and then repeating the entire process hundreds of times over in a single season.

After visiting the annual Christmas Light-Up Celebration in Clinton Park, Findlay Township, one can only imagine the enormous effort it takes to pull off this one-mile drive-through holiday extravaganza. There are no professional decor or lighting companies putting it together, however. It's entirely an all-volunteer effort, and the entrance fees don't go into anyone's pockets. It all goes right back into the community. Since 1993, a quintessential part of the Christmas holiday in the western suburbs has been the annual Christmas Light-Up Celebration.

The one-mile long labor of love began as Findlay Township residents Lloyd and Patty Faux and others visualized Clinton Park, a woodland beauty set amidst tall trees with a winding road, lit up in celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas.

The group's goal was simple: to generate unity within the community by celebrating the Christmas spirit together, and use the admission proceeds to give back to the community by addressing a variety of needs.

The first year of operation proved to be a success, and soon the vision of creating a seasonal holiday display to benefit neighbors in need took off.

Now in its 22nd year, this popular holiday display with a faith-based message has attracted tens of thousands of visitors and resulted in giving close to a quarter million dollars back to the local community. The message of the meaning of Christmas rings loud and clear from every aspect of the operation. Volunteers, donations, community and business support, and recipients of funds all collectively represent the simple act of sharing the spirit of the season.

Lloyd, 84, and Patty, 78, have always been community-minded. Lloyd was a long-time member of the West Allegheny School Board. Both he and his wife were involved in the Findlay Township Republican Committee. Patty was an active member of the Findlay Township Fair Board. They have spent the majority of their lifetime as residents and parents raising five children.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** A scene at the Christmas Light-up Celebration at Clinton Park. **ABOVE:** Lloyd and Patty Faux at the head of Clinton Park, the park's welcome sign is used to display the "Celebrate Jesus!" sign donated this year in the memory of Brian D. Henry. Inset: The sign at night.

Chuckling the idea of retirement once Lloyd sold his fabrication business, and frowning at the very idea of getting away during the cold weather months, the couple saw the Christmas Light-Up Celebration project as an opportunity to help their community. They spent a great deal of time in its early years seeking various displays, not only to fit within the theme of the event, but also different spots in the park. Lloyd explains that they traveled as far as Indiana to purchase some items. In the beginning, residents and volunteers either made or donated many. At one point, when another regional light display was ready to close its doors, Lloyd and Patty were able to secure some of their items for a fraction of the actual cost.

To this day, donations still dribble in year-round as residents clean their Christmas décor out of garages and attics. The growing inventory of tens of thousands of twinkle lights, hundreds of extension cords, spotlights, wooden and metal displays, and other items created a good problem. Several years ago, the Christmas Light-Up purchased a large storage barn and approached Findlay

Township to ask permission to install it on a spot near the back of the park. Township officials were most supportive, and provided the location. Up until then, they had stored everything for the light up in five tractor-trailer boxes. That created a large commitment of time and energy in the fall and again in the spring, when volunteers had to carefully unpack and then repack everything sequentially so it remained accessible.

The new building eliminates that problem.

Ornaments, lights, cords, displays, and more are now organized by category, and easily accessible as the display

takes shape.

The park closes officially to the public in late September. Soon after, the Christmas Light-Up volunteers jump into action, starting at the back of the park and working their way to the front, in all types of weather, in order to open to the public the week before Thanksgiving. Some come to help string lights around hundreds of trees. Others stop in to lend a hand with larger displays by holding ladders or using a bucket truck generously loaned by Armstrong Telephone Company.

Janoski's has donated a small trailer since the early years to give volunteers at the entrance a place to sit and stay warm in between visitors. Others come to help sort and untangle cords.

Displays include Noah's Ark and a lighted tunnel. A gingerbread family frolics on a hillside while deer outlined by spotlights appear to prance through the park. There has been more than one occasion when visitors have seen actual deer run through the park. A picnic pavilion is transformed into a church with stained glass windows, and a mailbox addressed to Santa gives little ones a place to drop their letters. A delightful display of the 12 days of Christmas perches along a fence lit with spotlights.

>>





**The Volunteers: (top) Wayne Torrance; (below right) Walter "Yum" Groom; (below left) Jay Kirkpatrick and (bottom) Tom McCullaugh (left) and Denny Macek (right).**



Community folks have gotten into the spirit in a different way, too, by sponsoring Christmas trees and giving them a unique décor, representative either of their organization or of an aspect of the holiday season. The tree display is seen by visitors at the end of their ride.

Music is piped through the park via a sound system, and during the early part of the season, live Christmas music is performed by such groups as the West Allegheny High School Show Choir. Hayrides are also available for groups wishing to enjoy the drive via a different perspective.

Throughout the season, a bevy of volunteers are on hand to greet visitors. A signup sheet of volunteers, including individual residents and community groups, including parent groups, churches, and Scouts, make commitments to come out and oversee the entrance. Every evening from 5 to 10 p.m. they collect a \$10 fee per car, pass out brochures, and direct vehicles on their way.

Christmas Light-Up continues daily, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's, until Jan. 5. Once the weather shows the slightest sign of relenting, volunteers are back at the park dismantling, properly storing, and removing all signs of Christmas before the park reopens to the public in March.

Two years ago, Lloyd suffered a fall from a ladder while installing displays. The next year, he was back at the park working alongside volunteers. Due to a stroke he suffered earlier this year, Lloyd wasn't able to climb ladders or get up in a bucket truck. Patty, however, said he came out and oversaw installations and offered suggestions.

Over the years, many businesses and organizations in the neighborhood have generously donated products, services, equipment, and, in some cases, cash to support the effort. Individuals and families have sponsored smaller displays in memory of their loved ones, while others have shared their own Christmas messages via a display they donated.

Patty said that the display has drawn recognition and support from beyond the local area. She noted that some folks who have visited from the tri-state region were so inspired that they sent monetary donations and even volunteered to help during the season. Tour buses have become a more common occurrence, and it's not unusual to see entire church or youth groups show up in buses.

Explains Patty, "As a result of the tireless efforts of many volunteers, the tremendous cooperation of the community's leadership, and the generous gifts of families and businesses, the Light-Up Celebration has become a great success and an annual tradition. Thanks to the generosity of many visitors over the years, we have been successful in donating proceeds from this effort to a diverse group of charities, groups with various needs, families and individuals with financial and health challenges, and to students in the form of scholarships."

With financial funds available, the Light-Up Committee also reacts to emergencies brought to its attention throughout the year. Early on, volunteers formed a committee of community members to ensure funds were disbursed each spring and throughout the year on a case-by-case basis.

Explains Lloyd, "We try to help others in our own neighborhoods who need it, and are glad to donate when the situation arises where someone is in a serious situation."

The Christmas Light-Up committee's vision is clear, as stated on their website: "Our mission is to generate unity within our community by celebrating the Christmas Spirit together and to





bring positive attention to our township from those outside its borders. It is also our ambition to continue a healthy community tradition of raising spiritual support for the worthwhile organizations within our area that help those who are in physical, emotional, spiritual and financial need, and to help other organizations, individuals, and groups who need such support.” ❄️



**TOP:** Archways with red and green lights decorate the road winding through Findlay Township Park during the Christmas Light-Up.

**ABOVE:** Live Christmas trees sit at the end of the Christmas Light-Up, decorated by families and businesses in the community.

**LEFT:** A couple of polar bears are among the numerous displays set up along the mile-long drive.

## DIRECTIONS:

GOOGLE or GPS:

600 Clinton Park Drive, Clinton, PA 15026

**FROM PITTSBURGH:** Take the Parkway West - Route 376 west (former Route 60 north) to Exit 7, Clinton (one exit past the Airport). Turn left onto Clinton Road at the ramp stop sign. Turn right onto Route 30 at the first traffic light. Travel 0.4 miles to Clinton Park Drive on the left.

**FROM SEWICKLEY:** Cross the Sewickley Bridge. Turn Right at the traffic light exiting the bridge. Follow University Boulevard to the traffic light at the intersection with Business 376 loop (former Business 60). Turn left onto Business 376 loop. Follow Business 376 loop to Route 376 (former Route 60). Exit west on Business 376 (toward the Pittsburgh International Airport). Take Exit 7, Clinton (one exit past the Airport). Turn left onto Clinton Road at the ramp stop sign. Turn right onto Route 30 at the first traffic light. Travel 0.4 miles to Clinton Park Drive on the left.

**FROM WEIRTON/STUEBENVILLE:** Take Route 22 east to the Findlay Connector (Turnpike 576). Enter the toll road (the toll is \$0.50). Travel north to exit 2, Route 30. Turn left at the exit ramp stop sign and travel west on Route 30 Travel 1.8 miles to Clinton Park Drive on the left.

**FROM THE BEAVER VALLEY EXPRESSWAY:** Take the Beaver Valley Expressway - Route 376 East (former Route 60 south). Take exit 7, Clinton (one exit before the airport). Turn right at the exit ramp stop sign onto Clinton Road. Turn right onto Route 30 at the first traffic light. Travel 0.4 miles to Clinton Park Drive on the left.

## DETAILS:

Clinton Park in Findlay Township Route 30, 1/2 mile west of Clinton Post Office Daily, 5-10 p.m., including holidays, through January 4, 2015. \$10/car (724) 899-3602. [www.christmaslightup.com](http://www.christmaslightup.com)

For hayrides, contact Judy Heck, (724) 899-3159



## Ongoing

**How to Promote Your Business through Networking,** Wednesdays, 7:15 a.m., Eat'n Park on Rt. 60, with the Greater Pittsburgh Business Connection, a referral group of business professionals, (412) 364-6446 x 302, [www.gpbc-pgh.org](http://www.gpbc-pgh.org).

**Greater Pittsburgh Football Officials Association Seeking New Officials,** GPFOA has officials working at the youth, scholastic, college and semi-pro levels. New applicants will learn the rules and mechanics associated with serving as an official so as to assist them in obtaining PIAA certification, certified officials who have obtained PIAA certification and are not already affiliated with another chapter are encouraged to join, GPFOA President Mike Conlon, (412) 398-6545.

**Women's Business Network, Robinson Township Area Chapter,** Meets first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:30 a.m. at Panera Bread meeting room in North Fayette, advances the presence of aspiring and successful businesswomen by providing personal and professional resources, meeting agendas include self marketing, business presentation by an individual member, table topic discussion and networking, Barb Dull, (412) 608-3616.

**Western PA Kidney Support Group,** second Sunday monthly, 2:30-4:30 p.m., King's Restaurant, Imperial, (724) 796-1603.

**No Veteran Dies Alone,** Volunteers needed for one-of-a-kind program that provides companionship and assistance to veterans entering the final stages of life, Deborah Goral, [deborah.goral@va.gov](mailto:deborah.goral@va.gov)

**November 22-January 4 Christmas Light Up,** Clinton Park, drive-thru only, 5-10 p.m. every day including holidays, \$10 per car, for special event info and volunteer opportunities call Lloyd and Patty Faux, (724) 899-3602.

**December 5-14 The Nutcracker,** Andrew Carnegie Music Hall, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday, \$15 adults, \$12 children, (412) 279-8887, [CarnegiePerformingArtsCenter.com](http://CarnegiePerformingArtsCenter.com).

**December 6 Polar Express Movie Night,** 6-9 p.m., West Allegheny High School Auditorium, come in pajamas and enjoy hot chocolate and snacks with Marching Pride band members, get a jump start on holiday shopping with local vendors and supporters of the band in cafeteria, don't forget a camera, visit with Santa at intermission, admission includes visit with Santa, hot chocolate, popcorn and cookies, \$8/1 ticket, \$15/2 tickets, \$20/3 tickets, \$25/4 tickets, [polarexpress\\_RSVP@yahoo.com](mailto:polarexpress_RSVP@yahoo.com).

**December 31 Oakdale American Legion Post 171 New Year's Eve Gala,** 8:30 p.m.-1 a.m., Oakdale Community Center, buffet and DJ, BYOB, mixers provided, beer while it lasts, dinner at 9:30 p.m., reservations required, limited seating, must be over 21, \$25, send to: American Legion Post 171, 219 Winslow Dr., Oakdale, PA 15071, Bob Mizwa, (412) 693-9242.

## DAR Events:

**Educational Luncheon,** February 7, 11 a.m., educational program, speaker and topic TBA, \$20 lunch, reserve by January 31.

**American History Tea,** March 7, 1 p.m., \$10 coffee/tea, dessert.

**DAR Good Citizen Awards presentation, American History Awards and the Junior American Citizen Awards,** come and acknowledge the winners of these contests and the hard work that went into their essays, reserve by February 28.

**Informational Luncheon,** April 4, 11 a.m., \$20 lunch, learn more about an aspect of the DAR, topic TBA, reserve by March 27.

## The ROCK Youth Center in Oakdale Events

**West Allegheny Show Choir Concert,** Dec. 13, 5 p.m., free dinner and children's Christmas program.

**Trinity Jazz Orchestra Christmas Concert,** Dec. 15, 7 p.m., free and open to the public, annual event supported by Oakdale area businesses, with local musicians Tom Snyder and Dan Hanczar, with hot chocolate and cookies, [hanczar@verizon.net](mailto:hanczar@verizon.net), [trinityjazz@trinityjazz.com](mailto:trinityjazz@trinityjazz.com).

## We'd like to hear from you!

As a neighborhood based and community focused publication, Allegheny West Magazine encourages complimentary submission 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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## Findlay Programs

Unless otherwise indicated, contact Darlene Larson for more information or to register, (724) 695-0500 x 246, [dlarson@findlaytwp.org](mailto:dlarson@findlaytwp.org). Events take place at Findlay Activity Center unless otherwise noted.

### "WALK Live" Classes

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7 p.m.**, Donna Kuzio opens doors to a better way of health and weight loss, \$5 per class, [kuziofjr@gmail.com](mailto:kuziofjr@gmail.com).

### Garden Club

Meets **third Thursday of each month, 6:30 p.m.**, activity center or other location, past projects have included Imperial Honor Roll, community vegetable garden at Valley Church, bicycle planters at Fair in the Woodlands, upcoming holiday bus outing to Phipps Conservatory, Sue Peindl, (724) 695-9837.

### Pavilion Rentals for 2015 Season

Open to Findlay Township residents, businesses, and youth or adult groups, \$60 with \$25 refundable deposit, two separate checks, begins **Feb. 7, 9-11 a.m.** at municipal building, after **Feb. 9**, online, non-resident reservations after **April 1**, \$85 with \$25 refundable deposit, new pavilion at Recreation and Sports Complex: residents \$100, \$175 with kitchen, non-residents \$150, \$250 with kitchen, \$100 refundable security deposit required for all, seats 150-165 with full kitchen facilities and nearby restroom, [www.findlay.pa.us](http://www.findlay.pa.us).

**Bingo**, First Monday of each month, Imperial VFD, **Dec. 1, Jan. 5**, doors open **5:30 p.m.**, kitchen at **6 p.m.**, bingo at **7 p.m.**, package of 12 throwaway cards and five specials is \$25, quickies and jackpots sold on the floor.

### Time for Toddlers

**Mondays: Dec. 1, 15; Jan. 12, 26. Tuesdays: Dec. 2, 16; Jan. 13, 27.** Bring children under four for an hour of movement, music, activities and snack, registration required, \$3 per session, **10:15-11:15 a.m.**

### Kids Creative Cooking Class

**Jan. 22, 4-5:15 p.m.**, popular after school cooking program, register at least two days before class, grades K-5, \$8 per class, class size limited, NO WALK-INS.

### Yoga for Beginners & Beyond

**Fridays and Sundays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**, call for dates, yoga for all levels, benefits whole body with exercise, stretching and meditation, classes continue past October with participation, \$5 per class, Julia Harvey, (724) 695-1976.

### Wrap It Up Holiday Christmas Wrapping Party

**Dec. 11, 6-11 p.m.**, wear your "ugly Christmas sweater," bring snack or appetizer to share, paper, tape, scissors and ribbon, get a six or eight-foot table to wrap gifts, free, donation jar for Food Pantry, registration required.

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# Area Christmas Services

## *The Bible Chapel in Robinson*

PTI campus, **Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.**, dive into who Jesus is and how to know him more deeply, examine His power to save and why he is the Savior of the world, childcare available for ages three and younger at 5 p.m. service, (724) 941-8990, [info@biblechapel.org](mailto:info@biblechapel.org), [biblechapel.org](http://biblechapel.org).

## *Cross Connections Alliance Church*

(formerly McDonald Alliance church), **Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.**, community Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, hear about how Jesus brought light and hope into the world, all welcome, childcare provided at no cost, (724) 926-2453, [crossconnectionsac@verizon.net](mailto:crossconnectionsac@verizon.net), [www.crossconnectionsac.org](http://www.crossconnectionsac.org).

## *Clinton United Presbyterian Church*

**Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.**, music-filled worship and candlelight ceremony, **December 28, 11 a.m.**, lessons and carols service, read through the story of Jesus' birth and sing favorite Christmas hymns, (724) 695-7993, [clintch@zoominternet.net](mailto:clintch@zoominternet.net), [www.clintonupchurch.weebly.com](http://www.clintonupchurch.weebly.com).

## *Crossroads Church*

**Christmas Eve, 2 p.m., 5 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 8 p.m., Dec. 23, 5 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.**, childcare provided for newborn to pre-school aged children during all services, (412) 494-9999, [contactus@crossroadsumc.org](mailto:contactus@crossroadsumc.org), [www.crossroadsumc.org](http://www.crossroadsumc.org).

## *Genesis Church*

**Christmas Eve, 6 p.m.**, Candlelight Service with worship and the word, childcare and nursery care available, (412) 264-8665, [gaiken@genesischurchlife.com](mailto:gaiken@genesischurchlife.com), [www.genesischurchlife.com](http://www.genesischurchlife.com).

## *Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church*

**Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., 7 p.m., midnight, Christmas Day, 9 a.m., 11 a.m., Dec. 31, 5 p.m., Jan. 1, 9 a.m., 11 a.m., Dec. 20, 5 p.m.** dedication of newly renovated church, mass celebrated by Bishop David Zubik.

## *Independent Bible Presbyterian Church*

**Christmas Eve, December 21, 7 p.m.**, Christmas candle light service, carols, praising and a retelling of the greatest story ever, (724) 695-0808, [www.ibpc-mcdonald.com](http://www.ibpc-mcdonald.com), [pastorlawrence@comcast.net](mailto:pastorlawrence@comcast.net).

## *Ken Mawr United Presbyterian Church*

**Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., 7 p.m., 10 p.m.**, Christmas Eve Candlelight service for families, choir will perform special music, **10 p.m.** service ends with "Silent Night," story for young children and free childcare available for first two services, **Dec. 28, 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.**, Rev. Bob Downs, parish associate at Ken Mawr, preaches for both Sunday morning services, (412) 331-2863, [pastorkarlmc@comcast.net](mailto:pastorkarlmc@comcast.net), [www.kenmawrchurch.org](http://www.kenmawrchurch.org).

## *McDonald Presbyterian Church*

**Christmas Eve, 5 p.m.**, Family Candlelight Service, **11 p.m.**, traditional Candlelight Service, **Dec. 21, 10:45 a.m.**, Children's Christmas Program "Comfort & Joy" at Calvary Center, **Dec. 13, 7 p.m.**, Community Christmas Cantata, "The Heart of Christmas," by Pepper Choplin, at Trinity Center, (724) 926-8561, [office@mcdonaldpres.org](mailto:office@mcdonaldpres.org), [www.mcdonaldpres.org](http://www.mcdonaldpres.org).

## *Montours Presbyterian*

**Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.**, Candlelight Service with Communion, special Christmas music, childcare available at no cost, (412) 787-1050, [www.montourchurch.org](http://www.montourchurch.org).

## *Mosaic Anglican Church,*

**Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.**, family candle-lit service, capturing the tender moment when Christ was born, **7 p.m., Dec. 8, 7 p.m.**, pause and receive rest from the hustle and bustle that the Christmas season can bring, **Dec. 21, 10 a.m.**, lessons and carols sung in a contemporary fashion paired with lessons from the Bible from beginning to end, childcare available at no cost, (724) 695-3129, [info@mosaicpgh.org](mailto:info@mosaicpgh.org), <http://www.mosaicpgh.org>.

## *Noblestown UMC/McDonald UMC*

**Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.** at McDonald UMC, 232 East Lincoln Avenue, McDonald, candlelight service open to the community, (724) 693-2755, [Noblestown.UMC@gmail.com](mailto:Noblestown.UMC@gmail.com).

## *The Presbyterian Church of Coraopolis*

**Christmas Eve, 7:30 p.m.**, special choral presentation with bell choir, **8 p.m.**, traditional Christmas Eve candlelight worship, **Dec. 5, 7-9 p.m.**, Living Nativity on the Church lawn, public invited, cookies and hot chocolate served, (412) 264-0470 x 10, [Prescor@verizon.net](mailto:Prescor@verizon.net), [CoraopolisPresbyterian.com](http://CoraopolisPresbyterian.com).

## *Providence Presbyterian Church in America*

**Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.**, candlelight Christmas Eve service, **Dec. 14, 6 p.m.**, Family Evening of Music, **Dec. 21, 6 p.m.**, Christmas Cantata, (412) 788-6100, [secretary@providence-pca.net](mailto:secretary@providence-pca.net), [providence-pca.net](http://providence-pca.net).

## *Resurrection Lutheran Church*

**Christmas Eve, 8 p.m.**, Candlelight Service of Holy Communion, (412) 788-4513, [rlc10380@verizon.net](mailto:rlc10380@verizon.net), <http://www.lutheransonline.com>.

## *Sharon Community Presbyterian Church*

organ recitals at noon on first three Wednesdays of Advent: **Dec. 3, 10, 17**, luncheon to follow, RSVP for luncheon only, [pbricklemyer@verizon.net](mailto:pbricklemyer@verizon.net).

## *St. Catherine of Siena*

**Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 9 p.m.**, Christmas Day, **10:30 a.m., Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m.**, Penance Service, (724) 457-7026, [scatparish@verizon.net](mailto:scatparish@verizon.net), [www.scatparish.com](http://www.scatparish.com).

## *St. Columbkille Parish*

**Christmas Eve, 4 p.m.** children's mass, **6:30 p.m., 10 p.m.**, Christmas, **8 a.m., 11 a.m.**

## *St. Malachy Church*

**Christmas Eve, 4 p.m., 6 p.m., 10 p.m.**, Christmas Day, **8 a.m., 11 a.m.**, (412) 771-5483.

## *St. Philip Church*

**Christmas Eve, 4 p.m.** children's mass, **6 p.m.** Christmas vigil mass, **12 a.m.** midnight mass, Christmas Day, **7 a.m. and 10 a.m.**, (412) 922-6300 x 5, [parishoffice@saintphilipchurch.org](mailto:parishoffice@saintphilipchurch.org), <http://www.saintphilipchurch.org>.

## *St. Philip's Church*

**Christmas Eve, 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m., 8 p.m.**, contemporary candlelight service, **Dec. 13, 6 p.m., Dec. 14, 10 a.m.**, lessons and carols, **Dec. 20, 6 p.m., Dec. 21, 10 a.m.**, Christmas choir performs holiday favorites during the service, children's programs available at no cost during all services except the **8 p.m.** Christmas Eve service, nursery and preschool-age children cared for during service, students K-5 enjoy age-appropriate lessons, crafts and games, (412) 264-0169, [www.stphilipsonline.org](http://www.stphilipsonline.org).

## *Valley Presbyterian Church*

**Christmas Eve, 7:30 p.m.**, childcare available at no cost, (724) 695-0300, [email@valleychurchweb.com](mailto:email@valleychurchweb.com), [www.valleychurchweb.com](http://www.valleychurchweb.com).

## *West Ridge Christian Community Church*

**Christmas Eve, 11 p.m.**, Candlelight Christmas Eve Service, (724) 695-7500, [info@westridge.cc](mailto:info@westridge.cc), <http://www.westridge.cc>.



## West Allegheny Indians Hockey Special Event Nights

Games held at Airport Ice Arena. For more information contact [president@wahockey.com](mailto:president@wahockey.com). For complete schedule visit [wahockey.com](http://wahockey.com).

**Breast Cancer Awareness Night**, varsity, **Dec. 22** versus Armstrong, **7:30 p.m.**, JV, **Dec. 23** versus Bethel Park, **7:30 p.m.**, benefits charity organization Faces, Family, and Friends of Breast Cancer, games to feature special jerseys, auctions, and raffles, proceeds benefit charity organization Faces, Family, and Friends of Breast Cancer.

**Senior Night, varsity**, **Feb. 12** versus Erie Cathedral Prep, **8:30 p.m.**, honors the organization's six graduating seniors and their families, seniors are Bailey Foy, Antonio Garofalo, Brandon Healey, Ethan Peternel, Brendan Rossi and Steven Stasik.

**Community Night, varsity**, **Feb. 27** versus Moon, **6:30 p.m.**, JV, **Feb. 20** versus Chartiers Valley, **7:50 p.m.**, special admission rates for adults accompanied by children under 12 years old, contests, raffles, skate with varsity team and coaches following game, skate free for all in attendance.

## West Allegheny Youth Soccer Association Spring Registration

Deadline **Jan. 31**, players must be at least four by **July 31**, registration for in-house players accepted until **Feb. 15** with \$10 late fee, season runs **April 4 through late May**, see ad on page 37 for more details, Heather Chappel, (724) 693-2536, [www.leaguelineup.com/westasoccer](http://www.leaguelineup.com/westasoccer).

## Oakdale Youth League Registration

**Jan. 24-Feb. 7**, see ad on page 26 for registration times and more information, players must be at least 5 by **Aug. 31**, great league atmosphere for ages 5-18 with clinics and extended play for all-star and club teams during summer months, (724) 693-8951, [www.leaguelineup.com/oysl](http://www.leaguelineup.com/oysl).

## West Allegheny Athletic Hall of Fame Nominations

Completed applications due **Feb. 6**, recognizes alumni, coaches and contributors to WA athletic programs, inductees to be honored at third annual WA Athletic Hall of Fame banquet **May 16 at 6 p.m.**, proceeds benefit North Fayette PALS program, which provides recreational opportunities to children with special needs, nominations accepted in following categories: athlete, coach/administrator, team, patron/contributor; two nomination letters and supporting documentation required, call (412) 693-3118 for application or check [awmagazine.com](http://awmagazine.com), also available at North Fayette Parks and Recreation office and township municipal building.

As a neighborhood based and community focused publication, Allegheny West Magazine encourages complimentary submission 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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**Movement Studio Pittsburgh**, p. 22, 412.401.9052, [www.movementstudiopittsburgh.com](http://www.movementstudiopittsburgh.com)  
**Oakdale Foot & Ankle Center**, p. 44, 412.787.8380, [www.oakdalepodiatrist.com](http://www.oakdalepodiatrist.com)  
**Oakdale Youth League**, p. 26, 724.693.8951, [www.leaguelineup.com/oyl](http://www.leaguelineup.com/oyl)  
**Ohio Valley General Hospital**, p. 7, 412.250.2600 - Kennedy Twp., [www.ovgh.org](http://www.ovgh.org)  
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**Self Storage of North Fayette**, p. 63, 724.695.8875, [www.selfstoragenf.com](http://www.selfstoragenf.com)  
**Spot Light Business Branding**, p. 19, 412-200-5610 or 724-260-5590, [spotlightbusinessbranding.com](http://spotlightbusinessbranding.com)  
**Strom Construction**, p. 38, 412-474-3480, [www.strom-construction.com](http://www.strom-construction.com)  
**Sunny's Wee Kids Palace**, p. 56, 412.788.2273, [www.weekidspalace.wix.com/weekidspalace](http://www.weekidspalace.wix.com/weekidspalace)  
**Thomas Dance Studio**, p. 48, 412.787.7686, [www.thomasdance.com](http://www.thomasdance.com)  
**Thomas-Little Funeral Svc.**, p. 8, 724.926.2800, [www.thomas-littlefuneralservice.com](http://www.thomas-littlefuneralservice.com)  
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**Tonidale Yard and Needle Craft**, p. 38, 412.788.8850, [www.TonidaleYarn.com](http://www.TonidaleYarn.com)  
**Up in Arms Tattoo**, p. 57, 412.264.3126, [www.upinarmstattoo.com](http://www.upinarmstattoo.com)  
**Weirton Medical Center**, inside front cov., Imperial Primary Care, 724.218.1931; 724.218.1894, [www.weirtonmedical.com](http://www.weirtonmedical.com)  
**West Allegheny School District**, p. 27, 724.695.3422, [www.westasd.org](http://www.westasd.org)  
**West Allegheny Hall of Fame**, p. 16, 412.693.3118  
**West Allegheny Youth Soccer**, p. 37, 724.693.2536, H. Chappel or 724.693.8073, M. Abbott, [www.leaguelineup.com/westasoccer](http://www.leaguelineup.com/westasoccer)  
**White Viper**, p. 9, 412.489.2460, [www.whiteviperkarate.com](http://www.whiteviperkarate.com)  
**Wiernik Quick Lube Center LLC**, p. 11, 724.695.2180, [www.wiernikquicklube.com](http://www.wiernikquicklube.com)



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**412-787-5280**



# Community Connections

## MUNICIPALITIES

### Findlay Township

1271 Route 30, Clinton, PA 15026  
(724) 695-0500, [www.findlay.pa.us](http://www.findlay.pa.us)

### North Fayette Township

400 North Branch Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(412) 788-4888, [www.north-fayette.com](http://www.north-fayette.com)

### Oakdale Borough

6115 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(724) 693-9740, [www.oakdaleborough.com](http://www.oakdaleborough.com)

### McDonald Borough

151 School Street, McDonald, PA 15057  
(724) 926-8711, [www.mcdonaldboro.com](http://www.mcdonaldboro.com)

## PUBLIC & PRIVATE SCHOOLS K-12

### West Allegheny School District

600 Donaldson Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(724) 695-3422, [www.westasd.org](http://www.westasd.org)

### Parkway West Career & Technology Center

7101 Steubenville Pike, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(412) 923-1772, [www.parkwaywest.org](http://www.parkwaywest.org)

This list includes only those public and private schools located within the municipalities served by the West Allegheny Edition of Allegheny West Magazine

## CHURCHES

### Church of The Living Christ

220 West Allegheny Road, Imperial, PA 15126  
(724) 695-7188, [www.cotlc.com](http://www.cotlc.com)

### Church of the Nazarene

(moved to Florence) 1080 Steubenville Pike,  
Burgettstown, PA 15021  
(724) 947-9223, [www.nazarene.org](http://www.nazarene.org)

### Clinton UP Church

25 Wilson Road, Clinton, PA 15026  
(724) 695-7993

### Clinton Wesleyan Church

1022 Clinton Road, Clinton, PA 15026  
(724) 695-7076

### Covenant Family Church

P. O. Box 15533, Pittsburgh, PA 15244  
(724) 263-7147, [www.covenantfamily.cc](http://www.covenantfamily.cc)  
(meets at Courtyard Pgh. Airport)

### Cross Connections Alliance Church

201 Valley Street, McDonald, PA 15057  
(724) 926-2453, [www.crossconnectionsac.org](http://www.crossconnectionsac.org)

### Crossroads Methodist Church

1000 Crossroads Drive, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(412) 494-9999, [www.crossroadsumc.org](http://www.crossroadsumc.org)

### First Baptist Church

141 N. McDonald Street, McDonald, PA 15057  
(724) 926-4216

### Hebron Presbyterian Church

1767 Route 30, Clinton, PA 15026  
(725) 899-2276

### Independent Bible Presbyterian Church

112 Dempe Street, McDonald, PA 15057  
(724) 926-3355

### Montours Presbyterian Church

3151 Montour Church Road, Oakdale, PA 15071,  
(412) 787-1050, [www.montourschurch.org](http://www.montourschurch.org)

### Noblestown United Methodist Church

7313 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(724) 693-2755

### Noblestown United Presbyterian Church

7427 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(724) 693-8250

### Oakdale United Presbyterian Church

62 Hastings Avenue, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(724) 693-8950

### Rivers of Living Waters Church

7120 Steubenville Pike, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(412) 787-1888, [www.rlwcc.tripod.com](http://www.rlwcc.tripod.com)

### Resurrection Lutheran Church

7600 Steubenville Pike, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(412) 788-4513

### St. Columbkille Church

103 Church Road, Imperial, PA 15126  
(724) 695-7325, [www.saintcolumbkilleparish.org](http://www.saintcolumbkilleparish.org)

### St. Patrick's Church

7322 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(724) 693-9260, [www.saint-patrick-parish.com](http://www.saint-patrick-parish.com)

### The Church of Jesus Christ

57 Moore Road, Imperial, PA 15126  
(724) 899-3935

### The Bible Chapel

@ Pittsburgh Technical Institute  
(724) 941-8990, ext. 124  
[www.robinson.biblechapel.org](http://www.robinson.biblechapel.org)

### Valley Presbyterian Church

237 Main Street, Imperial, PA 15126  
(724) 695-0300, [www.valleychurchweb.com](http://www.valleychurchweb.com)

### West Ridge Christian Community Church

100 Gorwood Drive, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(724) 695-7500, [www.westridge.cc](http://www.westridge.cc)

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

**Al-Anon, West A area,** (412) 683-4279

**American Legion Post 171 Oakdale,**  
(724) 693-8759

**American Legion Post 335 Imperial,**  
(724) 695-0491

**Boy Scouts-Grtr. Pgh. Council-Frontier,**  
(412) 325-7971 or 7995

**Faith in Action,** (724) 921-0027

**Findlay Athletic Assn.,** (412) 874-9348

**Findlay Garden Club,** (724) 350-9837

**Girl Scouts WPA,** (724) 774-3553

**Heritage Public Library-McDonald,** (724) 926-8400

**Kiwanis Club of the Pittsburgh Airport Area,**  
[PAAKiwanis@gmail.com](mailto:PAAKiwanis@gmail.com)

**Lions Club Imperial,** (724) 513-7616

**Masonic Lodge #669,** (724) 693-8274

**McDonald Area Redevelop. Assn.,** (724) 926-4617

**Meals on Wheels-W.A.,** (412) 279-5670

**Montour Run Watershed Assn.,** [www.mrwva.info](http://www.mrwva.info)

**Montour Trail Council,** (412) 257-3011

**Montour Valley Grange,** (724) 695-0481

**Mothers of Preschoolers-**

**Crossroads,** (412) 494-9999

**Mothers of Preschoolers-Hebron,** (724) 899-2276

**North Fayette Athletic Assn.,** (412) 580-0655

**North Fayette Garden Club,** (724) 693-8413

**Oakdale Youth League,** (724) 693-8951

**Rotary - Parkway West,** (412) 787-5280

**Senior Citizen Groups:**

**- Findlay Township,** (724) 695-0500

**- North Fayette Township,** (724) 693-3118

**- St. Columbkille,** (724) 695-7325

**SNPJ Lodge 106,** (724) 695-1411

**Sturgeon Athletic Association,** (724) 926-2150

**The ROCK Community Center,** (724) 693-2777

**VFW Ladies Auxiliary,** (412) 788-4674

**VFW Post #7070 Oakdale,** (412) 427-9195

**VFW Post #7714 Imperial,** (724) 695-8866

**West Allegheny Food Pantry**

**& Thrift Shop,** (724) 695-1305

**West Allegheny Foundation,** [inquiries@wafoundation.org](mailto:inquiries@wafoundation.org)

**West Allegheny Friends to Enhance the Library**  
**(WAFEL),** (724) 695-8150

**West Allegheny Ministerium,** (724) 693-8950

**West Allegheny Booster & PTA Groups,**  
[www.westasd.org](http://www.westasd.org)

**Western Allegheny Community Library,**  
(724) 695-8150

**West Allegheny Aqua Club,** (412) 608-4583

**West Allegheny Inline Hockey,** (412) 334-2640

**West Allegheny Youth Assn.,** [www.westayouth.net](http://www.westayouth.net)

**West Allegheny Youth Soccer Assn.,** (724) 693-8073

**West Allegheny Youth Wrestling,** (724) 695-8132





BY ERMA DODD  
NORTH FAYETTE  
TOWNSHIP  
RESIDENT



## This gift from a daughter to her mother keeps on giving

**"...in a manger,  
the Promise shines..."**  
- Sylvia G. Dunstan, hymn,  
"Where the Promise Shines"

Seven years ago, Bill and Bea Harris moved from Baldwin to the Walden Woods neighborhood in Imperial. They have celebrated 35 years of marriage. The license plate on the front of their blue van reads "Bill and Bea," with a red heart. They look happy and healthy. They are happy.

In 1999, Bea was battling an intestinal condition and doctors found that she had a kidney disease. For 12 years, she took a huge array of medications. During that time, Bea felt no pain. It's why those who know about kidney disease call it "a silent killer." Then she learned her medications would no longer be able to stop her kidneys from failing, but that chemotherapy might.

When Bea told her children she would have to start undergoing chemotherapy, her daughter, Belinda Taylor, rejected the idea because Bea didn't have cancer. She announced to her mother, "I will not shave my head, but I will give you my kidney."

"Mom, you gave me life and I'm going to give life back to you."

Soon, Taylor was in touch with her mother's doctor and began an extensive testing process necessary to see if she would be a good match. She says she felt that "the Lord put it on my heart and He guided my every step."

At the same time, Bea had started on chemotherapy treatments and steroids. The steroids made her feel terrible. Weaning from the drug began. Bea became unable to breathe on her own. She was dying.

Dialysis was the next step. She chose to undergo dialysis at home, which meant being tethered to a machine for nine hours every night.

Finally, after the sixth testing, Bea and Taylor were together when the call came. They were "a perfect match."

Taylor, along with her husband, Ryonn - an Air Force member - their son, Daelan, four, and daughter, Kiera, five, arrived from Maryland.

Bea and Bill's son, Steven, and his wife, Niki, who live in South Fayette and have four children, took Belinda's two children into their home. For a month, they took care of six children under the age of six.

Belinda had talked to her children about their "Nana," who they loved so much. She explained that it is nice to have two eyes, but one is what you need. Her meaning was that, while mommy had

two kidneys, she was giving one to Nana because she needed one.

Daily calls came in from Australia, from their son, Derek, who kept his finger on the pulse of his family.

"On May 29, 2013," Bea says, "Operation Kidney Swap, which was the name Belinda lovingly gave the transplant, was undertaken at Montefiore Hospital by a team of the finest medical personnel ever assembled."

After four small incisions, a kidney was removed and carried to the next operating room, where it went into Nana, giving her life. Now she has three kidneys. Two will shrink away to nothing. Her gifted one is in her front left lower abdomen.

"Those four fading incisions marks are thought of as proud spots," says Belinda. "They are like trophies, signs of life - beautiful."

Bea set a goal, to walk in the Kidney Walk in the Pittsburgh Zoo. In November of 2013, just five months after her transplant, Bea fulfilled her goal. With her entire family walking alongside her, she completed the walk in four hours. The 2014 Kidney Walk took Bea just three hours.

Bea, Bill and Belinda cannot stress enough how important it is to check the little box on a driver's license application to be an organ donor. Anyone can be a donor and save another's life. Given the chance to be a living donor means a loved one is saved that day. Recipients' insurance covers all costs.

Those suffering any form of kidney disease and have questions but don't know where to turn can come to a Kidney Support Meeting on the second Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m. at King's Restaurant in Imperial.

"I would like others to know that being a living donor is, by far, one of the most cherished achievements in my life," says Belinda. "I have two young children and I put donating a kidney on the same level as birthing a child! I literally gave life to three of the most important people in my world!"

It was the best Christmas present she could have ever given her mom.

For more on kidney transplants, visit <http://www.kidney.org/transplantation/beadonor.cfm>. More about Bea's story and the Kidney Support Meeting can be read at [www.ermajournals.com](http://www.ermajournals.com).



We, at Allegheny West Magazine and Hughey Publications, would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and a Happy New Year!



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