

West Allegheny Edition

# Allegheny West

Volume 19, Issue 109  
October/November 2017

FREE Direct Mail Community Publication

# Magazine

**Car cruise marks a milestone for American Airlines maintenance facility**

WA alumnus completing Air Force fighter pilot training

**TO FILM NEW PILOT. AREA NATIVE RETURNS TO HIS ROOTS**

**Makeover on Main Street**



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West Allegheny School District  
Official Newsletter  
Inside  
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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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Members of the Pioneers West Historical Society welcomed visitors to the Walker-Ewing Log House on Sept. 16 during the Third Annual Historical Log Homes Tour. Five area log homes were open to the public during the self-guided tour and the Walker-Ewing Log House served as its starting point. Some stops featured activities. At the Walker-Ewing Log House, visitors could talk with interpreters dressed in period costume and sample local whiskeys. They could also talk with Gary Adams (pictured at left in the photo at right), a metal detecting enthusiast who has amassed a collection of historical objects. Just up the road at the Walker-Ewing-Glass Log House at the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden, children could try out 18th century chores. At below right, Eve Ossler, 7, of Pittsburgh's South Side, experiences what it was like to do laundry back when area residents lived in the cabin pictured behind her.

PHOTOS BY DOUG HUGHEY



## From the Publisher

Dear Readers,

Thank you for picking up our October West Allegheny edition of Allegheny West Magazine. This month we're bringing you several interesting stories about people with area connections. First, on page 17, read our latest Alumni Profile column. This month, our writer Jill Bordo profiles Kurtis Lutz, a West Allegheny graduate who is now training to fly one of the most advanced fighter jets in the world. Lutz enrolled in the U.S. Air Force Academy right out of high school and has overcome several obstacles to reach this point in his career.

On page 46, our columnist Erma Dodd reports on two family members with area roots who were recently involved in life-saving efforts in the wake of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Harvey. Then on page 17, we take a look at a new television pilot that's being filmed in the area by yet another West Allegheny graduate. That alumnus, Patrick Cannon, has assembled quite an acting resume and is now working with a high-profile local director on the project, which he wrote.

For our feature this month, we switch gears and take a look at several area real estate developers who are investing in local properties with historic backgrounds. Their investment

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### ABOUT THE COVER

Amelia Egan, 3, of Moon Township tries her hand at watering a garden outside the Walker-Ewing-Glass Log House at the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden on Sept. 16. The house was a stop on the Third Annual Historical Log Homes Tour. Throughout the day, five area log homes were open to the general public to tour and activities available at some of them. At the PBG, children could try out the kinds of chores children in the 18th century had to perform. See above left for more. PHOTO BY DOUG HUGHEY



dollars are helping not only to preserve these properties but also revitalize the areas where they are located. Read more on page 36.

On page 27, we bring you the latest official West Allegheny School District newsletter, WA Today. Be sure to also check out news submitted by our readers, starting on page 6, and get caught up on area events – including parks and recreation schedules for North Fayette and Findlay townships – in our On the Horizon section, starting on page 40.

Look for our next edition the first week of December, when we'll be bringing you our annual holiday edition with fun, holiday-related things to do around the area. Until then, I hope you enjoy the start to fall.

Doug Hughey,  
Publisher and Editor



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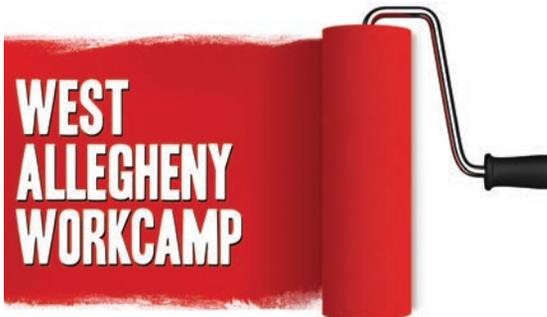
## West Allegheny Workcamp returning in 2018

Next summer, hundreds of teenagers and adults from across the U.S. will again descend on the West Allegheny community to participate in West Allegheny Workcamp. As in 2016, when the second-ever West Allegheny Workcamp took place, participants will be fanning out across the area, helping local residents whom they have never met with home repairs. Building materials will be bought with monetary donations and the work will all be done free of charge.

The not-so-random act of kindness is again being coordinated by Group Mission Trips and Heroes Supporting Heroes, a local, faith-based organization founded by North Fayette residents John and Sheri Lee, Jeff Lutz, and Don Steward. Heroes Supporting Heroes is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit that provides support to local veterans, the families of local veterans, and area seniors. West Allegheny Workcamp is a project of Heroes Supporting Heroes.

Throughout the week, participants will again be staying at West Allegheny Middle School. The work camp is expected to complete upgrades or repairs to 30 or more area homes. Participants pay their own way to attend the camp and many give up a week of summer vacation to do so. Material costs for projects, however, still need to be covered.

**Billy Bower of Frederick, Maryland and Abby Tarvin of Downers Grove, Illinois stand next to a set of steps they helped build for an area resident during the last West Allegheny Workcamp in 2016.**



Heroes Supporting Heroes will need to raise close to \$50,000 to cover these costs. Expenses often seen in such community service projects include tools, wood, paint, nails and cleaning products.

Sponsorships are available for businesses that would like to show their support.

As well, West Allegheny Workcamp will be asking for volunteers to help serve work camp participants throughout the week. The nonprofit is currently looking for both food vendors and entertainers to benefit work camp participants.

To donate, email [info@westaworkcamp.org](mailto:info@westaworkcamp.org).

To apply for home repairs, fill out the application on page 45.

For more, visit [www.HeroesSupportingHeroes.org](http://www.HeroesSupportingHeroes.org), [www.facebook.com/HeroesSupportingHeroes](http://www.facebook.com/HeroesSupportingHeroes).

## WA soccer players named to regional teams

Two members of this year's West Allegheny varsity soccer team were named to regional teams made of a rarified group of players earlier this year. Nathan Dragisich, a junior at West Allegheny High School, was selected to play on the Region 1 Olympic Development Program Soccer Team while Connor Blazer, a freshman at West Allegheny High School, was selected to the U13 boys team that played at the 2017 USL Experience in the spring. The latter was hosted by the United Soccer League's San Antonio FC.

Both players have been a part of the Pittsburgh Riverhounds Academy.

Dragisich has been a member since 2008 and Blazer played on the Riverhounds Super Y League. Blazer was among 18 Super Y League players selected to participate in the USL Experience.

Dragisich was one of 18 players selected from Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and the New England states for the region one team.

Last year, Dragisich was an all-WPIAL selection during his sophomore season at West Allegheny. He is also a member of the National Honor Society and has received highest honors as a student at West Allegheny.

Blazer earned a spot on the varsity team and is now in the midst of his freshman season with the team. He also plays on the U15 Century Gold Team, which won a state title over the summer.



Nathan Dragisich



Connor Blazer



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Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse  
Practitioner, **Michael Marek D.N.P., C.R.N.P.**,  
Therapist, **Alexandra Mattina, L.S.C.W.**



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Willow Brook Geropsychiatric Unit provides short-term inpatient services to men and women over the age of 55 who have mental health needs. Our unit is unique and one of the only Geropsychiatric facilities in Western Pennsylvania.

## Thomas Dance Studio offering new program for students with special needs

Thomas Dance Studio is currently offering a program for students with special needs called Rhythm Works. Six of the studio's instructors hold certifications in the integrative dance program, which provides a dance experience for children who are unable to participate in a traditional dance class.

"The pure joy that this program can provide to children and their families is a tremendous gift and blessing," says Thomas Dance instructor Lindsay McNary. "It uses music, purposeful movement and defined rhythm patterns to fully integrate the body, mind and spirit."

McNary says that the program recognizes how movement serves an integral role in helping the brain function at its best. She says it was created for individuals with learning differences and a wide variety of diagnoses. Classes assist a child's individual developmental goals and specific sensory, cognitive and physical needs. Movement engages the vestibular system, provides proprioceptive input, aids in adaptive skills, and progresses fine and gross motor development.

As well, the classes offer emotional and character-building benefits.

"It engages the child and assists in building social skills like taking turns, partner work, leadership, self-control, and various forms of self-expression," says McNary.

Prior to becoming a mother of two, McNary says she was almost blissfully unaware of many of the challenges parenting presents. She says her own personal experiences have made her mindful of how special each child truly is, and how different each child's learning needs are.

"From sensory stimulation and how that can affect a child's behavior, to cognitive and physical challenges and limitations, to a medical diagnosis that can change lifestyles, the list of differences that so many children and families face is endless, and exhausting at times!" says McNary.

At the same time, she points out that there is no greater feeling than witnessing the accomplishments of one's own child, such as

when they successfully recite their ABCs for the first time or sprint for a hug after their first day of school.

"The sensation of achievement and pride radiates and, as a parent, your heart swells with love," she says.

During her 10 years as a dance instructor, McNary says she has seen first-hand the immediate physical benefits that dance classes provide for a young, developing child. There are also long-term social and emotional growth benefits as well.

"I count myself blessed that I am privy to these moments of joy and have the opportunity to facilitate these special accomplishments daily," she says.

She says that as she grew to better understand the unique learning needs of so many children, her passion for dance education reignited. She now wants to make sure dance is accessible for all.

For more information on Thomas Dance Studio's Rhythm Works Program, contact Lindsay at (412) 257-2000. Visit Thomas Dance Studio online at [thomasdance.com](http://thomasdance.com).



Instructors at Thomas Dance Studio hold certificates they earned to instruct an integrative dance program for special needs children called Rhythm Works.

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## Pittsburgh International becomes first in U.S. to allow public access to gates, shops and restaurants beyond checkpoint

Pittsburgh International Airport, in cooperation with the Transportation Security Administration, has become the first airport in the country to give the public access to gates, shops and restaurants beyond the security checkpoint without requiring an airline ticket or a reduction in security.

As part of an airport program, the public will have year-round access to the airside terminal at Pittsburgh International Airport for shopping, dining and meeting/greeting passengers. Through the new myPITpass program, members of the public will be able to access the airside terminal by following these procedures:

1. Check in on the third-floor ticketing level (across from Allegiant).
2. Show a valid photo ID (driver's license or passport).
3. Have their name vetted against the No Fly List and obtain a stamped myPITpass.
4. Go through the security checkpoint while observing the same rules as passengers boarding flights.

"For years, we've heard from travelers and non-travelers alike who want the opportunity to shop the stores at the airport," said Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. "Thanks to the constant work of Christina Cassotis and her team at the airport, as well as the support of Congressman Tim Murphy, who assisted with the TSA, we're finally able to make that a reality with the myPITpass Program."

Hours for issuing passes will be Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the possibility of additional hours and weekend days in the coming months. The pass is only valid on the day of issuance.

"Since I started here, people have been asking about being able to shop and dine at the airport. We have worked closely with the TSA and we are thrilled that the agency selected Pittsburgh as the first airport in the country to implement this pilot program,"

Allegheny County Airport Authority CEO Christina Cassotis said. "This program builds on our successful Holiday Open House program and airside access for guests of the airport Hyatt hotel."

The same security requirements as ticketed passengers will be followed, ensuring no reduction in security. Ticketed passengers will receive priority in the checkpoint line and the public going airside will be strictly vetted and screened as if they were boarding a plane. All rules for carry-on luggage will also apply to those receiving the myPITpass for airside access.

"The Transportation Security Administration is pleased to support Pittsburgh International Airport on the launch of their myPITpass program," said Karen Keys-Turner, the TSA's federal security director for Pittsburgh International Airport. "Participants should be prepared to receive the same level of security screening as travelers and should ensure they're not carrying any prohibited items such as weapons before coming through the security checkpoint. We look forward to working with the airport on this program."

For more, visit [www.flypittsburgh.com/myPITpass](http://www.flypittsburgh.com/myPITpass).



Rep. Tim Murphy, Allegheny County Airport Authority CEO Christina Cassotis and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald celebrate the start of a new program that gives the public access to airport shops, restaurants and gates.

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## Unique Boutique returns for 17th year

Custom jewelry, delicious food, boutique clothing and charming gifts from some of the most talented artisans in the region will once again be available this November at Unique Boutique, an event sponsored by the Heritage Valley Sewickley Foundation. Now in its 17th year, Unique Boutique provides a special shopping and lunch experience for those seeking one-of-a-kind gifts for the upcoming holiday season. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Nov. 11 at the Edgeworth Club in Sewickley. All proceeds benefit the purchase of new infant bassinets for the Heritage Valley Sewickley Patricia S. Snyder Maternal Child Health Center.

Admission is \$10 per person or \$35 per person for admission and a buffet lunch, which will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lunch reservations are required. A courtesy shuttle will be available from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. to transport shoppers from the Heritage Valley Sewickley Hospital garage at Fitch Circle (720 Blackburn Road) to the Edgeworth Club. To RSVP, or more information, call (412) 749-7050 or email [foundation@hvhs.org](mailto:foundation@hvhs.org). Regular admission tickets and a limited number of lunch tickets will also be sold at the door.

Fifty vendors and artists from the tri-state area will be providing personal service, quality items and custom orders for unique gifts. Jewelry and clothing vendors will design a contemporary or classic style outfit with quality clothing and jewelry for the perfect day or evening look. Sample and buy gourmet chocolates, toffees, seasoned pretzels, olive oils and scone, rice and soup mixes.

This year's featured vendors are:

### Hazelmade

This collection of work is hand illustrated by designer Susan Hazel Rich in her studio in Kent, Ohio. The pieces she creates are inspired by nature, travel and a love all things vintage. With an attention to quality and detail, the products are made in the Midwest U.S. from sustainable papers, fabrics and packaging. For more, visit [shopHazelmade.com](http://shopHazelmade.com).



With a formal education and professional background in graphic design, Rich launched a line of stationery and home goods featuring her own illustrations. Her inspiration grows from the trees and gardens surrounding her cabin in the woods, quilting,

STORY AND PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY UNIQUE BOUTIQUE

fiber arts and her family and friends, near and far. There is nothing quite as lovely as the space where art and letters meet. Rich loves writing "thank you" notes more than opening presents. Susan believes in paper and pen.



### Diana Kauffman Designs

Designer Diana Kauffman believes that, "We are all handcrafted, strong and timeless. Her Diana Kaufmann Designs jewelry is handcrafted in the U.S. Kauffman's collection for men and women embraces trend color and achieves timeless design through quality materials and craftsmanship. She uses natural materials that gain



beauty with age, such as Italian leather and Portuguese cork.

Strong yet lightweight, her bracelets and necklaces are available in multiple sizes. Her jewelry is easy to put on and take off, making them versatile to wear on the on the go. Kaufmann personally procures her materials from across the globe and sells only her highest quality designs. Diana Kauffman Designs can be found in her Sewickley studio location and in 250 exclusive boutiques and galleries across the U.S.



### Kirsten Lowe-Rebel

A native Pittsburgh artist, all of Kirsten Lowe-Rebel's work is hand drawn and handcrafted. Lowe-Rebel uses her fine art prints to create a line of unique, wearable art jewelry,





accessories and gifts. Each one-of-a-kind piece speaks to the textural and rich urban fabric of her steel town.

## Hello Hummus

“Hello Hummus started as family-owned business with handcrafted, small batch hummus with the freshest, most local ingredients we could find,” said Zouhair Mkais, owner. “We offer a wide variety of unconventional flavors, including: artichoke, chipotle, garlicky black bean, honey jalapeno, hot and spicy, lemon cilantro, Siracha, spicy black bean, sun-dried tomato and basil, sweet corn and Thai chili pepper, peanut butter and chocolate, plain and simple, pumpkin, roasted red pepper, roasted veggie, sweet potato, white bean, and more.”

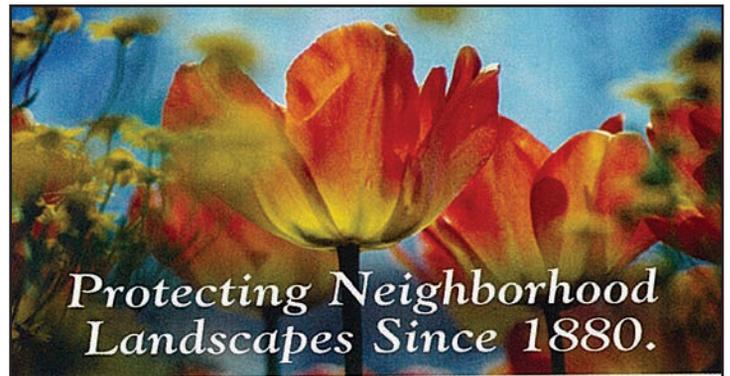


“Hello Hummus expanded its offerings with greens and grains quinoa-based salads, too. Our products are low in sodium, vegan, high in protein and fiber, dairy and gluten-free, thus providing you with ‘guilt-free snacking.’ Other than chick peas, all vegetables used in Hello Hummus creations are sourced from local farmers.”



## The Glass Garden

Rhonda Cocain makes unique, handcrafted glass flowers and bird feeders. Each unique piece is carefully selected using repurposed glassware. Whether it’s a feeder or a flower, these lovely pieces are sure to bring joy to those who pick them.



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## New Robinson Township tutoring studio helping students overcome their academic hurdles

A new tutoring center opened in Robinson Township earlier this year. Locally owned and operated, Open Minds Studios is now accepting new students at its Pike Place (formerly Chiodo's Plaza) location near Peace, Love and Little Donuts, Painting with a Twist, Tang Soo Do Karate, and other great businesses. The studio offers a variety of services to help students, including academic support and ACT/SAT test preparation.

Academic support includes services such as homework assistance, preparing for quizzes and tests, long-term projects, learning how to study effectively, and organization. For consistency, students utilize the same textbooks, handouts, study guides and computers that they do at school. The goal of academic support tutoring is not just to help students get better grades now, but to become better overall learners going forward.

"We take the time to listen to our students and their parents to learn how they learn and to develop plans that work for them," says Open Minds co-owner Nina Kaplan. "Let's say everything in school is going well except Algebra 1. When we sit with the student and start doing math with them - and by that we mean having the student write out every step of what they are doing and being able to talk about it - we will be able to identify areas that are in need of help."

Examples include recalling math facts such as multiplication tables, understanding order of operations, and memorizing formulas such as slope intercept for solving problems.

"And there may be no weaknesses, outside of confidence," says Kaplan. "Sometimes students do know what they need to know, but they are not getting enough feedback to feel confident about what they are doing."

Open Minds Studio also helps students develop organizational skills, including for those students who never seem to have homework, say they did it at school or did do it but didn't give it to the teacher. Some students who say they completed their homework don't do well on quizzes or tests. Students may also say everything is fine despite the first report card that tells a different story.

For some students, this is a frequent occurrence, despite previous talks, fights and loss of privileges.

"Adults make the assumption that every child/student has the natural ability to handle the complex task of being able to organize what they need to do," says Kaplan. "Knowing how long it will take, when to start and what will be needed to complete the task. This is not true."

Open Minds' GOAL - Get Organized About Learning - program can help. Just like any parent wouldn't give their child the car keys the same day they got their permit and tell them to go drive on the Parkway, Open Minds teaches, advises, and practices with students until they are able to handle academic responsibilities on their own. Not unlike a prospective driver who has to demonstrate their abilities, so too does Open Minds require students to demonstrate their ability to complete schoolwork on their own.

To do this, Open Minds works with students to check notebooks, planners and online gradebooks. The center also believes in accountability, and won't simply take students at their word that their grades are improving.

"If a student says their grades are good, we want to see them," says Kaplan.

Open Minds can help students plan out their week so assignments and studying are broken down into manageable pieces and not left to the last moment. Plans need to be written down and shared between the student, parents and tutors. As students learn to handle more responsibility, they gain the skills needed to be successful on their own.

Open Minds also helps students prepare for any kind of test, from kindergarten through college. Any test requires an understanding of content, using time well, applying good strategies - such as process of elimination - and a calm demeanor. It is never a good idea to cram for a test. The best way to prepare is to study a little at a time and the night prior. While impossible to do both, that is what most people try to do. For the SAT and ACT, Open Minds recommends preparing at least two months prior to a test date. The studio offers both one-to-one and small group exam preparation.

"Even in a small group, we individualize," says Kaplan. "Nothing we do is cookie-cutter."

Open Minds Studios can be reached at (412) 600-1125 or via email at [openminds@openmindsstudios.com](mailto:openminds@openmindsstudios.com). Find them online at [www.openmindsstudios.com](http://www.openmindsstudios.com). Open Minds Studios' tutors are available and happy to discuss tutoring programs and plans.





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## Eagle Scout project helps complete church donation

A project started by McDonald Presbyterian Church came to completion earlier this year thanks to a prospective Eagle Scout from Troop 1365 in Hickory.

Last year, McDonald Presbyterian Church donated several welcome and rules signs throughout Heritage Park in McDonald. In July, 17-year-old Boy Scout Jimmy Gilbert constructed retaining walls around the two welcome signs at either end of the park. The walls, each about two feet high, add a polished look to the signage and will help protect them from cars in the adjacent parking lots.

Gilbert, who is a longtime member at McDonald Presbyterian, says church pastor Rev. Justin Amsler suggested the project after Gilbert approached him looking for ideas for his Eagle Scout project. Gilbert says several locals then also helped out with the construction and materials. He says a neighbor of his helped excavate around the signs so he could install crushed limestone footers and that all aggregate material and wall stone for the project was donated by Rock Mulch and More. He says the business' owner, Dave Zurn, and his son, Dave Jr., not only donated those materials but also helped him choose what was appropriate for the project. The business also lent him a dump truck to haul the roughly four tons of aggregate required.

Gilbert says the work was completed over the course of four days in July. He will now have to give a presentation demonstrating how his project benefits the community in order to pass his Eagle Scout board of approval.

A senior at Fort Cherry High School, Gilbert says he plans to attend college after graduation and possibly study biology, teaching or both.



Jimmy Gilbert of Boy Scout Troop 1365 in Hickory constructed this retaining wall around two park signs at Heritage Park earlier this year. The signs were donated by McDonald Presbyterian Church last year and all the material for the walls was donated by Rock Mulch and More on Route 980. Gilbert built the walls as part of his Eagle Scout project.

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## North Fayette OVR program participants presented with Congressional certificates

This past summer, 10 students from several West Hills communities participated in a program supervised by North Fayette Township Parks and Recreation staff that provided those students with work experience.

The MY Work Initiative was run through Pennsylvania's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, which operates under the state's Department of Labor and Industry. MY is an acronym for municipalities and youth. According to OVR business services supervisor John Miller, the office provides vocational rehabilitation services to assist students and adults with disabilities to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment.

Last year, the office piloted the MY Work Initiative program, which connects students as young as 14 with a disability to a job opportunity. Miller says 50 students in nine Pennsylvania municipalities participated. This past year, he says 175 students across 36 municipalities participated. He says the expectation is that those numbers will increase next year.

Shaun Leslie, North Fayette parks superintendent, says the students did a great job over the summer.

"Overall it was phenomenal," he says. "We did every type of parks maintenance you can imagine. We also worked in the offices. We did filing. We even returned phone calls. The kids did

amazing. We didn't even have one kid show up late. There were no call-offs, they just did an incredible job."



Rep. Tim Murphy addresses attendees at a luncheon held for participants in a work program for students at the North Fayette Township Community Center. He is pictured with Shaun Leslie, North Fayette parks superintendent.

North Fayette manager Bob Grimm says he, too, was impressed by the students' dedication.

"They did a lot of work in our township parks, painting, mulching, planting grass, cleaning some things that hadn't been cleaned in a long time," he says. "They've done tremendous work. They've just been a dedicated group of kids."

On Aug. 18, the township hosted a pizza party for this year's participants. During the party, those students got a special visit from Rep. Tim Murphy, who presented them with Congressional certificates recognizing their work. Murphy said that, having once

held landscaping jobs at a golf course and cemetery himself, he appreciated the work they had done.

He also stressed the value of young people taking ownership of their communities.

"If more students did these kinds of things in their community, what an incredible thing it would be," said Murphy. "If kids are involved in their community, they take care of it better. That kind of pride in your community is a lesson that you'll carry throughout your life and well beyond this."




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## To film new television pilot, area native returns to his roots



**ABOVE:** West Allegheny alumnus Patrick Cannon (pictured above) has written a script for a new television pilot called “Mulligan” that’s filming in the area. **PHOTO BY FRANK VILSACK.**  
**RIGHT:** The film also stars West Allegheny alumnus Ian McIntosh. **PHOTO BY KENYA ALLEN**

A pilot for a new television series began filming in the area at the beginning of October. The show, “Mulligan,” was both written by and stars Patrick Cannon, a 2007 West Allegheny High School graduate. According to Cannon, the show evolves around Jack O’Malley, a one-time golf prodigy who, at the start of the show, has just been released from prison and accepts a job at his brother’s golf range.

The show is filming at Scally’s Golf and

Training Center in Moon Township, as well as at locations in North Fayette and Robinson townships.

Cannon says the idea got legs after he sent his script to Steve Parys, whose resume includes work on a number of high-profile Pittsburgh area film projects, including “Silence of the Lambs,” “Outsiders,” “Concussion” and “Wonder Boys.” He’s also well known for directing the film adaptation of “The Chief.”

Cannon says that after he pitched the idea to Parys, he got a response that he wasn’t quite expecting.

“Steve was incredibly kind and I kind of expected him to say ‘Nice try,’” says Cannon. “But then he wrote back and said he really liked it.”

Parys signed on to direct the pilot and Cannon says about 100 people have since gotten on board as well. He says that they’re planning to pitch the pilot to a television network or streaming service. Without going into too much detail about the plot, he describes it as a redemption story that explores themes of family

and addiction. He says he was in part inspired by the current opioid epidemic while drafting the script. Cannon says he was also trying to present a more true-to-life version of Pittsburgh than what’s often portrayed in Hollywood films.

“Anyone who knows Pittsburgh [but hasn’t been there] thinks it’s an LA-concocted version,” he says.

Cannon is no stranger to golf. At West Allegheny, he was a four-year member of the golf team and, during his senior year, helped the team

finish third in the MAC championship. He finished fourth in the individual WPIAL golf semifinals.

His senior year, he was elected class vice president.

After graduating, Cannon earned a bachelor’s degree in theater from Columbia College in Chicago and went on to perform in nearly 40 productions with dozens of different companies across the country. A couple of years ago, he played the younger version of Ebenezer Scrooge in the Pittsburgh CLO’s “A Musical Christmas Carol.” Fans of the Travel Channel show “Mysteries at the Museum” would likely recognize him from his numerous appearances.

He’s also made appearances on the show “Six Degrees of Murder.”

Earlier this year, he wrapped up work on another film he he starred in called “Malefica.”

In addition to Cannon, the show features 2009 West Allegheny graduate Ian McIntosh, a local screenwriter and comedian.

Cannon says the two didn’t know each other until Parys suggested they get him involved on the project.

The show also stars Dave Toole and Siovhann Christensen, both of whom were in the web series “Downward Dog,” which was picked up by ABC-TV. Barbara Burgess-Lefebvre of Robert Morris University’s theater program is helping with the show’s fight choreography.

Cannon is also a master of fine arts candidate in screenwriting and playwriting at Point Park University.





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## Car cruise marks a milestone for American Airlines maintenance facility

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
DOUG HUGHEY

A funny thing usually happens when Bill Czyzewicz of Moon Township tells people that he works as a mechanic repairing airplanes at Pittsburgh International Airport. They tend to act surprised, particularly when he mentions the company that employs him.

“You know how many people are in this area and I’ve talked to who think there is no US Air/American Airlines, that there’s nothing, everybody’s gone - that there’s no airline jobs here?” he says. “They think that everybody got laid off and that everyone’s gone. They go, ‘You still work here?’”

Czyzewicz works for American Airlines, which merged with US Airways in 2015. This year marked his 45th with the company. He’s one of 265 other mechanics who, at any given time, are working 24 hours per day, seven days a week on several passenger airliners at an American Airlines maintenance facility at Pittsburgh International Airport. In all, the facility employs about 500 people working in various departments like facilities, maintenance, stores, inspections and records. At one time the facility was much larger, back when US Airways still operated a major hub at the airport. US Airways moved that hub in 2004. Czyzewicz, like many of the other unionized mechanics who work at the facility today, managed to remain with the company through its various trials and tribulations that - at least for many locals - seemed to spell the end of the company’s presence in the area for good. Like Czyzewicz, many of those mechanics have been working at the facility for decades.

In August, the facility celebrated something of a milestone when it held its 12th annual car cruise outside its hangar. The event was sponsored by American Airlines, in partnership with the International Association of Machinists and Pittsburgh International Airport. During the event, workers at the maintenance facility brought their custom cars and family members out for the daylong event. As it has each year, the event also benefitted a charity. Over the years, the cruise has raised tens of thousands of dollars for nonprofits such as Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Wounded Warrior Foundation. This year’s event raised \$10,698 for Guide Dogs of America. The organization’s president, Russell Gittlen, says that it provides recipients not only with a service animal and training, but also transportation to its facility in California and board during training - free of charge.

Czyzewicz says the idea for the cruise first started when he approached a director of the US Airways maintenance facility with the idea. Since employees couldn’t bring their children to work on Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day due to safety concerns, Czyzewicz suggested an alternative.

“We weren’t allowed [to bring our kids] because of the safety issues,” he says. “I got this idea and said, ‘There are a lot of motor heads here.’ I went to the director and said, ‘What if we had a bring your car to work day?’”

Czyzewicz says that the first year, the cruise attracted about 60 to 70 cars. The second year, things got even bigger.

“Next thing you know we have vendors and bands and charitable donations,” says Czyzewicz. “It just took off.”

Since then, the cruise has turned into something of a daylong festival. At this most recent cruise, children and families wandered around the lot, admiring cars and enjoying live music while the smell of barbecue wafted over a parking lot just below the airport’s enormous control tower. Behind a wall adjacent to the lot, American Airline aircraft taxied down the tarmac.

The event didn’t just show off custom cars, however. Also on display was a giant snow blower the airport uses to clear runways in the winter, an NHRA racecar and Allegheny County Bomb Squad vehicles.



Classic cars, including this 1967 Pontiac Firebird (pictured in foreground) are displayed during a recent car cruise for employees of an American Airlines maintenance facility at Pittsburgh International Airport. This year marked the cruise’s 12th.



Joe Clemente (above) shows his 1951 Willy’s while John Bruni (below) shows his 1932 Ford 5 Window.



Among the car customizers showing at the cruise was John Bruni, who's been with US Airways, and now American Airlines, for 30 years. Bruni brought out a 1932 Ford 5 Window built from a kit with a fiberglass body, Chevrolet transmission and Chevrolet engine. Bruni, who fabricates sheet metal at the facility, says he built the transmission and rear end himself. Like many of the mechanics at the facility, he's long been a car enthusiast.

"Probably half of the guys have cars and the other half who don't have them either wish they did or did at one time," he says.

Micky Zuzik, a 32-year veteran with the company, brought his 1932 Ford Roadster. Retirees like Joe Clemente, who retired in 2002 after 35 years of working in supply chain, also aren't uncommon at the cruise. Clemente says he started with the company when it was still Allegheny Airlines. This year's show was the first Clemente attended, though he said he's been meaning to come to one for years. He brought along a restored and updated 1951 Willy's, a Jeep precursor. Clemente says he first bought the vehicle around 1980 but only started working on it within the past six years. The unique customized vehicle attracted plenty of attention, including from several people Clemente at one time worked with but hadn't seen for some time.

Clemente says he did much of the mechanical work on the vehicle himself and leaned on Pro Comp for the paint and bodywork.

Employees weren't the only ones bringing out their cars. Fran Donacco, whose son works as a mechanic at the facility, brought out his 1967 Pontiac Firebird.

Having families come out for the event is a big reason for it, says Frank Milillo, managing director of American Airlines overhaul and modification.

"Events like this, you see people here every day but I wouldn't know Bill's wife, or his grandkids, or children if not for them," says Milillo.

Milillo was referring to Bill Latour, who has worked for the company for 49 years.

"It brings out families and brings everyone together," Milillo says of the event.



Mechanics Lou Geier and Mark Burns (above) work on the tail of an American Airlines plane at a maintenance facility at Pittsburgh International Airport. At any one time, up to three planes like the one pictured below are always undergoing maintenance at the facility.



"You're more than just an employee. You're a person. You're a human being. You're not just a person who turns wrenches...It's about Bill, his family and his whole life."

Milillo says that Pittsburgh's maintenance facility is one of four like it across the country in the American Airlines network. In addition to Dallas, there is also a similar facility in Charlotte. The company's largest base maintenance hub is located in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Milillo, though, says that Pittsburgh's facility is one of the best performing base maintenance stations in the company.

"They are truly one of the best performing organizations within the airline, if not the world at what they do," he says.

During the car cruise, three planes were getting regular maintenance checks and upgrades in a secure hangar at the facility. While one was getting outfitted with a new Wi-Fi system, another was getting a complete overhaul and thorough check.

Czyzewicz says plenty has changed about the aircraft since he started. Back then, he says, the company's fleet consisted of DC-9 planes. Now, he likens them to "flying computers."

In the future, those planes will only continue to get more advanced. Pittsburgh base maintenance manager Samuel White says that American Airlines has ordered many new planes to update its fleet. He says that will make it one of the youngest fleets in the U.S. Those planes, though, will still require maintenance, which will help to ensure that facilities like the one at Pittsburgh International Airport continue to operate well into the future.

"Over time, they're all going to need maintenance," says Milillo.



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## WA alumnus nearing completion of Air Force fighter pilot training

STORY BY JILL BORDO

As a young boy growing up in a West Allegheny home, Kurtis Lutz's bedroom walls were papered in a plane motif. His father, Keith, a corporate pilot for Federated Investors, took Kurtis and his brother to numerous air shows during their formative years.

It stands to reason, therefore, that Kurtis would consider a career in aviation. In June, the 2010 West Allegheny graduate completed undergraduate training for the U.S. Air Force fighter pilot program. Lutz is beginning his final phase of training in New Mexico to fly the F-16 fighter plane.

Lutz's path to his current position has included struggles and much hard work. Though accepted into the Air Force Academy as a high school senior, he was forced to surrender that commission due to a knee injury. A goalie for both West Allegheny and club soccer teams, Lutz sustained an injury during a game and underwent major knee surgery shortly thereafter.

Rather than give up his dream, Lutz enrolled in the ROTC program at Embry Riddle University in Daytona, Florida. He describes the four-year program as college training in a leadership laboratory. The first two years were an introduction to the principles of the Air Force and how, in order to be a leader, students had to learn to follow.

The second two years involved technical training on the different capabilities of the Air Force - air, space, and cyberspace - and included hands-on experience and implementation of the leadership skills learned previously.

Lutz accumulated 15 additional credits over the course of four years and attended summer training in Alabama between his sophomore and junior years. "Field Training," the ROTC equivalent to boot camp, was a mandatory requirement to return his junior year.

Because of his commitment and effort, Lutz graduated as an Air Force second lieutenant in May of 2015. Several months after graduation, Lutz was sent to Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas for undergraduate pilot training. The 55-week program included two months of academic training in a T-6 aircraft as well as 100 hours of flight time, both of which occurred over a six-month period. The third phase involved 90 hours of instruction in a two-engine, supersonic T-38 fighter jet.

Those selected to fly fighter jets then completed a three-month course called introduction to fighter fundamentals.

Lutz animatedly described the numerous air-to-air and air-to-ground fighter jet fundamentals he learned through simulated exercises. Student pilots are given restricted air space to practice "dog fighting," shooting down other planes, and dropping bombs. Lutz said that with the cross hairs and targets "you can see exactly what you hit and what you missed."

The ultimate test, according to Lutz, was the first solo flight in each of the fighter jets. Though there are multiple hours of ground instruction, the amount of time spent flying is fairly limited prior to a solo flight. Lutz logged roughly 17 hours in a T-6 and 12 hours in the T-38 before he flew those planes alone.

"As far as actual flight time in the aircraft, the solo comes pretty fast," stated Lutz, who admitted that, though he was a little nervous, all of his solo flights were fairly "low-key."

Lutz's undergraduate pilot training was a slightly different experience than that of other pilots, as he was selected prior to



Kurtis Lutz, a West Allegheny alumnus and second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, poses with a T-38 fighter jet that he's been flying during training. PHOTO BY U.S. AIR FORCE

graduation for the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program. Started in 1981 at Sheppard Air Force Base, the program is run jointly by 14 NATO countries and involves both instructors and students from places such as Germany, Italy, Greece, Norway and the Netherlands who work and train together.

Though the program is similar to training at the three other Air Force bases, it is two to three weeks lengthier and involves several additional flights. Also, while students at the other bases are placed into helicopters, cargo planes or fighter jets, pilots in that particular program all advance to the T-38 fighter/bomber plane.

Students are chosen for the program by composite scores from their grades, training performance and physical test scores. Lutz says he enjoyed interacting with instructors from other countries and hopes that the bonds built during his training will contribute to an overseas assignment when his schooling is completed.

Lutz graduated from the program at Sheppard Air Force Base in June and will soon begin an eight-month training session in New Mexico that will introduce him to the fighting fundamentals of the F-16. At the end of that period, he will learn to which operational squadron he'll be sent for what will likely be the beginning of a three-year military rotation. Possible locations include South Carolina, Germany, Italy, Japan or South Korea - all bases that station F-16 squadrons.

Lutz credits his father, Keith, his mother, Gail, and his brother, Matt, for their support and influence in his life. He commented that they, and two other West Allegheny families that hung out with them, "made sure I was in the right state of mind to be doing this."

Lutz also mentioned the impactful year he spent in the West

Allegheny ROTC program as a senior. He stated that the “program was awesome and Major Botizan and Sergeant Major Word were life changers. Now that I’m older, I can really appreciate them and what they did for me.”

According to Lutz, the most difficult aspect of fighter pilot schooling was the vast amount of knowledge given to students at the beginning of training. Pilot trainees had to learn the information and decide how to use it. Teamwork was essential to not repeat mistakes and helping each other through difficult issues.

Lutz says that it is a huge milestone to have completed the first part of fighter pilot training, adding that, for him, the best part is that “my office is a cockpit!”



Kurtis Lutz poses for a picture with his Greek instructor from the U.S. Air Force fighter pilot program. Lutz graduated in June and asked his instructor to pin his wings on him during the ceremony. PHOTO SUBMITTED

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# Pittsburgh Technical College

## PTC welcomes veteran for Constitution Day event

STORY BY DOUG HUGHEY  
PHOTO BY VOLKMAR KUNTZ, MULTIMEDIA DIRECTOR,  
PITTSBURGH TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Pittsburgh Technical College held its annual Constitution Day observance Sept. 13 by welcoming guest speaker Brandon Rumbaugh.

A retired Marine Corps corporal, Rumbaugh served in Iraq and Afghanistan before losing both of his legs in an IED explosion in late 2010. While introducing Rumbaugh, PTC general education faculty member Dan Kirk pointed out that Rumbaugh, like all U.S. military personnel, took an oath to defend the constitution when he enlisted.

Rumbaugh, a Uniontown native, is now a motivational speaker and student at Penn State Fayette where he is finishing his bachelor's degree in business marketing and management. Late last year, 84 Lumber founder Joe Hardy donated three buildings in downtown Uniontown to Rumbaugh to use for his business, along with a mental health clinic and shelter. As well, Rumbaugh serves as a board member reviewing grant proposals for the It's About the Warrior Foundation.

During an hour-long presentation, Rumbaugh recounted his service career that started when he enlisted

in the Marine Corps at the age of 19 to secure money to go to college. He retired in 2013 following a nine-month deployment to Afghanistan. Prior to losing his legs, he earned a Purple Heart after he was caught in a separate IED explosion that nearly took the life of his squad leader, who Rumbaugh risked his own life to save. Rumbaugh lost his legs while attempting to save the life of another soldier who was serving under him after that soldier stepped on yet another IED.

Rumbaugh encouraged PTC students who had gathered to hear him talk to go above and beyond what is asked of them to reach their goals and aspirations. He said he came to a similar epiphany after he stepped on the IED that took his legs.

"I told myself, that if I make it through this, the rest of my life, I'm going to do everything I possibly can to be a better person every single day," he said.

Following a lengthy recovery period, Rumbaugh moved back to his hometown of Uniontown, where he enrolled in college. At the suggestion of the It's About the Warrior Foundation, he began speaking at schools about his experiences. He also camped out at the beginning of winter in downtown Uniontown to raise awareness about homeless veterans. His efforts helped raise \$30,000 that were donated to a veteran's shelter in Pittsburgh.

Rumbaugh said he is frequently approached by people in the gym where he works out who tell him that they were motivated to keep at it after they saw him there.

Over the course of three months in Afghanistan, Rumbaugh said his squad encountered upwards of 90 IEDs, from large, 300-pound bombs meant to destroy vehicles to smaller ones meant to dismember troops.

"They thought that was way worse than killing you," Rumbaugh explained, "because they felt that if you gave your life for your country, that was the greatest thing you could do."

He said that, before he stepped on an IED himself, he had either been in front or in back of another squad member who stepped on one in four other instances. As well, he had encountered heavy fighting as a grenadier and, in one commendation written by his platoon commander, is credited with directly contributing to the elimination of six enemy combatants during a single engagement.

Rumbaugh said that, just before stepping on the IED that took his legs, he knew he could have sent one of the soldiers serving under him into a

courtyard where their squad mate had been injured. He said he knew right away that Taliban fighters had likely laid more IEDs in the courtyard in order to target more troops.

"I'm thinking, you know what, I really don't need to be the one to go in and get him," he said. "I can send one of my other guys in and hope they don't get hurt. But then I started to think about the person I am, the type of person I wanted to continue to be. And I realized I already thought about that and if I send someone else in and they get hurt that's on me and I'll never be able to live with that for the rest of my life. It's time for me to be a leader and lead from the front."

During his recovery period, Rumbaugh was visited by President Barack Obama and given a framed quote by an official that changed the direction of his life. That quote read, "Find something you would die for and live for it." He has continued to follow that creed ever since.

For his efforts, PTC's military liaison Barabbas Dietrich presented Rumbaugh with a plaque recognizing his service to his country and community.

To view the video of Rumbaugh's talk, visit [www.ptcollege.edu/campus-life/video-and-photo-gallery/video/1925](http://www.ptcollege.edu/campus-life/video-and-photo-gallery/video/1925).



Brandon Rumbaugh, a retired Marine Corps corporal, addresses students at Pittsburgh Technical College during Constitution Day on Sept. 13. Rumbaugh lost both of his legs in an IED explosion in Afghanistan. He is now a student and inspirational speaker who is spearheading a number of efforts to help others.

Read and share stories from Allegheny West Magazine!  
Current and back issues can be read at [AWMagazine.com](http://AWMagazine.com).

Copy the URL from individual pages and then share via email and on social media.

## Through new agreement, CCAC business and IT graduates can earn a bachelor's at PTC

The Community College of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh Technical College have entered into a collaborative agreement that allows students who have earned an associate degree in either business or information technology at CCAC to seamlessly transfer into a parallel bachelor's degree program at PTC. This marks the first such collaboration between the two institutions.

The announcement was made during an official signing ceremony held at CCAC's Byers Hall on its Allegheny Campus in September. The articulation agreement allows CCAC students who earn an Associate of Science degree in a business program such as accounting, business, business management or tourism management to transfer directly into a Bachelor of Science program in business administration at PTC. Students who have earned their associate degree in information technology from CCAC in information systems, cybersecurity, information technology support or software development can enter into PTC's Bachelor of Science program in information systems and technology.

"Today, the Community College of Allegheny County and Pittsburgh Technical College have entered into a significant agreement, one which creates the foundation for a strategic partnership between our two institutions and which will enable graduates of some of CCAC's most popular associate degree programs to transfer to PTC and continue their studies without interruption in order to further their educational goals," said

CCAC President Dr. Quintin B. Bullock during the signing ceremony.

"The articulation agreement between PTC and CCAC creates a bridge for students to continue their studies toward a bachelor's degree," said PTC President Greg DeFeo. "PTC is committed to focusing on the success of students so they attain the skills necessary for today's employment market. The affiliation with CCAC reflects our commitment to students, to employers and to the community."

CCAC graduates transferring 60 credits will be considered juniors and will be admitted directly into PTC's corresponding Bachelor of Science program. The normal completion time for CCAC graduates transferring into PTC bachelor's degree programs is 15 months for business and 18 months for IT. The coordination of transferable coursework, supported through academic advising, will help ensure a successful transition. When transferring, CCAC students must apply for admission, submit required transcripts and meet PTC's admissions requirements. Interested CCAC students can submit a free application online during their final year at CCAC.

Transferring students may also qualify for a Bachelor's Degree Transfer Grant of \$7,500 as well as a Bachelor's Degree Scholarship worth up to \$5,000 from PTC. For more, including requirements about those grants and others, visit the grants and scholarships page at [www.ptcollege.edu](http://www.ptcollege.edu) under admissions.



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## Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies:



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### October Milestone Anniversaries

**15 years**  
 Liberty Insurance Agency  
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## Upcoming Chamber Trips for Members and Non-Members!

**April 15 - 21, 2018** Upcoming 2018 Trip!  
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 Info Meeting: Oct. 11, 2017

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For More Information,  
 Contact Michelle Kreutzer  
 at [mkreutzer@paacc.com](mailto:mkreutzer@paacc.com)  
 or call 412-264-6270.

Info Meeting: October 23, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

### Upcoming Events

November 1st | **Breakfast Briefing**  
 Hilton Garden Inn Pittsburgh Airport  
 7:30 - 10 a.m.

November 2nd | **Community Impact Awards**  
 Pittsburgh Airport Marriott  
 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

November 9th | **BizBlast@Noon**  
 Celebrations Bar, Banquet & Grill  
 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

December 8th | **JingleFest**  
 Embassy Suites Pittsburgh Airport  
 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.



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For more information about bunions and their treatment, visit the American Podiatric Medical Association Web site at: [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org).

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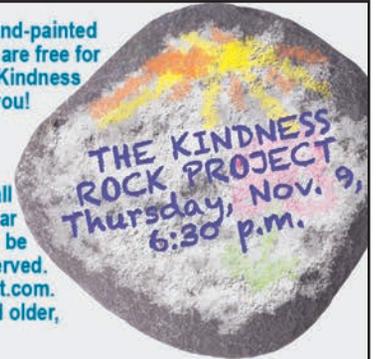
## VETERANS DAY BREAKFAST

**Friday,  
November 3,  
9-10 a.m.**

Once again, Findlay Township will be honoring veterans and their families with a breakfast at the Activity Center on Main Street in Imperial. Join us for a continental breakfast. After breakfast, there will be a patriotic music sing along led by Clem Rolin and friends. We encourage all veterans to come and be recognized. You must have a reservation to attend. We are so proud of our many local veterans and their service to our country.

**For questions or to register,  
call the Findlay Township  
Recreation Department at  
(724) 695-0500 x 246 or 240.**

All over the U.S., there are small gardens with hand-painted rocks that carry messages of hope and love that are free for the taking. Findlay Township is creating its own Kindness Rocks Garden. If you love crafts, this is just for you! This workshop will take place at the Findlay Township Activity Center and will be led by Joanne Jamis Cain, a 35-year Findlay Township resident. Bring with you a small smooth rock (3"-5" in diameter) and wear old clothes. All paints and markers will be provided. Light refreshments will be served. Read more at [thekindnessrocksproject.com](http://thekindnessrocksproject.com). The cost is \$2 per person, ages 10 and older, under 16 must be with a parent. Register by Nov. 1.



**KIDS RESALE  
EVENT  
Sunday, Nov. 5,  
12-4 p.m.**

Calling all parents, grandparents and caregivers. Gather your kids' toys, clothes and furniture that you no longer use and bring them out to sell at the first Findlay Kid's Resale Event. Just think how great it would be to get rid of unneeded items and make a little extra holiday cash, too. Tables provided. Call to reserve. Space limited. Tables are \$10.

## FOOD TRUCK THURSDAYS CONTINUE Nov. 2, 4-8 p.m.

Due the popularity of our Food Truck Thursdays this past summer, we are going to continue into the fall. Trucks will be parked in the new lot across from the Post Office in Clinton. Give yourself a break from cooking. Weather permitting, tables will be available to eat outside. Take-out available. Vendors: Gyros N'AT, Pittsburgh Taco Truck and Wok of Life.



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## Staff in-service kicks off new school year



It was a busy start to the school year as administration kicked it off with staff in-service training August 16 through 18. In preparation for the return of students, a primary focus included sessions on the new student information system Skyward. The system provides a centralized platform designed to manage grades, assignments and attendance, as well as ultimately promote parent, student and teacher engagement through streamlined and automated communication. Day-long training sessions culminated in an escape room challenge that tested the staff's knowledge of the Skyward system. Additional trainings included CPR and Stop the Bleed training that complemented last year's emergency preparedness drills. Staff also participated in a range of curriculum-specific academic sessions.

**TOP LEFT:** Teachers draw on their Skyward knowledge to solve puzzles and beat an escape room challenge.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** Staff members are trained in Skyward student information modules.

**RIGHT:** Stop the Bleed training provided staff with critical first aid training.



# #WeAreTeacherProud

## District hiring for substitute positions

West Allegheny School District is currently looking to hire substitutes in the following areas: custodians, cafeteria staff, bus aides, nurses and teachers. Please visit the WA Employment Opportunities page under the Human Resources page of the District website at [www.westasd.org](http://www.westasd.org) to apply. All school district applicants must have current state and federal clearances.

## New Gold Card Club members welcomed

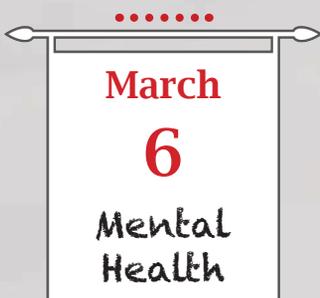
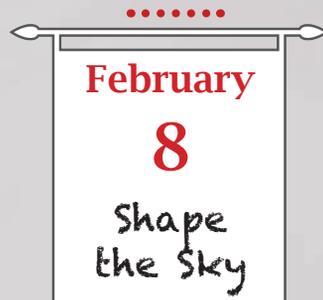
The West Allegheny School District continues to welcome new members into its Gold Card Club. Residents who are at least age 60 and live in the district may pick up a gold card at the district office, Wilson Elementary School at 110 Bruno Lane, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. through 3:30 p.m. A driver's license or other proof of age and residence is required.

The Gold Card entitles members to attend all school district-sponsored activities for which there is normally a charge. These events include a variety of concerts, plays, science fairs, art shows and regular-season athletic activities. Special events, including a holiday breakfast and a luncheon held in conjunction with the spring musical production, are also included in member benefits. Membership does not, however, provide free admission to fundraising events or other activities sponsored by booster organizations.

# #WeAreInnovators&Designers

## Mark your calendars

The West Allegheny Student Services Department is proud to host a Parent Workshop Series that addresses issues facing our youth. Please mark your calendars for these upcoming dates and join us for these very important conversations. Additional details will be provided closer to the presentations.



## New District website earns national award for excellence

The District was recently awarded a 2017 Education Standard of Excellence mark by the national Web Marketing Association for its new website design that was launched earlier this year. The competition recognizes websites that have established a high standard for Internet marketing and development. It is dedicated to naming the best websites from 96 industries.

The custom site brings vast new capability to the District's web presence. Its more contemporary look and functionality places an emphasis on clean graphics, a prominent photo gallery and new announcements.

The mobile-friendly performance of the site also improved dramatically with a responsive design that adjusts to device size and platform.

The District worked with its new web provider, eSchoolView, for more than a year to design the layout and migrate information. The site was launched in February and is now helping District administrators and teachers better connect with parents and local residents.



# Superintendent's Message

In the previous edition of Allegheny West Magazine, I wrote about the importance of career awareness and readiness, as well as the efforts that are underway at West Allegheny to ensure that all of our students are knowledgeable about careers, have in-depth and meaningful opportunities for career exploration, and understand the educational expectations necessary for successful career attainment. I also discussed the "college for all rhetoric" that has been adopted by many educational institutions and explained that, at West Allegheny, we believe our mission is to prepare students for the workforce, a career certification program **and/or** a two- to four-year college degree program by the time they graduate. A one-size-fits-all academic program funneling every student to college is not how West Allegheny supports students. However, many careers require four or more years of college to obtain a degree in order to qualify. On average, two-thirds of our graduates pursue a four-year college. To that end, my message for this edition will focus on our efforts currently underway to ensure that our students who choose to pursue a college degree are prepared for college and persist through degree completion.

One of our key strategies to ensure college readiness and persistence, without the need for remediation, is the work around exposing more students to Advanced Placement courses and ensuring they are successful in these courses. This work is being supported by a three-year \$729,000 National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) grant, which was awarded to the District in the spring of 2015. The NMSI grant provides for Saturday study sessions, tutoring sessions for students, mock AP exams, \$35,000 for additional classroom resources, partial payment of AP exam costs, student cash awards for earning qualifying scores, extensive AP and pre-AP teacher training, and other online AP resources for teachers.

Nationally, research shows that students who score a three or higher on an AP exam typically earn higher grade point averages in college and have higher graduation rates than their non-AP peers. National data from the College Board indicates that students exposed to the rigor of an AP course who earn an AP exam score of two (non-qualifying) maintain a significantly higher GPA in college from their first year (2.83 average) through their fourth year (2.85 average). Students who had neither AP nor dual enrollment courses in high school had lower GPAs (first year GPA 2.55 through fourth year 2.60). It is well posited that students who intend to pursue a four-year college degree should take at least one AP course in high school. Students who take at least two AP courses, maintain a 3.0 GPA and 95 percent attendance are 85 percent more likely to persist in college through degree attainment. Research from NMSI suggests that taking AP courses is valued in the college admission process:

- Eighty-five percent of selective colleges and universities report that a student's AP experience favorably impacts admission decisions.
- Colleges rank grades in college-preparatory courses and strength of curriculum as the two top factors in the admission decision.
- AP courses tell college admission officials that students are challenging themselves and preparing for the rigors they will encounter in their college careers.

In addition to the NMSI grant, we have expanded course offerings to 20 AP courses this school year, compared to 14 in 2013-2014. We have also extended seven AP courses to sophomores, allowing for more AP courses to be taken across three years as opposed to just during the traditional junior and senior years. Expanding AP courses across three years also decreases the academic pressure on students. Further, we were successful in obtaining the distinction of participating in the College Board AP Capstone Diploma program. This is a prestigious, innovative diploma program that focuses on

inquiry, research and writing skills that are crucial for college and career success. This year, West Allegheny joined only three other high schools in Allegheny County, 17 in Pennsylvania and 650 nationwide in offering the AP Capstone Program. Students who earn scores of three or higher on AP Seminar and AP Research assessments and on four additional AP Exams of their choosing will earn the distinguished AP Capstone Diploma. This signifies their outstanding academic achievement and attainment of college-level academic and research skills. Students who earn scores of three or higher on both AP Seminar and AP Research assessments only, but not on four additional AP exams, will earn the AP Seminar and Research Certificate, making these students stand out above others in a very competitive college admission process.

With the above outlined advancements to our AP program of studies, we have realized tremendous and remarkable results. Some of those are highlighted below:

1. The total number of AP students in 2012-2013 was 53. This number has grown to over 330 in 2017-2018.
2. In 2012-2013, our students took 77 AP exams. Last spring, our students took 727 exams.
3. In 2012-2013, our students earned 41 qualifying exam scores. Last spring, our students earned 294 qualifying exam scores.
4. This year, we have over 850 AP course enrollments in 20 AP courses, compared to 274 in 2013-2014.
5. In 2013-2014, we had 18 students earn the College Board AP Scholars distinction for outstanding performance on AP exams. This past spring, we had 60 students earn AP Scholars Distinction. Of the 60 students:

- a. 37 students were named **AP Scholar** by receiving a score of three or higher on three or more AP exams;
  - b. six students were recognized as **AP Scholar with Honor** with an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and scores of three or higher on four or more exams;
  - c. 17 students were recognized as **AP Scholars with Distinction** by receiving an average score of 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of three or higher on five or more exams;
  - d. three of our AP Scholars with Distinction are also **National AP Scholars**, earning the highest possible distinction for receiving an average of at least four on all AP exams taken and scores of four or higher on eight or more AP exams. Impressively, all three National AP Scholars earned this distinction by the end of their junior year. This honor places these students among the nation's most elite academic performers.
6. Over the past two years, our students have earned almost \$40,000 in cash awards for their performance on AP exams.
  7. In our first school year of the NMSI grant in 2015-2016, our AP exam scores earned us the top national ranking for percent increase in math and science qualifying scores as well as two top state rankings and one second state ranking.

These impressive results demonstrate that our students excel when afforded the opportunity and can compete with top performing students from other districts, both locally and nationally. Our recent alumni feedback has overwhelmingly supported the effectiveness of our efforts, with many anecdotes shared; from being over prepared for college courses to tutoring classmates who were not afforded the same opportunities in high school. Our guiding mission at West Allegheny is to prepare and support ALL of our students across varied career and college pathways, thereby ensuring their optimal success.

.....  
*Dr. Jerrí Lynn Lippert, Superintendent*

# #WeAreStudentStrong

## Marching Pride takes to the field with big numbers



The Marching Pride, which has grown to 122 students this year, poses for a picture on the field.

Following countless hours of practice in the summer heat, the Marching Pride has taken to the field this fall in grand WA tradition. Under band director TJ Fox, the group has grown to 122 students, with Evan Armstrong and Katie Borgo named this year's drum majors. Performing the "School of Rock" theme, musical selections include Aerosmith's "Dream On," Guns n' Roses' "Sweet Child of Mine," Metallica's "Master of Puppets" and Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven."

The Marching Pride hosted the Cavalcade of Bands on October 14 with seven other high school bands performing.



Senior members come together for a photo during summer band camp.

## Five seniors recognized by National Merit Scholarship Corporation



Seniors Tim Tan, Michael Bagnell, Lucia Bruschi, Megan Ye and Anden Acitelli receive their commendations from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

West Allegheny is proud to announce that five seniors were recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation for their exceptional academic promise demonstrated by their outstanding performance on the 2016 PSAT. Megan Ye was recognized as a semifinalist and will advance to the final round in the competition. Anden Acitelli, Michael Bagnell, Lucia Bruschi and Tim Tan qualified and were recognized as Commended Students.

According to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, over 1.6 million students nationwide took the 2016 PSAT with 16,000 designated semifinalists and 34,000 students named commended students.

"These students represent a valuable national resource," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation."

## SADD Club sponsors Safety Bug

On September 18, the high school SADD Club welcomed the Safety Bug program, which is sponsored by the DUI Pretrial Services Department and Allegheny County Alcohol Highway Safety Program. Licensed students were invited to participate in the drunk driving simulation during lunch periods.

The Safety Bug has been custom engineered to demonstrate the loss of control one would experience if operating a motor vehicle while in an impaired state. A trained mentor is positioned in the front passenger seat with control settings that cause the vehicle's steering to lose its finesse and prompt the braking mechanisms to become unpredictable. The result is that the teen in the driver seat gains a firsthand glimpse of what it feels like to drive under the influence.

SADD Club advisers are Kateri Meinert and Sgt. Mike Hayes.

High school students had an opportunity to drive the Safety Bug course in the parking lot.



## High school computer and technology students earn recognition and experience



Three West Allegheny students joined attendees from around the region at the University of Pittsburgh's CyberCamp.

High school computer and technology students have made a name for themselves recently by demonstrating their abilities and experience. Amir Little claimed first place in the Game Design category at the Teen Media Awards, which was sponsored by Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. He was recognized for his original action game arcade design "Knighy Knight" and was awarded \$250.

This past summer, three West Allegheny students attended the University of Pittsburgh and the Air Force Association's CyberCamp. Derek Halbedl, Arielle Moulinie and Little attended the camp, which culminated in a competition that resulted in the WA team earning the fourth highest score out of over 25 teams. The camp was designed as an introduction to careers in the growing field of cybersecurity as well as STEM - or science, technology, engineering and mathematics - disciplines.

## West Allegheny selected to host German soccer team FC Schalke 04

In town to show support for its sister team, the Pittsburgh Riverhounds, the world famous soccer team FC Schalke 04 chose West Allegheny as one of a handful of schools to visit on September 8. Representatives from the team first spoke with high school German classes and then tested their knowledge of culture, foods, festivals and, appropriately, soccer. Students had the opportunity to hear the German language spoken first hand as well as participate in a spirited round of questions.



**ABOVE:** FC Schalke 04 coaches and players speak to high school German students. **BELOW:** Middle and high school soccer players enjoy a rare opportunity to participate in a mini- soccer clinic with members of FC Schalke 04.



Players from both the WA middle and high school soccer teams were then invited to kick around with the German players and coaches as they held a mini-clinic that ran them through several drills and offered constructive pointers on the game.

Mascots from both the Riverhounds and FC Schalke 04 were on hand to add to the day's excitement.

## Award-winning author surprises student with literary package

Last year's seventh grade English language arts students culminated their year of study by writing letters to their favorite authors. Mallory McElhaney, now an eighth-grader, was admittedly stunned when her favorite author wrote her back. At the start of the school year, she received a package containing a handwritten letter from author Sharon Biggs Waller, along with a copy of one of her latest releases "The Forbidden Orchid." Also included was autographed artwork and other small tokens. Biggs Waller is an award-winning young adult novelist who often writes about young women navigating historical times.



**Mallory McElhaney excitedly displays items she received from her favorite author.**

## Middle school mini-grant promotes career readiness

The middle school team is the proud recipient of a \$5,000 mini-grant to further its focus on career readiness. The grant was made available in collaboration with the PA Workforce Development Team and PA Intermediate Units. The grant will support the District's work to expand the seventh and eighth grade career awareness and exploration program Virtual Job Shadow, which was launched this school year. The grant will also assist in teacher training and professional development, staff collaboration on curriculum, career and community partnerships, and implementation of the new career readiness project and community presentation.

The Virtual Job Shadow program reinforces middle school students' understanding and awareness of careers and high-priority occupations that incorporate their interests and talents. This work is critical in the middle school as it supports student success in the high school as they align to the seven career and college pathways.

To kick off the career readiness program, eighth graders participated in a session on career exploration presented by Susie Puskar from Partner4Work. The Pittsburgh-based organization builds partnerships to share key information on the job market and career opportunities.



**Eighth-graders participate in a career presentation sponsored by Partner4Work representative Susie Puskar.**

## WAMS pep rally recognizes fall activities

WAMS students and staff demonstrated their Indian pride in true WA fashion at a school-wide pep rally September 8. Members of the band, cheerleaders, peer mediators and sports teams were recognized. Teacher Jess Henry produced and provided the vocals for a school spirit video, which was debuted at the event to great fanfare.



**ABOVE:** Teacher Valerie Prevade tosses spirit bracelets to the enthusiastic crowd of students. **BELOW:** Members of the middle school soccer team were called down and recognized along with several other sports teams and student groups.



# #WeAreWestA

# Parent Information Notice

## Services for Disabled Preschool Age Children

Act 212, the Early Intervention System Act, entitles all preschool age children with disabilities to appropriate early intervention services. Young children experiencing developmental delay or physical or mental disabilities are eligible for early entrance services. He or she is considered to have a developmental delay when difficulties exist in the areas of cognitive, communicative, physical social /emotional and self help development. Services for special needs children, below school age, who reside in suburban Allegheny County, are provided through two different systems linked by a transition process. Birth through age two programming is provided through the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare funding and is coordinated by the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Inc. Students who are three years old to entry age are serviced through the Pennsylvania Department of Education funding. This preschool program is presently coordinated by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's Early Childhood and Family Support Services program, DART.

For more information, please contact the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, Inc. at 412-885-6000 or the Allegheny Intermediate Unit/DART Program at 412-394-5736.

You may find information regarding the appropriate developmental milestone descriptors for infants and toddlers at the Center of Disease Control (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/ActEarly/default.htm>

## Services for School Age Exceptional Students

The school district provides a free, appropriate public education to exceptional students according to state and federal mandates. To be eligible, the child must be of school-age, need specially designed instruction, and meet eligibility criteria for mentally gifted and/or one or more of the following physical or mental disabilities as set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act which was re-authorized in 1997 (IDEA -97) and the Chapter 14 Special Education Services and Programs State Regulations: Autism, Blindness/Visual Impairment, Deaf- Blindness, Deafness/Hearing Impairment, Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disability, Orthopedic Impaired, Other Health Impaired, Specific Learning Disability, Speech and Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury.

Identified students are provided with a continuum of services designed to meet the individual needs of eligible students. These services may include supportive intervention in the regular class, supplemental intervention in the regular class or in a special education resource program, placement in a part-time or full-time special education class in a regular school or placement in a full-time special education class outside of the regular school. The extent of special education services and the location for the delivery of such services are determined by the parents and staff at the IEP team meeting and is based on the student's identified needs and abilities, chronological age, and the intensity of the specified intervention. The school district also provides related services, such as transportation, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling services that are required to enable the student to derive educational benefits.

Parents of public school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child through a written request to the Building Principal or Director of Student Services. Please contact the Building Principal or Director of Student Services for the required form.

## Screening and Evaluation

The West Allegheny School District employs the following procedures for locating, identifying, and evaluating specified needs of school age students requiring special programs and services.

*Level 1: Review of group-based data*

*Level 2: Review of hearing, vision, motor, speech and language*

*Level 3: School Based Intervention Teams*

## The Multidisciplinary Evaluation (MDE)

The MDE is a process to gather information that will be used to find out if children really do need special education and if so, the types of services needed. Prior to an MDE, the District must obtain permission via the Permission to Evaluate form. Before an evaluation can occur, the form must be signed by the parent or legal guardian.

Evaluations are conducted by a certified school psychologist. Additional information is provided by the parents, classroom teacher, and other pertinent individuals who work with the student. All of this information is compiled into an Evaluation Report (ER). This report will recommend whether a child has one or more disabilities or mental giftedness. It also recommends whether or not the child requires special education and the type of program and services that the child needs. The ER may recommend that a child is not exceptional and therefore does not need special education services. If this is recommended, the report will list changes that may be made in the regular classroom to make the child more successful. All members of the MDT, including the parents, are entitled to review the ER.

Reevaluations for students, who are eligible for special education services, are compiled every three years or two years for students with intellectual disabilities or when requested by one or more members of the IEP team (please see information on Individualized Education Plan).

## Individualized Education Plan

Children who are regarded to be exceptional by the MDT team are entitled to receive special education services. The document that specifically addresses these services is called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Required members of the IEP team include: the child's parents; at least one of your child's regular education teachers; at least one special education teacher; a representative from the school district who: (1) is qualified to provide or supervise special education programs, (2) knows about the general curriculum, (3) knows what resources the Local Education Agency (LEA) can offer; someone who can interpret the evaluation results and who may already be a member of the team, at your request or that of the school; other people who know your child well or who have worked with your child; your child (at age 14 when planning will be done for life after graduation or any time before that age when you want your child to be present); or a representative from a vocational-technical school if a vocational- technical school is being considered for your child.

The IEP will review all of the evaluation material and will determine how your child is performing in school. The IEP team will write annual goals that can be measured and which meet the needs of your child. IEPs for eligible students are developed on an annual basis, or sooner, if requested by one or more members of the IEP team.

# Parent Information Notice (cont.)

## Notice of Recommended Educational Placement

Once the IEP has been developed with the IEP team; you will receive a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP). The NOREP explains the placement or class recommended for your child and explains your rights. You must approve the NOREP in writing for your child's first special education placement if you want it to go into effect. You will receive a NOREP with each completed IEP and you have 10 calendar days to return the NOREP. In circumstances when this form is NOT completed parental consent is NOT required, the school will proceed after 10 calendar days.

West Allegheny School District offers a continuum of educational services designed to meet the needs of eligible students including varying degrees of gifted, learning, and speech and language support. In addition, related services such as transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, vision support, and deaf and hearing support are available to those students that qualify. Detailed information regarding special education procedures may be obtained by calling the Special Education Department at 724-695-5221.

## Services for Protected Handicapped Students

There are instances in which students are identified as handicapped or disabled, but may not qualify for Special Education services. If it is determined necessary, the school district will provide these students, without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to ensure equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school programs and extracurricular activities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability which substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. Services and protections for protected handicapped students are different from those applicable to all eligible students enrolled in special education programs. These services are outlined in a Chapter 15 Service Agreement. Questions regarding Chapter 15 should be directed to the Director of Student Services at 724-695-5221.

## Services for Students in Nonpublic Schools

Public special education is accessible to resident students attending nonpublic schools by permitting the nonpublic school student to enroll on a part-time, dual enrollment basis in a special education program operated in a public school. The student must have a multidisciplinary team evaluation completed and an Individual Education Plan must be developed with the public school; parents must sign a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement.

Parents of nonpublic school students who suspect that their child is exceptional and in need of special education may request a multidisciplinary team evaluation of their child through a written request to the district Director of Student Services.

## Public Notice on Student Records

The Education Records Plan for Exceptional Students is a state approved plan for the local school districts within the Allegheny Intermediate Unit which defines all procedures for collection, maintenance, and dissemination of educational records belonging to exceptional students. Education records are needed to provide appropriate educational programs, but at the same time it is necessary to protect the rights of privacy and confidentiality of students and parents.

Official student education records are kept where a student attends a district operated class. Copies of the District Education Records Plan may be obtained from your building principal.

## Confidentiality of Student Records

The privacy rights of parents and students are mandated by federal legislation known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Buckley Amendment), state regulations (Chapter 14 - Special Education Services and Programs, Chapter 12 - Student Rights and Responsibilities), and district policy.

The different categories of information maintained by the school district are as follows: educational and health records, personally identifiable information and directory information. With the exception of the receiving school district, educational and health records, personally identifiable information cannot be disclosed or released without parental consent or adult student's (a student who is eighteen years of age or older, married or attending an institution of post secondary education) consent.

Information known as directory information can be released without consent. Directory information means information which would be considered not harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. This information includes the following: student's name, address, date and place of birth, courses taken, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.

A written, parental or adult student request is required for the disclosure of educational and health records and personally identifiable information. The consent must specify the records that may be disclosed and the purpose of the disclosure; and identify the party or class of parties to whom the disclosure may be made. A written record of the disclosure must be maintained by the school district.

Parent or adult students have the right to inspect and review the students' educational records within thirty (30) days of the date the district receives a written request for access. Parents of eligible students should submit to the building principal a written request that identifies the specific records they wish to inspect. Parents or adult students can seek to amend the student's educational record that is believed to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. The parent or eligible student in writing must clearly identify the parts of the record to be changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student will be notified of the decision and advise the individual of his/her right to a hearing regarding the requested amendment.

Parents or adult students have the right to file complaints concerning alleged failures of the district to comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Such complaints should be directed to the Health, Educational and Welfare Office, Washington, D. C. With regard to parents who do not understand English, the School District will attempt to inform them of their rights in their native language. Further information regarding the Policy of the Collection, Maintenance and Dissemination of Records is available through the principal's office.

## Students benefit from Helping Hands program



Helping Hands students and advisors (front) Carlee Lash, Isabella Fiscus, Vanessa Dale, (middle) Kathy Taylor, Emily Griffith, Dane Thomas, Erica Cicero, (back) Luke Sawford, Noah Figley and Joshua Bohley participated in a summer training session.

The Helping Hands program held its summer training session this past June for Wilson Elementary students who were interested in reaching out to assist others in their school. This year, eight incoming fourth-graders with recommendations from either a teacher, counselor or principal participated.

A key focus of the program is for volunteers to work with special needs students throughout the school year, with the summer training sessions focused on leadership, communication, team building and working with others. Life lessons taught during the student training included the themes of “helping with” versus “doing for” and what it is like to be differently-abled.

Upon completion of training, Helping Hands students put their skills into action by volunteering with students involved in the Extended School Year Program. They also work with special needs students in the context of social skills activities.

School counselor Kathy Taylor facilitates the Helping Hands program with assistance from West Allegheny school psychologist Erica Cicero, who led the summer training session.

## District conducts bus safety demonstrations

In partnership with Monark Student Transportation Corporation, WA’s transportation provider, the District carried out several bus safety demonstrations at the elementary and middle schools. Students learned the importance of proper bus behavior and procedures.



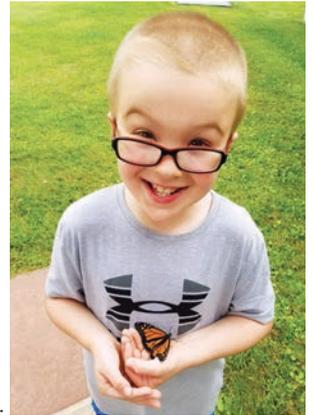
McKee students learn valuable safety lessons from Monark bus drivers.

## Donaldson students engage in learning through hands-on butterfly project

Now in its 10th year, the Donaldson Monarch Sanctuary has evolved into a notable example of student learning and engagement. Students in Denise Stitch and Sue McKissick’s classroom have a great deal to be excited about as they anticipate releasing over 300 Monarch butterflies this year after raising and observing them for weeks.

With this being their most successful release to date, the project continues to evolve. New this year was the addition of a tagging system provided by Monarch Watch. The organization is committed to the study of Monarch butterflies. It offers information about butterflies at [www.monarchwatch.com](http://www.monarchwatch.com), along with a means of tracking butterflies with tags once they are released. For each butterfly tagged, the class will record when and where the butterflies were released, along with its gender. If another butterfly lover finds them, they can input the tag number in the Monarch Watch database and the class will be notified as to where and when they were found. The tagging program will also help researchers determine possible reasons for a nearly 90 percent decline in the Monarch butterfly population.

“It is a fascinating project and the kids do an amazing job of caring for them,” said Stitch. “It teaches our students responsibility, and also beautifully brings about butterfly related math, science and ELA instruction for all students throughout the school. It is beautiful and useful at the same time!”



ABOVE: Second-grader Luke Mulder enjoys an up-close look at one of the Monarch butterflies before it is released. BELOW: The new tagging system will allow students to track butterflies’ migration.



## WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR WEEKLY EVENTS, SCHOOL CLOSINGS, AND DELAYS.

VISIT WEST ALLEGHENY ONLINE:

[WWW.WESTASD.ORG](http://WWW.WESTASD.ORG)

All material has been prepared, written or edited by Karen Ruhl, School Community Relations Coordinator, West Allegheny School District: (724) 695-5274.

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
DOUG HUGHEY

become even more of a draw since paving of the trail started last year. Earlier this year, the rest of the Washington County section was completed to the West Virginia state line. Now, a steady stream of trail users make their way past town and take advantage of the ample parking along the trail off South McDonald Street next to the McDonald Trail Station.

In the backdrop behind town, meanwhile, the Southern Beltway project is well underway. The highway will eventually connect I-79 with Pittsburgh International Airport and is expected to help develop points along the route.

Encouraged by those projects, a developer purchased several business district properties in McDonald earlier this year. That developer, Matt Novelli, says he flipped several houses in town before making that investment. Novelli has so far purchased four buildings along South McDonald Street, as well as the McDonald Plaza mini-mall. Mary Jean Evans, who sold Novelli that strip mall, says her father, Eugene Povero, built both that building and the building where the Giant Eagle is now located. Taken together, the development contains many of the town's current businesses. Evans says her father also helped secure funding for the current McDonald Heritage Library building.

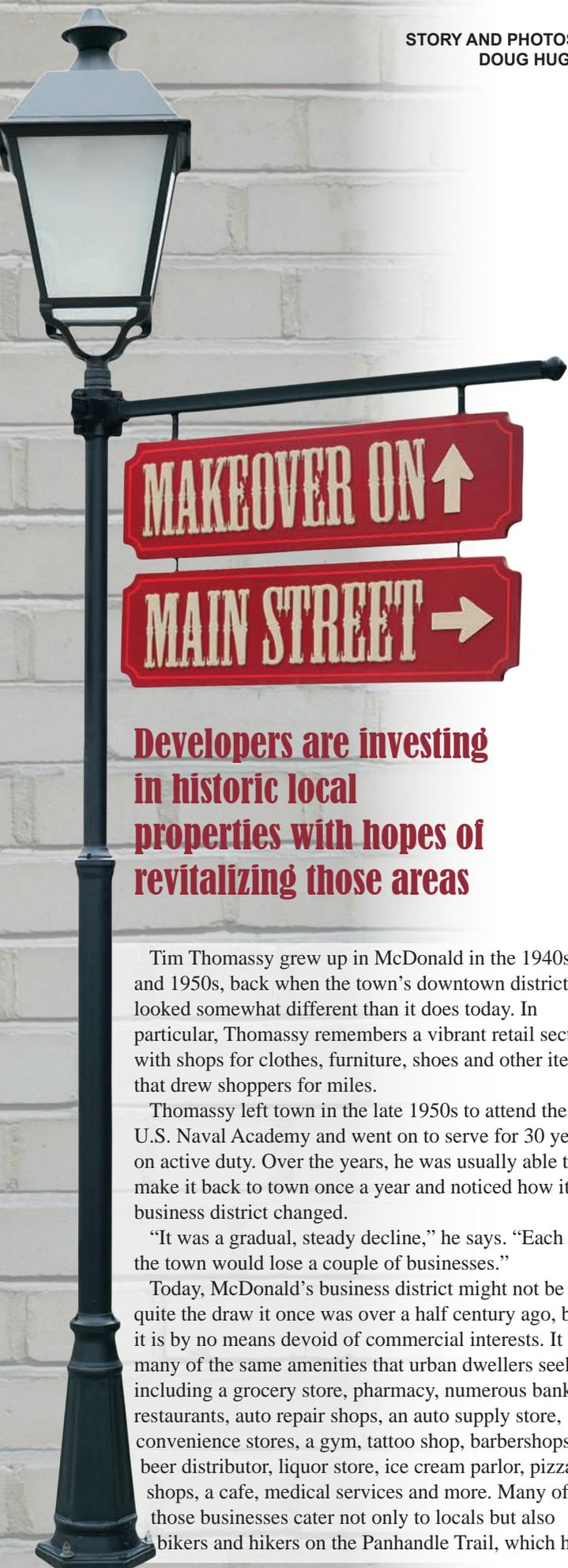
In addition to that plaza, Evans sold Novelli the former Pittsburgh Coal Building on South McDonald Street and another commercial plaza on Steubenville Pike.

A Keystone Oaks High School alumnus, Novelli says he bought his first duplex when he was 18 and has been developing properties ever since. Thomassy, who later bought a house in McDonald and served on borough council for a number of years, says he's been encouraged by Novelli's investment.

"I'm very optimistic personally about what he's doing," says Thomassy. "He can certainly revitalize the downtown commercial section. He's already invested in just the property itself."

A number of the properties Novelli purchased were built before 1910, in the wake of a feverish oil boom that descended on the borough in the early 1890s. The look of many of those buildings has not changed much since.

So when the company painted the yellow brick building formerly occupied by the Pittsburgh Coal Company black and installed shiny metal sheeting to give it what Novelli's property manager



## Developers are investing in historic local properties with hopes of revitalizing those areas

Tim Thomassy grew up in McDonald in the 1940s and 1950s, back when the town's downtown district looked somewhat different than it does today. In particular, Thomassy remembers a vibrant retail sector, with shops for clothes, furniture, shoes and other items that drew shoppers for miles.

Thomassy left town in the late 1950s to attend the U.S. Naval Academy and went on to serve for 30 years on active duty. Over the years, he was usually able to make it back to town once a year and noticed how its business district changed.

"It was a gradual, steady decline," he says. "Each year the town would lose a couple of businesses."

Today, McDonald's business district might not be quite the draw it once was over a half century ago, but it is by no means devoid of commercial interests. It has many of the same amenities that urban dwellers seek, including a grocery store, pharmacy, numerous banks, restaurants, auto repair shops, an auto supply store, convenience stores, a gym, tattoo shop, barbershops, beer distributor, liquor store, ice cream parlor, pizza shops, a cafe, medical services and more. Many of those businesses cater not only to locals but also bikers and hikers on the Panhandle Trail, which has



The old Pittsburgh Coal Company building on South McDonald Street in McDonald got a makeover earlier this year by a developer who recently purchased the property. In October, Dave and Lori Poe (pictured at right) opened the second location for their company, The Tandem Connection, in the storefront at left. The shop sits a stone's throw from the Panhandle Trail.



The Central Hotel building in McDonald has some interesting architecture, including a large atrium with a staircase leading up to the top floor apartments. The building may have at one time been a brothel, back in McDonald's early oil boom days when it boasted more speakeasies than any other town in Washington County.

was badly damaged in places. It will be possible, however, to remove the vinyl without destroying the existing tile in the future. The company also painted the restaurant's yellow ceiling black, which Bengston says will both preserve the original tin ceiling and hide flaws.

In addition to those cosmetic upgrades, the company has installed new windows in the Will Hotel and air conditioning in the Pitt Hotel. Novelli says he's hoping to convert the hotel into a bed and breakfast.

The company also touched up the brick exteriors of the Will Hotel and Central Hotel buildings with brick-colored paint, which has helped hide years of watermarks. Bengston says they've been researching the history of the buildings and plan to hang plaques on each bearing the names they were given when they were first built. Some of the buildings, she says, have colorful histories. For instance, the Central Hotel may have once been a brothel, back in the town's early oil boom days when it boasted more speakeasies than any other town in Washington County. Each apartment on the top floor has several doors leading out onto a balcony surrounding a large atrium. Over time, walls between the rooms were knocked down to form traditional living spaces.



Melissa Bengston describes as "a historic look with a modern twist," some locals were alarmed. Bengston, though, says the paint job was necessary to give the building - with its multitude of textures - a cohesive look. Novelli also says the exterior was in need of pointing, which would have been a massive undertaking.

While the company opted to make that major change, Bengston says they've been careful to preserve historic aspects of buildings elsewhere. For instance, while renovating, the company has been careful not to paint over doors with historic stenciling and preserve tile where possible. In the old Pitt Hotel building, Bengston says they installed new flooring in the bar and restaurant over top of the existing pea tile mosaic, which

was badly damaged in places. It will be possible, however, to remove the vinyl without destroying the existing tile in the future. The company also painted the restaurant's yellow ceiling black, which Bengston says will both preserve the original tin ceiling and hide flaws.

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Bengston says the company is currently trying to attract more businesses to downtown McDonald. She says they are in talks to bring a restaurant in to occupy the former Pitt Hotel Restaurant space. They

also were successful in drawing The Tandem Connection to town, which opened its doors in the Pittsburgh Coal Building at the beginning of October. The store, which sits a stone's throw from the Panhandle Trail, is the second such location for shop owners Dave and Lori Poe. The couple opened their first location along the Montour Trail in Hendersonville five years ago. They say Novelli approached them with the idea of opening a second location in McDonald at the right time.

"We'd had it in the back of our mind that the Panhandle could be another location to get up and running," says Dave.

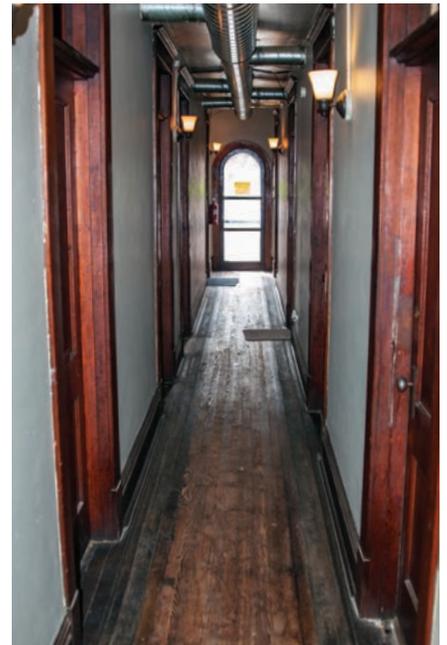
He says they are hoping to attract more road bikers drawn to the Panhandle Trail's paved surface. The shop is now both selling and renting bikes, as well as operating a bike maintenance shop. They'll also be offering bike storage services so people don't have to lug their bikes home if they don't want. Those customers can even get a tune up so their bike is ready for their next ride.

Just like at their Hendersonville location, the Poes say they also plan to sell workout apparel, including running shoes, along with snacks. They'll be serving ice cream, too.

Novelli isn't the only local developer whose portfolio includes historic area buildings, or whose investment could help revitalize a downtown business



ABOVE AND BELOW: Woodwork and historic stenciling are some the details that make the Pitt Hotel in McDonald unique. A developer is now working to update and preserve the building, along with its many historical facets. The building may eventually become a bed and breakfast.





**LEFT:** Formerly known as the “pink house,” this apartment building in downtown Imperial is now owned by Steve and Helen Kashmer. The couple purchased and began updating the building in 2010. **RIGHT:** The Kashmers also own several other buildings in Imperial, including this one formerly owned by Cunningham Brothers Lumber and Supply.



district. In Imperial, Helen and Steve Kashmer of McDonald own their own cluster of historic properties. Since 1995, the couple has been buying and improving those downtown properties and now own most of the buildings sandwiched between Main and Station streets. Many of those buildings were constructed in the early to mid-20th century, at a time when Imperial, like McDonald, was a busy hub of commerce. At that time, downtown Imperial had grocery stores, a bank, a pharmacy, a post office and a multitude of other services, not to mention a rail line. As many of those businesses disappeared, area properties have fell into disrepair and foreclosure. The Kashmers have since purchased a number of such properties and are continuing to invest in them as residential rental properties.

Helen says Steve acquired the first of their buildings in 1995 when he moved his business, Valley Electric, to Station Street. Those buildings at one time belonged to Cunningham Brothers Lumber and Supply. Two of the structures sat adjacent to a spur on the Montour Railroad where lumber was offloaded.

Soon after Steve moved his business to the area, Helen started working in his office and the two opened a bike shop together in one of those buildings. They married soon afterward and today operate both Valley Electric and Valley Security out of an office formerly occupied by Cunningham Brothers Lumber and Supply.

Over time, the couple accumulated additional houses and buildings across downtown Imperial. In 2010, they acquired an apartment building on Station Street that many locals knew as the pink house. The Kashmers have since remodeled the building, including its exterior, which is no longer pink. They’ve also gutted the first floor and are in the process of renovating it into four

apartments. Steve and Helen Kashmer own several buildings along this stretch of Main Street in downtown Imperial, including the building pictured in the foreground. At one time a grocery store, the building was renovated into apartments before the Kashmers acquired it.



Helen says that, after they purchased the property, they installed security cameras and started screening tenants.

Helen says she can’t be certain, but believes the apartment building has been there for quite some time.

“From what I’ve heard from people that was always an apartment house along the railroad,” she says.

That building, along with the bulk of the rest of the properties the Kashmers own, sits about a block from the site of the old Imperial Train Station, where the Findlay Township Activity Center was built. In the late 19th century, the Montour Railroad added passenger service almost as soon as it began hauling coal. According to the book “The Montour Railroad” by Gene P. Schaeffer, the rail line’s first stretch ran from Guy’s Mills to Imperial. As those mines were depleted, the railroad extended its line to service more area mines.

Among the businesses and buildings that emerged in town were several grocery stores along Main Street. In 1979, the building that one of those stores once operated out of was purchased by Howard Warman, who also owned and invested in a number of other area properties. He sold Steve several former Cunningham Brothers Lumber and Supply buildings when Steve first moved Valley Electric to the area.

Warman says the top floor of the building was already an apartment and that he converted the store’s first floor into residential apartments as well. He later sold the building, which still has the store’s old cooler in the basement, to the Kashmers.

Helen says they’ve worked to keep rental rates reasonable and that, at present, all of the apartments and houses they rent have tenants. Still, she says, she continues to get regular calls from people looking for apartments or houses to rent.

Midway native Matt Cochran, too, has been renovating properties into residential rentals for some time. Twenty years ago,



Steve and Helen Kashmer are pictured here in the mid-1990s, when they operated a bike shop out of one of several buildings they now own in downtown Imperial adjacent to the Montour Trail. PHOTO SUBMITTED

he started purchasing properties in Oakdale and McDonald with several partners. He was part of a group that renovated the former school building on Hastings Avenue in Oakdale into residential apartments. His group also converted a space once used by McDonald's library in the old McDonald Borough Building into apartments. The building sits near the intersection of North Street and North McDonald Street in McDonald. Cochran says he and his partners are also hoping to one day renovate a large, open space with tall ceilings on the third floor that was once a dance hall.

Most recently, Cochran's investment group started renovating the entrance to the Grand Theater building in McDonald in an effort to attract retail businesses and possibly convert it into a venue for the arts. He says his group initially bought the building for its adjacent parking lot to support the Cook and Shane building on South McDonald Street, which they also own. The group restored the edifice of that building a number of years ago.

The art deco theater building houses a massive, two-story open space with decorative tin ceiling and sconces. A stage sits at the rear. At one time, a bowling alley operated out of the basement, though the flooring has long since been removed. He says the building was used as a performing arts space and later converted into a film theater, though much of the old rigging remains.

Last year, Cochran's group installed a garage door in the front center of the building with two smaller doors at either end, along with wheelchair-accessible ramps. He says they were trying to strike a balance between functionality and architecture.

"This was an art deco structure," he says. "Everything contained symmetrical and colorful elements. You need to be respectful of those elements. That's the first thing we try to do when we are dealing with structures like this."

He says he hopes it will eventually become a mixed-use space with an open-air eatery. Until they find a definite tenant, though, they're keeping options inside the space open.

Finding that right tenant, and making the space viable, is a challenge every developer faces, particularly in a place that has its own challenges to overcome. That's in addition to making sure the structure is code-compliant and that changes are consistent with the historic architecture.

"Thirdly, you need to build something that your tenants will like," says Cochran. "And all of this needs to be done in the spirit of fiscal responsibility. That's a challenge. It's all a balancing act."



The old Grand Theater building in McDonald still has its original stage and rigging. It was also once home to a bowling alley. Local developers are now hoping to convert it into a mixed-use space and recently renovated the entrances to the building. A garage door at center can be opened to create an open-air environment, possibly for use by a cafe or restaurant.

# FALL FAMILY FUN!

## FREAKY FRIDAY

- > **October 20th**
- > 10:00 AM Costume Parade & Crafts
- > FREE for all participants
- > 6:00-8:00 PM Scary Swim & Spooky Crafts
- > Only \$8 per participant age 2 through adult

## COLOR CRAWL SPARKLE EDITION

- > **October 28th, 10:00 AM**
- > Halloween-themed 2 mile run/walk while being doused with **COLOR** and **SPARKLE**
- > Adults (Age 13 & up) \$20, Children (Age 6-12) \$10, Children Age 5 & under FREE\*
- \*Fees valid through October 14, 2017.  
After that date, registration fee will increase.



**November 4th**  
11:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
FREE Admission

Live Entertainment

Food Trucks

Kids Activities

Baking Contest

and Much More!

All events are open to the public.  
No C&RC Membership necessary to participate.

**Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park**  
1551 Mayview Road Upper St. Clair, PA 15241  
412-221-1099  
[www.twpusc.org/crc/special\\_events](http://www.twpusc.org/crc/special_events)

**Montour Trail monitors needed**, Jesse Forquer, [jjforquer@comcast.net](mailto:jjforquer@comcast.net).

**Toys for Tots Collection**, drop-off at Kennedy Township Police Department, **7:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, through Dec. 8**, new toys for ages 0-12, do not wrap toys, in partnership with the U.S. Marine Reserve Corps., (412) 331-2408.

**McFall Fest**, **Oct. 14, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.**, McDonald Presbyterian Church, [Karin\\_Munoz@comcast.net](mailto:Karin_Munoz@comcast.net) for application.

**West Hills Symphonic Band Concerts**, **Oct. 15, 3 p.m.**, "Autumn's Brilliance," South Fayette High School, **Dec. 10**, "Joyous Memories!" Christmas concert, West Allegheny High School, free, (412) 788-4713.

**Senior Citizen Wellness Expo**, **Oct. 20**, Sheraton Pittsburgh Airport, 1160 Thorn Run Road, hosted by state Rep. Guy Reschenthaler and state Rep. Mark Mustio, senior services information, flu and pneumonia vaccines, [bwilson@pahousegop.com](mailto:bwilson@pahousegop.com), (412) 263-3780.

**Montours Church Spaghetti Dinner**, **Oct. 21, 4-6 p.m.**, Montours Presbyterian Church, bake sale, Chinese auction, \$8 adults, \$4 ages 5-12, under 4 free, take-out available, tickets at door, (412) 787-1050, [montourschurch.org](http://montourschurch.org).

**Christmas Craft/Vendor Show**, Holy Trinity Cafeteria and Fr. Herrmann Hall, **Nov. 11, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**, 100 tables, bake sale, Chinese auction, lunch available, handicapped accessible, tables available, (724) 695-3537, [rojahn@verizon.net](mailto:rojahn@verizon.net).

**Unique Boutique**, **Nov. 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**, Edgeworth Club, see pages 12 and 21.

**Bishop Canevin Holiday Craft Show**, **Nov. 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**, Bishop Canevin High School, 150-plus crafters, "Crafts with Katie" for children while adults shop, silent gift auction, 50/50, lunch, bake sale, free shuttle for overflow parking, free admission, (412) 922-7400 x 224.

**Imperial VFD Holiday Extravaganza**, **Nov. 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**, see page 42.

**"Polar Express" Pajama Party**, **Dec. 2, 6 p.m.**, West Allegheny High School, \$4/child, \$6/adult, for tickets: [polarexpress\\_RSVP@yahoo.com](mailto:polarexpress_RSVP@yahoo.com), space limited, benefits West Allegheny Marching Pride.

**Greens and Things Holiday Sale**, **Dec. 2, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.**, Robin Hill Park in Moon Township, centerpieces, wreaths, swags, seasonal treasures, benefits Moon Township Garden Club, [clmolenda@gmail.com](mailto:clmolenda@gmail.com).

**Oakdale's Annual Halloween Parade**, **Oct. 31, 5 p.m. lineup** at the Panhandle Trail, **starts 5:30 p.m.**, goes to Oakdale VFD where children receive treat bags, (724) 693-9740.

**Oakdale Trick or Treat**, **Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m.**, (724) 693-9740.

**Cookie Walk**, **Dec. 10, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**, Findlay Township Activity Center, benefits West Allegheny Marching Pride, (724) 695-0500 x 246.

## Farmers' Markets

**St. James Farmers' Market**, St. James Catholic Church in Sewickley, 200 Walnut St., **Saturdays through November, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**, vegetables, organic farm products, meats, honey, pierogies, pasta, more, (412) 741-6650, [www.saintjames-church.com](http://www.saintjames-church.com).

**The Original Farmers' Market**, **starts 5:30 p.m.**; open **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays through November**; Bridgeville area; take left on Route 50 off Bridgeville I-79 South Exit; [www.theoriginalfarmersmarket.net](http://www.theoriginalfarmersmarket.net).

## HealthSouth Support Groups

Meetings take place at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Sewickley. For more information, call Michelle McCann, (412) 749-2388. Call to confirm meeting dates on holidays.

**Brain Injury & Stroke Support Group**, **third Wednesdays, noon-1:15 p.m.**, free lunch provided, call in advance if dietary modifications are required.

**Amputee Support Group**, **third Wednesdays, 4-5:30 p.m.**, third floor boardroom, RSVP to Michelle McCann, (412) 749-2388.

## Western Area YMCA

195 Montour Run Road Coraopolis, 15108  
(412) 787-9622, [www.westernarea-y.org](http://www.westernarea-y.org)

**Now hiring** talented and smiling faces for various part time positions. Come in and fill out an application.

**Afterschool childcare**, available for Montour and West Allegheny school districts.

**Tai Chi**, **Fridays, noon.**

**Social Dance**, **second Fridays, 6:30 p.m.**, learn ballroom dance moves.

**Belly Dance Body Fitness**, **fourth Fridays**, guest passes available, Jill Cersosimo, (412) 489.3231, [jcersosimo@ymcapgh.org](mailto:jcersosimo@ymcapgh.org).

**Tennis**, for adults and juniors, call for details.

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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## North Fayette Parks and Rec.

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

### Upcoming

 **Fall Festival**, Oct. 21, 5-7p.m., fall family fun with trunk-or-treat, pumpkin patch, crafts, hayrides children's costume contest.

**Senior Luncheons**, second Wednesdays, noon.

**CPR Class**, coming soon, see website for more.

 **Trunk or Treat and Costume Parade**, Oct. 21, 5-7 p.m., costume contest, haunted house, pumpkin slingshot, family fun.

**Trick or Treat**, Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m., community-wide.

### Fitness

**Kettlebell Class**, Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m.

**Cardio Hitt Sculpt/HIIT**, Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., starts back Aug. 28.

**Boot Camp**, Mondays, 7:30-8:30 p.m., Saturdays, 10 a.m.-11 a.m.

**Rock N Roll Kickboxing**, Tuesdays 9:15 a.m. -10:05 a.m., Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.-8:20 p.m.

**INSANITY**, Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m.

**Pound/Zumba**, Tuesdays, 7-8 p.m.

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

**Water Walking**, Monday-Thursday, 6-8 p.m., Donaldson Elementary, \$2, ages 18+.

**Water Aerobics**, Tuesday and Thursday, 5-6 p.m., Donaldson Elementary, \$2, ages 18+.

**Pickleball**, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-10:30 a.m.

**Adult Volleyball League**, Mondays through Dec. 11.

**Co-Ed Softball League**, Sundays, Aug. 27-Nov. 5, times vary.

### Youth

**PALS**, recreational opportunities for special needs children, email [dhildebrand@north-fayette.com](mailto:dhildebrand@north-fayette.com) for upcoming events.

**Out of School and In-Service Days**, see website.

**Youth Flag Football**, Sundays, Aug. 20-Oct. 29, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**Developmental Volleyball League**, ages 9-12, Wednesdays, Oct. 25-Feb. 7, ages 12-15.

**Youth Lacrosse**, ages 6-8, 9-11, Mondays, Nov. 13-Dec. 18.

**Indoor Flag Football League**, ages 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, Saturdays, Nov. 18-March 10, times vary.

**Super Kids Soccer**, ages 3-5, 6-8, Thursdays, Nov. 2-Dec. 14.

**Youth Pickleball**, ages 8-12, Mondays through Oct. 30, 12 spots only.

## North Fayette Afterschool Programs

K-8 programs designed to provide a safe environment for children after school, transportation provided from schools to community center when school is in session, \$10/day, [nkreutzman@north-fayette.com](mailto:nkreutzman@north-fayette.com) to register.

**Afterschool Program**, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

**Sports Session I**, Tuesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

**Weird Science**, Thursdays through Oct. 26, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

**Pinterest Party**, Thursdays, Nov. 2-Jan. 11, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

## 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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3151 Montour Church Rd. 15071  
[www.montourchurch.org](http://www.montourchurch.org)

*Spaghetti Dinner*

**Bake Sale & Chinese Auction**  
**Saturday, October 21**

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.  
Adults \$8.00 Kids 5-12 \$4.00  
(Under 4 FREE)

**For information: 412-787-1050**

## Findlay Parks and Rec.

Register for any of the following programs by calling Findlay Township Parks and Recreation at (724) 695-0500 x 246 or email [dlarson@findlaytp.org](mailto:dlarson@findlaytp.org), unless otherwise indicated. Checks payable to Findlay Township unless otherwise indicated.

**Scrapbooking Workshop, Oct. 14, Jan. 6, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.**, enjoy uninterrupted time dedicated to safely protecting your photos and memorabilia, bring tools and supplies, registration required, (724) 307-3333, [michellekoestercomcast.com](mailto:michellekoestercomcast.com), \$60 each event, includes lunch, dinner, beverages.

**Semi-Super Morning Bingo, Oct. 20, Dec. 1, doors open 9 a.m., bingo starts 10 a.m.**, \$10/packet, includes one triple card for each regular game and one triple card for each special, additional packets \$5, overall jackpots \$1, daubers available for purchase, may cancel due to weather, call, \$20 regular game payouts, specials \$50 payout, jackpot 100 percent of what is sold.

**Computer and Appliance Recycling, Oct. 28, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.**, Municipal Building, recycle old computers, monitors, printers, scanners, laptops, non-Freon appliances (microwaves, washer, dryers, etc.), lead acid automobile batteries, cell phones, telephones, keyboards, mice, radio equipment, televisions one per vehicle, appliances with Freon \$15, no fluorescent bulbs or television tubes removed from cabinet, Cynde, (724) 695-0500 x 247.

**Food Truck Thursdays, Nov. 2, 4-8 p.m.**, Findlay Municipal Lot, see page 26.

**Veteran's Day Breakfast, Nov. 3, 9-10 a.m.**, see page 26.

**Boy Scout Troop 830 Pancake Breakfast, Nov. 4, 7:30 a.m.-12 p.m.**, all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast, food pantry donations accepted, Chinese auction, take-out available, \$6 adults, \$5 seniors and children 5-12, under 5 free.

**Kids Resale Event, Nov. 5, 12-4 p.m.**, see page 26.

**Kindness Rock Project, Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m.**, see page 26.

**Imperial VFD Holiday Extravaganza, Nov. 25, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.**, Imperial VFD station, 35+ crafters/vendors, 50/50, food, refreshments, Chinese auction, open to the public, [www.facebook.com/events/142470332964561](http://www.facebook.com/events/142470332964561), vendors: [imperialvfdcraftshow@gmail.com](mailto:imperialvfdcraftshow@gmail.com).

## Halloween Events

**Pre-parade Pizza Party, Oct. 28, 12-12:45 p.m.**, entertainment 12:45-1:30 p.m., registration required for pizza party, \$2/person.

**Halloween Parade, Oct. 28, 1:30 p.m.**, runs from activity center in Imperial to fire hall, all ages, prize drawings, buy tickets at activity center door.

## Education

**Free Photography Class, Tuesdays through Oct. 24, 1-2 p.m.**, learn how to be confident shooting in manual mode with a digital SLR, registration required.

**AARP Safe Driving Classes**, eight-hour class, **Nov. 6, 9, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**, four-hour course, **Nov. 2, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**, must have taken eight-hour course in last three years, Findlay Township Municipal Building, refresher course for motorists 55 and older, refine driving skills, develop safe and defensive driving techniques, no driving tests, participants can receive insurance discount, AARP members \$15, non-members \$20, Findlay residents pay half, checks payable to AARP.

## Fitness

**YOGA for Beginners and Beyond, Fridays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**, \$5/class, exercise, stretch, meditate, (724) 695-1976.

**Senior Yoga and Qi Gong, Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.**, gentle stretches while seated and standing, mixed levels, great for seniors, (724) 695-1976, [Info@idtsd.net](mailto:Info@idtsd.net), free.

**Walk 15, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6-7 p.m.**, indoor aerobic walk class, all ages and fitness levels, \$5/class.



**Trick or Treat, Oct. 31, 6-8 p.m.**, community-wide.



## SNPJ Club

Events take place at SNPJ Lodge 106 and are open to the public unless otherwise indicated. Memberships available to the public at clubroom door. For more, (724) 695-1411, [snjimperialpa.com](http://snjimperialpa.com), [imperialroomsnpj.com](http://imperialroomsnpj.com).

**Fall Classic Bowling Tournament, Oct. 21-22**, Paradise Lanes, social activities at SNPJ Lodge 106, **Polka Classics perform Oct. 21, 7:30-11:30 p.m.**



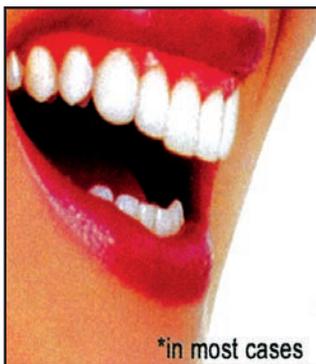
**Adult Halloween Party, Oct. 27**, costumes, prizes.

**Children's Halloween Party, Oct. 29, 1-3 p.m.**

**Comedy Night, Nov. 4**, two acts plus a humorous host, ages 18+, doors open 6 p.m., show starts 7 p.m., 50/50, Chinese auction, purchase tickets at club or call (724) 747-6429, \$15/ticket, food buffet \$10, cash bar.

**Children's Christmas Party, Dec. 10, 1-3 p.m.**, food, games, music, visit from Ole Saint Nick.

**Adult Christmas Party, Dec. 16**, food and prizes.



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## LIBRARY PROGRAMS & SPECIAL EVENTS

### BACK TO BASICS DAY

**Saturday, Oct. 14, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

Take a trip into the past! There will be artisans and craftsmen showing how things were created, including rug hooking, chair caning, quilting, knitting and wool dyeing. Plus, a hands-on project for the kids! Presented in conjunction with WACHS.

### BACKYARD HARVEST FESTIVAL

**Sunday, Oct. 15, 1-4 p.m.**

Join us in the Backyard for a special harvest festival. We will have pumpkin painting, apple tasting, face painting and more. A perfect fall outing for the whole family!

### INTRO TO RÉSUMÉS

**Tuesday, Oct. 24, 6:30 p.m.**

Are you new to the workforce or back for a second career and need help creating a résumé? This workshop will demonstrate the basics of using a template to create a résumé from scratch, as well as tips for editing and updating your résumé.

### MINI GOLF BOOKEND BONANZA

**Thursday, Oct. 26, 4:30-6:30 p.m.**

Have you ever played mini golf at a library? Now you can say you have! We'll have all of the holes lined up for you throughout the library. Bring your family and friends to play some golf! All ages welcome.

### AUTHOR VISIT: GENE P. SHAEFFER, WRITER OF THE MONTOUR RAILROAD

**Saturday, Oct. 28, 10 a.m.**

Author Gene P. Shaeffer will discuss how the railroad operated, the locations it went, some of the coal mines it served, and its general operations during its last decade in the 1970s. Copies of the author's book will also be available for purchase and signing.

### STAR WARS DAY

**Saturday, Oct. 28, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

We are so excited for the premiere of the new Star Wars movie, and we know that you are, too! To celebrate, we will have Star Wars crafts, activities and snacks, as well as a visit from Garrison Carida! Come in costume and get ready to party! All ages welcome.

### HALLOWEEN PARTY

**Tuesday, Oct. 31 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

It's that time of year again at the library! Enjoy all things spooky with fun games, crafts and a costume contest. All ages welcome!

### WRAPPED IN LOVE BLANKET DAY

**Saturday, Nov. 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Join us to make blankets to be donated to the Wrapped in Love organization, which benefits chemotherapy patients. Fleece donations will also be accepted (three yards per blanket).

### PITTSBURGH HOMEFRONT DURING THE CIVIL WAR

**Sunday, Nov. 12, 2 p.m.**

The Civil War brought many challenges home to Pittsburgh, from the dangers of making ammunition and weapons, to the struggles of caring for soldiers and their families, along with paying the bills. Outreach Lecture Program by the Heinz History Center.

### HOLIDAY VENDOR, CRAFT, AND COOKIE SALE

**Saturday, Nov. 25, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Get a start on your holiday shopping and support your library! Vendors plus a variety of handmade crafts, jewelry, accessories and treats.

For more information on all programs & events, visit [www.WesternAlleghenyLibrary.org](http://www.WesternAlleghenyLibrary.org) or call 724-695-8150.

## ONGOING PROGRAMS

*Check website for specific dates and to register for programs.*

### ADULT

#### Tech Takeout Night

First Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.

#### Bookworms

First Wednesdays, 1 p.m.

#### BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) Club

First Thursdays, 6:30 p.m.

#### Anime & Manga Club

Fourth Tuesdays, 6 p.m.

### TEEN

#### Teen D&D

Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m.

#### Teen Maker Lab

Wednesdays, 4:30 p.m.

### YOUTH & FAMILY

#### Baby Circle Time

Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.

#### Toddler Storytime

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.

#### Play K

Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m.

#### Pre-K Storytime

Thursdays, 11 a.m.

#### Location:

181 Bateman Road  
Oakdale, PA 15071

#### Library Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Friday – Saturday: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Sunday: 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.



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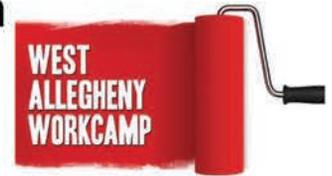
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# Free Home Repair Application

29 JUL - 04 AUG 2018



Group Mission Trips provides intensive one-week Workcamps that help people grow in Christian faith through service. Youth and their Adult Leaders, from around the country, will spend one week in our communities performing hands-on, home-repair projects for elderly, low-income, and disabled families. The work at each home will be done by 5 young people, and at least one adult leader, representing many Christian denominations. Eligible low-skill, high-labor projects may include:

- Exterior Painting
- Interior Painting
- Mobile Home Skirting
- Porch construction or repair
- Step construction or repair
- Weatherization
- Wheelchair Ramp construction or repair

**Work that will NOT be considered:** Concrete, Drywall, Electrical, HVAC, Landscaping, Masonry, Paving, Plumbing, Window/Door install/repair

Application must be received by **28 February 2018** to be considered!

Both labor and materials are free to qualifying households. Applicants who have not participated in previous West Allegheny Workcamps will be given 1<sup>st</sup> priority. To learn how your home *might be included*, please complete & sign this confidential application and return to:

EMAIL: [WAW@HeroesSupportingHeroes.org](mailto:WAW@HeroesSupportingHeroes.org)  
FAX: 412.235.1737  
USPS: **Heroes Supporting Heroes**  
**ATTN: West Allegheny Workcamp**  
**7313 Noblestown Rd**  
**Oakdale, PA 15017.1905**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Do you own your home?  Yes  No

Is your home within a 20-minute drive from **West Allegheny Middle School**  Yes  No

Are you US Military? (or if prior military, can you provide a copy of your DD 214?)  Yes  No

Directions to your home from **West Allegheny Middle School** (please be as specific as possible):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the work you would like to have done: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ (Continue on back if more space required above)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Saying “Yes” to disaster response

The extremely destructive Hurricane Harvey had come and gone, leaving homes and businesses in floodwaters with a long recovery ahead.

A call went out to law enforcement officers in other parts of the country asking them to volunteer to go to Texas to check on government facilities and to do what they could to help.

“Yes, I will go,” answered Brian Dodd Jr., who now works in Cleveland, Ohio.

One of Brian’s first positions as an officer was in 2009, when he served as an Oakdale Borough police officer.

Within 48 hours, on Sept. 1, he was boarding a plane with another inspector. They flew into Dallas, expecting to stay in a trailer. They were surprised to be staying in a hotel about 20 minutes from Houston. Officers came from all over the country.

They worked with police and other agencies. They were given police cars and drove through floodwaters to reach their destinations. They were there to help for 11 days and worked 10 to 16 hours each day.

Brian and his co-worker from Tennessee had brought water, Gatorade and snacks to offer anyone they found in need. It did not take long. They saw a man sitting by the side of the road. They stopped. He was homeless and very grateful for their kindness.

Brian says, “Houston is huge.” He was surprised to see that so much of Houston was not flooded. Schools and businesses were open as usual. He noted that, “People in Texas respect the police. Many carry guns. There was very little looting.”

He met a man who said, referring to the floodwaters, “I have four cars in my yard. None of them are mine.”

A most interesting man, he was an alligator guy. He still had his big alligator, but the 14 younger alligators were missing. He was not too concerned.

“They will be back. I feed them,” he said.

The team did not stick around to see if the gators would prove him right.

Just days after Brian’s return on Sept. 11, law enforcement officers were volunteering to go to Florida following Hurricane Irma.

“If they needed me,” Brian once again said, “I would go.”

His cousin, Hollie Dodd, a 2008 West Allegheny graduate, lives in Florida. She is a nurse at a hospital north of Tampa. The hospital had Hollie on alert and, as soon as Hurricane Irma passed through the area, she was to arrive at the hospital. She would not be able to leave until they determined she could. On Saturday, Sept. 9, Hollie got to work at 7 p.m. Hospital patients and staff were permitted to bring family and pets if they had nowhere else to go.

“One room had over 100 dogs,” she says, one of which was Hollie’s little Killian.

Hollie and Killian were there for 39 hours. Between 12-hour shifts, she tried to sleep. Try, that is, because the rooms and halls were filled with families sleeping on air mattresses and children playing. Hollie, lying on a yoga mat, tried to sleep. At one point the hospital lost power and switched to emergency power.

A nearby nursing home had to evacuate before the hurricane, so their patients had to go to the hospital. Once they were out of the nursing home for three days, the home accepted new residents, so many of those in the hospital had nowhere to go. They had to stay.

On Monday, Sept. 11, about 11 a.m., Hollie and little Killian were finally home. She called her family in Oakdale and said, “I’m going to bed.”

Hollie had another unforgettable happening recently. On May 22, 2017, she was in Manchester, England visiting a friend. Lisa knew her daughter was in England. Mom Lisa heard the news of a terrorist bombing attack at the Manchester Arena. She worried, “Where in England is my daughter?” Lisa asked Hollie’s sister Brittany to call Hollie. What a relief it was to hear Hollie’s voice. Then, she was stunned to hear her say, “We planned to go to that concert but Tony could not get off work.”



## “Take a deep breath...”

Stress - everyone experiences it. Stress tells on itself in the expression of a friend’s face.

The smile just was not happening. Kali started talking in negative tones. Her friend Thomas quickly stopped her mid-sentence.

“Kali,” he said, “Reach into your pocket. Pull out your balloon.”

She paused, looked at him, reached into her pocket, pulled out her invisible balloon.

“Now,” he said, “take a deep breath.”

She did.

“Now, blow that negative feeling into your balloon,” he said. “Blow hard.”

Kali did.

Thomas said, “Okay. Now, take another deep breath. Blow the negative out again. And do it again.”

Kali did it again.

“There. Now, let go of your balloon,” he said.

She did. She imagined watching it fly every which way, and then fall.

“Feel better?” asked Thomas.

“Yes!”

Amazingly, she did feel better, much better, and actually laughed. Her smile had returned.

Thomas is a close friend and co-worker. When he was a young boy, his mother wisely told him to take his balloon out of his pocket to get rid of his bad feelings. It worked for him then, too.

It just might be a good idea to carry a balloon in one’s pocket - real or invisible.



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