

CARLYNTON

School District News



Carlynton School District

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Student-Centered Learning with Technology

Integrating technology into the classroom has become an important learning strategy in schools today. Technology can enhance student-centered learning by allowing students to become actively engaged in the task at hand.

One form of technology widely used throughout the district is the Skype application, a telecommunications format that allows users to communicate by voice using a microphone, video by using a webcam, and instant messaging over the Internet. During a Skype, thought-provoking conversations can be sustained within a collaborative inquiry process. In comparison to traditional learning, students gain a greater sense of satisfaction by partnering with others, and sharing and presenting the outcomes of a particular project.

This style of student-centered learning also gives way to greater retention of what is discussed and learned.

Earlier this year, high school students enrolled in a Creative Writing and Technical Theater class took part in a video conference with students from Fox Chapel, Shaler and Steel Valley high schools. The Skype sessions occurred over several weeks after students read the play *Jekyll and Hyde*. During the collective meetings, students discussed the play to define the plot and the characters.

High school teacher **Tonilyn Longo** introduced the collective literature project to students in conjunction with Prime Stage Theater Literacy in ACTION. The program strives to connect



Crazy Hat Day and a Skype with students from Brooks Elementary School in Indiana prompted questions about the head gear and the character of Edward Tulane and his journey.

students to stories they have read and seen, decipher the elements of the plot and incite a creative response to works of literature and theater.

At Crafton Elementary, fourth, fifth and sixth grade reading students took part in the Global Read Aloud Project, an opportunity introduced to them by teachers **Tracy Alex** and **Susan Kosko**. To participate, the teachers selected the 200-page Newberry Award-winning chapter book, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo, a remarkable story about hope, happiness, love and loss. Reading the book was only a fraction of the lesson.

Global Read Aloud included interactive lessons with peers from schools in Arizona, Indiana and Kentucky. The story line and characters were discussed and projects and activities were shared cooperatively via Skype. In addition, readers wrote alternative



Teacher **Scott Donnelly** facilitated the video chat with **Dr. Adovasio**, enabling students to speak directly with the archeologist to ask questions and offer comments.



Students in **Miss Tonilyn Longo's** Creative Writing and Technical Theater class used Skype to connect with other Pittsburgh area high schools to discuss the elements of the play *Jekyll and Hyde*.



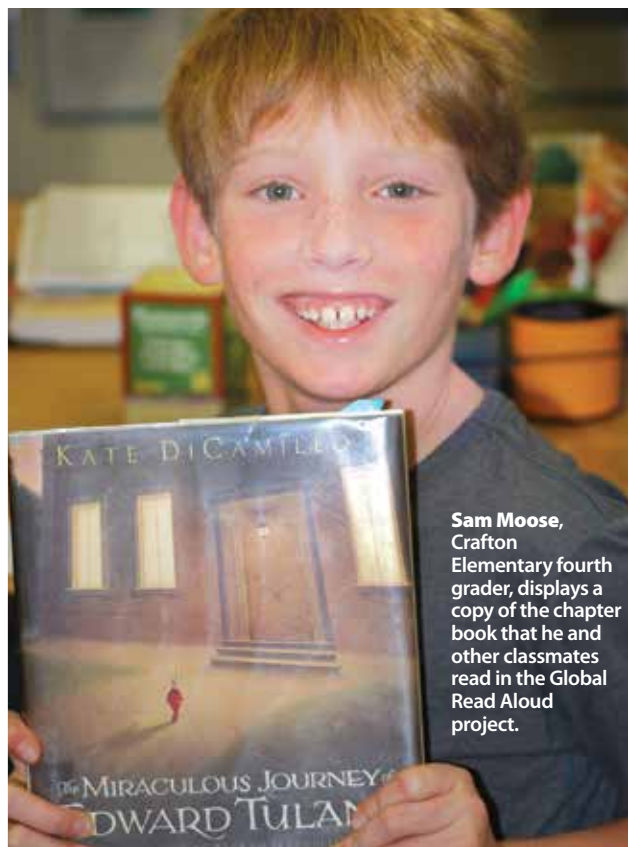
endings to the story and shared them on Kidblog. The teachers and students also utilized Padlet, Chatterpix, Prezi and Wikispaces, all sharing thoughts, ideas and stories about the book, and connecting to other students across the world.

Global Read Aloud incorporated technology, reading, writing, art, history and geography. As an extension of Edward's travels, students wrote and mailed postcards to their online connections, sharing information about the history and geography of Crafton and Pittsburgh. Likewise, they received responses from children living in the states of California, Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts and Nebraska, to name a few.

Global Read Aloud was created in 2010 by a Wisconsin teacher and was designed to connect the world through one book. The project now links and engages 60 different countries and more than 500,000 readers by way of the Internet. "This was really cool," said fourth grader Gracie Winston, who added, "Meeting other people from different schools and telling them what we did was so fun."

Making reading fun and a life-long hobby is the goal of any reading teacher. For teachers Tracy Alex and Susan Kosko, Global Read Aloud met that objective and so much more.

Earlier this school year, **Dr. James Adovasio**, a professor from Mercyhurst University, American archaeologist and expert in perishable artifacts, was a guest in the fifth grade social studies classroom at Carnegie Elementary by way of Skype. Teacher **Scott**



Sam Moose, Crafton Elementary fourth grader, displays a copy of the chapter book that he and other classmates read in the Global Read Aloud project.

Donnelly arranged the live video chat for his students to tie into a section of the curriculum and classroom discussions.

All three fifth grade classes took part in the Skype, affording students the chance to hear and learn about Dr. Adovasio's explorations and excavations in areas as local as Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Village. Students presented questions relative to topics in social studies lessons about the first Americans, what they ate, how they hunted and the tools they made and used.

Dr. Adovasio told stories about the excavation, ecological and archaeological mapping projects he conducted in over 37 states and abroad. His research at Meadowcroft Rockshelter has been recognized nationally and he has received honors and awards from numerous institutions including the Smithsonian.



Top left:

- Carnegie Elementary fifth graders listened to renowned archaeologist **Dr. James Adovasio** during a Skype session to complement a segment of a social studies lesson about the first Americans.

Bottom, l-r:

- Skype sessions took place in the high school library so students could sit together for better visibility. The dialogue between the four schools was

insightful as the teens discussed the plot, the components of the formidable tale and the struggle between good and evil.

- With assistance from **Mrs. Kosko**, **Gracie Winston** shares her opinion about the narrative in the opening chapters of *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* during a video conference with students from Kentucky County School in Louisville, Kentucky.

Altruism gives way to Learning

Teachers continually strive to augment daily classroom lessons with additional materials and resources to capture the attention of learners. These tools are used to enrich the curriculum and can often motivate the student while keeping them focused.

When it comes to funding these materials, teachers in the district are turning to DonorsChoose.org and other online sites that connect donors to classrooms by funding inspiring projects.

By posting a request on DonorsChoose.org, teachers have acquired funds to support projects or activities and incorporate distinctive strategies into the classroom. When a project reaches its funding goal, the materials are shipped directly to the school.

Earlier this year, high school English teacher **Zeffie Carroll** turned to DonorsChoose.org to fund 20 annual subscriptions to the Scholastic magazine, *Scope*. Mrs. Carroll uses the magazine in seventh grade Language Arts classes to encourage reading. The magazine is aligned to curriculum and the PA Core and includes current events, fiction and non-fiction stories and plays. Use of the magazine has been known to fortify differentiated learning and improve PSSA scores.

Mrs. Carroll said she was surprised at how quickly her request was filled. The project was fully funded by Google Pittsburgh.

Once a project is funded, it is the teacher's responsibility to send to the donor (or donors) photos of students utilizing the materials in the classroom, as well as a letter of appreciation, and insight into how every dollar was spent. Hand-written thank you notes from the students are sent to donors who contribute over \$50.

Carnegie Elementary teacher **Susan Cantwell** received \$506 in donor funding to implement the project, "Taking Math Down the Fun Path to Learning." One of the donors was a former student, originally from Carnegie, and now residing in California. Mrs. Cantwell received math materials to engage kindergarten students with hands-on learning resources by supplementing the traditional pencil and paper activities. The materials teach higher level mathematical concepts and work well with children who learn and develop at different rates. The supplies are also being used for a learning center resource within the classroom



From top:
• During Readers Workshop, fifth grader **Sebastian O'Leary** enjoys independent reading time while previewing a new book.
• Students in **Mrs. Kostrick's** classroom, **Mya Miller, Michael Artascos** and **Madison Gorny**, preview the new novels received from DonorsChoose.
• **Timonte Thompson** and **Tyjohn Harrison** in **Mrs. Leslie's** kindergarten classroom use recess time to read, selecting a book from the Leveled Reading sets available in the classroom.



for students to use during free time to review and practice previously learned concepts.

Carnegie kindergarten teacher, **Jaylynn Leslie**, has had great success with projects funded by DonorsChoose in the past two years. A projected titled "Leveled Reading for Kindergarten"

was funded by six donors in the amount of \$709 and includes five level reading sets and a storage cart. Mrs. Leslie says the kits allow her to determine the reading level of her students so she can then tailor reading instruction at the appropriate level. This avoids frustration, embarrassment and builds confidence in readers as they complete one level and advance to the next. The storage cart is placed in a prominent area of the classroom as a literacy center and is visited by the children frequently, promoting independent reading.

Mrs. Leslie also received over \$1,000 in funding for "Promoting Literacy with Technology" and "A LittleBit Goes a Long Way." "Promoting Literacy" procured four Kindle Fires that are used to support reading fluency. Because of their popularity, the tablets sometimes serve as an incentive to students who complete assignments in a timely manner or a reward for good behavior.

As part of STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math), "A LittleBit Goes a Long Way" project is used to inspire creativity. LittleBits are magnetic circuitry kits that connect to create tools with motors. Students can create, modify and rethink and as they engage in this hands-on activity. "DonorsChoose.org is truly a great resource for teachers to get the materials they always hoped to use in the classroom," said Mrs. Leslie.

Julie Lewis, a

fourth grade teacher at Carnegie has received three projects through DonorsChoose.org. Funding for an ActivSlate, a wireless, notebook-sized tablet that acts like a remote and allows for interactive functionality with a Promethean Board, now provides the capability to use the white board from anywhere within the classroom.

An iPad Mini was another item that arrived from DonorsChoose.org. The hand-held device has been loaded with educational applications for math, science, coding and photo editing and also stores a variety of age-appropriate Scholastic books. Students have used the iPad to create iMovies, forecast the weather and translate foreign languages with Google Translate. The tablet complements the student laptops in the classroom or the iPad mobile lab.



Clockwise from top right:
 • **Mary Dougherty, Michael DiFiore, Tanner Kephart and Madison Auen**, fourth graders in Miss Julie Lewis's classroom, use a funded iPad Mini to find 3D images of photographs featured in the Guinness Book of World Records.
 • Kindergarten students **Ashton Donlin and Cameron Corio** use Kindle Fires to practice spelling. The Kindles were funded by DonorsChoose.org to support reading and literacy skills.
 • Carnegie fourth graders **Austin Milliner and Tanner Kephart** use the educational application "Math Fight" on the iPad Mini, a fast-thinking competitive math game that positions one player against the other to test skill.

Just recently, Mrs. Lewis was notified that a "Books for Boys" project was fully funded and will support the implementation of a book club for boys in grades four, five and six. Over \$600 will subsidize a classroom library of chapter books. The project will focus on reading comprehension exercises. Mrs. Lewis has learned that "some boys are born readers, some are born athletes." Her goal is to encourage a love for reading with all boys, readers and athletes alike. Elementary librarian, **Jill Rishell**, helped Lewis choose the chapter books, and she acquired 13-14 copies of each title. Books for Boys will be held during recess, following lunch, two times a week. Plans are already in place for a girls' book club.

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In Mrs. Zeffie Carroll's class, **Dakota Mayfield** and **Arianna Anderson** read a short fiction story in an issue of *Scope* magazine. The annual subscription was funded by Google Pittsburgh.

In all, Mrs. Lewis received over \$1,400 to fund classroom projects through DonorsChoose.org.

In the past five years, it has become commonplace for individuals or companies to demonstrate altruism or philanthropy by contributing to charitable organizations by way of the Internet. Pay It Forward, GoFundMe, AdoptaClassroom, PledgeCents and DonorsChoose are just a few of the nonprofits that raise monies for special causes. The last three strive to enhance classroom learning to promote equity in education.

Several Crafton Elementary teachers have also applied and received funding for school projects through these sources. Fifth grade teacher **Anna Kostrick**, with an emphasis on reading and literature, received over \$1,000 in funding within a month for "Help Us Be More Awesome through Reader's Workshop." Fourteen sets of classroom novels were supplied for the classroom library, plus 10 large chart and paper easel pads and five sets of Sharpie markers. The books encourage independent reading and the chart paper pads are used to record notes about the characters, setting, plot and theme when students work in groups, or Reader's Workshop, to discuss what they have read.

Just recently, Mrs. Kostrick's "Wondering If We Can Earn 365 Days of Wonder" project was fully funded within two weeks by a generous couple, and provided 16 copies of the book *365 Days of Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. The book promotes character building by celebrating human strength and goodwill in all sorts of circumstances and corresponds with the district's anti-bullying campaign. "Not only will these books benefit my students this year, but those I will teach in the future," said Mrs. Kostrick.

Crafton's RTI (Response to Intervention) teacher **Tracy Alex** received \$1,230 from DonorsChoose.org to support the project "iRead, iLearn, iConnect, iSucceed." The funding

provided two iPads for her classroom. "I'm not sure who was more excited, me or my students, when we were funded!" Alex said. The iPads are used to energize the learning environment. Students are discovering the necessary support to embrace technology by reading relevant books downloaded to the iPads and engaging in correlating games that boost the learning process. Mrs. Alex has found that students who normally perceive reading as too difficult are more willing to read and stay on task when using an iPad. A greater sense of accomplishment is also achieved as students realize they are overcoming reading assignments that were once a challenge.

Susan Kosko, reading support teacher, has had success with multiple online donation sites to enhance learning in her reading lab. AdoptaClassroom.org has supplied comprehension workbooks, interactive white board word ladders and reward cards for students. A DonorsChoose.org project funded books for "The Dolphin Project," a Barnes and Noble Nook Tablet, and reading materials for a "Going Wild With Books" activity. Google Pittsburgh fully funded the DonorsChoose project "Connecting Globally for 21st Century Learners," and provided an IdeaPad laptop for the classroom as well as multiple copies of classroom books.

The nonprofit DonorsChoose.org was started by Charles Best, a social studies teacher from the Bronx, NY after experiencing a lack of funding for materials he needed in his classroom. The now popular nonprofit organization supports public schools with a mission to provide children with the tools and experiences needed for an exceptional education.

Teachers in the Carlynton school district have taken the initiative to use this resource to make an impact in the everyday learning process and the results have been rewarding. The simple gesture of giving has made a difference and set an example in the lives of many children.





Jim Nagorski, Teacher of the Year Finalist

Helping students to become positive, caring, compassionate and contributing members to society is the heartfelt desire of Crafton Elementary teacher **James Nagorski**. He does this in the classroom when teaching math, social studies and Language Arts and also as the facilitator of several clubs and activities that extend beyond the building and into the community.

In December, as a 2015 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year finalist, Jim Nagorski was honored for his profound impact on students at a three-day event in Hershey. He was joined by 12 other finalists from across the state, all who were identified as exemplary teachers with outstanding classroom practices. On Monday, December 8, these educators were saluted in a formal ceremony as every finalist was acknowledged by way of an introduction by a student. Sophomore Will Ford introduced Mr. Nagorski with a memorable speech that shared many of the remarkable characteristics of this great teacher.

A well-deserving tribute was paid to Nagorski before his departure to Hershey. Students and teachers emulated Mr. Nagorski's daily attire by wearing dress shirts, ties and jackets. During a surprise assembly, all students, teachers and staff came together for a send-off that Nagorski admits he will never forget. A dozen retired teachers came to the assembly as well, offering congratulations and support.

The ceremony in Hershey ended by revealing the name of the 2015 Teacher of the Year. The award was presented to a music teacher from Fox Chapel High School.



Above: Teacher of the Year finalist Jim Nagorski walked into the Crafton Elementary auditorium for an assembly about the arts, only to realize the gathering was arranged to pay tribute to him before his departure to Hershey for the 2015 Keystone Awards of Excellence.



Left: Students rushed to the stage after the assembly to present cards to Mr. Nagorski, who took the time to read each one and say thank you.

The theme of the Teacher of the Year competition was "One Among Equals." Those in the Carlynton School District who have had the honor to know, work or learn under Jim Nagorski can agree that his passion is unparalleled when it comes to educating children. In Carlynton, he is "our teacher of the year."

And just as Mr. Nagorski expects his students to walk away as better citizens, he too has walked away from this experience with a noble plan. Nagorski has volunteered to serve on the selection committee for the 2016 Teacher of the Year event and intends to work and mentor seniors in college who are preparing to become teachers.

Susan Kosko, Making Reading Fun

Susan Kosko, a reading teacher at Crafton Elementary, is well known for her involvement with "The Dolphin Project" and its integration into her reading program. The project, with an emphasis on reading fluency, combined video-conferencing with Captain Chris Desmond and his crew of marine biologists to track and learn about dolphins along the Gulf Coast of Florida. Last spring, the project was featured on the nationally syndicated television show, *Sea Rescue*, and the film crew spent an entire day at the school, interviewing students and Mrs. Kosko.

Kosko worked with Chris Desmond to develop a syllabus that features "The Dolphin Project" into a curriculum



Mrs. Susan Kosko

east coast of United States.

This spring, Kosko will share her experiences with distance learning through the use of Skype or video-conferencing and "The Dolphin Project" by presenting at the 2015 APHE National Humane Education Conference in Tempe, Arizona. APHE stands for Association of Professional Humane Educators. Dana Schultz, Education

series named "10,000 Islands Dolphin Project Environmental Studies." This curriculum contains core standards and has been adopted and is being used in multiple elementary schools along the

Coordinator of Animal Friends, selected Kosko as the conference co-presenter because of her work with animal behavior and rights, environmental concerns and character education.

Mrs. Kosko will share her story about the implementation process of "The Dolphin Project" through the association with Chris Desmond and reveal how the program has had a compelling impact on her students. Captain Desmond will join Kosko at the conference via Skype to convey his insight and the progression of the program.

"After careful consideration, I decided it was important to share the success of this program," Kosko said. She went on to say, "I don't want to look back and have regrets... and I'm sure I will learn a great deal from this as well, which will only impact my teaching in the classroom."

Sports Marketing Students Present Original Ideas to Pirates, Steelers

By: Alexander Popichak,
Student Writer

The students in **Mr. Gevaudan's** Sports Marketing course are getting hands-on experience with presenting original marketing ideas to local teams.

"We are the only school probably in the state that does this," Gevaudan said.

The idea behind the project is to have students prepare a presentation on how local sports teams such as the Pittsburgh Pirates and Pittsburgh Steelers can market their community outreach programs. Students in the semester-long course get face time with professionals in the field to present their ideas. Gevaudan says that this is "what brings this project to life and that's what makes it real."

Students first had this opportunity two years ago, and it was so successful Mr. Gevaudan decided to do it again. In the end, "if they like [any of the ideas] they can have them... one of these years we'll have an idea that sticks."

Conor Richardson was one of the students that presented January 22nd. One of her presentations, "The Steelers Steal Her," is a season ticket appreciation program for the Steelers in which fans get a chance to meet players on the field. In light of recent domestic violence allegations, she thought it was a great idea.

She said of the project, "It was a great opportunity just knowing that these people are high-ranked in their position and job, and it was great knowing that you were being taken seriously."

Another student, **Francesco Fenoaltea** said that he loved the tour of the facilities. "I had the opportunity to see PNC Park



Clockwise from top:
• **Jeff Stephan, Ted Ford, Chris Shumovich, Zachary Natale, Jessica Olkosky, Nathaniel Wilcox and Eric Zaharko**, pitched their ideas to **Michael Marchinsky**, Marketing Manager for the Pittsburgh Steelers. "Marchinsky was able to give all of us great advice and ways to make our ideas better, as well as giving us compliments on how well we did our research," said Jeff Stephan.
• Following the presentations, marketing students were led on tours of PNC Park and Heinz Field with the chance to step onto the fields. As Eric Zaharko put it, "I was able to accomplish a childhood dream of sitting in the Pirates dugout and picking up the bullpen phone, pretending to be Clint Hurdle making a pitching change. I truly felt like a little kid again."

and Heinz Field from the field." And of the project, he said "It gave me an idea of what a business presentation in that industry is like."

Students presented to the directors of marketing at both the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pittsburgh Pirates. The Pittsburgh Steelers representative is also a Carlynton alum. Gevaudan says he hopes to continue

the idea in coming years, and to use it as a capstone for this unique class.

Originally printed in The Cougar Times, the high school student newspaper, this piece was reprinted with permission from the author, Alex Popichak. Among various other activities, Alex is senior editor and photographer of The Cougar Times, broadcast announcer for the morning announcements, and yearbook editor. He will attend Point Park University in the fall to study journalism.

Assemblies make an impression

On the eve of Veteran's Day, freshman enrolled in American Cultures classes were invited to hear about local veterans and the sacrifices they made, thanks to speaker Mark Schuster of Crafton. Schuster worked with Crafton officials to erect the memorial wall located in the circle near the borough building. Extensive research made it possible for Schuster to share true stories about local veterans and families. Reflecting on the names listed on the memorial, he said that some 50 men from Crafton died while serving over an eight-month period.

World history students enjoyed an assembly with John Kent, a missionary who spent eight years in Papua New Guinea. Kent spoke about the Ewa people who inhabited the area, a tribe of polygamists with little education or help from the local government. The Ewa people lived in fear of spirits which they believed would bring sickness and death. Kent, his wife Brenda, and their four children hosted a health clinic in the area and were soon befriended by the Ewa people. Kent also shared stories about the diverse wildlife, terrain and climate and brought artifacts and pieces of clothing worn and used by the tribe.



Above: Presenter **John Kent** stands with eight-grader **Elias Ward**. Elias was selected to don an Ewa neckpiece with shells and spear made from bone.



Mark Schuster

World Language Proficiency

According to the National Foreign Language Education Association and the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), every high school language program should use a performance based assessment as a benchmark to measure student proficiency. In December, 17 students enrolled in the Spanish IV Dual Enrollment program and two from the French IV course took the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview which accurately measure a students' holistic speaking ability in a targeted language. This rigorous assessment challenges the students oral communication skills and a variety of tasks, such as writing, listening and reading.



Each student took the verbal assessment independently, using Google Voice.

Those taking the oral and written exam included Spanish students **Jacob Bickus**,

Cameron Bogats, Emmanuel Burton, Hannah Carey, Perry Chambers, Dean Chubarov, Ellise Colaizzi, Marin Exler, Garrett Fenton, Abigail Greiner, Tyler Harding, Tarik Isak, Holly Rodriguez, Dale Rybacki and Rachel Santillo, and French students **Brianna Oddi and Nicole Stengel**.

Much to the satisfaction of Spanish teacher **Steven Vayanos** and French teacher **Shelia Nery**, all 17 students earned a proficiency rating on the assessment. The students demonstrated a very high level of spoken proficiency in the language. Likewise, proficiency was obtained in writing, listening and reading and represented a holistic ability to communicate in the target language.

Accomplishments revisited and celebrated

Fans coming to a high school basketball game generally make a stop at the concession stand or restroom, and then head for the gym. Visitors this fall have been taking a slight detour, allured by a collage that highlights some of the district's most notable athletes and greatest feats. The 30-foot long by 12-foot tall mural now graces the entrance to the high school gymnasium and is getting quite the attention.

The photos for the collage were collected over several months from current and former students, teachers and residents of the district. The mural salutes WPIAL titles, state championships, individual accomplishments and those who went on to make a name in the realm of sports.

Decades of Carlynton sports-history is chronicled on the wall.

Retired teacher **Rebecca Petronsky** stood in awe when first seeing the collage. She attends the boys' basketball games to cheer on the team and support her son **Greg**, an assistant coach. "I feel as though I'm stepping back in time," she said.

Surprisingly, current students pause to check out the photos on the mural as well, feeling a sense of pride when noticing a teacher, older sibling or cousin.

According to **Michael Loughren**, high school principal, the athletic success recorded on the collage is just a small part of the school's achievements. Other accomplishments are accentuated around the building. Student projects, writings and artwork are displayed on walls

and in showcases for all to appreciate. Near the main entrance of the school, two large wooden plaques affirm the names of all valedictorians and salutatorians.

In the auditorium wing, framed artwork of high school musical program covers now occupy the lobby and portray every show presented at the school. In the long hallway adjacent to the auditorium, a procession of hand-painted



murals represents graduating classes from 2011 to present and includes an 18 x 24 inch framed photo of the entire class. The tradition will continue with each graduating class.

Loughren, other administrators and teachers share a goal of creating a learning environment which fosters, demands, and celebrates high standards. Placing an emphasis on community, excellence and character is building a culture of pride and commanding respect of those who daily walk the halls.

2014-2015 ATHLETICS IN REVIEW FALL AND WINTER SEASONS

Varsity teams to make the WPIAL playoffs:

Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Girls Volleyball, Wrestling and Girls Basketball, with two years back-to-back section titles

ATHLETIC HONORS, FALL SEASON

All-Conference:

Junior **Emmanuel Burton**, soccer
Sophomore **Sofia Carrasco**, soccer

Senior **Ted Ford**, football and soccer
Senior **Olivia Kalimon**, soccer
Senior **Pamela Meighan**, soccer
Senior **Logan Schuler**, soccer

All-WPIAL:

Ted Ford and **Logan Schuler**, soccer
Pamela Meighan, soccer

All-Section:

Senior **Jordan Melko**, volleyball
Senior **Conor Richardson**, volleyball

Second team:

Senior **Emily Brozenick** and junior **Erin Connor**, volleyball

Third team:

Junior **Amanda Martin** and sophomore **Ashleigh Wilson**, volleyball

All-WPIAL:

Jordan Melko, volleyball

In girls' tennis, junior **Hannah Phillips** captured the section championship, placing third in WPIAL and qualifying for States. And junior **Dean Chubarov**, a member of the bowling team, bowled a perfect game during a competition in February.

C.Harper Positive High School Athlete Awards:

Junior **Brianna Oddi**, cheerleading
Senior **Conor Richardson**, volleyball and basketball



Pictured with her mom, Selene, Conor Richardson signs a National Letter of Intent, making a commitment to play basketball for the Duquesne University Dukes. Conor's parents, friends and coaches celebrated her success with a reception in the high school library. Conor reached 1,000 career points, January 31, in a game against Freedom.

This issue of InCarlynton was printed before winter sports honors were identified.

Making S.M.A.R.T. Choices

Carlynton junior high teachers and staff make a concerted effort to alleviate student fear and frustration that sometimes comes along with the daunting transition to seventh grade. Guidance and patience is extended to these youngsters during the opening weeks of school while procedures are learned, schedules are memorized and the challenge of opening the locker combination lock grows easier.

It is also during the first few weeks of school that seventh graders are afforded the opportunity to gain some lessons in time management, making good choices and establishing self-discipline. In association with the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce, social studies teacher **Tim Patsko** reserves an entire day to offer CHOICES to all seventh graders, a program designed to lead students toward personal and academic achievement.

In October, several local businessmen and women from the Chamber of Commerce volunteered to conduct the workshop in the classroom setting, involving students in role play to underscore relative situations. Dr. Ahmad Soltani-Ahmadi from the Bayer Corporation held an exercise that presented a series of real-life scenarios, such as whether to go out with friends to a movie or stay home and study for a test. Understanding that the decision may cause a poor grade or even failure of the test, students discovered that their decision determines the consequence. Emphasis was also placed on managing time so as to enjoy time with friends and also having time to study for the exam.

With every class change, Mr. David Goldman of the Goldman Organization led an exercise with three students; one played the role of a high school dropout, another a high school graduate, and the third, an individual with a college education. The rest of the class pretended to be an employment agency, attempting to



match the students with available jobs. It quickly became apparent that more opportunities were available for those who completed high school or went on to college, sending the message that choices and decisions made earlier in life often have long term consequences.

Mrs. Deborah Gray, owner of Express Employment Professionals, wrapped up the workshop by providing students with a list of S.M.A.R.T. goals, an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely. She emphasized the importance of setting specific goals, creating clear steps to measure progress, choosing objectives that are challenging yet achievable, being sure the goals are pertinent to talent and interests, and finally, establishing a time frame to complete the goals. Mrs. Gray told students to begin setting small goals and the practice will lend way to fulfilling larger goals and developing self-discipline.

Mr. Patsko believes the points stressed in the workshop are applicable to seventh graders. "This is the best time to emphasize the importance of making good choices," he said. "I've watched a student make a positive decision and feel good about it. That's important at this age."

At the end of the CHOICES workshop, students received a certificate and a key chain with the words, "The key to success is self-discipline." Susan Hovanec, the CHOICES program manager for the Pittsburgh Airport Area Chamber of Commerce said, "The purpose of the program is to empower young teens to take charge of their lives and build confidence."

The workshop is presented at the junior high level so students can develop positive skills before entering high school, college and career.



Clockwise from top:

- Seventh graders **Jaimee Cabili** and **Haley Williams** participate in the CHOICES program by reviewing S.M.A.R.T. goals with presenter Deborah Gray.
- Businessman David Goldman, with students **Liam Egenlauf** and **Ronald Burns**, took part in an activity to determine the best decision in a fictitious situation.
- Dr. Ahmad Soltani-Ahmadi led a role play exercise with **Arianni Anderson**, **Chauncie Mickens** and **Jack Jones**. The students prepared questions for a mock interview to determine if a candidate was qualified for a job.

Celebrating the Arts through **DRAMA** and **MUSIC**



Midsummer / Jersey brings magic to the stage

In December, high school students captured the essence of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the reality television show, *Jersey Shore*, in the play *Midsummer/Jersey* by **Ken Ludwig**. In this fresh and modern drama, the characters came to life in a fairyland setting by taking Shakespearean prose and making it relevant to today. Director **Tonilyn Longo** selected the play "to remind students that classic stories should not be forgotten, but should instead be celebrated for their timelessness."

In a twist of sticky situations, love and trickery, the students performed with an energy and zeal for the stage, bringing the roles of fairies, politicians and salon beauticians to life in a manner that was both credible and endearing. The scenes included a high school assembly, political rally and an imaginable intersection between an enchanted forest and the Jersey shore.

Over the course of four performances, the cast and crew audaciously tackled this unconventional play to develop a clever, entertaining and engaging show.



Striking a chord in chorus and band

Students throughout the district have been selected to participate in a variety of music festivals, an honor that is grounded on academic and musical excellence. The opportunity to partake in these festivals brings many rewards. Students are guided by some of the top conductors and directors in the country and meet musicians or vocalists from other schools. These experiences often build self-esteem and encourage a life-long love for music.

In January, high school senior **Dan Doyle** took part in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) district chorus festival held at Bethel Park High School. A bass singer, Dan auditioned and was selected for regional chorus for the second consecutive year. Joined by chorus teacher **Rebecca Chenette**, Dan traveled to Trinity High School February 25-27 for the regional festival.

A distinguished honor student, Dan enjoys singing and recently performed as Dr. Blind in the operetta *Die Fledermaus* in the Antonian Theater at Carlow University.

Several choral students were chosen for junior high district chorus, to take place May 1-2 at CAPA. They are: freshmen **Ellie Davis** and **Tara Wade**, eighth grader David Holderbaum and seventh graders **Nick Cindrich**, **Elizabeth Duffy**, **Ed Huehn** and **Marco Moorby**.



This page from top:

- The 23-member cast of the modern play, *Midsummer/Jersey*.
- The fairies from the enchanted forest: (kneeling) **Jessica Vogliano**, **Sarah Lukaszewicz** and **Mickenzie Richard**; (standing) **Breanna Jameson**, **Tara Wade** and **Stephanie Bonifield**. **Sara Mannes** portrayed the mischievous Puck, with **Clay Bodnar** and **Cassie Clark** as Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the forest.
- In *the Hair and Gone Salon*, cast members **Alex Popichak**, **Mikaela Kapeluck**, **Makayla Rittmeyer**, **JP Cantwell**, **Rachel Roach** and **Jarod Latta** portrayed the roles of atypical beauticians.
- **Alex Pollak**, **Marin Exler**, **Caleb Staker** and **Natalie Thomas** were cast as high school crushes from Jersey with plans for a weekend at the shore.



At the elementary level, numerous students were selected to the PMEA Elementary Band West Festival. They included **Eric Burcham** (trombone), **Sara MacMurdo** (clarinet) and **Sofia Notaro** (flute) from Crafton Elementary, and **Rodrigo Corral** (trombone), **Morgan Floyd** (clarinet) and **Brooke Martinek** (clarinet) from Carnegie. These talented students will perform at Quaker Valley High School in March, accompanied by teachers **Mark Priore** and **Russ Pedersen**.

Quite a few high school students have been chosen to performance in area festivals. Trumpet player **Kassidy Heidkamp** and trombone player **Riley Post** were selected for both the junior high district band and district orchestra. **Sam Knabel** (oboe) and **Morgan Harding** (bassoon) will also perform in the junior high district orchestra.

Qualifying for the Western Area Middle School (WAMS) Festival were band students **Faith Aliano** (bass clarinet), **Molly Badger** (percussion), **Anya Carrasco** (alto sax), **Elizabeth Duffy** (flute), **Kassidy Heidkamp** (trumpet), **Carter Hrinda** (baritone), **Arabella Hunt** (trombone), **Sam Knabel** (oboe), **James Luckaszewicz** (tuba) and **Andrew Weimer** (percussion).

Sophomore **Kalista Heidkamp** (flute) and senior **Joe Baldanzi** (alto sax) were selected for senior high district band, held January 8-9 at North Allegheny High School. While participating in the festival, Joe Baldanzi successfully qualified for Regional Band through an audition process.

Representing Carlynton at the Western Allegheny County Area (WACA) honors band festival is **Joe Baldanzi**, **Perry Chambers** (percussion), **Andrew Clark** (trumpet), **Joscelyn Cura** (percussion), **Colin Henke** (Bari sax) and **Tyler Smith** (trumpet).

Instrumental music teacher and band director **Todd Obidowski** attends all festivals with the students.

Musical Theater Workshop with Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

Some 30 students cast for the 2015 spring musical, *High School Musical*, had the rare opportunity to interact with a professional actor from the national tour of *Pippin*. In partnership with the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, Bradley Benjamin, a member of the *Pippin* ensemble, visited Carlynton in late January to lead a musical workshop. Later that evening, the same students traveled to the Benedum Center to see the show.

Working with students on the Carlynton stage, Ms. Benjamin spoke about the choreography in the show's dance numbers, influenced by the original and late director Bob Fosse. Under Benjamin's direction, students learned the dance composition to *Pippin's* opening number, "Magic to Do," while attempting the turn-in step-walk and splayed fingers with the panache of Fosse. The teens took the workshop seriously, listening carefully to every directive. A time for questions came at the end of the session.

The story of *Pippin* blends Broadway flair with circus acrobatics and the performance that evening did not disappoint. Students who expressed an interest in seeing the show were given complimentary tickets to see the Broadway production. High school choral director **Rebecca Chenette** attended the performance with the students. Mrs. Chenette, along with alumni **Natalie Hatcher**, **Cara Walkowiak** and **Michael Davidson** will take over the reins of directing, producing and choreographing this year's performance of *High School Musical*, set to open April 16 through the 19th.

This page from top:

- Senior **Joe Baldanzi** successfully auditioned and advanced to Regional Band. This past summer, Joe was selected to participate in the Pennsylvania All-State Lions Band and spent four days at Gettysburg College to rehearse and prepare for a six-day tour with various performances through Toronto and Niagara Falls. Joe's accomplishments are credited to his talent on the alto sax.
- *Pippin* ensemble member Bradley Benjamin led students through a number of warm-up exercises at the beginning of the musical workshop.
- Junior **Dean Chubarov** and other *High School Musical* cast members learned the choreography to the opening number of *Pippin*.



Acts of KINDNESS

Studies have shown that community service participation in schools makes for positive effects on academic performance, leadership ability and self-efficacy.

Service learning represents a potentially powerful form of pedagogy because it provides a means of linking the academic with the practical. By emphasizing cooperation, democratic citizenship and moral responsibility through community service, educators help students connect to the wider community and prepare them to meet society's needs. Youngsters and teens who partake in acts of kindness are more likely to contribute to society after college.

Many Carlynton School District teachers place a great deal of emphasis on service learning. At any given point in the school year, drives are held for the local food bank, Toys for Tots, Make a Wish and other worthy organizations. Teachers often initiate fundraising activities to

support students and their families. During these acts of service, students take on leadership roles to oversee the efforts.

This year, seniors **Jacob Bickus** and **Alex Popichak** assumed the responsibility of initiating and facilitating two separate service projects to benefit others.

Jacob Bickus, of Crafton, approached the school board last summer with a plan to collect supplies for military personnel serving abroad. Jacob coordinated "Supplies for Soldiers" and collected over 40 boxes of non-perishable foods, such as granola bars, beef jerky and canned fruits. Students across the district participated in the drive. The food was shipped overseas with the help of Military Connections of Pittsburgh, an organization that ensures troops have the supplies they need while deployed.

A distinguished honor roll student, Jake plans to study chemical engineering in college. He has already been accepted to Penn State and the University of Arizona's Honorary College, though his dream is to attend a military academy. Jacob has applied to West Point and the Naval Academy with multiple nominations for candidacy. He will be notified of acceptance in the spring.

Last summer, Jacob attended a Summer Leadership Experience at West Point academy. During the week-long stay, he lived the life of a cadet with daily training in a disciplined environment. He also attended a six-day program at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, taking part in physical endurance activities, academic classes and weapon simulation.



Jacob Bickus

Endeavoring to attain the highest rank possible in the Boy Scouting program, **Alex Popichak**, of Carnegie, decided to focus his Eagle Scout project on an area he spends a considerable amount of time, Carlynton Junior-Senior High school. His attention was drawn to old sign near the entrance of the school. The brick structure was in a state of disrepair and had not been updated in nearly 25 years.



Alex Popichak

Gaining the approval of the school board was the first step Alex took before starting any work on the sign. Once that was obtained, he began the arduous task of cleaning the discolored brick, which attracted the help of some classmates. Alex and his brother Matt worked together to make a cement capstone for the top of the structure and then carefully secured it in place. Matt is enrolled in the construction program at Parkway and was able to help Alex remove the old cap, chip away timeworn mortar and lay fresh mortar for the capping.

Alumni Andrew Smith, a certified electrician (and Eagle Scout) offered assistance with the electrical wiring. Removing an exposed electrical line, Andrew added two code-approved outdoor junction boxes, one for exterior lighting and another for future backlighting, should the district choose to use this option.

Using the school's athletic logo as a focal point, Alex designed a banner that was reproduced in a durable and weather-proof material by Buildasign, a Texas firm he found online that offered the best prices. The banner was mounted into the recessed area of the signboard. Painting was done along the edges of the recessed area to better reflect light on the placard.

The last leg of the project included landscaping with the help of landscaper Jeronimo Corral. Mr. Corral has children in the district and assists with the scouting program. He helped Alex select and plant shrubbery in front and around the sign in green and gold hues. They also planted bulbs for bright yellow lilies to bloom in the spring and topped everything off with mulch.

The school board offered a \$500 stipend to pay for supplies and necessary contractors, and Alex was able to complete the work under budget, thanks to the laborers who kindly donated their time.

Alex tallied 122 hours while making improvements to the message board. His efforts paid off in a big way when he received the rank of Eagle Scout at a ceremony in January.



Before (left) and after (below). The new sign and landscaping offers a aesthetic welcome to the entrance of the junior-senior high school.



Kindergarten Registration Time is Here

Kindergarten registration for the 2015-2016 school year will be held March 19 at Crafton Elementary and March 20 at Carnegie Elementary. Children must be five years of age on or before September 1, 2015 to be eligible for kindergarten in the Carlynton School District.



Parents and the child to be enrolled must come to the school in the community in which they reside. While the parent is completing paperwork, the child will meet teachers and participate in a series of assessments.

In order to give full attention to each parent and child, it is suggested that parents register the child at the following times, based on the last name of the child. Children with a last name that begins A-G are asked to report between 8:30 am to 10:00 am; last name of H-M, report between 10 am and 11 am; last name of N-S, report between 12:30 pm and 1:30 pm; and last name T-Z, report between 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm.

At the time of registration, parents will be asked to submit the child's birth certificate and current immunization records, as well as two proofs of residency such as a driver's license, utility bill or tax statements.

If for any reason there is a conflict with the date to register a child for kindergarten, parents are welcome to contact the district registrar, Jan Sweeney, at **412.429.2500, ext. 1125**, at the earliest convenience.

Carnegie students decorate holiday tree at airport

The art classes at Carnegie Elementary, under the guidance of **Diane Criste**, art teacher, take part in several community service projects each year. For the past 14 years, the classes have been making and sending handmade ornaments to the Pittsburgh International Airport for the holiday trees. The decorations from Carnegie Elementary and other area schools embellish the trees during the winter season.

This past holiday season, Carnegie Elementary art students were invited to decorate one of six evergreens at the airport. Students in grades four, five and six worked with colored paper, glue and scissors to create bright red Poinsettias, candlesticks in stripes with glowing yellow flames, and red and green miniature airplanes. Students used recycled construction paper and bathroom

tissue holders to reflect a theme of reuse and sustainability.

On December 3, sixteen students from Carnegie joined other youngsters from Southside Beaver, Pittsburgh Gifted Center, Washington Community Arts and Cultural Center, Osborne Elementary and Plum Borough Junior High to decorate the trees in the airport landside ticketing corridor.

After the decorating was done, students were led on a tour to appreciate the many forms of artwork displayed throughout the airport, such as sculptures, mosaic tile designs and graphic banners.

Carnegie Elementary received a gift of \$100 for helping to deck the halls at the airport. The monetary award will benefit the art program.

Other outreach projects completed by art students this past year included fall and Halloween cards for Meals on Wheels and creatively decorated paper plates which were mailed to the U.S. Congress to support the need for funding of school lunch programs.



Clockwise from left:
 • Proud of their handiwork, and rightly so, are (kneeling) **Delaney Close, Madison Ciabattoni, Megan Henke and Gracie Scullion.**
 Standing, **Evan Chuchiak, Robbie Heinrich, Evan Yaros, Brooke Martineck, Kevin Zhang, Rodrigo Corral, Morgan Floyd**, teacher **Diane Criste, Alaiyah Burks and Breanna Ault.**

• Carefully crafted airplanes were one of the ornaments made to decorate the six foot tree at Pittsburgh International Airport.
 • Carnegie Elementary tree, adorned with red Poinsettias, green airplanes and white-striped candlesticks.



Save
the
date!

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES:

MARCH

- 6 Carnegie and Crafton Elementary Family Reading Nights and Scholastic Book Fair
- 19 Kindergarten Registration at Crafton Elementary
- 20 Kindergarten Registration at Carnegie Elementary
- 21 Mr. Carlynton Contest (HS Auditorium)

APRIL

- 2-6 Spring Break (will change with snow days)
- 10 Crafton Elementary PTA Teacher vs. Student Basketball Game (HS Gym)
- 16-19 Musical, *High School Musical* (Tickets go on sale to the public March 9)
- 24 In-Service Day, Senior Project Presentations and GATE Invention Convention (HS Cafeteria)
- 29 National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony (HS Auditorium)

MAY

- 18 Elementary Spring Chorus Concert (HS Auditorium)
- 19 High School Spring Chorus Concert
- 21 School Picnic at Kennywood Park
- 22 Junior-Senior Prom
- 25 School Closed - Memorial Day
- 27 Elementary Spring Band Concert (HS Auditorium)
- 28 High School Spring Band Concert

The 2015-2016 school year calendar has been approved and is available for viewing on the district website at www.carlynton.k12.pa.us. August 27, 2015 will be the first day of school.

