



West Allegheny Edition

# Allegheny West Magazine

Volume 15, Issue 88  
February/March 2014

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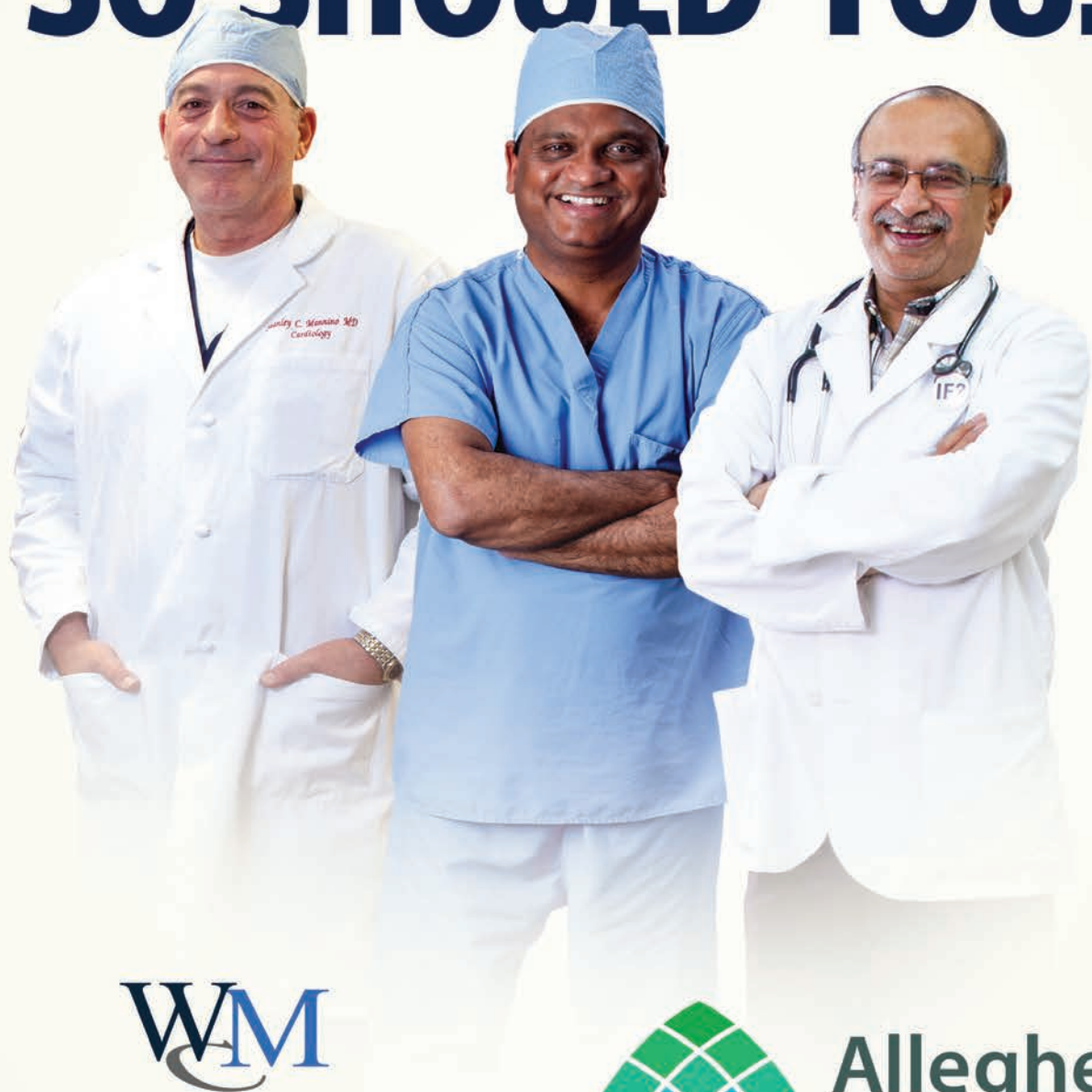


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Allegheny West Magazine - West Allegheny Edition, is an all positive, good news publication mailed free into the homes and businesses of the West Allegheny School District communities of Findlay, North Fayette, Oakdale, Sturgeon, and McDonald to connect communities, promote people, heighten awareness about the richness of the airport region, and build pride in the western suburbs of Allegheny County.



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**Logan Malatak, a seventh grade honors student at West Allegheny Middle School, qualified for the Junior Olympic Cross Country National Championships on November 24 in a regional meet at Coopers Lake Park in Slippery Rock. The race included top runners from New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. In the snowy and cold conditions, Logan finished tenth in the 4000-meter race among a field of over 100 runners. Logan was one of the top middle school runners in western Pennsylvania during his cross country season at West Allegheny Middle School this past fall season.**

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## From the Publisher



Dear Readers,

For the past two years, I have been writing to you as the assistant editor of *Allegheny West Magazine*. It is now with great enthusiasm that I write to you as the new editor and publisher of this magazine. Pat Jennette, who started this publication from nothing and grew it into what it is today, continues to consult with me throughout this transition. The story of how she grew this publication is an amazing one that deserves telling in a later issue. I have been thankful for her guidance over the past couple of years, and her continuing input as this trusted community resource changes hands.

So what will change? If you'll notice, our mission statement has not. We are still "Good news always, mailed and delivered free, every time." Moving forward, we will be looking to improve where we can while building on that mission statement. You shouldn't fix what's not broken, and there are lot of good things that work about this magazine. How to carry on all those good things has been a pretty big preoccupation of mine over the past couple of years. I'll try to communicate what I've come up with by telling you what I think we are, and asking for what I think we need going forward.

Ultimately, this magazine belongs to you, the reader. It is you who sends us news and contacts us about subjects that deserve covering. It is you who advertises with us. I think our readers use this magazine in a lot of different ways. In some respects, we're a community bulletin board. We're also a networking tool for local businesses and entrepreneurs. We're a marketing tool, both for businesses and nonprofits trying to make a difference. We're a way for local governments to communicate to the people who rely directly upon them.

We're also storytellers trying to lend added dimension to our community. We want stories that tell about little-known but interesting facts, people and places. We want to know about the unique and selfless ways individuals here serve others. We want to hear about the people who help define their communities.

For this publication to continue to be a success, it will take your input and help. I'm excited going forward to see all the good things we'll do. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

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## ABOUT THE COVER

A winter scene near McDonald.  
PHOTO BY SARAH HUGHEY

## NORTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIP PART TIME EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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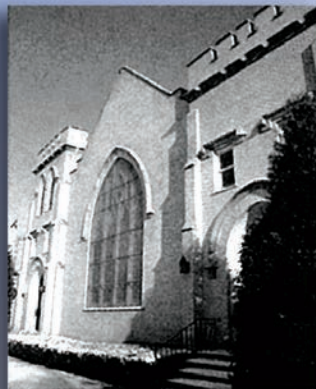
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Patrick Konieczny is the owner of Thomas-Little Funeral Service, Inc. with locations in the McDonald, Midway, Imperial, and Oakdale communities. He and his wife, Kristen, live in McDonald, North Fayette Township, with their two daughters, Mya and Allie.

Patrick is a graduate of Thiel College and Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. He is a member of the West Allegheny Foundation, St. Alphonsus R.C. Church, McDonald Lions Club, Oakdale Merchants Association, and Oakdale F&AM Lodge #669. He is a former member of the West Allegheny School Board, served as vice-president and is present superintendent of the Oakdale Cemetery Association.

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## Building Custodian

North Fayette Township is accepting applications for the part time position of Building Custodian. The position is responsible for the day to day building maintenance of the Community Center. Preference will be given to North Fayette Township residents. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled and should be submitted to **employment@north-fayette.com**. North Fayette Township is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

# A Wound Care Patient's Remarkable Journey

Joyce Carney is one of the healthiest 77 year olds around. That's what her doctors have always told her. Which is why when a sudden cyst-like wound broke out on her arm about three years ago, she was concerned. Unsure of what exactly it was, Joyce tried to have it removed by a surgeon. The wound wouldn't heal, and more started popping up across her back and down her arms, so she went to a dermatologist.

"I felt drained, and tired. No one knows what caused the sores, or how to stop them from spreading," she said.

Joyce's dermatologist sent her to the Ohio Valley Wound Care Center, where they tried to determine a cause. The OVGH Wound Care Center is one of the oldest and best-established practices in the region. As a Healogics-managed center, they are part of a nationwide network of wound-healing specialists, and they are used to treating wounds of all kinds, from diabetic ulcers to traumatic injuries. But this case was different.

Debbie Cardillo, Clinical Manager of the wound center said, "Joyce's case is unique. After months of tests such as biopsies, x-rays, blood work and different compounds of creams and ointments, the wounds would make progress but never completely heal." It was then that Dr. Samina Naseer talked with Joyce about Pyoderma Gangrenosum. It is a rare condition that causes ulcer-like sores to appear on your body. While the medical field is puzzled as to how this disorder starts in your body, many believe it stems from the immune system.

While continuing treatment at the wound center, Dr. Naseer also keeps in contact with Joyce's dermatologist on a regular basis.

"When doctors refer a patient to us, we like to include them so we can work together on treatment. We even give them monthly updates on how their patient is doing," added Cardillo.

Joyce has now been at the Wound Care Center for months, and has seen remarkable improvements to her open wounds. She has not had a new break out in several months. While she may never know what causes the sores to develop, or have them heal completely, Joyce doesn't mind coming to the Wound Care Center for treatment...she says they treat her like family.

"They're just so congenial. They bend over backwards for me. They even call me on the weekends after a big treatment to see how I'm doing. It's just a nice feeling when you come in."



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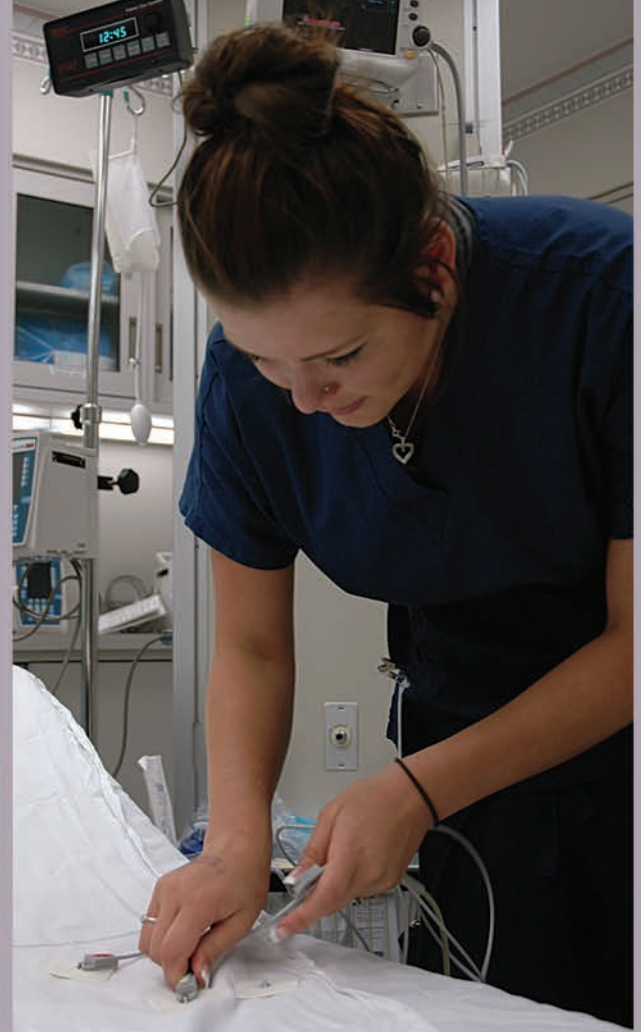
If you would like more information about getting help from Ohio Valley General Hospital's Wound Care Center, just visit us online at [www.ovgh.org](http://www.ovgh.org). The Wound Care Center has two convenient locations in Kennedy Township and Ohio Township. You can call **412-250-2600** to make an appointment at our Kennedy Township Location, or **412-847-7500** to reach our North Hills branch.

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## Oakdale-Based Law Firm BusinessLegal, PC Opens Second Location

Lynn R. Emerson, Esq., owner of BusinessLegal, PC, a law firm based in Oakdale, recently launched a new website at [www.businesslegal.net](http://www.businesslegal.net). The new website launch follows the opening of the firm's second office location in Cape Coral, Florida.

According to Lynn, there are many "snowbirds" living part of the year in Pennsylvania, and part of the year in Florida. The new Florida office makes the unique planning needs of those folks easier for them. Since 1998, the locally owned and operated BusinessLegal, PC law firm has focused on the personal and business needs of individuals, business owners, nonprofit organizations, corporations, and limited liability companies. Lynn and her staff will serve clients at both locations year round.

The new website focuses on legal requirements business owners encounter at different phases of their business, and the impact these have on the personal estate planning needs of the business owner. BusinessLegal, PC also developed a sister mobile site for smartphone users. Users can now scan its QR code and be taken directly to the firm's mobile website.



## Local Farm Backdrop for New A&E Show Episode

This March, local viewers of the new A&E show "Those Who Kill" might recognize a familiar sight. On September 24, the Scott Farm along Oakdale Road in North Fayette was used to film an episode of the new show, which is set in Pittsburgh. From September through December, the show filmed at various landmark locations in and around the city. Among them, according to a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article, were the Allegheny County Courthouse, the old Carnegie Library at Allegheny Square, and the old Carrie Blast Furnace site.

When crews showed up to film at the Scott farm, members of the family got to meet actress Chloe Sevigny, who plays a homicide detective, and James D'Arcy, who plays a forensic scientist. The show is a remake of a Danish television show of the same name. The plotline evolves around the two hunting down serial killers.

This wasn't the first time the Scott Farm has appeared on screen. The movie "Boys on the Side" filmed there, as have a number of ads for television.

## Little Indians Top Midwest Tournament

Over Thanksgiving weekend, the 8U West Allegheny Little Indians traveled to Cleveland, Ohio for the Midwest National Youth Football Championships and came out on top in the 8U, 85-pound division. They defeated three teams from the midwest along the way, with scores of 35-0, 20-13, and 14-12.

**TOP:** Head coach Rocky McGeary, assistant coaches John McArdle, Ken Dawson, E.J. Monti, and John Longo (not pictured, Dan Clements),

**MIDDLE:** Ethan DeBoth, Alec Harbison, Nick Longo, Broc Dawson, Lance White, Daniel Williams, Cullen Bish, Hudson Clay,

**BOTTOM:** Garrison Rodgers, Sammy Rippole (hidden), Caiden Ohrn, David McKoy, Ty Watters, Jake Monti, John Fazio, Alan Berlinger, Gage Upton, Ryan McArdle.



## Oakdale's Boy Scout Troop 248 Earns Multiple Individual and Group Awards

Members of Boy Scout Troop 248 of Oakdale earned 29 conservation awards over the past four months. The World Conservation Award was presented to Noah Hanich, Michael Behr, Patrick Gannon, Richard Mamula, Scott Zanella, Sam Miller, Jarret Parker, Dan Rodgers, Cory Supan, Lake Gilbert and Riley Supan. To earn the award, scouts worked on environmental issues and learned how they are interdependent with them. The award is the only one that can be worn on the Boy Scouts of America uniform.

Members who earned the PA Fish Commission Conservation Award were Cory Supan, Ike Bower, Noah Heinrich, Richard Mamula, Dan Rodgers, and Sam Shields. These scouts demonstrated skills, knowledge, and service of conservation and management of fish, reptile, amphibian, and watercraft throughout the state. The award recognizes those efforts in the fight for clean water in the state.

Members who earned the PA Game Commission Conservation Award were: Michael Allan, Michael Behr, Patrick Gannon, Lake Gilbert, Noah Heinrich, Noah Magdich, Richard Mamula, Sam

Miller, Jarret Parker, Dan Rodgers, Cory Supan, and Scott Zanella. These scouts demonstrated skills, knowledge, and service of conservation and wildlife management throughout the state.

Troop 248 also received, for the fourth consecutive year, the National BSA Outdoor Challenge Award. The award is granted to units that exceed national standards for outdoor activity through the merit badge and rank advancement program. Just a few units have earned this award for four consecutive years.

The troop also earned the National BSA Journey to Excellence Award for the third year in a row. Units are rated on their planned program, training, advancement, camping, communication, community service, outdoor activities, and administration of the unit. Troop 248 scored in the Gold Standard, the highest rating for the award.

On February 23, troop members William R. Supan, Nicholas K. Venturini, and Jeremy W. Carter will be awarded the highest honor offered to members of the Boy Scouts of America - the Eagle Scout Rank - during a formal presentation at the Oakdale Community Center.

## Scouts Serve Country and Environment

This past July and October, members of Oakdale Cub Scout Pack 848 and their parents provided some much needed attention to the Liberty Tree Grove in North Fayette Township's Donaldson Community Park. The clean-up project included weeding and edging around trees, signs, plant and shrub beds, and a walking path. Perennials and flower bulbs were planted and mulch was provided by Home Depot of North Fayette to spread around all trees and plants.

The grove consists of seven symbolic trees that were planted four years ago to honor military servicemen and women. Each represents a different branch of the military. They are: Abraham Lincoln Gettysburg Address honey locust, for Army, Betsy Ross sycamore, for Navy, Franklin Roosevelt tulip poplar, for Marines, Wright Brothers sweetgum, for Air Force, George Washington Mount Vernon red maple, for Coast Guard, Patrick Henry Osage orange, for Merchant Marine, and the Moon sycamore, for Pennsylvania National Guards.

Signs describe the national heritage of each tree and explain the historical significance of the Liberty Tree during the American Revolution. The grove provides a lesson, not just in service to country, but also to environment and conservation.

**LEFT:** Oakdale Cub Scout Pack 848 with Christine Kiss, Cubmaster, rear left, and Brenda Ford, Committee Chair, rear right, and Betsy Ross Sycamore in the background.



## Local Sisters Capture Sport Karate World Titles

A local trio of sisters made martial arts history by capturing 12 championship belts and eight world titles at the National Blackbelt League Super Grands this past December in Charleston, South Carolina. Chase sisters Brigid, "Hurricane" Hope and Elizabeth competed at what has become known as the Super Bowl of karate championships, where competitors from across the globe, including Europe, Asia, Guatemala, Mexico and Canada, converge to compete.

Fifteen-year-old Hope made history alone by earning two overall world grand championships at the Super Grands New Year's Eve Grand Finale in two opposite spectrums of sport karate competition: traditional forms and point sparring.

"This is the first time that a competitor captured an overall grand in both forms and fighting," stated NBL founder and president, Boice Lydell.

Hope also captured four NBL World Titles in creative weapons, Korean forms, point sparring and team sparring.

"Hope is a world class athlete in any league, in any country, in any sport, period," says 17-time World Champion in XMA, Extreme and Creative Martial Arts, Trace Megellas of TForceElite.com.

Cass Sigmon, a champion player on renowned sport karate team Team Paul Mitchell, says, regarding Hope's Super Grands performance, "World Class Competitor – amazing accomplishments!"

Sixteen-year-old Brigid Chase maintained her top ranking throughout 2013 in her continuous sparring division in the NBL. She backed up that ranking by capturing the continuous sparring NBL World Title in her junior girls' division by defeating last year's champion, Karina Perea, of Team Alchemy from El Paso, Texas.

Brigid also captured a world title in team sparring and earned an

NBL Silver Belt in self-defense for a second year in a row, losing only to NBL World Champion Ricardo Menderez of Mexico.

For the second year in a row, 13-year-old Elizabeth won an NBL Silver Belt in her continuous sparring division. She won seven out of nine bouts to again reach the stage finale. She not only defeated her competitors, but also impressed top martial arts judges to advance.

The three sisters are trained by their father, Peter Chase, at White Viper Karate in Imperial. Their mother, Brigid, is the school's head children's instructor. The Chase's brought 18 local students to the

24<sup>th</sup> Annual NBL Super Grands, including their three daughters. Fourteen of those students, all from West Allegheny, competed in the color belt amateur circuit of the NBL called SKIL. Two color belts, Sean Williams of Imperial, and Corrie Klobchar of Clinton, both won SKIL Amateur World Titles for Team White Viper. Kyleigh Trecki and Gary Klobchar, Jr., both of Clinton, and Nicky Yokoyama of Oakdale, all finished in the top three. Parker Shoup, Frank Trecki, David Williams, Sean Williams, Gary Klobchar, III, Alex Klobchar, Al Steele, Paul Steele and Ryan Vujanovich all finished in the top ten.



ABOVE: Chase sisters Hope, Elizabeth and Brigid.

"It's something special to take local West Allegheny residents from this little school in Findlay Township to the world games and experience success," says Peter. "We did it as a family, we teach karate as a family, and we promote a family atmosphere on our team. I think that positive disposition goes a long way towards helping individuals and families achieve their martial arts goals on a global scale."

For more on the Chase sisters and White Viper, visit, [www.hurricanehopechase.com](http://www.hurricanehopechase.com), [www.brigidchase.com](http://www.brigidchase.com) and [www.whiteviperkarate.com](http://www.whiteviperkarate.com), or call White Viper Karate at (412) 489-2460.

## The Bible Chapel Visitors Express Gratitude

On November 21, The Bible Chapel at Pittsburgh Technical Institute in North Fayette Township encouraged students and faculty to give thanks by scripting handwritten sentiments on a leaf and adding it to a makeshift tree. In exchange, participants received a piece of homemade pie baked by The Bible Chapel congregants. By the end of the event, the bare tree had blossomed into a full array of thankful foliage.

The Bible Chapel is a non-denominational Bible church with over 3,500 weekly attendees. Its five campuses are located in McMurray, Robinson, Washington, Wilksburg and online.



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# Around Your Town

## West Allegheny Students Honored for Patriotic Essays

On December 14, VFW Post 7070 in Oakdale recognized two West Allegheny Middle School students for their essays on patriotism at the post's annual Christmas party.

VFW posts across the country challenged middle school students with the essay prompt "What Patriotism Means to Me." Sydni Ellis' essay won VFW Post 7070's first place prize, while Cayla Chiodo took second. In their essays, both students reflect on the rights enjoyed by U.S. citizens and the armed services' role in protecting those rights. As an example of rights that Sydni characterizes as "sometimes taken for granted," she uses is that of Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani girl and education activist who became an international symbol of women's rights after a failed Taliban attempt on her life.



ABOVE: First place winner, Sydni Ellis, with Keith Colledge.

Both students were awarded with a check by VFW Post 7070 Commander Keith Colledge. In addition, certificates were presented to Oakdale WW II and Korean War veterans. Certificates for the latter marked the war's sixtieth anniversary.



## West Allegheny Alum Graduates with Top Honors

Jessica Morelli of the West Allegheny class of 2005 graduated magna cum laude from Duquesne University's Mylan School of Pharmacy on December 20. Jessica earned her Doctorate of Pharmacy. After graduating from West Allegheny, Jessica attended Allegheny College, where she received her Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry. During her studies at Duquesne, Jessica worked as a pharmacy intern with CVS Pharmacy in Robinson Township. She plans to continue to work with CVS as a pharmacist in the Greater Pittsburgh area.

## Local Student to Tour with Championship Drum Corps

North Fayette resident and West Allegheny senior Ray Haim has been selected to be a member of Carolina Crown, a 2013 Drum Corps International (DCI) Champion. Ray was chosen after attending monthly weekend audition camps at Carolina Crown's Fort Mill, South Carolina home base in November of last year. He competed with hundreds of new and returning members from across the country and around the world. Ray leaves for training camp in May. He will perform with Carolina Crown in over 30 competitions across the country, concluding in August at the DCI World Championship at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Ray is a member of the West Allegheny Marching Pride, West Allegheny Jazz Band, West Allegheny Wind Ensemble, West Allegheny Brass Ensemble, West Allegheny Chorus, and the West Allegheny Show Choir. He also has been selected to the PMEA District and Region Orchestras and the PMEA District, Region, and State Bands, and has performed with the West Hills Symphonic Band, the Pittsburgh Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Allegheny Brass Band. He plans on attending college in the fall and majoring in music education.



PHOTO BY Amanda Holl

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## Publisher Steps Aside After Fifteen Years

Fifteen years ago, Pat Jennette started running a small magazine out of her bedroom that eventually grew to attract over 100,000 unique readers across 14 airport communities. This past December, Pat announced her assistant of two years, Doug Hughey, would be taking over the magazine. Along with farewells and well wishes, Pat received proclamations from the state House of Representatives and Allegheny County articulating her contributions to the communities she has served. Her House proclamation, sponsored by Rep. Mark Mustio (pictured left with Pat), reads in part:

“Through her service, Mrs. Jennette has demonstrated remarkable knowledge, ability and integrity in carrying out her many responsibilities, thus earning the respect and gratitude of all those who received the benefit of her tireless devotion to duty...the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania congratulates Patricia Jennette upon her well-deserved retirement; heartily recognizes her exemplary record of service, in keeping with the highest ideals and traditions of this Commonwealth; offers best wishes for a happy and fulfilling future.”

## West Allegheny Work Camp and Heroes Supporting Heroes have Partnered Going Forward

West Allegheny Work Camp is now a project that will operate under Heroes Supporting Heroes. Heroes Supporting Heroes is a non-profit organization established last year to serve military families, veterans, and others in need. West Allegheny Work Camp is a one-week project that will bring 400+ teens and their leaders to the community to help repair and upgrade upwards of 80 local homes at no cost to the resident.

WAW is still inviting residents with needs, including the elderly, disabled, single parents, or income circumstances, to submit applications for free home repairs that will be undertaken the week of June 22-28 in the community. The only commitment by a resident is to be available throughout the week, provide a bathroom for teens and their leader, and provide a space where

the team can take a break for lunch. The costs for materials and supplies will be provided by donations from individuals and businesses.

To apply, please contact [www.heroessupportingheroes.org](http://www.heroessupportingheroes.org) ~ <https://www.facebook.com/HeroesSupportingHeroes>, P.O. Box 787, Imperial PA 15126, or <http://www.westworkcamp.org>, for an application online, or e-mail: [don.steward@heroessupportingheroes.org](mailto:don.steward@heroessupportingheroes.org).

To offer donations of supplies or funds, volunteer to help in some small way, or stay up to date with the progress of West Allegheny Work Camp through a monthly newsletter as the countdown begins to June 22, please send an e-mail address to: [don.steward@heroessupportingheroes.org](mailto:don.steward@heroessupportingheroes.org).

## Clearview Announces Community Service Award Winner

Clearview Federal Credit Union has chosen Rebecca Salopek as the winner of its sixth annual Joseph C. Cirelli Community Service Award. Rebecca was chosen for her volunteer efforts at Christian Assembly Reaching Everyone outreach ministries, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping the citizens of Beaver Falls.

Under Rebecca's leadership, CARE has continued to grow over the past two decades, thanks to contributions from individuals and businesses. In addition to honoring Rebecca, Clearview made a \$2,500 donation to CARE. The donation will be used to purchase new coats, gloves, and hats for children who attended the twentieth annual Christmas Day Dinner. The annual dinner is Beaver County's largest free holiday dinner.

“We're proud to recognize Rebecca for her hard work and dedication to CARE,” said Mark Brennan, President and CEO of Clearview. “We are also pleased that the funds will be used to help those in need throughout the Beaver Falls community.”

CARE has been a beacon of hope to the Beaver Falls community. The agency strives to provide a safe place to rest one's head, a full stomach, a backpack for a new school year, or a ride to a doctor's appointment. CARE provides meals on Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving, and a range of services, from transportation when to temporary shelter or rental assistance, to clothing and toys. CARE relies solely on private contributions to finance its various outreach efforts.





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### Coming Up . . .

**February 12** - PAACC Education Series Seminar: Social Media Marketing Made Simple, 8 a.m. at the Sheraton Pittsburgh Airport Hotel.  
**March 20** - Mixer with Shakers 5 - 8 p.m. at the Sheraton Pittsburgh Airport

### Member Milestones

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**10 Years**  
Bahama Breeze  
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Peg Eger - Office Manager  
Kelly Burgos - Communications Specialist

## Highlights from the PAACC's 2014 Annual Celebration of Excellence



**ABOVE:** Distinguished Service Award winners (L - R): Ken Faux of ICS - Imperial Construction Services, LLC, Casey Mahaven of Casey Mahaven Events, Charles Reszetylo of C.J. Reszetylo Tax & Accounting Services, Richard and Nancy Mills of Roselea Farm, Carl Pia and Brian Edwards of Quicksilver Golf Club. Guthrie, Belczyk & Associates, P.C. also won a Distinguished Service Award (not pictured).



**ABOVE:** Sally Award Winners, Dean Hastings of Multi Print Media, Inc., and Sean Henderson (right) of Sage Life Solutions.



**LEFT:** Ambassador of the Year Award winner, Melissa Hodge (center), with her Allegheny Medical Integrated Health Services colleague, Melissa Alexander (left) and company founder and CEO, Dr. Neal Fanelli (right).



**ABOVE:** Outgoing Chair, Dean Hastings, passes the gavel to Incoming Chair, Alisa Faulk.



**ABOVE:** A formal welcome to the 2014 Board of Directors.

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# WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT

# WA TODAY

FEBRUARY,  
2014  
VOL. 32,  
No. 3

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

## Dr. DiSanti Announces His Decision to Retire at End of School Year

Dr. John S. DiSanti, superintendent of the West Allegheny School District and recipient of the University of Pittsburgh's Tri-State Study Council's 2013 Distinguished Educator of the Year award, has announced his retirement. After over nine years, Dr. DiSanti is stepping down as the District's chief executive officer, effective June 30, 2014.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to live and work in West Allegheny. As a superintendent, I have always believed that it was my responsibility to do everything that I could to create a climate where every student could attain his or her fullest potential. That is what I have tried to do. Together, we have made remarkable strides. I am very proud of what we have accomplished. Thanks to the dedicated efforts and cooperation of the professional and support staffs, the administrative team, union leaders, and the Board, our District has become one of the most respected school systems in the region and state," said Dr. DiSanti in a letter to the staff.

Staff members and school directors credited the superintendent with leading numerous improvement measures and positive changes in the school culture. During Dr. DiSanti's tenure, student achievement has risen, evidenced by higher test scores, the number of students pursuing post-secondary schooling, and graduate scholarships earned. A myriad of new course offerings and services have been introduced, including 10 additional AP courses, a pre-AP curriculum in the middle school, engineering, biomedical, and gaming programs at the high school, summer math and reading enrichment camps for elementary students, and the District's on-line cyber school, the West Allegheny Virtual Academy (WAVA). Technology opportunities for students and staff have also grown exponentially through the implementation of SMALLab, an embodied learning environment where students interact with motion capture technology. Technology Opportunity Proposal (TOP) grants have provided additional technology to teachers who demonstrate competency in technology applications while integrating those skills in the classroom, thereby improving

their teaching and improving student learning.

"All of these District accomplishments occurred despite devastating cuts in state funding for schools. In a time when many districts have been slashing programs, we have been able to expand the number of opportunities for our students," said Board member and Finance Committee Chairman Ron Pasic. "We have completed \$30 million of new and renovated construction projects, but at the same time have grown our fund balance

surplus from \$290,000 in 2004 to over \$12 million in 2013. Dr. DiSanti deserves a great deal of credit, not only for his educational leadership, but for his fiscal management skills as well. He has instituted several cost-cutting measures that have made us more fiscally responsible without compromising the integrity of our programs."

"He has been a driving force in our collective efforts to improve instruction and raise

student achievement. With Dr. DiSanti, it's always been about doing whatever it takes so that our students and staff have every opportunity to be successful," said Dr. Christine Assetta, assistant to the superintendent for curriculum and instruction. "Upon entering Dr. DiSanti's superintendent office, visitors are greeted with a predominately displayed plaque stating Oscar Wilde's quote, 'I have the simplest of tastes; I am always satisfied with the best.' This statement epitomizes Dr. DiSanti's personal mantra as he strives for excellence in all matters related to education."

"Our school district has flourished under Dr. DiSanti's leadership," stated Board member Tracy Kosis. "He has brought not only a passion for kids through public education but also concern for fiscal responsibility to our taxpayers. Over the years, I've gained great respect for Dr. DiSanti and the difficult decisions a school superintendent must make. I speak not only as a Board member but also as a parent when I say he will be sorely missed."

West Allegheny Education Association (WAEA) president and art teacher, Debbie Turici, added, "In my twenty-five years



Superintendent, Dr. John S. DiSanti reads to students in Denise Cartisser's kindergarten class at Donaldson Elementary.

## Dr. DiSanti Announces Retirement (Cont.)

as a union leader, I have had the privilege to work with many superintendents, bargaining contracts and solving problems. Dr. DiSanti and I have developed a partnership that is both collaborative and cooperative. We share a mutual respect for each other and the organizations we represent. He is an admirer of Abraham Lincoln who stated, 'I have just tried to do my very best each and every day.' In his nine-year tenure, Dr. DiSanti has demonstrated his passion for the students, staff and community of West Allegheny 'each and every day.' I admire him as a true leader and advocate of public education. Dr. D has left 'wood for the campfire' for his successor and his legacy will remain with the District for many years to come. On behalf of the WAEA, we thank and congratulate him."

Former Board Vice President Eugene Sciulli said, "Dr. DiSanti has taken our District to a higher level. His many years of

experience as well as expertise have proven to be invaluable to our District. He continually challenged the status quo, accepting no excuses and expecting everyone to find a way to reach every student. He believed in benchmarking our progress against the best districts in the state. He held himself and all of those in his charge to a very high level of accountability. That takes courage and perseverance, and that is why I respect him."

"Dr. DiSanti will leave an indelible mark on West Allegheny School District," stated Board President Debbie Mirich. "We thank him for the guidance, dedication, strong leadership, inspiration and tireless efforts that he has given West Allegheny over the years. It is unbelievable just how much he has accomplished here for the good of our students, staff and community. We will miss him and wish him only the best in whatever new adventure he pursues."

## Team HiPod Reaches New Heights in Student Broadcasting

This past fall, few viewers of West Allegheny's televised football games were aware that the broadcasts were a product of student efforts; specifically those of Team HiPod. Through the hard work and creativity of seniors Jordan Grogan and Joe Falcioni, and junior Dakota Lamb, West Allegheny Sports Network (WASN) was born.

Over the summer, the trio looked to solidify their original network concept by securing sponsors and gathering supplies and equipment needed to bring the broadcasts to fruition.

Utilizing high school video equipment, the students created a working system to live stream football games to the community. The complex setup required hundreds of cables, five cameras, four computers and a crew of seven students. To establish a comprehensive product, a typical home broadcast consisted of one sideline camera located on the roof of the school, an end zone camera on a 31-foot tall HiPod, an instant replay field-level camera, and stabilized cameras positioned on the sidelines and scoreboard. Freshmen Jeremy Ellis and Zac Constantino served as WASN cameramen, providing a variety of angles to make the broadcast multifaceted. Instant replay was run by sophomore Zack Rose, who spent each game pausing, playing, and rewinding footage to provide the viewer with a replay of each down. For commentary, the broadcasts initially tied into the stadium PA announcer, but eventually WASN partnered with the MSA Sports Network to provide play-by-play analysis during specified broadcasts.

An early challenge for the team was locating a digital graphic scoreboard to overlay on the screen. Unable to find a program that met their needs, Grogan simply created one. Sophomore team member Joe Smeltzer utilized this graphic and ran the

program for all the games.

When all of these complex pieces came together, the final product was input into encoding software and broadcast to viewers all over the world. By season's end, WASN broadcasts accrued over 5,000 viewers on eight broadcasts, from over 20 states and four countries. In addition, the students broadcast the annual Powder Puff game to allow out-of-town relatives to watch from anywhere. One of the most rewarding realizations

for Team HiPod was recognizing how the broadcasts benefited alumni, parents and extended members of the community. Alumni attending college sent in pictures of themselves watching from their dorm rooms, while out-of-state relatives of athletes were able to watch the games as well.

"These guys took great pride in making the games viewable for alumni and fans across the globe, stated football coach and teacher Ron Neurohr. "They also devoted thousands of hours to make pump-up videos that showcased the team's success."

West Allegheny athletic director Dave McBain added, "With the inception of the WASN, West Allegheny has combined the excellence in education with a winning athletic program to bring to our alumni, families and fans the experience of being at the game when they can't make it. We appreciate the pioneering spirit that has created this venture and look forward to future seasons being broadcast."

Team HiPod's season didn't conclude in the fall, however, as the students now move on to winter sports that include basketball, swimming and wrestling. In the spring, the group will also broadcast varsity baseball games.

For more information and a complete broadcast schedule, visit: [wasportsnetwork.com](http://wasportsnetwork.com).



Team HiPod prepares for the first game of the season with help from Jordan Grogan, Dakota Lamb, Dave Brytus, Ron Neurohr (teacher), Joe Falcioni, Zachary Rose and Joe Smeltzer.

# Superintendent's Message

## Taking Care of Our Home... It's Time for Another Renovation Project

Anyone who owns a home recognizes the importance of taking good care of it. You want it to last, to meet your needs, and to grow in value. Homeowners also understand that few things in the home last forever. Whether it's the plumbing, electricity, heating/air conditioning, carpets, appliances, the roof, driveway, or landscaping, the longer you own the home, the greater the likelihood that you will need to make repairs and renovations; that is if you really want to protect its value and live in it for as long as you choose.

It was 2005 when the Board supported my recommendation to perform a demographic study that would determine the long-term facilities needs for the District. The study revealed that growth in elementary enrollment was beginning to impact the middle and high schools. Given the results of the study, coupled with programmatic expansion, special education requirements, and the aging of the 1962 portions of the high school, the District chose to dedicate resources to modernize and enlarge the high school. That

project began in 2006, when the original kitchen/cafeteria was converted from a traditional, single-service unit into a modern food court.

The District also constructed a new maintenance facility in 2006 to serve as a central warehouse for supplies and a garage/repair area for maintenance vehicles and equipment. It was built on existing District property, which eliminated the need to pay rental fees required on previous sites.

The next component of the overall Master Facilities Plan was to examine the use and condition of the athletic stadium. Increased demands from our student athletes, the physical education department, marching band, Marine Junior ROTC program, as well as numerous community organizations, spurred the administration to recommend renovations that included installation of artificial turf and a new, synthetic track; both of which were completed in 2007.

In 2008, expansion and renovation began on the high school. The 2010 building dedication showcased a new, two-story, 22-classroom wing with specialized suites for art, technology, engineering and the Marine Junior ROTC; a new, two-story athletic wing that houses locker rooms, offices, and classrooms; and a new stadium entrance. The project also provided for expansion and modernization of the auditorium, a set preparation storage/rehearsal area, new fitness center, extensive renovations to the guidance, nursing, and administrative suites, new tennis courts, and new Family Consumer Science/Child Development classrooms. Several infrastructure improvements were made that included energy efficient, mechanical, electrical, and HVAC systems.

Donaldson Elementary School was built in 2004 and is a beautiful learning environment for those elementary-age students who are fortunate enough to live in that attendance zone. Wilson and McKee Elementary schools were constructed in 1973, and in recent years have really begun to show their wear. The District's custodial maintenance department has done a great job keeping the buildings clean and safe. Over time, however, the infrastructure of the buildings has deteriorated simply because of age. Electrical, plumbing, and HVAC problems are becoming more prevalent. Often, replacement parts are difficult to find. Both buildings need new roofs. Door hardware and windows should be replaced. Antiquated systems are costing the District significant losses in energy efficiencies. The quality of each

building's climate can be considered fair at best when it comes to lighting, temperature control, and aesthetic appeal. Upgrades are needed to meet the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and revised occupancy codes. Significant repairs are needed for driveways,



Architectural rendering of Wilson Elementary School renovations.

parking lots, sidewalks, and curbing. Those of you who are familiar with the buildings know that they were constructed at a time when the "open classroom" concept was in vogue. That means that most of the classrooms have no walls and are only separated by temporary partitions and/or bookcases; certainly not an ideal learning environment for teacher to student or student to student interactions, not to mention security. Many school buildings constructed in the 1970s utilized an in-board classroom design, which means only perimeter corridors had natural lighting from windows. This was originally intended to reduce energy consumption by moving the occupied spaces toward the climate-controlled interior of the building; thus reducing the impact of the exterior weather conditions on the building environment. However, this design also reduced the amount of natural light in classroom areas. Research has shown students are more alert and receptive to learning when they receive instruction in classrooms with more natural light. Studied theories for this achievement include improved eyesight and mood from "daylighting" of spaces to perceived health benefits for students and staff.

The District has always prided itself on providing equitable services and programs to all students. While the programs offered at each of the elementary schools are equitable, the learning environments are not. This is why the District has decided to modernize its two oldest elementary schools.

In 2012, the District hired Thomas & Williamson, a Program Management firm, to perform a thorough physical inspection and evaluation of both Wilson and McKee Elementary schools. As part of that evaluation, the Board, administrators and teachers

## Superintendent's Message (cont.)

were asked for their input on how the educational environment could be improved to assist them in their efforts to facilitate higher levels of learning. The information garnered from this study laid the groundwork for the development of spatial planning and conceptual design to support the educational programming for the facilities. Thomas & Williamson turned over the "concept" to renew the facilities to the Hayes Design Group Architects. The Hayes Group then created an architectural plan to meet the programming needs of the staff and students at Wilson and McKee Elementaries, while bringing the building to current energy, safety and occupancy standards. The design will also incorporate a dramatic increase in the natural daylighting of classrooms.

One component of the architectural plan includes relocating the District Administration Office (DAO) from Donaldson to a dedicated space at Wilson. This addition will also serve as a professional development training center for teachers and support staff, as well as a place to hold School Board meetings.

Vacating Donaldson Elementary will enable the District to recapture seven classrooms in the building, in an attendance area where student population has grown.

Construction is scheduled to begin in April of this year. Wilson Elementary will be renovated first and is expected to be completed in August of 2015. McKee renovations will begin in June of 2015 with a completion target date of August of 2016. The total cost of both projects will be \$28.8 million.

In the months ahead, more details will be provided to parents of students who will be affected by the renovation process. Financing of the project will also be shared when the District presents its 2014-15 budget this spring.

Yes, it is important that we take care of our "home," to preserve its value, and to keep it as it was intended to be: a safe, well maintained, inviting learning environment where all who pass through its doors can realize their full potential. The renovations of Wilson and McKee will indeed meet the educational needs of our students, staff, and community for years to come.

*Dr. John S. DiSanti, Superintendent*

## Sweet Harmony Showcases West Allegheny Students

Seven West Allegheny Middle School students were selected to participate in the Sweet Harmony Festival on November 15 at Upper St. Clair High School. Participants included eighth graders Hailey Baum, Sydney Campbell, Hannah Cook, Mackenzie Danzik, Mikayla Day, Morgan Swasey and seventh grader Carly Thompson. Selection was based on student applications and teacher recommendations.

The concert showcased young women in grades six through nine and was sponsored by the Southwest Region of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) of Pennsylvania. Patricia Donohue Burns from Duquesne University served as the guest conductor, and students were joined by choristers from Washington and Jefferson College.



Students who attended the Sweet Harmony Festival include (left to right) Mackenzie Danzik, Hannah Cook, Mikayla Day, Morgan Swasey, Sydney Campbell, Carly Thompson and Hailey Baum.

## Freshman Wins High School Chess Tournament



Winner Dylan Teague challenges Mackenzy Sadauskas during the holiday tournament.

Freshman Dylan Teague was this year's winner of the West Allegheny High School Holiday Chess Tournament held on December 20. Nearly 80 students from the Chess Club participated in the annual event, which was organized by high school librarian and Chess Club advisor Carol Bookmiller.

## Students Participate In Mucho Macho Festival



Middle school students, left to right, Matt Zaletski, Hayden Shipley, Joseph Clutter and Will Wiechelt displayed their singing talents under the guidance of guest conductor Dr. Ryan Beeken from Indiana University of Pennsylvania at the Mucho Macho Festival on November 5. The festival is sponsored by the American Choral Directors Association.



Several gingerbread houses were on display in the middle school office.

## Gingerbread Contest Draws Record Participation

Eighth grade German I students participated in a festive project in December when they entered their creations in the annual Gingerbread House Contest. Middle school German teacher Kim Patterson encouraged students to create their house with family members, but also allowed students to collaborate with classmates.

A total of 17 houses were entered, the most in contest history, and gift cards were awarded to the top three winners. First place went to Rachel Hoge, second place went to Katie Borgo and Morgan Swasey, and third place went to Shay Horton.

## West Allegheny Forensic Coach and Team Earn Numerous Accolades

It has already proven to be an eventful and notable year for West Allegheny Forensic Team as both the coaches and students have earned accolades.

For head coach Michael Shaffer, the year started off on a high note as he earned the Donus D. Roberts Quad Ruby Award for excellence and longevity in the National Forensic League and was recognized for this achievement in *Rostrum*, the league's national magazine. Shaffer was also elected in October to serve on the communications committee for the Pennsylvania Speech and Debate Association (PSDA).

The West Allegheny Forensic team was recognized as a national contender when it was awarded 200 Club status. When the competition season kicked off on November 2 at Penn State Behrend's McDowell and Mercyhurst Tournament, the team proved their depth and claimed second place overall in the speech category. Individually, Cameron Kehm placed second in dramatic interpretation; Maura Vulakovich placed second and Carli Cardillo placed third in impromptu; Julianne Buterbaugh placed fifth in declamation; and the team of Maura Vulakovich and Carli Cardillo placed fifth in duo interpretation.

On November 9, the team traveled to Quigley High School to compete in their annual tournament. Individually, Julianne Buterbaugh placed third in impromptu; Cameron Kehm placed second in dramatic interpretation; Catherine Wheatley placed third in prose reading; Taylor Schmac and Spencer Sinclair placed fourth in DUO interpretation; and Josie Collins and Jonathan McKeegan placed as presiding officers in congress.

The team also competed in the Upper St. Clair Novice Tournament on November 16, where Jeff Biers placed fifth in

dramatic interpretation and Taylor Schmac and Spencer Sinclair placed fifth in DUO interpretation.

The Pennsylvania High School Speech League (PHSSL) Regional Competition was held at West Allegheny High School on November 20. West Allegheny's Drama Group performed "The Katrina Project: Hell and High Water" and claimed a second place finish earning the group a spot in the PHSSL state finals. The group then traveled to Susquehanna University on December 6 and 7, where they finished fifth in the state. The group included seniors Angela Mazzocco, Jeff Biers, Maura Vulakovich, Carli Cardillo, Amelia Chamberlain, Greg Schaefer, Alexis Trippe and Josh Dudukovich; juniors Adele Smith, Bernie Anderson, Jordan Atkinson and Emily Bower; sophomores Dan Hovanec, Janghyen Cho, Ciera Forrester, Annie Kate Raglow, Brooke Charlier, Spencer Sinclair, Reilly Zimmerman, Hunter Yurkovich, Taylor Schmac, Julianne Buterbaugh, Tim Kane and Keri Watters; and freshmen Brianna Rose, Claire Shemon, Catherine Wheatley, Sarah Behr, Dannial Cardillo and Will Cinna. The directors were Mike Shaffer and Stephanie White.

The December schedule wrapped up on December 14, when the team competed in the North Catholic Tournament. Individually, Morghann Simon placed third in poetry and Maura Vulakovich placed second in impromptu.

The forensic competition schedule will intensify in the new year, with higher level tournaments and students preparing for regional, state and national qualifiers. Along with Michael Shaffer, Michael Quinn serves as the assistant coach and congress and debate coach.

## Students Learn from Independent Study Projects

Elementary students in grades one through five from Donaldson, Wilson and McKee completed over 200 independent study projects that displayed curiosity and hard work. With six to eight weeks to research and prepare their presentations, the projects were voluntary ventures that gave students an opportunity to explore areas of interest outside the regular curriculum. Once topics were chosen, students were encouraged to gather information through interviews, libraries or on-line sources.

Along with exploring new areas of interest, each student learned how to work independently, research topics and organize notes; skills that are key in middle school, high school and college. As a final activity, students presented their projects to their classes. The projects were then placed on display in the hallways for students and staff to view.

Although the projects were not graded, students were offered incentives respective of their school. Teachers who initiated the projects included Tom Hamm from McKee, Beth Koraido from Donaldson, and Rob Dowd from Wilson.



McKee first grader Owen Kent presents his independent study project on firefighting equipment.

## West Allegheny Receives \$10,000 Highmark CPR Anytime Grant

West Allegheny Middle School has been awarded a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield CPR Anytime grant for \$10,000. Through the grant, 250 eighth grade students will have the opportunity to learn core skills of CPR, AED placement, choking relief, and how to activate the emergency response system.

Each student will receive a CPR Anytime kit, which contains a personal inflatable CPR mannequin named Mini Annie, an American Heart Association CPR for Family and Friends instruction booklet, and a CPR Anytime Skills Practice DVD. Students will have the opportunity to practice their skills on a personal mannequin while watching demonstrations on the interactive DVD. Students also are encouraged to teach family and friends in the home setting. The CPR Anytime Program benefits not only eighth grade students by teaching them lifesaving skills, but also the community, by ensuring more bystanders know what to do in the event of a cardiac emergency and how to perform CPR.

## McKee Students Transform Lessons into Lyrics

Through the Target Corporation's Arts, Culture and Design in School Grant, McKee Elementary School received \$2,000 to fund an in-school music program designed to enhance classroom curricula. The two-day program welcomed musician and full-time performer Dave Ruch, who presented a "Regions of the U.S. in Song" concert for the entire school and led songwriting sessions with the fourth grade classes.

Ruch visited with students on November 20 and 21 and worked to compose original songs that related to the social studies curriculum. Each fourth grade class selected a different U.S. region, composed a song, and then performed it for the other classes. Each song was also recorded so that students would have a permanent rendition of their performance.

Ruch is extensively involved in the arts in education field, using music to teach core curriculum and inspire young

learners. Through concerts, workshops and residencies, he works with tens of thousands of students each year.

Terisa Sharlow, McKee music teacher, was responsible for securing the grant and arranging Ruch's visit.

**Performer Dave Ruch entertains McKee students while teaching how to write lyrics.**



## Gold Card Club Members Treated to Holiday Concert



**JROTC members Nicole Snatchko, left, and Carolyn Bistarkey, right, help serve Gold Card Club members at the annual holiday breakfast.**

Nearly 140 West Allegheny Gold Card Club members attended the annual holiday breakfast on December 13, hosted by administration, food services, and the arts department. Attendees first enjoyed a hot breakfast in the high school cafeteria, followed by spirited rounds of trivia hosted by superintendent Dr. John S. DiSanti. Members of the JROTC were on hand to direct parking and serve coffee and food with the help of school board members, administration and staff.

Following breakfast, attendees were escorted to the Stewart Morgan Auditorium for a holiday program that showcased the creativity and talent of the middle school Jazz Ensemble and the middle school Percussion Ensemble, led by music teacher Andrew Peters. The high school Show Choir was led by music teacher J.R. Weichelt.

District residents age 60 or older who are interested in joining the Gold Card Club can register and pick up a card at the District Office at Donaldson Elementary School. The Gold Card entitles members to free admission for all events sponsored by the District for which there is generally a charge. These events include all concerts, plays, science fairs, art shows, and regular season athletic activities. Membership does not, however, provide free admission to fundraising events sponsored by booster organizations, such as spaghetti dinners or other activities.



**Gold Card Club members enjoy the sounds of the middle school Percussion Ensemble directed by Andrew Peters.**

# Middle School Students Dance for a Cause



On November 6, the sixth grade Superstar Team at West Allegheny Middle School hosted a dance-a-thon to raise money for the West Allegheny Family Support Committee. The students raised \$2,500 to donate to their cause.

Following the theme "Dancing with the Stars," students and staff were encouraged to model a past decade when choosing and creating their costumes. Winners in the best dancer category were Samantha Cox and Connor Stout; best costume winners were Lucian Francis and team members of the "Jackson Experience," Heaven-Lee Bland, Gabrielle Thompson-Dixon, Megan Stutzman, and Ariel Weaver. Phoebe Karas garnered the most pledges. The team with the most pledges was the "Back In The Day Divas," and was rewarded with an after-school pizza and sundae party. The team included members Kiera Bruno, Brenna Downing, Jenna Hollyfield, Phoebe Karas, Abigail Schoppe, Isabella Taddy, Maria Vidmar and Hannah Waldorf.

Teachers coordinating the dance-a-thon included Bill Britton, Nancy Lane, Gabrielle Monti, Coleen Scott and Nancy Watkins.

**Best costume winners from team "Jackson Experience" included (front) Lucian Francis and (back) Ariel Weaver, Megan Stutzman, Gabrielle Thompson-Dixon, and Heaven-Lee Bland**

## Fun and Challenges Add Up to Math 24

Fourth grade students from across the District were invited to participate in 24 Challenge, a tournament-style competition based on the game Math 24®. With sessions scheduled for fall and spring, students made the commitment to meet in the morning before the start of school. Students initially learned how to play the game while sharpening their math skills, and will later have the opportunity to compete in a Math 24® tournament at the individual school and District level.

Horizons teachers Tom Hamm at McKee, Beth Koraido at Donaldson, and Rob Dowd at Wilson organized the challenge.

## 7 Wonders Project Benefits Kindred Hospital

Throughout the years West Allegheny Middle School's 7 Wonders Team has participated in various service learning projects that benefited the community. This year, they continued the tradition when students collected and donated extra Halloween candy and snacks, and delivered five boxes of treats to patients and visitors of Kindred Hospital in Oakdale. Teachers who helped with the collections and delivery included Anita Berich, Heather Cozzo, Jessica Henry, Becky Sabin, Lauren Siciliano, and Renee Treonze.

## Four West Allegheny Students Recognized by PSBA for Poster and Essay Entries

The Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) awarded honorable mentions to four West Allegheny students for their entries in the 2013 PSBA Poster & Essay Contest. This year's contest theme asked students to complete the sentence, "My education will help me to ..." and respond with either an essay or poster.



**Wilson students Temi Famuyiwa, Alayna Stephens and Emma Bohley proudly display their honorable mention certificates.**



Wilson Elementary students Emma Bohley (third grade), Temi Famuyiwa (third grade), and Alayna Stephens (fifth grade) received certificates and had their posters on display at the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA)-PSBE School Leadership Conference held at the Hershey Lodge and Conference Center in October. Katherine Shimp (junior) received a certificate for her essay entry, which was published in a PSBA booklet and distributed at the conference.

**Katherine Shimp, Essay honorable mention winner.**

## Donaldson Kindergarten Class Welcomes Visitors

December proved to be an exciting month for Denise Cartisser's kindergarten class as they welcomed a variety of visitors, even a four-legged one. The month kicked off with the introduction of the Mystery Reader program, which featured surprise visitors that included parents, police and principals. Students were allowed four clues prior to guessing the identity of the reader, followed by the guest reading a holiday tale.

As to the four-legged visitor, the students have welcomed a new class pet, in the form of a bearded dragon named Spyro.

Their new friend has afforded them the opportunity to learn about pet care, habitats and responsibility. A field trip to Petco is scheduled for the spring.

**Colton Romano from Denise Cartisser's AM kindergarten class gets a surprise visit from his mom during the Mystery Reader program.**



## "The Amazing Reindeer Race" Takes Flight at Donaldson



**Tanya Sekelik's fourth grade students present "The Amazing Reindeer Race."**

Tanya Sekelik's third grade class at Donaldson Elementary School proudly presented a Christmas play titled "The Amazing Reindeer Race" to other classes on December 19. The theme of the play mirrored the television show "The Amazing Race," and led the students around the world in a competition to reach the North Pole. The play was written as a lesson in language arts, and linked the script to the new common core standards. A videotaped version of the play was shared with parents.

## Students Give Back to Inspiring Teachers

West Allegheny continued to prove its generous spirit as students gave back to two inspiring teachers. In acts of kindness and respect, student-initiated outreach efforts have touched recipients Elizabeth Shannon and Tonya Curigliano; teachers who are battling cancer.

In the fall, the football team, coaches and boosters organized an Elizabeth Shannon night at the first game of the season on September 13. Shannon is a high school English teacher who was diagnosed with cancer in 2013. Following the "Live Strong" theme, yellow "Shannon Strong" shirts were sold and the stands were filled with students, staff and community members sporting their jerseys. A total of \$1,465 was raised and donated to the American Cancer Society in Shannon's name.

In a second show of support, seniors Victoria Chiodo and Hannah Lutz united the district when they designed and sold t-shirts honoring their former fifth grade teacher Tonya Curigliano, who is currently on leave. Students and staff across the District were encouraged to wear their shirts on December 18. A total of \$2,451 was raised and also gifted to the American Cancer Society in Curigliano's name.

"Mrs. Curigliano has inspired all of the people she has taught or known. We hope this small act can strengthen her during this tough battle," added Chiodo and Lutz.



**Students show their support for teacher Elizabeth Shannon during the first home football game of the season.**



**McKee cafeteria staff Mary Ann Russo, Cheryl McBurney, Bonnie DeBiasio, Sabine Turner and Tina Cummins show their support for Tonya Curigliano by donning their t-shirts.**

## Middle School Constructs Sign for Food Pantry

When the West Allegheny Food Pantry needed a new sign constructed, they turned to the West Allegheny Middle School art and industrial arts departments. As a service project, five eighth grade students designed, constructed and painted a five-foot railroad sign. Students worked under the supervision of art teacher Sharon Harn and industrial arts teacher Bob Mayo.

**Students Stephen Grebosky, Anthony Vidmar, Carolyn Macek, Will Weber and Chris Schubert display their finished product.**



## Donaldson Student Council Hosts Holiday Fundraisers



The student council at Donaldson Elementary School hosted a Week of Fun and a Candy Cane Sale to benefit area organizations. With activities that included PJ/Slipper Day, Hat Day, Wacky Wednesday, Gum Day, and Freaky Friday, students were asked to donate \$1 per day to participate December 3-9. Students also sold candy canes prior to the start of school from December 11-13.

A total of \$2,217 was collected and will be donated to the Western Allegheny Community Library and the North Fayette K-9 Fund, and will go toward a random act of kindness and appreciation for local organizations that serve our community.

Tiffany Mangan serves as the Donaldson student council advisor.

**Members of Donaldson Elementary Student Council raise funds to benefit local organizations.**

## Alumnus Returns to Give Presentation from the H.E.A.R.T.

Alicia Lanni, from the class of 2009, returned to West Allegheny Middle School to present a prescription drug abuse awareness program offered through the leadership of Helping to Educate and Rehabilitate Together (H.E.A.R.T.). Lanni and four other students from Duquesne University's Mylan School of Pharmacy spoke with seventh grade students about the dangers of drug abuse and outlined proper ways to dispose of unused medication. A portion of the program featured a role-playing exercise in which students randomly chose different colored candies meant to represent a variety of drugs, and were then told how the drugs might interact and affect the mind and body.

H.E.A.R.T. is associated with Duquesne University's Mylan School of Pharmacy, where Lanni is in her fifth year of a six-year program. The program was introduced to West Allegheny through the ongoing efforts of the North Fayette Police Department's D.A.R.E. program.

"Over the years, I have found it to be very beneficial to our current students to have guest speakers talk to them about the choices they need to make," said Sgt. John Bates, school resource officer for West Allegheny School District. "It is more meaningful when someone close to their age can tell them the

benefits of making good choices and the consequences of poor choices. It has an even greater impact when the guest speakers are former students who can relate directly to our students and the choices they face each day."



**WA alumnus Alicia Lanni and a Duquesne University classmate explain dangers of drug use.**

# Indians Extend Unbeaten Streak with Seventh WPIAL Title



Indians celebrate their seventh WPIAL title win at Heinz Field.

The West Allegheny Indians brought home their seventh WPIAL title when they defeated Central Valley 16-6 in the Class AAA match-up at Heinz Field on November 23. In a record-setting game, Bob Palko became the first head coach in WPIAL history to win seven championships, and the team became the first to defend their title since 2008.

The game capped off a perfect 9-0 regular season record and three earlier play-off wins against Hollidaysburg, Indiana and Franklin Regional. The Indians concluded their season when they fell to Erie Cathedral Preparatory School in the quarter final round of the PIAA Tournament.

Individually, many players have garnered postseason accolades from all-section to all-state.

## WEST ALLEGHENY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2013-14

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Dr. Christine Assetta, Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	Mr. Richard Smith, Middle School Principal
Dr. William Englert, Jr., Assistant to the Superintendent for Personnel and Student Support Services	Ms. Megan Huchko, Middle School Assistant Principal
Mr. George Safin, Business Manager	Mrs. Toni Baldanzi, Supervisor of Ancillary Programs
Mrs. Elaine Fitzgerald, Pupil Services Coordinator	Mrs. Patricia Nolan, Donaldson Elementary Principal
Mr. Daniel Smith, High School Principal	Mr. Thomas Orr, McKee Elementary Principal
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## Parkway West Career and

### Rosedale Technical Institute Partners with Parkway West CTC

Rosedale Technical Institute has established an agreement to offer a dual enrollment program for select Parkway West Career and Technology Center students. Thus far, 20 juniors and seniors have been selected for the opportunity.

Through this partnership, students currently attending Parkway West CTC will have the opportunity to receive advanced, post secondary-style learning and training in both automotive and diesel technologies, allowing the student to earn credits prior to graduating.

Executive Director of Parkway West CTC Dr. Darby Copeland said, "Rosedale Tech's willingness to think outside of the box in order to help students succeed was a key factor to make the Parkway West CTC/Rosedale Tech dual enrollment program a reality."

The program started on January 13 and will run through mid-May. Students will report daily to Rosedale to take advantage of its state-of-the-art training facilities and learn from their experienced instructors.

Dennis Wilke, president and director of Rosedale Technical Institute, said, "Rosedale is excited to establish this collaboration with Parkway West CTC. Working together, we can help to close the technical skills gap our region faces."

The demand for tradespeople in the region continues to remain strong, as evidenced by Rosedale's 96% job placement for graduates of its diesel technology program since 2011. The development of the Marcellus Shale is among the factors driving the need for diesel technicians. Furthermore, all graduates in the December 2013 automotive technology program secured a job prior to graduation.

The partnership promises to benefit Parkway West, Rosedale Tech, and the surrounding communities both institutions serve.

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## Building Technology Center



### Testa Construction Lends Hand to Parkway West Students

Anthony Testa of Testa Construction and his employees donated their time and concrete pouring expertise to help Parkway West CTC masonry students finish the foundation for a supply shed on the school campus this past November. The students got hands-on experience by laying the foundation themselves and then assisting with the concrete pouring phase. PWCTC paid only for the materials and concrete.

This isn't the first time that Anthony, a Parkway West CTC grad, donated his company's expertise for a good cause. Anthony says they helped out an animal rescue shelter in Washington, and appeared on ABC's "Extreme Makeover" when the show came to Penn Hills.

### Parkway West CTC to Add Building Construction Technology Program

Beginning in Fall 2014, Parkway West CTC will begin offering a building construction technology program to students wanting to pursue a career in the carpentry field. The program will provide students with the opportunity to gain a solid background in safe and effective carpentry skills and techniques. Through hands-on training, students will learn about the different materials and processes used in the residential and commercial building trades.

The program instructs students on the safe use of hand and power tools, specialty tools, scaffolding, and finishing techniques. Additionally, the program will provide students with the technical knowledge and skills to lay out, fabricate, erect, install, and repair structures and fixtures. Students will learn business functions and principles, codes related to the building/construction industry, and how to interpret plans, blueprint drawings, and contracts.

Students who complete this program will be able to continue their education at a post-secondary school or go directly into a career in the construction or carpentry field.

## Pittsburgh Technical Institute

### PTI Offering Scholarships Testing Skills and Life Lessons

Pittsburgh Technical Institute is offering two new scholarships that challenge students. The first is a call to incoming applicants who are also 2014 high school graduates. Applicants must write an essay that answers the question: "What person or event has been the most positive influence in your life and why?" They can do so on the school's website under grants and scholarships.

Five student essays will be selected and the applicants awarded \$1,000 scholarships. The deadline for submissions is February 28.

At PTI's culinary school, the American Academy of Culinary Arts, students will participate in a series of Cook-Off Lite competitions in 2014. The third, on February 22, will test students' knife skills. The winner will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship, which can be used toward any PTI or AACA program.

For more, see the Cook-Off Lite page on PTI's website. For links, visit the *Allegheny West Magazine* Facebook page.

## Let's Grow Together!

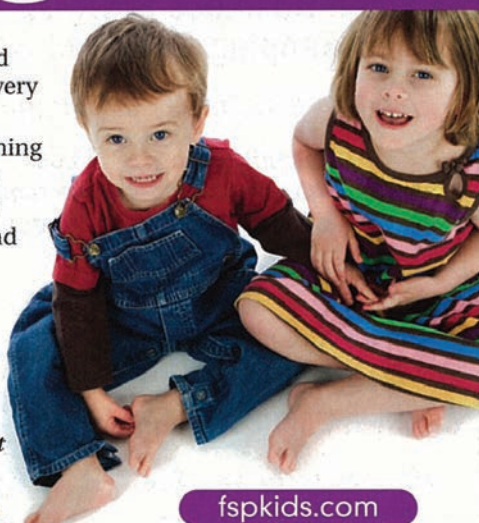
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# Library News

## All Ages

### Writer's Contest

Submit your story to WACL's Fiction Writer's Contest. Three categories of tween (ages 9-13), teen (ages 14-17), and adult (18+) of winners will be chosen. Winning stories will appear on the WACL website, as well as in an upcoming library newsletter. Winners receive a \$50 gift card to Barnes & Noble. Log on to WACL's website for details and guidelines of entry. **Deadline for all submissions is March 1.** Winners announced by March 15.

### Family Yoga

**Thursday, February 13 and March 13, 11:30 a.m.**

Kristen from Yoga H'om will host an hour-long session. Class will include yoga games, partner poses, and breathing exercises that will benefit both little ones and adults. Cost is \$5.

### Bluebirds

**Sunday, March 16, 2 p.m.**

Raccoon Creeks Bluebird Trails Coordinator and Beaver County Coordinator for the Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania Scott Parry will be on hand for an informative program on bluebirds. He will discuss bluebird natural history, his experiences with monitoring bluebird trails, and how to help attract bluebirds. Afterwards, stay and build your own bluebird house, but don't forget to register.

## Adults and Older Teens

### Yoga

**Saturday, February 8 and March 8, 10 a.m.**

Kristen from Yoga H'om will host an hour-long session. Register online, \$5 fee.

### eBooks Evening

**Tuesday, February 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

eBook FREE downloads, bring your eReader, tablet or other device. Contact Heather Blake, (724) 695-8150 blakeh@einetwork.net.

### Yarnies

**Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.**

Do you like to crochet or knit? All skill levels welcome for conversation as you work.

### Microsoft Office Part 4: Excel

**Tuesday, February 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

Final class in a series, covering Microsoft Excel. Basic computer knowledge required. Contact Heather Blake, (724) 695-8150, blakeh@einetwork.net.

### Anime/Manga Club

**Tuesday, February 25-March 25, 6:30 p.m.**

Explore this format of art and pop culture.

### Auto Repair Reference Ctr., Database of the Month

**Tuesday, February 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

This database includes detailed diagrammed automotive repair and maintenance information covering most major manufacturers. Free with library card. Contact Heather Blake, (724) 695.8150, blakeh@einetwork.net

## Want to get more involved with W.A.C.L.?

Log on to our website and check the event calendar for W.A.C.L. Board of Trustees and Western Area Friends to Enchance the Library meetings.



## Kids and Teens

### Book Chat Café

**Monday, February 10, 2014, 3:30 p.m.**

Stop after school to chat about your favorite books and enjoy light snacks, grades 6-12.

### Open Game Night

**Thursday, February 13, 5:30 p.m.**

Meet up with friends and make new ones! Just stop by the library to play one of our games or bring your own, grades 6-12.

### The Composer is Dead!

### A Musical Unprogram Adventure!

**Tuesday, February 11, 4:15 p.m.**

A Lemony Snicket-inspired music lesson for kids grades K-5.

### Creative Writing Lab

**Tuesday, February 18, 6 p.m.**

A time for unique writing exercise and to develop one's own personal writing voice! Grades 4-7.

### Lego Day

**Monday, February 17, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

With a day off from school you can stop by and explore our world of Legos. We have different stations and challenges set up throughout the youth services department.

### Lego Club

**Wednesday, February 19, 4 p.m., Saturday, February 22, 10 a.m.**

There will be building challenges and free play. Please DO NOT bring Legos from home, grades K-7.

### Teen Movie

**Tuesday, February 25, 4 p.m.**

After school, enjoy a movie and some snacks at the library, grades 6-12.

### Hug and Kiss Hunt

**Thursday, February 27, 9 a.m.**

Search the library for five chocolate hugs and kisses, ages 3-5 years.

### Music and Movement

**Thursday, February 27, 10:30 a.m.**

You and your little one will learn delightful songs, dances, and musical activities, ages 3-5 years.

### Computer Lab

**Tuesday, February 11 and March 11, 6 p.m.**

Learn coding, computer gaming, website construction and more! Online Registration required, space is limited, grades 4-7.

### Outreach

At 3:30 p.m., library visits the YMCA Afterschool program at listed School:

**February 19 and March 19 - Wilson Elementary**

**February 20 and March 20 - McKee Elementary**

## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that registering online for a library program is as easy as going to our website and clicking on programs on the left hand side of the screen? This will take you to our event calendar. Under each event, there will be a register button that sends you to the registration page. Visit: <http://westernalleghenylibrary.org>

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## The Retirement Reality Check

Decades ago, there was a popular book entitled *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*. Perhaps someday, another book will appear that discusses certain aspects of the retirement experience that go unrecognized; the "fine print," if you will. Here are some that are frequently overlooked:

**How will you save *in* retirement?** More and more baby boomers are retiring with the hope that they can become centenarians. That may prove true thanks to healthcare advances and healthier lifestyles.

We all save for retirement; with our increasing longevity, we will also need to save *in* retirement for the (presumed) decades ahead. That means more than budgeting; it means investing with growth and tax efficiency in mind year after year.

**Could your cash flow be more important than your savings?** While the number one retirement fear is running out of money, your income stream may actually prove more important than your retirement nest egg. How great will the income stream be from your accumulated wealth?

There's a longstanding belief that retirees should withdraw about four percent of their savings annually. This four percent rule became popular back in the 1990s, thanks to an influential article written by a financial advisor named Bill Bengen in the *Journal of Financial Planning*. While the four percent rule has its followers, the respected economist William Sharpe - one of the minds behind Modern Portfolio Theory - dismissed it as simplistic and an open door to retirement income shortfalls in a widely cited 2009 essay in the *Journal of Investment Management*.<sup>1,2</sup>

Volatility is pronounced in today's financial markets, and the relative calm we knew prior to the last recession may take years to return. Because of this volatility, it is hard to imagine sticking to a hard-and-fast withdrawal rate in retirement. Your annual withdrawal percentage may need to vary due to life and market factors.


**What will you begin doing in retirement?** In the classic retirement dream, every day feels like a Saturday. Your reward for decades of work is 24/7 freedom. Could all that freedom leave you bored?

Impossible, you say? It happens. Some people retire with only a vague idea of what's next. After a few months or years, they find themselves in the doldrums. Shouldn't they be doing something with all that time on their hands?

A goal-oriented retirement has its virtues. Purpose leads to objectives, objectives lead to plans, and plans can impart some structure and order to your days and weeks. That can help cure retirement listlessness.

**When should you and your spouse claim Social Security benefits?** "As soon as possible" may not be the wisest answer. An analysis is needed. Talk with a financial professional you trust and run the numbers. If you can wait and apply for Social Security strategically, you might realize as much as hundreds of thousands of dollars more in benefits over your lifetime.

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




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# CENTRAL BLOOD BANK

For patients in our community, an irreplaceable part of their medical treatment is highly specialized blood products prepared by Central Blood Bank. A stable blood supply is vital at all times to ensure excellence in the delivery of healthcare in our region.

Central Blood Bank is responsible for the recruitment, collection, component manufacturing, testing, product management and hospital customer relationships in our region. Central Blood Bank, a not-for-profit organization, was established in 1951 by the Pittsburgh Jaycees and four area physicians to serve the transfusion needs of Pittsburgh hospitals. Beginning as a 14-staff operation collecting 5,000 units of blood, and servicing seven hospitals, Central Blood Bank laid the foundation for a center of excellence in transfusion medicine and became an integral partner in the delivery of healthcare in our region. Central Blood Bank employs more than 330 dedicated employees and collects, tests and distributes 350,000 blood products annually to approximately 40 hospitals and healthcare facilities in the tri-state area.

There is no substitute for human blood, and someone needs blood every two seconds. Despite the generosity of many individuals, local donations continue to fall short of local demand. Less than five percent of the eligible population donates blood. Your one whole blood donation can help support up to three patients.

The whole blood donation process takes about an hour, and it's perfectly safe and comfortable. The actual donation usually takes about 10 minutes.

Central Blood Bank has 25 conveniently located community donor centers and fixed sites, along with numerous daily mobile blood drives throughout western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and northern West Virginia. A full list of donation locations and information on mobile blood drives can be found at [centralbloodbank.org](http://centralbloodbank.org).



## OPENING DAY BLOOD DRIVE

### PNC PARK

MARCH 3, 2014      MARCH 4, 2014  
noon - 7:30 p.m.      noon - 7:30 p.m.  
FREE PARKING IN RED LOT 6

ALL PARTICIPATING DONORS WILL RECEIVE

**A PAIR OF PIRATES TICKETS**      **AND**      **A PIRATES PROMOTIONAL ITEM**

**plus, ENTRY INTO A RANDOM DRAWING FOR  
A PAIR OF TICKETS TO THE PIRATES HOME OPENER  
MONDAY, MARCH 31**

HELP US MAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE FASTER AND MORE CONVENIENT  
- MAKE AN APPOINTMENT. WALK-INS ARE WELCOME!

**SCHEDULE BY PHONE**      **SCHEDULE ONLINE**  
866-366-6771      [centralbloodbank.org](http://centralbloodbank.org)  
group code: ET31



CENTRAL BLOOD BANK

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SUPPORT LIFE.**



Promotion runs March 3 and 4, 2014. Giveaways and prizes are nontransferable, nonrefundable and not redeemable for cash. Due to gaming laws, must be 18 years of age or older to be entered into random drawings. Visit [centralbloodbank.org/events/pirates-march-2014](http://centralbloodbank.org/events/pirates-march-2014) for full information and rules.

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


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Welcome!*

# North Fayette Township 2014 Recycling Calendar

 Represents holiday with no garbage pickup  
 Represents garbage pickup 1 day late  
 and  Represents recycling weeks

No gray and no box are e-waste weeks that e-waste can be brought to the Twnshp Bldg between 7 am - 2 pm

JANUARY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY						
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						1
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH						
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30	31					

APRIL						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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27	28	29	30			

MAY						
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE						
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

JULY						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

AUGUST						
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					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- When:** On your regular garbage pickup day during the weeks shaded above.
- What:** Clear and colored glass, aluminum and bi-metal beverage cans and steel (tin) food cans, plastic food, soda and milk containers. Plastic types 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.
- Not acceptable:** Unmarked plastic, motor oil containers, grocery bags, drinking cups, toys, fast food containers, styrofoam items, sheet plastic, Aerosol cans, paint cans, window glass, light bulbs, pyrex, or ceramics.
- Instructions:** Remove lids and metal rings - rinse - do not break glass. Metal and plastic containers may be flattened. Place in recycling container. Do not use plastic liner in container. All recyclables can be placed in the same container.
- Important Info:** The special container(s) provided for recycling are property of the Township and must be returned if you move (unless purchased by resident). They are to be used for recycling only.
- Questions:** Contact the Township Office at 412-788-4888 or 724-693-9601
- Holidays:** There will be **NO** garbage pickup on the following holidays: **Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.** Garbage service will then be one day late for the balance of that week.

Look for recycling changes later this year. You will receive a new calendar and information at that time.

Website: [www.north-fayette.com](http://www.north-fayette.com)

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## Critical Funding to Jump Start Airport Area Projects

Continuing to build on their bipartisan partnership, Rep. Mark Mustio (R-Allegheny) and Sen. Matt Smith (D-Allegheny/Washington) recently announced that they have successfully secured the funding necessary to move ahead with the following community improvement projects:

### Findlay Township Water Line Upgrade

The Commonwealth Financing Authority has approved a \$1.5 million grant toward the construction of the Findlay Township Water Line Project. This includes the replacement and extension of the existing eight-inch pipe with a 16-inch water transmission line to serve recent and future development in the Allegheny County airport corridor.

“This is a major first step toward bringing necessary infrastructure upgrades to fruition, which would help create an estimated 10,000 jobs and \$4 billion into the regional economy at the project’s completion,” Sen. Smith said.

As a member of the Allegheny County Airport Authority, Smith worked with Mustio to build support for the project with key stakeholders in Harrisburg. The total project is estimated to cost \$3.8 million. The Findlay Township Municipal Authority has applied for federal assistance for the remainder of the funds needed to complete the project.

“When this water line infrastructure is complete, it will ensure that those light manufacturing and distribution companies that look to locate in Findlay Township will have a reliable water supply,” Rep. Mustio said. “This good news will further solidify Findlay Township as a center for economic development in southwestern Pennsylvania.”

### North Fayette Township Community Center

North Fayette Township has received a \$164,000 grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development’s Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program to begin the construction of a new community center on New Park Road in Donaldson Park.

“This new community center will be the centerpiece for the existing baseball, soccer, and football fields, the playground, and the dog park,” Rep. Mustio said. “Donaldson Park also has an amphitheater and a walking/jogging trail. The addition of a new community center will ease the burden on various township groups looking for space to hold educational, business and fitness-related opportunities to area residents.”

North Fayette Township has already committed to provide a dollar-for-dollar local match to state investments to begin construction on this project.

“This facility will help North Fayette address the needs of its growing number of residents and add to its attractiveness as a community,” Sen. Smith said. “I was impressed with the plan’s focus on the diverse community needs and the township’s cooperation with the school district.”

### STATE REPRESENTATIVE MARK MUSTIO

1009 Beaver Grade Road, Ste. 220  
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(412) 262-3780  
[www.repmustio.com](http://www.repmustio.com)



### STATE SENATOR MATT SMITH

1009 Beaver Grade Road, Ste. 230  
Moon Township, PA 15108  
(412) 262-2260  
<http://www.pasenate.com/MSmith>



### Pittsburgh Botanic Garden

The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden (PBG) has received \$214,635 in funding from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) through Act 13 Marcellus Shale Funds. The funds will go directly toward the renovation of 2,500 feet of new trails and also renovate approximately one-half mile of existing trail. All renovated trails will be brought into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Natural play areas have also been planned and installed along the trails so that children and their families can more fully enjoy the experience of being in nature.

“As the first major regional asset to be created in the Pittsburgh region in more than a decade, the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden will positively impact economic development, job creation and marketing opportunities throughout area,” Rep. Mustio said. “This vital, new public attraction will serve the people of our 10-county region as well as visitors from across the nation and around the world.”

The Pittsburgh Botanic Garden has been recognized as a first-day attraction by Visit Pittsburgh. Operated as a public-private partnership, the Garden site is made up of over 460 acres and is leased from Allegheny County for 99 years at the cost of \$1 per year. All funding is for ready-to-go projects. It is located in Collier and North Fayette townships, just seven miles from the center of Pittsburgh, and a similar distance from the Pittsburgh International Airport.

“As a member of the Garden’s board, I can attest that the Forest Stories Trail project will add to the Pittsburgh Botanic Garden’s position as a regional asset and will offer educational opportunities to students of all levels,” Sen. Smith said. “With funding for this shovel-ready project in place, we are also primed to see the immediate economic benefits of the project.”

**Visit  
RepMustio.com  
and  
[www.SenatorMattSmith.com](http://www.SenatorMattSmith.com)  
for the latest legislative  
updates.**

## Transportation Funding Bill Could Provide Options to Local Governments

BY DOUG HUGHEY

In 1982, Findlay Township assumed ownership of a privately built bridge on Aten Road that passes over Industry Drive in the RIDC industrial park. As it has slowly deteriorated, Findlay Township Manager Gary Klingman has been trying to get the state to provide partial funding to get the bridge replaced.

A couple of years ago, when a steel beam underneath one of its berms failed, the township started renting markers to section off part of it. Findlay has also been paying for annual inspections, as required by law, and lowering weight restrictions.

Even if Findlay did get approval for the project, it would still need to cover twenty percent of the total cost. Assuming a recent Michael Baker Corporation estimate is correct, that means Findlay would have to shoulder \$700,000.

Still, says Gary, if they could get the state to agree to it, "We'd find a way to get it done."

Thanks to a \$2.3 billion transportation funding bill passed in November, though, and another measure being proposed by PennDOT, replacing bridges like the Aten Road one could become affordable for municipalities. PennDOT is proposing prefabricating steel beams for 500 to 600 bridges, thereby significantly lowering material costs. North Fayette Manager Bob Grimm says that the program is also expected to provide engineering designs, which would save municipalities additional significant dollars.

Money being generated by raising the Oil Company Franchise Tax under the new bill, meanwhile, could help municipalities pay for these lower cost bridge replacement projects. In the short term, that money is already helping with various smaller projects, says Bob.

"It's allowed us to get much more aggressive with our resurfacing projects," he says.

Gary says that the money could also help pay for new synchronized traffic lights that mitigate traffic, like ones on Flaugherty Run and Montour Run. Montour Run's, he says, were retroactively fitted and paid for through a federal grant, while Flaugherty Run's were paid for by Dick's Sporting Goods.



**ABOVE:** Sen. Matt Smith, Rep. Mark Mustio, Findlay Manager Gary Klingman, and Findlay Public Works Director John O'Neal explain the deteriorating state of a bridge on Aten Road to Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation Barry Schoch (not pictured) and PennDOT District Executive Dan Cessna (not pictured).

In addition, PennDOT has announced a spate of new state road projects in North Fayette and Findlay, including over two dozen bridge replacement and rehabilitation projects costing millions.

In January, PennDOT announced that the Southern Beltway Project, which begins in Findlay and is expected to eventually link with the Mon-Fayette Expressway, is moving forward again. The project is expected to ease congestion on the Parkway and I-79, but it ground to a standstill after the first section, known as the Findlay Connector, was completed in 2006.

Bob, Gary, and Moon Township Manager Jeanne Creese recently signed a letter supporting the transportation funding bill, and outlining the different ways it will help their municipalities. It also got the approval of Sen. Matt Smith and Rep. Mark Mustio. The two were among lawmakers in Harrisburg who put aside party differences and reached across the aisle in November to pass the bill. On January 10, they toured parts of Findlay, Moon, and Ohio townships, visiting potential projects, much as they've done previously.

This time, though, they were joined by Pennsylvania Transportation Secretary Barry Schoch. Among their stops was the bridge on Aten Road.

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Since 2012, employers in Pennsylvania have been required to withhold employees' local earned income taxes, just as they do with state and federal income taxes. Employees are required by law to complete a Residency Certification Form, or Residency Form, providing their name, address, Social Security Number, home municipality, and a 6-digit PSD Code identifying the municipality in which they live. Unique PSD Codes are assigned to each municipality in Pennsylvania. The completed Residency Form is kept on file by the employer and is used to withhold and distribute the proper tax amount to the tax collector representing the tax collection district in which the employee's home municipality and school district are located.

Errors on the Residency Form result in significant delays in the employee's taxes arriving at the employee's home municipality and school district. It is the employee's responsibility to provide accurate and updated information on his or her Residency Form.

The following are PSD codes for communities in the West Allegheny School District.

**Oakdale Borough: 731803**

**North Fayette Township: 731802**

**Findlay Township: 731801**

Allegheny County Tax Collection District and Jordan Tax Service, Inc. (JTS) is the appointed Tax Collector for these municipalities. Go to [www.jordantax.com/Act32](http://www.jordantax.com/Act32) for frequently asked questions and answers specific to taxpayers, as well as sample forms, including the Residency Certification Form, and the Annual Final Tax Return Form. You can also contact JTS at (412) 345-7966. JTS permits filing returns and paying any additional taxes due online.

Check with your employer to ensure that your Residency Form is correct, including your up-to-date home address and PSD Code. Update your Residency Form with your employer if you move your residence and complete a new Residency Form if you change employers. If you file a final return with JTS online, make sure to follow the instructions and mail your Form W-2 and any other schedules to Jordan Tax Service, Inc. at 7100 Baptist Road Bethel Park, PA 15102.

Use your home PSD Code on your final return. Just because your taxes are being withheld does not relieve you from your obligation to file a final return. You must file a final return each year regardless of whether you owe any additional taxes. If you did not file a final return for tax year 2012, you must do so. Contact JTS for assistance at (412) 345-7966.

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## **New Imperial VFD Station Breaks Ground**

The Imperial Volunteer Fire Department broke ground on a new, \$1.1 million facility on January 18. The new firehouse will replace the current one located on Main Street in downtown Imperial. It will be built about one-third of a mile away, across the street from a former West Allegheny school building on a piece of property off Pine Street. Imperial VFD President Bob Lambert says that the 10,400 square-foot facility will feature a number of improvements, starting with its size.

"We're gaining about one-third more space," he says.

The new facility will have a full kitchen and be able to hold about 100 people. New energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems will also cut down on utility bills, while the location itself will improve accessibility. Currently, VFD trucks are hindered by the fact that the station sits on a narrow street. The 10-foot doors at the current facility also limit the size truck the VFD can operate, Bob says. The new facility will have taller doors to accommodate larger vehicles, which is the direction newer trucks are trending, he says.

In 2010, the township made a one-time contribution of \$30,000 for the project design. Just as with the daily operations of the VFD, though, portions are being covered by fundraising efforts, such as fish fries, nights at the races, parades, bingo, and annual fund drives. In this case, it's about ten years' worth.

Bob says those dollars are also what help pay for life-saving equipment like gloves, breathing apparatuses, boots, and fire trucks. He says firemen can wear about \$4,500 worth of equipment at once.

"And that doesn't count the hoses or fire truck," he says.

Construction is being done by Moon-based Airport Contractors. The facility is expected to be completed by late June.

"This is all because of the people who support us," says Bob.

## **North Fayette Seeking Public Input on New Comprehensive Plan**

North Fayette Township is close to releasing a new township-wide comprehensive plan, which will outline future land use throughout the township over the next ten years. The plan will include goals and objectives related to housing, parks and recreation, open space, transportation, community facilities, natural resources, economic development and energy conservation. A draft is slated to be put on public display February 20, and a PDF version made available online at [www.north-fayette.com](http://www.north-fayette.com). Hard copies will be available for review at the municipal building, community center and library.

The township is looking for feedback on the plan, and welcomes comments from residents, business owners and developers. The North Fayette Township Planning Commission will host a public meeting on March 4 at 6:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room at Pittsburgh Technical Institute. The township's Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on April 8 at 7 p.m. at the North Fayette Volunteer Fire Department's Lafayette Room at 7678 Steubenville Pike. Pending revisions, the plan will likely be approved in late April.

For more information, please contact Laura Ludwig, community development director, at (724) 693-9601, or at [lludwig@north-fayette.com](mailto:lludwig@north-fayette.com).





**ABOVE:** Dignitaries and firemen at the groundbreaking on the site of the new Imperial Volunteer Fire Department station.  
**BELOW:** An architectural rendering of the new facility.



## News from Heritage Valley Health System

### Heritage Valley's Casual Pairings: A Toast to Your Health Features Great Tastes

Heritage Valley Health System will hold its biennial wine and culinary event, Casual Pairings, A Toast to Your Health, from 7-10 p.m., Saturday, April 5 at the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh International Airport. The event features delectable specialty foods prepared by more than 20 chefs from the area's most popular restaurants, as well as a unique variety of wines and spirits from regional and national wineries.

"For 24 years, I have been hosting this truly spectacular event. Our guests are able to sample specialty wines and spirits while enjoying some of the best food available in region," said Alex Sebastian, chair of the event and proprietor of the Wooden Angel Restaurant in Beaver. "It's a great party that attracts over 700 attendees. We hope to see even more turn out this year to taste wonderful food and wines and support a worthwhile cause."

UPMC Health Plan is the presenting sponsor and Diehl Automotive is the Partner in Health Sponsor. Andrew Stockey of WTAE-TV Channel 4 will be the honorary master of ceremonies. Proceeds benefit the Cardiology Funds at Heritage Valley Beaver and Heritage Valley Sewickley Foundations. Over the years, the funds raised from this event have helped purchase equipment and expand services at Heritage Valley's Heart & Vascular Center locations.

Tickets for a Casual Pairings: A Toast to Your Health can be purchased online at [www.heritagevalley.org/wine](http://www.heritagevalley.org/wine), or by calling (412) 749-7050. The cost is \$150 per person.



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## Findlay Programs

Unless otherwise indicated, contact Darlene Larson for more information or to register, (724) 695-0500 x 246, [dlarson@findlaytwp.org](mailto:dlarson@findlaytwp.org).

### Indoor Flea Market

**Saturday, March 15, Findlay Township Activity Center, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**, browse two levels of 60+ tables.

### Water Aerobics

**Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:15-7:15 p.m., Wilson Elementary School**, fun way to exercise with little impact on your muscle and skeletal systems, pre-register, payment due at first class, \$10 discount for attending both Monday and Wednesday classes, late joiner discount available, January-March, Mondays, \$40/8 weeks, Wednesdays, \$50/10 weeks, last week in March-May, Mondays, \$30/6 weeks, Wednesday, \$50/8 weeks.

### Adult Lap Swimming

**Wednesdays, January-May, excludes April 16, 7:15-8:15 p.m., Wilson Elementary School Pool**, adult lap swimming once a week this season, register at pool area, will continue as long as there is attendance, call if interested, \$2 per evening.

### "WALK Live" Classes in Findlay

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

### Yoga for Beginners (and Beyond)

**Fridays and Sundays through February, March 14 and 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Findlay Township Activity Center**, find out what benefit yoga can have on your whole body, \$5 per class, Master Julia Harvey of Imperial Tang Soo Do School, (724) 695-1976.

### Pavilion Rental 2014 Season

**Saturday, February 1** for Findlay Township residents, businesses, and youth or adult groups, **February 3**, online and phone registration starts, [www.findlay.pa.us](http://www.findlay.pa.us), \$60 with \$25 refundable deposit, 2 separate checks, **April 1** non-resident reservations start, \$85 with \$25 refundable deposit.

New pavilion tentatively available to rent in **July**, residents, \$100, \$175 with kitchen, non-residents \$150, \$250 with kitchen, \$100 refundable security deposit required, seats 150-165 with full kitchen facilities and nearby restroom.

### Free Self Defense Class for Women

**March 10, 7-9 p.m., Findlay Township Municipal Building**, learn skills that could save your life, based on PPCT's (pressure points & controlled tactics) SHARP program and the Mary Conroy method of self defense, addresses carjacking, workplace safety, safety while traveling, and others, instructor retired State Police Parole Agent Jack Leonard, bring pillow and wear comfortable clothing, registration required.

### Time for Toddlers

**February 10, 11, 24, 25, March 10, 11, 17, 18, 31, April 1, 14, 15, 28, 29, May 5, 6, 12, 13, June 2, 3, 16, 17, 10:15-11:15 a.m., Findlay Township Activity Center**, bring children under four for an hour of movement, music, activities and snack, registration required, follows WA School District schedule for inclement weather, \$3 per session.

### Kids' Creative Cooking

**February 27 and March 27, 4-5:15 p.m., Findlay Township Activity Center**, for youth in grades K-5, hands-on class introduces participants to the preparation of a variety of easy and delicious seasonal recipes that will satisfy those after-school hunger pangs, payment taken at the class, registration at least 2 days prior required, \$8, class size limited.

### Wilson Elementary PTA Bingo Night

**March 21, doors open 5:30 p.m., bingo 6-8:30 p.m., Wilson School Cafeteria**, \$3 for 3 bingo cards, prizes, auction, 50/50, concession stand with pizza, drinks and dessert for minimal cost.

### Scrapbooking Workshops

**March 1, May 10, October 18, 9 a.m.-9 p.m., Findlay Township Activity Center**, enjoy uninterrupted time while protecting your photos and memorabilia, bring tools and supplies, \$60 per event, includes lunch, dinner and beverages, registration and payment required, Michelle Koester, (724) 307-3333, [michellekoestercm@comcast.net](mailto:michellekoestercm@comcast.net).

### Minecraft Workshop

**Findlay Township Activity Center, April 10 and May 1, 5-7 p.m., ages 8-12**, \$30 per session, spend an evening overcoming survival and creative challenges in a Minecraft world built by Hi-Tech Learning, learn how to collaborate, innovate, and problem solve while having a great time, students work together in one virtual world, does not teach students how to play.

### Happy Feet™ Preschool Soccer

**Findlay Township Activity Center, March 7-April 11, 12-12:30 for 3 and 4-year-olds, 12:30-1 p.m. for 4 and 5-year-olds**, 30-minute class utilizes songs, nursery rhymes, stories, and fun games with a soccer ball to maximize motor skill development, see Happy Feet™ Pittsburgh online for more information, call ahead, limited class size, \$60 for 6-week session.

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## Imperial Volunteer Fire Department Happenings

For information on any of the events listed below, please call the fire department at (724) 695-8845.

### Night at the Races

March 8, doors open 5:30 p.m., betting and races 7-11 p.m., tickets \$10, available at door or fire department, pop, beer and food provided, BYOB.

### Bingo

February 3, March 3, April 7, doors open 5:30 p.m., kitchen 6 p.m., bingo starts 7 p.m. sharp, Findlay Township Activity Center, super bingo held on first Monday of each month with some exceptions, 12 cards and 5 specials, \$25, extra cards and specials available at the door, quickies and jackpots sold on the floor, throwaway cards used, bring dobber.

## 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).

## Ongoing

### Women's Business Network

First and third Tuesdays of each month, 7:30 a.m., upstairs at Giant Eagle Market District, provides personal and professional resources to advance the presence of aspiring and successful businesswomen, Cheryl Lieb, (412) 341-7667.

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

### No Veteran Dies Alone

Volunteers needed for one-of-a-kind program that provides companionship and assistance to veterans entering the final stages of life, Alan Morris, (412) 822-1861, [alan.morris@va.gov](mailto:alan.morris@va.gov).

### 2013-2014 West Hills Symphonic Band

**Season**, now in its sixth season of residency at West Allegheny High School, Stewart Morgan Auditorium, free admission, **March 2, 3 p.m.**, "Verdant Pathways," **May 4, 3 p.m.**, "The Heart of Spring," [www.whsb.org](http://www.whsb.org).

### March 4-May 1 McDonald Heritage Public Library Annual Spring Auction

Ticket prices 2/\$1, 12/\$5, many desirable products have been donated with more to come, drawings and bake sale on May 1, donate baked goods at the library the day before or that morning, (724) 926-8400.

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**February 8  
Alice in Wonderland  
Auditions**

Carnegie Performing Arts  
Center, ages 5-12, 10 a.m.,  
ages 13 and up, 11 a.m.,  
production and rehearsals  
will take place on Saturday  
mornings, directed by Monica  
Ryan, (412) 279-8887, www.  
carnegieperformingartscenter.com.

**Listen Locally:  
Chamber Music Series**

Andrew Carnegie Free Library and  
Music Hall, **February 24**, Freya  
Quartet (string quartet), **March**  
**31**, Ferla-Marcinzyn Guitar Duo  
with contralto Daphne Alderson,  
**April 28**, Matt Murchison Mutiny  
(euphonium, flute, piano, bass,  
drums), (412) 276-3456.

**March 7  
World Day of Prayer**

7 p.m., Montours Church,  
written by women of Egypt, this  
year's theme is "Streams in the  
Desert," all invited, fellowship  
and refreshments to follow, www.  
montourschurch.org.

**North Fayette  
Parks and  
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For more information or to sign up for  
the senior citizen mailing list, contact  
North Fayette Parks and Recreation,  
(412) 788-4888 x 118, (724) 693-  
3118, rbrozovich@north-fayette.com.

**Senior  
Programming**

**Silver Sneakers Splash,**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5 p.m.,**  
**Donaldson Elementary School, \$2,**  
BlueCross/BlueShield members can  
use their cards.

**Water Walking, Monday**  
**through Thursday, 6-8 p.m.,**  
**Donaldson Elementary School, \$2.**

**Senior Citizen**  
**Luncheons, Thursday,**  
**February 27 and March 27,**  
**Cornerstone at Tonidale, 11 a.m.,**  
**\$5.**

**Raccoon Creek State Park**

Call (724) 899-3611 or email paadams@pa.gov to register. Unless  
otherwise noted, activities start at Wildflower Interpretive Center on U.S.  
Route 30.

**Introduction to Winter  
Camping, February 6, 7-9**

p.m., learn all the basics for  
cold weather camping, indoor  
preparation class will cover  
clothing, camping equipment,  
safety, and prepare participants for  
a weekend campout in the park on  
**February 22 and 23**, must attend  
unless experienced with winter  
camping.

**Friends of Raccoon  
Creek Art Club, February**

**23, 2-5 p.m.,** anyone from beginner  
to skilled artist welcome to practice  
their artistic talents while enjoying  
the outdoors, all mediums welcome,  
February's theme is Winter  
Landscapes and will feature a  
beginners course for all ages on  
drawing/painting winter landscapes  
indoors, small groups please call  
ahead.



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**Pirates vs. Mets Game**, June 29, \$35, includes transportation.  
**"Play it Again Marvin"**  
 June 28, 8 p.m., at Heinz Hall.  
**Bingo**, Mondays, noon, community center.  
**Bowling at Latitude 40**, February 10 and March 17.

## Family Programming

**Easter Egg Hunt**, April 12, 11 a.m., Donaldson Community Park, bring a basket, all ages, rain day April 13 at 1 p.m.  
**Family Swim**, Tuesdays beginning March 4 at McKee Elementary, Thursdays beginning March 7 at Wilson Elementary, 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$4 adults, \$2 students.  
**Games with West Allegheny Football Team**, Fridays at 6:30 p.m., the team plays games with P.A.L.S. program kids, community center.

**Maple Sugar Workshop**, March, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., workshop covering the collection of maple sap, boiling process, grades of syrup, and the processing of syrup into candies and sugar, concludes with pancake dinner sampling a variety of whole grain pancakes and fresh maple syrup, covers maple tree identification, wild teas, home grain milling, \$20, register on-line by February 24, meeting location TBA.  
**Bake Your Own Wheat Bread**, March 10, 6-9 p.m., Betsy Bangle leads you through the process of mixing, raising and

## Amenities and Rentals

**Township Ice Skating Rink**, public sessions Friday 7-9 p.m., Saturdays 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m., Sundays 2-4 p.m., rink available for rentals, contact Parks & Recreation office to reserve, public sessions \$3, and skate rentals \$1.  
**Township Picnic Pavilion Rentals**, residents bring proof of residency and alternate dates, \$75 Township Park, \$50 Donaldson Community Park, separate \$50 security deposit.  
**Hankey Farms Pool**, 10% off early bird season passes available through April 30.  
**Community Center Rentals**, gym and community room rentals available, call for available hours, starts at \$50 for two hours.  
**Learning Center at North Fayette**, registration for fall now available, call (412) 737-4564.

baking bread, sample bread right out of the oven, make fresh dough to take home, \$10 payable at the class, register by March 3 on-line, meeting location TBA.  
**Friends of Raccoon Creek Art Club (Nature Journaling)**, March 30, 2-5 p.m., naturalist Betsy Bangle covers the fundamentals of recording observations, sketching in nature, and writing poetry in journals, dress warm for nature walks and bring a notebook/sketch pad, 2-5 p.m., small groups call ahead, free program.



## Western Area YMCA

Be Healthy, Be Strong, Belong! Everyone is welcome at the Western Area YMCA. Stop by and check out what the Western Area Y has to offer. (195 Montour Run Road Coraopolis, 15108: 412-787-9622: [www.westernarea-y.org](http://www.westernarea-y.org))

### Zumbini™

**Monday evenings, 5:15-6 p.m., Wednesday afternoons, 1-1:45 p.m., Saturday mornings, 10:30-11:15 a.m.** For children 0 to 5 years old, adults and their young children wiggle, sing, and learn for the ultimate bonding experience, enjoy cool Zumba® music packed with world rhythms and catchy, kid-friendly tunes created just for this program.

### Drop 10 in 10

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**Call to schedule an appointment.** A personalized Highmark program designed by a registered dietician to address the needs of an individual seeking nutrition counseling related to weight management, heart health, and diabetes.

### Insanity

The INSANITY group exercise class uses MAX Interval Training for insane results.

### Ten & Under Tennis (Ages 4-10)

Tennis is a sport that gets kids moving, improves balance, agility and hand-eye coordination, and can teach self-confidence and self-assurance. Playing tennis, your child can make new friends in a safe, supportive environment. By getting your kids into the game you'll be opening a door to a lifetime of enjoyment!

### Junior Tennis Clinics (Ages 11-17)

Junior clinics range from Level 1 through Level 4 and include specialty clinics, such as High School Boys Clinic, Middle School Beginner Clinic, and Junior Match Play. Check out the junior tennis programs in the new program guide on the website.

### School Days Out

**Pre-registration required, contact Andy Keaton, [akeaton@ymcapgh.org](mailto:akeaton@ymcapgh.org).** On days that school is closed, such as for breaks, teacher in-service, and snow days, a program will be provided at the Western Area YMCA on Montour Run Road from 7 a.m.-6 p.m. (9 a.m.-6 p.m. if a closure is a snow day). The day will consist of fun activities, with games, sports, lunch, crafts, and some surprises.

### Adult Tennis

**Contact Mike Lucente at [mlucente@ymcapgh.org](mailto:mlucente@ymcapgh.org).** Ever think about trying tennis? Just want a great workout? Come and try Cardio Tennis. No experience required for this 60-minute party on the court! Combines upbeat music, fun tennis games, and fast feet drills to burn calories. Instructors keep you moving, smiling, and swinging.

### Purse Bingo

**March 23, doors open 1 p.m., lunch and games at 2 p.m., Holy Trinity Cafeteria.** Featuring Vera Bradley purses and accessories; raises funds for children from low-income families to participate in recreational activities at the YMCA. Tickets available at YMCA; \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door.

Many homemade soups, salad, desserts, beverages & Mancini's bread  
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**Saturday, March 29, 4:30-6:30**  
**Adults \$8.00 Children (5-10) \$4.00**  
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 3151 Montour Church Rd., Tonidale Exit  
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**Go to [www.montourschurch.org](http://www.montourschurch.org)**

## FOOT FACTS

Bunions are among the most common type of foot ailment today's podiatrist treats, especially in women. Studies show that women are anywhere from two to nine times more likely to develop a bunion than men! While your high heels and peep toes are partially to blame, your foot type (passed down through your family) is the true culprit. Here's the good news! Today's podiatrist is the true expert when it comes to diagnosing and treating bunions.

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

## Got the Bunion Blues?



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# God's House on the Hill

Overlooking the Pointe at North Fayette rests a treasure in the heart of Tonidale; Allegheny County's fourth oldest house of worship, Montours Presbyterian Church. When it was formed by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in 1778, the church was home to a growing congregation with a great sense of biblical tradition. Over the years, as the church has grown, it has also kept true to its tradition, while bringing hope and faith to area residents.

It's difficult to picture a time when churches were so few and far between, but years ago, that was the case for early settlers. Prior to the building of Montours, it is believed that the area's population had been without a local Presbyterian church for nearly 10 years.

The original founders' faith played a significant role in the church's location. After studying the Bible, Montours' founders believed that high places brought a sense of closeness to God and the heavens. Today, nearly 235 years later, although the church has changed in size and appearance, it remains a place of refuge and faith for many.

What was originally a log cabin is now a beautiful church building with a breathtaking chapel next door. It is home to a congregation of followers who live out their faith by worshiping together, caring for one another, and finding opportunities to reach out to the needs of the larger community. As one of the area's oldest churches, Montours has seen change over the years, including new pastors, buildings and members. Its roots, though, have remained deeply steeped in tradition.

The church's growth wouldn't have been possible without the efforts of the local community. Over the past 60 years, the Saveikis family, through their active membership in Montours, has helped contribute greatly to the campus where the church rests. In 1978, the family gifted the church with a chapel, designed by local architect Chuck Kramer of Oakdale.

Erma Dodd, a longtime member of the church, explained, "The chapel here was made in honor of my mother, Lurline Saveikis."

Since attending Montours at the age of two, Erma's lifelong memories from the church are what have helped keep her active in the congregation and ministry. The chapel's breathtaking beauty is an excellent reminder of Dodd's late mother and the wonder brought about by God's creation. With stained glass mosaic windows and its modern yet authentic interior, the chapel's unique and attractive design draws the attention of many.

A photograph of the interior of Montours Presbyterian Church. The church features a high, vaulted wooden ceiling with exposed beams. A large, colorful stained glass window on the left side of the image depicts a cross and other religious symbols. In the foreground, a wooden altar is visible with a vase of red flowers and a book. A wooden chair is positioned in front of the altar. The overall atmosphere is warm and modern.

## MONTOURS PRESB. CHURCH 1778-1832-1924

In addition to the chapel's eye-catching interior, it was also constructed to attract attention from the outside. According to Dodd, a cross was built into the roof of the building. The idea behind this design was that anyone flying over would be able to see the cross while in the air.

The chapel has become a spectacle and a place of faith to many. Most recently, musician Ronny Munroe recorded a music video for his song "Pray" with his band at Montours' chapel. Hankey Farms resident Cyndi Roach connected the band to Montours with the thinking that it would be an excellent filming location.

"With the stained glass and the beauty of the chapel, I thought this would be a great place to film," explained Cyndi. "It is an intimate setting and its modern look is alternative to what you normally see in churches... the angel in the stained glass was perfect for this song."

She expects the "Pray" video to be released this spring.

Montours has brought great happiness and comfort to some of its oldest and lifelong members, like Everett Cheesebrough. Both he and his wife, Shirley, have been active in Montours for the past 60 years. Others, like

Judy Hayes and Erma, have also been active participants in the church's ministry. Hayes serves as the church's clerk of session and helps keep the membership informed as she edits the monthly newsletter. Though the church has undergone some renovations and changes since its formation over two centuries ago, members of the congregation say that they have always strived to keep their focus on the tradition of their faith.

"So much of this place is tradition. Not much has changed," Erma said.

It's not just the lifelong members of the church who have helped keep the faith alive. A great amount of life in the church comes from Montour's thirtieth pastor, Reverend James Evans.

"When I arrived, I knew that I was coming to a church with a long and special history which has served as a firm foundation upon which to build ministry for the future," said James.

In addition to leading worship, James has also had the joy of teaching both adults and the church's youth group.





"Pastor Evans is a great teacher," said Erma. He also visits members of the church in their homes and incorporates his love of playing the guitar into his ministry. James and his family share actively in the life of the congregation.

"My children have grown up in this congregation and we have been blessed by the generous support we have received from the members," he said.

While the church's founders wanted to build a place where all would feel close to God, they likely couldn't have imagined how it would change people. Over the past 30 years, the church has become more than just God's house on the hill for its faithful members. For some, it has also become a safe haven. Each week, Montours provides its space as a place of refuge for those in rehabilitation and outreach groups. During the week, Montours hosts groups such as Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and Al-Anon for family members of recovering addicts. It also hosts its Domestic Outreach Center. All are welcome, regardless of their faith. A true sense of support has developed as a result of their meetings - meetings that might not have been possible without the church. Erma says that these groups consist largely of people who are not already members of church's congregation.

"We provide a place for them so they can meet and find peace," she says.

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The church also hosts local Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, allowing them to use their campus as a gathering space for meetings.

Over the years, Montours formed a group called Eager Hands to help knit blankets, scarves, and bonnets for the food pantry and for Choices Pregnancy Center. Following Hurricane Ivan in 2004, when Oakdale was devastated by a flood, members of Oakdale's Good Shepherd Church joined together with Montours. Church members saw others in need, and made themselves available to reach out and welcome members from Good Shepherd to Montours with open arms.

"I am never surprised when I see congregation members reaching out to others in need," said James. "It is simply part of who they are."

There is a true sense of peace and service that exists even outside the weekly Sunday morning service. That sense of community and service to others is what has carried Montours through the years, and its members are working to keep that ministry going for the next 235 years. •



**PHOTOS on pages 44 and 45:** Interior of the chapel at Montours Presbyterian Church and the marker stone on Montours Church.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Sunlight illuminates the descending angel window and glass ridge pole inside the chapel. The glass ridge pole forms a 32-foot cross. When illuminated by the circular chandelier, it creates an effect for passing airplanes during the night.

**BELOW:** Montours Presbyterian Church, on the left, and the chapel, on the right, sit high above the busy shopping districts of Robinson and North Fayette townships.



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## Giving and Getting Back At the West Allegheny Food Pantry

Since November of 1971, there have been many changes in this part of southwestern Pennsylvania. Those changes have brought lots of businesses and people into the area, and that has meant the need for more housing. When my husband and I married in 1971, we were newcomers. Now, we are part of this area's older generation. Like many couples, we both worked so that we could make ends meet and provide for our family.

After working for over 30 years, I no longer had to work full time. I still needed something aside from some part-time work, though. Looking for answers, I prayed. That was on a Thursday. I got an answer on Sunday in our church bulletin. "Help needed at local food pantry," the announcement read. That was in November of 2000. When I started working at the pantry in 2001, approximately 55 families depended on it.

As of this writing, approximately 200 families rely on the West Allegheny Food Pantry. Some only come when they are in absolute need. On average, there are about 170 families who come regularly for the two distributions held each month, on the second and fourth Tuesdays, or the next day, on Wednesdays. Each family or household receives enough food for three days of each week between distributions, and the amount varies depending on the number of individuals in each family or household. Generally, between 2,300 and 3,000 pounds of food are distributed at each distribution.

Thankfully, along with an increasing number of people coming to the pantry, the amount of donations has also increased, due to the generosity of so many within the West Allegheny School District area. To list every donor would be impossible, but I would like to mention some.

Once a month, a local farmer donates anywhere from 90 dozen to 120 dozen eggs. The eggs are distributed during the second distribution of each month. The farm has been doing this for well over 18 years.

Because of the young people in this area - who I absolutely adore, love, admire, and cherish - projects both past and future will keep food on tables. Key Club members, sports organizations, individual classroom events, Show Choir, Girl and Boy scouts, private and community groups, and individuals on their own have all continuously supported the pantry's work. Local businesses both private and public have also regularly held events and drives. Shop and Save recently held a food drive that encouraged customers to "pick up stuff" while shopping over the holidays. The drive collected tons of food. In addition, numerous individuals have made commitments for various reasons to help others in need by donating to the pantry and Thrift Store.

Because of these random acts of kindness, families are healthier and happier. Fewer kids go to bed hungry. The same goes for moms and dads. Senior citizens worry less about affording food,

prescriptions, and the heating bill. There are also many people who live alone and both need and benefit from this community kindness.

Continued donations and events will do much to ensure the wellbeing of the 500 area residents who depend upon the pantry as we head into the post-holiday months. January, February and March, the coldest months of the year, also tend to be the forgotten ones. During the holidays, kindness and generosity help many families get through. The beginning of each new year though often coincides with a drop in donations. It's not unexpected, and there is enough to get through the month of January. However, donations of soups, canned meals, cereals, hot-chocolate, coffee and tea will help as well in the effort to keep kids, adults and senior citizens warm during February and March. It's not that people stop donating. It's just that right after the holidays, all of us are getting back to working our way through the reality of daily life.

I was asked about my personal perspective on all of this. Generosity and caring are the key words here. It truly amazes me every time I go to the pantry to work and see donations waiting to be shelved for the next distribution. The same goes for the Thrift Store. Gently used clothing and household items are always waiting to be put on the shelves and racks for the next sale day. Proceeds from the store go to the pantry to purchase food and non-food products for distribution, and to help pay other expenses. The Thrift Store is open to the public on pantry distribution days, and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. until noon.

Donations and the hours of volunteer time are measurable. The amount of caring is not. What each volunteer gives up by working at the food pantry or the Thrift Store - that unselfish act of giving up something for others - can't be quantified. There are approximately 75 to 80 of these individuals who volunteer to work at the pantry and the Thrift Store each year. Some are regulars. Others come during a month that their Church covers the pantry's volunteer needs. No one gets paid or reimbursed. Their rewards are the value of a hug, a shared joke, a smile, or a quiet, simple thank you.

For that, I thank you, neighbors.

---

*Geri Hermann is the coordinator of the West Allegheny Food Pantry. If you are considering a monetary donation to help the pantry provide food for families, a check can be written and sent to: West Allegheny Food Pantry, 520 Route 30, Imperial, Pennsylvania 15126. Product donations and donations for the Thrift Store can be dropped off either on Wednesdays or Fridays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., or on Saturdays between 8 a.m. and noon.*



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According to Evan S. Frazier, Senior Vice President of Community Affairs of Highmark Health, "Highmark is proud to support the new Pittsburgh Botanic Garden as it comes to life. It will provide a welcomed, new outdoor venue where Western Pennsylvanians can gather, exercise, learn, and enjoy the many health and wellness benefits of nature."

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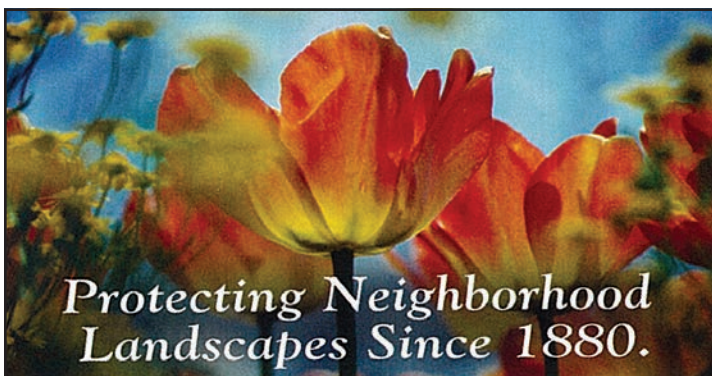
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## Local Police Stay

# ALERT

Ask North Fayette Police Sgt. Michael Hayes how he feels about the ongoing debate about assault weapons, and he'll tell you he's not so sure.

On the one hand, he says, he's always been a big second amendment guy. As the firearms specialist for the township police department, he instructs and trains other officers on the proper use of both side arms and assault-style weapons. He also teaches a class to the general public on how to properly defend themselves with a sidearm.

On the other hand, the police sergeant with the clean shaven head, strong build, and thick mustache, has reservations, too. The fact that assault weapons are readily available to the general public means he or one of his fellow officers could have to go up against one someday. In recent years, assault weapons have been used in a spree of deadly shootings with the sole intent of inflicting casualties. For Sgt. Hayes, the thought that something like that could happen in his own hometown is something that sticks with him.

"It's always in the back of your mind," he says.

Following yet another mass shooting last year, this time at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, law enforcement agencies across the country are continuing to refine tactics to address live shooters. North Fayette is no different.

"It used to be, we'd get to a house and secure it and wait for SWAT," says Sgt. Hayes. "But with an active shooter, we can't wait."

North Fayette Police Officer Mark Kern observes that police thinking about active shooter situations changed following the 1999 mass shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado. Since then, a number of nonprofits and companies have formed programs to train patrol officers on how to use SWAT tactics in such a situation.

"Chances are, it's going to be one or two officers who show up on the scene first," he says.

And in that situation, time can mean lives.

Mark is one of two officers at North Fayette who have been certified to instruct fellow officers in a program called Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training. ALERRT was developed at Texas State

PICTURED: Point Blank instructor Mike Ott works with North Fayette police officers Brian Kocian and Sean Heffern during an active shooter training session last September.

University in 2002 following the Columbine shooting. Since then, it has been adopted as the standard for active shooter response by departments across the country. Those departments include Miami, New York City, Houston, San Antonio and Atlanta. It has also been adopted by the FBI.

In 2009, the Findlay Police Department adopted ALERRT as its standard after Police Chief Jesse Lesko expressed a need for a rapid response program, and Findlay Township Police Capt. Mark Joyce contacted ALERRT. Since then, he says, that's led to the training of 300 military and police personnel in the region, as well as instructors at the 911<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and at the 171<sup>st</sup> Refueling Wing in Moon. All 18 municipalities in the Char-West Council of Governments, he says, participate in the program.

"I don't know a police officer anymore who hasn't been ALERRT trained," says Officer Kern.

Capt. Joyce now heads a committee made of six officers from participating departments. He says having all those different departments and agencies learning the same curriculum has its advantages.

"What we've found is that if an incident occurred, all the officers would be working together, because they'd be trained in the exact same tactics," he says.

North Fayette Police Chief Mark O'Donnell says that, during training, officers learn to work in teams and move as a group. They cover everything from approaching and breaching buildings to attending to victims in the aftermath. Officers who are new to the program complete a two-day course. That training is followed up by four-hour refresher courses.

Groups run through scenarios utilizing flash bangs and real firearms retrofitted to shoot paintballs and blank rounds. Capt.

Joyce says that each municipality in the Char-West COG contributes \$500 per year for the equipment and training supplies necessary.

"We want everything to be as real as possible," he says.

Departments also work with local schools to coordinate training sessions. The sessions not only train teachers to respond to an emergency, but also

familiarize officers with those buildings, should they ever need to respond to an incident at one.

In order to better outfit patrol officers, Chief O'Donnell says they have been upgrading their equipment. One such piece of equipment, a tactical shield, became the focus of an intense training session last September when Sgt. Hayes contacted the manufacturer for more information about it. He says the bulletproof shield, made by the company Point Blank, had been purchased for the department years ago by SWAT.

The company connected Sgt. Hayes with Regional Director of Training and Development Mark Albaugh, who happens to live in North Fayette. He, in turn, arranged a training session with Hard Armor Training Specialist Mike Ott. A former Lakewood Police Department SWAT team member, Point Blank hired Mike to train both police departments and SWAT teams, and come up with new ways to utilize and tweak their shield design. Since then, he's trained police around the world.

In September, North Fayette became the first department to utilize the company's newest shield design in a training exercise. Officers perspired under the weight of about forty pounds of gear, including bulletproof vests and utility belts - on a cool, late summer day - while using the shield and techniques Mike helped design. They learned how to go from a prone position to standing and moving, all while returning fire. As they did, Mike and Mark grabbed and pushed at officers. The idea, Mike explained, was to simulate moving through a crowd. A number of active shooter curriculums dictate circumventing victims and crowds in order to take out a gunman as quickly as possible.

As the training session ground into its fourth hour, one officer said that, "This is one of the most difficult training sessions we've ever done."

At one point, another officer caught Mark just under the eyebrow with the corner of his shield, opening up a cut that streamed blood down his face. The officer apologized, but Mark assured him that he reacted just the way he should.

"It's a different kind of policing," says Chief O'Donnell. "You plan for the worst and hope for the best."

He says they've had people in the community approach them and say that they appreciate what they're doing.

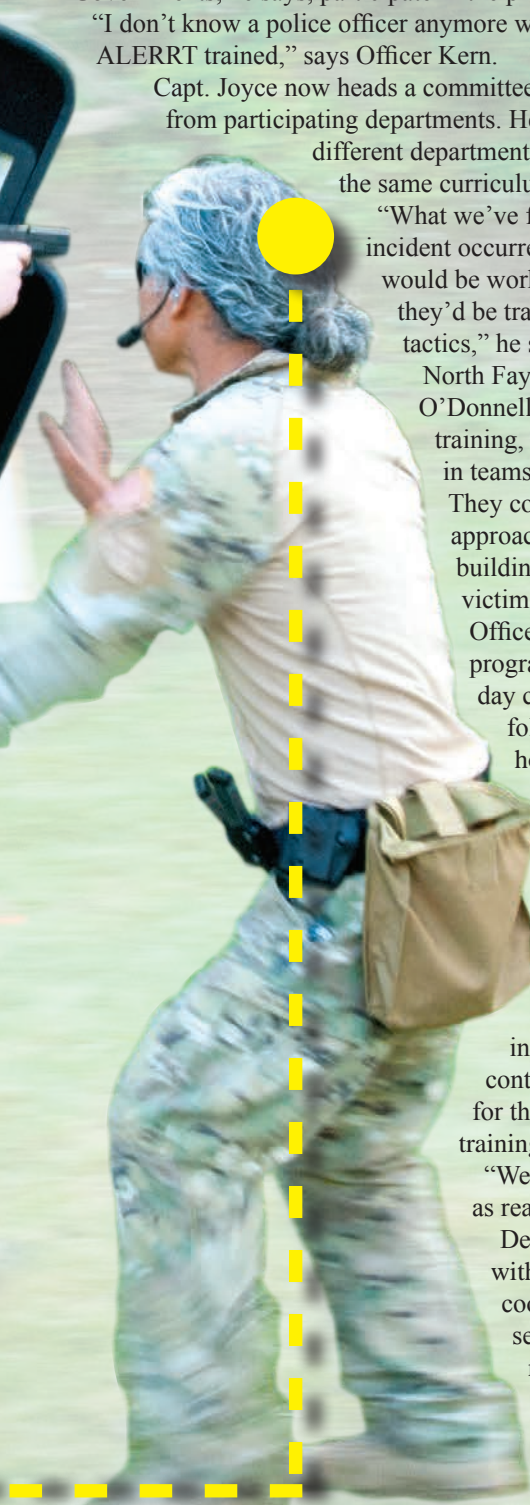
"They'll say, I have a wife who works there or a kid who goes to school there, and it makes me feel better," he says. "I like to think that we're ahead of the curve."

Another way North Fayette and Findlay have stayed ahead of the curve is with dedicated special resource officers. In 1990, North Fayette Police Sgt. John Bates was already working at West Allegheny part time teaching the DARE program when he was selected to take part in an SRO pilot program. The program placed officers at schools full time. After the initial two-year funding, the township and school district came to an agreement to keep him at the school.

Findlay Officer Jeffrey O'Donnell became an SRO officer at Wilson Elementary School in 1991. Findlay and the school district both contribute to keep him working in the district.

Following the shooting in Newtown last year, the NRA called for more armed guards in schools, and lawmakers responded by allocating funds for them. Sgt. Bates says a program with trained police officers is the way to go.

"It's definitely a deterrent," he says. •



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### North Fayette Township

400 North Branch Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
(412) 788-4888, www.north-fayette.com

### Oakdale Borough

6115 Noblestown Road, Oakdale, PA 15071  
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### McDonald Borough

151 School Street, McDonald, PA 15057  
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220 West Allegheny Road, Imperial, PA 15126  
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### Church of the Nazarene

(moved to Florence) 1080 Steubenville Pike,  
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25 Wilson Road, Clinton, PA 15026  
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### West Ridge Christian Community Church

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

Faith in Action, (724) 921-0027

Findlay Athletic Assn., (412) 874-9348

Girl Scouts WPA, (724) 774-3553

Heritage Public Library-McDonald, (724) 926-8400  
Kiwans Club, TBA

Lions Club Imperial, (724) 513-7616

Masonic Lodge #669, (724) 693-8274

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

Meals on Wheels-W.A., (724) 695-0634

Montour Run Watershed Assn., www.mrwa.info

Montour Trail Council, (412) 257-3011

Montour Valley Grange, (724) 695-0481

Mothers of Preschoolers-

Crossroads, (412) 494-9999

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

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North Fayette Garden Club, (724) 693-8413

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Rotary - Parkway West, (412) 787-5280

### Senior Citizen Groups:

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- North Fayette Township, (724) 693-3118

- St. Columbkille, (724) 695-7325

SNPJ Lodge 106, (724) 695-1411

Sturgeon Athletic Association, (724) 926-2150

The ROCK Community Center, (724) 693-2777

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

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

West Allegheny Food Pantry  
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West Allegheny Foundation, inquiries@wafoundation.org

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

West Allegheny Ministerium, (724) 693-8950

West Allegheny Booster & PTA Groups,  
www.westasd.org

Western Allegheny Community Library,  
(724) 695-8150

West Allegheny Aqua Club, (412) 608-4583

West Allegheny Arts Advocacy, TBA

West Allegheny Inline Hockey, (412) 334-2640

West Allegheny Youth Assn., www.westayouth.net

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

West Allegheny Youth Wrestling, (724) 695-8132

## Seeing without Sight



BY ERMA DODD  
NORTH FAYETTE  
TOWNSHIP  
RESIDENT

Meet Natalie Marie Ruschell.

She will take you on a carousel of optimism, laughter, hopes, gratitude, faith and love.

Natalie will share her vision of life. She sees people she meets from the inside; for who they are. She sees their heart.

She does not see their clothing, jewelry, tattoos or muscles.

Natalie is blind.

The diagnosis of juvenile diabetes came when she was twelve years old. Her parents, Albert "Hoss" Ruschell, West Allegheny class of 1954, and his wife, Naomi Campbell of Midway, were devastated, knowing what that diagnosis might mean for their precious daughter.

Natalie began to lose her sight while she was attending law school in 1986 at age 27. A total of ten surgeries followed.

Imagine reading law books using a magnifying glass with limited sight in just one eye.

"February 10, 1987, I woke up," she says. "My sight was gone."

It was due to a massive hemorrhage, Natalie explains. "I see absolutely nothing."

With encouragement from friends, family, and law school professors and staff, she continued her studies.

At her graduation ceremony, the audience, as is the tradition, was requested to hold applause until the entire class had received their diplomas. Natalie's name was called. She could hear a rustle. Something was happening. Her entire graduating class rose to their feet as she walked across the stage to receive her diploma. The thunderous applause began, and everyone in the auditorium was standing, many with happy tears.

Technology, amazingly, is opening worlds for Natalie, and for the blind.

Two years ago, Natalie participated in a study with a brain port. Once again, this past summer, she was again asked to participate.

The brain port device actually helps the totally blind to "see." Natalie explains that, "most people think, with the port, you see with your eyes. You don't use your eyes at all."

The brain port uses an ordinary pair of sunglasses. A one-half inch round camera is attached and centered on the nose bridge of the sunglasses. A cable is attached to the camera, and the other end of the cable attaches to a device called a "lollipop."

It is called "lollipop" because it is oval-shaped, flat, like a charms sucker. Natalie puts it in her mouth.

One side of the lollipop has hundreds of sensors, so sensitive that they cannot be felt with fingers. The sensor side lays on the tongue. The tongue feels tingling vibrations. The vibrations are the images that the camera sees, picks up and transmits to the lollipop.

Images go to the area of the brain responsible for vision.

The images do not have a lot of detail. Natalie could discern shapes: round, triangle, bananas, magic markers. Natalie says, gratefully, "I could pick up a sugar packet and put it into a cup."

To her amazement, Natalie says, "As soon as I received the brain port at the Eye and Ear Institute in Pittsburgh, I was able to walk through a long hallway; no assistance, no cane, no dog. I could feel, and sense, the lines of the hallway where the wall meets the floor."

She reached the waiting room.

"I could determine something was in one of the chairs in the waiting room," she says. "I could feel the image of another chair, and no one in the chair, so I could sit down."

Just as amazing is the actual hand-held remote control. It can change the image contrast, which is in black and white. It can change intensity and focus to zoom in on something.

The purpose of Natalie's participation in the brain port study is more about what it can do to help other blind people than about helping her, she says. She hopes to participate in the next study.

It is true, she has made the statement, "If I had to choose between the gift of sight coming to me, or to another blind person, I would choose the sight go to the other blind person."

Many question, "Why?"

How has she come to such terms with losing her eyesight?

People tend to question why God allows such things to happen to good people.

Natalie believes, "Things happen."

She remembers and tells the story of a man and his little girl.

"They were walking hand in hand. Somehow she fell. He was not able to stop the fall. But he was there to pick her up."

Like most people, optimist Natalie, at times, struggles professionally and personally.

"But I never lose faith," she says.

In addition to her role as an attorney, Natalie has become a motivational speaker.\*

She has been without sight for 27 years.

"I never lost vision, I lost eyesight," she says. "You do not have to see to know beauty, you do not have to see to know love."

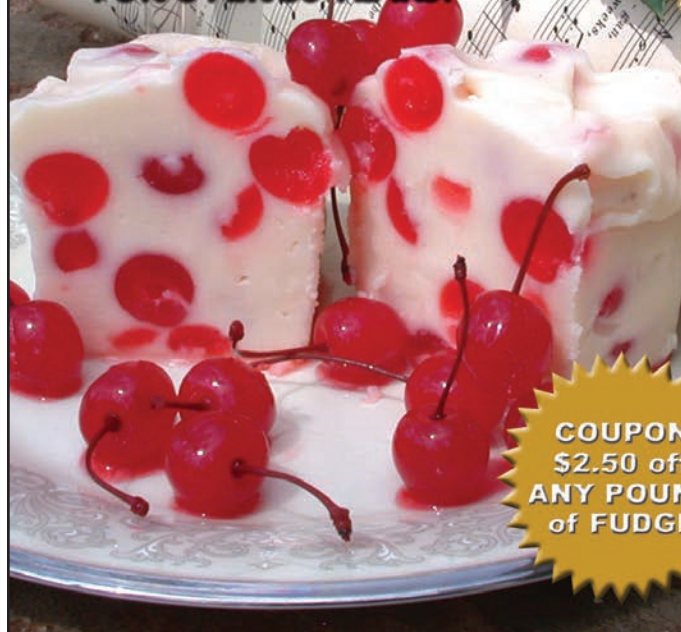
Natalie is happy to say, "With the brain port, I was able to play tic-tac-toe with my mom."

Natalie won.

\* Natalie will speak at Montours Church on May 4 at 7 p.m. For more information, please visit [www.montourchurch.org](http://www.montourchurch.org)  
Photo Submitted: Natalie with her first seeing-eye dog, Abe.

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