

Advocate

Connect Unite Succeed



The newsletter of the
Owen J. Roberts
School District

December 2012

Inspiring Each Student for Success Today and Greatness Tomorrow

Message from Superintendent Michael Christian



Students entered the 2012-2013 school year enthusiastically and our schools have been non-stop hubs of activity and learning. Dealing with the historic "Hurricane Sandy" provided challenges, but students demonstrated resilience and empathy.

Within days of the storm, schools launched into action to provide supplies to hurricane victims and assist the American Red Cross in beach restoration fundraising.

The No Child Left Behind Legislation has unequivocally thrust standardized assessments (PSSA's) into the annual limelight. Owen J. Roberts understands this era of accountability and is proud that our students achieved Adequate Yearly Progress in 2012 as defined by the federal legislation. However, a school district is defined by more than its test scores. Owen J. Roberts students learn and achieve in a variety of disciplines including the service-learning arena, academia, performance assessments, the arts, and extra-curricular activities. The first third of the school year has been highlighted with many points of pride for our students.

The Owen J. Roberts High School was selected by the College Board for this year's "Advanced Placement District Honor Roll". This award is presented each year to school districts that are able to expand access to AP courses to a more diverse group of learners while simultaneously improving performance.

Students and staff in our schools plan and look forward to many community events, including those honoring veterans. On December 10, the High School will host their annual Senior Citizen Tea and Holiday Concert. Senior citizens, grandparents and retired faculty/staff of OJR are cordially invited to attend. The event begins in the High School Auditorium with a concert featuring the Concert Choir, 7-Ups, and Jazz Band. Immediately after the concert, members of the Anchor Club and Wildcat Ambassadors will be providing and serving tea and light refreshments. Throughout the year, students raise funds to be able to host these valued community-connection activities.

Character education is thoughtfully practiced in all schools reinforcing caring, fairness, trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, and citizenship. The Owen J. Roberts Middle School continues an effective respect-for-diversity campaign that this year included a "Stomp Out" bullying assembly by an international presenter, the Challenge Day experience, and school-wide "Be the Change" team work.

Continued on page 4

Big Steps Toward a Smaller Footprint

Much work has occurred behind the scenes to reduce energy consumption during the past three years. The district is reducing dependence on non-renewable fuels by using 2,200 solar panels installed on the middle school and high school roofs. Students and community partners gathered during American Education Week to officially "Flip the Switch" on the new solar project at the middle school on November 14. The ceremony marked the official capturing of solar energy with a 525kW solar photovoltaic array that was installed this summer. An estimated 30 percent of energy on the main campus will be supplied by solar power.

Celebrating Success – Educational, Environmental and Financial Benefits

Throughout this school year, OJR will celebrate a variety of energy conservation measures (ECMs) and building-efficiency programs implemented through a performance contract with Johnson Controls, the global leader in building efficiency. Projected utility savings from lighting modifications, mechanical upgrades, and information technology systems will pay for the cost of the project. "Behind the scenes, a large amount of work contin-

ues between Johnson Controls and our staff," said OJR Director of Facilities Dennis Rozak. "We have state-of-the-art control capabilities that allow for better energy use in our buildings."



Photo courtesy of Janice Houck

A positive environmental impact will result from these initiatives. According to predictions by Johnson Controls, the projected reduction of energy used by the district is equivalent to the amount used in more than 200 homes. The expected decrease in the district's

carbon footprint is equivalent to the carbon sequestered by 537 acres of pine forest.

Owen J. Roberts and partner Johnson Controls introduced the Academy of Energy education program that will help bring energy science to life with authentic, hands-on energy education opportunities and classroom tools. The district's commitment to comfortable, safe, and sustainable facilities will inspire teachers and help students learn. The district will host several energy milestone events on green practices for students, staff, and the community during the 2012-13 school year. Johnson Controls scientists and engineers will give students an inside look at the renewable and conservation projects as a high school film crew records the events for a documentary.

Photo courtesy of Janice Houck

A student ambassador from each of the District's seven schools took part in the "Flip the Switch" event on November 14, when Owen J. Roberts officially began generating solar power from the 2,200 solar panels installed on the High School and Middle School rooftops. The panels, which are completely out of sight, are projected to produce about 30 percent of the total energy needs for main campus. Dr. Michael Christian welcomed attendees explaining that while many companies tout "going green", Owen J. Roberts now has an opportunity to make a significant environmental impact. The district has already taken many steps to conserve energy and has realized budgetary savings. Producing sustainable energy is only a small part of the overall energy operations management.



Current Resident

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Pottstown, PA
Permit No. 22

Summer Programs were Huge Success

More than 500 students participated in a variety of tuition-based courses at Owen J. this past summer. Some costs were underwritten by Friends of the Arts and the Owen J. Roberts Education Foundation. These classes included offerings in music, art, athletics, and cooking as well as academic options. In Digital Arts Camp, the art department welcomed 32 students to explore ways to integrate technology into the fine arts. The Middle School Mosaic Club created gorgeous mosaics for the raised bed gardens. At Wildcat Creativity Camp, nearly 60 children in grades 4-7 explored ways to creatively solve problems. They built sets and props and performed original skits. The camp was designed to encourage teamwork and take risks to solve challenges. At Upbeat Strings Camp, Mr. Cliff Hall and others led students through strings lessons. The theme for the camp was "At the Movies". More than 100 young students learned to play songs from movies such as Star Wars, Harry Potter, and Beauty and the Beast.

At a concert on June 28, students entertained the audience with a full multi-media presentation and the premier of "District 12" (based on The Hunger Games), a violin concerto written by Matilde Heckler, a 4th grade student at North Coventry Elementary School. The premier featured Matilde accompanied by a full string orchestra of her fellow students.



Summer 2013 classes will be advertised via email and at www.OJRSD.com.

OJR High School on AP Honor Roll

Owen J. Roberts High School is on College Board's third annual Advanced Placement® (AP) District Honor Roll. Nationwide, 539 schools in 44 states achieved this distinction for simultaneously adding more Advanced Placement courses and increasing the number of students who score a 3 or higher on the exams.

The College Board's AP program allows students to pursue college-level studies in high school. Each AP instructor's syllabus must be college-approved. The in-depth courses challenge students to think critically, analyze complex problems from dif-

ferent views, and construct convincing arguments.

In the last three years, Owen J. Roberts High School deliberately sought to increase the number of students taking an expanding array of AP courses. In 2012, 219 students enrolled in AP courses, an increase of 61 students compared to 2010 student figures. Instruction is tailored to challenge students to achieve success on the rigorous AP exams. High School Principal Dr. Richard Marchini said staff has been working extremely hard creating opportunities for students to challenge themselves and stretch their

learning. "However, as with many opportunities we offer students, it is up to them to do the work and make the grade." Last year 84.5 percent of Owen J. Roberts' students scored a 3 or better on the AP exam, while the state average was 68.2 percent.

Owen J. Roberts High School Advanced Placement Courses include:

Biology, Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Chemistry, Computer Science A, Computer Science B, Comparative Government & Politics, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Envi-

ronmental Science, European History, French Language, Latin Vergil, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Music Theory, Physics B, Physics C, Psychology, Statistics, Studio Art, Spanish Language, United States History, and United States Government & Politics.

According to College Board, "More than 90 percent of colleges and universities across the U.S. offer college credit, advanced placement or both for a score of 3 or higher on an AP Exam — which can potentially save students and their families thousands of dollars in college tuition."

Morning of Spelling and Kindness at French Creek



During American Education Week, students and staff gathered for a staff spelling bee contest. Eleven teachers demonstrated savvy spelling skills in front of the entire school. The purpose of the fun event was to encourage students to participate in the upcoming French Creek Spelling Bee. Mrs. Bispels, reading specialist, won the title of "Super Speller". Afterwards, students listened to the story, "The Kindness Quilt" by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace. The entire school broke out into teams of K-6 grade students to discuss kindness, compassion and appreciating the differences in others. Teachers and staff members facilitated some terrific conversations. Children drew examples of kindness on cloth squares that will be sewn together to create a giant French Creek kindness quilt. The quilt will hang in a prominent place in the school as a reminder for students, staff and parents.

Middle School Students Stand Together



Students and staff dressed in blue for National Stomp Out Bullying Day, as an outward sign of unity. Mark Brown, an Emmy-nominated and award-winning motivational speaker, presented a powerful anti-bullying message to students during an assembly. Mr. Brown travels across North America teaching tolerance and respect to more than 200,000 children each year. He delivers a life-changing message in a way that children understand and inspires them to think about ways that words and actions hurt others. Mr. Brown quoted Mother Theresa, "Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier." He challenged students to "Take a Stand" by making sure their words always "do good." Later in the day, students discussed the impact of respecting others.

Sale Supports Devotion to Reuse and Recycling

The Owen J. Roberts Education Foundation held its first Children's Consignment Sale on September 15. The Education Foundation funds innovation in the classroom. Last year, the Ed Foundation supplied a number of I-pad tablets to classrooms under their grant program. The consignment sale is a win-win-win. The Foundation earns money



that can be turned into educational opportunities for students. Families can save money purchasing good quality used clothing and merchandise and also earn some money selling things that often take up garage and attic space.

The Consignment Sale supplements another major fundraiser, the Chili Cookoff, which this year became the Harvest Festival. The fundraiser is tons of fun with a local chili contest, a silent auction, and music. Keep your eyes open for next year's event as a great way to connect with friends for a night of warmth and laughter that enhances the education of our youth.

Plan now for the Spring Consignment sale on **April 13, 2013**. Tags are available from the foundation to make preparation easier. The post-holiday closet cleaning may yield some extra profits for you and the students of OJR. For more information check www.ojref.org.



Owen J. Roberts Navy National Defense Cadet Corps



Pictured at left are Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp (NJROTC), now the Navy National Defense Cadet Corps (NNDCC), cadets and commanding officers following the annual military inspection where students are tested on knowledge and discipline. More than 70 students are involved at Owen J. Roberts High School. The specialized program promotes leadership, patriotism, and community service. Personal honor, self-reliance, and individual discipline are keystones of the cadets' work.

NNDCC serves the district with color guard duties performed at football games, school board meetings, and other important events.

Little Boy Blue

On November 26, author Kim Gavin visited the high school to speak about her book, Little Boy Blue: A Puppy's Rescue from Death Row and His Owner's Journey for Truth, which tells the story of her rescue dog, Blue, and her journey to learn about his history. Her research included a visit to the high-kill shelter from where he was saved as well as gathering information about groups who work to place pets. Ms. Gavin addressed several different classes speaking to students about her book and the information she learned from research. Pictured below is the animal studies class, who has been working on a campaign to educate others about puppy mills. Blue, once only 3 days away from death having been placed in the group of dogs who were "unadoptable" because of his shy nature, is now the proud recipient of the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen certificate. Blue is becoming quite a star having appeared with the author on CNN and at many events around the country as she speaks about dog adoption and the truths about "throw away" dogs, changing the plight of many. The book is being credited for ending the practice of gas chamber use in the kennel from which he came. An accomplished writer and author of nine books, Kim Gavin also held a short workshop with high school students who are aspiring journalists and writers.



Animal Studies Club Skypes with Philadelphia Zoo



Owen J. Roberts High School's Animal Studies Club recently participated in a Skype videophone workshop with a trainer from the Philadelphia Zoo. Through the Zoo's UNLESS Campaign, students will use their passion to help save animals by reducing human impacts on the animal world.

Breakfast with Books

By Kathleen O'Neill, Reading Specialist and Lori Palmer, Academic Coach

Parents and students gathered in North Coventry Elementary School's all-purpose room on a chilly, November morning. Literacy was abuzz as everyone enjoyed breakfast treats, and discussed books and reading habits. Following breakfast, parents and students participated in a variety of breakout sessions and learned new literacy strategies based on their child's grade level or reading experiences. Parents can easily implement these strategies in their child's reading routine.

Kindergarten students and parents gathered around reading specialist, Mrs. Susan Wendel, to learn how to match their voices to print and understand concepts by cutting up sentences. First and second grade students and their parents listened to Mrs. Lori Palmer, the school's academic coach, discuss benefits of

exploring non-fiction, and the text features that support understanding while reading non-fiction. Students and parents then worked together to find text features in non-fiction books and to discuss what they learned from the text.

Third through sixth grade students and parents split into two groups to share their "inner conversations" while reading. Reading specialists, Mrs. Kathleen O'Neill and Mrs. Carey Frey, explored the many different conversations one can have while reading a text, and the benefits of listening to your "inner voice" to help stay engaged while reading.

Parents, students and staff at North Coventry are vested in building a literacy-rich environment. Understanding the importance of reading is imperative to student and school growth. If

a child reads for 20 minutes each day, he or she read for 3,600 minutes in a school year, which amounts to 1,800,000 words. By the end of sixth

grade, a student would have read the equivalent of 60 full school days. If a student reads only five minutes each day (900 minutes in a school year), he or she will have read 282,000 words. This student would have read for 12 school days. Reading is essential for success in school and life.

Breakfast with Books is one way for families and schools to work together for literacy achievement. North Coventry looks forward to many more mornings when parents and students engage in reading.



The Arts go Digital at East Vincent

Through discussions, activities, and utilization of 21st Century technology, East Vincent 6th grade students are probing into how visual art and music are related. Students are visually analyzing works of art by assessing elements and principles while evaluating music through discussing tone, mood, rhythm, instrument selection, and other expressive elements. Students matched masterworks of art with works of music that best represented each image. Students blogged views by using appropriate art and music vocabulary on Kidblog. Blogging requires students to write a response and consider multiple viewpoints. Students collaborated by painting a mural that responded to a new musical score and expressed their thoughts in individual works of art.

To finish their creative experiences, students are viewing a mural made by their peers and developing a musical score to accompany it.



Message from the Superintendent

Continued from page 1

Red Ribbon Week, the largest drug prevention campaign in the country, was celebrated in our schools October 22-26, and served as a vehicle for our students to take a stand for their hopes and dreams and to commit to good choices. During that week, students in each of our seven schools enthusiastically participated in community service including Relay for Life (cancer research) activities and the annual Make a Difference Day fill-the-bus food drive for the North Coventry Food Pantry. The Middle School hosted a successful community Breast Cancer Awareness walk-a-thon as a culminating activity.

Each of our schools has service groups who assess community needs and work toward solutions. The local

Lions Club sponsors service clubs in each school who will be working on a book drive this year as well as many individual group service projects. At the High School, Student Council, Key Club, Anchor Club, National Honor Society, and Wildcat Ambassadors are just a few of the organizations whose students are actively engaged in service learning.

We are extremely proud of the continual growth in student learning and character development demonstrated by Owen J. Roberts students. Our students achieve excellence in multifaceted ways including developing skills in the areas of civic responsibility, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Project Speak Up

Parents, staff and students may share ideas for a national research project. Owen J. Roberts is participating in "Speak Up," the first survey designed to help stakeholders share their ideas directly with schools and national policymakers. Since 2003, Speak Up has shared views of more than 2.6 million national and international students, teachers, and parents. The views of those who participate in Speak Up are presented to local, state, and national policy makers, as well as the business leaders. Thus, survey participants contribute to national dialogs about science, technology, and preparing students for the 21st Century workforce.

Speak Up is facilitated by Project Tomorrow® (www.tomorrow.org). Data findings are shared each year with federal, state and local policymakers to inform education programs and funding. In February, the school district will be able to access a summary of results which may be used to evaluate current technology needs, inform strategic planning and budget processes, and measure progress toward technology goals.



OJR Students Honor Veterans

Owen J. Roberts School District students do not take Veteran's Day lightly. They explore ways veterans protected our freedom. Staff and students reached out into our communities to honor veterans and shared their feelings.

East Coventry Elementary held its first Veteran's Day Breakfast the morning of November 7. Nearly 40 veterans were honored – including some East Coventry parents. School staff baked breakfast items to share. Students produced a short video that answered the questions, "What is a veteran?" and "Why are veterans important?" Students articulately expressed gratitude to veterans for keeping our country safe and free.

North Coventry Elementary School students read poems, sang songs, and played music for veterans at a special celebration. Second graders sang to Air Force Master Sergeant Tom Gorski via an internet service, Skype. He surprised his niece and nephew, and other students. Many veterans who attended said they had never felt more appreciated.

East Vincent Elementary students designed patriotic postcards to send to veterans. A committee chose four designs and had postcards printed. East Vincent students wrote notes of appreciation to those who served our country. On Veterans' Day students were reminded to recognize veterans for sacrifices they made serving the U.S. in any capacity.

French Creek Elementary honored 24 veterans in a special program to observe Veterans' Day on Friday, November 9. Breakfast was followed by a brief assembly with patriotic songs. Veterans led the Pledge of Allegiance and they received hand-made cards. Many veterans visited classrooms and spoke to students. Veterans and their missions varied, including Operation Iraqi Freedom, a Green Beret, a Special Forces member, and a U.S. Navy veteran whose ship recovered the Gemini 10 spacecraft.

West Vincent Elementary School recognized community veterans during a Veteran's Day assembly. Some students were surprised to learn their principal, Mr. Ed Smith, was a U.S. Army Ranger in the 101st Airborne Division during Desert Storm from 1986-1991.

Owen J. Roberts' High School Color Guard attended many of the elementary school celebrations. The unit also played a role in the High School's 7th annual Veteran's Day Celebration. U.S. Congressman Jim Gerlach, Pennsylvania State Senator John Rafferty, and State Representative Tim Hennessey shared their thanks and thoughts. The choir provided entertainment and Kayla Oliver, student government president, shared a heartfelt student perspective of the importance of honoring those who serve. The Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps Drill Team and Drum & Bugle Corps performed a tribute to all branches of the military. Students raised funds to serve community veterans lunch; they also visited with the honored guests.

Running is Elementary

Several opportunities for young runners are available at Owen J Roberts. This year celebrated the 40th annual elementary cross country run at Warwick County Park. After school on a beautiful autumn afternoon, more than 200 fourth and fifth grade students converged on the countryside to run a one-mile cross country trail - a portion of the course where the high school cross country team competes. West Vincent Elementary hosted the 3rd annual Turkey Trot at West Vincent Township Park the Friday after Thanksgiving. More than 150 junior runners had the opportunity to trot one mile with a "turkey". Noting the desire for families to take part in healthy activity, for the second year, the township sponsored a 5K as well. A student can win the honor of wearing the turkey costume at a PTA silent auction. More than 75 girls in grades 4-8 took part in Girls on the Run and Girls on Track, a transformational learning program that uses the goal of running a 5K. A similar program for boys in grades 4-6 called STRIDE (Success, Teamwork, Respect, Inspiration, Determination = Excellence in Character) may be available with volunteer assistance. If interested, please contact Jo-an Rechtin at JRechtin@ojrsd.com.



North Coventry Gives Back



First graders along with North Coventry mascot Wally Wildcat, hold a check for the American Red Cross. First grade students and their North Coventry mascot Wally Wildcat raised \$1,241.76 for the American Red Cross to help victims of Hurricane Sandy. Students and staff donned their beachwear on November 8 to raise funds.

Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible



The student body inhaled a collective gasp when the stage curtain rose to the show-stopping beat of the Owen J Roberts High School Drumline! If the captivating rhythms were not enough to get the students' attention, the Wildcat mascot was.

The assembly was to bring attention to the character messages important to East Coventry students and staff. Students learned that some of the drumline performers had once been East Coventry Elementary students themselves; through good choices they were able to pursue their dreams to become the talented musicians they are today.

During the assembly, students performed skits which contrasted suitable and unacceptable behaviors. The character building scenarios "set the stage" for a year of good choices.

Make a Difference Day Does Good for Others

Owen J. Roberts School District's 2012 Make A Difference Day expanded to accomplish more good this year. USA Weekend Magazine issues its Make A Difference Day challenge to encourage everyone to make a difference in his or her communities. The event benefitted The North Coventry Food Pantry, which serves those in need in the Owen J. Roberts School District and Northern Chester County. The district gave the challenge of doing something good, no matter how small, to give back to the community on Saturday, October 27th.

A bus donated by Gross Bus Company stopped at each school on October 27; it was loaded with donations of food, personal care items, and paper goods. The Norchester Red Knights Football league also collected items for the food pantry during a tournament at Wildcat Stadium during Make A Difference Weekend. The High School Anchor Club took on the large task of unloading the bus-load of items at the food pantry.

The Owen J. Roberts Middle School Staff sponsored a Breast Cancer Awareness Walk-A-Thon. Proceeds benefitted Relay for Life and Unite for Her organizations. Many students, families, and staff gathered on the Middle School's backfields to raise awareness for the cause. Individuals and service groups participated; some held bake sales. The Middle School's Builders Club sponsored a Mini-Relay for Life for students during lunch periods to support the North Coventry Food Pantry, the Relay for Life, and Unite for Her.

Krista Venza, Make A Difference Day and Breast Cancer Awareness Walk-A-Thon organizer said, "Year after year I'm overwhelmed, but not surprised, by the generosity of the Owen J. Roberts community! Every effort was appreciated. It is hard to believe Make A Difference Day started here seven years ago – each year gets better! I can't wait to see what we do next year!"



Mrs. Suzadail Tours Chinese Schools

High School World Language instructor Mrs. Karin Suzadail was selected as a 2012 National Education Association (NEA) Foundation Pearson Foundation Global Learning Fellow, one of a unique class of 32 award-winning public school educators, to build global competency skills. Global competence is defined as the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance.

The fellowship is an expansion of the NEA Foundation's annual Awards for Teaching Excellence (ATE) program and a continuation of its mission to advance student achievement by investing in public education that will prepare all students to learn and thrive in a rapidly changing world. It is designed to broaden how the Fellows, all ATE recipients, navigate the global age to better prepare their students for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

The tour of China, from June 19-28, included visits to schools in Beijing and Shanghai to provide educators with structured opportunities to



observe high quality instruction and to interact with Chinese teachers and administrators. It also included interactions with representatives from multi-national corporations Intel and Fastenal to increase Fellows' understanding of the workplace skills their students need to succeed in a global economy.

"In order for students to be prepared for the global age, their educators must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to teach in the global age," said Harriet Sanford, President and CEO of the NEA Foundation. "Our program has an intentional focus on strengthening each educator's global competencies: investigating

the world beyond one's immediate environment; recognizing multiple perspectives; communicating ideas effectively with diverse audiences; taking action to improve conditions."

Mrs. Suzadail noted, "A representative from Intel provided a teacher-accessible overview of how the company operates and the skills and attitudes that the company looks for in its employees and how those workers function across continents. One of the factors stressed was flexible thinking and how a focus on rote protocols does not really work in today's marketplace."

She chronicled many of her experiences explaining, "It was such a privilege and pleasure to travel with such dedicated educators and such an adventurous group. The time we spent together at meals, visits, sites and of course travelling on the bus, was a conduit for rather profound conversations on education, globalization, and sometimes just trying to figure out what was on the table at dinner."

OJRHS Homecoming Court 2012

Candidates for homecoming queen pose for a photo after a week of homecoming spirit activities at the high school. Classes competed in a range of daily events including Color Competition and Farmer Day.

Senior Madelyn Murphy (far right) was crowned 2012 homecoming queen.



OJR Hosts High-Level Competitions: Cavalcade, Robotics, and PMEA District Chorus

Owen J. Roberts hosted the 42nd annual OJR Cavalcade of Bands on October 6. Fourteen bands performed, including our middle school and high school bands. The entertainment and competition during the evening were spectacular.

Owen J. Roberts Middle School will again host a First® LEGO League (FLL) Qualifying Competition for students in grades 4-8 from all across the Delaware Valley. Last year's competition was outstanding, 230 students competed as 500 visitors looked on. The regional coordinator said OJR was one of the most fun and exciting events in Pennsylvania – the middle school's first time to host the event.

The goal of First Lego League teams is to improve the quality of life for seniors by helping them continue to be independent, engaged, and connected in their communities. There are three parts to the First Lego League Challenge: the Robot Game, the Project, and the Core Values. The Robot Game and Project are what teams do, and the Core Values guide teams through the experience. This

year's competition will be held Saturday, December 8, 2012, 8 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Owen J. Roberts High School Music Department is excited to host the PMEA District 12 Chorus in February. Watch for news about attending this spectacular event that will feature world-renowned composer Sydney Guillaume as guest director, arriving to Bucktown from Los Angeles via Haiti. The events will also world-premiere a work of another composer, Ben Hjertmann, which will be dedicated to OJRHS and the District 12 Chorus!



Pennsylvania Common Core and Keystone Exams

Pennsylvania adopted Common Core State Standards in 2010. Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what U.S. students are expected to learn. The standards are research-based and built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards. They include rigorous content and emphasize analytical capabilities. The standards focus on helping students develop real-world skills of communications, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem solving that are relevant for working in a global economy.

Student testing will gradually transition from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) to the Keystone Exams, which are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in various subjects related to the Common Core State Standards. The transition begins during the 2012-2013 school year. The new assessments are one component of high school graduation requirements proposed by the state.

An overview of the transition schedule for the Keystone Exams follows:

- All 11th grade students will take the Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams to meet No Child Left Behind requirements. The PSSA will be eliminated at the high school level.
- All 9th and 10th grade students who have completed Algebra 1, Biology, and/or Literature will take the corresponding Keystone exam to meet the requirements of NCLB. The scores will be banked until students are juniors.
- All seventh and 8th grade students enrolled in Algebra 1 will take a Keystone Exam for graduation requirements and to meet No Child Left Behind requirements.
- Beginning with the class of 2017 (our current 8th grade) and moving forward, students must earn "proficient" scores on Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams to graduate.

Take Off, Reach for the Stars and Say No to Drugs

Red Ribbon Week is the largest drug prevention campaign in the country and serves as a vehicle for individuals and communities to take a stand for the hopes and dreams of our youth.

At West Vincent Elementary School, thematic activities helped students realize the importance of good choices. "Take Off for a Drug-Free Life" day kicked off the week's events. Students were able to meet Barry DiLibero of U.S. Flag Hot Air Balloons and touch a balloon basket. He explained how combustion plays a role in hot air flight which set the stage for a combustion assembly later in the week.

The Dr. Quark Combustion assembly took place on "Lift Off and Shine a Light" on drug prevention day. Through wacky theatrics, students were invited to experience combustion as a chemical process and to understand how important safety is whenever dealing with anything flammable.

A representative from the West Vincent Police Department was also in attendance that day and specific Halloween safety information was shared.





District Calendar Highlights

December 2012

10..... Senior Citizen Holiday Concert
24-31 Winter Break

January 2013

1..... No School
21..... District Closed

February 2013

15..... Professional Development – No School
18..... No School
22..... Prom Fashion Show

March 2013

2..... Read Across America
2-3 Friends of the Arts Craft Sale
15-17 HS Spring Musical
27-29 No School

April 2013

1..... No School
13..... EF Spring Consignment Sale

May 2013

24..... Professional Development – No School
27..... District Closed

June 2013

13-14..... Half Days
14..... Last Day of School and Graduation

To view a full, printable 2012-2013 calendar, visit www.OJRSd.com.
Check school websites for plays, concerts and art shows.



High Five!

More than 100 OJR High School students bravely donated blood during a Key Club-sponsored blood drive in October.

Two Owen J. Roberts students, Amanda Ficca and Rachel Bloemker, will perform in The Tim Janis “American Christmas Carol Tour” at Carnegie Hall in New York on November 30th. Amanda will perform with the Tim Janis Orchestra, comprised of some of the finest student musicians, music educators, and private instructors from the area. Rachel will perform with the Honors Choir accompanying the Orchestra.

The National Merit Scholarship Program recognizes Owen J. High School student Rachel Heise as a National Merit Semi-Finalist. Rachel is the highest scoring entrant for the state of Pennsylvania. Addison Bliss, Prescott Bliss, Madison Flaherty and Kayla Oliver received Letters of Commendation in recognition of outstanding academic promise.

The elite high school choral group the 7-Ups, directed by Sheila McIntyre, once again received a select invitation from 6 ABC to perform in the annual Thanksgiving Parade. The honor included being selected to pre-record all of the vocals for two parade numbers (“Youth Choir Production Number” and “Center Stage Production”) in a professional recording studio. The gentlemen of the 7-Ups were featured in the finale.

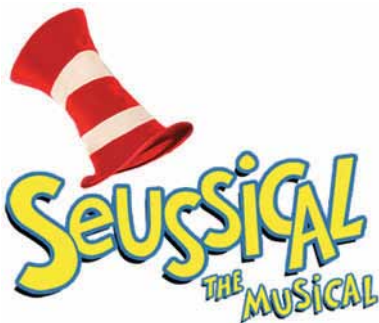
Sarah Intoccia and Hendrick Burger, under the direction of Todd Mengel, won in the “Best Drum Major” category in the Conestoga Cavalcade of Bands.

Community Bulletin Board

The Owen J. Roberts School District’s robust website is a valuable tool for sharing information with school families and the community. One bookmark-worthy area of the website is the [community bulletin board](#), located within the website’s community section. The goal of the bulletin board is to share information that may directly benefit students and families residing with the district.

Calling All OJR Third Grade Students!

The High School Department of Musical Theatre needs 25 students (five students from each Owen J. Roberts School District elementary school) to be Little Whos in *Seussical The Musical*, which will be performed March 15-17, 2013. The musical is high-energy, fun-filled and full of imagination! If you like to sing, dance and be on stage – this show is for you!



Auditions will be held Monday, December 17 from 6 pm - 8 pm in the high school auditorium. Come ready to dance by wearing comfortable clothes and shoes. More information is available on the high school’s website. We look forward to seeing you.



Find news, announcements and event information on Facebook. Like us by searching Owen J. Roberts School District or clicking the Facebook icon on the district website.

Join OJR for Annual Senior Citizen Tea and Holiday Concert

Senior citizens, grandparents and retired faculty and staff are invited to the Annual Senior Citizen Tea and Holiday Concert on Monday, December 6 from noon to 2 pm. The event begins in the High School Auditorium with a concert featuring the Concert Choir, 7-Ups, and Jazz Band. Following the concert, Anchor Club members will be serve tea and light refreshments.

Wildcat Ambassadors will help guests who need physical assistance entering the building. We hope you can join us! Please RSVP to 610-469-5663 or smcintyre@ojrsd.com.

Wildcat Athletic Highlights

The High School Girls Cross Country team won the 2012 PAC 10 Championship!

Megan Bernatos placed in the district cross-country match and qualified for state competition; she finished 13th among freshman competitors.

Madeline Sager shot a 77 to finish on top of the PAC10 Girls Championship for golf. Teammate Laura Hackman finished second.

Congratulations to these athletes and their coaches.



Cash Rewards for OJR

Giant Food Stores A+ School Rewards Program allows schools to earn cash rewards. Giant shoppers are able to register their Bonus Card and designate an Owen J. Roberts School as the recipient. More information is available at www.giantfoodstores.com/aplus/.