

OJR Celebrates Community

On Monday, September 24th, the Owen J. Roberts High school students and staff spent their school day participating in the first annual Community Day program. The activities for the day were designed as a 'first step' response to a number of societal trends that are negatively impacting the health and safety of students.

During the spring of the 2017-2018 school year, a few hundred students and staff members were surveyed to gather opinions on the most important topics affecting the long-term health and success of our students. The most popular responses fell into the categories of mental health, drug use, stress management, time management, lack of empathy towards others, bullying, and school safety. Information gathered from other community members indicated that parents specifically requested that the district work in many ways to create connected and inclusive communities in our schools and beyond.

On Community Day, instead of attending their regularly scheduled classes, students and staff engaged in a number lessons that educated them about research-based ways to avoid potentially dangerous decisions, reduce stress, effectively accomplish long-term goals, and better understand the people and world around them. Keynote speaker, Preston Centuolo, delivered a powerful presentation entitled 'Heroes and Mentors', which focused on having each other's backs. Mr. Centuolo spoke of the importance of connecting with others, appreciating the unique strengths that each of us has to offer, and being willing to stand up and offer support to those that need it.

All students spent a portion of the day sharing experiences and forming deeper connections with the other students in their grade level advisory classrooms. Each student was also provided with the opportunity to attend one or two break-out sessions of their choice from a list of 22 physical, emotional, and mental health topics. The sessions were led by OJRHS faculty members and some volunteers from local health agencies. The day ended with the entire student body participating in an energized Human Chair Challenge between grade levels.

An immediate impact was felt throughout the high school building in the days following the event as large numbers of students were witnessed committing random acts of kindness and supportively reaching out to peers. Additional programs are running throughout the year to continue the progress that is being made. Some of these include the Sandy Hook Promise 'Start with Hello' campaign, educational evening presentations for community members, and class meetings with students.

Research shows that social isolation is a growing epidemic in the United States. Excessive feelings of isolation can be associated with violent and suicidal behavior. In fact, one study reports that chronic loneliness increases the risk of an early death by 14%. Furthermore, young people who are



isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression. As a result, many further pull away from society, struggle with learning and social development and/or choose to hurt themselves or others.

The Owen J. Roberts School District is committed to working with families to build and maintain a community where all students are valued, cared for, and supported. When surveyed after the Community Day event, 88% of those that responded reported feeling value from the day's activities and would like to see Community Day become an annual event. A video from the day may be found at: www.tinyurl.com/18CommunityDay

Time to Register Littlest Learners



We will be opening Kindergarten registration for the 2019-2020 school year on February 1st at 9 am. Follow the online registration link on www.ojrsd.com to begin the process. You will be called to set up an appointment to finish registration in March.

Start with Hello

It is not new for Owen J. Roberts School District to address the social and emotional needs of all learners, but a strategic focus on creating safe, caring communities is taking place district-wide. A K-12 effort including all seven schools joining with other schools across the United States was "Start with Hello Week", September 24-28. The week was celebrated in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise, a national, nonprofit organization. Understanding that skills such as cooperation, kindness, and resiliency may be learned, each school planned extensive activities and lessons to promote skill acquisition. In addition, another research-based violence prevention program from Sandy Hook includes training for children, teens, and parents on how to recognize signs, especially in social media, of an individual who may be a threat to him or herself or others and say something to a trusted adult or authority. The Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan's parent presentation on school shootings was one such training. In addition, Owen J. Roberts has many other prevention education programs. Read about many of Owen J. Roberts Safe, Caring Community programs in this newsletter and find others on the district website under About Us, Superintendent.



Start with Hello teaches students in grades K-12 the skills they need to reach out to and include those who may be dealing with social isolation and create a culture of inclusion and connectedness within their school. Social isolation is the overwhelming feeling of being left out, lonely, or treated like you are invisible. Excessive feelings of isolation can be associated with violent and suicidal behavior.

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SEL at West Vincent

On Friday, September 28, West Vincent Elementary School hosted their first social emotional breakfast for staff, students, and parents. This breakfast helped conclude Start with Hello Week by inviting families to learn more about the week's theme. Parents were eager for the chance to discover more about the social emotional development of their students and are constantly seeking opportunities where they can gather more information on how to work together with their school to raise happy, healthy, and empathetic children.

Throughout the week of September 24-28, West Vincent celebrated inclusion and connectedness by teaching students that small acts of kindness have a widespread effect on the happiness of others in the school community. During this breakfast, Mr. Thom Stecher spoke to parents, students, and staff about social emotional learning and how to better understand and support their elementary school student. Research has shown students are better able to be active learners, are more successful in academics, and have better relationships with peers when

schools and parents are supporting their social emotional development. Thom Stecher and Associates has traveled across the nation teaching parents, students, teachers, and administrations.

The aim of the breakfast series is to educate parents on the social emotional wellbeing of their children and how to help foster growth and resiliency in our youth. This was the first of a four part series targeting topics like resiliency, communication, and empathy. Mr. Stecher spoke to a crowd of almost 100 people who woke up early on a cold and rainy morning to dedicate their time to learning more about how to encourage social emotional learning in our students. Mr. Stecher led his audience through stories, small breakouts, and large group discussion.

The conversation centered on hopes for the skills our children should possess once they leave elementary school and continue their learning in middle and high school. Many parents noted the importance in developing communication and interpersonal skills for the real world. Others voiced the need to continue

to foster an environment where students love learning. Several spoke about students being able to feel both physically and emotionally safe in school through the care they feel from their teachers and classmates. Students were enthusiastic to join the conversation telling their parents and Mr. Stecher about the social emotional activities they engaged in during Start with Hello Week including an assembly with SEL activities for each grade and the kickoff of their Mentor Groups. Mentor Groups provide an additional time for students to meet in a small group with a staff member to engage in activities and dialogue surrounding social emotional learning topics. One sixth grade student explained how the week's activities helped to illustrate the importance of working together and having a growth mindset in school.

The next breakfast was scheduled to be a celebration on Veteran's



Day where Mr. Alex Fizz of Thom Stecher and Associates presented on gratitude, service, and giving back to the community and country. The community provided positive feedback on having this opportunity to develop their own understanding of the social emotional needs of their children.

EC Students are P.A.L.S.

This year the East Coventry P.A.L.S. (Positive, Attentive, and Loyal Students) have been busy kicking off a new school year and a new school! Led by school guidance counselor, Mrs. Morgan, and second grade teacher and school counseling intern Mrs. Smith Wentzel, the P.A.L.S. are a mentoring group made up of sixth grade students who were recommended by their teachers. The primary purpose of the group is to support making positive relationships with peers.

The first event this school year took place at the old East Coventry. Students worked with the Sandy Hook Promise organization to help all of the students of EC "Start with Hello!!" The program focused on spreading kindness and promoting

inclusion of all children. The P.A.L.S. helped by passing out name tags to every student and teacher to make sure that all students and staff remembered to greet everyone we encountered! It was a great experience to see how many people could be greeted by name and also to get to know names of teachers and students one may not know.

For the second round of activities this year, the sixth graders adopted new students to East Coventry. To start the process, they learned about leadership. What makes a good leader? What characteristics do leaders possess? This helped them prepare for their new student buddies. During the first meeting, the children spent some time getting to know each other. Through the use of games



and ice-breaker activities the new students had the opportunity to ask their P.A.L.S. questions and share their experiences as a new student at East Coventry. Students will

continue to have these opportunities through different student-led activities throughout the remainder of the school year.

Welcomed Class of 2031



Owen J. Roberts Elementary Schools (East Coventry, East Vincent, French Creek, North Coventry and West Vincent) welcomed incoming kindergarten students, the class of 2031, to Kinder Camp prior to the school year. At Kinder Camp, fledgling students have a chance to experience the school setting prior to the start of the school year. Students get a jump start on meeting new friends and school staff. They have an opportunity to feel more confident about the start of school because they are able to tour their school, begin to understand expectations, and best of all, find out how much fun it may be! Be sure to register any incoming kindergarten student to be eligible for the 2019 Kinder Camp.

Best Buddies Fest Promotes Friendships

Owen J. Roberts High School and Middle School Best Buddies organizations hosted the fabulous and fun Fall Fest at Wildcat Stadium. This is an integrated event that incorporates many Best Buddies clubs from the local regional area. Fourteen other Best Buddies chapters attended this event with a total of 185 buddies and close to 350 total people! Owen J. Roberts Best Buddies members were in charge of interactive fall and Halloween-inspired stations that promoted socialization and physical activity creating a time to meet new friends and to expand friendships within other clubs in the area. Each group is inter-mingled with different members from other schools so that they can meet new friends. The buddies run the stations and assist where needed. The Best Buddies Fall Fest was tons of fun for all schools in attendance. As an added bonus, the high school hallways were still decorated from the wildly popular Roberts Education Association Safe Trick or Treat event. Visiting teachers were very impressed with the spook-tacular hallways when groups came in for lunch in the cafeteria and the students all had smiles on their faces as they were dancing to Halloween tunes.



Great Kindness Challenge

French Creek students and staff are eagerly doing their part to meet the district's Safe and Caring Environment goal for the 2018-2019 school year. Earlier this school year, French Creek, along with other OJR schools, participated in the Sandy Hook Promise, "Start with Hello" initiative. The weeklong event promoted inclusive practices, random acts of kindness, and bullying-prevention. French Creek celebrated prosocial behaviors with various activities intended to raise awareness and foster a safe and caring environment for all members of the school community.

Throughout the school year, students will participate in ongoing bullying prevention and social emotional

lessons designed to teach students how to promote and model kindness, inclusive behaviors, and empathy and compassion toward others. In addition, French Creek will participate in "The Great Kindness Challenge". This weeklong event at the end of January is a proactive and positive bullying prevention event that is intended to improve school climate and increase student engagement. During this week, students and staff will be encouraged to perform as many genuine acts of kindness possible.

French Creek also received an exciting challenge from Upper Providence Elementary School in the Spring-Ford School District to complete "21+1 Good Deeds" to become fellow "Superheroes of Service". After

completing the challenge, French Creek will be expected to challenge other schools to promote the spread of ongoing acts of kindness.

Lastly, Art teacher, Mrs. Krista Zollers surprised students at the start of the new school year with an extremely important reminder about being kind. Mrs. Zollers painted an inspiring message for students in the building's main hallway as a daily reminder of the importance of being the "nice kid". Other inspiring messages related to kindness, inclusion, and anti-bullying behaviors will be added throughout the school year.

We encourage our Owen J. Roberts



community to follow French Creek Elementary on Twitter @OwenJRobertsFC.

From Devastation to Education

North Coventry partnered with the local Red Cross on a project motivated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The local Red Cross learned that local university students carried their valuables in pillowcases when they were evacuated as a result of the hurricane. Soon a program was created, in which children living in makeshift communities across New Orleans decorated pillowcases with emergency supplies such as toothpaste, a toothbrush, soap, snacks, and valuables. In early 2013, the Red Cross received a grant from Disney to design and develop The Pillowcase Project, a state-of-the-art preparedness education program. The Pillowcase Project is being offered to fourth grade students by every Red Cross region across the country. Thirteen years later, North Coventry Elementary School will partner with the local Red Cross through lessons and activities, resulting in the students developing their own pillowcase in the event of an emergency.

The learning objectives of the Pillowcase Project include:

- identifying the best ways to stay safe during emergencies that can

occur in their communities.

- identifying the best ways to prevent and stay safe during a home fire.
- using coping skills to help manage stress during emergencies and in everyday situations.
- gaining confidence in their abilities to be prepared for emergencies through hands-on activities.
- using their knowledge to act as advocates for emergency preparedness in their homes and communities.
- discussing the role science plays in emergency preparedness.
- understanding and communicating the work of the Red Cross in their communities.

The Pillowcase Project will help create a generation of children who understand the science of hazards, are empowered to act preparing for emergencies, and are excited to help create a prepared community by sharing what they have learned with family and friends. Matthew Briedenstein, Annmarie Cassidy, and Sharon

Christian facilitated the project for our fourth-graders. One beneficial element of the lesson was teaching our students coping skills such as breathing with color and sticking with a buddy when you get to a safe place. The students were given the task to make an ongoing connection to the program by sharing the information with their family members.



Each student was given a decorative pillowcase provided by Disney and the Red Cross. The pillowcase will serve as a vessel for items they may need to take in the event of an emergency. Their pillowcase and instructional materials will assist the students to share out to their loved ones at home.

The Owen J. Roberts Graduate states that we help develop responsible citizens by embracing service learning and responding to the needs of the community. The students liked

having the Red Cross present and thought the information was inspiring and beneficial. Rebecca Fisher and Dominic Frosty, North Coventry fourth graders stated that "the presentation made us feel prepared and secure if anything were to happen. It taught us about what to do in the event of a natural disaster." The Pillowcase Project is just one of many opportunities for our K-12 students that supports citizenship and character, all while developing community connectedness.

Wowzers



Students and staff at East Vincent Elementary School cheered for their mascot "Wowser the Wildcat" during their first school-wide assembly, which focused on the school's new School Wide-Positive Behavior System (SWPBS) and the Responsive Classroom approach. Nearly 600 students and more than 50 staff members congregated in the gymnasium using a classroom meeting format with its four components: Greeting, Message, Sharing, and Activity. The highlights of the school-wide assembly included reading student-created messages to Wowser about how students and staff followed "Go CATS!" (the school's acronym for Choose Kindness, Act Respectfully, Take Responsibility, and Stay Safe) and choosing students who demonstrated the most school spirit. The assembly ended with staff dancing the "Chicken Dance" as a result of students voting for a staff dance using their Cat Cash, a token system that rewards students for demonstrated Go CATS behaviors.

Staff at the school adopted a School-Wide Positive Behavior System with guidance from Chester County Intermediate Unit's Pennsylvania SWPBS facilitator, Ms. Beth Socha. Ms. Socha trained and guided a core leadership team. In their first year, staff, students, and the community have noticed a calm, positive environment at the school. To learn more about SWPBS, visit EVES' SWPBS webpage at <https://www.ojrdsd.com/domain/1493>. Information about the Responsive Classroom approach can be found at <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>.

Being Buddies, Not Bullies



Like other schools in the district, the Middle School had activities throughout the month of October centered on the month's kindness theme. Everyone in the Middle School wore "Be a Buddy, Not a Bully" t-shirts at the beginning and end of the month. Announcements relative to the theme were read on a regular basis and team activities supported the initiative. The bulletin boards were designed to reflect a commitment toward making the Middle School a supportive, inclusive place for ALL students. Looking forward to the remainder of the school year, a team of teachers will be meeting regularly to establish the framework for a School-Wide Effective Behavioral Support program for the building. The team has already done a site-visit to a neighboring middle school for their kick-off assembly and will be researching components of successful programs and selecting what they believe will work for Owen J. Roberts Middle School. The staff hopes to have a pilot program up and running for the second half of the year, with the goal of including a reward aspect next year.

Working together toward a common goal, all middle school students have been involved in creating a mosaic mural for the school. Principal Corbin Stoltzfus said, "It has been awesome seeing many of our students come together to design and create the mural to be displayed in our main hallway." The students have been the driving force behind what the mural should reflect and represent. They have been very mindful in choosing themes that represent a myriad of special interests in our Middle School and as we watch it progress towards completion we are reminded of all the wonderful opportunities offered to students at Owen J. Roberts.

High School Emotional Support

Emotions play a critical role in how students behave, interact with others, and even how they learn. Owen J. Roberts takes pride in meeting the needs of all students, including those who may have emotional barriers to social and learning success. The Owen J. Roberts High School Emotional Support Program was established in 2007 to provide support for those secondary students in need of additional resources to address anxiety, depression, and many behavioral needs. The program is staffed by a dedicated, specialized emotional support teacher and

paraprofessional. Initially, the students received academic instruction from content area teachers in the core courses: English, Math, Science, and Social Studies, as well as emotional intervention. Over the years the program has grown, in both the number of students serviced, as well as the teaching staff involved with the program.

As a conduit to the emotional health and well-being of students, the Healthy Lifestyles Program was established with funding through the Pottstown Wellness Foundation.

The Healthy Lifestyles program is supported by a vast body of research which demonstrates that physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices enhance positive emotions. The foundation of this class introduces healthy lifestyle habits inside and outside of the classroom. At the beginning of each school day, a physical education teacher provides physical activity and/or nutritional instruction as a means to encourage lifelong healthy habits. In addition, the students are able to participate in monthly incentivized field trips, which promote social skills and healthy

habits. As the program continues to evolve, it incorporates community outreach such as volunteering at Coventry Food Pantry and Phoenix Animal Rescue. Acts of service help students feel value and self-worth. The program continues to look for opportunities to teach self-worth through service for our community. As addressing the emotional wellbeing of students becomes even more prevalent in our school communities, OJR feels fortunate to have established this valuable program, which continues to grow to support the needs of our community and every type of learner.

US News & World Silver

Owen J. Roberts High School ranked silver in the U.S. News & World Report Best High Schools in the country. According to their website, U.S. News & World Report included data on more than 20,500 public high schools to make determinations of rankings. U.S. News ranks high schools both nationally and by state to show how well schools are preparing students for college and careers. Pennsylvania reportedly has about 952 public and 549 private high schools. U.S. News ranked Owen J. Roberts High School 64th in the state.

U.S. News awards gold, silver and bronze medals to more than 5,900 schools based on a methodology that incorporates performance on state proficiency tests, graduation rates and

participation in and performance on challenging college-level coursework using Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate examinations.

Owen J. Roberts High has approximately 1,647 students and 126 teaching staff members. District-wide, 98% of teachers have advanced degrees. Owen J. Roberts High School remains committed to helping more students learn at a higher level and earn higher AP scores. As of 2017-18, Owen J. Roberts High School offered 27 AP courses. The high school has been included on the AP Annual Honor Roll, five out of eight years. Interim High School Principal Dr. Sean Earley stated, "We are very fortunate to have excellent students and teachers who are all supported by

caring stakeholders."

After a rigorous process, the high school was officially certified for International Baccalaureate Career Program (IBCP) in July, 2017, and accepted its first IB students to the program that fall. There are only 20 IBCP high schools in Pennsylvania. The IBCP is a two-year certificate program which combines courses from the International Baccalaureate's highly regarded Diploma Program (DP) of coursework in connection with Owen J. Roberts High School's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math).

Dr. Susan Lloyd, Owen J. Roberts School District Superintendent, shared, "Congratulations goes out to the teachers, students, and their



parents. I can't address what other schools are doing, but the entire staff at Owen J. Roberts is committed to working hard to make sure our students succeed."

High School Starts Integrity Crew

A program called Integrity Crew is off to a great start at the high school this year. In October, 20 outstanding students who exemplify the ethics and good morale of Owen J. Roberts High School were recognized. Teachers and staff are able to nominate a student who has been observed utilizing one of five basis traits of good citizenship each month. There is no limit to the number of recognitions. The traits being recognized, as described at educationworld.com, are:

- Honesty: the basic theme of good citizenship. A person must be honest with others, and with himself or herself, in order to be a good citizen.
- Compassion: the emotion of caring for people and for other living things.
- Respect: caring for one's self, others, and/or a set of rules.
- Out of honesty, compassion, and respect comes Responsibility, which includes both private, personal responsibility and public responsibility. Responsibility is about action, and it includes much of what people think of as good citizenship. One of the main responsibilities of students is to learn. They must educate themselves so that they can live up to their full potential.
- Courage: the ability to do the right thing even when it may be unpopular, difficult, or dangerous.

District Hosts First Job Fair; Second Scheduled

On October 24, 2018 the Owen J. Roberts School District hosted its first job fair. The district's substitute teacher service, ESS, was on hand to share information on how interested individuals might go about becoming daily substitute teachers. Owen J. Roberts Director of Human Resources, Jessica Heffner, was also able to meet with nurses and paraprofessionals who were interested in working in our schools on a substitute basis. Building principals were on hand to meet with candidates and discuss openings as well. Owen J. Roberts is always looking for people who enjoy working with children to join our team. Please visit the Human Resources website at <https://www.ojrds.com/domain/85> and click on employment to see current openings. The District will hold another job fair in February which will be advertised on the district website.

State Police Bolster School Presence

Owen J. Roberts has seen increased support of local and state police. With the goal of serving as a community resource and to support safe learning environments, Governor Tom Wolf and Acting Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Commissioner Lieutenant Colonel Robert Evanchick announced that station commanders will ensure troopers visit schools and colleges located in their primary coverage areas on a consistent basis.

"A theme that resonated at all of the School Safety Task Force regional meetings was that students and faculty feel safer if there is a visible presence

of a community safety resource at our schools," Gov. Wolf said. "The Pennsylvania State Police will help support safer schools with enhanced trooper presence."

State police shared that troopers will check in on educational facilities located in a PSP jurisdiction at least once per shift, and visit schools where PSP is not the primary law enforcement agency as time and resources allow. These checks establish visibility and open lines of communication. They are carried out to be a positive experience between troopers, students, and educators.

Community Input Desired

Owen J. Roberts School District invites public input in regards to shaping the future. The district is in the process of gathering information through a feasibility study which will analyze and explore various ideas to accommodate future enrollment, utilize resources, assure safe learning environments, and provide for quality educational practice. An important part of this process is to listen to input from all stakeholders.

Owen J. Roberts Board of School Directors has approved Marotta Main Architects to lead the study. A steering committee made up of school board members, school personnel, township supervisors, parents and other residents began the process of gathering and sorting community input. The team is not starting with preconceived notions except to recognize all possibilities to conserve physical, financial, and human resources. The study should reflect ideas for a long-term plan that will result in creative use of facilities that make sense for the community and provide for the safety and educational needs of students.

The steering committee hopes to draw feedback from as many residents, businesses and community-based organizations as possible. A Community Input Forum was held on November 1 with about 85 participants. All community members are invited to provide feedback and offer ideas by taking the survey on the district website or by sending direct email to feasibility@ojrds.com. Owen J. Roberts residents can follow the process of the feasibility study and reference relevant articles on the district website.

Chromebooks Enhance Teaching and Learning

As part of the District's instructional/technology plan, high school students are using Chromebooks in a 1-1 environment in their classes. Parents, students, and faculty participated in a comprehensive survey regarding technology use and digital learning. All OJR students have access to a variety of technology tools during the school day; the initiative this year has a focus for the high school. Over 1100 Chromebooks were deployed to 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students in August so that students would have anytime access to course work. A rollout is planned for the final grade next year. Teachers develop course activities and assignments into a Learning Management System called Canvas. Students access Canvas to view resources, submit assignments, or see class announcements. The software can be used in online, hybrid, or traditional courses at the high school.

Allowing students use Chromebooks in classes does more than simply offer access to course documents. Students who regularly use technology for instructional purposes promote positive digital citizenship. They learn how to navigate the Internet safely, participate in online dialogue

appropriately, and explore new resources. All OJR students have presentations and lessons about their own digital footprint and how to manage new account profiles online. At the high school, student leaders participated in a series of sessions designed to empower them to model positive digital messages for peers. They also assisted when negative messages were sent among students and oftentimes stopped rumors from spreading. Continuing with digital citizenship messages and keeping students in those leadership roles is a critical part to the success of a digital learning community.

High school teachers have taken on the Canvas challenge! In order to prepare for the 1-1 initiative this year, they made a change to the new software. Throughout last spring and summer, teachers participated in training for Canvas. A representative provided initial professional development and a group of teachers visited another high school to see Canvas in action. Mr. Jonathon Yoder, a teacher on special assignment, was selected to assist the high school faculty with the transition. Mr. Yoder offered sessions during the summer



and fall to help teachers set up their courses into Canvas. He also modeled lessons with teachers to assist students access the new resources. During the fall, he began a Teacher FAQ for Canvas that includes tips and responses to questions directly from the faculty. This "just in time" training provides daily support for the teachers during the first year of implementation.

New resources were added to the high school so that students would have

technology support and assistance with their devices. A student Help Center was added to the high school library. Students experiencing issues with the Chromebooks can get help during the school day. Additional outlets and several charging stations were put into the cafeteria lobby and added around the school. The students are doing some incredible things and the 1-1 initiative with Chromebooks and Canvas are enhancing their high school experience.

Lisa Duffy Outstanding Art Educator

Congratulations are extended to Middle School Art and STEAM teacher, Mrs. Lisa Duffy, for being selected as the 2018 Pennsylvania Art Education Association (PAEA) Outstanding Middle Level Art Educator for Pennsylvania. The PAEA actively supports and promotes visual art education through professional development, leadership, and service. In winning this recognition, Mrs. Duffy is acknowledged for going beyond the classroom and the school

to demonstrate the value of art and its benefit to our daily lives. "Mrs. Duffy is part of a tremendous arts program at the Middle School," said principal Corbin Stoltzfus.

Mrs. Duffy has acted as Owen J. Roberts Middle School STEAM Day Assistant Coordinator conceptualizing and operating several art stations for the event using various hands-on strategies so that students experience the science of art. She involves herself

in many theatre projects including a role as Art Director for The Springer Studio musical theater camp and Art Director for Owen J. Roberts Middle School performance of Aladdin and High School performance of Brigadoon where she created all sets and props and assisted with costuming, program and posters.

Mrs. Duffy is a coach for the successful Owen J. Roberts Odyssey of the Mind program and has taken

two teams to the world competitions. She served on the Pennsylvania Art Education Association board of directors for three years, recognizing the importance of belonging to a professional community. She presented at numerous PAEA conferences and constantly seeks out learning opportunities for herself and her students, she provides leadership and guidance with colleagues and provides service to all communities for which she is involved.

Safety for All the Goal of "On the Road" Driver Training Thanks to Community Partners

On Friday, September 14, 2018, at the home football game, Mr. Jason Owens, Owner of Patriot Buick Pontiac GMC, presented an instructor-brake-fitted Chevy Malibu for use in the On-the-Road Driver Training Program at Owen J. Roberts High School, which began in 2011 when Mr. Owens provided the first vehicle for the district to use. There are now two vehicles available to keep up with the demand for instruction.

This program which benefits teens, families, and the entire community is the result of two friends seeking an answer to a concern about the lack of access to school-based, hands-on driver's training. Longtime friends—Mr. Jason Owens and retired Judge James DeAngelo—had discussed their belief that school-based, hands-

on driver training would create safer drivers and a safer community.

Partnering with District Judge John Hipple, Owens and DeAngelo worked to keep this program alive in 2018 and beyond. All parties feel strongly that driving is one of the most important life skills one can learn and that behind-the-wheel training can be vital to adopting habits that can help drivers avoid accidents. School officials and instructors have worked to support and develop the program.

Owen J. Roberts offers classroom driver education for students while school affiliated behind-the-wheel programs throughout the state were eliminated over the years due to cost concerns. Due to the generosity of community members and Patriot

Buick Pontiac GMC, Owen J. Roberts can continue a fee-based behind-the-wheel training, a natural extension of classroom education. The hands-on training is of no cost to taxpayers.



In early 2013, Owen J. Roberts was approved as a road testing site for students to complete PA licensing requirements and many students have earned their driver license at the com-

pletion of OJR Behind-the-Wheel. The program is an excellent example of community and school partners working toward safety for all.

Safe to Say Something

In 2018, the General Assembly passed Act 44 mandating the establishment and use of the "Safe2Say Something" (S2SS) Anonymous Reporting System to roll out in every Pennsylvania school entity in January 2019. S2SS intends to be a life-saving and life-changing school safety program envisioned to teach students, educators and administrators how to recognize the signs and signals of individuals who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others and to anonymously report this information through the S2SS app, website or

24/7 Crisis Center Hotline.

The Office of the Attorney General established S2SS, and they will manage and maintain the program. They have been working in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise – a leader in anonymous reporting systems – in building the app, website and PA-based 24/7 Crisis Center platform. Sandy Hook Promise is a non-profit committed to creating safe schools & communities through their evidenced-based intervention programs: Signs of Suicide, Say Something, Start with Hello and Safety Assessment.

Meritorious Budget Award

Owen J. Roberts has received ASBO's Meritorious Budget Award (MBA) in each fiscal year since inception of the program in July 1996. "I'm proud of our district's achievement and the importance we place on maintaining best practices in the areas of budgeting and financial reporting," said Jaclin Krumrine, Chief Financial Officer and Board Secretary for Owen J. Roberts School District. "ASBO's MBA Program provides our stakeholders with assurance that we are continually working on improving the quality of information being communicated to our community about the district's educational programs and services in a clear and transparent manner."

Safe and Healthy Communities

Chester County is a recent recipient of a new grant for a program called the Safe and Healthy Communities Initiative. This is the first comprehensive initiative in our county created to end child sexual abuse. The Safe and Healthy Communities Initiative involves many facets geared toward ending child sexual abuse. In the fall, Owen J. Roberts secondary teachers took part in an evidence-informed, two-hour workshop designed to teach adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The program is in addition to mandated reporter training and offers a more detailed insight into how to end child sexual abuse and how adults, educators in particular, can effect real change to accomplish that.

In addition, through the grant the Crimes Victims' of Chester County will deliver free programming called Safe Touches to all second graders and the adult community at large. The initiative involves a research component developed by Penn State to show that these programs reduce the rates of child sexual abuse. The hope is to replicate this model state and nationwide. Safe Touches is being implemented over the next two school years, beginning 2018-2019, in the Owen J. Roberts Elementary Schools. A parent information session was held in October and the presentations began in November.

Gross School Bus Co Hiring PT CDL Drivers

Great hours and pay CDL training is provided.

Perfect job for parents with school children, as we work the same days as your children go to school.

Summer work is available but not mandatory.

Please contact Larry or Michelle at 610-469-0221.

Honoring Veterans

Owen J. Roberts widely celebrated Veterans Day with more than 400 veterans and their guests visiting our schools. This year, French Creek Elementary School students and staff held an annual breakfast and program with a special twist. The school was able to welcome back a father, Mr. Troy Beane, who had surprised his family with an unexpected return from Kuwait that morning. "It was a heartfelt moment when the entire auditorium rose to honor Mr. Beane with a standing ovation," said Dr. Malinda McKillip, principal. West Vincent Elementary School served breakfast for parents and students while a social/emotional consultant presented on the theme of service. The session led into an all-school assembly with orchestra, chorus and student-read compositions. East Coventry Elementary School also hosted an annual breakfast which included a special presentation created by the school children. Owen J Roberts NJROTC led the group in

the raising of the American flag. Many of the veterans visited the classrooms sharing their stories and experiences. At North Coventry Elementary School, students invited their loved ones to take part in the Veteran's Day ceremonial activities. They started as one community for breakfast with Veterans. After breakfast everyone was invited outside for the NJROTC presentation of the colors, followed by laying the North Coventry Ceremonial Wreath. They concluded the morning with a Veterans Day Assembly with performances from the NC band students, choral group, Lions Cubs, and first grade students. East Vincent Elementary School collected spare Halloween candy from students and families to donate to active troops. Students wrote encouraging notes to be sent with the candy and the school worked with NJROTC to get the candy placed. When received, the troops will see that it was a joint effort with East Vincent Elementary students and the

high school NJROTC cadets to bring some sweetness their way.

The annual Veterans Day ceremony at the high school was held on November 9. Dr. Susan Lloyd welcomed guests. State Representative Tim Hennessey paid tribute to the veterans and a representative delivered a statement from Senator Pat Toomey. Among the veterans in attendance were WWII veterans, who received special recognition. The event included musical performances by the high school choir, speeches, and a luncheon. As a tradition, the oldest veteran and youngest cadet cut the cake after lunch. All those in attendance were honored to recognize two WWII veterans with birthdays close enough to share the distinction of being the eldest in attendance; Mr. William Bull, 96, part of the WWII Big Red One, First Infantry and Mr. Frank Harrath, 96, part of the WWII 83rd Infantry. The luncheon provided



an opportunity for students and veterans to interact with one another and for students to express their gratitude and serve veterans.

North Coventry Earns Top National Title I Honors

In 1965, President Johnson began the course for the nation to ensure equity for all by increasing access to a basic education. Public Education continues to pursue that goal for millions of children today. Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides resources for our school to aid students reach proficiency in reading and math.

North Coventry Elementary School has the great honor of being selected as a 2018-2019 National Title 1 Distinguished School. Two schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have earned this honor and the staff and community could not be more proud. North Coventry strives to ensure that all students and families are provided the highest quality education. The students are the focal point of every decision.

Through funding provided by the state, the school offers Title 1 Reading and Mathematics Programs.

The Title 1 Reading program is carefully monitored and led by a team of teachers; Mrs. Carly Youngblood, Mrs. Sarah Thompson, Ms. Carey Little and Mr. Brett Galambos. They provide daily services for students and families who require assistance with reading needs. Mrs. Youngblood stated, "It is a real honor to be recognized. Our entire staff, families and students have worked hard, and we are all proud of the growth and the accomplishments of our children."

The Title 1 Math Program is led by Ms. Joyce DeVol and Mrs. Rachel Lemuell. This dynamic duo provides services for students and families who need support in mathematics. They indicated in a comment, "This

recognition is an incredible feeling and demonstrates the collaboration of our dedicated staff and supportive families. Our students should be so proud of their success! We are honored to be a part of it all."

North Coventry Elementary School was designated as a Distinguished Title 1 School for High Progress for the 2015 - 2017 school years. High Achievement was awarded for the 2018-2019 school year. Researched based instructional strategies, along with a strong curriculum, are at the core of our daily practice. The staff believes it to be their responsibility to minimize obstacles to effective learning.

The North Coventry Title 1 teachers are to be commended for their efforts to establish partnerships with the parents of our Title 1 students. Title

1 parents are invited and encouraged to attend reading and mathematics events at North Coventry. These events include the Title I Parent Meetings, Mathematics and Literacy Night, Book Swap, Read Across America, Winter Break Reading Challenge, Summer Reading Program, and Jump Start.

The North Coventry Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) is a Title 1 partner due to the generous funding and volunteer hours they provide throughout the year. The PTO funds high interest summer reading books for all Title 1 students, provides financial support for Mathematics and Literacy Night, donates fall and spring Book Fair gift certificates for low income students and sponsors the annual Book Swap.

New Learning Environment

East Coventry Elementary School students were welcomed into their first full day of learning in their new school on Tuesday, October 9. Teachers and staff had been able to access the building for several weeks and students had a tour on October 5. Several grades were able to cheer for the official ribbon cutting the same day.

All learning areas were fully functional for a seamless transition

in learning and instruction. Some outdoor play areas still need finishing touches. Prior to moving in, students learned how to safely transition floors applying good staircase practices in their new two-story building. Buses had practiced staging, drop off, and pick up. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Friday, October 5. On that day, teachers brought their classes of students over to the building in two-hour shifts for desk move-in, seating arrangements, and building

tours. An open house was held on October 19 in conjunction with the East Coventry PTA Annual Fall Family Fun Fest.



Tiny House Auctioned

Big things happened to the tiny house at Owen J. Roberts High School on Friday, October 12th. The OJR Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math Club (STEAM Club) auctioned off a completed a 2-year project in which they designed and constructed a fully-functional tiny house.

Styer Real Estate hosted a “Tiny” Open House to introduce people to this masterpiece of tiny living. The miniature home was 14 feet long by 8 feet wide and boasted 112 square feet of living space on the first floor, plus two loft areas that added an additional 64 square feet for sleeping and storage. Gorgeous tongue and groove pine and reclaimed oak timbers inside and out, standing seam metal roof, a bathroom with a shower ready for a compost-toilet, plus many

other unique details. Fully student-designed and student-constructed under the supervision of certified instructors from Owen J. Roberts High School and the Technical College High School, the house was designed to be as green as possible by using very little water and power. The school district donated the equipment trailer, and all other materials were donated, re-purposed, or paid for through student fundraising and OJR Education Foundation Mini Grants.

The money raised will be utilized by the STEAM Club to fund future projects which could include additional tiny house builds or the development of a traveling STEAM lab to educate and inspire students in the district. A portion of the sale is also planned as a donation back to the Owen J Roberts Education

Foundation. Jim Wehlan of Treasured Heirlooms, conducted the auction with the tiny house selling for \$13,100. The buyer, Karel Minor for Humane Pennsylvania, hopes to utilize the tiny house as a mobile veterinary clinic.

The Owen J Roberts Education Foundation sponsored a mini food truck festival to coincide with the tiny house event. Vendors included Katja’s Empanadas, Bucktown Grille, Captain’s Curbside Seafood, OMG Smoothies, and Dump-N-Roll with vendors donating a portion of proceeds to the OJR



Education Foundation which supports teacher mini-grants and technology in the classroom.

District Attorney Visits School

The district is holding a series of programs supporting various topics to inform and engage our community this year. On October 11, Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan delivered a presentation on school shootings and how to protect children. He shared some startling facts about guns and shooters and talked about many forces that feed into a shooter’s mentality. District Attorney Hogan spoke about how, statistically, more students are likely to die from drugs than from a school shooter. Still, he strongly supports shooter drills in schools. He reinforced the idea that parents are the first line of defense in a safe community urging parents to “monitor social media accounts; look at their children’s phones, texts, and emails, and to search their rooms.” He stressed the importance of keeping guns locked up. Downingtown Police Detective Andy Trautmann and DA Hogan both commented that Owen J. Roberts has made one of the most important investments in school safety by having a school district police force and Chief of Security and Safety.

Sleep Health

A discussion on adolescent sleep health has reopened at Owen J. Roberts School District. The topic was studied by a group in 2016, which prompted many practices to educate students on sleep hygiene and create flexible scheduling options at the high school level. A significant amount of community discussion surrounding the subject has continued with some parents and community members feeling strongly that secondary school start times be pushed back to compliment the circadian rhythms of adolescents. Others have concerns or other ideas on how to address sleep health. This fall, Senate Resolution 417 directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish an advisory committee to conduct a study on secondary school start time in this Commonwealth, was passed. The Board of School Directors requested that the Pupil Service Committee further investigate and reopen the discussion. A Community Learning Forum started in October and met twice as of November 13. Please keep an eye on the school website for any information about this topic and future discussions and/or presentations.

Swim Safe Community

The Owen J. Roberts community may feel very proud that every student who comes through the Middle School is trained to be swim-safe. In seventh grade, the students are introduced to the basic swimming skills hope to make swimming a viable lifelong fitness and recreational activity. Swimming is a life sport that benefits cardiovascular systems, flexibility, and strength. In addition to gaining fitness, Owen J. Roberts seventh grade students learn basic lifesaving skills like how to safely save a drowning victim and also how to save themselves in water. Students also learn the six basic strokes recommended by American Red Cross. During their swim instruction, they participate in a variety of fitness activities that utilize these strokes including fitness swimming, games, synchronized swimming, water aerobics and personal challenges.

Owen J. Roberts has a community swim program each fall and spring. Be on the lookout for a whole new line up of swim instruction classes and other swim classes for children and adults in early March. The schedule posts to the COMMUNITY section of the district website and updates may be found on social media @ OJRSDCommunityAquatics.



High School Blood Drive

Owen J. Roberts High School students understand that a safe and stable blood supply is reliant on a generous and willing community. On October 24, Miller-Keystone Blood Center was at the high school for a semi-annual blood drive. More than 100 students and many staff signed up to give blood. In addition to donors, more than 30 student Key Club volunteers helped man the drive assisting and supporting peers. According to MKBC, “Blood transfusions save more than 4 million Americans each year. From cancer patients to accident victims, premature babies and more, the generosity of blood donors contributes to saving lives right here in our community. Miller-Keystone Blood Center is the only blood supplier to 22 hospitals in our region.”





Message from the Superintendent

The start to this school year has been filled with laughter, music, camaraderie and positive energy.

That's why I love this school district! I hope everyone had a refreshing summer and took some cleansing breaths, because we have a fabulous and challenging year ahead of us.

The challenging part, of course, is to maintain our standing as one of the best school districts in Pennsylvania, while striving to meet the needs of all students. I'm so grateful to see everyone working to not only maintain our standing, but to improve it. Students and faculty, parents and community, school board and administration . . . we're always better together and our united front gives us the momentum we thrive on!

I want to tell you about an initiative we're embracing this year along with districts across the state. While we continue to grieve deeply and forever at the memory of students lost to school shootings, we look to find the strength and resources to prevent it from happening in our own community. One of the most horrible shootings in American history – Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., in December 2012 – has resulted in a force of positive energy to be reckoned with. The Sandy Hook Promise is a nationally renowned organization launched by families who lost their children that day, and their mission is clear: "Prevent gun-related deaths due to crime, suicide and accidental discharge so that no other parent experiences the senseless, horrific loss of their child."

The Sandy Hook Promise isn't just a rhetorical notion with no actionable resources. We're bringing their "Say Something" program coupled with the state "Safe to Say Something"

initiative to our community, to provide training for students to help them recognize the signs that someone may be a threat to himself or herself, or to others, and to say something to a trusted adult to seek help. The program is designed to reverse these frightening statistics:

- In 7 out of 10 acts of gun violence, a friend or friends were told that an act of violence would be committed; and
- In 4 out of 5 school shootings, the attacker had told people of the plans ahead of time.

"Safe to Say Something" gives students the tools they need to be strong and confident advocates for themselves and the people around them. You'll be hearing a lot about this in the coming months. Please take the Sandy Hook Promise with me: "I promise to do all I can to protect children from gun violence by encouraging and supporting solutions

that create safer, healthier homes, schools and communities."

Speaking for the Owen J. Roberts School District, I vow to accept global accountability for the safety of every student, teacher and community member. Join me, because together we make the promise stronger! Taking the time to visit www.sandyhookpromise.org is a great first step.

As always, never hesitate to reach out to me at slloyd@ojrsd.com. Thank you for everything you do to make Owen J. Roberts a great place to live and learn, and to do the right thing at the right time . . . for all the right reasons.

Very Truly Yours,

Dr. Susan T. Lloyd

Superintendent of Schools



The Owen J. Roberts Graduate

Driven by Honesty, Integrity, Empathy

Listens with an open mind. Acts thoughtfully. Collaborates successfully with diverse groups. Operates from a clear and adaptable vision of the future.



Embraces Uniqueness

Understands the importance of a balanced and meaningful life. Demonstrates optimism. Seeks new experiences. Utilizes the habit of self-reflection.

Responsible Citizens

Embraces service learning. Responds to the needs of the community. Asserts a deep commitment to the betterment of the world.

Learns Autonomously

Intrinsically motivated. Has confidence in abilities and resources. Investigates with curiosity and passion. Leverages the potential of technology.

Thinks with Agility in Complex Ways

Adaptable in different environments. Seeks creative solutions. Inquires critically from multiple perspectives. Communicates effectively.



Our Mission

Inspiring each student for success today and greatness tomorrow...

Music Mural for MS



Recognizing that visual art could express ideas and emotions that would enhance the musical instruction experience for students, Mr. Jason Hess, Middle School Concert, Jazz, & Marching Bands and General Music instructor, reached out to Miss Tracey Shiavello, High School art instructor to see if any of the students or clubs she advised would be interested in taking on a mural project for the Middle School Music wing. The teachers met with the National Art Honor Society members to discuss the concept. Mr. Hess was interested in a progressive mural that would expand each year to feature an outstanding Middle School music student.

National Art Honor Society took on the project led by NAHS Student President (2017-2018) Colette Dellaquila, who designed the mural. Members of the NAHS from 2017-2018 completed the bulk of the work with final details being finished by 2018-2019 members this fall. The 16-foot long by 4-foot high mural features an acrylic and alcohol process which gives the background an element of fun, movement, and rhythm. Each year, the likeness of a music student will be added to the mural. The project demonstrates the interconnectedness of our school district community.

Go Wildcats!

Noted Accomplishments in Athletics and Other Arenas

The High School Girls Field Hockey took the title of Pioneer Athletic Conference (PAC) Champions and became the PIAA District 1 AAA Field Hockey Champions qualifying for state play. In their state title quest, the team fell to Hershey High School on Tuesday, 11/6/18, completing an incredibly successful season.

On the same night that the Girls Field Hockey team became PAC Champions, October 18, a red wildcat wave fell over the Pioneer Conference with Varsity Girls Soccer, Varsity Girls Cross Country and Varsity Boys Cross Country all grabbing PAC champion titles!

The HS Boys Soccer team defeated Downingtown West on Tuesday, 10/23/18 by a score of 2-1 to advance to the second round of PIAA District 1 Playoffs.

Congratulations to the High School Boys Cross Country team for placing 6th in the PIAA District 1 Cross Country Playoffs. With this placement, the boys qualified for the PIAA State Cross Country Championship in Hershey, PA. This is the boys second consecutive year qualifying for the State Championship. Boys Cross Country State qualifiers included Linus Blatz, David Brunton, Thomas Damiani, Josh Dimarino, Vincent Fennel, Matt Muthler, Quinten Sherwood and Cole Smith

The Girls Cross Country team finished 10th overall in the PIAA District 1 Cross Country Playoffs. Hannah Kopec from the girls team qualified for the PIAA State Cross Country Championship in Hershey, PA.

Pioneer Athletic Conference also saw Wildcat success in Girl Tennis. Congratulations to Jacey Caplan and Elaina Lee on their PAC Tennis Doubles Championship. Owen J. Roberts' Elaina Lee and Jacey Caplan needed three sets to secure the Pioneer Athletic Conference girls tennis doubles championship at Kinetix Sports Club. Lee/Caplan, seeded third in the event, overcame the top seeds, Methacton's Dina Nouaime and Tina



Prince, 6-2, 4-6, 6-4 to earn the top prize in the finals.

Four students may be congratulated for their achievements in the National Merit Scholarship Program, an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955 and measures success on the SAT: Congratulations to Ahmed Alveed, Daniel Duffy, and Nadia Mokhallati who are semi-finalists. Congratulations to Samuel Smith who received Letters of Commendation in recognition of outstanding academic promise.