



# IB and AP Opportunities

Owen J. Roberts High School will be home to more than 1,600 students next year. Opportunities for every student to grow and succeed continue to expand with the population.

Two current high school students shared aspects of their AP experience as part of a panel at the January 29, 2018 Curriculum Committee meeting of the Board of School Directors. In addition to the students, the panel included teachers, guidance, and administration. The panel spoke to both the IB and the AP programs at the high school and fielded questions from the public and Board. “I personally believe that any student in Owen J. Roberts High School has the ability to succeed in AP coursework,” offered Senior Max Gallagher.

Mr. Bill Richardson, International Baccalaureate (IB) CP Coordinator, gave an overview of the

IBCP program, which will expand next year. After a rigorous process, the high school was officially certified for IBCP in July, 2017, and accepted its first IB students to the program this past fall. Mr. Richardson spoke about the courses which will be added next year and the planned growth of the program as it pertains to teacher training, student growth, and the program of studies. Next year will include IB Information Technology (IT), for which there is much interest among students. IBIT uses an integrated approach, encouraging students to make informed judgments and decisions about the role of information and communication technologies in contemporary society.

Students Max Gallagher and Liam Conway spoke about the significance of AP testing and offered specifics about how their AP courses prepare them to succeed on the exams. They also talked about how

AP courses helped them build confidence in many areas and how appreciative they were to have many AP options. Two AP teachers shared some of their teaching methodologies and talked about how, at OJR, instruction is driven not only through data and student input, but by global collaboration among AP teachers across districts. AP potential, as derived from PSAT score reports, is used by teachers, guidance, and administration as students make course selections. The high school staff and administration work together toward the goal of each student learning at full potential. “We try to guide students to feel confident in their abilities to succeed in rigorous coursework,” said Assistant Principal Mrs. Caroline Slade. Owen J. Roberts High School offers 25 AP courses, giving students great access to rigorous learning and opportunities for college credit. The high school has been included on the AP Annual Honor Roll, five out of eight years.

# Owen J. Roberts Reality Fair    Loss of a Community Leader

In conjunction with Tri-County Area Federal, Citadel and Diamond Federal Credit Unions, Owen J. Roberts High School hosted its first “Reality Fair” on April 25th. This event was an interactive financial literacy experience which gave approximately 400 junior students the “real life” experience. The event supported district workforce needs and career pathways.



Students selected a level of post-secondary education (i.e. high school, 2 year college/technical school, bachelors, etc.) and a career within that level. Prior to arriving to the event, students received a budget sheet that had their monthly take home pay (monthly gross pay minus taxes, health insurance and retirement). Many students had student education loans as part of their monthly deductions.

Upon arriving into the Main Gym, students attended various booths, such as housing (select a rent package or mortgage), transportation, insurance, furniture, food, cell phone, and typical expenses. Additional expenditures such as entertainment and travel were factored in as well. Deductions were then made to their monthly take home pay.

“Being completely stressed about my future more than ever,” admitted student Katherine Sundemier.

Throughout the fair, there were many temptations for additional spending, and students learned to balance their wants and needs to live on their own. Once students visited all required booths, they met individually with financial advisors for feedback and review of their budget. This event was an excellent way to give students “real life exposure” to the financial demands of living independently.

At the regular business meeting of the Owen J. Roberts Board of School Directors on Monday, February 26, 2018, a Resolution of Tribute was made in honor of school board member Mr. James B. Frees II, who passed away suddenly on February 1, 2018. An official, sealed copy of this action was furnished to Jamie's immediate family at the meeting. The Honorable Representative Tim Hennessey attended the meeting to honor Mr. Frees presenting citations from both the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and the Pennsylvania Senate on behalf of Senator John Rafferty, who was unable to attend. Representative Hennessey offered, "Mr. Frees represented many things to many family man, dedicated worker and avowed heart and time to enhance the quality of life. His inspiring presence and genuine love for in the hearts and memories of the many in



The Honorable Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania officially submitted a tribute to James B. Frees II into Congressional Record recognizing Mr. Frees as a true champion for students and a tireless advocate for educational excellence.

Mr. Frees, a 1989 graduate of OJR High School and third generation School Board Director served our community in this capacity since December 2009. As a School Board Director, Mr. Frees proudly served as Chairperson of the Finance Committee since 2010. He was elected by his fellow board members to serve as Board Vice President in 2012 and Board President in 2014. A tireless public servant, Mr. Frees was a member of the OJR Music Parents Organization and assisted the OJR High School Marching Band from moving equipment, driving the equipment truck or pulling the trailer to serving as announcer at the Fall Preview and Annual Cavalcade. He founded and served as President of the Coventry Rugby Football Club. He was a member of the Famous Bucktown Boosters. He also served as a member of the Board of Charlestown Playschool. Mr. Frees was kind-hearted and will be remembered for his generosity and unsurpassed commitment to the students of the Owen J Roberts School District. The Jamie Frees Memorial Fund has been established c/o Phoenixville Federal Bank.

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# Sleight of Hand

Yes, he pulled a bunny from a hat in the end, but during the show he also put a bottle of soda into a black velvet bag, waved a wand, had the audience SNAP and pulled out a bottle of water! THE MAGIC OF NUTRITION™ teaches children the importance of good nutrition and staying active using magic and illusion to create an educational and unforgettable learning experience. If laughter is the best medicine, students got a healthy dose during the assemblies as they were “wowed” on many occasions. Thanks to generous grants from the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation and The Phoenixville Health Foundation, East Vincent Elementary and North Coventry Elementary schools brought in Mr. Todd Kupper, RD, LDN, a registered dietitian and PA licensed nutritionist who happens to be an award-



winning professional magician. Mr. Kupper’s program, called the Magic of Nutrition, addresses nutritional issues in memorable ways. Mr. Kupper reinforced other district-wide nutrition programs, Go for the Greens and Water First for Thirst.

# Engineered Races

There was a lot of nail biting on the perimeter of the eight-meter runway as Mr. DeRafelo’s eighth grade engineers demonstrated the balloon race cars they designed and constructed. The construction could not include any commercially-produced parts such as toy car wheels or axles. Students were allowed to use wood, plastics, paper, spools, straws, and tape with a balloon to power their car. Work-ability was judged on the car being able to travel at least 8 meters. Some cars sped down the runway for over 20 meters. Students applied knowledge of forces, friction and Newton’s Laws of Motion in the construction of their vehicles. For the test, students inflated balloons and set the cars down the runway. Most cars passed inspection, but a few had to be re-engineered. Students were able to learn from their own research and design and also learn from others in the class.



# Not Scared...Prepared



Over the last few semesters, all Owen J. Roberts staff have taken part in training and decision making for Run, Hide, Fight protocols. The drills are much like the regularly practiced lock-down drills which have been accomplished for the last 18 years, but add some new strategies which may be implemented in certain situations. Run, Hide, Fight, originally created by the Department of Homeland Security, is sanctioned by multiple agencies including the Pennsylvania State Police. During these safety drills, staff and students are trained in different options for responding to a school intruder who is intent on doing harm.

Principal Dr. Malinda McKillip met with all French Creek Elementary students this spring to introduce the Run, Hide, Fight concept. She read the book, “I’m Not Scared...I’m Prepared!” by Julia Cook. The book was developed by the ALICE Training Institute, which mirrors the concepts of the Run, Hide, Fight program. The book makes the safety concepts applicable to children of all ages in a non-fearful way. By using this book, children can develop a better understanding of what needs to be done if they ever encounter a “dangerous someone”. All students, district-wide, continue to practice Run, Hide, Fight scenarios.

# Morning News Brief



Written by: Noah Zimmerman and Brian Serfass, Grade 6

It is a typical school morning at West Vincent Elementary School. Everyone is unpacking book bags and getting ready to start the day. Before the switching of classes occurs, you can hear the theme song from the school news projecting from classrooms everywhere. As the clock hits 8:40, the 6th grade ATP group begins their daily routine of furiously writing articles and filming them live, to deliver information to the students and staff at West Vincent. Each day sixth grade ATP students report about the weather, lunch, an important event in history that occurred on that specific day, a vocabulary word and definition of the day, important school happenings, and recent news with a focus on STEM. After they have found the articles, written summaries to showcase the information, and filmed the reports using the iMac computer, the lead anchors of the West Vincent News Team, Noah Zimmerman and Brian Serfass, have the responsibility of editing and uploading the finished product to the private YouTube account. Although the news consumes quite a bit of time to film, edit, and publish, it is something the school depends on and the 6th graders, look forward to. This is what it takes to make a professional and polished West Vincent News Team.

The High School Art Show included collections from 10 Advance Placement Art Students.

**Cassandra Jasulevicz’s** concentration focuses on oil paintings done on glass or mirrored surfaces. She focused on portraiture, figurative, and organic matter to create pieces that show inner expression and intense emotion through use of vivid colors, varying 3-dimensional textures, and interactive compositions. Cassandra will be attending Tyler School of Art at Temple University in the



**Jane Minor** focused her concentration on the Fashion Editorial Process; sketching and rendering, constructing garments, photography, and editorial format. She explored new sewing techniques, improved renderings, and completed a college application portfolio. She will be attending the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City this fall.



# Mystical Brigadoon

Brigadoon was performed at the Owen J. Roberts High School March 15-18, 2018. The large, talented cast of this year's musical presented previews to all the Owen J. Roberts Elementary Schools. Lerner and Loewe's Brigadoon, the enchanting and beloved Broadway and West End musical, inspired the classic MGM film, and numerous productions all over the world. Featuring such standards as "Almost Like Being in Love," "Come to Me, Bend To Me," and "Heather on the Hill," Brigadoon is a timeless, romantic classic which vividly brings

the mystery and magic of the Scottish highlands to life. Previewed at the elementary schools, the students loved the story in which New Yorker Tommy Albright unexpectedly arrives at the mysterious Scottish Highland village of Brigadoon, which only appears for one day every 100 years. When Tommy meets and falls in love with Fiona, a beautiful villager in this magical hamlet, he must decide whether to return to his old life, or stay in Brigadoon -- forever. Elementary students were left with the cliffhanger... would the magical city of Brigadoon disappear into the mist?



# AP Honor Roll

Owen J. Roberts School District was placed on the College Board's 8th Annual AP® District Honor Roll for significant gains in student access and success. The district is one of 447 school districts in the U.S. and Canada being honored by the College Board with placement on the 8th Annual AP® District Honor Roll. To be included on the 8th Annual Honor Roll, Owen J. Roberts School District had to, since 2015, increase the number of students participating in AP while also increasing or maintaining the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher. Reaching these goals shows that this district is successfully identifying motivated, academically prepared students who are ready for AP.

Dr. Susan Lloyd, Owen J. Roberts School District Superintendent, offered, "Having achieved this honor five times, our high school has clearly demonstrated an ongoing commitment to helping more students learn at a higher level."

"Congratulations to all the educators and administrators in this district

who have worked to clear a path for more students of all backgrounds to participate and succeed in AP," said Trevor Packer, head of AP and Instruction. "These educators and administrators are fostering a culture in their schools and classrooms that allows students to face new challenges and build the confidence to succeed."

Helping more students learn at a higher level and earn higher AP scores is an objective of all members of the AP community, from AP teachers to district and school administrators to college professors. Many districts are experimenting with initiatives and strategies to see how they can expand access and improve student performance at the same time. Owen J Roberts School District is highlighted for achieving these outcomes among an AP student population in which 30% or more are underrepresented minority students (American Indian/ Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander) and/or 30% or more are low-income students (students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch).

# Mapping Influenza

The U.S. experienced an unusually active influenza season this year and Mr. Hampson's Biotechnology students were hard at work mapping the evolution and migration of this year's outbreak. Analyzing data and weekly maps from the CDC and state DOH's, students gained insights in the spread patterns and hoped to better understand how the flu migrated town to town and state to state. They noticed that rates of influenza increased dramatically during the winter holiday season and speculated this took place in conjunction with holiday travel. Insights into patterns of spread help scientists develop effective vaccines.



# Heart Healthy Smoothies

In honor of heart health month, District Chef Nels Benton visited all elementary schools offering fruit smoothies as part of lunch through Chartwells' Chef2School program. Activities such as Zumba at East Coventry Elementary, which was made available by a generous grant for the Pottstown Health & Wellness Foundation, were part of the heart healthy celebrations. The weather happened to cooperate on February 20 so the students enjoyed additional heart healthy benefits of a good dose of sunshine and fresh air.



# For the Kids



Owen J. Roberts High School hosted a mini-THON all-night event on Saturday, March 3, 2018. During the fun, interactive event which runs from 8 p.m. until 8 a.m., students do not sit. It takes scores of volunteers to help throughout the night. Approximately 450 students attended and the group raised more than \$40,000! Four Diamonds Mini-THONs are interactive events for students of all ages that inspire teamwork, leadership and creativity, while empowering youth and young adults through philanthropy and community service in the fight to conquer childhood cancer. Mini-THONs are modeled after the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON) and have been making a difference in the lives of childhood cancer patients and their families since 1993.

# Police Presence

In light of the violence that has taken place in schools in our country, it is reassuring to know that our local police are involved in our schools on a regular basis. Township police chiefs from North Coventry, East Coventry, East Vincent, and West Vincent have increased their presence at our elementary schools. In addition, Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) notified school districts in the Commonwealth that schools may expect an increased presence of troopers conducting drive-throughs in marked patrol vehicles. Additionally, troopers informed us that they will be more proactive with their walk-through tours of school facilities, greetings of students during arrival and departure.

State and local police work to provide visible officer presence as a deterrent to potential criminal activity and to establish a level of reassurance for the communities that law officers have sworn to protect. We are thankful for our state and local police who are being proactive in protecting our most precious resource, the children in our community.



# Simple Machines

Mrs. Neiffer’s physical science classes at the middle school have been studying simple machines. There are many ways that students applied their knowledge throughout the unit. They created Rube Goldberg machines to understand how devices may be linked together to produce more complex actions.

On Friday, March 2, students took part in a K’Nex lab, where they were able to apply input/output theory to create simple machines. Rather than trying to understand how simple machines work in the abstract, the hands-on lesson helps students calculate mechanical advantage to assess the performance of their machines.

To warm up for the lab, students solved the problem, “If a wedge struck by a 525N hammer blow can split a log held together by 1400N of force, what is its mechanical advantage?” Since Mrs. Neiffer has an iPad class, students performed their solutions using the Educreation App, which allows their iPads to become interactive whiteboards. Mrs. Neiffer was able to scan the iPads to assess



how many students were able to solve the problem.

Mrs. Neiffer went on with the lesson using Plickers, a powerfully simple tool that lets teachers collect real-time formative assessment data without the need for student devices. Students use Plickers cards which have an image with sides that represent a different answer choice. When the teacher asks a question, students hold up their Plickers cards with the answer positioned at the top. The teacher scans the room and in a matter of seconds knows exactly if the class understands the concept.

# Welcome, Principal Bentman

North Coventry Elementary School welcomed Principal Mr. Brad Bentman on May 1. Mr. Bentman attended West Chester University where he earned his Bachelors of Science in Education.

After graduating from West Chester, he began his career at Glenolden School in the Interboro School District as a fifth-grade teacher. While at Glenolden he continued his learning at Temple University and received a Masters of Science in Education. After graduating from Temple, he went on to Gwynedd-Mercy University to pursue a Principal K-12 Certification. He then moved into a leadership position and served in the capacity as the Dean of Students at Glenolden.

His aspiration was to serve as an administrator at the elementary level. In the summer of 2008, he transitioned to Rainbow Elementary School in the Coatesville Area School District serving as the Assistant Principal. In the summer of 2012, he became the Principal of Friendship Elementary School. Mr. Bentman lives locally with his wife and three daughters. He is excited to be a part of the Owen J. Roberts family so he can continue his life-long goal to serve students while helping to provide a first-class educational experience. Mr. Bentman observed, “I am extremely impressed with the positivity, collaboration, community support, and the nurturing environment that flows throughout the school. During my initial conversations with teachers and parents it is evident that the stakeholders’ number one goal is to support students. The curriculum, programs, resources, and activities are robust and in place for every child to succeed.” He is excited to support student success.



# Middle School Scores for Cancer

Seventh grade Middle School student, Makenna Massi, attended the annual Middle School student/faculty basketball on Friday, February 9, via the “Perfect Attendant” telepresence robot from her hospital room at CHOP. The game raised over \$2,000 and featured hundreds of people wearing orange (for leukemia awareness) Fight On Makenna t-shirts designed by Makenna’s classmate, Hunter Kqira. The t-shirt sales and donations raised over \$6,400 for the American Cancer Society to fund ground-breaking research, crucial patient care programs, and cancer education and prevention information.

The Perfect Attendant technology gives Makenna the ability to be fully supported by her school, teachers, and peers. Prior to the faculty/student basketball game, Hunter Kqira presented a check to the Relay for Life organization with Makenna’s family gathered around Makenna via the Perfect Attendant. Her father, Rich Massi, faced Makenna and repeated what he says he tells her all the time, “Makenna, you are the strongest person I know.” The entire crowd cheered, “Fight on, Makenna”! The Middle School also sponsored a Dodge Ball Tournament on March 16 with proceeds going to American Cancer Society and Relay for Life.



# Museum Experience

Art Goes to School (AGTS) presented museum experience visits to the five Owen J. Roberts elementary schools this winter. Art Goes to School is a non-profit organization that for the past 50 years has worked to present a wide-ranging, rotating portfolio of art to the Delaware Valley’s elementary students. Each year, the Owen J Roberts Art Goes to School chapter donates a framed print to an elementary school (rotating schools). This year’s print will be selected by French Creek Students and framed for the school.



The Owen J Roberts Art Goes to School chapter is one of more than 50 school districts that participate in the program. Owen J Roberts School District has participated for more than 30 years bringing the richness of visual arts appreciation to all of our elementary schools. Art Goes to School is staffed exclusively by volunteers. AGTS volunteers start each new school year by researching pieces from rotating portfolios and presenting findings to fellow members. Then, they bring some of that knowledge back to the District’s elementary classrooms in the form of art appreciation seminars.

# Record Odyssey Participants

Owen J. Roberts fielded an all-time high of 13 teams in regional competition this year with nearly 100 Owen J. students participating. Seven of our 13 teams moved on to compete in state finals competition by virtue of their first or second place finishes competing in the Odyssey of the Mind, Creative Problem Solving Contest, held in Stroudsburg, PA. Four of those seven teams moved on to world finals competition by earning either a first or second place finish at the tournament. World Finals competition are held at Iowa State University May 23rd through May 26th where Owen J. students will compete against teams from across the United States and more than a dozen other countries.

Congratulations to French Creek Elementary for earning a second place finish and to teams from East Vincent and both the Owen J. Roberts Middle School and High School for bringing State Championship Titles back to Owen J. Roberts School District.





# Mobilizing Resources for Teens in Need

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program is utilized at both the middle and high schools at Owen J. Roberts and is called the Roberts Assistance Program (RAP). RAP provides a systematic team process used to mobilize school resources for any student experiencing barriers to success which may include (but are not limited to) substance abuse, harassment, intimidation, mental health issues, and/or bullying.

At the high school level, the team includes the school police officer, the Student Assistance Coordinator who

is a licensed social worker, a certified mental health clinician from Creative Health, a certified drug and alcohol counselor, the certified school nurse, a team of trained staff and teachers including all guidance counselors and administrators.

The high school team meets twice weekly and discusses student needs and outcomes. Teachers and students are encouraged to openly use RAP resources. Students may self-refer or someone may refer a student. Once a referral is made, there is an information collection process to find

out what may be going on with the student. The team meets and assesses the need lining up resources which are then offered to the student and student’s family.

The Student Assistance Office and the RAP team work to reduce risk and solve underlying problems which help students succeed and help to keep the school community safe. If an issue escalates, a discipline team is in place to handle all reports of harassment and licensed social workers are available for specific student needs.

Approximately six years ago, Owen J. Roberts High School instituted an Advisory Period three days per week to encourage adult connection with students. Most advisory teachers have a “buddy” which could include another teacher, an administrator, a secretary, a clerk or paraprofessional. These advisory groups help give students additional adult contact, allowing them to get to know an extra adult in the building. The 10 minutes of Advisory is largely unstructured allowing students to healthy, trusting, and appropriate relationships.

## NJROTC Programs

On Tuesday, March 20, 2018, Mr. John Conrad, a NASA Ambassador, brought a fascinating Global Climate Change program to Owen J. Roberts High School sponsored by the NJROTC. The program depicted simple facts and logic behind climate change, with emphasis on the researcher and tools (especially complex models) which underpin the world’s understanding. Students learned how to access the NASA climate website and also reviewed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which draws on the work of hundreds of scientists from all over the world.

Students were excited to welcome Mr. Conrad and learn more through his expertise. Students were impressed to explore a satellite view of earth from space – provided by well over a dozen earth-viewing spacecraft programs (most involving NASA). They discovered that we are neighbors to the longest running programs for collecting satellite imagery--Landsat--which is based in King of Prussia. Students examined the facts gathered by numerous instruments, orbits, and techniques. They explored various models to be run to pin-point where we are in climate change, and also reviewed more well-known models for big data collection studying ice cap, sea level, and greenhouse gas statistics.

To continue the students’ exploration of climate, Airmen from McGuire Air Force Base were at Owen J. High School on March 27, lecturing on military weather forecasting and showing off their large piece of equipment called a TMQ53 - Tactical Weather Observing Station. The airmen were from the Weather Flight group which is part of the 305th Operations Support Squadron out of McGuire AFB. They support air cargo and refueling missions and occasionally are called upon to support alert aircraft, presidential support missions and refueling test flights for the new F-35.

## NHS Pillar of Service

Service is one of the four pillars supporting the National Honor Society. Throughout the course of the school year, NHS members participate in numerous service activities initiated by the Owen J. Roberts Chapter. Many current NHS members have given back to the school by volunteering as tutors to provide academic guidance and assistance to their peers. The National Honor Society of Owen J. Roberts has tutored students in subjects such as Chemistry, Algebra, Geometry, History, English, World Languages and peer editing of papers. Upon being dismissed from school, many of our NHS members, instead of going home, go to one of the five elementary schools to work with the younger children with their reading, writing, arithmetic and other essential skills needed for future academic success.

NHS usually plays a big role in Reading Across America when they fan out to our five elementary schools in order to devote part of their day to read with and to our young students so as to share in the excitement of reading and Dr. Suess’s birthday. Students were disappointed this year when inclement weather didn’t allow the annual event to happen. In addition to the NHS initiatives, students give back to the community with individual and independent community service. These activities range from participating in numerous school sponsored events such as the Wildcat Ambassador Program and the upcoming Minithon to helping kids in camps, working with senior citizens through churches, food pantries, working as volunteers at local hospitals, participating in benefit concerts for senior citizens.

## Water First

Owen J. Roberts schools celebrated healthy hydration during Go for the Greens week, March 12-19. As part of gaining knowledge about healthy hydration, students learned about the hydrating properties of cucumbers. The Wellness Council partnered with Chartwells Chef 2 School program to bring cucumber water and cucumber salad samples to nearly 3900 elementary and middle school students. “Drip” and “Slice” mascots helped spread the message “Water First for Thirst”. The healthy hydration campaign was in conjunction with a generous \$12,000 Pottstown Health & Wellness Foundation matching grant supplying water filler fountains in all schools. The filler/filter fountains allow for quick fill of re-usable water containers and help reduce disposable plastic water bottle trash.



## Extraordinary Gifts



On March 9, the High School celebrated Spread the Word to End the Word Day. This is a very important day to many students throughout the nation in order to spread awareness about the harmful use of the word “retarded” and to end any detrimental slang words towards people with disabilities. The campaign aims to recognize the extraordinary gifts of every individual and eliminate use of words that are still all too common. High School students were able to sign a banner to pledge to stop the use of disparaging words toward others and to speak up when they hear it.

## Read Across America

Wawa store #146 SURPASSED their goal of collecting 250 books to donate to the boys and girls at North Coventry Elementary School. Thanks to their customers, employees, and a generous donation from Books-A-Million, North Coventry Elementary students have 434 MORE books on the shelves. Manager Dave Soto worked with his staff to celebrate Read Across America in a meaningful way, connecting books with young people right in their community.





# Science Mentors

Twelve Owen J. Roberts High School Science National Honor Society students used their personal experiences and scientific knowledge to judge and mentor. High school teacher Mrs. Karen Neumaier had no problem assembling the first-ever student jury for an elementary science fair. High school scientists showed up at East Vincent Elementary School on Wednesday, January 10, eager to create a positive experience for younger students and happy to model that science continues to be fun as one grows up.

Beginning in early October, Owen J. Roberts School District students in grades 4-6 identify a problem, idea, or question to research. Later in the year, they are able to choose if they would like to enter the science research competition. The elementary competitions are held at each elementary school with the top five projects in each grade being selected to move on to the Chester County competition.

The entire science research process is a unique learning opportunity for students as they get to select a topic they are interested in learning more about. The process then not only encourages the student to conduct research--- it promotes problem-solving scenarios, writing exercises in journaling, process/procedural narratives, and abstract summaries in addition to the use of the scientific method as a framework to make these projects a wonderful integrated exercise.



At East Coventry Elementary, the 12 high school jurors were joined by a local scientist and Ursinus biology student to judge more than 70 projects. “I was impressed how focused our judges were,” said Dr. Heidi Lehmann, K-12 Science Supervisor, adding “They were enthusiastic, provided encouragement and constructive feedback, and shared topics and courses that they are currently studying with the East Vincent student scientists.” Choosing projects to move on to the country Science Research Competition is often difficult. Dr. Lehmann was impressed at how the student judges deliberated. “They used scientific vocabulary and shared content expertise,” she offered.

# Reading for a Cause

Recently, it was difficult at East Coventry Elementary School to get students focused on something other than reading. For ten days in the month of March, all students participated in a read-at-thon sponsored by the East Coventry PTA. The event was an overwhelming success with the proceeds helping to offset the cost of the planned new playground that will be installed when the new school opens in fall. The total amount of money collected through donations was over \$17,000.00



The kickoff for the read-a-thon began on the same day as the annual Read Across the District. As a way to celebrate and honor the life and work of Dr. Suess, students and staff across the district were encouraged to stop what they are doing and spend time simply enjoying a good book. This was a fitting start to East Coventry’s read-a-thon. Principal Todd Oswald said, “The building got extremely quiet while students found comfortable places in their rooms to enjoy their books.”

After the initial kick-off event, students recorded their accumulated reading minutes both at school and at home for the ten days of the read-a-thon. The original goal of the read-a-thon was to reach a combined total of 75,000 minutes by the end of the event. Incentives were planned for the students in each grade and the class with the most

minutes. Students were able to design simple websites that could be sent to family and friends encouraging them to read by donating various amounts of money. All of the donations were handled on-line which meant no students needed to solicit door-to-door selling.

In all, students read for a combined total of 312,624 minutes which far exceeded the original goal. One of the top readers, fourth grade student Nola Herbic said, “I really liked the read-a-thon.” She added that she knew many other students who were just as excited as she was to be reading and participating. The event culminated with awards being given to the top class and the top readers.

# Luminous Science Students

A limited number of science research projects advance from the school to the county level. From the county, a select group moves on to the Delaware Valley Science Fair (DVSF). DVSF was founded in 1949, making it one of the oldest Fairs in the country, and now also one of the largest. DVSF, a regional competition, works to bring parents, teachers, and industry together to stimulate and nurture young people so that they grow and develop into contributing members of the community. Students present their scientific work and have the opportunity to interact with scientists and receive feedback on their efforts.

Owen J. Roberts had a strong showing of student scientists winning awards at DVSF. Representing elementary schools were Saachi Chakravarty (EV) who received an Honorable Mention in Behavior and Social Sciences.

Dysen Neill (FC) was acknowledged with the Leonardo DaVinci Society Award recognizing Superior Science Fair Projects in the areas of Music, Medicine and Engineering. Joshua Zhang (WV) received an Honorable Mention in Computer Science. At the Middle School level, Cooper Bryan received Honorable Mention in Botany and Reilly Koitzsch won second place in Environmental Sciences with an invitation to participate in the Broadcom MASTERS. Will Cano received the NASA Earth System Science Award and American Meteorological Society Award. Both competitors from the High School were offered scholarships to Harrisburg University in addition to their other recognitions: Paige Aldred received Honorable Mention in Zoology and Jonathan Arditì fetched first place in Medicine and Health Sciences.

# ChiefTech Award

Owen J. Roberts Director of Technology, Mr. Paul Sanfrancesco, was given the 2018 Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology (PAECT) Chief Technology Award. The honor goes to an individual who is a pioneer and champion of the uses of technology in K-12 education through leadership, community-building, innovative uses of technology, creation of partnerships and impact on learning.

Mr. Sanfrancesco changed the focus of the technology department to one of customer service. The impact has been the creation of trust from the faculty and administration encouraging individual buy-in for initiatives. Mr. Sanfrancesco has worked with both Verizon and Comcast to help provide internet access to low income families. Mr. Sanfrancesco, who has been a Director of Technology for over 20 years, will represent Pennsylvania at the national CoSN (the Consortium for School Networking) Conference. CoSN represents over 12 million students in school districts nationwide and continues to grow as a powerful and influential voice in K-12 education.

# Harnessing the Sun

An estimated 30% of the energy needs on Owen J. Roberts main campus are generated with solar as part of an aggressive project to create renewable energy while reducing energy consumption throughout the district. A huge step toward reducing the dependence on non-renewable fuels was the installation of more than 2,200 solar panels in 2012 on the rooftops of the high and middle schools capturing solar energy with a 525 kW solar photovoltaic array.



# DuPont Excellence in Education

Congratulations to Ms. Mary-Rita Bonner, Owen J. Roberts Gifted ATP Support Teacher, who received the DuPont Excellence in Education Award at the DelVal Science Research Competition Award Ceremony on Thursday, April 5. This award goes to the teachers who guide students in STEM, support science education in their communities, and are most dedicated to science fairs. Ms. Bonner received a plaque, check, and an all-expense-paid trip to the International Science and Engineering Fair in May. East Coventry Principal Mr. Todd Oswald said, “Ms. Bonner has developed a science research competition at East Coventry that has become the model for many other schools in the area. She works closely with the directors of the Del Valley Science Fairs as well as the National Intel Competition. Both opportunities have benefited students in the district through the professional relationships she has established.”



# North Coventry Audience with Senator Rafferty

A FIRST LEGO League robotics team at North Coventry Elementary School designed their competitive robot around the problem of keeping medicines out of our waterways as part of the FIRST LEGO HYDRO DYNAMICS season. In robotics competition, each challenge has three parts: the Robot Game, the Project, and the Core Values.

The Watery Wizards of Oz, as the team is called, became active citizens as a direct result of the research for their problem (the project portion of the challenge). They found out that the issue of safe medicine disposal was much bigger than just how disposed medicines might affect water quality. This group of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students began to understand that medicine disposal was also a key component in the opioid crisis. “We don’t want

to grow up in an environment where this problem is going on,” the team said. So they began a public health campaign and started contacting local politicians for support and caught the attention of Senator John Rafferty.

On January 9, Senator Rafferty spent an hour with the Watery Wizards team learning about their research and listening to their concerns. They showed him several videos they had produced and talked about how they distribute and inform the public about a product called Deterra which deactivates drugs using a simple process. The Senator was familiar with the product, but was inspired to find ways to distribute more widely at community days. “You have convinced me to make Deterra available at community events and to share with other senators so they might also share with their constituents when they have



events for children, senior citizens and the community,” the Senator informed students.

The Senator also explained to students that he was happy to partner with them on their public safety campaign

using his website to share their research and resources. Students are excited to have the Senator’s support and looking forward to continuing to make a difference with a problem for which they have found workable solutions.

## Robot Dogs and Radon

Two teams of East Vincent students participated in the annual Chester County STEM Design Challenge tournament. The teams were charged with making a K’Nex prototype of their original invention that would make life better, safer, and cleaner. In the elementary division, East Vincent was represented by the Extreme Extinguishers, who designed a fire detector & extinguisher, air purifier, and radon fan that are all connected to users’ phones.



The team impressed the judges with their background research and marketing plan, and they placed 1st overall in the elementary division. Congratulations to fifth graders Chance Weaver and Andrew Dybicz, and 4th graders Anna Braun and Sophia Shea. In the middle school division, the Healthy Hounds team represented our school with their robotic dog who can assist the elderly and disabled, keeping our community safe, healthy, and connected. The judges loved the impact their invention could make in the lives of users and the eye catching, sophisticated design of their prototype. Congratulations to sixth graders Jack Snyder, Casey Davies, and Mark Walsh for placing 1st overall in the middle school division.

## Glow Bug

Lindsay Smith, MPH, from the Chester County Health Department, visited all East Coventry Elementary School classrooms during flu season to demonstrate proper hand washing. Students learned that washing your hands is easy, and it’s one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. They also learned what types of germs may linger on hands. Ms. Smith brought a device called the Glow Bug which had a black light so that students could see germs before washing their hands and perform a germ check after washing. The students, even at the kindergarten level, were shocked by the microscopic “yuckies” that could hide under their fingernails and other areas that may be easy to miss during a hand wash.



## Post Prom Fun

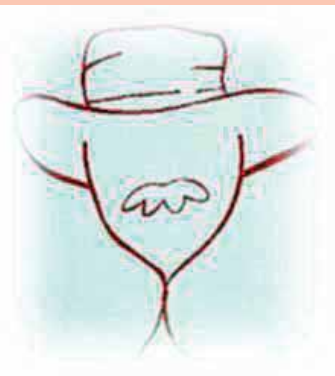


Photo by Jessica Marzella

On May 5, Owen J. Roberts High School held the Junior/Senior Prom in King of Prussia with more than 800 students attending. The high school parent organization, the PTSA, sponsored a fun post-prom party which provided students with a safe and enjoyable evening where they could make memories to last a lifetime. The post prom included a pre-promenade at the Wildcat with professional pictures at no charge to students. PTSA not only hired a photographer, but arranged a coach bus to transport students to the prom after the promenade.

More than 250 students attended the after-prom party, which ran from 11 pm - 5 am with live music from the Fabulous Taco Brothers Band and various crowd-pleasing foods such as Chick Fil-A and Lani Ice. A mock casino, inflatables and laser tag provided ample opportunity for teens to play. Dancing went well into the wee hours with DJ Tracey Shaner entertaining from 12:30-3:30 am. There were plenty of prizes given out and the event was free to students thanks to the dedication of the post prom committee and the help of so many community members.

## Coach David Michael Track



After hearing the case prepared by an advisory committee, the Owen J. Roberts Board of School Directors unanimously voted to recognize Coach David Michael for his service and success as a teacher coach for Owen J. Roberts School District. Following School Board Policy 701.1 and Regulation 701B, the high school track will be named Coach David Michael Track. Mr. Michael was a Health and PE teacher for 35 years, held the position of track and field coach for 38 years and was the cross country coach for 42 years. In addition to

many Pennsylvania State Track and Cross Country medalists and qualifying teams, his legacy included seven Girls Cross Country Championships, three Boys Cross Country Championships and one Girls Track & Field Championship. He also coached three first team All-State Cross Country Runners, was Cross Country Coach of the Year ten times and Track & Field Coach of the Year four times. An annual 5K and Kids/Family 1-mile Fun Run/Walk will be held in Coach Michael’s name. Proceeds from the first year will be used for the track signage. This year’s event is planned for June 2, 2018 with registration from 8:00-8:30. (We realize there may be a possibility some residents may not receive this publication prior to June 2 due to bulk mail considerations and apologize in advance if that happens.) For more information contact Coach Tim Marcoc at TMarcoe@ojrsd.com.



# Message from the Superintendent



listening and learning as your new superintendent. Well, during

Welcome to the spring edition of The Advocate. Remember, in the last edition I promised you I would hit the ground listening and learning as your new superintendent. Well, during the past few months, I've met with students, parents, employees, community members, municipal leaders and law enforcement. I've learned that our students enjoy school, but not homework and that parents worry about the safety of their children, yet are overwhelmingly supportive of our teachers and administrators. I've learned that community members and municipal leaders appreciate that the quality of the school district is responsible

for increased property values, but demand that we continue to be fiscally responsible. In speaking with our employees, I've learned that throughout the district, there is tremendous Wildcat pride and a strong desire to continually strive for excellence. And finally, I've learned from our local police chiefs and state police officials that they support our schools and are committed to working with the district to assure everyone's safety. I'm so pleased that everyone has been forthcoming, even when I ask difficult questions. That tells me that everyone is interested in the advancement of our district, and they want to be heard. I'm still listening! Make sure you contact me directly with your questions or suggestions, with concerns or advice, or when you are inspired or troubled, at [slloyd@ojrsd.com](mailto:slloyd@ojrsd.com).

## Smoking Cessation Memes

The Chester County Tobacco-Free Coalition (CCTFC) is a collaborative community effort dedicated to preventing the initiation of tobacco use among youth, promoting free cessation options to both youth and adults, advocating for smoke-free environments and reducing the rate of tobacco sales to youth under the age of 18 in Chester County. Members include hospitals, clinics, schools and universities, local health agencies, community organizations, government agencies and legislative representatives. Each year, CCTFC encourages middle school students to stand up, speak out and seize control over companies who market smoking/vaping products by participating in a Kick Butts Day contest. The coalition

hosted an anti-vape meme contest for the national Kick Butts Day in both 2017 and 2018. Prior to that, they used to hold essay contests. Three Owen J. Roberts Middle School students placed in the 2018 Kick Butts Day Meme Contest this year. Zachary Evans (7th grade), won first place. Dylan Woodgate (7th Grade), won third place and Jacob Evans (8th Grade) received Honorable Mention. The students created their poster images in Exploring Technology with Mrs. Jen Armstrong.

Chester County Tobacco Free Coalition members Kate Genthert, Prevention Specialist, Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol



Services; Lindsay Smith, CCTFC Chair, Public Health Educator, Chester County Health Department; and Michelle Evans, BSN, RN, CTTS,

Community Health Education and Outreach, Tower Health, were all on site at the Middle School for a small award ceremony.

## College Admissions Panel

A panel of experts presented college admissions practices to the Board of Directors and public on January 29. Guests included J. Scott Myers, Director of Undergraduate Admission Moravian College; Catherine Campbell-Perna, Associate Director, Freshman Admission, Drexel University; Becky Eckenrode, Assistant Director of Admissions Penn State University; Summer Davey, Assistant Director of Admissions West Chester University; Maureen Mathis, Assistant Provost

for Undergraduate Enrollment Saint Joseph's University. Representatives fielded a variety of questions about SAT/ACT scores, grades, GPA and class rankings. While the each college and university had variances in the college admissions process, the overriding theme which emerged from the panel is that the college admissions process is a holistic one. Each student application is reviewed in a way that brings context to the student, his school experiences

and how he or she may fit at the college or university to which he or she is applying. Many factors are considered. Some students may work, others may play sports, others may dance or play a musical instrument. No one activity is more meaningful than another. "Students need to pursue [in high school] what they enjoy, what they are able to do, what they may be good at or want to try, and what makes them happy," said Maureen Mathis of Saint

Joseph's University. Each panelist expressed that there is no one factor that makes an admissions decision. The audience learned that GPA is only one factor that is considered by colleges for admissions and merit monies. GPA cannot be compared from one high school to another as the scales are not standardized and, in fact, vary tremendously. Students apply from all over the state, the country and the world are reviewed in the context of the high school profile.

## Go Wildcats! Noted Accomplishments in Athletics and Other Arenas



Claire Venanzi has won the Level 2, Grades 7 and 8, Letters About Literature (LAL) contest in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Claire is a student in Mrs. Wheeler's Eighth Grade English Language Arts Class at Owen J. Roberts Middle School. Her letter rose to the top of thousands of state applicants. In addition to Claire's first place, another OJRMS student had a letter place in the top 5 letters. Elizabeth G. Geist, an eighth grade student in Ms. Colleen Hampton's Language Arts class, took this honor. Congratulations to both students and their teachers. The OJR High School Coding Crew participated in Widener University's 12th Annual High School Programming Competition. Not only did the team of Ahmed Alveed, Andrew Kwiatkowski, and Michael Rauco place 1st, but they completed all eight problems with the best time of any team over the

past 12 years. The team of Ahmed Alveed, Andrew Kwiatkowski, and Hrithik Sangani followed up by placing 1st in the Expert Division in the Lower Merion High School's 3rd Annual code and Programming Competition. Congratulations to OJR's Coding Crew Team 1 and Coding Crew Team 2 on their performance in Lockheed Martin's 2018 CodeQuest Programming Competition in King of Prussia, Saturday April 21, 2018. Advanced Division 2nd place: Coding Crew Team 1: Ahmed Alveed, Andrew Kwiatowski, Oscar Balan Novice Division 1st place: Coding Crew Team 2: Sriya Jonnadula, TJ Reynolds Congratulations to the runner-up team of the Congressional App Challenge from Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District. A team of OJRHS students: Ahmed Alveed, Justin Schwenk, Syder Defibaugh, and Josh Diamond, designed the app Playmakerz Plus, which would

allow sports teams to create a virtual playbook by hand-drawing plays and saving them in the app. Owen J. Roberts had a successful winter varsity sports season. Boys Basketball finished with a record of 14-8. They lost to Methacton in the quarterfinals of the PAC playoffs and then lost to CB East in the first round of the District 6A Playoffs. Girls Basketball finished with a record of 11-11. They lost to Downingtown East in the first round of the District 6A Playoffs. The wrestling team fielded four state qualifiers. In PIAA state competition, Connor Quinn went 0-2, Jason Zollers finished 0-2, Antonio Petrucelli finished 1-2, and Dan Mancini finished 4-2 placing 4th in his class in Pennsylvania. Both the Boys and Girls swim teams were PAC Champions this year. Both teams finished with

perfect records of 9-0. Qualifiers for the state PIAA Swimming and Diving Championships were Abbey Malmstrom, Lilia Crew, Madison Gadzicki, Mikayla Niness, and Meredith Mutter. In the 200 Medley Relay: Abbey Malmstrom, Lilia Crew, Madison Gadzicki, and Mikayla Niness placed 15th. In the 200 Freestyle Relay, the team of Abbey Malmstrom, Lilia Crew, Madison Gadzicki, Mikayla Niness also placed 15th in the state AND set a new team record at the District Competition. Individual Mikayla Niness placed 17th at states in the 50 free and set a new team record at districts. She also placed 27th at states in the 100 free. Abbey Malmstrom placed 27th at states in the 100 Backstroke. Meredith Mutter, in the 100 Breaststroke, placed 27th place at states and set a new school record at districts.