



# TROY School District

Volume 2, Issue 3

## NEWS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dr. Richard Machesky

I'd like to call your attention to a few important items in this edition that will continue to be in the forefront. First, our Board Corner column talks about the impact of funding on an important discussion we'll all be having in the coming months—the debate over delaying school start times. In my last column, I wrote that we would be inviting our community to talk about this issue, but that any changes come with a significant price tag. The Board column outlines the ways the District is engaging with our legislators on this issue and what any potential changes might cost.

Next, check out the progress on our new TSD Preschool. The building is on track to welcome 500 students this fall. But it's not just construction keeping us busy. Our preschool teachers have been honing their craft through targeted professional development in early childhood education, ensuring once again that the educators in our classrooms are the best of the best. We are excited to offer this opportunity to our community at no additional cost to taxpayers, made possible in large part by the sale of land the District no longer needed.

On that front, we have exciting news about Section 1, an 81-acre parcel of land north of Square Lake Road that we prepared to sell two years ago. At the time, we heard from our community about its unique ecological value, which also limited the area that could be developed. After careful study, our Board decided to ensure that this valuable resource would remain as a nature preserve for all to learn from and enjoy. We are happy to announce that we have partnered with a developer to deed more than 70 acres to Six Rivers Land Conservancy, in exchange for 7 acres to be used for residential development. In addition to just under \$2 million for the land, the builder also agreed to pay a \$150,000 to Six Rivers so that conservation efforts can begin. We will finalize this agreement in the fall but strongly believe this is a win for our community.

*Stay tuned—the best is yet to come!*

Dr. Richard Machesky  
Superintendent  
Troy School District

## TROY STUDENTS CELEBRATE READING



March is Reading month was observed at all Troy Schools, and each approached it a little differently.... More inside

### ATTEND TO WELL-BEING

## FIVE THS SCOUTS BECOME EAGLES

There's something in the water at Troy High, and specifically in one family. In February, 5 members of the Johansson family—Jackson (son of Jack & Joan) Matt (son of Bill & Kristin) and Xander, Benjy and Troy (sons of Amy)—achieved their Eagle Scout award, the highest rank possible in the BSA program. Only four percent of Scouts earn this designation per year and go through a lengthy review process having earned at least 21 merit badges and demonstrating the Scout Oath of law, service and leadership. "To become an Eagle you have to work for years on Merit Badges, serving others, and trying to better yourself," said Jackson. These outstanding students are THS athletes as well: Matt- Football, Basketball, Rugby; Jackson- Football, Rugby; Xander-Water Polo, Hockey; Benjy-Hockey, Rugby; Troy-Hockey, Rugby. "We are so proud of all of the boys, of their dedication to service," concluded Kristin Johnson. We all are.



### EMPOWER STUDENTS

## COME TO THE 2019 TSD ART SHOW — AND HELP SAVE THE PLANET!

The public is invited to experience great art during the annual TSD Art Show at the Troy Community Center from April 17-30. As part of this show, students and staff will be creating a collaborative, community art piece using plastic straws to bring awareness to the harmful impact that plastic straws have on our environment. This piece will be produced at the opening reception on April 22, which is Earth Day.

Many restaurants in Troy have begun using biodegradable straws, and our Visual Arts team is asking residents to pledge not to buy plastic straws and to donate any EXISTING straws in their home to the art piece. Straws can be donated at the Community Center on April 22.

Help us spread the word, save the planet, and see some amazing works from talented young artists!





SCHOOL BOARD CORNER



Karl Schmidt, President  
Board of Education

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

During recent discussions and town hall meetings with State Representative Padma Kuppia, State Senator Mallory McMorrow, and Governor Whitmer, Troy School Board members have been asked repeatedly for examples of specific situations where the past ten years of inadequate funding have hurt students. One particularly frustrating example we shared with them was high school start times.

About seven years ago, our transportation company came to the Board with a recommendation to reduce busing costs by switching to a “staggered start time” schedule for the District, where buildings start at different times to allow full utilization of our bus fleet. This new schedule allowed us to reduce our fleet from 90 buses to 70 buses and reduce annual costs by over \$1 million. The downside was that we had to shift high school start times back to 7:20am and end

our late-start elementary schools at 4:07pm—which means some HS students are picked up as early as 6:30am and some elementary students are dropped home as late as 5pm. We agreed to this new schedule as a way to keep budgetary cuts out of the classroom and squeeze every last efficiency we could out of our operations budget.

Unfortunately, an avalanche of physiological and educational studies has since demonstrated that adolescents’ natural melatonin production (the hormone that makes us sleepy) makes it almost impossible for teens to get adequate rest if high school starts prior to 8:00am. In fact, districts switching to later start times have consistently experienced significant reductions in tardiness, unexcused absences, student social/emotional issues—and even double-digit reductions in teen driver accident rates. Inversely, these districts see a significant boost in academic performance—not just in first hour, but across the entire school day. As a result, the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics have

both recommended that districts set high school start time at 8:00am or later.

Seems like a no-brainer, right? It would be if we were adequately funded—but we are not. To date, we have not identified a way to pay for approximately \$1 million in new buses and the \$1 million in annual operating costs it would take to move away from our staggered start schedule and allow the shift in start time to occur. That has left the Board exploring a variety of unattractive options, such as dramatically reducing or eliminating transportation at the high school level, as a way to make the time shift possible. We will be engaging parents and the broader community in the coming months to hear your priorities as well as seek new perspectives and possible solutions as we attempt to craft a policy that will be palatable—if not ideal. In the meantime, we need your support at a state level. Continue to help us push for adequate public school funding so our ability to do the right thing for our kids is not hindered by a lack of basic educational investment.

EMPOWER STUDENTS

BOULAN STUDENTS SOLVE WORLD PROBLEMS IN MODEL UN

Where can middle school students learn to research real-world problems and work cooperatively to come up with real-world solutions? It’s called “Model UN,” and kids at Boulan have the opportunity to do just that, collaborating with peers while being mentored by high school students in this popular after-school club. “We currently have about 50 members,” said teacher adviser Phil Lewan. “I started it several years ago, and now have members of the Troy High club mentor our students.” Students research global issues and compete in simulated sessions of the United Nations.

8th grader George Majar has been doing Model UN for the past 2 years, and loves it because it has

committees, like the real UN, research the root of the problem then brainstorm different ways to solve it.” Teams work together to come up with a “no compromise solution,” where everyone



taught him valuable public speaking and research skills. “The issue I chose was the shortage of drinkable water in Africa. We had to divide up into

has had input and supports the final proposal. Students pitch ideas to each other, and have to be prepared not only for what others say in support of their ideas, but for what people may say against them. “Teamwork is a really important part of what we do in Model UN. We all have to agree on our final recommendations, and that takes effort.”

28 members of the Boulan Team recently competed at the Red Cedar Model UN competition, held at Michigan State University, and placed admirably. Lewan said, “Every year has been better than the last. It’s really impressive to see students grow and take the reins of these leadership roles the way they do.” Future World Leaders!

ATTEND TO WELL-BEING

MORSE SUMMER NIGHTS

The staff and community at Morse Elementary are already hard at work planning the Morse “Summer Nights” community outreach program for Summer 2019. This third year of the Morse Summer Nights welcomes the Morse community, as well as any Troy resident, to its FREE fresh and non-perishable food pantry, lending library and community FUN event held every Wednesday all summer long at Morse Elementary School. The Morse Summer Nights program runs Wednesday evenings from 6-7:30 P.M., from June 19th-August 21st (NO program July 3rd). Want to



HELP with funding or support the community during the Morse Summer Nights program? Contact Morse’s principal at szendler@troy.k12.mi.us.



## HANDS-ON LEARNING FOR AUTISM AWARENESS

April is Autism Awareness Month, a time to spread understanding and acceptance for people living with autism spectrum disorder. An estimated 1 in 59 children in the U.S. have autism, which can cause wide-ranging social,

communication and behavioral challenges.

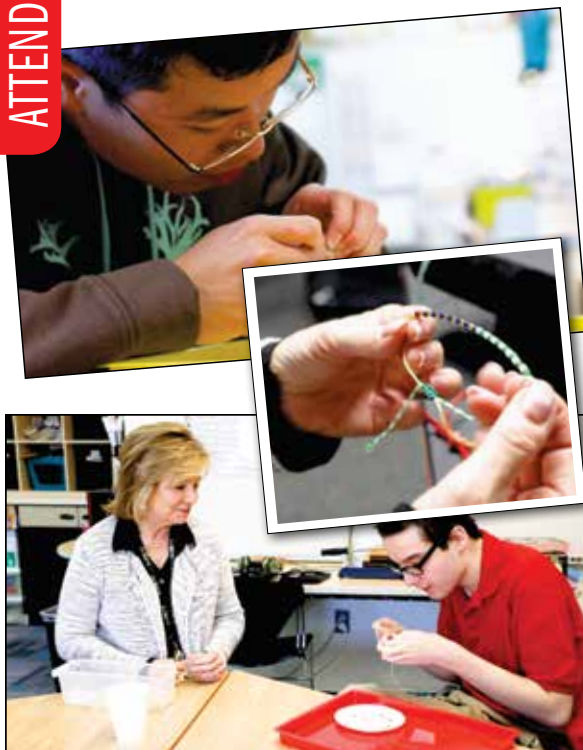
At Troy Center for Transition (GROW), which serves students aged 18-26 with developmental disabilities or cognitive impairments, this month is recognized with the sale of Autism Awareness bracelets. The key here is that the bracelets are made specifically by students with ASD.

"It's not just that it's Autism Awareness, it's that our students all create them," says teacher Kathy Hocking. The project is part of the vocational work training that students learn from.

"The thing that I like best about it is that it provides something fun that they can do and it's a little different from the jobs they normally do."

The bracelets are sold at the school in a variety of colors and patterns. Because autism is a spectrum disorder, each person with autism has a distinct set of strengths and challenges—and that is reflected in the bracelets themselves. Just as no two people with autism are exactly the same, the bracelets are as unique as their creators.

To purchase these bracelets (\$3 ea. or 4/\$10) contact khocking@troy.k12.mi.us.



## NEW TSD PRESCHOOL SHINES INSIDE & OUT!

The floors are in and the roof is on! The new World Class Troy School District Preschool will be ready to welcome hundreds of students this fall, but construction crews aren't the only ones preparing for young learners. Our preschool teachers are digging deep with their own professional learning, designed to build literacy skills that will provide the foundation for future readers and writers.

One other important distinction between TSD Preschool and others is that the curriculum here is directly aligned to the K-12 curriculum in every other Troy School. This means the transition to Kindergarten will

be seamless for students who attend TSD Preschool, with common language, learning



routines and teachers who collaborate across grade levels.

## Congratulations TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Three outstanding TSD teachers were surprised in their classrooms with the news that they had been selected as Teachers of the Year, out of 43 nominations.



Zach Rondot, 4th grade teacher at Costello, Elementary School Teacher of the Year.



Suzanne Domin, 6th grade English teacher at Boulton, Middle School Teacher of the Year.



Josh Pudaloff, Athens Computer Science teacher, High School Teacher of the Year and Overall TSD Teacher of the Year.



Zach Rondot, pictured with family, was also named Oakland County Elementary Teacher of the Year.

## STUDENTS WIN CASH FOR FOCUSING ON THE ROAD

A contest where students created public service announcements about the dangers of distracted driving has paid off for eight TSD high school students. Thanks to the generous support of The Suburban Collection, \$3000 was awarded for the winning entries.



**Athens students**  
Penelope Rampazo, Jason Kemp and Jared Makowski won \$1500 for First Place. \$500 went to Athens students Audrey Parks, Allison Leonard, and Victoria Plachta for Third Place (not pictured).



**Troy High students**  
Marina Sun and Rachel Wu split the \$1000 second place prize.



## LUCK OF THE IRISH AT ATHENS HIGH SCHOOL

Thursday, March 14 started out as any regular day at Athens. Students came to school, ready to work, ready to learn, and ready for a spring break that was just out of reach. But on this day, Dr. Lara Dixon and her staff, student leadership, and PTO had a spring surprise that no one expected. Dixon wanted to connect with every student in her building and asked her staff to make it happen.

Working in secret, each student's name was cross-referenced to a staff member, and the giant handwriting exercise began. "Dividing 1,550 student names among 100 staff members, and making sure no one was left out, was daunting. But we were up for the challenge," said Dixon. The postcards read "We are LUCKY to know you! Sincerely, Athens Staff," with the flip side left blank as space for a personalized message.

The project was unveiled when Dixon along with teachers Hannah Nagi and Sue Syme and



her special student group (whom Dixon calls a "SWAT Team of Joy"), aided by staff and the amazing parents of the Athens PTO, took carts loaded with bagels and the very special Shamrocks and started entering classrooms. "The students were surprised at first. But as they read their cards, it became apparent what was happening," said PTO president Danielle Buser.

Tenth grader Alisa Voyevicko observed, "It was a really nice surprise to start the day. The

hand-written notes were so special." SWAT Team senior Penelope Rampazo "...felt good because I was part of something special by spreading joy to my classmates." "Student feedback has been great and profuse. Kids are walking around, holding their cards, saying thank you in the halls and smiling," concluded Dixon. "As one teacher said, you could instantly feel the mood change in the building." You could say everyone felt lucky at Athens.



## ONE TROY CREATIVE TURNS THE SPOTLIGHT ON TSD!

People from around the world and right here in Troy can see the amazing things going on in the TSD thanks to a re-imagined Communications Department continued to share our great stories. Several recent changes presented the opportunity to add multiple channels of content, without adding any full-time positions.

"Before, we focused on a traditional model of producing videos of school events and hoping the media would cover us," said Communications Director Kerry Birmingham. "Now, as ONE Troy Creative, we are taking people inside our schools with engaging videos and articles shared via social media, our website, 'World Class Wednesday' features and this Troy Times supplement. We're getting feedback from as far away as Southeast Asia and as close as retirees around the block."

After a publication partner closed its doors, part-time Communications Specialist Patrice Rowbal was hired to handle media releases and this newspaper insert. When a longtime staffer retired, the position was split to capitalize on the



talents of Athens TV teacher Adam Burns and AHS/Oakland University grad Thomas Butcher. Secretary Linda Alfonso keeps ONE Troy Creative running smoothly and this year added web and digital skills to ensure that every avenue to distribute news is covered.

And there's more—a generous donation is helping to install high-tech cameras that follow the action in gyms and stadiums at Athens and Troy High, allowing live streaming of games and events as well as recording for replay later. AND, in June, the District will unveil a brand-new website, to better showcase the amazing content this group creates.

Follow "Troy School District" on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook to see more!

## LARSON STUDENT EXCELS IN NATIONAL COMPETITION

For Larson student Julian Farrell, the world is a track. It started with flag football, but when his speed on the field was noticed, he began running track in 2014. Farrell is currently a member of the Amateur Athletic Union "Motor City Track Team," which is an amateur travel track team. DeLane, Farrell's dad, said that "He can't wait to get to high school, where he can compete at the junior or varsity level." In the meantime, Julian is topping AAU's indoor 400



meter dash at 57.8 (4th out of 45) and 2:20.21 (4th out of 33) for 800 meters at the organization's March nationals in Landover, Maryland. "Track motivates me to continue to beat my personal times and strive for excellence," said Julian, who runs 5Ks whenever possible, and is looking forward to competing in AAU's National outdoor "Club Championship" which will be held this summer in Florida.

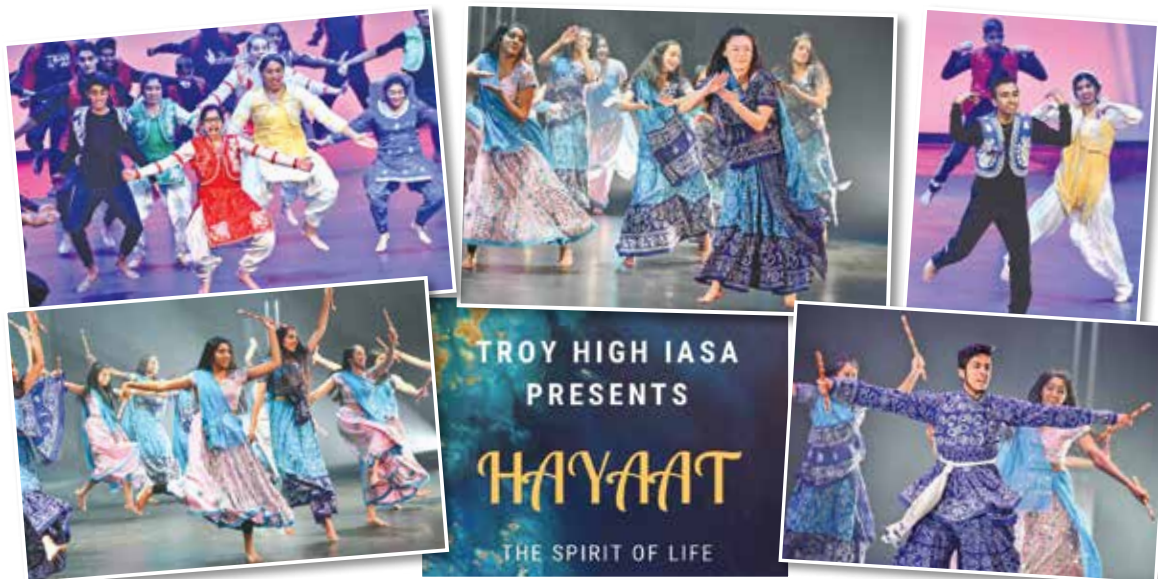
## REGISTER NOW FOR 5th GRADE FITNESS RUN

Register your fifth grader for the annual T.R.O.Y. Fitness Run, to be held at the Boulton Track on Saturday, May 18, at 9:15 a.m. The 2-mile run/walk costs \$5, and participants receive a t-shirt, race bib, and snacks after the race. Register Online until May 3 at <https://troyfitnessrun.weebly.com/> or in person on the day of the race.





## TROY HIGH HOSTS IASA SHOW



On March 16, 150 students from Troy High's IASA (Indian American Student Association) club presented their spring program for an audience of over 700 people. The dance numbers included many subsets of Indian culture including Classical, Bhangra, Throwback Bollywood, Hip-Hop, Bollywood, South Indian, Raas, Senior Fusion, and featured Troy High's competitive dance team Troy Zahara and Detroit professional Bollywood dance team Kohinoor.

The title of this year's program, Hayaat, is Hindi for "The Spirit of Life." "It means showing your inner self and who you really are on stage. This show brings many cultures together to display the spirit of India and America. It's important for people to know what cultures exist in our world and how we can

be part of it," said IASA Board member Hemanth Tadepalli. Participants shared in the group's rich and diverse Indian-American traditions transcending Indian culture to include students of every racial and cultural background. "Coming from a Filipino heritage, I like being part of new cultures and diversifying who I am. As a member of the TCMB Color Guard, my performance skills have improved since I joined the competitive dance group, Troy Zahara" said Denise Fajardo, IASA Board Member.

This year's Troy High IASA show raised approximately \$6000, which will be sent to a non-profit organization in India called Vibha that provides education and healthcare to children. Now that's the "spirit."

*Photos by Sarah Purlee, C & G Newspapers*

### ATTEND TO WELL-BEING

## "I AM IA" IS THE THEME FOR IA EAST C-DAY

IA East held their 2nd "C-Day" of the year on January 25, focused on their "I am IA" initiative. "I am IA" was created to build pride in our school," stated Student Council President Karma Karira, who participated in planning the day. "It shows that we are an inclusive and welcoming environment and that everyone has a responsibility through their actions to the well-being of our community".

The day's events were designed to share information about student culture, boost engagement in student organizations, and build new relationships in the IA community. "It made us really think about our school environment and gave us an opportunity to have fun and relax," shared junior Szymon Ficon. "Students from all grade levels were connected through meaningful conversations about both our school community and the greater community," added junior Lauren Kouassi, who also led the event.

The day ended with keynote speaker

Dr. Abdul El-Sayed, former gubernatorial candidate and director of the Detroit Health Department. Dr. El-Sayed spoke about character, serving their community, and making positive choices for the future. "It was a powerful message," said junior Lauryn Collins. "Dr. El-Sayed talked about how it is okay to fail and if you are not failing you are not trying; as well as the idea of not needing institutions to validate who you



are, but being the person institutions use to validate themselves."

"Dr. El-Sayed's message resonated with the student body and with the focus of the 'I am IA' initiative - that we all have a place here at IA East and we all have a role to play in creating that welcoming environment," stated Associate Principal Ryan Brinks.

## TREE GIVES GRANTS

The Troy Foundation for Educational Excellence's (TFEE) mission is to strengthen the educational experience of TSD students by funding innovative learning opportunities through private support. Since 1988, the TFEE has provided over \$890,000 to our teachers and students.

How do they do it? They fundraise all year long and grant teachers' requests for innovative projects not able to be funded by the district. During 2018-2019, the TFEE directed \$92,000 to special projects, including Pop Up Pods at Costello Elementary, US History Artifact Kits at Larson Middle, and Model-Based Biology at Troy High, to name only a few. This school year, teachers applied for either multi-classroom grants or single classroom grants. "More students/classrooms were touched this year because multi-classroom grants supported collaboration within grade levels, within buildings and across the district," said TFEE President Julie McClure.

Larson's "Protect our Waters" project to reduce plastic water bottle waste was selected by the TFEE as Innovator of the Year. Runners up were: "Pebblego: Digital Literacy" software that teaches students literacy and research skills, across all 12 district Elementary Schools; "A Little Mustang Music" which enables 120 Morse Elementary students to learn the violin and create their own music; "Positive Slope" at Baker, where students recognize, graph and interpret linearity and slope using a specialized toy car; and also at Baker: "Building Math Understanding with Forts" where students will use geometry, volume, surface area, and other geometric concepts to create a "dream fort" to house their athletic teams.

According to TFEE Grant Chair John Stindt, "We supported many quality requests where multiple teachers joined together to develop student creativity, higher level thinking, and collaborative learning experiences in our classrooms, reflecting the district's mission and vision."



The TFEE's main fundraiser is their annual Golf Outing, scheduled this year for June 21, at Sanctuary Lake Golf Course, Troy. To register, please visit <https://www.troyfoundation.org/golf.html>. Contact Barb Fowler at 248.217.4232 to volunteer, to inquire regarding sponsorships, or for general questions.



# MARCH IS READING MONTH

“March is Reading” month was celebrated at all Troy Schools who approach it a little differently.

- Wass Elementary kicked off MIR by wearing PJs and reading their favorite books. They also participated in DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) where once a day, music is played over the speaker system, signaling the kids to stop what they are doing, right then, and read.
- Martell students said “ALOHA” as they ‘surfed’ into MIR. Students lined the halls ready to listen as mystery readers read over the PA.
- At Hamilton, Troy High’s JV basketball team along with their cheerleaders stopped by to kick off MIR’s basketball theme in high-energy style.
- Boulton Park Middle School students furiously read Troybery-nominated books and tracked them in March Madness-style brackets! There were prizes for winning brackets, and a voting day to determine the Troybery winner which will be revealed April 26
- Smith Middle School welcomed author Patrick Flores-Scott, author of “American Road Trip.”
- Athens Varsity Basketball team members visited Wass Elementary as “Guest Readers,” and Athens’ Book Club held a scavenger hunt in their library, along with a door decorating contest.
- Troy High’s Spanish 3 students read books in Spanish to students at Costello who loved literacy time in another language.
- Also at Troy High, 10th graders created book covers for their *Lord of the Flies* unit that synthesize the book’s symbols into cohesive, artistic interpretations.
- Troy College and Career High School students traveled to PEACE Academy Preschool in Pontiac to read books out loud to students they have formed a relationship with.
- And finally, our Preschool theme for MIR was “You’ve Got a Friend in Books” from Toy Story 3. School Board President Karl Schmidt visited on “Toy Story Tuesday,” and read to students who were wearing cowboy or cowgirl gear! Yeehaw!





# Students Giving Back

**Schroeder** students made Valentine's Day cards for senior citizens in nursing homes; 4th graders created care packages for the homeless, including a Valentine's Day card, a granola bar, candy, and hand warmers.



**Hamilton** Students learned about healthy nutrition,

proper exercise, and heart health while raising \$16,937.81 for the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge.

**Barnard** students donated household supplies and made crafts to create "Welcome Home" baskets for families that Community Housing Network help move into affordable, safe housing.



**TCCHS** students visited new friends at Oakmont Manor Senior Residence in Sterling Heights to assist them with their technology questions.



**IA East** held their annual Charity Ball Dance, where students collected 1600+ canned goods and raised over \$2000 to support Gleaners and buildOn, an international organization that builds schools in developing countries.

**Baker** joined in the fight against leukemia with a Pennies for Patients Program, raising \$4,475 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society!



**Athens** varsity cheerleaders held their annual Spring game night with residents at Oakmont Sterling. Senior Maddie Purvis started this effort 5 years

ago, when her Nana moved there.



**Troy High's** Indian

American Student Association raised over \$6,000 from their spring show, Hayaat, that will be sent to Indian non-profit Vibha, to provide education and healthcare to children.



**Wattles** 4th graders learned about disaster relief in the wake of the recent Alabama tornadoes, and have partnered with non-profit "Disaster Relief At Work," who collect items and supplies year round and store them in a big warehouse so when disaster strikes, they are ready.





## TCCHS STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT "JOURNEY 2 JOBS"

Troy College & Career High School senior Jordan Andrews walked into the Journey 2 Jobs skilled trades expo interested in an automotive-related career and walked out with a load of information, networking contacts, and inspiration.

Andrews was so encouraged that he went home and immediately contacted two of the companies he met with earlier in the day to further pursue an apprenticeship after he graduates in June.

He was one of 17 students from TCCHS who explored skill trade careers, engaged in hands-on experiences, and encouraged



to connect with professionals when they attended the event sponsored by Junior Achievement in Pontiac.

"I am most excited about the different job opportunities and experiences, and I want to show how hard I will work. You can't pass up an opportunity like this,"

Andrews said.

Some students are reconsidering their plans to attend traditional, four-year college as the skilled trades industry offers apprentices lucrative pay and benefits while learning both in the classroom and on-the-job.

"I wanted to go to college for business, but after yesterday, I realized there are jobs that pay for your education. After graduation, I can get paid for going to school and become more educated as I am working. It's a very good thing," Sean Hendricks, senior, said.

Already enrolled in an automotive class at Oakland Community College while working on his high school diploma requirements, Noah Germilhac said he thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the expo.

"I learned that businesses are in need of young apprentices, and they will do a lot to persuade you to work for them," Germilhac said.

Austin Johnson agreed. "Some may get jobs out of this. It was very inspiring for students who may not know what they are going to do after high school," he said.



## TROY CENTER FOR TRANSITION CREATES MICRO BUSINESS

They say necessity is the mother of invention. Jennifer Voight of Troy Center for Transition has created a mobile Vocational and Life Skills Lab called "Vo2Go" to fill a real need among her students by helping them develop their skills for community integration and helps bridge gaps in student achievement. In addition, as other districts order the Vo2Go Lab from Troy Center, it becomes a Micro Business for our students!

Our Troy Center young adults ages 18-26 will drill holes for task boards, shop for lab components, laminate instructions, create and label job boxes, track expenditures and deposits for sales, along with many other tasks, and support the visual that Jennifer and our team have created to help more students find success with an even more advanced lab. Every student now has the opportunity to learn in this lab environment at their level.



## ACTIVIST – CHARITY WEEK RECAP

Athens High School's goal for this year's Charity Week was \$100,000. Charity Week has been part of Athens' culture since 1981, and students take their event very seriously. So after a very busy week of fundraising activities, as a crowd of 1,550 students, teachers, administrators and friends looked on, the giant banner was peeled back to reveal the magic number: **\$130,035.71!!!** These funds will be donated to Athens' chosen

charity for 2019: FOCUS Detroit, whose mission is to diminish the cycle of poverty by empowering and partnering with schools and communities to combat poor academic achievement, under resourced schools, substandard housing, and lack of access to basic needs.

Across town at Troy High, spirit and fundraising activities headlined their 4th annual **Activist Week**, with proceeds benefitting their chosen charity, "A Friend for

Flint," to help school children and their families who are still feeling the effects of the water crisis. On March 14th, Troy High Student Government students traveled to Dolye Ryder Elementary to personally deliver **\$13,000+** in items including gift cards, school supplies, hygiene products and teacher gift baskets, and took the opportunity to interact with students and staff whom they have maintained a relationship with throughout the year by visiting and being pen pals.





## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: TEACHER KATIE DRINKARD

Early Childhood Special Education teacher Katie Drinkard feels at home here in the TSD. She began her career teaching preschool in a tuition-based program, but soon recognized her calling-- working with special needs students--and pursued a Masters in Special Ed.

Katie came to Troy two years ago and was immediately impressed that one of Troy's 4 core pillars of education focuses on "Investing in the Learning of pre-kindergarten students." "I knew I had arrived at a place that valued the teaching and nurturing of preschool/pre-K students." Drinkard realizes her important role as the first impression of the special education system for the children as well as their parents. "A huge part of my job is supporting the families," said Drinkard. "I get to know each child and work together with families to continue progress outside the classroom."

"Katie has an uncanny ability to see her students' strengths," said a fellow educator. "Her classes are VERY structured, allowing her students to thrive in a routine-based curriculum where they are happiest and most productive when they know what to expect." Drinkard believes in "pushing in" special services like OT, PT, social skills, rather than removing a child from the classroom environment. "When everyone in the

class is exposed to accommodations it becomes more normalized, and less "scary" or disruptive in the long run," said Drinkard.

The best thing is when she witnesses a student's breakthrough. Said one of her parents: "She is always upbeat and believes the best in her students. My son is nonverbal, and he has a difficult time showing what he knows. Katie really "sees" my son. Whenever he has a success and she gets a glimpse of the deeper knowledge that he doesn't always show, she is always as excited to tell me as I am to hear it."



## NPDL Visit

In March, the ONE Troy's New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) team welcomed 180 educators from across Oakland County, to observe the ways we have started to work toward authentic, innovative, deep learning here in Troy. NPDL is a global partnership of more than 1300 schools that is centered on building knowledge and practices that develop deep learning and foster whole system change. As a member of the Oakland County Cluster, Troy--along with other districts like Rochester, Birmingham, Ferndale--meets four times a year for professional learning and sharing. Said TSD Director of Student Growth, Equity and Accountability Jennifer Gottlieb: "This county NPDL visit has amplified our TSD focus on deepening learning. It was energizing to have the chance to share and talk with others who are grappling with deep learning, but bring a different perspective to the work." Gottlieb praised our teachers' willingness to open their doors and share by quoting research professor and author Brene Brown, "Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage." Inviting others to enter our classrooms to observe, discuss and share was powerful. Truly prioritizing the learning of our people.



## MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND ADULT ED HOSTS "STUDENTS SPEAK"

They say that public speaking is just about the scariest thing a person can do. But fear didn't stop 13 brave non-traditional adult students at the first regional Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education "Students Speak" event. Three of the speakers represented Troy Continuing Education:

**Elena Khoreshcheva** immigrated from Russia three years ago and leveraged the Troy Adult Education and Career (TRAC) program for help learning the language and culture while in pursuit of a job in Quality Control. "Troy Adult Ed helped me with pronunciation, reading, grammar and conversational skills," she said, and helped her build a resume, prepare for an interview and ultimately find a good job.

**Heekyung Kimm** came here in 2016 from South Korea with her husband and

sons, and shared the story of her first job working in a chicken factory in Montgomery, Alabama. She knew then that she wanted to better her employment prospects, but she "didn't know where to start." Kimm found Troy Continuing Education and worked hard in their

ESL curriculum, ultimately landing a good job and being an inspiration to her young sons.

**Bhavisha Modi** was a civil engineer back in India and moved to the US with her husband. As her children grew and spoke fluent English, "my need for better English began haunting me," she said. She found TRAC's online programs and worked hard to gain the skills and confidence she needed to be competitive in the job market, and just started her new job as a CAD designer for Auburn Hills inventory corporation RGIS.

These amazing students just go to show what happens when hard work and drive meet with the right resources and opportunity. For more information about the Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education, visit <https://macae.org/>.





## ATHENS TEACHER IS A “GAME CHANGER”

Athens teacher Shawn DuFresne was named a Detroit Pistons and Farm Bureau Insurance “Game Changer” for making a positive impact in the lives of students over 23 years. DuFresne was one of 10 award recipients of over 50 nominations, and received \$1,000, with which he will add to his classroom library, purchase flexible seating for students and pay for student council leadership training. Athens Principal Dr. Lara Dixon agreed: “Shawn is an exceptional educator who has had a lasting impression on the lives of his students.”



## A.P.T. TO SUCCEED INTERVIEWERS NEEDED

Start thinking now about volunteering for the TSD’s “A.P.T. to Succeed” program! .P.T. to Succeed is a project in which all 8th grade students take part in a professional interview with members of the Troy community. Students present digital portfolios of their classwork, awards, extracurriculars and volunteer work, showing the growth they have achieved in middle school, and are prepared to answer questions about their future plans, both academically and career-wise. This program depends on volunteer interviewers, and we are SO grateful from the support we receive from members of the Troy Chamber of Commerce and the community!

Interviews will take place in May, with numerous days to choose from. Online signups are available at [www.troy.k12.mi.us](http://www.troy.k12.mi.us) or “on the TSD website.”

## 2019 SUPPORT STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR – LORI UCHWAL

Lori Uchwal is the 2018-19 TSD Outstanding Support Staff Employee of the Year. She was chosen because of the impact she has on everyone she meets as both secretary at Troy College and Career High School and as payroll/accounting secretary for Community Education/Enrichment.

TCCHS Principal Deb MacDonald-Linford said Uchwal’s influence on students makes all the difference: “She is the big sister when they need someone to listen; the cheerleader when they need extra encouragement; the mom when they need to be corrected and always remembers to order their lunch even when they forget.”

Teacher Jonathan Matthews agreed, saying “Students go to her to get help, find information or simply talk about their days. Lori’s approachable and positive disposition allow others to feel at ease. ... Especially at a school with a high population of at-risk youth, she is precisely the caring person we need.”



## SPORTS ROUNDUP

**ATHENS: Boys track** hopes to return the State Finals while **girls track** hopes that Jenna Doyle will defend her finish at the State meet. **Girls softball** and **Boys lacrosse** celebrate MHSAA tournament success. Redhawk **Tennis** returns to past glory at the Regional and Travel State Tournament. Athens **girls lacrosse** played well this year, as did the **girls water polo** team, while Athens **baseball** are formidable both home and away. **AHS golfers** will compete at some of the top courses in Oakland County and take swings at Oakland Hills.



**Mich. High School Hockey Coaches’ Association** have named Athens’ Keith Pilut Division 1 All state 2nd Team Defenseman and Troy High’s Quest Bigelow Division 1 State Honorable Mention, Forward.



The **Troy United High School Figure Skating “B” Team** won first place in the Michigan State Competition for the second year in a row after winning first place in their District, and are back-to-back champs. The team consisted of Rachel Burke and Sophie White from Troy High and Lauren Ferguson, Joy Liao and Emily Rosinski from Athens.

**TROY: Synchro Swim Team** won the State Championships for the 2nd year in a row. Gymnastics finished a good season at the State Individual Meet. **Girls Basketball** finished a great season at the District Championship Game against Utica High School. **Baseball & Softball** have begun their spring seasons full of promise. Both **Boys and Girls Lacrosse** teams are playing well, and **Track Teams** are tearing up their best times, while girls **Water Polo** is headed to tournament finals, and **Boys golf** begins match play.







# District Round Up



**Athens High:** The Athens Concert Choir will perform the National Anthem at the opening ceremony for the 4th Annual North American Active Assailant Conference (NAAAC) at Woodside Bible Church at 8 am on Thursday, April 25th.

**IAE:** Juniors welcomed former Michigan gubernatorial candidate Dr. Abdul El-Sayed to their C-Day activities in January.

**TCCHS:** Leadership students returned to Frost PEACE Academy in Pontiac to read their favorite books to preschoolers during March is Reading month. TCCHS established a partnership with PEACE Academy by donating books and reading to students in November and December.

**Troy Center for Transition:** Students are assembling and selling “Vo2Go” vocational task mobile labs to other districts in Oakland County. Tasks are Vocational and Life Skill based, and help skills needed for PAES Labs.

**Troy High:** Biology Competitions Club and AP Biology students competed in the USA Biology Olympiad and five Troy High students will be traveling to nationals in Albuquerque, NM, on April 24-27.

**Baker:** 8th grade choir received a Division I rating for their excellent performance at the MSVMA Choir Festival, at Dakota High School.

**Boulan Middle:** BPMS took home a 3rd place win at the regional Science Olympiad competition, and will be advancing to the State competition at MSU on April 27th.

**Larson Middle:** Larson’s Primary Science Olympiad Team placed 6th overall at the Oakland County Tournament and also qualified for the State Finals at MSU. Larson’s Alternate Team placed 5th overall.

**Smith Middle:** Smith’s Quiz bowl team recently placed 4th at state tournament held in March and is heading to Nationals for the second year in a row.

**Barnard Elementary:** The hearts of students at Barnard were filled with love in February as they collected \$1931 for the Children’s Heart Foundation.

**Bemis Elementary:** Bemis staff have created BIG idea questions, goals, and critical thinking lessons designed to provide assessments that dive deep into the “Blue Pillar,” empowering students to connect learning to their world.

**Costello Elementary:** PTO leaders and members hosted an Adult Auction and Costello Fair as a way to engage their school community, and both were a huge success.

**Hamilton Elementary:** Students worked with partners in collaboration to create poems together, which they turned into music.

**Hill Elementary:** Two Hill Robotics Teams--team TEKnIQ and team Quantum Sheep--will be competing in the VexIQ Robotics World Championships in Louisville, KY, on April 24 – 27



**Leonard Elementary:** Leonard Reading Coaches help students across grade levels partner up and read together first thing every morning. Drop Everything And Read!

**Martell Elementary:** Author Maria Dismony, a known national speaker, visited with students, sharing an educational presentation that inspired and taught valuable lessons.

**Morse Elementary:** Morse is one of 158 Michigan schools who joined the Building Healthy Communities program, a public-private initiative to improve health and wellness through better nutrition and physical activity for their students.

**Schroeder Elementary:** Schroeder celebrated March is Reading Month with “Reading Around the World” and our MIRM Family Night. All of the events connected reading to some international fun!

**Troy Union Elementary:** Troy Union finished their behind-the-scenes work of completing a Character Education refresh, kicking off new traits for students that support their positive cULTure movement.

**Wass Elementary:** Wass was awarded with a State School of Character plaque and banner by the TSD Board of Education. 2nd graders shared with the Board what it takes to follow the Wass Wolves’ Way.

**Wattles Elementary:** The PTO hosted a special STEAM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Arts/Math) night with workstations that gave families a chance to interact with high-tech and low-tech items, such as circuitry boards, robots, and LEGOS.