



# AROUND THESE HILLS

A publication for alumni and friends of **Ottawa Hills Local Schools**



## Daniel Liu

O.H. student youngest ever to win national "You Be The Chemist" competition (pg. 8)

## Newsweek names O.H. #1 in Ohio, #45 in U.S.

**Newsweek** has released its latest listing of the top 500 high schools in the nation, ranking Ottawa Hills High School #1 in Ohio and #45 in the United States.

### THE RATINGS ARE BASED UPON SIX INDICATORS:

- College Enrollment Rates
- Graduation Rate
- Advanced Placement Composite
- SAT/ACT Composite
- Student Retention
- Counselor-to-Student Ratio



According to Newsweek, "The Newsweek High School Rankings assess schools based on a broad range of data to determine which institutions do the best job of preparing students for college."

## HELP CREATE YOUR ALUMNI DIRECTORY

We're creating a network of O.H. alumni with the help of Erica (Gatchel) Silk ('89), who's contacting alumni of all ages and following the leads they provide to connect with classmates and friends around the world.

Please help us create a comprehensive alumni directory by passing the word along to your classmates and friends.

Contact Erica at **419-304-4648** or by emailing **esilk@ohschools.org**. You can also visit our website to register at **ottawahillsschools.org/content2/ohalumni**.

In the meantime, it's refreshing to reconnect with **you** through this edition of *Around These Hills*.

*"It's been a delight to hear from so many O.H. alumni who have emailed or called to update their contact information. I've heard from people I know, people I don't know... even a previous neighbor I haven't seen in thirty years. The personal contact has been great."*

—Erica Silk



# communitynews

## GREEN BEARS UNITE TO PROTECT THE OTTAWA HILLS EXPERIENCE

As economic factors continue to impact school districts across Ohio, the community of Ottawa Hills has rallied together to form a nonprofit foundation to help protect the Ottawa Hills "experience."

The **Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation** was founded in 2013 to serve the district as a long-term, sustainable funding source for key programs and initiatives that make our schools unique.

The seed for the establishment of a foundation was planted in 2010, when the economic downturn impacted the district's bottom line.

While the Ottawa Hills Board of Education and district personnel worked together to identify more than \$1 million in budget cuts and cost savings, it was clear these measures were a short-term solution for an uncertain time.

At the same time, discussions with the community clearly revealed that residents were committed to preserving the full scope of programs unique to their school district, despite economic and funding factors.

**"The Ottawa Hills community has a long history of philanthropic support for our schools."**

—George Lathrop, president, Foundation Board of Trustees

The Foundation will *not* provide financial support for administration and operations. Instead, it is meant to complement—not replace—the financial support of school levies as well as the district's already-established partner organizations such as the

Boosters, the Parent Association, and the Music and Theatre Association. Visit [ohschoolsfoundation.org](http://ohschoolsfoundation.org) for information about Foundation funding priorities and to learn how you can help share the Ottawa Hills experience with future generations of students.

For questions, please contact Dr. Kevin Miller, O.H. superintendent, at 419-536-6371 or [kmiller@ohschools.org](mailto:kmiller@ohschools.org).

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## Join the Founders' Giving Society Be recognized as a founding donor. Forever.

Join the Founders' Giving Society by pledging \$5,000 or more over five years. Your name will be included on a permanent donor recognition wall and in Foundation promotional materials.

To give, please use the envelope enclosed or contact George Lathrop at 419-262-3838 or [george@wwlathropco.com](mailto:george@wwlathropco.com).

Once a founder, always a founder.

OTTAWA HILLS SCHOOLS  
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administration

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**\$35,925**

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FOUNDATION!**



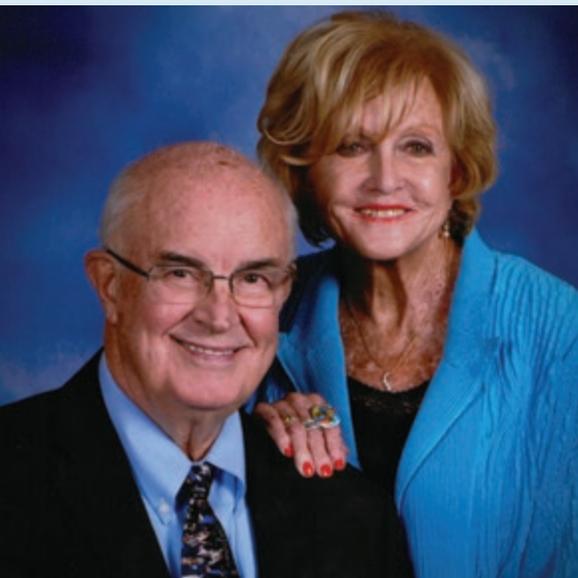
# FIRST FOUNDATION GRANT SENDS CHORALIERS TO CARNEGIE HALL

The Ottawa Hills High School Choraliers are singing at Carnegie Hall in February, thanks to a \$13,000 gift from the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation.

The Choraliers were invited by Dr. Lynda Hasseler, a professor at Capital University in Columbus, to join the college's choir in New York City for vocal music workshops and a performance. The invitation was a result of Dr. Hasseler's visit to the O.H. campus last

spring, where she worked with our students and was deeply impressed by their dedication and abilities.

The Choraliers' performance at Carnegie Hall is scheduled for 8 p.m. on February 29 as part of the Masterworks Festival Chorus. The event will be preceded by an alumni reception planned by the O.H. Schools Foundation. For more information, please contact Dr. Kevin Miller, O.H. superintendent, at 419-536-6371 or [kmiller@ohschools.org](mailto:kmiller@ohschools.org).



## Dr. Lance and Mrs. Dee Talmage lead the way

Dr. Lance and Mrs. Dee Talmage, long-time residents and dedicated supporters of Ottawa Hills, made the inaugural gift to the Foundation with a \$100,000 multi-year pledge announced in May 2014.

In making their pledge to the Foundation, Dee and Lance noted their intent was to "express how much Ottawa Hills means" to their family and inspire others who share this appreciation to give at their own ability.

Members of the Foundation Board of Trustees and district Board of Education took this declaration literally and matched the Talmage gift with another \$150,000.

Thank you for leading the way.



## { NORM NIEDERMEIER }

“I wouldn’t trade the forty years I was at Ottawa Hills for anything.”

—Norm Niedermeier

## KEEPING UP WITH COACH NIEDERMEIER

**B**iology teacher, football coach, tennis coach, basketball coach, athletic director, dean of students...Norm Niedermeier wore many hats during his forty years at Ottawa Hills Schools. And he impacted many lives.

Although Coach Niedermeier retired in 1997, he stays connected with O.H. and his former students in many ways.

For example, there’s an informal gathering of graduates that’s been tabbed “Dinner with Norm.” He explains, “Fifteen or twenty of us get together at the Beirut every-other-year and shoot the breeze for hours. It’s a great group of kids and everyone has done well. They’re all retired now too! Some have moved south, but they’ll still come back for ‘Dinner with Norm.’”

To sum up his days since retirement, Coach shares, “I spend my time going to whatever I feel like going to, any time I feel like going. It’s kind of nice.” He lost his travel partner when wife Mary Ann

passed away about seven years ago. “We used to travel together all over the place,” Coach says.

“Now, I travel alone (he enjoyed a trip to Italy last fall). A lot of times I drive because I can stop and see some of my old players and students. Every few years, I go through Nashville on my way back from Florida to see Jamie O’Hara. I consider him the best athlete to ever graduate from Ottawa Hills. But in high school, he was in all the choirs. He became a professional songwriter, singer, and entertainer, so his whole career was in the music business, not sports.”

Topping Coach’s list of favorite things to do is spending time with his five children and sixteen grandchildren, scattered around the country. And with three new little ones on the way, he’ll soon become a great-grandpa.

However, he’s still “Coach” or “Mr. Niedermeier” to his former students. “I always tell them, ‘You can call me Norm.

We have no connection but friendship now.” But most tell him, “I just can’t do it!”

Coach Niedermeier remembers Jim White, who was the senior quarterback of the football team in 1957, his first year at O.H. Coach notes that Jim was a great athlete in all sports. “Jim and I were walking out of a funeral a couple years ago,” he recalls. “Jim said, ‘You know, Coach, when you coached us you were only four or five years older than us.’” Coach reminded him, “You know what, Jim, I’m still only four or five years older than you!”

Norm Niedermeier has only fond memories of his years at Ottawa Hills. “I always tell people it’s one of the best school systems in the country and I spent my whole life there. I talk Ottawa Hills up wherever I go. The people are great, the faculty is great, and the kids are great. It has been a wonderful place. I wouldn’t trade the forty years I was at Ottawa Hills for anything.”

## { GARY WOODBURY } 1958

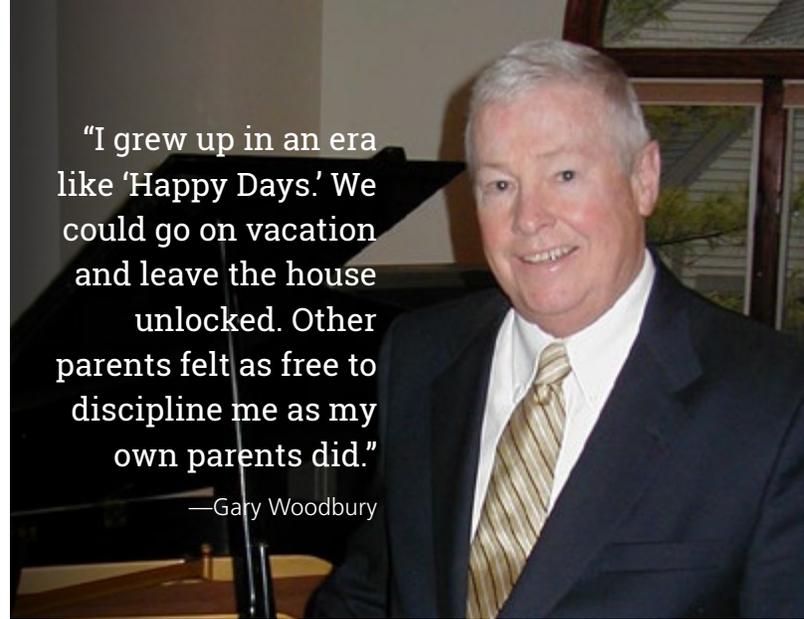
When Gary Woodbury looks back on a successful career spent working with national leaders of business and government – including a string of U.S. presidents – he recognizes the influence of his Ottawa Hills education.

“It’s not something you consciously think about, it shows in how you act, how you perform,” he says. “Your actions are molded by the experience.”

This 1958 graduate is referring directly to his experience in Ottawa Hills, where teachers set high expectations for students, parents enforced the rules, and the community united to raise and educate its youngest residents.

Woodbury describes high school as some of the greatest years of his life because he developed important friendships and left feeling well prepared for college and steps beyond. After graduation from Ottawa Hills he earned a degree from Hillsdale College and went to work in Chicago. He then moved to Lansing, Michigan, where he built a career as a lobbyist and association leader, advocating for small business and other causes.

Having served on a White House commission for small business and distinguishing himself as “one of the nation’s most visible small business advocates,” Woodbury was recognized in 2000 by the Small Business Administration with a lifetime achievement award for advocacy.



“I grew up in an era like ‘Happy Days.’ We could go on vacation and leave the house unlocked. Other parents felt as free to discipline me as my own parents did.”

—Gary Woodbury

During these busy years, however, his communications with O.H. classmates had grown infrequent. Things changed in early 2013, when Woodbury learned of a friend’s passing. He wondered if other classmates were aware of the loss – and if they had news of their own to share. Thus was born “I’ve Heard from the Class of ‘58,” an email newsletter that reaches most of his fellow graduates.

Today, Woodbury serves as town crier and chief scribe for the Class of 1958. He says his classmates are planning a reunion in 2016 for the 58th anniversary of their graduation – ‘58 in 58 – and all are looking forward to meeting again, in a very special place.



## { DAVID ROADHOUSE } 1962

David Roadhouse is part of a select group of Ottawa Hills students. Not only is he a member of the kindergarten club, he’s also a member of an even more elite group – a 1962 state swimming champion.

“I needed to have a school representative with me, so Coach Niedermeier accompanied me for both of my trips to the state swim meet. He was my designated coach. He still loves to tell that story,” Roadhouse recounted of the trips to the Ohio State natatorium, where he earned first place in the 100-yard butterfly his senior year.

“It was very thrilling,” he added, “and I was so happy to have done that for Ottawa Hills and to have been able to compete against other high school swimmers.”

Today Roadhouse is a world-class triathlete, having won four world age-group championships. He’s currently the reigning national champion in the 70 to 74-year-old age group, a title he defended last summer after winning in 2014. His four world championships were secured at competitions in Honolulu, Switzerland, Australia, and Budapest.

Roadhouse feels that among the many things Ottawa Hills provided for him, three stand out. “At graduation, I was given three awards – one for athletics, one for service, and one for leadership. And as I moved on from Ottawa Hills, it was those three values that I took with me – the value of physical fitness, the value of service, the value of leadership. I carried those character traits with me and always aspired to exemplify them.”

Roadhouse lives in Chicago with his wife, Ota. They have four children and seven grandchildren. Despite the geographical distance, his boyhood home remains a special place.

“Growing up in Ottawa Hills was outrageously fun. I had a great group of friends, and we still stay in touch. We celebrated our 50th reunion a few years ago. The friends I made at Ottawa Hills are really the best friends I’ve ever, ever known.”

When Roadhouse learned about the newly-formed Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation, he saw it as an opportunity to give back.

He made a gift to join the Founders’ Giving Society (see page 2) where his support for O.H. will inspire others for generations to come.

**“Ottawa Hills is a very special place. It just seems that what Ottawa Hills does for students goes much, much further than other schools. The academics, the diversity in activities—it’s grown exponentially since I was a student there. I’m happy about that and glad to support it.”**

—David Roadhouse



## STUDENT PROFILES

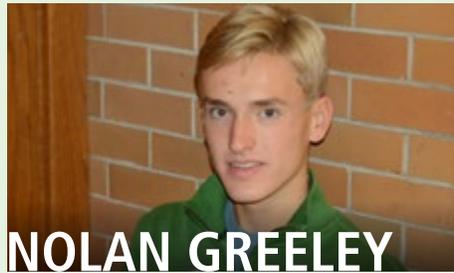
### Categories

1. Elected/leadership position
2. Why did you run for office/decide to be a student leader?
3. How's it going?
4. What are your academic and extracurricular interests?
5. How do you balance it all?
6. What might people be interested to know about you?
7. What do you like best about being a Green Bear?



### ANDREW DAYTON

1. Student Body President
2. I ran because I wanted to help create a student council that our school could be proud of, and that incorporates the ideas of the students.
3. Fantastic, our student council is dynamic and is constantly looking to get better.
4. I don't play any sports at O.H., but I like to consider myself the No. 1 Green Bear fan. I can be found at most Ottawa Hills sporting events, cheering. I also play on an indoor soccer team with my buddies in the winter. I'm involved in AP Classes like AP Literature and AP Statistics.
5. I balance it all by planning it out. I also wouldn't be able to do it without my dad, who helps keep me balanced.
6. I've gone to Ottawa Hills since 3rd grade. I'm not quite sure where I'd like to go to college, although I've looked at OSU and Miami of Ohio.
7. My favorite part is being able to serve as a role model for our younger students because I know that I certainly looked up to the older kids when I was younger. The smaller school environment means that I know almost every one of my fellow students.



### NOLAN GREELEY

1. Junior Class President
2. I love to organize events and implement new ideas. I find satisfaction in knowing I played a key role in making an event possible.
3. School is very busy this year but I'm enjoying it. The student council is working hard to plan many spectacular events.
4. My favorite class is AP Government. I have an interest in government and politics. I founded the Ottawa Hills Young Republicans Club. I also participate in cross country, tennis, and French club.
5. Laughter is the key to balancing a busy life. Be a friendly person and make sure you're having fun with the people around you.
6. I'd like to be a real estate developer and investor in the future.
7. Green Bear spirit is everywhere at Ottawa Hills. People are friendly and fun to be around. We support each other and help one another all the time.



### WILLIAM KOURY

1. Sophomore Class President
2. My freshman year I saw what the student council was doing at Ottawa Hills, and I knew I wanted to be a part of it.
3. It's going quite well! This year, the sophomore class officers did a great job organizing homecoming, and we learned there is a lot more to teamwork than meets the eye.
4. My favorite subjects are history and English. I actively participate in Quiz Bowl and Choraliers. I also played for the boys' soccer team.
5. Earl Grey tea helps sometimes...
6. I'm a certified master diver, and both of my parents are certified open water divers as well.
7. I love the community that we have here. Everybody knows each other.



### AIDAN MCMURRAY

1. Senior Class President
2. I wanted to make senior year my best year of high school, and I figured that running for office was the best way to make that happen.
3. Senior year is going very well.
4. I enjoy physics, even though it's very tough, and I really enjoy Model United Nations and band. I was also a member of the soccer team.
5. Balancing it can be difficult, but I've learned to manage my time, thanks to Mr. Broadway, my junior English teacher.
6. People might find it interesting that I enjoy speaking French with my mom.
7. My favorite part of being a Green Bear is being able to participate in a myriad of activities.



### LAUREN ROWND

1. Freshman Class President
2. I ran for office because I wanted to be a part of the decision-making in the student body.
3. It's going really well! We planned the homecoming bonfire and it was very successful. We had a student band come in to play, so a lot of people showed up.
4. I'm enjoying history. We're researching our National History Day project. My topic is Nelson Mandela and he's really interesting. I was involved in the production of Twelve Angry Jurors and tennis this fall. I'm also a member of Choraliers.
5. It's very difficult to balance it all, but with a little caffeine, perseverance, and lack of sleep, I pull it off.
6. I can say the ABCs backwards, I don't like candy, and I have a stepsister, a stepbrother, a half-sister, a half-brother, and a real sister.
7. I love Ottawa Hills because of how tight-knit the community is. Everyone is friends with everyone and it's just a great school.



## Seven O.H. Students Earn NATIONAL MERIT RECOGNITION

Senior **Brent Wang** has been named a 2016 National Merit semifinalist. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest-scoring entrants in each state.

These academically-talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,400 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$32 million that will be offered this spring.

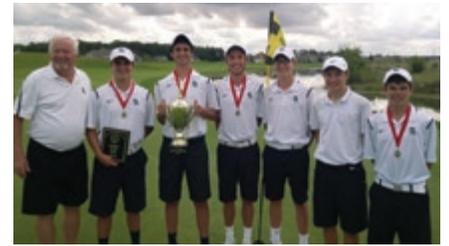
OHHS students **Sarah Wilmore, Margaret Nichols, Anna Becker, Jack Wolff, Donovan DeMilt, and James Steven** were named Commended Students in the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program for their exceptional academic promise.

Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2016 competition by taking the 2014 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

## OTTAWA HILLS #1 IN OHIO

**StartClass.com** has named Ottawa Hills Local Schools the #1 district in the state of Ohio.

Ratings were based on data from the U.S. Department of Education reflecting student math and reading proficiency on state assessment tests as well as other institutional factors, including student-teacher ratio, student discipline, and other data points.



## Green Bear Golfers THIRD IN STATE

Green Bear golfers finished in third place at the state golf tournament held on Oct. 16–17 at The Ohio State University's Scarlet Course. This was the team's fifth state appearance in the last six years.

Senior **Michael Denner** placed third individually as well at the tournament.

The golf team qualified for state competition with a runner-up finish at the district golf meet, held at Bowling Green's Stone Ridge golf course.



## COACH TALMAGE PICKS UP 100<sup>TH</sup> CAREER WIN

The field hockey team's 2-0 victory over Laurel in October was a special one. It gave Coach **Tammy Talmage** ('82) her 100th victory as coach at O.H. Coach Talmage said, "The best part is sharing it all with the players and parents from the present and past. I feel very fortunate to be a part of such a special program and school system." Coach Talmage has led the Ottawa Hills field hockey program for the last ten years.



## O.H. TEACHERS WIN GOVERNOR'S THOMAS EDISON AWARD 5<sup>TH</sup> YEAR IN A ROW

In September 2015, teachers at Ottawa Hills Junior/Senior High School earned the Governor's Thomas Edison Award for Excellence in STEM Education for the 5th year in a row. The award acknowledges schools that value student-originated, inquiry-based science and technology education as envisioned by the Next-Generation Science Education Standards.



Ottawa Hills Local School District  
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Ottawa Hills, OH 43606

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OR CONTACT ERICA SILK AT: 419-304-4648 or  
email [esilk@ohschools.org](mailto:esilk@ohschools.org)

## WELCOME



Welcome to the first  
edition of *Around  
These Hills*

THE NEW ALUMNI NEWSLETTER FOR  
OTTAWA HILLS LOCAL SCHOOLS

As an alum, you are part of a special community that has built a long tradition of excellence. Once a Green Bear, always a Green Bear! We would like to help you stay connected to O.H. and informed of the events and people making news in our schools.



### YOUNGEST GREEN BEARS USHER IN NEW ERA

Forty-four kindergarten students made history on Thursday, August 27, 2015, as the first class to attend Ottawa Hills Elementary School's full-day kindergarten program.

FROM THE COVER:

### O.H. STUDENT YOUNGEST EVER TO WIN NATIONAL "YOU BE THE CHEMIST" COMPETITION



Now a 10-year-old freshman at OHHS, **Daniel Liu** is used to standing out among his peers. However, he really rose to the occasion in 2015 when he became the youngest student ever to win the national "You Be The Chemist" competition.

Nearly 40,000 students in the fifth through eighth grades participated in the local and state levels of the Challenge program during the 2014-2015 school year.

Daniel first won the Ottawa Hills "You Be The Chemist" competition, organized by science teacher Nicole Silvers. He then went on to capture the Ohio title in April. Daniel said he prepared for the state competition "by studying the information from current and past coaching manuals and studying my honors chemistry textbook as an extra 'push.'"

Daniel excels academically and contributes to the school environment by taking part in a variety of activities, such as the Science Olympiad program and the Quiz Bowl team. This past year, he received the Outstanding Student Award for his work in the Advanced Placement Statistics class.