

# YOUR SCHOOLS

2021

Aurora City School District

## From the Superintendent

By MIKE ROBERTO  
Superintendent of Schools



You might recall, from the last *Your Schools* issue, that 75% of the young people attending the Aurora Schools during the first semester were meeting in person (Plan A) while the other 25% have been able to

work with our staff remotely (Plan B). We are now into the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year and have welcomed back young people in all grade levels who were learning virtually for the first semester, but have returned to in-person learning for the second semester. Overall we now have approximately 80% of our students in Plan A for the second semester and the remaining 20% learning through Plan B.

Whether your child is learning in Plan A or Plan B, I think you will find that this year has been a unique learning experience. It certainly has caused the teachers to approach their lessons from a different perspective. One of the key pieces for our success is that the teachers have worked to develop relationships with your child first and then allowed the learning to develop from there. Young people have adapted to these new learning experiences and have closed learning gaps from the spring and continue on a trajectory of growth.

Regarding closing learning gaps, recently Governor DeWine announced that local schools should develop plans for "catching students up" and submit these plans to the Ohio Department of Education by April 1, 2021. Some of

*See Superintendent p. 7*

## AHS STUDENTS VOLUNTEER TO MAKE COVID-19 VACCINE REFRIGERATION PART



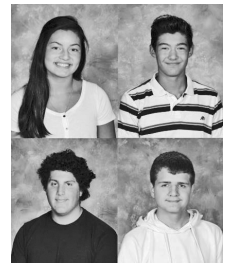
The COVID-19 Pandemic saying, "We're All in This Together", is truly being exemplified by four Aurora High

School (AHS) students who are playing a very important part in helping to bring about an end to the current worldwide pandemic. The students, Thomas LoGalbo, Aiden Sexton, Annabelle Zamary and Connor Zamary, volunteered to help make a wire wrap that is part of the refrigeration equipment used in the storage and transportation of the Pfizer, Inc. COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine requires extremely cold temperatures to remain stable enough to be given to those people wanting to be vaccinated.

The four students were approached over the summer by their Aurora neighbor and pool lifeguard manager, Barry

Wessels, who asked them if they would like to volunteer to help make the part. Wessels was volunteering with a non-profit company called Mobility International Worldwide which was using building space offered by a company, Blaze Technical Services, located in Stow, Ohio. Blaze had applied for a grant

to produce the resistant temperature detector (RTD) probes for the vaccine's refrigeration system and was awarded the grant. Wessels said that, "Ralph Hickman, CEO and President of Blaze, saw that



**AHS Students (left to right) 1st Row - Annabelle and Connor Zamary; 2nd Row - Tommy LoGalbo and Aiden Sexton**

*COVID-19 p. 3*

## MILLER SCHOOL RECEIVES ODE PBIS 2020 SILVER AWARD



Congratulations to the Aurora Schools' Miller Elementary School administrators and staff who once again received the Ohio Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Silver Award. Miller School has previously been the recipient of the PBIS Silver Award in 2019 as well. PBIS stands for "positive behavior intervention supports and it is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate

challenging behaviors and replace them with pro-social skills by explicitly teaching the expectations, positively reinforcing expected behaviors, and celebrating students' successes." Basically, "PBIS seeks to reduce or eliminate poor behavior school-wide through the encouragement of "positive behaviors." With PBIS, schools teach students about behavior, just as they would teach other subjects like reading or math with the focus being on prevention, not punishment. PBIS has been shown to

*PBIS Award p. 4*

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## ACSD Quality Profile 2019-20 Now Available Online

This year's Aurora City School District's annual Quality Profile (QP) 2019-20 is now available in a new online format. It can be found on the District website at [aurora-schools.org](http://aurora-schools.org). The QP helps to characterize the overall educational value of the Aurora City Schools in areas that matter most to our community that are not included on the yearly State of Ohio Report Card. The purpose of this QP is to characterize the overall educational value of our school district, highlight areas that matter most to our community, elaborate on topics not included in the

annual State of Ohio Report Card, and spotlight areas where Aurora School's staff, students, families, and community members can feel a sense of pride. Areas that are highlighted include, 21st Century Learning, Academics, Arts, Student and Staff Leadership, Parent and Community Involvement, Athletics, Student Services, and Fiscal Stewardship. This QP can be found on the district website Homepage under Quick Links on the left hand side under the title Quality Profile. Please take a look at how much we all have to be proud of as a District.

## AHS Greenmen Depot Offers Supplies

A small and little known room at Aurora High School (AHS) houses what is called the Greenmen Depot. The Greenmen Depot contains school supplies for students who do not have the means to afford to purchase school supplies. The idea was originally conceived in 2016 by AHS Service Learning Class and Spanish teacher, Melissa Foster. Foster explained, "This idea came to me from a story I read on Facebook in 2016. It explained how a school had necessary supplies donated such as food, school supplies, etc. for students in need. Although it is a blessing to live in this community, it always bothered me that students and adults assumed that everyone in Aurora is financially comfortable. Therefore, I wrote a grant to the Aurora Schools Foundation and they generously supplied enough funds for paint and shelving. I found an empty mailroom at AHS and our custodians painted it ... and added shelving. I did little to no marketing and before I knew it, it was up and running." Foster added, "I do not carry food supplies right now. I know Volunteers of America [Aurora] distributes to those in

need. Currently, we have school supplies, Greenmen clothing, and required English reading books."



The items available from the Greenmen Depot are strictly the result of donations. Foster said, "A lot of donations came from the Aurora PTO and the AHS bookstore. Teachers and community members have given me donations. The entire student body is not aware of the Greenmen Depot. If a teacher, counselor or administrator is aware of a student in need, they go to the Depot and take whatever is needed. I do not document student names. I do have the adult write the date, item and grade of student so I can see what items are being used the most." Donations are always welcome and greatly appreciated. Melissa Foster can be reached by email at [mfooster@aurora-schools.org](mailto:mfooster@aurora-schools.org).



## AHS Instructor Melissa Foster the WKYC Everyday Champion

AHS Spanish and Service Learning Instructor and Interact Club adviser, **MELISSA FOSTER**, was recently featured on the **WKYC-3 CLEVELAND** series entitled, **EVERYDAY CHAMPION**. Foster appeared on the segment to discuss **HELPING THE HOMELESS DURING WINTER** with host Larry Macon Jr. and guest Lydia Bailey, a Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry Men's Shelter Coordinator of Volunteers, at the 2100 Lakeside Road Men's Shelter where Foster routinely volunteers. Both her class and club members participate in volunteer and service work with the community. Some of the student activities at the shelter have included, serving meals, celebrating Black History Month, reading poetry, and recently creating 100 goodie bags for the outreach program for people suffering from homelessness on the streets. One of the goals of this volunteer work is to help remove the stereotypes of people who are suffering from homelessness. To find the link to this Everyday Champion segment, please go to the News story on the main webpage of the ACSD website at [aurora-schools.org](http://aurora-schools.org).



**AHS Instructor Melissa Foster (bottom) featured on WKYC as an Everyday Champion**



## YOUR SCHOOLS

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Editor: Stacey DeAnna

*Your Schools* is a publication of the Aurora City School District. Its purpose is to keep residents of Aurora informed of current events and progress in the Aurora City Schools and to foster pride and a continuous communication link between the schools and the community.

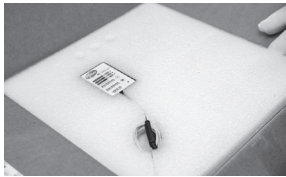
*Your Schools* has been awarded the "Mark of Excellence" and "Best of the Best" Awards by the Ohio Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association for service as a school district newsletter. *Your Schools* is a quarterly publication, mailed to all residents of Aurora. For information, comments, or story ideas, e-mail Editor Stacey DeAnna at: [yourschools@aurora-schools.org](mailto:yourschools@aurora-schools.org).



## COVID-19 - Continued from p. 1

there was a need to have temperature sensors for the refrigerators that will house the Covid vaccine. He was using a thermal couple called an RTD, which is a temperature probe." He needed hundreds of thousands of them and the company had approximately 50 employees at the time. Wessels said, "The Mobility volunteers were asked to help and so we got involved."

Wessels explained, "Connor Zamarly said to me one day, you know it's great to have a job, but what we really need is volunteer hours, meaningful volunteer hours and we're looking for unique opportunities for that. So all of a sudden the lights go on." AHS junior, Connor Zamarly, explained, "Mr. Wessels was my boss at my lifeguarding job. He is an incredibly inspiring presence as he constantly finds new ways to give back to the community and he would tell me about all these awesome opportunities and things that I could be doing. So when he offered me this volunteer option, I was incredibly eager to get started. I wanted to volunteer because this is a time where everybody should come together and help as much as possible. Everyone has had their lives altered by the pandemic, and people need help. This opportunity was so unique, to be so directly related to the vaccine effort, even just for a small piece. It's a really special thing and Mr. Wessels, the people at Blaze Inc., and my fellow volunteers are amazing for helping with this effort."



**Pfizer RTD Part Used in Covid-19 Vaccine Refrigeration System**

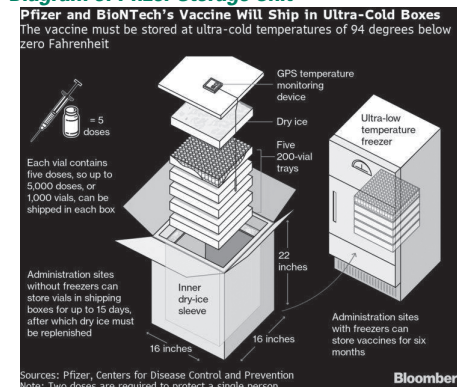
Connor Zamarly's sister and lifeguard co-worker, Annabelle, also volunteered to help and said, "Since a lot of the volunteering was minimal at the time, when we heard this idea to build the refrigeration units, we were all very interested." She went on to explain that, "This past summer I was lifeguarding and my manager, Barry Wessels, told me about this opportunity to help develop refrigeration units that would hold and ship the COVID-19 vaccines. We started creating the wire wraps before the vaccine was created. It was necessary that we did this because now when the vaccine comes out in larger quantities there will be suitable units that can help distribute the vaccine to the areas of need. I really wanted to volunteer for this because I have seen all the contributions that people have been making by the

health care workers and hospital staff who we are all very thankful for because they work so hard. I aspired to make my contribution in any way possible."

The actual wrapping of the wire in this RTD's probe is a vital piece and creates the first step in the 20-step process of making the RTD's. Annabelle added, "We were creating the first step in the making of the refrigeration units." Connor Zamarly explained, "The wires are rather simple to produce. That's the awesome part about this effort, everyone can help with it if they have a spare hour or two." Annabelle Zamarly added, "The actual process of wrapping the wires is not exactly difficult but it takes a good amount of time to make sure that the wires are the right size and are wrapped correctly. It just involves wrapping the wire and making sure the zip ties are tight enough." She added, "It takes about 3 minutes for each part." Annabelle estimated the group of student volunteers had produced approximately 900 parts at the time.

AHS Volunteer, Aiden Sexton, heard about the volunteering from Wessels through involvement with the AHS Science Olympiad program. Sexton said, "For me, I really enjoyed the ability to sit down and just start with 50 wires and a bag of zip ties and then in the end have 50 completed wire wraps that would then later go on to do something very important." Sexton added, "Overall, it was very enjoyable just because of how important it was." In mid-January, he thought he had completed around 300 parts putting in approximately 16-17 hours of work.

#### Diagram of Pfizer Storage Unit



Tommy LoGalbo, who was also a lifeguarding at the same neighborhood pool, and volunteered with the project, explained how the volunteers worked on making the part. He said, "We were able to make these parts from the comfort of our own houses. I personally would do my work at my desk in my bedroom. Because all of the equipment we needed was able

to be dropped off at our houses, we didn't have to go anywhere special to do this. It was kind of amazing that this grand scale project would take place inside people's bedrooms and living spaces. Mr. Wessels would drop them [wires] off pretty much every week usually around Thursday or so. He would drop those off as well as the zip ties we needed and if we were missing tools for the job he was able to provide us with those tools." The volunteers then returned them to Wessels by the end of the week. On the importance of this project, LoGalbo stated, "I think that it's kind of mind blowing how even small kids in Aurora can partake in such a grand scale project that matters nationally. I remember at one point we got mail showing the finalized models at the White House and it is kind of fascinating that our volunteer hours and hard work produced an item that is going to save lives around the world and also made it to Washington, D.C."

Craig Anderson, President of Mobility Worldwide, Stow, shared that the part was recently presented at the White House. He said, "It was quite exciting! This thermos couple, this has been a big deal for the United States. You know, the secret to solving the Covid problem is getting this vaccine, particularly to health workers and first responders..." In December, when the vaccine first started shipping, there was a huge celebration at the White House. They brought in these wires and the press was there and the Wall Street Journal picked it up, a huge celebration." According to Blaze CEO and President, Ralph Hickman, "I say to people in manufacturing, for every one sensor they make, that's 5,000 vaccines." Blaze has recently ramped up production and is currently making 3,000 sensors a day and added approximately 50 new employees to the workforce.



#### White House Presentation of Pfizer RTD

Connor Zamarly, said, "We make one part of this whole machine and Blaze and Mr. Wessels and everyone else that's involved is a huge part of this so we're really just one part of it, but even that little part, it just really felt like we were really doing something to change how this is going on

## Who's Who & What's New

### AHS COCOA, COLLEGE APPS and CAREERS



Each year the AHS School Counselors host **Cocoa, College Apps and Careers** in honor of Ohio's College Application Month. They were not able to hold their

traditional hot cocoa bar, so they created their own pre-packaged hot cocoa to go. Seniors went to the Media Center to ask questions about the next steps they should take for their college or career goals. Financial Aid Advisor, **Renee Morgan**, was available for questions. Thank you to the AHS counselors for their hard work, creativity and sharing their too hot cocoa with staff members too.

The week of January 25, 2021 Intervention Specialist, **Victor Torres**, challenged people to perform a kind act during their day. He said, "No need to reveal the act, just pay it forward by challenging someone the next day. Let's continue to build a better world..." What a great way to spread positivity!

**Photo collage** illustrating several of the many changes that have taken place at AHS (and other buildings) due to the pandemic.



### AHS INCOMING FRESHMEN FAMILY ORIENTATION

Please take the time to navigate the interactive orientation-presentation linked on the Aurora Schools' website Homepage as this serves as an important first step in a successful transition to AHS. Make sure the audio on your computer is on as each slide has narration (simply click the microphone in the upper right-hand corner of the slides) and/or videos to help students and families in addition to active links to the Program of Studies, Scheduling Sheets, and important contact information. There is also a feedback form linked to the final slide where students/families can provide additional questions and insights. Try to set aside 90-minutes to thoroughly go through the entire presentation.

Congratulations to **Lilly Bates** and

**Aden Ricketts** who were the AHS January 2021 **Rotary International Students of the Month**.

### COMMUNITY FOCUS

Check out the new **Community Focus App** that allows viewers to watch **Live Streams of Aurora Schools' events**, including sporting events and a catalog of past events. Just go to the Community Focus App Store to get the app that lets you view or download local area events including the Aurora Schools! The link to Aurora's Livestream can also be found on the ACSO website currently under the News section of the District website homepage and can be found permanently under the District webpage Quick Links under Forms & Links.

Aurora Schools' staff members **Mary Beckstrom, Mike Gerome, Elaine Martin**, and **Megan Wesoloski** had sneeze guards delivered as part of an Ohio **LSTA CARES ACT** grant initiative that was awarded to Harmon School's Director of Media Services, Mary Beckstrom, over the past summer. Several other purchases were made with the grant funds which totaled \$3,000, including the Harmon/AHS subscriptions to Overdrive and a webcam and amplification system for Beckstrom's Booktalks by Beckstrom. CARES ACT purchases will be made with the remaining funds for the Harmon media center and an amplification system for teacher **Heather Berlin**.



**National Honor Society** sponsored a fundraiser to support the annual **Aurora for Others** giving

campaign each holiday season. Last December, for a total donation of a \$100, NHS students decorated an entire classroom door as requested by the donor. The proceeds were then donated to the 2020 selected charities, **Seeds of Literacy** and **Sanctuary for Senior Dogs**. Thank you to all who sponsored a door for this great philanthropic cause.

**Senior Class of 2021 Yard Signs** are available to purchase now from the AHS After Prom Committee. They can be used as a great way to celebrate your AHS student. They also make a great as a gift idea and can be used outside this coming spring. More information and an order form are available on the District website Homepage. Thank you for supporting the AHS After Prom.

*PBIS Award - Continued from p. 1*

improve student achievement, student behavior, and school climate.

According to the ODE website, "Each year the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Network via the 16 State Support Teams recognizes schools for their quality and fidelity of PBIS implementation." Miller School has been recognized for their success with PBIS which involves teaching students expected behaviors in a consistent and positive way, modeling and acknowledging those behaviors, and helping all students meet expectations and be successful. Schools are eligible to receive awards at the bronze, silver or gold level of distinction. Miller School was recognized as one of 307 schools in Ohio to earn either a Gold, Silver or Bronze level of achievement. The award winning schools and districts for 2020 (29 Gold, 63, Silver, 215 Bronze) were recognized at the virtual 2020 PBIS Showcase in conjunction with the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) on December 15, 2020.

Ohio PBIS Network Visibility and Marketing Workgroup member, Sherri Helterbrand, stated, "Congratulations to Miller Elementary School on being designated by your State Support Team as a recipient of the Ohio PBIS Silver Recognition Award for 2020. We look forward to celebrating with all of you who are implementing PBIS with fidelity to maintain a positive school culture and climate that benefits your entire school community. Congratulations again!" Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Paul Milcetic, said, "Congratulations to you [Maria Goodman] and your staff. The manner in which you are supporting our young learners is being recognized and is well deserved." Miller School Principal, Maria Goodman, explained, "This award is a product of continued implementation of the PBIS framework by ALL staff members at Miller. To say our PBIS structures came into the picture this past week is an understatement. These supports truly helped every child find success at Leighton. We even used our Golden Tickets at Leighton and children went home excited to share how they met our PBIS expectations."



Miller Elementary  
HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED  
2020 Silver Award

By The State Support Team Region 8  
for implementation of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports





## CLASS ACTS

### The AHS SERVICE LEARNING CLASS

students and staff were busy preparing 100 bags of much needed items that included soap, masks, hot chocolate and snacks for the **LUTHERAN LAKESIDE MEN'S SHELTER** located at 2100 Lakeside Ave. in Cleveland. Thank you very much to these students for helping with this outreach.



Congratulations to the November 2020 **AHS ROTARY STUDENTS, RYAN STAHL** and **ILA KERCHENSKI**. They were honored virtually at the **AURORA BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING** on November 23, 2020 and are the **FIRST EVER ACSD VIRTUALLY HONORED ROTARY STUDENTS**.



Ryan Stahl



Ila Kerchenski

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, **PAUL MILCETICH**, has started a **CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION PODCAST** series for AHS, Harmon and Leighton teaching staff dedicated to sharing teaching practices with episodes being produced on an as needed basis. The first episode in the series was shared in December 2020 and featured AHS Instructor, **TONI TAYLOR**, who discussed the use of her Google Classroom/Calendar with a focus on organization including specific tools and strategies which can help students access curriculum. The second January episode included **ALISA DEININGER** as a guest and discussed the use of Google Read/Write Tools. More episodes are planned to be produced throughout the remainder of the school year.

## AHS NEW COURSE OFFERINGS 2021-22

The following classes have been added to the AHS Program of Studies for the 2021-22 school year. **AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE 3, ASTRONOMY** and **COLLEGE ALGEBRA**.

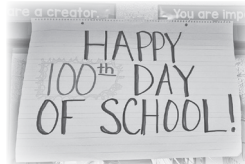
Congratulations to Miller School staff member, **STEPHANIE TUTKOVIC**, who was awarded the **AURORA SCHOOLS FOUNDATION ENHANCEMENT**

**GRANT** for the **KIMOCHIS PROGRAM** that uses a social-emotional learning curriculum to help children recognize and manage their emotions in order to build empathy.

Leighton Schools' Guidance Counselor, **TAMI MAZZELLA**, holds an annual **PROJECT BACKPACK PROJECT** event close to the holidays to help families that may need a little extra support with items such as, school supplies for their student, winter weather gear, holiday assistance, etc. During this past holiday season, the project collected enough items to fill the seats of half of a school bus to distribute. Thank you to all who so generously gave to this outreach project to make helping those in need such a success.



Stephanie Tutkovic pictured with the Kimochis



Craddock Wishes - Happy 100th Day of School!

Aurora High School has implemented a new way to recognize students for embodying the characteristics of the **ACSD STRATEGIC VISION** which are critical thinking, collaboration, empathy, balance, innovation and resiliency. Students from each grade level are nominated each quarter and then one student from each grade level is chosen and recognized as an **AHS VISIONARY STUDENT OF THE QUARTER**. The students (pictured below) received framed awards, had a round table discussion with Mike Roberto, Mike Hayes and Brian Brookhart to provide feedback, and Brookhart treated them to a lunch from the restaurant of their choice.

### Visionary Students of the Quarter



(left to right): **MICHALENE BLADOS** (10th Grade), **JUSTIN HARTLAND** (12th Grade), **KATIE TANSKI** (9th Grade), **BO HALL** (Not Pictured - 11th Grade)



**Lauren Brezovic's** 2nd Grader's Explored Shapes During Class Time

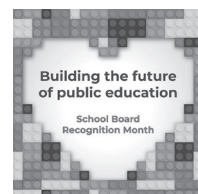
## AURORA BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING



The Aurora Board of Education held its annual January Board of Education (BOE) Organizational Meeting this year on January 6, 2021. The meeting, held virtually, was attended by all five Board members who voted unanimously in favor of Gerald Kohanski to continue to serve as president of the Aurora BOE. This year will be Kohanski's 24th year as an Aurora BOE member. During his tenure, the first two years he held the position of vice president and then went on to hold the position of president for the last 22 years.

The Board also voted unanimously for Vice President Pam Mehallis to continue in that position. Mehallis has spent 20 years as an Aurora BOE member. She has been the vice president of the Board since January of 2010. Former BOE vice presidents that have served under Kohanski's tenure as president include, Dave Cameron, Terri Hauenstein, and Ann Morrison.

## SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH ~ JANUARY 2021



January 2021 has been designated School Board Recognition Month by the State of Ohio. Thank you goes to each one of our Aurora Schools' Board of Education (BOE) members who give their time selflessly and their efforts tirelessly in making sure that our District's first belief, "Kids Come First," is always in the forefront. Superintendent of Public Instruction, Paola DeMaria, said, "Thank you to Ohio's local school board members! From being mindful stewards of district resources to making decisions to meet academic and fiscal goals, their work impacts the community and all aspects of the educational experience. I applaud their dedication and leadership!" In celebration of the ACSD Board, the Craddock School teachers and their classes each chose a letter from the words, "Aurora Board of Education." The staff and students then thought of a word or words that described our BOE starting with that letter. Each class then created a picture or video showcasing the word or words they chose. Craddock School Principal, Kim Menta, then compiled the productions and created a video that was presented to the Board at the January 25, 2021 Aurora BOE meeting.

## SPORT REPORT

Congratulations to the four outstanding baseball athletes who signed their Letters of Intent on **AHS NCAA SIGNING DAY 2020** in November. All four team members included, **MICHAEL CARPENTER** (Washington & Lee University); **JACK FECKO** (Central Michigan University); **ANDREW HORVATH** (The University of Akron) and **MIKEY MYLOTT** (Bradley University). Congratulations to all of these athletes and best of luck in their future athletic aspirations.



*Pictured (top to bottom, left to right): Jack Fecko, Coach Brancazio, Mike Carpenter, Mike Mylott, and Andrew Horvath*

## ALUMNI RECOGNITIONS

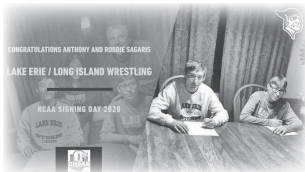
A big Congratulations goes to AHS alumni **BUBBA ARSLANIAN** (Linebacker '17) and **ANTHONY MELCHIORI** (Kicker '12) who were named as **HONORABLE MENTION HONOREES** in the **CLEVE. COM ALL DECADE TEAM!**

**GREENMEN BOYS' GOLF COACH, DAVE MUNSON**, was named the **SUBURBAN LEAGUE COACH OF THE YEAR**. Congratulations to Munson on another fantastic season!

## AHS NCAA SIGNING DAY 2020



*Maggie Bradley – Ursuline College, Volleyball*



*Anthony and Robbie Sagaris – Lake Erie/Long Island, Wrestling*



*Carlie Filkouski – Kent State, Soccer*



*Mikayla Jones – Catawba, Cross Country*



*Shyanne Sellers - Maryland, Basketball*

The **BOYS' GOLF TEAM** were the **SUBURBAN LEAGUE CHAMPIONS ALL NORTHEAST DIVISION 1 DISTRICT QUALIFIER** and had an outstanding **UNDEFEATED SEASON**.

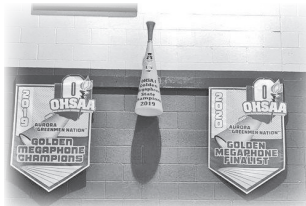
**SUBURBAN LEAGUE ATHLETES OF THE YEAR: MATTHEW SINGLETON**

(Cross Country) and **BROOKLYN MILLARD** (Girls Golf) were selected by the Suburban League coaches as **ATHLETES OF THE YEAR** in their respective sport.



*Matt Singleton*

**FUN FACT: AHS FALL STUDENT ATHLETES** earned a 3.50 or higher GPA in the First Quarter of the 2020-2021 school year! Way to go Greenmen!



Thank you to the **AHS MAINTENANCE STAFF** for installing the **OHSAA GOLDEN MEGAPHONE BANNERS** and **CHAMPIONSHIP MEGAPHONE**. **AHS** took the **GOLDEN MEGAPHONE CHAMPIONS 2019** title and a **GOLDEN MEGAPHONE FINALIST** title in 2020 competition.

**AHS FALL ATHLETES** had a total of 58 members named to the **SUBURBAN LEAGUE ALL STAR TEAMS**. **ALL STATE HONORS** went to **EVAN MCVAY** (Football) and **MICHAEL SEDER** (Football) along with **EMMA KRONDORFER** (Girls' Soccer). **ANDREW PLOSKUNAK** (Cross Country) was a Division I State Qualifier with a 38th place finish. Congratulations to each of these athletes for an outstanding fall season.

Congratulations to the **BOYS' SOCCER TEAM** who earned the **DIVISION II DISTRICT RUNNER-UP TITLE**.



## Harmon School Overdrive/SORA Reading APP Launched

Harmon School's Media Center has launched Sora, a new student reading app by Overdrive, a global distributor of digital content for libraries and schools and a leading platform for libraries and schools worldwide. Overdrive describes their app as, "your gateway to the best selection of ebooks and audiobooks available to schools, spanning millions of titles from thousands of publishers. With a catalog for all interests and abilities." This Overdrive subscription was purchased with the State Library of Ohio's LSTA CARES ACT Grant initiative which had been applied for by Harmon School's Director of Media Services, Mary Beckstrom. Beckstrom was awarded the grant and said, "This is a really nice new feature. Something else you can use online and we're very happy to offer it to Harmon Middle School."



## Service Learning Class Hosts Veterans Day Lunch

The Aurora High School Service Learning Class and the Aurora Schools Foundation cordially invited area veterans to join them for a complimentary Drive Through Veterans Day Lunch on November 11, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the annual breakfast event which had previously been held in the AHS cafeteria, was made social distancing friendly by offering a drive through event instead with guests remaining in their cars and picking up a boxed lunch to go.





*Superintendent – Continued from p. 1*

the Governor's suggestions for the plans include extending this school year, starting next school year earlier, or creating longer school days. We will be working to develop these plans as requested or potentially required if the Governor's declaration turns into legislation. However, I did want to share that because we have been fortunate to offer two different learning environments this year, young people in our district have been able to have their learning needs met and growth has been taking place. In the PreK-5 grades we are monitoring young people daily through activities such as reading conferences and number talks while still implementing our Literacy and Math Frameworks for both Plan A and Plan B learners. In grades 6-12, young people experience the same lessons just through a different medium and teachers are not only meeting with students during class time, but during office hours before and after school as well as during "A-Time" at AHS. I bring this up because our plans to meet the Governor's request will not include extending the school year or starting earlier, but will instead focus on meeting the specific needs of individuals. This could take place during the school year as mentioned above or it might extend to opportunities in the summer such as our already established Reading and Math Academies or Credit Recovery classes. We will share more information about these plans as April 1st approaches, but I wanted to be sure to let you know we have no plans to alter our school calendar for the 2020-2021 or the 2021-2022 school years.

On a different note, we continue to work toward implementing our new **strategic vision** for the 2020-2021 school year. I had mentioned earlier in the year that one might think that rolling out a new strategic vision in the middle of a pandemic would be a terrible idea. However, I can't think of a more important time to make the shift to focus on the whole child and to emphasize the importance of what we call "nurturing the roots" of young people. It is this idea of "nurturing the roots" that I wanted to dive into a little deeper as it relates to our strategic vision.

The new strategic vision emphasizes that today's schools must not only build a solid foundation of academic knowledge, but also nurture a deep sense of purpose and self in young people. These young people are not merely students, but LEARNERS with a skill set that prepares them to be successful in an ever changing world. In essence, with this vision we want Aurora Learners to be Future Ready.

The use of metaphors can often serve as powerful catalysts for implementation of a vision and we have taken that approach in the schools when sharing our story. We

believe that despite the current industrial model of schools in which the sound of a bell signals the start and end of work time, schools should not be compared to a factory. This is because the goal of a school is not to manufacture identical or standardized products such as those which factories are designed to mass produce. Schools should also not be compared to a business because schools are not in the "business" of educating students. Unlike a business, schools are not profit seeking organizations with the ability to bring in more revenue if individual students learn more or if more individual students learn. A better metaphor for a school is to look at it as a greenhouse. In a greenhouse, individual organisms are nurtured in an optimal environment with special attention given to specific needs. Some organisms need more water, others need more nutrients, but none thrive in darkness. In a greenhouse, the organisms are nurtured with the goal for them to leave the greenhouse bearing strong roots, which allow them to anchor into new environments and contribute to the benefit of all outside of the greenhouse. This metaphor fits because nurturing and growth take place in both a greenhouse and a school.

The strong roots of students referred to in this metaphor represent qualitative factors that are not easily measured. Like the roots of a plant, these "roots of students" are found under the surface and are not easily seen, yet they provide support and anchor students as they grow. The six competencies of **resilience, empathy, balance, collaboration, innovation, and critical thinking** in our strategic vision serve as the "roots" which we are nurturing in young people as they grow and mature through grades Pre-K-12 in the Aurora City Schools. Schools that function as a greenhouse are committed to focusing on nurturing the "roots" of young people and when these essential skills, or "roots", are nurtured, a natural byproduct will be strong quantitative outputs of data. Ultimately the success of any school, like a greenhouse, should be measured by how healthy, how strong, and how "deeply rooted" the individuals are when they leave the school rather than by their test scores or grades. Those young people that leave the schools bearing strong roots, which allow them to anchor into new environments and contribute to the benefit of all outside of the school, will find success no matter if they choose to begin to lay down their roots by enrolling in college, enlisting in the military, or finding employment straight out of high school. In short, they will be Aurora Learners who are Future Ready.

**GO GREENMEN!**

Mike Roberto  
Superintendent

*COVID-19 - Continued from p. 3*

in a time when there isn't a lot of control in what's going on in the world. It felt like taking back just a little bit of that control." Annabelle Zamary, added, "It is extraordinary that I can take a part in such a fabulous chance to help with COVID relief and I am thankful to be able to help those in need and help our country successfully distribute the vaccines. It's awesome to know that I am helping get this vaccine into the right hands. The scientists and volunteers who have made a global effort to develop a vaccine in record time have more than done their part, and it's a great feeling to know that we were able to help someone get a vaccine. The lives that could be saved by the efforts are countless and to be able to take part in this effort is so rewarding, and to even be a small part of that is incredible. As a high schooler sometimes it can feel like there isn't much you can do when something with the magnitude like a pandemic occurs, so it's an awesome feeling to be able to take back some control and help make change."



**Paolo DeMaria, Ohio's  
Superintendent of Public  
Instruction**

The official Twitter account of Ohio's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Paolo DeMaria, stated, "Wow! Aurora High School students are volunteering to help produce a vital sensor used to refrigerate and deliver the #COVID19 vaccine. They are making a remarkable difference for Ohioans and the nation with this incomparable STEM learning experience." It was accompanied with a link to the FOX8 Cleveland news story that featured the student's story and ran in January. The Community Focus' *Spotlight on Aurora Schools* show for the month of February also featured the students and their story. The links to both of these stories can be found online at the Aurora Schools' district website's Homepage under News.

## CATCHING SNOWFLAKES AT CRADDOCK SCHOOL



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February 2021

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## NHS Hosts Halloween Drive Through

The AHS National Honor Society hosted a Drive Thru Trick or Treat event to celebrate Halloween on Thursday, October 29, 2020. Students were invited to dress in costumes and drive down AHS Greenman Way to enjoy a socially distanced trick or treat experience. The NHS student groups decorated tents set up along the drive and dressed in themed costumes. Candy treats were passed out following safety protocols. The proceeds from the \$5.00 per car donation went to the NHS scholarship fund. Thank you to all NHS members and advisers for their creative and resourceful way to make Halloween fun for children during the pandemic.



## Interact Club Rake & Run

This year over 100 students participated in the annual Aurora Rotary Club Rake & Run event last November. Thank you to all of the Interact Club members and club adviser, Melissa Foster, Service Learning Class members, and the Girls' Basketball Team (and some independent community members) who gave so generously of their time. Thank you to the City of Aurora and the Aurora Rotary Club who provided snacks for the students before they set out to rake.



## HALLOWEEN PARTIES WERE "HOWLING" WITH FUN

