

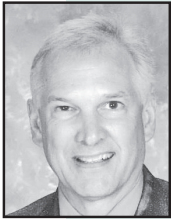
YOUR SCHOOLS

2017

Aurora City School District

From the Superintendent

By PAT R. CICCANTELLI
Superintendent of Schools



I hope this school year has been an opportunity to watch your child learn and develop in many ways. Each year students in our district meet difficult curricular challenges

with increasingly higher levels of achievement. This outstanding accomplishment is the direct result of the utilization of best practices and a collaborative learning culture where “Kids Come First”. Our students have also excelled outside the classroom in a wide variety of co-curricular activities.

We continue to earn accolades from various organizations for our student achievement. This past fall the United States Department of Education bestowed their highest honor on Leighton Elementary designating it as a National Blue Ribbon School! Leighton joins Aurora High School and Harmon Middle School as National Blue Ribbon Schools. Newsweek Magazine published its annual ranking of high schools and Aurora High School is ranked 14th in the state and 215th in the nation. Our ranking of 215th in the nation is an extremely high award; this puts us into the top 1% of all the high schools in the nation!

January was national Board of Education Recognition Month. Our elementary

See Superintendent p. 4



AURORA HIGH SCHOOL EARNS MOMENTUM AWARD 2016 FROM THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Aurora High School has recently earned the Momentum Award from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The award recognizes schools for earning A's on every value-added measure on the 2015-2016 Report Card.

According to the ODE website, “The Momentum Award is presented by the State Board of Education and recognizes schools for exceeding expectations in student growth for the year. Schools must earn straight A's on all Value-Added measures on the report card. The school or district must have at least two Value-Added subgroups of students, which includes gifted, lowest 20% in achievement, and students

with disabilities.” The value added is a measure of growth and not overall achievement, making this award much more difficult to attain.

Superintendent, Pat Ciccantelli, said, “I am very proud of the efforts of the faculty, staff and students at AHS. This award is very meaningful as it required outstanding growth in academic achievement for all of our students. We are very proud of our educators who provided the instruction and encouragement, and we are honored to work with students who value education and have such a strong commitment to learning.”

LEIGHTON SCHOOL BLUE RIBBON CEREMONY

Leighton School students, staff and administrators were treated to an assembly on December 1, 2016, in honor of Leighton's National Blue Ribbon School recognition given by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). On hand for the ceremony were Board President, Gerald Kohanski, Superintendent, Pat Ciccantelli, Leighton School Principal, Paul Goodwin and City of Aurora Mayor, Ann Womer Benjamin.

Kohanski presented the National



Blue Ribbon plaque that was given to Principal Paul Goodwin at the Ohio Department of Education's National Blue Ribbon Ceremony in Washington, D.C. in November 2016. He then handed the plaque to three educators and three students who were invited to appear on stage.

Mayor Womer Benjamin presented

Leighton p. 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Superintendent.....	1	Paul Dubetz Thanks Students	3	NHS Veterans Day Breakfast	5
AHS ODE Momentum Award 2016.....	1	School Board.....	3	Class Acts	6
Leighton School Blue Ribbon Ceremony.....	1	Who's Who & What's New	4	Haunting Good Time	6
Internet Safety Meeting	2	Community Tech Help.....	5	Sport Report.....	7
Preschool Five-Star Award Winner.....	2	AHS Rake & Run	5	Aurora Schools' Spread Holiday Cheer.....	7
Thank You Aurora	3	AHS Fall Musical	5	Dads-N-Donuts	8

INTERNET SAFETY MEETING WITH JESSE WEINBERGER



Nationally recognized Internet Safety Expert and author Jesse Weinberger addressed students in grades 4-8 during class time on November 2-3, 2016.



Weinberger then spoke to only parents in an evening meeting held at Aurora High School on November 7th. After speaking with the students in class, Weinberger took the information/statistics that she gleaned and tailored her adult presentation specifically to Aurora parents. Her appearance was sponsored by the Aurora Schools Foundation and the Aurora City School District.

Weinberger, whose passion is speaking to tweens, teens, and parents who may not understand how best to keep their children safe, spoke passionately about keeping children safe in this digital world. As a parent, it was recommended to set basic limits and parameters for the use of a child's digital technology. Weinberger stressed that with kids having multiple app accounts, it is vital to monitor their profiles and she discussed apps that parents may not be aware of that can be purposely hidden. She stated that if the child is in your home and you pay for the device you are solely responsible for their online presence. Weinberger also explained that it is not the schools job, but the parents who are responsible for their child's digital experience.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM EARNS STEP UP TO QUALITY FIVE-STAR AWARD

The Aurora City School District's preschool program has earned a Five-Star Step Up To Quality Award from the State of Ohio. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services research confirms that the first five years of a child's life has a direct impact on how children develop emotional well being, in addition to learning and social skills. This rating is given in recognition of the commitment to quality and the ongoing dedication to the learning and development of children.

The Step Up to Quality is the State of Ohio's rating system for learning and development programs where participating programs can earn a one to five star rating. In addition to meeting all standards of a four-star rating, programs with five stars need to meet additional requirements. The rigorous evaluation process includes a site visit, examination of documents, interviews, and observations of school staff.

Aurora Schools' Special Services Director, Christy Roshong, said, "The team at Miller School is honored to receive a five-star rating for our integrated preschool program. This has been a multi-year process involving all pre-school staff members as well as our families and community partners."

Roshong, added, "Our Five Star rating reflects our district's commitment to ensure young children develop their sense of self-confidence, social and emotional skills and life-long love of learning."

Superintendent Pat Ciccantelli said, "Congratulations to the preschool staff and all of the support professionals at Miller Elementary for earning a Five-Star rating in the Step Up to Quality analysis by the Ohio Department of Job and

Family Services. This is the highest rating possible and a significant accomplishment. This outside audit confirms what we have already known: when you attend this program your child will be in great hands and receive an outstanding education."



Aurora School Board President, Gerald Kohanski, stated, "The teaching and foundational development performed by our pre-school and elementary teachers are critical to the future academic success of our students. The importance of the efforts of these professional educators cannot be appreciated enough."



THANK YOU AURORA!

The Aurora City School District and the Aurora Board of Education would like to thank our community members for your support of our recent renewal levy on the November 8, 2016 ballot. Without your continued support we would not have been able to achieve our current status as top rated on both local and national levels.



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.

Leighton- Continued from p. 1

a City of Aurora proclamation acknowledging the school's, "exemplary accomplishments" and extending, "heartfelt congratulations to Leighton Elementary School and its staff on this outstanding achievement."



Leighton School Principal Paul Goodwin holding the ODE National Blue Ribbon School plaque

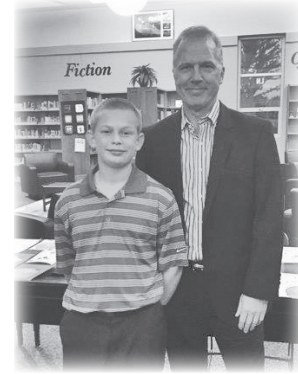


Leighton School Assembly with (left to right) Aurora Mayor, Ann Womer Benjamin, Aurora Board President, Gerald Kohanski, and Leighton Principal, Paul Goodwin

PAUL DUBETZ THANKS STUDENTS FOR THEIR SUPPORT



Paul Dubetz (left) and Paul Wilk



Nate Ruehr (left) and Paul Dubetz

Aurora resident, Paul Dubetz, attended the October 24, 2016 Aurora School Board meeting to express his gratitude to students who befriended him when they were kindergartners.

While traveling for business in Europe years ago, Dubetz suffered significant injuries in an automobile accident and required extensive rehabilitation due to his injuries. The doctors told him at the time that he would need quite a bit of positive support. Mrs. Haughey's Kindergarten class learned of Dubetz's situation and jumped into action. They created get-well cards and sent them along to him as he was recovering.

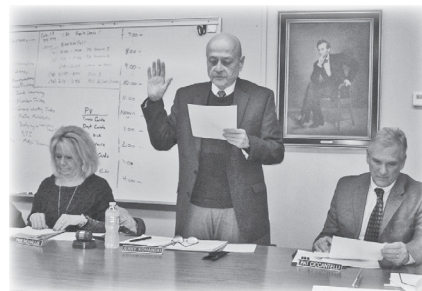
Dubetz kept these cards over the years and explained that he took them out to read from time to time to remember the wonderful support the kindergarten students at Miller School gave to him at a time when he needed it most. He

wanted to thank the students in person at a Board meeting to show his gratitude for their kind gesture.

The students and their families were invited to attend the Board meeting, where Dubetz explained what had happened to him while overseas, how much the children's thoughtfulness and support meant to him, and personally thanked Mrs. Haughey and the students in attendance. He also brought the cards with him so that the students could find the card they made. His presentation was a wonderful way to show the students just how much of a difference their act of kindness from years ago made. Superintendent Pat Ciccantelli said in the student's invitation letter, "We never know what a small gesture may mean to someone who needs the support and this is a fantastic example of the difference it can make for someone in need."



Thank you to our Aurora School Board members: Gerald Kohanski, President; Pam Mehallis, Vice President; Beverly Kuch, Annie Grohie and Zena Elliott for their time and dedication to our community, school district, and most of all, our children. They provide our district with the expertise and guidance that has made us one of the top districts both in the State of Ohio and nationally.



The Aurora School Board's Organizational Meeting took place on January 5, 2017. Board President Gerald Kohanski (center) took his oath and was sworn in. Seated next to Kohanski are the Board Vice President, Pam Mehallis (left), and Superintendent, Pat Ciccantelli.



Who's Who & What's New

In the **MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL** found on the AHS webpage, Principal, Dr. Paul Milcetic has added a Parent Resource Series called *Know! Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free* from the Drug Free Action Alliance (DFAA). The Know! series features informational flyers that cover an array of topics, some of which include, Optimal Sleep, Family Support For Prevention, Anxiety Increases Substance Abuse Risk, Parenting Style Matters and To Gain Understanding About Suicide. Check out these great resource links.

Miller and Craddock School students can show their pride by wearing their new colorful T-shirts that were purchased by **PTO**. Each class has their own special color t-shirt that can be worn on field trips, assembly days, picture days and spirit Fridays (or anytime). Thank you to PTO for supplying these t-shirts to help show our school spirit.

Handy Reminders

Click on the Aurora Schools' website Best High Schools logo under Quick Links to find the **DISTRICT ACCOLADES LINK** and **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING PHOTOS**.

Catch up on all of our monthly **CABLE 9 SPOTLIGHT ON AURORA SCHOOLS SHOWS** on Youtube. Just search Youtube under SpotlightOnAuroraSchools.

RETIREES

We have three veteran employees who retired at the end of 2016. Congratulations to **BILL GANOE**, **DALE DEAN** and **MARK STUDER**. Together they have nearly 100 years in the Aurora City Schools! We wish them well and offer them a huge thank you for all their service!

SPECIAL SERVICES PCF

together

The Aurora City Schools' Special Services Department held a Parent Communication Forum (PCF) in December that was held off-site at

the Two Café and Boutique located in Chagrin Falls. A presentation was given by **SHARI HUNTER**, the founder of the **TWO FOUNDATION** and **THE TWO CAFÉ**. She is a licensed intervention specialist and completed her student teaching at Harmon School with instructor Jen Loudon. She shared the Two Foundation's vision, "to create a neighborhood place, where individuals with mild to moderate exceptionalities would be job trained, coached and placed into a fully integrated work setting". Two Foundation's mission is to support individuals with mild to moderate exceptionalities through his/her transition into the workforce by providing job coaching, job placement, ongoing support and non-medical transportation. The foundation explains that they "exist to fill a gap in our society where our clients are left without appropriate job/careers upon completion of high school."



AHS student graduate, **KYLE SMITH**, is the author of a book titled, **THE OUTDOOR KID**. The book is about a student coping with autism. It is a moving account of his experiences and challenges. He would

like to make it into a movie and started a Kickstarter fund to help produce it. You can find the trailer at Kickstarter.com under Kyle Smith.



Recent AHS 2016 graduate **CAL DIJULIUS** began his own non-profit organization, **BELIEVE IN DREAMS**, whose mission is "to help fulfill dreams for children who are economically disadvantaged and have suffered from non-medical hardship." Their mission statement explains, "We provide a little joy and happiness to kids who have had a rough time. We believe in giving them hope that things can turn around and get better." To learn more, donate or to sponsor granting a dream, you can go to BelieveInDreams.com.

Superintendent - Continued from p. 1

students wrote cards and produced a video thanking the board members for their dedication and support. I also want to thank the five board members, President- Jerry Kohanski, Vice President- Pam Mehallis, Beverly Kuch, Annie Grohe and Zena Elliot for everything they do for our students and staff!

We have continued to move to a more student-centered approach of instruction in our classrooms. Students work in teams, collaborate, communicate and have to think deeply about their content. Our classrooms look less traditional with students moving around the room, working in groups, using technology, and learning through experiencing the content versus having it just presented to them by the instructor. We have worked hard to build the culture of a "Growth Mindset." We want them to build a grit or determination that helps them persevere in tackling difficult tasks or challenging work.

We have had another successful season outside of the classroom as well as our students have earned many awards the past few months. The wrestling team won their second consecutive Suburban League Championship and finished as regional runners-up in the State Dual Meet Tournament. Our individual wrestlers will be competing to earn berths for the state meet this month. Our girls' basketball team is on top of the Suburban League this year. This would be the first conference championship in 90 years! Congratulations to both teams. Also, our students continue to excel in the arts. We have students who have earned the highest rankings in music and visual arts in their respective competitions. Several of our robotics teams have qualified for the state tournament again. This month 64 students were recently inducted into the National Honor Society at Aurora High School.

This winter we offered several programs to help educate our parents and students on important social topics. Jesse Weinberger, a national internet safety expert, presented to our 4th - 8th grade students. She did a great job explaining the potential dangers of using the internet and the potential issues with

See Superintendent p. 5



STUDENTS OFFER FREE TECH HELP TO COMMUNITY

Did you know our students at Harmon Middle School offer advice on technology to our community members each week on Tech Tuesdays? Students will be available on Tuesdays from 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. in Room 125 (enter through Door #9 in the back of the school) while school is in session. Just bring in your technological device and the students will be happy to help with all problems, big or small.

AHS RAKE & RUN 2016

The Aurora High School annual Rake & Run event took place again this past fall. Students donate their time to help those community members who are unable to rake the leaves in their yard. The students provide the raking and then “run” off to their transportation, headed to the next location.



Superintendent - Continued from p. 4

social media and other platforms. She also presented to our parents as a follow-up to the student presentations. It was very informative and very well received by the over 225 parents in attendance. We also provided a school wide drug awareness program at the high school. Every student viewed an edited version of the documentary produced by the FBI/DEA called Chasing the Dragon. This is the same video we showed at our community event this past spring. This documentary was introduced by the Aurora Police Chief, Brian Byard. He detailed the local angle and provided insight as to how the heroin epidemic has reached across all socio-economic and demographic lines.

There are many great things happening in our district, but we have some financial challenges ahead. We appreciate the community support as evidenced by the passing of the renewal levy this past November. This allows for the continued revenue of a levy that was first passed in 1992, but there is no increase in our local revenue from this issue passing. Due to increasing health care costs and the recent state cuts in our budget we need to seek additional local revenue to maintain our current programs and we have placed a new 5.9 mill operating levy on the ballot in May. We will continue to be resourceful with our dollars and will be making cuts, as well as, seeking the additional revenue.

We continue to see families finding this as an attractive community and with the new housing developments in town we anticipate some growth over the next several years, which will also provide new challenges. When families move into our district they often cite the schools and the opportunity of their children to pursue their goals in and out of the classroom as a major reason they choose to make Aurora their home. This additional revenue will allow us to continue to provide an outstanding education to the students of Aurora.

We look forward to working through these challenges with your continued support. Our school system is truly great because of the supportive parents and greater community that we serve!

Go Greenmen!

THE AHS FALL MUSICAL



NHS VETERANS DAY BREAKFAST 2016

Scenes from the AHS National Honor Society's 2nd Annual Veterans Day Breakfast.



WE ARE *thankful* FOR YOUR SERVICE



CLASS ACTS

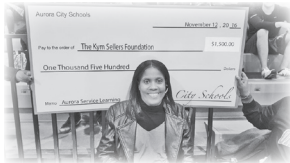
Jannine Mason, an Intervention Specialist at Miller School, earned one of the top 100 scores in Ohio on her Resident Educator final assessment and was invited to a recognition ceremony at the Statehouse in Columbus.

The AHS Service Learning Class

sponsored a volleyball tournament to benefit the nonprofit organization,

The Kym Sellers Foundation.

The foundation was founded by Sellers to increase awareness and provide education for those affected with Multiple Sclerosis in the Greater Cleveland area. The students chose the charity and it was organized entirely by them.



Kym Sellers is presented with a check for \$1,500 from the AHS Service Learning Class.

The Miller School Book Fair

lucky prize winners were: **Savannah, Emma, Simon,** and **Tavi** who showed off their prizes below!



Congratulations to the largest number of **National Merit Scholarship Commended & Finalists** students in AHS history (pictured below).



Left to Right: April Nenadal, Samantha Marotta, Julia Weber, Alexandra Mehallis, Tyler Thieding, James Kristell, Ian Doemling, Gabrielle Risko, Nadia Abbass, Guidance Counselor Chris Miley and Guidance Counselor John Calcei

Leighton Elementary School math teacher **Keri Stoyle** was recognized by the **Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics** as an outstanding educator for the northeast district. This is an award from her math colleagues which is always a very meaningful recognition.

VETERANS DAY TRIBUTE VIDEO ON YOUTUBE

As a tribute and a "thank you" to all those who have bravely served our country, Aurora High School teacher **Patrick Fenner** produced an AHS Veterans Day video that can be seen on Youtube. To view the video, search on Youtube under Patrick Fenner and choose his Channel. The video is titled, Veterans Day 2016.

Congratulations to 8th Grader **Lilly Bates** whose Washington, D.C. trip photograph of the Vietnam Memorial was one of 10 national finalists for the **Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History Veterans Day War Memorial Photo Contest**.

Lilly won a \$100 gift certificate to purchase materials for her classroom from the Gilder Lehrman History Shop and her picture was published along with the other finalists on Gilder-Lehrman's Veterans Day webpage. Her photo was also displayed, along with the other 8th grade D.C. photo contest entries, in the Harmon 8th Grade Social Studies hallway.

Thank you to **Mike Roberto** for all of his hard work organizing the **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY** on November 8, 2016.



Congratulations Excel TECC Environmental Ed Winners

In October, the **Future Farmers of America (FFA) District 3 Landscape Competition** was held at Holden Arboretum where nine teams and 127 students competed. The Excel TECC team took 2nd place, qualifying them to go on to FFA state competition. There were eight team members, including Aurora High School senior **Jarrett White**.

Harmon School Physical Education Instructor **John Farrell** received a grant from the **Martha Holden Jennings Foundation** to bring two dance groups from The Center for Arts Inspired Learning to perform and teach

a one day workshop to kick-off the dance units for the 6th and 8th grade students.



Sogbety Diomande (left), originally from the Ivory Coast, performed for 6th graders at Harmon School in their PE class.

Seven AHS seniors were among the highest scoring **WordWright Challenge** students in the country! The WordWright competition requires high school students to perform close reading and analysis of prose and poetry. The AHS students were: **Nadia Abbass, Sarah Gang, Ian Doemling, Johathan Kokinchak, Gia Leone, Ryan Shock** and **Julia Weber**. Congratulations to AHS English Instructor **Rose Brown's AP Senior Team** who also placed 5th in the nation!

New AHS Classes being offered for the 2017-18 school year include: **AP Computer Science, AP Physics C, AP Comparative Government** and the addition of **Digital Photography** in the Art Department.



BRINGS A HAUNTING GOOD TIME



SPORT REPORT



The **BOY'S SOCCER TEAM** raised \$5,000 for the **AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY – MAKING STRIDES AGAINST BREAST CANCER FUNDRAISER**.

The **AHS VARSITY CROSS COUNTRY ATHLETES** made school history. As a team, the **GIRL'S CROSS COUNTRY VARSITY TEAM** qualified for the Division I State Meet for the first-time ever. It was also the first time that a male individual, **DONOVAN BOYLE**, qualified for State in Division I. The girl's team took 12th place out of 20 teams. Boyle finished in 130th place in the Division I boy's race as a first-year runner.



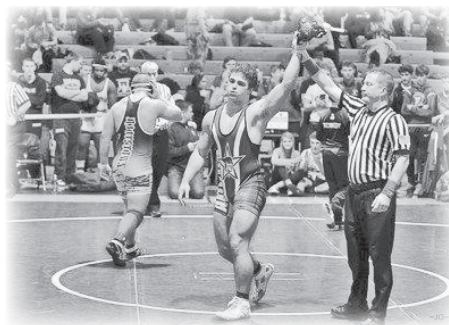
Greenmen Cross Country Team Division I State Athletes: (left to right) **D. BOYLE, B. SESNY, L. KELLER, M. SCHMITT, K. FELLENSTEIN, O. GROHE, S. GROHE**, and **K. ZABELL**.

ASSOCIATED PRESS HONORS – BUBBA ARSLANIAN - Named **AP DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2016** for Division II in the Northeast Inland District. **FIRST TEAM GREENMEN MEMBERS** include **GAVIN BLUNT** (defense), **CHRIS VANZO** (running back), and **HOLDEN SEMANCIK** (lineman). **HONORABLE MENTIONS: ROBBIE ALBRECHT, MAC AUSTIN, JONATHAN BLUE, MASON COPLEY, WILL LOVELL AND NATE SMIERCIAK.**

Aurora Schools' Athletic Director,

PAUL POWERS, earned the **OHIO INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION (OIAAA) STATE AWARD OF MERIT**. The award is “presented by the state to a National Interscholastic Athletic Administrator who demonstrates outstanding leadership and meritorious service and achievement in the vocation of interscholastic administration.”

The **HARMON SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS COMPETITION SQUAD** won the **CHALKER CHEER OFF COMPETITION** in November while achieving the competition's highest score for the 2nd year in a row.



The **GREENMEN WRESTLING TEAM** won the **PAULIE MCGHEE INVITATIONAL** on December 3, 2016. They won the team title with 296.5 points and walked away with seven weight class champions. The wrestling team also won their second consecutive **SUBURBAN LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP** and finished as regional runners-up in the **STATE DUAL MEET TOURNAMENT**. Good luck to the individual wrestlers who will be competing to earn berths to go to the state meet. Congratulations to first-year coach **JOHNNY PAPESH**.



Congratulations to the **AURORA GREENMEN FOOTBALL TEAM** and **COACHES** for another outstanding football season. They added another year to their list of consecutive OHSAA playoff appearances from 2005-16.



AURORA SCHOOLS' SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER

The Aurora City School District staff members, students and parents are actively involved in spreading holiday cheer throughout the community and beyond. This year was no exception. Our school buildings were busy with many philanthropic events all geared toward helping others.



The Aurora High School Student Council sponsored a canned food drive during the Thanksgiving holiday with students donating approximately 500 pounds of canned goods. High school Student Council Advisor Jen Simmerman explained that the “Aurora for Others” campaign encompasses several events at AHS that raise money for three different charities. One of the events is a dodge ball tournament where various teams pay to play and this year they brought in \$1,000 for charity. This year, “Aurora for Others” raised a total of \$3,000 and checks for \$1,000 each were presented to Girls with Sole, Team Red, White and Blue and Youth Challenge with students typically choosing the charities. Simmerman explained that, “It keeps kids focused on people other than themselves.”

Jennifer Jenkins, Harmon Middle School Student Council Advisor, described one of this year's school projects, which was to reach out to soldiers at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C. As an extension of several teachers having veterans speak to their classes for Veterans Day, student council members wrote holiday cards which were sent to recovering American soldiers. Jenkins added that between 50 and 55 cards with “very sweet and heartfelt” sentiments were mailed out in one week.

Harmon students also donated 188 pounds of canned goods before Thanksgiving which were taken to the

Holiday p. 8

Non-Profit Org.
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 Aurora, Ohio 44202

Dated Material

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Gerald P. Kohanski, President
 Pam Mehallis, Vice President
 Beverly Kuch
 Annie Grohe
 Zena Elliott

ADMINISTRATION

Pat Ciccantelli, Superintendent of Schools
 William Volosin, Treasurer
 Mike Roberto, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

ECRWSS
Postal Customer

Craddock students enjoyed a morning of breakfast treats with their "special guest."

Holiday - Continued from p. 7

Aurora Food Pantry, along with \$195 collected from a bake sale. Jenkins explained, "The kids work hard to keep a good connection with the community." She added, "An important part of learning to be an adult is learning what your civic duty is."



During the holiday season, Harmon School held a coat drive that collected 646 coats, which were donated to the Portage County Clothing Center to help keep kids warm. More coats were then distributed to Aurora families in need. Jenkins said, "This is just really to give them the focus that there are kids this winter in our county that don't have what we have."



The Leighton Leaders, in conjunction with the Salvation Army, once again sponsored their annual Flurry of Gifts program at Leighton School. The

Flurry of Gifts program is a wonderful opportunity for families to give a gift that made a Portage County family's holiday brighter. Donations of new coats, hats, gloves, boots, socks, blankets and holiday gift wrap were distributed to area families through the Salvation Army. Leighton Elementary School also held a used toy drive with the toys being distributed to less fortunate children throughout the area.

Miller/Craddock Elementary Schools also experienced an amazing response from the community for their annual Giving Tree service project. Many volunteers organized the event and transported the items to those in need.



Miss McArthur's First Grade Class



Giving Tree Helpers