
WINTER 2023

THE TORNADO CONNECTION

KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN



The Gettysburg Tradition Continues

BY LOGAN GOETZ AND LUCIANA SLOBODA

Seventh grade students have been visiting Gettysburg in the spring for the past 60 years. This year, that tradition will continue with about 180 students attending the overnight expedition on March 17-18.

The trip is organized by Rebecca Green at Logan Tours, Inc., Mrs. Casher, the school liaison, and Miss Carlson, a seventh grade history teacher. According to Mrs. Casher, the rest of chaperones are current or retired school staff and all have their required clearances, which are the same that are required to be a teacher.

On Friday, March 17, students will load the buses at 6 a.m. at the Intermediate after everyone goes through metal detectors. Breakfast will not be provided, but students can bring their own snacks for the bus. The buses will then travel to Harrisburg, where students will visit the state capitol building and the Civil War museum. At the PA State Capitol building, where the students will tour the Supreme Court and will have the opportunity to sit in the House and Senate chambers. The Logan Tours brochure the students were given states, "The beauty and art of this majestic building serve as the backdrop for a lesson in Pennsylvania history and state government."

While at the Civil War museum, students will watch a group of highly skilled reenactors who host a variety of hands-on activities for students to get a better picture of life during the war. Some areas the students are able to explore include musket firing, marching information, a signal corps station, and a surgery station.

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Also, on the first day, the students will be going to Hershey's Chocolate World, where they will learn how chocolate is made. The students are able to browse the gift shop for souvenirs to bring home to their family and friends. After browsing the gift shop, the students are able to make their own chocolate bar or Hershey sundae, then they will make their way to their next stop. This busy day now ends at the Hanover YMCA. Students will have a pizza party and participate in activities such as swimming, volleyball, dodgeball, and more.

After a good night's sleep, the students will head to Gettysburg National Park. The visit begins in the Visitor's Center, where students will watch a film that gives a great introduction to the Civil War and the Battle of Gettysburg. The Cyclorama is a massive, 360-degree "Battle of Gettysburg" painting-in-the-round measuring 377 feet around and 42 feet high. The group stands in the center of this three-dimensional diorama as the events of the 3-day battle unfold in front of them, culminating with the fury of Pickett's Charge. After this dramatic retelling, students explore the museum exhibits at their own place.

After exploring this fun exhibit, licensed battlefield tour guides will board each bus and share stories with the students on a two-hour tour of the town and battlefield of Gettysburg. History will come alive as the students get out and explore the infamous Peach Orchard, Devil's Den, and the site of Pickett's Charge. According to Mrs. Green, "These guides are awesome with kids, bringing history to life with sensational stories and fun activities."

For the trip in 2023, the cost, including the meals, hotel room, entrance to all attractions, and trip insurance is \$360. In addition, students may wish to bring spending money; no more than \$30-\$50 is necessary. On the first day, students eat Subway for lunch and pizza for dinner. Breakfast is served at the hotel on the second day, and an additional meal is provided on the way home on Saturday.

As far as roommates, travelers have the option of choosing their own roommate and will be housed in rooms of 4-5. Students who do not have a roommate choice meet with Mrs. Casher to determine a room placement. The hotel the students will be staying in on Friday is the Holiday Inn Express and Suites in Gettysburg. This hotel offers comfortable rooms with two queen beds, a TV, and a blow dryer.

On this trip, student safety will be the chaperones' most important focus. Experienced tour coordinators travel with the groups at all times, even when the groups split up. Before they go anywhere, the chaperones go over the meeting times, places, etc. before each stop. According to Mrs. Minch, an English teacher, "Last trip was the first time that I chaperoned, and everything was so well-organized and fun. I can't wait!"



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Enrichment Program Expands Class Offerings

BY KALIN BUREK AND CAMRYN MCKINDLEY

The Enrichment Studies Program, a series of courses offered to qualifying students in grades seven and eight, added several new courses this school year, including Intro to Fashion and Forensics.

One exciting new enrichment opportunity is Intro To Fashion, taught by Mrs. Walker. This new course is a hands-on class that teaches students how to be creative and express themselves through fashion. When Mrs. Walker found out her curriculum proposal was accepted, she was very excited. "I immediately started to fill my closet space with crafting supplies and fabric," she said.

On a typical day, Mrs. Walker has the students complete the advisory activity, a lesson on the unit they are covering, then they work on their current project. According to Mrs. Walker, she "has a passion for fashion" and is interested in teaching students merchandising techniques, sewing skills, and how to be independent learners.



During a full course the class usually completes four to six projects. These projects include using a sewing machine, hand stitching, working on mannequins, and other creative projects around the room. The projects they complete are displayed throughout the school until a new project is complete. Mrs. Walker grades her students based on the students' effort, participation, creative nature, and the details on the projects. The most challenging part about the class, according to Mrs. Walker, is having 25 students working at a different pace and all in different places around the room. Mrs. Walker's favorite project to assign is the prom dress challenge.

Reagan Kriebel, a seventh grade student taking this course, said, "The work in this class is typically fun because we can be creative, and it feels nice to get a break from daily classes." Reagan also mentioned that they get to use all kinds of fabric and beads along with their projects. Her favorite part about Intro To Fashion is showing her parents and family her hard work by displaying it in the library and it getting published. She also believes that the skills in this course can be used in the future. For example, they learn how to hand stitch fabric, use a sewing machine, and fix holes and rips in fabric. "It's a great course for any students that love fashion and love being creative with hands-on projects," Reagan said.

Another interesting new course is Forensics taught by Mrs. Swartz. Forensics is also a hands-on based course that has to deal with crime, science, and labs. According to Mrs. Swartz, "I wanted to teach this enrichment class so that I could share something sciency and hands on that many aren't exposed to learning at this age." She taught a forensics class while student teaching which influenced her to propose this ESP course, along with the fact that some of her family is in the law enforcement so she finds it interesting. "My favorite part about teaching this class is watching the students apply what they learned to a lab and also watching them be creative," she commented. Mrs. Swartz definitely recommends this class to any students who are into crime, science, doing labs, and being creative.

This ESP typically completes at least 10-12 different labs. The class will usually learn about a forensics topic for about 15 minutes each day and then apply it to a lab on topics like fingerprinting, DNA, blood splatter, etc. Students are evaluated on labs or projects, testing what they know about the concept that was taught. Another thing that will be evaluated is discussion based class time, to show if they are confused on the topic after reviewing it.

According to Mrs. Swartz, learning the information taught in the course can open up more job opportunities for students, and it gives them opportunities to experience science activities.

Eighth grader Callie McKindley and seventh grader Zoe Green state that this class is very enjoyable especially if students like crime and science. "I can have fun with my friends and learn about crime and science at the same time," said Callie. Zoe Green likes learning about the different topics each week along with the group work.

Students Inspired by Academic Games and PJAS

BY OWEN MEDVED, EDITOR

The academic games and Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) are both competitions that inspire creativity and smart thinking. In addition, they foster new friendships and offer fun memories for students and teachers.

Dr. DeThomas and Mrs. Sankey both serve as gifted coordinators at the IHS and sponsors for the academic games. Most of the competitions are held at Slippery Rock University during day-long events. Some of the competitions students can compete in are Linguistics, Presidents, Onsets, Propaganda, and Equations. Additionally, other games take place at each school, including 3.2.1, KMO, Google Doodle, and the Ping Pong Ball Engineering Challenge.

Competitors who win one of these competitions at Slippery Rock earn the opportunity to go to Tri-Bowl Academic Games Competition, which is held at Grove City College. Students who attended Tri-Bowl on March 6-7 this year include: Bennett Ambuske, Andrew Benjamin, Ava DeLorenzo, Easton Floris, David Kramer, Simon Miller, Josh Noronha, Maddix Pacoe, Luke Robbins, and Landin Schooley.

Teachers have to be trained with each new variation of the game so that they can teach the students the up-to-code game. According to Dr. DeThomas, "The I.U. trains teachers how to play the games so that we can train students to play the games." The sponsors prepare students to compete with practices during gifted pullouts and sometimes lunches in Mrs. Sankey's room. These competitions started in Butler years ago to enrich the curriculum for students with a gifted designation.

Mrs. Sankey has been teaching gifted students in Butler for 30 years, but this is her first year as one of the gifted coordinators. "I was given the gifted science class and was very passionate about it so I pursued additional certifications in the area," she commented. When Mrs. Sankey attended school, the games were not available to students, but she is glad they have been added because they cultivate valuable critical thinking skills.



2023 PJAS State Qualifiers

On the other hand, Dr. DeThomas has been a gifted coordinator for seven years. Like Mrs. Sankey, her favorite game is Equations. She started teaching academic games because she liked playing Equations so much. She also didn't play any of these games as a kid because she didn't know about them. When she started teaching, they only had three academic games including; presidents, equations, and onsets. "Students should participate in these games because they can challenge their minds against other like-minded students," she said. In her years of sponsoring the games, Dr. DeThomas has seen some changes in the games, such as new variations for Onsets and Equations. "And of course new presidents have been added to Presidents," she added.

PJAS is another enrichment opportunity for advanced students in Butler. The competition, which has been hosted for many years by Mrs. Sankey, allows students to compete against other local schools at a high level. This year's competition took place at the end of February, and the students from Butler had an outstanding showing.

Riley Rittersdorf received a perfect score and the Slippery Rock University Outstanding Chemistry project, which came with a \$100 cash award. In addition, the following students received first place awards and have earned the opportunity to compete at the state competition held at Penn State University on May 14-16: Olivia Cornish, William Fielder, Ava Gerber, Alexis Glenn, Claire Landon, AJ Mariotti, Owen Medved, Lukas Oleksak, Cassie Sklencar, and Alyse Wells.

Over the years, Mrs. Sankey has seen many projects that have piqued her interest. Just a few of them include: The effectiveness of masks, the best type of hand washing soap, the Mayan calendars explained, and building rocket engines. The point of this competition is to use the scientific method and to present your project in front of a group of people. The competition was started to give kids a chance to put their brains into a project. "Learning how to be a presenter and being able to present can be more important than the experiment itself," said Mrs. Sankey.

For more information on the gifted program or enrichment opportunities, please contact the principal's office.

Sixth Grade Chorus Program Thriving at IHS

BY RACHEL SMITH

The sixth grade chorus students are working hard toward their next concert, which will be on May 18th. The concert will be held at the Butler Intermediate High School at 6:00 p.m.

To prepare for this concert, the chorus has been rehearsing nearly every day during fourth period. On a typical day in chorus, the students walk into the chorus room, they get a folder containing their materials for rehearsing, find their seats, and listen to announcements. Then, they participate in both physical and vocal warmups, and rehearse their songs.

Mrs. Erevia is the sixth grade chorus teacher. Before becoming a teacher, she attended Westminster College. She was inspired to become a music teacher because of her high school music director. Mrs. Erevia loves seeing how much the students grow and improve with the music. "It is just my favorite part of my day. I love to make music with the energetic and fun sixth graders," she said. If there was one thing Mrs. Erevia could change about the program, it would be to have chorus as a full class period rather than only during the students' advisory period.

Avery Lynn is one of the many students in the chorus program. According to Avery, "I joined the chorus because I just love singing." Another chorus student, Dominic Snyder, explained, "I like singing with the nice teachers and friends."

Both students agree that the most rewarding part of being a member of the chorus is the people loving their concerts, their parents being proud of them, and just having fun singing. Avery and Dominic also agree that they will most likely continue participating in chorus throughout their high school careers. While Avery claimed, "I would definitely sing a solo," Dominic said, "I would not sing by myself."

This program has always been available to students. However, it went on pause during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, when the Butler Middle School closed, the sixth grade chorus was moved to the Butler Intermediate High School. As a result, there were modifications to the program. Mrs. Erevia said, "I loved the middle school building, but I understand the need for change. We have found a way to make it work here at the IHS." The sixth grade chorus members also agree that this has been a big adjustment. Nonetheless, chorus continues to be a fun and exciting experience for both teachers and students.



BY AVERY SINTZ AND HAILEY ZIEGLER

According to Mrs. Caton, one of the IHS guidance counselors, this is the district's fifth year utilizing Xello. "They started first at the high school level, and then we got it in seventh and eighth grade," she said. In Butler, students start Xello in fifth grade and are required to continue using it until they are seniors. The program is not nationwide; however, it is accessible for everyone in North America.

As Mrs. Caton said, “I wouldn’t say there’s anything really tricky about it. It’s interactive, and it’s pretty intuitive.” She also pointed out that the more that students work with Xello, the more it builds on itself, pinpointing more specific career choices for the students.

Butler chose Xello over other career programs because it was the most effortless option, and it saves the progress that the student has made over the years. Mrs. Caton explained, “Every student has their own portfolio that they keep adding to, so it’s a nice tool that kind of keeps track of all the work that kids have done over the years.”

Students' interests and hobbies are constantly changing, so they might alter their career plan after exploring more options. Mrs. Caton said, "Not everybody who thinks they're going to be an astronaut when they are eight, end up becoming an astronaut." In some instances, students already know that there is a family business that they will manage as an adult. Xello can also assist these students in their career journey. "There is a lot about being an entrepreneur, that means developing your own business or company," Mrs. Caton said. This is extremely helpful for students who want to start a company but don't know how. Xello also gives good advice for how to keep a business running.



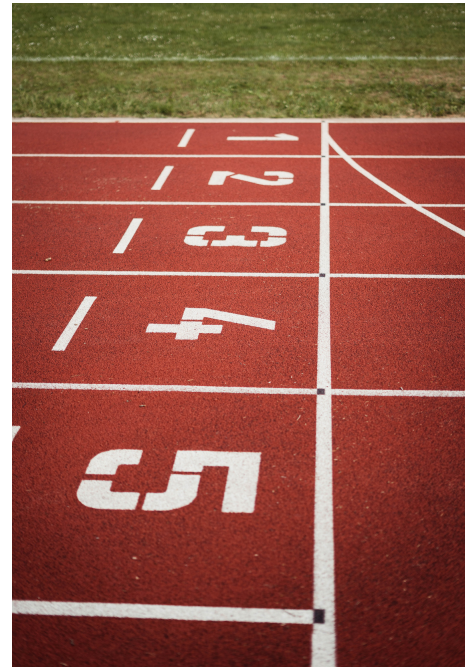
Spring Sports Season Begins

BY COLTEN ENGLISH AND TRENT BEST, EDITOR

In March, Butler Intermediate athletes start their seasons for track and field, boys' volleyball, baseball, and softball.

Tyler Stebick is a second year athlete on the track team and is very confident that the team will be successful. Tyler is very excited for the season and can't wait for the bus rides to away meets. Tyler believes the team will be able to follow up the outstanding season they had last year. "I feel the team did very well last year, and we will be able to follow that up with a similar season," he said.

Eva Stutz is also a second year track athlete who is looking forward to the 2023 season. Eva believes the team will be successful but not near as successful as last year due to the loss of the current freshman. Stutz said, "I am very excited for the season because Nist is our head coach."



Coach Stoner has been the head junior high coach for a slim one year but is very knowledgeable, especially in distance running. Coach loves to see new athletes trying the sport and being motivated to succeed with their goals. Coach Stoner is also very set towards development and knows that winning is not the main priority as a junior high coach. Even though he is not very focused on winning, he thinks the team will be successful and be able to win multiple meets. As far as the competition, Stoner commented, "North Hills is such a good all around team, and Roman Thompson is a generational athlete."

Colton Bestwick is one of many boys' volleyball players competing in the sport this year. Colton is very excited for the season and believes the team will be very successful. He is confident that the team will be able to compete with other schools but thinks NA will be a very tough team this year. Colton describes a typical practice as a lot of running and positional work. On the coaching staff, Colton enjoys playing for them and believes they are set towards developing good athletes in volleyball. "Our team has many good athletes and will be very competitive this year," he said.

Miss Hegedus has the opportunity to coach this team and is also very confident about the team this season. She has been coaching for three years and is motivated to coach because she wants to see the kids have fun. She also believes that NA will be a tough competitor but thinks Hempfield will also be very good this year. The way she described practice was very similar to what Colton said. She is also a developmental coach but wants the kids to have a strong work ethic. She is so excited for the season that she has all the games written in her calendar. According to Coach Hegedus, "The eighth graders are going to need to step up, but I believe they will be able to."

Nick Kramer is an eighth grader at Butler Intermediate High School who is trying out for the freshman baseball team. Nick is very excited about the season and has worked very hard over the past year to make the team. He explained that the team will stretch, run, and warm-up all as a team. Nick is inspired by the late Roberto Clemente and even wears his number. He is also very happy with the coaching staff and likes how they coach. He feels the team will be very successful and competitive this year. He was so confident that he said, "North Allegheny? They won't be a problem for us."

The coach of the freshman team is Mr. Buzzard. He has been coaching for eight years and head coach for four. He loves to see players' development not only on the field, but also as a person in general. He is very impressed with the players and skill level they have this year to the point he is confident they can win games. Buzzard is a very developmental coach. He doesn't care how many games his team wins, but he does care that every player gets better throughout the season. According to Coach Buzzard, "As a freshman team, my job is not to win games. My job is development; getting you ready for the varsity level. Wins are obviously a plus, but not the main priority."

Leeah Croll is an eighth grade athlete partaking in softball this year. Leeah is very excited for the season and believes the team will be able to compete. She was always a baseball player until she was forced to play softball. She is very fond of the coaching staff this year. She describes a typical practice as stretching, throwing, running, and positional work. She believes the team has a solid chance of winning over half of the games this season. Although she thinks they will be good, she thinks NA will be their best competition. She said, "NA has always been a tough team and will stay a tough team for a long time."

The softball coach is Miss Baxter. She has been coaching for five years and loves to work with kids. When selecting the team, she looks for leaders and girls with a lot of potential. She is also very fond of the coaching staff and is looking forward to coaching with them. She believes the schedule this year is very tough due to the fact two new teams were added to the section. According to Coach Baxter, "This is the hardest schedule we have ever had with the expansion in our section."

Good luck to all of our spring athletes as they begin their seasons!



SRU Student Teachers Practice Skills at IHS

BY RYLEE YOST, EDITOR

This spring, Butler Intermediate High School is hosting quite a few student teachers including: Miss Carr, Miss Hartle, Miss Trithart, Miss Thompson, Miss Zacharias, Miss Harris, Mr. Biondi, and Mr. McChesney. All of these young teachers are from nearby Slippery Rock University and have been practicing daily to prepare for a career in education.

Miss Carr is studying music education, and her cooperating teacher is Mr. Karenbauer. During her first few years at college, she didn't get much experience with being in front of students on an everyday basis, but being here at Butler has made her challenge herself, mainly by learning the names of about 150 students. According to Miss Carr, "I chose music as my subject area because it was the best part of my day when I was in school, and I was good at it." Her favorite part of teaching is interacting with her students and getting a break from college classes. One of the challenges of teaching is navigating the different energies of the students, as well as not being able to work one-on-one with the students who are struggling with something. In the future, she hopes that she is hired at a nice school district, and she wants to learn more about string instruments.

In the health and physical education department, Miss Hartle is working with Mr. Uncapher. She loves teaching the students here at BIHS and has learned many things like how to manage her classroom. One aspect that she loves about teaching here is being able to talk and interact with the students, but something that is challenging is the classroom management and having to say no to a student whenever it is time to stop talking and listen. Miss Hartle said teaching physical education was a natural choice. "I took this professional test, and it said P.E. teacher," she said with a smile. In the future, Miss. Hartle hopes that she will be able to continue teaching health and P.E., especially in middle school.

In the special education department, Miss Trithart is learning the ropes in Mrs. Sequete's classroom. Miss Trithart was inspired by her family to become a teacher because a lot of her family members are teachers, and because of that she always knew she wanted to be one as well. One thing that she loves about teaching the students here is being able to have that relationship with all of them, and learning about what makes them unique. According to Miss Trithart, "I am majoring in both general education and special education, so I will be able to teach kindergarten through twelfth grade in special education." In the future, Miss Trihart would love to be able to have her own classroom and grow more confident in her teaching.

Miss Thompson, who is student teaching with Mr. Miller in the special education department, has learned many things while being at the BIHS. She has learned how to figure things out as they happen, and she is learning from her mistakes. She wanted to become a teacher because she had great teachers growing up, and she wants to be a better person by helping students learn. She chose the subject of special education because she had always been interested in special ed, and teaching things that aren't taught in other classrooms. According to Miss Thompson, "One of my favorite things about teaching is creating all of the lessons that my students can enjoy." Overall, she says her experience is, "My experience here has been great. "I was here for my field experience last semester, so I was familiar with some students and staff," she said. In the future she hopes that she will be able to have her own autistic support classroom somewhere in the South.

Miss Zacharias is student teaching in seventh grade history with Miss Carlson. When she was young, she always thought that history was the most important subject, but others didn't always value it like she did. That is why she wanted to become a history teacher. Although being a student teacher can be tough at times because she always has to come up with new ideas to be able to teach a lesson, she loves the energy that the students give her during her lessons. "They're energetic and funny, and there is something different every day," she said. Miss Zacharias has felt very welcomed by the teachers and students at Butler. "Everyone is very helpful," she said. She hopes that in about five years she is teaching at the high school level in her own classroom.

Also in the history department, Miss Harris can be found working with Mrs. Behrens in eighth grade. According to Miss Harris, "I wanted to become a history teacher because when I was in seventh grade, my history teacher told me that history is like a revolving door." One of her favorite things about teaching is getting to know all of her students. One aspect that is challenging for her is getting mistaken for a student and not a teacher. So far, her student teaching experience is different from her school experience. "I attended a school that was a lot smaller, so when I came here, this school was huge," she said. In the future, she hopes that she will be able to have a teaching job in a middle school history department.

Mr. Biondi is just down the hall, working with Mr. Cochran in eighth grade history. For Mr. Biondi, history was always interesting. "I love how history changes and repeats. I also love just hearing stories from my grandfather," he said. As far as teaching, he enjoys talking to others and developing rapport with his students, which is why he wanted to teach. "I like seeing the students be able to learn from what I am saying and comprehend it," he said. However, he feels the most challenging part of student teaching is finding a rhythm in the classroom. In the future, he hopes to have his own classroom in the South and be riding in a Tesla.

Yet another history student teacher working with Ms. McKinsey is Mr. McChesney. According to Mr. McChesney, "I wanted to become a teacher because I have always wanted to do something rewarding." One thing that he loves about teaching is getting to see all of the students' personalities, but he claims that being young can make it more difficult to earn respect from the students. He decided to pursue the subject of history because "I have always been into history." In the future, he hopes that he will be able to have a good teaching job and hopefully start a family.



Best Buddies Club Brings Smiles to BIHS

BY REESE SEQUITE AND ISABELLA PYLE

The IHS chapter of Best Buddies, a non-profit organization that promotes opportunities for one-to-one friendships for students of all backgrounds and abilities, has grown to record enrollment this school year. Mrs. Rekich, Kendall Adams, Julie Smail, Arianna Torres-Morales, and Zoe Huval are all a part of Best Buddies. They have made many friendships and have learned many life lessons through this club.

Mrs. Mandy Rekich, a speech therapist at IHS, took over the Best Buddies club three years ago. She started it when it was originally at the middle school and since then has brought this club to the Intermediate. She decided to start this club because her son was in Best Buddies when he attended the Senior High. "I saw how much he enjoyed it and started that tradition at the middle school," Mrs. Rekich said.

Since then, she has organized countless meetings and events with the help of a dedicated group of staff, providing opportunities for fun memories and lasting friendships. Now that the club has transferred to the Intermediate High School, there has been more student involvement and more student leadership.



According to Mrs. Rekich, "Best Buddies teaches inclusion. It shows the students it is okay to be friends with kids outside of your classes." She believes that this is a club that teaches people the importance of including others and the importance of making friends; which are life lessons that will stick with you. The bond between the students and their new friends is very natural and very comforting to watch.

Julie Smail, a sixth grade student at BIHS, loves Best Buddies. She joined the club two years ago and has participated in many events throughout the club. According to Julie, this club has helped many people who are in the club and even people who aren't.

Julie's backstory on how she decided to join the Best Buddies club involved her sister who is on the autism spectrum. "I know that my sister has had some troubles making friends, and I wanted a fair chance for kids like her to make new friends," she said. Since Julie has been in Best Buddies, she has made lots of new friends as well. A favorite moment Julie has had was the bocci match with her friends. She enjoys how kids with special needs are able to make all kinds of friends and be themselves. Julie's intent is to help others in a way and the school community as well.



Kendall Adams, who is also in sixth grade, enjoys Best Buddies as well. She has been a part of this club for about two years, and has made many friends. Kendall likes how all of the kids that are in Best Buddies are very nice and super funny. One of Kendall's favorite things about the club is when they did the bocci match. Something Kendall does normally in the club is hanging out with her friends she has made and doing activities with them.



"I really have gotten to know many people better as I have talked to them at club events," she said. Kendall thinks that this club helps a lot of people in the school and community, and she will continue to participate in the club in the future.

Arianna Torres-Morales, grade 6, has joined Best Buddies this year as her first year. She joined the club because it seemed very fun. She since then has made lots of new friends while in the club. Her favorite thing about this club is that she gets to play games with her new friends. She also liked designing posters for the Bocci match.

Zoe Huval, a seventh grader, has been in Best Buddies for two years. She joined the club because her mom told her it is a good club to be involved in and is very fun. She has since then participated in the club's various activities. She has made ten friends while along the way. "I like Best Buddies because I get to have fun with my friends," she commented. She likes that the club helps connect her to great, lifelong friends. Zoe is very excited to continue to make more friends and have fun at Best Buddies.

Attendance a Point of Focus for 22-23

BY LANDON GEIBEL AND JUSTIN PARKER

Following a few years of decreased school attendance due to the pandemic, Dr. White has made attendance a point of emphasis this school year. At the IHS, Mrs. Best, Mrs. Crissman, and Ms. Succop all have a part in the focus on school attendance.

Mrs. Best is the attendance secretary, and she works at the counter just past the principal's office. When students are absent or have an early dismissal, they stop to visit her to turn in parent notes. According to Mrs. Best, "On a typical day, first thing in the morning whenever the buses come in late or students come in late, I will add a list of tardy students. They will tell me whether they are coming in late due to oversleeping or missing the late bus ride," she said. "Other times the buses will come in late, and I will give the students late bus excuses, and I will send them off to class," she added. She also creates an attendance bulletin for teachers that includes which staff members are absent and who has a vacation or a sports dismissal.

In the afternoon, Mrs. Best said spends a lot of time on the phone. "I receive phone calls, and I let phone calls go out from the school letting parents know which students are absent." If a parent gets that call and their student isn't absent, then the parent will call Mrs. Best and let her know that their student is not absent or that they came in late. That typically means that as a student, they probably didn't sign in. This will usually take about 15-20 calls on a bad day. "On a good day, I don't get any calls and that's a really good day," she said. In between these duties, she enters all of the excuses that were turned in that day.

She also prints and mails compulsory attendance letters. Those get sent out to students' parents usually once a week letting them know that they haven't turned in excuses. She said, "If you haven't turned in your excuses after five days, you can expect to receive a letter in the mail saying that an excuse hasn't been turned in and that will basically remind you to turn in that excuse for the days you missed. Also if you don't turn in the excuse, then that's how you can be fined."

Ms. Succop, the district's home/school visitor, has her office inside the IHS. If a student misses school without turning in excuses, she becomes involved. When families do not respond to requests for excuses after receiving the compulsory attendance letter, Ms. Succop may call, visit the home, or register a fine. In extreme cases, families end up in court over attendance.

Mrs. Crissman, the assistant principal, helps encourage attendance through the PBIS program. Students who attend school regularly are randomly placed in a drawing to win prizes. The efforts of Mrs. Best, Ms. Succop, and Mrs. Crissman have been making an impact. According to district data, in September of 2021, attendance dipped to 86% district-wide. In September of 2022, those numbers improved to 93%. Similarly, January 2022 showed that on average 87% of students were in attendance. This January, that percentage was back up to 92%. According to Mr. Dobransky, "Our goal is always to be above 95%, but we are improving all the time."



What's For Lunch?

BY CHASE BODEN AND EVAN MIKAN

School lunches are a widely discussed topic around the school. The students at IHS have mixed opinions on the school lunches.

Karsten Lenyk believes the Italian Dunkers are the best on the menu, but he also thinks that they should add different foods, like fried chicken. In addition, he thinks that more students would buy lunch if the cafeteria served breakfast for lunch every friday. "It would add more variety to the menu and would bring in more lunch buyers," he said.

Nash Cuffman also agrees that Italian Dunkers are the best item. He also says that his favorite nutritious option is an apple. If he could change any of the food options, he would add more treat options to the menu, such as a brownie. He thinks that items served should be sold separately so that students don't have to pay for the whole meal, even if they only want one thing. Nash also gave his thoughts on the vending machines. He believes that the vending machines do not serve any purpose because they are empty. He believes that it would have a positive impact on students if they were filled.

According to Jennifer Marken, the head of the food service at Butler Area School District, the lunches served at school must follow very specific guidelines. She started working for the district in November, but she has been working with Aramark K-12, the district's food service provider, for more than five years. Her favorite part of her job is talking to the students about the meal that they are having for the day, whether it is breakfast or lunch. On the other hand, the most difficult aspect is being able to find a balance between introducing new items without taking away some of the favorites that students may have.

For calorie and nutrition requirements, Ms. Marken said that there are different guidelines for different age groups. They can all be found on the USDA website, but they are required to offer fruit, vegetables, milk, bread grains, and meat/meat alternates. According to Marken, the school lunches are funded through reimbursements from the government. The percentage of cost paid for by the students depends on their free, reduced, or paid status.

Based on the data collected by the food service, the most popular school lunches are pizza, chicken sandwiches, chicken nuggets, and breakfast for lunch. "We try to plan for items that students want on the menu, and we will try a new option twice. After the second time if the item is not received well, we will exchange it for a more popular item on the menu," she said.

Many students have food sensitivities, and the food service takes all of these concerns into consideration. "We follow safe food handling practices to ensure that cross contamination does not occur and source different products when needed for students with allergies," she said. According to Marken, the food service decides what they will serve by going off of student feedback from surveys, data from past menus served, and looking at the industry trends to create their menus. "This year, we have a monthly 'Limited Time Offer' menu that is featured two days a month at all locations. We have implemented a daily third option at the elementary schools," she added. Grab-N-Go options have been added at both the Intermediate and Senior High, and several Made-To-Order rotations are available at the Senior High.

For the last few years due to Covid, all students were able to eat at school for free. Like many others, Ms. Marken hoped that the universal free meals would be continued for this school year, but the bill did not pass in Congress; however, they were glad that the state of PA made universal free breakfast for this school year.

WINTER 2023

THE TORNADO CONNECTION

STUDENT SECTION

Sixth Grade Student Spotlight: Hadley Benson

BY JOSIE CRILEY AND HARLEIGH WISE

Hadley Benson is a 11 year-old in sixth grade and was born on June 16. She has one sibling named who is 10 years old. In school, her favorite subject is history, although she doesn't know why. Outside of school, she spends time doing gymnastics. "I started two years ago, and I really like it," she said.

When she is done with school, Hadley plans to be a veterinarian because she loves animals. At home, she has two dogs named Cash and Bella. She would go to Hawaii because according to Hadley, "I just think it's cool there." She would bring her friends with her.

Her favorite color is blue, and she likes watching movies more than reading books. "Books were always boring to me," she shared. With 1,000 dollars, she would buy a dog.



Seventh Grade Student Spotlight: Legend Adamik

BY JOSIE CRILEY AND HARLEIGH WISE

Legend Adamik is a 12 year-old seventh grade student who was born on June 1. He has two sisters and one brother. His favorite subject is history because it is fun, but he is also very interested in geography. "It's intriguing and fun to learn about," he commented.

Outside of school, Legend enjoys baseball. According to Legend, "I used to watch baseball, and I thought I would try out for it. I ended up liking it."

When he grows up, he either wants to be a cartographer or a geographer because he absolutely loves mapping and exploring the world.

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If he could go anywhere in the world, he would choose Italy because it is such a beautiful place. "I would bring my mom along because she would really like to see Italy too."

His favorite color is yellow. He likes reading books rather than movies because he likes gaining more information about things. If he had a thousand dollars, he would put it towards something like a charity. If he could wish for anything, he would wish for a big house and infinite money.

Eighth Grade Student Spotlight: Natalee Barnes

BY JOSIE CRILEY AND HARLEIGH WISE

Natalee Barnes is a 14 year-old eighth grade student who was born on March 14. She doesn't have any siblings, but she does have one dog named Heath. Her favorite hobby is competitive dance. According to Natalee, "I have been doing dance for six years, and it was just something I was passionate about." In school, her favorite subject is history because as she stated, "I think it is really neat learning how everything came together in the world and learning about the past."



She wants to be a dermatologist when she is older because she believes that there are not enough people that understand skin, and it would be nice to help out people who need it. Her dream vacation would be to go to the Bahamas because she loves the beach and wants to go somewhere nice and warm. "If I could choose anyone to come with me, it would be my family and three of my friends," she said.

Her favorite genre of music is classic rock and roll. Her favorite color is aqua. She prefers reading a book over watching a movie because in her words, "I feel like I get more from the book than the movie." If she had one thousand dollars, she would save half of it and donate the other half to charity.

Overall, according to Natalee, "I think that I am very loyal, trustworthy and kind. I always try to help people because I care about everyone a lot. Also, I try to be very supportive and help people get what they need to get through in life. I feel there are so many people you can't talk to because of what is happening in their life."

Security Shout Out

BY SEAMUS MCCAULEY-RODGERS

Our security guards, John Stepansky, Dave Bayer, Thomas Duffy, Eric Sipes, and Frank Cichra, do so much for us. They come in at 6:15 a.m. every day and set up the metal detectors. Then they operate the metal detection when students come into school around 6:30 a.m. After the day starts, they monitor the entrances, exits, and cameras to keep our school safe while students learn.

All of our guards are retired police officers. Their routine every day may seem somewhat simple, but it is valuable to the piece of mind of parents, students, and staff. Because they are retired state troopers, all of the security guards feel comfortable carrying out the daily duties and carrying a firearm.

Officer Stepansky has been working at the BIHS for 11 years now. He is very diligent with his job and very attentive. During his time working for the school district, he has seen additional security measures and improved security equipment.

He enjoys working here mostly because of the people that occupy the building daily. One thing he doesn't like is the early start time for his shift.

Outside of school hours, Mr. Stepansky works on old vintage cars. A tip from Mr. Stepansky for students that want to be police officers is: "What you do now impacts your chances of being an officer." He enjoyed his career in the police force and likes working for the schools now. "Everybody is very diligent about their job and attentive to what is going on around the building," he said.

Officer Duffy has been working at the BIHS for four years now. Mr. Duffy takes his job extremely seriously. In a decade, Mr. Duffy hopes to see security continue to evolve and improve. As far as what he likes best about his day, the answer is simple: "I like interacting with the students and the staff."

After the school day ends, Officer Duffy spends his free time with his family and occasionally golfs when it's nice out. He is proud to work for Butler because the district makes the security of students and staff a top priority. "Our security is the best around because the guards are retired police officers and have excellent training, so they know how to handle situations and people," he observed.

If students want to be police officers, he suggests that they stay in school, get a good college education, get used to crazy hours because you're on 24/7.

Who Is Your Role Model?

BY LUKE BENDER AND ADAM DUGAN

Who is your role model? By definition, a role model is "a person who is looked to by others as an example to be imitated." The staff and students have a variety of types of people who they consider to be role models, but many references well-known athletes and parental figures.

Mr. Frank, one of our security guards, said that his role model is Ted Williams. Ted Williams was a baseball hall of famer who played for the Boston Red Sox for 19 years from 1939 through 1960. His career was interrupted by military service in WWII and the Korean War where he served as a second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps as a Naval Aviator. According to Mr. Frank, "Role models should have integrity, honesty, and a good character." He added that role models may change over time. "As you get older, you discover other people and learn about new people throughout history who are pretty good role models," he said. He added that he has known about Ted Williams for a long time, but he has recently been more aware of him than ever.

Mrs. Sheatz, a seventh grade teacher, knows her role models personally. "My parents are my role models because they are hard working and make sacrifices for their children. I strive to be like them," she said. According to Mrs. Sheatz, her parents have been her role models since she was young. She added, "A role model is someone you can look up to, and kids often look up to people with money and fame instead of good traits."

Seventh grader Winter Phillips said that her role model is Mrs. Sheatz. "She is awesome, and makes ELA fun." She agrees with Mrs. Sheatz that a role model is someone to look up to, and also said that a role model should be nice, respectful, and do good. According to Winter, she first thought of Mrs. Sheatz as her role model the day she met her because she was a very kind and outgoing person. Winter thinks role models are important because everyone needs someone to look up to.

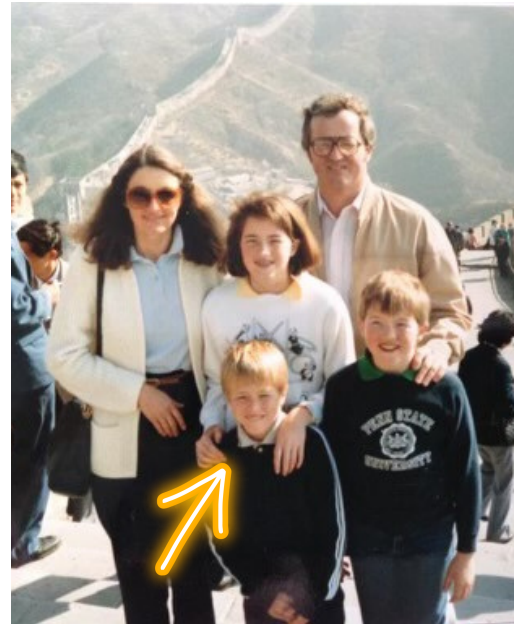


Who Am I?

Eighth Grade Mystery Teacher

BY EMMETT REGES

The eighth grade mystery teacher teaches history, and his favorite color is green. He had a good relationship with his teachers growing up which inspired him to become a teacher, and felt like he had the right personality to do it as well. When in school, he participated in basketball and volleyball. He didn't have a favorite school lunch because he packed every day. For students who really pay attention in his class, they would know about his family. Someone he would trade places with it would be Coach Mac because he wants to be a gym teacher. If he could ride any creature to school, it would be a horse.



Who Am I?

Seventh Grade Mystery Teacher

BY EMMETT REGES

The seventh grade mystery teacher is from the English department, and her favorite color is green. She was inspired to teach by her very funny 11th grade English teacher who made her like reading again. While in school, she participated in tennis and taught Spanish. Her favorite school lunch was pizza. A few interesting facts about her include that she believes in Bigfoot and doesn't like ranch dressing or yogurt. If there was anyone she could trade places with, it would be a principal because she wants to be a principal for a day. If there was any mythical creature that she could ride to school, it would be Cerberus, a three-headed mythological dog.

Who Am I?

Sixth Grade Mystery Teacher

BY EMMETT REGES

The sixth grade mystery teacher teaches math, and his favorite color is blue. His dad inspired him to become a teacher because he was one himself. When he attended school, he participated in choir, plays, musicals, volleyball, golf, student council, and track. His favorite lunch was the Jet-747. Students who really pay attention in his class know that he lives an hour away from the school. If there was any one he could trade places with in the school, it would be Mr. Starr because he thinks of him like a brother. If he could ride a mythical creature to school, it would be a griffin.

