

The



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Pierce Retires, Leaves Lasting Imprint on Fenton



Dr. Kathie Pierce

By Emily Patterson

Dr. Kathie Pierce has been a familiar face at Fenton for over 30 years. Pierce first started working at Fenton as a special education teacher 33 years ago. Over the next few decades, Pierce moved up the ranks, from special education teacher, to special education director, to special services director, to assistant principal, to principal, and then finally all the way up to title of superintendent.

With the new renovations to Fenton this year, Pierce has obviously seen the school change in a lot of ways. As well as physical changes to the building, Pierce has also seen other changes, such as in the curriculum which has become more developed and coherent over the years.

"It used to be that teachers taught whatever they thought was best, and now there are aligned standards with Common Core. It's gotten a lot harder, and we've had a huge expansion of AP."

As well, Fenton has had some changes of character and culture, as Pierce remembers a time when there was a sort of "gang

presence" at Fenton. She described it as students really just wearing specific colors and forming opposing "gangs" but was happy to report that there was no real outbreak of gang violence at the school.

"I'm glad that's gone."

Despite all that's changed, one constant that Pierce is happy has existed is the apparent absence of obvious divided cliques at Fenton.

Over 33 years, one is sure to accumulate a lot of amazing memories, and Pierce certainly has a few for the books. Pierce was at Fenton during the ever-famous prank in which the senior class put a Volkswagen in the courtyard.

"My classroom was on the courtyard so I saw it through the window. As a teacher I thought it was hilarious."

Pierce also remembers the fire department having to come in and subsequently saw the Volkswagen apart in order to get it out of the courtyard and remembers her and her students watching that interesting activity through the window for most of the day. As well, Pierce remembers when now former president Bill Clinton visited Fenton.

"It was amazing how charismatic he was, no matter what your political views are," Pierce said.

When I asked her what she'll miss about Fenton, Pierce without hesitation answered: the people.

"I think we have a great staff, and it's been a wonderful to be a part of their lives. The students keep you young, I really don't feel my age. There's so much energy that the kids bring, it keeps you feeling young."

Teachers, many of whom have worked side by side with Pierce, also have nothing but the utmost respect for Pierce.

Regarding Pierce, math department chairperson and teacher, Clint Porter, said, "Kathie is a tremendous leader who was involved

in every facet of the building: sports, activities and academics. Administratively, she is the primary reason that Fenton is a back to back recipient of US News Reports' Silver Medal Designation. More importantly than the nuts and bolts of her job, Kathie is a 'people person.' She knows every single person at Fenton by name."

"She knows about our families, honored all people equally regardless of occupation, and was the face of Fenton. As a colleague, what I most appreciated about her as a leader was the ability to engage in debate to the point that almost seemed like arguing. No matter how far apart it seemed we were from agreeing, when it came down to doing what was best for students Kathie always agreed with anyone that was advocating for them. Of course, this is why Fenton is such an amazing place for all of our stakeholders; staff, students and parents alike," Porter said.

Social studies department chairperson and teacher, Kate Ward, said, "I have never known a Fenton without Dr. Pierce. I was always astounded by Kathie's knowledge of education law, testing and data, and school-wide curriculum. She knows EVERYTHING! If you had a question, she had the answer. However, she always wanted to make sure that any new projects, programs, or initiatives were tailored to meet the needs of the students at Fenton and led by the teachers, who she always viewed as experts."

Ward continued, "I also appreciate that she was always accessible. Even though she had a very busy schedule, if there was ever a problem you wanted to discuss with her, her door was always open. I appreciate all that she has done for Fenton and will miss her leadership and candor."

Special education assistant department chair and 504 coordinator

Sue Gaska said, "The one thing that puts Dr. Pierce above the rest is her uncanny ability to remember everything that she read or learned. Her intelligence was one of her many qualities that made her an outstanding educational leader. During her tenure, Dr. Pierce kept the education of students and their well-being first and foremost in every decision and action she made. She genuinely wanted to 'educate and inspire' everyone – students and staff alike. I will sincerely miss having her at the helm of the District in the future. It has been an honor to work and learn from her. I thank her for putting her confidence in me and hiring me 25 years ago."

As for the future, Pierce is currently planning on doing some consulting work part time before moving somewhere warmer not too far in the future.

Although she is moving on from Fenton, there will always be reminder of Pierce's accomplishments here, not only in the lasting presence and culture she leaves behind, but also in the form of a tree.

On May 10th, The Village of Bensenville partnered with Fenton as part of the annual Arbor Day celebration and planted a tree in Dr. Pierce's honor. Pierce was extremely humbled by the dedication and absolutely loved it. "Fenton has been home for so many years,"

Pierce said, "It's good to know that there's a part of me here still growing."

When I asked if there was anything else that she'd like to say, Dr. Pierce had a simple final statement.

"I've loved my time here," she said, "and I hope that students and staff continue moving forward. What's that saying? Stay strong and carry on."

Fenton Groups Unite, Raise \$1500 in Walk for Flint

By Karsen Idelman

Flint, Michigan, where 41.6% of residents live below the poverty line and the median household income is \$24,679, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Flint, Michigan is a poor city, and their water supply is even poorer.

Fenton's B.E.A.T. (Bison Environmental Activism Team) was brainstorming ideas for fundraising. Julia Gainski, a sophomore; and Giselle Villegas, a senior, brought up the idea of a walk-a-thon.

"I brought the idea of donating to Flint, Michigan when I was looking into possible causes that need more attention that had to deal with environmental issues. The Flint water crisis occurred when its water source was changed from the Detroit River to the Flint river," Julia explained.

The water in Flint is contaminated with e.coli and lead,

infecting anywhere from 6,000 to 12,000 children, suffering from long-term heavy metal poisonings and neurological issues, memory loss, and kidney damage. The walk-a-thon took months of planning between Gainski, Villegas and B.E.A.T.'s advisors Mr.

Coan and Ms. Lamey.

The event, which took place on April 29th, 2016, raised \$1500 for Flint, and many different groups in the school participated. Tri-M Music Honor Society, girls' soccer and many other students took part in the

fundraiser.

One participant, Anita Kuchlewski raised money for Flint and had this to say about the walk-a-thon, "I would do it again, it was a ton of fun! Especially for a good cause!"

Anita participated on Team Tri-M and explained how much she enjoyed the event and thought it was a great idea.

When asked about what happened with the money Ms. Lamey said, "B.E.A.T. ultimately decided on sending fresh bottled water to the Flint Community School district because they liked the idea of a school to school connection. We learned about this donation opportunity through the Sierra Club, which is a conservation group founded by John Muir in 1892 which focuses on protecting the wilderness and has been influential in the passing of many environmental legislation."



Tri-M

Photo courtesy of Sereidy Williams

2016 Retirees: "What Will You Miss Most About Fenton?"

Michelle Bennett



"I have truly enjoyed the past 34 years teaching at Fenton. The students and staff here are very special people. I will always have great memories of helping my French and ESL students grow and become more proficient in their language skills. Thank you Fenton for helping me have a wonderful career. I will miss all of you!"

Judy Bosen



"After teaching at Fenton for 29 years, I have many beautiful memories of Fenton students. I have enjoyed every minute of my teaching career, and I love learning from the students every day. What I love the most is finding out what is special and unique about each individual student. I hope they all know how much I care about each one of them. ¡Gracias a todos!"

Ginny Oelslager



"There are many memories I'll take with me from my years here at Fenton. I have had the opportunity to teach students as preschoolers, as high school students and then see them pursue their dream upon graduation from Fenton, often to become teachers too. Sponsoring FCCLA for many years and witnessing the success of so many members has created memories that will last a lifetime."

Melanie Haug



"I will miss all the contacts with students and teachers alike. I love when students ask for help in researching a difficult subject and overjoyed when I am able to point them to some incredible material to use in writing a paper. And then, when a student or teacher asks for a book recommendation to read for leisure, I feel the challenge to suggest just the 'perfect' book for their reading pleasure."

Lisa Hennessey



"I will miss all the people, the young and the old, the past and the present-- the mighty Bison of FHS."

Mark Carmen



"The opportunity to spend time surrounded by creative, energetic, and caring professionals both in the classroom and on the athletic field. I will miss how our students have kept me young. Mostly, I will miss my friends in the English department and of course, Rick Johnson."

Summer School Registration

By Mariel Eloppe

Summer is just around the corner and so is summer school. There are two sessions of summer school and students are only allowed to take one class per session. Session I will be from June 13 to June 30 and Session II will be from July 5 to July 22.

Both sessions will be on Monday to Friday starting at 7:45am to 12:30pm with busing provided. Students are only allowed to miss 2 days per session and missing anymore days will result in your withdrawal from that class. Each class is \$150 and students are advised to check in with his or her counselor before signing up and paying.

If you need to register for summer school, registration can be done online. There is also a downloadable form that needs to be completed by students, parents, and counselors. If you are registering, know that registration and the full fee payment must be turned in by June 3rd.

If you have any questions please ask your counselor or Mrs. Pomahac who is in charge of the summer school programming.

Brzys Bids Farewell



By Allie Brzys

Every student has a different experience in high school. Some students consider high school their second home, while some students think of it as four years they wished never happened. However, we all need to admit that high school taught us valuable lessons. Between learning to become good friends and procrastinating, we learned about ourselves.

Despite wanting a high school re-do, I can't deny how much I have learned about myself these last four years. Yes, I know this sounds cliché, but high school has made a huge impact on me and the person that I am today.

A big part of my positive memories in high school are due to the opportunities I was lucky enough to have. Between watching the Special Olympics Basketball Team win first place at state, helping to organize Homecoming and crying-running to NHS at 7 am, I realized that these memories never would have occurred if I hadn't been

involved in various extracurriculars. College and the real-world are no different. We will never be handed opportunities. Yes, shocker, they actually require hard work!

Four years from now, you will probably be thinking the same thing to yourself- "Wow, I love college"/"Man this sucks"/"This pizza tastes really good."

Keep in mind everything you enjoyed in high school, and work to include those things in your life. However, remember the negative events, and don't forget to learn from them. Mistakes occur to form us in better people, so keep them in mind next time you're thrown into a similar position.

No matter the experience that we had in high school, on May 29th, we get the chance to start a brand new life. Carry on the positive memories, valuable lessons and that cute pair of shoes. Never forget to learn from your mistakes and always thank the people who helped you get to this point in your life. Fenton is filled with amazing staff members who truly care about their students. Countless teachers have impacted me these last four years, and I would not be the person I am today if it hadn't been for their patience and their welcoming smiles. High school is a confusing time for about 99.9% of people, but all of that changes in a week. A negative high school experience only consumes four years of your life. Countless memories, relationships and smiles are still left to be formed.

P.S. No, I am not pursuing a degree in philosophy, I just read an inspirational quote before I wrote this.

Martinez Says So Long!

By Jack Martinez

It's hard to realize that four years have come and gone. On one hand, freshman year feels like yesterday, the nervousness and excitement still feels fresh in my mind. On the other hand, it feels like a thousand years ago. In the blink of an eye, my high school career has ended. I know that soon I'll start college and move on with my life, but these four years will always hold a special place in my heart. These were the years where I completely changed who I was. These were the years that I got stronger, even after I broke down a little. I made friends and ended other relationships. I figured out what kind of life I wanted for myself and how I'm going to achieve it.

Senior year is a weird kind of limbo. It's a year of contradictions and sleepless nights worrying about the future. It's also a year full of crying; whether it's sad or happy is your choice. We may be leaving Fenton behind, but we're also entering a new chapter of our lives. I've had a lot of good times this year. From band to academic team to performing in the school play. I even got to make new friends this year. I'm going to miss a lot of things



when I leave, but at the same time I'm glad that I'm leaving with a lot of memories.

If there's any advice that I can give, never procrastinate. Seriously it saves you a lot of stress later on. Other than that, don't rush things. Even though I'm excited for the future, sometimes I wish I'd slow down and appreciated the time I had.

So thanks everyone. Thanks for everything you've done for me. Thanks for the love and support from when I was at my lowest point to now. I hope I'll make you guys proud. So long!

Commons Open to Students This Summer for WiFi Access

By Emily Patterson

For anyone who has been enjoying the new student commons over the past few months and is already looking forward to using them again next year, next year may come sooner than you think. The Fenton administration is currently looking into making the commons available for students during the summer for use as a comfortable, air conditioned environment to get stuff done. This is especially useful for anyone with summer work who doesn't have WiFi access at home, as students will be able to connect to the school's WiFi network with the Chromebooks per usual.

"It's important to Mr. O that students have the opportunity, if they don't have WiFi at home, to have a place to work on things, read, study," said Ms. Pomahac. "We really want to make it a viable option for kids if it's something that they think they'd like to access."

Though plans for the commons access are not yet finalized, Ms. Pomahac said that the commons will most likely be available during the 6 weeks of summer school, from 8-12 while summer school is in session. As well, if students are interested, the school would be willing to serve lunch at 10 AM (the same time as summer school students) for any students who are using the commons-though lunch orders would have to be prearranged in some way.

If students are interested, they serve lunch every day at 10am. As well, the administration is looking into providing transportation for students who may want to come into the building to access the opportunity. Transportation would probably consist of a bus around 7:15 or 7:30 in the morning just like any other school day, with buses all being on campus by 7:45.

If anyone has questions related to the use of the commons over the summer please email or see Ms. Pomahac for more information.

Vocational Ed Develops Skills

By Amber Azim

Ever wonder how the lunch tables in cafeteria get cleaned? Or the spoons and forks get filled in the containers? There is a class where special needs students learn skills beneficial for them in the future. Skills they focus on are following directions, organizing supplies, completing job tasks accurately, working cooperatively or independently, communicating with the lunch room staff, taking pride with one's work, satisfaction for doing well on the job, compliments on work from others, providing community service to our school, working is a reward experience.

This class is called vocational education. Every day the students go into the cafeteria and learn to become independent and ask questions when they need help. For example, by asking for certain items, such as extra spoons, they become more confident knowing they can ask someone for help. Some of the students ask for something by using their talkers by clicking on a button to say the item they need. Every day some of the students clean tables; how they distribute the tables evenly is each person cleaning the tables for the day will get a certain color and all the tables with that color will be their specific tables to clean.

Some students will work in the community room and put gloves on and put the spoons and forks in the containers. Other students will also wipe down microwaves. They have a lot of fun during this time, putting on music and dance around. This class also gives them community service hours.

Swallow Strives for More Success



Photo courtesy of Judah Swallow.

By Gerardo Garcia

Most people already recognize junior Judah Swallow as a talented guy. He's active in concert choir and swing choir but he also performs outside of school at places like The House of Blues, The Wire and other festivals. A guitarist and a singer, Judah has been busy making a name for himself as an alternative artist with "Your Eyes" being his most successful song so far, and it even has a professional music video to go with it.

Judah says his love of music started when he was very young, thanks to his mother. "I've always been around music. My mom played a lot of music so she taught me how to play stuff on the guitar, and I've always been intrigued by music. I kind of took what she taught me and started playing guitar and writing music and stuff like that till I got old enough to start playing shows."

For Judah old enough was just ten years old, first performing at

a talent show. He's been performing ever since with another important figure in his life, his friend Ethan.

Judah said, "We've always been working together, he's been my drummer since my first show...he was one of my biggest inspirations for music."

As a result of his inspiration and hard work, Judah recently took a trip to L.A. to meet with Richard Reines, the owner of Drive-Thru records.

"I was definitely really nervous and really scared," Judah said, "but it ended up being really cool. I got to write with a bunch of guys...he has a bunch of guys out there from the U.K. and L.A.."

Judah said this has been "a big stepping stone" in his career and the next step is to put together a band and to start touring. This band is going to be a "typical boy band" he said, but one that will be keeping with his "style" and "roots."

In looking for band members, Judah says "Talent is a huge part, but personality is also a huge part...I want to find people who have a lot of character and who are likable!"

Currently Judah is still searching and plans on returning to L.A. soon with his friend Ethan, but until then he says, "I'm just super excited for everything that's happening. I'm super grateful for everyone who supported me, everyone who donated to my GoFundMe. If they didn't do that I'd probably be doing nothing right now...I'm really excited to see what happens."

Girls' Soccer: Growth, Reformations

By Julia Gainski

Girls' soccer's focus is on playing their game, possessing the ball, and making combination plays. Varsity and junior varsity also exemplified lots of hard work that pushed themselves to victorious wins. One of junior varsity's outstanding achievements was of their win against Larkin High School in Elgin, where the girls scored two goals in the first half, making it their top win.

On the varsity side, they beat Addison Trail for the second year in a row at the Niles West Tournament. One of the largest obstacles faced with this season was the extensive amount of injuries as there were several rolled ankles, concussions, and pulled muscles. This was especially a problem dealing with the issues of finding a goalie for varsity.

Leslie Castillo, had been the first goalie but rolled her ankle during training, and Patricia Acosta had become the new goalie but was unfortunately was plagued by a concussion. Finally, the current goalie, Diana Catalan, stepped up and made an exceptional fit.

Varsity coach, Ms. Lamey restates that, "The season was full of hard-fought battles and great learning experiences." Overall, girls soccer has had many reformations and has been growing in numbers as the team had been determined to make it their best season. Junior varsity coach, Ms. Downen reflects on the season and says, "Overall, very happy with the level of effort, it was a good squad where everyone worked hard and gave it their all, probably one of my favorite groups to coach."

Pen Pal Program Provides Connections

By Julia Gainski

At the start of second semester, German 1 and 2 students began communicating with German high school students attending the Friedrich-Dessauer Gymnasium in Aschaffenburg, Bavaria, located in Southern Germany.

Furthermore, the pen pal pairings were best decided based on similar interests and personalities. On a regular basis, the German classes have been exchanging letters including information about their hobbies, life, school involvement, and cultural background.

Additionally, as for a visual, they attached pictures of themselves and their town. The students from Friedrich-Dessauer Gymnasium were kind enough to send "Osterhasenschokolade," or Easter chocolate candy with their letters during the Easter Holiday.

Communication between the students has been fluid as they transitioned from letters to via email every one to two weeks for a faster root of contact.

Likewise, both sides have evidently improved their language skills as the German students responded in English and Fenton students have responded in German. Mrs. Zubovic shares her insight on the program by stating, "It is a fun way to connect with students abroad and learn about other cultures."

Boys' Tennis Exudes Optimism, Spirit, Positive Attitude

By Emily Patterson

Always wanted to play a sport but not really sure about dedicating yourself to anything super-rigorous? How about a sport that just seems like a lot of fun? Look no further than boys tennis. Having been invited by junior Sean Norris to talk to this year's tennis team, I had the opportunity to venture to Fenton's tennis courts, which I hadn't visited since my freshman year, playing tennis for a few weeks during P.E. And my visit was definitely worth it. Though I hadn't heard a lot about Fenton's tennis team this year, these boys had a lot to say.

According to the team, this season has been an average one. Julian Zalejski and Sean Norris, known fondly by the team as "dumb and dumber," have had what the two players deemed "an unsuccessful

bout as the third doubles team," as junior Joe Andrews and freshman Jeff Andrews, who hold the spot of number one doubles team "win all the time." Julian and Sean also hailed Mirko "The Serbian Prince" Janjanin as a key player on the team, saying that he has done an excellent job of filling

the position of number one singles, previously filled by Joe Andrews, and say that Mirko has been instrumental in keeping the team afloat. Even in the face of the adversity of uncooperative rainy weather, the team is currently looking forward to their sectionals on May 20th.

No matter what this season has looked like, however, the team is very optimistic for next year. "The future looks bright," said junior Julian Zalejski, "since most of us are juniors and underclassmen." As well, Julian deemed tennis the only sport that he likes and will participate in. The other members of the team also only had good words on the sport. "It's one of my favorite sports to do. It's not only a challenge, but it's relaxing," said Sean Norris. As well, freshman Fabian Calvillo hailed the sport as "one you won't regret."

Though they may not be the most well-known sports team in Fenton, I do believe that this team may be the one with the best attitude, as the team's spirit seemed to be summed up in one quote by Joe Andrews, Captain/President of the team: "If you don't count the losses, we're undefeated."



Photo by Emily Patterson