



FOX TALES *Quarterly*

A Student Publication

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FCA Students Dominate the Regional 2016 Scholastic Art Awards

Several Fox Chapel Area School District students recently won awards for their entries in the Pittsburgh Arts Region of The Scholastic Art Awards of 2016. The show is being held February 6-20 at the Community College of Allegheny County North Campus and nearly 2,000 entries were received from students from schools across the region.

The Fox Chapel Area High School Gold Key winners were seniors Elayna Burdelski, Maria Burns, Alexis Buzzatto, Rebecca Francis (three Gold Keys), Hannah Goodman, Kathleen Kiszka (also an American Visions Nominee, one of only five given from the entire region), Fiona Marree, Maya McCann, Nina Mulroy, Astrid Navas, Hannah Pignoli, Heather Snowball (two Gold Keys), and Wolfgang Stearns (two Gold Keys); juniors Kira Galanter (two Gold Keys), Roy Gao, Amanda Hurwitz (three Gold Keys), Solana Morningstar (three Gold Keys), Mary Clare O'Connor (three Gold Keys), Bryanna Urso, and Brenda Vernon; sophomores Hailey Johnson, Elizabeth Kauma (two Gold Keys and also an American Visions Nominee, one of only five given from the entire region), and Jessica Schwartz; and freshman Sofia Porter Bacon (artwork done when she was an eighth grader at Dorseyville Middle School during the 2014-2015 school year). The Dorseyville Middle School Gold Key winner was eighth grader Anzu Sekikawa. The Gold Key winners will have their work sent to New York for national judging where they will be competing with other regional winners from across the United States for national awards. The winners of the national contest will participate in The Scholastic Art Awards National Exhibit.

The Fox Chapel Area Silver Key winners were 2015 graduate Claire Durr; current seniors Tara Bates, James Braham, Elayna Burdelski, Zachary Burkhart, Maria Burns, Hansen Bursic, Alexis Buzzatto (three Silver Keys), Lia Crocker, Madeleine DiMedio, Hannah Goodman, Charles Irakoze, Sierra Kaminski, Nina Mulroy, Morgan Perry, Hannah Pignoli, Jose Rincon, Heather Snowball (four Silver Keys), Wolfgang Stearns (two Silver Keys),

Maya Weis, and Maura Whelan; juniors Phoebe Beard (three Silver Keys), Amanda Hurwitz (three Silver Keys), Emmeline Klatt, and Mary Clare O'Connor (two Silver Keys); sophomores Madelyn Flanagan, Vincent Occorso, Jacob Orban, Helen Paulini (four Silver Keys), Najire Taylor, and William Tabor; freshman Paige Johnson (two Silver Keys); and eighth graders Claire Fenton and Anzu Sekikawa (two Silver Keys).

Several students from Fox Chapel Area High School received Honorable Mentions for their entries. They are seniors Tara Bates, Zachary Burkhart, Maria Burns, Alexis Buzzatto, Maya Clark, Madeleine DiMedio (two Honorable Mentions), Jeremy Drischler, Rebecca Francis (six Honorable Mentions), Hannah Goodman, Jade Perry, Morgan Perry, Hannah Pignoli, Wolfgang Stearns (two Honorable Mentions), and Maya Weis (two Honorable Mentions); juniors Anna Burkel, Casey Dillon, Claire Gaffney, Roy Gao, Laura Klak, Sada Lantgios, Solana Morningstar, Mary Clare O'Connor (four Honorable Mentions), Amy Potochny, Amanda Trusiak (four Honorable Mentions), Bryanna Urso, and Micah Ziff; sophomores Sarah Fownes, Elizabeth Kauma, Helen Paulini, Bridget Shelestak (two Honorable Mentions), and Najire Taylor; freshmen Victoria Brokaw and

Paige Johnson; and eighth graders Brandis Malone and Anna Meyer.

The regional award winners were selected by a panel of distinguished judges which included artists, art educators, and art professionals. All of these Fox Chapel Area students will be honored at a special ceremony which is part of the Pittsburgh Arts Regional exhibition February 20 at the CCAC North Campus.

The Fox Chapel Area High School students who entered pieces are under the instruction of art teachers Ron Frank, Joan Marangoni, Jody Shell, Christine Smith, Sarah Stewart, and Amy Wickman. The Dorseyville Middle School students are under the instruction of art teachers Cheryl Etters, Nanci Goldberg, and Mary Jo Montgomery.



Senior James Braham received a Silver Key for the regional 2016 Scholastic Art Awards



GSA Having a Successful Year

Daly Trimble and Elizabeth Kauma

With the Supreme Court's recent legalization of same-sex marriage, successful battles for fair treatment from corporations and communities in several states, and the rise of positive portrayals of gay and transgender individuals in mass media, the United States has become a much more hospitable place for its LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) population. With the help of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance, so has Fox Chapel Area High School.

Established several years ago by students seeking refuge from an unwelcoming environment, the then Gay-Straight Alliance has come far from its covert meetings about how best to come out to one's parents. Today, it boasts over thirty members and an officer panel that coordinates everything from fundraising efforts to the annual holiday party. The now weekly gatherings are spent facilitating outreach from local activist groups, checking in on the well-being of individual members, and pursuing

a packed itinerary, two of the largest successes this year being Asexual Awareness Week and the Proud Youth of Pittsburgh Convention.

Asexual Awareness Week, spearheaded by sophomore Elizabeth Kauma, was a campaign to inform the student body about a lesser known sexuality that revolves around not feeling sexual attraction to anyone. Members of the GSA stood near the cafeteria and engaged in conversation with students who perused an informative poster board and got purple, black, and white candy. Presented information included definitions, statistics, and a list of famous asexual people.

The Proud Youth of Pittsburgh Convention drew roughly 100 students and teachers from various schools in Western Pennsylvania to meet one another and connect with the adult members of the Pittsburgh activist community. Seniors Daly Trimble and Hansen Bursic worked in close conjunction with the Sto-Rox Area High School GSA and THRIVE, a local nonprofit dedicated to LGBT education, to create a conference themed around intersectionality and fostering welcoming neighborhoods. Panelists and speakers covered topics such as inclusive spirituality, gender transitioning, activism and legal rights, and the history of the Stonewall Riots. Many attendees were enthused not just by how many other people were similar to themselves, but also by the numerous opportunities for education and expression in the Pittsburgh area.

The GSA's next large target this year will be Day of Silence, an official event created by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network to call attention to the silence people face domestically and internationally from LGBTQ discrimination. GSAs across the country will be participating to raise awareness, and FCA club members, as they have for the past few years, will hand out rainbow ribbons, stickers, and explanation cards during the days leading up to the event. On April 15th, participants are invited to remain silent an entire day in protest.



Elizabeth Kauma, a member of the GSA, mans a table about asexual awareness.

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High School Experience Launches Inspirational Career for FCA Graduate

Greta Lazzara

Puja Gandhi, an eight-year resident and bilingual entrepreneur of Sevilla, Spain, visited the Fox Chapel Area High School Spanish classes to present a new program in her business, Key Idiomas. This FCAHS graduate and former student of Señora Scigliano received degrees in both Business and Spanish from Penn State University. She was inspired by a high school trip to Spain to pursue a career using the Spanish language. She created a homestay program for students from around the world to come to Spain and experience the language outside of the classroom. The homestay program takes place in the beautiful coastal town Malgrat de Mar and includes morning language lessons followed by activities such as sailing and kayaking and visits to the cities of Barcelona and Girona. So far, it has been a great success, and she hopes that it will be of interest to the language students of FCAHS.



FCA graduate Puja Gandhi has started a business called Key Idiomas to allow for outside-the-classroom learning of Spanish.

FCA Students Dazzle with Poetry

Alex Smolar

The Fox Chapel Area High School's annual Poetry Out Loud competition once again impressed spectators. The contest, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanity, was organized by Theater Arts teacher

Ms. Meyers and judged by Ms. Giguere, Ms. Frank, and Ms. Hollern. The purpose of Poetry Out Loud is to recite poetry while "enjoying the spoken word." The contest aims to help the youth of America discover and appreciate great poetry by memorizing and reciting it to others.

This year, four FCA students, freshmen Sadie Lorence, Helena McDonald, Alyssa Melani and sophomore Maddie Macek competed in hopes of advancing to the regional finals. All four students wonderfully interpreted poems and performed them with precision, emotion, and a great deal of heart. It was clear that they all worked very hard and were passionate about poetry. Alyssa Melani was named the winner after seamlessly performing "Testimonial," by Rita Dove, and "The Albatross," by Kate Bass. Alyssa chose "Testimonial" due to its recounting of nature and its tone of speaking to the world. In reference to "The Albatross," Alyssa said, "I felt that I made a great connection with the poem and its message."

All students are strongly encouraged to participate in Poetry Out Loud next year, as it truly represents a love for the arts and demonstrates Fox Chapel Area's commitment to the performing arts.



Sadie Lorence, Helena McDonald, Maddie Macek, and Alyssa Melani competed in Poetry Out Loud by memorizing and reciting poetry.



Pittsburgh's World Language Conference

Priyanka Shah

Language is one of the most important elements of today's global society. We use different languages to communicate with different people. Some languages are more well-known; others are, right now, exclusive to certain groups of people in the world. Either way, language unifies people. Fox Chapel Area High School embraced this by hosting the World Language Conference in November, 2015.

In conjunction with the University of Pittsburgh, FCA gathered many foreign language, social studies, and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers from across Western PA to join the conference. FCA world language students welcomed these guests at registration by speaking in various languages, simulating the effect of entering a different country. The Pennsylvania Alliance for Geographic Education even brought a large 20 x 30 foot map of Pennsylvania to compliment the experience.

The main goal of this conference was to inform language and social educators of global problems so that



Student greeters showcased their Spanish-speaking skills at the registration table.

they can make their own students aware. These students can then work to solve those global issues. Additionally, the conference made the teachers knowledgeable of global enrichment programs and opportunities for students.

Conference attendees enjoyed breakout sessions led by teachers from the University of Pittsburgh, regional representatives from various companies, and the President of the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association, to enhance the learning. There were seven sessions in total; participants could pick three. Topics included, "Teaching for Global Competence: A Whole-School Approach" and "Internationalizing the Curriculum—Professional Development for Teachers." During these sessions, attendees discussed obstacles and solutions within the language scope.

FCA thanks the speakers, teachers, administrators, and others who attended the World Language Conference and the University of Pittsburgh for making this conference an unforgettable, impactful experience!



Sophomore KazziMae Carson-Love, adorned in traditional dirndl offers samples of German pastries to guests.

upcoming academic events

- February 15th: No School
- February 19th: Move-Up Day
- March 2nd: Read Across America Day
- March 5th: SAT Testing
- March 7th: Super QRT/Joint Session
- March 17th: Career QRT
- March 18th: Early Dismissal

- March 21st - March 25th: Spring Break
- April 1st: Early Dismissal/End of 3rd Quarter
- April 4th: Apprenticeship Applications Open
- April 4th: Super QRT/Joint Session
- April 6th: ASVAB Testing
- April 21st: Opportunities Fair
- April 22nd: Career QRT



Gourmet Foods and Preschool Lab: Two Unique Course Selections!

Nadia Islam

We've all smelled those enticing scents that disseminate throughout the hallways adjacent to the food's room, yet many FCA students are unaware of the exciting happenings in room 201. Ms. Buches and Ms. Depoli head up the Family and Consumer Science department and within their curriculum is a myriad of opportunities that benefit all students enrolled in these courses.

Foreign and Gourmet Foods is a full-credit course in which students are able to grow as chefs and expand their cultural horizons through mastering the use of basic measurement tools and skills and learning how to cook gourmet cultural foods. The course is an enthralling opportunity for students of all ages to become involved in entertaining activities such as cooking competitions that mimic those of the television series, "Chopped." Gingerbread house rivalries paired with cupcake/muffin wars raise funds for charity. Contributing to the overall improvement of society is an important goal of the course as seen through their donation of cookies to Meals on Wheels twice per month. Cooking delicacies from diverse regions entails the creation of foods such as empanadas, perogies and crêpes. This experience offers students a way to learn more about worldly culture and customs. Cooking gourmet foods from around the globe changes students' overall perspective of the world we live in for the better.

The preschool lab is another course offered that provides real-world application to students. This course ap-

peals most to high schoolers who strive to become a teacher or want to work with children in any capacity. Children from the district register to attend this in-house preschool that is fully run by the FCAHS students under the supervision of Ms. Depoli. From this course, high schoolers are able to acquire an improved sense of patience and leadership because they are truly the commanders of the classroom. There is obvious structure involved in the course, but overall, the students are able to utilize their creativity to run the show. Science, math and language arts are the fundamental subjects that are taught each day to the children and students gain the capability of truly being the teacher in doing so. At the end of each semester, a "graduation" ceremony is held for the children, and they are presented with a personalized memory book — a collection of photographs and personal artwork that the preschoolers truly cherish. The preschool lab runs Mondays through Thursdays during second and fourth period, and on Fridays the students are busy creating their lesson plans for the following week.

Both the Foreign and Gourmet Foods course and the Preschool Lab provide enjoyable opportunities for students. Next time you are flipping aimlessly through the course options for next year's schedule, think about how the Family and Consumer Sciences department could personally benefit you.



Junior, Michael Palumbo, whips up a tasty dessert in hopes of winning of the "Chopped" in-class competitions.



Seniors Emmelia Jaffe and Nicole Susi read a book to preschool students in story circle.



Spreading Holiday Cheer at the Veteran Affairs Hospital

Hannah Mueller

The FCAHS Community Outreach Club ventured to the VA Medical Center in Aspinwall to decorate and spread holiday cheer among veterans. Upon their arrival, students and chaperoning teachers were greeted by the head of recreational activities, who directed them to a room full of boxes of holiday decorations. For several hours, the students assembled and decorated Christmas trees and hung wreaths around the hospital. They finished the day by singing various holiday songs requested by a group of veterans that had gathered to watch.

While it may not be a life-changing contribution to the lives of veterans, these efforts truly brightened the holiday season for many permanent residents of the facility. The decorations transformed the clinical facility into a homey residence for the veterans, and student volunteers brought a youthful vitality that was especially welcome during the holidays. Any time is the perfect time to volunteer and spread joy, as the Community Outreach Club knows from their annual trips to the H.J. Heinz campus and their many other volunteer efforts in our neighborhood.



Students Explore U.S.-Cuban Relations

Marty Taxay

Every year, the World Affairs Council gives a presentation at the Heinz History Center to educate students about important global issues. This year, the council decided to lead a discussion about the relationship between the United States and Cuba. Mrs. Klein and Señora Fontes, along with the help of the Fox Chapel Area Rotary Club, escorted a group of students to this event. The day opened with presentations from several notable speakers about U.S./Cuban relations. The presentations explored a variety of topics including tourism, the U.S. embargo on Cuban trade, history between the two nations, and politics. Following these discussions, all of the students were divided into smaller groups to discuss more specific issues, including the economic impacts of lifting the embargo, and the significance of reopening embassies. These groups then each picked a representative to discuss their ideas with the rest of the conference. As a whole, the convention was very interesting and provided much needed insight into United States/Cuban relations.





Young Playwrights Light Up the Stage

Alyssa Melani, Sadie Lorence, & Michela Nicholas

On December 4, 2015, Ms. Meyer's Theater Arts class held the 19th annual Young Playwrights Festival. Students performed their original plays for which the writing process began about five weeks prior. Students were required to write a ten-page comedic or dramatic play that included a conflict between two characters. First drafts were cast by the playwright for a reading in front of the class. Then, the students revised their pieces based on the audience's feedback. Finally, the revised pieces were voted upon and the top nine plays were announced for production.

The plays touched upon a variety of themes. "Throw It," by Gabe Fynsk showcased gang life in the streets of Glasgow, Scotland. Same-sex love was the focus of "Story of Ours," by Helena McDonald and Flora Gladwin and "Even Lovers Drown," by Jazmyynn Flewellen. Relationships sparked on social media, in "Facebook," by Adina Munin. The devastation of a family's loss was brought to life in



Olivia Stevenson, Rowan Courts, Michela Nicholas, Sadie Lorence, and Alyssa Melani take some time to decompress after the performances.

"He Never Stopped," by Lauren Copeland; and the heart wrenching story of the struggle between a mother and a young girl battling cancer was portrayed in "I Promise," by Maggie McCoy. The plays were not only written and performed beautifully, but they sparked some important conversation among FCA students.

The longest piece, "Wings," examines struggles of ex-cons reintroduced into the 21st century after decades behind bars, often for petty crimes, (California's three-strike law, repealed in 2012). This piece was inspired by a NY Times article, "So You Just Got Out of Prison, Now What?" by Jon Mooallem. The class decided this was a story that needed exposure, and they worked together to devise the play.

Ms. Meyers' students would like to thank her for giving them this once in a lifetime opportunity and for inspiring them to continue with theater. This was her last Young Playwrights Festival after 29 years of teaching at the high school. Congratulations to all of the students who participated in this cool and different experience!



Playwright Adina Munin's character is not sure she wants to reconcile with her ex-boyfriend, played by Gabe Fynsk, in this scene from "Facebook."

Students Chosen for Choral Festival

Two Fox Chapel Area High School students and five Dorseyville Middle School students were selected to perform at the young women's choral festival, Sweet Harmony. The students are freshmen Anna Aupke and Alaina Kotchey, eighth graders Alyssa Fabian and Christiana Paljug, seventh graders Cindy Deng and Amara Ostroff, and

sixth grader Eleanor Petersen. The Sweet Harmony choral festival was held in November at Upper Saint Clair High School and approximately 100 young women from the area were chosen for the choir.





A Great Education is Just a Wi-Fi Signal Away

Alex Smolar

The ever-innovating Fox Chapel Area School District has further embraced the internet age by launching Fox Chapel Area Online (FCAO). Coordinated by Ms. Randi Leonard since 2013, FCAO is designed to make education more accessible and flexible for students. The opportunities presented by FCAO provide students opportunities to take additional courses, have a more flexible schedule, work from home, and take courses during their school day that they cannot fit into their schedule otherwise. FCAO course options are offered in two delivery methods: FCAO-Cyber and FCAO-Blended.

FCAO-Cyber classes give students the opportunity to take control of their own education by taking a 100% cyber schedule. The courses are designed by Edgenuity,

chance to take a blended course (90% online and 10% face-to-face) which has been created and designed by Fox Chapel Area High School teachers. The students taking these classes are taught lessons, take tests, and create projects online while meeting with the teacher in a class setting before or after school approximately once a month. The frequency of the teacher-student meetings vary from course to course. Taking an FCAO-Blended course offers students the perk of being able to arrive to school after first period or leave school after third period. Additionally, students can take an FCAO-Blended class as a "fifth period" option, in addition to a full course load, if they wish to graduate high school early or pursue other educational opportunities that they may not otherwise have room for in their schedule.

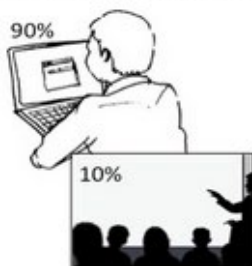
Fox Chapel Area Online Educational Options

Fox Chapel Area Flexible Scheduling Options



Traditional Courses

- Taken at school building
- FC designed & taught
- Core and elective
- Able to participate in all school activities, clubs, organizations
- Meets national and state standards



FCAO* Blended Courses

- 90% online, 10% face to face
- FCAHS designed & taught
- Electives
- Able to participate in all school activities, clubs, organizations
- Meets national and state standards



FCAO* Cyber Courses

- 100% online @ home
- Designed by outside vendor
- FCASD customized & taught
- Core and elective
- Able to participate in all school activities, clubs, organizations
- Meets national and state standards

Options may be combined to design a student's schedule; counselor approval is required.

pace, with benchmarks set for timely completion of the courses. Fox Chapel Area teachers who are facilitating the cyber courses are available for support during their FCAO "office hours" or by appointment, and FCAHS school counselors are also available to help with personalized planning. FCAO offers a wide variety of fully cyber courses in the areas of World Language, Business, Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education. Regular, Accelerated, and AP courses are also available.

FCAO-Blended courses provide students with the

Throughout the course, the class met with Ms. Welty for about 30 minutes per month. However, Ms. Welty was available for questions if I had any. For students trying to get caught up or ahead on their course credits, graduate early, or even want to take a class in their pajamas, FCAO may be the best path to choose. For more information check the website at <http://fcaonline.fcasd.edu>, or check with your school counselor.

In my experience, taking a blended course is a tremendous opportunity to take an extra class and build up credits. In 10th grade, I enrolled in Mrs. Welty's Online Health blended course. I took all tests, lessons, and completed the final project in the comfort of my own home.

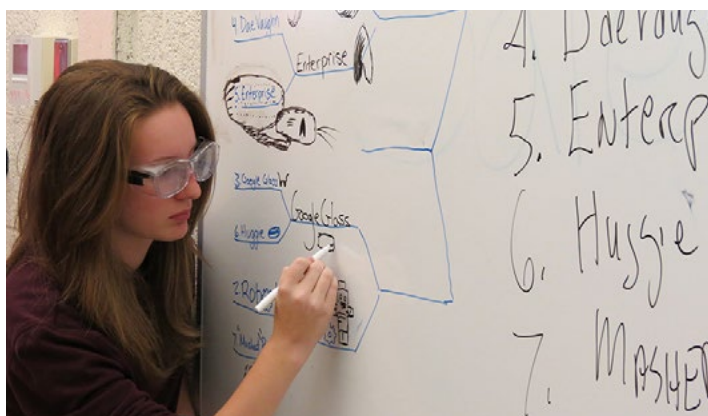


Swept Away by Robotics

Emily Hartz & Amandy Trusiak

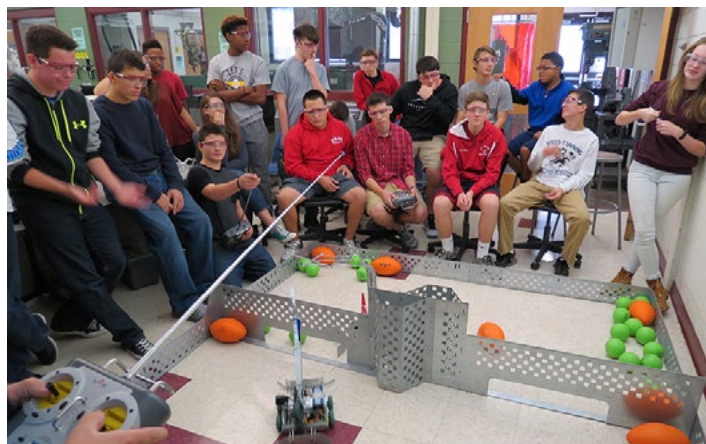
In Mr. Grimm's Introduction to Robotics Engineering class, computer programming, working as a team, using robots, and preparing for competitions are what it takes to succeed in different robotics venues. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are ever present in Introduction to Robotics class. Without a set plan, the students employ the engineering design process to construct robots that will perform various tasks.

The game, "Swept Away," is used to demonstrate the completed robot's ability to carry out a function. In this instance, the goal is to get as many balls out of one side of the playing field and into the opposing team's side or baskets. Vex robots are programmed by the students to complete the task of picking up the ball or pushing it across the playing field. These robots are 100% student designed and engineered, which ensures a deeper learning experience. After the competition, students shared that they gained a greater understanding of the engineering design process and the basics of robotics.



Above: Freshman Sofia Porter-Bacon marks her team's victory in the bracket to advance to the next round of competition.

Right: Robotics Engineering students engage in a game of "Swept Away."



Taking Action to Help Others

Thomas Swigon

The newly formed Fox Chapel Area Interact Club holds an energetic commitment to helping others. The first charity they focused on was the United Nations Refugee Agency. In the fifth year of the Syrian crisis, millions of refugees are caught facing deteriorating conditions in host countries, which are unwilling or unable to support them. The club members took action and raised \$200 through a Homecoming carnival booth and a school bake sale. According to the United Nations website, the donation will supply refugee families with heating stoves to cook for themselves. The Interact Club's motto is "Service above Self," and the Fox Chapel Area Interact Club will continue to help others throughout the course of the year. New student members are always welcome. Students may sign up by contacting Mrs. Klein at jen_klein@fcsd.edu.





FCA Dancer Performs for Thousands

Daly Trimble

At the 2015 National Catholic Youth Conference, junior Casey Dillon experienced the highlight of her twelve-year dance career by doing something many in the near-professional world can only dream of. Not only did she perform in front of thousands of people, but she also co-choreographed an original pointe ballet duet. As a youth animator, a position for which one is carefully selected, Casey took part in acts that opened for well-known performance artists that this year ranged from the band For King and Country to comedian Judy McDonald.

While Casey has been working on her repertoire of jazz, hip-hop, ballet, modern, and contemporary dance for over a decade now, the conference was a whole new challenge. Not only did training span from summer practices at Marian University in Indianapolis to hours-long rehearsals mid-conference, but implementation was months in the making. "Staging the routine was difficult because we were not sure what the size or shape of the stage in Lucas Oil Stadium, where we performed, would be," she explained. "We had to create a piece that could entertain our audience of thirty thousand." However, reflecting on the innumerable successes that came out of it, Casey said that she deeply treasures the perhaps once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of such a well-attended show, the ability to do something "that is such a big part of my life," and all the new friends she made along the way.

The National Catholic Youth Conference is a biennial celebration in Indianapolis, Indiana that brings together thousands of high school students and adult chaperones to share and celebrate their faith. Those interested in learning more about the conference itself or the process of becoming a youth animator can visit www.ncyc.info.



Junior Casey Dillon (left) has been dancing for over ten years and recently choreographed and performed a pointe ballet piece.

student athlete spotlight

This season, Nicole Susi, center forward for the Foxes Field Hockey team accumulated 25 goals and 8 assists, and she did so as her team rolled to a 20-1-0 record, a WPIAL championship, and a state playoff appearance. Susi began playing field hockey in sixth grade and instantly fell in love with the sport. Now a senior, Susi will continue her field hockey career after high school at Seton Hill University, a NCAA Division 2 powerhouse. Although the team is losing many valued seniors – four starters and nine seniors total – Nicole is confident that "the team will continue its success. We have strong underclassmen who will lead this team to success for years to come."

One person who has had a huge positive influence on Nicole is her head coach, Ms. Jen McCrady. "Not only is she a great player and a great coach but she also sets a good example on and off the field. She's like my second mom and is someone I look up to and trust for advice. I strive to be as good of a person as she is."

- Elias Izenon





Bands, Beards, and Buckets of Ice: FCA

Marty Taxay, Bridget Wang, Bliss Uribe

Fox Chapel Area School District students held their 26th annual telethon on December 23, 2015 and raised more than \$68,000 for the Live Like Lou organization, which was started by two parents in the Fox Chapel Area School District to help ALS patients and their families in Western Pennsylvania. This year's total also included a matching donation of \$25,000 that was made by an anonymous Fox Chapel Area School District family!

Live Like Lou, a fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, is a local organization focused on raising awareness for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease), supporting scientific research targeted at finding a cure, and providing care for ALS patients and their families in Western Pennsylvania. Specifically, the Fox Chapel Area telethon supports Live Like Lou Patient Care Fund grants, the Iron Horse Awards for Kids grants, and the Live Like Lou Center for ALS Research. Live Like Lou was started by Neil Alexander and his wife Suzanne in 2012. Unfortunately, Neil passed away in 2015, but his wife continues the work of this important charity in his honor.

Every year the telethon is hosted by students in the video production class and led by the students in the marketing class. The weeks leading up to and on the 23rd, the marketing students were busy organizing various activities for the student body to participate in, including a dating auction, a donut-on-a-string eating competition, a car smash, a dodgeball tournament, and the famous students vs. faculty basketball game. Several clubs hosted their own fundraisers to help the cause and donate what they had earned on the day of the telethon.

One interesting addition to the list of telethon fundraisers was a competition run by two social studies teachers, Mr. Norberg and Mr. Rios, who created an interclass battle in which the students of Mr. Norberg's AP US History and Rios' AP World History strove to raise the largest sum of money in order to win the prize of dictating how the teacher of the other class would shave his beard. After a week of fundraising, the AP US History students were victorious; however, Mr. Norberg decided that the amount of money raised was so great that he also shaved his beard in the "Franz Josef" style. The two classes raised a total of \$407!





Raises Thousands for ALS Charity



Finally, no coverage of the telethon would be complete without mentioning Fox Fest, the annual concert put together by students in the Fox Chapel Area Busking Club and their sponsor, Senior Gonzalez. The Busking Club has been around for about ten years and was formed because of the number of students who were highly interested in performing live music. Occasionally, the club performs around the school during lunch or during the school day. Their biggest event is Fox Fest, in which both student and teacher musicians perform on the day of the telethon and donate all proceeds to the cause.

This year, Fox Fest did not disappoint. From solo acts to jazz bands to student bands and even a teacher band, attendees were amazed by all the incredible talent being displayed on stage. Notable performances include vocalist Leah Saleone, Becca Salamacha on bass, and Izzy Acevedo on violin with "Nobody Loves" by Tori Kelly; Samantha Fabiszewski, Alex Barcic on guitar, Ryan Zakin on bass, Thomas Swigon on trumpet, and Andy Fugh on drums performing "Little Talks" by Monsters and Men; vocalist Serena Smith, William Kuhns on piano, and Liam Botos on violin with "Wild Horses" by Natasha Bedingfield; Connor McAtee, a recent FC graduate, and the teacher band, 2-Hour Delay, with "Taxman" by The Beatles; and Iris Schaitkin on the ukulele performing an original song titled "Little Blue." Other unique performances included 2-Hour Delay with Becca Salamacha on bass performing "Times Like These" by Foo Fighters and the FCA Jazz Band performing "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder.

The FCA Busking Club donated more than \$1200 this year. Congratulations to the group on their truly amazing performance!





Volunteerism Leads to Career Exploration

Anne Friday

Earlier this semester, several teens were given the opportunity to volunteer at a premium veterinary clinic hosted by the Northeast Association of Equine Practitioners (NEAEP) at Cedar Run Farms. Many first-rate equine vets from around the country attended, presenting professional methods of dealing with horse health and offering demonstrations in podiatry, lameness, joint injections, radiographic views, hematology and cytology results, ultrasounds, fetal well-being, back examination, and saddle fitting.

Student volunteers were given a front seat experience not only to veterinary career paths but also to horse interaction. "When people put their minds together, great things can come out," says junior Morgan Geahry. Students assisted in holding different types of horses while vets performed demonstrations. Not only were they exposed to a multitude of modern veterinary equipment and technology, but many advanced theories were explained and applied while they observed. Every horse was treated for health issues with plenty of one-on-one time to identify problems and how to solve them.

Old friends were reunited, and many new friendships were formed. Veterinarians debated ways to proceed with care, and newly improved methods were shared among all. The true connection between the horses and their owners really made the event an inspiring experience. The entire clinic was centered around the idea that if everyone works together, they can actually make a difference and keep horses from experiencing unnecessary pain.



upcoming events

- February 17th: Tapestry Submission Deadline
- February 18th: Boys' & Girls' Varsity Swimming
- February 20th: Best Buddies Semi-Formal Dance
- February 25th - 27th: PMEA Regional Orchestra
- March 3rd - 6th: Spring Musical
- March 7th: First Day of Spring Sports Practices
- March 10th - 12th: PMEA Regional Band
- March 14th: Boys' Varsity Tennis
- March 14th: Girls' Varsity Lacrosse
- March 16th - 18th: PMEA Regional Chorus
- March 16th: Boys' Varsity Tennis
- March 18th: Boys' Junior Varsity Tennis
- March 22nd & 24th: Spring Sports Physicals
- April 5th: HS Kaleidoscope Concert
- April 7th: FC's Got Talent
- April 16th: HS Senior Citizens' Luncheon



Goodbyes and Hellos as FCA Students Graduate Early

Daly Trimble

"This is bittersweet." In one sentence, FCA assistant principal Dr. John Magee gave a name to the feeling all had at the early graduation ceremony on January 21. Teachers, parents, and administrators teared up as the early graduates accepted diplomas. Each student was clearly prepared to leave the nest and the majority commented that the thing they would miss the most were their teachers. The exciting stories of what lies ahead for each student and the fantastic support from the audience proved exceptionally sweet.

No student was without an exciting post-graduation plan. Accepting their diplomas were two nurses-to-be (Hailey Balog for anesthesiology and Shealyn Viccari for pediatrics), one occupational therapist to-be (Emily Hartz, who will attend Gannon University), a junior league hockey team contender (James DiVittorio, IV), an already-enrolled business student (Asia Stewart, at CCAC), and no fewer than three artists. All of the students are currently employed or expected to be so very soon; from Tyler Simonic, who used part of his thank-you speech to support Brother Tom's Bakery in Sharpsburg, to Rebecca Francis, who will spend her time training horses before starting classes at CCAC. Some students will be traveling far from Fox Chapel Area. Jadian Jackson, who previously made a music video with Wiz Khalifa, will be accompanying the Pittsburgh-born rap artist on his tour while pursuing graph-

ic design. Maddie DiMedio hopes to travel to Europe to study artwork there before venturing back home for school in the fall. Three students, Carlos Valenzuela, Nasreen Hashmie, and Charles Fletcher were already in the middle of their commitments and were not able attend the ceremony.



Although nine students held center stage, the room was crowded with members of the FCA family, and at least fourteen teachers and counselors lined the walls to bid farewell. Explaining why she attends all graduations, school psychologist Ms. Susan Fink smiled and proclaimed that, when a student she has worked with

successfully graduates, "I feel like I walked across that stage!" Gary Francis, father of Rebecca Francis, boasted, "I'm proud of her! It's a heck of a achievement. I'm proud of all the kids." Jimmy DiVittorio's mother and grandmothers, Gina DiVittorio, Georgine Veltry, and Darlene Maurinac took a few moments to excitedly debate what their graduate aspires to be before contentedly declaring that "He wants to be like [Marc-André] Fleury!" The love was a little less specific but entirely evident as a few students graduated while hearing a roar of approval from the friends who left class to attend and all were met with warm applause.

Best of luck to all of the early graduates. Your smiling faces in the hallways of FCAHS will surely be missed!





School Counselor Recipient of Yale Educator Award

Fox Chapel Area High School guidance counselor Rachel Machen has been recognized by the Yale Office



of Undergraduate Admissions as a recipient of the 2015 Yale Educator Award. The Yale Educator Recognition Program recognizes outstanding educators from around the world who support and inspire their students to perform at high levels and to achieve excellence. A total of 276 educators were nominated for the award and 51 teachers and 28 counselors were chosen as recipients.

Machen was nominated by 2015 Fox Chapel Area High School graduate Rishi Mirchandani. Rishi is currently attending Yale University. Students are invited to nominate high school educators and a committee of Yale admissions officers reviews each nomination and chooses the recipients. The winners received engraved desk sets and congratulatory letters.

According to a press release, "The Yale Admissions Office attributes the exceptional quality of the Yale student body to educators like these recipients of the 2015 Yale Educator Award, who shape their students long before they attend Yale."

Students Shine in the Shakespeare Monologue Contest

Albert Liu

All the world's a stage, and on January 15, that particular stage was the HS auditorium. There, 20 FCAHS students tested their wit and gravitas at the Shakespeare Recitation Contests. The participants each chose a monologue from their favorite Shakespeare plays and performed them in front of judges and their peers. Students were coached by Theater Arts teacher, Ms. Meyers, who has been coordinating this event for nearly ten years. The students spent hours memorizing, practicing, and rehearsing, and this was definitely evident in their performances, one of which was more than 30 lines in length. Many of the performances were fantastic, and judges Ms. Giguere, Mrs. Hollern, and Dr. Pazin had to make some tough decisions when choosing the best performances. The two winners were ninth graders Sadie Lorence and Alyssa Melani, who both played Juliet from the play Romeo and Juliet, and while the judges only selected two winners, all contestants left with a T-shirt that, by any other name, would be just as rewarding.



After performing his monologue from Henry V, junior Micah Ziff strikes a pose.



Senior Isabel Acevedo performs Queen Mab's speech from Romeo and Juliet.



Future Business Leaders of America

Karissa Becer

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) is a competitive organization that educates its participants in the ways of American business enterprise. Students from across the nation challenge each other in a battle of business smarts and wit through tests and performance events. The competition is organized in three stages: regional, state and national. In order to advance to the next stage of the competition, students must be one of the top scorers in their division of the previous stage.

On December 15th, the Fox Chapel Area FBLA chapter, the second largest chapter in the state, traveled to the regional conference in Hopewell, PA. At the conference, the students were exposed to enlightening new business perspectives by professionals in the field. While at the competition, students with performance events competed on site. After a catered lunch, awards were presented to those who qualified for the state conference to be held in Hershey, PA. Students who qualified for the state confer-

ence from FCAHS were seniors Anja Schempf, Ben Santilli, Charlie Fletcher, Brady Maximovich, Jacob Kronman, Logan Foster, Manasa Thada, Mariana de la Torre, Matt Shaw, Megan Zonker, and Teddy Wight; juniors Daniel Paviglianiti, Grace Mueller, Hannah Mueller, Jared Cohen, Juliette Nangle, Macy McClaren, Marty Taxay, Rohan Chalasani, Sophia Lee, Tanvi Meringenti, and Tim Marsh; sophomores Adam Woo, Anna Hirsch, Alexa Selwood, Ashley Trusiak, Brad Lalor, Brianna Smith, Chris Bonavita, Cooper Collins, Elena Liberto, Fallon Curry, Georgina Zimmerman, Hannah Morton, Jeff Savin, Jordan Taxay, Karissa Becer, Madelyn Reuss, Margaret Edgecombe, Margeaux Essey, Riley Michael, Ryan Santilli, Ryan Weinberger, Sarah Sheerer, Sarthak Navjivan, Scott Hastings, Tanvi Yende, Theo Faucher, and Toby Lazear; and freshmen Alana Herceg, Arnav Gupta, Gina Wang, Jared Nord, Jay Kashyap, Matt Good, Michael Kilmer, Robbie Shymansky, Ryan Zakin, Sanjana Harish, and Vishi Agrawal.

FCA Gymnastics

Sarah Hamilton

The Fox Chapel Area varsity gymnastics team kicked off their season on Friday, January 8, in their first home meet against Baldwin High School. While it was an unfortunate 117.675 to 133.85 loss for the Foxes, it was still a very important meet in which they honored their old coach, Leah McDonough, who recently passed away. Each team member wore a blue ribbon with Leah's name on it, made by former FCA gymnastics team member Missy Eschman, who graduated last year. She was an amazing per-

son who coached so many and will be kept in everyone's thoughts throughout the season.

The team is dedicating the entire season to Leah and is excited to continue competing. The team gained five new freshman members this year, making up a total of eleven girls, and each member hopes to qualify for WPIALS. With new members and plenty of new routines, the FCA Gymnastics squad is ready to take on this season. Best of luck, Foxes!





Past Graduate Visitation Day

Lucy Stone

On January 5th, a group of graduates from the class of 2015 returned to their alma mater to talk to students about college choices, reunite with younger friends, and chat with former teachers. Attendees represented a variety of post-secondary institutions, and they had valuable advice to share with the students of FCASD.

Sophie Roe, who attends Pomona College in California, shared the upsides of attending a small school. "I really like how intimate it is. I've gotten so close with all of the students in my class, and we get a lot of individual attention from teachers!"

Katrina Nestel, a freshman at Duquesne University, discussed the great experiences she's had with her roommate and other friends, how much she likes her professors, and how nice it is to live on her own but still be close to home. "I feel independent, but I'm not that far away from home if I need anything. It's like I'm half of an adult. It's great!"

The past graduates event definitely accomplished its goal of encouraging and helping high school students who are making decisions about their future education.



Class of 2015 graduates Rachel Szabo and Kat Nestel chat with FCAHS students about life after high school.

Globally-Minded Students Get Introduced to the Peace Corps

Daly Trimble

Shortly before winter break, adventurous spirits gathered in the LGI to hear about the Peace Corps, a service program known since 1961 for sending American citizens to over 63 countries on cross-cultural exchange and global improvement projects. Adrián Fontes, son of Fox Chapel Area Spanish teacher Señora Fontes, gave a presentation of his experiences while on vacation from his station in Panama. Having started in February of 2014, Adrián will be wrapping up his multiple education and health projects by this April.

Throughout the presentation, Adrián emphasized the life-changing challenges of the Peace Corps. Following acceptance, there is a 27 month commitment that Adrian admitted was both daunting and exhilarating. After three months of intensive training, volunteers are dropped into their communities to learn about their neighborhood, and

carry out projects, and often live as the only American in their area. "The greatest and perhaps worst thing about being a Peace Corps volunteer is the freedom to do whatever you want." For Adrián, this included teaching English, starting wellness programs, and making a town's worth of friends.

Adrián saddened the group by informing them that applicants typically have a Bachelor's degree. However, the Bachillerato Group, a GED program Adrián created, is in part funded by the Fox Chapel Area Spanish Club, and Spanish-speaking students may participate in Amigos de las Americas, a miniature Peace Corps-like experience for high schoolers. Those interested in learning more about the official program are still encouraged to visit peacecorps.gov or contact local recruiter Lori Frola at frola@peacecorps.gov.



FC Forensics Update

Bridget Wang

Students from the FCAHS Forensics team went to many different competitions within the past months. On December 12, students went to North Catholic High School for their tournament, and students went to Central Catholic to compete at the annual Brother Rene Sterner Steel City Invitational Forensic Tournament on December 19. At Central Catholic, FCAHS students competed against approximately 290 other students representing 21 other schools in Western Pennsylvania. Among them, juniors Ellen Pil and Darwin Leuba won Outstanding Speaker (first place) and Distinguished Speaker (second place) respectively in Student Congress. In addition, seniors Julia Lynch and Ishan Khatri won fourth place out of 40 teams in Public Forum Debate.

On January 8th and 9th, students from the FCAHS

team travelled to Canfield, Ohio to compete in an overnight tournament. Unfortunately, no members placed in the semifinal rounds of any event and didn't get to take home any trophies.

On Saturday, January 16, students from the high school competed among 425 other students representing 31 schools in Western Pennsylvania and West Virginia at the annual Pine Richland High School Forensic Tournament. At this tournament, several students placed. Junior Ellen Pil won the Superior Speaker award (equivalent to second place) for Student Congress. And in the Public Forum Debate, seniors Julia Lynch and Priyanka Shah won third place out of 50 other teams. Congratulations to our students.

The Fox Chapel Area Forensics team is sponsored by Mark Matusiak, Terry Taylor, and Rob Wilson.

In Tapestry, Creativity Rules

Anne Friday

The world is built on expression. We express ourselves in order to allow others to see into our broad imagination. Creativity allows others to peek inside our brains, as if we were turning our heads inside out. Many times, the hustle of life prohibits the chance to construct our originality. Our minds are full of great ideas and concepts just waiting to be revealed. For the students of FCAHS, Tapestry is the perfect outlet in which to do that.

Many believe that Tapestry is solely the school's literary magazine, but to many great artists and writers

the club is so much more. Tapestry is a way to release the creativity confined within us and shape it into something worthy of sharing. A person can present his/her view of life to others freely, without any fear of belittlement; for those reading the pieces are creators themselves. Literature, art, music and other brilliance is exchanged and comprehended, complimented and critiqued. Ideas travel throughout the brains of the readers like wildfire; sparking new ideas and developing old ones. Everyone is given a chance to submit their own works without going through many of the perils of publishing.

Tapestry also hosts stimulating gatherings known as Open Mics. During Open Mics, guests can either watch the skills being demonstrated or present their own skills. Many different songs, poems and other exciting talents are showcased, filling the room with the sounds of art. These gatherings usually take place during QRT, and anyone (not only club members) is invited to attend.

Tapestry welcomes submissions of art and writing from all students, which they combine into a small book at the end of the year. On most Thursdays during QRT, members assemble in Mrs. Green's room to discuss what submissions will go into the book. At the end of the year, the booklets are distributed throughout the school for all to enjoy. So, pick up your pencils, markers, pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, guitars, and whatever other materials you may need, and come to Tapestry to show others what you can do!



The Senior Staff of Tapestry work behind the scenes to run meetings, plan Open Mics, and create the actual magazine.



Preparing Students for Life After High School

Alex Smolar

For upperclassmen at Fox Chapel Area High School who often find themselves too busy to worry about resumes, applications, interviewing skills, and portfolios, College and Career Essentials may be the perfect course for you. Offered twice per week for one semester, College and Career Essentials is a great opportunity to develop savvy skills when applying to a job or learning about post-secondary education.

The course begins with college searches, as students make a comprehensive list of schools within his or her performance range. This unit is followed by learning how to use the Common Application, a tool that many colleges use in order to make one simple application that can be sent out to many schools at a time. Students also draft possible college essays in the Common Application and get constructive feedback from the instructor. Also, students take time to build a resume in the class, an activity that usually takes hours of cumbersome work outside of school. The resume is reviewed by a College and Career Essentials teacher, and a student is given helpful critiques and recommendations to make it perfect.

Most importantly, College and Career Essentials also offers an interviewing unit in which students learn how to have a successful college or job interview. Students prepare for possible questions, gain feedback from peers, learn about the interview process, and are taught helpful

tips by the teacher. This unit ultimately culminates in a mock interview, where a student must come to school dressed and prepped for a real interview and then are interviewed by a FCAHS teacher or administrator.

College and Career Essentials is truly a great course that helps make the college application experience a much easier and less daunting task.



Mrs. Shanko offers valuable input to her students about resumes, college essays, and more.

student athlete spotlight



Meet Ted Uinski, A.K.A. "The Honey Badger." Ted joined the Fox Chapel Area Ice Hockey team in sixth grade after being recruited by head defensive scout, Ralph Pleckzowski. Ted began his career with the Butler Valley Dawgs of the Pittsburgh Amateur Hockey League. In addition to being a lockdown defenseman, Ted is also one of the best players on the team in terms of taking big hits and getting back in the play. Ted's intense toughness and passion for hockey was put on display in a varsity game against Chartiers Valley after getting turn-buckled into the corner where the door stops and the glass begins; Ted couldn't even remember what had happened. However, Ted is called "Honey Badger" for good reason, and he was back on the ice for the next shift. Although Ted has been playing hockey for many years, he has worked tirelessly in the past two off-seasons to get as good as he is now. Over the past summers, Ted has also spent many grueling hours on the golf course perfecting his near-natural slice off the tee, and his admirable short game. Ted is a tremendous representative of the Fox Chapel Area Hockey team, and he perfectly exemplifies the true meaning of being a Fox. Ted Uinski is a great teammate, but an even better person.

- Elias Izenon



FCAHS Students Place at Model UN Conferences

Two Fox Chapel Area High School students won awards at the University of Virginia Model United Nations (UN) Conference. Sophomores Karissa Becer and Albert Liu earned a "Verbal Commendation" (equivalent to fourth place). More than 825 students from schools across the East Coast participated in the 35th Annual University of Virginia Model UN Conference. The conference was held November 13-15, 2015, at the University of Virginia.

Two Fox Chapel Area High School students placed at the University of Pittsburgh Model UN Conference. Juniors Mihir Garimella and Suvir Mirchandani

won second place for their position paper. Additionally, senior Ishan Khatri helped with the paper, but was unable to attend the actual competition. Approximately 460 students from 28 schools from western Pennsylvania participated in the University of Pittsburgh Model UN Conference. The conference was held November 2 at the University of Pittsburgh.

The purpose of the Model UN conferences is to enable students to role play and simulate the countries in the United Nations. As a part of the conferences, students debate and try to solve global problems from the perspectives of other countries.

Bill of Rights Day

Marjorie Trimble

December 15th is a day that most Americans would not consider a holiday, but for the AP Government and Political Science classes, Bill of Rights Day became a big event. To celebrate, the Social Studies department, with much support from the AP US Government classes, orchestrated special events so that other students and teachers could further their knowledge about the importance of this day. Students decorated the commons with posters listing the first ten amendments. The school's fox statue was dressed to showcase the student body's patriotic and historic pride. During all lunches many activities occurred, such as a rousing game of Kahoot, an interactive quiz game

in which scholars compete against each other. There was a Twitter board (#fc10rights) to allow students to express their First Amendment rights and Levi McCrady, Ana Spangenberg and Ryan Quinn dressed as Uncle Sam and the Statue of Liberty. These three students asked lunch goes if they could list the first ten amendments as they mingled through the cafeteria and commons area. The day also included a scavenger hunt for pocketbook constitutions hidden throughout the school. Fox Chapel Area students are proud to learn and share their knowledge of America's political system. Can you name all ten?



Seniors Freesia Vettier and Jenny Snyder took AP US Government and celebrated Bill of Rights Day.



Students were encouraged to give their opinion about rights in the US via sticky notes.



Amnesty International Talks Refugee Crisis

Bridget Wang

The Amnesty International Club invited a speaker to talk about the Syrian Refugee Crisis on December 18. While some students wanted to see the petting zoo, most students wanted to listen to a man speak about foreign affairs and policies. Because several of the articles he had written on the topic in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette had attracted much attention, Dan Simpson was invited to give a brief lecture about the crisis and how it affects the United States and European countries. Mr. Simpson talked about the history behind why the crisis was occurring, why it was important, and various countries' stance on the matter. He also took questions from the students. Co-presidents, Margaret Edgecombe and Alexa Selwood, and teacher sponsor, Mr. Rios hosted this lecture before the students left for winter break, and it was very successful.



FCA Student Candidate in Presidential Scholars Program

Fox Chapel Area High School senior Stephen Polcyn has been named a candidate in the 2016 United States Presidential Scholars Program. Approximately 4,000 stu-

dents from across the United States, and 130 from Pennsylvania, have been named candidates in this year's program.

Inclusion in the Presidential Scholars Program, now in its 52nd year, is one of the highest honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors. Students are initially selected for the program based on academic achievement and having scored exceptionally well on the SAT or the ACT. The candidates must then complete an application which includes essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports, and transcripts. Candidates are evaluated based on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and the quality and content of their essay.

About 800 students will be selected as Semifinalists in the program and then students chosen as Scholars will be notified this spring. Each year up to 161 students are named Presidential Scholars. Scholars will be invited to Washington, D.C., in June for an expense-paid trip to meet with government officials, educators, and other accomplished people. They will also receive the U.S. Presidential Scholars Medallion at a special recognition ceremony sponsored by the White House.



Senior Stephen Polcyn is one of 130 students in Pennsylvania to qualify as a candidate for the Presidential Scholars Program.



FCAHS Chosen as National Winner in Miró Transcendence Education Project

The Miró Quartet – as part of their 20th anniversary season and free release of their Transcendence album this fall including a documentary – announced a winner of the Miró Transcendence Education Project: the Fox Chapel Area High School Orchestra and teacher Mairi Cooper. The program and its students will receive a visit from the Miró Quartet (based in Austin, Texas) on March 14, 2016, along with a masterclass and Q&A session. Their winning video submission came from the high school orchestra under the instruction of Cooper, who has demonstrated “musical transcendence” by winning the Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Award – after which her students decided to pay it forward by entering into the Miró Quartet’s contest on her behalf.

Joshua Gindele, founding member of the Miró Quartet remarks, “This educator really inspired all four of us – having transcended the limitations of what people think is possible within the public school system, and allowing students to transcend themselves. We cannot wait to meet her and her students in person.” Miró also selected 1st runner up Tetra String Quartet in Phoenix and Nanook String Quartet in Alaska should additional funders come forward.

Cooper, who is in her 15th year at Fox Chapel Area High School, is the director of the high school orchestra and chairwoman of its music department. She has devel-

oped curriculum for the high school’s music department, including proposals for two new music courses: History of Rock and Roll and World Music, which are currently being piloted.

During her career as a teacher she has written curriculum, designed lesson plans, developed new courses, advised multiple student teachers, mentored new teachers in the school district, and served on many committees, but considers her greatest contributions those largely unseen. From her blog: “These contributions occur as I guide a student who has lost a parent, listen to a child deal with the fear of her parent losing a job for the second time that year, strategize with a student about negotiating schedules in a family that is pushed to the limit, or simply give someone lunch money. These personal connections are the most rewarding, and sometimes the most challenging.”

Over the past four years, her students have performed for Maestros Honeck and Nosedá from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, accompanied members of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and helped to create incredible interdisciplinary works, “Grand Salons,” in the school district. The orchestra has performed everywhere from Children’s Hospital in Pittsburgh to the Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal to Symphony Hall in Chicago.

Taking the Stage at Barnes & Noble

Bridget Wang

On Wednesday, December 2nd, the choir took the stage at Barnes & Noble as FCA’s Madrigals, Concert Choir, Women’s Choir and Men’s Ensemble performed for a fundraiser for the Fox Chapel Area Choral Parent’s and Friend’s Association. Directed by Mr. Ben Murray, the choirs worked in collaboration with 41 other choirs from across the country to commission a new choral composition called *The Longest Nights*, by Timothy Takach, a prominent young composer from the mid-west. The piece consists of seven movements and combined to form a song cycle that transitions from the beginning of winter to the birth of spring.

The Fox Chapel Area High School Orchestra just re-

leased their newest Christmas album at Barnes & Noble on December 13. The orchestra is directed by Mairi Cooper. Members from the orchestra also played at Barnes & Noble to raise money for the music department and to spread holiday cheer. By buying any item at the bookstore and using the voucher given by the department, 15% of the proceeds were donated to the department. Throughout the day, classic songs were played, including *We Wish You A Merry Christmas*, *Joy to the World*, and *Jingle Bell Rock*. People enjoyed listening to the pieces as much as the students enjoyed playing them.

