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SPRING 2023

# THE TORNADO CONNECTION

KEEPING THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN

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## Starfish Fights Bullying and Encourages Leadership

BY KIMORA HARRISON

Since 2001, the Starfish Program has worked to create a welcoming environment at school by teaching students to respect others and turn our school into a better place! More than 20 years since its start, Starfish continues to make positive changes in our school.

According to Mrs. Snyder, one of the amazing staff members who helps with the program, “Starfish is important because it reminds students that we care, that we are here for them, and that we are going to help them navigate their time here with us.”

Because Starfish is an overall philosophy of acceptance and kindness, all students are naturally involved in the program. Some students, however, are nominated by their teachers in the spring of their seventh grade year to serve as Starfish leaders within the school. “Students are nominated for their positive leadership in classes and in the hallways,” Mrs. Snyder said. Those seventh grade students are then invited to an informational meeting to explain the expectations of Starfish leaders within the building. For example, leaders are asked to attend an all-day summer training and also help with some of the many activities that Starfish sponsors throughout the year.

Once the selected students accept their invite to the program, they attend the summer workshop on August 17. During the training, leaders complete fun activities that help them work as a team and focus on social skills. The workshop allows students to make friends through team building activities while learning “Starfishy” ways.

CONT. PG. 2

The program has lots to offer for the students every year. This school year Starfish offered 26 activities! The activities included things like orientations, Veteran's Day card making, helping elementary students, autism awareness lollipop sales, and so much more. Every activity helps the students contribute to a positive atmosphere in the Butler Area School District.

The Starfish Program was originally brought to Butler Junior High School by former principal, Mr. James Allen. Mrs. Snyder said, "When he hired me, he told me he had some people he thought I would get along with very well and a program that aligned to my personal principles that had a lot to offer students. I have loved the program ever since!" Now there are many students and staff that continue to keep our school a better place just like Mr. Allen wanted it.

Memories are always made while participating in the Starfish Program. According to Mrs. Snyder, one of her favorite memories of Starfish this year happened before the year even started. "I walked into the school for orientation over the summer and saw a long line of Starfish leaders lined up behind the tables with student schedules. Everyone was smiling and rocking their new starfish t-shirts. It was a great way to start the school year for me and the incoming students," she said.

Audrianna Byers is one of this year's leaders. According to Audrianna, "My favorite memory of Starfish was when we all welcomed the new students into the Butler Intermediate during the soft opening!" Starfish leader Lucia Leyland agreed. "It was a great day," she said.

This May, students who were extra involved in Starfish during the year earned an exciting field trip to reward them for their hard work. The trip was to Camp Guyasuta where the students completed low and high ropes courses with activities such as a climbing wall and a zipline. The leaders loved this fun-filled, relaxing day! Parker Slater and Abbie Steele both went on the trip, and they both mentioned their favorite part was the zipline. Mrs. Minch, another Starfish faculty advisor, also attended the trip. "It was a beautiful day, and everyone was so supportive of one another. I wish we could do it again!"

## Students Recognized at Spring Ceremonies

BY EMMA LAUER

At the end of the year, seventh and eighth grade students receive awards in a variety of categories to recognize their efforts in and out of the classroom. Students earn academic and participation awards, in addition to competition awards and other special recognitions. Sixth grade students will participate in Field Day on June 7 instead of having a ceremony.



Families of students receiving awards were invited to the ceremonies, and the honorees will be excused from classes to attend. The students who are not receiving an award can watch it via livestream in their classrooms. Each ceremony usually takes about 60-90 minutes.

The seventh grade ceremony is at 8 am on June 7, and the eighth grade ceremony will follow on June 8 at 8 am as well. Students invited to the ceremony will sign into their homeroom, report to the auditorium, and sit in their reserved seats.

Most of the awards are determined by the specific academic departments including World Language, Band, Orchestra, Chorus, Family and Consumer Science, English, History, Mathematics, Science, Geography, Technology, and Physical Education. In some departments, like history, students take a test and the highest scorers earn the award. In others, teachers nominate students based on their overall performance in class for the entire year.

CONT PG 3

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Additional academic awards include the Presidential, Scholar Athlete, Honor, and High Honor awards, given to students who attain specific standard of academic excellence in all of their classes. Student of the Month winners are also called to the stage for a certificate of achievement.

Outstanding contributions to clubs are also honored. Students involved in Drama, Starfish, Yearbook, SOAR, and many other clubs will be acknowledged.

Some of the certificates are awarded by outside agencies. Mrs. Caton said, "One of the awards a student can win is through the senator's office, and we also have the Daughters of the American Revolution, American Legion, and YWCA present awards."

The goal of the ceremonies is not only to celebrate the achievements of students who choose to challenge themselves at school, but also to encourage goal setting for future school years as well. The event also is in appreciation for the parents' involvement in encouraging their children to challenge themselves. Congratulations to all of this year's honorees!

## Leyland, Miller, and Mills to Retire in June

BY BROOKLYN KLINE AND ANNA MARTIN

IHS teachers, Ms. Dana Leyland, Mr. Jeff Miller, and Mr. Dale Mills, will retire in June, concluding careers that have impacted countless students in Butler.

Ms. Leyland started her career in 1985 and has worked as a teacher for 38 years. She attended Butler High School and went on to Slippery Rock University to earn her degree. In addition to teaching sixth grade at Butler Middle School and the Intermediate, Ms. Leyland spent time teaching grades 4-8 at Butler Catholic and sixth grade at Center Township. Currently, she teaches science and social studies, and her favorite topic to teach is the unit on populations.

According to Ms. Leyland, she is really going to miss her job. "I will miss the relationships that I have with the students and their families," she said. During her time in education, a lot has changed. "The biggest change that I have had to face is the state tests and all the restrictions that have been placed on the tests," she said. Before these restrictions were placed, the curriculum was much more flexible. The most memorable moments she has had in the classroom are when she has done musicals and plays with her classes.

If Ms. Leyland could give any advice to new teachers, she would tell them: "Be flexible and try to laugh everyday." Ms. Leyland has definitely impacted her colleagues in addition to her students. Mrs. Jill Dietrich has worked with Ms. Leyland for some time. "I am going to miss having her here. She has taught me to do more group work," said Mrs. Dietrich. Elijah Feile currently has Miss Leyland for class. According to Elijah, "She has taught me how to organize my work." Ms. Leyland's plans for retirement are to travel the world and explore new places.



Mr. Miller has worked as a teacher for 25 years and started teaching in 1998. He attended Seneca Valley High School and also went to Slippery Rock University. He has worked in many buildings in Butler School District during his teaching career and currently teaches Special Education for grades 5-6. His favorite subject to teach is math. He stated, "I love to work with kids and see kids grow and learn new things." The thing that he is going to miss is the interactions he has with the kids and the relationships.

Throughout his 25 years of teaching, many changes have been made. The biggest change that he has faced during his career is the change in technology and computers. "When computers entered

my career, it was difficult for me because I didn't know anything about how to work them," he said. The most memorable moments he has had in the classroom are when a student doesn't understand what is being taught, and he can help them understand and give them more instruction.

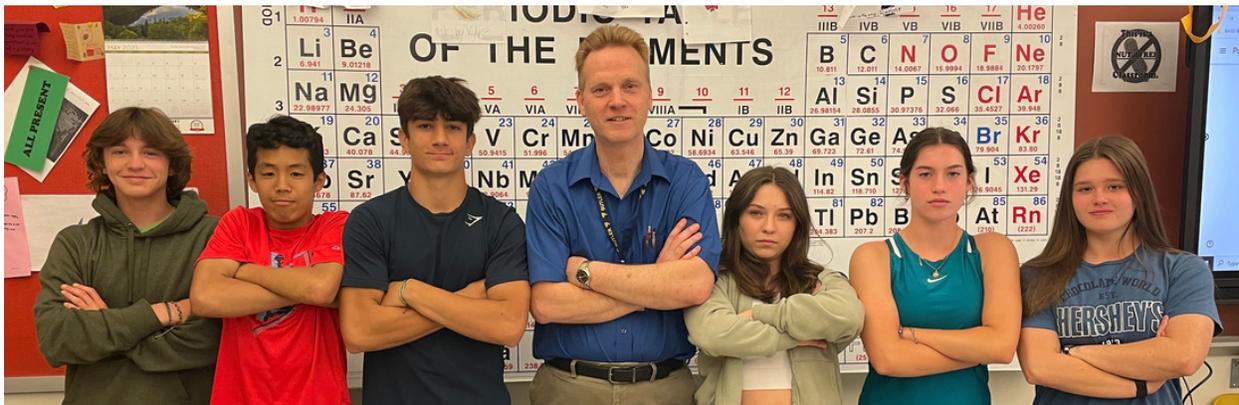
If he could give any advice for new teachers, he would tell them: "Be patient and don't just quit; keep trying until you get it right." The easiest part of teaching he said was working with the students. If Mr. Miller chose a career other than teaching, he would have been a farmer because he owns a lot of land. His plan for retirement is to relax and spend more time with his granddaughter.

Rounding out the trio of retirees, Mr. Mills has been a teacher for 25 years and began his career in 1998. Mr. Mills attended Clarion-Hudson High School and went to California University for college. He has worked at Butler Junior High and Butler Intermediate during his career. He now teaches eighth grade science at the IHS, but he also taught STEM. In his science classroom, his favorite topics to teach are electricity, work and power, and simple machines.

According to Mr. Mills, "I am going to miss the students and working in the classroom." Through his 25 years of teaching, many aspects of education have changed and progressed. The biggest change that he has had to experience is there are a lot more standardized tests. "Before they added more tests, there was a lot more freedom to teach what you wanted," he said. The most memorable moment that he has had in the classroom was teaching and helping the students with combat robots.

If Mr. Mills could give any advice to a new teacher, it would be: "Have patience." He believes that the easiest part of teaching is teaching kids who are motivated to learn. Mrs. Milanovich has worked with Mr. Mills for a while, and he has taught her a lot about teaching. "I am going to miss his quick responses, and the encouragement that he gives to keep going," she said. Mr. Mills has shown her that science is best taught with activities. Cade Karns had Mr. Mills for science. According to Cade, "Mr. Mills is a great example of someone who is kind and who cares about people." The best memories Cade has with Mr. Mills are his really cool labs that he would do with the class. "Mr. Mills always made class fun and exciting," Cade added. During his retirement, he plans to spend time with his family.

Mr. Dobransky added that all of this year's retirees have impacted the IHS in a way that cannot be replaced. From their kind personalities to their work ethic, students and staff alike have enjoyed their time with Ms. Leyland, Mr. Miller, and Mr. Mills. Mr. Dobransky stated, "They are always dependable. They all will be missed daily."



## Butler Continues to Offer Cyber Classes

BY ALEXANDRIA THOMPSON

For the past few years, Butler has offered a cyber program for students using the online platform Edgenuity. The numbers of students enrolled in the program dropped significantly this school year due to the end of the pandemic, but some continue to find the option appealing.

The Butler cyber program, which is supervised by Mr. Keenan McGaughey, is just another way of completing school, just online. Students who choose this path can create their own schedule each day. The students have a daily amount of work they need to complete.

Each class they take should take them about 40-45 minutes per day, but the time they finish that work each day is up to them. Students do have to wake up at a certain time each day, however, to complete their daily attendance so they will be marked present.

The classwork is very independent and students learn using a series of instructional videos, but they can contact their teachers, guidance, and even tech help, if they need help with something. Mrs. Milanovich, an eighth grade science teacher, also teaches science for cyber students. She teaches honors and academic for seventh grade science and eighth grade. She also teaches gifted honors science 7, in a total of five classes. She would say she teaches about 50 students in all of her classes combined, and she has one period a day in her schedule to monitor their progress. According to Mrs. Milanovich, "The best advice I can give cyber students is to keep on pace with the workload. Those who fall behind tend to really struggle to catch up."

She went on to explain, "Students need to be mindful of what they are doing and what assignments are due that day. If they turn in their assignments when they are due, they will have a greater chance of success." One last way to succeed is to be independent. She believes that those organized and independent students have the potential to do well in cyber classes.

Mrs. Milanovich talks to her students in many different ways. She emails them to talk about their grades, progress, and assignments. She also said she sets up Google Meets to talk to her students, individually or in small groups. She believes that there are some pros and cons of cyber. A pro of cyber is that you can work at your own pace, but she also thinks that it can be a con at the same time for certain students. "It just depends on the student," she said. Another con would be that these courses are mostly self-directed. However, that could also be a pro for certain students.

According to Mrs. Caton, the seventh grade guidance counselor, the cyber classes are self-directed. She also said if you are not self-motivated or struggle with setting a routine and sticking with it, you will most likely not be successful in cyber. However, if you do well in those areas, then the program may be a decent fit. Mrs. Caton said that if a student is not doing well in cyber, they will be asked to go back to in-person class. "Our main goal is for students to be successful, so if we see that someone is really struggling with cyber, we need to get them back in a face-to-face learning environment to cultivate that success," she said.

Cyber is not as easy as one may think. "Students typically think that cyber is super easy and you get to do whatever you want, but they do not realize it is much harder than they think it will be," said Mrs. Caton. She also said to stay in contact with their teachers and principals if they need help.

For more information about the cyber options at IHS, please contact the guidance office.

## IHS Library Lends Books and More

BY CARTER HEIST

Ms. Eckert, the librarian at the IHS, has worked as a librarian for 23 years. She loves books, and she calls herself a "book hoarder." Reading has been her passion since she was young and volunteered as a library aid. When she was younger, she wanted to be a car mechanic, following in her father's footsteps. But during her seventh grade year, her school held a career day and that's when she was told she would be a good librarian.

Her typical school day consists of: helping to fix chromebook issues, assisting teachers with projects, sorting and replacing books, and, of course, reading. According to Ms. Eckert, "My favorite part of being a librarian is when kids come back to the library and tell me that they loved the book that they read."

There are about 18,000 books in the library at the IHS. Each day, 50-200 books are checked out. Teachers checkout books too, for reading and for their classes. If you are having trouble finding a book, you could ask Ms. Eckert to help you find it.



She uses a catalog of all the books in the library to help find where they are. You can also find audiobooks and ebooks on Sora. "Sora is a great way to read/listen to books," she said. You can hold, read, listen, and renew books on Sora.

Ms. Eckert uses the "weeding policy" to decide what books to keep on the shelves. The weeding policy is when she monitors if the book is checked out a lot, if the book is relevant, and the condition of the book. The first question Ms. Eckert asks if someone wants to find a genre or book to read is, "What types of Youtube videos do you watch?" This is smart because if you watch animal videos, you can like animal books, or if you like motocross, you could like vehicle books. One of the things taken away from the library due to covid was reading in the library. This could change soon because Ms. Eckert is trying to start No-Tech Tuesdays in the library. So students can come down during fourth period or study hall and read a book in the library.

Each year, Ms. Eckert brings the Scholastic Book Fair to the library in the fall and in the spring to raise money for additional books. This year the spring book fair was more successful than the fall, which is unusual. "The spring book fair paid for almost 3,000 more books for the library. The spring was more successful because more people came during the family nights, and because the book fair stayed open for longer due to an event happening at the school," Ms. Eckert commented.

Next school year, Ms. Eckert hopes that students and staff utilize the library even more than they did this year. A good time to go to the library would be fourth period, lunch, and English class. There is no assigned library class because it would book the library for the entire day and seventh and eighth graders would have no time to go to the library. Although there are no library classes, teachers often schedule time in the library to complete research projects. The library also has some tools that can help students with classwork. Some of these tools are databases and picking reliable cites, which were things fifth graders learned in middle school.



## Sixth Grade Staff Spotlight

BY LYSSA FIKE AND ALEXIS MYERS

This year was the first year having sixth grade at the IHS, and now that everyone is settled in, sixth grade teachers are looking forward to greeting next year's class into the building. Mrs. Popovich (math), Mrs. Munko (ELA), Mr. Starr (social studies and sciences), and finally Mrs. Kauffman (gym) are eager to meet incoming students.

Mrs. Popovich is a sixth grade math teacher that has been teaching for 20 years and was inspired to be a teacher because she used to coach soccer, basketball, and gymnastics. She graduated from IUP and attended graduate school at Pitt. Her favorite subject in school was ELA because she loved to read. Mrs. Popovich decided to teach at Butler because it was close to home. She said, "I love to be around the kids because I get to learn a little something new everyday." Her favorite thing about math is that there is always only one answer, and she also likes to help students by walking them through the problem or using the "I do, We do, You do" method.

Mrs. Popovich's advice and expectations for incoming students is to work hard. "There is no free pass to an easy grade," she said. She added that students should own up to their mistakes. Her goal for her students is that they graduate high school and go onto a good college or technical school. Next year, Mrs. Popovich is switching from teaching math to teaching social studies and science.

Another sixth grade spotlight teacher is Mrs. Munko. She is a sixth grade ELA teacher that has been in the classroom for 16 years. Mrs. Munko earned degrees from Slippery Rock and Gannon. According to Mrs. Munko, "I became a teacher because I like to help my students grow and mature." She was inspired to become a teacher because her mom was both a preschool and fourth grade teacher. If Mrs. Munko wasn't a teacher, she would've wanted to be a counselor or a pilot. Some of Mrs. Munko's hobbies are being outside, spending quality time with her three children, and following cheerleading.

Mrs. Munko expects students to try their best, and she believes that students should get to meet new people by joining and finding out what clubs fit them best. She also wants students to be successful.

Mrs. Munko said that her favorite thing this year was moving to the IHS. "I like the structure of the building and just enjoy the school in general," she said. According to Mrs. Munko, in ten years, she sees herself still teaching, hopefully still sixth grade at the IHS, maybe one day coaching one of her child's sports.

Up next, Mr. Starr has been teaching for 27 years. He teaches science and social studies, and he graduated from IUP. He stated, "I was inspired to become a teacher because I used to be a lifeguard and taught kids how to swim, so I thought that it was a good idea to just teach kids as a profession." Mr. Starr's favorite subject in school was history because he had the most interesting teachers. If Mr. Starr had to pick a different job, he would have been a carpenter. In 10 years, Mr. Starr sees himself alive, retired, and traveling with his wife around the world. He decided to teach at Butler because he attended Butler as a student, and he was excited to get a job in his hometown. Some of Mr. Starr's hobbies and interests are playing the guitar and home improvement plans.

Mr. Starr likes teaching his subject because the students are able to participate in experiments and hands-on activities. As a teacher, he expects students to have all their materials needed for class and for the students to try as hard as they can. If a student has any kind of issues, whether it's personal or an issue in school, he tries to help any way possible. According to Mr. Starr, "Incoming students should try to attend the open house to lessen any anxiety they may have about the new building." One of his goals is for students to look at school as an opportunity and not a requirement. His favorite memory from this school year is when the sixth grade students played the teachers in kickball and lost.

Lastly, Mrs. Kauffman is one of the sixth grade gym teachers. Mrs. Kauffman had been teaching for 30 years, after graduating from IUP. Her favorite subject in high school was science because she loved to do all the experiments. She chose to be a gym teacher at Butler because it was close to home. According to Mrs. Kauffman, "I was inspired to become a phys. ed. teacher because I always loved playing sports and knew that I could never sing, draw, or play an instrument." She added, "I love my job because I play games for a living."

She wants the kids that hate the gym to "learn that it can make good things happen." Mrs. Kauffman said that she likes the fact she can teach students with a wide range of abilities. She also said that she hopes that her students will be involved in activities in the future. Mrs. Kauffman said that in 10 years, she sees herself in the garden and retired. She said that her favorite hobbies are gardening, being a mom, and coaching Junior High track. Her favorite thing that happened this year was teaching sixth graders how to ribbon dance. Her best advice to new sixth graders: "You need to wear your gym shoes and always work hard in gym class."



## Gettysburg Travelers Overcome Obstacles

BY BRADEN PETERS AND BEN SMITH, EDITOR

On the weekend of March 17-18, seventh grade students enjoyed a fun and educational tour of Gettysburg, Harrisburg, and Hershey. Even though the travelers encountered some challenges along the way, the end result was a memorable event for all involved.

The journey began with a stop in Harrisburg at the Civil War museum and the state capitol building. Due to the size of the trip, the four buses split in groups of two, and one pair went to the museum while the other pair explored the capitol, and

then they switched. At the museum, the students learned about how Civil War troops marched, formations, weaponry of the period, and much more. At the capitol, the students experienced an interactive tour, had lunch, and even squeezed in a photo op with State Senator Scott Hutchinson.

At this point, the travelers discovered that one of the buses had broken down, and everyone played their part to get the trip back on track. Students and chaperones from Bus 2 (the broken down bus) piled onto Bus 1, and headed to Hershey, buying lots of candy and chocolate before leaving. Then, after eating dinner at the Gettysburg Fire Hall, students went to the YMCA. The students finally went to the hotel to sleep.

The next morning, a new bus replaced the original Bus 2, and students traveled comfortably to Gettysburg. The first stop on the tour was at Little Round Top, where students climbed an observation deck and overlooked the entirety of the vast field. The next major stop was at the Pennsylvania State Monument, commemorating all of the Pennsylvania soldiers that served, fought, and died at Gettysburg. The stops continued until the students had learned about the entirety of the battle. Following the tour, the travelers stopped for dinner and headed home.

Gabriel Jolly, who was on Bus 4, said, "The trip was fun, entertaining, and informative." Gabe said that he would recommend this trip to other students because it is "a good time" and the trip was "well worth it." He learned about the Civil War, and that it was more gruesome than he would have ever known by looking at a history textbook. Furthermore, he claimed that the trip was nicely paced and wouldn't really change anything about it, other than the situation on Bus 2 which really was the only problem in the trip. He went because it "sounded fun," while his favorite part was at Hershey.

A second primary opinion about the trip came from student Jordan Ryan, who was on Bus 3. According to Jordan, "I went on the trip to get away from my brothers for a little while and to be with my friends." She said that, for her, the trip was very "fun and educational," despite the occasional pace issues and overall liveliness which, although a little rough, didn't take away from the fun of the trip. She added that the tours were detailed, and the tour guides made it very interesting.

Next, on Bus 2, was Mr. Jurysta, a history teacher who enjoys Civil War history. He was open about how he believed the trip could be improved by "Make[ing] it longer, spend[ing] more time in other places to see the historical parts and have some more fun." His opinion on Bus 2 breaking down was that it was a "nightmare" where everyone played their part. In the end, he said he didn't think the bus breaking down impacted the trip too heavily, just making it "more interesting." He added, "To take something from a book and see it in real life like a museum made it very authentic."

Lastly, Mr. Butler chaperoned on Bus 1. He absolutely loved the trip because of its traveling opportunity and its historical education value. He found the tour guides the most interesting, however, because they gave more information about the trip and made for fun to go sightseeing. "If I were to change anything about the trip, I would like more time in Gettysburg to further enrich the students in the history," he said. Mr. Butler also viewed the trip as a chance for students to learn outside the classroom and be with friends, backing up why he would recommend the trip to other students.

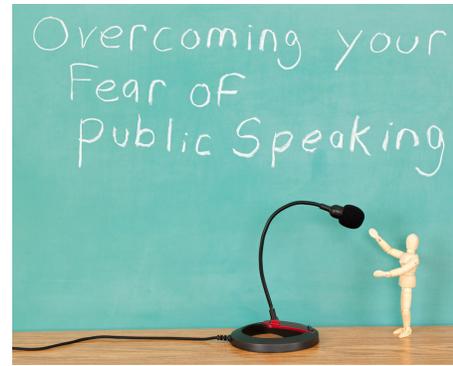


Photo courtesy of Senator Hutchinson's office

# ESP Course Hones Speaking Skills

BY RYDER CUMBLIDGE

The Public Speaking and Mock Trial ESP class is a class all about strengthening and building public speaking skills. Participants will learn how to have good tone, volume, body language, and confidence. Students will also learn about the legal system and have a small mock trial at the end of the class. It can also help students in auditioning for the high school mock trial team due to the earlier experiences with the ESP class. The mock trial section of the class is just as important as public speaking. Students will learn about the process of a trial. Students will also learn about the many objections, roles people have in a trial, and how long a typical mock trial is.



According to Mr. Kasperek, the teacher of the public speaking ESP course, "This class promotes public speaking confidence, and the ability to think critically, logically, and quickly." He added that students learn valuable life skills while also having a great time with friends. Mr. Kasperek noted that a complete, structured procedure isn't really needed for a class like this one because "there's a lot of individual prep and assistance provided." Beyond public speaking techniques, students can learn the basics of trial. Public speaking encourages students to be confident in many areas. "I have witnessed first hand how the class builds confidence, and I think it's good for students of all strengths," he said.

Gabriel Jolly, a seventh grade student who took the course, stated, "It was a hard ESP. It was probably the hardest ESP class I had this year, but I learned so much." Even though the class is difficult, it is still fun for students. Gabriel said, "I definitely learned what it is like to be a part of a trial and how hard it would be to be a lawyer." Gabriel prepared for the trial by reading about the case, talking with his witness, and studying at night. "I read the pamphlet thing about the trial, I talked with my witness, and I studied at night so I knew what to do," he said.

Gabriel faced many challenges throughout the class, but one in particular stood out. "Stage fright was really the biggest one," he observed. "I got to meet a lot of new friends there, and they helped me with public speaking and how loud I need to talk," he added.

The Public Speaking/Mock Trial class will continue to be offered through the Enrichment Studies Program during all three trimesters next school year.

## Leadership Shines in JROTC

BY LUCY QUERTINMONT

JROTC is an elective open to all Senior High School students in grades 9-12. Butler's JROTC program is one of the best in the state, involving a large group of committed students every school year. Unlike other electives, JROTC is a leadership training course, a career development program, and a competitive team all in one.

JROTC stands for Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps. Butler High School's JROTC Leadership Program helps prepare students for responsible leadership roles while making them aware of their rights and responsibilities as American Citizens. The program is a stimulus for promoting graduation from high school and provides instruction and rewarding opportunities.



JROTC Raider Team

The program is led by Major Coleman and Sgt. Major Nichols. Both men served in the army; Sgt. Major Nichols served for 31 years, and Major Coleman served for 23 years. "In the army, you become a teacher," Major Coleman observed. He has experience with teaching at high schools, universities, colleges, and in the army. Major Coleman was assigned as an artilleryman; he fired rockets, missiles, and cannons. Both Major Coleman and Sgt. Major Nichols started at a low rank and climbed the ladder from there. "You're going to move up the ranks, five to six soldiers, to 1,000 soldiers," Sgt. Major Nichols said. Eventually, he was leading over 3,000 soldiers! Now, the two men take pride in guiding their JROTC cadets, teaching them about leadership, citizenship, and responsibility.

Within the organization, cadets can participate on four teams: Raiders, Rifle and Drill Team, Robotics, and Marksmanship. Each team specializes in a different area: the Raiders focuses on athletics and physical fitness, Robotics cultivates STEM-related skills, Rifle and Drill teaches weapon safety, and Marksmanship focuses on teamwork, precision, and following directions.

In JROTC, cadets also learn first-aid, participate in physical exercise, and learn about financial plans, decision making, communications, and public speaking. Students wear camouflage uniforms to show they take pride, and that they are part of an organization. Some awards that participants can achieve are ribbons, leadership awards, academics, and working with the community awards. According to Major Coleman, "JROTC is like one big family."

JROTC teams start morning training at 5:30 a.m. because of coordination issues with the gym, and assigned class periods are any time periods 1-4. The students are dedicated and enjoy coming in an hour and a half before school starts to train. All JROTC teams have currently qualified in first, second, or third place to go to nationals.

JROTC students are involved in community work, service learning projects, Salvation Army donations, and volunteering in soup kitchens. Students ring the bell at stores during Christmas, and gather food and presents. JROTC cadets attend camps for group training, go on field trips, and organize dances and dinners. In addition, the Color Guard goes to different elementary schools to represent JROTC and the different teams. Major Coleman said, "We stay pretty busy, and I think that the kids like that."

## Butler Teams Impress in Manufacturing Contest

BY COLTON BEVERIDGE AND LOGAN BISH

On April 5, two teams from the Butler Intermediate participated in the What's So Cool About Manufacturing Contest at the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh.

What's So Cool About Manufacturing is a state-wide contest where participating student teams are paired with local companies to create a promotional video about manufacturing. Mr. Cochran, the teacher of the TV/Video enrichment course, and Mrs. Snyder, the teacher of the makerspace enrichment class, guided the groups of students. The boys' group partnered with JSP Manufacturing Company, while the girls' group promoted MECCO Manufacturing Company.

According to Mr. Cochran, "Both teams worked very well together and all complimented each other in their groups." Students met with members of the company, recorded footage, and edited their videos. After sorting out over three hours of footage, the students had to put their minds together to select the best footage. Mr. Cochran added, "Editing can be difficult. Taking three hours of footage and cutting it down into a two minute and 30-second video is not easy."

At the regional ceremony on April 5, the Butler teams won a combined four awards, and the boys' team advanced to the state competition. Then, on May 15, the boys' team won one additional award at states to wrap up Butler's successful season.

Parker Slater, Mackenzie Christley, Aliza Green, Nora Trepanier, and Abbagail Steele were all part of the girls' team. Abbagail was happy to be selected to be part of the girls' team for the contest. She said, "Mr. Cochran is a cool teacher, and I thought the contest would be fun to try out something new." Abbagail and her group went to MECCO, a Manufacturing company that uses laser technology to produce products. Since MECCO had awesome machines and lasers, gathering footage was no hard task for the group. According to Abbagail, "The fun parts of the trip were the lasers, and

the hands-on, interactive activities.” The girls went into the editing process confident and ready to produce a great video. Unfortunately, halfway through the editing process, their computer crashed, deleting most of their video. Still determined, the girls worked hard and produced an outstanding video. At regionals, the girls’ team won the first place award for best manufacturing message. Congratulations to the girls on a great video!

Logan Bish, Colton Beveridge, Jackson Stewart, Nicholas Savannah, and Jacob Szul were all part of the boys’ team. According to Jacob, “I love to make videos in my spare time, so I was so thankful for the opportunity to participate in the contest.” While visiting JSP, the group got some great footage of the manufacturing process. Jacob said, “I liked our interviews because the people we talked to gave descriptive responses.” The editing process was pretty smooth for the boys. Just like the girls, over 100 clips were left out when making the video.

Once they officially finished their video, they were confident and ready to head to regionals. There were some good videos at regionals, but Jacob thought that their video stood out the most. “The other videos were creative but didn’t focus on manufacturing as much as we did,” he said. The boys performed well, winning second place in best manufacturing message and winning first place in viewer’s choice and best overall. By winning best overall, they got the opportunity to go to the state competition in Harrisburg.

Congratulations to all of the participants on a successful showing this year!

## Musicians Share Talents in Spring Concerts

BY EMMA DAVIS AND AMBER SHAY, EDITORS

Students in sixth, seventh and eighth grade band, orchestra and chorus recently performed in their spring concerts at the IHS.

Mr. Karenbauer, the band director at the IHS, talked about the concert. Some of the songs that the seventh and eighth grade bands played were: *Synchronized Energy*, *Fragile*, *Blue Sky Horizon*, and many more. The sixth graders also played many fun songs at the concert. Some of the songs they played were: *Hot Fudge Sundae*, *It’s Raining Tacos*, *Taking my Walrus for a Walk*, and others. Mr. Karenbauer said, “When I select music I like a wide variety, so normally the opener is something that is big and grabs people’s attention. I also like to do a march and a show tune and then a few fun songs the kids enjoy playing.”

Karenbauer is very proud of his students and how the concert went. He said, “I think the performance was one of the best performances we have had in quite awhile. Students were prepared, and we had no major issues during the concert.” Something different the director did for this concert was he included sixth grade and combined seventh and eighth grade.

He worked hard to help his students learn the songs. “We worked daily to spot check and introduce new concepts to the students so they were learning on top of being able to play the music,” Mr. Karenbauer said. Students also spent some of their time practicing at home.

Mrs. Black, the orchestra director at the IHS, talked about her spring concert and the upcoming concert for next year. The next concert will be the “Spooktacular” on October 26, 2023. At that concert, the Butler High School orchestra will be performing spooky songs, like *Ghostbusters* and *Thriller*. Mrs. Black said that she already passed out the music, and the students have started learning it.

She also shared how she helps her students learn music. “Everyday in class, we consistently work on intonation, rhythms and musicality. We set little goals for each week,” Black said.

In May, there were two orchestra concerts, one for 6-8 orchestras and Rock Orchestra, and one the next day that featured high school and chamber orchestras. Some of the songs sixth grade played were *Hey Fiddle Fiddle*, *Canyon Sunset*, and *Velocity*. Seventh and eighth were combined; they played *Blue Ridge Run*, *American Landscape*, and *Irish Faire*. The Rock Orchestra played *Purple Haze*, *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*, *Electric Light Orchestra Medley*, and more. Mrs. Black chooses the music that she thinks her students would play best. She said, “I choose the music to feature the students I am working with.” This concert was different from the rest because it featured a combination of modern and contemporary styles of music. The students played more advanced music than they played in the beginning of the year. Black said, “I think they did a fantastic job; my favorite thing was seeing the growth.”



Mrs. Tepper, one of the seventh and eighth grade chorus teachers, talked about their performance. One of the most important things to Mrs. Tepper is to help her students learn music. She said, "We start learning music in January, and we progressively learn everyday." Some of the songs the students sang were *Zum Gali Gali*, *Four Chord Medley*, and *Nothing is Going to Stop Me*. Tepper chose this music because she likes to pick a song in a foreign language, then a pop flare, and then something that is audience appealing.

Mrs. Tepper said, "I think the concert went amazingly well." She said this year was a little different because they combined seventh and eighth grade, but in previous years, they would combine eighth and ninth grade.

Mrs. Waseleski, another IHS chorus director, talked about her recent concert. Mrs. Waseleski said, "The performance was awesome, super impressive, and I'm super proud of all my students." She helped the students learn by breaking the music into learnable chunks then helping them memorize the music, and then putting it all together.

Some of the songs she chose for the students to perform were *Armed Forces Salute*, *Sisi Ni Moja*, *Do Re Mi*, and many more. Mrs. Waseleski chooses these songs for several reasons. "I select music so that I have songs that develop their vocal technique from different genres, and I always choose a song in a different language," she said.

This concert was very different for Mrs. Waseleski because she and Mrs. Tepper co-directed for the first time. That was very exciting for both of them.

Mrs. Erevia, the sixth grade choir director, also had her concert. "I am so incredibly proud of how the students did and their hard work for making the commitment to the ensemble everyday, learning all of their music, harmonies, and overcoming stage fright. It came together in the best way possible," she said. The sixth grade chorus class rehearses everyday during fourth period. Once a week, they work in sections to make the sound come together even more.



Mrs. Erevia chooses songs according to the theme of the concert. The theme for their spring concert was "Music Makes the World Colorful." She chose songs about spreading joy through music. Some of the songs they sang were: *Let Us Sing Together*, *Canter!*, *Colors of the Wind*, and *Over the Rainbow*. The group also had a high school student play drums with the songs.



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SPRING 2023

# THE TORNADO CONNECTION

STUDENT SECTION

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## A Day in the Life of an IHS Sixth Grader

BY JULIA WRIGHT

At Butler Intermediate High School, a day in the life of a sixth grader begins with entering school and going through metal detectors. Students are encouraged to remove all metal items from their bags and hand those metal items to one of the monitors before going through the detector. This keeps the line moving. After going through metal detectors, the students report to the holding rooms in one of the cafeterias until the bell rings for homeroom at 7:30 am. Students who are interested in breakfast can request to go to the breakfast cafeteria at this time.

When the bell rings, everyone goes to their homeroom, which is the same as their first period class. Homeroom/first period lasts eight minutes longer than the other periods of the day so that attendance can be taken, students can pledge the flag, and important announcements can be made. The periods of the day continue in order and last for a little over 40 minutes each. In sixth grade, students do change classrooms each period. However, students do spend two periods in both English and math each day.

Fourth period is advisory period for all students. During advisory, students sometimes participate in special PBIS lessons; other times, they complete make-up work or attend clubs. Club sign-ups take place during advisory in September. Students can choose from a variety of clubs in their areas of interest. Some of the most popular clubs are chess club, swimming club, Rubik's Cube club, and many more. This advisory period is also when many sixth grade students fit their music class into the day. Students involved in band, chorus, and orchestra will report to the music wing at this time.

Each grade level has a different time for lunch, and sixth grade eats after completing sixth period, around noon. Lunch lasts 30 minutes. For the first few days, lines may be slow, so some students plan to pack a day or two until the lines calm down. Rest assured though that no matter how long the lines are, all students will be given time to eat and no one will be sent to class hungry!

The last three periods follow lunch, and dismissal begins at 2:45, when students are dismissed in three waves. The first wave at 2:45 includes students who are walking home and students who will get picked up by their parents/guardians, as well as the first group of buses. Because so many students are picked up by their parents, it is important that students who are being picked up are quick to leave the building and cautious in the parking lot. The bell for the second wave sounds at 2:50 p.m, and the third wave is at 2:52 p.m. Students who stay after school for sports and clubs are dismissed with the last wave.

Most current sixth grade students feel like there is more freedom at the IHS because of the time to talk with friends in the four minutes between classes. However, they felt like the rules are a bit more strict. They also said that this building is very big compared to their old school, but if they had the choice to go back, they would stay here. Many said they like being in a school with older students because the older students helped them when they first arrived.

Many students in band, orchestra, and chorus said their favorite memories this year are from their concerts. Students feel like the dismissal process is very organized because they always get to the right spot, and they feel like they have plenty of time to get to their buses. They also really like having their own chromebooks because they have a lot more independence and they can play games when they're bored.

Hopefully this helps ease the minds of some incoming students. We can't wait to welcome you to the IHS!

## Mrs. Meskel's Class Wins Contest

BY TONI MATUKE

Mrs. Meskel's sixth grade ELA students won the Third-Circuit Essay Competition. The essay topic was about why it is important to vote. Because the class won the contest, they had the opportunity to present their work at the US Steel Building in Pittsburgh in May. While they were there, they also witnessed a naturalization ceremony of 35 new US citizens.

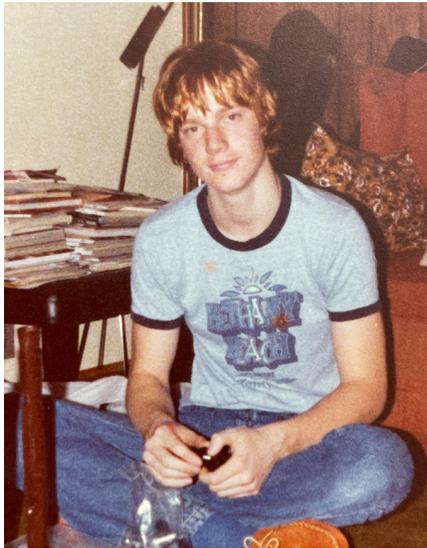
"My favorite part was learning about what a naturalization ceremony is and learning how people get citizenship," said Landon Slear, one of the students who won the essay contest and attended the ceremony. "It was an exciting experience," said Ben Kinney, another student who attended. This was Mrs. Meskel's first time winning the essay contest and attending the naturalization ceremony with students.



The students had to research the importance of voting in order to write the essay. "The biggest obstacle of writing the essay was researching and reading to know what to write," said Harlan Barron Fowler. Harlan also stated, "We were motivated to win the contest because we found out we could go to Pittsburgh." All of the students seem to have enjoyed the visit to the U.S Steel building.

Landon Bichler, another winning student, said, "It was a really good experience because it was my first time going to the U.S Steel Building."

At the ceremony, Addy Bushre had the honor of reading the class's winning essay. Mrs. Meskel is very proud of her students. "It was a unique experience, and I'm grateful that my students were able to attend such a special event. The group of students did a wonderful job representing the Butler Area School District," she said.



## Who Am I? Eighth Grade Mystery Teacher

BY KARA LUBINSKY, EDITOR

The eighth grade mystery teacher went to Chartiers Houston High School, and attended college at California University of PA. He has no pets, and “dreams of vacationing at the US Tennis Open.” He also really enjoys fishing.

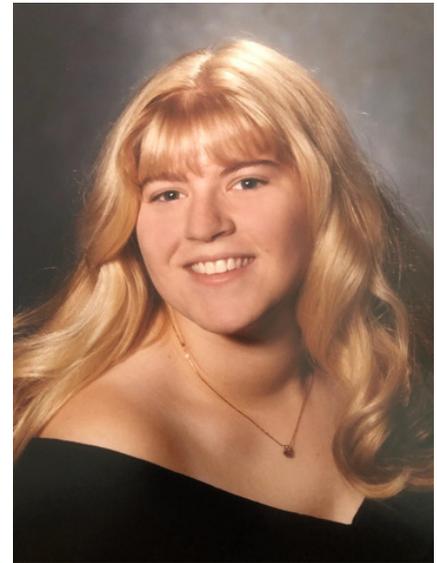
He said that if he could listen to any musician play live, it would be Foreigner. This teacher also said that his favorite TV show is *Swamp People*. He said that he doesn't have anything too strange in his refrigerator, “unless you would say chili hot sauce is weird.”

## Who Am I? Seventh Grade Mystery Teacher

BY KARA LUBINSKY, EDITOR

For seventh grade, the mystery teacher is an IUP graduate who attended Red Land High School. Her dream vacation is camping in Colorado, and she has two dogs named Willow and Thunder. If she could see any musician live, it would be Garth Brooks.

This mystery teacher grew up participating in field hockey, softball, and marching band, where she played the clarinet. She says that the weirdest thing in her refrigerator is “worms because my family fishes.” If money and time were no object, she would not be working and would be living in the woods.



## Who Am I? Sixth Grade Mystery Teacher

BY KARA LUBINSKY, EDITOR

The sixth grade mystery teacher graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School and then went on to college at Pitt. This teacher said that her dream vacation would be “to spend the summer touring Europe.” If she could go to any concert, it would be a Trans Siberian Orchestra concert.

When this teacher was younger, she enjoyed spending her time participating in track, softball, and music programs. She said that the strangest thing in her refrigerator is “Paw Patrol yogurt because my kids love it.” If money and time were no object, she'd be on a tropical beach with her family.



## Seventh Grade Most Memorable Moments

BY NOLAN CRANMER AND COLTON BESTWICK

- Cayden Bayer: "Spending time with teammates and making memories with them"
- Mrs. Bodamer: "Winning the Linear Scramble"
- Chase Boden: "Hanging out with Coach Cooper"
- Colten English: "Playing the slave game in Mr. Rock's class"
- Ms. Hegedus: "Playing in the 7th grade kickball game"
- Isaac Huey: "Doing activities with Mr. Casher"
- Mrs. Neely Aldridge: "Having the 6th grade staff and students in the building"
- Addison Pino: "Taking walks with friends"
- Mr. Rock: "The competitions between the classes and teachers"
- Braden Slaughenhoup: "Making a 3-pointer vs. Seneca Valley"
- Shae Wells: "Seeing people fall in the hallways"



## Eighth Grade Most Memorable Moments

BY NOLAN CRANMER AND COLTON BESTWICK

- Mrs. Behrens: "Mentoring my student teacher and watching him get involved with the students"
- Mr. Cochran: "Spirit week, but specifically, decade day"
- Ryan Collins: "When I ate 11 bananas in 5 minutes"
- Jake Kollinger: "When Ryan Collins ate 11 bananas in one lunch"
- Nicholas Kramer: "When we beat Knoch 42-0 because I got to play backup QB and WR"
- Malina McElroy: "The last basketball practice because we got to mess around"
- Isaac Miller: "The Butler invite because I placed well"
- Mrs. Minch: "Kicking Colton Bestwick out of class"
- Mrs. Minter: "4th period shenanigans"
- Jacob Proudfoot: "Bus rides to volleyball games because I had fun with my teammates"
- Abigail Steele: "Participating in What's So Cool About Manufacturing"
- Brooke Steyer: "When I brought a cake in for a birthday party at lunch for my friend"



## Sixth Grade Most Memorable Moments

BY NOLAN CRANMER AND COLTON BESTWICK

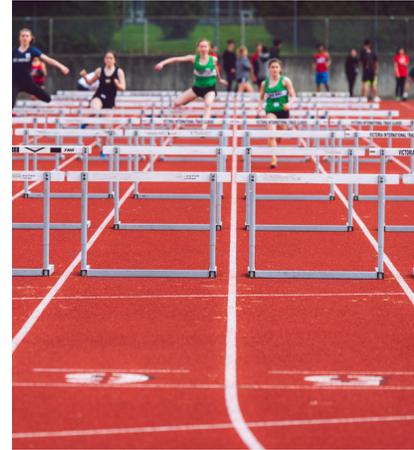
- Drew Cuny: "Meeting new friends"
- Hunter Knapik: "Watching the high school basketball team play in the WPIAL playoffs"
- Mr. Leyland: "The first week of school in the new building"
- Reese Machak: "Watching my friends trip in the hallways"
- Maggie McCurdy: "Playing in the 6th grade kickball game"
- Asher McKee: "The first day of 6th grade"
- Mr. McKinley: "When my homeroom won the attendance challenge"
- Mrs. Meskel: "Winning the essay contest and going to the Naturalization Center"
- Mrs. Popovich: "Playing in the 6th grade kickball game"
- Jennica Sarver: "When my friend trapped herself in a locker"
- Landon Slear: "Gym class basketball with Colton Bestwick"
- Reeve Swanson: "Playing in the 6th grade kickball game"

# Best of Butler Sports

BY ZARI GOLOJUH AND BROOKE VANDEVORT

Spring sports teams just concluded their seasons, and the coaches and athletes are eager to share why their sport is the best.

Track and Field is a very difficult sport for athletes to play. According to Coach Hilderbrand, “Effort and attitude are key factors in becoming a successful track athlete.” He mentioned that one of the athletes he admires is Nicco Baggetta, because he puts in great effort, has a good attitude, and is good with time management. “Every practice, he trains positively and is hard working,” Coach Hilderbrand observed.



An athlete’s performance needs to be broken into thirds. As Coach Hilderbrand said, “A third of the time, you’re going to have great performances. Another third of the time, you’re going to have medium performances. And for the last third, you’re going to have tough performances.” He added, “It is important not to put your head down or dwell on a difficult performance. Mistakes are something that athletes can learn and get better from.” Hilderbrand believes that the only way to get better is to keep practicing, and that part of being a good coach is connecting with your athletes. He loves being around competitive people and has been doing so for 14 incredible years. To him, coaching is more than just being a part of something and results, it’s about, “being with your friends and working towards your goals.”

Eighth grade track athlete, Macie McLister, believes one key factor in becoming a successful track athlete (distance, in particular) is endurance and self-confidence. According to McLister, a distance runner specifically needs these qualities late in races. “When you are doing two, four, or even eight laps around the track, your self-confidence is a black cloud, and you doubt whether you can make it around that track.” This season, Macie broke an 800-meter record with a 2:36.

Halle Swidzinski, another eighth grader in track, had a fun 2023 track year. As an older, more experienced member of the team, she felt she should lead by example. She put more determination into her work to become more of a successful athlete. In addition, she broke a pole vault record, jumping 9’6. In the off-season, she makes sure to work on her strength and speed.

Staying on the topic of track, eighth graders Kyle Newton-Boston and Nicco Baggetta were members of the boys’ track team. Kyle’s best piece of advice that he would give any new athlete going into track and field is: “Keep going, even if you are not good now, because you will continue to see many little improvements that will add up to the big one.” The strengths that you need to have to become a successful athlete in Kyle’s eyes are dedication and patience.

Nicco Baggetta admires Kevin Shriver because he is one of the best record-breaking kids Butler has seen in sprints. When Nicco comes off a bad or difficult performance, he tries to follow Coach’s advice. “I keep my head up and try to do better next time,” he said



According to Coach Baxter, “Softball is a sport that takes hard work, time management, and a positive attitude.” Of course, with every sport comes frustration. “I encourage my players that are frustrated with a new skill to break down what they are struggling with and start from the basics and work their way up to the more advanced level,” she said. Coach Baxter does not specifically admire any student in particular, but she notices the athletes that work hard and are positive. After losses, especially tough ones, Baxter tells her athletes that tomorrow is a new day. “Yesterday’s mistakes should not define your next games,” she said. To Coach Baxter, it is bigger than softball. “I want to help my players become good people,” she said.

Kyra Olivares and Aryanna Golob played on the softball team this season. After a loss, the girls try to motivate themselves by thinking of what they did wrong. “That way we can improve for the next game,” Kyra said.

Being a team and working together is one of the most important factors of softball. Every day, the team would practice throwing because that is where their team struggles. "And then we also get pounded with drills from 7:30-9," Aryanna said. The athletes on the softball team need motivation, time management and team bonding to grow their success going into the 2024 softball season.

Coach Buzzard is the head coach of the freshman boys' baseball team. According to Coach Buzzard, "An athlete's work ethic, willingness to be coachable, determination, and obviously a physical knack for the game is what helps them to become successful." Coach believes that among the varsity team, his students should look up to Lance Slater. "He has always been an extremely hard worker, and it has paid off." Learning new skills and techniques is always something challenging. When students are struggling, the teacher would come out of Buzzard to help that player understand it more. Coach describes his team as rambunctious. "We have a young team with lots of talent that will continue to grow and get better together," he said.

He has been coaching for about eight years at Butler now, and he believes that coaching is what he was born to do. "I have always enjoyed using my knowledge/skills to help someone else build and grow." Athletes and coaches can prepare in the off-season for the next season by just continuing to play as much as possible and throwing long toss.

Bentley Zinkham and Torin Bell are both on the baseball team. Bentley admires Oneil Cruz of the Pittsburgh Pirates. "Oneil is very good at the sport, and he is good at the things I need to improve on," he said. Both boys believe that hitting and pitching are the biggest weaknesses on the team. "We need to work hard and be determined to get better," said Torin. Bentley and Torin are hard-working athletes that motivate and bond with their teammates to become a strong and thriving team.

Boys' volleyball is coached by Coach Hegedus. She describes her team as "silly but hard-working." Good attitude is important in a successful volleyball athlete. In practice, they do drills to work on the athletes' technique since volleyball only starts out in seventh grade. When thinking about a new season of volleyball, she thinks of a fresh start and a time of new beginnings and wonderful possibilities for her athletes. Coach Hegedus has been coaching volleyball for three years and hopes to keep continuing to give more opportunities to upcoming athletes.

Brett Schnur and Jaeden Malacaman were hard-working members of the volleyball team this spring. Both athletes admire teammate Jacob Proudfoot due to how well he hits the ball and his good sportsmanship. Jaeden's advice to any athlete in any sport is: "Do what is fun because you are only in Intermediate High School for so long, so why waste it being unhappy when there are so many opportunities like volleyball?"

Team bonding is very important when talking about a team. "If the volleyball team does not bond very well, they won't have a good chance of winning a game because everyone on the court is important," Jaeden said. Brett thinks that communication with the ball is one of their downfalls and something that they continue to improve and practice on every single practice. Boys who would like to play volleyball next year should work on skills like passing at home over the summer.

