



# THE WOLVERINE

A regular publication from the Woodland Hills School District



## COMMUNITY ORGANIZER LEON FORD PROVIDES MENTORSHIP AND GUIDANCE AS PART OF FOURTH STUDENT SUMMIT

Woodland Hills hosted its fourth annual Student Summit on February 10. Founded by high school English teacher Ms. Erin Wall, the summit began during the 2019-20 school year as a response to a series of traumatic events within the Woodland Hills community.

The summit has grown from once exclusively featuring only Woodland Hills students to now include students from nine districts. Aliquippa, Avonworth, Belle Vernon, Greater Johnstown, Mt. Lebanon, Penn Hills, Shaler, Westmont Hilltop and host Woodland Hills. Student leaders worked throughout the year to plan and host discussion groups about hand-picked subjects.

This year's topics included women's rights, LGBTQ issues, mental health, quality animal care, racial and social injustice, gun violence, and climate change.

The summit featured a keynote speech from author and community organizer Leon Ford. Mr. Ford was paralyzed at the age of 19 when he was shot by a police officer in a case of mistaken identity. He shared his experience with depression, PTSD, the concept of post-traumatic growth and the importance of self-care.

Mr. Ford also recently agreed to a mentorship program with the district, one of several such programs the district has developed this year.

# NEWS FROM DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION



## EXPERIMENTING WITH AUTONOMOUS MOVEMENT OF VEX ROBOTICS

Woodland Hills is one of the only school districts with a full K-12 robotics curriculum thanks to its partnership with VEX Robotics. At the high school level, students are learning more complex coding, including how to direct the robots to move autonomously.

Throughout March, students in Mr. Aaron Minor's computer science classes wrote Python code to make their VEX Robotics robots move and act autonomously. They began with algorithms to control movement, added sensors to detect objects, and later added a second sensor to detect a defined boundary. This experimentation helped test their coding skills as well as their ability to think critically and problem solve.

At the elementary school level, third graders at Turtle Creek Elementary STEAM Academy have showcased such a mastery of the VEX curriculum that they've started serving as mentors to kindergarteners and first graders. At Edgewood Elementary STEAM Academy, fifth graders overcame the lack of snow in the Pittsburgh area and created a slalom course that their classmates had to navigate with their code base.

Wilkins Elementary STEAM Academy fifth graders have been working on an ocean exploration unit, including building code bases, plows and more to help clean up the ocean floor.



## OPPORTUNITY CAMP SET FOR GRADES K-8, HOSTED BY DICKSON & WILKINS

The Woodland Hills Opportunity Camp will return this summer with programming for students currently enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade. The program will run from June 20 through July 28 and it will be hosted by Wilkins Elementary STEAM Academy and Dickson Preparatory STEAM Academy. The day lasts from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and the camp is provided at no cost to families.

Now in its third year, the Opportunity Camp is designed to help recover learning loss from the COVID-19 pandemic and help prevent future learning loss that typically occurs during the summer break. The combination of academics and activities serves to develop the students' reading, writing and math skills while also helping them develop their social and emotional learning.

Due to the interest in the Opportunity Camp, registrations were placed in a weighted lottery based on when the registration was received. Families will be notified of their enrollment status by mid-April. Students not selected will be waitlisted.

Transportation to the camp will be provided. All students will receive a free breakfast, lunch and snack every day. Students will also have the opportunity to take regular field trips on Fridays.

Parents with questions or concerns can reach out to Mrs. Julie Scarberry at [scarju@whsd.us](mailto:scarju@whsd.us) or Ms. Tamika McGee at [mcgeta@whsd.us](mailto:mcgeta@whsd.us).



# NEWS FROM WOODLAND HILLS HIGH SCHOOL



## SENIOR KATIE GREEN NAMED NATIONAL FINALIST FOR NHS SCHOLARSHIP

Normally reserved and quiet, Katie Green's voice gets loudest when she advocates for change to positively impact the environment through the Woodland Hills Climate Action Team and Green Team.

It's one reason why Green has been selected as one of 25 National Finalists for the National Honor Society Scholarship. As a finalist, Green will receive a scholarship for \$5,625. She also earned a trip to the annual award celebration in D.C. and is eligible for additional scholarship money.

Green helped plan the NHS induction ceremony, participated in blood drives and community service projects, took part in mock trial, competes in science Olympiad, serves as a member of the stage crew for theater productions, and works as a library intern.

"After COVID and just sort of sitting in my room and everything being shut down, it was really nice to get back and have things to do where I get to see people," she said. "I like service so I enjoy doing NHS. It's just a lot of different things that appealed to me."

## WINTER SPORTS RECAP

- The girls basketball team reached the semifinals of the WPIAL Class 5A playoffs and qualified for the first round of the state playoffs, where they lost to Mechanicsburg. Carmen Vasquez was named to the Class 5A All-Tournament team.
- The boys basketball team capped a strong season with a playoff appearance against rival Gateway.

## MEN OF VALOR PROGRAM DETERMINED TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON YOUNG MEN

The new Men of Valor program is already making an impact on the Woodland Hills community. The brainchild of Dean of Students Mr. Tim Brown, Men of Valor is dedicated to providing mentorship to young men who are struggling academically, socially and behaviorally.

By providing these young men with guidance and examples of positive role models, they can in turn have a positive impact on their community and their school through service projects. In the heart of the high school basketball season, that meant providing a couple of basketball clinics on the weekends.

The clinics focused on basketball fundamentals, as well as the importance of teamwork, positive social skills, good communication and more. Several members of the high school boys basketball team helped out, as did alumni and volunteers.

The program features mentorship from Mr. Marlon Youngblood, Mr. B.J. Grinage, Mr. William Ferguson and Sgt. Pedro Valles.



- The boys swimming team won the Section 6-2A team title. Elijah Kline, Max Huck and Ryan Powers competed in individual events while Jacob Mroz joined them for two relays at the WPIAL individual championships.
- Asia Fowler finished in fifth place at the PA Girls West Regional Wrestling Championship and qualified for the state tournament.

# NEWS FROM DICKSON PREPARATORY STEAM ACADEMY

## LEGALLY BLONDE TAKES THE STAGE AS JUNIOR MUSICAL PRODUCTION

The Woodland Hills Department of Performing Arts thrilled audience with its performances of "Legally Blonde, Jr." as this year's junior musical.

Students from Dickson teamed up with high school underclassmen to perform the Broadway hit. The musical follows Elle to Harvard as she embarks on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

The production featured two casts, which gave multiple students a chance to take on the starring roles. The cast featured Summer Curtright and Livia Rocco as Elle, Leo Alfieri and Adam Steiner as Emmett Forrest, Sonny Davis as Warner Huntington III, Sabrina Bender and Noelle Brubaker as Paulette, Hayden Crum and Olivia Safran as Vivienne Kensington, Luke DeVore and Isaac Lott as Professor Callahan, and Annabelle Chernyshev and Avery Thomas as Brooke Wyndham, along with a deep and talented ensemble and hard-working stage crew.



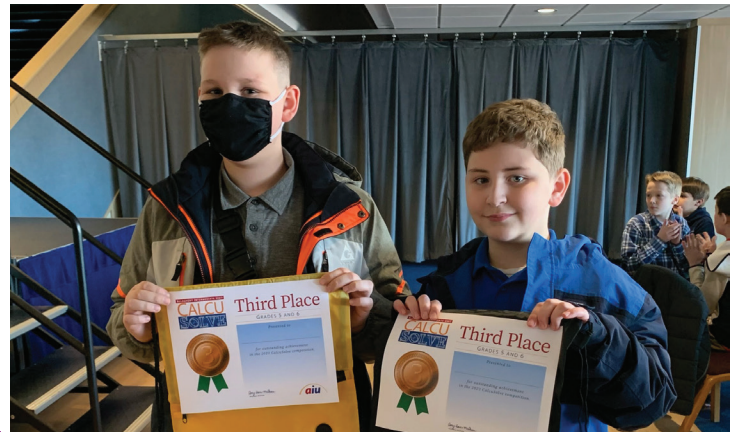
## MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

- There will be no school on Friday, April 7, 2023 or Monday, April 10, 2023.
- PSSA testing will take place from April 24 through April 28 for English Language Arts and from May through May 5 for Math and Science.
- Teacher appreciation week begins May 8.
- Algebra Keystone exams will begin May 15.
- The 6th and 7th graders will perform a spring concert on May 10, while the 8th graders will perform on May 17
- May 30th will be the Dickson Fun Field Day

## GABE WATSON SHINES AT ALLEGHENY COUNTY CALCUSOLVE COMPETITION

Two Woodland Hills excelled at the Allegheny County CalcuSolve Competition in February. Fifth grader Isaac Rihn from Turtle Creek and sixth grader Gabe Watson from Dickson ended up tied for third place in the individual competition.

Calculusolve challenges students to put their mathematics problem-solving skills to the test in a competitive format. Students compete both individually and as part of a team.



## CARNEGIE SCIENCE CENTER SPONSORS NEW STEAM ACTIVITY

The Carnegie Science Center recently sponsored a group activity at Dickson. Students were challenged to build a contraption that used simple machines such as wheels, levers, inclined planes, etc. to move an object. The purpose was to help the students explore the idea of simple machines in greater detail, learn how to collaborate, and to test their creativity.





# NEWS FROM EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY STEAM ACADEMY

## PARTNERSHIPS, MENTORSHIPS HIGHLIGHT THE FIRST FEW MONTHS OF 2023

Several visitors stopped by throughout the first few months of 2023 to share their knowledge with Edgewood students. Older students at Edgewood also stepped up, as they became mentors to their younger classmates.

To celebrate Read Across America Day, the older Edgewood students were paired up with younger students as part of the Book Buddy program. The pairs then read a favorite book together.



The C.C. Mellor Library stopped by to challenge fourth and fifth graders to read excerpts from "Midnight at the Barclays Hotel" in order to solve a mystery. The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf visited Mrs. Scifo's kindergarten class for some activities.

High school students also made a visit for Valentine's Day and shared some valentines with the third graders. Members of the Black Student Union also visited to share their knowledge of influential Black women as part of Black History month.



## LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM CLOSES OUT BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

Students and staff celebrated Black History Month with the school's first Leadership Symposium. Each grade identified a positive leadership characteristic and a historical Black leader, and then used songs, videos, posters and presentations to share more information about that characteristic and leader. Students and teachers also shared their answers to the question, "What kind of person do you want to be?" The symposium was livestreamed to families and is available on the Edgewood Facebook page.



## 100 Days and Counting of VEX

Schools everywhere love to celebrate the 100th day of the school year. This year, Edgewood students celebrated the 100th day of school by using their VEX robotics kits. In fourth grade, students used their code base to knock down 100 cups. Mrs. Borts' class created a giant "100" out of pieces from the kit and also programmed their bots to trace out a "100" on the floor.





# NEWS FROM TURTLE CREEK ELEMENTARY STEAM ACADEMY

## READ ACROSS AMERICA WEEK A HIT WITH TURTLE CREEK STUDENTS

Turtle Creek students and staff really got into the spirit of Read Across America Week and all things related to renowned children's author Dr. Seuss. Each day had a special theme - Silly Hat Day, Wacky Socks Day, Mismatched Day, Wolverine Spirit Day and even a future career day inspired by "Oh, The Places You'll Go." The themes led to some really creative outfits and colorful displays.



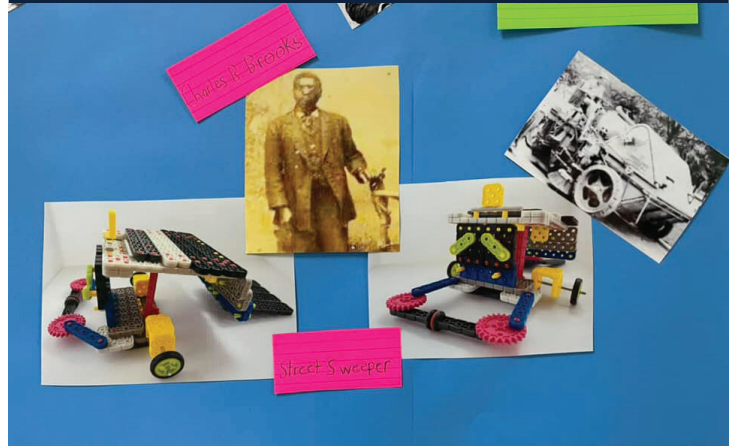
Third graders teamed up with their kindergarten buddies and read some of their favorite books together.

Officer Troy, one of Turtle Creek's security guards, took some time to read to the kindergarteners. A number of additional visitors also stopped by to read to the kindergarten classes, including Ms. Angel Boyd, Mr. Eddie Willson, Mrs. Laura Arthrell, Dr. Tammi McMillan, assistant principal Mr. Andrew Cress, principal Dr. Jean Livingston and many more. The kindergarteners loved every visitor.



## INSPIRING OTHERS WITH VEX CREATIONS

Ms. Tina Dietrich's classes have been very creative at integrating the VEX Go robotics kits into their subjects, and their work during Black History Month earned them some surprise attention. The third graders researched Black inventors throughout the month and then used the VEX Go kits to build replicas of their notable inventions. After she shared it on social media, they earned a shoutout from inventor and entrepreneur Dr. Calvin Mackie and an Alabama elementary school borrowed their idea.



## TURTLE CREEK STUDENTS STAR IN SHAKESPEARE MONOLOGUE CONTEST

All of the world is a stage for a group of Turtle Creek students who impressed with their command of the Bard during Pittsburgh Public Theater's 29th Annual Shakespeare Scene and Monologue Contest. Jonas Divelbiss from Turtle Creek was selected as a finalist for his performance from "The Taming of the Shrew." Nate Willson and Gus Barnes earned honorable mentions for their monologues, while Colette Ciocco, Natalie Steiner and Katelyn Pittler earned an honorable mention for their scene from "Macbeth."





# NEWS FROM WILKINS ELEMENTARY STEAM ACADEMY

## LOCAL TV BROADCASTERS STOP BY TO VISIT WILKINS STUDENTS

News anchor Mike Clark always loves to read to the students during Read Across America Week to celebrate the life and work of Dr. Seuss. He returned to Wilkins again this year and read "Oh, the Places You'll Go" to the first graders. Students wore their "Cat in the Hat" inspired hats and later had a chance to talk to Mike about what it's like reporting the news and working on television.



In February, WTAE-TV reporter Ashley Zilka visited the second graders at Wilkins to help them with a special project. The students had been working on inventions and needed some advice so they could create a commercial selling their new inventions. Ashley shared tips about how to make interesting content for television and the students used that advice to later try to film their own commercials.

The students also asked questions about her work as a reporter, what it's like to be on live television, and much more.



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH AT WILKINS

Students and staff all gathered for a Black History Month assembly on February 24 that featured student poetry readings, dancing, and sing-a-longs. It included an appearance from Pastor Ratliff, who read a book to the audience, and an outstanding singing performance from Ms. Teresa Hawthorne. Students took part in a Black History Month contest throughout February and the winners were all recognized as part of the assembly.



## WQED BRINGS SIX-WEEK FILM PROGRAM TO FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADERS

They know all about watching TikTok and YouTube, but a group of fourth and fifth graders recently spent six weeks learning how that kind of video content gets made. Thanks to the WQED Film Academy, the students were able to learn about the process content creators use to make short films that end up on social media platforms. The students were introduced to a wide range of equipment, learned the basics of good lighting and sound, and worked toward making their own short videos.





## PSLA RECOGNIZES WHHS LIBRARY AS 2023 OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM IN PA

The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association selected Woodland Hills High School to receive this year's Outstanding Pennsylvania School Library Award. The award recognizes outstanding school library programming, instruction, and services which are integral to students' education.

Under the leadership of librarian Kevin McGuire, the high school library provides an educational program that supports the curriculum, provides a creative atmosphere for learning and exploration, and fosters a life-long pursuit of knowledge.

Consortium for Public Education Program Director Debbie Pixton and Executive Director Jacqueline Foor said, "While some may have the perception that libraries are the place for academics, WHHS focuses on their library being the place to include all students in inquiring, exploring, collaborating, and engaging in a wide variety of curated experiences for their futures. This includes a variety of literature and so much more."



## TICKETS ON SALE FOR ALL SHOWINGS OF SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL

Stop by the Woodland Hills High School box office or visit [whhs.ludus.com](http://whhs.ludus.com) to get your tickets to see this year's performance of "Seussical: The Musical!"

The Woodland Hills Department of Performing Arts presents

# Seussical

The Musical

April 20-22 April 27-29 8pm  
April 22 April 29 2pm

Box Office opens March 7  
Tuesdays-Thursdays 6pm-8pm  
Wednesdays 2:30pm-4pm  
412-256-3335 | [whhs.ludus.com](http://whhs.ludus.com)

in the Thomas G. Crone Auditorium