



THE CR REPORT

CAESAR RODNEY SCHOOL DISTRICT QUARTERLY
"Where Excellence is Our Tradition"

Your District-Wide Information Source

February-March 2014 Issue



Welch Elementary Chorus honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., while senior varsity football players get together one last time.



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What's Happening?

Board Meetings (7:00 p.m.)

February 18th: - Caesar Rodney High School

March 18th: - Nellie Stokes Elementary School

April 15th: - Niel Postlethwait Middle School

Special Events:

February 17th- President's Day-Schools Closed

March 31st - In Service - Schools Closed

April 18 through April 25th - Spring Break

April 7th - 11th: Kindergarten Registration

Nearly 6500 pictures are now online of the CR school year at:

<http://www.cr.k12.de.us/photos/photos.htm>

Have you seen our website?

<http://www.cr.k12.de.us>

Welcome to Rider Country!



This image is a Quick Response Code (QR) for the Caesar Rodney School District website. If you have a Smartphone with a camera, just search for a QR "app" then use your phone to take a picture of this image. You will then be taken to the district website. Once you have installed the "app" on your phone, go to Google.com and type in "QR Generator." You will then be able to create your own QR codes to share websites, videos or other information.



Message From the Superintendent

As we enter the second half of the 2013-2014 school year, I want to personally congratulate 66 students who have been designated by the College Board as Advanced Placement (AP) Scholars. What a remarkable achievement as these scholars have excelled in the most demanding and rigorous coursework being offered, including Advanced Placement Chemistry, Biology, U.S. Government and Statistics, to name just a few.

I am also pleased that 18 of our 8th and 10th grade students have earned Michael Ferguson scholarships. These \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to students who have attained high scores on the Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System in reading and mathematics.



Kevin Fitzgerald, Ed.D., Superintendent

I also want to offer my congratulations to the Caesar Rodney High School AFJROTC Honor Guard for recently being declared Delaware "Overall Champions" following a rigorous competition against other high schools from across the State. These young men and women spend a great deal of time after school and on weekends perfecting their craft and are true Rider champions!

And finally, I also want to personally congratulate Elvina Knight on her retirement at the end of this school year. Mrs. Knight has spent her entire 38 1/2 years in education at Caesar Rodney High School. She came to Caesar Rodney as a Spanish and English teacher, then moved into the roles of Dean of Students, and Assistant Principal and before becoming Principal in 2007.

During her tenure, Mrs. Knight has been recognized as Caesar Rodney's Building Teacher of the Year, Delaware's Assistant Principal of the Year and Delaware's Principal of the Year.

While those awards recognize a great teacher and fine administrator, her greatest tribute has come from the smiles, hugs and thank you that she has received over the years from seniors as they walk across the stage with their diploma in hand.

On behalf of the entire Caesar Rodney community I also want to say thank you Mrs. Knight for a job well done!



Becca Wang from Allen Frear Elementary and Sofia Cooper of Stokes Elementary show off their Delaware Department of Education awards for winning the annual School Bus Safety Poster contest.

"Rider Eye" Newspaper Staff Participate In Call With Governor Markell

The staff of Caesar Rodney High School's newspaper "Rider Eye" recently participated in a conference call with Delaware's Governor Jack Markell.

Along with 21 other public and private high schools across the State, students of high school newspapers were asked to participate in the conference call to help provide experience and insight into interviewing politicians/leaders, as well as affording an opportunity to ask questions about education in Delaware.



Staff of the "Rider Eye" newspaper participate in a conference call with Governor Markell and 21 other public/private high schools.

At CRHS, students asked the Governor if he would elaborate on Delaware's commitment to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and specifically how the Race To The Top initiative made improvements in STEM education.

The governor responded by saying Race To The Top helped develop clearer and higher academic standards, created more teacher preparation and STEM support and education. He stressed that there are more jobs for students in STEM-related job fields than ever before, and that as a state, we need to provide more opportunities for students to visit the business community and see how their STEM skills can help them with future employment.

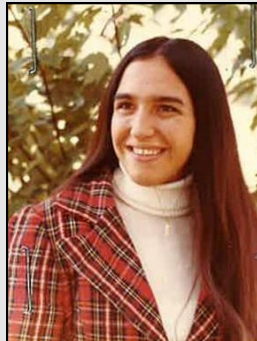
Go Riders

Principal Elvina Knight to Retire After 38 Years at Caesar Rodney High School



The year was 1976. Gerald Ford was President of the United States; Jimmy Carter would be elected in November. In the Super Bowl, Pittsburgh would defeat Dallas, while theater-goers would watch *Rocky* and *Taxi Driver*. The song of the year was Captain and Tennille's "Love Will Keep Us Together" while the blockbuster novel

"Roots" was released. It was also during the beginning of that year that Elvina Cecconi, of Udine, Italy, would be hired as a ninth grade Spanish/English teacher at Caesar Rodney Senior High School.



Elvina Cecconi, 1974

And just 38 short years later, Principal Elvina Knight would announce that this would be her last year, wanting to spend more time with family and friends.

A 1974 graduate of Clarion State College in PA., Elvina was hired by then CRHS principal Herbert Childers with a starting salary of \$4498.00 which included a local share of \$454.00!

For the next 31 years, Elvina would teach Spanish and English, serve as a cheerleading coach, become Dean of Instruction, and then Assistant Principal. However, in 2007, she would be selected to replace Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald as the leader of one of the largest high schools in Delaware.

Elvina's journey to Caesar Rodney began when she arrived in the United States from Udine, Italy, passing through Ellis Island in 1957. She and her family resided in Midland, PA., where her father worked as a mason.

Her parents stressed hard the importance of a good education, and following her high school graduation, Elvina attended Clarion State College, majoring in Spanish. Upon graduation, she applied for a temporary, part time position as a ninth grade Spanish teacher at Caesar Rodney Senior High School. "At the end of the school year, I was given a 'pink slip' since there was no opening at the time," said Elvina. "They told me that if the enrollment numbers improve, they would certainly bring me back." Just a few months later, in September of 1976,

-more next column-

Elvina was asked to return and would spend the next 38 years in the only school she has ever worked.

In 1995, Elvina was selected as Dean of Students until 1998 when she was chosen as Assistant Principal. In 2007, Dr. Fitzgerald was selected to replace Dr. Harry Roberts as District Superintendent. Needing a new principal, the local school board quickly approved Elvina to become the school's next leader.

"The Caesar Rodney School District and Caesar Rodney High School are very fortunate to have someone like Elvina as their leader," said Superintendent Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald. "Her intricate knowledge of the school process has provided CRHS students opportunities to take a multitude of courses which will benefit their careers. Under her leadership, the high school has grown every year to its current enrollment of more than 2100 students." Added Dr. Fitzgerald, "She has truly left her mark on so many students, parents and staff and will be missed both as a leader and as a friend."



Elvina Knight, 2014

"As her secretary, I have worked with Mrs. Knight for the past 13 years," said Susan Foster. "She truly epitomizes what a good administrator/boss should be; she always listens, understands and at the same time encourages you to 'shine.' Her passion for her job makes her a special leader and a true friend."

Looking back at her career and the more than 65,000 students whose lives have been touched by her passion for educational excellence, Elvina said, "These students and this community are all I know. Each year has brought something special into my life; they are all part of my extended family. The memories I have will stay with me forever."

As for her future plans, Elvina stated, "To be a wife, a mom and a grandmother first. However, that may not be enough for me, so maybe one day return to teaching somewhere. But for now, I want that extended summer vacation."



TWO CAESAR RODNEY TEACHERS SELECTED FOR DREAM TEAM

Delaware's Department of Education and LearnZillion have announced that teachers Danielle Deinert (Stokes Elementary) and Shannon Lapinsky (Fifer Middle) were recently selected to join the inaugural Delaware "Dream Team" for *Teach-Fest*, an event that offered an innovative, hands-on model for teacher professional development.

In January, 34 teachers from 31 Delaware schools participated in 2 1/2 days of highly structured coach and peer collaboration led by LearnZillion and will now use LearnZillion's platform to continue working with content coaches in online professional learning communities (PLCs).

The teachers developed their proven teaching methods and classroom expertise into formative assessment tools and resources that will be made available to teachers in Delaware and around the country through LearnZillion's free Common Core resource library at LearnZillion.com.

Delaware Dream Team members were chosen through a competitive application process that evaluated both their understanding of the Common Core State Standards and their desire to "scale their impact" beyond the walls of their own classroom. The teachers themselves represent a wide spectrum of grade bands, 22 from ELA and 12 from Mathematics disciplines.

FCCLA MAKES BLANKETS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Postlethwait Middle School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) students recently participated in a statewide community service project called "Fleece for Keeps." This organization collects either monetary donations or completed blankets which are then presented to foster children throughout the state.



PMS students show off one of their handmade blankets

PMS students recently created 12 blankets which were presented to "Fleece For Keeps" for distribution to children throughout Delaware.

CR Receives \$45,000 Induction Grant to Help With Teacher Mentoring

The Caesar Rodney School district is a recipient of DDOE's Comprehensive Induction Program (CIP) Innovation grant, providing \$45,000 to enhance current new teacher mentoring program.

The grant provides new teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively with school and district level colleagues to foster personal and professional growth in their first years of teaching. In turn, students will benefit from their expertise and flourish alongside their teachers.

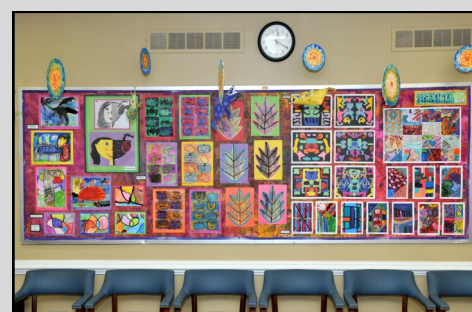


The new program is focused on a more individualized mentoring experience for our teachers with lead mentors in year one and two by grade spans (elementary, middle, and high school). Teachers will meet monthly by grade spans, but will also have several opportunities throughout the year to meet as an entire cohort. Year three allows the teachers to take a variety of online course options or use graduate work to create presentations on their learning for their colleagues.

The grant monies will fund the purchase of iPad minis to be loaned to all first and second year teachers to allow for a more technology based program with book studies through E-Books, online research on assessment practices, a new teacher district blog, and regular online surveys to help monitor new teacher satisfaction with their mentoring experience.

The CIP will ensure all new educators of the Caesar Rodney School District participate in meaningful collegial dialogue through quality professional development to develop essential knowledge and skills. This opportunity will result in the improvement of student learning and retention of highly qualified teachers.

Artwork from Star Hill Elementary on display at the Caesar Rodney School District Office.



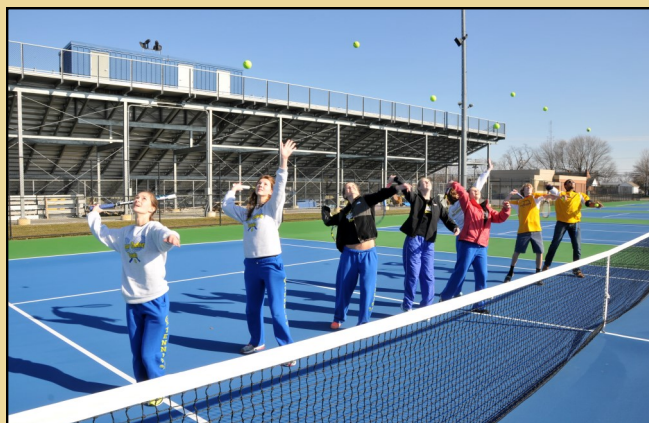
Tennis Courts Upgraded Thanks to USTA Grant

Caesar Rodney High School District has had their tennis courts completely reconstructed, thanks to a \$15,000.00 grant from the United States Tennis Association (USTA).



Wanting to provide communities access to safe, appealing and functional tennis environments, the USTA partnered with CRHS to help promote life-long healthy activity and improve their programming by advancing the latest tennis innovations for all program types.

“Restoration of the seven courts and the addition of an eighth court at CR is a huge boost to the States tennis community with CR’s outstanding



facilities and strategic location,” said Pete Rigby, board member with the Delaware District. “The Delaware District is delighted to have had an opportunity to participate through facilities grants from both the USTA National and the Middle States Section.”

Superintendent Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald stated, “Our students and community have had to endure playing on deteriorating courts, but today, with the newly reconstructed courts completed, our students can once again compete at a professional level.”

Rider Varsity Football Banquet Honors Athletes

The senior class of the Caesar Rodney High School varsity football team was recently recognized by staff, coaches, family and friends at a banquet honoring the 2013 football season in which



Following the banquet, varsity football seniors get together one last time to celebrate their successful 2013 season.

the CR Riders had a highly successful year, finishing with an overall record of 8 – 4 and winning the Henlopen Northern Division Championship.

Said Coach Mike Schonewolf, “We are extremely proud of the effort that our 2013 football team, led by our senior class, put forth this year. They will be remembered as a championship team who devoted themselves to playing football the right way. They have proven that they deserve to fit in with the best teams that we have had at tradition rich Caesar Rodney High School.”

Spirit Of Caesar Rodney Award Presented to Magnolia Fire Company

The Caesar Rodney School District has awarded its monthly “Spirit Of Caesar Rodney” volunteer award to the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company for their long standing relationship with the McIlvaine Early Childhood Center (MECC). The company actively supports and provides fire prevention instruction to all 500+ kindergarten students on an annual basis, which includes a field trip, giveaway bags, costumes for pictures and DVDs. Members of the fire company also support McIlvaine through the school’s annual food drive and holiday toy drive. The Magnolia Volunteer Fire Company can often be found checking the building on weekends. MECC is very fortunate to have a community-based fire company as our neighbor.





Speaker Peter Van Buskirk Brings "The Admission Game" to CR High School

To the delight of more than 450 people, Peter Van Buskirk recently presented "The Admission Game" in the auditorium at Caesar Rodney High



School. Van Buskirk, who has been featured in the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Family Circle and "Oprah and Friends" talked about how to demystify what can often be a confusing and difficult college application process.

Nearly half of the attendees responded to an after-program survey and almost all students and family members agreed the presentation was relevant to their needs and that Van Buskirk was a trusted source about the selective process by providing useful insight and tips.

Said one family member who attended the presentation, "It was an excellent program and a great opportunity for the district to have sponsored. There is so much to be learned in this process and it was truly beneficial for both students and parents."

Please contact CRHS if you have questions about the college admission process.

Welch Elementary Chorus Perform In Remembrance of Dr. King

Eighty-five chorus members of George Welch Elementary School entertained men and women of the 436th/512th Air-lift Wing in remembrance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Under the direction of Music Director Diane Walls, the children crowded into a small room of the base chapel and put large smiles on the faces of all who attended by singing the song *Instrument of Peace* by Greg Gilpin.



Reverend Moore Talks to Welch Children About Dr. King

Reverend John Moore, Vice President, Resource Development at United Way Delaware, was guest speaker at George Welch Elementary School to pay tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Reverend Moore spoke about the values that Dr. King believed in and talked about values which made him a great American.



Reverend Moore answers a question from a Welch student.

"Jump With Jill" Program Shares Good Eating Habits With Frear Students

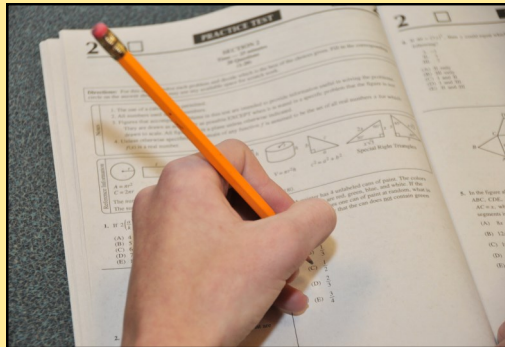


"Jump with Jill," a multimedia, interactive health program reinforcing and supporting a healthier nutrition lifestyle. Armed with loud and interactive activities, music and dance, "Jill" got Frear students engaged, motivated, moving and grooving to healthier eating habits.



Caesar Rodney High School Students Earn Advance Placement Honors

The College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) Program has announced that Caesar Rodney High School has 66 students who have earned recognition as AP Scholars, AP Scholars with Honors and AP Scholars with Distinction. In 2012, CRHS had 39 students who earned AP recognition.



The AP Scholar recognition is granted to students who receive scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP examinations. The AP Scholar with Honor recognition is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. An AP Scholar with Distinction is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

In 2013, 40 students were selected at CRHS as AP Scholars, compared to 21 from last year. Fourteen students received AP Scholar with Honor accolades compared to nine in 2012; 12 students were declared AP Scholars with Distinction compared to nine in 2012.

The AP Scholars will be honored at the local school board meeting in February.

CRHS AFJROTC Declared Competition Champions

CRHS's AFJROTC Honor Guard was recently declared Overall Champions after placing first in three of four events entered at the first annual Blue Hen Classic JROTC Military drill competition at the Delaware Air National Guard base in New Castle.

Eight Delaware high schools competed against each other in six different events: Inspection, Armed and Unarmed Regulation, Armed and Unarmed Exhibition, and Colors.



CR's Honor Guard placed first in Un-Armed Regulation, Armed Regulation and Armed Exhibition and finished second in Color Guard. "All four teams represented Caesar Rodney in classic Rider fashion," said MSgt (Ret) Jay Wedel, Program Instructor. "Their performances were near flawless."

"Our cadets are developing unrivaled proficiency and other programs have taken notice," said Wedel. "I am extremely proud of the long hours of effort and dedication our cadets put in on a regular basis. We are continuing to build on what many see as the strongest program in the state."

Postlethwait and Fifer Middle School Students Selected for All-State Band and All-State Chorus

The talented musicians and singers of Postlethwait Middle, Fifer Middle and Caesar Rodney High Schools came together to sing and play and be chosen as members of the All State Chorus and All State Band. "The best of the best of singers and musicians from public and private schools across the state are chosen for this distinct honor," said Mark Crossley, band and music teacher at Postlethwait. The All State Chorus will perform at Seaford Senior High School on February 22nd while the All State Band will perform at Smyrna High School on April 5th.



Postlethwait All-State Band Members



Postlethwait All-State Chorus Members



Fifer All-State Chorus Members



Fifer All-State Band Member



Lt. Governor Denn Visits Students and Staff at Simpson Elementary

Just before the holiday break, Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn visited with students and staff of W.B. Simpson Elementary School which was a 2013 winner of the state's Reward and Recognition School Awards, known informally as the state's Academic Achievement Awards.



Lt. Governor Denn and Dr. Kevin Fitzgerald join staff and student council members of Simpson Elementary in displaying the Reward and Recognition banner.

During his visit, the Lt. Governor toured classrooms, talked with students, teachers and administrators and learned about their plans for spending the \$50,000 grant that came with the award.

Art Students To Showcase Work at DSU

Thirteen CRHS art students have received awards and recognition in this year's statewide Scholastics Art Competition. Two students received "Gold Key" recognition; two received "Silver Key" recognition; one received "Silver Key Portfolio" recognition and eight other students received honorable mention for their submitted artwork.



CRHS art students show off their award-winning art work

DR. SEUSS MURAL CREATED AT STAR HILL ELEMENTARY

What was once a storage/fitness/all purpose room at Star Hill Elementary School has since been transformed into a reading lounge for students. But this is no ordinary reading lounge. A massive wall-to-wall mural of Dr. Seuss' "Cat In The Hat" and many of the Seuss characters have been superbly painted freehand by parent-volunteer Lori Conner. Lori spent nearly 100 hours planning and painting the mural.



Artist Lori Conner stands in front of her freehand creation in the reading lounge at Star Hill Elementary School.

"I designed and created the mural so that when students come into this room, they will feel like they are in a book," said Lori. In addition to the Cat, images of Horton, Thing 1 and Thing 2 and two painted useable dry erase boards are among the many mural features.

PTO President Kristin Boyd had approached Lori about painting the mural. She personally knows Lori and of her artistic abilities. "We also went to many yard sales and went shopping on Black Friday looking for deals for furniture and fixtures for the lounge. We referred to it as 'Design on a Dime!'"

Thank you, Lori for taking the time to showcase your artistic talents and put smiles on the faces of all who come into the reading lounge!



Go Riders!

