

RIDER EQUITY BUZZ

THE EQUITY OFFICE NEWSLETTER

May 2021



CR CELEBRATES MILITARY CHILDREN

The Caesar Rodney School District went purple for Military Kids Days on 4/23 and 4/26 as part of the larger Month of the Military Child (MOMC) campaign. The MOMC campaign is a time to applaud military families and their children for the daily sacrifices they make and the challenges they overcome. It was established by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in 1986. Districtwide participation was tremendous. It was an outstanding show of support for all of our students with military parents throughout the district. It was also a warm gesture for our student populations at Major George S. Welch Elementary and Dover Air Base Middle School where the student population is predominately children of military parents.

[Learn More](#)



THE EQUITY CORNER

Confronting COVID-19-Related Harassment in Schools

Harassment and other discrimination stemming from prejudice and unfounded fears about the coronavirus (COVID-19) is wrong and can have devastating effects on students and their families.

During the pandemic, false information and harmful statements about Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities have led to increasing acts of intolerance across the nation—from verbal harassment to violence. In schools around the country, AAPI students have reported bullying and harassment by classmates because of their race or national origin, including their ethnicity, ancestry, and language. [Learn More](#)

**#STOP
ASIAN
HATE**

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May is Jewish American Heritage Month – On April 20, 2006, President George W. Bush proclaimed that May would be Jewish American Heritage Month. The announcement was the crowning achievement in an effort by the Jewish Museum of Florida and South Florida Jewish community leaders that resulted in resolutions introduced by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida and Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania urging the president to proclaim a month that would recognize the more than 350-year history of Jewish contributions to American culture. The resolutions passed unanimously, first in the House of Representatives in December 2005 and later in the Senate in February 2006.

May was chosen due to the highly successful celebration of the 350th Anniversary of American Jewish History in May 2004, which was organized by the Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History.

[Learn More](#)



May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. A rather broad term, Asian/Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants. [Learn More](#)



Haitian Heritage Month celebration is an expansion of the Haitian Flag Day, a major patriotic day celebration in Haiti and the Diaspora. May is to celebrate the rich culture and for Haitians all over the world to enrich and spread awareness. The month of May carries a number of significant historical and cultural traditions that Haitians are proud to make aware of and to pass on to future generations. Reference their calendar for a list of the historic dates and explanations per day.

It was documented to be celebrated in the U.S. in the early 1990s, Boston, MA; Connecticut; Florida. Since then, many other locations around the U.S. have celebrated the raising of the Haitian flag in honor of the culture. [Learn More](#)

Patsy T. Mink



Photo Credit: womenshistory.org

Patsy Matsu Takemoto was born on December 6, 1927 in Paia, Hawaii. After graduation, she went on to attend Wilson College in Pennsylvania and the University of Nebraska but transferred after facing racial discrimination. Patsy decided to move to Honolulu to finish her schooling at the University of Hawaii where she graduated in 1948 with majors in zoology and chemistry. Patsy applied to several medical schools but none of her applications were accepted. Instead, Mink decided to apply to law school and was accepted at the University of Chicago Law School.

Patsy would become the first woman of color elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and the first Asian-American woman to serve in Congress. In addition to writing bills like Title IX, the Early Childhood Education Act, and the Women's Educational Equity Act, Mink was the first Asian-American to run for U.S. President.

[Learn More](#)



Six Questions With Catie Preszler

In case you haven't noticed, Caesar Rodney High School has a new, but familiar face at the helm. Ms. Catie Preszler took a few moments to talk about her new role.

What is your musical background?

My music education actually started here in the Caesar Rodney School District! I took general music classes at both Welch and Allen Frear Elementary, and decided to start band in 5th grade with Maureen Cannon. In middle school, I continued playing the clarinet at Postlethwait with Vanessa Sandlin and Mark Crossley, who are now close mentors to me. After 3 years at Postlethwait, I fell in love with my instrument and chose to continue at the high school level. Caesar Rodney High School was where I found my true passion for performing. DuWane Sandlin played a large role in my musical background. He pushed me all 4 years to reach my fullest potential -- he was kind yet firm, and I was always excited for 7th period Blue Band with him. If you know DuWane Sandlin, you know he has some awesome stories. I always looked forward to those. I quickly found that band was the place where I could be myself, specifically marching band. It was my senior year when I was drum major for the Rider Marching Band, that I realized music education might be my calling. I remember having a conversation with Duwane and Vanessa Sandlin, and Keith McCarthy (choir director at CRHS and also one of my closest mentors now), and I decided I would continue to study music in college.

I spent 4 years at the University of Delaware studying music education, with a focus on clarinet studies. In my time at UD, I was fortunate to experience so many wonderful opportunities in the performing arts. I studied clarinet lessons weekly with Dr. Christopher Nichols, clarinet professor at UD. I continued playing clarinet in the UD Wind Ensemble with Dr. Lauren Reynolds, who also mentored me through the University of Delaware Summer Scholars research symposium, where I presented my work titled Percy Grainger's Quest to Elevate the Folk Song in 2018. Dr. Reynolds continues to be a role model to me in the female wind ensemble community. Through the 4 years, I also fondly remember the times I had in the Fightin' Blue Hen marching band, under the direction of Professor Heidi Sarver. There I continued fine-tuning my skills in education with the leadership positions I held. Marching Band has always felt like "home" to me. - **continued on page 4.**

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What drives your passion for music?

My passion for music is driven by the community and environment it creates. Music has the special ability to imitate emotions. It is truly the universal language. I remember touring in Spain with the University of Delaware Wind Ensemble. One of the last concerts we had was combined with a local community band. They didn't speak much English and most of us didn't speak Spanish well either. We sat down side by side and had one of the most memorable performances of my life. You could feel the connection in the air as we played the same music, and felt the same emotions the music exuded, without being able to speak more than a sentence to each other. It was exhilarating and exciting.

Music is not just black ink on white paper. It is the connection between two completely different people, where the only thing they might have in common is the music they are creating. It is the feeling after playing the last chord in a piece, feeling the energy vibrating through the air. It is a way to process emotions and life. I'm sure that there are a few songs that everyone has that brings them a fond memory or emotion, even if they have not studied music formally in a band, choir, or orchestra.

Music brings people together. Music brings different people together, who may think they have nothing in common at all. This is why I decided to form my career around music. I hope to foster this unspoken connection with music to my students, and use music as a vehicle to help shape and develop young minds.

When did you start as CR's Band Director? How long had the previous band director held the position?

I started in August of 2020, although with the pandemic it was certainly felt longer than that!

My predecessor, DuWane Sandlin, held the position for 30 years. Next time you are in CRHS, come to the music wing and take a look at the large trophy case outside of the band room. That is his work. Better yet, talk to the people that have had DuWane Sandlin as their band director. He's made such a strong and valuable impact on every student he's taught. I am thrilled and humbled to continue the amazing work he has fostered for this program.

Were you aware that you would be CR's first female band director when you applied for the position?

I was actually not aware until I sat down with DuWane and we talked about the history of the CR band program. I knew I was amongst the youngest to be hired into the role, but I didn't know I was the first female.

Does being the first female band director for CR motivate you in any way?

Incredibly. It is important for students to see teachers that look like them. I remember the first time I worked under a female band director, and it was empowering to see someone who looked like me succeeding in a job that had been my goal for so long. I think it is the type of motivation that drives me to be the best I can be inside the classroom.

I hope that students in the CRHS Band Program, and all students at CR, see representation in every area that they are passionate about, and continue to work towards every dream they have with full support behind them.

Better Hearing & Speech Month



2021 • BUILDING CONNECTIONS

BETTER HEARING & SPEECH MONTH

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month, a time to raise awareness about communication disorders and available treatment options that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems speaking or hearing. [Learn More](#)

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Do you think your presence inspires others in the band to pursue their dreams of being musicians?

That is one of my goals. I strive to use my presence as a vehicle for deep musical understanding and appreciation that all students will take with them when they turn their tassels. My hope is for the band room to be a place where students feel safe enough to make mistakes, are pushed out of their comfort zones, and work to feel a sense of vulnerability and confidence when they play their instrument.

Being in band, or any performing arts class, allows students to understand many different elements of music they're playing, such as style, tone, genre, texture, historical context, musical influence, etc. These things students will take with them, even if they might not know it yet.

Whenever I hear about a student formally continuing their music studies post graduation, it is exciting. But, I try to let my students know that even if music might not be their pathway and career goal, there are so many ways to still be an active musician once they graduate. Whether that means they study music in college, in the armed forces, teach private lessons or they continue to play their instrument every now and then and just actively listen to different genres/styles/types of music, I feel like I have done my job.

LOOKING AHEAD

June 1st-30th: Caribbean American Heritage Month [Learn more](#)

June 1st-30th: LGBTQ Pride Month. [Learn more](#)

June 14: Flag Day [Learn more](#)

June 19: Juneteenth [Learn more](#)

June 20: Father's Day [Learn more](#)

June 20: World Refugee Day [Learn more](#)

Contact Us

For more information about equity and diversity items, or if you have ideas for future features, give me a call.

Caesar Rodney District Office

**7 Front Street
Wyoming, DE 19934
(302) 698-4800**

Cliffvon.Howell@cr.k12.de.us

