



RAIDER PRIDE

A National Award-Winning Publication

DECEMBER 2019

RYAN GLOYER MIDDLE SCHOOL AWARDED IN 'SCHOOLS TO WATCH' PROGRAM

Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) in the Seneca Valley School District (SVSD) has once again been named a PA Don Eichhorn Schools: "Schools to Watch" (PA STW) as part of a recognition program developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

This program is held annually in partnership with the Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education (PAMLE), Duquesne University, Edinboro University, Kutztown University, and the Horace Mann Service Corporation. The Pennsylvania "Schools to Watch" leadership team has announced that the award for RGMS is the third consecutive designation after first earning the elite title nine years ago.

RGMS joins 40 other Pennsylvania middle-grades schools recognized previously. Tony Babusci, RGMS Principal, said he is pleased his seventh and eighth building continues to receive such recognition. "We are honored to be recognized by such a



reputable organization that shares our commitment to middle level education," said Mr. Babusci. "(This designation) is a reflection of the hard work and dedication by our students, staff and parents."

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS, SV!

Wishing you warm and thoughtful greetings this winter season and happiness throughout the coming year!

[Click the image to watch a special holiday video.](#)



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DATES TO REMEMBER

Jan. 1	District Holiday, No School
Jan. 6	School Board Meeting, Work Session, SHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
Jan. 6-17	Keystone Exams Testing Window
Jan. 13	School Board Meeting, Regular Session, SHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.; SVAOC End of First Semester
Jan. 16	End of First Semester, Grades 5-12
Jan. 17	Staff In-Service Day, No School for Students
Jan. 20	Act-80 Day, No School for Students
Jan. 24	Report Card Release, Grades 5-12

For more dates, visit: www.svsd.net/WebCalendar.

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

CANDY FOR A CAUSE

Seneca Valley Student Council and Library Club ran collections and packed 50 boxes for the annual "Candy for Our Troops" project that started after Halloween and continued throughout the month of November.

SV Technology Assistant Ms. Jennifer Kaufman and volunteers including SV students and staff finished packing boxes of candy as well as socks, books and hygiene items on Dec. 4.

With contributions from both SV and the community, a total of 217 care packages were sent to troops serving overseas.



Many thanks to our administrators, teachers and school counselors for helping facilitate this project.

"Candy for Our Troops" is part of Operation Gratitude, which



annually sends 150,000 plus care packages to New Recruits, Veterans, First Responders, Wounded Warriors, Care Givers and US Service Members deployed overseas. ■

THE BEST GIFT

Seneca Valley students learned a lesson that it is truly better to give than to receive.



The Seneca Valley Intermediate High School (IHS) Leadership and Career Development classes recently organized a collection for Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

They collected an impressive \$1,603 in addition to other toys and books. Their donation was given to Children's Hospital on Nov. 27. ■

LOADS OF GOODWILL

The non-profit Neighbors for Neighbors is making many spirits brighter this holiday season.

This generous Cranberry Township organization delivered hundreds of gifts for Seneca Valley students to the administration offices on Dec. 9.

Members of the group shopped for weeks to fill nearly 150 wish lists confidentially gathered by staff in the school's nine facilities. All of the items delivered will help economically



disadvantaged children enjoy a holiday season that was sure to be void of presents.

An additional shout out goes to Grace Community Church, Cranberry CUP, Cranberry Sunrise Rotary Club and Georgie Smigel Group at Coldwell Banker for also stepping up to help with an additional 25 wish lists for students and their family members.

There is no doubt their efforts will make this a much brighter holiday for many.

We can't thank them enough for helping SV families in need! ■

TIDINGS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Seneca Valley Senior High School students, led by junior class officers Luke D'Ambrosio



and Max Van Wormer, spent a recent weekend morning helping to assemble 30,000 meals for other parts of the world. The young men were recognized for their service at the Dec. 3 School Board Meeting. ■

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Haine Elementary kicked-off Word Kindness Day last month with a coin drive to support Gleaners Food Bank.

Throughout the last two weeks of November, students were encouraged to donate coins for Gleaners. Additionally, students read the book "Maddie's Fridge"

to help them understand the struggles many families face regarding hunger.

"Our goal was to raise \$500, but remarkably, we raised \$3,129," exclaimed Haine Elementary Second Grade Teacher Megan Anderson. "We loved witnessing the joy students found in giving



and are thrilled to support our community!" ■

RYAN GLOYER MIDDLE SCHOOL AWARDED IN 'SCHOOLS TO WATCH' PROGRAM

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State leaders selected RGMS for its Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity and Organizational Structures and Processes.

In addition, the school was noted as having strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and a commitment to assessment and accountability to bring about continuous improvement. Bruce Vosburgh PA State STW Director, stated, "We congratulate these schools for being places that do great things for all of their students. These schools demonstrate that high-performing middle grades schools are places that focus on academic growth and achievement. They are also places that recognize the importance of meeting the needs of all of their students and ensure that every child has access to a challenging, high-quality education."

The Schools to Watch selection process is based on a written application that required schools to show how they met criteria developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. Schools that appeared to meet the criteria were then visited by state teams, which observed classrooms, interviewed administrators, teachers, students, and parents, and looked at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons, and student work.

Schools are recognized for a three-year period, and at the end of three years, they must demonstrate progress on specific goals in order to be redesignated. Unlike the Blue Ribbon recognition program, "Schools to Watch" requires schools to not just identify strengths, but to also focus on areas for continuous improvement; thus the three-year redesignation. The redesignation process is based on the schools continued growth since their last STW recognition.

Launched in 1999, Schools to Watch began as a national program to identify middle-grades schools across the country that were meeting or exceeding 37 researched based criteria developed by the National



Forum. The Forum developed a web site <https://www.middlegradesforum.org/> that features online tours of schools, as well as detailed information about the selection criteria used in the recognition program. There are now 17 states across the country, which have trained Schools to Watch State Teams, with more than 650 schools recognized across the country.

"We are pleased that our Schools to Watch program has shown that schools can meet high academic expectations while preserving a commitment of healthy development and equity for all students," said Ericka Uskali, National Forum Executive

Director. "These Schools to Watch are indeed special; they make education so exciting that students and teachers don't want to miss a day. These schools have proven that it is possible to overcome barriers to achieving excellence, and any middle-level school in any state can truly learn from their examples," Uskali said.

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform began as an alliance of 65 educators, researchers, national associations, and officers of professional organizations and foundations dedicated to improving education in the middle grades. ■



ADVOCATES OF HOPE

In support of Children's Grief Awareness Day, Seneca Valley staff and students districtwide, wore blue on Nov. 19 and created butterflies to spread awareness and hope for children that are grieving from a loss of a loved one.

Children's Grief Awareness Day is designed to help people become more aware of the needs of grieving children — and of the benefits they obtain through the support of others. Children's Grief Awareness Day is an opportunity to make sure that grieving children receive the support they need. ■



DESIGNER FOR THE DAY

Students in fourth grade at Haine Elementary School used their creativity to bring computer coding to life.

Googlers (full-time Googler corporation employees) visited the elementary school on Dec. 11 to teach students about different coding careers and showed them how to design code through a program called "Code Your Hero."

Students let their imaginations run wild as they programmed various codes to make animations dance, feature sound effects or tell a story.

This visit was in collaboration of Computer Science Education Week (CSEDWeek), where thousands of students all across the country are learning about coding. CSEDWeek is an annual program dedicated to inspiring K-12 students to take interest in computer science. ■



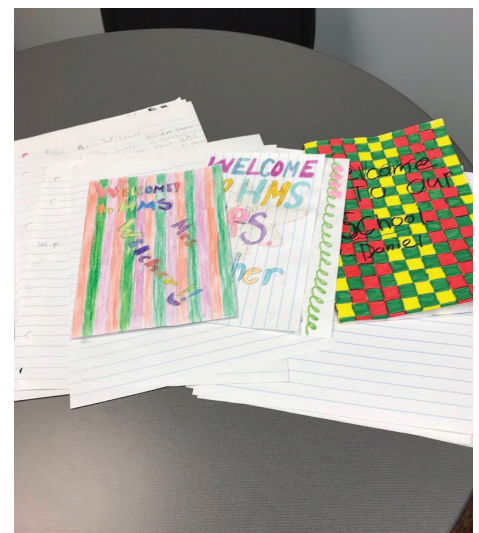
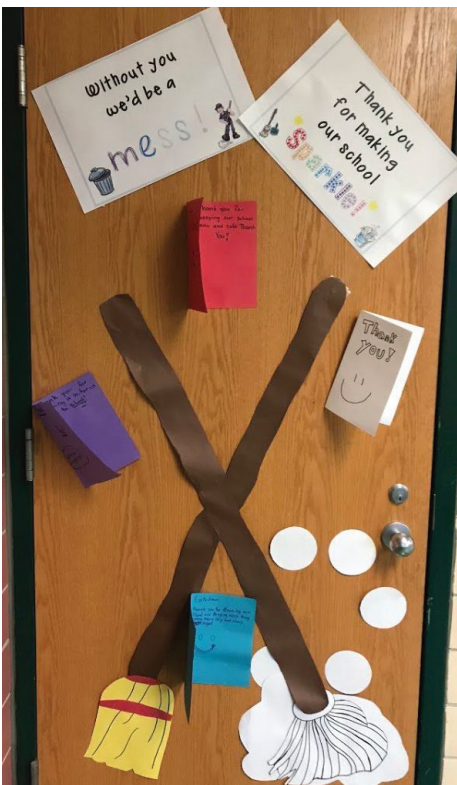
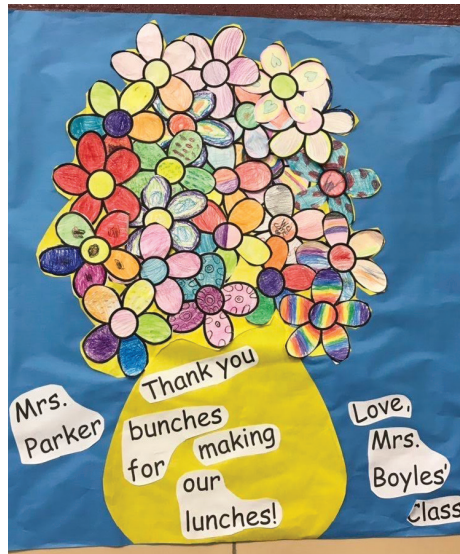
CAMPING OUT WITH A GOOD BOOK

Rowan second graders in Angela Cardillo's classroom recently participated in Camp Silent Quiet Uninterrupted Reading Time (SQUIRT) at the school. Students brought in their sleeping bags, blankets and stuffed animals, and curled up with a good book. ■



12 DAYS OF KINDNESS

SV guidance departments organized the second annual 12 Days of Kindness Challenge that kicked off Dec. 9. During the challenge, students, parents and community members were encouraged to participate in random acts of kindness throughout the holiday season. ■



'HE WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN'

Students at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) learned firsthand about the student, teacher and soldier for which their building was named.

Ryan Burglund and Jenna Pollaci, Seneca Valley graduates and two of the four students who spearheaded the renaming, introduced the program on Nov. 26.

Ryan's father, Richard Gloyer, and Mary Beth Keally, high school classmate, shared

stories about Ryan with seventh and eighth grade students and also encouraged them to work hard and dream big.

During Mr. Richard Gloyer's visit, he also met with RGMS eighth grade students Bella Colgan and Elise Ketler.

For the second consecutive year, these young ladies raised money for Wreaths Across America, an initiative to place wreaths on Veteran



gravestones to honor their service and sacrifice.

Mr. Richard Gloyer, donated to their efforts as a way of thanking the girls for their selfless work. In total, the



girls raised over \$850 for the cause. ■

PEN PALS

Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) students on the Falcons team are making new friends in the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) using an old-fashioned tradition – pen pals.

The idea grew from a friendship between two teachers who studied education together at Westminster College. Christine Mills, a learning support teacher on the Falcons Team at RGMS, teamed up with Sarah Carlson McCallion, an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at Beechwood PreK-5

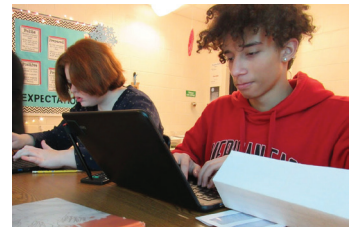


School, as an opportunity to practice their reading, writing and vocabulary skills. They also believed the age difference should allow for a mentorship to develop. "Neither of us had participated in a pen pal program before, but we were both eager to try it," said Ms. Mills.

The initial letters have been



exchanged and afterward the students plan to share photos and ultimately video chat with their younger counterparts sometime next year. "We realized that both of our student populations would benefit from a real-world application for practicing speaking and listening," explained Ms. Mills. "We would love to have the students meet



in the spring and participate in icebreaker/teambuilding activities led by the middle school students." ■

A TRIP TO THE MUSEUM

Ryan Gloyer Middle School students exhibited their school spirit on a recent trip to the Children's Museum in Pittsburgh.

While there, students presented nature photography and local biodiversity and also created an installation showing their SV Raider Pride! ■



ROBOTS, ACTIVATE!

The Seneca Valley Raider Robotics FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Team placed second out of 16 teams at the Pennsylvania FTC Scrimmage at North Catholic High School on Nov. 23.

FTC releases a new competition challenge the first week of September and the teams have just a few short months to design, build and compete.

“Not only did we build our robot from scratch, but we also built a replica of the competition course in order to

practice,” stated Seneca Valley Robotics Coach and Applied Engineering and Technology Teacher Steve Fortunato.

This was SV’s first year starting an FTC team and consists of ten students who signed-up as an advanced experience opportunity. The students involved include Bri Buccini, Felipe Junquera, Dalton Reese, Emily Richards, Mackenzie McIntyre, Jocelyn McNany, Kyra Rodgers, Charlotte Purcell, Zach Garcia and Jocelyn Krieger.

“Although I could not be prouder of the Raider Robotics team for their second-place award, the real prize was seeing one of the best displays of authentic learning,” said Mr. Fortunato. “These students demonstrated exemplary problem-solving skills, grit and empathy. As a teacher, nothing is more rewarding.”

The team will compete again in Gibsonia, Pa on Jan. 11 in hopes to qualify for state championships.

The FTC is designed for



students in grades 7–12 to compete head to head, by designing, building and programming a robot to compete in an alliance format against other teams. ■

ART SHOWCASE

Three Seneca Valley students won awards and 18 others were featured at Slippery Rock University’s (SRU) 2019 Regional High School Art Exhibition.

Seniors Kelsey Gianfrancesco, Corin Trejchel and Victoria Lydon earned three of the five awards presented during the exhibit reception on Nov. 21.

Miss Gianfrancesco received a portfolio scholarship to SRU based on the breadth and depth of the portfolio she submitted. Miss Trejchel won the Potter’s Guild Award for her ceramic piece “Hockey Skates” and Miss Lydon received an Honorable Mention for her piece “Drop It Like It’s Hot.”

Student work that was also on display included seniors Emma Householder, Paige Biordi, Madison Hatcher, Grace Hilling, Lindsey Edwards, Kennedy Carr, Haley Cramer, Audery Ferraro, Ivey Corcuera, Sophia Snow, Max Carpenter,



Emma Burd, Lindsey Hans and Angelina Khoury.

Junior work on display included Simren Jayaraman, Jenna McDonald and Max Ludwig.

Sophomore work on display



included Adrien Koromaus.

All students are under the direction of Jason Woolslare, Jason Shorr and Megan Bonistalli, high school art teachers. ■

‘SV ACE’ LESSON PLAN

Seneca Valley Architecture, Construction and Engineering (SV ACE) Externship students got a first-hand lesson from industry experts.



Argo AI visited Seneca Valley Senior High School on Dec. 17.

According to their website, Argo AI was founded to develop self-driving technology that provides a safer, more affordable, convenient, and accessible way for everyone to get around. Argo AI is developing a production-quality self-driving system (SDS) — which is the software, sensors, and compute that powers self-driving vehicles. Working together with leading automakers, they integrate their SDS into their vehicles from the ground up. ■

ADVANCE BY BOUNDS

The Seneca Valley Junior Reserved Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) recently advanced to the next round of competition for the Academic and Leadership Bowl.

The academic competition tested cadet knowledge on English, science, math, leadership, team dynamics and communication skills. Students answered questions about current events, national and international news, international relations, politics and business. Academic team members include Lexi Bardos, Gracen Heilman, Joe Cantella, Alex Gardiner, James Halyama and Alex Kramer.

The leadership competition tested cadet knowledge on the JROTC curriculum that included leadership, American History, government, service



learning, career development and financial literacy. Leadership team members include Aleksander Matusiak, Cassandra Cramm, Bryan Broad, Elijah Rieger and Sean Ways.

The next competition will be held February 1-15 and will determine the 32 teams that will participate at the Championship in Washington DC in June 2020. ■

HIGHEST HONOR

Seneca Valley freshmen Lexi Marcotte was honored by Girls Scouts of Western Pennsylvania with the Girl Scout Silver Award, the highest recognition for achievement in Girl Scouting.

This award recognizes girls who demonstrate—individually or as a group—extraordinary leadership through sustainable and measurable “Take Action” projects that address important community needs.

Through this project, Miss Marcotte wanted to address the issue of the Woodbine Community wanting horseshoe pits for their neighborhood. She worked with the Woodbine



HOA to build and install horseshoe pits.

Girl Scouting's Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards—are a girl's chance to make a lasting difference in the world. ■

DECATHLETES CROSS FINISH LINE FIRST

The Seneca Valley Academic Decathlon Team, for the second time this year, placed first in a regional Academic Decathlon Competition, this one held at Collegiate Academy on Dec. 7.



SV medalists included seniors Nishant Jayachandran won overall gold and medaled in the category of science. Gabriel Sutherland won an overall silver and won in the events of economics and interview; Julia Allman medaled in speech, Megan Neely, William Firman and Logan Glatz all medaled in interview, Megan Spark won in science and Steven Yang in the category of math.

Mia Chevallier, junior, won an overall gold and also medaled in economics, science, essay and speech. Junior Ash Eury medaled in economics, math and science. Juniors Allison Flatt and Abigail Roeckmann

both won in the category of science and Gwyneth Defede medaled in speech.

SV medalists also included sophomores Rayan Ghaffar who won an overall silver and medaled in math, and speech; Shanker Pillai won in the category of math and Nick Nedzesky won in speech.

The students competed against 15 other schools in six events: interview, economics, math, essay, science and speech.

The next competition will be held at Seneca Valley on Jan. 4. ■

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: INCREASING OUR AWARENESS IN HEALTH-RELATED FITNESS

The Physical Education department understands the positive link between healthy fitness levels and overall wellness. Starting this school year, all students in grades 7-12 will perform a health-related fitness screening during their credited PE course. Screening protocol includes measures in core muscular endurance, cardiovascular endurance, upper body strength, and flexibility. Parents and students can see current scores, as well as view previous years' scores for tracking and progress assessment in the [SV Portal](#). For more information, please click on the “Fitness Screening” link in the [SV Portal](#) and/or contact your child's PE teacher. ■



THE EVENT OF THE SEASON

The Seneca Valley School District hosted their 22nd Annual Senior Holiday Event at the intermediate high school on Dec. 19. JROTC cadets welcomed the nearly 300 attendees.

To begin, a continental breakfast was served in the cafeteria by the intermediate National Honor Society members.

At the event, guests were entertained by the Seneca Valley Jazz Band, Orchestra and Senior High School Madrigal Singers. They were even treated to a surprise performance by CVE student singers and the SV Show Choir! ■



Photo credit: Bill Paterson



TOP MUSIC

Forty-four Seneca Valley instrumentalists (more than any other school!) were selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 Band Festival Dec. 12-14.

Representing Seneca Valley were Alisha Aboosally, Alaina Althouse, Caelen Blakely, Ashley Brenner, Ally Buchek, Luke Choban, David Choi, Jada Chvilicek, Emma Conrad, Hannah Downs, Kennaeya Fitzgerald, Eden Geis, Kyle Gragg, Bekah Heltzell, Elizabeth Hixon, Leta Hixon, Kevin Karatassos, Carly Klein, Peter Ko, Kenzie Kozar, Ethan Lipscomb, Jeremy Love, Kyra Martino, Haley McKinney, Jenna Miller, Evan Moeller, Victor Myrna, Alex Owen, Ashleigh Patterson, Liz Salgado, Kate Scanlan, Jackson Scherzer, Sean Scott, Harrison Silvester, Ryan Sims, Dean Smith, Jaya Subramaniam, Lizzie Sylves, Sydney Thompson, Olivia Tilton, Eliana Topf, Josie Walter, Renhan Xu and Haihan Xu.

Over 220 students auditioned for a band of 125 musicians.



District 5 is made up of students from Beaver, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties.

Instrumental instructors on the secondary campus include Robert Matchett, Varden Armstrong, Robert Babick and Sara Snyder. ■

REPRESENTING SV

The Seneca Valley Music Department was well represented at the Butler County Symphony Orchestra "Holiday Traditions" Concert on Dec. 7.

The Seneca Valley Madrigal Singers, led by Seneca Valley Choir Teacher Aaron Magill, were featured in the second half of the concert performing several holiday standards and some other unique arrangements of well-known carols.

Additionally, SV music faculty, Sarah Miller on violin, and Robert Matchett on trombone, participated as instrumentalists in the Butler County Symphony Orchestra. ■



SV FLAUTIST EARNS TOP HONORS AT STATE COMPETITION

Elizabeth Salgado, junior SV flautist, recently took first place in the Senior Woodwinds Division in the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Young Artist Competition on Nov. 24.

She won the state round three years ago in the junior division.

Miss Salgado is a highly accomplished musician. She has already made it all the way to the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) state level bands as a sophomore. This year, she was the top-scoring musician at Honors Band and will be going on to the District level to begin the journey to the state level once again.

"Every performance is an exciting opportunity to continue working toward my long-term musical goal as a classical performer," stated Miss Salgado.

The MTNA National Student Competitions are the most successful and prestigious student competitions in the country. Each year, thousands of students compete for top prizes and national recognition. The purpose of the Music Teachers National Association Performance competitions is to provide educational experiences for students and teachers and to recognize exceptionally talented young artists and their teachers in their pursuit of musical excellence. ■





WINTER SPORTS UNDERWAY

Here is a recap of winter sports which got underway officially on Friday, Dec. 6, 2019.

Boys Basketball

Raider boys basketball, under second-year head coach Kevin Trost, return only three letter winners from last year's WPIAL playoff team and welcome four freshmen onto the 17-man roster. In a word, one could describe this year's squad as young. Despite the lack of experience, the team is high on energy and effort. The opening



schedule has challenged this team and each game the improvement is notable. The Raiders open section play on Dec. 20, against Pine-Richland and will then travel to Arizona over break for the 2019 Cactus Jam Phoenix Classic. Leading the way in 2019-20 are a trio of seniors in Mason Bush (returning All-Big 56 1st team), Brian Hart and Gabe Lawson.

Girls Basketball

First-year head coach Dorothea Epps has the Raiders sitting at 3-2 overall and 1-1 in section play at the time of this writing. Senior



Maddie Karchut is averaging 15.0 ppg & 6.4 rpg and junior Jaden Davinsizer is also in double figures at 13.6 ppg. Senior Haley Cramer and a pair of sophomores – Jess Bickart and Olivia West – round out the starting line-up. The Raiders will participate in the Riverside Holiday tournament over the break.

Swimming and Diving

The Raider boys and girls swimming & diving teams are two meets into their dual meet season and both currently stand at 2-0. Most recently against Peters Township three pool records were broken: Kendall Craig in girls 200 IM (2:06.39), Edie Sawyer in girls 100



breaststroke (1:05.64) and Owen Blazer in the boys 100 backstroke (49.95). The teams will face off against West Allegheny on Dec. 19 and will then return to competition on Jan. 2.

Wrestling

The Raider wrestling program, under head coach Kevin Wildrick, enters the 2019-20 season as one of the top-ranked teams in WPIAL AAA competition. The team started off the season winning the Cumberland Valley tournament on the strength of 10 medalists:



Hunter Swedish (2nd), Dylan Chappell (2nd), Alejandro Herrera-Rondon (1st), Chanz Shearer (3rd), Antonio Amelio (1st), Drew Vlasnik (3rd), Marshall Adamson (5th), Liam Volk-Klos (3rd), Nick Funovits (5th) and Davin Beahm (6th.) Following a section win over Armstrong, SV traveled to the nationally renowned Walsh Ironman tournament where Herrera-Rondon brought home a third place medal. The schedule gets no easier in the month of December with dual matches upcoming against Butler, Kiski and Hempfield and then the national caliber Powerade Tournament over the holidays. ■



STAR TEACHER

Congratulations again to Paolo Tolomeo, a fourth-grade teacher at Haine Elementary School, who was named a finalist in the 2020 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year competition as hosted by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National State Teacher of the Year Organization.

Mr. Tolomeo joined other finalists at a special awards ceremony on Dec. 9 where a North Hills teacher was named Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Tolomeo was one of only a dozen teachers chosen for finalist recognition and ultimately represents the more 122,000 teachers from across the Commonwealth.

Pictured at right, Mr. Tolomeo (center) was surprised by Haine Elementary Assistant Principal Jeremy Womer (left) and Haine Elementary Principal Kristen White, along with his colleagues, during a recognition ceremony held at the school earlier this month.

“Mr. Tolomeo creates a positive classroom community that is built on trust, inclusion of all diversity and high expectations for both learning and behavior,” said Kristen White, Haine Elementary Principal. “Children in his classroom are encouraged to take risks, in a non-threatening environment, which supports learning, encourages resiliency and reinforces the pillars of



mindfulness. Students are expected to work in collaboration throughout the day, and high levels of engagement are simply the norm.” ■

AN IMPACTFUL LESSON

Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) Gifted Support Teacher Zeke Stroupe's lesson plan is not only impacting students in his classroom today, but it is also helping students change the future.



Mr. Stroupe's lesson plan “Understanding Now to Change the Future” recently won third place for the middle school track in the Classrooms Without Borders (CWB) contest.

In May 2019, CWB published a call for educators to write lesson plans aimed to tackle issues of racism, hate, and antisemitism in classrooms; engage students in meaningful dialogue about the shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue; and help them act to prevent more violence.

Five months later and one year after the shooting, this call resulted in a repository of lesson plans ready for teachers to use, made available on CWB's online Curriculum Support Center.



“The real goal is to get the kids thinking of ways to create a positive change and to realize that anyone can make a difference,” stated Mr. Stroupe.

All winning proposals were presented at the Antisemitism, Hate and Social Responsibility conference in Pittsburgh, on November 10-11, 2019. Mr. Stroupe was awarded a \$200 book stipend for his efforts.

An independent evaluation committee composed of experts in education judged the proposed lesson plans and ranked the top three in each track: middle school and high school.

[To learn more about staff visits through CWB, click here.](#) ■

FIRST ENERGY GRANT BENEFITS SV GENETICS LAB



Mr. Rob Lombardo (far left), a representative of First Energy, presented (from left-right) Seneca Valley Intermediate High School (IHS) Chemistry Teacher Mr. Brian Carson, IHS Gifted Support Teacher Ms. Patti Griest and IHS Principal Dr. Matt Delp with a check for \$1,000 on Dec. 6. Teachers received the funding from a grant they applied for through First Energy to benefit the Seneca Valley Molecular Genetics Lab. ■

GIVING TUESDAY

We can do so much more as a group than we ever could as individuals.

This was realized on Dec. 3, also known as Giving Tuesday, when Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) trustees and local business owner Chris Camp surprised various teachers and presented them with classroom mini grants.

Mr. Camp, CEO of Fun Fore All Family Fun Park, funded \$4,000 and the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) covered the remaining balance to assist Seneca Valley teachers who requested funding for classroom projects via the crowd funding source www.donorschoose.org.

Check out some of their wonderful reactions in the video here.

If you want to join the movement, please consider donating to the Seneca Valley Foundation and give here: <https://www.mightycause.com/donate/Seneca-Valley-Foundation?donationModalStep=1&fbclid=IwAR0XgRtiCvx-2RW34VjHF72RmwlysxJIUD-i2W6Map4LUmnb1BcNdSeLfsQ.>



IT STARTS WITH SOAP

Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) students have become experts in the soap-making business.

For the past two years, the Owls team students have made cold-processed soap as a cross-curricular activity to enlighten their compassion for those who have or had cancer or have someone in their life that has or had a cancer diagnosis. The activity culminates in a written investigative piece on the topic of cancer (see one student's example below) and ties in the soap making, which serves as the foundation for a fundraiser where the proceeds are donated to the American Cancer Society.

In the 2018-19 school year, RGMS English Teacher Andra Titus was awarded a grant for the project, which was funded by Randy Hart, long-time supporter of the District (the two are pictured below).

The soap making extends into all of the content areas: in math, the students learn how to calculate the ratio for the soap molds; in science, they learn about the chemical reactions that occur that transform the oils into a new substance (soap), in civic and economics, the students determine the cost of materials versus profit and how to market the product; in health, they learn how soap molecules remove germs by using blue light to see dirty hands prior to washing and then how clean their hands after washing with soap. ■

SOAP FOR A CAUSE

By Ashley Kemp, RGMS eighth grader

The halls at Ryan Gloyer Middle School buzzed with excitement on the morning of Nov.7. Todd Winter's eighth-grade science classes were to face the task of making handcrafted soap. Students murmured nervously among themselves before their scheduled science class.

To make the soap, students combined lye, olive oil, palm oil, and coconut oil. They then added their chosen fragrance to the mix. The science activity isn't all fun and games, however. The soap was sold during lunch periods in December to raise money for cancer research. The money gained will be donated to a cancer research charity.

Room 113 burst with three different but harmonious soap fragrances; the sweet, gentle aroma of berry vanilla, the crisp smell of alpine cheer, and coastal watermelon's tropical tang. Students bustled around the room, talking quietly among one another. The air crackled with concentration and stress. "It's fun and like a race against the clock," Shelby Hemmerlin said when asked about the experience.



For safety, each adolescent sported safety glasses and blue rubber gloves. Some students expressed approval for the safety gear. "I look hot in these goggles," Priscilla Rozic says. Many kids had fun with the experience. "Science is awesome," Sami Domhoff said. Everyone knew that they were supporting a good cause by making the soap. After all, they had been face-to-face with someone who had experienced the emotional effects of cancer.

On Oct. 25, Mr. Randall Hart, a retired North Allegheny teacher and coach, came into Ms. Titus's English class. He shared with the Owls' students the story of his daughter Jacquelin (Jackie)'s battle with cancer.

Jackie passed away on Dec.16, 2012, of melanoma that had spread to her brain, liver and lungs. According to Hart,

nobody knows how or why she got melanoma—not even the doctors. Hart reports that he first suspected something was wrong when Jackie slurred her words while trying to read an Oklahoma license plate. Hart shared with the Owls that he knew that the diagnosis was going to be bad from the moment Jackie confided her symptoms to him.

When Jackie and her family found out she had cancer, they were reportedly very upset. "Dad, don't let me die," Hart recounts his daughter's reaction to the news. "I'll never forget what she said." Jackie had cancer for approximately 24 months before her passing. A trial drug called Yervoy allowed her to stay alive for that long. Without it, Hart says, Jackie's death would have come more quickly.

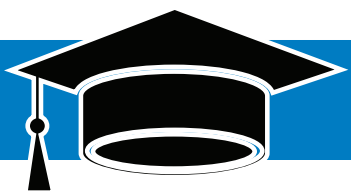
When Jackie passed away, she left behind her husband and sons, Colin and Myles. She liked to collect Smurfs and look at old license plates with her father. Hart expressed regret that he had spent his time coaching other students instead of being with her.

During his presentation, Hart explained the importance of

spending time with the people you love and the fact that nobody is guaranteed tomorrow. He uses Jackie's brother as an example. "They were always bickering about something," Hart remembers. "He can't fix that now." Everyone can take away something from his presentation. However, Hart's experience is not a new one for most people.

Cancer deaths are more of a common occurrence than one might assume. 58% of eighth-graders who participated in a survey say that they know someone who has died from cancer. Most eighth-graders are only thirteen to fourteen years old. Because of this, we know that even at a young age, cancer deaths are a thing that many people are exposed to.

Unfortunately, Jackie's story is one of many. As previously concluded, many people die from cancer. However, cancer death rates seem to be receding. "The report finds overall cancer incidence rates, or rates of new cancers decreased in men but stabilized in women during the period 1999-2013," ("Cancer Death Rates"). Despite this good news, there is still work to be done. Cancer research is progressing, but it can only go on with donations. ■



Seneca Valley Graduates - and siblings
- Alissa Hill (Class of '14) and Kylan Hill
(Class of '12) are both pursuing careers in the medical field. We asked them to catch us up on what they are doing today and how Seneca Valley influenced their lives and careers.

Q: Catch us up. Tell us what you're doing today:

AH A: Currently, I live in Erie, PA and I am in my first preclinical year of medical school at LECOM. I graduated from Allegheny College in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in Chemistry.

KH A: I am in my last year of medical school. Currently, I am interviewing for residency positions at hospitals across the country. I am pursuing a career in OB/Gyn and choosing to sub-specialize in Maternal-Fetal-Medicine so I can focus on helping high-risk pregnancy patients. It's a really fascinating field that combines both surgery and medicine. Also, I'm getting married to my wonderful fiancée next spring!

Q: Please share with us some information about your family.

AH A: While I've relocated to Erie for medical school, my parents still live in the District and I love coming home to see what new improvements and additions have taken place at the secondary campus. My dad, Bob, is the former school board president, and he always keeps me in the loop of the unique and beneficial changes at SV. I have one older brother, Kylan, who is a 2012 graduate of Seneca Valley and a fourth-year medical student at LECOM.

KH A: My family is very Seneca-proud. My father served on the school board for my entire education, and my sister graduated in 2014.

Q: What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?

AH A: Some might be surprised to know that I worked for a while as an EMT for Cranberry EMS after I graduated from Allegheny College. I really wanted to do this work in advance of medical school, since my interest is in emergency medicine. I like to decompress by baking and decorating cookies, pies, and cakes. I also love the outdoors, hiking, and fishing.

KH A: My favorite hobby is scuba diving. Most recently, I went diving in the Florida Keys for a shipwreck dive in 120 feet of water!

Q: How did Seneca Valley help you become the person you are today, both personally and professionally?

AH A: The faculty at Seneca Valley certainly helped to foster my work ethic and chosen path of study in college. The chemistry courses I completed at SV not only challenged me, but also inspired me to pursue a chemistry major in college. The curriculum at Seneca Valley helped prepare me for my undergraduate studies, while also opening the doors to a field of science that I most likely would not have chosen for myself. Additionally, this passion for science helped guide me to my chosen career path in medicine. I also learned how to juggle the time demands of playing a varsity sport, student council and other extra-curricular activities, all while still being able to focus on my academics. When my team was out of season, I was able to apply this time management tool to other activities and volunteer opportunities off the campus.

KH A: I loved my time at Seneca Valley, and it wasn't until I went on to other institutions (i.e., college and medical school) that I realized how special my high school experience was. The teaching staff is second to none and students are really fortunate to have such educated and passionate faculty. I've had faculty recommend colleges, help with my resume, and even drive me to interviews for my senior project! I had a teacher, Mrs. Pries, who nominated me for the People to People Ambassador Program and I was fortunate enough to spend a summer at Johns Hopkins Medical School. I definitely think it's safe to say that propelled my excitement for wanting to study medicine.

Q: What do you think makes Seneca Valley such a special place to learn and grow?

AH A: The faculty and staff of Seneca Valley are ALWAYS working to become more innovative and adapt to today's world to benefit the students. I have never known a faculty member of Seneca Valley to not have their students' best interests in mind. There was always an opportunity to ask



for help while also being encouraged to do better and succeed. I appreciate that student success is at the top of mind of not only the teaching staff, but with the district administration and leadership as well. This really makes the Seneca Valley School district a great place to raise a family.

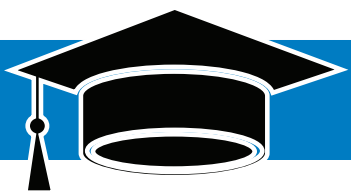
KH A: I think it's important for students to know that in the "real-world" there is more to life than just tests and scores. While I can say Seneca Valley prepared me very well for college and medical school, there was a very social aspect to my high school experience that helped me develop professional skills to succeed at every level. A sharp suit and firm handshake can go a long way!

Q: Who was your favorite teacher/coach/SV staff member?

AH A: I had so many wonderful teachers and experiences that make this question very hard. I have very fond memories of the elementary teachers I had at Rowan all the way to the secondary campus. I feel incredibly blessed to have known and been encouraged by many fantastic mentors at Seneca Valley!

KH A: That's really a difficult question because I honestly have such fond memories of all my teachers from kindergarten to high school. However, if I

continued on page 16



continued from page 15

had to give a shout-out to a teacher who was most dedicated to my success as a student and young man I'd have to thank Mr. Fetchko. He was such a great mentor and we even did research together at the University of Pittsburgh Department of Biology during a summer in high school. We frequently catch up on the phone, and this post reminds me that I am due to give him a call!

Q: What is one of your favorite memories from your time at Seneca Valley?

AH A: Many of my favorite times at Seneca Valley are related to the projects and events that we planned and executed while I was a Student Council member. I loved interacting with the community through service projects and working with faculty and administration to plan many school functions.

KH A: I played lacrosse for seven years and during my senior year I decided to run cross

country during the fall to stay in shape. I ended up enjoying it so much that I decided to continue running NCAA Cross Country during my time at Allegheny College. I'd have to say that my favorite memories were our long runs on campus, if anyone hasn't taken advantage of running on Seneca's cross-country course, I'd highly recommend it. When the temperature was too hot in the summer, we would even take a quick dip in the Connoquenessing Creek!

Q: If you had one message for teachers or staff, what would it be?

AH A: Continue to challenge your students and push them past their self-imposed limits. It is so important for students to have people in their lives who recognize potential, and are willing to shape and mentor young people, turning that potential into achievement.

KH A: When encouraging students, my father would always say "aim for the stars, even if you miss, you're still out of this world!"

Q: What do you wish other people knew about Seneca Valley?

AH A: I wish that other people knew what an incredibly broad and deep education experience can be had here in Harmony. That experience can be enhanced by a seemingly endless list of extra-curricular activities which should provide something of interest for almost everyone.

KH A: To a lot of students I've met along the way, their high school experience was a "been there, done that" kind of thing. My best friends from Seneca Valley are still my best friends to this day and are even in my wedding! Seneca Valley is such a tight knit community and it is so unique, you can find teachers, staff, and students volunteering at almost every local fair, athletic event, and fundraiser. I am truly grateful to be a part of the Raider Nation! ■

SV STEM ALUMNI

Approximately 50 Seneca Valley alumni who have entered Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs or fields of study spoke at Seneca Valley Senior High School Dec. 19-20 for the school's sixth annual STEM Alumni Days.

Students heard presentations from alumni about college majors, research projects, internships, jobs and overall college experiences in areas such as biomedical engineering, neuroscience, and nursing.

The intention of SV STEM Alumni Days is to inspire and inform current students, encouraging STEM fields of study.

As part of a network of opportunities organized by a committee of teachers, SV STEM Alumni Days joins the highly successful SV Science Honor Society, STEM Lecture Series, and STEM Fair, as a way to become more engaged in STEM career possibilities. ■





HOW TO HELP KIDS DODGE CIGARETTE, VAPING, AND POT MARKETING AND STAY SMOKE-FREE

Whether or not you smoke cigarettes or support legalizing marijuana, you probably don't want your kids lighting up. But the [rise of e-cigs](#), vaporizers like [the Juul](#), and decriminalized pot may make your standard anti-smoking arguments -- "it causes cancer," "it's illegal" -- feel a little shaky. Add in celebrities posting pictures of themselves smoking various substances, and you might wonder: Is it possible to raise drug-free, smoke-free kids in the era of Smoking 2.0? Yes, but it helps to have a little ammunition.

Vaping is an especially tough one, because kids encounter tons of information about it online. According to a [November 2019 survey conducted by Common Sense Media and SurveyMonkey](#):

- **Vaping is popular among teens, and it's happening regularly at school.** One-third of teens (33%) say they see classmates vaping in school a few times a week or daily. More than half (54%) say they see it monthly. Nearly eight in 10 (78%) say vaping is popular among people their age where they live.
- **Most teens think vaping is as harmful as smoking.** Just over half of teens (52%) say vaping is "about as harmful as smoking," while 31% say it's more harmful and 17% say it's less harmful. Among those teens who say vaping is less harmful than smoking, 43% say they've gotten messages online telling them that "vaping is healthier than smoking cigarettes."
- **One in four teens first learned about vaping on social media.** A plurality of teens (44%) say they first learned or heard about vaping from someone they know, while 23% first heard about it on social media, 9% from TV or a movie, and less than that from outdoor ads, in a store, on a website, on the radio, or on a podcast.
- **Vaping is common in teens' social media experiences.** When thinking about their typical experience using social media, 59% of teens say they're likely to see a post that mentions or shows vaping.

If you're feeling outspent, out-messaged, and out-cooled, take heart. There are plenty of ways to fight back. Here's how to help your kids resist the marketing of traditional cigarettes, vaporizers, e-cigs, and pot.

Traditional cigarettes

- **Explain how bad smoking is for you.** Kids think they're immune and immortal. The death statistics could be eye-opening, even for the "it won't happen to me" age group.
- **Talk about how addictive nicotine is. Nicotine is really difficult to quit.** Discuss the signs of physical addiction and the risk of getting addicted.
- **Help them resist gimmicks.** Traditional cigarettes are trying to capture smoker interest by using kid-friendly tricks -- for example, the Camel Crush cigarettes with a menthol ball inside. But the cigarettes still really are bad for you.
- **Explain that Big Tobacco just wants to addict you.** When cigarette smoking declined, tobacco companies such as Altria bought the vaping company Juul.

Vaporizers and e-cigs

- **Share the facts.** E-cigarettes and vapes reduce exposure to some of the harmful chemicals of tobacco cigarettes, but **no one really knows the impact of these products on kids' health**. And studies show **they contain formaldehyde**.
- **Tell them to wait.** Tell them it's important that they wait until their brains and bodies have developed fully before they consume something potentially harmful.
- **Talk about addiction.** Kids can get hooked on nicotine but also on the physical habit of reaching for a pipe.
- **Get your doctor involved.** Have your pediatrician talk to your kid about the dangers of ingesting any chemical you don't know much about.
- **Help them see through the hype.** Talk about marketing methods such as using **celebrities** and how companies try to make e-cigs seem as though they are



healthier and better for the environment than tobacco cigarettes.

- **Cite the death statistics.** Dozens of people **have died from vaping** -- and many more have become sick.

Marijuana

- **Impart your values.** Teens are still listening to their parents, despite much evidence to the contrary. Discuss what's important to you: good character, solid judgment, and belief in a bright future -- all of which are compromised by smoking pot.
- **Explain the health consequences.** Study after study indicates that **pot negatively affects a teen's developing brain**.
- **Encourage waiting.** For some kids, forbidding might backfire, so focus on preventing them from starting to smoke in the first place, delaying it as long as possible.
- **Look for warning signs.** Be on the lookout for things that might be affecting your kid in other areas of his or her life -- for example, social exclusion, school problems, and emotional instability.
- **Pull back the curtain on pot marketing.** Kids and teens don't like to be tricked, and advertising is full of sneaky ways to get people to buy a product, including branding pot products with names such as **Bob Marley** and **Willie Nelson**. Instead of lecturing, help your kids break down the ads to see how they try to influence emotions, choices, and behavior. ■

Article and photo provided by [Common Sense Media](#).



FAKE IDENTITIES AND REAL CONCERNS

In a chat, people with bad intentions can pretend to be any age. They can say they are a friend-of-a-friend as a way to enter the chat. Children are susceptible because they are unsuspecting, and by the time they may realize something is not right, shame and threats may already be in place to keep them quiet and scared.

People have been reporting problems much more frequently than just a few years ago. According to a New York Times (NYT) article: “Six years ago, a little over 50 reports of the crimes, commonly known as “sextortion,” were referred to the federally designated clearinghouse in suburban Washington that tracks online child sexual abuse. Last year, the center received over 1,500. And the authorities believe that the vast majority of sextortion cases are never reported.”

These predators connect to kids who play games like Minecraft, Fortnite, and any game that has a chat function, slowly “grooming” their victims (“grooming” is such a creepy word—which is fitting—and refers to a perpetrator working to gain a child’s trust with the intent of doing sex related crimes).

Things to know:

1. Criminals pretend to be teens and start conversations. I learned from the NYT article that often they pretend to have emotional hardships and use that as a way of building the relationship. I find this so disturbing.
2. They might buy gaming currency, like Fortnite V-Bucks, for the kids.
3. Their goal is to try to get sexually explicit photos and videos to use as blackmail for more imagery.

This kind of extortion happens with many games. A Seattle man was convicted for posing as a teen and getting explicit photos from boys via Minecraft and League of Legends.

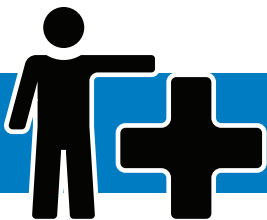
The NYT article reports how Roblox, a game for small children, allows players to chat with others. Youth are socializing online through the chat functions on the games themselves but also on third-party chat sites like Discord and Omegle (whose tagline is Talk to Strangers), where interacting with strangers is the norm. Discord is a chat feature with text, video, and voice chat to meet up “live” while gaming. Once predators establish a “trusted-relationship” in an open space chat room, they will try to move these interactions to private conversations on platforms like Kik and Facebook Messenger.

As parents, teachers, and counselors, let’s be proactive by having conversations about warning signs and red flag behaviors before our youth get targeted. It is critical to consider how we can engage our kids in productive conversations, without making them too anxious and without coming off as too anxious ourselves.



1. Being strategic with our kids when we talk to them about these topics is vital. Start a conversation with the assumption that your child is doing the things you have asked, such as only interacting with people online that they know in real life. But then, verify, using a tone that assures them that your main goal is to reinforce safety, not impose punishment. (Yes, there may be consequences, but when they tell us the truth, praise them, rather than focus on the breaching of a rule. This way you will get more honesty in the future.)
2. We don’t want them to think we think this is happening everywhere and all the time. It’s not. But it is about letting them know that this is a risk and we need to all work together to think deeply about how we prevent and stop suspicious activity.
3. These risks are serious and can even be life-threatening. Carol Todd’s daughter Amanda tragically died by suicide after ongoing, online sextortion. Ms. Todd has done tremendous advocacy work for online safety and mental health. (The adult man who was doing the sextortion is behind bars.)
4. It can also be helpful to foster a discussion about these topics with your kid and someone they play video games with, and that person’s parent. Start a conversation about these topics, working to engage the youth. Try to shift the conversation from what they are playing to the more significant discussion around the issues, all the while weaving in the points you are trying to convey. ■

Article and photo provided by [Screenagers](#).



SAFETY FIRST

There's an old saying among those who investigate crimes against children: It goes, "where children play, predators prey." Years ago predators, slipped into the school yards, playgrounds, and arcades, but now they approach your child through the Internet, online gaming, and chat rooms. The Child Crime Prevention and Safety Center estimates that there are about 500,000 online predators active each day. If your children are live streaming games or playing online in online gaming forums, there is the potential for them to be approached in that format by a predator.

The Internet, and specifically gaming forums, have become the new hunting ground for those who choose to exploit children. They use their opportunities in chat rooms and during games to build relationships with kids and then groom them by sending gift cards, money or other gifts. Once the relationship is established, they make their approach to meet with the child in person.

When I was in my assignment as the Secret Service liaison to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), I saw a couple prevalent themes with children who were victimized and easily swayed by strangers. One of those themes was the lack of parental oversight. You have to be the parent. You have to manage how much time your child spends on the Internet, where they access the internet, and who has access to them.

This can seem like a daunting task, so here are some tips:

- The first and most important matter is to tell your children not to give out any information to anyone even if they know them. Tell them to keep the conversation about the game, especially if someone they don't know jumps into their gaming session
- Keep gaming systems, laptops, and phones in a common area of the home. This way you can hear what the people



your kids are gaming with are saying to them, and see the content.

- Take some time to play the game with your kids. This allows you to get a feel for the game's content, and to see if adults are trying to infiltrate your child's online gameplay
- Do some research into the game, and check the games content and rating to make sure that it's appropriate for your child
- Set up the parental controls for the games that your kids play, and don't be afraid to report someone who is being inappropriate
- Talk with your kids! Make sure they know where to draw the line with people who may try to engage with him. Often times kids just don't know that they can come to you for help. Make sure that they know you're there to protect them and not punish them. They need to know that it's not their fault if someone is inappropriate, but they also need to know that they need to disengage immediately

Put very simply, you would never let a stranger come into your home and have access to your child in person, so why would you ever allow them to have access to your child over the Internet?

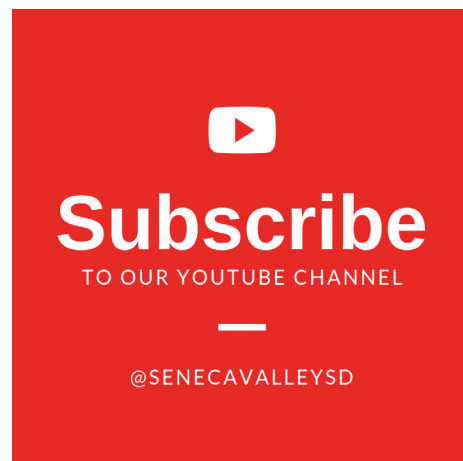
If you would like some resources on how to talk to kids about this topic, or tips about letting your kids go online safely, there are a lot of resources out there. Because it was my professional experience, I always go back to the NCMEC website at [missingkids.org](https://www.missingkids.org). There is great information on there.

If it happens that your child does get themselves into a bad spot with someone online, report it immediately. You or your child trying to find your way out of that situation can be difficult, so trust law enforcement to help you fix it. Remember not to panic and immediately shut off the device or the game. Rather, try to remain calm and take screenshots, save texts, etc. to gather as much evidence as possible

Predators aren't going to stop just because you shut off your machine or don't allow your child to interact with them. They will simply move on to the next target. See something, say something applies to the virtual world, too. Be sure to report any harmful behavior that you may encounter when your child is online. ■



- Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!
- Being sick is no fun, and we thought it was important to take a few minutes to share some facts, prevention information and reminders.
- Join our team! SV is hiring administrative, secretarial and paraprofessional employees.
- The Seneca Valley Adult Walking program began Nov. 4. For more information, [click here](#).
- The 2019-20 first nine weeks Honor Rolls for grades 7-12 can now be viewed [here](#).
- Call for Judges! Evans City CIRC Tank is looking for community members to judge student inventions. [Learn more or sign up here](#).
- In honor of both Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving, the Rowan Elementary fourth grade created a music video to thank our US Military for their service. [Click here to watch it!](#)
- 'Tis the season to be jolly! [Click here to watch Rowan Elementary School's Kindergarten Holiday Program that was held on Dec. 18.](#)



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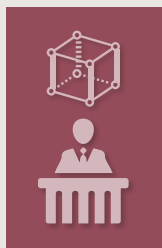
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MEET DESIGN | Monday, Feb. 17

Collaborate with like-minded high school and college students to flex your creative muscles in an immersive design experience. Get up close and personal with the La Roche campus, tour our design studios and scope out a residence hall. Hear firsthand accounts from current design students, faculty and professionals about opportunities in the field.



PREVIEW NIGHT | Monday, Feb. 24

Get an inside look at La Roche by meeting current students and campus staff, touring campus and having dinner in the dining hall. Learn more about campus life, and how to apply and pay for college.



COMMUNITY FINANCIAL AID NIGHT Tuesday, Feb. 25 | 6 p.m.

Get an overview of the financial aid process, learn how to apply and see how to complete the FAFSA.

FAFSA WORKSHOPS:
Saturday, March 21 • 10 a.m. to Noon



OPEN HOUSE | Saturday, April 18

Talk to faculty, have lunch in the dining hall, tour campus and attend presentations by academic departments, admissions and financial aid.



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