



RAIDER PRIDE

A State and National Award-Winning Publication

MARCH 2023

MARCH NATIONAL READING MONTH

*"You can find **magic** wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a **book**."* - Dr. Seuss

READING ALWAYS WINS

Ehrman Crest Elementary School kicked off a month-long reading contest that is sure to be a slam dunk!

Students participated in a tournament of games as part of March Reading Madness, an international reading program. After each game, two books were revealed as matches in the competition. Students read each book and voted on which was the class favorite. Top choices moved on to the next round of the competition leading up to the grand reveal of a final favorite.

Story continued on page 2



READING TOWARD THE FUTURE

On Wednesday, March 1, eighth-grade students at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) delivered children's books that they created to younger students enrolled in the Seneca Valley Preschool program in both the AM and PM sessions.

RGMS Family and Consumer Sciences teacher, Ms. Kayla Robinson collaborated with Ms. Angie Kotula, RGMS Librarian during Ms. Robinson's Personal Development course as students created children's books to promote literacy. The eighth graders then hand delivered their books to the Seneca Valley Preschool program to kickoff Read Across America Week.

Story continued on page 2



Seneca Valley Academy of Choice Summer Camp Registration is Now Open

Students are encouraged to register for summer camps early to ensure camp availability. Registration for all camps will end on June 16, 2023. [Click HERE to learn more.](#)

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DATES TO REMEMBER

April 5 - 12 Spring Break, No School for Students

April 17	School Board Meeting, Work Session, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
April 24	School Board Meeting, Regular Session, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.

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

APRIL

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						

READING ALWAYS WINS

Story continued from pg. 1

The tournament reminds us that when we read, we all win! ■



READING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Story continued from pg. 1

Students not only worked hard by writing the narrative for the books, but they also illustrated them as well.

"I'm grateful for Angie and Kara's help in doing this project, and I think it's a great way to provide a well-rounded experience for the eighth-grade students," said Ms. Robinson. "The students were able to use skills from English class and Personal Development to create these awesome books. It's also a great way to show how we can give back to the community by donating the books to our preschool and by working with the preschool students. I hope that by doing this project, it will help promote how important reading is for all ages."

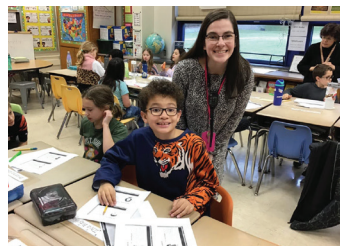
After the book delivery, the eighth graders read their books to the preschoolers in Ms. Kara Andres' preschool class and helped students throughout the daily lesson plans. ■



BREAKING NEWS... CVE LOVES TO READ!

This month, students and staff at Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School (CVE) celebrated Read Across America Week with fun dress-up days and a visit from special guest, author David Biedrzycki.

Throughout the week students dressed for success to show off their future careers, went wild in their favorite animal print, paraded shirts with positive messages, stayed comfy in their pajamas, and brought CVE stories to life as their favorite book characters! ■



SQUAD GOALS

SV launches Hope Squad Initiative

Hope.

It's a powerful word with great meaning that, for many, can be a much-needed lifeline during a time of great struggle and pain.

That's why our hope is that you will join us in spreading the word about mental health, and sharing the news on the District's recent initiative that will serve as a support outlet for students: it's called Hope Squad.

To understand why we are here today, we must first consider some rather difficult statistics. If you are not aware, suicide is the third leading cause of death in youth today. In fact, suicide rates overall have increased 31 percent over the past 20 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It most often occurs when stressors exceed current coping abilities of someone suffering from a mental health condition.

To be clear, there is no single cause for suicide. According to the experts, adolescents who believe that affirmation and love are won and earned are the most vulnerable to suicide as there is no capacity to psychologically manage failure.

"They don't want to die, they want the pain to go away," explained Dr. Greg Hudnall, Founder of Hope Squad. "Of all deaths, suicides are preventable."

That is precisely why Hope Squad was developed by Dr. Hudnall and brought to SV by Dr. Jeff Roberts, Student Services Director.

Dr. Hudnall is considered one of the leading experts in community and school-based suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. He is a former high school principal, student services director and associate superintendent with the Provo City School District in Provo, Utah. Deeply and personally impacted by suicides in his school district, he created the Hope Community Task Force in 1999, focusing on community-wide suicide prevention,



intervention and postvention. In 2004, he and a team of experts went one step further and created the school-based "peer-to-peer" suicide prevention program now known as Hope Squad and found in schools across the country.

This important suicide prevention program trains and mentor students, nominated by their peers, to perform intentional outreach with fellow students. Hope Squad student members do not provide counseling or therapy, they instead serve as a connection to the help that is needed. CDC statistics indicate that seven out of 10 teens considering suicide will tell a friend.

"Hope Squad is built on the principle that students are most comfortable confiding in their peers when they are having difficulty," said Dr. Roberts. "Hope Squad students will learn how to respectfully report concerns to an adult staff member."

Hope Squad members will also organize school-wide activities that promote connectedness and inclusion and have already launched an Instagram account as a supplemental source for reaching students online.

The curriculum includes a four-year "choice" model that includes strands like suicide prevention, resilience and self-care, just to name a few. There are more than 30 secondary staff, representing all school subject areas, who are volunteering their time to serve as advisors to the Seneca Valley Hope Squad student members.

Hope Squad student members were chosen by their peers as being easy to talk to, great listeners and naturally supportive

of struggling students who are in need of a friend. And for one SV Hope Squad student, it's an opportunity to help change the culture when it comes to mental health, as he noted on their social media page.

"This is lifelong training that I wouldn't be able to get anywhere else," said Mr. Gavin Cress, a sophomore. "It also makes a positive impact on our school."

For now, the program at Seneca Valley is for grades 9-12, but is expected to extend into grades 7-8 this summer.

To learn more about the Hope Squad program at Seneca Valley, visit our website at www.svsd.net/hopesquad.

Additional mental health resources are available across our website as well as through partnerships with other outreach groups:

- To learn more about Hope Squad, please visit www.HopeSquad.com
- For more on mental health education and support, visit www.ParentGuidance.org
- For 24/7/265 mental health coordination for Seneca Valley students, staff and their families, please visit [Care Solace - Seneca Valley School District](#).
- To learn more about Seneca Valley's school-based mental health service partnership with Glade Run Lutheran Services, please visit [Seneca Valley Q&A Parent Fact Sheet \(svsd.net\)](#).
- At any time, an individual can reach the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – just text or call 988 ■

ON YOUR MARK...GET SET...GLOW!

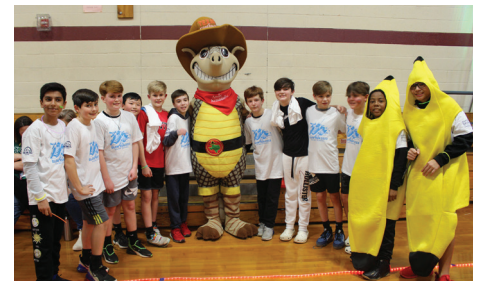
Late last month, Haine elementary and middle schoolers participated in their first ever Glow Run.

Leading up to the all-day event, students fundraised, learned about National Parks, and celebrated dress-up theme-days.

The Glow Run was a pay-per-lap type fundraiser that was planned to help raise money for new playground equipment, increase the schools' field trip fund, and strengthen the school community.

Donations were received from all 50 states and students ran a total of 38,954 laps, raising a total of over \$70,000!

Congratulations to Haine students, staff and volunteers! ■



DELICIOUS DIGITS, AS EASY AS PI!

Fourth grade students in Mrs. Hixon's class at Ehrman Crest Elementary School celebrated Pi Day with both pi and pie on March 14, Pi Day! Parents donated baking supplies to help their pie baking come to life. Students were organized into groups and four pies were made in the Ehrman Crest demo kitchen. Students followed a recipe, using their knowledge of fractions to assist them. They calculated the time it took to prepare the pie. Once the pies were in the oven, students used their knowledge of fractions and multiplication to double and triple the recipe.

Students also engaged in other pi related activities throughout the day. Students brought in circular objects that allowed them to explore the concept of pi. They also created "pi skyscrapers" graphing the first 30 digits of pi! ■



IMAGINATION INSPIRATIONS

This month, Haine Middle School hosted the author Jonathan Auxier who presented on his unique process of writing middle school level books. Mr. Auxier shared how he daydreams ideas and gave an entertaining discussion of his books while performing yo-yo tricks for the audience.

His most popular book, 'Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes,' is a story about a blind orphan who becomes the most incredible thief the world has ever known. He can smell gold in someone's pocket, hear a guard's heartbeat from around the corner, and touch so precisely that he can pick any lock ever invented.

Mr. Auxier tells his audiences that he is a professional daydreamer. He shared a sneak peek into his journal and told stories about his childhood, which inspires the stories he writes. The students were all very impressed with his final Yo-Yo trick of the show – the DNA. It is a challenging trick, made popular by TikTok, which involves tossing the Yo-Yo sideways, balancing it on your finger, twisting the string inside the Yo-Yo and when ready, it unleashes the string into a "DNA-Helix" shape in the air. It is quite a feat to watch! His books are intriguing for all ages. Each story will take you on an unexpected journey you will never forget. ■



SV3 FUN IN THE PRINCIPALS' 200 CLUB

Each day at Ehrman Crest Middle School (ECMS), some students get recognized for being respectful, responsible and ready, also known as SV3.

Staff randomly receive SV3 tickets which can then be given to students who they see going out of their way to demonstrate the three goals. When students receive a ticket they are awarded with a certificate in the office and are able to sign the Celebrity Book. These students are also randomly assigned spots to enter their names on the Principals' 200 Board. Once a row on the board has been completely filled with 10 names, those students are invited to participate in a mystery motivator reward, a special activity with both ECMS Principals.

This month, Mr. Tim Eiler, Principal of Ehrman Crest Middle School, played a fun game of Human Battleship in the gym! ■



RYAN GLOYER MIDDLE SCHOOL UNVEILS NEW SERVICE PROGRAM, 'COMMUNITY GROWN'

Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) is preparing a school-wide team of helping hands with the new "Community Grown" service program.

In an effort to strengthen connections with each of the nine communities within the Seneca Valley School District, Ryan Gloyer Middle School hosted an event for municipal leaders to learn more about their new initiative "Community Grown."

This new program will be a building-wide service-learning initiative where each RGMS team made up of seventh and eighth-grade students, will work with one of the nine communities to identify a need. Once a need is determined, the team will work on planning for a solution that will include community service.

The planning phases for "Community Grown" are underway and RGMS is hoping to partner each of their teams with a community to complete a service project in the spring. RGMS has a total of 10 teams; therefore, Cranberry Township would likely have two teams working on projects.

The program will facilitate and empower students to serve others, develop connections to the community, and become more experienced individuals. ■



FINDING YOUR PASSION

Industrial Engineer, NAVY Officer, Attorney and Accountant.

Those were just four of the amazing presenters at Haine Middle School's Exploratory Career Day.

Students had the opportunity to hear from over 20 presenters about careers in Automotive Services, Law, STEM, Health



Science, Business, Hospitality and Tourism, Finance, Architecture and more!

A special thank you to all of the presenters and those who helped make the day a success! Students asked great questions and gained useful experience about their careers of interest. ■



THE POWER OF FILM

Earlier this month, over 90 sophomores from Ms. Russo and Miss Landolina's English 10 classes traveled to the Lindsay Theater in Sewickley to watch the biographical drama *Till*.

The movie is based on the true story of Mamie Till-Bradley who pursued justice after the brutal murder of her son Emmett in August 1955. Students are currently studying elements of drama and how the arts can be used as social commentary in

their classes. As a topic relevant to Women's History Month and the Civil Rights Movement, the movie served as a very powerful example of how film can teach.



The film was provided by Teen Screen, a free educational program for students and teachers that focuses on important and engaging topics through film. ■



Pictured closest to view: Niko Papakirk, Steven Patterson, Evan Macinerney and Eric Chen

FUNDS DONATED TO STUDENT VISIONARIES

Juniors Sarah Vescio and Kacy Christensen have BIG goals! Over the last two months, the students have been raising funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) in support of its mission to cure blood cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients. Their goal was to raise \$30,000 by the end of this month.

At the Central Office, employees who donated a minimum of \$10 to the organization enjoyed the opportunity to dress down by wearing jeans on a selected day last month. Together, the Central Office raised \$130 toward the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's mission and were able to present the funds to Miss Vescio and Miss Christensen.

The young women were motivated to participate in the campaign after their teammate, Virginia Fronk, a senior on the Girls Soccer team, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in August of 2022. The students were inspired by Miss Fronk's journey to beat cancer and how her positivity impacted the entire community. ■



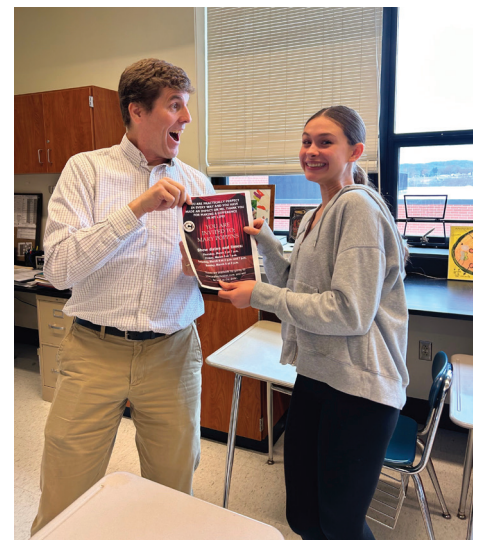
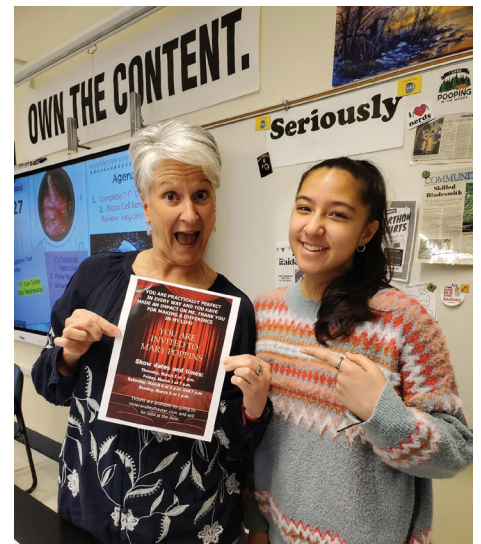
'MARY POPPINS'

Congratulations to the entire cast and crew of "Mary Poppins" for six amazing performances earlier this month. They were all met with rave reviews! ■



IMPACTFUL TEACHERS RECEIVE SPECIAL INVITE TO SV ALL-SCHOOL MUSICAL

This month, student leads in the musical “Mary Poppins” chose impactful teachers to invite and attend a performance of the all-school musical. This “pinning” ceremony included a personal invitation and “Mary Poppins” pin, and was a wonderful way to demonstrate appreciation for the roles teachers play in the lives of students. ■



SV SENIOR RECOGNIZED AS 'KIDS WHO CARE' HONOREE

Dyllann Volz is constantly in action. The senior at Seneca Valley Senior High School regularly volunteers for The Miracle League, Pittsburgh Zoo, Seneca Valley Junior Football & Cheer Association (SVJFAC), and extensively at Glade Run. She is also a varsity cheer member, captain of the competitive cheer team, and is a Highest Honor Roll student.

Miss Volz's dedication and volunteerism at Glade Run earned her special recognition this month. Pittsburgh Cares, a non-profit program focused on community service, named Miss Volz as one of its 2023 Kids Who Care Honorees. The organization awards students who go above and beyond in their community and 'embodies everything a caring kid should be.'

For the past six years, Miss Volz has organized a Back-to-School Drive for students at Glade Run. She also volunteers for the Glade Run Adventures Program and their equine services. On top of it all, she dedicated her senior project to coordinating an in-kind drive for the Winter Warming Center.

"This award really means so much to me, but there honestly is no greater honor than being able to serve our community," said Miss Volz. "People never really recognize the struggle that occurs right here in our community, so I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to make change right here in our area."



Glade Run nominated Miss Volz for the 2023 Kids Who Care Awards based on her commitment to service and supporting students and clients over the years.

"I am beyond thankful for the nomination from Glade Run and I cannot wait to continue to assist this wonderful organization and also take what I have learned over these past 6 years of being involved with this group into my future," Miss Volz said. ■

LEARNING MORE ABOUT LAWS WITH STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEPHENIE SCIALABBA

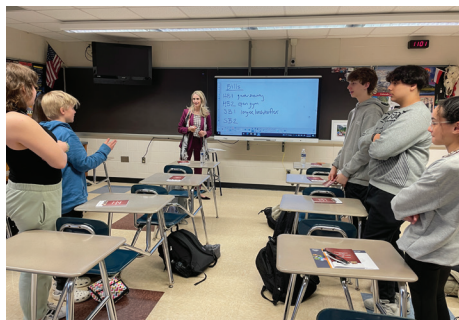
On Tuesday, March 28, State Representative Stephenie Scialabba visited with eighth graders in Mr. Herb McCracken's social studies classes at Ryan Gloyer Middle School. Students learned a little bit about what Representative Scialabba does in her role and how it relates to them. Throughout the presentation, students gained more knowledge about laws, how they are made and how laws are enforced.

"My goal has always been to have my kids have a basic understanding of Federal, state and local government and this is a great opportunity for my students to hear what the State of Pennsylvania is working on and the ongoing issues that present themselves to our citizens," stated Mr. McCracken. "I think it helps my students understand where their parent's taxes are being used."

Toward the end of the class period, students were divided into two groups, the House of Representatives, and the Senate. These groups brainstormed ideas on how

to make their school a better place and turned their ideas into bills. The students proceeded with debating their bills followed by a hands-on experience of how a bill becomes a law.

"State Representative Stephenie Scialabba was a good speaker, easy to listen to and made the law passing procedure easier to understand," said eighth grader Ian Benson. "I really liked that we got to debate about the laws our groups proposed, and I enjoyed learning that our legislature does that exact thing, debate." ■



RAIDERTHON RAISES OVER \$11,000

Seneca Valley Senior High School (SHS) Student Council's ninth Annual Raiderthon was bigger than ever!

Between raffle baskets, donations, and an active GoFundMe page, the event, held March 24, raised over \$11,000 for the Miracle League of Southwestern PA (SWPA).

The 400 plus people in attendance participated in carnival games, an escape room, 'pie the principal,' face painting, karaoke, a dodgeball tournament, and much more. Miracle League players were interviewed on their favorite part of being on a Miracle League Team and participants danced the night away learning the moves to *High School Musical's*, "We're All in This Together."

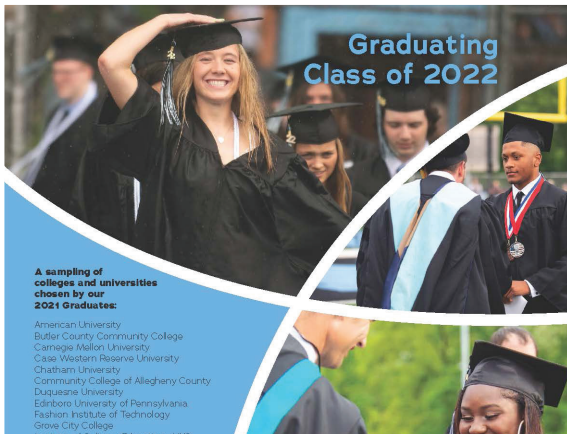
It's easy to say the event was fun for everyone involved!

Over the last nine years, Seneca Valley students have raised over \$100,000 for the Miracle League of SWPA. To continue to help SV reach their goal, SV SHS Student Council set up a GoFundMe page for donations: [Fundraiser by SVSD SHS Student Council Raiderthon : SVSD's 2023 Raiderthon \(gofundme.com\)](#)



SENECA VALLEY PRESENTS "INSPIRE. CONNECT. EXCEL."

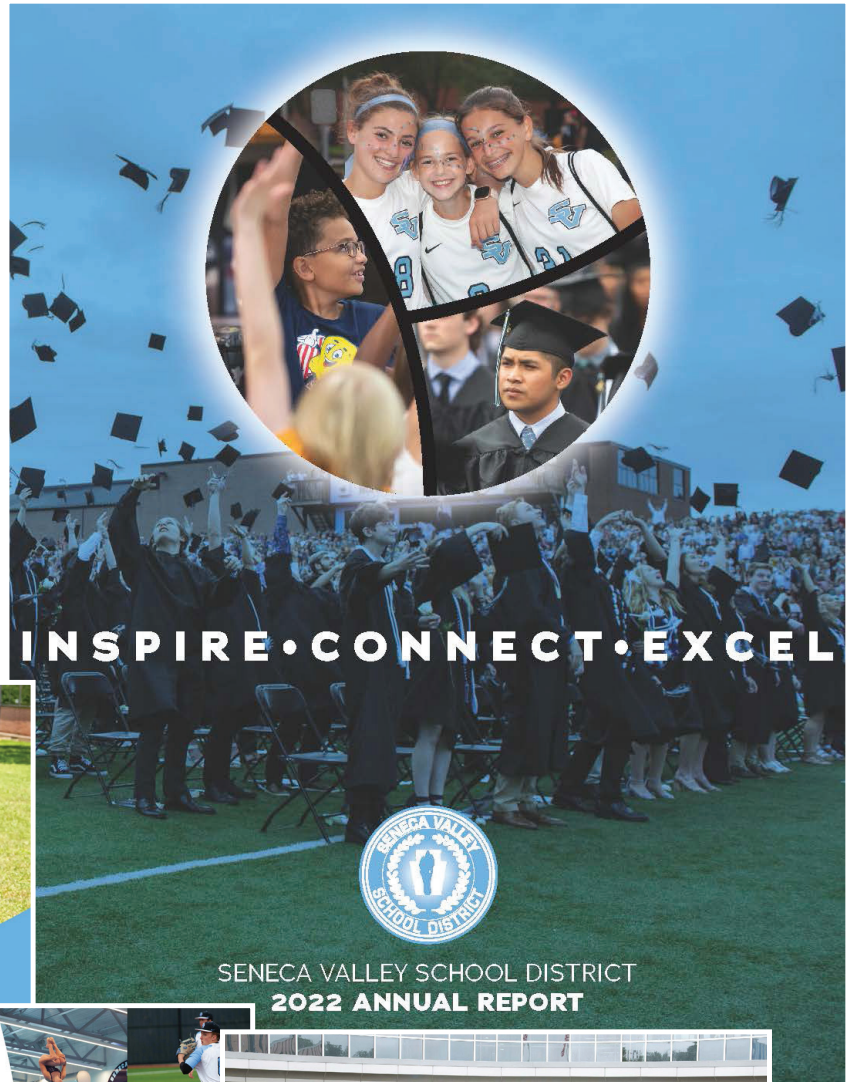
The 2022 Seneca Valley Annual Report is coming soon! Here's a sneak peek at what you can expect to see. ■



Graduating Class of 2022

A sampling of colleges and universities chosen by our 2021 Graduates:

- American University
- Butler County Community College
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Case Western Reserve University
- Chatham University
- Community College of Allegheny County
- Duquesne University
- Edison University of Pennsylvania
- Fashion Institute of Technology
- Grove City College



INSPIRE • CONNECT • EXCEL



SENECA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT
2022 ANNUAL REPORT

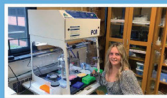


Seneca Valley

The Seneca Valley Center for Excellence is celebrating 10 years of excellence and program support of our community throughout the district.



As we continue to support our community throughout the district, we are proud to have received the Seneca Valley Educational Center for Excellence award.



The Seneca Valley Center for Excellence is dedicated to providing a high-quality education for all students. We are proud to have received the Seneca Valley Educational Center for Excellence award.

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Athletics and Activities

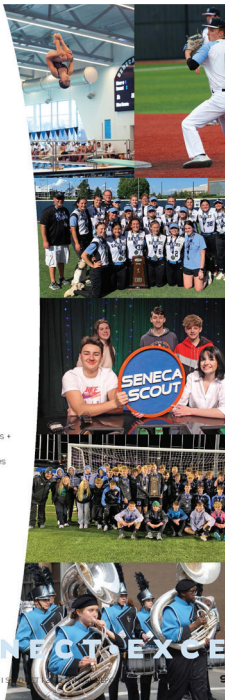
- 82** Total number of athletic programs (male and female combined)
- 83** Extracurricular clubs/activities for grades 7-12
- 1,705** Student rostered participation opportunities in athletics (958 boys, 737 girls, grades 7-12)
- 36.59** Total percentage of students who participate in athletics (grades 7-12)
- 1,372** Total number of students who participate in extracurricular clubs/activities (grades 7-12)
- 39.19** Total percentage of students who participate in extra-curricular clubs/activities (grades 7-12)
- 1** Number of PIAA Team State Champions:
 - Seneca Valley Boys' Swimming & Diving Team
- 2** Number of PIAA Team State Finalists:
 - Seneca Valley Boys' Soccer Team
 - Seneca Valley Girls' Softball Team

Honor Roll Athletes:

- Honor Roll Athletes = 372 students (290/43)
- High Honor Roll Athletes = 272 students (212/30)
- Highest Honor Roll Athletes = 525 students (405/90)
- Total Athletes who made Honor Roll (Honors + High Honors + Highest Honors) = 1,959 students (91,284)
- Total number of students who participate in sports (grades 7-12) = 1,281

- 20** Estimated hours athletes invest in sports weekly
- 248** Students who are part of a club that serves our communities

- 82** Staff members who serve as advisors for these extracurricular activities
- 190** Staff members who serve as coaches for athletics teams



Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School

WE EXCEL. Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School opened in August 2022. This state-of-the-art K-6 facility was designed to be a learning tool and provide a vast array of dynamic and unique learning environments. TIME publishes an annual list highlighting the most impactful new products and ideas from around the world and Ehrman Crest was recognized as one of the Best Inventions of 2022. Ehrman Crest was the only school on the list and was chosen based on originality, efficacy, ambition and impact. We are incredibly proud of this designation and the learning opportunities the school provides.

Visit www.svsd.net/story/ehrmancrest to learn more.



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HARMONY-ZELIENOPLE COMMUNITY BAND RETURNS TO THE STAGE

More than 25 years ago, Sue VanArsdale, a retired elementary instrumental teacher at Evans City Elementary and Connoquenessing Valley Elementary, wanted to create an opportunity for adults who had a passion for music to play their instruments again. Originally established as a continuing education course through Butler County Community College, the group rapidly grew in number allowing it to become what is now the Harmony-Zelienople Community Band. Boasting a roster of close to 80 members, the band is made up of adult residents from the Zelienople, Harmony, and Cranberry communities as well as surrounding neighborhoods who all share the desire to play live music in a band setting. Many of the members are SV alumni, SV teachers, current SV instrumental students, and extended family members.



The group is currently led by Sara Snyder and Varden Armstrong, secondary instrumental directors.

On Sunday, March 19, the band performed their first concert since 2019. The pandemic hit just as the band was set to

perform their concert in March of 2020. For the past three years, members have waited patiently to have the opportunity to perform again. Thankfully, rehearsals resumed this past January at Ryan Gloyer Middle School and plans were made for a performance. The concert featured a wide variety of music, including a French horn solo by Kim Hummel (SV Class of '85).

The community band movement nationwide is unique as it presents the opportunity for members who grew up with music in school to continue that passion as adults. Combined with having family members participate as well as current students, the experience represents how music is a lifelong activity for people of any age. The Seneca Valley community is fortunate to have a band that it can call its own. ■

PMEA REGION BAND @ BUTLER HS

This month, nine SV Band students were selected to participate in the PMEA Region 1 Band Festival that was held at Butler Intermediate High School from March 23-25. Region Band comprises a select group of students who have advanced through audition to the regional level of the state festival process. Region 1 comprises eight counties from three PMEA district-level bands. Christopher M. Cicconi, Director of Bands and Assistant Professor of Music Education at Towson University, conducted the festival. A highlight of the concert was the performance of "Come Sunday" by Omar Thomas. This selection won the 2019 National Band Association Revelli Composition Contest.



Students are led by Varden Armstrong, Robert Babick, Brian Croach, and Sara Snyder, secondary instrumental instructors.

Participants: Leanne Abel – trombone, Paityn Armstrong – clarinet, Nicole Brown – bass clarinet, Peter Ko – alto sax, Colton Marley – trumpet, Camyn Meanor – french horn, Bridget Scott – trombone, Mackenzie Tunstall – clarinet, and Raymond Walter – trumpet. ■

SAXOPHONE QUARTET PERFORMS FOR SCHOOL BOARD AND DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR BANQUET

The Seneca Valley Saxophone Quartet played for area school superintendents and University of Pittsburgh professors at the 74th annual School Board and Distinguished Educator Banquet hosted by the Tri-State Area School Study Council on March 16.



The student quartet includes seniors James Beck, Bailey Milanovich, Peter Ko and Colton Firster. They were guided by Varden Armstrong, high school band director and performing arts coordinator.



The Seneca Valley Wind Ensemble began a new concept this year called the "Chamber Group Initiative." This initiative created small ensembles from within the larger group and allowed students opportunities to perform in the community and develop strong musical independence. This quartet is one of the groups formed from this initiative. The banquet guests were rather impressed with the quartet's talent and professional performance, with several stating they couldn't believe these were high school students. ■

PMEA REGION ORCHESTRA FESTIVAL

On Thursday, March 9, six students from Seneca Valley participated in the Western Region Orchestra concert held in State College, PA. Due to inclement weather, the festival was moved from a three-day festival to a two-day festival with an impromptu performance. Despite a difficult situation, students rose to the occasion and performed a concert under the direction of Conductor Douglas Droste. Mr. Droste, a conductor at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory, led students in the preparation of Peer Gynt Suite, Elegy op. 58, and movement four of Scheherazade.

Orchestra director Sarah Miller said, “In spite of the hectic situation, students performed beautifully. It was fun to see them act with such maturity with a rapidly changing schedule and perform in their street clothes!” Sophomore Isabella Muthler, a violist, will be advancing to All-State Orchestra to be held in April.

Participants:

Tristan Conrad – cello, Charlotte Davis – violin, Gretchen Kellar – violin, Isabella Muthler – viola, Jacob Pieszak – violin, and Grace Riggle – violin.



SV CHOIRS MAKE ‘MAGICAL’ JOURNEY TO FLORIDA

Disney Imagination Campus welcomed 225 Seneca Valley Chorus members March 16-20. The wonderful world of Disney provided students with opportunities to experience a broad range of disciplines and improve many skills. Students participated in workshops to hone their craft while working with artists in the industry (including Apple TV/Amazon Prime star Billy Flanigan) to see what it is like to be an entertainment professional. The result of each workshop was the students’ creation of soundtracks and videos performed to iconic Disney film music, which parents will be able to view at the Spring concerts. While there, students also had the special opportunity to meet Christina Sivrich, a Pittsburgh native and friend of Mrs. Alexander, who left Broadway to star as ‘Dory’ in the popular Nemo show! Ms. Sivrich welcomed the main characters into the theater after the show for a private ‘talk-back’ with SV students. In addition to the educational workshops, the SV Chorus ate at the Hard Rock Café Orlando, enjoyed a pool party at the hotel, visited all four parks, and even had a banquet at a Country Club to conclude the trip! It truly was the “most magical trip on Earth.”





LESSONS FOR LIFE

As I sit to write this message, we have just wrapped up our winter sports season and are welcoming the start of spring sports, weather permitting! Recently, I have spent countless hours traveling with teams - to their respective post-season events - and the miles have given me the opportunity to reflect on the season and the performances of our talented student-athletes. My reflection leads to feelings of admiration and appreciation. I continue to be amazed at the accomplishments of our student-athletes but am not surprised, given their dedication and sacrifices in pursuing excellence. My appreciation is for the countless hours our coaches spend with their student-athletes, often at the expense of their own family time. The basis of what

we do in Raider Athletics is teaching life lessons, those which will lay a foundation with our students for enduring success. One of the gifts of sport is the opportunity for growth in failure and validation of teamwork in triumph. As we can expect from sport, I have witnessed exhilaration and heartbreak. I have seen Raider student-athletes win championship medals and narrowly miss podium finishes; I have watched personal bests in competition and untimely, devastating injuries at inopportune times. Through it all, our student-athletes have handled their accomplishments and adversity with an uncommon humility and grace. As I think about their futures, I feel confident their education from sport has positioned them for extraordinary accomplishments.

- Heather Lewis, Athletic & Activities Director. ■

WINTER SPORTS FINAL RECAP

Boys Swimming & Diving – WPIAL Runner-Up

The reigning WPIAL and PIAA champions finished their regular season dual meet schedule with an overall record of 8-3 and a section mark of 5-1 to finish as section runner-up. Entering the WPIAL championships, the Raiders had a number of top seeds, and the medal count confirmed the sustained excellence of this program. One of the highlights from post-season was the Raider boys diving team finishing with all four entries on the WPIAL championships podium. Even more exceptional - Isaiah Clerkley, Jeremiah Laslavic, and Sam Hersick finishing **ONE, TWO, THREE** to secure three of the WPIAL's four entries into the PIAA championships! As in section competition, our boys finished as WPIAL runner-up to North Allegheny and in the PIAA championships they were the highest placing team from the WPIAL at number six. We congratulate the entire program - athletes and coaches - on another outstanding season!



Medalists from WPIAL & PIAA Championships:

Boys team WPIAL & PIAA medalists

- **200 Medley Relay** – 2nd place (Connor Seeley, Logan Hockenberry, Gavin Blazer, Haihan Xu)
- **PIAA** – 6th Place (Connor Seeley, Haihan Xu, Logan Hockenberry, Gavin Blazer, Frankie Walton)
- **200 Free** – Connor Seeley, 4th place
- **200 IM** – Haihan Xu, 1st place
- **PIAA** – Haihan Xu, 4th place
- **100 Fly** – Gavin Blazer, 4th place
- **200 Free Relay** – 1st place (Gavin Blazer, Connor Seeley, Frankie Walton, Haihan Xu)
- **100 Backstroke** – Connor Seeley, 4th place
- **100 Breaststroke** – Haihan Xu, 1st place
- **PIAA** – Haihan Xu, 2nd place
- **400 Free Relay** – 7th Place (Gavin Blazer, Logan Hockenberry, Connor Seeley, Frankie Walton)
- **Diving, 1m** – Isaiah Clerkley, 1st place; Jeremiah Laslavic, 2nd place; Sam Hersick, 3rd place; Miles Miller, 8th place
- **PIAA** – Isaiah Clerkley, 2nd place; Jeremiah Laslavic, 5th place



Girls Swimming & Diving – 4th Place Finish at WPIALs

Raider girls swimming & diving had another great season, finishing the year 8-3 overall (5-1 in section meets) and finishing in fourth place overall at the WPIAL Championships. Five athletes secured individual WPIAL medals and all three relays found their way to the WPIAL championships podium and a spot in the PIAA state championships. The exciting part is that all WPIAL medalists and PIAA performers will return in 2023-24. The future is very bright for our Raider girls swimming & diving program! Congrats to the entire 2023-24 team.



Medalists from WPIAL & PIAA Championships:

Girls team WPIAL medalists

- **200 Medley Relay** – 7th place (Bella Kling, Alissa Wilson, Sonya Dietz, Lena Rothrock)
- **200 IM** – Alissa Wilson, 5th place
- **50 Free** – Claire Riehl, 8th place
- **200 Free Relay** – 5th place (Claire Riehl, Lena Rothrock, Audrey Wolfe, Morgan Baker)
- **100 Free** – Claire Riehl, 7th place
- **400 Free Relay** – 5th place (Bella Kling, Morgan Baker, Alissa Wilson, Claire Riehl)
- **Diving, 1m** – Cooper Burcham (7th place); Chloe Petersen (8th place)

Boys Wrestling – Sends Two to PIAA Championships

A tradition that never gets old – Raider wrestling sends multiple team members to the PIAA state championships. Senior Tyler Chappell and junior Connor Smith earned their trips to the Hershey Giant Center and Connor brought home a medal, finishing in 8th place at 114 lbs. Freshman Zach Hill earned a spot on the podium at WPIALs, finishing in 8th place at 133 lbs. We congratulate Tyler on an outstanding career – one that featured him never being pinned – and wish him all the best starting his Pitt wrestling career next year.



Wrestling Medalists from WPIAL & PIAA Championships:

- Connor Smith (114 lbs): WPIAL, 3rd Place; PIAA, 8th place
- Tyler Chappell (127 lbs): WPIAL, 4th Place; PIAA qualifier
- Zach Hill (133 lbs): WPIAL, 8th Place

Girls Wrestling – Sends Two to State Championships

In what can only be described as an outstanding inaugural season, Raider girls wrestling qualified two athletes out of the regional tournament for the state championships – sophomore Maddee Fischer and junior Khloe Hollinger with Fischer coming home with an 8th place medal. In addition, junior Natalie Tofanelli and freshman Haley Hunter earned top-8 medals at regionals. With a roster which featured only one senior, it is an exciting future for girls wrestling at Seneca Valley. Congrats girls on setting an extremely high standard!

Wrestling Medalists from Regional & State Championships:

- Maddee Fischer (130 lbs): 4th Regionals; 8th States
- Natalie Tofanelli (130 lbs): 6th Regionals
- Haley Hunter (170 lbs): 7th Regionals
- Khloe Hollinger (190 lbs): 3rd Regionals; State qualifier



Boys Basketball – WPIAL Playoffs

Raider boys' basketball drew the 7th seed in the WPIAL bracket and traveled to Upper St. Clair on Feb. 24, 2023, for their quarterfinal match-up. The opening half saw the USC Panthers shoot lights out while our Raiders struggled to find their rhythm and SV entered the locker room down 31-14. The lead grew to 18 for USC early in the second half and, as this team has done all season long, the Raiders fought their way back into the game outscoring the Panthers 20-4 in the fourth quarter! Despite their heroic effort in the fourth quarter, the Raiders fell 45-43 after a last-second shot by senior Luke Lawson fell short. This year's team will be remembered for their "never say quit" attitude – always fighting until the final horn. Congrats on a good season boys.

All-Conference Selections Announced in Winter Sports

The Big 56 Conference recently announced its winter sport honorees in boys' and girls' basketball and the Raiders were well represented. The following Seneca Valley student-athletes were recognized for their excellence on the court.

Boys Basketball

1st Team	2nd Team
Luke Lawson	Connor Oros

Girls Basketball

2nd Team	Honorable Mention
Natalie Hambly	Emerson Pepper ■



COLLEGE COMMITMENTS – CLASS OF 2023



Raider student-athletes continue to make their college commitment official through the winter months. We congratulate these seniors in achieving their goals of continuing their athletic and academic careers at the next level. Each of you are tremendous representatives of Raider Athletics and we are proud of your efforts in the classroom, in competition, and in the community.

Name	Sport	College/University	Major
Evan Bulvin	Men's Lacrosse	Univ. Mount Union	Business Management
Ella Butterfield	XC/T&F and Swimming	Bethany College	Biochemistry
Maya Perry	Women's Lacrosse	Virginia Wesleyan	Univ. Elementary Education ■

SV WELCOMES ACCLAIMED SPEAKER TO SHARE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF THE INTERNET

In an ongoing effort to provide tools that help students safely navigate social media and online activities, the Seneca Valley Foundation partnered with Ryan Gloyer Middle School Librarian, Angela Kotula, and School Resource Officer, Chris Miller, to welcome Alicia “Kozak” Kozakiewicz, a highly sought-after motivational speaker and Internet safety expert, to share her first-hand experiences with secondary students.

Ms. Kozakiewicz is an internationally acclaimed advocate who, through personal testimony, recently shared her story of Internet grooming, abduction and captivity at the hands of an Internet predator with all students in grades 7 through 12. At age 13, Ms. Kozakiewicz, a Pittsburgh native, became the first widely reported Internet-related child abduction victim. Following her rescue, Ms. Kozakiewicz has devoted her life to raising awareness of missing persons and protecting children against predatory crime.

In the interactive presentations, students learned the importance of cyber security, and how to safely use computers, mobile devices, social media, gaming systems and apps. She not only motivated students to transcend life’s challenges, but to pursue their passions, and to discover their purpose. Her extraordinary life story exemplifies the strength of the human spirit’s ability to overcome adversity and to deny defeat.

“Alicia’s presentation is an example of authentic real-world learning that is actively and positively impacting our students. Through her emotional and personal story, Alicia was able to show our students that there are real dangers online. She left students with the message that making good choices online can save their lives, and that they are not defined by life’s tragedies,” Ms. Kotula said.



Pictured from left to right: Dr. Jeffrey Roberts, Mr. Dean Walker, Ms. Julia Benson, Ms. Alicia Kozakiewicz, Ms. Annie Mersing and Mr. Vic Conrad



Pictured from left to right: Officer Chris Miller, Alicia Kozakiewicz and Ms. Angela Kotula, RGMS Librarian

“I thought the stories she shared were very impactful,” stated seventh grader Anthony Hernandez. “What she went through was horrifying and made me realize we need to be safer on the internet. It’s not just girls who can get lured by online predators, it’s young men as well. We also learned



that predators can be anybody, especially those you don’t expect.”

Special thanks to Ms. Kotula and Officer Miller for bringing this issue to the forefront in order to keep students safe.

Read more and watch the WPXI story [here](#).

SUPPORT FROM OUR NEIGHBORS

Many thanks to our neighbors, MPLX (Evans City) for their generous contribution of \$1,000 to the SVF. Through this donation and others like it, we are to further our mission of providing the Gift of Hope and Promise of Excellence to the students and staff of Seneca Valley. We are incredibly grateful for our friends at MPLX and their commitment to being a partner in public education. ■



Pictured from left to right: Ms. Brittany Dean, MPLX Administrative Assistant, Ms. Annie Mersing, SVF Development Director, and Mr. Tyler Beck, MPLX Regional Manager

HART MINI-GRANTS

The Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) is excited to announce that Mr. Randy Hart and his family have committed \$25,000 to the SVF for SV-teacher-inspired projects through “Hart Mini-Grants.” Funds will be awarded up to \$1,000 per teacher and can be used for classroom enhancements, projects and experiences that focus on outdoor enrichment, physical activity and “things that make students smile.”

These mini-grants are made in memory of Ms. Jackie (Hart) Morris, daughter of Randy and Cynthia Hart of Zelenople. Jackie, a 1998 graduate of Seneca Valley, passed away in 2012 after a brave battle with cancer. She is remembered by her family, friends and fellow SV alumni as someone who always strived to make others happy. She enjoyed being outdoors and enjoying



nature, as well as playing sports and being active. It is the hope of the Hart family that projects will inspire students and staff to be creative and kind, and to keep smiling!

SV Teachers can apply for these mini-grants [here](#) or through the pictured QR Code. We look forward to hearing the creative and impactful ideas of SV Teachers. ■

FUNDS RAISED FOR SV CENTER FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY

As part of his senior project, Andrew Weisgerber, with the help of Mr. Lavelle, Mr. Carson and Mrs. Griest, hosted a fundraiser to expose the Biotech lab to the public and garner financial support for its future. Funds raised from this event will go to the Seneca Valley Foundation and be earmarked for the lab’s future needs. Over 60 people attended and, so far, Mr. Weisgerber has raised almost \$3,000! The future for the students utilizing the lab is as bright as glowing bacteria, especially for Andy! ■



SV ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL NAMED EDUCATION AWARD WINNER

Leaders not only provide direction but also possess attributes that inspire and strengthen others. Ms. Quincy Gildea, Assistant Principal of Seneca Valley Intermediate High School, has been named a 2023 recipient of the Emerging Woman in Education Award in memory of Professor Emeritus Dr. Jean E. Winsand, University of Pittsburgh, as hosted by the Tri-State Study Council.

The Jean E. Winsand Emerging Woman Leader in Education Award honors a woman who is at an early stage on the path of her leadership career. The award is intended to recognize a woman who has made a significant impact and positive difference through her leadership activities and initiatives.

"I am honored to have been nominated and chosen for this award in honor of a trailblazing female educator, Dr. Jean E. Winsand," said Ms. Gildea. "This recognition speaks to the phenomenal leaders in my life who I have learned from and who believe in my abilities. We are profoundly fortunate here at Seneca Valley to have so many strong female leaders who inspire me and those around them each day."



Ms. Gildea earned her Bachelor's (Early Childhood Education) from Pennsylvania State University and Master's (Education Administration) from California University of Pennsylvania. Prior to becoming an Assistant Principal, Ms. Gildea worked as a third-grade teacher at Stenwood Elementary School in Virginia for two years before joining the Seneca Valley School District where she served as a second-grade teacher at Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School (CVE) for three years followed by Acting Assistant Principal for one year.

"We are so proud that Ms. Gildea has won the Emerging Woman in Education Award," stated Dr. Tracy Vitale, Seneca Valley School District Superintendent of Schools. "Quincy is a born leader who is firm but compassionate, level-headed, and mature beyond her years. She has made the transition from leading in one of our elementaries to now leading as an assistant principal in one of our high schools. This transition is not typical for many educational leaders. It is very apparent that her love for children and her passion for learning shines at all levels."

Ms. Gildea will be recognized during an awards ceremony at the upcoming Dr. Jean E. Winsand Workshop for Women in School Leadership in April. ■

SV ALL-STAR: HAINE MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONAL RECOGNIZED FOR DEDICATION TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS

For March we are pleased to announce the newest member inducted into the SV All-Star Club, Ms. Patty Ruggerio, special education paraprofessional at Haine Middle School.

The SV All-Star Club is an awards program developed by the District to express our gratitude to Seneca Valley classified employees (administrative assistants, paraprofessionals, maintenance, cafeteria), bus drivers and security guards who are often the unsung heroes of our schools. We recognize a new member of this elite all-star club each month.

"I first met Patty when I was a life skills classroom teacher; Patty was a paraprofessional supporting a student that began coming to my room," said Ms. Ashley Pattison, Supervisor of Special Education.

"Together, Patty and I have worked with the student to determine the student's behavioral needs, rule out academic concerns and help the student become successful at school. In the 10 plus years I have known Patty, I have observed her supporting students in our learning support program, multiple supports programs, as well as supporting a student as his personal care assistant. In every role Patty has possessed, I have seen her go above and beyond to support students with significant learning and behavioral needs. I have seen her implement behavior plans with fidelity, build relationships with students who are hard to connect with, and help her students be successful in their educational programming."

"Patty is a remarkable asset to Haine Middle School," said Dr. Erin Wilcher, Principal of Haine Middle School. "Her passion allows her the ability to see something special in every student she encounters. Every day she can be seen smiling, interacting, and supporting students within her special education classroom."



Pictured from L-R: Mr. Jeremy Womer, Vice Principal of Haine Middle School, Ms. Kathy Whittle, Board President, Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Patty Ruggerio, Ms. Ashley Pattison, Supervisor of Special Education and Dr. Erin Wilcher, Principal of Haine Middle School.

Ms. Pattison concluded, "What makes Patty the most deserving of this award is her selflessness. We have never heard her say no to any supports or recommendations the team, including me, have asked of her. She puts students first, always. It is my honor and privilege to present this award on behalf of the student service department and Haine Middle school." ■

'I LED THE PLEDGE'

Seneca Valley School District's School Board meetings were held on March 6 and 13. We were pleased to continue the tradition of inviting elementary students from Seneca Valley's K-4 schools to lead the members of the School Board and public in saying "The Pledge of Allegiance."

For the March 6, work session meeting, we were joined by Aubree Patton, a second grader at Rowan Elementary School. An outdoor enthusiast, Aubree also loves singing, dancing and being a gymnast. Her favorite subject in school is math and she wants to be a teacher when she grows up.



Aubree Patton with, from L-R, Ms. Kathy Whittle, Board President, Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent, and Ms. Angela Cardillo, Rowan Elementary Second Grade Teacher

For the March 13, regular session meeting, we were joined by Landon Donaldson, a fourth grader at Haine Elementary School. Landon's favorite subject in school is math, and he loves to play ice hockey. When he grows up, he wants to be either a hockey player or a geologist. Landon is also learning to play the saxophone and enjoys learning about military history, especially the Civil War and WWII. ■



Landon Donaldson with, from L-R, Ms. Kathy Whittle, Board President, and Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent

SENECA VALLEY ART STUDENTS BRING HOME GOLD AND SILVER AWARDS

Seven Seneca Valley students were recently announced as Gold Key winners in the 2023 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, while 11 students took home the Silver Key and 31 received Honorable Mentions.

Gold Key Winners include seniors Ava Campagna, Anna Johnson, Arden Kiely, Kimberly Lahoz-Ruiz, Regan Ridenour, Morgan Taber and sophomore, Miles Bornes. Gold Key Recipients go on to be judged at the National Level in New York City. Seneca Valley Silver Key recipients include seniors Allison Alexander, Jonathan Allen, Emma Bedell, Mattie Berger, Miles Bornes, Veronica Grassell, Anna Johnson, Gretchen Kellar, Kimberly Lahoz-Ruiz, Alexis Neal and Massi Petitta.

Also, several students from Seneca Valley received Honorable Mentions for their entries including seniors Allison Alexander, Jonathan Allen, Emma Bedell (12 Honorable Mentions), Mattie Berger, Ella Butterfield, Peri Gaguzis, Marijose Garcia Rodriguez, Grace Hwang, Anna Johnson (three Honorable Mentions), Kimberly Lahoz-Ruiz (three Honorable Mentions), Madison Long, Jackson Magill, Karen Malloy, Em Morrissey, Alexis Neal, Massi Petitta (two Honorable Mentions), Reagan Porter, Kayla Rabinovitz, Regan Ridenour, Eddie Soderquist, Mya Stackhouse (two Honorable Mentions), Kelli Trimble, Paige Walko (two Honorable Mentions); juniors Dacie Bachman (two Honorable Mentions), Paige Baker, Carly Cravotta, Daniel Edwards, Hannah Smith (three Honorable Mentions); sophomore Miles Bornes (three Honorable Mentions), Jo Fernandez-Jenkins (five Honorable Mentions) and Scarlet Woolslare.

“Our art students are some of the most creative, passionate, and dedicated students in the region,” exclaimed Seneca Valley Senior High School Art Teacher Jason Woolslare. “The numerous awards and accomplishments that were earned at the 2023 Scholastic Art & Writing exhibit demonstrates the passion and talent our students have in visual art.”



“I am in awe of our students’ talent, strength and creativity,” said Seneca Valley Senior High School Pottery and Ceramics Teacher Megan Bonistalli. “It takes bravery to submit personal work for evaluation amongst your peers, so I am always proud of all our Seneca Valley students who choose to enter such a giant competition. Their participation provides them with opportunities to learn about their artistic process, other types of art entered in the competition and how to move forward with feedback.”

Mr. Woolslare continued, “In addition, I am so grateful for Ms. Megan Bonistalli and her willingness to take the lead in coordinating the Scholastic Art show for the Pittsburgh region. It is a huge undertaking and provides an opportunity for thousands of students across the region to showcase their work in a juried exhibition.”

The regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards were held at Carnegie Mellon University in the Hall of Arts on Feb. 25, 2023. This event has grown to be the nation’s longest-running, most prestigious recognition initiation for creative teens, and the largest source of scholarships for young artists and writers. The Pittsburgh Arts Region encompasses all of Allegheny, Beaver, and Butler counties and is facilitated by the Seneca Valley School District, Pittsburgh Art Affiliate. ■



VOICES



A podcast from the Seneca Valley School District

Want to hear directly from the voices at Seneca Valley on the most current topics and updates? Join us in listening to Voices, a podcast brought to you by the Seneca Valley School District.

Check out our three-part series highlighting 25 years of the SV Graduation Project. These podcasts interview guests who share an inside look at the history behind the Graduation Project, benefits of the project, and a student's perspective of the Graduation Project. Be sure to subscribe to SV Voices and listen online [here](#) or anywhere you listen to podcasts.



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SV SELECTED FOR REMAKE LEARNING SITE VISIT

Through a collaborative partnership between the Remake Learning Personalized Learning working group, KnowledgeWorks and the SWPA Personalized Learning Network, Seneca Valley was selected as a site visit where several educators from over 30 different school districts were able to see firsthand the vast array of learning environments and programs offered to students. The overall goal of the visit was to create a resource for educators outlining key elements and components, including strategies, resources and local examples, that lead to a shift toward learner-centered practices and professional networking across the region.

Visitors were paired with SV administrators during guided tours led by senior high school (SHS) Student Council members. After the tours, educators returned to the SHS library where they listened to a student panel speak about their customized schedules based on their interests and future career goals. Student representatives from each of the five SV [Career Pathways](#) shared how their academic courses as well as their hands-on-experiences are preparing them for viable career options and/or post-secondary programs. Several students also explained the benefits of gaining college credits by taking CHS (College in High School) courses.

One student said she got to visit Connoquenessing Valley Elementary (CVE) School and received a hands-on education. Through this experience, she has decided to be a teacher. Another student who works in the SV Center for Biotechnology Research expressed how the lab provides him with a phenomenal opportunity to access advanced lab equipment. He said it not only increases his interest in science, but it also opens a lot of doors because he can get college-level experience in high school.

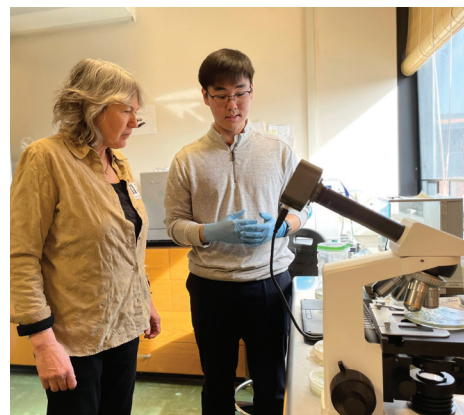
“Dr. Manganello and I have been active members of the Personalized Learning working group for a few years now,” said Ms. Amanda Mallin, Assistant Principal

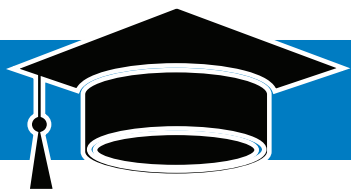


at Seneca Valley Academy of Choice. “In collaboration with KnowledgeWorks and the Remake Learning Network, we have had a voice in both practice and policy to build a framework for Personalized Learning. While collaborating in our network, we were chosen as a spotlight school last May. As the network began planning in-person site visits, we were asked if we would be willing to showcase some of the ways that SV empowers learners through relevant learning experiences.”

Ms. Mallin added, “The purpose of the site visit was to highlight some of the ways that our high school students take ownership of their learning through Customized Learning and Advanced Experience. Students shared firsthand why their customized schedule fits with their interests and future plans.”

To wrap-up the event, educators enjoyed a luncheon followed by networking and an optional off-campus tour of the new Seneca Valley Academy of Choice (SVAOC) Drop-in Center. ■





ALUMNI Q&A

Martina Beggy, SV '19, is a full-time student enrolled at American University in Washington, D.C., and working as a resident assistant for freshman residents on campus. We asked her to catch us up on what she is doing and how Seneca Valley influenced her life.

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

A: Currently, I am a senior at American University in Washington, D.C., and am earning my Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a focus in Justice, Ethics and Human Rights in the Middle East. I am also earning a minor in Arabic. Additionally, I am a Resident Assistant for freshman residents on campus. Although managing the freshmen residential class can be a handful, I absolutely love my job and the residents with whom I get to interact.

Since I am a senior, I am preparing to graduate and enter the big scary world. Right now, I have two options. I will either be going into the Peace Corps in Costa Rica to serve as a Youth Development Officer for two years or will be traveling to Jordan as a Fulbright Scholar to teach English for one year. I am a Fulbright Semi-Finalist so I'm now just waiting to hear back from them (but fingers crossed). I recently just got back from traveling abroad in Jordan. I was involved in an intensive, immersive language program where I only spoke Arabic for three months. It was difficult but so worth it because I feel confident now in my ability to speak a foreign language.

My eventual goal is to become an international human rights lawyer, but I wanted to take a break from schooling before entering law school so the options I have are two great opportunities to practice working in the human rights sector (education) before going into the crazy world of law school.

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

A: Although I missed my family so much when I was abroad, and I am sure I will miss them when I go abroad again, they have been so supportive of my travels and my education. My mom works in the Human Resources department at Seneca Valley (Hi **مومي**!!! That's the Arabic word for mom, pronounced 'oomee'). Over Thanksgiving break, my mom actually traveled to Jordan to visit me for two short days, but, in that time, we went all over Amman. She also met my language partner, and it was the absolute best time. I don't know if my dad or two brothers will ever travel to visit me wherever I end up in the world, but I know that they'll always Facetime and text me, despite the time difference.

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

A: I feel like people at university are always surprised to find this out, but if you know me from Seneca Valley, this won't be that surprising. But I can play the flute and piccolo. I still have the piccolo solo in "Stars and Stripes Forever" memorized.

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

A: Seneca Valley introduced me to my passion for human rights and international affairs. Without Seneca Valley, I would not be in university or the field that I am currently in today.

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

A: I think the individuality of SV's education makes it special. I took every single Advanced Placement (AP) class in the Social Studies field (to the dismay of my parents) because I knew that I was going to eventually end up in the social studies field. I also know I'm not the only person who was able to do that. If you're going into the medical field, anatomy and biology are offered, and there are so many math



classes for those who have a math brain. We even have a preschool for students who are looking at eventually becoming early education specialists. I was able to tailor my high school experience to what I eventually wanted to do and I think that's what makes Seneca so special because other high schools don't or can't offer the crazy amount of classes that Seneca does. It's amazing to think we have a metal fabrication class and a Biotech lab right in the high school.

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

A: There is absolutely no way you expect me to pick just one. All the band teachers are amazing and, even though I am not pursuing a career in music, that program along with teachers' encouragement, gave me the confidence in myself that I have today. Senor Fraser in the Spanish department introduced me to my first foreign language. Actually, because of Senor's insistence on conjugation, I am the best Arabic conjugator in the department. I would have to say that Mrs. McDermott and Ms. Nassan are the two people that

influenced me the most. Without those two I would have never pursued a degree in International Relations. I don't even know if I would have realized that there was a career field in this area of study. I could not have asked for two more supportive mentors who truly believed in me. It was their coaching and encouragement that inspired what I am doing today.

Q: What is one of your favorite memories from your time at Seneca Valley? We'd encourage you to recall a moment or event that had a particularly strong influence on your life.

A: My favorite memory was probably the band trip my senior year. I was the drum major for our marching band, and we marched in the Cherry Blossom Parade in Washington, D.C. It was really cool to end my high school career in the city where I was going to spend the next four years of my life. Funny story, too, from that trip; it had rained the morning of, so the road was wet. There was a piece of wet plastic on the ground, and I was marching backward conducting, and I slipped and fell. Mr. Babick caught me and stood me upright and I just kept on marching, but I still look back and laugh at that experience.

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

A: Don't forget the individuality of each student. It is because I was seen as a unique individual, rather than as part of a class, grade or club, that I was able to find my passion. That's how other students will



find their passions, as an individual rather than as part of a group.

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

A: I wish more people knew about Seneca Valley's great liberal art programs. There is a huge focus on STEM (don't get me wrong, it's amazing) but there are also so many great classes and clubs in the liberal art areas that might open students to different pathways. It was the College in High School (CHS) argument class that really got me thinking about becoming a lawyer.

Q: This question is being asked because the 22-23 school year marks the 25th year of SV's Senior/Graduation Project. What did you present during your Senior/Graduation Project and what did you learn from it?

A: I hosted a Model United Nations (MUN) for students at Seneca who don't normally get the opportunity to participate in MUN. As basic as it may seem, I learned how to put on a MUN Conference which actually landed me a three-year leadership position at American University hosting AmeriMUNC. Without doing a senior project, I never would have been in the Secretariat at AU. ■

FYI

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. ■



 A smartphone screen displays the Instagram profile for 'svhopesquad'. The profile includes a circular logo with a life preserver, 4 posts, 42 followers, and 12 following. The bio reads: 'SENECA VALLEY HOPE SQUAD Peer-to-Peer Suicide Prevention Mental Health Matters To Get Support & Care'. Below the bio is a link to 'www.caresolace.com/site/seneca' and buttons for 'Follow' and 'Message'. A grid of four mental health resources is visible at the bottom of the screen. A white callout box with a blue exclamation mark icon contains the text: 'FOLLOW SV HOPE SQUAD ON INSTAGRAM!'.

Did you know the SV Hope Squad is on Instagram?!

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD!

Sharing resources, tips, & more on mental health!



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD

I know two families for whom the New Year marked the anniversary of the poisoning death of their child by a drug most parents never heard of at the time. That drug is Fentanyl and is 100x more potent than morphine.

Fentanyl has taken over the street drug supply meant to mimic prescription drugs in color, imprinting and size. Apps like Snapchat, frequently used by teens, are the ‘seemingly innocent’ connection to drug dealers eager to deliver these ‘fake pills’. Dealers have the image of an electrical plug attached to their Snapchat profile to indicate their trade.

Recently a caring mom dismissed the Snapchat risk, stating that while she didn’t know how the settings worked on Snapchat or what the platform was about, she was ‘sure’ her teen had the proper privacy settings. As responsible parents, we can sometimes be too confident to heed warnings.

Monthly drug overdose/poisoning deaths of adolescents from 2019 to 2021 nearly tripled. At least 25% of these deaths were from ‘fake pills’.

Consider that some youth are looking for ADHD drugs that they think will help them study, Other youth may be looking for Percocet to relieve a resurgence of pain from a sports injury. **None are looking for a drug that will kill them!** The DEA reveals that **60% of drugs** seized now contain fentanyl. Marijuana purchased from drug dealers has no guarantees to be free of this drug. In **South Carolina, overdose incidents** were tied to marijuana laced with fentanyl and meth.

Everything related to best messaging styles for nonprofits would say don’t send a message like this - it is too negative. However, we would be remiss if we didn’t stress the urgency of this message.

However, we never leave our parents without coping skills. The nonprofit SongforCharlie.org and the Ad Council offer more background information and ways to talk with your child. Click on **Coping Skills** to become informed now.

Article provided by CANDLE, Inc. ■

LEARN ALL YOU CAN ABOUT FENTANYL NOW



This organization has a wealth of information highlighting the emerging dangers of self-medication and casual drug use in the fentanyl era and encourage healthier strategies for coping with stress.

[A Song for Charlie](#)

Is your child at risk for substance misuse? Find out with this 5 minute quiz.

This risk assessment is designed to help you better understand the risks your child may face related to mental health, well-being, personality, family history, and their environment.

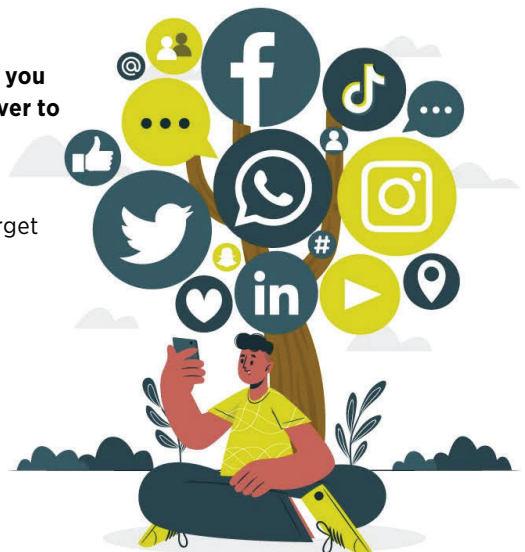
[Risk Assessment Tool](#)



Drug dealers are as close as you child’s phone...and will deliver to your door.

See how drug dealers are exploiting social media to target young people.

[Watch the video.](#) ■





- Breakfast is now **FREE** for all students. Click to learn more: [Food Services / General Information \(svsd.net\)](#)
- SV offers voluntary student accident insurance. To learn more and apply, visit: [Backpack Fliers / Education/ Resources \(svsd.net\)](#)
- Effective October 1, Pennsylvania will increase the income threshold for all applicants to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG). With this change, more than 420,000 additional Pennsylvanians in more than 174,000 households will be newly eligible for SNAP and will receive, on average, \$63 a month. To learn more, visit [Wolf Administration Marks Hunger Action Month by Expanding Eligibility for SNAP Benefits, Securing Food Assistance for More Pennsylvanians](#)
- Seneca Valley residents 62 years of age or older are invited to apply to become a member of the Seneca Valley School District Gold Card Club. Membership entitles card holders to attend home athletic events, music, dramatic and other

school productions. To apply for a gold card, please visit [Parents/Community / Gold Card Club \(svsd.net\)](#).

- Reality Tour is an accessible substance prevention program that delivers information to get parent and child on the same page
- [Substance Abuse Prevention for Parents - CANDLE, Inc. \(candleinc.org\)](#)
- [Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!](#)
- [Drive for SV! Sign-up bonuses are now being offered.](#)
- Join the SV Team! [Watch here](#) or visit [www.svsd.net/HumanResources](#) to learn more and apply.
- Visit [Niche](#) to view SV rankings ■



PARAS NEEDED!

Paraprofessionals:

We are accepting applications for the very fulfilling role of full-time paraprofessionals in various district buildings and at a rate of \$14.50/hour; 182-day school year. Responsibilities include supervising and assisting with students' daily routines. Proficient technology skills, and strong communication and interpersonal skills are key. Please submit required information to [www.svsd.net/Employment](#).

Substitute Paraprofessionals:

Make a difference in our schools! Responsibilities include supervising students' daily routines; \$13.50/hour. We are looking for individuals with proficient technology skills, and strong communication and interpersonal skills. If you are interested in becoming a substitute, please contact Kim Capozzi in Human Resources at capozzikb@svsd.net.



"I started working as a paraprofessional when my kids were in elementary school because it was the perfect schedule that allowed me to be home with them on breaks and summers. It was supposed to be temporary until they were old enough to be home alone, they are now in college, and I am still here. The Team I work with has been amazing and I've learned so much from them. It is so awesome to see how the students grow each year, knowing you played a part in it. The daily smiles, hugs, high fives and fist bumps make this a truly rewarding job."

Tracy Ekstam, Haine Elementary Learning Support Paraprofessional

"I have always appreciated the hard work and dedication Seneca Valley employees pour into their students, my children included. Each employee and personnel truly devote their heart to enriching the lives of the sweet children we are honored enough to see every day. There is no greater joy than seeing the academic and social strides the kids make from August - June. We are truly a family and support each other in all work and life endeavors. I am beyond proud to call myself a paraprofessional for Seneca Valley."

Kara Patrick, Haine Elementary Paraprofessional

REMOTE AREA MEDICAL



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED; JOIN THE MISSION TODAY!



DENTAL

- Dentists
- Oral Surgeons
- Dental Assistants
- Hygienists



VISION

- Optometrists
- Ophthalmologists
- Opticians
- Vision Techs



MEDICAL

- Physicians
- Physician Assistants
- Nurse Practitioners
- Nurses



General Support

- Interpreters
- Guides
- Data Entry & Much More!



Butler, PA

November 11-12, 2023

Butler Intermediate High

551 Fairgrounds Rd.

Butler, PA 16001

"To prevent pain and alleviate suffering by providing free, quality healthcare to those in need."

- RAM's Mission

FOR MORE INFO: RAMUSA.ORG | 865.579.1530





 **CRANBERRY**
TOWNSHIP

CRANFEST

a celebration of cultural diversity

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023

11AM - 3PM

**CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP
MUNICIPAL CENTER**



Join us for an afternoon filled with beautiful music, striking dance performances, and foods from across the globe.

All are welcome!



BE A PIONEER.

OPEN HOUSE

BC3 Main Campus

April 11

5 PM - 7 PM

Health Care Info Session | 4:30 PM



Ash Eury

Seneca Valley High graduate
BC3 biological science student
National Science Foundation selection



**RSVP at [BC3.edu/open-house](https://bc3.edu/open-house)
Apply for FREE at this event.**



[IRS.gov/ChildTaxCredit](https://www.irs.gov/ChildTaxCredit)



It's Not Too Late to Claim the **2021 Child Tax Credit**

Even If You Received Advanced Payments or Didn't File a Tax Return



If you don't normally file a tax return, but **you're eligible for the Child Tax Credit**, you can still claim the 2021 **Child Tax Credit** by filing a 2021 tax return – even if you had no income in 2021. Advance payments sent in 2021 were not the full amount of the credit.

The 2021 Child Tax Credit is \$3,600 for each qualifying child who was under age 6 in 2021 and \$3,000 for each child who was age 6 to 17 in 2021.

If you're eligible to claim the 2021 Child Tax Credit, you must file a tax return by April 15, 2025, to claim the refund.

IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is a great option for people who are only filing a tax return to claim the 2021 Child Tax Credit.

Visit www.irs.gov/VITA to find the site nearest you and a list of what to bring.

See the special section on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) about **claiming the Child Tax Credit if you aren't required to file a tax return**. Learn more at [2021 Child Tax Credit Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.irs.gov/ChildTaxCredit).



CTCC community days



JULY 13-15, 2023
CRANBERRY COMMUNITY PARK

Be a part of Cranberry's largest celebration of community and nonprofits! CTCC is actively accepting food, nonprofit, handmade, art, and direct sale vendors. Show your support for Cranberry, while promoting your brand, by becoming a sponsor!



free admission • 48,000+ attendees
nonprofit fundraiser • 3 days of FUN
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.YourCTCC.org/CommunityDays
CommunityDays@CranberryTownship.org



time for giving back

CTCC Community Days is an annual, 3-day event celebrating Cranberry Township nonprofits and businesses. This free event features live music, carnival rides, games, vendors, car show, 5K race, fireworks and so much more - excitement for the whole family!



The Cranberry Township Community Chest is a 501(c)(3) Pennsylvania non-profit corporation, EIN 25-1484323. Your gift to the Cranberry Township Community Chest is tax-deductible per the tax rules of the IRS. CTCC will provide a written acknowledgement of the tax-deductible contribution.



Help your preparer get your tax return right with the **tax credits** you have earned.



Life's a little easier with

Tax Credits

Tax return preparers, paid or volunteer, must ask many tough questions to figure out your correct filing status, total income, deductions and credits.

These credits include:

- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Child Tax Credit (CTC)
- Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC)
- Credit for Other Dependents (ODC)
- American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC)

Because the tax laws are complex, deciding if you qualify is not obvious.

Your return preparer also needs to see your Forms W-2, other income statements and receipts. He or she will ask for your worksheets or records if you are self-employed or own a business. If you had income that wasn't documented, tell your return preparer. Your return preparer will ask questions about your living arrangements and relationships to get your tax return right.

You can help by giving your return preparer all the needed information and answering all questions. Your return preparer is required by law to make sure your tax return is correct, complete and consistent. By giving all the right information, you greatly reduce your chance of being audited and paying additional tax, penalty or interest.

You need to protect yourself. Before you sign your tax return:

- Review your return with your return preparer to make sure it is complete and correct.
- Make sure anyone you pay to prepare a tax return enters his or her preparer tax identification number (PTIN) and signs the return (returns prepared at a volunteer site should have the site identification number but the volunteer does not sign the return).
- Make sure you are given a copy of your tax return to keep.

Remember, even if you have someone else prepare your tax return, YOU are still responsible for everything on it!

If your return is audited and the EITC, CTC/ACTC/ODC, or AOTC is disallowed, you must pay back any amount refunded in error plus any additional amount assessed, with interest, and may be:

- Required to file Form 8862, Information to Claim Certain Credits After Disallowance, to claim the credit again
- Banned from claiming the credit for two years if the IRS finds the error is due to reckless or intentional disregard of the rules
- Banned from claiming the credit for ten years if the IRS finds the error is due to fraud

Even though you are responsible for everything on your tax return, your return preparer must sign your tax return and meet certain due diligence requirements. If they fail to meet these requirements, they can also face:

- Return preparer penalties
- Suspension or expulsion from IRS e-file
- Disciplinary action by the IRS Office of Professional Responsibility
- An injunction barring them from preparing tax returns for others
- Criminal penalties for filing fraudulent returns