

# TYNOTES

A PUBLICATION OF THE TYRONE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



HOME OF THE GOLDEN EAGLES

## TAHS GRADUATE AND PHYSICIAN TO SPEAK AT 140<sup>th</sup> GRADUATION



**Paige Black Orphanidis, DO**  
**TAHS Class of 2006**

**D**r. Paige Black Orphanidis, a Pediatric Hospitalist in New Jersey and a 2006 Tyrone honors graduate, will be delivering the keynote speech at the Tyrone Area High School 2024 Commencement Ceremony.

Paige is the daughter of John and Traci (Loose) Black (TAHS '79 and '81 respectively). She grew up in Sinking Valley with her three younger siblings, Ross ('09), Libby ('13), and Abraham ('21).

As a student at TAHS, Paige actively participated in various clubs, sports, and activities. She was a member of the Student Council, Key Club, and National Honor Society. Additionally, she was involved in ski club, cross country, track, swimming, and powderpuff football. Paige also dedicated her time to Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) and served as the class vice-president.

After high school graduation, Paige embarked on fulfilling her aspirations outlined in the 2006 TAHS yearbook—to attend medical school and become a doctor. She pursued a major in Biology at Juniata College, where she graduated in 2010. She continued her passion for swimming at Juniata and even held the position of team captain.

Paige persevered on her path to becoming a doctor by attending the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, where she completed her Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine in 2016. While in medical school, she

also obtained her Master's Degree in Biomedical Sciences with an emphasis in research in 2015. She then completed her residency in Pediatrics at Gorey Children's Hospital at Morristown Medical Center in New Jersey, where she served as Chief Resident. She is board certified by the American Board of Pediatrics.

Currently, Paige works as a physician at Gorey Children's Hospital. Her expertise lies in evaluating, caring for, and managing hospitalized children from birth to age 21. In addition to her clinical responsibilities, she actively participates in research protocol development and quality improvement projects. Paige also takes on the role of supervising and teaching resident physicians and medical students as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics for the Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University.

Outside of her medical career, Paige and her husband, Phillip Orphanidis, founded and own Milton James Builders, a real estate development company specializing in eco-friendly, luxury homes with stunning views of the Manhattan skyline in Northern New Jersey. During their leisure time, they enjoy traveling to explore new destinations and immerse themselves in different cultures.

# MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Each year brings a sense of accomplishment for the things that we have achieved. However, each year also brings feelings of not having done enough. The latter feeling is how we improve and what gives us the foundation on which future goals are set. As the 2023-24 school year concludes, we can certainly rest easy knowing that students have made progress and relationships have been fostered; yet, we are already engaging in discussions about how each of those can be improved moving into the coming year. The time to prepare is short as we set goals based on our desire to provide the best educational experiences possible for our students.

In this issue, we feature our graduation speaker, Dr. Paige Black Orphanidis, TAHS Class of 2006, and welcome her back to TAHS to celebrate a milestone for the Class of 2024. We are happy to continue our tradition of inviting alumni speakers to address the graduating classes and we hope that this practice provides our seniors with the confidence of knowing that they have been provided a solid foundation on which to succeed. We also honor four retirees for their dedicated and loyal service to the Tyrone Area School District. These staff members have touched the lives of so many and we wish them all of the best in their retirement! Although we will replace the positions that these staff members fill, we can never replace the stories and memories that we have for each of these individuals who have touched the lives of so many.

This issue contains a section devoted to honoring our students whose hard work has advanced them to state and national competitions/honors in the areas of academics, athletics, and the arts. For a small school district, our students always compete at a high level! We are so proud of the achievements of all of our students!

We have much of which to be proud, and I would like to thank the Tyrone community for its support of our students and staff. Without your involvement and commitment, we could not provide such a successful educational program. Looking ahead, I am excited about the many possibilities for another productive year in 2024-25.

I hope that you find the contents of this publication interesting and informative. If you have comments or questions regarding any of this material or suggestions for future articles, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 814-684-0710, Extension 4137 or email [sjwoomer@tyrone.k12.pa.us](mailto:sjwoomer@tyrone.k12.pa.us).



**Leslie Estep**  
Superintendent of Schools



**Austin White and Board President Rose Black**

At its May 14, 2024, Regular Session meeting, the Tyrone Area School Board recognized Austin White, Student Board Representative, for his contributions to monthly school board meetings. He served as the Junior Class Representative for the 2022-23 School Year and as the Senior Class Representative for the 2023-24 School Year.

**Thank you, Austin!**

## Congratulations TAHS Class of 2024!

*Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain.*

*An occasional glance towards the summit keeps the goal in mind.*

*But many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point.*

*Climb slowly, steadily, enjoying each passing moment.*

*And the view from the summit will serve as a fitting climax for the journey.*

~Harold Melchert

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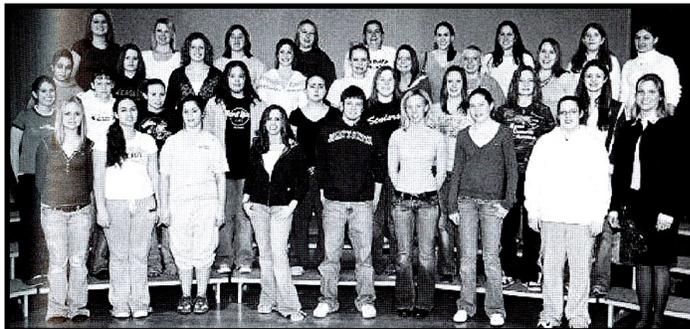
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It is the policy of the Tyrone Area School District not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, race and national origin in its educational and vocational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504, and Title VI. Please direct questions about this policy to Leslie Estep, Superintendent of Schools, at 814.684.0710, Extension 4123.

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Commencement Speaker continued from cover



**Photo top:** Paige and husband, Phillip, in Santorini, a picturesque Greek Island located in the Aegean Sea.

**Photo bottom left:** In her senior yearbook, Paige highlighted that being named the junior homecoming princess was the “most memorable moment” for her. She was escorted by Brian Pearson during the Fall 2004 homecoming festivities.

**Photo bottom center:** While in high school, Paige (front row, fourth from right) was a member of the Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). Health Technology Teacher and HOSA Advisor Christie Taylor (first row, first on right) recalls that Paige was very conscientious about her schoolwork, was soft spoken but very personable, and was excited to learn anything about medicine, no matter how small or insignificant it may have seemed.

**Photo bottom right:** Nearing the end of her final cross country season, Paige, along with other senior team members, posed for a group yearbook photo. (Left to right): Sam McCloskey, Aaron Houck, Paige Black, Emily Ingle, Chris Bradigan, and Eric Sweet.



## 50 YEAR FLASHBACK — TAHS CLASS OF 1974

Members of the Tyrone Area High School Class of 1974 will gather together in September 2024 to commemorate 50 years since high school graduation. The following activities are planned:

**Friday, September 13:** Picnic at Reservoir Park—Pavilion #1, beginning at 3:00 p.m., followed by home football game

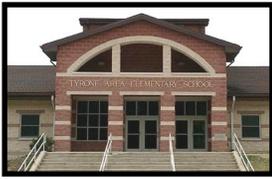
**Saturday, September 14:** Dinner, Music, and Mingling at the Bull Pen, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

For additional information, please visit the TASD website at [www.tyrone.k12.pa.us](http://www.tyrone.k12.pa.us), click on the “About Us” tab and select “Alumni.”

If you would like to post class reunion information on the TASD website, email the information to [cjblaska@tyrone.k12.pa.us](mailto:cjblaska@tyrone.k12.pa.us).

Pictured left are the Class of 1974 Senior Class Officers. Row 1 (L to R): Donna Moskel; Jacqueline Brown. Row 2 (L to R): Barbara Beringer; Wendy Freeman; Steve Gill. Row 3 (L to R): Cynthia McCutcheon; Dave Johnson; Samuel Williams.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOLS



## TAES

At the elementary school, students and staff members are busy wrapping up their learning for the 2023-2024 school year. Recently, all third and fourth graders completed their PSSA tests, and PreK through fourth grade students demonstrated their learning on their end-of-year district assessments. In addition to testing, teachers and students are celebrating the end of another year with “Fitness Friday” walks around our campus and special classroom events and guest speakers. The warmer weather seems to bring out smiles and sounds of happiness within the elementary building.

In the final weeks of the school year, many grade levels will embark on field trips to Lincoln Caverns, Fort Roberdeau, and the PSU Arboretum. Our students are also looking forward to the upcoming school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) end of year carnival event where they will be able to enjoy time outside with their classmates. Students will also be able to use their SOAR tickets to enter for a chance to win one of our many raffle prizes! In addition, our third and fourth graders are busy preparing to run, throw, and jump at our annual Track and Field Day at the end of the month.

Regardless of the grade level, the students, teachers and staff members are looking forward to the crazy fun that May brings to our building and the restful and rejuvenating break that is around the corner.



## TAMS

Spring is one of the busiest times of the year at the middle school level. Students begin taking the PSSA tests in late April. All students in grades five through eight take the English Language Arts and Mathematics exams, while just eighth grade students take Science. After PSSAs, the students engage in a plethora of different activities during the month of May.

Field trips are just one activity that students participate in during the month of May. Fifth grade students, having already visited Penns Cave in the fall, took part in a virtual tour of the National Titanic Museum. Sixth grade students visited the Pennsylvania Military Museum in Boalsburg, and seventh grade students visited the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville. Finally, eighth grade students visited Pittsburgh, where they toured Acrisure Stadium (where the Steelers play) and visited the Carnegie Science Center.

In addition to field trips, we provided many other opportunities for enrichment. First, students participated in a Nitro Ball Tournament, hosted by our physical education teachers, with the champion crowned on May 10. To cap off the year, students participated in academic awards ceremonies and received their yearbooks, followed by our SOAR Carnival and Track and Field Days. The 2023-24 school year was great in every way!



## TAHS

We have been fortunate to have several opportunities for our students throughout this school year to extend learning beyond classrooms. These opportunities for students to learn in a new environment and make real world connections to the knowledge they have gained in class is very beneficial.

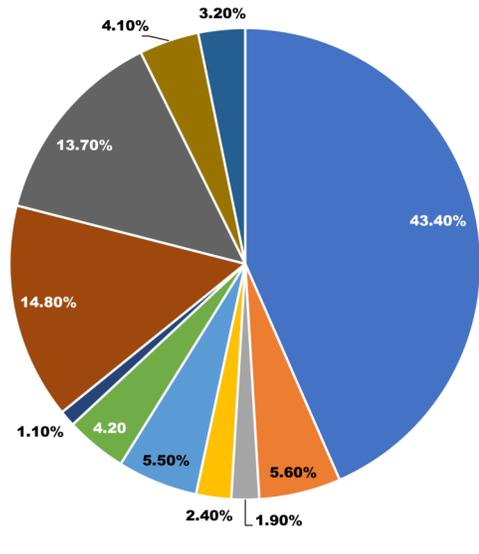
This April, all high school sophomores at Tyrone with all other local schools were invited to participate in a Career Fair held at the Blair County Convention Center. Students were able to choose from more than 70 career categories to help them better understand what careers are available, and the type of preparation required to pursue them. Prior to the Career Fair, each student designates four career interests and then is scheduled to meet with businesses and organizations representing those interests for a twenty minute informational session. The event is co-sponsored by the Businesses and Schools Investing in Cooperative Solutions (BASICS) Committee and the six Blair County Rotary Clubs, including the Tyrone Rotary. The BASICS/Rotary Career Fair is considered the step on the career pathway just prior to Career Shadowing.

The annual Senior Safety Program Mock Crash and Mock Trial was also held in April. This event took place in our back parking lot with our local fire companies, AMED, the county coroner, local and state police in attendance. The program gave our seniors a glimpse of a staged car accident with the fire departments conducting rescue operations and AMED administering treatment. The coroner and police attendants provided information on the dangers of driving impaired or recklessly. We also had a mock trial to summarize the legal ramifications of drunk driving.

Our Guidance Department, with the help of our Career and College Adviser, work on ensuring that every senior that needs to complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for postsecondary opportunities have the support that they need during the submission process. We appreciate all the hard work that they do every day for all of the students and particularly for those senior students who need college and career advice. These extensive efforts that have given our High School the esteemed recognition of being one of only a few school districts in the state who can boast of 40 percent or higher student FAFSA completion. They have also planned a Career and College Decision Day that will be happening in May. This event is intended to be a fun celebration for our seniors as they move onto their next steps in life whether that's entering the workforce, military, and/or college. Decision Day will take place in the gym with games and fun activities that give the students the opportunity to win tickets to exchange for prizes.

# TASD 2024-2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

## 2024-25 Budget Breakdown



- **Salaries** Salaries and benefits account for 71.9% of budgeted expenditures
- **Other** Supplies, Equipment, IU Services, Field Trips, Professional Services, Etc.
- **Reserve/Fund Transfer**
- **Athletics**
- **Tuition**
- **Transportation**
- **Debt**
- **PSERS**
- **Other Benefits**
- **Utilities & Maintenance**
- **Technology**

## 2024-25 Proposed Budget Facts

- Revenues total \$28,195,923  
Budgeted revenues represent an increase of 1% from 2023-24.
- Expenditures total \$29,583,669  
Budgeted expenditures represent an increase of 1.84% from 2023-24.
- Use of Fund Balance - \$1,387,747
- Transfer to Capital Projects - \$350,000
- Millage rates proposed to increase to 1/2 of the Act 1 index for the 2024-25 year

## TAMS/HS STUDENTS ADVANCE IN COMPETITIONS

As of the date of this publication, the following Tyrone Area Middle/High School students have advanced to state and/or national competitions during the 2023-24 school year—CONGRATULATIONS to all!

### ACADEMICS

#### The Challenge Program

Sarah Zimmerman

#### Eagle Eye

- Alivia Anderson
- ✦ Abby Anthony
- Allison Beeman
- ✦ Drew Escala
- ✦ Kaylee Ettaro
- ✦ Rylee Fleck
- Elayna Hess
- ✦ Alyssa Houck
- MacKenzie Hyde (2023 Grad)
- ✦ Rebecca Lewis
- Austin Lucas
- ✦ Olivia McMonagle
- Cassidy Miksich (2023 Grad)
- ✦ Grace Naylor
- ✦ Breanna Paul
- ✦ Nicole Ramsey
- Logan Rumberger
- ✦ Makenzie Soellner
- ✦ Kaleb Sweitzer

#### Future Business Leaders of America

- Bryanna Britten
- Andrew Escala
- Logan Harpster
- Carlie Nowlin
- Jacob Rice

#### Future Farmers of America

- Aubrey Biter
- John Eaken
- ✦ Cassidy Fleck
- ✦ Maverick Fleck
- Janice Gilliland
- Gracie Graham
- Hailey Houck (2023 Grad)
- ✦ Nora Hoy
- ✦ Paige Hoy
- Jana McCartney
- Carlie Nowlin
- Reilly Rawlings
- ✦ Catie Sklenar
- Wyatt Walls
- ✦ Frances Weaver
- ✦ Remington Weaver
- Jaden Williams (2023 Grad)
- Bailey Woomer
- Sarah Zimmerman

#### Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center

- AJ Betke
- Joshua Herbster
- Alex Thompson

### THE ARTS

#### TAMS/HS Band-Percussion

- Lukis Bonsell
- Makayla Briggs
- Kaleigh Brodzina

- Lola Brown
- Phoebie Brown
- Raife Carroll
- Emma Connelly
- Jackson Conrad
- Jonathan Davis
- Joseph Davis
- Jordyn Deck
- Rylie Ellis
- Hannah Gabel
- Lacie Geissinger
- Landon Geissinger
- Cole Hunter
- Amaris Kleintop
- Evan Laird
- Logan Markel
- Reagan Markel
- Alexis Martinez
- Aden Miller
- Bentley Miller
- Judah Myers
- Rachel Pedersen
- Reilly Rawlings
- Elijah Richardson
- Abigale Roberts
- Alexander Sklenar
- Jaden Smyth
- Logan Smyth
- Chase Weber
- Isaac Weber
- Miles Weber

- Austin White
- Lily Whited
- Cliff Wilson
- Emma Witkamp

### ATHLETICS

#### Swimming

Lucas Bonsell

#### Track and Field

- Alex Brumbaugh
- Steven Buck
- Sarah Chichester
- Dravyn Crowell
- Aiden Detwiler
- Alayna Greene
- Seth Hoover
- Drew Irons
- Rebecca Lewis
- Austin Lucas
- Ethan McCloskey
- Kylee Nelson
- Breanna Paul
- Nicole Ramsey
- Rocky Romani
- Brady Ronan
- Logan Rumberger
- Thomas Sutt
- Andrew Weaver
- Caleb Whitby

#### Wrestling

- Braden Ewing
- Kyle Scott

✦ National Competitions

# BEST WISHES TO TASD RETIREES



**Laura Harris**  
**TAMS/HS**  
**Director of Choral Music**  
**40 Years of Service**

By Evan Chichester, TAHS 11th Grade Student/Eagle Eye News

No well-performed concert or musical theatre production should conclude without a warm round of applause to show the audience's sincere appreciation. The same goes for one current Tyrone Area School District teacher, someone who is deserving of a loud standing ovation for her long career of dedication, service, and accomplishment. After 40 years of service to the Tyrone Area School District, music and chorus teacher Laura Harris will close the curtain on an extremely distinguished teaching career at the end of this school year.

Harris began her career at TASD in 1984 after graduating from IUP with a degree in music education. She was very excited to get a position at Tyrone because it was one of the few schools looking for a music teacher at the time. She remembered having to go through two rounds of interviews and was offered the job just two weeks before the new school year was set to start. Harris said that she "hit the ground hard that year. I accepted the job, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Since then she has impacted thousands of students, including many second-generation students whose parents had Harris as their teacher, and several current colleagues and administrators at TASD.

Tyrone concert sound technician Bill Hartsock is one of many people who have had the honor to know Harris as both a student and a colleague. "One of the most cherished aspects of my time with Mrs. Harris has been the genuine connection we shared, stemming from our earliest interactions when I would eagerly retrieve music folders from her van for class in Elementary School. Her kindness and respect toward me, even in those small moments, left a lasting impression that has guided our relationship ever since," Hartsock said. On the final dress rehearsal night of this year's musical production of Grease, Hartsock shared a touching video with Harris and the cast. It featured dozens of Harris's former and current students, sharing their appreciation for all Harris has done for them and the music program at TASD.

Another former student-turned-colleague featured in the video is current TAHS English Teacher Jonathan Holmes. He has known Harris as a teacher, a mentor, and most recently, a friend. Holmes is one of the thousands of students Harris mentored through their awkward middle school years as a member of the middle school chorus, to Vocal Attraction, and finally to POPS Extension and Drama Club, where they blossomed into talented high school students. Holmes was the stage manager for Harris's last production musical this spring and has probably spent more time with Harris over the past couple of years than anyone outside of her own family. "If you know Mrs. Harris at all, you know her by the love in her heart. She is as genuine a person as they come. Her love and passion for music is only matched by the love she has and shows to her students and peers," Holmes said. "She has always been one of my biggest supporters. Even when I had doubts, or when I didn't believe in myself, she always did. As a student, she encouraged me to take a chance, to take risks, and to try new things. Without her, I never would have found my way to music or discovered that artistic side of myself. She was one of the people who introduced me to our drama club and theatre. I've been involved with theatre and acting, one way or another, ever since."

The admiration of her students extends to members of the current graduating class, like senior Jay Isenberg. "I learned a new depth of music appreciation and she taught me all I know about music," Isenberg said. "She pushed me to be the best vocalist I can be, and I appreciate her endlessly for it."

Harris's dedication is something that her students appreciate her for. She has guided her students through many competitions, concerts, community events, and musical theatre productions over the years. She has been active with the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) Choral Festivals, helping students make District, Regional, and even State level competitions. At PMEA Chorus festivals and County Chorus festivals, Tyrone has consistently had students near the top, and most say that they couldn't have done it without Harris's help. She has also encouraged her students to attend County Chorus Festivals, where they can express themselves through music without competition. With her help, many of those students have learned the joy of performance and the personal confidence it can bring, regardless of the student's level of talent.

When asked what she hopes her students will take away from their experience in the TASD music program, Harris was quick to point out that it isn't just about their ability to sing. "I hope that I've taught them to always believe in themselves and that it's okay not to succeed on your first try, as long as you never stop trying until you're satisfied with your accomplishments," Harris said.

According to Harris, one of the most special experiences of her career was the gift of teaching her daughter, who to no one's surprise, was a very accomplished vocalist in high school. "I have so many wonderful memories, but one of my favorites will always be sitting in the auditorium at the PMEA Regional Chorus festival as I heard them announce my daughter's name as one of the sopranos who would be going to the State Chorus festival. I knew how hard she had worked to achieve that goal, and I was so proud of her," Harris said.

Her daughter Molly also cherished the opportunity to learn from her mom. She stated, "I feel incredibly lucky that I got to share all of my musical experiences with her when I was in middle and high school. She has impacted so many students at Tyrone, and she should be incredibly proud of her wonderful career."

*Retirements continued from page 6*



**R. Cummins McNitt  
TAHS Social Studies/  
Gifted/Driver's  
Education Teacher  
17 Years of Service**

**By Alex Shock, TAHS 12th Grade Student/Eagle Eye News**

**P**aperboy. Farmhand. Factory worker. College radio DJ. Dining hall director. Short order cook. Bouncer. College teaching assistant. Folklorist. Historian. Archivist. Museum director. Scout leader. Innkeeper. High school social studies teacher. Drivers' education instructor. These jobs were held at one time or another by beloved TAHS teacher Cummins McNitt, and when the Class of 2024 graduates on May 31, McNitt will add another title to the list—retiree.

While he has only been a member of the Tyrone faculty for 17 years, McNitt's impact on his students, the school, and the community cannot be understated. The list of things that McNitt has accomplished in his short teaching career is nothing short of amazing. In addition to teaching senior world geography and economics, McNitt has been Tyrone's in-class and behind-the-wheel driver's education teacher for many years. He has been responsible for gifted education in the high school, served as a faculty representative for the Student Assistance Program support team, and is the chairman of the TAHS Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support steering committee. McNitt is also the co-founder and co-advisor for the Youth Action Network (YAN) club that hosts

the annual YAN Halloween Event, Pennies for Panzi fundraiser, and the YAN 4D movie event for elementary students each year. He is also the faculty coordinator for the annual Community Service Day that sends students out on spring cleaning projects around the Tyrone community each spring.

McNitt is well known for sharing stories from his life and many careers with his students. Born in Shade Gap, Pennsylvania, he grew up in Mount Union and graduated from Mount Union Area High School. "Mount Union was a great place to grow up because it was full of a lot of very nice people and a lot of diversity," McNitt said. Growing up, McNitt imagined himself being everything from an archaeologist, a preacher, or a diplomat serving overseas. Ironically, the one career he didn't see himself pursuing as a young man was teaching. "My mother was also a teacher, but because of this I never thought I would become one. I saw the struggles she had and sometimes the heartbreak that can come with the job, so I went in a different direction," McNitt said.

After graduating from high school, McNitt pursued a degree in religion at Thiel College in Greenville, Pennsylvania, where he began to build his diverse resume of jobs and careers. To help pay for college, he worked as a student supervisor in the campus dining hall. "It required about 50 hours a week, on top of my classes," McNitt said, "but I worked with some wonderful people." McNitt was also a DJ on the midnight to 6 a.m. shift at the Thiel College student radio station.

After college, McNitt worked at an all-night diner as a cook and bouncer and did other odd jobs for a few years. He then decided it was time for a change and applied to join the Peace Corps. However, the Peace Corps were under a hiring freeze, so McNitt decided to further his education instead. He was accepted to a graduate program in the Penn State University Department of History and received his MA in American history.

McNitt also got married and decided to settle in Tyrone, his wife Peg's hometown. He then went to work for the Boy Scouts of America as a senior district executive. He was involved with scouting for many years, which led to his current involvement with Camp Anderson.

McNitt also worked as a historian and fieldworker for a program called America's Industrial Heritage Project. That job took him all across central Pennsylvania making audio recordings of early 20th-century industrial workers like coal miners and railroader workers.

One of the most interesting experiences of McNitt's life was his job as the curator and director of the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, Pennsylvania. McNitt played a key role in the creation of the museum, which was considered cutting-edge at the time. Eventually, as the funds dried up for many museums, including the Railroaders Museum, McNitt began looking for another new career to "reinvent himself." It was then that he began to consider the career that he had decided against when he first went to college many years ago. "I worked in a multitude of different jobs over the past 40 years. While my path took me away from teaching, I noticed that there was often a common link in my different jobs—working with others, especially young people. When I started substitute teaching at Tyrone in 2005, I got hooked. Teaching got into my blood," McNitt said.

He then decided to go back to school and earn his high school social studies teaching certification from Saint Francis University. In 2006 he did his student teaching with Tyrone High School Social Studies Teacher Todd Cammarata. "I met Cummins a couple of years earlier when he helped me to develop an elective class gathering oral histories from local veterans. I knew he would be a great teacher and was excited to work with him," Cammarata said. "Since then it's been an honor to have him as a colleague and a friend."

Fortunately for McNitt and the Tyrone community, the timing was right and a position on the social studies faculty became available the next year. McNitt was a perfect fit. It's no secret to anybody that Mr. McNitt loves his job and his students. Many people would agree that he's enormously positive and that positivity is very contagious when with him. You can't help but enjoy the stories about his amazing life that he tells in class. "Mr. McNitt has not only had an educational influence on me but also such a strong personal influence. He constantly checks in on all of his students so that they feel seen, heard, and cared for. Mr. McNitt has such a huge heart, and his never-ending support has meant the world to me. He truly uplifts our community in immeasurable ways, and anyone who knows him can agree on the absolute pleasure it brings to have him around," Tyrone senior Bekah Sprankle said.

Retirements continued from page 7



**Karen Rumberger  
TAES Special Education  
Paraprofessional  
10 Years of Service**

**By Sidney Goodwin,  
TAHS 10th Grade Student/  
Tyrone Eagle Eye News**

Paraprofessional Karen Rumberger will retire this spring after 10 years of dedicated service to the district.

Rumberger spent her entire T ASD career helping autistic support teachers teach their students how to read, write, and develop positive relationships with their teachers, staff, peers, and the community.

Rumberger said that she will cherish the memories and lasting friendships she made along the way. “Everyone I have worked with, students and teachers, have made my years here perfect,” Rumberger said.

She has worked closely with many teachers over the years but currently works in Kristy Brennan’s classroom at the elementary school. Brennan credits Rumberger with having a great work ethic and positive attitude. “She works with our students every day, in order to help them improve on their writing skills,” Brennan says, “She also often prepares craft projects, which allows students to let loose and have fun.”

Rumberger loves the children and adores helping them learn the basic skills they need, as well as providing these kids with memories they can hold with them forever. Director of Special Education Jessica Anderson said, “Mrs. Rumberger has been a dependable paraprofessional over her tenure. She has worked with students at the high school and elementary levels and made a lasting impact on them all. The staff in the room could always count on her to lead a craft or cooking activity for the students.”

Her most memorable accomplishments were helping students to be independent and be included in the school and the community. “In my third year here, we took five of our students to the prom,” Rumberger said, “We worked on their outfits and got the money to pay for the prom.”

She says that she will miss her students dearly but is excited for what’s next to come. Rumberger says that she has some very exciting plans for retirement. For her first post-retirement adventure, she and her brother plan to take a trip out west to California.

Her friends and co-workers wish her the best as she enters into the next chapter of her life. Rumberger is a great asset to the T ASD community and she will be missed.



**Barry Shaffer  
TAES Custodian  
12 Years of Service**

**By Kaleb Sweitzer,  
TAHS 10th Grade Student/  
Tyrone Eagle Eye News**

After working for Tyrone Area School District for the last 12 years, Tyrone Area Elementary School custodian Barry Shaffer is ready for retirement at the end of June.

Shaffer grew up in Bell Hollow near Port Matilda and graduated from TAHS in 1976.

Before coming to Tyrone, Shaffer worked at Jostens Printing and Publishing in State College for 31 years until the plant consolidated its operations and moved to Tennessee. The loss of the State College Jostens plant was disappointing to Shaffer and many other local people who worked there. He said he could have moved to Tennessee with the company but wanted to stay local after growing up in the area and living here his whole life, so he was thankful to find a position at the school district that allowed him to stay.

Shaffer spent the first nine years at T ASD working the second shift at the middle and high school and moved to first shift at the elementary school three years ago.

Tyrone Area High School Head Custodian Randy Gorecki said he always enjoyed working with Shaffer. “Barry was always a hard worker. When he was at the high school, he had the responsibility to strip and wax the floors in the summer. He got along great with everyone and did a great job. We are going to miss Barry,” Gorecki said.

In addition to working for Tyrone Area School District, Shaffer has also been the President of the Tyrone Area Support Professionals Association since 2019. The association negotiates contracts with the school district for the support personnel.

Director of Physical Plant Jordan Good commented, “Barry has been very reliable and always takes pride in everything he does. He will be missed around the school, and I hope he enjoys his retirement.”

Barry shared that he has many fond memories of both the staff and students that he will carry with him as he embarks on his retirement. With more free time, Shaffer plans to hunt, travel to visit his family, relax, and do whatever his heart desires.



**FREE BREAKFASTS  
AND LUNCHES  
for any child 18 and under**

Once again this summer, the Tyrone Area School District will partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide free, healthy meals to children. There are no income or registration requirements. Meals are available to any child age 18 and under. If you have questions or would like more information, please call 814-684-4240, Extension 3727.

**Monday through Friday**  
June 5 — August 2 (closed July 4 and 5)

**Breakfast:** 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.  
**Lunch:** 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Tyrone Area Elementary School**  
601 Clay Avenue  
Enter through cafeteria lobby at rear of building (no registration required)