



RAIDER PRIDE

A State and National Award-Winning Publication

NOVEMBER 2024



SALUTING OUR MILITARY: BRAVE JOURNEYS BEYOND SV

Justin Graham, SV '14, is currently stationed in Germany as an AH64 Apache Pilot for the United States Army. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Administration of Justice and has used all that he learned at Seneca Valley to help him accomplish his "lifetime goal" of becoming a pilot at the age of 28. Despite spending time in other career fields, Mr. Graham encourages and reminds readers that "there is always time as long as you keep focused and dedicated to what you want to do in your life." *Read more on page 2.*



Major David Harris, SV '05, has been in the United States Marine Corps for over 15 years and has been a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter pilot since 2013. He is currently preparing to deploy to East Africa to serve as a staff Air Operations Officer with a Special Forces Task Force. He has nearly 1,500 hours of flight time and holds every available tactical flight leadership and instructor qualification! Mr. Harris has served on four continents both as a Naval Aviator and a Joint Terminal Attack Controller. During his decorated career, he spent time stationed in Japan with a specialized liaison unit; worked with members of the Dutch, British, Norwegian, German, Spanish, Canadian, Korean and Taiwanese militaries; and served with members of the US Navy, Air Force, Army and Special Forces. *Read more on pages 3-4.*

WE'RE OPEN!

Check out pages 20-22 for a spotlight on SV alumni-owned businesses, just in time for Small Business Saturday! From startups to storefronts, check out their ventures and shop local with SV pride! ■



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DATES TO REMEMBER

Dec. 2	School Board Reorganization Meeting, IHS Auditorium, 5 p.m.
Dec. 14	ACT Testing, SHS, 7:30 a.m.
Dec. 19	Senior Holiday Event, IHS Auditorium, 12:30 p.m.
Dec. 23 - Jan. 1	Winter Break, No School
For more dates, visit: www.svsd.net/WebCalendar	

NOVEMBER

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
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SALUTING OUR MILITARY: BRAVE JOURNEYS BEYOND SV *(continued)*

Justin Graham, SV '14, shares how Seneca Valley encouraged his path of leadership and military aspirations

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

A: SV helped facilitate and motivate me to attend college and pursue the military and my ultimate goal of becoming a pilot.

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

A: The amount of variety in teaching and staff members in terms of knowledge, perspective and life lessons really made it easy to find leaders and mentors that had positively affected me in my younger years. The campus had much to offer in terms of clubs, sports and interests.

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

A: First Sergeant Angelo Lettiere of the SV JROTC program and Mr. Dan McKosky of the Video Production class were both huge influences in both my career and multimedia-related hobbies. Both encouraged and inspired me to continue with my passions and develop skills to help me for the future.

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: One of my favorite moments was a field trip to the city of Pittsburgh for video production. It was an extremely valuable moment to be given the freedom to record video and edit it in a way we wanted. Also, competing in the JROTC Marksmanship team after school helped me develop skills I still use to this day.

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

A: Everyone has different interests and goals in life. It is important to encourage



young people to not give up on those things. Ask the students what interests them and push them towards things that can help them achieve their ultimate goals.

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

A: That it is what you make of it. Even to this day, there are things I miss and wish I could relive. Use your time to help yourself and help your peers, and don't let personal indifferences affect your day. ■



SALUTING OUR MILITARY: BRAVE JOURNEYS BEYOND SV *(continued)*

David Harris, SV '05, shares how his involvement at SV inspired lifelong passions and professional endeavors

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

A: I am happily married to my wife Jami, from Akron, OH. We met in choir at Mount Union College and have been married for over 14 years. We have two bright and talented children, Georgia (11) and Cooper (7) whom she has been homeschooling since we moved to Japan in 2019.

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

A: I hold the Guinness World Record for most sporting events flown over in a single continuous flight path (Charlotte, NC 2018)!

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

A: First and foremost, if it weren't for my involvement in the music programs—starting with elementary music with Ms. Agostinelli; choir at Haine with Ms. Ewing; then with Ms. Keefer in middle school; Ms. Alexander in the IHS; and Mr. Magill, Mr. Matchett, and Mr. Armstrong in the SHS—I wouldn't have developed the love for music that led me to Mount Union, where I met my wife and began my career as a U.S. Marine. Music has profoundly shaped every aspect of my life—personally, professionally, socially, and academically. I truly can't imagine where I'd be without the exceptional arts programs in Seneca Valley. The joy of collaborating to create something beautiful, something greater than the sum of its parts, is one of the most gratifying experiences I've ever had. SV athletics also played a significant role in shaping who I am today. The lessons I learned from wrestling, track and field, and cross-country have been invaluable. These experiences have directly influenced my career as a U.S. Marine Officer and my personal life as a husband and father. It's just as important to experience losing as it is winning. These experiences teach



you resilience and dedication—lessons that many young adults often struggle to learn the hard way as they begin their professional lives.

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

A: Seneca Valley is special because of the rich history, morals and values that the Raider Nation was founded on. During my

time there, teachers took immense pride in shaping students into good citizens above all else. The school was large enough to offer great resources yet never so big that students got lost in the crowd. A unique aspect was the impartiality in classrooms—we were encouraged to think critically, equipped with the tools to form our own opinions, rather than being told what to think. As I've lived all over the country, I've become painfully aware that

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this kind of environment is increasingly hard to find, and I sincerely hope it still thrives at Seneca Valley.

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

A: That's a tough one! I had some fantastic history teachers—Mr. Herb MrCracken was one of them. I was in Mr. Macedonia's class as 9/11 unfolded and his words that day haven't faded in my mind in the slightest. Mr. George Trew and Mr. Jeff Wilhelm were two of the best science teachers I ever had. I use things Mrs. Thompson taught me in honors geometry almost every time I fly and I'll always remember how well she handled my ADHD behavior in the classroom. Dr. Vaughn Bicehouse taught me everything I know about government; Mr. Jeff Hanlon taught me everything I know about economics; Haine Elementary third grade teacher Mrs. Miller was my first teacher when we moved to the district in 1995. All of the music teachers I had were fantastic but especially Mr. Bob Matchett. I only got to take one class with him and it made me regret not being involved in band during high school.

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: When the leaves turn, I get nostalgic for Pie Fest, the Fall Festival and parade, football games, following the marching band in and out of the stadium, crunchy leaves out on the nature trails during cross-country practice and reconnecting with friends after the summer. Other fond memories that stand out are choir trips, the school musical, track meets and study halls spent in the music wings of the secondary campus.

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

A: If I had one message for teachers or staff, it would be this: Please uphold the fundamental values that our country is built on – it's what made this the greatest country in history. Work to maintain a neutral stance in your teaching, free from biases or personal agendas. It's essential to create an environment where critical thinking is encouraged, avoiding the pitfalls of conforming to popular opinions. Inspire students to think independently and question the information presented to them, fostering a generation of thoughtful



and informed individuals. Thank you for your dedication to education and for nurturing the minds of tomorrow.

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

A: Seneca Valley is truly a hidden gem. The sense of community here is strong, and the commitment to both academic excellence and personal growth creates an environment where students can really thrive. The teachers are passionate, and the resources are fantastic. It's a place that perfectly balances a rich history with modern innovation. The value placed on arts and music is particularly special. There is overwhelming evidence and research linking arts programs with success in life, demonstrating that students involved in the arts tend to excel academically and develop strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills. More than just a school district, it's a community that genuinely cares about nurturing well-rounded individuals ready to take on the world. ■

ECMS HOSTS VETERANS RECOGNITION BREAKFAST

Ehrman Crest Middle School (ECMS) honored veterans this month by hosting their annual Veterans Recognition Breakfast. The breakfast consisted of about 75 veterans along with the students who invited them as their special guests. The ECMS band performed “The Star-Spangled Banner” followed by students who read poems and handwritten letters about veterans. Guests enjoyed a presentation featuring names and photos of local veterans and concluded the event with performances by the ECMS Orchestra and Chorus.

After the program, many students had the unique opportunity to interview fifth grader Wyatt Tornifolio's special guest and great-grandfather, WWII veteran Mr. John Panza! Mr. Panza shared from his time as a Private First Class in the Army and offered a glimpse into life growing up in the 1920s. Students asked thoughtful questions and enjoyed hearing Mr. Panza's memorable stories!

Shoutout to Ms. Angela Cardillo's second grade class from Rowan Elementary School for making the placemats used at the breakfast and for ECMS fifth and sixth grade teachers for organizing a fantastic event! ■



RACING IN HONOR

Over 560 people joined us in honoring the life and legacy of fallen hometown hero Sgt. 1st Class Ryan A. Gloyer (SV '00) who died courageously in battle in Afghanistan in 2016.

The Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) welcomed participants, families and community members to the 2nd Annual SFC Ryan Gloyer Memorial (5K Run/Walk) in memory of Sgt. Gloyer's work ethic, drive and resilience.

On a beautiful fall morning, the Memorial Run was held as an opportunity to share the attitudes and beliefs that make Sgt. Gloyer a role model for everyone in the Seneca Valley School District. The event raised over \$42,000! Proceeds from the race go toward continued educational initiatives at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS), that reflect Ryan's commitment to fitness, inclusiveness, perseverance and kindness, ensuring his legacy continues to inspire others.

Many thanks to the SVF for a successful and inspirational event! Congratulations to SV junior Riley McGee on his first-place finish!

Additionally, leading up to the race, seventh and eighth graders of RGMS gathered during an assembly where they learned firsthand about the student, teacher and soldier for which their building was named. During the assembly, Ryan's father (who also served in the U.S. Navy), friends, SV graduates and a member of the Green Berets spoke about his life, legacy and the impact he made on the lives around him. Following the presentation, students went back to their classrooms and made cards for local veteran organizations.

Continued on page 7

Photos courtesy of Chris Leisie and the SV Communications Department.



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We, again, wish to extend our sincere thanks to all participants, sponsors, donors and the entire SV community for their support, including:

Presenting Sponsor:

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Pre-Race Ceremony:

SV JROTC, American Legion Post 474 (Zelienople), Gavan Traugh

Community Commissary Participants:

Pittsburgh Three Rivers Marathon (P3R); Studio Z Cycle; U.S. Border Patrol; AJ Stop 22; Raider Robotics; The Andrew Effect; Studio Z Yoga and Cycle; Veterans Overwatch Foundation; American Heart Association; Center for Community



Resources; Reality Tour; Isaiah 177 House; So Many Angels; Legacy Fitness; US Veterans Affairs; Highmark Caring Place

In-Kind Donations:

Eat N' Park; Senator Elder Vogel; Costco Cranberry; Paragon Foods; Giant Eagle (Seven Fields); Dr. Cheryl Rosato, North Hills Dental Complex

Race Planning Committee:

Anthony Babusci, Nicole Eaton, Jean Elwell, Dick Gloyer, Laura Goossen, Marybeth Keally, Rebecca LaButis, Annie Mersing and Michelle Rossi

Volunteers:

Renae Brown, Christine Cooper, Elizabeth Williams, Kim Capozzi, Eric Karpinsky, Claire Zovko, John Negley, Corey Wolfe, Tommy Wuycheck, Jonah Bacher, Jake Berg, Adam Bayer, Sidney Karner, Danny Drennan, Ryan Flowers, Adam Gehm, Jackson Matthews, Andrew Loebig, Kendall Vorhes, Margie Beggy, Aubrey Bittel, Brody

Horn, Sydney Heltzell, Jim Heltzell, Amelia Troyan, Sophia Santoro, Daniel Marino, Faye Nelson, Joshua Falco, Jamen Alwine, Kyle Mancing, Jacobe Sutherland, Dean Walker, Ethan Holmes, Jayson Beachem, Jayden Price, Jake Challingsworth, Chase Mazanek, Tesin Amoscato, Ellie North, Carsyn Broglie, Aubrey Sutherland, Elaina Pezzuti, Leah Maxwell, Catherine Harrison, Isabella Prouty, Trisha Butschle, Allyson Neal, Camilla Richards, Lauren Harsche, Molly Neidich, Madalyn Matsom, Brooklyn Wiley, Madalyn Matson, Lanie Koliscak, Haley Hilliard, Gianna Hilliard, Sophia Santoro and Jackson Matthews

Support:

SV Building & Grounds, SV Security Team, GCXC Timing Company, Pittsburgh DJ Company, RoyPro Graphics (sign printing), Paul Siefer (sign design) and Chris Leisie (photographer)

We can't wait for #RunForRyan in 2025! ■



ON GUARD!

Heading into its second season, the Seneca Valley Fencing Club offers students an exciting opportunity to learn and compete in the dynamic sport of fencing. Open to students in grades 7-12, the club focuses on building technique, fencing etiquette, discipline and teamwork. Over 20 fencers joined the team this year, and they're gearing up for a busy and competitive season.

Thanks to a generous donation of \$1,050 from the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF), the team was able to purchase a crucial piece of equipment—a scoring machine used for both practice and competitions; a second set was obtained with the support of local business sponsors. These machines are essential to train and compete effectively.

Beginning in January 2025, fencers will compete in "Foil" tournaments alongside 11 other schools. In April, a smaller group will also join "Epee" competitions.



Practices are held weekly on Thursdays after school, from September through May, in the Seneca Valley Intermediate High School cafeteria. No prior experience is required. Beginners can start with a 6-week introductory course to explore fencing;

after completing it, they may join the club and participate in competitions.

For more information about the Seneca Valley Fencing Club visit their website, www.svfencing.weebly.com.


STRENGTHEN THE FOUNDATION

Annual Support Campaign 2024

The Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) is excited to launch its Annual Support Campaign and hopes to have your support as we wrap up our twelfth year of enhancing the educational experience at Seneca Valley School District. We are proud to have invested over \$111,000 in the 2023-24 school year and are eager to do more. We know that strong futures are built on solid foundations and we ask that you help us get to our year-end giving goal of \$50,000 to STRENGTHEN THE FOUNDATION at SV.


Donations can be made through the pictured QR Code or by mailing a check payable to the Seneca Valley Foundation to the district's central office.

The SVF is a private, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to extent allowed by law. ■



STRENGTHEN THE FOUNDATION

Annual Support Campaign 2024



\$50,000

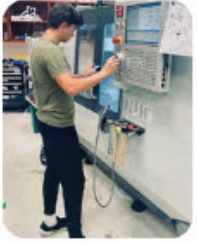


GOAL!

\$25,000

\$10,000

The SVF is building a strong future for students & staff.

Join us to **Strengthen the Foundation** of educational excellence at SV!

Donate Today

Your gift impacts student growth & staff empowerment through solid academic programs, meaningful professional development, advanced technologies & well-equipped classrooms.

RAISING FUNDS AND HAVING FUN!

Students at Connoquenessing Valley Elementary School (CVE) were excited and ready to GLOW as they celebrated the conclusion of their fall booster fundraiser with a glow dance and special, schoolwide assembly. For surpassing their goal and raising over \$39,600, select students had the chance to “pie” teachers, security staff, paraprofessionals and school principal Mrs. DeeAnn Graham! All funds raised from this entertaining fundraiser will go toward new playground equipment. ■



LENDING A HELPING HAND

This month, 70 Haine middle schoolers gave their time and raking talents to serve a local 55+ community in partnership with Cranberry Township's Leaf Angel Program. Students in Ms Sipp's, Mr. Cammisa's and Ms. Clarke's classes traveled to Cranberry Village Estates to rake and bag leaves at over 20 homes. Great job, students, for sharing community spirit and service! ■



WARM FEET, WARM HEARTS

Ms. Angela Cardillo's second grade class at Rowan Elementary recently embraced the spirit of giving by hosting “Socktober,” a sock drive to support those in need. With help from their families, students collected over 300 pairs of socks for Socks with a Mission, a Pittsburgh-based organization focused on providing the most requested item at homeless shelters. The students were excited to make a difference and invite everyone to join in bringing warmth to Pittsburgh and nearby communities by visiting www.sockswithamission.org. ■



AROUND THE WORLD IN ONE DAY

A bit of the world was brought to Ehrman Crest Middle School on Friday, Nov. 1, as part of an interactive Cultural Day.

Students and staff took part in a cultural celebration with special guests, learning opportunities and engaging activities. The day began with cultural presentations covering the customs and traditions of Greece, South Africa, Japan, Thailand, Sweden, India, Argentina and many others. In addition to presentations from community members and SV high school students, the middle schoolers

participated in stations complete with crafts, dances and interactive activities. These activities included Greek dancing, Diwali crafting, Japanese kimono dress,

Indian dancing and Argentinian textile fashion. Students ended the day with classroom community discussions. ■



DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

Students in Spanish 3 classes created ofrendas for Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). These ofrendas were proudly showcased in the LIGHT Center at Seneca Valley Intermediate High School. An ofrenda is an altar traditionally set up in homes during Mexico's Día de los Muertos celebration. Families create ofrendas to honor and celebrate the memories of their departed loved ones. ■



WALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

Mythology came to life at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) late last month! Students in Mr. Cene's World History class researched gods, heroes and monsters in Greek Mythology and wrote about their studies. Following the weeks of research, parents and teachers were invited to watch the students become "living statues," complete with costumes and informative speeches.

Parents enjoyed seeing their students' educational showcase and students did a great job bringing their mythological statue to life! ■



ACE-ING THE FIELD

This month, several Seneca Valley juniors had the opportunity to meet with professionals from the architect firm CannonDesign and tour their new Pittsburgh office through the District's Architecture, Construction and Engineering (ACE) externship. Students engaged in meaningful discussions and hands-on activities, including a design challenge where they were tasked to reimagine a courtyard or create an open collaboration space for schools.

"The energy and creativity they brought to this challenge were truly inspiring," said Mr. Jeremy Dwyer, Associate Vice President at CannonDesign. "They developed thoughtful and innovative ideas."

The visit concluded with an introduction to the role of artificial intelligence in design processes, highlighting how emerging technologies are shaping the future of these industries.

"Sharing knowledge and witnessing the students' enthusiasm for design was incredibly rewarding," Mr. Dwyer added. "We hope this experience inspired them as much as they inspired us." ■



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

Eighth graders on the Condor Team at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) came together to make a difference in their community through their annual "Scare Hunger" food drive. In addition to students donating over 500 non-perishable items, Giant Eagle generously contributed more than 5,600 items, including canned chicken, Helper meals, instant potatoes, pasta, boxed cereal, canned soup, peanut butter and jelly, canned beans, powdered milk and more!

These donations were split between two local food pantries: the Evans City Food Cupboard and the Southwest Butler Food Cupboard - to provide direct support to families in need.

On Friday, Nov. 8, students unloaded and organized the donations, and on Monday, Nov. 11, student volunteers delivered them to the pantries, sharing hope with their community.

"We are beyond grateful to Giant Eagle for their generous donation that will help to fill two area food banks," said Ms. Jennifer Cenna, RGMS Social Studies teacher.

"Beyond the impact of the substantial amount of food, our students will have the chance to experience service firsthand. This will be an amazing life lesson for our team."

This collective effort was made possible by the dedication of SV students, staff, and families, as well as the invaluable support of Giant Eagle, Corrigan Moving Systems, and SV's Building and Grounds Department for transporting the donations. ■



BEING THE KIND KID

Students and staff at Haine Elementary School celebrated World Kindness Day in a big way! Showing their pride in #bethekindkids t-shirts, students embraced the day with meaningful activities, including kindness webs and chains, heartfelt kindness goals, handwritten cards for staff and peer compliments. Great job, Haine Elementary, for spreading kindness and making a difference! ■



UNITING FOR HOPE

Students at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) recently came together for a purposeful retreat focused on supporting peers and making a meaningful difference through Hope Squad, a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program. The mission of Hope Squad is to reduce youth suicide through education, training and peer intervention.

Mr. Chris Camp and the staff at Fun Fore All Family Park graciously hosted RGMS Hope Squad members for a retreat where students worked with a trained team of teachers and administrators. The retreat was filled with team building games, training sessions and activities focused on establishing a supportive network. We would like to thank Mr. Camp for donating his venue for the retreat, continually being an advocate for students and demonstrating community support!

Hope Squad members are nominated by their peers as being approachable,



empathetic listeners who naturally support students in need of a friend. This vital program trains and mentors Hope Squad members to actively reach out to those who are struggling, acting as a bridge to



connect them with the professional help they may require. Hope Squad student members do not provide counseling or therapy, but instead serve as a connection to the help that is needed. ■

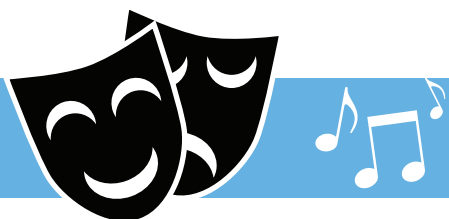
INSIDE LOOK

SV students participate in FBI Teen Academy

Last month, three Seneca Valley students got a peek into the inner workings of the FBI during the 2024 FBI Teen Academy. Juniors Jaycie Kinney, Jordan Vaughan and senior Sydney Brower were selected to participate in this one-of-a-kind program that provides students the opportunity to learn about the FBI and what a variety of career paths in the FBI would entail.

The FBI's Teen Academy program offers high school juniors and seniors from diverse backgrounds a chance to build leadership skills and explore the field of law enforcement. Led by FBI special agents, intelligence analysts, and professional staff, the program features discussions and interactive sessions that delve into the FBI's mission, operations, and the efforts required to protect America. ■





ORCHESTRA PERFORMS ANNUAL COMMUNITY CONCERT

In collaboration with the Strand Theater in Zelienople, the Seneca Valley Chamber Orchestra, once again, put on a spooktacular Halloween performance! This special event included eerie classical favorites, such as “Danse Macabre” and Bach’s “Toccatina and Fugue,” as well as movie music and Halloween repertoire. In addition to the music, students and audience members participated in a costume contest, and prizes were raffled off as a fundraiser for the Seneca Valley Orchestra Parents Association (SVOPA).

“It was really fun to see the kids dressed in costumes and work together to put on a unique performance,” said Mrs. Millie Shay, secondary orchestra teacher, commenting on her first concert at Seneca Valley.

This concert is part of a series of Pops Concerts put on by the Seneca Valley Chamber Orchestra, SVOPA and The Strand Theater. The next romance-themed pops concert is set to take place at The Strand Theater at 7 p.m. on February 18, 2025. ■



SV STUDENTS SHINE AT REGIONAL STRING FESTIVAL

This month, 28 Seneca Valley students in grades 7-9 participated in the third annual Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 String Fest. This one-day string fest combines students from eight school districts across Beaver, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties.

This year, the junior high string fest was hosted at Beaver Area High School under the esteemed conductor Mr. Pierce Cook. Mr. Cook serves as a middle school orchestra director at Mt. Lebanon School District, as well as the conductor of several ensembles within the Three Rivers Young People Orchestra (TRYPO) organization.

Students ended the day with a wonderful culminating performance including repertoire by J.S. Bach, music from the Hunger Games and a special piece, Honor and Glory, paying tribute to our Veterans. Ms. Miller, secondary orchestra director, assisted in hosting this event in conjunction with the Beaver Area School District music department.

Student Participants:

Layla Anglero (9th, Violin)
Annelise Dykstra (9th, Violin)
Sarah Frenz (9th, Bass)
Anna Leggett (9th, Bass)
Kaelynn Markivich (9th, Violin)
Hudson McGrady (9th, Cello)
Lucille Miller (9th, Viola)

Emma Pichieri (9th, Viola)
Erin Sbrolla (9th, Violin)
London Slacker (9th, Violin)
Mia Baugh (8th, Viola)
Emma Bergen (8th, Violin)
Kendal Fitzgerald (8th, Violin)
Ella Jacisin (8th, Violin)



Layla Kinney (8th, Violin)
Aubrey Morelli (8th, Violin)
Aiden Pfab (8th, Cello)
Monique Polas (8th, Viola)
Dylan Rice (8th, Violin)
Charlotte Riggle (8th, Cello)
Charley Shipley (8th, Viola)

Alex Slovak (8th, Violin)
Sienna Vitalbo (8th, Violin)
Emily Browne (7th, Cello)
Stana Galitsis (7th, Violin)
Jackson Hartzell (7th, Cello)
Robin Schanz (7th, Cello)
Zachary Syplen (7th, Cello) ■

'BANDING' TOGETHER

On Nov. 8, nearly 160 instrumental students came together in the intermediate high school band room for the annual side-by-side event between the Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) seventh grade band and SV Wind Ensemble. What has become a great collaboration between the youngest instrumental students on the secondary campus and some of the oldest in the SV Band program, the event did not disappoint. Students worked together for approximately 45 minutes performing pieces for each other as well as providing input and advice on ways to grow and improve in their playing.

Sophomore Ella King thought the seventh graders “did an amazing job at playing one of their concert pieces with lots of excitement and energy.”

Seventh grader Madeline Grove was “amazed how the Wind



Ensemble clarinets could play so many notes so fast.”

The goal of the event is to begin fostering a connection between all students who are part of the SV Instrumental Band program across the secondary campus. RGMS instrumental directors Mr. Brian Croach and Ms. Sara Snyder intend to make this annual event the beginning of a series of activities between instrumental students in grades 7-12. Joining in the event were Mr. Varden Armstrong and Mr. Bob Babick, secondary Wind Ensemble directors. ■



SHOW CHOIR HAS SOME HALLOWEEN FUN!

The Seneca Valley Show Choir surprised all lunch periods at Ryan Gloyer Middle School on Oct. 31, with an impromptu performance of Michael Jackson's “Thriller” as a Halloween treat! ■



SENECA SCOUT CONTINUES BROADCASTING TRADITION

Every Friday night, a large team of dedicated student journalists record and broadcast a full, Seneca Valley-focused news program called “The Seneca Scout.” Produced by the college in high school (CHS) Broadcast News class, the weekly “The Seneca Scout” show has students writing about current events and lesser-known items, ranging from district to national, and occasionally to international news. This year’s crew has a large contingent of students with no prior video experience, though their dedication and work has yielded one of the most dynamic crews the class has had. Throughout the week, in addition to research and writing, student journalists shoot relevant video footage for their stories, interview experts, make graphics and videos, test all technical equipment and do run-throughs before recording and airing their final show on Fridays. This crew has already reported on countless district stories, notable academic and artistic accomplishments, sports and entertainment, and current world events. Students have produced polished and in-depth video packages detailing the upgrades to The Raider



Roast, Treble Choir, Student Congress, the organization of the 2024 SV Lip Dub, and the Biotechnology Lab, to name a few. Junior and second-year member Madie Conrad stated that her favorite thing about this semester is “that it doesn’t feel like a class; it feels like a team doing something fun.” Audiences can see a new episode of “The Seneca Scout” every Friday at 7 p.m. on SVTV (Armstrong channel

208), premiering live on SVTV’s YouTube page (youtube.com/senecavalleytv), or streaming live from the [SVTV website](#). The CHS Broadcast News class is a fantastic opportunity for any students interested in journalism, technology, media literacy and video production, all with the possibility of earning college credit through Point Park University. ■





GRATITUDE

With fall sports having ended and the winter season officially starting, this transition allows for a moment of reflection to the start of our school year. As always, our student-athletes and student-performers did not disappoint. #SVRaiderNation was privileged to witness championship-level results and award-winning performances throughout the fall. But, as sport is accustomed to do, there were also valuable lessons taught through heartbreaking defeat. Through it all, our students have comported themselves with class, integrity, loyalty and grit. They have exhibited the true character of what it means to "Wear the SV" - they have been good people, great competitors and even better teammates. They have extended their hands to the worthy victor and have celebrated their own excellence with an uncommon humility and deserving exuberance. I am proud of the start to the 2024-25 school year and embrace the winter season with similar enthusiasm and anticipation. As we enter the holiday

season, it is my hope we do so with appreciation for the joy our students bring us in their artistic performances, school spirit and gifted athleticism. In the season of giving thanks, I am grateful for the privilege of spending many days and nights surrounded by our students whose energy, effort, grit and grace fill me with gratitude for the opportunity this District has afforded me. ■

Help SV WIN against hunger in the WPIAL Food & Fund drive challenge! For every \$1 donated, the Food Bank can provide up to three meals for families, children and seniors, so **DONATE TODAY** and make SV the most giving district for the THIRD year in a row! ■



Thanks for your support

FALL SPORT POSTSEASON RECAPS

Cross-Country

As reported in our October issue, senior Max Smith represented Raider Athletics at the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) 3A Boys Cross-Country State Championships and recorded his best-ever performance in three appearances at the state meet. Max finished 43rd overall (out of 250 finishers) with a time of 16:47. His time improved by 1:21 from a year ago and his placement improved by 133 spots! No better way to close out a career than doing your best at the state championships! Congratulations, Max!



Football

Raider football concluded the 2024 season facing off in the WPIAL semifinals against eventual 6A champion Central Catholic. On an evening when effort could not be questioned, the Raiders simply came up short against a more talented squad. We congratulate the team on their return to WPIAL playoffs. Closing out the season, we offer our appreciation to Head Coach Ron Butschle who has announced his resignation following eight seasons at the helm of our program. We thank Coach Butschle for his undeniable commitment to our program and its student-athletes.



Girls Soccer

Last month, we shared that Raider girls soccer was about to face off against Canon-McMillan in the WPIAL semifinals with the winner advancing to Highmark Stadium to compete for a WPIAL title. The girls did not disappoint, bringing home a convincing 4-1 victory over the Big Macs. Junior midfielder Maddie Marcotte had herself quite a night with a hat trick and classmate Ashlee Libby contributed the fourth goal. At Highmark, Seneca Valley faced top-seeded Peters Township and fell in penalty kicks 5-4 to finish the season as WPIAL Girls 4A Soccer runner-up. Their next game was a PIAA bracket first-round contest at Altoona and the Raiders quickly regained their form with a 6-1 win. In the PIAA quarterfinals, it was SV versus Conestoga out of PIAA District I. On this day, finding the back of the net proved to be a difficult task against a formidable opponent - one that would finish as the state runner-up. At the end of the afternoon, Conestoga would advance in championship play with a 2-1 defeat of our Raiders. We congratulate this squad on their section title, appearance at Highmark Stadium and win of their first-round state playoff game. That is a great season, girls! ■



ALL-CONFERENCE SELECTIONS ANNOUNCED IN FALL SPORTS

The Big 56 Conference recently announced its fall sport honorees in football, boys and girls soccer and girls volleyball, and the Raiders were well represented. The following Seneca Valley student-athletes were recognized for their excellence on the field and court.

FOOTBALL

1st Team

Brooks Beres, DE; Jayden Price, DB

2nd Team

Jackson Matthews, H-Back; Chase Mazanek, RB; Cayden Parker, DL; Tom Wuycheck, OT

BOYS SOCCER

1st Team

Brady Eubanks, Mid; Zach Garma, For; Tyler Prex, Mid

2nd Team

Tyler Kuhar, Def
Sami Malkamaki, Mid

Additional Honors – Boys Soccer

2024 High School All-American Game – Tyler Prex
PSCA All-State – Tyler Prex
WPSCA Player of the Year – Tyler Prex
WPSCA All-WPIAL – Brady Eubanks, Zach Garma, Tyler Prex
WPSCA All-Section – Brady Eubanks, Zach Garma, Sami Malkamaki, Tyler Prex

GIRLS SOCCER

1st Team

Bella Gianfrancesco, Mid; Karly Majeski, Mid; Cassidy Stopchick, Def

2nd Team

Ashlee Libby, For; Cassie Leonard, Mid; Madeline Marcotte, Mid

Player of the Year

Karly Majeski

Coach of the Year

Mark Perry

Additional Honors – Girls Soccer

WPHSGSCA All-WPIAL – Ashlee Libby, Karly Majeski
WPHSGSCA All-Section – Bella Gianfrancesco, Cassie Leonard, Ashlee Libby, Karly Majeski, Maddie Marcotte, Sydney Postler, Cassidy Stopchick

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

1st Team

Sadie Reese, S

2nd Team

Addison Fowler, Lib; Kennedy Pepper, OH ■



COLLEGE COMMITMENTS – CLASS OF 2025

Many Raider student-athletes made their college commitment official with the early signing period starting in mid-November. We congratulate these seniors for 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 immensely proud of your efforts in the classroom, in competition, and in the community.

Name	Sport	College/University	Major
Lexie Hames	Softball	Clemson University	Business & Finance
Sydney Heltzell	Cross-Country and Track and Field	Slippery Rock University	Exercise Science ■

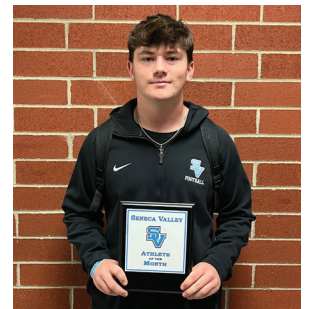


ATHLETES OF THE MONTH, OCTOBER 2024

The Female Athlete of the Month for October was girls cross-country runner Paige D'Amico. The sophomore has been a key contributor to the team, helping them finish section meets in second place along with a few top-five team finishes at invitationals. In section meets over the last month, she had two first-place finishes with a personal best course time of 19:58 coming against Butler and Pine Richland. Paige followed those performances with top-five finishes at the Grove City invite with a time of 19:56 and the Youthtowne Clash with a time of 19:12. Her standout race came at the PIAA Foundations meet where she placed 35th out of 245 girls with a time of 20:50. Paige was also named to the Pennsylvania MileSplit Top 50 Sophomore Girl Runners of 2024. For a stellar month, we recognized Paige as the October Female Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Paige!



The Male Athlete of the Month for October was junior football kicker Max Eisenhut. Max has been a consistent producer of points for the football team helping them to a 3-3 record and a 3-2 record in section play. He has scored at least one point in five of the last six games including an eight-point performance (two field goals and two extra points) against Norwin and a nine-point performance (two field goals and three extra points) against Hempfield. His stand out game came against Norwin where he hit 46- and 42-yard field goals and was two for three in extra points. Max has also been perfect the last three games, tallying three field goals and eight extra points. We recognized Max as the October Male Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Max! ■





SHOP LOCAL: YOUR GUIDE TO SV ALUMNI-OWNED BUSINESSES

This Small Business Saturday, we're excited to spotlight the incredible businesses owned by Seneca Valley alumni right here in our community and abroad! From pet care to photography, wellness services to honey sales, these local entrepreneurs are sharing their passion and expertise, exemplifying the dedication of our graduates. Support our SV Alumni by shopping local and discovering the unique services they offer!

Studios, Shops and Boutiques

Ashley Almendares, SV Class of 2001, is on a mission to empower and celebrate women through fashion at her Cranberry Township business, **Mainstream Boutique**. With a range of sizes and styles, Ashley brings her passion for helping women look and feel their best, all while supporting a strong, connected community!



Kelly Scott, SV Class of 2001, made her dream of owning a business a reality when she opened **Harmonie Laden**, a gift and candy shop that specializes in locally handcrafted goods and unique gifts. And for our local candy lovers, the shop features a candy and gourmet foods room filled with delicious chocolates, European favorites and yummy treats!



Jessica Valdez, SV Class of 2003, has been elevating the dessert game, bringing a sweet touch to any celebration with her business **Nothing Bundt Cakes**! From bite-sized bundtins to towering tiers, her shop offers a variety of flavors and festive decorations for every occasion!



Lauren Shorr, SV Class of 2006, created her business **CURIO Art Gallery & Studio** to make art more approachable and accessible to our community. CURIO exhibits fine art and art from professional contemporary artists. The space also offers a range of experiences and classes and consists of two dedicated art education studios!



Kylie Gallagher, SV Class of 2006, curates fashion fun for tiny trendsetters at her storefront **Little OOMA**, located in Zelienople. This baby and children's boutique offers a delightfully fresh shopping experience right on Main Street!



SHOP LOCAL: YOUR GUIDE TO SV ALUMNI-OWNED BUSINESSES

Self Startups and Handcrafted Goods

Abbie Aladdin, SV Class of 2010, created her business [PGHcheeseboards](#) after making charcuterie boards for fun for many years. Her company combines art and creativity to offer a variety of small bites, salads and charcuterie options for any event!



Gary Starr, SV Class of 1985, operates his veteran-owned business [Parrot Candles](#) in St. Petersburg, FL. His company hand pours 100% soy wax candles that are eco-friendly, sustainable and burn cleanly. Although based in Florida, they ship nationwide!



Mia Campagna, SV Class of 2021, has taken her lifelong love for photography and turned it into her [own business](#) specializing in high school senior, family and engagement photography. The first step in her photography journey? Creating a business website as her SV senior project! She enjoys finding new and exciting ways to make lasting memories for clients.



Tracy Shaffer, SV Class of 1988, along with her family, manages over 150 bee hives on various farms, from Ambridge to Zelienople! Her company [Honey So Good](#), sells hand-harvested, bottled honey, along with specialty products: hot honey, creamed honey and infused honey. As a PA Preferred Certified business, Honey So Good can be found at community special events, bringing pure, local sweetness straight from the hive to the jar!



Daniel Lonchena, SV Class of 1999, combined his passion for photography and art into his own portrait and headshot photography business [Daniel Paul Photography](#) (also known as [TSS Photography of SWPA](#)). His mission? To deliver a stress-free picture day while ensuring top-notch customer service! As a proud graduate of Seneca Valley, Mr. Lonchena operates his studio within the school district, prioritizing hiring local talent and reinforcing his commitment to the community.



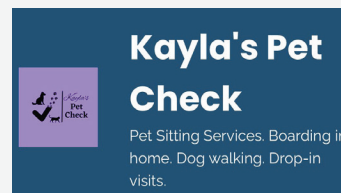
SHOP LOCAL: YOUR GUIDE TO SV ALUMNI-OWNED BUSINESSES

Services and Solutions

RJ Skalos, SV Class of 2002, has watched his veterinary practice **Windrose Animal Hospital** grow from a startup to a succession of three practices with nine Doctors of Veterinary Medicine (DVM). Offering general practice and urgent care services, the Windrose Animal Hospital is also the official animal hospital of the Pittsburgh Penguins!



Kayla Owens, SV Class of 2011, is the ultimate pet concierge, offering reliable **pet taxi services**, home-environment pet boarding, and personalized drop-in visits. Whether your pet needs a safe ride, a comfortable stay, or in-home visits for feeding and playtime, Ms. Owens keeps your furry friends happy and cared for when you're away!



Daniel Winkle, SV Class of 1987, is a dual-business owner of two services, AGX, Inc. and Bear Run Enterprises. **AGX, Inc.** conducts asbestos, lead, mold and IAQ testing while Bear Run Enterprises performs excavation and gas line installation. With each test and every dig, Mr. Winkle's companies help lay the groundwork for a safer community!



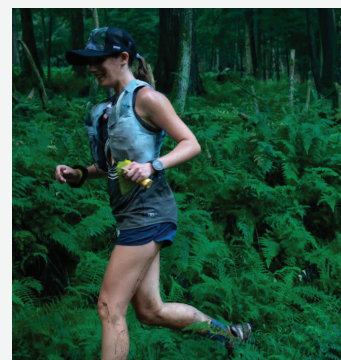
Jeff Gooch, SV Class of 2001, provides technology solutions and consulting services at his business **Innovative Public Safety**. He serves critical infrastructure agencies throughout western Pennsylvania all while remaining active in Cranberry Township and the Seneca Valley community!



Valorie Burns, SV Class of 1978, and her team at **State Pipe Services, Inc.**, are celebrating 53 years in business as a full-service sewer infrastructure contracting company. Offering a range of services from cleanings and repair to installation and inspections in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Maryland; Ms. Burns credits her company's success to her employees' commitment to high-quality work and professionalism.



Shannon Mick, SV Class of 2007, is a mother, counselor, avid ultrarunner and mindset coach for **Finish Stronger Mindset Coaching**. She provides virtual mindset and mental wellness coaching for endurance runners and those who enjoy being active. Her passion for running shines through in her coaching, inspiring others to chase their own goals!



Sawyer Shoup, SV Class of 2025, is a prospective alum with a head start on his entrepreneurial journey as the founder of **Pristine Mobile Detailing**. Specializing in high-quality vehicle detailing at your doorstep, Mr. Shoup is already impressing clients with his attention to detail and passion for his craft—all before he's received his diploma!

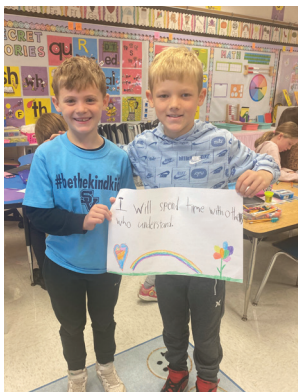
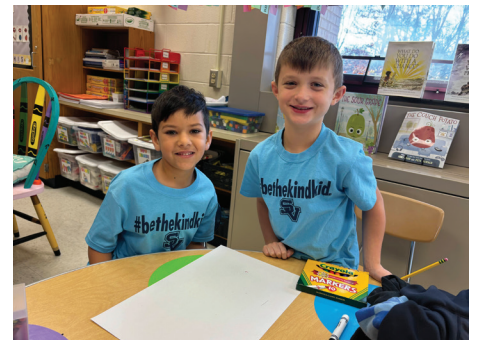
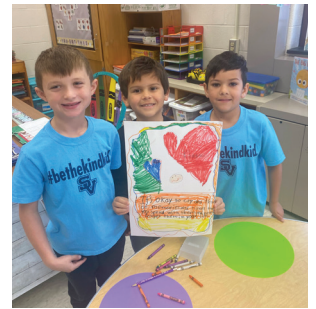


SV RECOGNIZES CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS DAY

On Thursday, Nov. 21, faculty, staff and students from across the District recognized Children's Grief Awareness Day. At Rowan Elementary School, some classes created thoughtful posters for Highmark's Caring Place. Their efforts aimed to highlight how to support a grieving friend, bringing awareness and sharing messages of compassion and kindness.

At the secondary level, students and staff created "Walls of Support" that displayed encouraging and uplifting notes. Students worked with guidance counselors and teachers at the intermediate high school's LIGHT Center to decorate a votive honoring someone they love and have lost. Additionally, everyone was encouraged to wear blue on Nov. 21, to show support for all who have grieved the loss of a loved one.

If SV students, staff and/or their families are in need of mental health support services, Care Solace is here to help. Visit www.caresolace.com/seneca. Other mental health resources are also available on our website at <https://www.svsn.net/mentalwellness>. ■



EMERGING EDUCATORS

On Oct. 30, Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School hosted budding educators from Brashear High School as part of a partnership with their Emerging Educator's Program. During the visit, they toured classrooms, observed teachers in action and connected with our students over lunch, gaining insights into the elementary and middle school experience. The visit afforded a meaningful exchange, brought fresh perspectives and inspired a shared enthusiasm for shaping future educators. We look forward to your next visit! ■



ERADICATE HATE SUMMIT

Teachers and administrators from Seneca Valley joined hundreds of others from across the region at the Eradicate Hate Global Summit, held from Oct. 21-23 at Pittsburgh's David L. Lawrence Convention Center. This summit, the world's most comprehensive anti-hate conference, brought together global experts and leaders committed to eliminating all forms of hate-driven violence. The mission of the Eradicate Hate Global Summit is to identify and implement effective solutions for collective change.

Alongside teachers, principals, and administrators, select students from Seneca Valley attended the summit on the second day, marking Seneca Valley as the only district outside of Allegheny County represented. The students participated in breakout sessions and roundtable discussions with peers on strategies to combat hate.

The summit featured leaders from government, academia, journalism, business, and non-profit sectors, offering three days of international keynote speakers, panels, and various breakout sessions focused on practical outcomes to enhance the work of those fighting hate. ■



INSPIRED HEARTS AND HANDS

Haine Elementary School staff, students and families recently took part in a fundraising event to support Inspired Hearts & Hands (IH2). This non-profit organization provides essential food resources to youth and veterans across Butler, Beaver, Allegheny and Armstrong counties. IH2 Founder and Executive Director Mindy Schnitgen is pictured receiving the generous donations from Haine Elementary. ■



SV PREPARES FOR REMOVAL OF FORMER ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Seneca Valley School District is beginning preparations for the future demolition of the former Evans City Elementary/Middle School.

The 138,000-square-foot school building, which served the district's students for over 80 years, has been vacant since its closure in June 2022, just before the opening of Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School.

"Safety is our top priority as we move forward with this project," said Randy Miller, Director of Buildings and Grounds. "Due to the ongoing costs of maintaining the building, we've determined that keeping it is no longer feasible."

The District intends to keep the property for potential future development in response to projected growth in student

enrollment. Meanwhile, the adjacent sports fields will remain unaffected and will continue to be open and accessible to the public.

For the past two years, district crews began clearing its contents, and a final auction was held this past summer. Currently, the District has appointed an asbestos abatement team to begin the four-to-six-week abatement process that should start later this month. Throughout this phase, the team will monitor air quality and ensure compliance with health and safety regulations. The crews will also work to minimize disruptions, particularly for nearby residents and travelers along Rt. 68.

Demolition is anticipated to take place in 2025. Updates on the project timeline

and specific demolition details will be shared on the District's website – and in publications and press releases – as they become available.

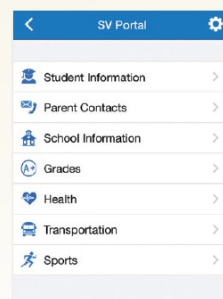
Once the demolition takes place, the District will partner with the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) to offer bricks from the building as keepsakes, available at a minimal cost, for those wishing to preserve a piece of history while supporting the SVF. Additional details about this project will be shared with the public as they become available.

"We appreciate the community's understanding and support as we undertake this important project," Miller added. ■

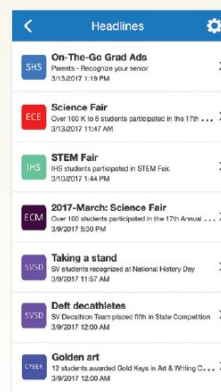
Download the new and improved **SV MOBILE APP**



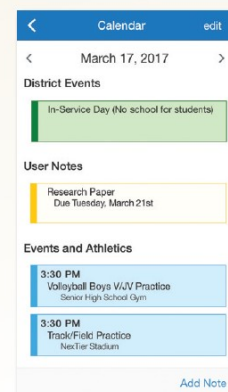
Seneca Valley's updated app is more personalized, more customized and has greater mobile content!



SV Portal
Once you log in, you'll stay logged into your account. Now you're just a tap away from viewing grades, homework, school information and more.



SV Customization
Click on the settings wheel to customize the app on your device.



SV Calendar
Stay informed with access to one or more calendars all in one place. Add personal calendar notes.

www.svsd.net



26th Annual **Seneca Valley** *Senior Holiday Event*

Thursday, Dec.
12:30-3 p.m.
(Doors open at noon)

19

SV Intermediate
High School
*126 Seneca School Rd.
Harmony, PA 16037*

This free festive holiday presentation is open to senior citizens living in the Seneca Valley School community. Performances from the Seneca Valley Jazz band, Madrigal Singers and Orchestra will take place in the auditorium.

The National Honor Society will serve a sit-down holiday meal in the school's cafeteria following the performances.

Extra assistance will be provided by members of the SV JROTC.

RSVPs are required by Dec. 12. For more information or to RSVP, attendees are asked to please call 724-452-6040, ext. 0.

SV ALL-STAR

For the month of November, we are pleased to announce the newest member inducted into the SV All-Star Club, Mrs. Audrey Goode, Administrative Assistant at Rowan Elementary 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.

For 32 years, Mrs. Goode has served as the administrative assistant at Rowan Elementary School, consistently showing unwavering dedication to creating a welcoming and enriching experience for everyone who enters the building.

"Mrs. Goode is much more than an administrative assistant," said Dr. Tina Wentz, Principal of Rowan Elementary School. "She is the heart of our school—a steady, reliable presence who ensures everything runs smoothly and efficiently. Whether she's greeting families with a warm smile, supporting staff with thoughtful solutions, or keeping our school organized down to the smallest detail, Mrs. Goode accomplishes it all with unmatched professionalism and a deep sense of purpose."



L-R top row: Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Eric DiTullio, Board President
L-R bottom row: Ms. Jessica Parker, Assistant Principal of Rowan Elementary School, Mrs. Audrey Goode and Dr. Tina Wentz, Principal of Rowan Elementary School

Dr. Wentz added, "What truly sets Mrs. Goode apart, however, is her unwavering commitment to our school community. Ask anyone—staff, students, or parents—and they'll tell you that Mrs. Goode is the first to step up when someone needs help, the first to celebrate a success, and the first to offer a kind word on a difficult day. And if you've ever had a question about our community, Mrs. Goode likely knows the answer—or knows the exact person to ask. Her deep connections within the school and beyond are a testament

to her genuine care and tireless efforts to build relationships."

Mrs. Goode is very deserving of this recognition exemplifies what it means to support a community. Her thoughtfulness shines through in every interaction, her care is evident in every task she completes, and her impact is felt by everyone who walks through the doors.

"I love what I do," said Mrs. Goode. "Accepting the All-Star award was very humbling. It was an amazing event for me and truly heartwarming." ■

BEYOND THE HIVE

Congratulations to Connoquenessing Valley Elementary first grade teacher Ms. Genevieve Morgan and tech facilitator Ms. Jodi Albert for representing CVE at the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) 2024 MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Advanced Implementation Forum in Hershey. They shared their expertise through a presentation on boosting school-community partnerships and engagement, reflecting their commitment to fostering a caring and positive environment for our young learners! ■



SV WELCOMES IVAN ARANHA AS NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The Seneca Valley School District is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Ivan Aranha as Ehrman Crest Middle School Assistant Principal. The appointment was officially approved by the Seneca Valley School Board on Nov. 4, during the action portion of the work session meeting.

Mr. Aranha brings with him a wealth of experience, and a unique distinction—he's the first educator to have worked for both of the only two Seneca Valleys in the nation. Prior to joining us in Pennsylvania, he served at Seneca Valley High School in Germantown, Maryland, making him the sole member of this exclusive "dual-school/district-named" club.

In his previous roles, he served as assistant principal at Lake Braddock Secondary School and North Stafford High School in Virginia, where he led initiatives to improve student outcomes through data-driven strategies and professional development for staff. Mr. Aranha also has administration experience at Monterey Peninsula Unified School District in California, as well as the previously mentioned Seneca Valley High School in Maryland. He also has 11

years of educator experience throughout Maryland and the Washington D.C. area. His accomplishments include implementing differentiated learning programs for English language learners and coordinating extensive student support services.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mr. Aranha to the Seneca Valley team," said Dr. Sean McCarty, Assistant Superintendent of K-6 Instruction. "His expertise and passion for educational leadership will be instrumental in our ongoing mission to provide a supportive and dynamic learning environment at Ehrman Crest Middle School."

Mr. Aranha holds a master's degree in education from George Washington University, along with a bachelor's degree in communications from Howard University. Additionally, he has pursued advanced coursework in Educator Administration at the University of Maryland, underscoring his commitment to excellence in educational leadership. He brings with him certifications from both Pennsylvania and Virginia, spanning administration, English, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and special education.



"I feel blessed to have this opportunity to serve the Seneca Valley School District community," shared Mr. Aranha. "I am excited to meet the students, families and staff of Ehrman Crest Middle School. We are going to have an exceptional year!" ■

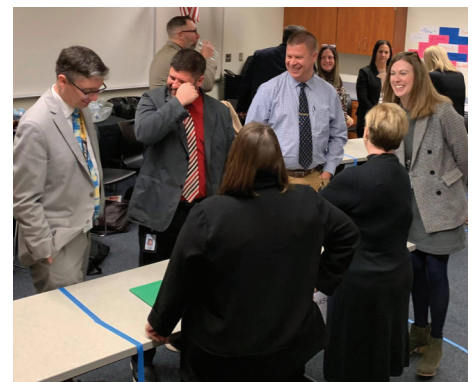
BUILDING SKILLS THROUGH GAME

Seneca Valley Leadership Team Members, in a recent hands-on meeting, took part in the impactful "Neighborhood Game," an innovative simulation designed by Dr. Kat Gray of Gray Consultants. Since 2003, this engaging exercise has served as a powerful antiracism training tool, guiding high school teachers, superintendents, faculty and support staff through the realities of segregation. The simulation's goal is to offer a deeper understanding of systemic issues and encourage thoughtful dialogue about equity and inclusion in our schools.

Many thanks to Lisa Graham and Malika Christopher, Seneca Valley Intermediate



High School Counselors, for their facilitation of the game, and to Mr. Ashley Porter, Supervisor of Equity and Title IX Coordinator, and Mr. Dan Guerra, Seneca



Valley Intermediate High School Assistant Principal, for assisting with the activity. ■

PSBA HONORS SV SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS FOR DEDICATED SERVICE

The Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) recognized three Seneca Valley School Board members for their dedicated service as part of its 40th annual Honor Roll of School Board Service Program. At the Seneca Valley School Board meeting on Monday, Nov. 4, PSBA Member Outreach Manager Ms. Lena Hannah presented service awards to Mr. Mike Jacobs (5 years), Mr. Eric DiTullio (15 years) and Mr. Jeff Widdowson (20 years).

“School board service is a tremendous commitment, one in which directors face numerous challenges in an ever-evolving public education landscape,” said Ms. Hannah. “It is truly inspiring to see these individuals who have worked tirelessly to ensure the success of our students, and our school communities are better for their work. I thank them for giving generously of their time in support of public education in Pennsylvania.”

The PSBA Honor Roll of School Board Service Program, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, acknowledges school board directors across Pennsylvania for their long-term dedication and contributions to public education. We here at Seneca Valley extend our heartfelt gratitude for their combined 40 years of volunteer service to our students, staff and community. ■



From left, Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Board President, Mr. Jeff Widdowson, Board Vice President, Ms. Lena Hannah, PSBA Member Outreach Manager, and Mr. Mike Jacobs, Board Member.

‘I LED THE PLEDGE’

Board meetings were held on Nov. 4 and 18. 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.”

Konnor Vaughn, a fourth grader from Ehrman Crest Elementary, was nominated by the school’s administration and staff to lead the pledge at the Nov. 4, Seneca Valley School Board meeting. Konnor’s passion for history, especially World War II, started at a young age when he connected with his great-grandfather, who served in the war. At school, history is his favorite subject, and he’s always eager to learn about the past. Beyond his studies, Konnor loves creating with Legos and building worlds in Minecraft. Someday, he dreams of becoming both a historian and a police officer!



Konnor pictured with, from L-R, Chief Zeke Reed, Superintendent Dr. Tracy Vitale, and School Board President Mr. Eric DiTullio.

A special moment at the meeting: when Chief Zeke Reed of the Jackson Township Police-Butler County heard about Konnor’s dream, he made Konnor an honorary police officer for the evening.

Greg Nguyen, a sixth grader from Ehrman Crest Middle School, led the Pledge of Allegiance at the Nov. 19 School Board Meeting. Greg’s creativity shines in his love for piano and video games, and his kindness makes him a friend everyone can count on. Greg loves math and science and dreams of a future in STEM – whether as a veterinarian or following his father’s entrepreneurial path. Greg was an incredible representative of his school, classmates and family. ■



Greg pictured with, from L-R, Superintendent Dr. Tracy Vitale and School Board President Mr. Eric DiTullio



5-STEP PLAN TO HELP KIDS AND TEENS WITH AI COMPANION CHATBOTS

“The fundamental paradox of technology is that the more intimately it knows us, the better it can serve us and the better it can exploit us.”

- Asa Raskin, a tech designer known for his work on technology ethics

Help is needed when it comes to AI companion bots because Silicon Valley is in a race to create and monetize large learning platforms to be human companions. Unlike AI tools like ChatGPT, which are developed to complete tasks, these apps are specifically designed to mimic emotional and close personal relationships. Recently, a young boy took his life while in the midst of a really disturbing “relationship” with such a “companion.”

Another recent quote by Asa Raskin:

“...the question to be asking is, is intimacy more valuable to a company than just mere attention? And the answer is yes, that there is a race therefore to colonize, to commodify intimacy. And that’s just not an abstract thing that we say, that’s a real thing, which is now causing the death of human beings.”

Physician Delaney Ruston created a step-by-step guide to help parents discuss all this with kids. This can be modified for parents to talk to young people who aren’t their children, such as students, a scouting troop, extended family, etc.

5 Step Parenting Guide for AI Companion Conversations

Communication science tells us that when we ask kids and teens questions because we really want to understand their points of view, they feel respected and thus more motivated to participate in the conversations.

The steps

WHY: Why might a person want to use a companion bot?

RISKS: Serious risks--what are some of them?

RULES: Family guidelines

HELPERS: Commit to help others

DEEP THINKERS: Commit to ongoing discussions

1. WHY: Why might a person want to use a companion bot?

The more kids answer the question versus our offering reasons, the more their analytical thinking comes on board, and the greater the chance they may find themselves contemplating the questions after the discussion.

2. RISKS: Serious risks--what are some of them?

Let kids come up with as many as they can.

(Pro tip: repeat some things in your own words to them; it helps them feel heard. Remember, people want to be heard as much as they want what they think they want.)

3. RULES: Family guidelines

It is important to talk about what parents want for their kids and their expectations and rules. Yes, kids can get around rules, but research

shows that the chances are less that this will happen if there are rules in place. Parents can explain the reasoning around rules and take into account their children’s feelings and opinions.

Here is an example of what to say to a 13-16 year old (and other ages where you feel appropriate): *Silicon Valley is racing to create these AI companions, but they often have no safeguards. For example, if a young person talks about self-harm, a chatbot with responsible safeguards may offer resources for seeking help and also says it can’t have conversations about that. Yet, many of these other platforms have not built in such safeguards. For now, we want to have the rule that it is not okay to use AI chatbot companions.*

Of course, parents should think about this and have discussions about what rules work best for their family.

Character AI, the platform that the 14-year-old became immersed in when he took his life, is for ages 13 and older. And, worse, there is no age-gating, so kids younger than 13 can have access by lying about their birthdate.

4. HELPERS: Commit to help others

These “empathy chatbots,” as some in Silicon Valley call these companions, are being touted as a reasonable approach to helping the lonely. Don’t buy it. Whatever views parents have on this, one thing most can agree on is people who are struggling and feeling lonely need support. Parents can also agree that they all want kids to be helpers now and more in their lives.

One conversation could go as follows:

Of course, one reason people will be pulled into connection with an AI companion is due to loneliness. Let’s commit to all being on the lookout for people we think might be feeling lonely and we can talk about ways that we might help them.

5. DEEP THINKERS: Commit to ongoing discussions

Parents should decide together some specific times that they will revisit these topics, explaining that this is all brand new and that, frankly, we need our youth to grapple with these complex ethical issues.

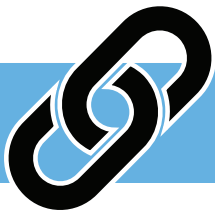
After all, their ideas are key now and are needed as future leaders.

In terms of picking times to discuss companion A.I.s, how about proposing the first night of each month for the next three months? At that time, you will all check in with each other about the four steps above, such as discussing people who seem lonely and ways that can possibly help them.

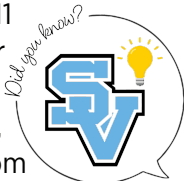
Questions to get the conversation started within your family or group:

1. Discuss steps 1 through 5 above for questions and suggestions about making commitments.
2. Has the topic of chatbot A.I.s been brought up at school at all?
3. What are peers/friends saying about support/companion chatbots?

Article provided by **Screenagers** ■

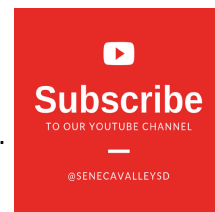


- Did you know Seneca Valley is home to 911 employees? We are incredibly grateful for our dedicated staff members who work tirelessly every day to ensure the success, safety and well-being of our students. From classrooms to cafeterias, offices to playing fields, and everywhere in between, their hard work and commitment make a difference in countless ways!



- It's an honor! [Click here](#) to view the 2024-25 First Nine Weeks Honor Rolls for grades 7-12.
- Teacher Nominations - WTAE-TV is launching a Teacher of the Month recognition program for the 2024-25 school year. Each month, from September through May, a teacher will be selected from the many deserving submissions that they receive. The selected Teacher of the Month will receive a \$1000 credit to donorschoose.org, a crowd-sourcing page for classroom project/program funding. In addition, Pittsburgh's Action News 4 will feature that teacher and their story (and possibly a surprise school visit) during a news broadcast, as well as social media. Nomination information can be found at [WTAE Teacher of the Month](#).
- All students in Pennsylvania public schools, including Seneca Valley, have access to **free breakfast for the 2024-25 school year**, regardless of family income. Encourage your student(s) to stop for a full breakfast or various grab-and-go items. If you think you might be eligible for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals, we encourage you to fill out a Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application as many programs are connected to your child[ren]'s eligibility. Please return it to the Seneca Valley Administration Office with attention to Faye Nelson. Applications can be found at [www.svsd.net/FreeandReduced](#).
- Healthy habits - SV's Health Services Department would like to remind everyone to eat well, sleep well, stay hydrated and wash hands frequently. Additionally, they ask that you please stay home or keep your child home when sick, and for 24 hours after fever is gone without medication or 24 hours without vomiting/diarrhea. Thank you!

- 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 Gold Card Club \(svsd.net\).](#)



- SV Backpack Flyers - Flyers are updated frequently and feature information on student and community events/activities. Learn more at [Backpack Flyers / Backpack Flyers \(svsd.net\)](#).
- 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! Driver incentives are now being offered.](#)
- Join the SV Team! Visit [www.svsd.net/HumanResources](#) to learn more and apply.
- Visit [Niche](#) to view SV rankings. ■

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. ■

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

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