

A publication of Ottawa Hills Local Schools for alumni, families, and Villagers

# AROUND these HILLS

DECEMBER 2024



## FOSTERING CONNECTIONS in Our Community and Beyond



For the first time, students traveled during Agora to the Bahamas to explore the culture and conduct environmental studies at Forfar Field Station on Andros Island.

### Inside this issue:

Legacy of excellence continues as a top rated district

Students engage locally and globally during Agora

Thriving alumni network gather, celebrate





**Ottawa Hills**  
Local Schools

*Defined by excellence. Supported by tradition.*

**BOARD OF EDUCATION:** Maara Fink (president), Kathy Lathrop (vice president), Rob Gnepper, Jennifer Kielczewski, Katie Timmers

**MISSION:** In partnership with our community, Ottawa Hills Local Schools will inspire, challenge, and support each student to realize their unique and full potential; to embrace the joy of learning as a lifelong process; and to become an empathetic, responsible citizen.

**CONTACT:** Ottawa Hills Local Schools  
4035 W. Central Ave., Ottawa Hills, OH 43606  
ohschools.org | 419-536-6371  
info@ohschools.org

**EDITOR:** Katie Cho

**CONTRIBUTOR:** Ben McMurray



ohschools



ohschools



**OTTAWA HILLS SCHOOLS**  
FOUNDATION

**FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE BOARD:**

Judd Silverman ('74) chairman; Austin Irving ('02) vice chairman; Anjali Gupta ('99) secretary; Mike McCullough ('93) treasurer; Jackie (Hylant) Berenzweig ('93) past chairwoman

**FOUNDATION TRUSTEES:** Dr. Jeremy Bauer ('93), R. L. Berry ('76), Andy Dale, Dr. Adam Fineske, Maara Fink, Rob Gnepper ('91), Joel Jerger, George Lathrop, Ben McMurray, Liz Puskala ('99), John Roemer ('99)

**MISSION:** The mission of the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation is to permanently enhance and extend the unique experience of excellence that defines Ottawa Hills Local Schools.

**CONTACT:** Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation  
4035 W. Central Ave., Ottawa Hills, OH 43606  
esilk@ohschools.org | 419-214-4838



ohsfoundation



ohschools.org/about-us/development

**DISTRICT LETTER**

## Finding strength by digging deep

I want to begin by personally thanking every teacher, staff member, board member, volunteer, parent, and student for their steadfast focus on academic excellence last year in our district. This fall, the State of Ohio announced that our district earned a 5-star rating on the Ohio State Report Card, tying with three other districts as the top-ranked public school district in the state. We are immensely proud, knowing that this success is due directly to our Green Bear community's dedication to putting kids and education first.

We began this school year with a mindset of "Digging Deep." The district made a lot of progress in the past 12 months to ensure we are utilizing all our resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Now, as a district, we are building on that progress and digging deeper to prioritize and achieve the following Strategic Plan goals:

- Foster positive connections (both internally and externally)
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency
- Strengthen our academic supports for all students

We are committed to more engagement with all village residents. Our Treasurer/CFO, Mr. Siloy, and I are inviting the community to quarterly 'Coffee Conversations,' welcoming residents to share their opinions and stay connected with what is happening in our district. The community is also invited to attend our State of the District event on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 7 p.m. in the auditorium, to hear updates on how we are staying focused on our financial foundation.

In Ottawa Hills Local Schools, we are so fortunate to have some of the most dedicated and excellent teachers and staff. This year, I have encouraged everyone on our team to dig deep, embrace vulnerability, and continue learning, so they can bring their full potential forward, feel empowered to ask questions, and contribute new, creative ideas to district leadership. I know that each of these individuals will "dig deep" discover innovative ways to best serve all the students in our district and make us stronger and more successful.

Thank you for your support—we look forward to continued success together this school year.



*Adam Fineske*

Superintendent Dr. Adam Fineske  
afineske@ohschools.org



AdamFineske

With coffee  
brewed by our  
students from



**THE STEAM**  
CAFÉ  
by The Frankel Family

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR**

**COFFEE CONVERSATIONS**

Come for coffee; stay for conversation with  
Superintendent Dr. Adam Fineske and  
Treasurer/CFO Mr. Tom Siloy.  
Let's talk, keep you informed, and stay connected on  
what is happening at Ottawa Hills Local Schools.

**8:30 - 10 a.m.**  
Friday, January 10  
Friday, April 11  
Friday, May 16

at OHLS DISTRICT OFFICES  
4035 W. CENTRAL AVE.



**In this issue, we want to share the incredible connections that our students are making to the world.** We believe in fostering meaningful links that extend far beyond the classroom. This edition highlights how our students are engaging with the local community and broadening their horizons, both within the U.S. and internationally, through our Agora program. We also want you to show how we're engaging with alumni who continue to shape our school district's legacy. Through these stories, you'll see how our mission of cultivating engaged, thoughtful, and globally-minded students is put into action.



## 4

### LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE CONTINUES:

Ottawa Hills Local Schools continues the legacy of excellence as a top performing school district, earning the district a tie for 1st place on the Ohio School Report Card for 2023-24.

## 6

### STUDENTS CONNECT TO OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND:

The longstanding tradition of Agora gave students powerful experiences beyond the classroom that connected them to communities across the globe.

## 20

### MEANINGFUL BONDS WITH GREEN BEAR ALUMNI:

We celebrate our 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients and Athletic Hall of Fame inductees, including the 1992-93 field hockey team, pictured here with current field hockey players at the alumni recognition home football game.

## CONTENTS

## AROUND these HILLS

2 District Letter

6 Campus News

14 Development News

28 Upcoming Events

4 District News

10 Athletics News

18 Alumni News

## AN AWARD-WINNING DISTRICT



The Governor's Thomas Edison STEM Award recognized 15 junior/senior high school teachers for building a strong foundation for our students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Send information, corrections, or change of address requests to the editor at [info@ohschools.org](mailto:info@ohschools.org)

## Tied for 1st on Ohio School Report Card

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce uses 5 performance areas to gather data for the state report card. Ottawa Hills Local School District earned 4.893 out of 5 possible rating points on the 2023-24 Ohio School Report Card. No other district earned more points than that, meaning we are among the 4 public school districts tied for the #1 spot in the state.

Taking a deeper look into the performance area of achievement, OHLS earned a 99.1%. This is calculated by dividing our achievement score of 108.3 by the maximum our district could have earned of 109.3. The Performance Index measures the test results of every student, not just those who score proficient or higher. Schools and districts receive points on the index for every student who takes a test. It is important to note that, as with any ranking system, top performing schools compete at one to three digits behind the decimal point.

- **OHLS PI Score: 108.3**
- **Average PI Score of area districts: 87.7**
- **Average PI Score of demographically similar districts: 106.6**

Attention continues to be given to every component of the report card, including the PI score. Each year, teachers and administrators review the data to determine what changes might need to be made in order to improve student performance. Those changes could include alterations to the courses of study (as in math, for example) to instructional practices (like embedding more test prep questions in daily activities). While each year is inherently different from the last and each cohort of students demonstrates different areas of strength and need, we do our best to respond to all student performance



data, including points that only come to us annually.

It should be underlined that, while broad in scope, each of these measures represents a small snapshot of the accomplishments of our students and the work of our teachers and families that support them. If you want to take a deep dive into all our school testing data, including the State Report Card, see the annual District Testing Report on the Curriculum & Instruction page of the district website using the QR code below. Please feel free to direct any questions to Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Bill Miller as he continues to look at the data the state report card provides ([wmiller@ohschools.org](mailto:wmiller@ohschools.org)).



The district comparison chart shows how Ottawa Hills Local Schools compares to our peer districts, other top rated districts, as well as two area districts. This chart reflects the total rating points, Performance Index Score, and the percentage of operating funds spent directly in the classroom. Peer districts are defined by the state as most similar to our district. The state considers factors such as size, demographics, and economic wealth to determine peer comparables.

### District comparison chart

District Name	Rating Points	PI Score	Classroom Spending
Ottawa Hills	4.893	108.3	77.90%
Marion	4.893	111.5	65.60%
Salon	4.893	111.1	70.50%
Oakwood*	4.893	108.2	71.70%
Chagrin Falls*	4.857	111.0	68.60%
Rocky River	4.822	110.2	67.10%
Madeira*	4.822	106.5	71.50%
Versailles	4.750	109.5	67.30%
Wyoming*	4.750	105.9	76.10%
Bexley*	4.572	100.5	70.80%
Perrysburg	4.501	102.8	72.60%
Sylvania	3.786	94.1	65.00%

\*Peer districts defined by state as most similar to OHLS in size, demographics, and economic wealth.  
Source: Ohio Department of Education and Workforce 2023-24 State Report Card



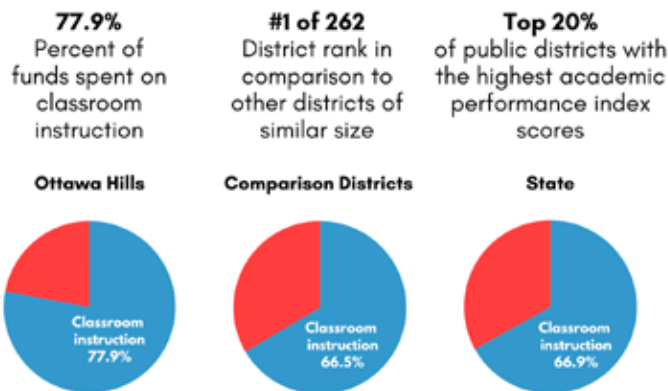
# Green Bear Finance update

## Key takeaways from the Ohio School Report Card financial data

- **\$0.78 of every dollar is spent on student instruction and support**
- **Ranked #1 for similar-sized district spending directly in the classroom**

Ottawa Hills Local Schools spends 78% of our operating budget on classroom instruction. The statewide average for school districts percent of budget spent directly on classroom instruction is 67%. Classroom spending includes teacher and staff salaries and benefits, curriculum materials (such as textbooks and software), instructional services, and any other costs that contribute directly to student learning in the classroom environment.

This data indicates that our district is currently operating well above the state average in terms of ensuring dollars are spent serving our students. In fact, we are ranked #1 when comparing this figure across the 262 districts of similar size.



Source: Ohio Department of Education and Workforce 2023-24 State Report Card

## District finance update

In an effort to remain fiscally conservative, the district has reduced future expenditures in the amount of \$100,000 over the past nine months. These cost saving initiatives include removing unneeded software and renegotiating copier, trash, phone and banking services, and much more. These savings will be fully realized in the 2025-26 school year.

The district continues to look for outside sources of funding including grant opportunities and has recently secured a \$40,000 safety grant with the Bureau of Workers' Compensation. This grant will allow us to purchase enhanced security software as well as additional cameras in and around both school buildings. Other ways we have generated new revenue is through facility rentals; although the dollar amount this generates is not large, every dollar matters to the district's bottom line.

## Property taxes and school revenue

**Lack of commercial tax base:** Property taxes from Ottawa Hills residents make up 80% of the school district's general fund revenues. In comparison to our state defined peer performing

districts, residents pay an average of 68% share of property taxes while commercial property pays the remaining share. In Ottawa Hills this is a little different as residents pay a 98% share of property taxes. This is because the Village of Ottawa Hills has almost no commercial tax base.

**Stagnant tax revenue for schools:** Even though our expenses will always grow with inflation, salary and benefit increases, and building upkeep, our main source of revenue (your property taxes) remains stagnant. This is because Ohio House Bill 920 rolls back the voted millage amount so no more than the voter approved dollar amount will be collected, even when taxable property value increases.

**Millage rollbacks following the reappraisal:** Following the property reappraisal conducted by the Lucas County Auditor (which is required by law every 6 years), the district will collect the \$2.3 million in revenue that voters approved last March, but instead of your tax bill showing a 12.9 mill levy, it may instead show closer to a 10 mill levy. This is because it takes less millage to generate the same dollar amount. So while you may see a change in your valuation, the district will not receive more dollars from the voted millage.

**The inside scoop on inside millage:** State law does require each taxing district in Ohio to guarantee 10 mills of unvoted taxes (these are not subject to HB 920), of which 3.9 mills is designated to OHLs. In 2025, the district will see a small increase in revenue from inside millage. This is because inside millage has a direct correlation to property value increases or decreases. The Green Bear Finance series Episode 3 has a great explanation from Treasurer/CFO Mr. Tom Siloy on how the county reappraisal will affect your property taxes and our district's revenue.



*I welcome questions from all district stakeholders and can be reached at [tsiloy@ohschools.org](mailto:tsiloy@ohschools.org)*  
 – Treasurer/CFO Mr. Siloy



### EPISODE 3 - DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

#### REAL ESTATE TAX REVENUE

1. Why does the District need to continually pass real estate levies?
2. What is a mill?
3. Calculating the cost of a new real estate levy for homeowners
4. Inside millage vs. Outside millage
5. The Lucas County reappraisal process
6. How does the reappraisal affect homeowners and the District?



## Fostering connections

Between people, ideas, and experiences

*All Abroad!*

This year, Agora took place during the week of November 18-22 with the 2024 theme “*Making Connections Between People, Ideas, and Experiences.*” Agora is a special week of programming that occurs every-other-year and is truly one of the most unique opportunities our students experience at Ottawa Hills Junior/Senior High School. During Agora week, 11th and 12th graders had the opportunity to travel abroad, 9th, and 10th graders participated in workshops, the 8th graders traveled to Washington D.C., and the 7th graders enjoyed on- and off-campus experiences, all focused on building connections.



**Bahamas:** Science teachers Mr. and Mrs. Genzman accompanied twenty-four students on an environmentally focused trip in the Bahamas. Students traveled to the Forfar Field Station on Andros Island to conduct scientific field studies of the environmental features of the island.

**France:** Madame Hanlon and Mr. Leeds accompanied twenty students to France where they visited Nice and Paris. Students were able to fully immerse themselves in French culture and even met up with their pen pal exchange school students in Hyères.

## Agora Workshops

“*Making Connections*” themed workshop choices for the 7th, 9th, and 10th grade students during Agora week were designed to build collaboration and learning, provide support systems, encourage personal and emotional growth, have health benefits, and create a sense of belonging. Each workshop also incorporated some type of community service component. Fifteen workshops in total were available to students, including:

**Civic Connections:** This workshop led by Mr. Bobak, in partnership with Village Mayor Marc Thompson and Village council, provided students with an overview of civic responsibilities and how citizens can engage to improve their community.

**The Dive:** Led by Divemaster Instructor Mr. Andrew Sabo and Mrs. Dowd, this workshop initiated students into the realm of equipment, training, and underwater scuba diving.

**For the Love of Nature:** Mrs. Eisenbaum took students to explore the fantastic parks systems in Greater Toledo, including the Cannalee Treehouse Village and the Toledo Botanical Gardens to learn about the healing power of nature.

**Under Investigation:** This new workshop was conducted in partnership with Toledo Police Coroners’ Office, with Mrs. Puskala, to engage students in practical investigative techniques typically employed at crime scenes.



**Costa Rica:** Thirty-six students traveled to Costa Rica with Mrs. Silk, Dr. Kreischer Gajewicz, and Mr. Nixon and explored the incredible ecological diversity that is protected by one of the best-developed conservation systems in Latin America. The group studied the country's rushing rivers, abundant wildlife, and a variety of pristine marine, volcanic and rainforest ecosystems.



**Spain:** Mrs. McLean, Señor Hood, and Mr. McCarthy accompanied twenty-eight students to Spain where they visited our sister city of Toledo. Students were able to converse using skills learned in their Spanish language classes and learned first hand of the subcultures within Spain that have influenced Spanish civilization and culture.



**Italy:** Mr. McMurry, Ms. Hoss, Ms. Shawaker, and Mrs. Burnworth accompanied thirty-one students to Italy for an action-packed week of Italian history, architecture, and culture.



### Art Connections:

Led by former Agora Director Mr. Kinkaid and community member Mrs. Danielle Snyder, students planned, designed, and created artistic benches in public spaces and learned about the impact of public art and how it facilitates community building.

**School of Rock:** This new workshop allowed students to spend a week at the Perrysburg School of Rock with Mr. Davis and Mrs. Richards to practice, plan, and perform as a band in a recording studio.

**The Build:** Rob Weaver from Penta and Mr. Torio worked with students at a Penta carpentry class to assist in building three tiny home projects in Toledo.

**OH Storytellers:** Students with Mrs. Kozy leveraged technology, and their press passes, to function as the media hub to share Agora adventures.



**oh\_agora**



**@oh\_agora**



**Ottawa Hills AGORA 2022**

Meanwhile, the 8th graders went on the annual trip to Washington, D.C. to visit the center of our democracy, see monuments that commemorate our history, and hear the echoes of voices that define what it means to be American. The D.C. trip connected real places and experiences with students' academic studies while also helping them envision themselves as participants in the nation's future. See photos from the D.C. trip on Instagram @ohhs\_dc. The 7th graders participated in on-campus workshops, traveled to the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, and explored the Toledo Metroparks.



## Connecting with traditions: 6th-graders make the best 'buddies'

Ottawa Hills Local Schools continues its beloved tradition of pairing kindergarten students with 6th-grade student "buddies" for a school-year-long mentorship. Through regular meet-ups, this buddy system allows the older students to take on a leadership role, while the younger students build confidence and make lasting connections with a trusted friend. In one recent activity, the buddies collaborated on a science project where the 6th graders helped their kindergarten partners trace their hands and explore bone structures.



## 4th-Grade storyteller publishes bilingual picture book

Mark Chen has always been a storyteller, entertaining his family with endless make-believe to pass the time or make his little brother, Martin, laugh. Recently, Mark greatly expanded his storytelling audience with the publication of his book, *Copycat*. Mark is both the author and illustrator of *Copycat*, a project he began over summer break as part of an online Mandarin course. The book is written in both English and Mandarin, using Traditional Chinese characters and Taiwanese phonics.

Writing is Mark's favorite subject in school. "I like writing because there isn't a limit to the things you can write about," said Mark. He began by first planning his 20+ page spreads. Mark knew his story would be inspired by his family's cuddly and calm Japanese Bobtail cats, Miji, Momo, and Maru. In his book, the main character tries to "copycat" the behaviors of others before eventually realizing he is perfect just the way he is. The illustrating process was very challenging, Mark recalls, drawing and redrawing pages many times, resulting in over 100 unused illustrations. Many details can be found in his final drawings, including a green bear on the dedication page to represent his teachers and friends at Ottawa Hills.

*Copycat* was published in September 2024, and the Chen family donated a signed copy to The Wondry, making it one of a handful of bilingual books in the elementary library.

## Seniors named Commended Students in 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program

Jacob Rymer, Cole Weaver, Esther Yang, Irene Sun, Hutch Carter, and Annie Bahar (not pictured) have been named Commended Students in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program. Commended Students are among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2025 competition by taking the 2023 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®).

Congratulations to these students who have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success.



## A School of Distinction

Ottawa Hills Junior/Senior High School has been named a Cognia® School of Distinction, earning this recognition through accreditation and review process. We share this honor with a select group of peers of 49 schools and 11 systems across 16 states and 7 countries. Pictured: Cognia's Director for the Mid-Atlantic region, Melinda Isaacs, presented Principal McMurray with the accreditation certificate. She remarked, "Ottawa Hills is a clear example of a community where excellence is a central part of its culture."



## CENTER STAGE!



Watch for the district's Summer 2025 issue with a recap of the theatre programs *Footloose*, *SpongeBob the Musical*, and the spring musical.



## Paws-itive support for students: Harrison joins elementary school as new therapy dog

Elementary school counselor Ms. Syrowski introduced Harrison, a one-year-old therapy Aussiedoodle, to students this year. Harrison, who visits 2–3 days a week, is a great listener and brings comfort to students, especially those with limited verbal skills. He completed rigorous training with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, including visits to care facilities, and must volunteer regularly to maintain his certification.

“The impact has been immediate,” said Ms. Syrowski. “Therapy dogs help with emotional regulation, language, and reading skills. Harrison is also part of the reading program, where he listens as students practice in a nonjudgmental way.”

Studies show therapy dogs enhance cognitive, social, emotional, and reading development. Ottawa Hills Schools have seen positive responses to therapy dogs, as have neighboring districts like Sylvania, Anthony Wayne, and Springfield.



## Connecting with the arts: Highlights from the Fall Collage Concert

The annual Fall Collage Concert showcased the vocal and instrumental talents of junior and senior high school students. Directed by Vocal Music Director Hayley Hoss and Band Director Michael Leeds, over 200 students participated, performing a diverse selection of pieces that celebrated the themes of inspiration and the season. Our music programs thrive thanks to the generous support of OHMTA and community partners, ensuring that the arts remain a vibrant part of the Ottawa Hills experience.



## Connecting with our environment:

### Field research at Stone Lab highlights Great Lakes biodiversity

Environmental Science students visited OSU's Stone Lab on Gibraltar Island for a hands-on research experience. They conducted tests on water quality, measuring wind speed, temperature, water clarity, and wave height, and examined samples for zooplankton, phytoplankton, fish, and invertebrates. Students also learned about local ecosystems, conservation efforts, and the area's history.

“This trip is unique for our students,” science teacher Mr. Genzman shared. “Being on the water brings the Great Lakes' significance into perspective. Observing diverse organisms and fish species in person is incredibly rewarding.”



### UT Lab visit brings plant biology to life

The Honors Scientific Research class visited Dr. Heckathorn's lab at the University of Toledo and were able to see first-hand advanced photosynthesis equipment and growth chambers used in federally funded plant biology and algal toxin research. Viewing algae under the microscope offered a glimpse into professional scientific techniques and deepened students' understanding of plant biology and environmental science.

### Ottawa River cleanup brings awareness to stream conservation

For nearly a decade the Eclipse Club has been cleaning up plastic and debris along the Ottawa River in collaboration with Village officials. This effort supports the Lake Erie watershed's health, and with ongoing cleanups and a dam removal, the river is gradually being restored to its natural state.

### Exploring local ecology: 5th graders assess Ottawa River

In partnership with TMACOG and The Nature Conservancy, students tested water quality, studied invasive species, and assessed the river's health using benthic macroinvertebrates.





## Clean sweep of the TAAC



Ottawa Hills High School emerged as the undisputed champion of the Toledo Area Athletic Conference (TAAC) this fall, achieving an extraordinary feat as every varsity team in the league brought home the trophy. This remarkable accomplishment reflects the dedication, hard work, and team spirit that define our athletes and coaching staff.



**BOYS' & GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPS**



**GOLF CHAMPS**



**VOLLEYBALL CHAMPS**



**FOOTBALL CHAMPS**





BOYS' SOCCER CHAMPS



GIRLS' SOCCER CHAMPS

## JUNIOR HIGH

## Junior High School also captured four TAAC titles

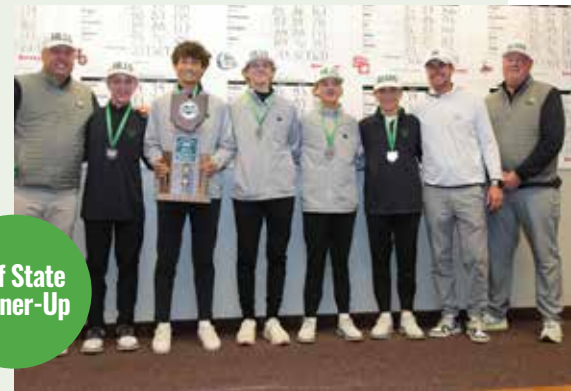
The Ottawa Hills Junior High School also captured four TAAC titles. Congratulations to the athletes and coaches of the junior high boys' and girls' cross country teams (pictured with the high school cross country team above), the 8th-grade volleyball team, and the junior high football team. We are excited to see these young athletes grow and develop their skills as they move into high school!



## TITLES BEYOND THE TAAC

**Golf** The golf team ended their season as state runner-up. Individual golfers Charlie Swigart and Yale Feniger were named Second Team All-State. Golf Coach Justin Kruse (OHHS class of '01) was named the Division II District Coach of the Year.

**Cross Country** Both the girls' and boys' cross country team finished the season as district champions. The teams went on to compete at the state competition with the boys' team finishing 3rd in the state and the girls' team finishing 13th in the state. [Read more >](#)



Golf State Runner-Up



Cross Country competes at state



## OH Highlights

**Girls' Tennis** The girls' tennis doubles dynamo of Bryn Tangeman and Taylor Kayse finished 4th at states.

**Football** The football team had a tremendous season with a three-peat win of the TAAC championship followed by making it to the regional semifinal round of playoffs! Over the summer, these Green Bear athletes with head coach Mr. Brandon Carter, participated in a special day with special athletes. Niedermeier Stadium and the Ottawa Hills football program hosted the Lucas County Special Olympics.

**Volleyball** The volleyball team claimed the title of District runner-up. These athletes also participated in Volley for the Cure and the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, fundraisers which aim to promote positive awareness and the importance of early detection of breast cancer.

**Boys' Soccer** The boys' soccer team drove the ball all the way to become district runner-up. A highlight from the season was defeating rival school Maumee Valley Country Day School 3-0.

**Girls' Soccer** The girls' soccer team swept their way to sectional champions. Both soccer teams raised nearly \$6,000 in the Match for MS, which will help fund multiple sclerosis research, programs and services so that people affected by MS can live their best lives.



Girls' Tennis  
4th in State



Special Olympics



Volleyball  
District  
Runner-Up



Boys' Soccer  
District  
Runner-Up



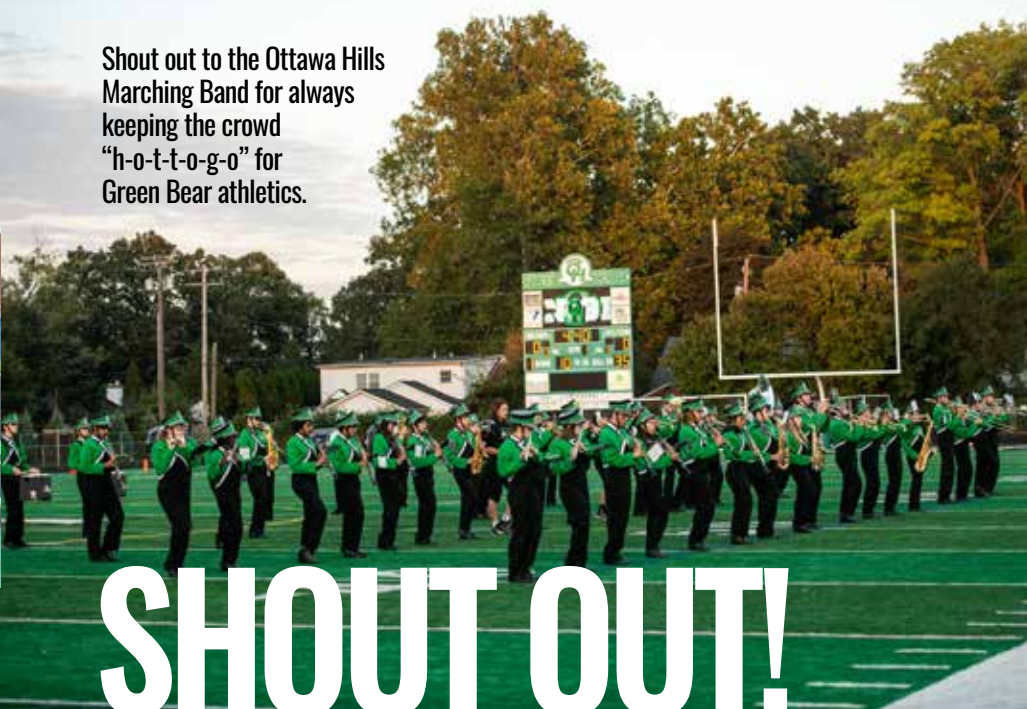
The dance team never fails to get the crowd ready under the Friday night lights.



Girls' Soccer  
Sectional  
Champs

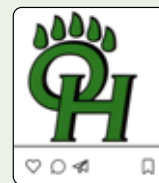


Shout out to the Ottawa Hills Marching Band for always keeping the crowd "h-o-t-t-o-g-o" for Green Bear athletics.



## Scoring big on social media

Our fantastic new Athletic Director, Mr. Ryan Wronkowicz, has been highlighting all the Green Bear athletics action on our new District Athletics social media account. Stay in the know on every game!



 [ohls\\_greenbears](#)

 [ohls\\_greenbears](#)

 [Ottawa Hills Green Bears](#)



We've got spirit,  
**YES WE DO!**

For the second time ever, the Green Bear student section was named the BCSN Student Section of the Week and awarded the GameDay Nation Belt.



## 'Chase is on the case!'

Ottawa Hills football received national attention following their win in the first round of regional playoffs against Ashland Crestview. Chase Miller's interception was the #6 pick on ESPN's SportsCenter Top 10 Daily. Thank you to Urban Dialexx Sports Media for the photo. Scan the QR code above to see the video clip.



## FOUNDATION LETTER

### The deep connections of our shared legacy

Over the past six months, we have witnessed a remarkable spirit within our beloved community. We were thrilled to welcome back vibrant groups of alumni who returned to the Hills to reconnect with former classmates, teammates, and the very community that played a pivotal role in shaping their formative years. These gatherings reminded us of the deep connections that define our shared legacy and the bonds that remain strong, no matter where life takes us.

The stories we heard were nothing short of inspiring. Each achievement underscores the profound impact of a Green Bear education—one that instills the values of hard work, resilience, and community engagement. As we celebrate these connections, we recognize the importance of supporting the student experience at Ottawa Hills. The Foundation is currently engaged in a feasibility study to strategically define its focus within the district over the next 10 years. Together, we can continue to enhance the unique experience of excellence that defines Ottawa Hills and inspire new generations of Green Bears to follow their dreams.

Warm regards,

Judd Silverman  
Board Chair, OHSF

Erica Silk  
Director of Development, OHLS



**Judd Silverman** ('74) is chairman of the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation. **Erica (Gatchel) Silk** ('89) is Director of Development, Ottawa Hills Local Schools.



### Accepting nominations

If you are interested in nominating an Ottawa Hills alumni for the Distinguished Alumni Award or Athletic Hall of Fame, contact Erica Silk at [esilk@ohschools.org](mailto:esilk@ohschools.org). More information on celebrating alumni achievement can be found at [ohschools.org/about-us/development](https://ohschools.org/about-us/development)

## It's the 'Little Things'

See how it's the "Little Things" that make Ottawa Hills Local Schools so special, and how those little things help the Foundation have a big impact on our students. As long time coach Chris Hardman says, every donation, every dollar, adds up to a major impact and is changing lives and creating a bright future for Ottawa Hills students. Watch the video, narrated by Chris, by scanning the QR code to see first-hand how the student experience is strong because of the OHS Foundation.





# DONOR FUNDS

## Annual Unrestricted Impact Fund

Gifts received and spent in the same year to have an immediate impact on faculty, staff and students at Ottawa Hills Local Schools

## The Irene A. Aubin Student Assistance Fund

To provide financial assistance for students to participate in curricular, extra-curricular and super-curricular programs, regardless of financial ability

## The Billy Ciralsky Entrepreneurial Endowment Fund

For the enhancement of student entrepreneurial initiatives and projects at Ottawa Hills Local Schools

## The Nanci Kay Effler Fund for Visual Arts

To support innovative and impactful initiatives and recognize student passion and excellence in visual arts

## The Heldreth Family Student Services and Support Fund

To support current and future district efforts to meet the academic needs of individual students, their educators and District Interventionists; and to contribute to the educational needs and development of students and the training and tools teachers need to provide effective support

## The Bill and Anne Lathrop Endowment Fund for Educational Innovation

To provide resources toward creating a learning environment for students and teachers that reflect the latest educational developments

## The Mindel Family Athletic Fund

To provide the resources necessary to enrich the lives of student-athletes as they strive to be champions in the classroom and at the highest level of athletic competition

## The Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation STEM Fund

To increase opportunities for students and ignite a passion for exploring STEM-based learning (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)

## The Eleanor Seifried Fund for the Performing Arts

To enhance the performing arts – theater, choir, and dance

## The Swigart Family Golf Fund

To ensure the life-long sustainability of the men's golf program at Ottawa Hills Local Schools and provide those student athletes with the highest level of training and competition, as well as an unmatched academic and athletic experience

## The Talmage Family Fund

The general fund to support emerging needs and initiatives

## The Dynamo Soccer Fund

To ensure the life-long sustainability of soccer within the Ottawa Hills community and Ottawa Hills Local Schools; Recipients will learn to work with others toward a common goal, develop a sense of belonging, learn about teamwork and cooperation, and improve their skills and advance to higher levels

## Cornerstone Planned Giving Society

Donors who plan for a bequest in their will

*Named funds are established with a minimum contribution of \$25,000 and are often used to support specific initiatives.*

All donors  
can give – at  
any level – to  
an established  
named fund.

# Granted!

Grants like these help enhance, extend excellence in Ottawa Hills



## Project: Music room chairs Fund: Talmage Family Fund

The Foundation joined the Ottawa Hills Music and Theatre Association and the Ottawa Hills Schools Parent Association to purchase 55 new chairs for the music room in the junior/senior high school. This purchase replaced the current chairs that were on their “last legs” from nearly 40 years of use by the band and choir students. Chair racks were also purchased to allow the music room to be easily modified into a more versatile space for band, choir, and theater.

## Project: Environmental chemistry OHLS Grants Committee

With the help of the development office, Dr. Kreischer Gajewicz was able to secure additional funding for her honors and AP Chemistry classes through the ACS-Hach High School Chemistry Classroom Grant. This supplemental funding of \$1,800 provided lab equipment and supplies including Stream Survey Test Kits. Honors Chemistry students are using this equipment to complete an independent research project in the field of environmental chemistry. AP Chemistry students are using this equipment to conduct research on microplastics. “Supplemental funding like this helps students make real-world connections between chemistry and the environment,” said Dr. Kreischer Gajewicz.



## Project: Mindfulness Professional Development Fund: Annual Unrestricted Impact Fund

This fall, elementary school counselor Mrs. Celizic attended a professional development training that was geared towards educators teaching yoga and mindfulness in class. The Foundation funded this training that will help support the development of social emotional skills and regulations.



## Project: Elementary school basketball hoops Fund: The Mindel Family Athletic Fund

The Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation joined OH Boosters and the Ottawa Hills Schools Parent Association to complete this project. The new hoops will be installed before the beginning of the 2025-26 school year.

Upgrading the current portable basketball hoops in the elementary school gym to safe, standard permanent structures. The new basketball hoops will meet current safety and game regulation requirements, ensuring compliance with official measurements and improving practice and game conditions for approximately 220 elementary school basketball athletes and the enjoyment for all 550+ recreational play students.



## Project: Kadens Family Fitness Center equipment updates and TrainHeroic subscription for student athletes Fund: The Health & Wellness Fund

As more student athletes take advantage of the programming inside the Kadens Family Fitness Center, equipment such as treadmills, medicine balls, and exercise bands need to be updated and replaced. The Foundation provided support to ensure the equipment is in top working condition. Additionally, the TrainHeroic app subscription was purchased that will allow our athletic trainer, Mr. Yuschak, to prescribe and deliver workouts to students and staff en masse using the app. This subscription was previously cut from the district budget due to financial constraints and the Foundation is thrilled to be able to help provide this once again.

## Project: Home to Home Fund: The Kadens Family Leadership Series

Home to Home is the continued partnership between Scott High School and Ottawa Hills High School that strives to establish connections within our greater Toledo community. This fall, students attended the Global Salesian Leadership Summit at the Glass City Center in downtown Toledo. The students participated in a variety of breakout sessions led by Toledo-area



As the district continues to navigate a tight financial position with limited permanent improvement and general fund dollars, donations and grants through the development office and the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation continue to play a critical role in providing our students with the best possible educational environment and opportunities.

professionals for a thoughtful day of leadership training.

Below, Home to Home students enjoy a walk along the Glass City Metropark after the summit to share what they learned.



## Pickup Truck can fuel savings for district

As part of our ongoing efforts to find alternative funding and resources to support OHLS, the district is in need of a reliable pickup truck to support our operations team. If you have a pickup truck that's in good condition, and you are interested in donating it to OHLS, contact Director of Development Erica Silk: [esilk@ohschools.org](mailto:esilk@ohschools.org). Donations like this are tax-deductible.



# Directed Gifts

## Gift: Heldreth family impacting Student Services

Many thanks to the Heldreth family for their gift to the Foundation dedicated to strengthening the district's Student Services Department. This generous contribution will enhance resources and support systems to support the academic needs of individual students and their educators and interventionists.

High school intervention specialist Mrs. Lauren Tracy says, "Our team is very grateful for the Heldreth family's generosity and support. It is making a real impact in our department."



## Gift: Talbott family drives district forward with school bus

The Foundation recently received a generous gift from Katharine (Thomas) Talbott (Class of '89) and her family, directed toward the purchase of a new school bus. This addition to the district's fleet will be a valuable resource for transporting student-athletes to competitions and providing reliable transportation for class field trips, enhancing the overall student experience.

The Talbott family's contribution reflects a long-standing commitment to enriching Ottawa Hills' educational and extracurricular programs. The district is grateful for the Talbott family's generosity and dedication to student growth,

teamwork, and learning beyond the school grounds. "The need for an additional bus is a testament to the many out-of-school



experiences our district offers. "My family is happy to support the school in this way, and I know that my parents, William and Mary ('54) Thomas, who raised three Green Bears, would be pleased as well," said Katie Talbott.

## Gift: Funding connections

For the second time, an anonymous donor has generously directed a gift to the Foundation to support students in financial need to participate in Agora's travel opportunities. The donor's goal is to increase access to the transformative experience of educational travel and cultural exchanges. This directed gift supported students participating in the fall Agora trips abroad, as well as the annual 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C., broadening students' perspectives, fostering global connections, and encouraging civic engagement. These gifts helped ensure that financial barriers did not prevent students from accessing such transformative opportunities. By covering part of the travel costs, the gifts allowed more students to participate, supporting Ottawa Hills' mission to develop well-rounded, globally-minded young adults.

If you are interested in making a gift and impacting students as these directed gifts have done, contact Director of Development, Erica Silk at [esilk@ohschools.org](mailto:esilk@ohschools.org).





## Reunited and it feels so good...

### Lions, Tigers, and Bears, OH my!

A very special alumni meet up took place in October at the Columbia vs. Princeton football game in New York, NY. Columbia's AJ George ('23) faced off against Princeton's Luke Gnepper ('24) at Robert K. Kraft Field. Alumni gathered for a pre-game tailgate at Inwood Farm and a post-game celebration at Haswell Greens. The players were also able to reunite with their varsity football coach, Mr. Carter, who attended the game.



### OH Choraliers

The OH Choraliers have always been a prestigious group. Pictured: choralier alumni Alec Frye, Michael Docis, Noah Hupp, Elizabeth Noble, Grace Wipfli, and Yarko Kuk joined vocal music conductor Donna Wipfli for a summer choir concert benefiting the Wernert Center. The Wernert Center is a community center for individuals seeking mental health support and recovery through peer support.

### Green Bears gather to celebrate

This summer Kari and Andrew Jamison ('11) were married with many Ottawa Hills friends and family in attendance. Congratulations to the happy couple!



### Alumni Soccer

Green Bear athletes reunited for a spirited alumni soccer game this fall.



# Class Acts



Class of 1964 at Stubborn Brothers



The Class of 1959 gathered in Boston, MA



Class of 1967



Class of 1967 reunites and celebrates 75th birthdays

Did you know that the Class of 1974 was the largest graduating class in Ottawa Hills' history with 126 students?



Class of 1974



Class of 1979 at Stubborn Brothers during Jeep Fest



Class of 2004



Class of 2004 at Hannon's Garage



Class of 2013

## Get in Touch!



Green Bear Nation has a robust alumni network. Share your alumni news at [esilk@ohschools.org](mailto:esilk@ohschools.org).

## Upcoming Reunions

**1959** contact Catharine Melhorn: [cmelhorn@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:cmelhorn@mtholyoke.edu)

**1970** contact Nancy Edmunds Ankney: [nancy.ankney@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.ankney@gmail.com)

**1980** contact Toddy and Greg Glosser: [toddyglosser@gmail.com](mailto:toddyglosser@gmail.com)



# Celebrating Alumni Achievement

The following pages honor **the Class of 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients and Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees.**



The Distinguished Alumni Award was established in 2017 to recognize Ottawa Hills Local Schools' attendees who have made a meaningful contribution to society, and whose accomplishments, affiliations, and careers have honored the tradition of excellence at Ottawa Hills.



The Ottawa Hills High School Athletic Hall of Fame was established in 2019 to formally honor the memory and contributions of the many outstanding athletes, teams, coaches, and supporters of our athletic programs. The Hall of Fame serves as a symbol of our appreciation of the excellence, honor, and devotion displayed by these celebrated individuals and teams.

## Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients



### 2023 INDUCTEES

Shelley Wolson ('76)  
Steve Jenks ('77)  
Kristján Gíslason ('74)

### 2022 INDUCTEES

Dr. Jessica Ciralsky  
Carl Heiles ('57)  
Phil Mattingly ('02)  
Cleveland O'Neal III ('74)  
Jim White, Jr. ('58)

### 2021 INDUCTEE

Dr. David Glow ('55)

### 2020 INDUCTEES

Barbara Barker ('79)  
Mary (Carson) Fedderke ('65)  
Constance Hauman ('79)  
Amul Thapar ('87)  
Gary M. Woodbury ('58)  
Robert (Bob) Hinkle ('56) (in memoriam)

### 2019 INDUCTEES

Betsy (Carson) Brady ('64)  
Pete Kadens ('96)  
Rustin "Polly" (Steele) Levenson ('65)  
Robert (Bob) Shopneck ('68)  
Dr. Catherine Webb ('66)

### 2018 INDUCTEES

Dr. James Geiger ('79)  
Roa Lynn ('55)  
Larry Mindel ('55)  
M. Scott Peeler ('89)  
Frederic Roberts ('79)

### 2017 INDUCTEES (INAUGURAL CLASS)

Christine Brennan ('76)  
Craig Burkhardt ('69)  
Russell Carson ('61)  
Richard DeVore ('51) (in memoriam)  
John Galbraith ('41)  
David Staelin ('56) (in memoriam)  
Sally Stuckey ('74)

## Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees



### 2023 INDUCTEES

John Buckey ('69)  
Craig Burkhardt ('69)  
Michael Tanner ('73)  
Richard Kuzma, Coach  
Girls Athletic Association ('63)  
Penny Carver Dean ('63)  
Gretta Fleck Laskey ('63)  
Marianne Fleck Gehring ('63)  
Diane Smith Kerin ('63)  
Margo Seney Morrow ('63)  
Jane Ulmer Kuta ('63)  
Joan Ulmer Fisher ('63)

### 2022 INDUCTEES

Paula (Wagoner) Conway ('94)  
Norm Niedermeier, Coach  
Sandy Osterman, Coach  
John Spengler ('77)  
Jim White, Jr. ('58)

### 2021 INDUCTEES

Wendy (Roberts) Pavicic ('97)  
David Roadhouse ('62)

### 2020 INDUCTEES

Jamie O'Hara ('68)  
Katherine (Jamieson) Folino ('10)

### 2019 INDUCTEES (INAUGURAL CLASS)

Kelly Coleman ('82)  
John M. Hill ('56)  
Laurie Imes ('81)  
Jim Tenney ('56)

# Amy (Robbins) Kadens ('99)

Advocate for healthy children and family development



Amy Kadens has made a tremendous impact in addressing the critical issue of diaper insecurity in the United States. As a mother of three young children, she co-founded Share Our Spare in 2011, a nonprofit organization that provides clothing and other essentials to infants and toddlers from low-income families.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Amy's work with Share Our Spare took on new urgency. The organization partnered with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to distribute nearly 10 million diapers to families in need through diaper banks. Through this work, Amy realized that traditional diaper banks, which meet only 3% of the national demand, were insufficient to address the growing crisis. Amy knew there had to be a better way to address this public health crisis.

In response, Amy founded MOD Collective – an organization that exists to end diaper need. MOD Collective's signature program is Diaper Dollars, an innovative and compassionate solution that gives families in need a monthly prepaid digital e-card to purchase diapers from retail stores nationwide. MOD Collective, named after Marion O'Brien Donovan, the inventor of the precursor to the disposable

diaper, seeks to bridge the gap left by traditional charity models and empower families to meet their own needs with dignity and convenience.

Amy emphasizes that diaper insecurity has far-reaching consequences, affecting not only physical health but also mental well-being and economic stability. She points out that diaper need is a leading cause of maternal depression and can prevent children from attending daycare, which in turn limits parents' ability to work, perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

"This is a public health crisis without a public solution," Amy remarked in a 2023 interview with JCW Media Group. Through MOD Collective's innovative approach, Amy has gathered data and momentum to begin driving legislative action and expanding support for struggling families.

Amy's work has brought much-needed attention to diaper insecurity, paving the way for a future where no child or parent suffers due to a lack of something as essential as a diaper. Her efforts continue to inspire change and offer hope to countless families across the nation.

# Brad Rubini ('79)

Claire's Day co-creator to inspire lifelong readers



Brad Rubini co-created Claire's Day, a festival dedicated to inspiring children to become lifelong readers, in memory of his daughter, Claire, who passed away unexpectedly in 2000 at the age of 10 due to a misdiagnosed heart condition. Claire was an avid reader, and Brad founded the festival with his wife, Julie, to keep her legacy alive. For over 20 years, Claire's Day has been a beacon of literacy in the community and is now Northwest Ohio's largest children's book festival.

What began as a one-day free family book festival in 2002 has grown into a variety of literary experiences impacting over 15,000 children annually. Claire's Day established the School Visit outreach program in 2004. The program places visiting authors and illustrators in schools that have partnered with Claire's Day, offering their students the opportunity to hear stories and inspirations directly from creators. In 2016, the 15th anniversary of Claire's Day, 15 authors visited 43 schools throughout the greater Toledo area. Claire's Night was also established in 2004, providing a fundraising reception to give adults the opportunity to mix and mingle with guest artists and writers.

Brad also established the C.A.R.E. (Claire's Awards for Reading Excellence) program, which has recognized over 10,000 students as the most improved readers in their schools. Beyond impacting the community in memory of Claire, Brad has been a dedicated volunteer at First Tee,

participated in numerous volunteer projects with Toledo Rotary, and serves as a golf course rater for the United States Golf Association with the Northern Ohio Golf Association. Brad also served as President of the Rotary Club of Toledo, one of the largest Rotary clubs in the world.

Dubbed "Mr. P" as in "Mr. Personality" by his children, Brad has a habit of striking up conversations with strangers. This outgoing nature has served him well in both personal and professional endeavors. Brad's personal philosophy, "The harder you work, the luckier you get," drives his approach to both work and life. He has overcome significant challenges, including struggling with dyslexia, which wasn't diagnosed until his senior year of high school. Reflecting on his time at Ottawa Hills Schools, Brad recalls the influence of his English teacher, Mrs. Barb Wagner, who he surprised with an outstanding year-end project, earning him an A and saving himself from failing.

Today, Brad continues to work in the family business, now in its 92nd year. He and his wife, Julie, have been married for 36 years and have two children, Kyle and Ian, who are both happy and thriving. Brad and Julie are currently on their second journey around the United States in a motorhome, enjoying activities like golfing, kayaking, biking, hiking, and exploring cultural sites in each state.



# Steve Staelin ('63)

Community leader and business mentor



Steve Staelin is a retired managing partner of Ernst & Young (EY). He began his career with the firm after earning his BS and MBA from the University of Michigan in 1969. Looking back on his time at EY, Steve is most proud of the individuals he mentored. He guided many from their early years at the firm and they later became CFOs, CEOs, or fellow partners of EY. "It's wonderful to see people grow and develop into highly accomplished business and community leaders," said Steve.

Over the years, Steve served on numerous community boards and committees, including the chairmanship of ProMedica Health Systems. He also served as treasurer, vice president, and president of the Toledo Zoo board. Steve was instrumental in bringing new leadership to the Toledo Zoo in a time of extreme turmoil, and regaining community support to pass a much-needed levy. This may be one of Steve's most

significant impacts on the community, as he helped secure the future of the Toledo Zoo with a clear vision for reform and necessary funding. Steve also served as president of the board of education at Ottawa Hills and was extremely proud to present his daughter, Tiffany, with her high school diploma at commencement.

Reflecting on his upbringing, Steve says growing up in a village like Ottawa Hills instills a strong sense of commitment to others and the greater good because of the deep sense of community. "You are accountable to your neighbors, fellow students, and teachers." Steve's OH education provided a strong foundation and prepared him for post-secondary education. The collegiality and camaraderie of his class challenged him to succeed in the classroom and led to lifelong friendships.

# Penny (Katchka) Staelin ('64)

Juvenile justice system leader committed to community service



Penny Staelin has played a crucial role in giving the most vulnerable children a voice in the justice system, in Lucas County and throughout the country. She founded and was the Director of the Lucas County Juvenile Court Citizen Review Boards and the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program. The Review Boards are an arm of the court that monitor the Children's Services permanency plans for abuse/neglect cases. The CASA's are guardian ad litem who work directly with the children and families, and represent the child in court.

This CASA program was the third in the country and now there are 800 such programs. Penny was hired by the court to be the Director of Training for the Review Boards, the CASA's and the Guardian ad Litem attorneys. Her extensive impact in the juvenile justice system earned her two awards in the community and the programs received a National Award from the Juvenile Court Judges of America which she accepted in Portland, Oregon.

"My parents were great believers in giving back," Penny

said. "A love of service is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children." She is a past president of the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) Ambassadors and a member of the TMA Board of Trustees. She credits the Junior League of Toledo for greatly enriching her life. She served as the Vice President and held many committee chairmanships for the League. She chaired Major Gifts for the United Way and served on other community boards such as ProMedica Metro Hospitals, UPMC Foundation, YWCA, Planned Parenthood and others. One of Penny's greatest joys was operating her stationery shop for over 25 years. She loved working with and helping clients through important times in their lives, such as weddings, funerals and other events.

While Penny has accomplished many things in her life, she says she is most proud of her children and grandchildren. "The support of my family and friends has always given me confidence to take on many new experiences."

## A life together...

Penny and Steve had their first date when they were young 14-year old students at Ottawa Hills and recently celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary. They share the same personal philosophy to approach life with enthusiasm and accept opportunities that will enrich your life. No matter what life hands you, you must keep going and find your purpose.

Steve and Penny's lives have not been without great challenges. Their daughter, Tiffany, an environmental consultant and educator, passed away suddenly when she was just 31 years old from a malignant brain tumor.

In Tiffany's memory, they established the Tiffany

Staelin Fund at the Greater Toledo Community Foundation to support organizations consistent with Tiffany's passions. As they said, "We are grateful that God gave us Tiffany for 31 years . . . just wish we could have had more."

Today they are very proud of their son, Tyler, and his family. Tyler is a surgeon and his wife, Katie, is an RN in Nashville, TN. They have three children, the eldest of which is now a freshman at Yale and on the men's rowing team. Their two daughters are honor students and actively involved in high school athletics.

# Coach Chris Hardman

Mentor and Ottawa Hills coach for 50 years



Chris Hardman was working in Bowling Green when he noticed a job posting on a wall for an open position at Ottawa Hills. He applied, and the rest is history. "I've been the lucky one. When I started in August of 1974, I didn't know that Ottawa Hills would become my life's work," says Hardman. He spent the next three decades working at Ottawa Hills Junior/Senior High School.

Hardman retired from his teaching position at OHHS in 2013/2014. Anyone who knows Chris wouldn't be surprised to hear that, despite retiring, he continued teaching youth. Recognizing the opportunity to share his life experiences, Hardman became a motivational speaker, drawing from his 40 years of experience in education. He recently volunteered as a speaker for 5th and 6th grade Green Bears. These "Conversations with Coach Hardman" focus on peer relationships, decision-making, and leadership by example. "We are surrounded by a terrific community here. People move here for the schools and the sense of community. There is no other place like it," says Hardman. "I've never not wanted to come to work; and that is such a good thing to be able to say."

In recent years, Hardman also took on the role of substitute teacher. When the elementary school started seeing larger enrollment, Hardman stepped in as an additional elementary physical education teacher. Towards the end of the 2023-2024 school year, Hardman became a paraprofessional at the elementary school, filling in when the district faced staffing shortages.

Mentorship and leading by example are fundamental

aspects of coaching, beliefs that Hardman holds dear. Mentoring has always been crucial to him. "My father, a teacher and coach, taught me the value of mentoring." Hardman encourages younger players to volunteer as helpers on the junior varsity and varsity teams, allowing older athletes to mentor younger ones.

Hardman has coached for decades and his dedication to Green Bear Athletics is felt deeply in the Ottawa Hills community. This year marks his 44th season as the head varsity baseball coach. On April 10, 2024, at Hardman Field, the Varsity Baseball team defeated Whiteford 2-1, giving Coach Hardman his 700th win. In addition to baseball, Hardman has coached various other teams and sports. 2024 commemorates his 50th year of coaching Ottawa Hills athletics.

Chris says, "I am incredibly fortunate to have been involved with the Ottawa Hills community for such a long time. We raised our four daughters here and now, seven of our grandchildren reside in the village. I recognized years ago that there is no better place to be an educator, and no better place for a young person to receive an education, than at Ottawa Hills Schools." He continues, "I have been very privileged to have coached some wonderful student-athletes and shared those experiences with their families. It doesn't get any better than that! I know that because of my long tenure here, some believe that Chris Hardman has given his life to Ottawa Hills, but in reality, Ottawa Hills has given me my life!"

# Jeff Gehring ('61)

Basketball standout and guidance counselor



Jeff Gehring's journey from Ottawa Hills High School to becoming one of Miami University's most celebrated basketball players is a testament to his extraordinary talent and dedication. Graduating from OHHS in 1961, Jeff quickly made his mark on the varsity basketball team at Miami University, where he would go on to achieve remarkable success.

During his time at Miami, Jeff became the second-highest scorer in the university's history, a feat that solidified his legacy in college basketball. He was the first player in Miami's history to score over 400 points in each of his three varsity seasons, amassing a total of 1,295 points. His scoring prowess was matched by his consistency, as he ranked third in Miami's all-time career list in point average with 18.0 points per game, and his field goal percentage of .478 (498-1042) placed him among the best shooters of his era. Jeff's excellence extended to free throws as well, with an impressive .789 (200-379) free throw percentage.

A three-year letter winner under Coach Dick Shrider, Jeff's impact on the court was undeniable. He was selected to the All-MAC second team as a sophomore and earned first-team

honors in his junior and senior years. His leadership and skill helped Miami achieve a three-year record of 49-24, including a share of the MAC championship with a 20-5 record in his senior year.

Despite being drafted by the Cincinnati Royals in the 7th round, Jeff chose a different path, dedicating 35 years to serving the Columbus school district as a guidance counselor. His decision to work in education exemplifies his commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of others, a trait that defined him both on and off the court.

Jeff's outstanding achievements in basketball were recognized with his induction into the Miami University Hall of Fame in 1976. His legacy was further immortalized in a feature spread in *Sports Illustrated*, celebrating his contributions to the Miami Redskins basketball team.

Jeff's wife, Marianne (Fleck) Gehring, was inducted into the Ottawa Hills Athletic Hall of Fame in 2023. As a beloved figure in Ottawa Hills and beyond, Jeff Gehring's life story is one of perseverance, excellence, and dedication to both sport and community.



# Andy Lott ('88)

Baseball champion with a passion for hard work



Andy Lott's passion for sports was ignited at an early age. Encouraged by his parents and inspired by his sister, Torrey, a successful tennis player, Andy developed a deep love for competition. Traveling to Torrey's matches, he absorbed the nuances of competitive sports, learning the value of determination and teamwork.

A standout athlete, Andy embraced a personal philosophy that was rooted in confidence and self-belief. He and his teammates carried a mindset that they were meant to dominate the court or field, often elevating their performance to new heights. This unwavering confidence became a cornerstone of his athletic success.

One of Andy's most cherished memories from his high school athletic career was winning the state baseball championship as a sophomore in 1986. The journey to that victory was marked by a series of unforgettable moments, including Coach Hardman's motivating words, "Someone is going to win 7 more, 6 more, 5 more... why not us?" These words fueled the team's drive as they navigated the eight games required to clinch the title. The final game, in which Andy pitched, stands out as a highlight, not just for the win but for the shared joy of celebrating with lifelong friends.

Andy credits several coaches for their significant impact on his athletic career. Coach Bob Repp's passion and intensity for competition left a lasting impression, while Coach Hardman's patience, strategic acumen, and ability to bring out the best in each player were invaluable.

Andy appreciated Coach Hardman's understanding that each player required a different approach to be led effectively, a quality that made him a great mentor.

Growing up in Ottawa Hills, Andy benefited from a supportive community with excellent facilities, systems, and parents who valued organized athletics. His high school athletic experience not only shaped his competitive spirit but also laid the foundation for his future endeavors. After graduation, Andy continued his athletic career, playing baseball for two years at the College of Wooster, where he helped lead the team to the Division III College World Series. He finished his college career pitching for the University of Toledo Rockets.

Today, Andy applies the lessons learned from his athletic career to his professional life. With over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, including 17 years with The Ritz-Carlton and recent work at The Henderson Beach Resort on the Gulf Coast, Andy's commitment to excellence and teamwork remains steadfast.

Reflecting on his time as an athlete, Andy advises current high school athletes to find a mentor, work diligently at their craft, and never underestimate the importance of the small details. While talent is essential, he emphasizes that hard work and consistency are key to long-term success.

# Jack Loy ('77)

1,000-yard football rusher and dedicated mentor



Jack Loy's athletic journey began alongside his brother Jim, who played a significant role in shaping Jack's love for sports. Growing up, the brothers were inseparable, competing in various backyard games and playing church basketball together from an early age. When they first started playing football, they hadn't yet moved to Ottawa Hills, and while they were split into different teams due to their grades, their shared passion for sports remained a constant bond. Jim, a formidable presence on the field at 6'3" and 210 pounds, was not only a great athlete but also a protective older brother who always looked out for Jack and their teammates.

One of Jack's most memorable achievements came during his junior year when he rushed for 1,000 yards in football. While the accomplishment is often credited to him, Jack humbly views it as a team effort. With Jim leading the blocking out of the backfield and a strong offensive line, Jack's success was a testament to the collective strength of the team.

Jack was deeply influenced by his coaches at Ottawa Hills, particularly Coach Niedermeier and Coach Hardman. Their coaching styles, which emphasized respect, clear communication, and thoughtful strategy over yelling and intimidation, left a lasting impact on Jack. These lessons not

only shaped his athletic career but also influenced his approach to life beyond sports.

After high school, Jack continued to embody the values he learned on the field. His experience as an athlete taught him the importance of being a good teammate, a lesson that proved invaluable in his career as a steel tubing manufacturer's representative and later in his 16-year coaching career at St. Francis de Sales High School. Jack believes that the essence of teamwork—thinking of others, working hard, and remaining humble—are principles that have guided him throughout his life.

Jack's advice to current high school athletes reflects his belief in the power of selflessness and dedication. He encourages athletes to focus on making their teammates better and to prioritize team goals over personal achievements. For Jack, the culture of his senior year team, where everyone played for each other and no one was bigger than the team, was the epitome of what sports should be about.

Today, Jack reflects on his time as an athlete with gratitude, recognizing that the lessons of hard work, humility, and teamwork have shaped his life well beyond the playing field.

# Lindy Redmann ('74)

Multi-sport athlete with a love for field hockey



Linda Beth “Lindy” Redmann loved all sports. “She could do just about anything and was good at almost everything she tried,” says Fred Redmann, Lindy’s older brother. While women’s athletics tended to take a back seat to men’s, Title IX was enacted in 1972, two years before Lindy graduated from Ottawa Hills High School. Before Title IX, the Girls Athletic Association (GAA) was instrumental in engaging and supporting young women in sports. Lindy served as vice president of the GAA in her junior year and president in her senior year, demonstrating her commitment to women’s athletics during her formative years.

During her time at Ottawa Hills, Lindy played a variety of sports, but her favorite was field hockey. She went on to play field hockey all four years at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. In her senior year, she was awarded Most Valuable Senior Player. Lindy continued to play field hockey on club teams in Atlanta, GA, after graduating from college. She was also a very accomplished horsewoman, taking lessons with several of her Ottawa Hills classmates for seven years. Later, she taught horseback riding for a short period of time.

The Lindy Redmann Sports Award was established in 1984 in memory of Lindy, who passed away far too soon

at the age of 28 following a battle with Hodgkin’s disease. Lindy’s high school field hockey coach, Sandy Osterman, affectionately nicknamed “Miss O,” helped the Redmann family create a meaningful way to honor Lindy through the award. The award was passionately and enthusiastically continued by Coach Jo Cooley. Each spring, the award is given to a junior female athlete who best exemplifies the characteristics of humility, loyalty and determination. Lindy also had a strong feeling for fair play, a dedication to win, talent which ranked among the highest on the team, and spirited on-field leadership. The award recipient’s name is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the school hallway. As of this year, 40 female athletes have received this esteemed award.

Fred says, “As a family, we felt The Lindy Redmann Award would be something that Lindy would be proud of. Hopefully it helps to inspire and encourage girls to work hard to earn the recognition that comes with receiving this award. Lindy cherished her time at Ottawa Hills and would be honored and humbled to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.”

# Kimberly (Kos) Southall ('93)

Field hockey star who finds the joy in all team sports



Kimberly (Kos) Southall is an accomplished field hockey player. She played Division I for Boston University, earning First Team All-Conference and First Team All-Region honors during her time there. In 2003, Kim was inducted into Boston University’s Athletic Hall of Fame. During her time at Ottawa Hills High School, Kim earned varsity letters all four years in field hockey, basketball, and softball. She was named Maumee Valley Tournament MVP, All-Star Team MVP, All-Ohio All-Star, Northern Ohio All-Star, team captain, Ohio State Champion, and was inducted into the Toledo City Athletic League Hall of Fame in 2018.

Kim is also a ten-time recipient of the Eastern Independent League (EIL) Field Hockey Coach of the Year award. She led the varsity field hockey team at Newton Country Day School to six EIL championships over her 25 years as head coach. Kim’s love for athletics extended beyond coaching; she also served as the Athletic Director at Newton Country Day for 19 years.

“As a child, my mom signed me up for everything—from gymnastics to tee ball, diving, swim team, and tennis. I was drawn to sports for several reasons, especially the camaraderie and friendships that came with them,” Kim reflects on what drew her to sports. The social aspect of athletics and being part of a team gave Kim a strong sense of belonging. “Sports go beyond competition; it’s about connection.” Kim’s mother, Ann Kos, a special education teacher at Ottawa Hills, was her biggest supporter. “Her belief in me and constant encouragement laid the foundation for my

passion for sports and influenced everything I’ve done in my life,” said Kim.

Kim remembers when field hockey was first introduced in 7th grade. She and her friends signed up and played without really knowing much about the game. In high school, she tried out for the varsity team and vividly recalls Coach Cooley announcing that she had made varsity in her 9th-grade year. Kim continued to enjoy other sports, including basketball and softball, throughout high school. Although Kim left the Village of Ottawa Hills after high school, she says it will always be home. The experiences she gained and the opportunities she had growing up in this special and unique community fundamentally shaped her life. Kim says, “One of the most valuable lessons I learned in high school was the importance of belonging to a community like Ottawa Hills. I realized how supported I was and how fortunate I am to have lifelong friendships, many of which began in kindergarten. The community of people around me then, and still with me now, truly became a part of my life, teaching me the significance of being surrounded by loving, supportive individuals. It’s something I continue to cherish and appreciate every day.”

Together with her husband, Alec, Kim now enjoys traveling and watching their daughter, Lily, play soccer, run track, and compete in lacrosse tournaments. Kim encourages her daughter to try everything. “Do as much as you can and remember to keep doing things that bring you joy—the end game should be happiness.”



# 1992/93 and 1993/94 Field Hockey Teams

Back-to-back state champions



The 1992/93 and 1993/94 varsity field hockey teams from Ottawa Hills High School were led by outstanding athletes, with 1992/93 captains Jackie (Hylant) Berenzweig and Kimberly (Kos) Southall, and 1993/94 captains Meredith (Ciralsky) Friedman, Paula (Wagoner) Conway, and Mallory (Blank) Curran. Under the guidance of head coach Jo Cooley, both teams had remarkable seasons, each culminating in a state championship.

The success of these teams was due to their exceptional speed and fitness. “Our team was really fast and had really good endurance,” one player recalls. “We were always faster than other teams, and if games went into overtime, we were better able to ‘survive’ because we were in better shape than many other teams.” Despite their dislike for the grueling speed drills Coach Cooley made them run at the end of practice, the team recognized the value of this conditioning in their performance.

Offensively, the team was dynamic and unpredictable. While they had star players who regularly scored, they had a deep roster of players capable of stepping up when needed. “We never doubted that someone would step up and score when we needed it,” said one player. Defensively, the team was strong and consistent, often shutting out their opponents.

The camaraderie among the players was built over years of playing multiple sports together from a young age. Many of them had been playing together since junior high, which created a strong bond both on and off the field. With only one other field hockey team in Toledo, they often traveled long distances for games, bonding during those bus trips with their beloved bus driver, Dave “Goal Time” Siwa.

The 1993/94 season was particularly memorable. With the theme “Sweet Repeat,” the team set out to defend their state championship title. Their parents embraced the theme, creating “Sweet Repeat” memorabilia, from pillowcases to winter headbands. The team faced all kinds of weather, from extreme heat to freezing rain, yet they remained unfazed, confident they could win in any condition.

At the start of the 1993/94 season, there was some

uncertainty about whether the team could match the success of the previous year after losing many key players from the Class of 1993. However, the veterans stepped up, and the new players rose to the challenge, with Paula Wagoner, who was later honored as a high school All American, leading the way. The influence of German exchange student Birgit Brune, who played on the 1991 team, also played a significant role in the team’s success. Her advanced technical skills and experience from Germany’s developed field hockey system provided a model for the team to emulate.

Superstitions and traditions played a role in the team’s success as well. Jenny Cooper’s mom made Rice Krispy Treats before every important game, and it became a ritual that everyone, no matter how nervous, would eat at least a piece for good luck.

Both years, the team defeated Shaker Heights to claim the state championship. This was particularly impressive given the size difference between the schools—Ottawa Hills had just 47 students in the 1994 graduating class, while Shaker Heights had hundreds.

The teams celebrated their victories with their own psych-up mixes on cassette tape, playing Queen’s “We Are the Champions” as they returned home as state champions. Their success was recognized by a proclamation from the Toledo City Council, where they received a standing ovation from a room full of firefighters.

Coach Jo Cooley played a pivotal role in the team’s success. With a background in Syracuse, NY, where field hockey ignited her competitive spirit, Cooley brought a wealth of experience to Ottawa Hills. Her personal philosophy of staying committed and dedicated resonated with her players, helping to instill the perseverance and work ethic needed to achieve greatness. Under her leadership, Ottawa Hills Field Hockey not only won state championships but also saw many players go on to play collegiately and even become coaches themselves.

The memories of bus rides, team dinners, and countless laughs are what made these seasons special. The success of these teams was a true collective effort, marked by

## The 1992/93 Team:

Back row: Ann Moore, Summer Hardman, Paula Wagoner, Mallory Blank, Jenny Cooper, Emily Casey, Brooke McCaffrey, Cecily Straub, Courtney Westmeyer, Erika Newcomer, and Coach Cooley. Front row: Tiffy DeBoer, Joe Ross, Julie Huber, Jackie Hylant, Kim Kos, Meredith Ciralsky, Megan Meinerding, and Melissa Munn.



1992/1993  
Ottawa Hills Hlgh  
School varsity field  
hockey team



incredible stats, strong leadership from the seniors, outstanding coaching, and the commitment and dedication of every team member. The 1992/93 and 1993/94 teams' success was more than just a collection of victories; it was a testament to teamwork, dedication, and the leadership of Coach Cooley. Their story is one of perseverance, unity, and the enduring legacy of a program that continues to inspire.

**The 1993/94 Team:** Back row: Heidi Bohl, Brooke McCaffery, Emily Casey, Julie Huber, Marla Danziger, Mallory Blank, Erika Newcomer, Caroline Thomas, Liz Webb, Betsy Davies. Middle row: Jo Ross, Tiffany DeBoer, Meredith Ciralsky, Paula Wagoner, Shannan Scheuer, Meredith Hufford, Summer Hardman, Wendy Roberts. Front row: Coach Jo Cooley, Dave "Goal Time" Siwa.



## 1986 Varsity Baseball Team

Creating a legacy of champions



The 1987 MESASA yearbook features a spread on the victorious spring season of the '86 varsity baseball team, celebrating their achievement as Class A state champions. Led by Andy Lott, who went 8-0 during the state playoffs, the Bears secured their title by defeating Northwood in the district final and Wayne Trace in the regional final on their way to the state championship. The most thrilling moment in Ottawa Hills sports history occurred when Jeff Ray hit the winning run in the bottom of the 11th inning. Mark Davis, whose voice echoed throughout Columbus, exclaimed that the Green Bears and winning pitcher Andy Lott were number one as the team lifted Lott in celebration.

The excitement following the team's spectacular come-from-behind victory culminated in a parade honoring the players and coaches. Principal Jim Casper and Mayor S. Stewart Cochran were on hand to praise the Bears, while villagers gathered around for the awards ceremony. The state championship quickly became known as the "Miracle

on Evergreen Road," a truly remarkable accomplishment that will never be forgotten.

Coach Hardman reflected on the significance of the 1986 baseball team, stating, "The 1986 baseball team changed the course of Ottawa Hills baseball forever. The impact of what that team accomplished will run through every young player who will ever put on the Ottawa Hills uniform." He recalled that the team was 4-5 at the tournament draw, with no clear idea of how the season would unfold. Despite significant victories, the team never played with an air of confidence but instead chose to play with grit. Strong hitting, tough defense, and solid pitching carried the team to Columbus with a shot at the state championship. The story concludes with the team bringing home the championship trophy, and from that moment on, every Ottawa Hills baseball team has set their sights on bringing home the championship again.



### The Miracle on Evergreen Road '86 Baseball Team:

Pictured: Front row (l to r): Coach Bennett, Mike McCormick, Scott Poll, Steve LeCron, Paul Gipson, Mike Magura, Matt Cooper, Dan O'Connell. Back row: Coach Calvin, Ted Nolette, Robin Roy, Rod Cooper, Andy Lott, Jeff Ray, Bill Kuebbler, Mike Ellenwood, Rob "Mohawk" Kuebbler, Matt Magura, Coach Hardman.



# Ottawa Hills Local Schools

3600 Indian Road  
Ottawa Hills, OH 43606

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

TOLEDO, OHIO  
PERMIT #311

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PLEASE JOIN US

The district invites the community to stay connected with us and attend these upcoming events.

**Tickets to plays can be purchased at <https://www.ohschools.org/tickets>.**

We recommend you double check event details on the district calendar.

Visit [ohschools.org/calendar](https://www.ohschools.org/calendar) in case of event date changes



### January

**10 Friday** – Coffee Conversations 8:30 a.m. at the district offices

### February

**7-9 Friday-Sunday** – *The SpongeBob Musical*

**12 Wednesday** – State of the District 7 p.m. in the auditorium

**26-27 Wednesday-Thursday** – Art Fair Breakfast 7:30-8 a.m. in the elementary new gym

### March

**9 Sunday** – Spring Choir Concert 3 p.m. & Spring Band Concert 7 p.m. in auditorium

### April

**4-6 Friday-Sunday** – Spring Musical

**11 Friday** – Coffee Conversations 8:30 a.m. at the district offices

**24 Thursday** – smART Show 6-9 p.m. in the jr./sr. high school

**29 Tuesday** – Brown Bag Chorus Spring Concert 7 p.m. in the auditorium

### May

**13 Tuesday** – JHHS Choir Concert 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium

**14 Wednesday** – All District Band Concert 7 p.m. in the auditorium

**16 Friday** – Coffee Conversations 8:30 a.m. at the district offices

**30 Friday** – Last day of school. Commencement 6 p.m. at Niedermeier Stadium