



RAIDER PRIDE

A State and National Award-Winning Publication **DECEMBER 2023**



BLANKETS OF GRATITUDE

In a heartwarming display of generosity, our students have come together to create a ripple of warmth!

Students in Ms. Wimer’s fourth period Vocational Readiness class made fleece tie blankets for veterans living at Passavant Community in Zelenople. Materials for the blankets were graciously donated by Ms. Michelle Eppinger, No Cost to Shop Coordinator and Job Coach-Paraprofessional. The students worked as a team to measure, cut and tie the fringes to make a total of five cozy blankets that will provide an extra layer of comfort during the chilly winter days.

“The students have done a great job making the blankets, and I’m very proud of all their efforts,” said Elizabeth Wimer, Vocational Coordinator at Seneca Valley Senior High School. ■



Happy Holidays, SV!

Wishing you warm and thoughtful greetings this winter season and happiness throughout the coming year! The Seneca Valley School District will be on winter break (no school for students or staff) from Dec. 25, 2023 – Jan. 2, 2024. Students will return to school on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024.



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DATES TO REMEMBER

- Dec. 25 – Jan. 2 Winter Break, No School
 - Jan. 8 School Board Meeting Work Session, SHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
 - Jan. 11 End of First Semester, Grades 7-12
 - Jan. 12 Staff In-Service Day, No School for Students
 - Jan. 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No School for Students
 - Jan. 22 School Board Meeting Regular Session, SHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
 - Jan. 23 Release of Report Cards, Grades 7-12
- For more dates, visit: www.svsd.net/WebCalendar

JANUARY

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

A SILVER ANNIVERSARY TO CELEBRATE

The sounds of the season were ringing out at the 25th Anniversary of the Senior Holiday Event.

The Seneca Valley School District welcomed nearly 300 attendees to the Intermediate High School on Dec. 20.

During their time at this free program, guests were entertained by the Seneca Valley Jazz Bands, Chamber Orchestra and Senior High School Madrigal Singers. Talented student artwork was also on display.

At the conclusion of the performances, members of the National Honor Society served guests a sit-down holiday meal in the school's cafeteria. The day concluded with special cafeteria performances and a take-home treat to celebrate the silver anniversary of the event.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to our event organizers, performers, as well as the JROTC cadets who greeted and helped guests to their seats along with National Honor Society members who decorated and assisted the cafeteria staff. ■



BALLOONS OVER EHRMAN CREST ELEMENTARY

Just days before the famous Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade kicked off in New York City, students at Ehrman Crest Elementary School (ECE) staged their own parade to celebrate the holidays. The hallways of ECE were filled with smiles, laughter and many balloons during the school's second annual "Balloons Over Ehrman Crest."

Third grade classes read the book "Balloons Over Broadway." After learning about the history of the Macy's Day



Parade, students created their own balloon displays and hosted a parade for kindergarten, first, second and fourth grade students. ■



WARM FEET, WARM HEARTS

As part of a lesson on kindness, Ms. Angela Cardillo's second grade class at Rowan Elementary School decided to host "Socktober," a sock drive held in October.

After watching a special episode of "Kid President" teaching on kindness and service drives, students were excited to implement their own way to give back to the community.

With the help of Mrs. Michelle Follett, a retired teacher from Rowan Elementary, students collected socks and had them distributed to Socks for a Mission to be given to foster care families and area shelters. ■



THANKFUL TALES

Ms. Dalashay Williams' second grade class "turned the page" as they recently went from students to published authors.

Students wrote and illustrated their own books about what they are thankful for this holiday season. Through Studenttreasures Publishing, students learned the process of writing and editing multiple drafts and having their final copy printed.

Studenttreasures Publishing provides teachers and schools with a free, hands-on writing activity that motivates students to write and inspires them to learn by turning their stories into professionally bound books.

"They worked so hard and were excited when our final copies came in," Ms. Williams said. "Their favorite part of this project was getting to read each other's pages during Flashlight Friday!"



Congratulations to all these amazing authors and keep writing! ■

AROUND THE WORLD IN ONE DAY

Earlier this month, Haine Middle School hosted their annual exploratory Cultural Day. During this event, students enjoyed presentations about different cultures and countries that included South Korea, France, Japan, Greece, South Africa, India, Ireland, Ecuador and more! Students went on a worldwide adventure as they learned about a variety of cultures through interactive presentations, engaging activities and guest speakers. ■



SV PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION DATE SET FOR 2024-25

Seneca Valley Preschool registration for 2024-25 will be held at 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 29, in 2C of Seneca Valley Senior High School.

Enrolling your child in the SV Preschool program will provide them with an opportunity to participate in hands-on learning experiences while working one-on-one with high school students. The program runs every week on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from mid-October through mid-May.

The AM session is 8:55 – 10:55 a.m. and the PM session is 11:50-1:50 p.m. Cost is \$180/year. Children must live in the district or have parents who work for Seneca Valley. Children must also be toilet trained and three years of age on or before Sept. 1. Enrollment forms can be found on the preschool website at www.svsd.net/preschool.

Please bring your completed forms along with a \$20 non-refundable deposit to registration day. Acceptance will



be on a first come basis. If you are unable to attend registration day and spots are still available, completed paperwork and registration fee can be dropped off at the senior high school.

Seneca Valley Preschool is part of the Seneca Valley Senior High School Child Development program. Monitored and guided by the teaching staff, high school students study the growth and development of children from birth to age five and use this information to



assist in planning and teaching age-appropriate preschool lessons. ■



RAIDER RESET

What do stargazing, karaoke and big ball volleyball all have in common? They are all great ways to reset and unwind before the holidays!

Before Thanksgiving break, the Seneca Valley Hope Squad hosted their first Raider Reset during students' flex period. Students and staff had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities ranging from coloring and drawing to line dancing and putt-putt golf! ■



SV STUDENT SHARES UNWRITTEN HISTORY

Senior Alexander Kim shares untold stories of local heroes in his first book, "Matthew B. Ridgway Korean War Veterans Association of Western PA," by Hanseung Oh and Alexander Kim. When asked about the book, Mr. Kim provided the following synopsis:

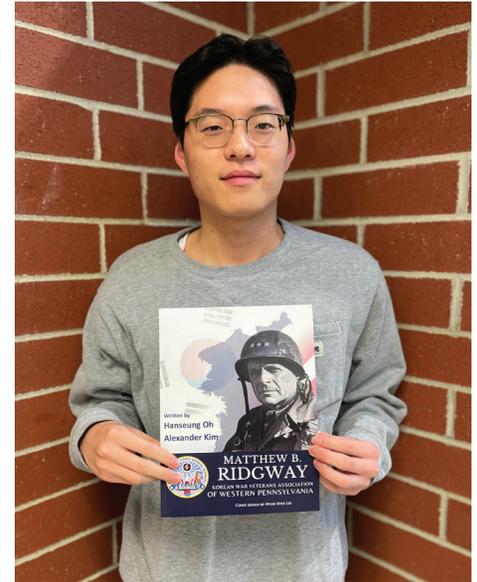
"The book covers the history of the Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA) of Western Pennsylvania, also called Chapter 74 because it was the 74th chapter of the national Korean War Veterans Associations.

Founder and Korean War veteran Edward Stevens formed Chapter 74 in 1991 with the hopes of spreading the word about the Korean War, sometimes referred to as the Forgotten War. In its prime, Chapter 74 had over 700 members, who marched in parades, visited schools, fundraised for the chapter, and boasted an exceptional Color Guard, which posted the colors at events and held military funerals. Perhaps the

chapter's most notable accomplishment is the building and dedication of the Korean War Memorial in downtown Pittsburgh in 1999.

Over the course of years, the veterans secured a massive sum of around \$1.2 million to build the memorial. But as the members aged, their outreach events dwindled. Recently, Chapter 74 began cooperating with the Korean American Association of Greater Pittsburgh and Korean volunteers to maintain the memorial and to assist with the chapter's activities. Current KWVA President John Rosenberger is hopeful that the Korean volunteers will eventually run the chapter and transform it back once again into the social outreach group that it was in its prime in the 1990s.

'As a second-generation Korean American, I would be on the other side of the globe without the efforts of the veterans,' said Mr. Kim. 'Speaking with people who I've



only read about in history books has been immensely meaningful. I am grateful for the chance to write unwritten history, to share and immortalize the untold stories of local heroes that would have otherwise been lost.'" ■

AN EXHIBIT OF EXCELLENCE

Twelve Seneca Valley students recently had their artwork accepted into Slippery Rock University's (SRU's) 16th annual Regional High School Art Exhibition.

Awards juried by the SRU Art Department included Best of Show, four honorable mention awards, SRU Art Students' Choice Award and the SRU Potters Guild Ceramics Award. Junior Jo Fernandez-Jenkins received an honorable mention for her sculptural wall hanging piece of a duck made from recycled materials.



Submitted pieces from students in Ms. Megan Bonistalli's ceramic classes included seniors Molly O'Keefe, Jillian Weiss, Elise Ketler and Paige Baker. Submitted pieces from Mr. Jason Woolslare's painting, drawing and senior career art classes included seniors Hannah Smith, Molly O'Keefe, Phebe Locante, Sam McNeely, Haley Yost and Sam Massimiani; juniors Miles Bornes and Jo Fernandez-Jenkins; and sophomore Carly Byrom.

"I am so proud of all the art students that I am fortunate to work with," said Seneca Valley Senior High School Art teacher Jason Woolslare. "They work very hard on their art concepts and visual art projects. It is always



awesome to see our students get recognition beyond the walls of SV!"

The exhibit featured artwork by students from 15 local high schools which culminated with a reception and award presentation at SRU's Martha Gault Art Gallery. ■

FUTURE FORWARD

Eighth graders at Ryan Gloyer Middle School recently toured Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School where they learned about each of the 16 different programs of study offered at Butler Vo-Tech.

Students walked through the facilities where they received dynamic presentations

and brief personal introductions to each program including health assistant, carpentry, machine technology, protective services, culinary arts, welding, HVAC, cosmetology, graphic design, sports medicine and more!

This annual field trip is provided to both eighth and ninth grade students (who attended earlier this year) and exposes them

to a variety of educational opportunities and elective choices when planning their schedule for their sophomore, junior and senior year.

To learn more about Butler Vo-Tech visit [Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School / BCAVTS Web Homepage Layout \(butlertec.us\)](#) ■



SWEET MASTERPIECES

The scent of ginger, cinnamon, spices and a dash of holiday cheer filled the halls of the Intermediate High School as students in Ms. Marie McLachlan's Food Chemistry and Culinary Arts 1 classes created some tasty and festive treats.

Students in Culinary Arts made gingerbread houses while those in Food Chemistry learned how to make popovers and scones.

The Culinary Arts 1 students created homemade gingerbread houses. Teams worked together to prepare and bake the dough followed by designing and making intricate cuts to construct the house.

In Food Chemistry, students discussed leavening agents used in baking, and learned about the different batters and doughs and what constitutes each. They made popovers and a variety of savory and sweet scones. ■



GINGERBREAD JUNCTION

Haine Elementary School's Best Buddies chapter hosted their winter group activity with a burst of creativity and holiday cheer! Two teacher-nominated students from each third and fourth grade classroom as well as students who primarily attend Haine Elementary's Multiple Supports classrooms worked together to color giant cardboard gingerbread houses. Everyone had a great time creating these festive decorations that will adorn the Multiple Supports classroom.

Best Buddies is an international organization consisting of volunteers that create opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At the elementary level, it's about promoting inclusion and friendship among students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities through group activities. ■



PMEA DISTRICT 5 HONORS BAND

On Tuesday Nov. 7, auditions were held for the 2023 Pennsylvania Music Education Association's (PMEA) District 5 Honors Band at Slippery Rock University. Over 200 students auditioned for a band of 125 musicians. This year, Seneca Valley had 36 students earn a position in the Honors Band, more than any other school!

District 5 comprises all school districts in Beaver, Butler, Lawrence and Mercer counties. To audition, students must be in at least ninth grade and prepare a piece from a predetermined solo list for each school year. These college-level solos are selected by the directors of District 5.

This year's Honors Band was guest conducted by Dr. Galen S. Karriker, Director of Band and Professor of Music at the University of Akron. The three-day festival culminated with a concert in Miller Auditorium at Slippery Rock University on Dec. 9. Secondary Band Instructors include Varden Armstrong, Robert Babick, Sara Snyder and Brian Croach.



Participants

Maya Anglero - Bari Saxophone

Paityn Armstrong - Clarinet

Camden Armstrong - Alto Saxophone

Noah Bracht - Tuba

Sydney Brower - French Horn

Willow Campbell - Flute

Jordan Courtney - Trumpet

Joseph Cuchapin - Bass Clarinet

Elora Dabravalskas - Trumpet

Caitlin Dugan - Clarinet

Quinn Gallagher - Trumpet

Emma Gallie - Clarinet

Allison Gillett - Percussion

Jaylen Guillame - Tuba

Sylvia Heilman - Clarinet

Rachel Hines - Clarinet

Isaac Hixon - French Horn

Braden Hughes - Percussion

Maddy Karns - Alto Saxophone

Ella King - Clarinet

Sydney Kratsas - Tuba

Katie Mack - Oboe

Ryann Martino - Euphonium

Camyn Meanor - French Horn

Patrick Monahan - Flute

Niko Papakirk - Clarinet

Steven Patterson - Clarinet

John Rieger - Trumpet

Susie Roscoe - Flute

Bridget Scott - Trombone

Claire Thompson - Flute

Zachary Tollerton - Trumpet

Kami Topf - Trumpet

Mackenzie Tunstall - Clarinet

Adrian Wrubel - Trumpet

Autumn Zacherl - Flute ■

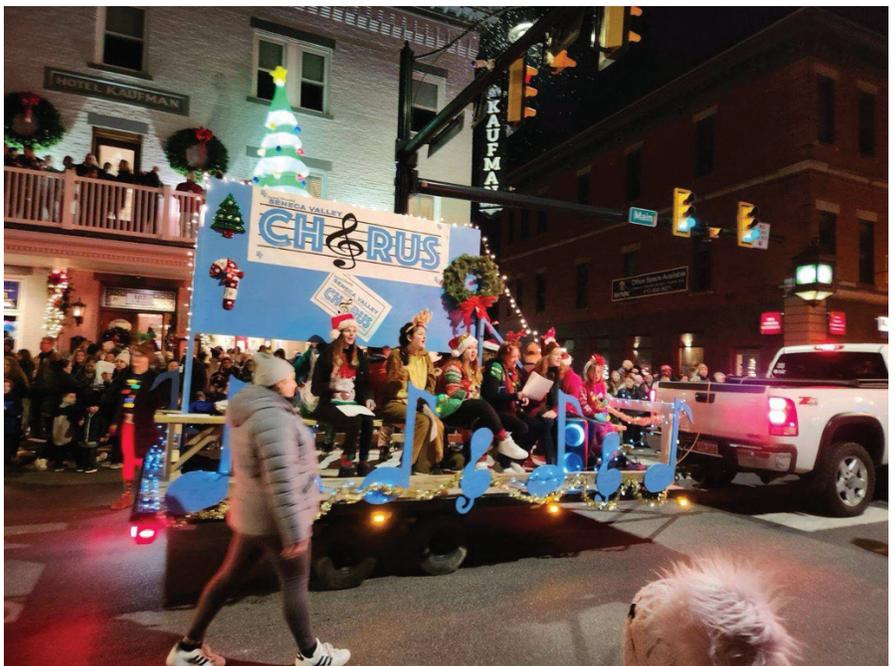
JOYFUL JINGLES

This holiday season, the SV choirs were busy performing around the community and spreading holiday cheer. Some eighth grade chorus members participated in Zelenople's Miracle on Main Parade, and the sophomore Treble Choir performed in the tree lighting ceremony held in Zelenople. Volunteers from the Beautyshop Quintet sang for a local remembrance service. Reverend Reid Moon wrote, "They were a balm for our families."

The SV Madrigal Singers performed at Seven Fields Light-Up Night, Sherwood Oaks and Passavant Retirement Community. In the words of Ms. Jane Lavender, "thank you for all you do with and for those students. What a glorious breadth of music they are experiencing. It was a very fine and greatly appreciated evening of music."

In addition to students performing in four school chorus concerts, the Show Choir and Madrigal Singers also performed at Kennywood Park.

Choir Director Ms. Bobi-Jean Alexander stated, if you like choral music, "it's the most wonderful time of the year!" ■





WINTER SPORT SEASONS UNDERWAY

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) winter sports season officially began on Friday, Dec. 1. The following is a brief recap on the start of the respective seasons.

Boys Basketball: Boys basketball traveled to North Hills for their Tip-Off Tournament and came away with a split, beating Perry Traditional Academy (84-41) and falling to Hampton (67-40). Following the opening weekend, the Raiders fell 70-58 to visiting North Catholic and then traveled to Franklin Regional for the 20th Annual Mike Rettger Memorial Tournament. After an impressive 62-54 win over Laurel Highlands, SV fell to hosting team Franklin Regional, 43-39. After five games, the Raiders are currently led by three players averaging double figure points per game (ppg) – Tyler Pepin (18.4 ppg), Kai West (12.2 ppg), Owen Congdon (10 ppg). Next, the Raiders will host Fox Chapel, travel to Baldwin and Penn Trafford, and, over winter break, compete in three games at the Kaylee Scholarship Association (KSA) event in Orlando, Florida.



Girls Basketball: After opening the season with two losses at the Woodland Hills Play 4 Mae Tournament, the Raiders have reeled off four consecutive wins over Fox Chapel (70-61); Friendship Collegiate in Washington D.C. (59-37); and High School for Construction Trades, Engineering and Architecture (CTEA), in Queens, New York (46-22) in the “She Got Game” Classic, as well as Neshannock (56-24). The balanced scoring of the 2023-24 Raiders was never more evident than in their game against Fox Chapel where SV had four players in double figures – Natalie Hambly (19 pts), Makayla Canty (15 pts), Allison Sevin (15 pts), and Emerson Peffer (13 pts). Next up for the team includes a home game against North Catholic and two games against Kiski and Shady Side Academy at the Shadyside Holiday Tournament over winter break.



Ice Hockey: At the time of this writing, Raider Ice Hockey is off to another great start currently tied atop PIHL AAA standings with eight wins in their first 11 contests. SV will face Upper St. Clair, currently tied for third place in the PIHL standings, before a break in their schedule over the holidays.

Swimming & Diving: At the time of this writing, Swimming and Diving has squared off against Riverside and Fox Chapel with the girls team at 2-0 on the season and the boys team at an even 1-1. The early highlight of the season came as senior diver Isaiah Clerkley broke a 24-year-old team and pool record for six dives, scoring 331.90 points (the previous record was 318.80 points). Congratulations, Isaiah, on a record-setting performance!

YEAR	TIME	YEAR	EVENTS	POOL	TEAM	TIME	YEAR
11	1:33.29	20	100 MIDLAY RELAY	SV	1:35.63	21	
11		21	200 FREE	SV	3:39.75	21	
11	1:39.75	21	500 FREE	SV	8:52.32	23	
11	1:46.87	22	1000 FREE	SV	20:04.84	23	
11	20.14	22	50 DIVES	SV	331.90	23	
11	331.90	23	100 DIVES	SV	331.90	23	
11	322.9	22	150 DIVES	SV	331.90	23	
11	47.95	20	100	SV	49.82	21	
11	45.10	22	150	SV	49.82	21	
11	4:30.06	01	200	SV	4:39.16	23	
11	1:23.31	22	500	SV	1:27.80	21	
11		22	1000	SV	3:11.35	21	
11	47.83	20	100	SV	50.62	22	
11	54.96	23	150	SV	58.09	23	
11	3:05.26	22	200	SV	3:11.35	21	

Boys Wrestling: Boys wrestling opened their season at the Hampton Duals and came home with a fourth place finish out of 12 teams, going 3-2 on the day. Victories were collected over Hampton, Kiski and Norwin, along with tough losses to Plum and Franklin Regional. Prior to school being dismissed for winter break, the Raiders took part in the Panther Classic at Mount Aloysius College and hosted Butler in a section dual meet. Over the holidays, SV will compete in the nationally renowned Powerade Tournament at Canon-Mac.



Girls Wrestling: Another milestone was achieved for the Raider girls wrestling program as they traveled to Plum for the first official PIAA-sanctioned dual meet against the Mustangs. The Raiders did not disappoint, coming home with a 54-12 victory. Prior to the holiday break, SV hosted Butler in a girls dual match and will then compete in the nationally renowned Powerade Tournament at Canon-Mac over the holidays.



In addition, all sub-varsity teams have started their seasons and are off to great starts. As always, I am so appreciative of our coaches and grateful for all they do for our student-athletes. As we pause for the winter holidays, may we cherish the time with family and friends. The Seneca Valley Athletics Department wishes all #SVRaiderNation a Happy Holiday Season. ■

ATHLETES OF THE MONTH, NOVEMBER 2023

The Female Athlete of the Month for November was girls soccer forward **Ayla Ward**. The senior team captain led her team to a 13-3-1 overall record with the two regular season losses coming against eventual section champion and WPIAL runner-up North Allegheny. Ayla led the team as captain and with 25 goals and 10 assists, averaging two goal contributions a game. She had seven multi-goal games, including four hat tricks and two four-goal games. Ayla's impact for the Raiders was emphasized by the fact she scored in 13 of 16 regular season games. Her efforts on the season were recognized by area coaches as she was named to the All-Section, All-WPIAL, and Big 56 first teams. We recognized Ayla as the November Female Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Ayla!



The Male Athlete of the Month for November was junior boys soccer midfielder **Tyler Prex**. Tyler's stellar play on offense helped the Raiders to a 13-1-3 record including another WPIAL 4A Section 1 title. He was a key contributor on the team and finished with 12 goals and 17 assists to total 29 points on the year. He led the team in goal contributions, averaging close to two a game. He had several standout games, including scoring the game-winning goal against North Allegheny to seal the section title along with two free-kick assists to bring the Raiders level in their WPIAL playoff match with Norwin. The end of season accolades rolled in for Tyler as he was named to first teams for All-Section, Big 56, WPIAL and State, and was named WPIAL Co-Player of the Year. For an impressive month, we recognized Tyler as the November Male Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Tyler!



ADDITIONAL HONORS ANNOUNCED FOR FALL SPORT RAIDER STUDENT-ATHLETES AND COACHES

While the fall season is in the books, the awards continue to arrive for Raider student-athletes and coaches.

We congratulate soccer junior midfielder Nathan Prex for being honored as the 2023 Boys Soccer Player of the Year by the Butler Eagle and named to the Trib-Live Boys Feb 15 Soccer Team and PA Soccer Coaches Association All-State Team.



We congratulate soccer senior forward Ayla Ward for being honored as the 2023 Girls Soccer Player of the Year by the Butler Eagle.



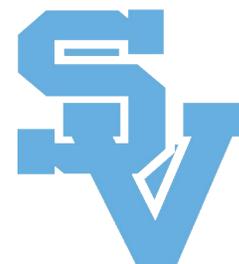
We congratulate Ollivia Congdon and Bria Stepp, named All-State by the PA Volleyball Coaches Association. ■



COLLEGE COMMITMENTS - CLASS OF 2024

Many Raider student-athletes made their college commitment official with the early signing period starting in mid-November. We congratulate these seniors in achieving their goals of continuing their athletic and academic careers at the next level. Each of you are tremendous representatives of Raider Athletics and we are very proud of your efforts in the classroom, in competition, and in the community. ■

Name	Sport	College/University	Major
Isabella Kling	Swimming	Gannon University	Accounting & Criminal Justice
Zach Tkatch	Baseball	Gannon University	Mechanical Engineering
Ayla Ward	Soccer	IUP	Nursing



BIG IMPACT

Be a part of the IMPACT. Please consider donating a gift to the SV Foundation (SVF) as we ASPIRE to INSPIRE!

Donate today via PayPal.Me or by check made payable to the SV Foundation and sent to our Central Office at 124 Seneca School Road, Harmony, PA 16037. Thank you for your support!

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



ASPIRE
TO
INSPIRE

Annual Support Campaign



WWW.SVSD.NET/SVFOUNDATION

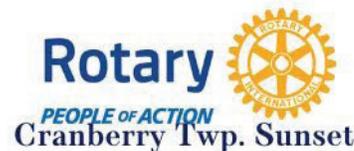
INNOVATION
CREATIVITY
INCLUSION

COMMUNITY



DONATE TODAY!

Thank You
Holiday Heroes



HOLIDAY HEROES

The Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) was thrilled to partner with several local organizations to make over 275 students' holidays a lot brighter this year.

"This is the largest number of students helped through our efforts to date," Said Ms. Annie Mersing, SVF Development Director.

Local organizations including Neighbors for Neighbors, Cranberry CUP, Cranberry Rotary (Sunset), Georgie Smigel Coldwell Banker Real Estate Group, Fun Fore All, Cranberry DQ and SV Security Guards shopped to fulfill wish lists that contained five or six items that students hope to receive this holiday season. Things like books, cozy blankets, board games, clothing and winter boots. SV Central Office staff and General Rental Center helped to haul the sacks of presents just in time for the holidays.

Ms. Mersing added, "Without these amazing organizations and people, some of our students would not get to experience the magic of having their wishes come true. And for that, we at the SV Foundation are truly grateful."



Heroes come in all TYPES and sizes. Be a Hero and GIVE blood.



Ehrman Crest School Blood Drive

Sponsored by the Cranberry Township Police in collaboration with the Seneca Valley School District

**MONDAY, JANUARY 15
11:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**

**MOVEMENT STUDIO
2070 EHRMAN ROAD
CRANBERRY TWP, PA 16066**

- To schedule an appointment to donate:
 - Go to vitalant.org and search with Account Code **10055538** or by zip code.
 - Call 1-877-25VITAL
 - Or scan this code for a list of all available times:



APPOINTMENTS RECOMMENDED

For more information or to schedule a donation, call 412.209.7000 or visit us at vitalant.org
Find us @vitalant: [social media icons]



A COMMUNITY TRADITION

While most people woke up Thanksgiving morning with anticipation of upcoming holiday feasts, Graham Park was preparing for the 12th annual Turkey Chase 5K and the community showed up in full force!

The event, which primarily benefits the Seneca Valley High School and Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) Cross Country teams (SVXC), attracted over 700 participants this year, returning to pre-pandemic levels!

At the race, the first-place finisher went to Matthew Woolcock from Oil City, who had an impressive time of 16:18. The SV boys Cross-Country runners put forth a good effort as well with Ryan Domencic (18:18), Philip Silvis (18:39), Ethan Barnett (18:51), and Riley McGee (18:59) finishing sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth overall.

The first female finisher was Cassidy Kidd from Union, NJ, who completed the 3.1-mile course with a time of 20:51. SV freshman Clara Silvis took home third place overall honors with a time of 21:55. Seneca Valley's Annelise Dykstra, Paige Damico and Elyse Cilik finished in 11th, 13th, and 14th place, respectively!

Junior Sydney Heltzell donned the turkey costume this year and was chased by the lead runners, bringing smiles to many spectators and posing for many photo ops.

Many other SVXC athletes represented their teams and took home several age group awards. For a complete list of results, visit: [Seneca Valley Cross Country Turkey Chase 5k \(runsignup.com\)](https://runsignup.com). Jim Heltzell, the Turkey Chase 5K Race Director and incoming SVXC Boosters President, said that, while there is certainly a competitive side to the run, the mood is intended to be festive and light.

"We want this event to continue to be the premier 5K race in Butler County for years to come and show support for these SV school athletes. It was great to see so many smiles and hear positive feedback about the event and Graham Park's course. We're extremely thankful for the support of our community."

A portion of the proceeds from the race were donated to Armstrong's Breaking Bread food distribution initiative which benefits multiple local food cupboards in the Seneca Valley area. Seth Prentice, Community Marketing Manager for Armstrong, provided his positive energy and DJ experience to keep the runners and spectators excited and motivated.

Mr. Prentice said, "It is always a pleasure to form partnerships in the community with organizations that are giving back to those in need.



We were honored by SVXC asking us to sponsor the Turkey Chase in September but never expected this wonderful partnership to grow out of such a great event. Every penny that was donated to our Breaking Bread program will help give an additional 8,000 meals for those in need in the Seneca Valley School District area. We look forward to working with SVXC on future events!"

More information about their initiative can be found at [Breaking Bread - Armstrong \(armstrongonewire.com\)](https://armstrongonewire.com), as they are always thankful for donations, volunteers and raising awareness from community members. ■



SHINING A LIGHT

Recognized for building a more inclusive, engaged and equitable school community, Ms. Michele Russo, English teacher at Seneca Valley Intermediate High School, has been selected as a recipient of the Antisemitism Civic Courage Award by the Shine A Light organization.

Shine A Light is a national, purpose-driven convening platform for organizations, companies, institutions and individuals to unite in shining a light on antisemitism in all its modern forms. The 2023 Shine A Light on Antisemitism Civic Courage Award honors students and educators who exemplify what it means to be upstanding citizens when it comes to taking action against antisemitism and countering hate in their communities.

“To receive this award is quite an honor,” said Ms. Russo. “It means so much that this recognition validates the important work that so many of us are doing in trying to combat not only antisemitism but celebrating diversity as well. I am more motivated than ever to continue to move forward with projects and initiatives within my classroom, the district, and advance into more community engagement.”

Ms. Russo has made it a personal and professional goal to not only learn more about marginalized groups but to discuss them in the classroom to further educate students and help break down barriers. She has traveled to Poland with Classrooms Without Borders to gain more knowledge about the Holocaust, and she also traveled to the South to expand her knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement.

Like many, Ms. Russo was heartbroken by the massacre that occurred in 2018 at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and she is committed to combating hate and antisemitism.

In addition to her curriculum, Ms. Russo recently worked in the library to create stations titled “Stronger than Hate.” Her sophomore English class learned about hate and propaganda around them, including antisemitism, and watched the film “Repairing the World: Stories from the Tree of Life.”

Ms. Russo is also the Education Initiative Coordinator for Leadership through Innovation in Genocide and Human Rights Teaching (LIGHT), a network of students,



teachers and community leaders working together to bring innovation to human rights advocacy and genocide prevention.

“I would like to congratulate Ms. Russo for receiving the Shine A Light on Antisemitism Civic Courage Award,” said Mr. Chet Henderson, Principal of Seneca Valley Intermediate High School. “Her commitment to combating antisemitism is noticed by all within the intermediate high school, and her commitment to educating students about the negative effects of antisemitism and hate is making a difference within our school community.”

For more, watch WTAE’s story [here](#). ■

TURNING POINT

Redemption story inspires students with a tale of transformation

Seneca Valley, in partnership with Classrooms without Borders (CWB), hosted a thought-provoking and impactful speaker event for high school students on Dec. 7, aimed at fostering understanding and compassion within our diverse community.

Mr. Tony McAleer is an international speaker and instructor with the Safe Communities Institute and an expert on white supremacist extremism. A reformed neo-Nazi who once subscribed to extremist ideologies, Mr. McAleer now works closely with law enforcement and government, from Attorneys General to senior staff at the Department of Homeland Security. He is also the author of "The Cure For Hate: A Former White Supremacist's Journey from Violent Extremism to Radical Compassion." Mr. McAleer shared a video depicting his story and spoke to students about his powerful personal transformation and the importance of rejecting hate.

Members of the Seneca Valley Social Handprints Overcoming Unjust Treatment (SHOUT) Club attended the morning session along with SHOUT students from South Fayette School District. Following the presentation, the two school groups met to reflect and discuss the consequences of extremism while emphasizing the power of redemption, personal growth and unity. They also discussed ways in which they could help spread compassion and foster a culture of inclusivity. South Fayette is where SHOUT originated. It has now grown to over 20 schools in the Pittsburgh area SHOUT provides its student members with the opportunity to celebrate diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging while



participating in learning experiences and leading school-wide projects that help foster a welcoming school community for all students and staff members.

CWB is a Pittsburgh-based organization that serves as an excellent supplemental resource for the important lessons we teach about the Holocaust, genocide, hate, cultural differences and more. ■



SV WELCOMES TWO NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Seneca Valley welcomes to the School Board two new members representing Cranberry Township Region 2 and Evans City and Seven Fields boroughs, Region 7. The two of them join Susan Harrison, re-elected to Cranberry Township Region 3, and Mike Jacobs, re-elected to Zelenople Region 6, along with the other five sitting members of the board in representing Seneca Valley.

We look forward to working with them in making decisions that shape our schools and provide pathways to success for every student.

Mr. Nick Brower

A longtime resident of Seven Fields Borough, Mr. Brower has served the community in educational, service-oriented, and faith-based institutions since moving to the area in 2007. Mr. Brower has been a part of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Scouting program his whole life, starting as a scout in Minnesota, earning the rank of Eagle, serving as Cub Master for Pack 406, and now Assistant ScoutMaster for Troop 404. He and his wife are active parents in the community and school district with two children attending Seneca Valley Schools.



Mr. Brower earned his Bachelor of Science degree at Maine Maritime Academy. After graduation, he shipped on his U.S. Coast Guard Licenses in all engineering officer capacities on international and domestic ships for almost a decade before transitioning “shoreside” to work on power plants in multiple states. Being close to home was wonderful, but shift work was difficult with a young family, so another industry change was needed. He moved his wife and new daughter to the Pittsburgh area for work on marine and powerplant engines with General Electric Transportation in Grove City and Erie, Pa. Mr. Brower’s U.S. Coast Guard Licenses are held in continuity and his State of Maine 1st Class Operator’s license is actively maintained while he continues to work for General Electric. His current employment is with the Power Conversion business as a Senior Marine Engineer.

He believes in the education and development of youth and is thrilled to be involved in developing educated citizens for wherever their aspirations and education take them.

Ms. Kari Zimmer

Kari Zimmer is serving her first term representing Cranberry Township West 1,2, and 8, Region 2. Ms. Zimmer and her husband, Matt, have three children who are current students in the Seneca Valley School District.

Ms. Zimmer earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Penn



Eric DiTullio, board president (center), congratulates and welcomes Kari Zimmer and Nick Brower to the Seneca Valley Board of School Directors.



State University. She taught third grade in the Fairfax County Schools in Northern Virginia before becoming a stay-at-home mother. During her time at home with her children, she volunteered in many capacities including Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and school PTO.

Ms. Zimmer chose to run for school board because she is a staunch supporter of public education and enjoys being involved in her community. She is honored to serve as a member of the board. ■

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are open to the public and are held at 7 p.m. in the Intermediate High School auditorium unless otherwise noted. The agenda development (work session) meetings are used for discussion and are typically held on the first Monday of the month. There are some exceptions due to holidays. The Board is allowed to take action on items at this meeting if it is necessary. The regular action board meeting is held on the second Monday of each month unless otherwise noted and the Board votes on most or all of that month's agenda items. [School board meeting agendas and minutes can be found here.](#)

These meetings allow for public comment. The Board also recognizes its responsibility for proper governance of the district and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner. To learn more about Public Comment Guidelines, see [School Board / School Board Overview \(svsd.net\)](#).

School Board Meeting Dates for 2024:

Work Sessions

Jan. 8, 2024
(second Monday due to holiday;
held in SHS Aud.)

Feb. 5
(held in SHS Aud.)

March 4

April 8
(second Monday due to holiday)

May 6

June 3

July - No Meeting

Regular (Action) Meetings

Jan. 22, 2024
(fourth Monday due to
Act 80 Day; held in SHS Aud.)

Feb. 12
(held in SHS Aud.)

March 11

April 15
(third Monday due to holiday)

May 13

June 10

July - No Meeting ■

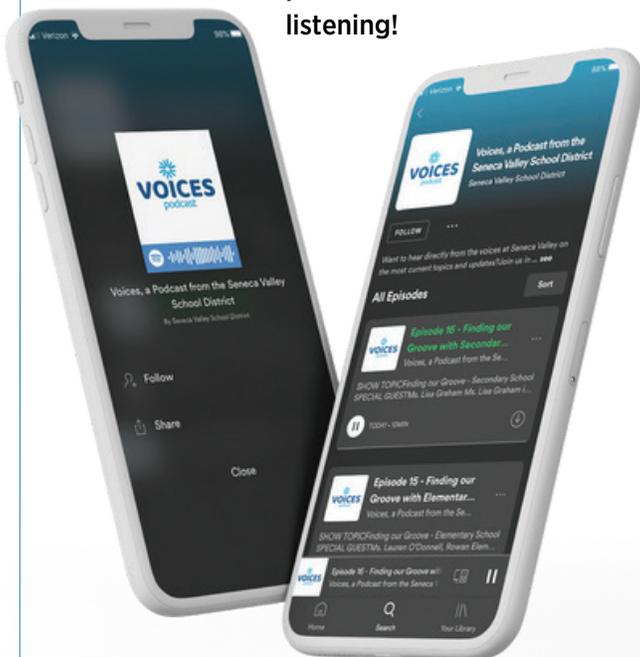
VOICES



A podcast from the Seneca Valley School District

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

Since the start of the 2023-24 school year, we've had nearly 600 podcast downloads! [Check out our most recent podcats to start listening!](#)



Voices, a Podcast from the Seneca Valley School District

Want to hear directly from the voices at Seneca Valley on the most current topics and updates? Join us in listening to Voices, a podcast brought to you by the Seneca Valley School District. This podcast interviews guests who share an inside look at what is happening at SV.



DRESS FOR SUCCESS

We recently conducted a survey to gather parent/guardian thoughts and opinions regarding the District's current dress code policy. We appreciate your participation and would like to share an overview of the results with you:

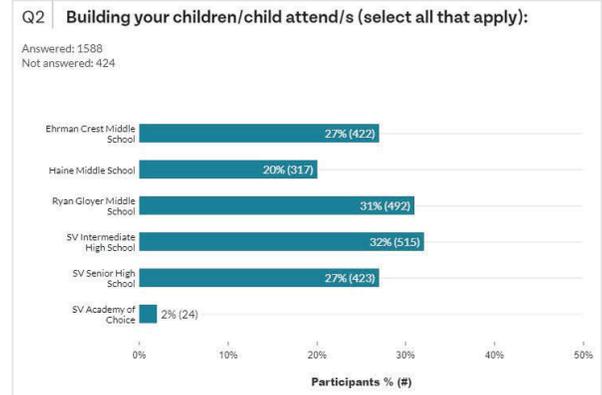
- The majority of respondents agreed that the dress code should be consistent across all school buildings and should focus on education. Many parents expressed concerns about equal enforcement for both boys and girls. There was also a strong emphasis on the importance of respectful and non-distracting clothing.
- Some parents suggested that the dress code should be more flexible and allow for individual expression, while others felt that stricter enforcement is necessary to maintain a professional learning environment. Many respondents mentioned the difficulty in finding appropriate clothing for their children due

to current fashion trends and the need to consider different body types.

- Several parents also highlighted the importance of teaching children to dress appropriately for school and future professional settings. Some respondents suggested that the dress code should be updated to follow current fashion trends, while others felt that modesty and respect should be prioritized.

Overall, the survey results indicate a desire for a fair and consistent dress code policy that promotes a respectful and focused learning environment. We will take these results into consideration as we review and update our dress code policy. Thank you again for your valuable input.

To view the results of this most recent ThoughtExchange, [click here](#). ■



style wear uniforms showing environment
focus respect boys feel children
shirts express male rules policy kids trends
shorts clothing comfortable code crop
skin girls appropriate gender body current
individuality enforced length tops
important female dress cover
skirts learning distracting

JOIN THE SV FAMILY!



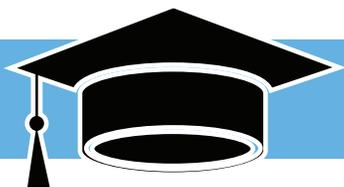
Now Hiring Paraprofessionals

- Work Incentive Bonuses
- Background Check Reimbursements
- Credential Bonuses

Earn \$15/hr. on a flexible schedule

**Visit svsd.net
to learn more!**





Jeremy Boren, SV '99, is currently a brand manager for an industrial technology company and, more importantly, a new dad! We asked him to catch us up on what he is doing and how Seneca Valley influenced his life and career.

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

A: I'm loving life as a new dad! My wife Megan and I welcomed our son Remy in 2022 and recently relocated from Pittsburgh to the Mars area to be closer to family. Professionally, I work in the marketing department of GrayMatter, an industrial technology company that has clients and offices across the U.S. and Canada.

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

A: I wasn't interested in sports in high school, but in my 20s and 30s I became very involved in distance running, weight training and rock climbing (bouldering, sport climbing and traditional climbing). I've completed four marathons, more than a dozen half-marathons, a few trail races and too many 5Ks and 10Ks to count. I've climbed outdoors in West Virginia, New York, New Hampshire, Kentucky, Tennessee, Nevada and Montana, and had the opportunity to work part time as a climbing guide, often taking people on their first outdoor climbing experience.

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

A: I was really interested in journalism as a Seneca Valley student and I stuck with it. I made journalism my career after high school. That course took me on some great adventures and taught me a lot about politics, business and leadership. I credit the dedication of teachers such as Deborah Kennedy, Susan Stephenson, Tracey O'Toole, Patricia Ruzga, Louis Nagy, Tim Hall and Gary Lisica, among many others, with helping me to find a career path as I went from high school to college at Ohio University and later Carnegie Mellon University.

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



A: SV offered a fantastic array of extracurricular activities such as SVTV, The Seneca Scout, Academic Games and yearbook. The teachers who supported those groups were amazing, and they made Seneca Valley stand out from other high schools.

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

A: I've mentioned a few already, but Deborah Kennedy was a great mentor, coach and teacher to me. The ability to study newspaper writing, design and production during and after class was extremely valuable to me.

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: In SVTV we would broadcast news coverage of the prom like it was Oscar night. I think I went to three proms, and they were all a blast. It was a real taste of live TV production. The only way to experience it is by doing it, and if you get to do it in high school like I did, pretty much every other public speaking role later in life will seem tame by comparison.

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

A: Thank you for your hard work. We need more teachers and public education professionals in the world. Both of my parents spent their careers in public education at school districts in Western Pennsylvania, and I couldn't be prouder of them. It's work that truly matters, more than ever, to our society and to our country. You're needed, and I'm grateful for what you do every day.

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

A: Seneca Valley has been investing in excellent teachers and state-of-the-art facilities since my time there in the late 1990s. There are new people moving to the area all the time, so I think it's worth it for those families to know that the district realized the value of integrating technology into its curriculum early on and continues to do so with facilities like Ehrman Crest. ■



HOW TO CHOOSE APPS FOR STUDENTS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

When it's time for school holidays, children often spend more time on their devices.

Help them balance screen time, find new interests and manage their wellbeing with tips on choosing apps for kids to explore.

Why is it important to help kids choose apps?

Most children who like to watch content use [TikTok](#) or [YouTube](#) while those who game often use [Roblox](#) or [Fortnite](#). As such, they might fall into the habit of spending time online the same way as everyone else. Furthermore, this might make it hard for them to see other opportunities available online.

Helping students try out new apps and games over school holidays gives them the opportunity to try new things. This could in turn open their eyes to new possibilities.

Here are some tips to help children develop new interests with their phones or tablets:

- **Expose students to a range of types**
 - The more games and apps a child experiences, the more likely they are to find ones they enjoy. This could lead to new interests, passions and [skills that will support them in their future](#).
- **Use the same apps and games**
 - Children and young people want their parents to show interest in their online activities. It's a great way to bond and helps parents understand what their child gets out of it. Plus, it gives them more comfort to talk to a parent about it knowing they'll understand.
- **Talk about the apps they use**
 - Ask a child or teen what they like about the apps they use and games they play. What have they learned? Who do they play with? This will help parents understand what their child gets out of their digital experience. Additionally, children and teens will become more mindful of why they choose what they do.

5 tips for choosing the right apps



- ➔ Consider age and development
- ➔ Think about children's interests
- ➔ Look for apps that help them learn
- ➔ Consider the social aspect
- ➔ Read reviews

• Set app screen time limits

- It's important to [set limits](#) on how much time children spend playing particular games and using particular apps. This helps them balance their screen time and limits passive scrolling or gaming.

How do I choose the right apps and games?

Children and young people need guidance from parents, carers and other trusted adults to help them choose new apps. It's likely difficult for them to find what they want.

Here are some tips to choose new apps for your child or teen:

• Consider their age and development

- Some apps are suitable for young children, while others are more appropriate for teens. It's important to choose games that are age-appropriate. This means thinking about both content and difficulty level. Remember that age ratings relate to children's developmental levels.

• Think about their interests

- What are kids passionate about? What do they enjoy learning? When

looking for new, fun apps or games, make sure to get their input too. Children and teens are more likely to explore apps and games they had a say in getting to use during these school holidays.

• Look for educational apps for kids

- There are many great [educational games available](#). They help children learn about a variety of subjects, including Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

• Consider the social aspect

- Some games and apps offer more social options than others. If communication and connection is important for a student, choose apps with multiplayer or teamwork features.
- For some children, online communication is much easier than offline. So, choosing apps and games with this element provides them with a safe space to communicate.

Article provided by [Internet Matters](#) ■



- Teacher Nominations - WTAE-TV is launching a Teacher of the Month recognition program for the 2023-24 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 2023-24 school year**, regardless of family income. Encourage your student(s) to stop for a full breakfast or various grab-and-go items. And new for the 2023-24 school year, families who qualify for reduced meals will now be able to receive lunch for free. If you think you qualify, please apply to receive this benefit and return it to the Seneca Valley Administration Office with attention to Faye Nelson. We encourage you to fill out a Free & Reduced-Price School Meals Application as many programs are connected to your child(ren)'s eligibility. Applications can be found at www.svsd.net/FreeandReduced.
- SV Backpack Flyers - Flyers are updated frequently and feature information on student and community events/activities, including Open Chess Play at the Zelienople Area Public Library and SV's new Fencing Club. Learn more at [Backpack Flyers / Backpack Flyers \(svsd.net\)](#).
- 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 [Parents/Community / Gold Card Club \(svsd.net\)](#).

- Reality Tour is an accessible substance prevention program that delivers information to get parent and child on the same page.
 - [Substance Abuse Prevention for Parents - CANDLE, Inc. \(candleinc.org\)](#)
- [Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!](#)
- [Drive for SV! 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. ■

The holiday season
can be difficult.

We are here for you, 24/7.

Text 988 or chat with us online at
988lifeline.org/chat.



PSATS Scholarships

Inspiring the **NEXT GENERATION** of local leaders



Township officials are encouraged to promote the **BRAND-NEW PSATS SCHOLARSHIPS** to high school juniors and seniors.

THE DEADLINE
TO APPLY FOR
EITHER SCHOLARSHIP
IS JANUARY 26,
2024!

The Local Government Achievement Scholarship

Awarded to students who demonstrate outstanding **citizenship through commendable public service and community involvement.**

The Academic Achievement Scholarship

Awarded to students who demonstrate enthusiasm toward **education by maintaining high academic standards.**



BEGIN YOUR APPLICATION PROCESS TODAY.

Two \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded in each category for a total of four scholarships. Applicants must be a U.S. citizen, reside in a Pennsylvania township of the second class, and be currently enrolled as high school junior or senior. Both achievement scholarships are open for career education opportunities whether they be 2- or 4-year college degree programs or technical training schools and certificate programs that lead to professions. Interested applicants may scan the provided QR Code or visit psats.org/scholarship to begin the application process. The deadline to apply for either scholarship is January 26, 2024. For more information, email Scholarship Program Coordinator Katie Lizza at klizza@psats.org.



SEASONAL JOB FAIR

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4 | 2:30-6:30 PM

TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL CENTER - FRANKLIN STATION



Waterpark

Various positions available in Guest Relations, the Concession Stand, Maintenance, and Lifeguarding. Minimum age varies by position, starting at age 15.



Camp Cranberry

Coordinator and counselor positions. Minimum age varies by position, starting at age 15.



Cranberry Highlands

Various positions with the Pro Shop, Banquet Facilities, and Course Maintenance. Minimum age varies by position, starting at age 16.

Township departments will be on-site to answer questions, applications will be accepted and interviews may be conducted.

Applications for all seasonal positions will be available online by January 4 at cranberrytownship.org/employment



*The Public Work's Grounds Division will not be on site but will be hiring for seasonal parks maintenance positions. Information and applications for this position will be available.

Join us!