



RAIDER PRIDE

A State and National Award-Winning Publication

JANUARY 2025



KEY TRAITS FOR THE SV LEARNER

At Seneca Valley, we're all about challenging our students academically while helping them become responsible digital citizens, creative thinkers and globally aware individuals. These are the building blocks for preparing our kids to thrive and make a difference in the world.

We're excited to share something new we've been working on: **the Seneca Valley Profile of a Learner**. The Profile highlights 10 key traits that we believe are incredibly important for our students to succeed in today's fast-paced world. It gives a clear picture of the skills and qualities we want our students, grades K-12, to develop alongside their schoolwork. By weaving these qualities into our lessons and activities, we're helping our students grow both personally and academically.

You can check out the Seneca Valley Profile of a Learner on our website under the Academics tab or by clicking on this link: [Profile of a Learner - Seneca Valley School District](#).

Plus, we recently sent out poster versions, so you'll see it in classrooms, offices and

PROFILE OF A LEARNER

- COLLABORATION**
Working together to achieve goals and create a supportive learning environment.
- COMMUNICATION**
Sharing information clearly using various methods to connect and collaborate.
- CRITICAL THINKING**
Analyzing and evaluating information to form reasoned conclusions.
- CREATIVITY**
Producing original ideas or solutions through imaginative thinking.
- CURIOSITY**
Encouraging exploration and seeking knowledge for a deeper level of learning.
- EMPATHY**
Understanding and sharing the feelings of others with compassion.
- PERSEVERANCE**
Continuing to work toward goals despite challenges.
- RESILIENCE**
Adapting and staying positive when facing hardships.
- RESPONSIBILITY**
Being accountable and fulfilling obligations reliably.
- SELF-REGULATION**
Managing emotions and behaviors to stay focused and achieve goals.

meeting rooms around the district. We hope this visual and interactive tool helps communicate our big-picture goals to you and encourages more collaboration between school and home.

We're looking forward to continuing this journey with you and making sure our students are ready for bright futures ahead! ■

GET YOUR TICKETS!

Tickets are now on sale for the Seneca Valley All-School Musical, "The Spongebob Musical!" Read more about this production on page 10, and purchase tickets [here](#). ■



OUTSTANDING HONOR!

Haine Middle School's own Mr. Jeremy Womer has been named Pennsylvania's 2025 Outstanding Assistant Principal! Turn to page 20 for the full story on this incredible recognition. ■



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DATES TO REMEMBER

- Feb. 3 School Board Meeting Work Session, SHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- Feb. 10 School Board Meeting Regular Session, SHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- Feb. 14 Snow Make Up Day #1
- Feb. 17 Staff In-Service Day, No School for Students

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

FEBRUARY

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	

DECK THE HALLS

Ehrman Crest Middle School (ECMS) Band and Orchestra students, grades 5-6, wrapped up their last week before break on a high note with cheerful performances for students and staff upon arrival.

During their annual "Deck the Halls with Music" event, they collected over \$500 that was donated to local food banks!

Both Ms. Tracy Glass, ECMS Band Director, and Ms. Amanda Lesney, ECMS Orchestra Director, shared how valuable the experience was for our SV young musicians to share their talents and give back to the community. ■



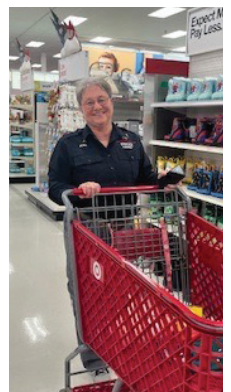
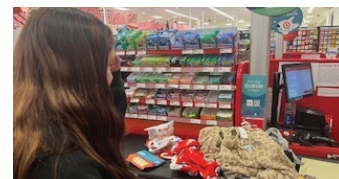
HELPING HANDS

Selected students on the Lions Team at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) volunteered at the Help Your Neighbor (HYN) warehouse in Harmony where they packaged over 200 food bags to be distributed throughout Pittsburgh as a part of 412 Food Rescue's efforts. Additionally, students also put together over 150 food boxes that were utilized locally for pick-ups at the HYN warehouse. This community service project was planned as part of the continued "Community Grown" initiative that allows students to give back to the communities that have given so much for their education. ■



HEROES AND HELPERS

Before the holiday break, 20 Haine Elementary and Middle School students participated in the Heroes and Helpers event in collaboration with the Cranberry Township Police Department. In its seventh year, the program gives students the opportunity to shop for themselves and their families. Special thanks to Ms. Josie Bittner, Assets Protection Team Leader at Target; Ms. Annie Mersing, Seneca Valley Foundation Director of Development; the Cranberry Twp. Police Department; and Haine administrators and staff for providing students a special evening of shopping, pizza and fun raffles. ■



SV PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

A few spots still remain open for the 2024-25 Seneca Valley Preschool program. The 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.

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 September 1.



Enrollment forms can be found on the preschool website, www.svsd.net/preschool. Acceptance will be on a first come basis. Completed paperwork and registration fee can be dropped off to the Senior High School. ■

BIG HEARTS FOR LITTLE ONES

Students at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) showed incredible generosity by participating in a diaper drive to support families in need! Donations included 13 cases and 25 packs, adding up to a total of 1,957 diapers and pull-ups!

The drive was part of the RGMS Winter Showcase, where students and families enjoyed festive door displays and holiday projects throughout the building.

Ms. Tammy Cantella, Family and Consumer Sciences teacher led this heartwarming initiative with her personal development class. "This diaper drive was a valuable experience for the students and touched my heart that so many families gave to help families in need of a basic necessity for infant care," said Ms. Cantella. ■



WELCOME BACK FUN

Students in Ms. Sara Coon's Physical Education class welcomed the new year with games and activities promoting mental, social and physical health.

Activities like Head, Shoulders, Knees and Cone taught listening and cooperation skills while games like Hungry Hippo and Octopus Scooter Tag encouraged fair play, taking turns, spatial awareness and balance. Students not only learned these valuable skills, but also had a blast staying active and enjoying some fun exercise as young athletes! ■



MUSIC MILESTONES SHARED TOGETHER

Making this performance one to remember, students shared the spotlight with their biggest fans—their family. On Jan. 10, Connoquenessing Valley Elementary (CVE) fourth grade band and string students showcased their talents during an "Informance" held at Ehrman Crest. Families were treated to a special glimpse into the incredible progress our young musicians have made since September. For the first time, students played together as a full group, creating a memorable and heartwarming experience for all. ■

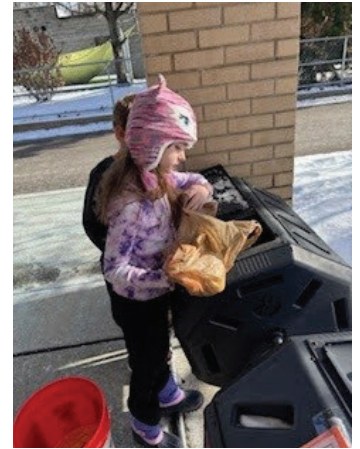


GROWING GREEN!

Students at Rowan Elementary School are developing upon their sustainability efforts through the school's composting program. Collecting food scraps from lunch, second grade Compost Ambassadors are pictured here adding to the bins.

Rowan Elementary teachers Ms. Jennifer Fiscus and Ms. Angela Cardillo launched the Composting Program in 2021. Since then, the school's Green Team has expanded the program and built a Learning Garden, where students can deepen their understanding of planting and the benefits of composting.

What began with just two classes now involves all grades K-4! The compost collected is put to good use, enriching the soil in garden boxes and supporting a sustainable learning environment for students. ■



PREPARING FOR THE POLLINATORS

As part of an outdoor education initiative being piloted at Haine Elementary and Middle School by sixth grade teacher Mr. Ken Cahall, over 50 elementary students and family members recently participated in an afterschool program on pollinator gardens. The goal of this program was to provide an engaging opportunity for parents and children to gain knowledge and appreciation for various types of local pollinators, identify threats facing many beloved pollinators such as the Monarch butterfly, and to see how



small action steps could help attract some of these pollinators to personal gardens. Near the conclusion of the program, families worked together to construct a butterfly box and were given local wildflower seeds to take home as they plan out their own pollinator garden spaces for the spring. The hope is that this experience will help foster a curiosity in children about the world around them and encourage families to see the value the outdoors can play in the lives of their families. ■



TIDINGS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

The holiday season is a time for giving, which is exactly what Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) students aimed to do before the winter break.

Seventh graders on the Tiger Team and their families recently donated nearly 800 items that were used as gifts for the residents of Passavant Nursing Home.

In addition, about 50 students stayed after school on Dec. 17 to deliver the donated items and visit with residents to spread holiday cheer by playing music, singing carols and performing dance routines.

“Our visit captured the joy and magic of the holiday season for the residents, students and teachers,” said RGMS teacher Ms. Jessica Phillips. “It was just as special for our students as it was for the residents.” ■



DONATIONS AND DECORATIONS

Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) geared up for break while celebrating in style! The annual door decorating contest made the hallways merry and bright and unique exhibits were displayed by ESL students and the Condor Team, highlighting holiday traditions from across the globe.

These festive decorations and creative cultural displays transformed the building into a winter wonderland, bringing a sense of community to the season! ■



A DECADE OF STEM INSPIRATION

Nearly 50 Seneca Valley alumni who have entered Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs or fields of study spoke on Thursday, Dec. 19, during Seneca Valley’s STEM Alumni Days at the Seneca Valley Senior High School.

The SV Senior High Science Department and Science Honor Society hosted the event, which is in its 11th year.

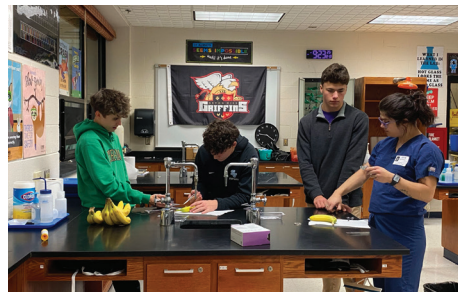
Students had the opportunity to listen to presentations from alumni about their education, careers and their experience in areas such as chemical engineering, neuroscience, interior design, aerospace engineering, nursing, biology and more.

“It was truly a great day for all involved,” said Ms. Kelly Weston, Seneca Valley Senior High School Advanced Placement Chemistry teacher. “I really enjoyed watching our past students share their knowledge and passion with our current students. It’s incredibly satisfying to see how far our alumni have come and to witness them inspiring the next generation of STEM leaders.”

The intention of SV STEM Alumni Days is to inspire and inform current students, encouraging STEM fields of study. As part of a network of opportunities organized by a committee of teachers, SV STEM Alumni Days joins the highly successful SV Science Honor Society, STEM Lecture Series, and STEM Fair, as a way to become more engaged in STEM career possibilities.

“The day served as a powerful reminder of the importance of mentorship and collaboration in shaping bright futures,” Ms. Weston added. ■

Photo Credit: Bill Paterson



MAPPING THE JOURNEY

Junior and senior students enrolled in Seneca Valley's Foundations of Special Education and Child Development 1 and 2 classes had the opportunity to attend a two-day event called Special Education Destination: Mapping the Journey to Your Career, at the Midwestern Intermediate Unit 4. During this experiential learning opportunity, students learned about the various fields in Special Education, how to navigate through the educational career path, the modern technology used with students who experience disabilities, and the personal rewards associated with a career in education. There were several hands-on learning opportunities, a deep dive into two career paths of each participant's choice, and plenty of time to speak with professionals who are currently leading the way in education. ■



CASE CLOSED ON THIS COMPETITION

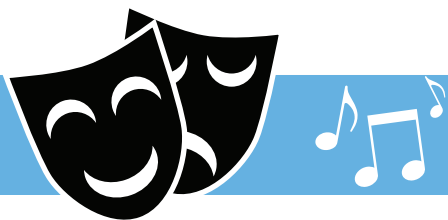
Students on the Seneca Valley Mock Trial team recently competed at the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral Classic Mock Trial Tournament.

Competing against 53 teams from across the state, these hardworking students dove into a legal case where they built their prosecution and defense strategies, mastered their roles as characters, and faced off against competitors in simulated courtrooms.

The SV Mock Trial Team is comprised of students in grades 9-12 in the gifted program and is advised by Ms. Brieana Nassan, Senior High School gifted support teacher.

We wish them the best of luck as they compete at the Pennsylvania Bar Association Mock Trial competition taking place at the Butler County Courthouse in February. ■





SV INSTRUMENTALISTS ATTEND PMEA FESTIVAL

This month, 18 Seneca Valley Band students were selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 Band Festival held at Mercer Area High School from Jan. 22-24. District Band is a representative festival of all the schools in PMEA District 5. It is the first step in the state-level music festival system, where students have the opportunity to advance to the regional level. The guest conductor for the festival was Dr. William Stowman, Associate Professor of Music and Department Chair at Messiah University. Based on audition results, nine SV students (Maya Anglero, Camden Armstrong, Noah Bracht, Elora Dabravalskas, Emma Gallie, Isaac Hixon, Steven Patterson, Eli Scanlan, and Mackenzie Tunstall) were selected to move on to the PMEA Region 1 Band Festival to be held in March at Ambridge Area High School.

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

Participants:

Ayla Alexander - Flute, Maya Anglero - Baritone Saxophone, Camden Armstrong



- Alto Saxophone, Noah Bracht - Tuba, Elora Dabravalskas - Trumpet, Emma Gallie - Clarinet, Allison Gillett - Percussion, Isaac Hixon - French Horn, Ella King - Clarinet, Anna Livorse - French Horn, Victoria Matchett - Alto Saxophone, Lauren Nowak - Clarinet, Steven Patterson - Clarinet, Eli Scanlan - Trombone, Lola Schwendemann

- French Horn, Cady Shea - Bassoon, Imogen Tomo - Trombone, Mackenzie Tunstall - Clarinet.

**not pictured - Elora Dabravalskas, Allison Gillett, Anna Livorse, and Victoria Matchett* ■

NOTEWORTHY SUCCESS AT PMEA ORCHESTRA

Students in the Seneca Valley Orchestra program recently participated in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 2, 3 & 5 Orchestra under the direction of esteemed conductor Dr. Timothy Dixon. The festival was held at Collegiate Academy in Erie from Jan. 9-11, with a culminating concert on Jan. 11. Students performed selections from Bizet, Dvorak and Sibelius. Of special note, sophomore bassist Benny James earned first chair, making Seneca Valley history as our first ever, first-chair bass! As a result of auditions, six Seneca Valley students will advance to PMEA Western Region Orchestra in Johnstown, Pa, at the end of February. Those advancing include

Elizabeth Browne, Benny James, Heath Lyon, Isabella Muthler, Jake Pieszak and Ava Platt.

Students are led by Sarah Miller and Millie Shay, secondary orchestra instructors.

Participants:

Elizabeth Browne (11) - Violin, Cortlan Harrell (12) - Bass, Isaac Hixon (12) - French Horn, Benny James (10) - Bass, Heath Lyon (10) - Viola, Isabella Muthler (12) - Viola, Dylan Neal (11) - Violin, Jake Pieszak (12) - Violin, Ava Platt (12) - Viola, Morgan Roithner (11) - Viola, Imogen Tomo (10) - Violin, Henrique Vilas Boas Casimiro (12) - Bass ■



SV STUDENTS DIVE DEEP INTO THE WORLD OF MUSICAL THEATER!

The Seneca Valley All-School Musical is thrilled to present “The SpongeBob Musical,” an unforgettable underwater adventure brought to life by nearly 200 talented students.

“This musical journey has been filled with nothing but fun and joy,” shared senior cast member, Miss Lauren Southwood. “Everyone has been incredibly accepting and kind, making it an experience I’ll remember forever.”

The production team is creating a truly immersive experience with dazzling costumes and sets that will transport you straight to Bikini Bottom! Beyond the visual spectacle, the show features infectious songs and high-energy dance numbers that will have you tapping your toes.

In a new and exciting initiative, we are pleased to offer a sensory-friendly experience during the Saturday, March 1 matinee. We are also working to provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for this performance.



“The SpongeBob Musical” delivers a powerful message that resonates with all ages: the importance of friendship, teamwork and never giving up! So, dive on down to the SV Intermediate High School (IHS) Auditorium and join SpongeBob, Patrick, Squidward, Mr. Krabs and even Plankton as they face a volcanic eruption!

Performance dates: February 27 & 28 and March 1 at 7 p.m. with two matinees March 1 & 2nd at 2 p.m. More information can be found on the Seneca Valley Theater website www.senecavalleytheater.com. ■



SV SENIOR EARNS SPOT IN ELITE ENSEMBLE

Seneca Valley choir senior Miss Ayla Alexander recently earned a position in the 2025 All-Eastern Honors Choir Festival!

The National Association for Music Education (NAFME) All-Eastern Music Festival brings together the finest high school musicians from the region, including students from Connecticut, Delaware, New Hampshire, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. To be eligible, students must have been part of their home state’s All-State festival in the year prior to the All-East festival. After a highly competitive selection process, Miss Alexander was chosen for this prestigious event to take place April 24-25, in Hartford, Connecticut.

The All-Eastern Music choir will be under the direction of Dr. Anton Armstrong of St.

Olaf University and Ms. Jessica Napoles, of the University of North Texas.

“This is an incredible accomplishment, not just for Ayla, but for our entire school,” said Ms. Bobi-Jean Alexander, Seneca Valley Choir director. “She is a natural musician who has worked hard in her music studies. Her dedication to reach this goal has been truly inspiring. We are very proud of her for achieving this remarkable recognition.”

Miss Alexander is Secretary of Concert Choir, President of the Tri-M Music Honor Society and a two-year Captain of the Color Guard Team. Additionally, she plays flute and bass and is a two-time All-State Chorus Qualifier.

Congratulations to Miss Alexander for accomplishing this outstanding achievement! ■





WINTER SPORTS UPDATES

Basketball, Boys & Girls: At the time of this writing, our boys and girls basketball teams were both ranked #2 in the latest TribLive WPIAL rankings and both teams sit atop their section standings. Coaches Kevin Trost and Dorothea Epps have their teams playing aggressive defense, and disciplined, selfless team basketball on the offensive end. Great starts by both teams in the first half of section play!

BOYS BASKETBALL STANDINGS

WPIAL Section 1 (Class 6-A)

Team	Section	Section %	Overall
Seneca Valley	7-1	0.875	10-6
New Castle	6-2	0.750	12-2
Fox Chapel	6-2	0.750	11-4
North Hills	4-4	0.500	5-10
Butler	3-5	0.375	10-5
Pine-Richland	3-5	0.375	5-8
Woodland Hills	2-6	0.250	6-8
North Allegheny	1-7	0.125	5-9

GIRLS BASKETBALL STANDINGS

WPIAL Section 1 (Class 6-A)

Team	Section	Section %	Overall
Seneca Valley	5-0	1.000	9-5
Butler	3-2	0.600	8-6
North Allegheny	3-2	0.600	5-7
Pine-Richland	3-2	0.600	4-10
North Hills	1-4	0.200	5-10
Woodland Hills	0-5	0.000	5-7

Bocce: Congratulations to our Raider Bocce team that opened their season with wins over Mars and Butler. The Black team is 4-0 in match play and the Blue team is 3-1. The Raiders have two matches remaining against Armstrong and Knoch.



Competitive Cheer: Congratulations to our Raider Competitive Cheer squad for qualifying for the PIAA state championships in the Large Varsity Traditional 3A classification! In addition, this squad has also qualified for the National High School Cheerleading Championship (NHSCC) to be held at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Well done, Raiders!



Ice Hockey: At the time of this writing, Raider Ice Hockey sits in second place in the PIHL 3A standings with a record of 8-2-2. The team has eight games remaining and will attempt to secure the top seed in the playoffs.



We congratulate the following Raider ice hockey players who were named to compete in the PIHL All-Star game on Jan. 26, at Robert Morris University (RMU). Congratulations to all!

- Tyler Garvin, Forward
- Carter Hoehn, Defenseman
- Andrew Malichky, Forward
- Jimmy Murtha, Forward
- Chris Nichols, Goalie

Swimming & Diving: Raider swim and dive teams are in the middle of their section schedules and are training hard for WPIAL championships. The girls team is currently undefeated (6-0) in dual meets and the boys are 4-2.

Wrestling: Raider boys and girls wrestling teams are finishing their dual match portion of their respective schedules and will shortly turn their attention to WPIAL section and individual championships. Final season and postseason results will be available in a later Raider Pride issue. ■

ALUMNI VISIT WITH SALT TO TALK COLLEGE

Earlier this month, the Student-Athlete Leadership Team (SALT) welcomed five Raider student-athlete alumni to their January meeting to talk about college and what it is like to be a college student-athlete. Joining SALT were:



- Graham Hancox (SV '23) – IUP Football
- Anna Kalkowski (SV '24) – Seton Hill Softball
- Julia Lozowski (SV '23) – Tampa Soccer
- Kara Pasquale (SV '24) – Slippery Rock Volleyball
- Nathan Prex (SV '22) – Lebanon Valley Soccer

The panel answered questions and shared their experiences on the daily life of a student-athlete, the importance of nutrition and sleep, balancing academic responsibilities with athletic commitments, the biggest surprise transitioning from high school sports to collegiate sports, and what their favorite parts of being a student-athlete are. We are grateful to Graham, Anna, Julia, Kara and Nathan for spending the morning with SALT.

Leading up to winter break, SALT was busy planning a visit to the Passavant Community in Zelenople. SALT members visited all elementary schools in early December and sat down with our young students to make holiday cards for the Passavant community members. On Dec. 18, members of SALT visited Passavant



to share in some holiday festivities and distribute holiday cards and cookies. Residents were also treated to some spontaneous caroling by SALT. It was a festive and heartwarming morning for all.

In addition to the Passavant visit, SALT organized a toiletry, hat and gloves drive

during contests the week of Dec. 16. The collaborative efforts of visiting team communities along with the Seneca Valley community resulted in SALT collecting six garbage bags worth of donations, all of which were donated to the Second Avenue Commons shelter. ■

COLLEGE COMMITMENTS – CLASS OF 2025

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










Name	Sport	College/University	Major
Jordan Hoover	Volleyball	Roberts Wesleyan University	Engineering
Rachel Humphreys	Lacrosse	University of the Cumberland	Physical Therapy
Elizabeth Petelin	Volleyball	Penn State-Behrend	Nursing

RAIDER GENEROSITY ON DISPLAY

Once again #SVRaiderNation generosity was on full display during the 2024 WPIAL Food & Fund Drive for the Pittsburgh Food Bank. Seneca Valley was fourth overall and second in

6A classification for its contributions to the WPIAL third annual drive. Thank you to everyone who contributed! #WearingTheSV ■

2024 FOOD & FUND DRIVE OVERALL TOP 10

<p>#1  CENTRAL CATHOLIC 15,846 MEALS // \$5,282.00</p>	<p>#6  THE ELLIS SCHOOL 6,254 MEALS // \$1,996.75 + 220 FOOD ITEMS</p>
<p>#2  ARMSTRONG 8,929 MEALS // \$2,111.85 + 2,161 FOOD ITEMS</p>	<p>#7  WINCHESTER THURSTON 4,674 MEALS // \$1,367.65 + 476 FOOD ITEMS</p>
<p>#3  SOUTHMORELAND 8,223 MEALS // \$2,390.86 + 875 FOOD ITEMS</p>	<p>#8  BETHEL PARK 4,178 MEALS // \$1,213.88 + 447 FOOD ITEMS</p>
<p>#4  SENECA VALLEY 7,673 MEALS // \$2,557.79</p>	<p>#9  SETON LASALLE 2,670 MEALS // \$890.00</p>
<p>#5  KNOCH 7,141 MEALS // \$2,180.21 + 500 FOOD ITEMS</p>	<p>#10  CALVARY CHAPEL CHRISTIAN 2,489 MEALS // \$135.00 + 1,737 FOOD ITEMS</p>

ATHLETES OF THE MONTH, DECEMBER 2024

The Female Athlete of the Month for December was girls diver Ali Waters. The junior has been a key point scorer for the Raiders on a young diving squad. She has recorded a first-place finish in each meet this season and has already exceeded the qualifying score for the 2025 Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) 1-Meter Diving Championships. Her contributions on the diving board have assisted the girls swimming and diving program to six straight wins. Ali's dives have all scored above 220 points with her season and personal best score of 274.95 coming in a tri-meet against McDowell and Canon McMillan. We recognized Ali as the December Female Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Ali!



The Male Athlete of the Month for December was junior boys basketball guard Nico Santapau. Nico was a key contributor for the Raiders as they overcame injuries and a slow start to the season to boast a seven-game win streak for a 7-6 overall and 4-1 section record, at the time of this writing. Over the first 13 games of the season, Nico has tallied 10.8 points a game in 324 minutes of play. He leads the team in three-pointers made (31) along with free throw percentage (83.9%). On the defensive end, he averages 2.6 rebounds a game and has tallied 15 steals. His standout game came against Avonworth where he scored 19 points and came down with four rebounds to lead the team to a 72-61 win. For an impressive month, we recognized Nico as the December Male Athlete of the Month. Congratulations, Nico! ■



MAKING STUDENT SPIRITS BRIGHT

The Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) was thrilled to partner with several local organizations to make over 230 students' holidays brighter this year. Each year, friends from **Neighbors for Neighbors (N4N)**, **Cranberry CUP**, **Cranberry Rotary (Sunset)**, **the Georgie Smigel Coldwell Banker Real Estate Group**, **Fun Fore All**, **Cranberry Dairy Queen Grill & Chill** and our very own **SV Security Guards** shop to fulfill wish lists that contain five or six items that students hope to receive this holiday season. **SV Central Office Staff** and **General Rental Center** helped to haul the sacks of presents just in time for the holidays. A special thank you is extended to Seneca Valley employees who played a huge role in the success of this gift drive by buying gifts through Amazon wish lists curated through N4N.

Through all these efforts, over \$50,000 worth of gifts and new clothing items were donated to our students this holiday. We are exceedingly grateful for this collaboration of so many generous people who illustrate the spirit of giving throughout SV every year. ■



SUPPORTING THE SV FOUNDATION THROUGH EITC

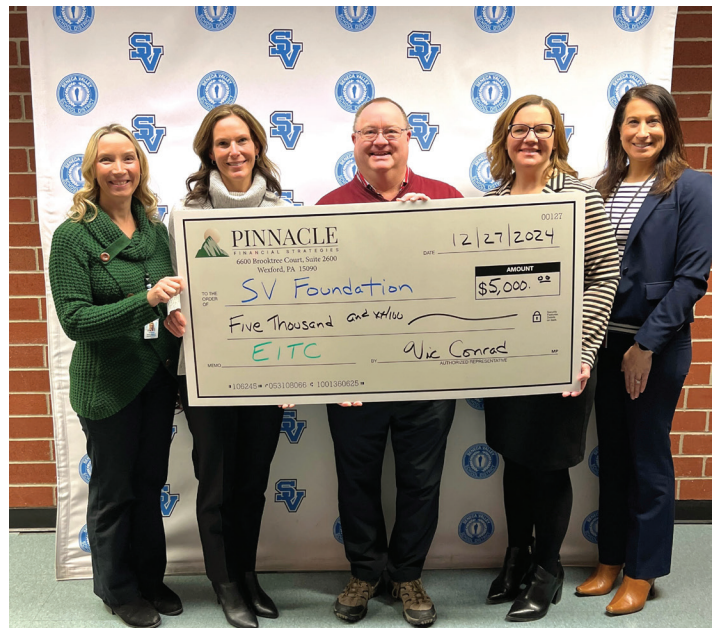
Many thanks to the following businesses for supporting the mission of the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) through Pennsylvania's Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program:

- NexTier Bank
- Waste Management
- Farmers National Bank
- Buncher Company
- Pinnacle Financial Strategies



This tax-credit program is a vital part of the Seneca Valley Foundation's ability to contribute to Seneca Valley School District and we are honored to have the support of these generous businesses. All gifts received support the following classes in the SV Senior High School:

- Women in Engineering (a high school class for young women that focuses on engineering concepts)
- Honors Engineering (enhanced course on engineering exploration and robotics technology)
- Accounting (college-credit accounting class for high school students in grades 10-12)



Pictured left to right: Ms. Julia Benson, Dr. Marie Palano, Mr. J. Victor Conrad, Ms. Annie Mersing and Ms. Dana Kirk

We kindly ask staff, families and community members to help connect us with businesses also willing to contribute to SV through this program. To learn more about how to become our newest "Partner in Public Education," visit: [Seneca Valley Foundation](https://www.senecavalleyfoundation.org). ■

SENECA VALLEY PRESENTS "REACHING NEW HEIGHTS"

The 2024 Seneca Valley Annual Report is coming soon! Here's a sneak peek at what you can expect to see. ■



GRADUATING CLASS OF 2024

Post-Secondary Plan	# of Students	%
2-Year College/Institution	57	10.3
4-Year College/Institution	401	72.1
Apprenticeship	8	1.43
Career/Technical School	5	.9
Employment/Military/Other	85	15.27
Total Students in the Class of 2024	556	100%

A Sampling of Colleges and Universities Chosen by Our 2024 Graduates:

Auburn University	New York University
Butler County Community College	Ohio University
Chatam University	Penn State University
Clemson University	Pennsylvania Western University
Duquesne University	Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania	Robert Morris University
Florida State University	Roseale Technical College
Gannon University	Slippery Rock University
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	The Ohio State University
Johns Hopkins University	University of Dayton
Kent State University	University of Pittsburgh
La Roche College	West Virginia University
Liberty University	Westminster College
Mercyhurst University	Youngstown State University



DID YOU KNOW?

ENROLLMENT

- 7,440 Total students enrolled, grades K-12
- 1,295 Enrollment at Seneca Valley Academy of Choice
 - Full time - 119
 - Hybrid - 1,176
- 165 SV students enrolled in Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School

DIVERSITY

- 332 Students in English as a Second Language (ESL) Program
- 43 Countries represented by SV students
- Top three native languages spoken by our ESL students are Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic

EMPLOYMENT

- 911 Number of employees across the District
 - 669 - Professional
 - 242 - Classified
- 50% Employees live within the Seneca Valley School District
- 6th Largest employer in Butler County, PA

ACADEMICS

- 300 | Approximate number of courses offered (grades 9-12)
- 101 | Advanced Placement, Honors and College In High School courses offered (grades 9-12)

PERFORMING ARTS

- 4th grade | When band and orchestra classes begin for our youngest musicians
- 1,307 | Number of students (grades 7-12) enrolled in curricular performing ensembles, which is 25% of the 7-12 student body
- 130+ | Hours of practice during summer and band camp The Roaring Raider Marching Band accumulates prior to the first football game

FOOD SERVICES

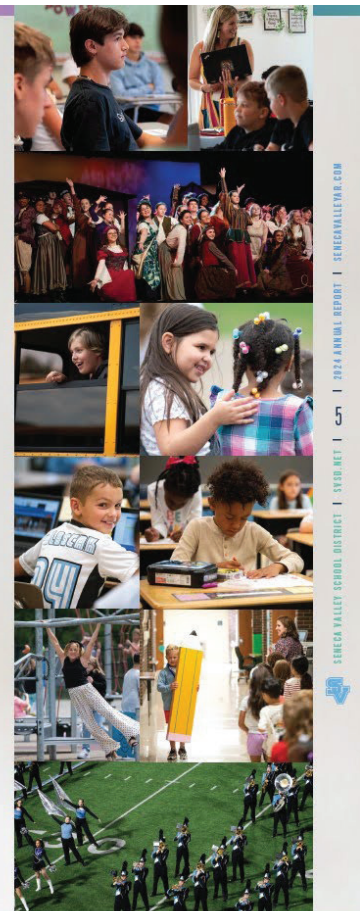
- 607,857 | Average number of meals served for lunch in 2023-24
- 23.1% | K-12 students utilizing Free and Reduced-Price Meals
- Friday Pizza Day! | Day of the week most lunches are purchased

TRANSPORTATION

- 8,278 | Students transported daily (public, private and parochial)
- 100 | Square miles the District spans
- 15 | Activity buses within the District

DIGITAL MEDIA

- 3,270,220 | District website page views in 2024
- 25,500 | Average number of followers across all social media platforms
- 8,000 | Total downloads of Voices podcasts



SENECA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT | 5700 NET | 2024 ANNUAL REPORT | SENECAVALLEYFD.COM



Seneca Valley Track and Field – Elementary Program Grades (3-6)

The fee is \$75 per student we will honor any financial waiver approved by the school district. The money will go towards a team t-shirt and the Track and Field Program. The Elementary Program will finish with the Annual Community wide Track and Field Meet on May 16th more information will be provided once your child is registered for the program.

Schedule:

This program is open to all third - sixth graders within the Seneca Valley School District in the evening on the following dates April 7, 10, 16, 21, 30 and May 5, 10 (10-11:30 a.m.) and 12 (5:30–7 p.m.)

May 16 (Track and Field Meet) – more information will be coming soon

Conditioning Start Date – April 7 meet the coaches and varsity athletes down on the turf field in the stadium. During each session the athlete will have exposure to running, jumping and throwing activities.

Expectations:

You may come to all sessions or just the ones that fit your schedule, since this is a beginning Track and Field Program. Success (meaning improvement and fun) is more likely to occur if you come more often.

Behavior expectations: Be on time and prepared for running activities you need to come dressed for activity. Being prepared means having athletic clothing (dress for the weather), lightweight running sneakers that fit well, a water bottle, and anything else you might need individually. Be good, positive, and encouraging to all teammates and stay where you are directed. Lastly, all activities will take place on the school district campus. The beauty of this sport is the entire range of experiences and desires everyone can be genuinely successful. This is a beginner program to get ready for an Elementary Track and Field Meet. If you come regularly, set goals, accept challenges, and work hard you can have success. Success is mainly measured by times and distances: setting new and improved PR's is success regardless of your place in an event. (There are other ways, too!) Our Philosophy of this program/rationale: We want to build our program from the enjoyment of wanting to be an athlete. We hope many of you find this type of activity as important, meaningful, and fun and eventually decide to join our MS Team in grades 7-8 and eventually our HS Track & Field Programs in the coming years.

This Program is an evening community Booster Sponsored program designed to inspire boys and girls of all abilities to recognize and embrace their inner strength. They will learn lessons that emphasize the important connection between physical and emotional health. Through safety modifications and specific training by the coaches. At the end of the program, everyone will be able to compete in a Track and Field meet, which provides a tangible sense of accomplishment, setting a confident and goal-oriented mindset into motion.

Questions please contact:

Ray Peaco (Seneca Valley Head Coach)

peacorf@svsd.net or call/text cell# (724) 452-0560

This correspondence is being circulated as a community service at the request of a non-school organization. This information and/or activities are not associated with the Seneca Valley School District. Any questions or correspondence should be directed toward the activity coordinator.

Online Registration: (Please complete by Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at the latest)

Follow this link to register online –

- For this program to take place, we would like to have 10-20 girls and 10-20 boys to participate in grades 3-6
- Link to online registration page - <https://forms.office.com/r/90VaDsd0MT?origin=lprLink>
- Link to Annual Community Elementary Track and Field Meet - [Elementary meet Flyer - Copy.docx](#)

SV DAY OF SERVICE

On the Jan. 20 In-Service Day, Seneca Valley teachers and staff dedicated their afternoons to meaningful volunteer activities. Service opportunities included volunteering at the Haine Middle School Blood Drive, donating to clothing and service drives, making cookies for local police officers, baking dog treats for the Evans City Humane Society, assembling blankets for Highmark's Caring Place and much more. Staff greatly appreciated the opportunity to give back to the community and make a difference in the lives of others. Thank you, SV, for your commitment to fostering an environment of kindness and support within our district and beyond! ■



SV DAY OF SERVICE *continued*



TEACHERS TAKE PART IN ADAPTIVE SPORTS TRAINING

On Jan. 20, during the staff In-Service Day, Physical Education teachers from across the District participated in training on adaptive sports equipment led by Envision Blind Sports. Wendy Fagan, the founder of Envision Blind Sports, generously volunteered her time to introduce a kit designed for students with visual impairments. The kit includes adapted sound-producing balls, running tethers and eye shades, enabling these students to participate in sports and activities alongside their sighted peers while promoting awareness of blind sports in public schools.

After the equipment was presented, Physical Education teachers learned how to play Goalball, a team sport played in the Paralympic Games by visually impaired athletes. They also played adapted tennis, adapted soccer and learned how to use running tethers with a guide.

Ms. Jessica Sloan, Midwestern Intermediate Unit (MIU) IV Teacher of the Visually Impaired, works with visually impaired students at Seneca Valley and received one of the adaptive sports kits provided by Envision Blind Sports. She plans to share the kit with Physical Education teachers throughout the year to support inclusive sports opportunities. ■



CHECK THIS OUT!

Mr. Seth Verba and Mr. Kurt McNaught, teachers at Ryan Gloyer Middle School, recently gave a special performance for the Passavant Retirement Community on the Jan. 20 In-Service Day. [This meaningful performance](#) brought smiles, toe-taps, and a little extra joy to everyone's day!

Video credit: Mr. Oliver Wiehe, Ryan Gloyer Middle School teacher ■



DISTINGUISHED HONOR

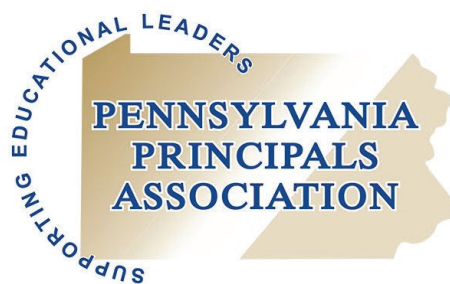
Jeremy Womer Named Pennsylvania's 2025 Outstanding Assistant Principal

Jeremy Womer, Assistant Principal of Haine Middle School in the Seneca Valley School District, Cranberry Township, was selected as Pennsylvania's 2025 Outstanding Assistant Principal by the Pennsylvania Principals Association. As a state winner in the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) National Outstanding Assistant Principal (NOAP) Program, Mr. Womer is eligible to be considered for the honor of NAESP National Outstanding Assistant Principal of the Year.

Dr. Eric Eshbach, Executive Director, PA Principals Association, said, "A remarkable and talented educator has once again been chosen by our selection committee to represent assistant principals in Pennsylvania at the elementary/middle school level. Jeremy Womer is a perfect example of the traits we seek in an award recipient: dedication, professionalism, leadership and a love of learning for students, faculty, the school and the community. I am delighted that Jeremy will serve as our 2025 Outstanding Assistant Principal, representing our commonwealth and the Pennsylvania Principals Association."

Mr. Womer has served as an assistant principal at Haine Middle School since 2023. He has been an administrator for nine years and an educator for 15 years, beginning his career as a teacher and an administrator in the Wood County Schools in West Virginia from 2011-2017. In 2017, he joined the Seneca Valley School District as acting assistant principal of Rowan Elementary School. In 2018, he served as a fourth-grade teacher at Haine Elementary School and then as assistant principal and acting principal.

"Mr. Womer's calm, approachable demeanor, dedication to students and remarkable ability to cultivate strong relationships have made him an invaluable asset to Seneca Valley," said Dr. Tracy Vitale, Seneca Valley Superintendent of Schools. "This well-deserved recognition



is a testament to his unwavering commitment to excellence, his leadership and his significant impact on our school community."

A compassionate and dedicated leader, Mr. Womer is committed to the success of his students, staff and school community. He is a caring leader, and his commitment to his students is evident in the school's daily culture and activities, including recreational, social and academic programs.

At Haine Middle School, Mr. Womer's main focus has been on supporting and assisting all children in their academic, social, and personal development. He has been instrumental in leading Haine Middle School's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program and

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to provide core instructional support for students. His school's PBIS program focuses on students being responsible, respectful and ready to learn. Additionally, it provides opportunities for all students to earn rewards for meeting positive expectations and positive choices. He said, "The emphasis has been on creating an environment where expectations are consistent and clearly communicated. When students know what is expected of them, how to meet those expectations and the outcome of meeting those expectations, they are more likely to work toward putting them into practice."

In addition to his administrative duties, Mr. Womer is actively engaged in mentoring new teachers, guiding them in best practices, classroom management and curriculum development. He leads by example, consistently demonstrating a strong work ethic and a positive attitude. Dr. Vitale shared, "His commitment to supporting and uplifting his colleagues has cultivated a collaborative environment that greatly enhances our school's effectiveness."

Continued on next page

Continued from page 20

Mr. Womer believes that his school will remember him for being approachable and eager to assist in any way. “When I see students and staff in the hallway, I greet them with a smile. I never ask anyone to do anything that I wouldn’t do. This can be helping with sweeping and cleaning, assisting a student, moving items or setting up and tearing down for a performance,” he shared.

Mr. Womer is a member of the PA Principals Association and NAESP, as well as the Association for Middle Level Education. In addition, he is a member of his district’s science and math resource committees.

Mr. Womer said, “I am deeply humbled and honored by this recognition. I firmly believe that hard work pays off, and this achievement would not have been possible without the incredible educators and colleagues who I have worked with throughout my career. It is a privilege to serve the Haine Middle School and the Seneca Valley community.”

Mr. Womer resides in Beaver, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Melissa, who is also an educator and his biggest supporter, and their two children, Megan, 5, and Easton, 4. He and his wife have been fortunate to work in the same school district throughout their careers. As a family, they stay active playing and exploring together. In addition, he enjoys spending time outdoors, hunting, fishing and hiking, as well as participating in outdoor sports such as golf, baseball/softball and skiing.

*About the **Pennsylvania Principals Association**: The PA Principals Association membership of approximately 3,500 is comprised of elementary, middle level and secondary school principals, assistant principals and other educational leaders and is affiliated with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).*

The Mission of the Pennsylvania Principals Association: To ensure a quality education for every child by comprehensively supporting the educational leaders of our schools.

The Vision of the Pennsylvania Principals Association: To be the best service organization of its kind in the United States.

About the NOAP Program: The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) is committed to preparing assistant principals to step into the principal role. NAESP honors assistant principals who make stellar contributions to their leadership team. This program promotes excellence in educational leadership and calls attention to the fundamental importance of the assistant principal. ■

THE DOCTORS ARE IN

Congratulations to Dr. Henderson, Dr. Davenport and Dr. McKelvey

Chet Henderson, Intermediate High School Principal, earned his doctorate in Education Leadership from the University of Pittsburgh. The title of his dissertation was “Teacher Mentor Perspectives on the Check and Connect Mentor Program.”

“Reaching this level of education is rewarding and relieving,” said Dr. Henderson. “Completing this journey has reinvigorated my desire to learn and grow as a professional, in a way that will best serve students.”

School Psychologist, Cindy Davenport, successfully completed her doctorate in Educational Leadership (Ed.D.) from Youngstown State University. Her dissertation topic was “Healthcare Access and Academic Achievement: Investigating Connections between Hospitals and Student Success.”

“It is an amazing and humbling experience to reach this milestone,” said Dr. Davenport. “Every achievement is a team effort, and I feel blessed reflecting back on the support and encouragement I received from my husband, family and my colleagues.”

Thomas McKelvey, Haine Elementary School Assistant Principal, successfully completed his doctorate in Leadership and Administration from Point Park University. His dissertation was titled “Changes in the State of School-Based Mental Health Service Programs in Southwestern Pennsylvania from 2021 to 2024: A Mixed-Methods Approach.”

“Earning my Doctorate in Education has been a humbling and rewarding journey, fulfilling a long-held personal and professional goal of mine,” said Dr. McKelvey. “I have always had a passion for supporting all students. This experience has strengthened my dedication to enhancing the supportive and engaging learning environment here at Haine Elementary.” ■



SV ALL-STAR: SENECA VALLEY BUS DRIVER RECOGNIZED FOR HEARTFELT SERVICE

For January, we are pleased to announce the newest member inducted into the SV All-Star Club, Mr. Josh Phipps, bus driver for ABC Transit, Inc.

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

“Josh is not only an incredible person but a great bus driver too,” said Dr. Erin Wilcher, Principal of Haine Middle School. “To our students and staff, Josh is far more than someone who ensures safe transportation—he is a trusted, friendly person and a valued member of our school community.”

Every day, Mr. Phipps goes above and beyond by greeting students with a warm smile and kind words, fostering a welcoming and positive environment. He genuinely takes an interest in their lives, creating meaningful connections that leave a lasting impact.

A perfect example of Mr. Phipps’ dedication occurred just last month when he attended the fifth grade band, chorus, and orchestra concert at the students’ request. His presence demonstrated his commitment to celebrating their achievements and supporting them beyond the bus ride.

Mr. Phipps’ is also a team player who regularly lends a helping hand to fellow drivers at Haine. And, of course, his signature fluorescent



Pictured from L-R: Back row: Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Eric DiTullio, Board President; Front row: Dr. Erin Wilcher, Principal of Haine Middle School, Mr. Josh Phipps, Mr. Jeremy Womer, Assistant Principal of Haine Middle School and Mr. John Demkowicz, Transportation Director

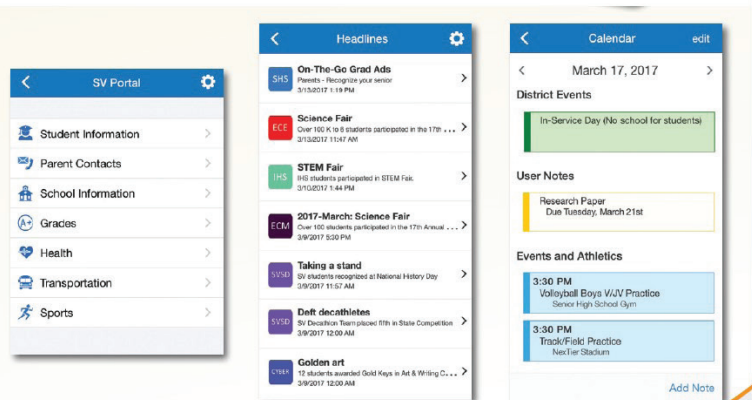
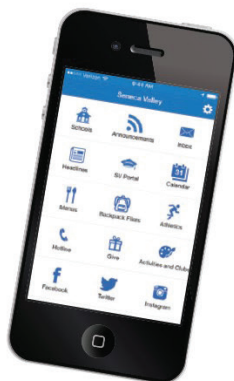
attire makes him easy to spot, a cheerful reminder of his constant presence and dedication.

We are incredibly fortunate to have Josh as part of our team. His unwavering kindness, enthusiasm, and commitment to excellence make him an invaluable part of our community. ■

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



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



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

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

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

www.svsd.net

SV ATHLETIC DIRECTOR RECEIVES LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Congratulations to Ms. Heather Lewis for receiving the 2024 National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) Lifetime Achievement Award!

The NFHCA Lifetime Achievement Award was established in 2018 to recognize a seasoned coach and their significant impact to the sport of field hockey. With this award, the NFHCA honored Ms. Lewis' courage, leadership and strength as well as her outstanding commitment to the sport.

Ms. Lewis' coaching career began at Springbrook High School in Montgomery County, MD, where she served for three seasons (1986-1988), earning league Coach of the Year honors in 1986 and reaching the state semifinals that same year. She then moved to Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, MA, coaching for two seasons (1989-1990). Following this, Ms. Lewis was an assistant coach under Pam Hixon at the University of Massachusetts in 1991. In August 1992, she became the head field hockey and head womens lacrosse coach at Bucknell University. Over 16 seasons (1992-2007) in field hockey, she was named Patriot League Coach of the Year in 1995, tied for career wins at 128, and set a record for most wins in a season with 14 in 1999. Lewis also coached lacrosse for four seasons (1993-1996). After leaving Bucknell in the summer of 2008, her final coaching stop was at Norwin High School, where she led the team to its first-ever PIAA District championship.

Ms. Lewis also served as a field hockey umpire from 2008 to 2014, achieving Level II National Certification and officiating at the Metro Atlantic Conference Championships and an NCAA Play-In Game. Her commitment to the sport extended to administrative roles, including serving as President (1999-2005) and Past-President (2006-2008) of the National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA). Currently, she serves on the NFHCA Board of Directors in the designated Honorary member role. Ms. Lewis was also the Executive Vice President/Secretary of the USA Field Hockey Board of Directors, where she authored the association's strategic plan (2007-2011). Additionally, she chaired the

NCAA Student Records Review Committee (2019-2023) and was a member from 2014 to 2019.

"First off, I'd like to thank Cate (NFHCA Executive Director Cate Clark) and the NFHCA Hall of Fame Committee. There's just something really special about being honored by your peers," said Ms. Lewis. "Looking back at previous honorees, I'm truly humbled to receive the NFHCA Lifetime Achievement Award and join such an esteemed group of coaches, and quite frankly, pioneers in our sport. I have been so blessed by our sport and I have, in turn, tried to give back as much as I have received. I know I haven't come close, but I'll continue to try."

Ms. Lewis was formally recognized on Jan. 16 at the NFHCA Hall of Fame Reception and Awards Dinner held in Lake Mary, Florida.

*The **National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA)** is a nonprofit organization serving field hockey coaches and supporters of the game from across the United States. The mission of the organization is to champion, strengthen, and celebrate field hockey coaches and the game. The NFHCA strives to cultivate and recognize the professional contributions of its membership and to foster and promote the growth of the sport. The NFHCA is responsible for providing a recognizable presence and voice in regard to legislation affecting the sport as well as interscholastic and intercollegiate programs.* ■



EXPANDING HORIZONS

Over 440 courses available in 25-26 SV Program of Studies

Earlier this month, Dr. Matt McKinley, Seneca Valley Assistant Superintendent for 7-12 Instruction, presented a comprehensive selection of new courses to the School Board and public, further enriching an already diverse program of studies with over 440 courses. These additions aim to equip students with modern, relevant skills and knowledge, opening doors to new opportunities and future success.

- Social Studies will feature *America in the Modern Era: 1970s to Present and Advanced Experience Criminal Investigations*, offering students a deep dive into recent American history and the intricacies of criminal investigation methods.
- In the English department, *Voices of the Moment – Perspectives in Pop Culture* is a semester elective and allows students to explore contemporary cultural trends and their societal impacts.
- The Science department expands with *Astronomy 2*, offering the nearly 90 students in the current Astronomy classes an opportunity to consider advanced topics as an elective for the coming school year.
- The Family and Consumer Sciences department will introduce Advanced Experience Fashion Design, a decision inspired by the enthusiasm of 40 plus students in the first class who were eager to advance to the next level of design.
- Our Business curriculum introduces Microsoft Suite courses in *PowerPoint* and *Word*, offered via cyber to be more flexible with student schedules. Also offered in cyber format is *Social Media Marketing*. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) marks a significant enhancement in our offerings as we intend to incorporate it into the practices of many courses.



Seen here are students in the Criminal Investigations class, analyzing a pre-created crime scene based on a real-life case.



Intro to *Artificial Intelligence (Cyber)* introduces the fundamentals of AI, while *Artificial Intelligence (Blended)* combines online and in-person learning for a more immersive experience.

- Additionally, the JROTC program now features a *Leadership* course aimed at developing essential skills in communication and teamwork.



These new offerings demonstrate our dedication to providing a comprehensive, forward-thinking program of studies that prepares students for future challenges.

To learn more, visit the Program of Studies page at [Program of Studies - Seneca Valley School District](#) and/or our video, [Seneca Valley Program of Studies: Planning ahead made easy.](#) ■

WORK TO BEGIN AT FORMER EVANS CITY SCHOOL

Demolition work on the former Evans City School is anticipated to begin as early as next week. The 138,000-square-foot building, which has been vacant since its closure in June 2022, will be removed to make way for future District use, though no specific plans or timelines have been discussed or determined. While demolition is underway, please note that the former Evans City

School grounds are closed to the public. The site is an active construction zone, and for everyone's safety, visitors must adhere to all posted signs and restrictions. As part of this project, the Seneca Valley Foundation plans to offer commemorative bricks as a fundraiser later this spring—stay tuned for more details! ■

SV RECOGNIZES SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Photo Credit: Bill Paterson

In honor of school boards' commitment to our students, schools and communities, January is once again designated School Director Recognition Month.

Pennsylvania public schools educate nearly 2 million students, including over 7,400 students here at Seneca Valley. The nine members of our school board are a vital part of the district's administrative team, making informed decisions that lead Seneca Valley and provide opportunities for every student to succeed.

School directors, who are unpaid volunteers, devote an average of 10 hours each month to the challenging and complex responsibilities of board business, including voting on budgets, adopting policy and conducting comprehensive planning.

As citizens and parents, the success of our schools is a collective interest. We recognize the time and dedication of our School Board and thank them for ensuring our schools remain a pathway to opportunity for every student. To learn more about Seneca Valley School Board members, please visit [School Board Members](#). ■



Pictured, from L-R: Ms. Leslie Bredl, Board Vice President Mr. Jeff Widdowson, Ms. Susan Harrison, Mr. Frederick Peterson Jr., Superintendent Dr. Tracy Vitale, Mr. Timothy Hester, Ms. Kari Zimmer, Mr. Nick Brower, Board President Mr. Eric DiTullio and Mr. Mike Jacobs

'I LED THE PLEDGE'

Seneca Valley students from the District's K-6 schools are appearing at this year's school board meetings, leading the members of the School Board and public in saying "The Pledge of Allegiance."

We're thrilled to highlight Landry Reach-Sweeney, a fourth grader from Rowan Elementary School, who recently and successfully led the pledge at the Jan. 13 board meeting. A science enthusiast with a passion for marine biology, Landry dreams of becoming a marine biologist specializing in mammals, particularly seals. His love for learning doesn't stop there—he's an avid artist who enjoys sketching and reading in his free time. As an active member of Boy Scout Troop 403, he consistently showcases his leadership and commitment. Each summer, he further immerses himself in his interests by attending both zoo camp and a local eco camp, enriching his knowledge and experiences. We can't wait to see what the future holds for this remarkable young individual! ■



Landry is pictured here with Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Eric DiTullio, School Board President

PLAY, LEARN, GROW

The Seneca Valley School District, in partnership with The Andrew Effect, recently launched a new program for full-day kindergarten students called Dramatic Play Centers. These centers were unveiled at Haine Middle School on Jan. 17, with a special celebration: Full Steam Ahead. Each center is equipped with supplies that foster imaginative play and incorporate situations that develop cognitive and social skills like dental offices, diners, creator spaces, banks, and more.

“Structured play offers our youngest learners a valuable opportunity to develop creativity, interpersonal skills, communication, and real-world connections,” said Haine Elementary Principal, Dr. Kristen White. “While teachers support these experiences, the development of play is encouraged to be organic. We are incredibly fortunate to have the support of the Andrew Effect and our community partners as we strive to provide our learners with opportunities that benefit them both inside and outside the classroom.”

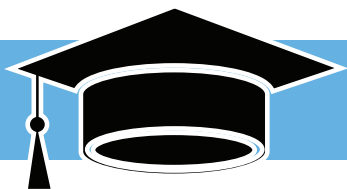
The Andrew Effect creates meaningful opportunities for children to learn through play using engaging activities and quality educational toys.



“Every child deserves to dream, and have high quality, interactive learning experiences,” said Ms. Candace Kantz, President of The Andrew Effect. “We could not be more excited to unveil the Play Centers, and soon to see them in action in the school.”

This program was funded by generous donors including Clearview Federal Credit Union, #1 Cochran Automotive, Cranberry Pediatric Dentistry, FOF Golf Association, Friends of the Bantam Jeep Association, Karski & Spokane Orthodontics, Marshall Hair Salon, Mascaro Construction, Park United Presbyterian Church, Weber Insurance Agency, and WPXI-TV. ■





Brendan Malloy, SV '21, is finishing up his studies at Mercyhurst and gearing up for a career in the Criminal Justice field. 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 am a senior at Mercyhurst University. I am currently completing my bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and I also carry minors in History and Political Science. I have been fortunate enough to be placed on the Dean's List my first three years, as well as maintaining membership with the Phi Eta Sigma National Honors Society. Along with that, I also serve as President of Mercyhurst's Alpha Phi Sigma chapter, the national honors society for Criminal Justice. I have maintained this position for the last two years after being elected at the end of my sophomore year. Finally, I have been a member of the Mercyhurst Club hockey program throughout my time in college. I was named captain midway through my sophomore year, and last year our team clinched the league championship for our conference.

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

A: I have two amazing parents, Dan and Gayle, who have taught me how to succeed and lead in the adult world. My sister Karen is a Bio-behavioral health/Pre-med major at Penn State University. My brother Aidan is a senior at Seneca Valley and plans to major in Engineering with a preference for aeronautical. Our family also includes three dogs: Tess, Finn and Tucker.

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

A: Someone might be surprised to know that I spent this past summer working an internship in Washington, D.C.

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



A: In terms of my personal life, Seneca Valley gave me the opportunity to fail, learn from those failures and ultimately discover how a person can truly succeed. Whether that be regarding friends, relationships or just general struggles, Seneca Valley allowed me to grow along my own pathway. Professionally, Seneca Valley also helped me to prepare for life in the business world. Career development, which I took senior year, provided me with resume advice, interview tips and a wealth of other knowledge I still use today.

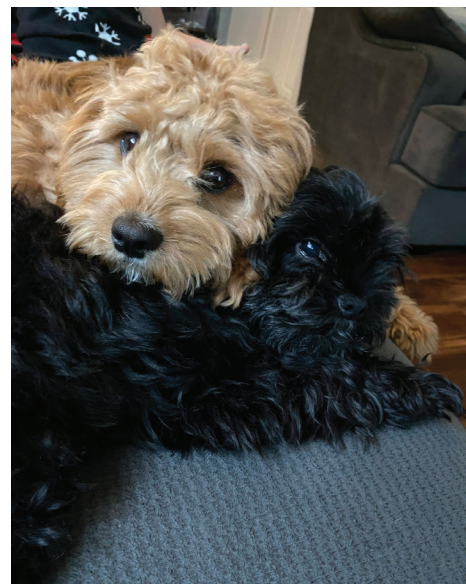
Q: What do you think makes Seneca Valley such a special place to learn and grow?

A: Seneca Valley is a special place to both learn and grow because of the mindset instilled by teachers and administrators. Seneca Valley gives each student the opportunity to learn in their own way, and presents them with a host of activities/sports to pursue. At the same time, although we have this freedom, the entire school structure recognizes the necessity of a non-disruptive learning environment. By combining these two elements, the school becomes a place that is safe, easy to navigate, enjoyable to be in and conducive to success in one's education.

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

A: I have two teachers that were my favorites at SV. The first is Ms. Langley, who taught me AP (Advanced Placement) Statistics my junior year. I still wonder what class would have been like if not for virtual learning during COVID-19, as I would have been the only student remaining in the final weeks after

Continued on next page



Continued from page 27

the seniors graduated. The second is Miss Thomas! Although I know she has since married and thus changed her name, the memory of sharing excitement with each other every day still brings warm feelings to my heart. I hope both these amazing women have continued to find happiness since my time at the school.

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

A: One memory that sticks out for me is winning the Keith Anger Leadership Award as a junior for the Seneca Valley Inline Hockey Association. This award is presented to one junior each season who exemplifies leadership qualities on and off the ice. At this point in my life, I had come to recognize that I could be a leader, but I had not figured out how to present myself as one in the most effective way possible. Winning this award opened my eyes to the potential I held, and through multiple opportunities in both the workplace and school over the following years, I have been blessed to maximize that potential.

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

A: Never underestimate the influence that you have on a student(s). Some will naturally be troublesome or inattentive, but recognizing whose life you can truly change is vital. Schooling and career decisions can be changed because of one's experience in a particular classroom, and that is truly something special.

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

A: I wish others recognized how rare a school like Seneca Valley is today. Not only are we fortunate to live in a relatively safe area with a population that recognizes the cruciality of education, but we also are a part of a district that does not rest on its laurels. I visited the new Ehrman Crest Elementary/Middle School two summers ago during my internship with the Cranberry Twp.



Police Department. It amazed me how advanced much of that building is compared to my experiences within the last 15 years. Not many children get to experience this kind of modernization. I find it important for the students and their faculty to embrace this opportunity, and recognize what it can provide them. ■

CALLING SV ALUMNI!

Seneca Valley is proud of their graduates who have excelled in their careers. Be sure to let us know if you would like to be featured in our Raider Pride e-newsletter. To keep us in the loop, send your graduation year, a summary of your professional life and a brief review of how Seneca Valley helped pave the way to [Ms. Tiffany Hernandez](#), Content Marketing Specialist. ■



5 SIMPLE TECH TIPS YOUR FAMILY CAN DO IN THE NEW YEAR

We've all experienced having a New Year's resolution that we were really excited about, only to stick with it for a few weeks before it eventually gets away from us. *"We're only going to allow YouTube for 30 minutes after school this year!"* Sound familiar?

While long-term goals and habits are important, they can also be overwhelming. So instead of adding a bunch of tech-related resolutions to your list, we're giving you just a few one-and-done tech tips you can do as soon as the New Year starts. This way you can feel accomplished before January is even over!

5 Tech Tips to Start the New Year Right

Start with a mini tech detox

Emphasis here is on the *mini*. No matter what your family's screen time looked like in the previous year, it's always healthy to take some sort of break. So pick a time in the next month where it would make sense to go screen free with family. This could literally just be one evening where phones and gaming consoles are put away. Or, it could be a day, a weekend, or more. Whatever feels achievable to your family and significant enough to feel disconnected from the draw of technology.

Clean your tech devices

Did you know that the average smartphone is shown to host **18x more bacteria** than a public restroom? We know — gross! And yet, only **21% of Americans** report cleaning their device once a day (which is what health experts recommend).

The simplest way to clean your tech is to use a microfiber towel and distilled water to wipe down your screens. Be sure to include phones, computers, smartwatch faces, keyboards, phone cases, chargers, etc. You can also take a toothpick to gently scrape out the debris from hard-to-reach places like charging ports and earbuds.

Looking for an even simpler solution for your most-used tech? Get a **UV sanitizer** for smartphones that will kill germs in every crevice of the device, in just ten minutes!

Make sure data is backed up

You may already have an automatic backup process in place, but the start of a new year is a great time to make sure all important photos, files, etc. are properly saved. Popular options for cloud-based storage services include iCloud, Google Drive, and Dropbox. However, you can also go slightly more old-school by using an external hard drive.

Update important passwords

This one may sound tedious, but it can easily be done in a day. As far as protecting your online privacy, having strong passwords is one of the most surefire ways to keep those hackers at bay. Try to just prioritize your family's most important accounts, such as your bank, email, healthcare, etc. We would recommend including your child's social media accounts on this list of priorities (if they have



any). Kids and teens are often targeted by scammers on social media, so it's important these accounts are secure.

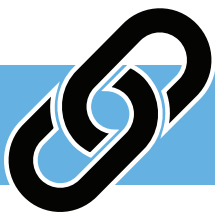
Review your family's previous tech rules

Remember — the goal isn't to focus on unrealistic long term resolutions here. But it doesn't hurt to take some time to reflect on how the last year went in terms of screen time. Get the family together and talk about the rules or boundaries that everybody enjoyed and the ones that didn't work so well. Bonus points if you had a **tech contract** that you can review! This can just be a time of reflection, but also an opportunity to think about possible changes for the New Year.

Start the New Year with Bark

A bonus tech tip for the next year is to use Bark to make screen time and monitoring as simple and reliable as possible. Their goal is to be the powerful tool that helps put family tech rules into action. Whether it's automatically blocking video games during homework time or quietly monitoring for inappropriate content on social media, Bark can add efficiency and peace of mind to digital parenting.

Article provided by **Bark** ■



- SVAOC Summer School Registration is Open! Exciting news! Summer School is now available for students currently in grades 8-11. Secure your spot by registering at <https://www.successfund.com/SVsummerschool>. Seats are limited—enroll today!
- The Seneca Valley Academy of Choice (SVAOC) summer camps registration is now open! This program offers a variety of exciting experiences for every interest – from artistic masterpieces to culinary delights, LEGO adventures to sports thrills. Register **today** for a summer filled with creativity, fun and confidence-building!
- Big news! Seneca Valley students, grades 9-12, have an exciting opportunity to travel through Tokyo, Japan in June 2026. When students travel, they deepen their knowledge of the world and build confidence in themselves. Trip activities include visiting the Harajuku District, taking lake and river cruises, sightseeing museums, and more! A parent meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 4 in the Senior High School LGI. [Learn more about this immersive adventure](#) and how to enroll.
- Take a look at this [Beacons of Hope](#) video featuring the Seneca Valley School District, one of 42 public school districts that are reimagining education. The Western Pennsylvania Learning 2025 Alliance advances student-centered, equity-focused, future-driven school systems that prepare every learner for tomorrow. Co-led by Pittsburgh-area superintendents and AASA (the School Superintendents Association), the Alliance convenes for workshops and professional development facilitated by world-class experts. With support from The Grable Foundation, these districts are showing the world what school could be.
- Teacher Nominations - WTAE-TV is launching a Teacher of the Month recognition program for the 2024-25 school year. Each month, from September through May, a teacher will be selected from the many deserving submissions that they receive. The selected Teacher of the Month will receive a \$1000 credit to donorschoose.org, a crowd-sourcing

page for classroom project/program funding. In addition, Pittsburgh's Action News 4 will feature that teacher and their story (and possibly a surprise school visit) during a news broadcast, as well as social media. Nomination information can be found at [WTAE Teacher of the Month](#).

- All students in Pennsylvania public schools, including Seneca Valley, have access to **free breakfast for the 2024-25 school year**, regardless of family income. Encourage your student(s) to stop for a full breakfast or various grab-and-go items. If you think you might be eligible for Free and Reduced-Price School Meals, we encourage you to fill out a Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Application as many programs are connected to your child[ren]'s eligibility. Please return it to the Seneca Valley Administration Office with attention to Faye Nelson. Applications can be found at www.svsd.net/FreeandReduced.
- SV Backpack Flyers - Flyers are updated frequently and feature information on student and community events/activities. Learn more at [Backpack Flyers / Backpack Flyers \(svsd.net\)](#).
- Healthy habits - SV's Health Services Department would like to remind everyone to eat well, sleep well, stay hydrated and wash hands frequently. Additionally, they ask that you please stay home or keep your child home when sick, and for 24 hours after fever is gone without medication or 24 hours without vomiting/diarrhea. Thank you!
- Seneca Valley residents 62 years of age or older are invited to apply to become



a member of the Seneca Valley School District Gold Card Club. Membership entitles card holders to attend home athletic events, music, dramatic and other school productions. [To apply for a gold card, please visit Gold Card Club \(svsd.net\)](#).

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

FYI

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

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE



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www.gladerun.org/careers



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