JUNIORS – APRIL NEWSLETTER

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My name is Julie Sitko and I am the College and Career Counselor. This is the time to think about life after high school. My role is to advise and support students and families in the college search and to help identify "best fit" colleges and universities, and to assist students in realizing their post-secondary goals. This monthly newsletter will keep you on track for post-secondary planning. Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Here are some things to think about as we go through your child's junior year:

Spring - Post-Secondary Timeline for juniors

- Begin the college and career exploration process with Naviance
- Begin to talk, as a family, about what your child wants to do after graduating from high school. Although the student makes the ultimate decision about what they want to do after high school, input from parents and guardians is helpful and appreciated.
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT, if your child wants to test
- If your child is thinking of testing – do test prep
- Participate in programming hosted by colleges. Information is posted on the schools' individual websites. Schools are doing both virtual and in person visitation programs.
- A copy of your child's transcript has been uploaded into the Portfolio section of Skyward, at the beginning of this school year. Look over the transcript and save a copy for your records. If there are any questions or concerns about the transcript, please reach out to your child's school counselor.
- All colleges/universities have a Net Price Calculator on their websites (generally on the financial aid page). This is an excellent resource to help you and your family determine how much you can anticipate paying at each school you're looking at. Use this tool as a resource to help you determine affordability.

Post Secondary Events in the area:

WQED Film & Media College Fair
Thursday, April 10
5:00-8:00 PM
Penn Hills High School
Top film and media schools locally and around the country will be joining to share information about their programs. The event will culminate in a live and virtually broadcast peer-led Q&A designed to allow high school students and families to ask candid questions and engage with current college students, including WQED Creator Academy (*formerly known as WQED Film Academy*) alumni.
Students can register for the College Fair here!

West Point Admissions Informational Program
Tuesday, April 22, 2025
North Hills High School
6:00-8:00 PM
Register here: https://apply.westpoint.edu/register/PittsburghAIM2025
Meet with an admissions officer and learn about what West Point offers, life as a cadet, and the application process.

CCBC Aviation Showcase: Saturday April 26, 2025
This day is designed as an open house to be very informative. Students can come at any time and speak to our flight schools, the airlines, our premier partner colleges and universities, the aviation faculty, and so much more. The flight simulator will be available and discovery flights, and the Air Traffic Control Tower will be open if weather permits.

UPMC Sports Medicine Student Aide Workshop:
Saturday, May 17 from 8:00-4:00
Lemieux Sports Complex

This is for high school students interested in a career in athletic training. Students will be exposed to elements of our key topics through lecture, demonstration, and presentations. The main topics will cover the role of an athletic trainer in multiple settings, anatomy and evaluation, concussion, therapeutic exercise, and career opportunities.
Topics include:

- Career exploration
- Therapeutic exercise
- Modalities
- Anatomy and evaluation
- Concussions
- Spine boarding & equipment removal
- Medical terminology
- Taping and bracing

Students must register here: Student Athletic Trainers' Workshop | Southwest Pa. (upmc.com)
There are only 40 sports for this program and there is a cost of $40.00/student.

ACT and SAT testing:
If your child wants to test, go to the testing websites for information about testing and open test sites. **(SAT: www.collegeboard.org** and **ACT: www.act.org**). A schedule of tests dates is in the class of 2026 Teams (under Post-Secondary Planning, then files). The same list is also on the High School Counseling Center webpage. Before deciding if your child wants to test, check with the schools they are interested in and determine if they need to test. Schools who are test optional are often examining the transcript much closer. For example, if your child is interested in studying business, colleges will look closely at the math classes they took and the grades earned in those math classes. If students want to test and safely can, do so.
--Students on free/reduced lunch are eligible for a fee waiver. Have your child see their school counselor or Ms. Sitko
--Every college accepts either the SAT or ACT. There is no preference.
--The SAT eliminated the writing portion of their exam, as well as the subject tests. When registering for the ACT, I do not recommend taking the writing portion of the exam. I do not think it will be necessary for admission.
--Check out this site to see if schools your child is interested in have determined their testing policies https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional.

ACT/SAT Prep:
Students taking ACT and SAT tests should do some sort of preparation prior to taking the tests. There are many resources available for test prep. All students have FREE access to Khan Academy – an online program that partners with College Board (owners of the SAT) to provide test prep to students. https://www.khanacademy.org/sat. ACT also has online test prep here. These are both fantastic resources.
Penn State Beaver is offering in person SAT prep classes
Eaton Prep offers SAT prep classes at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center
Goldstein Test Prep - Offering both in person and virtual tutoring options for the SAT and ACT. They also do academic tutoring. Call 412-874-7645 or fill out an interest form on their website.
Eaton Prep is offering classes at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center for the various tests.

Visiting schools:
If you have a chance to visit schools, here are things to think about when you're on campus:
--Talk to people in the department of anticipated study. If your child is totally undecided, talk to the schools about what they do to help pick a major. Colleges have robust career centers and advising programs which help students pick a major, find internships, jobs and graduate schools.
–Ask what is the four-year graduation rate? Colleges report a six-year graduation rate, due to financial aid. Ask about the four-year graduation rate– schools should try to get students in and out in four years – make sure the school is going to help your child make the best use of their time and get the classes needed to get out in time.
--Ask what is the retention rate for returning sophomores? This number can tell you a lot about what schools are doing to make students happy and keep them enrolled. If a number is low, ask why students are leaving – what's going on? If the number is high, it's safe to assume students are generally happy and the college is doing a good job of educating students and keeping them happy.

--College is not just about getting a degree. It's about so much more. Is your child going to be challenged at each school? Are they going to have to put in more effort than they ever have? That's a good thing!
--Learn the middle 50% SAT/ACT scores and GPA of admitted students at the schools that interest you. This can serve as a guide to schools that will be a good academic fit for you. Also – remember if board scores are lower than the middle 50%, but the GPA fits in the middle 50%, in most cases, students do not need to submit test scores, if they could potentially hurt an application. Keep in mind, with most schools being test optional, the students who are submitting test scores generally have higher scores, so the middle 50% are going to be skewed to the higher end.

Emails from Post-Secondary Schools:
If you have not yet, you will be getting inundated with emails from colleges. I have a few suggestions on how you can manage the emails.

1. Create an email address just for post-secondary planning. That way, all of the emails you get from colleges won't flood your regular inbox.
2. You can create a folder in your email and filter emails from the colleges you think you want to look at later. You can also create a folder of schools that you are interested in, so you don't miss any important messages from them.
3. Check this email account once a week or every few days. Delete messages you're not interested in. You're going to be overwhelmed with information from colleges and managing the emails is necessary, so you don't miss anything important.

Scholarships:
All scholarships that come through our office are listed in Naviance. To find the scholarships, log in to your Naviance account, go to the colleges>scholarships and money>Scholarship Search. The scholarships we get in the counseling center are listed on the 'scholarship list' page. That site is updated regularly, so be sure to check back regularly as new scholarships are posted. Many scholarships posted in Naviance are for seniors, but there are some for juniors. My favorite scholarship search sites are: www.goingmerry.com, www.scholarships.com, www.fastweb.com, www.scholarshipamerica.org, www.finaid.org
Here are two good resources for paying for college and understanding financial aid:
www.mysmartborrowing.com
www.collegecosts.ed.gov

Here are a few scholarships for juniors:
Horatio Alger Scholarship – one of the nation's largest need-based college scholarship programs, this scholarship specifically assists high school students who have faced and overcome great obstacles in their young lives. There are national and state scholarships and scholarships specifically for students going into career training programs.

QuestBridge – full scholarships for students who have shown outstanding academic ability despite financial challenges. There is no minimum GPA or test cut-off, or income.
The **Bryan Cameron Education Foundation** has opened up applications to the high-school graduating **Class of 2026** for the **Cameron Impact Scholarship** (merit-based, 4-year, full-tuition). A Cameron Impact Scholar must show evidence of strong academics (3.7 unweighted GPA or higher), leadership, community service, participation in extracurriculars, and a desire to make a positive impact on the world around them.
Early Application Deadline: May 21, 2025
Regular Application Deadline: September 3, 2025

College Board's Opportunity Scholarships: If you use College Board for college searches or practicing for the SAT through Khan Academy, you could win scholarship money.

NCAA:
If your child is an athlete considering playing sports at a division I or II school, make sure to visit the NCAA Eligibility Center website www.eligibilitycenter.org. Student athletes need to submit an official high school transcript (requested through Naviance) and official test scores, if they are available. These scores must be sent directly from ACT or College Board. NCAA will not accept test scores from the high school transcript. If students haven't had an opportunity to test,

they can still gain eligibility without test scores. *This registration does not apply to students attending division III or NAIA schools.*

If you are looking for good college resources, here is a good resource:
Georgia Tech Admission Blog has a lot of great information not specific about Georgia Tech, but about the college search and selection process in general. The blog is insightful, educational, and humorous.
https://pwp.gatech.edu/admission-blog/

Summer Opportunities:
Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center (AHEC) 2025 Summer Health Career Academy
This program is open to students who are interested in learning more about various careers in healthcare. Over the course of 5 days this July, students will have the opportunity to hear from leaders in various health care professions and participate in hands-on simulations. The Academy is hosted at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.
A confirmation email will be sent once the application is received. **Applications are due by May, 2025.** If you have any questions, please reach out to HCA@SouthwestAHEC.org.

The Ice-T Project is an initiative of The Citizen Science Lab, Black/African-American High School Youth will learn the computational and experimental techniques required to examine the physiology, biochemistry, and voltage potential of microbial fuel cells (MFC), a living battery made powered by bacteria. Once participants learn the basics they will then build and create their own device powered by these living batteries. More information will be share on the website as it becomes available.

The West Point Summer Leader Experience (SLE) provides rising high school seniors with a week-long immersion into the academic, military and social life of a cadet. AT SLE you'll explore West Point from all angles, including the high-tech facilities, team building athletic activities, and realistic military training. You will get a taste of Cadet life throughout the program, which is led by current West Point cadets.

Bucknell Academy Summer Experience (BASE) is a collaborative residential experience where students are invited to explore the value of a liberal arts perspective in making challenging decisions to improve today's world. At BASE, students will experience interdisciplinary study from top tier professors while challenging their thought processes. This year's theme is To Share or Not to Share: How has social media impacted society and what can we learn from it? When: June 22-27, 2025. Who: Rising juniors and seniors in high school are welcome to apply.

Duquesne University Summer STEM Camp will take place June 17-21, 2025 on the campus of Duquesne University and is designed for rising sophomores, juniors, and senior high school students from the local Pittsburgh area schools that have demonstrated a strong interest in science. We would like to expose high school students from populations underrepresented in science, via an immersive, diverse, hands-on learning experience.

Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week (PFEW) is a one-of-a-kind summer program that offers in-coming high school juniors and seniors a unique and challenging opportunity to see what it is like to run their own business. Participants will make up an "imaginary" management team where they will learn first-hand about the Free Enterprise System. Their task - turn their failing company into a financial success. They will develop their own marketing strategies, design a website and, make all the decisions that are demanded of real-life company executives. This weeklong program is at Lycoming College, in Williamsport and students have the option to choose between four different weeks. PFEW is FREE, although there is a $295 non-refundable registration fee.

Carnegie Mellon is offering several in-person Summer Pre-College Programs in architecture, art, computational biology, design, drama, music, gaming, and game design, and writing and culture. The also offer the following programs at no-cost; computer science, summer academy for math and science, and an artificial intelligence program called AI4ALL.

Duke University offers summer academic opportunities for students. Rising seniors are invited to take classes with Duke Professors, where you can earn college credit. Students also have an option to take personal enrichment courses, with a global perspective, through the Summer Academy.

Youth Garden Internship
Overview: NHCO is seeking two youth Garden Interns to help grow produce for low-income families and learn more about vegetable gardening. Duties include:

- Working under the Garden Coordinator to help maintain the garden through field preparations, planting, cultivation, harvesting and packing crops to be distributed at NHCO's three food pantries
- Assist volunteers as needed
- Record amount of food grown and distributed to food pantries
- Participate in the Youth Garden Summit at the end of the season

Site Location: 119 Davis Ave, Bellevue, PA 15202
Hours and Timeline:

- Position will begin June 2025 and go through August 2025 during summer break
- 8-10 hours/week average, flexible schedule, Monday-Friday between the hours of 8am and 5pm

Compensation: $10.30/hour
To Apply: Interested applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to Kate Robson at kerobson@NHCO.org.
Applications must be submitted no later than May 1, 2025.

Summer Inspirit **AI program** at OLSH: Students will learn the fundamental concepts of AI and gain a deeper understanding of how AI is used to build ChatGPT and generative AI, predict stock market trends, power self-driving cars, recognize and create art, help first responders, and more. Students will learn to program AI using Python, discuss ethics and bias within AI, and complete a group project applying AI to a discipline like healthcare, astronomy, and finance, among others. No prior computer science experience is required to participate, and advanced cohorts are available. Program runs Monday - Friday from June 16-June 27 from 9-12:30. Cost Is $1400.

Freddie Fu Sports Medicine Scholarship Program – this is a six-week internship during the summer. The intern will have the opportunity to observe patient evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation by physical therapists and athletic trainers, and will have responsibilities comparable to those of a Physical Therapy Aide. There will also be opportunities to observe clients in our sports performance program, as well as patient care and surgery with various physicians. There is a $2000.00 scholarship associated with this program. Application deadline April 12, 2025.

Pitt, in partnership with Pitt Information Technology will host the Air Force Association CyberCamp June 23-27, 2025. This week-long program is free and open to high school students and teaches cybersecurity principles, skills, and future career opportunities.

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The Wildlife Leadership Academy enriches Pennsylvania teens and empowers them to become certified conservation ambassadors through a five-day residential summer field school program. Program costs $600 for the week, and scholarships are available.

Education and Support Series:

The Moon Area High School Transition team is offering the following programs for our students and families. All meetings start at 6:00 PM and to join them

CLICK: Join the meeting now

or SCAN:

Tuesday April 15 at 6pm - CCAC West Hills Center

Jennifer Cowans- Executive Director of West Hills Center

- Overview of what CCAC has to offer, College terminology, Cost of college, how do you pay for college, and highlight skilled trades/apprenticeship program options.

Wednesday May 7 at 6pm - PA CareerLink Pittsburgh

Alexis McCartney- Site Administrator

- PA CareerLink Pittsburgh will provide a general overview of the online and in person career services, resources, and skill building courses available for jobseekers.