



RAIDER PRIDE

A State and National Award-Winning Publication **SEPTEMBER 2024**



SENECA VALLEY CELEBRATES HOMECOMING

The night shined bright as Seneca Valley students celebrated an enchanting homecoming with this year's theme, "Light Up the Night: Rapunzel."

Leading up to the homecoming dance, students and staff participated in a Spirit Week, full of celebrations and fun theme-days. On Thursday, Sept. 19, hundreds of participants enjoyed festivities including a carnival, parade and fireworks.

Keira Colella was crowned queen and Rohin Jayaraman king during Seneca Valley's Homecoming pregame festivities at NextTier Stadium on Friday, Sept. 20. Miss Colella is the daughter of James and Amy Colella of Cranberry Township. Mr. Jayaraman is the son of Chandrasekar Jayaraman and Sonia Jaiswal of Cranberry Township.

Earlier this month, seniors chose 20 classmates to represent their homecoming

Photo credit: Bill Paterson and Bill Sauers Photography



court. Senior girls on the court included Maddie Bittner, Emmie Bush, Keira Colella, Gia DiTullio, Maggie Evelsizer, Skyler Fischer, Lilly Hudac, Riley Kuhar, Anna Schmidt and Addison Shank. Senior boys on the court included Evan Colella, Gavin Cress, Mattix Durst, Isaac Hixon, Gavin Horn, Rohin Jayaraman, Tyler Kuhar, Tyler Pepin, John Perelman and JT Wolfe.

Shoutout to SV Student Council for all their hard work planning the Homecoming parade, carnival, pep rally and dance!

Click [here](#) to view additional photos (or see page 2).



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DATES TO REMEMBER

- Oct. 3 Act 80 Day, No School for Students
- Oct. 4 Staff In-Service Day, No School for Students
- Oct. 7 School Board Meeting, Work Session, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- Oct. 14 School Board Meeting, Regular Session, IHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.
- Oct. 26 ACT/PSAT Testing, 7:30 a.m.
- Oct. 28 End of First Nine Weeks, Grades 7-12

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

OCTOBER

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

SENECA VALLEY CELEBRATES HOMECOMING

Photo credit: Bill Paterson and Bill Sauers Photography
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NEVER FORGET

On Patriot Day, Seneca Valley Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) honored the memories of the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and of every hero who gave their life since that day to protect our safety and freedom. The annual commemorative event recognized the innocent men, women and children who lost their lives on an airplane, at the World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, in Somerset County and on the streets of New York.

As a community and a nation, we honor the lives of the victims of 9/11. JROTC Cadets also commended the civil servants, firefighters, police officers and military personnel who dedicated and lost their lives serving the American people in a time of crisis. ■



HONORING LOCAL HEROES

One of the sixth-grade student teams at Haine Middle School (HMS) recently read the book, “Branches of Hope” and learned about the Survivor Tree that’s at the [9/11 Memorial](#) site in New York City. A single Callery pear tree, which became known as the Survivor Tree, was buried in rubble at Ground Zero. It was burned and badly damaged, but it still showed signs of life. The tree was rehabilitated and replanted at the Memorial site in NYC in 2010 and is a living symbol of hope and resilience.

A lesson was presented to the team and students created their own messages of hope to be displayed on a tree in the sixth-grade hallway. Donations were collected from students and families to create care baskets containing a variety of single serve drinks and treats to be given to the local EMS, fire stations and the police department as a small token of thanks for their service and sacrifice. A representative from each of those agencies visited HMS with their emergency vehicles on Wednesday, Sept. 11, to receive these baskets from the students.

“It’s important for us that students have a personal connection to their learning,” said Mr. Ari Zahavi, sixth-grade math teacher at HMS. “In teaching about the tragic events of 9/11, we wanted to equally focus on the positive traits that first responders and other citizens showed to overcome these terrible actions. Mrs. Michelle Rogozinski came up with the idea of having students show their appreciation to local first responders, whom many of our students have everyday interactions with. Students were excited that they would be able to deliver their handmade cards and donations.”



“As we studied the events that took place on September 11, 2001, we focused heavily on the firefighters, police officers, paramedics, and other emergency personnel who worked tirelessly in dangerous conditions to rescue and assist those in need,” said Mrs. Michelle Rogozinski, English teacher at HMS. “The heroism displayed on that day and in the days that followed deeply inspired our students to give back to the first responders in their community who work diligently to keep them safe daily. This project aims to express our

appreciation for the men and women who consistently exhibit extraordinary courage and selflessness.” ■



SV THANKS VETERANS

Seneca Valley celebrated veterans and active members of the military at the annual Veteran Recognition Event on Sept. 6. This representative group includes those who have served in Desert Shield, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Vietnam and Operation Enduring Freedom, just to name a few. Among this elite group were recipients of numerous honors, including commendation medals, achievement medals, campaign medals, national defense medals, Bronze Star honors and even a Purple Heart awarded to our honorary captain for the game.

Today and every day we are grateful for our military service personnel, past and present, and the families who support them. Prior to the evening's inclement weather, we were honored to recognize these outstanding individuals for their service and sacrifice. Even though the home football game was ultimately canceled, we're pleased to have been able to carry on this tradition!



ON A 'POSITIVE' NOTE

Congratulations to both Ehrman Crest Middle School (ECMS) and Ehrman Crest Elementary (ECE) for meeting criteria for School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) program on behalf of the Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PaPBS) Network.

ECMS met the designated requirements for Tiers 1-2-3 and will be officially recognized at the 2024 *Innovate and Integrate: MTSS & PBIS Advanced Implementation Forum* in November at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center in Hershey, PA.

Along with the core staff team, ECMS students participated in lessons and activities that promoted being responsible, respectful and ready (also known as the SV3). Students also learned about the expectations throughout the building and classrooms.

“We are excited Ehrman Crest Middle School was recognized for attaining fidelity for all three tiers of PBIS implementation,” said Mr. Tim Eiler, Principal of Ehrman Crest Middle School. “The work put into this achievement over the last five years was a team effort, and the layers of supports and interventions we have in place are truly for the benefit of our students.”



Additionally, ECE met the criteria for Tier 1 SWPBIS. As part of their PBIS kickoff, Ms. Sara Coon, Health and Physical Education teacher at ECE is teaching students new games and recess activities that were created last year. During the 2023-24 school year, students worked with teachers and administrators to brainstorm ideas on how to enhance options for recess. Through a group effort, a variety of stencils were created and then painted on the blacktop. This new resource is now an additional recess venue where students can thrive by reinforcing safe play and good sportsmanship.

SWPBIS is a framework to make schools more effective places. By implementing evidence-based practices within a PBIS framework, schools support their students' academic, social, emotional and behavioral success, engage with families and use data



to make informed decisions that improve the way things work.

Both ECMS and ECE successfully implemented this school-wide program that establishes and articulates clear and consistent expectations while recognizing students for their positive efforts. The teachers and staff continue to work diligently to build a culture that focuses on the positive behaviors that students exhibit daily. ■





SV STUDENTS AND STAFF PARTICIPATE IN STEEL CITY CLARINET DAY

Imagine bringing together over 70 people who all share the same passion...playing the clarinet. On Saturday, Aug. 24, that is exactly what happened at the annual Steel City Clarinet Day which was held this year at Shaler Area Middle School. Dr. Amanda Morrison, Event Director and Professor of Clarinet at Slippery Rock University, sponsors the event every year which is open to clarinet players of all ages, from middle school through adult professionals. Each year, Dr. Morrison brings in guest artists and performers along with local vendors, all in an effort to provide exciting learning opportunities and experiences for clarinet players of all ages.



A highlight of the clarinet day was the opportunity to perform in a masterclass and one of the clarinet choirs. Two Seneca Valley instrumental students, Miss Makenzie Tunstall and Miss Ella King, performed with the Adult Clarinet Choir. In addition, Miss Tunstall played in the Masterclass and had the opportunity to work with the guest clinician Dr. Christopher Mothersole from the University of West Georgia. According to both girls, "it was an awesome way to spend a day!"

Seneca Valley Instrumental teacher Ms. Sara Snyder was also involved in the clarinet day as one of the directors for the Intermediate Clarinet Choir. In addition to conducting the closing concert, Ms. Snyder participated in a clinic with the younger students on fundamentals of clarinet playing that they could use as they begin the new school year. ■



SV CHAMBER ORCHESTRA SET TO PERFORM SPOOKY CONCERT!

The SV Chamber Orchestra will be performing "Halloween @ The Strand" on October 29. Use the QR code on the poster to reserve tickets. ■

SV Chamber ORCHESTRA

Halloween @ The Strand



Get into the spirit with a night of spooky music, kids' costume contest, raffle basket, & more!

OCTOBER 29TH , 7:00 PM



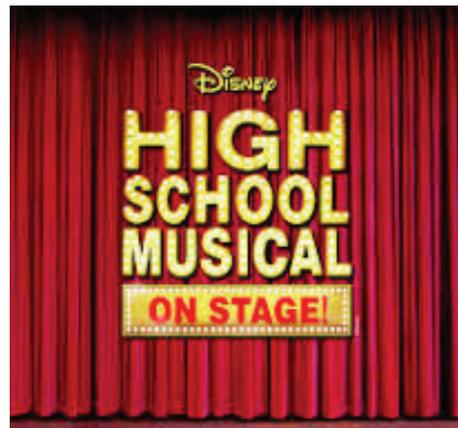
IHS/SVCL MUSICAL BRINGS 'HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL' TO THE SV STAGE

"High School Musical" is a family friendly show that is a favorite among teens, tweens and parents because it is so relatable! With familiar songs and themes, the students involved in this show are eager to entertain!

In the musical, high schoolers Troy Bolton and Gabriella Montez come from two different worlds: Troy, the Basketball star, and Gabriella, the smart, stunning academic student. They meet on New Year's Eve on vacation and instantly click. When they meet again at East High School they accidentally audition for the school musical. The social cliques they belong to don't approve of this new friendship

and try to separate them. At the same time, drama queen Sharpay Evans and her brother Ryan, the co-captains of the Drama department, try in every way to prevent Troy and Gabriella from beating them in the callbacks. Can Troy and Gabriella lead their friends to more open-minded thinking?

The biggest message "High School Musical" conveys is to be yourself. Nobody is confined to one thing, and the song "Stick to the Status Quo" delivers on that. An athlete can also be a singer – an academic student can also be a dancer. Don't let the world define you. You define you!



Disney's "High School Musical" onstage performance will take place Nov. 7, 8 and 9 at 7 p.m. and Nov. 10 at 2 p.m. ■

RGMS MUSICAL BRINGS THE WORLD OF DR. SUESS TO LIFE!

Over the past several weeks, the Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) stage has been transformed into the magical world of Dr. Seuss as students have begun rehearsing for "Seussical Jr." This beloved musical, featuring a cast of nearly 60 RGMS students, 36 fourth graders and a crew of 25 students, has filled the intermediate high school auditorium and RGMS Chorus Room with the joyful sounds of the Cat in the Hat and his colorful friends.

"Seussical Jr." is a heartwarming tale of friendship, loyalty and perseverance. Horton the Elephant, a gentle giant, must protect a tiny civilization living on a speck of dust and an abandoned egg entrusted to his care. With the help of his loyal friend, Gertrude McFuzz, Horton faces numerous challenges and proves that even the smallest creatures can make a big difference.

As the cast continues to rehearse, they are excited to share this heartwarming story with the community. "Seussical Jr." is a perfect show for families and friends of all ages, offering a message of hope and kindness.

Performances will take place on Thursday, Oct. 24, and Saturday, Oct. 26, at 7 p.m. with a matinee performance on Sunday, Oct. 27 at 2 p.m.. Tickets will go on sale on Oct. 1 at www.ticketleap.com/rgms-Seussical. ■





FALL SPORTS UPDATES

CROSS-COUNTRY – Boys and Girls (Head Coach Steve Strelick)

Raider cross-country opened their season at the annual Red, White & Blue invitational on Sept. 7. In the boys varsity race, senior Max Smith finished 8th out of 277 runners and the Raider boys team finished seventh out of 37 teams. In the opening three section meets, the boys are undefeated with wins over Pine-Richland (18-43), Butler (27-30) and Shaler.



In the girls varsity race at the Red, White & Blue Invitational, sophomore Paige D’Amico paced SV with a 22nd place finish out of 247 runners and senior Sydney Heltzell was right behind her in 24th position helping the Raiders to an eighth-place finish out of 33 teams. In section meets, the girls team is also undefeated with wins over Pine-Richland (15-50), Butler (20-36) and Shaler. To finish out the month of September, both teams competed at the PIAA Foundation meet in Hershey on Sept. 21, followed by a key section matchup at North Allegheny on Sept. 24. Finally, the Raiders competed at the Youthtowne Clash Invite on Sept. 28.



FOOTBALL (Head Coach Ron Butschle)

Raider football picked up a key 6A conference win on the road beating the Norwin Knights 26-6. A strong ground game and a few huge special teams’ plays were the difference. Josiah Edwards’ 55-yard scoop and score off a Norwin fumble, a ground game good for 224 rushing yards, Max Eisenhut’s 46-yard and 42-yard field goals, and a stifling defense were the ingredients in this decisive win. This team has learned from two tough opening



games, and you can see the chemistry starting to gel and the confidence starting to grow. To close out the month of Sept., the Raiders hosted Moon on Homecoming night and traveled to Mt. Lebanon for another key 6A conference game that will go a long way in determining playoff fates.

GOLF – Boys (Head Coach Dean Leventopoulos)

At the time of this writing, Raider boys golf has had a very successful past few weeks. First off, the team has finished section play in second place, thereby qualifying for the WPIAL Team Golf Championships which begin play on Oct. 7. Their current overall record is 9-4 with a section mark of 8-4. They rounded out the month with a final match against Quaker Valley on Sept. 24. In individual section qualifiers, our boys advanced four to the WPIAL Individual First Round championships the week of Sept. 23. Marcos Lopez tied for third place shooting a 75 and he will be joined by Anthony Cardosi (76), Brody Pirt (79) and Tyler Garvin (80). Good luck, Raiders, in your post-season play!



GOLF – Girls (Head Coach Brian Pesavento)

Under second-year head coach Brian Pesavento, Raider girls varsity golf is rebuilding following their run to the PIAA championships in 2023. Top scorers for matches have rotated with senior Elana Khilji and juniors Rylin Barbe and Regan Gallagher leading the way. In WPIAL individual qualifiers, Strawberry Ridge played tough on Sept. 17, with only four players advancing to the WPIAL Individual Championships. For the Raiders, their season came to end on Sept. 19, following their match with Mars. We thank our graduating seniors Addison Booth, Elana Khilji, Lena Rothrock and Alissa Wilson, and wish them all the best in future endeavors.

**ICE HOCKEY (Head Coach Tyler Mesisca)**

Raider Ice Hockey is off to a great start as they captured the 2024 St. Margaret's Fall Face-Off championship, defeating Mt. Lebanon 4-2 in the finals. For the tournament, SV went undefeated at 5-0. Juniors Marshall Hewitt (6g, 2a) and John Sroka (4g, 4a) paced the Raiders who scored 30 goals while giving up only five goals in five tournament games. Matthew Gilchrist manned the net in all five games for 1.0 GAA. Congrats, boys, on a great start under first-year head coach Tyler Mesisca.

**SOCCER – Boys (Head Coach George Williams)**

When you graduate a senior class of eleven with two PIAA and two WPIAL titles to their name, there is bound to be a learning curve for those stepping into newly minted starting roles. Such



is the case in this 2024 season as Raider boys soccer finds themselves in a section battle for postseason qualification. Currently, the boys are 6-4 overall with a section mark of 2-3. Scheduling challenges forced the Raiders on the road for four of their first five section contests. As they approach the second half of section play, the tables turn and SV will host four of five section contests – certainly a plus for this talented, yet inexperienced squad. What we have come to learn with the tradition of Raider boys soccer – you can never count them out. We look forward to the next few weeks and plenty of home section contests. Good luck, boys!

SOCCER – Girls (Head Coach Mark Perry)

Raider girls soccer is off to a fantastic start with a 7-2-1 overall record and 5-0 in section play – sitting atop the WPIAL 4A, Section 3 standings. The girls have scored 41 goals on the season while giving up only 10. At the time of this writing, TribLIVE High School Sports Network had our Raiders ranked



#1 in WPIAL 4A girls soccer. Midfield play by Maddie Marcotte and Karly Majeski and scoring threats Cassie Leonard and Ashlee Libby pace the team offensively while goalkeeper Sydney Postler controls the defensive end along with defenders Cassidy Stopchick, Gia DiTullio, Kailee George and Gianna Donatucci.

SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL (Head Coach Steve Rape)

Raider girls slow pitch softball is an even .500 following doubleheaders with Shaler, Hempfield and Baldwin. SV split



with Shaler, swept Baldwin and lost both to Hempfield. To close out the month the team played doubleheaders against West Allegheny on Sept. 22, and North Allegheny on Sept. 29.

TENNIS (Head Coach Eric Grove)

Raider girls varsity tennis is currently 5-6 overall and 3-3 in section play, holding on to third place in Section II standings. At the time of this writing, the Raiders were tied for third place and the top four teams will qualify for WPIAL team championships. Seniors Alaina Brody, Sydney Blucher and Cady Shea hold the top three spots on the team's midseason ladder and doubles play is a combination of Anna Coon, Gianna Guandolo, Emily Merola, Jenna Muenck, Olivia Hein, Gianna Medici, Maddy Straw, Autumn Zacherl and Hannah Kenyon. To close out the month, the Raiders have key section matches with Moon and Montour - both results will factor heavily in determining the team's fate for WPIAL team championships in October.



VOLLEYBALL (Head Coach Brett Poirier)

Raider girls volleyball finds themselves in the thick of a playoff race as only three teams will qualify out of WPIAL 4A Section II. Currently, the team is 5-4 overall and 1-3 in section play. Earlier in the season, the team brought home the championship trophy from the Butler Spike Fest going 11-1 on the day. Following a short break over Homecoming weekend, SV closed out the month with a key section match at home against North Hills on Sept. 25, and followed that with a home non-section contest against 3A section-leading Mars on Sept. 26. Good luck Raiders - keep working hard! ■



UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENT DATES FOR RAIDER ATHLETICS

Special Events

- Oct. 3: Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, 5:30 p.m. Dinner & 7 p.m. Ceremony
- Oct. 4: Hall of Fame Game vs Canon-McMillan, 7 p.m. NexTier Stadium
- Oct. 11: Annual Pink Game vs Hempfield, 7 p.m. NexTier Stadium

Winter Sport Information

- Oct. 23: Drug & Concussion Testing for Winter Sports in Senior High School
 - NO physicals offered
- Nov. 6: Final Drug & Concussion Testing and Athletic Physicals for Winter Sports in Senior High School
 - 30 physicals offered 2:45-5:15 p.m.
- Nov. 7: **Deadline** for winter sport paperwork; all papers due in athletic office.
- Nov. 15: First official day of winter sports - mandatory tryouts begin this day.
- For tryout schedule, please contact the coach directly. Coaches contact information is located on athletics website under [Participation Information](#) tab.

Reminders for 2024-25:

- **ALL** paperwork for winter sports due in the athletic office no later than Thursday, November 7, by 3 p.m. Coaches will not accept paperwork at the first day of tryouts.
- The PIAA mandates the CIPPE Section 6 form as the only permissible form for doctor's signature.
- All required paperwork for 2024-25 athletic participation is available on [Parent Portal](#) or Athletics website. Paperwork includes PIAA CIPPE Sections 1, 2, 5 & 6 and Drug Test Consent Form.
- If a student played in a fall sport, the only paperwork needed is PIAA CIPPE Section 7 and, if applicable, PIAA CIPPE Section 8 - these forms can be dated no earlier than Oct. 4.
- All student-athletes must register in the [Parent Portal](#) under "Sports Registration" before the start of each season.
- Tryouts are mandatory. Student-athletes are expected to attend every tryout session. ■

LET'S RUN FOR RYAN!

We are nearly one month away from the 2nd Annual SFC Ryan Gloyer Memorial Run! Presented by Westinghouse and hosted by the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF), this incredible event serves to spread community awareness of the life and legacy of SFC Ryan Gloyer by highlighting the many amazing attributes this man possessed; to remind students and the entire community of Ryan's ultimate sacrifice for our Country; and, more importantly, preserve his legacy of being inclusive, selfless, dedicated and a true patriot. We are calling on the entire Seneca Valley School District to be a part of this day: Students, staff, families, alumni, businesses – you can walk, run, wheel or cheer your way across the finish line!

The race will begin at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 3 on the beautiful campus of Seneca's secondary schools. Because of course logistics, it is necessary to shut down Seneca School Road for approximately one hour. We ask participants and guests to arrive no later than 8:30 a.m.

Register here: <https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/Harmony/RyanGloyerMemorialRun>

All proceeds from this event will benefit Ryan Gloyer Middle School. ■

SFC RYAN GLOYER MEMORIAL RUN



PRESENTED BY:
 **Westinghouse**

2nd Annual 5K Run/Walk
 November 3 - 9 a.m.
 SV Secondary Campus, Harmony, PA

Register Today!

SV Students - \$20
 Civilian & Virtual - \$30
 Active Duty or Veteran - \$25

Sign Up Here:





SFC RYAN GLOYER MEMORIAL RUN

Presented By:  **Westinghouse**

Thank You Sponsors!

T-Shirt Sponsors:

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GREEN BERET FOUNDATION

SFC RYAN GLOYER MEMORIAL RUN

Impact



RGMS Fitness Center
 Afterschool Program
 Community GrOwn
 Gloyer Gold Program
 RGMS T-Shirts

Race proceeds fund important initiatives at Ryan Gloyer Middle School. Projects exemplify SFC Gloyer's bold characteristics and encourage inclusivity, physical fitness, confidence, kindness & perseverance.



Mile-Marker Sponsors:


BAIRD
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 The Dishart Mackie O'Brien Group

The Georgie Smigel Group






Finish Line: 
Hydration: 
Water Station: 
DJ: 
Legacy: 


NexTier Bank



The Lindner Family

WHAT ARE WE UP TO?

At its quarterly meeting, the SV Foundation's Board of Trustees recently approved funding of over \$42,000 for the following initiatives happening across the district:

- Classrooms Without Borders Educational Seminars for up to 12 educators
- Esports Club at Haine Middle School requested by Dr. Wilcher
- LEGO Serious Play Project at Ehrman Crest Middle School requested by Mr. Haffey
- Native Wildlife Program for Biology students at the Intermediate High School requested by Ms. McMurray

- Transportation for Haine Elementary students to take part in the Kids of Steel Marathon requested by Ms. Salman
- Supplies for a new Peer Empowerment Program at Haine Middle School requested by Ms. Exler
- Material and Supplies needed for senior high Robotics and Engineering students to become certified as a HAAS Basic Mill Operator
- Continuation of the SVF Vo-Tech Mini Grant Initiative which relieves the financial burden for students wanting to attend the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School



THE GIFT OF HOPE, THE PROMISE OF EXCELLENCE

The SVF is committed to investing in Seneca Valley School District and providing for an exceptional educational experience for students and staff. For more information about these projects and how SV teachers can request funding for projects, contact SVF Development Director, Annie Mersing, at mersingam@svsd.net.

SVF PARTNER IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Thank you to the [Butler County Chamber of Commerce](#) and Glade Run Lutheran Services for co-hosting an EITC Workshop earlier this summer at Ehrman Crest Middle School!

This collaboration featured a panel discussion with executives from [NexTier Bank](#), [Bonus Accounting](#) and the Department of Community & Economic Development about the WHO, WHAT, WHY and HOW of Pennsylvania's Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program.

This tax-credit program is a vital part of the Seneca Valley Foundation's ability to contribute to [Seneca Valley School District](#) and we were honored to have many local businesses join us to learn how to turn their tax dollars into charitable dollars. We encourage all staff, families and community members to help connect us with businesses willing to contribute to SV through this program. All funds received support the following classes in the Senior High School:

- Women in Engineering (a class for high school girls that focuses on engineering concepts)
- Honors Engineering (enhanced course on engineering exploration and robotics technology)
- Accounting (college-credit accounting

Photo Credit: Kris Chirton, Butler County Chamber of Commerce



class for high school students in grades 10-12)

To learn more about how you can become our newest "Partner in Public Education" visit: [Overview \(svsd.net\)](#).

Extra thanks to our 2023 EITC donors: [NexTier Bank](#); [The Buncher Company](#); [UPMC](#); [Farmers National Bank](#); and Waste Management. ■



SV STUDENT SHINES WITH \$11,000 FUNDRAISER FOR PERFORMING ARTS

In an inspiring display of student initiative and community spirit, the Seneca Valley Foundation (SVF) recently celebrated the remarkable achievement of a student-led fundraiser generating over \$11,000 for Performing Arts initiatives. This significant contribution spearheaded by senior Annika Batavia is set to enhance and expand the district's performing arts programs, enriching the educational experience for elementary students.

The fundraiser, "Rising Stars of Seneca Valley," was the brainchild of Miss Batavia, who sought to address the growing need for expanded curriculum options and increased opportunities within the performing arts offerings at Seneca Valley, especially for elementary-level students. Over the past several months, Miss Batavia organized and led a fundraising campaign to generate donations to support her goal of raising \$10,000. Donations began pouring in from across the country helping to exceed her goal. The success of the fundraiser is a testament to the hard work and creativity of Miss Batavia, as well as the generous support of businesses, families and community members.

Simultaneously, Miss Batavia also ran two week-long summer camps for underprivileged students ages 8-11 that provided an opportunity to learn more about musical theater and encouraged creativity, confidence and teamwork. At the end of each camp, students performed on stage in front of their families and friends giving them a chance to shine.

"Musical theater has provided me with a supportive community and has allowed me to be myself," said Miss Batavia. "I am so happy I was able to share that with the kids in my camp, and I'm excited to transition this camp to the elementary schools! Getting kids involved at an early age will help them discover their talents and



Pictured left to right Josie Bordt, Sam Harris, Annika Batavia, Dani Maloberti, Amy Ramirez and Gia DiTullio

passion and help easily transition to the opportunities available in the high school."

"We are incredibly proud of Miss Batavia and her dedication to enhancing the performing arts at Seneca Valley," said Annie Mersing, Development Director of the Seneca Valley Foundation. "Her initiative not only raised substantial funds but also demonstrated the power of student leadership and community collaboration. This contribution will have a lasting impact, providing our students with more opportunities to explore and excel in the performing arts."

The \$11,000 raised will help expand opportunities for elementary students through after-school or summer programs, offering a more diverse and enriched performing arts education.

The SVF extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in and supported the "Rising Stars of Seneca Valley" fundraiser. This collective effort exemplifies the spirit of the Seneca Valley community (and beyond) and reinforces the foundation's commitment to supporting educational excellence through innovative and collaborative approaches.

As the Seneca Valley School District looks ahead, the success of this student-led initiative will undoubtedly act as a driving force for ongoing growth and excellence in the performing arts. The SVF remains committed to supporting impactful, student-driven projects and eagerly anticipates the positive outcomes that will result from this generous contribution and Miss Batavia's dedication. ■

'FEEL THE POWER'

This month, Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) students received a special presentation from Mr. Jon Pritikin, an anti-bullying speaker and world record holder. Mr. Pritikin shared his program, "Feel the Power," addressing bullying and peer pressure issues. As one of the world's strongest men, his incredible feats of strength were well received by students and engaged the audience in a meaningful way. He encouraged respect and understanding and highlighted the



importance of every individual, regardless of their differences.

Acting Assistant Principal Ms. Skylar Meier. "We hope they continue to have these positive conversations and make the right choices." ■

"Our students truly seemed impacted by his story and presentation," shared RGMS



'PITCHING' IN FOR A 'SPECIAL' CAUSE

Congratulations to Dr. Kristen White, Haine Elementary School Principal, for all her work as the volunteer chair for the opening ceremony of the Special Olympics North America Softball Championship held Sept. 6-8 in Russellton, Pa. Dr. White, along with Dr. Kathy Mahon, school psychologist; Ms. Leah Carlin, special education teacher; and Ms. Sandra Carlin, District administrative assistant, volunteered at the event, welcoming hundreds of athletes and Unified partners from across the United States and Canada.

According to their website, Special Olympics provides year-round training and athletic competition for those with intellectual disabilities. These events provide continuing opportunities to show courage, experience the joy of sports, and create lasting friendships. ■



'I LED THE PLEDGE'

We are pleased to continue the tradition of inviting elementary students from Seneca Valley's K-4 schools to lead the members of the School Board and public in saying "The Pledge of Allegiance" during school board meetings.

Anaad and Anhad Saini, second graders from Rowan Elementary School, proudly served as our "I Led the Pledge" students for the Sept. 9 work session meeting. Anhad (on left) loves math and hopes to become an astronaut one day. Anaad shared that English is her favorite subject and she hopes to become a geologist when she gets older.

Yasmeen Fahs, a Haine Middle School sixth grader, had the honor of leading the "Pledge of Allegiance" at the Sept. 16 school board meeting. Yasmeen is a multi-talented student who loves playing chess, soccer, and the clarinet. Yasmeen is fascinated by space exploration, enjoys ice skating and outdoor activities, and excels in school. She's also a strong advocate for protecting the environment. Earlier this year, Yasmeen was named a 2024 Carson Scholar, a prestigious honor given to only 570 students nationwide for academic excellence and community service. Her dream? To one day become an astronaut, a goal she's had since kindergarten! ■



Anaad and Anhad with, from L-R, Mr. Eric DiTullio, Board President, and Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent



Yasmeen with, from L-R, Dr. Tracy Vitale, Superintendent, and Mr. Mike Jacobs, Board member

SV BOARD TOURS NEW FIELD HOUSE

Members of the Seneca Valley School Board recently toured the now-open SV East Field House (located on the scoreboard side of NexTier Stadium). In addition to providing space for girls' sports, it also features four exterior restrooms that are accessible to those attending sporting events in our lower-level field areas. Additional interior spaces include:

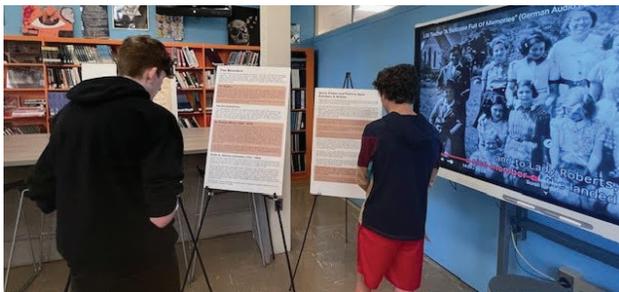
- 3 locker rooms that can be utilized as 3 small locker rooms or 1 small and 1 large by simply opening a rolling door that separates them.
- Large Cardio Room
- Female Wrestling Room
- Officials Locker room
- Trainer's Room and office
- 2 small conference rooms
- Various Storage rooms ■



CWB HOSTS KINDERTRANSPORT EXHIBIT AT SV

This month, Classrooms Without Borders (CWB) hosted an exhibit in the Seneca Valley Intermediate High School called “For the Child - Stories of the Kindertransport.” This moving exhibit, open to students and staff in the District, showcased the poignant history of this humanitarian event that saved nearly 10,000 children from Nazi persecution between 1938 and 1939. Containing photographs on over 25 panels, it captured the intense emotions of separation and the hope for survival and a

new beginning. Ms. Michele Russo, English Teacher and SV LIGHT Education Initiative Coordinator, was pleased that she could assist in providing such an opportunity



DISCUSSIONS WITH A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

On Thursday, Sept. 24, 25 Seneca Valley students and their parents joined Mr. Jim Lucot, AP U.S. History Teacher at Seneca Valley Senior High School, for an exclusive meet and greet with Holocaust survivor, Ms. Solange Lebovitz at Chatham University.

During the event, Mr. Lucot's students had the opportunity to listen and learn about the survival story of Ms. Lebovitz and her family as they endured the deadly threats during the Nazi Shoah.

“I was humbled and honored to introduce Ms. Lebovitz for this event and share that with 25 of my students who joined us for this priceless and rare experience,” said Mr. Lucot. “I’m extremely proud of their dedication, maturity and interest in this once in a lifetime chance to talk with Ms. Lebovitz and ask her questions.”

Mr. Lucot added, “I was so proud of my students, and I received endless compliments from the staff members at the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, teachers, Chatham students, attendees and most of all Ms. Lebovitz.”



for viewing. “The artifacts illuminate the strength and spirit of those that fought against hate and the resiliency of those who faced this adversity,” she explained. To learn more about the Sept. 22 public viewing to be held in Pittsburgh, please visit [Resilience Rising: Amplifying Voices of Hope: Opening Reception “Für das Kind / For the Child” - Classrooms Without Borders \(cwbpg.org\)](#). To learn more about Kindertransport, please visit [The Journey - Kindertransport Association](#) [Kindertransport Association](#).

Congratulations to junior Paige DeStasio for having her artwork displayed at Chatham University as part of the ‘Revolving Door’ exhibit presented by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh.



Earlier this year, Miss DeStasio competed in the 2024 Waldman Arts & Writing Competition where she placed first in the 2-D art category and was also named the grand prize winner of the overall competition.

Miss DeStasio's mixed media painting shows the Bielski brothers escorting Jewish people out of the Iwiev ghetto in 1942. The painting depicts the lifeless ghetto on the left and the colorful woods to the right. The further you look to the right, the brighter the colors become, symbolizing hope.

The Bielski brothers rescued over 1,200 Jews.

SV ALL-STAR

For September, we are pleased to announce the newest member inducted into the SV All-Star Club, Ms. Karen Christy, security officer for Seneca Valley's contracted security team.

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.

While Ms. Christy has only been working at Seneca Valley for a very short period of time, she has already gone above and beyond. In addition to performing her routine patrols and ensuring a safe school environment, she has shown exceptional dedication and vigilance.

Officer Jason Young, Seneca Valley Safety and Security Director said, "During her second or third day on the job, Karen noticed suspicious activity on our surveillance video. She quickly responded to the area, and she was able to provide me with detailed information to assist in identifying the persons involved." Officer Young added, "I think this may be a new record for the number of days on the job to earn a spot in the All-Star Award



group. Karen and her counterpart have provided fantastic security service, and I receive daily reports of building activity."

Ms. Christy's commitment to both responding to suspicious activity and actively reporting it plays a crucial role in fostering a safe and supportive learning environment for our students and staff, and we are fortunate to have her on our team. ■

GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD

Mr. Chris Eden, a Health and Physical Education teacher at Ryan Gloyer Middle School (RGMS) and a Seneca Valley Football coach, was recently honored with the 2024 Good Neighbor Award by NexTier Bank. This award recognizes educators who go above and beyond both in their professional and personal lives.

Mr. Eden, a dedicated teacher and coach, played a key role in starting Seneca Valley's first Girls Flag Football team. With nearly 70 girls attending the introductory meeting, Mr. Eden has shown exceptional commitment to supporting the team and helping them succeed. Thanks to his efforts, many girls are now participating in a sport for the first time, boosting their self-esteem and recognizing themselves as integral members of the community.

This year, over 12 local teachers were nominated for the Good Neighbor Award. Nominees can be put forward by



colleagues, friends, family, or parents, and a panel of NexTier Bank judges select the winner. The winner is awarded the opportunity to choose a classroom item valued up to \$300.

Mr. Eden selected a GoPro Hero10 + Head Strap Accessory to be used for a project involving all of his students as part of the body systems unit. ■

care/solace.

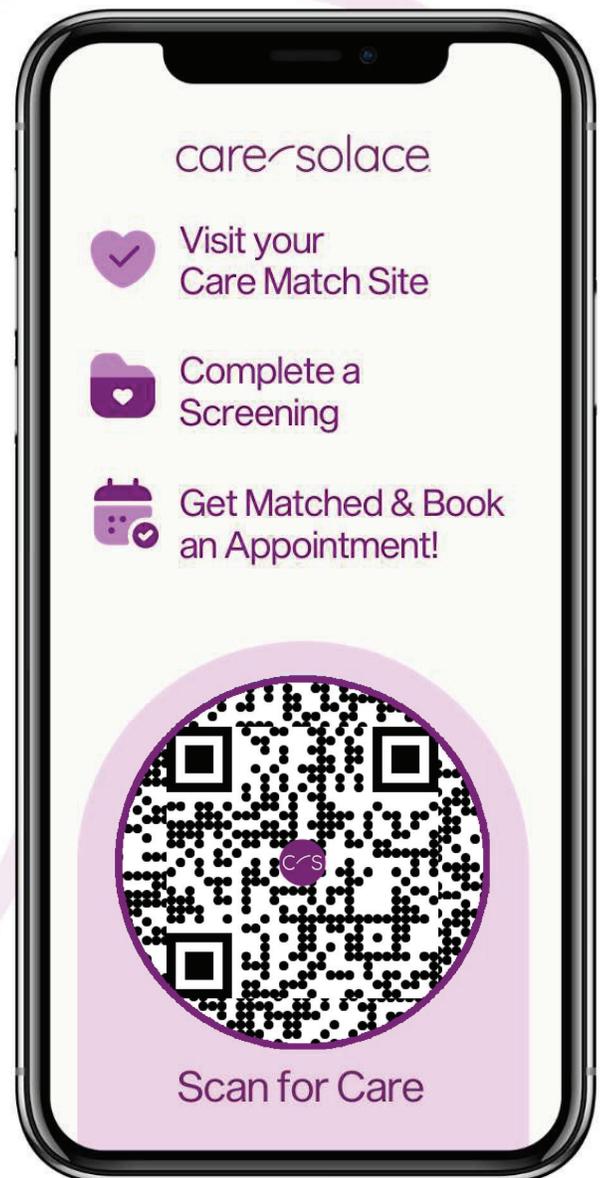
It's okay to ask for help.



(888) 515-0595

Care Solace is a free, confidential service that connects students, staff and their families to mental health providers and substance use treatment matched to their needs – regardless of insurance.

Scan the code or use your link:
caresolace.com/seneca



If you have a life-threatening emergency, please call 911 or the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988. Care Solace is not an emergency response service or mental health services provider.

STAFF OF SV

"In 2017, I was hired as an emotional and autistic support teacher at Evans City Middle School. Little did I know that my colleague and mentor would not only share the same job title and position but also the same last name.

We quickly became known as "The Reynolds," "Reynolds 1" and "Reynolds 2," "the taller one" and "the shorter one," "W. Reynolds" and "D. Reynolds." We jokingly told our students that we were sisters or a mother/daughter duo. From day one, we supported each other professionally—not just in spirit, but also in practice. We encouraged one another on difficult days, connected with each other's students, updated each other on best practices, and collaborated closely, striving together to plant seeds of growth in our students. As colleagues, *together, we thrived*.

In July 2006, Wanda gave birth to her third son, Connor. Shortly after his birth, complications ensued, and Wanda found herself thrust into the world of disability and medically complex parenting. In May 2008, Connor passed away, likely from mitochondrial disease, though this was never formally confirmed. After our first school year as "Team Reynolds," I had my first child, a daughter named Avery, in July 2018. Three days later, I found myself calling Wanda from Children's Hospital at 5:00 in the morning. Like Wanda, I was suddenly thrown into the world of disability and medically complex parenting. In November 2019, Avery was diagnosed with Trisomy 12p, requiring lifelong care.

Throughout my parenting journey and Avery's diagnosis, Wanda was there every step of the way. Her love and support helped us thrive not just as colleagues, but as mothers. Together, we thrived in the face of personal challenges.

Though years apart, our shared personal experiences profoundly impacted our professional lives. Experiencing the challenges of parenting children with disabilities gave each of us a deeper



understanding and empathy for the families and students we served. We became more patient, compassionate, and resilient—qualities that were invaluable in our roles as support teachers. We knew firsthand the emotional toll that complex medical conditions and disability can have on a family, which allowed us to connect more meaningfully with our students' parents and offer them the kind of support that only someone who has walked a similar path can provide.

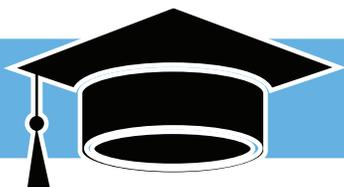
Moreover, our personal experiences gave us a unique perspective on the importance of fostering a supportive, inclusive environment for all students. Because we understood the significance of small victories and the power of encouragement, *together, we thrived*. This connection between our personal and professional lives became the foundation of our success.

We have supported each other both personally and professionally—on good days and bad, through ups and downs, grief and celebration. With our unwavering commitment to our students and their families, our colleagues, spouses, and children, *together, Team Reynolds thrives*. We thrive together because of our connection as women, mothers, and teachers. We thrive together because we learn from one another, challenge



one another, and strive to lead with love, patience, and kindness. In every aspect of our journey, we've proven that *together, we thrive*."

Danielle Reynolds, Ehrman Crest Middle School Autistic Support Teacher, in reflection of the "Together WE Thrive" theme for the District's 2024 All-Staff Welcome Back Event. ■



Megan Stocklas, SV '17, has taken many adventures since graduating from Seneca Valley from European travel experiences to pharmacy school. We asked her to catch us up on what she is doing and how Seneca Valley influenced her life and career.

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

A: After graduating from Seneca Valley, I attended pharmacy school at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. It was a six year program, so I spent that time studying hard, getting involved in clubs and activities, and meeting some of my best friends. I am proud to say that I am now a licensed pharmacist with CVS Pharmacy.

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

A: I have two older brothers who also attended Seneca Valley. Eric, who graduated in 2012, and Justin, who graduated in 2015. My mom has also been involved in the district as one of the Haine school nurses. She served students for nine years and recently retired at the end of the last school year. My favorite family member, however, is my dog Peanut.

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

A: Despite only being 5'1", I am a first-degree black belt in Taekwondo.

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

A: Seneca Valley helped me grow into the person that I am today because of the vast opportunities I was given. I played soccer in middle school and ran cross-country and track during high school. I strongly believe that the discipline I learned from these sports and the people I met molded me into the person I have become. From a professional standpoint, I was drawn to the pharmacy world because I was part of the Medical Careers Club. With the help of their speakers, the club helped narrow my focus to pharmacy for college.



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

A: Due to SV's large size, we are well known and have access to so many opportunities. College was an easy transition because I was used to a larger student body and the variety of classes helped prepare me.

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

A: I never had any bad teachers at Seneca Valley, but I would say I was drawn to my science teachers because of my career interests. They left the biggest impact on me. My cross-country coach, Mr. Steve Strellick, made our team feel like a family. He made everyone feel valued despite cross-country really being an individual sport. He pushed us to be the best version of ourselves and those values have stayed with me even now. I enjoyed going to practice every day after school because he created an environment that led to my favorite memories with lifelong friends from SV.



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.

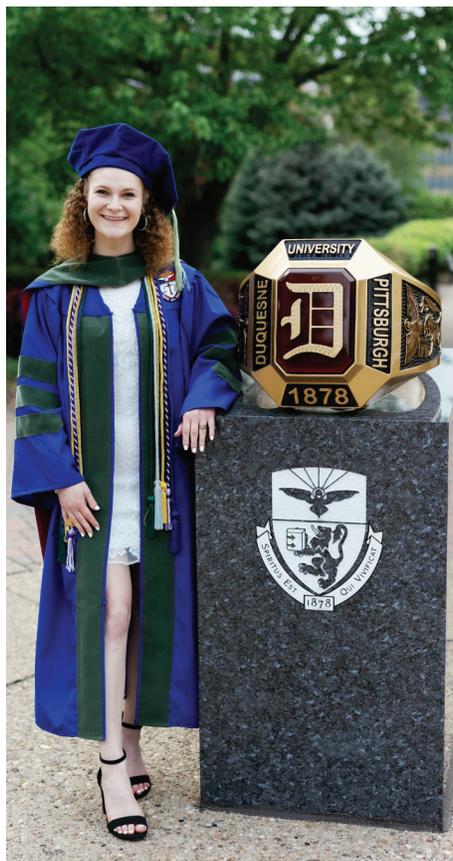
A: I honestly can't pick one favorite memory. Overall, my whole high school experience is one that I think of fondly. I made the most of it by participating in the clubs, sports, classes, and dances that were available. It all led me to meet wonderful friends that are still in my life today.

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

A: Your work may be frustrating at times but know that it is important, and you have the opportunity to make a positive impact on a student's life.

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

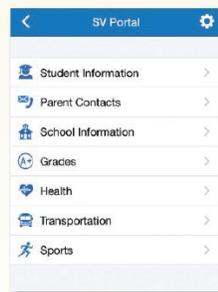
A: We have strong and competitive academics that will prepare you for college, but Seneca Valley offers way more than academics to its students. ■



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www.svsd.net



WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY 2024: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON SUICIDE

September is Suicide Prevention Month and, more specifically, Sept. 10 is dedicated as [World Suicide Prevention Day](#), an important day dedicated to suicide awareness and mental health care promotion. Suicide can be a challenging subject to talk about, especially when it comes to teens and tweens. It's important, though, for everyone to understand more about this issue and the people it affects. Here's what parents and kids need to know about observing this important day and how we can all help change the narrative around suicide.

The Vulnerable State of Teen Mental Health Today

In recent years, there's been a worrying trend in the general mental health of young people. An eye-opening stat that parents may not know is that suicide is the [second-leading cause of death](#) for 10- to 14-year-olds, behind only serious accidents. It's not entirely clear what's driving this concerning statistic, but many believe there's a strong correlation between tech and social media use.

In fact, the U.S. surgeon general [issued a warning](#) in 2023 about the risks social media poses to teens' mental well-being. He then followed it up with an op-ed in The New York Times proposing a warning label on social media akin to those on cigarettes or alcohol.

Although social media can be a place for connection and creativity, it's also a breeding ground for potentially harmful experiences. Kids can scroll for hours and experience cyberbullying, fall victim to sextortion, encounter inappropriate content, compare one's self unfairly to others and more. These can negatively impact a teen's sense of self-worth and contribute to mental health struggles, including depression and suicidal thoughts.

This Year's Theme: Changing the Narrative on Suicide

Starting this year and lasting until 2026, the theme for World Suicide Prevention Day will be centered around "[Changing the Narrative on Suicide](#)." Wondering what exactly "change the narrative means?" It's about disrupting the ways we've talked about suicide in the past and reframing them in a way that destigmatizes the topic and encourages people to seek help.

Here are a few different ways that together we can change the narrative around suicide:

Encourage open conversations around mental health — including the hard stuff

One of the most powerful ways to fight the stigma around mental health is by normalizing discussions about it. With friends and family, be honest and open about feelings. Be honest about yours and inquire earnestly about theirs. The phrase "it's okay to not be okay" is a universal truth, and we shouldn't shame people for

struggling emotionally. When folks start believing that it's bad or embarrassing to share how they really feel, this encourages them to hide it more and avoid help.

According to the [CDC](#), research shows that people who are having thoughts of suicide actually feel relief when a trusted friend or family member talks to them about it in a caring way. Data suggests that acknowledging and discussing suicide may actually reduce rather than increase suicidal thoughts.

If you're worried about your child feeling suicidal, the most important thing you can do is talk openly about it. You have to learn what they're going through before you can help them.

Think about the language we use when discussing suicide

Being mindful about the words you use when talking about suicide can go a long way in helping destigmatize it. By choosing compassionate and non-judgmental language, you can create a safer environment for people to talk openly about their feelings and experiences without fear.

Here are a few ways to shift your mindset when discussing it:

- Instead of saying "commit suicide," which equates the act to something heinous, say a person "died by suicide."
- Instead of using "suicidal person," say "a person with suicidal thoughts." This helps to emphasize the person and not their condition first.
- Avoid phrases like, "I'd rather jump off a bridge than do X." Joking about suicide like this — even if it's not your intent — can increase the stigma around it.

Article provided by [Bark](#). ■

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



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



- 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 \(svsd.net\)](http://www.svsd.net/BackpackFlyers).

- 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 \(svsd.net\)](http://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. \(candleinc.org\)](http://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. ■



FBI TEEN ACADEMY 2024

This fall, interact with FBI Special Agents, Intelligence Analysts, Professional Staff, Special Weapons & Tactics, Bomb Techs & the Evidence Response Team.

Teen Academy is a one-day program for high school **juniors** and **seniors** who live within **FBI PITTSBURGH'S** area of responsibility (Western PA and West Virginia) to learn about the FBI and what a variety of career paths in the FBI would entail.

Program Dates

OCTOBER **08** **BECKLEY, WV**
JUNIORS - SENIORS

OCTOBER **09** **CHARLESTON, WV**
JUNIORS - SENIORS

OCTOBER **15** **CLARKSBURG, WV**
JUNIORS - SENIORS

OCTOBER **17** **PITTSBURGH, PA**
JUNIORS - SENIORS

OCTOBER **29** **WHEELING, WV**
JUNIORS - SENIORS

NOVEMBER **13** **MARTINSBURG, WV**
JUNIORS - SENIORS



TO APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM, VISIT:

<https://www.fbi.gov/pittsburgh/community-outreach>

FBI Pittsburgh Community Outreach Program



[fbi.gov/pittsburgh](https://www.fbi.gov/pittsburgh)



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students having an exceptional college experience at an affordable price.

It's the **TOMCAT WAY**



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Center for
Community
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BUNDLE UP BUTLER

**Friday, October 11, 2024
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**Butler City Farm Market
209 South Chestnut Street,
Butler, PA 16001**



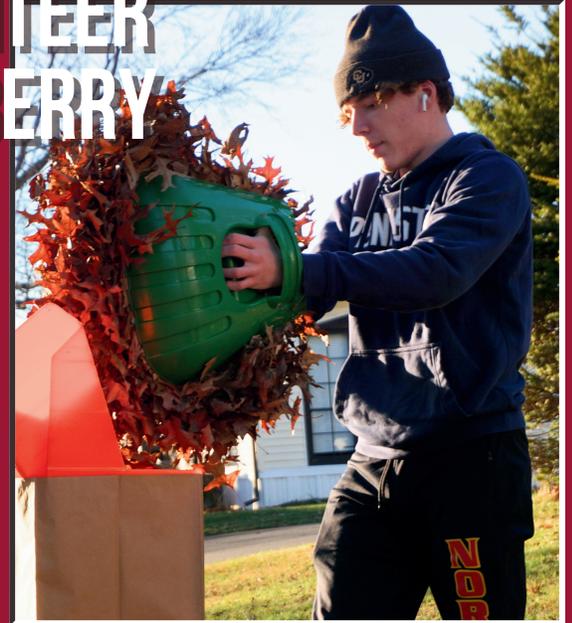
Kid's coats are free and distributed on a first come, first served basis. We will make every effort to fulfill a child's need.

Bundle Up Butler will only have a limited number of coats for adults. Adults in need of a coat are encouraged to make a \$5 donation to Bundle Up Butler.

No registration required.



**VOLUNTEER
CRANBERRY**



LEAF Angels!

Regional volunteers are needed to assist Cranberry Township residents with their fall yard waste collection. The program runs from October through December 2024. It is a perfect volunteer opportunity for sports teams, families, friends, businesses, or individuals interested in "paying it forward." Visit our website to learn more.



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WWW.CRANBERRYTOWNSHIP.ORG/LEAFANGELS

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Oct. 22 | 5 PM - 8 PM

BC3 @ Cranberry
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