

SPARTAN SCOOP

Inspiring Excellence, One Spartan at a Time!

Students “Climb” Mt. Everest

With the addition of new technology and a visit from a world-traveling WASD alumnus, what began as a traditional sixth-grade language arts unit at West Reading Elementary Center quickly turned into a memorable experience for the students and their teachers.

The unit began with students reading either *Peak* by Roland Smith or *The Climb* by Gordon Coleman. Both books, which feature teens who climb Mt. Everest as the main character, provide the young readers with themes of relationship dynamics and physical challenges. As they progressed with the reading assignment, the students also watched the movie based on the book *Into Thin Air* as a class.

“I would stop the movie at different points so that we could discuss similarities and differences between the movie and the books that the students were reading,” Mrs. Bridgette Kozuch, sixth-grade teacher explains.

During this time, Mrs. Shana Matz introduced the students to the school’s new virtual reality/augmented reality goggles that were purchased by and donated to the school by the Wyomissing Area Education Foundation. Money to make this donation possible was raised during the special “fund-a-need” portion of the auction at last year’s Blue & White Party held in May at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill and Vicki Combs. One set of 15 AR/VR goggles is available in each school for teachers to use. Using the goggles, Mrs. Matz took the students on a 30-minute virtual field trip to Mt. Everest. They explored Kathmandu, Base Camp, Camp 1, and the ice fall.

However, the students’ exposure to Mt. Everest didn’t end there. While visiting for the Thanksgiving holiday, Mr. Dan



A sixth-grade student explores Mt. Everest with the assistance of a virtual reality goggle.

Helinek, Wyomissing Area Class of 2011, agreed to share with the class highlights of his experience climbing to Mt. Everest Base Camp in 2016. Mr. Helinek, who is currently attending law school at George Washington University, moved to New Zealand after graduation. He told the students that while he had hiked more than 500 miles in 11 months all over the world, the Three Pass Trek to Mt. Everest Base Camp was “by far the coolest” he had ever hiked, and the journey took him and his fellow hikers 19 days to complete.

Mr. Helinek shared photos of his time in Kathmandu as well as on the Three Pass Trek. He also passed around his passport, which included his Nepal visa and passport stamps and visas from other places he has traveled to around the world.

“I am grateful to Mr. Helinek for taking the time to visit with our students,” Mrs. Kozuch says. “Anytime a WYO graduate can visit and show the students that they can go beyond our zip code is amazing.”

JSHS Places on College Board’s AP® Honor Roll

Once again, the Wyomissing Area School District is being honored by the College Board with inclusion in its 9th Annual Advanced Placement® District Honor Roll. To be listed on the honor roll, Wyomissing Area School District had to increase the number of WASD students participating in Advanced Placement (AP) courses since 2016 while also increasing or maintaining the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher. Reaching these goals shows that the District is successfully

identifying motivated, academically prepared students who are ready to work at the AP academic level.

“I would like to congratulate the Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School for receiving this prestigious award. We are pleased to have an increased number of students taking and succeeding in rigorous course offerings. This is a great tribute to our talented students and dedicated staff members,” stated Wyomissing Area School District Superintendent Robert Scoboria.

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WINTER 2019

Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center Builds Community with One School, One Book

This year, Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center set sail on a reading adventure with *One School, One Book*, a community-wide shared reading experience.

Beginning on January 14, each member of the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center community—from students and parents to teachers and administrators—received a copy of *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown. Everyone embarked on the reading journey together. Families were invited to read aloud together. In class, students began exploring the book through varying activities and discussion. Each morning, they were invited to answer daily trivia questions that encouraged and rewarded attentive listening from the previous night of reading.

The book title was kept top secret, students enjoyed guessing based on hints, leading up to the grand reveal on January 14. The much-anticipated book was selected with all students in mind. Younger students could follow, understand, and enjoy it, but it still captivated and stimulated older students.

When an entire school reads the same book, magic happens. The buzz around the book stimulates a collaborative learning environment, building and expanding community among students, parents, teachers, and staff.

“Our goal is that every student can simply enjoy a book,” explains Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center librarian Mrs. Kara Les. “One School, One Book will generate excitement about reading while building a strong sense of community.”

This opportunity would not have been possible without a generous donation from the Wyomissing Area Education Foundation, which provided books for the whole community to enjoy. The District thanks the Foundation for helping our students become lifelong learners with this and other new and unique programs.

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Spartan Stories:
Read about two of
Wyomissing Area
JSHS’s best and
brightest!

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Wyomissing Area School District
630 Evans Avenue, Wyomissing, PA 19610-2636
610-374-0739 | 610-374-0948 (fax)
www.wyoarea.org

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WYOMISSING AREA JSHS

630 Evans Avenue
Wyomissing, PA 19610-6012
Phone: 610-374-0739
Fax: 610-374-6012
Dr. Corey Jones Principal
Matthew Redcay, Assistant Principal
Ginger Johnson, Assistant Principal

WEST READING ELEMENTARY CENTER

421 Chestnut Street
West Reading, PA 19611-1309
Phone: 610-374-0739
Fax: 610-378-5739
Dr. Corbett Babb, Principal

WYOMISSING HILLS ELEMENTARY CENTER

110 Woodland Road
Wyomissing, PA 19610-1935
Phone: 610-374-0739
Fax: 610-374-8487
Kate Bobst, Principal
Dr. Robert Kucharczuk, Assistant Principal

The Wyomissing Area School District newsletter is published by the Wyomissing Area School District.

For questions or comments regarding this publication, please contact Kristine Parkes, MA, CFRE at kparkes@wyoarea.org.

Students Learn Life Skills, One Snack at a Time

Students in Mrs. Emily Emerson's life-skills class begin each day with morning assignments. One of the most anticipated activities this year is the newly implemented Snack Attack, a mobile snack service operated entirely by students.

Snack Attack provides a unique opportunity for students with disabilities to learn in a work-based environment. It brings tasty treats to Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School faculty and staff while reinforcing the critical life-skills lessons students learn in class.

Each morning, a designated student prepares the mobile snack box, organizing treats, taking inventory, and counting money. Once the snack box is in perfect working-order, the student takes to the halls, offering snacks for purchase to faculty and staff. After finishing rounds, the student returns to Mrs. Emerson's classroom to complete the work experience. At the end of the shift, each student is required to keep track of inventory in Excel, count money, make weekly deposits, and replenish and order new inventory.

While Snack Attack reinforces what the life-skills students learn in class, this new program teaches much more. By incorporating practical living skills, vocational skills, and transition skills, Snack Attack prepares them for their transition out of high school.

"If we can identify the students' needs for life," explains Mrs. Emerson, who introduced Snack Attack to the district, "we can best educate the students for their future."

It's safe to say the future of Snack Attack is also looking bright. The student-operated business has recently introduced a second mobile snack box and has big plans for expansion. The profits of Snack Attack fund the annual Spartan Challenge, a Special Olympics-type event held in the spring for students in the Wyomissing Area School District.

Snack Attack is truly a treat for both students and staff, teaching life skills one snack at a time.



Connor Harris prepares to make the rounds with the Snack Attack mobile snack box.

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JSHS Places on College Board's AP[®] Honor Roll

Helping more students learn at a higher level and earn higher AP scores is an objective of all members of the AP community, from AP teachers to school and district administrators to college professors. Many districts are experimenting with initiatives and strategies to see how they can expand access and improve student performance at the same time.

"It is quite an honor to be recognized with this national distinction, as we are one of only 373 high schools across the United States and Canada to receive this recognition," stated Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School principal Dr. Corey Jones. "It is a clear testament to the dedication of our faculty and the hard work and competitive nature of our students."

In 2018, more than 4,000 colleges and universities around the world received AP scores for college credit, Advanced Placement, or both, and/or consideration in the admissions process. Inclusion in the 9th Annual AP District Honor Roll is based on a review of three years of AP data—in this case, from 2016 to 2018—looking across 38 AP Exams, including world language and culture. The following criteria were used.

Districts must:

- Increase participation/access to AP by at least 4 percent in large districts, at least 6 percent in medium-size districts, and at least 11 percent in small districts;
- Have increased or maintained the percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students taking exams and increased or maintained the percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students scoring 3-plus on at least one AP Exam; and
- Improve or maintain performance levels when comparing the 2018 percentage of students scoring a 3 or higher to the 2016 percentage, unless the district has already attained a performance level at which more than 70 percent of its AP students earn a 3 or higher.

The complete 9th Annual AP District Honor Roll can be found by visiting <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/score-reports-data/awards/honor-roll>.

Gizmos Support Learning in the Classroom

Students at Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School receive their own iPads for multimedia learning. However, chemistry teacher Mrs. Michelle Filippini was disappointed to learn that iOS devices like iPads do not support Adobe Flash, a program used by much of the best educational software programs. This led Mrs. Filippini to find ExploreLearning's Gizmos, a collection of more than 450 interactive online math and science simulations for grades three through twelve that are aligned with PSSA, Common Core, Next Generation Science, and Keystone Assessment standards.

"Gizmos operate in a platform that is compatible with the iPads," Mrs. Filippini explains. "And I love the interactive component. They provide every student with the ability to graph, compare, and measure."

To introduce Gizmos to the Wyomissing Area School District, Mrs. Filippini wrote a grant proposal asking the Wyomissing Area Education Foundation for a one-year license to start a Gizmo pilot program in the 2017–2018 academic year. Eighteen teachers volunteered, participating in summer in-service days to discuss and explore integrating Gizmos into the curriculum,

implementing them in the classroom, and providing data about student use and engagement.

The pilot program was a success, with teachers reporting that using Gizmos "provides hands-on time with challenging math concepts" and "inquiry in a virtual lab setting." Thanks to this success, the District has purchased a license to use Gizmos in all of its schools.

Mrs. Valerie Knauer, who teaches Physics of Space at Wyomissing Area JSHS, used the "Seasons in 3D" Gizmo during a class this past fall to teach the causes of the seasons and why seasons are different in each hemisphere.

Freshman Thane Townsend and sophomore Nicholas Koch were tablemates during this Gizmo activity.

"It's fun," Thane says. "You can get the perspective of what you are learning, and you can change the numbers to see what would happen with the seasons."



Nicholas agrees, adding that he also uses Gizmos in his biology class.

The Wyomissing Area School District thanks the Wyomissing Area Education Foundation for supporting our teachers and for making the pilot program possible.

Sixth-Grade Students Learn about Therapy Dogs

Mrs. Rose Sneeringer's sixth-grade class at West Reading Elementary Center was in for a special treat when Mrs. Susan Brombacher brought her therapy dog Clara in for a visit. Clara, a nine-year-old Tibetan spaniel, helped teach the important differences between therapy dogs and service dogs.

Students waited on the edge of their seats for Clara and Mrs. Brombacher to arrive. They were working on writing informational pieces on therapy dogs, who bring comfort to people in need.

During Clara's visit, students learned everything about the black and tan pooch, asking Mrs. Brombacher questions they had researched. She explained the requirements to become a therapy dog, including having a patient and kind disposition and being a quick learner. Mrs. Brombacher shared that Clara's weekly schedule

included visits to local hospitals, where Clara brightens the days of patients and staff members. At the end of the question and answer session, each student had the opportunity to meet Clara and give her a pat on the head.

"Some students are reluctant writers," explains Mrs. Sneeringer. "If you can find a topic they are passionate about or connect them to a shared experience, it can truly ignite their passion for writing."

Sixth-grade student Lily Caldwell says, "It was cool how Mrs. Brombacher talked about the differences and similarities of therapy dogs and service dogs."

The District would like to thank Clara and Mrs. Brombacher for visiting students, and for creating a learning experience they will never forget.



(From Left: Drew Latourelle, Cameron Cohen, and Yoniel Moronta-Nunez meet Clara after the formal presentation.

Storybook Comes to Life with Visit From K-9 Officer

As part of their reading curriculum, third-grade students at Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center recently read *Aero and Officer Mike: Police Partners*, a true story that follows a day in the lives of a police officer and his K-9 partner. This December, that story came to life as students welcomed local police officers, K-9 partners, and police vehicles for a special learning experience.

Ms. Joan Plummer Russell, author of *Aero and Officer Mike*, spent two years on duty shifts with Corporal Mike Matsik and K-9 Aero. Through their shared experience, the text and photographs reveal truths about police work and partnership. The thoughtful text documents a deep friendship between man and dog that goes far beyond police work.

The visiting police officers shared their personal duties and responsibilities and answered questions, creating a lasting bond between police officers and the community they serve.

The District thanks the Wyomissing Borough Police Department, the West Reading Borough Police, and the Berks County Sheriff's Office for visiting our students and sharing their stories.



Eighth-Grade Student Wins School Spelling Bee

After correctly spelling "vacuousness," eighth-grade student Katherine Kaufmann became the winner of the Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School's 2019 Spelling Bee. It was a hard-fought win, as Katherine went back and forth for multiple rounds with fellow eighth-grade student—and last year's Spelling Bee winner—Benjamin Zobian.

A preliminary round of competition was held during homeroom for all seventh- and eighth-grade students in early November. From that round of competition, the top eight eighth-grade students and top nine seventh-grade students advanced to the final round of school competition, held prior to Winter Break.

Katherine will now participate in a preliminary written round, which is scheduled for February 21. Qualifiers from this round will participate in the Regional Final Round on March 27, at Northampton Community College's Lipkin Theatre in Bethlehem.

The Wyomissing Area School District wishes Katherine the best of luck!



West Reading Elementary School Hosts Veterans Day Breakfast

This Veterans Day, West Reading Elementary Center honored veterans with a celebration feast at their third annual Veterans Day Breakfast. Together students, staff, and local veterans enjoyed an exciting morning full of activity.

The celebration began with moving tributes to the veterans. These included a beautiful rendition of the national anthem performed by high school students; a thoughtful student-created poem read aloud; and a performance from the West Reading Elementary Center Choir.

The celebration continued in the library, where students and their guests of honor enjoyed a plentiful breakfast spread. Cheerful chatter filled the room as students and veterans ate and shared experiences.

As the plates were cleared and the coffee was finished, students invited the veterans to their classrooms. The veterans shared moving experiences and photographs and answered students' questions.

"Each year we cannot wait to welcome the veterans in our community," math and technology specialist Mrs. Shana Matz said at the beginning of the morning. "This event teaches our students to value the courage and commitment shown by these brave men and women. This is a big day for students and their heroes."

The District would like to thank Mrs. Matz and the entire West Reading Elementary Center staff for their dedication to making this event a success.

(Right) A Veteran's Day participant shares a photo of herself from her enlisted days with students.



Wyomissing Area JSHS Hosts Annual Career Day

On Wednesday, November 7, Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School invited 124 guest speakers for Career Day. Students in grades seven through twelve participated, learning about a variety of different career options.

Throughout the day, students attended panels, individual speakers, roundtable discussions, and a career fair featuring 40 interactive career stations. A multimedia assembly focused on how to match their passions with the best career option.

Seventh-grade students enjoyed a day designed around the theme "Discover Your Happy." Activities focused on six traits: positive outlook, human connection, purpose, gratitude, generosity, and mindfulness. These traits will grow with students as they actively transition into the Junior Senior High School. They ended their day at the interactive career fair.

Eighth-grade students spent the morning listening to panel speakers discuss 19 different career paths, including visual and performing arts, engineering, health sciences, fashion, and business. They also learned about the value of volunteerism and what a quality employee means to employers, and had some time to do online career exploration. They concluded the day at the career fair.

Students in ninth-grade spent the morning on campus listening to panel discussions, then completed resumes with help from their guidance counselors. In the afternoon, they each visited one of four local businesses.

Tenth-grade students learned how to prepare for a career. Representatives from local colleges discussed life after graduation, college, and career readiness. They then attended panels based on their

career interests. Speakers discussed why they chose their careers and how they prepared for them, and engaged students in hands-on activities to give them a better understanding of each career. The tenth-grade students also spent one full period at the career fair.

Students in eleventh-grade began their day in roundtable discussions with local post-secondary training professionals. They attended career panels and learned about financial aid and how to afford college and other postsecondary education programs. They discussed their post-high school plans with guidance counselors, then attended the career fair, inspired and ready to ask questions.

The senior class focused on graduation preparation. They enjoyed a presentation by a local attorney, who discussed the legal implications of turning 18 and becoming an adult. Students also learned critical life skills like CPR, thanks to volunteers from Tower Health. Next, they completed a Personality Inventory to better understand how to engage with individuals with different personalities as they go through life. After visiting the career fair, they assembled fleece blankets to be donated to those in need and ended the day with a friendly dodgeball tournament.

Beginning this year, Pennsylvania schools are being held accountable for preparing students to transition out of high school using the Career Ready Index. Each student must have a career portfolio containing specific experiences related to career development and post-secondary education—like Career Day.

"Career Day is an opportunity for students to



(From left) Pilate Davis and Jaila Jackson proudly display their career plans.

explore their interests and passions," says principal Dr. Corey Jones. "We want students to know what opportunities they have and the respective training or education that is needed for them to reach their goals."

Eighth-grade student Pilate Davis is interested in becoming a lawyer and enjoyed speaking with different professionals.

Classmate Evan Sandbakken, who wants to be an artist, also enjoyed the day, saying, "I learned a lot about career choices today, and it was really fun."

This day would not be possible without the help of the Wyomissing Area Parent-Teacher Association and guidance counselor Mrs. Regina Barletta. Each year, Career Day grows significantly, creating invaluable opportunities for our students to learn, explore, and achieve.

WASD Hiring Paraprofessionals

Do you want to be part of a team that puts children first through communication, collaborative planning, and a support system ready to tackle any difficulty that may arise? Do you have an Associate Degree (or higher) or two (2) years of post-secondary educational credits?

Then you should consider a job at Wyomissing Area School District as a special education paraprofessional! Generally speaking, the paraprofessional provides support to the teacher and especially students with disabilities in the classroom who need modified instruction or assistance in keeping with their Individualized

Education Program (IEP). Paraprofessionals commonly assist with tasks such as:

- leading small group instruction designed by the teacher,
- gathering materials,
- providing assistance for personal care and other physical needs,
- assisting students to complete directions given by the teacher,
- facilitating interactions between students, and
- executing other, often unseen, but very important tasks for the classroom community.

The Wyomissing Area School District's best practices

include all the activities listed above as well as playing an important role in the student-centered team to ensure quality instruction for all students.

If you would like to join our Paraprofessional team or find out about other employment opportunities, please visit our website at www.wyoarea.org. Click on the Human Resources tab to complete an employment application and email it to the Human Resource Department at dweise@wyoarea.org or the Director of Special Education, Mrs. Jessica Lengle, at jlengle@wyoarea.org.

GeoBee Challenges Young Scholars

For the 31st year, the National Geographic Society is holding its National Geographic GeoBee for fourth- through eighth-grade students in thousands of schools across the nation. The GeoBee is an annual competition designed to inspire and reward students' curiosity about the world. The event includes three levels of competition: school, state, and national.

Within the Wyomissing Area School District, West Reading Elementary Center and Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School both participated in the 2019 GeoBee. At the junior high school level, the GeoBee was won by eighth-grade student, Tim Reilly. Also in eighth-grade, Owen Holst was the first runner-up, followed by Peter Folga in third place. The following students finished in the top 10: Bryce Butler, Addie Cohen, Katie Kaufmann, Cassie Minich, Oliver Rex, Ryan Rothermel, and Joe Snyder.

At West Reading Elementary Center, sixth-grade student Derek Macrina won the GeoBee.

To qualify for the school-level GeoBee, students took a written qualifying test. Students with the top 15 to 20 scores earned the opportunity to compete. To prepare, students were given a list of websites, including NationalGeographic.com, to study.

Typical GeoBee questions ask students to identify states by location or by statistics such as the chief products a state produces. For example, "Which state lies directly south of Missouri: Arkansas or Iowa?" And "Which state is a major producer of soybeans in the U.S.: Washington or Illinois?"

As a result of their wins, Tim and Derek will advance to the next level of competition, a written examination that will determine state-level competitors. All school winners are eligible to compete for the national championship and its first prize, a \$50,000 college scholarship. The national competition will be held in Washington, D.C.

Best of luck to Tim and Derek as they attempt to earn a trip to Harrisburg to compete in the Pennsylvania State GeoBee.



(Above; from left) Peter Folga, Tim Reilly, and Owen Holst were the top three finishers in the junior high school level of the GeoBee.



(Left) Sixth-grade student Derek Macrina won the GeoBee at the West Reading Elementary Center.

Earth and Environmental Science Day Provides Hands-on Learning

For 19 juniors and seniors in Mrs. Brenda Phillips' Advanced Placement Environmental Science class at Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School, textbook concepts came alive during a fall field trip to Wilkes University for the college's Earth and Environmental Science Day.

"It was a wonderful experience," says Mrs. Phillips. "Not only were the students exposed to college-level speakers, they got an idea of careers in fields of Earth and environmental science that they may not have thought of and had the opportunity to see another college campus."

Throughout the day, six workshops with hands-

on activities and discussions were presented by Wilkes faculty. The workshops included:

- Grasping the Gravity of the Situation: Gravity Anomalies and Earth Structure
- Climate Change and Melting Glacial Ice
- A Hydraulic Blast! Analyzing Leaking Pipes in a Water System
- Geospatial Applications: Mapping and Analysis of Water Quality and Watersheds
- Flash, Bang, Boom: How Weather Forms and Impacts Our Lives

Junior Jack Garapola and senior Elizabeth Luyben said they enjoyed the "Hydraulic Blast"

session the most, agreeing that the professor who presented the workshop was passionate about the topic.

"I liked the glacier workshop," added senior Grace Gleason. "The professor was interesting, and I liked how it tied back into what we are learning in class."

The students also took tours of the university's science building and labs. Senior Mia Huber found this part of the day especially interesting because the building has a living roof, so it is eco-friendly.

Overall, Mrs. Phillips and her students appreciated their time at Wilkes University.

Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School Introduces New Internship Program

This year, Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School will implement a new student-internship program, bridging the gap between school and college or career readiness.

The internship program will allow students in eleventh- and twelfth-grades to gain professional experience before they enter college or a career. They will be matched with a professional mentor and collaborate to custom-design an internship to best fit the student's needs.

Depending on the student's schedule

and current workload, internships can be adjusted for any student. Each participant will communicate regularly with his or her advisor, complete weekly reflective assignments, conduct professional interviews, and compare current literature about the career to learn skills. While no two internships will look alike, the professional experience gained will help Wyomissing Area School District students stand out among the masses as they move toward graduation.

The internship program currently has 10 active students who will begin their internships in

the upcoming semester. Current internships include athletic management, information technology, facilities management, classroom education, special education, business, and public relations.

Assistant principal Matt Redcay says, "The internship program enables students to explore their interests, learning critical practical-application skills."

If your company is interested in becoming involved in the Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School internship program, please contact Mr. Redcay at mredcay@wyoarea.org.

New Faces, New Positions: WASD Introduces New Administrators

For the 2018-2019 academic year, the Wyomissing Area School District welcomed two new administrators and created an assistant principal position at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center. Join us in welcoming the following staff to these positions.

Dr. Melissa Woodard, Assistant Superintendent



Following an interview process that included meetings with teachers, administrators, and Board members, the Board of School Directors approved Dr. Melissa Woodard as assistant superintendent of the Wyomissing Area School District at its August 13, meeting.

“We are excited that Dr. Woodard has joined the Wyomissing Area team,” District Superintendent Robert Scoboria states. “Dr. Woodard is recognized throughout Berks County as an effective leader in curriculum and instruction. Her proven experience will help Wyomissing Area continue to provide excellent programs and services. He adds “Dr. Woodard is a team player who is dedicated to working with staff and community members to ensure that all students are prepared for success.”

Prior to joining the Wyomissing Area team, Dr. Woodard served as assistant superintendent of the Boyertown Area School District. For the past five years, she supervised the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development for that district. Dr. Woodard has been instrumental in implementing an instructional coaching program, facilitated the development of four areas of academy study at Boyertown Area High School, secured a partnership with Kutztown University for professional development for staff, and secured a Pre-K Counts grant to start pre-kindergarten programming in September 2018.

Prior to holding the assistant superintendent position, Dr. Woodard served as a principal,

teacher, and cross-country coach. She received her doctorate in educational leadership from Immaculata University and has completed an extensive study of effective professional development practices as a graduate of the Learning Forward Academy.

In 2015, as a delegate of the AP College Board, Dr. Woodard joined a team of Pennsylvania educational leaders in studying school systems across China. A graduate of the Leadership Berks Class of 2017, Dr. Woodard resides in Oley Township with her husband, Brian, and two children.

Dariely Marrero, Director of Food Services



Originally from Brooklyn, New York, Mrs. Dariely Marrero relocated to the area after being introduced to it by family who live in the Lehigh Valley. Before joining the Wyomissing Area School District, Mrs. Marrero was food service manager for the

New York City Department of Education. Prior to that position, she was a nutritionist for a Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program.

In her position as Director of Food Services for WASD, Mrs. Marrero is responsible for budgeting, ordering food, preparing menus, reporting, and documentation, and ensuring the District’s compliance with the National School Lunch Program.

“I love my new position and school district,” Mrs. Marrero says. “Everyone is friendly, and I have a great staff.”

Mrs. Marrero earned her bachelor’s degree in nutrition and her master’s degree in nutrition and exercise science from Queen’s College. It had always been her dream to attend Queen’s College and to work in a field where she could help people be better physically.

Mrs. Marrero and her husband have a miniature

Doberman pinscher named Cloe. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, exercising, and spending time with her family.

Dr. Robert Kucharczuk, Assistant Principal at Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center



Dr. Robert Kucharczuk is no stranger to the halls of the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center. In fact, except for spending a half-year as a long-term substitute teacher in the Oley Valley School District, Dr. Kucharczuk has spent his entire educational career at the school.

Dr. Kucharczuk earned his doctorate in educational leadership with a concentration in education technology from Wilkes University, and he received his K-12 Administrative/Principal Certificate from Cabrini University in 2018.

Prior to teaching, Dr. Kucharczuk was an assistant educator with Pennsylvania Migrant Education and an intern educator at the Reading Museum. In his new position, Dr. Kucharczuk is looking forward to serving the students and staff of Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center, and to continuing to assist students and staff in being successful now and in the future.

“My hope is to utilize my knowledge and background to assist with curriculum and integrate technology to assist our students academically, physically, socially, and emotionally,” Dr. Kucharczuk says.

When he is not at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center, Dr. Kucharczuk enjoys spending time with his family watching Philadelphia sports and attending local events and activities. Dr. Kucharczuk and his wife, Felicia, have a 5-year old daughter, Mya; a 2-year old son, Jack; and a newborn daughter, Eve.

Spartan Stories: Spotighting WYO Students

In each issue of Spartan Scoop, we will spotlight students who represent our tradition of excellence. In this issue, we introduce you to seniors Mia Huber and Emma Hopler.

Recognizing Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy

Mia Huber received the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award from the Berks Regional Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

Mia commits approximately five hours per month to serving as student liaison to the Borough of Wyomissing Recreation Board. In her nomination application, the board wrote that “Mia provides a level of organization, creativity, understanding, and patience that very few adults are able to match.”

The Borough of Wyomissing’s Fourth of July parade is highly anticipated each year—and Mia plays an integral part in planning it. She has also taken it as her mission to get her classmates more involved.

Mia accepted her award at the Berks Chapter’s National Philanthropy Day Breakfast. In her acceptance speech, she told the audience, “I feel quite honored to be receiving this award from AFP, a group dedicated to civil betterment through the nonprofit community. I have always loved helping others and my community.”

Mia is also involved in the school’s National Honor Society and Mini-THON. Her dedication to community service sets her apart from her peer group.

Globalization through Model United Nations

Emma Hopler was excited to join Model United Nations, also known as Model UN, as a freshman. Model UN is an extracurricular activity in which students role play as delegates to the United Nations and simulate UN committees. The simulations take place at conferences organized by high school or college clubs. At the end of her freshman year, Emma was invited to attend her first national conference.

Emma attended the national conference again as a sophomore, and this time she placed sixth out of approximately 350 students. As a result of this award, the coach of the All-American Model UN team invited Emma to apply to be a member of the team, and in the late spring of her sophomore year, she was accepted.

The All-American Model UN team has approximately 50 members. However, due to financial constraints and schedules, not every member of the team travels to each competition. Emma has traveled with the team to Budapest, Poland, and China, raising more than \$10,000 in six months for her travel.

Emma explains that on these trips she plays the role of a representative of various countries while debating solutions to current global issues. Her first trip was to Budapest, where she competed against students from around the globe. She finished in first place and her team placed first. The All-American Model UN team has been undefeated for more than 15 years.



(Above) Mia Huber poses with representatives from the Association of Fundraising Professionals and the Borough of Wyomissing Recreation Board.



(Left) Emma Hopler is a member of the All-American Model UN Team.

Emma’s most recent trip was a two-week trip to China. The team spent four days competing in Beijing, and the remainder of their time touring Beijing and Xi’ang. During this trip, Emma was named team captain for the first time. She is responsible for ensuring that team members are prepared for their debate, which includes reading their draft resolutions, while also preparing for her own competition.

Emma has one more competition – in Madrid, Spain. She will again serve as the team’s captain and, although it will be bittersweet, she is looking forward to the challenge.

Wyomissing Area Education Foundation: Looking Forward to Spring Events



A party to honor the unsung in our halls from all three schools on Friday, May 17, from 6:00 - 9:00 PM in the home of Eric & Kathleen Schippers.



A family celebration to honor teachers from West Reading and Wyomissing Hills Elementary Centers. Saturday, June 1, from 3:00 - 5:00 PM at the Happy Hollow Playground Pavilion.



Nineteen scholarships totaling \$31,000 will be awarded to graduating seniors and one adult in our community on Monday, May 20, in the WYO Area JSHS New Gym at 6:30 PM.

The Wyomissing Area Education Foundation is always looking for volunteers. For information on how you can get involved visit www.wyoarea-foundation.org

Students Turn Ordinary Walking Tour into Extraordinary Adventure

On Thursday, October 25, twenty-eight students gathered at the Junior Senior High School flagpole. Together, they were about to journey to Philadelphia, where they would turn an ordinary walking tour of historic sites into an extraordinary interactive adventure.

Led by their teacher, Mr. Timothy Hetrich, the AP U.S. History students were not just taking in the sights but fully immersing themselves into the rich history that surrounded them. At each stop along the tour, students presented speeches about moments in history. Before the trip, students were each given a topic to present at a specific location, such as the Panic of 1819 or the Age of Reform. Eager and engaged, they carefully researched, prepared, and delivered moving speeches so powerful that spectators joined in to listen.

Between locations, Mr. Hetrich presented the students with writing prompts designed to challenge them and inspire them to think critically. What better place to find inspiration than on the streets that shaped our nation's history?

"My goal is to provide students with unique and immersive experiences," explains Mr. Hetrich. "That's the stuff you remember. That makes education much more personal."

The tour ended at the Eastern State Penitentiary, but the memories will last for years to come.



Food Drive Supports Greater Berks Food Bank

In the weeks leading up to Winter Break, members of the West Reading Elementary Center's Student Council encouraged their peers and school staff to donate to the school's canned food drive.

Mrs. Kelly Ferrandino, sixth-grade math teacher and sixth-grade Student Council advisor, explains that the annual food drive is a wonderful community service project because it enables the students to visualize the need and how they are helping.

"Every two years, we take a trip to the Greater Berks Food Bank to hand-deliver the food we collected and to tour the facility," Mrs. Ferrandino says. "A member of the staff kindly shares the details of the programs the food bank provides to the county, including programs for kids. It helps our kids understand that anyone can be hungry and need the assistance of the food bank."

During the group's recent visit, they learned that the Greater Berks Food Bank is the central distribution center for more than 7 billion pounds of food each year. After the tour, the students were told that their school's donations weighed 1,018 pounds – reinforcing the power of their hard work.

A Wyomissing Area School District bus driver from GNL Transportation volunteered to drive the group to and from the Greater Berks Food Bank.

Congratulations to the West Reading Elementary Center for a successful community service project!



The Hills Participates in Hour of Code

Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center recently participated in the Hour of Code, a week-long celebration of computer science and coding. Students in kindergarten through fourth-grade enjoyed grade-level computer science activities teaching them the basics of coding.

The Hour of Code is a global movement sponsored by Computer Science Education Week and Code.org that reaches tens of millions of students in 180 countries.

During the event, held in the school's STEAM Explorations classroom, students began their introduction to coding with "unplugged" (without a device) activities. Unplugged activities enable students to understand technology fully before tackling more advanced activities. This foundation enables students to excel in their STEAM Explorations classes, which will introduce coding in the new year. STEAM Explorations teacher Dr. Toni Wengerd led the Hour of Code.

"The Hour of Code enables all students to try something they have never done before," explains assistant principal Dr. Robert Kucharczuk. "These activities are opening the students' eyes ... showing them that the possibilities are endless."

Alumni Spotlight: Engineer Turned Intellectual Property Lawyer

When George Chen graduated from the Wyomissing Area School District in 1987, he never imagined that he would become one of the top intellectual property lawyers in the country. Now, three decades later, he joyfully reflects on his unforeseen journey.

In seventh-grade, Mr. Chen and his family moved a few miles down the road, into Spartan territory. As a member of the boys soccer team and the track and field team, he was a strong defender on the pitch and a sprinter on the track. He also earned many academic accolades: he was a National Merit Scholarship Finalist, one of only 90 students in Pennsylvania selected to enroll in the 1986 Governor's School for the Sciences, and class valedictorian.

"As I think back to my high school career, I am reminded of the impact my educators had on me," explains Mr. Chen. "While I had quite a few impactful high school teachers, Mr. Charles Bell's physics and nuclear science classes and Mr. William Dowling's chemistry classes instilled in me a great curiosity for science and technology, which helped me immensely during my college career and beyond."

After high school graduation, Mr. Chen attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he would follow in his father's footsteps to earn a degree in electrical engineering. In his fraternity, Phi Beta Epsilon, he served as president, rush chairman, and social chairman. He was also a project contact for incoming freshmen and participated in many scientific research projects.

After graduating in 1991 from MIT, Mr. Chen moved to Arizona, where he began his career with Motorola while working full-time as a device and process engineer and studying part-time for his master's degree in electrical engineering at Arizona State University.

In 1995, Mr. Chen decided it was time for a change. He found an opening in Motorola's Intellectual Property Department for an engineer who understood the company's technology and could work on patent projects. He soon found himself on a brand-new career path: becoming an intellectual property lawyer. It combined his passions and

interests in a challenging and rewarding way.

While working full-time at Motorola's Intellectual Property Department, Mr. Chen attended the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University, where he earned his Juris Doctorate and graduated cum laude. While on campus, he served as president of the Asian Law Student Association, as an active member of the Arizona Asian American Bar Association, and as co-chair of the Asian Law Student Scholarship Committee, which raised over \$30,000 during his tenure.

In 1999, Mr. Chen became an associate with the Phoenix office of Bryan Cave LLP, now known as Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP. Now, almost twenty years later, he remains in Phoenix as an equity partner and a member of the Board at his law firm, which has 1,500 lawyers across the world.

Throughout his career, Mr. Chen has received prestigious awards for his outstanding work. For example, in 2018, he was recognized by Arizona Governor Douglas A. Ducey "for distinguished legal talent and leadership and for dedicated service in contributing to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and community." He is a co-inventor of four United States patents, and was also named one of America's Top 100 High Stakes Litigators and an Elite Lawyer in the United States for excellence and outstanding service in his area of practice. And, for the past four years, he has been honored as one of the World's Leading Trademark Professionals.

As one of the most notable achievements of his career so far, Mr. Chen served as president of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), which represents the interests of 50,000 Asian lawyers and judges across the country. As president, he focused on increasing diversity and inclusion within the legal profession, including lobbying U.S. Senators and the White House to increase the number of federal judges from underrepresented ethnicities.

While his path may not have always been clear, Mr. Chen's dedication, enthusiasm, and persistence have grown with him, from the seventh-grade student who first came to the Wyomissing Area School District to the remarkable lawyer he is today.



"If I could share some advice with students today, it would include: 'Don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone,'" he says. "As the only lawyer in my extended family, I am very grateful for taking that step from engineering into law." Mr. Chen also adds, "It is critical to always do your best work even on the small projects, maintain your integrity especially during the challenging times, and stay in touch with people that you meet because you never know when your paths might cross again." Finally, Mr. Chen invests in others by mentoring law students and attorneys and by serving as an active pro bono volunteer in the Volunteer Lawyers Program.

When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with his wife and children as well as outdoor activities, traveling, physical fitness, and cooking.

If anyone would like to contact Mr. Chen, he can be reached via email at George.Chen@BCLPlaw.com.

The Wyomissing Area School District is proud to share the amazing stories of our alumni across the world. If you know an alumnus you think should be featured in the Spartan Scoop, please contact Kristine Parkes, MA, CFRE, district communications at kparkes@woyarea.org.

From Your Wyomissing Area PTA

The Wyomissing Area PTA represents all schools in the Wyomissing Area School District. Its mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.



Walk with WYO - May 10

The PTA's primary fundraiser is Walk with WYO. Held at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center, this event is an opportunity for the students

to work together with the community to raise funds that go directly back to district students. The PTA uses the money to sponsor mini-grants, assemblies, movie nights, back-to-school events, book fairs, career days, staff-appreciation events, and many other activities at all three district schools.

While fundraising for this event doesn't begin until March, Walk with WYO is a major event that relies on the help of numerous volunteers and sponsors. The volunteer committee is actively seeking volunteers, from older students to retired community members. If you would like to help and have or are willing to obtain your clearances (an easy

process) before the event, please email ptawyo@gmail.com.

Movie Night

Families with children in grades kindergarten through six are invited to join the Wyomissing Area PTA on February 8, at 6:30 at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary Center for a showing of *Smallfoot*.

If you are interested in volunteering, sponsoring, or learning more about the Wyomissing Area PTA, please email ptawyo@gmail.com.

Celebrating WYO Musicians

The District is proud to announce the following musical honors:

Six Wyomissing Area High School students in grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve were chosen for the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) 2019 District 10 Chorus. These students auditioned against hundreds of students from public, private, parochial, and charter high schools in seven Pennsylvania counties.

These talented students will participate in PMEA District 10 Chorus on February 7, 8, and 9, 2019, at Exeter High School in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Congratulations to:

Soprano II - Analexis Foss

Alto I - Sarah Fleischood, Colleen Gieringer, Elizabeth Luyben

Bass I - Clifton Brown

Bass II - Joseph Ambarian

Eight Wyomissing Area Junior Senior High School students recently auditioned into the Senior High County Orchestra. Together, they performed at the Senior High County Orchestra Festival, January 15

to 19, 2019, at Daniel Boone High School in Berks County.

Congratulations to:

Concert Mistress - Alexandra Amin, Sarah Fleischood

Violin - Emma Morris, Gracie Simmons, Daria Tilich

Viola - Sara Steber

Cello - Nina Botvin

Oboe - Emerson Gagnon