

Mr. Geist

# LION'S ROAR

AN E-PUBLICATION FROM THE SOUTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

## POP-UP PUTT-PUTT COURSE A HOLE IN ONE

PAGE 6

I SAY,  
YOU SAY

Hear n

Avengers...  
Assemble!


To Infin  
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DISTRICT'S  
COMMITMENT TO  
MUSIC HONORED

EDUCATOR PART  
OF CMU RESEARCH  
PROJECT







# LION'S ROAR

**APRIL 2023**

The Lion's Roar E-Publication shares and celebrates the stories of the South Fayette Township School District.

**South Fayette Township School District**  
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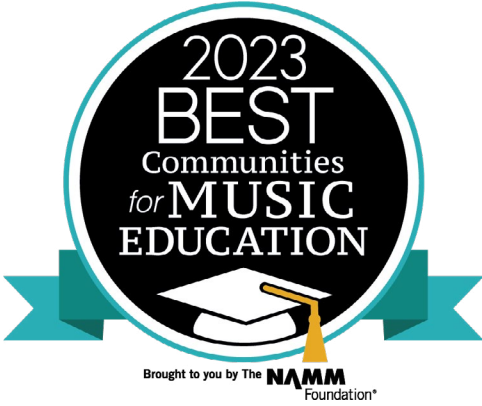


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# SF NAMED TOP MUSIC DISTRICT



The South Fayette Township School District has received the "Best Communities for Music Education" designation by the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) Foundation for its commitment to music education. Now in its 24th year, the Best Communities for Music Education recognition is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in their efforts to provide music access and education to all students.

The District submitted data about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. That information was reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

"Music education is an integral part of the South Fayette Township School District," said Superintendent **Dr. Michelle Miller**. "That is why you will find the arts at the heart of the District's mission statement. Our student-musicians, led by our passionate music educators, continually amaze us. This prestigious designation celebrates their talents and commitment."

The South Fayette Township School District is one of just 830 school districts across the country to receive the Best Communities for Music Education distinction.

In South Fayette, music is key in educating the whole child. Beginning at the elementary level and continuing through high school, Lion Learners are afforded opportunities to explore their own creativity, work collaboratively with peers, and build upon skills needed in all facets of education and life.

South Fayette's music curriculum scaffolds from first through twelfth grades. Elementary school students are introduced to music first through steady beats and rhythms. Pitch intervals are gradually introduced at a pace so all students can succeed. Student-musicians in grades 3-5 at the intermediate school build upon those elementary-level foundations. Students then begin to create their own music by learning the language of music. They also have opportunities to deepen their musical ability in band, orchestra, and choral classes and groups.

Additionally, students in first through fifth grades are immersed in the arts through the Arts Alive program. In Arts Alive, students use acting, movement, music, and emotional expression to perform and bring to life concepts introduced in their music classes. Arts Alive teaches students that they can interpret, understand, and engage the world around them through music and the arts.

While not a requirement in many middle schools, all South Fayette Middle School students are enrolled in general music courses. They also have the ability to sing in the choir or play in the school's orchestra or band. At South Fayette High School, the music education choices expand. Student-musicians can join the popular Little Green Machine Marching Band, concert band, jazz ensemble, orchestra, strings ensemble, wind ensemble, or choirs. South Fayette High School also offers digital piano and musicianship courses and an AP music theory course.

The NAMM Foundation is a nonprofit supported in part by the National Association of Music Merchants and its 15,000 member companies and individual professionals. The foundation advances active participation in music-making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving, and public service programs.

ON THE CALENDAR	
May 12	High School Prom
May 16	School Board Meeting, High School Studio, 7:30 p.m.
May 22	Two-Hour Late Start, Staff Professional Development
May 23	School Board Meeting, High School Studio, 7:30 p.m.
May 25	No School
May 26	No School
May 29	No School, Memorial Day
Dates and Times are Subject to Change Check <a href="https://southfayette.org">southfayette.org</a> for Updates	



**South Fayette Foundation for Excellence  
10th Annual Golf Outing  
at Hickory Heights, Bridgeville, PA  
Monday, July 17, 2023**



**REGISTER TODAY!**

**Golf/Sponsor Information**

Contact Maureen Pedzwater at  
[mapedzwater@southfayette.org](mailto:mapedzwater@southfayette.org)



# ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ENGINEER MINI-GOLF COURSE

Second-grade Lion Learners recently took a swing at designing mini golf courses, and it was a hole-in-one!

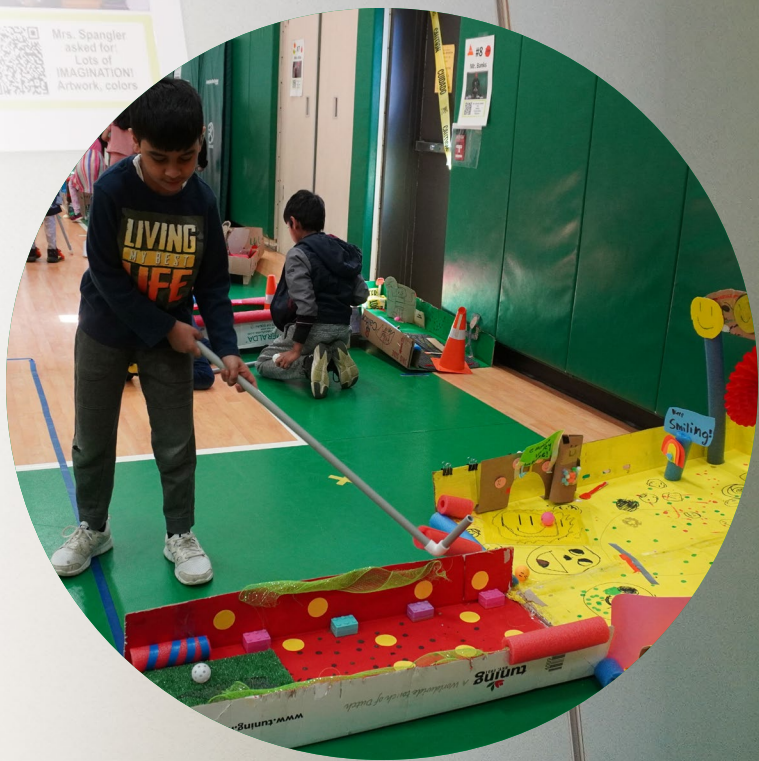
**Melissa Unger** and **Alexis Deyarmin's** students recently collaborated with twelve "celebrity" clients to design South Fayette's first mini-golf course. Those clients, made up of administrators, teachers, and support staff, had unique ideas and interests that they wanted to see reflected in their section of the course. The second graders' job was to design, create, and build a mini-golf hole that met those specifications and desires.

Each of the twelve holes designed by the second graders used cardboard, obstacles, and props to make it unique. South Fayette Elementary School Principal **Tyler Geist** is full of Lion Pride, so the second graders designed his section of the course so that the golfer would sink a put into a lion's mouth. Assistant Principal **Pharlan Ives** loves Florida, so the engineers designed a hole with palm trees and a beach. Music educator **Dana Falosk's** section included musical instruments and a toy microphone. Librarian **Lauren Cribbs'** love of Harry Potter was reflected in the hole designed by her students.

Approximately 16 students worked on each of the sections of the course over three to five class periods. The pop-up putt-putt course was set up in the elementary school gymnasium, and on March 30 and 31, students as well as faculty and staff had the chance to play a round on the student-designed course.









# SOUTH FAYETTE STUDENTS EARN STATE RECOGNITIONS AT CONFERENCE

This year was the first time South Fayette High School students participated in the Penn HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) Student Leadership Conference in Valley Forge, PA. But South Fayette students certainly left their mark at this statewide event.

Junior **Laasya Pedapati** and sophomore **Caroline Praveen** took first place in the state in forensic science. Junior **Vidhisha Chahande** took second place in the state in Job Seeking Skills.



## THANK YOU, TRANSPORTATION TEAM

May 1, 2023  
School Bus Driver Appreciation Day



# LIONS ENJOY SUCCESS AT FBLA CONFERENCE

Twenty-five members of the South Fayette High School FBLA attended the state leadership conference in Hershey, PA. There, many South Fayette Lions earned their way to the stage as top ten place-winners, and four qualified for nationals!

**Anisha Ganesh** is a state champion and national qualifier in job interviewing.

**Dan Mano** is a state champion and national qualifier in introduction to business concepts.

**Pavithra Dantu** was a third place state finalist and national qualifier in introduction to parliamentary procedure.

**Aadya Pesara** was a fourth place state finalist and national qualifier in social media strategies.

**Dhruv Kithany** was a fifth place state finalist in introduction to information technology.

**Anjali Srinivasan** was a sixth place state finalist in insurance and risk management.

**Aditi Musalgavkar and Bhumika Parnerkar** were seventh place state finalists in business ethics.

**Anush Desai, Harin Godugu, and Vikesh Venkatesh** were seventh place state finalists in introduction to social media strategy.

**Harshitha Lingam** was a ninth place state finalist in business communication.

**Dharini Maruthu Pandian** was a tenth place state finalist in organizational leadership.

**Kira Perna** was a tenth place state finalist in advertising.





# LIONS SELECTED FOR STATE MUSIC FESTIVAL



Three South Fayette student-musicians earned their spots among the best high school student-musicians in the state. **Brett Skerbetz** (chorus), **CJ Inkenhaus** (orchestra), and **Ella Schiro** (band) were selected to participate in the PMEA All-State Festival & Conference April 20-22 in the Poconos.

The festival concluded with a suite of concerts. The chorus concert was directed by Amanda Quist from the University of Miami Frost School of Music. The band concert was directed by F. David Romines from Marywood University. The orchestra concert was directed by Tim Dixon from Messiah University.

## PMEA BANDFEST

Fifth graders **Natalie Dietrich**, **Jack Luo**, and **Ramon Vasquez** along with sixth graders **Lucy Froelich** and **Adrianne Kunkel** represented South Fayette at the PMEA District 1 Bandfest on March 31 and April 1.



## CHORUS FESTIVAL

Eighth graders **Emma Billing**, **Maddie Diehl**, **Alastair McClintock**, **Allyson Seabright**, and **Carolyne Tomlinson** and ninth graders **Camille Berg**, **Mackenzie Concannon**, **Bailey Cunningham**, **Arianna Doeblor**, and **Annabelle Snyder** sang in the PMEA District 1 Junior High Chorus Festival.





# FIFTH GRADERS DRESS LIKE THEIR FAVORITE IDIOMS

Fifth-grade Lions and their teachers were on the ball for the annual Idiom Day on April 19. Students dressed up as their favorite idioms, while their classmates tried to guess the idiom and learn the meaning of it. Can you guess the idioms represented in the photos below?





# DREAM COMES TRUE FOR SOUTH FAYETTE JUNIOR



A trip to the place where dreams come true helped a South Fayette High School junior recognize that her career aspirations truly are attainable. Junior **Prerna Chakkingal** is one of only 100 young people from across the country to be named to the Disney Dreamer Academy. Disney Dreamers are recognized for their intellectual curiosity, compassion, courage, positive outlook, generous spirit, and optimism. Every year, thousands of young people ranging in age from 13-19 apply to be a Disney Dreamer. This school year, South Fayette's Chakkingal was selected.

The Disney Dreamers Academy, which started in 2008, is a four-day event aimed at broadening career awareness and creating exclusive opportunities for Black students and teens from underrepresented communities across the nation. Disney Dreamers interact with Disney executives, business leaders, celebrities, and motivational speakers. The students and a parent/guardian enjoy an all-expenses paid trip to the Walt Disney World Resort. Disney Dreamers get a behind-the-scenes tour of Walt Disney World and attend seminars where they discover career opportunities and learn how to pursue their own dreams.

Throughout the academy, Chakkingal met former Disney Dreamers and celebrities, including Halle Bailey. But she says hearing from and meeting Danni Washington, a marine biologist and television personality, had the greatest impact. In Washington, Chakkingal was able to see her career interests – science, public speaking, and advocacy.

Chakkingal, who wants to enter the medical field, has led several TED Talks and is passionate about the areas of diversity and inclusion. Before going to the Dreamers Academy, Chakkingal thought that a career that combines medicine and public advocacy may not be possible. But interacting with Washington changed that.

"Now I believe that I can do that," Chakkingal said. "The Dreamers did a lot to get there. We were selected as the best of the best. If we do more and reach for one more thing, we can get where we want to be."





# HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT GOVERNMENT RECEIVES TOP NATIONAL AWARD

For the fifth consecutive year, the South Fayette High School Student Government has been recognized as a National Gold Council of Excellence by the National Student Council (NatStuCo). South Fayette's Student Government received the award for its exemplary record of leadership, service, and activities that improve the school and community.



The National Gold Council of Excellence award recognizes the highest standards of quality in student councils and are models that other student councils strive to become.

"Exceptional student councils are a hallmark of exceptional

To qualify, a student group must meet criteria to earn the award. In addition to basic requirements such as a written constitution, regular meetings, and a democratic election process, the councils had to demonstrate successful sponsorship and participation in activities such as leadership development and service.

schools," said NASSP CEO Ronn Nozoe. "The South Fayette High School Student Government has taken student leadership to the next level, creating a culture promoting scholarship and citizenship that resonates far beyond their team. I'm delighted to recognize their hard work with the National Gold Council of Excellence Award for their commitment to service, leadership and uplifting the voices of their peers."

## EDUCATOR NAMED TO CMU RESEARCH PROGRAM



South Fayette High School chemistry educator **Bryan Seybert** will participate in a summer research experience and curriculum development at Carnegie Mellon University this summer.

Educators in the program will work alongside Dr. Coty Jen and the Jen Lab to conduct atmospheric nanoparticle formation measurements that will contribute towards improving climate models.

As part of the program, Carnegie Mellon University will help the educators develop atmospheric chemistry curriculum for their classes. Seybert proposed curriculum lessons for South Fayette's chemistry, honors organic chemistry, and AP chemistry classes.



# STEELERS COME TO SFIS

There were touchdowns, field goals, great catches, and even a visit by Steely McBeam when Steelers Youth Football came to South Fayette Intermediate School on March 30. The only thing that was missing was "Renegade"!

The visit was part of the team's outreach to schools to get kids moving and introduce them to the game of football. Several physical education classes rotated through stations where our Lions showed off their skills. They performed drills, made some amazing plays, and even worked in a few touchdown celebration dances.



**"Here We Go!"**  
**Steelers Youth Football Comes to SFIS**





# LIONS RECOGNIZED AT PARKWAY

A group of South Fayette High School students who attend Parkway West Career & Technology Center was recently honored at an awards ceremony.

Seniors and National Technical Honor Society members **Daniel Mine** and **Nathan Spolnik** received their graduation cords.

**Kevin Clayton**, **Angel Snell-Guerrero**, and **Jorin Williams** were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society.



# SFHS STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to **Christopher Lee**, **Lana Schiro**, **Ashton Iriti**, **Tessa Schwarzmiller**, **Raymond Traficante**, **Alexandra Czaplicki**, **Zoe McCoy**, and **Sydney Bickel** for being named High School Students of the Month for March. March's theme was imagination and creativity.

Also, congratulations to **Julianna Rossi** who was named the February Rotary Student of the Month.





# CELEBRATING CHAMPIONS



The South Fayette Lions hockey team was honored in Harrisburg on Tuesday, April 25. The Lions were the 2023 Penguins Cup and PIHL champions and were recognized on the floor of the state capitol building.

At the South Fayette Township School District Board of School Directors meeting on Tuesday, April 25, the School Board recognized the WPIAL champion and PIAA runners-up South Fayette High School Lady Lions basketball team.



At the South Fayette Township School District Board of School Directors meeting on Tuesday, April 25, the School Board recognized swimmer **Zoe Poe** on her first-place finish in the girls' 500 yard freestyle at the WPIAL 3A Swimming Championships in March.





# PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Nothing says Lion Pride quite like a campus-wide parade! Lions from across the district braved the chilly temperatures on Tuesday, April 18 for a parade featuring the Penguins Cup and PIHL champion hockey team, the WPIAL champion and state runners-up Lady Lions basketball team, swimming place-winners, and all winter season champions. A group of second-grade grand marshals and the Little Green Machine Marching Band led off the parade.



Parade of Champions





# LARGEST-EVER HIGH SCHOOL GROUP QUALIFIES FOR TSA CONFERENCE

The South Fayette High School chapter of the Technology Student Association (TSA) attended the PA TSA State Leadership Conference held at Seven Springs from April 19–22. This year's group was the largest ever from the school, and among the largest in the state, to attend the conference with 84 of 127 members qualifying and participating at the conference.

The Lions performed admirably. Sophomore **Nandana Manoj Menon** led the way with two state champion awards for Photographic Technology and Promotional Design where her keen eye for composition and detail distinguished her work from the competition. Sophomores **Shreya Duraisamy** and **Snigdha Ramavathu** composed an inspiring song, fittingly titled "Victory," to earn the state champion award for Music Production. Seniors **Ria Chada**, **Triyasree Katta**, and **Shreya Rathi** wrote a story for children in first through third grades that promotes a career as a STEM teacher. Their work was beautifully illustrated by senior **Zoe McCoy's** digital art. Collectively, the four senior Lady Lions won the state champion award for Children's Stories.

Finishing on the podium with awards for third place were the group of sophomores, **Prerna Chakkingal**, **Nandana Manoj Menon**, and **Gourisree Prasanth** and freshmen **Pranita Chakkingal** and **Rashmita Chekka** for Audio Podcasting and seniors **Viraj** and **Vishram Urs** for Coding.

Most chapter members were acknowledged as state finalists indicating that they finished in the top ten across Pennsylvania in their event. South Fayette had state finalists in Data Science & Analytics, Digital Video Production, Engineering Design, Essays on Technology, Extemporaneous Presentation, Fashion Design & Technology, Flight Endurance, Future Technology & Engineering Teacher, Geospatial Technology Manufacturing Prototype, Senior Solar Sprint, System Control Technology, Technology Bowl, Technology Problem Solving, Virtual Reality Visualization, and Webmaster with many of these groups and individuals earning near podium finishes in fourth and fifth place.

While the students were not competing for honors in their events, they were able to attend a variety of special interest sessions, including several networking opportunities with professionals, university professors, and TSA alumni from across the state; information sessions regarding college and career readiness; Penn State's Breazeale Nuclear Reactor; and a day in the life of a software developer, as well as a number of other team-building and mini-competitive events.

TSA members learn to lead in a technical world by applying and integrating personal development, leadership, and career opportunities in STEM through intracurricular activities, competitions, and related programs. The SF TSA chapter is advised by the high school's PBL/STEAM Coordinator **Mr. James Hausman III**. South Fayette high school students interested in joining the SF TSA family should see or contact Mr. Hausman for more information.







# SENIORS RECEIVE SHASDA AWARDS

South Fayette High School seniors **Connor Delaney** and **Brianna Williams** were recognized with the SHASDA (South Hills Area School Districts Association) award during the annual conference on Saturday, April 22, 2023. The SHASDA award celebrates students who have demonstrated significant improvement in performance or have overcome obstacles on the road to success.

South Fayette School Board Member **Joe Welch** delivered the keynote address at the conference.



# STUDENT VISIONARIES RAISE MORE THAN \$50,000

High school students **Anna Fraps, Cooper Hillebrand, and Aiden Martincic** who were accepted into the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's (LLS) 2023 Student Visionaries of the Year campaign earlier this year raised more than \$52,000 for the organization. Out of the 17 teams of visionaries, the South Fayette trio was one of only four to raise more than \$50,000.

Their team included students **Lilly Hillebrand, Camryn Hondru, Taylor Peters, Ryan Pirain, Olivia Renk, Piper Sanders, Louis Schinosi, and Samantha Sharrer.**

The funds raised benefit the LLS mission: to find a cure for leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and to improve the quality of life of patients and their families.





# PTA BINGO BASH A HIT

The South Fayette K-5 PTA welcomed more than 300 people to its annual Bingo Bash on Sunday, April 16. It was a fun time of bingo games, prizes, and raffles. There was even a surprise visit from the Lion mascot. Thank you so much to all of our PTA and NHS volunteers who kept things running smoothly and to the donations that came from local and regional businesses. Please remember to thank these businesses for their support of our students on your next visit:

Alpha Residential  
Andy Warhol Museum  
Bedner's Farm and Greenhouse  
BJ's Wholesale (South Fayette)  
The Pittsburgh Science Center  
Chick-fil-A (Collier)  
Heinz History Center  
Living Treasures Animal Park and Keystone Safari  
Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village  
Millie's Homemade (South Fayette)  
MindBody Yoga + Barre (South Fayette)  
OTB (South Fayette)  
Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens Inc.  
South Fayette PTA and Family Communities  
The Pittsburgh Bottleshop (Bridgeville)  
The Pittsburgh Summer CLO Series  
The Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium  
The Steeping Leaf (South Fayette)



# BUNNY BONANZA



There was an incredible turnout for the annual Bunny Bonanza on Saturday, April 1. There were too many eggs to count, great treats, and a lot of fun.



# SOUTH FAYETTE FOUNDATION FOR TO SOUTH FAYETTE ED

Since 2008, the South Fayette Foundation for Excellence (SFFE) has been providing grants for curriculum enhancements for South Fayette Township School District teachers over and above what the district budget can afford. These grants are made possible through the SFFE annual golf outing fundraiser and the generosity of South Fayette community donations.

In addition, Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Grants are awarded to non-profit organizations from corporations within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Department of Community and Economic Development. SFFE has been receiving EITC grants from Trumbull Corporation annually. The requirements of these awards focus on enhancing female participation within STEM and STEAM after-school programs. South Fayette has seen a significant increase in the numbers of females taking Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics classes in high school, as well as within STEM labs and classes K-8. Before- and after-school STEM programs and clubs have also seen the numbers of girls taking part increase annually.

SFFE EITC Grants are available through teacher grant applications each year. This year, the recipients of these awards are **Sgt. Jeff Sgro**, SFTSD school resource officer and ROV advisor, and **Mr. Benjamin Laughton**, sixth-grade language arts teacher.



The SFHS ROV Underwater Robotics team takes part each year in a regional competition and has produced South Fayette top-ten winners each year. The PA event includes elementary, middle school, high school, home school, and community college students from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland and Washington, D.C. This year's EITC grant will cover a portion of the cost of parts needed to compete in this year's event being held at Villanova University in May.

The 2022-2023 South Fayette High School ROV Team members are: **Anush Desai, Vikesh Venkatesh, Dhruv Kithany, Vaibhav Santhosh, Pranai Vijay, Yatin Katta, George Cox, Alaa-Eddine Guetari, Harinbalaji Godugu, Guhun Suresh, Meet Raje, Nimish Rai, Ishaan Chahande, Vidhyut Raju, Rishika Somireddy, Fares Bouassida, Aayush Sandesh, Yunus Alkamel, Vraj Shah, Davlat Musoev, Vedant Dagar, Varun Sriharish, Chandhan Juluru, Sandilya Gonugunta, Neel Gandhi, Mohit Parmar** and team advisors, **Mr. Greg Schutz** and **Sgt. Jeff Sgro**.



# FOR EXCELLENCE AWARDS GRANTS UCATORS & STUDENTS



Each year the entire South Fayette sixth grade class has an opportunity to take part in an overnight camping trip to Camp Kon-o-Kwee. In addition to exploring the adventures of camping with classmates, the students will be taking part in STEAM activities focusing on Environmental and Ecological Sciences.

Mr. Laughton was awarded an EITC grant to provide supplies for the STEAM related sessions during the trip. In the past, the sixth-grade campers returned to campus with a renewed interest in their classes as they had just experienced authentic project based learning while having fun in the great outdoors.

Mr. Laughton and his Block 3 class celebrated as they received the EITC grant from the South Fayette Foundation for Excellence.





## SENIOR LANDS GAMING APPRENTICESHIP



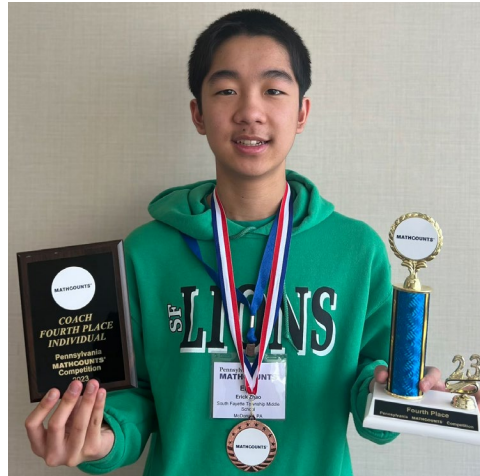
Senior **Luca lafrate** says one of his favorite classes was Programming for Game Design. This summer, he will have the opportunity to tap into that passion for game design thanks to an apprenticeship with Simcoach Games.

Simcoach Games, based in the South Side, works to develop video games and digital experiences that make a difference in the lives of individuals with diverse backgrounds.

The summer apprenticeship program is focused on employability skills including software development, game design, and social-emotional learning. Apprentices try their hand at studio roles – producer, designer, developer, and artist – as they develop games that are relevant to the challenges they feel they must overcome and opportunities they wish to pursue.

## SFMS STUDENT MAKES SCHOOL HISTORY

South Fayette Middle School student **Erick Zhao** is the first student in school history to advance to the national MATHCOUNTS competition. Erick will compete next month.



## LIONS LEARN THE POWER OF ENERGY SAVINGS



On Thursday, April 20, South Fayette Intermediate School students participated in FirstEnergy's Pennsylvania Utilities Think! Energy program. During the interactive program, students learned energy concepts and the simple things they can do at home that can make a big difference.

That evening at the Celebration of Excellence, families received an energy education kit, full of high quality, energy-efficient products they could use at home. The program was made possible by the National Energy Foundation.



## SFIS STUDENT EARNS HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL ROLE

South Fayette Intermediate School student **Jayden Meehan** will play the role of "Fletcher" in Bishop Canevin High School's production of "Freaky Friday." The show runs through April 29.



## DANCE TEAM HOSTS FIRST DANCE CLINIC

The new South Fayette High School Dance team hosted its first-ever dance clinic in April. Sixty students in first through seventh grades took part in the inaugural event. South Fayette alumna and former Cleveland Cavaliers dancer **Alyssa Jessloski** was the guest artist who choreographed the piece that was taught during the event.



## GINGERBREAD CREATION

Spring may be in the air, but we are celebrating one of our Lions entries into the 20th Annual City of Pittsburgh Gingerbread House Competition. One of the delicious creations by a team of fifth graders was recently recognized as taking third place in the elementary school division! The gingerbread house was called "Santa's Diner."

(Photo courtesy of the City of Pittsburgh)







The Lion's Roar is produced  
by the South Fayette Township  
School District's  
Communications Department

[communications@southfayette.org](mailto:communications@southfayette.org)

In partnership with the community, the **mission** of the **South Fayette Township School District**, *a leader in innovation*, is to elevate academic, artistic, and athletic excellence of the whole learner by inspiring the strength to be dynamic, ethical, and empathetic citizens who flourish in a global society.