



FEBRUARY 2023

LION'S ROAR

AN E-PUBLICATION FROM THE SOUTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

SOUTH FAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL

NEW WAYS TO CONNECT WITH THE SOUTH FAYETTE TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

PAGE 4

**STUDENTS' START-UP
GAINS NATIONAL
ATTENTION**

MARCH MUSICALS

**CYBERSECURITY
PATHWAY COMING TO
HIGH SCHOOL**

**LION'S LAST-MINUTE
TRIP TO HERSHEY**





LION'S ROAR

FEBRUARY 2023

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

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Future-Focused Student-Centered Innovation-Driven



6



13



14



17



20



22



- 6 Power of Change
- 13 Team's Act of Service
- 14 On a Roll
- 17 Remembered in Art
- 20 A New World
- 22 18 Under Eighteen
- 36 Stepping Staff



36

WELCOME TO THE LION'S ROAR!

CELEBRATING SOUTH FAYETTE'S STORIES

A significant portion of the South Fayette Township School District's 2022-2025 strategic plan is devoted to fostering connections between the district and our learners, families, staff, and community. We seek to accomplish that through an increased focus on communication. We have heard similar messages in our conversations with all of our key groups over the past year – you desire, and rightfully deserve, **timely, reliable, effective, and transparent communication** from the South Fayette Township School District. With that in mind, we are building upon the foundation that has been laid and building out a robust, comprehensive communications plan that will connect you with and celebrate the amazing stories from the South Fayette Township School District.

The Lion's Roar will be delivered to your inbox monthly and will recap the successes of our academic, arts, and athletic programs throughout the district. We also have established the district's presence on social media. You can follow the district on Facebook (facebook.com/SouthFayetteTwpSD), Twitter (twitter.com/SouthFayetteSD), and Instagram (instagram.com/SouthFayetteSD). There, the tradition, pride, and excellence of the district will be shared by highlighting our Lion Learners and staff. The district also has launched a YouTube channel (youtube.com/@SouthFayetteTwpSD) to both tell and show how we are future-focused, student-centered, and innovation-driven. In the coming months, we will give particular attention to our district and school websites to ensure they

are user-friendly and accessible. Soon, we will offer a unique opportunity for families, staff, and community members to serve on our key communicator council. Details about the application process will be shared next month.

Recognizing the value of conversation, we have opened a new email account for families, staff, or community members to share good news with us. If you would like to celebrate an accomplishment, provide feedback, or ask a question, you can email communications@southfayette.org. Of course, you are always welcome to reach out to district administrators and staff directly by phone or email. We encourage you to follow along as we celebrate the amazing stories from the South Fayette Township School District.



ON THE CALENDAR

- Feb 28 School Board Meeting, High School Studio, 7:30 p.m.
- Mar 6 Two-Hour Late Start, Staff Professional Development
- Mar 21 School Board Meeting, High School Studio, 7:30 p.m.
- Mar 23 Third Nine-Weeks Ends
- Mar 24 No School for Students, Professional Duty/Staff Development
- Mar 28 School Board Meeting, High School Studio, 7:30 p.m.

Dates and Times are Subject to Change
Check southfayette.org for Updates

SOUTH FAYETTE MIDDLE SCHOOL PRESENTS

SHREK

THE MUSICAL JR.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2
7 PM

FRIDAY, MARCH 3
7 PM

SATURDAY, MARCH 4
2 PM

SOUTH FAYETTE MIDDLE SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM

AVAILABLE TICKETS CAN BE
PURCHASED AT THE TICKET
TABLE BEGINNING ONE HOUR
PRIOR TO THAT DAY'S
PERFORMANCE.

FRIDAY, MARCH 17
7 PM

SATURDAY, MARCH 18
7 PM

SUNDAY, MARCH 19
2 PM

HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

SOUTH FAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

CRAZY FOR YOU

Music and Lyrics by
George Gershwin
and Ira Gershwin

Book by
Ken Ludwig

Co Conception by Ken Ludwig and Mike Ockrent
Inspired by Material by Guy Bolton and John McGowan
Originally produced on Broadway by Roger Horchow and Elizabeth Williams
Original Broadway Choreography by Susan Stroman

STUDENTS' START-UP COMBINES TECHNOLOGY AND POWER OF CHANGE

South Fayette High School seniors **Shreya Rathi** and **Sejal Verma** are quickly gaining national attention for their startup company, Maytik. They were interviewed by Forbes Magazine in an article on how teenage entrepreneurs think businesses will transform with the advent of ChatGPT. In March, they will present their first product to entrepreneurs and investors at South by Southwest in Austin, Texas. Their success story is one of innovation, drive, and determination. But most of all, it is one of inclusivity.

Shreya and Sejal applaud the substantial steps towards inclusivity taken by the beauty industry. But they noticed those companies rarely feature accessible makeup lines and products for individuals with blindness or low vision. They said the only step a handful of companies took was including braille on their packaging.

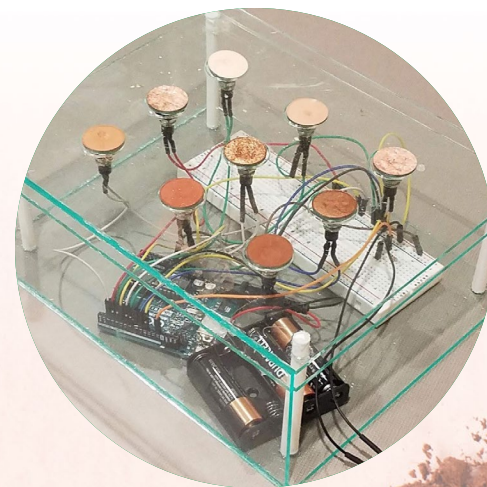
Even that, they explain, is an ineffective method to promote inclusivity since not all individuals with blindness or low vision read braille.

"Palettes are even more confusing because a person will not be able to tell if they are using the color red or gold," said Sejal. "They need a universal method, other than braille, to differentiate color."

With that thought serving as their motivation, Shreya and Sejal began their work last school year as part of the Girls' STEAM afterschool program to develop the first tech-integrated makeup palette. They met with electrical engineers and business managers to build a palette and a business. But it was their collaboration with Chloe and Darlene, two students at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, that gave them the insight they needed to take Maytik to the next level.

From Chloe and Darlene, the South Fayette seniors learned that haptics such as vibrations are ideal ways to use touch to communicate with the user. Shreya and Sejal decided to use haptic technology to signal the colors on the palette.

The palette works somewhat like a keyboard. As a user presses a shade, a signal is sent to the speaker, announcing the shade's name. As users go down the palette and the color of the shade intensifies, so too does the intensity of the vibrations from the palette. All of it is made possible by the designs and circuits built by Shreya and Sejal.



After developing the palette, Shreya and Sejal took it to their community partners Chloe and Darlene. Their reaction was something Shreya and Sejal say they will never forget.

"Their faces beaming with excitement and eagerness illustrate the powerful change our product can create in many lives," Shreya said.

That powerful change has been noticed both regionally and nationally. Shreya and Sejal first participated in Project Invent and won the Explorer Award at Demo Day East. Most recently, they took first place in the TRET (Three Rivers Educational Technology Conference) Student Pitch Competition. They are global finalists for the South by Southwest EDU Student Startup Competition, and they will showcase their product in front of and receive coaching and feedback from successful entrepreneurs.

The seniors say this experience has taught them valuable technical and soft skills by running all aspects of the start-up.

"One day I'm designing the logo, presentation, and business cards, but the next day I'm calculating the financial projections and writing a business executive summary," said Sejal.

Their work, however, revolves around the reason they first were interested in STEM – making an impact.

"When you begin to design and create a product for someone with an experience you have never shared, it is imperative that one must listen and think of others' needs as if they were their own," Shreya explained.

"It's astounding how much a simple product I created can brighten someone's life," said Sejal. "The smiles on their faces and joyful laughter as they used the palette are something I will never forget. Being the reason for someone's happiness is gratifying, but being the reason they can experience something they have never been able to is a celebratory cause. For me, there is no bigger joy than making someone smile and feel confident."



SHOW OF APPRECIATION

Every January, the 500 school districts across the Commonwealth start the new year by recognizing their school board directors. 4,500 individuals throughout the state volunteer their time and expertise to the students of Pennsylvania by serving on locally-elected school boards. In a particular way, the students, educators, staff, and community of the South Fayette Township School District took time last month to collectively offer their sincere appreciation to the members of the South Fayette Township School District Board of Directors.

To mark School Director Recognition Month, high school students **Amar Avdagic, Joshua Nugro, Nathan Sgro, Ty Yaquinto, and Ethan Yeaman**, with the guidance of high school teacher **Greg Schutz**, crafted South Fayette charcuterie boards for each board member. The boards were presented to the members of the school board at their meeting on January 24.

Also at the January 24 board meeting, a video of appreciation was played. It featured students and staff from throughout the district and highlighted the pride we have in our schools thanks to the work of our school board members.



THANK YOU,
SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTORS



School Director Recognition
Appreciation Video



HIGH SCHOOL TO LAUNCH IMMERSIVE CYBERSECURITY PATHWAY



CYBERSECURITY
SOUTH FAYETTE

Thanks to a new educational pathway coming to South Fayette, students could soon graduate with the skills and certifications needed to land an in-demand, high-paying cybersecurity job right out of high school or continue training in higher education.

South Fayette was one of only eleven districts nationwide selected to launch a high school cybersecurity program through Digital Promise. South Fayette is a proud member of Digital Promise's League of Innovative Schools.

According to Cybersecurity Ventures, the number of unfilled cybersecurity jobs will reach 3.5 million over the next two years. The group said, "The U.S. job market reflects a global supply-and-demand problem around recruiting candidates with cybersecurity certifications."

South Fayette's cybersecurity pathway will develop the next generation of qualified cybersecurity talent. While South Fayette High School has previously offered a one-semester cybersecurity course, this new program will be a two- to three-year pathway where students will have the opportunity to earn industry credentials and gain valuable networking experience through internships.

Dr. Matthew Callison, the district's director of innovation and strategic partnerships, is leading the efforts in the face of the country's growing labor need. Dr. Callison, along with **Dr. Chuck Herring**, director of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, built a group of industry professionals, many of whom are South Fayette Township residents, to serve on core and advisory teams. Their vast experience across a number of business sectors makes South Fayette's program both relevant and robust. These industry professionals joined the District on Friday, January 20 for an initial planning meeting with Digital Promise and on February 1 for one of several kickoff events with prospective eighth- and ninth-grade students.

While the expanded cybersecurity courses will be available to all high school students next year, incoming ninth- and tenth-grade students would be the first to have the opportunity to complete the entire program before graduation.



In the first-year cybersecurity course (Cyber 1), students would gain foundational knowledge and skills through hands-on learning, tackle in-class challenges, and hear from industry partners. The second-year course (Cyber 2) aligns with the CompTIA Security+ certification, and successful students could be certified by its completion. Learners will be paired with individual cyber mentors, experience real-world opportunities, and compete in a national cybersecurity competition. The third-year course (Cyber 3), while still being developed, would expand certification and competition access and help students build their resume and skillset through internships.

Amid increasing reports of cyber attacks targeting American businesses, the South Fayette Cybersecurity Pathway will train the next generation of cyber crime-fighters through industry-supported curriculum and experiences.

High school families interested in discovering more about this exciting future-focused learning opportunity may email Dr. Callison at mdcallison@southfayette.org or speak with their child's counselor.

STUDENT-MUSICIANS REPRESENT SCHOOL AT REGIONAL PERFORMANCES

In January, seven South Fayette High School students were selected to perform at the PMEA District Choir Festival. **Cooper Bruce, Nicolas Civetta-Villanueva, Daniel Gormley, Justin Kaine, Amelya Pinami, Dechlan Santavicca, and Brett Skerbetz** took to the stage at Thomas Jefferson High School. At the festival, Amelya, Brett, Justin, Daniel, and Dechlan were selected for the PMEA Region Choir.



Five South Fayette High School students earned the opportunity to perform at Heinz Hall during the PMEA District Orchestra Festival. **Ella Newhouse, cello; Reilley Barish, oboe; Anushri Eligati, violin; CJ Inkenhaus, bass; and Ayaan Soni, bass**, joined student-musicians from across the region. At the festival, CJ qualified to move on to the Western Region Orchestra Festival.



South Fayette High School student-musicians **Ella Schiro, Alycia Stier, Reilley Barish, and Cade Kellick** represented South Fayette High School at this month's PMEA District Band Festival. At the festival, Ella, Alycia, and Cade qualified through audition for the Region I Band Festival next month.



South Fayette High School student-musician **CJ Inkenhaus** performed in the PMEA District 1 Honors Jazz Festival. The festival culminated with a concert on February 18 at Seton Hill University.



MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSICIANS JOIN AREA HONORS BAND

Last month, a group of middle school student-musicians performed in the Western Area Middle School Honors Band Concert. Middle school band director **Adam Wazenegger** hosted this year's festival at South Fayette High School.



STUDENTS ACCEPTED INTO PENGUINS TECH ACADEMY



Sarah Kornacki and Pranita Chakkingal have been accepted into the Pittsburgh Penguins Tech Academy. In its second year, the Tech Academy gives up to 100 local high school students the chance to learn from leaders in sports and business technology while participating in immersive experiences at PPG Paints Arena. The goal of the program, sponsored by CGI, is to explore new ways of thinking and the technology career possibilities open to today's students.

SHOWING HEART FOR GOOD CAUSE

South Fayette Intermediate School hosted a Foursquare tournament for fourth- and fifth-grade students this month. In order to participate in this tournament, each participant donated to the American Heart Association. The event began with a presentation about heart health. Then the students were split into teams for the tournament. The winning team members won a playground ball. Five students also received a kindness award and a jump rope. The students had a great time learning about their heart! The event raised \$600 for the American Heart Association.



CHEER TEAM EARNs STATE, NATIONAL RECOGNITIONS

The South Fayette High School varsity competitive cheer team finished second in the state in the PIAA Competitive Spirit Championships in January! The cheer team competed against 40 other teams in the 3A small varsity section at the finals at the Giant Center in Hershey, PA on January 27 and 28.

In February, the cheer team traveled to Orlando, Florida for the UCA National High School Cheerleading Championships. The team competed against 82 teams that qualified through four rounds of competition. In the first round, South Fayette placed first in the section, allowing them to skip the second round. In the final round, the team performed a near-perfect routine, taking fifth place in the nation!



TEAM'S FOCUS ON SERVICE

On a blustery winter day after the holidays were over, the South Fayette High School baseball program spent the day honoring the more than 20,000 veterans who are laid to rest at the Cemetery of the Alleghenies in Cecil Township.

The team spread across the cemetery to clear the holiday wreaths placed at veterans' graves throughout the holiday season. The cemetery always sees an overwhelming response from volunteers across the region when the wreaths are placed on the individual graves every November. However, only a fraction of volunteers help to remove the wreaths several months later. That is why the nearly 30 South Fayette Lions bundled up, showed up at 8 a.m., and worked all day to clear the grounds.

Head coach Ken Morgan makes service a priority every year for the baseball program. He said it had a noticeable effect on his team.

"You never know how high school kids are going to react," said Morgan. "While I never doubted their respectfulness, you ask yourself whether they are going to feel the impact and know the sacrifice. And they certainly did. They saw the names on the graves. And they talked about it during every practice in the days that followed."

Coach Morgan hopes his team's regular volunteerism can have a ripple effect of community service.

"You never know what one act can lead to," Coach Morgan expressed.



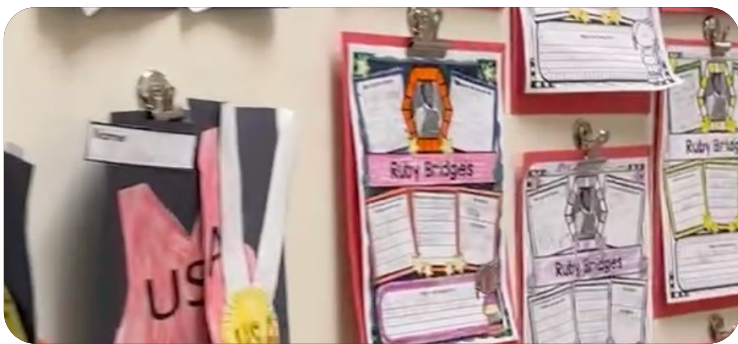
A SURPRISE TRIP TO HERSHEY



As the South Fayette Competitive Cheer Team prepared for the final day of the Spirit Championships, they discussed the one member who was not with them in Hershey – The South Fayette Lion. They said how nice it would have been for the Lion to be there. That discussion made it to the Lion, **Cooper Bruce**, and to his parents. The next morning at 5:30, Cooper and his parents made the three-hour drive to Hershey to surprise the girls. The Lion was there to cheer the team on to a second-place finish in the state and show off South Fayette Lion Pride. South Fayette was the only participating school in the championships to have a mascot there.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH HALLWAY OF FAME

As part of their studies of Black History Month, South Fayette Elementary School second-grade students created a "Hallway of Fame" to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of Olympic athlete **Wilma Rudolph**, civil rights activist **Ruby Bridges**, hall-of-famer **Jackie Robinson**, aviator **Bessie Coleman**, scientist and inventor **George Washington Carver**, and educator **Mary McLeod Bethune**. Click the image to the right to see a video of the display.





IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

A WINTER SPORTS RECAP

IMPACTFUL ROLLS

SOUTH FAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL JOINS SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED BOCCE PROGRAM

A new sport rolled onto the winter sports schedule at South Fayette High School this year, and its goal is to foster inclusion and acceptance.

Last year, Special Olympics of Pennsylvania approached High School Principal **Dr. Laura Hartzell**, Director of Student Support Services **Dr. Rachel Andler**, and Athletic Director **Mark Keener** in an effort to expand opportunities for athletes in the region's school districts through its unified indoor bocce program. Unified indoor bocce brings together neurodiverse and neurotypical students to build teamwork and friendships while learning and playing the entertaining game.



Student-athletes train and compete as teammates in four regular season matches before the playoffs begin in March. South Fayette administrators and educators quickly agreed that the program would further enhance the positive and inclusive opportunities available for Lion Learners. And the ball got rolling, figuratively and literally, from there.

South Fayette teachers **Kara Pappas** and **Nicole Canofari** are the team's coaches and helped to lead the efforts to promote the program and recruit student-athletes. Feeding off the success of the Best Buddies program at the high school, the interest was so overwhelming that the high school quickly formed two teams.

"Our educators are so passionate about doing the work that is in the best interest of our students," said Dr. Andler. "Mrs. Pappas and Mrs. Canofari stepped up and took on this extra role because they knew it would have a powerful effect on our students, school, and community. That truly is what it means to be future-focused, student-centered, and innovation-driven."



The two teams of eight students practiced at least twice a week starting in November. Each team consists of an equal number of student-athletes and partners who first had to learn the rules of bocce and then the strategies of the game. While skills are important, teamwork may be even more essential as coaches are not permitted to assist or talk with players during the match.

At the first home bocce match in school history on Thursday, January 26, hundreds of students, staff, family members, and community members packed the bleachers in the high school gym to celebrate the accomplishments of the Lions bocce team. Dozens of high school students formed a tunnel during pregame introductions as the crowd roared to show their pride. The enthusiastic crowd fed off the sounds of the high school pep band and cheered on the athletes of both teams. It was an energized, and at times emotional, afternoon, that Dr. Andler says was only the beginning of a proud new tradition in South Fayette.

"While you can see the seriousness on the faces of the student-athletes as they take their turn, what is even more evident is the sense of belonging that has been built," Dr. Andler said.



In addition to interscholastic sports, as a member of the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools program, South Fayette High School will participate in the other components of the program – inclusive youth leadership and whole school engagement. Last fall, high school students attended a sportsmanship summit about empowering inclusivity. Additionally, the winter pep rally, Best Buddies Mardi Gras Dance, and the Cool Schools Polar Plunge will build school engagement to further the mission of Special Olympics.

STUDENTS ATTEND CULTURE JAM



On January 13, South Fayette's student-led group SHOUT (Social Handprints Overcoming Unjust Treatment) had the opportunity to attend The Ellis School's annual Culture Jam. Culture Jam is an annual student-led and produced conference that focuses on diversity and empowering students to have courageous conversations about equity-related issues that are present in schools, the Pittsburgh region, and the global community.

This year's theme, *You've Got the Power*, focused on the power of self-advocacy. The Student Diversity League, who organized the event, hopes that all participants learn something about advocating for themselves while on the road to becoming an advocate for everyone. Self-advocacy is a crucial step in becoming a strong advocate for marginalized groups and allows for appreciation of diversity and fostering a positive environment.

SHOUT members were excited to attend and participate in the various workshops and discussions offered at Culture Jam. They were able to connect with other high school students from around the region and learn about different perspectives and experiences. They also had the opportunity to share their own thoughts and ideas on how to create a more inclusive and equitable society.



DISTRICT'S WORK SPOTLIGHTED

The South Fayette Township School District received a \$10,000 grant from Kidsburgh through the Parents as Allies initiative for the 2022-2023 School Year. The research-based project was designed in 2021 to build connections between schools and families and includes 24 schools in the region. South Fayette entered into this program in April 2022.

Dr. Chuck Herring, Dr. Kevin Maurer, and a group of parents have been working through this project to build opportunities for teamwork between families, educators, and administrators to support student learning and well-being. The ultimate goal is to enhance the strong partnership that already exists in our school district.

The monetary award was given to South Fayette in order to implement unique activities that bring families into the school to interact with staff in non-traditional ways. With the recent district-focus on the "World of Work" and Holland's "RIASEC Codes," this was a perfect opportunity to invite parents/guardians into the initial implementation of the "World of Work" framework.

During the first semester, the Parents as Allies committee along with the Intermediate School Administration and Staff facilitated a Holland Code/RIASEC experience for parents/guardians. This entailed scoring parents'/guardians' RIASEC assessments and facilitating a fun-filled evening event.

The event was highlighted in the latest Kidsburgh Newsletter.

The SFTSD Parents as Allies Committee is looking forward to coordinating and providing upcoming events and resources for the families of the school district!

The parent members of the Parents as Allies committee are **Erin Barth, Rebecca McClintock, Preeti Potdar,** and **Dominique Robinson.**

STUDENT REMEMBERED IN ARTWORK

On what would have been his 16th birthday, the life of South Fayette's Tanner Young was celebrated on Tuesday, February 14 with a memorial painting. Students, staff members, families, and community members gathered at the intermediate school cafeteria and were each given a tile to paint using the palette of colors created for his portrait by artist Kevin Wenner. Each artist showed their creative style on their individual tiles.

Once each tile was complete, the entire mural was assembled and truly represented Tanner's happy, bright, carefree, and loving personality. The portrait will be displayed in the intermediate school.




IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

STUDENTS, STAFF TEAM UP FOR WINTER PEP-RALLY SURPRISE

What happens with high school students and educators collaborate on a choreographed display of Lion Pride? Check out this video from the winter pep-rally!



Students, Staff Show Off Their Lion Pride

 YouTube

SFHS STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to **Marley Fugh-Brooks, Ben Willy, Ami Wolstoncroft, Cooper Hillebrand, Ravya Bajaj, Braden Jenks, Hannah Hughes, and Gianna Guzek** for being named High School Students of the Month for January. January's theme was enthusiasm.

Also, congratulations to **Robert Wiggers** who was named the December Rotary Student of the Month.



TEACHER AWARD FINALIST CELEBRATED

Nearly 250,000 educators serve in Pennsylvania's 500 public school districts, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. And out of the quarter million teachers who are inspiring the next generation, South Fayette Elementary School STEAM teacher **Melissa Unger** was named one of only 12 finalists for the 2023 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year.

The Teacher of the Year program is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania chapter of the National State Teacher of the Year. It is the most prestigious teacher recognition program in the country, honoring educators who make outstanding academic contributions to Pennsylvania's students.

Unger was nominated by former student **Julia Welch**, who introduced Unger at the Teacher of the Year ceremony in early-December as a "caring teacher who encouraged us to keep imagining and creating." Julia's younger brother, **Noah Welch**, even said he did not want to go on a Walt Disney World vacation because it meant he would miss Unger's STEAM class.

Julia highlighted the "thinking cap" Unger and her students created to embody the great ideas fostered in her classroom. Unger's classroom is a true learning lab where all students are encouraged and inspired to create and build. Unger's students are engaged in project-based learning that helps them to understand computer programming, engineering, and problem-solving.

Unger was a finalist with eleven other educators from across the state, including local teachers from the Bethel Park, Blackhawk, and Shaler Area school districts. All finalists benefit from yearlong professional learning and development experiences through the Council of Chief State School Officers.

South Fayette Elementary School celebrated Unger's accomplishments with a lunch in her honor after her return from the Teacher of the Year ceremony in Hershey. The South Fayette Township School District Board of Directors recognized Unger at its meeting on Tuesday, January 24.



"I feel very thankful to be part of the South Fayette community because it is a place where I know that I am truly supported and encouraged by my fellow teachers, administrators, and school board members to bring creative learning to our students," Unger told the School Board during the January recognition.

Ryan Hardesty from Blackhawk was named the recipient of the 2023 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year award.

SPEAKER SERIES CONTINUES

The South Fayette Speaker Series continues next month with a conversation on "Raising a Student Athlete." **NFL veteran Dorin Dickerson** will present positive strategies and tips to be an effective parent of an aspiring athlete. As a former student athlete and father of student athletes, Dorin will share his vast experience with both sides of the athletic journey. The in-person event is scheduled for Monday, March 27 in the High School Theatre. To register or to see the entire speaker series line-up, [click here](#).

THE BRIDGE TO A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

BRINGING WORLD OF WORK TO SOUTH FAYETTE AND THE REGION

R
Realistic

I
Investigative

A
Artistic

S
Social

E
Enterprising

C
Conventional

Through a partnership with three other local school districts, the South Fayette Township School District is bringing a real-world, relevant career curriculum to our region.

"World of Work" will provide exposure to careers and personal strengths and interests beginning in the earliest grade-levels. World of Work began in the Cajon Valley Union School District outside San Diego. Thanks to funding from the Grable Foundation, the transformative career initiative has arrived in western Pennsylvania. South Fayette, along with the Avonworth School District, Duquesne City School District, and the Elizabeth Forward School District, are each building a grade-level curriculum for World of Work Pittsburgh this school year, with plans to grow it to another four grade-levels next school year.

The four steps of World of Work are exploration, simulation, meeting a pro, and practice.



EXPLORATION

Students participate in an interest survey called the "RIASEC" survey. The letters in RIASEC represent Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Once students receive their individual survey results, they learn about career paths in multiple industries. Students then have the opportunity to explore careers that they may not have known before.

SIMULATION

Students engage in hands-on experiences and activities related to the job or industry they discovered in the exploration phase and broaden their knowledge with learning about skills and values for different careers.

MEETING A PRO

After learning more about the career, students have the opportunity to connect with professionals in that particular line of work. Real-life experiences are presented in person or virtually so that students can see first-hand the work in which they are interested.

PRACTICE

With a thorough understanding of the profession, students can take what they learned and practice through play, school projects, homework, socialization, and volunteer work.

South Fayette's efforts to build a World of Work curriculum for the region started in fifth grade this school year. Teachers **Dana Populo** and **Lori Litwinovich** introduced their students to RIASEC activities that capitalize on students' individual strengths and interests. Counselor **Sarah Sweet** has also been instrumental in bringing this initiative to fifth graders.

Recently, fifth-grade students studied the career of entrepreneurs. Working in small groups, they created solutions to everyday community challenges. These activities also have helped create a classroom community that incorporates RIASEC into daily conversations and instruction. Recently in Mrs. Populo's class, students used their knowledge of RIASEC to predict the three-letter RIASEC codes of famous entrepreneurs throughout American history. These classroom experiences allow students to take ownership of their own learning while recognizing the strengths and interests of others and exploring how their respective skill sets might complement one another in a collaborative classroom setting.

Next year, students in all four local districts will have access to World of Work in second through fifth grades. And while the regional World of Work efforts have been focused in those four districts, the vision is to grow its reach to students in all districts by making the curriculum robust and accessible.



WORLD
of
WORK



SENIORS NAMED TO JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT'S 18 UNDER EIGHTEEN

For the second year, Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania has searched to find 18 of the region's most incredible young people. And for the second straight year, the organization found two of its 18 Under Eighteen recipients at South Fayette High School.

During a ceremony at Acrisure Stadium on Tuesday, February 7, South Fayette seniors **Grace Howard** and **Mohammad Shedeed** were formally presented with their 18 Under Eighteen awards by Junior Achievement of Western Pennsylvania. The 18 Under Eighteen program recognizes the talents and achievements of young people from Western Pennsylvania and Northern West Virginia. This year's recipients come from Allegheny, Beaver, Cambria, and Washington counties.

Howard is committed to making a difference through community service with the National Honor Society at South Fayette High School and through her church. When social distancing prevented her from working directly with senior citizens in her church, Howard and her mom created the COVID Love



Shedeed serves as the co-chair for SHOUT (Social Handprints Overcoming Unjust Treatment) at South Fayette High School. Shedeed's family is from Egypt, and he said his

passion has always been to promote cultural awareness and acceptance. He did so at South Fayette with the creation of the first "Dress Like Your Culture Day."

"The objective was to celebrate our differences and have kids look at each other and celebrate that they are wearing similar outfits because often we feel divided and embarrassed by our differences," Shedeed explained.

Bag initiative. The bags filled with everyday necessities, encouraging words, and treats fostered connections during a time of isolation.

"They were so excited when they saw us because we drove door-to-door to drop them off," Howard said. "And people came out of their houses with their masks on to take a picture. It was so they still felt welcome. And we still had that communication with them."



Mohammad & Grace In Their Own Words YouTube

Ending the stigma of mental health has been a shared priority for both Howard and Shedeed during their years at South Fayette High School. For each student, the reasons are personal.

In Egypt, Shedeed says mental health is not discussed. He never had much of an interest in studying mental health until he took an applied positive psychology class with **Dr. Felix Yerace** in his sophomore year. The course opened his mind to the reality of mental health.

From there, Shedeed got involved in national organizations, including Work2BeWell, becoming part of its education team, focusing on promoting mental health resources and normalizing conversations about mental health. He is part of the Pennsylvania Youth Advocacy Network, where he and other members crafted a proclamation recognizing Teen Mental Health Day on May 22.

"I want to make it my mission, in a community and a country where there is a mental health infrastructure, to properly promote and spread awareness about these resources to help reduce the stigma that arises and address the epidemic of teen mental health," Shedeed said.

Howard's work at South Fayette with Stand Together, a group funded by the state, also is aimed at eliminating the stigma around teen mental health. With Stand Together, Howard and her classmates make it their mission through three yearly projects to promote open and ongoing conversations about mental health.

"I feel like not being able to talk about it makes it worse or harder," Howard said. "And so just by breaking the stigma, making sure it is something we talk about and get comfortable with is the only way people are going to get help."

Howard and Shedeed are excited about their futures. Howard will attend a Division I university. Shedeed plans to major in neuroscience. And alongside the other 18 Under Eighteen recipients, they know the future of our region and world is just as bright.

"It's often said our generation is lacking and in danger," said Shedeed. "But this group proves that we're taking on initiatives to help secure our future and humanity's future, as well."



DRONES TO SHATTER GLASS CEILING

DISTRICT, TWO OTHERS RECEIVE GRANT TO CREATE DRONE ACADEMY

The South Fayette Township School District's commitment to a future-focused, student-centered, and innovation-driven education for all students will soon take to the skies above western Pennsylvania with the support of a Moonshot Grant from Remake Learning. South Fayette partnered with the Baldwin-Whitehall School District and the Beaver Area School District to propose the creation of a drone academy aimed at shattering the glass ceiling for women in the aviation industry.

According to 2021 statistics from the Federal Aviation Administration, nearly 264,000 individuals have obtained the Remote Pilot Airman Certificate since the enactment of the small drone rules in 2016. Females account for just under 8% of the total certificates earned. Recognizing a need to enable gender representation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields, **Dr. Kristin Deichler, assistant superintendent** with the South Fayette Township School District, collaborated with Dr. Janeen Peretin, director of communication, innovation, and advancement with the Baldwin-Whitehall School District, and Ms. Emily Sanders, assistant superintendent with the Beaver Area School District, to develop the Fly Like a Girl Drone Academy.



The 12-16 week academy will take flight in spring 2023 and connect high school girls interested in STEM-related fields with curriculum, equipment, and hands-on training. Aspiring pilots from South Fayette, Baldwin-Whitehall, and Beaver Area, as well as from participating districts Ambridge, McKeesport, and Woodland Hills, would attend the academy in four-week increments on Saturdays. Sessions will last for three hours. Every fourth week, students will be engaged in a full, hands-on learning experience, working directly with drone industry professionals. Transportation from each school to the academy will be covered by Remake Learning's Moonshot Grant.

"South Fayette is a renowned leader in embracing inventive and meaningful learning opportunities for our Lion Learners," said South Fayette Township School District **Superintendent Dr. Michelle Miller**. "Through the support of Remake Learning and our partnership with the Baldwin-Whitehall and the Beaver Area school districts, this Moonshot Grant helps us to reach students who for too long have been underrepresented in STEM careers."

By the end of the academy, students interested in pursuing their UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) license through the FAA will complete the Remote Pilot Certificate exam. The cost of the exam and transportation to the exam site also will be covered in the first year by the Moonshot Grant.

"Drone technology will shape the future, and we believe it is the responsibility of today's educators to provide the technology, support, networking, and safe spaces that are essential for female students to explore their career aspirations," said Dr. Deichler.

Following the inaugural drone academy courses this spring, the districts' vision is to scale up the program and open it to all interested students. 2022-2023 participants will serve as student leaders in future academies.

For the last two years, Remake Learning has challenged our region's educators to dream about the future of learning and test new ideas to make that future a reality. Support for Remake Learning's Moonshot Grants is provided by The Grable Foundation and The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

The South Fayette Township School District is grateful for the leadership in innovation from leaders with the Baldwin-Whitehall and Beaver Area school districts.

MARDI GRAS

It was a record turnout for the annual South Fayette High School Best Buddies Club Mardi Gras Dance on Friday, February 17. Approximately 250 current and former students, family members, support staff, and friends danced, played games, and enjoyed great food. This dance has been a tradition at South Fayette High School for the past 15 years and was started by **Helen Cardillo**, former paraeducator and sponsor of the club Circle of Friends, to celebrate friendship and inclusivity.



**SFHS Best Buddies
Mardi Gras Dance**



LION TALES

A Recap of What's Happening in South Fayette

QUIZ BOWL REGIONAL CHAMPS



Members of the High School Varsity Quiz Bowl Team **Himanish Kolli, Danny Miller, Tyler Passyn, Viraj Urs, and Vishram Urs** competed in the Varsity Quiz Bowl Tournament at Thomas Jefferson High School on January 18. The Lions took first place at the Southwestern Academic League Tournament Championship!

Quiz Bowl is an academic competition where teams compete against students from other districts on toss-up questions. They also collaborate with their teammates to answer bonus questions.

BAKING UP GOOD

Students who are part of the Middle School Baking Club, along with educator **Alexandra Toras**, recently baked eleven dozen muffins. The muffins were donated to the local Meals on Wheels organization and were delivered to local residents.



STARS ON THE STAGE



Two students represented South Fayette Intermediate School in Pittsburgh Musical Theater's presentation of Beauty and the Beast Jr. from February 16-19. **Julia Welch** was cast as Chip and **Jayden Meehan** portrayed the role of LeFou. The performances took place at the Gargaro Theater in Pittsburgh's West End.



BUNNY BONANZA

Join your community members for the annual Bunny Bonanza at the South Fayette Stadium Athletic Field on Saturday, April 1. Gates will open at 10 a.m. The egg-citing Egg Hunt for children 12 and under will begin at 11 a.m. The cost for the Egg Hunt is \$5 per child. Children will be able to collect up to 20 eggs. This event is rain or shine. No reservations are needed.

TA FOR A DAY

Friday, February 10 was "TA for a Day" throughout the district. For a donation towards a senior scholarship, educators had the opportunity to welcome one or more senior "teacher assistants" to their classrooms for the entire day. The TAs helped with lessons, activities, or projects. More than 60 teacher assistants served in all four schools throughout the district. For some teachers, it was a reunion with Lions they had in their classrooms a decade ago!



CRAFTING WORRY DOLLS



Middle School Spanish Club members recently met to learn about the Maya and the worry doll tradition. The students then created worry dolls.

LIONS COME TOGETHER

Following the passing of Schawn Conner in December after courageously battling cancer, the South Fayette family came together to support his wife Lisa and their three children. On Tuesday, January 24, the South Fayette community participated in a spaghetti dinner fundraiser. The meals, cooked by culinary students at Parkway West Career and Technology Center, were distributed on campus with the help of school district staff and students. The money raised from the many meals sold was donated to the Conner family.



18TH CENTURY SHARK TANK



What would the television hit show Shark Tank look like if it were recorded in the 1700s? Students in **Megan Hackworth's** AP Euro class pitched their inventions (steam engine, piano, dictionary, telephone) during presentation earlier this month to a panel of "sharks." They even took some tough questions from the potential investors.

TELL US SOMETHING GOOD

Do you have good news to share? We want to celebrate it! Email the information and photos, if applicable, to communications@southfayette.org.

CALCUSOLVE SUCCESS

South Fayette Middle School students who competed in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit's CalcuSolve tournament earned second place, third place, and a perfect score out of 360 students in the region! The team took third place. CalcuSolve combines individual and team competitions to test students' problem-solving skills related to mathematics.



MOCK TRIAL TEAM MAKES SCHOOL HISTORY



In January, the South Fayette High School Mock Trial team took fifth place out of 49 schools at the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral Classic Tournament. The finish was the highest that any South Fayette team has ever placed at the Pitt tournament.

STUDENT'S INTERNSHIP HIGHLIGHTED

Senior **Ty Yaquinto's** internship at West View Cunningham in Oakdale was recently spotlighted on the company's Facebook page. Ty assists with taking apart pump assemblies and doing 3D modeling for baseplates.



MAKING IT COUNT

The South Fayette Middle School MATHCOUNTS team recently took third place in an Allegheny County competition. Additionally, middle school student Shaurya placed fifth, and Erick placed first. Erick is moving on to the state competition.



LION HEARTS' DONATION



The South Fayette Middle School Lion Hearts were joined by special guests at their meeting on Thursday, February 9. The Lion Hearts presented a \$500 check to Animal Friends. The money was raised from last year's Halloween Dance. Our Lions really enjoyed meeting therapy dogs MeiLi and Rooney. The group also donated \$500 to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

DRUG SAFETY LESSONS

Pharmacy students from Duquesne University recently visited South Fayette Middle School to teach them about responsible over-the-counter medicine use and disposal. The presentations occurred during students' health classes.



POSTING KINDNESS

Friday, February 17 was Random Acts of Kindness Day. At South Fayette High School, SHOUT sponsored four days of kindness-themed activities. During all lunches on February 17, Lions had the opportunity to express kindness by writing uplifting, positive notes and posting them in the school.



MY COUNTRY,
MY CONTINENT



Intermediate school students in the ESL (English as a Second Language) program with educator **Sarah Cabonor** learned about the world's continents and oceans. To complete the unit, they worked on a project called, "My Country, My Continent." Each student identified the country they are from, what continent that country is located on, and one ocean near their home country. The students also created a "flat" version of themselves and displayed the finish projects on a world map.

WEATHER GUEST

After reading about storms, elementary school students welcomed meteorologist Jeff Oechslein from WTOV in Steubenville for a visit to learn more about weather.



IT'S MINI-THON SEASON!

It's the community celebration that high school students look forward to all year, and it is just nearly two months away. South Fayette High School will host the 2023 Mini-THON beginning on Friday, April 28. This all-night dance marathon, much like Penn State's THON, will last until 6 a.m. on Saturday, April 29.

Already, high school students are busy collecting donations and raising money for Four Diamonds, an organization dedicated to the fight against pediatric cancer. Four Diamonds covers the cost of treatment that insurance or other means do not cover. The organization also helps with other emergency expenses for the families of children battling cancer.

2022's Mini-THON raised more than \$258,000, bringing South Fayette's ten-year total to more than one million dollars. Now, high school students, educators, and staff are ready to raise even more.

There are several ways to support the 2023 Mini-THON:

- Visit the Mini-THON donation website [by clicking here](#) and find a student or educator who is participating and make a donation to their team. All of the proceeds go directly to Four Diamonds.
- Wear blue on Friday, March 3 during a district-wide "Blue Out." Blue is the official color of Four Diamonds.

This year's Mini-THON student chairs are:

Hannah Hughes, Meghan Kuczinski, Rishika Panda, Tim Danziger, Marissa Stock, Paige Westbrook, Ryan Baldigowski, and Tessa Schwarzmiller.

If you have questions about South Fayette's Mini-THON, contact **Brandon Flannery** by emailing bmflannery@southfayette.org.



THE THREE, THIRTY-THREE,
SIXTY-THREE LITTLE PIGS

The Fifth Grade Drama Club at South Fayette Intermediate School had to rename a national play because so many students wanted to participate. The play "The Thirty-Three Little Pigs" written by playwright Brian D. Taylor and based on the popular tale "The Three Little Pigs" became "The Sixty-Three Little Pigs" at South Fayette Intermediate School.

After months of rehearsal and set design, the students stepped into the spotlight on Wednesday, January 18. The fast-paced play featured more than 20 scenes reflecting each character's personality.

The performance was directed by teachers **Caroline Wazenegger** and **Shad Wachter**.



SF HOSTS TECH-ED CONFERENCE

The South Fayette Township School District hosted more than 300 leading and forward-thinking educators from across the country for the Three Rivers Educational Technology Conference (TRETc) on January 16. The gathering, centered around the theme of “Building the Future,” formed a community of individuals passionate about substantive transformation in education, with technology leading the way.

Nearly 40 sessions and workshops took place in just about every corner of South Fayette High School. The conference let educators showcase the educational technology they are using in their districts and learn from others to expand the impact of the inspiring learning advances taking place in our region.

Not only did South Fayette host the event, but the district’s educators and administrators led sessions and workshops throughout the day, highlighting the educational opportunities and programming available to Lion Learners in all grade-levels.



- **Dr. Rachel Andler**, director of student support services; **Dr. Matthew Callison**, director of innovation and strategic partnerships; and teachers **Nicole Canofari and Kara Pappas** hosted a session introducing the high school freight farm – a climate-controlled shipping container located in the high school parking lot that will grow produce all year. The team shared how this initiative will build inclusive STEM and entrepreneurship through data science pathways.
- Dr. Callison and teachers **Samantha Edkins, Anthony Mannarino, and Melissa Unger** led a workshop on using hands-on learning to guide STEM career exploration.
- Teachers **Lori Litwinovich and Dana Populo** were part of a 90-minute in-depth session on the World of Work initiative.
- Melissa Unger led a discussion to promote community growth among educators.
- Dr. Callison led a discussion among STEM coaches throughout the region.
- Superintendent **Dr. Michelle Miller** joined a panel discussion with other superintendents, focused on building the future with education.
- Dr. Andler was part of a presentation on utilizing gaming simulation to drive instruction for neurodiverse populations.



- **Dr. Kristin Deichler**, assistant superintendent, shared how the South Fayette School District uses RIASEC codes, the value of RIASEC, and how it matters during instruction and classroom engagement.

Marie Pelloni, senior director of talent and workforce development initiatives with the Pittsburgh Technology Council which organizes TRETc, said South Fayette was chosen to host the conference because of its reputation for innovation.

“It really starts with your whole culture,” Pelloni said. “You have incredible leadership here who are so dedicated and passionate about the student learning, empowering teachers, empowering students. The culture was incredible, then being able to highlight the makerspaces that you have. The commercial-grade equipment, the way that your teachers integrate them to really bring about learning and objectives and success for your students, brought us here.”

The South Fayette Township School District will also host TRETc 2024 next January.

SECOND ANNUAL AP ONLINE COURSE AWARDED

South Fayette High School has been a pioneer in offering Online AP Courses since the early 2000s. This program has afforded thousands of students the ability to take a selection of elective courses that were not able to be offered in the high school course list.

At that time, these offerings were provided through the University of Missouri free of charge through the district. Gradually AP courses were added to the list; however, beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, the South Fayette Township School District was unable to continue to cover the cost of these courses.

During a school board meeting in late fall 2021, **School Board Member Dr. Jennifer Iriti** asked whether there was a way to provide a grant to students taking the AP Online Learning courses to offset the costs paid by the families.

High School Principal **Dr. Laura Hartzell** began the process of creating this opportunity and presented it to the South Fayette Foundation for Excellence (SFFE) Board for funding. SFFE agreed to provide the monies from the Dr. Iannarelli Scholarship Fund and an additional generous donation by **Mrs. Annie Duchess**, SFFE Board Member, to fund the program.

Dr. Hartzell and the high school counseling staff designed the application and with SFFE board approval it was given to AP Online students who had requested the information.



On Wednesday, February 1, **SFHS junior Alekhya Buragadda** received a \$200 award for her outstanding achievement in her Online AP Environmental Science Class. Upon graduation, Alekhya is looking forward to pursuing a degree in neuroscience with additional studies in environmental science. Her AP course has had an impact on her decision to study the latter. The award was presented by SFFE President **Maureen Pedzwater** and Dr. Hartzell.



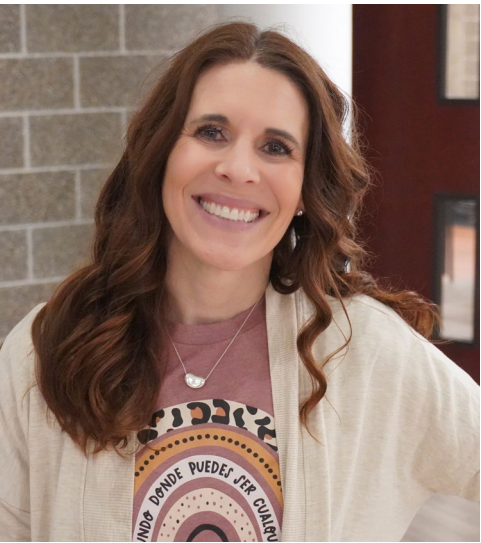
SAVE THE DATE!

MONDAY, JULY 17, 2023

South Fayette Foundation for Excellence
10th Annual Golf Outing
at Hickory Heights, Bridgeville, PA

Contact Maureen Pedzwater at
mapedzwater@southfayette.org

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATOR NAMED TEACHING FELLOW



South Fayette High School Spanish Teacher Tara Surloff was selected to be a transformED Teaching Fellow. The Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) successfully piloted the fellowship last year as its latest vehicle for providing transformational professional development opportunities.

Surloff is one of 36 teachers selected across the region to be awarded a 2022-2023 transformED Teaching Fellowship.

The transformED Teaching Fellowship reflects the AIU's commitment to support the professional development of quality educators, and the AIU is excited to embark upon this next iteration of the initiative that aims to convene teacher-leaders interested in instructional innovation to incubate new approaches to teaching and learning.

As part of this small community of practice, fellows will learn collectively with their peers in sessions held throughout the remainder of the school year. In addition, each fellow receives a \$1,500 classroom mini grant to purchase technology,

subscriptions, maker materials and other resources to support their innovative teaching approaches to be applied in their classrooms.

transformED is an initiative of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit that connects educators with the professional learning, technology access, peer networks and grant funding they need to start, scale, and sustain transformational change.

This fellowship was made possible through grant funding provided by the Grable and Hillman foundations.

KINDNESS CHALLENGE AT SFIS

During Random Acts of Kindness Week at South Fayette Intermediate School from February 13-17, Girl Scout Troop 52346 created a kindness challenge for their action project. Homeroom teachers were given a kindness kit the morning of February 13. The kit included strips of paper to make a kindness chain. Every time a homeroom teacher saw a random act of kindness, they had their students write down the good deed on a strip of paper to make a chain link. Each observable act of kindness was added to the chain. The class with the longest chain at the end of the week would earn an extra recess the following week. Congratulations to **Mrs. Drewen's homeroom** for winning the kindness challenge! Mrs. Drewen's class had 99 kindness chain links.

In addition, the troop created kindness posters, an interactive bulletin board, and kindness bracelets. Thank you, Troop 52346, for your efforts and your kindness!



WINTER SIGNING DAY

Congratulations to five South Fayette Lions who participated in the Winter Signing Day at South Fayette High School and will continue their academic and athletic careers at the collegiate level.



Jake Betz will attend Messiah University and play baseball.



Morgan Clark will attend Westminster College and play lacrosse.



Sarah Grimenstein will attend Pennsylvania Western University, Clarion and swim.







Marissa Malosh will attend the University of Delaware and play golf.



Cameron Rosinsky will attend Sacred Heart University and play football.

Signing Day photos courtesy of South Fayette High School student **Josh Yates**.

FOLLOW ALONG!



ON THE MOVE THIS WINTER

South Fayette Township School District staff members laced up their walking shoes and were on the move thanks to a winter movement motivation challenge. Developed by the district's wellness committee, the competition encouraged school staff to move more and stay healthy this winter. Participants joined teams of four, and earned daily points based on the calories they burned or the steps they took every day. The competition lasted through Monday, February 20. Twenty-two teams participated in the challenge.

The winners of the challenge with an impressive 7,189 points tallied were **Christa Fornella, Tara Kohowski, Lexie Revi, and Ryan Schoenberger**. In second place with 7,123 points scored were **Lori Litwinovich, Scott Litwinovich, Joe Rossi, and Karley Rossi**. And coming in third place with 7,117 points were **Jocelyn Blystone, Rebecca Colangelo, Anne Liberatore, and Karla Schooley**.



FIRST PLACE TEAM



SECOND PLACE TEAM



THIRD PLACE TEAM

Congratulations to the Top 10 Individual Winners who were not on a winning team! The Top 10 included **Christine Sharrer, Mary Quirk, Sarah Manly, Dena Hoffman, Melissa Gielata, Dana Falosk, Donna Glass, Alexis Deyarmin, Kara Miles, and Dana Populo**!



Christine Sharrer



Mary Quirk



Dena Hoffman



Melissa Gielata



Dana Falosk

WINTER
MOVEMENT
CHALLENGE



Donna Glass



Alexis Deyarmin



Kara Miles



Dana Populo

BUILDING BRIDGES



On January 17th, **Dr. Chuck Herring**, the director of diversity, equity, and inclusion at South Fayette Township School District, had the opportunity to meet with **Mrs. Ebtahal Badawi**, the founder of Pittsburgh Builds Bridges. The meeting was held at Pleasant Hills Middle School, where Mrs. Badawi completed her first public art installation for the organization.

During the meeting, Mrs. Badawi shared with Dr. Herring the story of how Pittsburgh Builds Bridges came to be. It all began with a hate incident against a Muslim girl in a local school district.

The incident, which happened about four years ago, made her realize that there were many people in the Greater Pittsburgh Region who were not only struggling with feelings of isolation and disconnection but also facing discrimination and bias.

As a mother, Mrs. Badawi felt that it was her responsibility to do something about it. She wanted to create a way for people from different backgrounds to come together and understand each other better. And thus, Pittsburgh Builds Bridges was born.

One of the ways that Mrs. Badawi is spreading the message of building metaphorical bridges throughout the Greater Pittsburgh Region is by partnering with schools and organizations to create public art installations.

One such installation will be called South Fayette Builds Bridges with Handprints. The installation will be a large-scale mural featuring her signature bridge paintings along with handprints of students from the district. The handprints will represent the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the students as well as their promise to do their best to keep each other safe both mentally and physically.

This project will serve as a powerful symbol of unity and understanding, reminding us that despite our differences, we all want to be connected and valued. It will also be a tangible way for students to see the impact they can have on their community and to feel pride in their own unique identities.



2023-2024 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW!

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION





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

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.