



TEACHERS WIN GRANTS



HONORING OUR VETERANS



ACME CELEBRATES SAFETY



AV FRIENDS PROGRAM

Allegheny Valley School District

# eNEWS



## Be Generous

Each year around the holidays, students and staff celebrate the spirit of the season and take the initiative to share and spread goodwill. Participating in a number of service projects, student activity groups, classrooms, and staff members find new and traditional ways to give back to the community. Projects ranged from collecting and distributing items to making blankets for senior citizens to entertaining throughout the local area.

For many years, the elementary Student Council (formerly Colfax Upper Elementary Student Council) has sponsored “special” days throughout the school year. On these days, students wear certain items as a theme of the day. At times, students pay a quarter to wear the item, and any funds raised go to a charity. The charities change each time, allowing the group to donate to a number of groups.

In addition, Allegheny Valley staff purchased “Secret Santa” gifts for the Lower Valley

*Acmetonia Elementary Student Council sponsors days throughout the year to raise funds for various charities. Students pictured, participate in the*

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*Ugly Sweater Day.*

Food Bank and students in the elementary and secondary buildings. Presents included clothing, toys, beauty and hygiene products, and gift cards. The staff looks forward to these drives each year as a way to give back to the community.

What perhaps has come to be the most anticipated events of the season were the student vocal and instrumental music performances. The Senior Choir and High School Band provided a joint holiday concert in December. They filled the auditorium with wonderful sounds of the season. Students from both buildings traveled throughout the area, performing at senior care facilities, local malls, and at community organization meetings. The groups not only put audience members in the holiday spirit, but the performances help students gain confidence and learn positive outcomes of community service.

Through all of these activities and the many more that occurred throughout the past months, students have given of themselves. They've learned the importance of community and that these lessons are not only for the holidays. Over the course of the school year, staff and students put in time and effort to show appreciation to their community for all that they have been given. For community members, it becomes an additional reason to be proud of Allegheny Valley.

## Learning With Legos

Acmetonia Elementary School brought a popular toy into their daily lessons through the Lego Lab. Established in Create U, the room now supports a new place to learn through play. Create U, a Makerspace in the building developed to support STEAM education, was established in 2014 through a \$20,000 grant from the Center for Creativity. With the recent renovation including a new STEAM classroom, Create U changed its focus to become a place of Learning with Legos. Students suggested the idea because students at all grade levels can use Legos, and the blocks are all-inclusive, no matter what your academic ability.



Although Lego blocks are known as toys, the company has developed a Lego Education component. This section of Lego “provides a continuum of hands-on STEAM solutions with standards-aligned lessons that are adaptable to the needs of students.” (<https://education.lego.com/en-us>) The idea is to “deliver playful learning experiences that bring subjects to life in the classroom and make learning fun and impactful.” Students love the new focus and the creativity it brings. They can build anything, and Acmetonia staff has found that they quite often do.

Currently, students work on “free building” - they can build whatever they want - which they love, and it sparks so much imagination! “Although sometimes I do put a note on each table with some directions – just to see what they can build,” commented Mrs. Shamey, the school’s librarian who manages the area. The notes ask students to “build a character from a book you have read” or “build something with wheels.” “I never tell them ahead of

## Fall Sports Honors

### Boys’ Soccer:

#### All Section 3A

Alexander Barch, Ephraim Duku,  
Chris Mitchell,

Michael

Mitchell,

and Matt Taliani

Honorable Mention: Andrew Haus

#### Valley News Dispatch

First Team: Andrew Haus, Michael  
Mitchell, and Matt Taliani

Second Team: Ephraim Duke and  
Chris Mitchell

#### All W.P.I.A.L.

Michael Mitchell and Matt Taliani

### Girls’ Soccer:

#### All Section 2AA

Georgia Dale and Lilly Iadicicco

#### All WPIAL Class A All-Stars

Lilly Iadicicco

#### Valley News Dispatch

First Team: Miranda Shock

Second Team: Lilly Iadicicco

### Football:

#### Eastern Football Conference

First Team Offense: Blake Sgambati

Second Team Offense: Logan Dexter  
and Christian Voke

Second Team Defense: Demitri

Fritch, Brandon Green, Cavin

Kindler, Josh Lang, and Blake

Sgambati

Second Team Kicker: Matt Haus

Honorable Mention: Dakota Boyce,

Justin Dvorsak, Ashton Krebs, Gio

Savko, and John Utiss

Scholar Athlete: Zack Conte and

Justin Dvorsak

#### Valley News Dispatch All-Stars

First Team: Christian Vokes

Second Team: Demitri Fritch, Cavin

Kindler, and Blake Sgambati

### Volleyball:

#### All Section

Second Team: Kylie Dileo and Becca

Selzer

time what I put in there,” Shamey comments with a smile, “it’s kind of a surprise when they go in.”

The goal of using the blocks is to tie Lego-building into curricular projects, with integration to all subject areas, to spark creativity, build clarity, and inspire imagination. It’s become an extension of learning through play. The students enjoy the Lego lab and look forward to their time to create.



### **Dynamo Education Foundation Provides Grants To Staff Members**

The Dynamo Education Foundation continues to focus on its goal to raise funds for classroom projects. Each year, staff members apply for competitive grants that fund innovative educational projects, enrichment programs, and other educational initiatives. For the 2019-20 school year, the Foundation awarded three grants to Allegheny Valley staff members. The winners and projects are listed at <http://www.avsdweb.org/foundation/grant-program>

In the six years the Foundation has been awarding grants, the group has given over \$11,000 to the District. The Foundation’s Board of Directors plan to continue their fundraising efforts. To date, a series of events and activities are coordinated to help raise money for the Grant Program. The Foundation has also instituted a Grant Partner Program, where businesses and individuals can support these grants. For additional information on the Dynamo Education Foundation, please go to <http://www.avsdweb.org/foundation/index.html>



### **Honoring Our Veterans**

The annual Veterans’ Day Celebration was held on November 8. As in past years, local veterans were invited to the high school for breakfast and a program held in recognition of their service to the community and our country. Over the years, word has spread throughout the community, and an increasing number of residents now join the audience to honor these men and women. Students from all three buildings participate in the program, serving as the Masters of Ceremony, playing instruments, and singing patriotic songs.

This year’s keynote speaker was Ms. Georgette Smotzer, a U.S. Navy veteran. Smotzer shared her memories of being one of the first women to serve on a Navy ship and talked of how women have made progress in the armed forces over the year. Her message: that women can do anything.

Allegheny Valley continues to sponsor the event to express its thanks and to help students understand the importance of veterans to the community. Students and staff spent many hours developing the program to make the veterans feel welcome and know how much they are appreciated. The event serves as a time for students to gain a greater respect for those who have given so much.



### **Acme Celebrates Safety**

Every fall, the District dedicates various weeks to issues of safety. This time is designated to learn about safety topics. In addition, October is recognized as a month to focus on cyber security and anti-bullying. Bringing all of the topics together under the umbrella of safety allows the District to touch on many subject areas for students.

Five years ago, Acmetonia Primary School began a Safety Fair to celebrate the month. The program brings local police, fire, and emergency services agencies along with W.L. Roenigk and other community organizations to the building to help educate students in areas of safety. This year, the program was expanded to include all the new students in the building. Pre-K students had visitors from the local police and fire departments; Kindergarten through grade three students traveled to stations around the school; while grade 4-6 students attended a vaping presentation from the School Police Officers, ALICE training, and information on the school’s Buddy Bench program.



### **AV Friends**

In November, Allegheny Valley began an AV Friends Series, where alumni, community members, and other friends visit the District to support learning in the classrooms. The program brings individuals to the building to share their talents, skills, and stories with students. Friends are able to work with the classes to help provide an understanding of the community.

The program kicked off with friend and alumnus Joseph Sbaffoni, who, in 2002, led rescue efforts at QueCreek Mine. Sbaffoni spoke with high school students about the nine miners who were trapped

underground for five days. Dr. Jennifer Naviglia continued the program as a guest reader into the second grade classrooms. Naviglia recently wrote and released the book, “K-9 Merlyn: Officer Extraordinaire.” The book tells the story of Officer Merlyn through the K-9’s point of view, detailing his duties and daily routine.

**Highlighting the Quarter...**

**Allegheny Valley SD**



*Allegheny Valley welcomed three new members to its School Board: David Buchman, Kathleen Haas, and Paula Jean Moretti join James Gaschler, Jr. and Stephen P. Puskar as newly elected Board members.*



*Allegheny Valley started an “I Led Pledge” program. At monthly School Board meetings, elementary students will lead the Pledge of Allegiance to promote student involvement.*

**Acmetonia Elementary School**



*Students at Acme celebrated Pancakes with the Principal in November. An annual event, the program helps the school recognize National Education Week.*



*Acmetonia Elementary School presented information to parents on school safety. As part of Safety Month, school personnel talked with parents about how safety items are taught to students.*

**Springdale Jr-Sr High School**



*SHS National Honor Society members volunteered at this year’s Senior Citizen Brunch. The group acted as greeters, servers, and Masters of Ceremony for the morning program.*



*Nine SHS students brought home First, Second, and Third Place awards in the FBLA competition. These students will head to Hershey in April to compete at the state level.*

*eNEWS is a publication of the Allegheny Valley School District. Questions or comments should be sent to [jzastawniak@avsd.k12.pa.us](mailto:jzastawniak@avsd.k12.pa.us). The Allegheny Valley School District will not discriminate in its education programs, activities, or employment practices, based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, ancestry, disability, union membership, or any other legally protected classification. Announcement of this policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Employees and others involved with the District who have a complaint of discrimination or harassment or require information about accommodations for disabled individuals, should contact the superintendent of schools by calling 724-274-5300 or writing and mailing a letter addressed to 300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024*