

# eNEWS

Allegheny Valley School District

## *Second Quarter 2022*

Photo: Students in Ms. Slomka's room prepare the pajama packages in their classroom.



## *Sixth Grade Provides Pajamas for the Holidays*

What is more traditional, than reading a story in your pajamas during the holidays? Sixth grade students at Acmetonia Elementary School took that idea one step further to share the tradition with others.

"Every year Scholastic Books organizes a pajama drive," commented teacher Kelly Slomka, "This is a widely successful project that is in its 12th year. After much consideration, 6th grade decided to host their own pajama drive." They asked staff members to donate a new pajama set or pajama bottoms. Sixth grade students then chose their favorite bedtime story to read aloud, recorded them with a QR code that would allow the individual to play back the



story, and package them all up with colorful ribbon and bows. The packages were delivered to the local food bank and distributed to families in our community.

“This felt like a great way to support the scholastic purpose with our own hometown connection,” explained Slomka. “I wanted to show the students the importance of providing support and showing kindness to the people in their own community.” In addition, the project was a true classroom project. The students needed to choose their favorite bedtime story and write a short “book talk” about it. They were encouraged to include story elements as well as a purposeful connection. The project required them to read aloud with appropriate rate, tone, and fluency. “It also helped them feel great inside when they were laminating their QR codes and packing up the PJs.”

Every student was excited and engaged in the project; every student participated in all aspects of the project. This project incorporated several ELA standards as well as technology standards. It is a great way to deliver everyday instruction in a more hands-on, meaningful way.

“I learned that a small thing can make big changes,” commented student Adele Walters-Vrabel. “The best part of the program was helping and volunteering to give to others.” “Make sure to do good deeds and always help people,” continued student Shelby DiPalma. “It’s the best thing to do!”

The pajamas, along with the stories (QR codes), were delivered to the local food bank on December 15th. The grade collected a total of 47 pairs of pajamas. “This project was a huge success thanks to the kindness of the Allegheny Valley teachers, administrators, custodians, cafeteria workers, business office/clerical staff, and the 6th grade students,” shared Slomka. “We hope to keep up this project for many years to come.”

## *Holiday Giving*

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 Pajama Packs to entertaining throughout the local area.

For the past several years, the high school's The Future Is Mine Group held a Stocking Drive, where they collected stockings stuffed with personal hygiene products, socks and other non-perishable items to help the less fortunate and unhoused this holiday season. The group ended up donating the items to The New Me Outreach program. Appreciation is extended to everyone who donated to this effort. #DynamoProud

In addition, Allegheny Valley staff purchased “Secret Santa” gifts for students in the elementary and secondary buildings. Presents included clothing, toys, beauty and hygiene products, and gift cards. Staff also participated in the Pajama Drive and collections of hot chocolate and cookies through the high school guidance department. 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 the elementary building traveled throughout the area, performing at senior care facilities and the

Pittsburgh Mills Mall local malls. 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.

### *The Lighthouse Designation*

Recently, the Allegheny Valley School District was honored by the Learning 2025 Network team with the designation of Good Choice for Lighthouse designation. The group consists of a team from The School Superintendents Association (AASA), Successful Practices Network (SPN), and Battelle for Kids.

The designation of Good Choice means that Allegheny Valley is seen as progressing its educational makeup, while including measures that will sustain the educational program in the future. It also shows evidence that the program is relevant and apparent in the schools that suggests that positive outcomes are promising.

The District's Lighthouse designation is in the area of Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Growth. The award is outlined by specific criteria, including that the program is tied to comprehensive planning and has assessments in place for monitoring. In addition, the District partners with students and families, is supported with professional development, and incorporates tested curriculum.

Lighthouse designations are awarded in eight areas: social emotional cognitive growth, future ready learners, cognitive growth model, learners as co-authors, diverse educator pipeline, early learning, technology-enhanced learning, and community alignment. Districts may apply for designation in any of the areas; there are no limits to the number of areas for application. Allegheny Valley was one of 25 applications reviewed and considered by the Learning 2025 committee.

Learning 2025 is a national commission of thought leaders in education, business, community, and philanthropy convened by AASA. The group advocates for school development as public education looks to the future. Their recommendations stand on three core components: whole-learner focused, no learner marginalized, and future-driven. In other words, future plans for districts should cultivate and improve schools so that education embraces social, emotional, cognitive, and behavior health in addition to academic needs; meet the needs and foster growth of all students; and incorporate decisions that understand the world our learners will move into as it continues to transform rapidly through advancements in technology.

Changes in education are continual and span a large area. The vision, however, needs to be narrowed on how to achieve success for students and how to best do that in the Allegheny Valley School District. By using data, giving everyone a voice, researching best practices, and partnering with the extended community, the District will continue to move the educational program of Allegheny Valley into the future.



## *Girls' Soccer Wins WPIAL Runner-Up Trophy*

The Allegheny Valley School District has a tradition of greatness when it comes to the sport of soccer. From the Harmarville Hurricanes who brought national championship titles to the area to more recent Springdale High School section and WPIAL champions, prominence in soccer goes back generations.

This year, the SHS Girls' Soccer Team began their season with high hopes, and a belief that they could continue that tradition and bring another championship back to the District. With the returning starters, the team believed they could qualify for the playoffs. The season exceeded all expectations. After ending the regular season with a 13-3 record, the team entered the WPIAL playoffs.

The group traveled to Kiski Area for their first playoff round and beat a skilled Sewickley Academy group, 3-2. After defeating a tough Mohawk team in the second round, the Dynamos prepared for Waynesburg Central, beating them 5-0 to move on to the WPIAL Class A final. Springdale was an unexpected challenger in the championship game, facing powerhouse Freedom High School. The team played a tough match, but ultimately coming up short and bringing home the runner-up trophy for their efforts.

The girls then entered the PIAA Championships and moved on to the second round before being defeated by Greensburg Central Catholic at Norwin High School. The team overcame injuries and higher-seeded opponents to provide an amazing season for fans. There were many memorable moments throughout their schedule, and it seemed throughout the season that the players had a goal in mind that nothing was going to deter them from reaching. This team did not give up.

This team played with spirit and sportsmanship, and most of all heart. These are the qualities of a great team and great champions, no matter what the scoreboard says at the end. Way to go Dynamos.

## *Fall Sports Honors*

### **Eastern Football Conference**

**First Team Defense** - Noah Bradley- (Jr, Linebacker)

**Second Team Offense** - Nate Folmer- (Sr, Offensive Tackle)

### **Boys' Soccer**

**All-Section** - Mason Gent, Billy Lawrence, Chris Mitchell

**All WPIAL Class A All-Stars** - Billy Lawrence, Chris Mitchell

**Valley News Dispatch First Team All-Stars** - Billy Lawrence (Jr, Forward), Chris Mitchell (Sr, Midfield)

**Valley News Dispatch Second Team All-Stars** - Mason Gent (Jr, Defense)

### **Girls' Soccer**

**All-Section** - Grace Gent (Sr. Forward), Molly Hurley (SO, Forward)

**All WPIAL Class A All-Stars** - Grace Gent (Sr, Forward), Molly Hurley (SO, Forward)

**Valley News Dispatch First Team All-Stars** - Brianna Ross (SO, Forward), Grace Gent (Sr, Forward)

**Valley News Dispatch Second Team All-Stars** - Molly Hurley (SO, Forward), Ashley Ross (Jr, Midfield)

### **Girls' Volleyball**

**We Serve First Tournament** - Bella Burrell (Sr, Setter), Kelsey Sprouse (Sr, Outside Hitter)



## *Going the Extra Mile*

Allegheny Valley's Extra Mile Award acknowledges staff members, students, and community members for their achievements. The program is designed to show all members of the District community that they are appreciated and respected. Individuals recognized through this program will be honored at school board meetings.

Any staff member, student, parent, or community member is eligible for the awards. These individuals are nominated based on efforts demonstrated in their accomplishments, timeliness and follow-through, willingness to help fellow employees, "customer" service, creativity, dedication, cooperation, reliability, and/or leadership. These individuals create opportunities, bridge gaps, and help to improve the District. In other words, Extra Milers are people who "look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, they make them." Staff members, students, and/or community members may be nominated for this award. Nominations must be submitted to the Public Relation's Office:



## *Snack Cart*

Hungry? Acme staff members have a different choice when they get the urge for munchies... the Snack Cart. The idea started from a program at the high school building. The elementary school implemented the program in 2022 as a way to foster life skills in a fun and engaging environment.

"The Acme Snack Cart provides an opportunity for our students to work collaboratively with their peers and adults," commented Dr. Melissa Holler, Supervisor of Pupil Services. "Based on [staff] responses, the students go with staff to Sam's Club (community outing) to purchase the items, return to Acme to stock the shelves, and take/maintain inventory. The students sell the items to the staff members, working on money skills, organizational skills, and social skills."

In other words, the program brings with it many educational areas for students. It is an extension of classroom learning with a focus on math skills, telling time, communication and speech skills, social skills, and personal interactions. Students are highly involved



## *Students Honor Our Veterans*

The annual Veterans' Day Celebration was held on November 11. 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. Students from all both Acmetonia Elementary School and Springdale Jr-Sr High School participate in the program, serving as the Masters of Ceremony, playing instruments, and singing patriotic songs.

This year's keynote speaker was Mr. Connor Green, a U.S. Army veteran. He is a familiar face to many, working as a social studies teacher at the high school. He shared his message about humility and empathy as he remembered his time in the armed services.

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

and motivated. They interact with the staff and their peers, they engage with adults that they may not normally come in contact with, they provide the ideas for snacks, and they shop and manage the cart. "They LOVE this opportunity," say Dr. Holler with a smile.

One additional benefit is that the program is such a positive contribution to the school climate and community. The students look forward to Wednesdays when they have the chance to work together and engage with adults. The program has brought awareness to the special education department and amazing things that our staff do on a daily basis for the best education for all students. "We look for the program to continue to evolve and engage as many students, special education and general education, as possible," stated Dr. Holler. "Our long-term plan will be to see this continue each year, bigger and better, and provide this amazing opportunity for our students."

for students to gain a greater respect for those who have given so much.



## *Safety Fair Comes to Acme*

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. Three 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. Kindergarten through grade three students traveled to stations around the school to learn about fire prevention, bus safety, drug and alcohol awareness, and ALICE training, along with information on the local police, fire, and ambulance services. Students were able to interact with representatives, see emergency vehicles, and ask questions.



## *Technology*

Allegheny Valley is passing along information for families concerning a federal program to offset the cost of the internet at home. Although the district does not benefit nor assist with this program, it is good information to share to the community. The Affordable Connectivity Program was created by the FCC to help households struggling to pay for internet service. As part of that effort, the FCC is mobilizing people and organizations to help raise awareness about the ACP. The materials below are available for public use, and you can download and customize them to meet your needs. For additional information, please see <https://www.fcc.gov/acp-consumer-outreach-toolkit>



## *Senior Citizen Brunch Returns*

A much anticipated tradition in the Allegheny Valley School District is the Senior Citizen Brunch. For years, the program welcomed senior residents to the high school to provide a meal and entertainment, showing appreciation for all of their support for the District. Allegheny Valley was unable to hold the program for the past few years due to the Covid pandemic. Students and staff were excited to bring the program back this school year. Held in October, the Senior Citizens' Program brought approximately 70 community residents together for a wonderful meal and a small concert. Students in both buildings played a role in making the event a special occasion: Acmetonia Elementary School students created favors, the Acme Chamber Singers sang, and members of the SHS National Honor Society acted as servers and hosts. The students enjoyed taking time to talk with the senior citizens and express their appreciation for the community members'

## *Alumni Hall of Fame Accepting Nominations*

Members of the community and all alumni are asked to consider nominating a deserving alumnus for the Allegheny Valley School District's Alumni Hall of fame program. [Information and the nomination form](#) can be found on the District's website. Nomination forms are also available in the school offices.

## *Use of Student Photos or Interviews*

Individual and/or group photographs, interviews, and/or videos of Allegheny Valley students may be taken for use by the District in publications, on its web site, or in local newspapers. Allegheny Valley provides opportunities for positive media publicity; a staff member is always present at these times. If a parent/guardian would prefer that his/her child not be photographed/interviewed for publicity purposes, he/she should send written notification to: Allegheny Valley School District, Public Relations Department, 300 Pearl Avenue, Cheswick, PA 15024.

## *Gold Cards*

Senior residents are reminded that passes to enter District events are available. Residents can register for a Gold Card at Springdale Jr-Sr High School's main office. Seniors will need to complete an application and present proof of age, 62 or older, to receive their card. The cards do not have to be renewed.

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