

Pemberton Pride

The Newsletter of Pemberton Township Schools

Fall, 2020

STUDENTS, STAFF MEET SHIFTING CHALLENGES OF PANDEMIC

Last March, when the rapid spread of COVID-19 resulted in the governor issuing stay-at-home orders, students and staff had to quickly adjust to a novel approach to learning—remote instruction. Armed with Chromebooks, iPads, Google Classroom and a host of virtual learning tools, students adapted, parents adjusted schedules, and teachers and staff members rose to the challenge of meeting the educational needs of our students. While not the model of learning everyone was accustomed to, remote learning quickly evolved into the standard approach of education nationwide, and continued into the start of the 2020-2021 school year.



Busansky teacher Mrs. Muse instructs her fifth grade class.

Then, on October 13th, Pemberton successfully launched hybrid learning. Approximately 50% of students in grades PreK through sixth returned to

school for in-person instruction on alternating days, and the high

school briefly welcomed back students for in-person instruction beginning November 16th.

Protocols were utilized to ensure the safety of students and faculty. Desks were arranged and separated at least six feet apart, students and instructors were required to wear face masks, and walking patterns were utilized in the hallways to create smoother transitions from classroom to classroom. Temperatures of students and staff were taken upon arrival in an effort to monitor the health of all those within our buildings.

These unprecedented circumstances may have posed a challenge initially to students and staff alike, however, they adapted well and enjoyed the hybrid learning opportunity.

“It’s different because now we have to social distance,” Busansky fifth grader Madison White said. “Whenever we have to walk, we have to walk one way. It’s safer, so I guess that’s good.”

Even with the unfortunate circumstances due to COVID-19, students were thrilled to be back in school to see their friends and receive in-person instruction.

“I like being with my friends,” White added. “I’d rather have it with all the kids, but we’re separated into groups.”

“It feels kind of different to see everyone with masks on,” Busansky fifth grader Stella Phillips said. “It feels like you can concentrate more sometimes with less kids. I was really happy to

hear we were going back. It can be hard learning from home because you don’t have the in-person instruction all the time.”

While the hybrid program was a welcome change for many, circumstances shifted again in late



Assistant principal John Bamber checked temperatures of PTHS students entering the building.

November, as the county COVID-19 spread was raised to the “High Risk” category. The decision was made to return to remote learning until January 19th for all students, except for those students in specialized programs, who will continue to attend daily.

“We know many hybrid students are disappointed in this change, but we made the transition out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our students and staff,” said interim superintendent Paul Spaventa. “We appreciate the flexibility of our students, staff, and especially parents, as we all do our best to meet the ongoing challenges of the pandemic.”



Pemberton Learning Community: Pursuing Excellence One Child at a Time

STACKHOUSE COMMUNITY HONORS LONG-TIME STAFF MEMBER BEA HOLLEY

The community honored long-time staff member Bea Holley on October 28th with a memorial bench to honor the dedication and passion she exhibited in her time at Harker-Wylie. Holley worked in the district for an astonishing 50+ years. She passed away suddenly in March.

Bea was notorious for socializing with students and staff as she sat on the bench outside the main office. In honor of her nurturing character, the Stackhouse Elementary community decided to designate the bench as 'Bea's Bench' — contributing to the legacy of the beloved staff member.

"Bea was my gift. I loved her dearly," husband Lester Holley

said. "She loved her co-workers, she loved her school, she loved her students. I'm so appreciative of what you've done by honoring her with this bench, and we thank you very much."

Bea's Bench symbolizes her caring nature and love for the school community. She took pride in helping out others and was appreciated by all for her selflessness and positivity.

"Bea had such a positive impact on everyone she came into contact with," Stackhouse principal Robin Blue said. "She made connections with the whole staff. Many parents knew her well and loved her. Her students absolutely loved her. She went above and beyond for each student. She never stopped thinking about them and what she could do to help them."

Bea was also a member of the IRST team and the character education team. Her contributions extended far beyond the confines of a six-hour school day, as she instructed at family science night and family literacy night. She was chosen as the support staff member of the year in 2019.

While she will be missed, Bea will never be forgotten. Our district is extremely thankful for all her contributions.

"There is not one person from Harker-Wylie that does not miss Bea," Blue said. "I had the luxury of seeing Bea and talking to her every morning. I would get a chance to catch up with and watch her interactions with the students as they ran to hug her."



Bea Holley



Above, family and friends joined in the Stackhouse dedication ceremony, including Bea's husband Lester (left) daughter Daria, grandson Kameron and son Kevin (far right).

PTHS GIRLS TENNIS TEAM MAKES HISTORY

The PTHS girl's tennis team earned the highest seed in a NJSIAA postseason tournament in school history. The Lady Hornets finished the season with an 8-2 record and earned the 2nd seed in the NJSIAA Southwest C (Group 2) tournament. It was the first time the girl's tennis team hosted a home playoff match since 2017. The program's 6-0 start is the best in head coach Jerome Kurpicki's 20-year tenure.

"This year was a great success under difficult circumstances," Kurpicki said. "We were fortunate to have plenty of returning players and the girls used the limited practice time to really improve their game. The team remained positive, built on their success, worked hard, stayed focused and had a good time playing. When they came to practice and matches they really seemed to enjoy their time on the court and that is a big reason for our success."

Congratulations on a fantastic season!



The PTHS girls tennis team, above, poses for a team photo before hosting a match against New Egypt on October 13th.

STUDENTS CELEBRATE VETERANS DAY

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While traditional Veterans Day ceremonies had to be put on hold this year, students still found a way to honor our veteran—with flags and thanks!

- 1. PECEC student Olivia Green uses a hammer to place her flag into the ground with the assistance of Mrs. Cox.**
- 2. Samson Okine adjusts his flag at PECEC**
- 3. Students in Ms. Gionta's class at Fort Dix Elementary proudly display their flags.**

PTHS STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN HORNETS BREAKFAST CLUB

Participating students in the 18-21 transitional program collaborated to provide breakfast on a daily basis for PTHS staff during the hybrid learning period.

Students Carter Butler, Tyler Chun, John Sexton and Jonathan Yocum joined forces to operate the Hornets Breakfast Club.

The program was incorporated last school year and operated from Monday through Friday. Services allowed for either pick-up or delivery and included breakfast choices such as coffee, tea, yogurt, bananas, chewy bars, Pop-Tarts and bottled water.

"We started the breakfast club last year as a way to create more jobs within our structured learning experience program," SLE coordinator Emily O'Brien said. "The

students really take ownership of all of it. It's their thing and they're always excited on mornings when we do it."



Jonathan Yocum, left, pours a cup of water while Tyler Chun, center, prepares a meal for delivery. Carter Butler, right, oversees the preparation process.

Staff members would place their daily orders via a Google form sent out by O'Brien and the students would take over from there.

They'd work collectively by writing down each individual order, preparing the food, stocking and bagging, and delivering orders.

In the process, students became proficient with making food, organizing materials, cleaning and counting money.

"The best part about the breakfast club is seeing everyone happy," Butler said.

It's safe to say the feeling was mutual among the four members.

"I have a great time with my friends," Yocum said.

INTERACT CLUB MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR PEMBERTON COMMUNITY WITH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE



Jack MacCallum, left, and Gabby Directo, right, sort bottles of apple juice and vegetable oil for the Interact Club's annual food drive.



Evan Shagg stacks bags of dry milk at Grace Episcopal Church in Pemberton.

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The PTHS Interact Club continued its tradition of collaborating with the Rotary Club of Pemberton Township to provide Thanksgiving meals for the local community. Under the direction of club advisors Regina Carvin and Jamie Hubbell, participating students helped with the food pantry at the Grace Episcopal Church in Pemberton Borough by collecting food donations from district schools and offices—before sorting the canned goods and creating packages that were distributed to the families.

This year, club members Yohanna Bauerdorf, Gabriela Directo, Destiny Hartsfield, David Israel, John MacCallum, Madilyn McGreevy, Eliza Pepito and Evan Shagg were able to collect and help sort donations that provided for over 135 families.

“The best part of helping with the Thanksgiving Food Drive is knowing that we were able to make someone’s holiday just a little bit brighter,” Carvin said. “We have a fantastic group of dedicated students that are willing to help the selfless staff of the Grace Food Pantry. There is a special feeling of contentment that is felt when you are able to help, and helping our community members makes it even more special.”