

SONEW

THE OFFICIAL SOUTHMORELAND NEWSLETTER

January 2019

Issue One

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High Quality
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A LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

MR. VINCENT MASCIA

Communication is an extremely important part of establishing relationships with all district stakeholders, and it is the intent of this newsletter to share what is happening in our schools with our community. By sharing and communicating, it is my hope we can foster positive relationships and a sense of trust between the Southmoreland community and our schools. The benefit of these positive relationships is the focus of uniting everyone to the single cause of providing our students with the greatest educational experience possible. Working hand-in-hand, we can achieve the goal of preparing our students to be future decision makers and leaders.

As international speaker and author Yehuda Berg states, "Words are singularly the most powerful force available to humanity. We can choose to use this force constructively with words of encouragement, or destructively using words of despair. Words have energy and power with the ability to help, to heal, to hinder, to hurt, to harm, to humiliate and to humble." It is my desire that we use this forum to encourage and help our students, parents, community, faculty, and staff understand all the positive events and interactions that are occurring in our schools on a daily basis. The faculty and staff have readily embraced this newsletter and have contributed many items to be shared with our readers. Thank you faculty and staff for your assistance and support.

I hope everyone reads this newsletter in the spirit in which it was written, to unite and inform our community. There may be a time when the community will be asked to contribute items to this newsletter. It is my hope everyone understands the intent and vision of this publication and supports our efforts to provide everyone with a small glimpse of all the great things that are happening in our schools. I would like to leave you with a quote from American author, Jim Stovall. He states, "You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins." I want to thank our students for working hard and their continued desire to learn and be successful. I want to applaud our parents for the wonderful jobs they are doing in raising their children in what can be difficult times. I also want to acknowledge our community members who support our students and schools. Finally, I want to thank our faculty, staff, and administration for the work they do on a daily basis. Thank you everyone for helping make this a great community!

Many thanks,
Vincent Mascia



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

A DAY WITHOUT HATE

BY

Jen Tarasky and Nicole Pruchnic

Accepting Rachel's Challenge

After learning about this day, Nicole and Jenni spent hours researching what they could do to celebrate the day in a big way at SMS--on a small budget. They put a plan into action along with the help of other SAP team members. To get students and teachers in a positive mindset, Nicole sent emails every morning in April with an uplifting quote. For example, something as simple as, "A smile can change a person's day." Many students and teachers alike commented on how those quotes had a positive impact on their day.

On Friday April 27th, Day Without Hate, students and staff were asked to wear white. Some staff purchased white shirts that said, "No Place for Hate." As students walked off their busses that morning, they found uplifting messages sprawled all over the sidewalks that were written by teachers who arrived early that morning to decorate. As they entered the building, students were greeted by teachers handing them white flower pens that said at the top, "If there is one thing we could plant in your heart, it's that you matter; you'll always matter." They also found the walls to be covered in student and teacher-made posters with words of encouragement.

**Be Kind Whenever Possible.
It is always possible.
~ Dalai Lama**



A Day Without Hate

by Jen Tarasky and Nicole Pruchnic

Last April, 6th grade SMS teachers Nicole Pruchnic and Jennifer Tarasky were given permission to attend a meeting about a program called "Rachel's Challenge." Both teachers were affected incredibly by the presentation and were excited to share the program with their colleagues, but they knew it was something that would have to wait until the following school year to be implemented. They, however did not want to wait. They wanted to do something to create an atmosphere of kindness and acceptance in the middle school immediately.

At the Rachel's Challenge presentation, the presenter, Chris, informed the group about a special day that is celebrated each year on the last Friday in April called "Day Without Hate." In 2007, after the Virginia Tech shootings, students at Standley Lake High School in Colorado wanted to honor those who lost their lives. The students all wore white that day to show a commitment to one another to make their school a place where all feel safe and welcome. Since then, the day has grown exponentially and has been celebrated across the nation.

One of the cafeteria walls became the "I AM" wall where each and every student wrote a word to describe him or herself. Teachers chose a word as well. These words ranged from "athletic" to "kind" to "depressed." Students were encouraged to write how they were really feeling about themselves even if it wasn't positive. The goal with the wall was to show students that even though they are very different, there are others out there feeling the same way they do. The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade halls all had a designated "High-Five Zone" where students were encouraged to give each other high-fives, fist bumps, or just a big smile at those they passed in that area.





I AM...

SPECIAL. IMPORTANT. A SCOTTIE.

In ELA classes that day, students watched a short film called "Silent." The main message being, if you have nothing nice to say, stay silent. They also wrote one act of kindness they would perform that school day. At the end of the day, the students attended a pep-rally for spring sports, so it was perfect for tossing out some "No Place for Hate" tees into the audience. Students who stayed after school and helped decorate for Day Without Hate also were given a t-shirt to wear. At the end of the day, Nicole, Jennifer, and many other teachers felt the positive energy pulsing through the building. From seeing the students at the pep-rally, it seems that the students felt it, too.

about the team

Nicole and Jennifer found the day to be very successful and are excited to start planning for this year. Since they have more time to organize, they are hoping to have more student input on how the day should look.

They and the rest of the SAP team—Heather Meyer, Kristi Burgh, Ruth Joyce, Pam Wortman, Cathy Pallygus, Barb Conn, and Tracey Kuchar—were also thrilled to bring some new things to SMS this year such as Anti-Bullying Week (November 12–16) and Rachel's Challenge in December.

statistics

- Every 100 minutes a teen takes his/her own life.
- Suicide is the third-leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24.
- About 20 percent of all teens experience depression before they reach adulthood.
- Between 10 to 15 percent suffer from symptoms at any one time.
- Only 30 percent of depressed teens are being treated for it.

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STAFF STUDENTS ALUMNI

THE FACES OF SOUTHMORELAND

Staff Spotlight



Always a Reason to Smile

Jenna Hixson

Upon entering the 2017-2018 with a cancer diagnosis followed by surgery and remission, Jenna Hixson recognized that she needed to find a purpose. She knew she wanted to provide support for others fighting this disease and also include her students who had been a constant source of support during her battle.

Since April 2018, Mrs. Hixson and her students have provided free family portraits to over 100 people impacted by cancer: current fighters, survivors, and the family members who love them the most. Now planning their 4th Always a Reason to Smile event, these shoots serve as a testament to both the power of family and hope. Mrs. Hixson said getting pictures during her battle initially provided the peace of mind that her son would always have a reminder, but now they serve as a reminder that she can beat any obstacle that comes her way. Her hope is to provide that same opportunity for fellow fighters and survivors.



Speak Out

Denise Puskar

This year there are four Southmoreland senior students, Chaz Gianfrancesco, Casandra Steele, Mikaela Willard, and Genesis Harshell who are participating the FBI Pittsburgh Hope Speak Out to Save Lives!!- Public Service Awareness (PSA) contest. For this project, the students are creating a public service announcement that not only warns about the dangers of opioid usage but also showcases this year's theme of opioid rehabilitation.

They are taking a new route this year by creating a short film about a high school girl, played by Makayla Harvey, and the struggles her character faces with addiction. The character "Addiction" is brought to life and personified by sophomore actor Jonah Harshell. Instead of the audience trying to figure out the struggle the actress faces within herself, Addiction follows her through the shadows, drags her away from her friends, and eventually becomes too strong for the student to fight. It shows just how difficult opening up about addiction is by pushing the protagonist to her breaking point. The dynamic, tension, and anxiety between these characters is a major tool that the video staff are relying on to get their point across to the world. Mrs. Puskar, who is the Informational Science teacher, is sponsoring our efforts with this project.

Mindfulness at SPC

Amy Pushkis

Southmoreland Primary Center houses approximately 300 kindergarten and first grade students. I couldn't think of a better time to introduce our children to researched techniques that teach self regulation, recognizing and validating emotions, and ways to help themselves. In order to thrive and be successful in all facets of life, it is critical to feel safe, secure, and heard. Learning how to stop and breathe, connect with yourself, and process your feelings enables the child to flourish not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well. Many of the children never consciously thought about their breathing and being still. For my groups of early kindergarten students, it made my heart so big to see them sitting comfortably, eyes closed, and using their imaginations.

I had one student tell me that she was at the dentist office and was nervous, but remembered to use her "Balloon Breathing." She even taught her family! Once a month, the kindergarten staff holds "clubs" so I am able to continue to use these awesome materials not only throughout the day with my reading students, but with every kindergarten child! Our staff is also able to use the materials in their classrooms. I am honored to be the catalyst that shares these ideas with as many children and staff as possible! Namaste!"



I Mustache You a Question

Jason Bandemer

By Bryton Montgomery, 9th Grader

Mr. Jason Bandemer is a PE teacher at Southmoreland Elementary School and Primary Center. He started a club a couple of years ago that raises money for a family in the school district. It is called the Mustache Club, and he sells T-Shirts for \$5. All the money raised from the shirts go to the family. This year, he raised over \$3,000 for Ryder Gigliotti and his family. When Ryder was eight months old, he was in a medically induced coma because he was diagnosed with parainfluenza croup.

After a couple of weeks in Children's Hospital, he is home now taking two shots a day for six weeks. Ryder has a brother in third grade, and his parents graduated from Southmoreland. His father had to take unpaid family leave.

Also, his mom wasn't working.

The money tremendously helped the family, and Mr. Bandemer is ready for another fundraiser next year.



From SHS to the YMCA

Dan Boring

by Erin Polakovsky, 12th Grader

Just because his day at the Southmoreland Primary Center ends at 3:30 doesn't mean that

Dan Boring stops teaching. Instead, this gym teacher simply moves his classroom to the local YMCA. When he was approached by the Children's Program Director this summer, Boring couldn't turn down the opportunity "to give back to the kids" and run several youth sports classes including basketball, soccer, and archery. Boring hopes that by introducing children to sports at a young age he will spread his passion for sports.

Staff Spotlight Continued



Ukulele The Day Away

Meghan Whytsell

By Hannah Schaeffer, 10th Grader

Meghan Whytsell is a kindergarten-5th grade music teacher and a 5th grade chorus teacher at Southmoreland Elementary School and Primary Center. Meghan has been playing the ukulele in her classes for about 4 years. After discovering that there are several ukulele teaching tools, she decided to begin teaching it to students. At first Meghan's project was to start teaching ukulele in class, however, then it moved on to beginning a ukulele club with 5th grade students. She received 7 ukuleles last year from the school district and then 12 more through a funded donors choose project.

She began to teach a ukulele unit to all of 5th grade at the beginning of 2017 and says, "The students picked up all the skills so quickly. It sparked their interest in music again, and it was very rewarding to see them loving it!" After the unit concluded and so many students still wanted to learn more, Meghan decided to start the ukulele club. She ended up having 10 students who went first thing in the morning to her once a week. The students would pick their own songs to play, and one person sang while the others accompanied on the ukuleles. Some of the songs that they learned were "Lost Boy" and "Over the Rainbow." Then they performed at the end of the year band and chorus concert.



The Lunch Bunch

Kelly Derr

By Ireland Craig, 10th Grader

Kelly Derr is a Life Skills Support Teach at Southmoreland Primary Center and is the head of a new project: Lunch Buddies. This program invites highschool students, who are currently involved with YEA, across the street to the primary center to have lunch with Mrs. Derr's students.

The K-1 students are in need of a role model to look up to, and the teens help fill their need. The teens help the students build up their social and communication skills through the time spent together. In the words of Mrs. Derr, "Amazing things can happen when you combine teenagers, young students, and pizza!"

Death Valley National Park



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The Heberlings Host Exchange Students

By Alexis Hull, 11th Grader

"It's not just taking in a student," Stephen Heberling says wholeheartedly, "but a family member." The Heberlings, a thoughtful and endearing family, give back to the world by hosting exchange students, who more or less are nervous about this type of experience. Imagine living with a completely different family, made up of a variety of new traditions and living arrangements. The Heberlings, hosting students twice, admitted that they also shared the same feeling. It would affect not only the student but them as well. However, after time went by, they began to enjoy the student's presence and their personality being a part of the family.

Inevitably, they created warm memories, special only to this certain experience, which in the end made it all worth the anxiety and unease of having a new person in the house. It allowed them to grow as individuals and to grow with each other, learning about a new culture along the way. And when it is time for them to leave, they know they've made a friendship that will last forever and always a reason to visit again.

Candy for a Cause

Jodi Graft and Jodi Deluca

By Julia Davis, 9th Grader

Jodi Deluca and Julie Graft organized a Halloween Candy Drive that collected candy to send to troops, veterans, and first responders. The two teachers set up donation boxes at multiple Southmoreland facilities. The drive began the day after Halloween and lasted for roughly a week. The drive collected a lot more candy than expected. The students and faculty combined collected 464 pounds of candy!

Large boxes of candy were given to the EMS station in Scottsdale, the Scottsdale Police Station, the Scottsdale Firemen, the Everson Firemen, the East Huntington Firemen, and a few other places as well. The boxes were given to show that everyone in the community appreciates our first responders, veterans, and our troops. This Halloween Candy Drive's goal was to let anyone, no matter the age, help to give back to the community.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

From Student to Eagle Scout
Andrew Novak, 12th Grader

By Alexis Hull, 10th Grader

Twelfth grader Andrew Novak is an overachieving student. In school, he looks forward to graduating from CWCTC and Southmoreland. Outside of school he recently received his final cleft lip surgery all while obtaining his Eagle Scout. Experiences in the scouts (Troop 160 Everson, PA) changed his views on how he does and looks at things like helping people and traveling.

Showing his school spirit, he claims, "My favorite part of being a Scottie is to represent Southmoreland." His aspirations for the future are to go to ATC in Mount Pleasant for Manufacturing and Robotics, including later on going to CMU in Pittsburgh for Robotics and Music Theory. Hoping to be part of the band and being a guitarist, he only wishes to "live a healthy, comfortable life."

Writing Talent Being Recognized Globally
Hailey Croushore, 11th Grader

By Jason Cherpak, 9th Grader

Hailey Croushore is an 11th grade student who has had many huge personal accomplishments. While in the 10th grade, Hailey submitted a narrative writing that indistinguishably placed as a finalist in the country. Following that, she placed as a semi finalist in a global essay based on Ayn Rand's Anthem. She is currently deciding between three fields for college: pediatrics, psychology, and teaching.

Hailey's most memorable moment outside of the SHS was meeting Taylor Swift with her friends. Taylor Swift has been her idol since she has been six years old and she has had a substantial amount of dedication to her ever since her love for her began.

Hailey being a Scottie, according to her, has made her a better person all around. She learned that many people face many battles and daily hardships that nobody would ever know about but themselves, hence the reason why it is only right to treat everyone with the most amount of respect possible and kindness.

Hailey's dreams for the future is to just help anyone in need, to accompany others as a source of wisdom, inject others with her happiness, and to become the best possible person that she can be in any way possible.



Reverse Trick or Treating
Caileigh Johnston, 11th Grader

By Chloe Gillott, 10th Grader

Caileigh Johnston is a junior at Southmoreland High School who loves helping her community. She thinks that her favorite part of being a Scottie is participating as a team with other students in projects where she can give back to people who live around her. In a "Reverse Trick-or-Treating Project," Caileigh recalls how happy people were to receive a treat when usually someone coming to your door is asking for something.

Instead of going door to door on Halloween to get treats, Caileigh and her volunteers gave homeowners Halloween gifts. Even though the weather was not ideal for the project since it was raining, Caileigh remembers the best part of the project: smiles on peoples' faces in appreciation of the random act of kindness.

Whenever Caileigh graduates, she plans to attend college in either California or South Carolina to major in Marine Biology. Once Caileigh becomes established in her career, she would like to continue to help in her community by funding projects to help those in need.



Single Season Pass Record Surpassed Zachary Cernuto, 10th Grader

By Emily White, 10th Grader

Zach Cernuto is one of the many ambitious sophomore students attending Southmoreland High School. Not only is Zach an outstanding student, but he is also very gifted in sports. Zach serves as the quarterback of the Southmoreland Varsity football team. One of Cernuto's biggest accomplishments this past year was being awarded Scholar-Athlete. In order to win, students must be academically superb. Zach also set the school's single season passing record. According to Zach Cernuto, he plans to take, "academics first," because getting good grades and community support are essential. Zach would like to further his education by going to college to succeed with his personal goals, and he wants to perform at his very best. Dan Clara, Southmoreland's Director of Elementary Education, said, "Zach is a consummate leader. He focuses on the work and doesn't concern himself with anything other than the team's success. He is a selfless player. That type of player inspires and elevates the play of those around him. I nominated Zach because I believe that his leadership is not limited to athletics. I see Zach as a quiet leader in our school. It is a quality that I respect."

Future Lawmaker Michael Klatt, 10th Grader

By Ella Huffman, 10th Grader

Michael D. Klatt is a fifteen-year-old sophomore at Southmoreland High School, widely known by fellow students, as well as previous and current teachers, for his love of politics and ambitious nature. Pursuing his love for politics and gaining knowledge of his future plans are his most significant fulfillments. He takes pride in the launch of his most recent political project: his co-establishment of the Teen Age Republicans club of Westmoreland County. The club will open up to anyone ages thirteen through eighteen, and further details are expected to be released within the next two or three months. In the meantime, Michael opens up to a range of political-based opportunities, such as Gifted Program-based events like Great Debate, and general search of public reform through government.

He also keeps an active voice on social media, voicing his political views and stances on social issues for people to view across the nation. Still, the tenth-grader admires his local influences, telling that his favorite thing about being a Scottie is the advice and encouragement given to him by Southmoreland staff. With the help and motivation of these teachers, Michael is determined to aim high and attend Vanderbilt University in the future to minor in Political Science and major in Pre-Law; furthermore, he plans to attend law school for four years and finally run for public office.



Student Spotlight Continued



An American Hero

Brayden Harvey-Detore, 8th Grader

By Luis Gomez-Villalobos, 10th Grader

Brayden Dettore-Harvey is an eighth grader at SMS who has already taken seriously his privilege to be an American citizen. Brayden is currently enrolled in the Young Marines, a group that promotes being a good citizen and provides a proper introduction to military life. The group encourages those who enroll to consistently self reflect and always seek improvement. As of now on every Thursday evening, you'll find Brayden involving himself with others to perform various activities: color guard training, physical training, learning law enforcement, and community service.

Outdoor Odyssey will provide the opportunity for Brayden, and others, to expand their knowledge in trust and self reliance. It's truly exciting to acknowledge the work between the Young Marines and Brayden; to witness how he's combined the education of both school and home to pursue a variety of future possibilities.

A Model Student

Faith Tarr, 7th Grader

By Mikayla Miller, 10th Grader

Faith Tarr is a seventh grader who has been playing the flute and piano for at least three years. She obtained first chair flute and received a secondary role in Mary Poppins Jr. at Penn State Fayette. Music has influenced Faith's life from a very young age, and she has many achievements to show this. She has participated in Westmoreland County Children's Chorus, Melody Singers, and the C Glee theater group. Faith has also been invited to WCMEA County Band for flute the past three years and has participated in the last two.

Her favorite part of being a Southmoreland Scottie is the spirit because "the vast majority of the students here have so much passion for learning and school activities, and it makes me proud to call myself a Southmoreland student." Faith's goals for the future include: being accepted into NJHS and WCMEA Junior County Band, maintaining her first chair spot in band, attending Penn State for Meteorological and Atmospheric Sciences, work at the National Weather Service in Pittsburgh or WTAE, and "move into a big, beautiful house here in Scottdale."

Alumni Spotlight

IN THIS ISSUE

**COURTNEY COSTELNOCK
MCHUGH**

ANDREW DZAMBO

KELSEY JAMES

RORY KEEFER

KALI ALVARADO

PATTY RUSH

**STEPHANIE WELLS AND
MARISSA THEIS**

Adidas: **Courtney Costelnock McHugh**

by Scarlett Davidovich

When asked for a personal accomplishment in her life, she replied with, "Never settling." Starting off in the small town of Scottdale, Courtney Costelnock McHugh, class of Southmoreland 1997, ventured on to achieve many remarkable accomplishments in her life. After graduating from Southmoreland, Courtney attended West Virginia University obtaining her Masters of Art in Communications and Quantitative Research and a Bachelors of Science in Advertising.

Courtney is now working her dream job, a brand that she has respected and has been passionate about for most of her life: Adidas. When asked what is so unique about her job Courtney said, "Not only do I get to work for the best sports brand in the world, I get to work specifically on the sport, golf." Golf has played a very important role in Courtney's life; while growing up her grandfather would take her to play the sport as a family and watch Arnold Palmer win his multiple major championships. Courtney would also like to tell students to not be afraid to branch out and explore.

She says, "There is an entire world to experience. Be inquisitive and recognize there is so much more to learn from other cultures, countries, and people." She also would like to add a message to teachers: "Prepare students for the real world. Teach them how to manage their finances, school debt, and investing at an early age. Empower them to think for themselves and to explore outside of Alverton, PA."



From SHS to NASA



Andrew Dzambo

By Isabella Hribal, 9th Grader

Andrew Dzambo is a Southmoreland alumni, class of 2009. Andrew went to college and received a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology at Pennsylvania State University. He also went back to college to receive his Master of Science also for Meteorology at University of Oklahoma. Andrew is also hard at work, trying to achieve his Doctor of Philosophy in Atmospheric Science at the University of Wisconsin.

Andrew says that his biggest professional accomplishments are his two published journals. One is about his Masters work, while the other is about his Atmospheric Measurement Techniques. He also includes how he participated in NASA's ORACLES ,ObseRvations of Aerosols above CLouds and their intEractionS, for three years while helping to run the radar on research flights.

In Andrew's personal life, his biggest accomplishment is completing half marathons, and one was completed under two hours. He says it is easy to forget about one's personal health and well being when working on graduate degree work.



Looking back on his previous years in college and even back to high school, Andrew believes that the education that can be received at Southmoreland is "truly top notch." Coming from such a small high school, at college Andrew went head-to-head with students who came from larger, better funded, public, private, and charter schools. Some advice that he would give to current students is to take their education seriously throughout high school and college.

Finally, Andrew would like to give a huge thanks to all of his teachers he has had at Southmoreland. He claims Southmoreland was a great foundation to going into the real world, and now 10 years out of college, he is still being served from such a great basis. Finally, Andrew also apologizes for always secretly playing with Mrs. Denise Saunders Rubik's Cube during her classes.



Superstar Volunteer: Patty Rush

By Julia Wadsworth, 9th Grader

Mrs. Patty Thomas Rush was a member of Southmoreland's class of '57. She then went on to Westminster College and got a BS in education. She then graduated from Westminster in '61 with the Outstanding Junior Award. Her advice to Southmoreland's current students is to, "Enrich someone's life today with a warm word of praise. Both of you will be better for it."

Mrs. Patty Rush used to teach at Southmoreland before retirement. Her biggest professional accomplishment is the joy of teaching little ones to read and believe in themselves. She'd like to tell the current teachers of Southmoreland to "Make new friends. Keep the old. One is silver, the other gold." In her retirement, Mrs. Rush is enjoying all the volunteer jobs she has. She assists the SES library on Wednesdays, she goes to Frick Hospital to volunteer a few times a week, with the Jacob's Creek Church, and much much more. Her biggest personal accomplishments are her services to God, to her family, and to her friends.

An Album Cover: Kelsey James

By Alexis Hull

Kelsey James, a graduate from Southmoreland eight years ago, succeeded in making her big dreams into reality. After graduation, she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Pitt Greensburg, and is currently a full time musician with her band Shiva Skydriver.

With her band, she is writing two albums, including their new album entitled "Let Go of All You Know," which was released on December 21st, 2018. During this summer, they developed an audience in Europe and are currently going on a European tour in 2019. In her words, "I was lucky to have a handful of teachers who embraced my individuality and helped to celebrate my love for music." As well as, she highly encourages high school students to "approach everything with an open mind and embrace what you truly love."



RORY KEEFER

UPenn School of Veterinary Medicine: Rory Keefer

By Jacob Levendowsky, 11th Grader

Proven as a student of excellence at Southmoreland School District in the past, Rory Keefer has surpassed many standards and proven himself successful through his large multitude of academic and personal achievements. Keefer graduated Southmoreland High School in 2012 specializing in subjects such as biology as well as more liberal subjects of art and history. He has kept his interests alive in his pursuit for education with his enrollment at West Virginia University during the year 2012 and 2013. There, he expanded upon his inclinations until later in 2016 when he was able to attend The University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg. Eventually he made his way to The University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his Veterinariae Medicinae Doctoris. Rory is currently studying there and is expected to graduate in 2020.

As for his accomplishments during his long path in education, besides the outstanding obtaining of his Doctoris, Keefer is proud of his surgical experiences in veterinary practice. On a more broad subject, he is very well traveled for being a young adult, visiting places from all across the United States and countries in Europe and South America.

With all of his knowledge, Keefer wishes to enlighten the students as well as the faculty at Southmoreland. For the students, he has three main points he has emphasized. Always research and ask questions regarding your education and try to obtain them through any means; move to the city when you feel you're ready to force thinking outside the box and get a feeling for where you want to be; and always remain "kind, patient, and willing to learn." As for the educators, his message is this: "Please continue to shape these young, plastic minds to be forever inquisitive. Please make them feel they aren't just in a classroom but in the time period of literature they're analyzing, or to help paint a clear picture of the molecular reaction in biology or chemistry that you're trying to get across conceptually. These students should be challenged and rewarded every day."



SPEECH PATHOLOGY

Giving Others a Voice

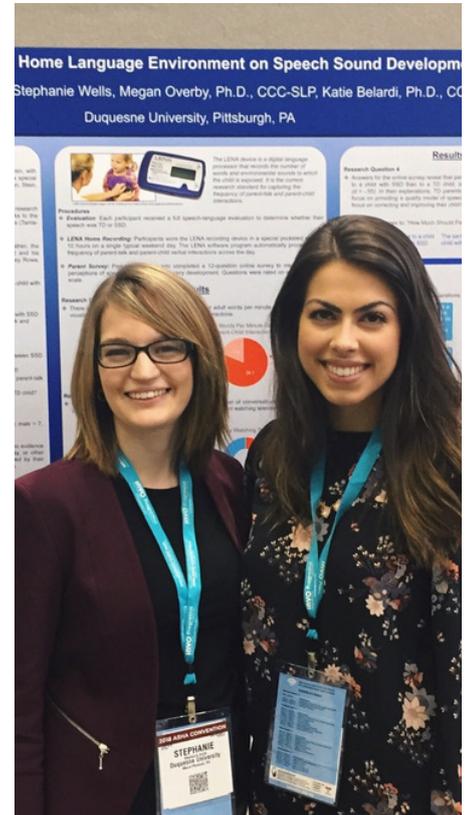
Speech Pathologists:
Stephanie Wells and Marissa Theis

Marissa Theis is a 2014 Southmoreland graduate that has gone on to conquer the world. Marissa graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in Communication Science and Disorders; Marissa is currently attending California University of Pennsylvania for her Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology.

While attending the University of Pittsburgh, Marissa was a member of the NSSLHA (National Society of Speech Language Honors Association), and also took American Sign Language classes and is now an active member in the ASL Club.

Marissa travels to different school districts within the area to perform hearing screenings on numerous grade levels. She will then go into her next school year with having two externships to finish her degree; the externships will have her working in a skilled nursing one and a hospital setting. Although, Marissa aspires to work in the school environment and work with the children she has grown to love.

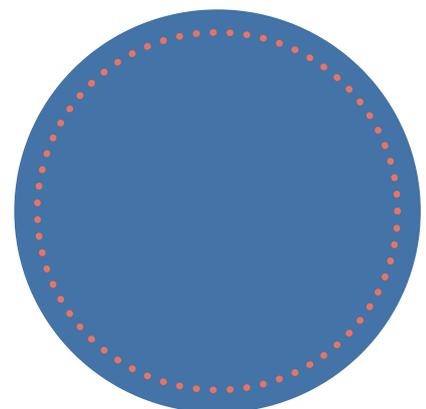
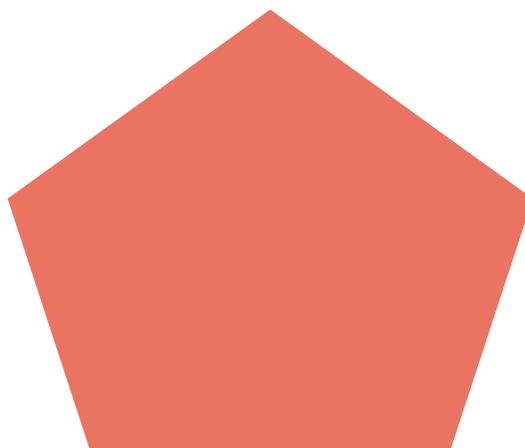
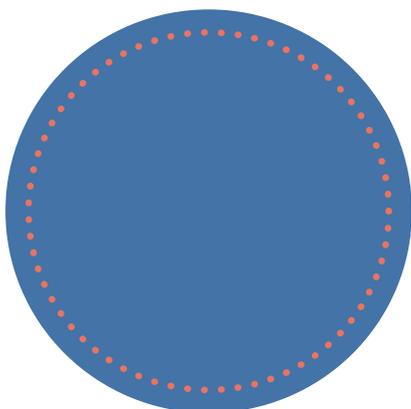
-By Kaylea Wright, 10th Grader



Stephanie Wells, a Southmoreland alumni from the graduating class of 2015, is making a difference in the field dedicated to gaining a better understanding of speech development issues in children. She is currently studying at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh on a path to graduate with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 2019 and a Master of Science In Speech-Language Pathology in 2020.

Wells has participated in a speech therapy research study with her professors and has attended the ASLHA national conference in Boston, MA in 2018. She has overcome any self-doubt and obstacles on her journey to help improve the lives of those around her in a unique way that she has come to love.

-By Joselyn Busato, 11th Grader



Dr. Kali Alvarado



By Ryan Cameron, 10th Grader

Kali (Theis) Alvarado is one of the many former students that attended Southmoreland. Kali Graduated from Southmoreland in The Class of 2008, leaving behind a wonderful success story.

After graduating from high school, Kali moved on to larger pastures, entering the prestigious halls of the University of Pittsburgh, whose acceptance rates are at 55%. Kali later graduated in 2012 with a strong educational background, having a Bachelors of Science in Biology, minoring in Chemistry, and even received a Certificate of American Sign Language.

Now, what makes her story a "Southmoreland Success" story? Kali became a doctor, receiving a Doctorate in Osteopathic Medicine, from VCOM (Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine) in 2017, a private medical school in Blacksburg, Virginia. She considers becoming a doctor her biggest personal accomplishment so far, but on a personal level, she considers her best accomplishment marrying her high school sweetheart, Victor Alvarado. Kali also wanted to send a message out to all people in Southmoreland High School, students and teachers alike: "Focus on the bigger picture. Don't sweat the small stuff. Ask yourself if it will matter in one year from now. If the answer is 'no,' then bless and release it from your mind."

Leaving high school, Kali mentions how nothing down the line will be "handed to you" and "if you want something, you have to work to get it, whether that be getting a college degree, a grown-up job, or raising a family."

She continued to say, "You come from a small town, but that doesn't mean you can't accomplish big things if you put your mind to it." Kali also showed her thanks to the teachers of Southmoreland, a decade later: "Your work is a thankless role. Your students likely don't show appreciation their appreciation for all that you do for them. But, whether you see it or not, your support matters."

Kali then explained how she can still remember guidance and advice from her high school years, and how even if some people attempted to put her down, she climbed right back up, and higher than before. "I had someone once tell me that I would never become a doctor, and I will never forget how defeated I felt," Kali said. Kali ended the interview with a piece of advice for all teachers: "Don't be afraid to be [the children's] mentor. Even if they don't seem to be listening, they are, and they won't forget it."

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BEST PRACTICES

FROM OUR CLASSROOM TO YOURS



EDUTOPIA

By Jenna Hixson

Edutopia is a website providing brief, concise articles, videos, and webinars on popular topics in contemporary education with a heavy focus on social and emotional learning, brain-based learning, integrated studies, project-based learning, technology integration, comprehensive assessment, teacher development, and classroom management.

Second Chances

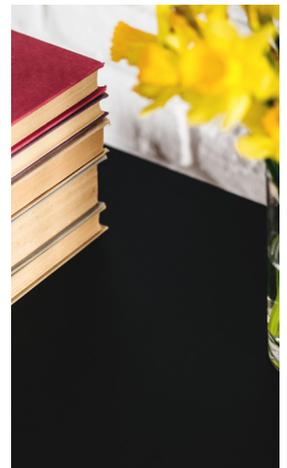
By Julie Graft

One of our 6th grade math best practices is giving students the opportunity to correct their mistakes for half credit back. For example, if a student receives a 14 out of 20, that would be a "C." We encourage he or she to take it home and fix all the incorrect problems and bring it back the next day. For each correction, a half of point is added back to the original grade. This student would now receive a 17 out of 20, which is a "B." We believe in helping students learn from their mistakes to prevent them from potentially making the same mistake on a future assignment.

Guest Speakers and Field Trips

By Sherri Zimmerman

In December, third grade students completed a unit of study on *The Nutcracker*, exposing them to various cultures and the performing arts. The unit began with a visit from a guest from the theater who provided background information, hands on experiences with props used in the production, and lessons on theater etiquette. Students read a novel and summaries of different versions of the story to compare and contrast. As a culminating activity, students experienced the ballet performance at The Uniontown State Theatre. Students also replicated The Land of Sweets by building their own gingerbread houses and decorating them with candy.



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GRANT WATCH

DONORS CHOOSE
SUCCESS STORIES

Grant Resources

PDE Grants List:

http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/grants_and_subsidies/7207

The Foundation Center:

<http://www.foundationcenter.org>

Teacher Planet:

<http://www.grants4teachers.com/>

Teachers Count:

<http://www.teacherscount.org/teacher/grants.shtml>

Grants Alert: <http://www.grantsalert.com/>

Grant Resources

Adopt a Classroom: <http://www.adoptaclassroom.org/>

Education World:

http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/grants/additional_grants.shtml

Digital Wish:

http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/grant_awards

eSchoolNews: <http://www.eschoolnews.com/funding/>

Suggested key words for Internet searches:

classroom grants, education grants, teacher grants, school grants, educational technology grants, education foundations, education philanthropy, youth grants, community grants, corporate grants

Donors Choose



The Best Prize of All: Books!

By Jenna Hixson

My students need a true prize for literary excellence in the classroom: A book!

Written in the very mission statement of our school, my students are promised "high quality learning for all."

They come from various backgrounds and various economic situations, but within our building they are all the same- students worthy of a great education.

These students are also hard working and ambitious. They work hard in the classroom and in the community. To encourage them to always try their absolute hardest, I would like to motivate them with prizes of literature throughout the year!

My Project

Within the pages of a good book are some of life's greatest lessons.

During the 2018-2019 school year, students will be rewarded with classic and contemporary literature for classroom accomplishments. From rewarding students with *The Outsiders*, a book written by SE Hinton when she was teen, for planning their very own YA bestseller to hosting a local version of Chapman University's Holocaust writing contest and awarding the winner *The Book Thief* and a chance to compete in the national competition, students will be given opportunities outside the regular curriculum. The opportunity to enter national contests offering scholarship money and the opportunity to build a home library.



Feeling a Little Crabby by Kelly Derr

Having classroom pets will help my students with disabilities develop and build upon many skill deficit areas. They will gain a sense of pride in learning how to take care of our hermit crabs and be responsible for feeding, watering and cleaning the cage. Our hermit crabs will help promote empathy as students understand their actions affect other living things.

Communication and language skills will increase as we discuss, share and answer questions about our new pets and the habitat in which it lives.

Getting Back to the Basics! By Morgan Coleman

The Hooked on Phonics kit will allow my students to get the basic building blocks they need to become great readers. The dry erase circles will give each of the students a separate and personal space when working in the hands on small group station. The command hooks will allow me to hang each students personal progress folder in a space that they can access. These tools combined will help my students feel a sense of success. They will also help my students gain the basic educational foundation they need to continue to active and accomplished learners throughout their educational careers.

The Comfy Corner for Reading By Sherri Zimmerman

My students need a comfortable and inviting place to read. The comfy couch can seat 3-4 students and would be placed against the wall in the reading corner. The bright green cushion color beckons students to come and read. The floor seats would be placed anywhere in the center of the reading corner. These seats will allow 8 students at a time to rotate through the reading corner.



Kids Connect: MIND BODY HEART



By Amy Pushkis

My Students

I have the privilege and honor to be a Reading Specialist for Kindergarten students. We are a Primary Center with Kindergarten and First Grade students. Our building houses approximately 300 children. We are a rural school district in Western Pennsylvania.

What are some ways to help our young learners be their best, deal with daily stress and be happy? If we help them in ways like offering techniques to help them manage their emotions and stress, their academics will improve. In years past, we have introduced a therapy dog, which has been successful. When offering these new MIND BODY HEART resources, we will be able to reach more students.

My Project

Using music, movement, and mindfulness from the books "Gorilla Thumps and Bear Hugs" and "My Magic Breath," will give children a multi-sensory approach and will teach them ways to connect with themselves.



Children will learn tools and techniques to be used at school or home to encourage self realization.

The BluTooth speaker and the BalanceFrom Puzzle Exercise mat will allow activities like yoga and meditation to be either indoors or outdoors. Then I would be able to share these with other teachers who may want to incorporate these activities within their classrooms. The Woodstock Solo Silver Zenergy Chime will serve as a calming transition signal for the children. I am especially excited to encourage the use of these techniques at a young age so it can be used for a lifetime.

Children will learn how to connect their mind, body and heart in order to be more successful students and to be kind and compassionate to themselves as well as others.



ENTERTAINMENT

WEEKNIGHT RECIPES
READINGS
CLASSROOM CLASSIFIEDS



STEP ONE: GET YOUR CROCKPOT

Salsa Chicken

Ingredients:

Chicken Breasts
1 can of black beans
1 can of corn
1 jar of salsa

Preparation:

Mix all ingredients in the Crockpot.
Cook on low throughout the day.
Serve warm with rice and cheddar cheese.
Can also be shredded and served on a shell.

Balsamic Chicken

Ingredients:

Chicken Breasts
½ cup balsamic vinegar
1 jar of salsa

Preparation:

Mix all ingredients in the Crockpot.
Cook on low 4-6 hours.
Serve warm with rice or cauliflower rice.

Cheesy Chicken and Rice

Ingredients:

Chicken Breasts
1 tsp garlic salt
1sp black pepper
1 medium onion chopped
1 tbs garlic minced
2 cups chicken stock
1 can of Cream of Mushroom
1 can Cream of Chicken
2 cups shredded cheese
Cooked White Rice

Preparation:

Set aside cooked, white rice and shredded cheese.
Mix all remaining ingredients in the Crockpot.
Cook on Low 5+ hours.
Once done, add in cooked rice and cheese.
Let sit for five minutes and serve warm.

Beef and Broccoli Stir-Fry

1/2 c. low-sodium chicken broth
1/3 c. low-sodium soy sauce
1/4 c. brown sugar
2 cloves garlic, minced
Juice of 1 lime
1 lb. flank steak
1 tbsp. sesame oil
1 head broccoli florets
kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Sesame seeds, for garnish
Cooked rice, for serving

In a medium bowl, combine chicken broth, soy sauce, brown sugar, garlic, and lime juice.

Rub steak with oil and add to high heat skillet.
Sear 3 minutes per side.

Add sauce to skillet and deglaze pan, then add broccoli. Return steak to skillet and let simmer in sauce. Season generously with salt and pepper.

Let simmer 8 to 10 minutes until broccoli and steak are cooked through.

Garnish with sesame seeds and serve with rice.

ENTERTAINMENT



CLASSROOM CLASSIFIEDS

Contact **Jenna Hixson** if you are in need of chapter books for grades 2-8.

Contact **Janey Layman** or **Richard Love** for clipboards.

TO READ OR TO WATCH

Jody Deluca is reading *High Performance Habits*. According to Jodi, "It is a book for anyone who is looking to become the best version of themselves."

Jodi also recommends *Nightingale*, a book about the Holocaust. It is truly an amazing encounter of perseverance, kindness, helping others, and survival.

Jean Carey recommends morning podcasts including *The Genius Life*. A science and health/nutrition journalist interviews insightful minds of our time about what it means to live like a genius.

For fun, Jean is currently watching *Frontier*. *Frontier* is about fur trade in the 1700s. An outlaw trapper is leading a campaign to breach the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly on fur in Canada.

Do you have ideas or content for the next issue of SONEW?
Contact Jenna Hixson at hixsonj@southmoreland.net