



Winter 2015

SHENANGO NEWS

"HOME OF THE WILDCATS"

724-658-7287

2501 Old Pittsburgh Rd
New Castle, PA 16101

www.shenango.k12.pa.us

Expanding Excellence

By Courtney Fontana and Angelina Sibeto

Shenango High School received the PA Governor's Expanding Excellence Grant. The Expanding Excellence Grant is a program that focuses on creating a culture of innovation and achievement in Pennsylvania's schools through recognition, collaboration, mentoring, and sharing the best practices available between schools.

"Shenango was recognized for scoring above 90 on the School Performance Profile (SPP) and selected to model our strategies for two SPP indicators, Science/Biology and Advanced Placement. Two teams of faculty members and administration were selected to create replication tools which will be used by other schools as resources for school improvement," Shenango's primary grant writer Mr. Barron explained.

"It was a team effort between teachers and administration," furthered principal Joe McCormick. "Everyone was involved in drafting and developing the application, a replication tool for other schools to understand what we are doing that is effective, and presentation materials for an upcoming conference." Though the primary benefit of receiving two \$25,000 grants was admirable in and of itself, the grant also "allows us to showcase some really good things our teachers and students are doing."

The funding from the grant was very helpful towards the creation of the replication tool as well as paying for the team's expenses to attend the conferences to share Shenango's practices and successful techniques with other schools. Further funding from the grants will be used by Shenango High School to help further improve programs related to student growth and achievement.

"I am very pleased to be able to share with other schools the methodology we've used at Shenango to achieve such outstanding achievement and student growth on the Biology Keystone Exam," explained Katie Sherry, biology teacher. "We will be mentoring Union Area School District and also presenting at a conference to other schools across the state that are interested in bettering their biology programs. We will explain how our course structure, supplemental programming, and remediation efforts have enabled our biology students to perform above the state average."

Biology teacher Nate Flood added that "while the Biology Achievement grant team includes Mrs. Sherry and myself, it truly is a result of a collaborative effort of numerous individuals over many years and a product of how hard our students work within the school."

There are numerous ways this grant benefits Shenango School District. Shenango was able to secure funding to enhance programs involving academic success and growth. "During the conferences, Shenango was able to build relationships and share best practices with other school districts. This collaboration will not only help the other districts involved, but will also help Shenango remain a leader in education," Mr. Barron said.

SCEF Continues Its Impact

By Ashleigh Presnar and Claire Tevis



"Runners, walkers, and strollers alike are able to join together at the school campus to enjoy our beautiful facility and to get some exercise while helping to fund classroom grants and student scholarships," said Vice President of the Shenango Community Education Foundation Dr. Karen Matis in regards to the second annual Homecoming Weekend 5K/10K. There were around 250 participants for the 5K/10K. People of all ages participated in the run, and even the younger students were able to enjoy the Children's Walk and Rock where they could engage in an obstacle course, face painting, crafts, balloon animal making, and a visit from a Disney princess.

SCEF, a non-profit organization, has raised over \$12,000 in total. During the 2014 fundraisers, \$9,400 came from the 5k and \$1,100 came from McTeacher Night. McDonalds was generous enough to present the foundation with 20% of the total profits that were received that night. In addition, this night was supplemented with a

basket and 50/50 raffle. Elementary students enjoyed the opportunity to dress in their Halloween costumes. "The event brought together families and friends in a fun and entertaining way," Dr. Matis noted.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the SCEF student representative is Elizabeth Salem. She served on the Board of Directors and her duties for the foundation were to attend regular meetings where she was instrumental with the organization and implementation of these activities. Because of Elizabeth's running knowledge from her participation in cross country, she was able to fully participate and be active in organizing the events.



New Teacher Welcome

by Shelby McCart and Montana Vanderzee

Shenango Area School District welcomed four new staff members to its ranks for the 2014-2015 school year. Take a minute to get to know our new employees.



Janelle Cassano is a 5th grade teacher at Shenango Elementary School. She and her husband of five years have a 20 month old daughter, Makaylee. They are also expecting their second daughter at the end of February. Ms. Cassano attended Slippery Rock University and majored in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Development. She received her Master's degree in K-8 Mathematics and Science Curriculum and Instruction from Slippery Rock. When asked why she chose to become a teacher, she explained that she enjoys working with students and seeing their growth throughout the year. She also told us it is a challenging yet very rewarding profession but the children make it all worth it. "Seeing the students succeed on a daily basis is something that isn't offered anywhere else."

Ms. Cassano would also like to become more involved in extracurricular activities because she was very active as a student and would love to give back. She stated that her goal for the year is for her students to always remember this year as a fun, successful year in which they felt they grew as individuals. When asked for an interesting fact about herself, she told us her first dog was a Basenji. This kind of dog cannot bark, but instead yodels, whines, and screams. Mrs. Cassano explained that what impressed her the most about Shenango was how respectful and well mannered the students are. She said that adjusting to a new school can be difficult, but the staff and administration have been welcoming and helped the transition to a new district to be smooth and enjoyable.



Krista Hunter is Shenango's new psychologist. She is recently engaged and will be tying the knot in August of 2015. She owns a fox red lab named Copper. She attended Clarion University of Pennsylvania for her Master's in Educational Psychology and Post-Masters Certification in School Psychology. She chose to be a School Psychologist because she enjoys working with children and adolescents along with helping them experience success socially, behaviorally, and academically.

Ms. Hunter explained that she has always loved the school environment and had an intense interest in psychology and how the brain works. In this profession she is able to do all of these things together in one day. She plans to get more involved with the elementary and high school extracurricularly once she is situated in her new position. Her goal for this year is to help as many students as she can. She would like to be able to talk about their success and feel as if she made a positive impact on their lives. Also, she would like to get to know the school personnel better and wants them to feel comfortable approaching her with any of their concerns. Something unique about Ms. Hunter that most people would not know is she rides motorcycles. She has had her motorcycle license for seven years and is looking to get a Harley-Davidson after her wedding next summer.



Paula Natale replaces long time elementary nurse Sue Zeigler. She has been married for almost 16 years to her husband, Jim, and they have two children, Janie and Jake. She attended St. Francis School of Nursing and Carlow University earning a Bachelor's degree in Nursing. She received her Certificate in School Nursing from Slippery Rock University.

Mrs. Natale chose to be a nurse because she loves taking care of people and helping them. Being an Elementary School Nurse combines her love for both nursing and children. She is already involved in the Wellness Committee and the Shenango Athletic Association. Of her many goals to achieve this year, teaching the children about proper handwashing, better nutrition, and ways to get more exercise are among the top priorities. When asked about an interesting fact about herself, she stated that she is a lifelong fan of the Pittsburgh Pirates. Her whole family enjoys going to games together, and she even named one of her dogs Candy after John Candelaria, one of her favorite Pirate players when she was little.



Vicki Carbone is a new special education teacher at Shenango High School. She has been married to her husband for three years and they have one dog named Tony. One of the many unique facts about herself is that she lived in the Golden State of California from third grade to eighth grade. She attended Westminster College and majored in Elementary and Special Education, highly qualified in middle school math, reading, and English. She has always wanted to be a teacher and stated that she used to teach her stuffed animals for fun. She enjoys working with students and seeing their growth not only academically, but as productive young adults. She explained, "It makes me proud to know I'm making a difference in their lives." She said that eventually she would like to work with students in extracurricular activities like Peer Leadership or as a Class Advisor. Her goal for this year is to help students adjust to their new high school setting and help them succeed in all of their classes. When asked what has impressed her most about Shenango, she responded that she loves how everyone is always willing to help out.

National Honor Society Inducts New Members

This year, the National Honor Society officers considered many themes for the Induction Ceremony. They settled on "Quest for Excellence." Speeches by members highlighted the theme and challenged the current members and inductees to continue their personal journey to do their best in all facets of life. President Hunter Miller presided over the ceremony with assistance from Vice-President Carly Danielson, Secretary Claire Tevis, and Treasurer Christa Bupp. Student readers included Ashleigh Presnar and Brent Leber. Also, Carly and Christa performed "For Good" from the musical Wicked.

Now THAT is BRILLIANT!

Traditional Public Schools Continue to Outperform Charter Schools

The 2013-14 School Performance Profile (SPP) scores showed that traditional public schools perform well, while charter schools continue to lag in performance. The PA Department of Education (PDE) announced the results of the 2013-14 SPP that showed 2,134 of 2,947, or 72%, public school buildings earning a 70 or higher, which included both Shenango High School (SPP - 84) and Shenango Elementary School (SPP - 72). Compared to the 2012-13 profile, the percentage of schools with a 70 or higher has held steady at 72%. The results are available at www.paschoolperformance.org.

PSBA's examination of the SPP scores showed traditional public schools continued to outperform their charter and cyber charter counterparts. Based on a scale of 100, the average SPP score for a traditional public school was 76.9, brick and mortar charter schools was 65.1 and cyber charters was 48.9. The department has indicated a 70-point score or higher is the mark of moving toward success.

"Public schools continue to perform well under tougher academic standards and in the face of a difficult environment including funding and tax issues, and the unfortunate need to lay off staff and cut programs and services," said PSBA Executive Director Nathan Mains.

"These results show that, compared to 2012-13, the majority of our public schools are performing well even though the state has recently revised its academic standards and is transitioning to more rigorous assessments," Acting Secretary of Education Carolyn Dumaresq said in a PDE news release. She noted that, compared to last year, the percentage of schools that earned below 60 declined by nearly 1%, indicating that student achievement is improving as a number of schools target resources to improve student academic performance.

While there is room for improvement for all schools, it is clear charter schools, especially cyber charter schools, need to be held to the same accountability standards as traditional public schools so all students receive a quality education. In the new legislative session, PSBA hopes that charter school reform will be considered.

Safety First

By Natalie Book and Ciana Fogel

Thanks to the Safe Schools Initiative Target Grant that was awarded last year, Shenango School District continues to provide an even safer environment for students and staff.

A total of nine new cameras were installed throughout the building in locations ranging from the front lobby to the cafeteria to the second floor. These HD cameras, monitored by administrators and by the school security officer, are "very clear and have a zoom feature, unlike the old cameras," explained security officer Dave Tyler. "The new cameras were installed at Shenango High School and augment the existing cameras which are placed everywhere throughout both schools inside and outside leaving very few dead spots. The cameras record and store activity for months. If an incident occurs, I can review the footage to determine exactly what happened in a timely manner."

Principal Joe McCormick was ecstatic about the installment of the new cameras. "The new cameras are a significant upgrade in the quality and functionality compared with the old cameras. The quality of picture and ability to zoom and still see clearly have been a great asset for both open spaces like the cafeteria and in crowded places like long hallways with lockers," stated McCormick.

Shenango can add this grant to the growing list of accolades it continues to receive. "The grant was awarded through a competitive process which was open to all Pennsylvania schools. Throughout the state of Pennsylvania, 110 school districts were selected by the PA Safe Schools Office to receive grants after submitting a proposed overview of the project," said Brett Barron, director of transportation and school grants. "The funding from the grant was used to make various safety improvements across the district. Shenango was able to increase the quality and coverage of our security system by installing new cameras and district emergency communication equipment."

There are many beneficial factors to the installation of the new cameras. "Shenango School District will see a number of benefits that stem from the completion of this project. With the increased quality and coverage of our security equipment Shenango will be able to provide an even safer environment for students and staff.

Shenango Band and Chorus Excel

November 18 at Westminster College, Shenango had FIVE students successfully audition into the PMEA District 5 Honors Band! Approximately 900 students from Beaver, Butler, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties auditioned, and approximately 120 were selected for the band. These students prepared professional level solos on their instruments since last spring for a three minute audition that took an enormous amount of discipline and hard work to prepare for. The students are: Julie DiGiammarino, clarinet; Christa Bupp, baritone saxophone; Mike West, trumpet; Luke Uber, trombone; Stephen Thomas, tuba. It is indeed an honor to be selected and they are considered the "best of the best" in our 4 county District.



On November 1, 2014 Shenango High School Choir was represented at the District 5 Honors Chorus at Westminster College. Over 400 students from four counties auditioned for the select 96 member choir. Two Shenango students earned spots in the choir. Senior Carly Danielson was a member of the Soprano 2 section and Sophomore Michael West was a member of the Tenor 1 section. This was West's second year placing in the ensemble. The choir was under the direction of Dr. Ryan Beeken from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.



Two Shenango Teams Make History

By Rachel Miloser, Christina Rapone, and Nicole Watkins

“Be Uncommon.” This has been the Shenango Wildcats’ motto for the past two years, and it surely showed this year as the football team made it to the playoffs for the first time since 2006. Coach Comnesso attributes much of this success to the team’s unselfish attitude and hard work ethic, both of which they showed on the field. This mindset, paired with Coach Comnesso’s 18 years of being an assistant and his studies of great coaches, resulted in a season to remember.

“It’s never about one player or one coach,” Coach Comnesso said. “What we accomplished this year is an example of everyone committing to our core values of teamwork and excellence. This team was very unselfish and worked hard to be the best they could be.” Leadership was a key role this season. The seniors demonstrated this character trait very well for their fellow teammates. Senior Steve Murcko was all about believing, noting that “believing was half the battle all year.” He knew the team had it in them, but they had to believe that they did. Their work and drive showed on the field where Murcko consistently told the team to believe and it would happen. A positive attitude also helped the team be successful this year. Senior Brenton Booher was always calming the team down when they were in tight situations. He wanted to just remind everyone about their overall goal of a winning record and making playoffs.

There was great excitement throughout the whole community when it was determined that Shenango was in the playoffs. The real “kicker” that set the tone for the season was when the Wildcats made a winning field goal with only a few seconds remaining during their first game at Western Beaver. The team was very excited and this excitement grew throughout the entire school and community. Fans started to believe in the Wildcats more than ever. Even when they lost, their fans were there still cheering them on. “You have to believe 100%,” said senior Nick Rich, who led the Wackos in cheering on the team this football season.

“Most importantly have fun and make memories,” was Brenton Booher’s motto for the team this year. He wanted to have a very memorable senior year, and that he did. He loved being able to have one last home game and gain a win with this. “It was absolutely amazing. It was great being a senior on the team that turned it all around. That is a memory that will never die and I’ll cherish forever,” Steve Murcko added. The team made history this year, but also made memories. These memories will be ones the seniors will never forget.

The Shenango girl’s volleyball team’s mindset this year is also what led them to their victories. The 2014 season for SGV has been the most successful in Shenango volleyball history. As Coach Dugan said before the start of the season, “Knowing the returning talent on this year’s team, I was very confident that we could advance further into the WPIAL playoffs than last year. All of the open gyms and summer camps proved to me that even if someone would get injured, we had enough talent on the bench to fill in for any position on the court,” he said. “But I always say to just play each point as hard as you can and good things will happen.”

Going into the season, SGV was pumped considering all the time and work they put in. SGV’s five seniors, Katie Lacey, Shelby McCart, Irene Koury, Christina Rapone, and Nicole Watkins, aspired to make history and leave their mark on Shenango their senior year. Their goal was reached and even exceeded as the team was also ranked 10th in the state for Single A schools, a first for the team.. Senior Irene Koury noted just how special this honor was: “Making history means everything to me and my team. I couldn’t ask for a better senior year.”

Coach Dugan hopes this is just the beginning for the future of volleyball at Shenango. “One of our goals was making it to the state playoffs this season and it was very hard on us being that close and to lose 3-2,” he said. “But I was very proud of my team and how hard they worked all year to take SGV to a place it had never been before. Now hopefully all of the younger players will feed off of what these five seniors have done over their six years of playing volleyball at Shenango and take it one step further next year.”

SGV cruised through their section despite one loss from Neshannock. As they advanced into playoffs being ranked sixth in the WPIAL, their first playoff game was against Giebel. Though Giebel took the third seed and SGV took the sixth, the girls beat their opponents 3-0. Their next playoff game was against Frazier, and this was ultimately their biggest game of the season because every team in the history of SGV lost in their second rounds of playoffs. Close games of 25-16, 25-21, and 25-23 resulted in SGV pulling out the victory and advancing further to Greensburg Central Catholic. Unfortunately, Greensburg took the win which placed SGV against Neshannock to compete for who would go on to states. Going into the Neshannock game Coach Dugan was positive, “As always, when you have rivalry it is a very meaningful match but since Neshannock had beaten Shenango the previous year, I knew how much extra this meant to the team. The first match-up, the teams were very focused and played a mistake free match winning 3-0. The second match-up, emotions got the best of us and too many errors were difficult to recover from, losing 3-0. And the match to make it to state playoffs was what both coaches expected, very close and competitive sets. Unfortunately we suffered a 3-2 loss.”

Regardless of the loss ending their season, the girls still had a history-making season. The remaining players look forward to next season as they start preparing now by playing in JO leagues, lifting, and training.

Making a Difference

By Shelby McCart

Girl Scout Troop #1-376 of Shenango Elementary School worked exceptionally hard to make an impact on their school this year. They raised enough money through their magnet and Girl Scout Cookie sales for the 4-squares to be painted on the new blacktop. They also purchased playground balls so the students can properly play the game. They chose to spend their earnings on the paint and the balls because this is a beloved game throughout the elementary. In addition to the 4-square paint, they were proud to donate 12 kick balls, eight basketballs, six jump ropes, two frisbees and four bins as a storage unit.

Troop leader of four years Billie Bober explained that the girls narrowed down their many ideas to the best one that they felt would “benefit every child in the elementary. They had to come up with a budget on what they thought they could afford and then determine how to best use their funds.”

Not only did the girls raise the necessary funds, but they also actively participated in the service project. “Each girl had several turns at rolling the paint and completing the first 4-square on the playground,” principal Adam Vincent said. “Their caring has given students at recess more games to play. They did a wonderful job presenting their ideas, collaborating with several departments to coordinate the project, and achieved their plans as designed.”



Honors Students Get Rewarded

By Alyssa White and Jada Montozzi

This fall was very busy for honors English students in 8th through 10th grades. They stepped outside the traditional classroom to enhance their education. These learning experiences were guided by Ms. Guy for the sophomores, Mrs. Allen for the freshmen, and Mrs. Barron for the 8th grade class.

Ms. Guy and Mrs. Allen combined their 9th and 10th grade honors classes and travelled to Grove City College to attend a workshop called "Curing Shakespear." The purpose of this trip was to introduce students to ways of understanding the plays of William Shakespeare without feeling intimidated by the language or content. This trip benefited the students by giving them the opportunity to learn about Shakespeare and then use that knowledge in their own curriculum.

"They were able to meet and interact with students from various locations and work with them to analyze and create responses to Shakespeare's literature," Ms. Guy said. Students also worked with pre-service teachers who shared an enthusiastic perspective on the topic.

Most students who appreciated Shakespeare before the trip enjoyed the workshop. "I enjoyed learning different ways to read the Shakespearean language. You can rearrange the order of words in a sentence or take off endings of certain words," stated sophomore Abby Sickafuse. Ms. Guy also noted that "the workshop provided a good introduction to material that will be covered during class in the spring semester."

Mrs. Allen brought the freshmen honors students to Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh. The purpose of this outing was to give students the opportunity to see short stories like Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* and Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* come to life.

"The production by Chamber Theatre lets the students see the stories we studied in class through a different lens," Mrs. Allen explained. "They get a taste of theater and see the connection between their studies and a real live performance." Freshman Hayden Carpenter noted that "the performances were pretty cool."

Mrs. Barron's 8th grade honors students also travelled to Pittsburgh as a way to supplement their study of the biography *Andrew Carnegie: Industrial Philanthropist* by Laura B. Edge. "Carnegie's business partner was Henry Clay Frick, so we visit Frick's estate in order to experience the way of life during that time period," Mrs. Barron explained. "Students also learn about the role steel mills played in Pittsburgh's history."

"To help the students learn about the Gilded Era, students received a tour of Clayton and the art museum on the grounds. The tour guides provided the students with information about the artifacts in the house as well as the artwork on display," Mrs. Barron explained. "The students had the opportunity to examine items the Fricks' owned, ask questions about their way of life, take notes on an outline for their persuasive essay, and participate in activities that helped them to reflect upon the artwork they viewed."



Doling Out Decision-Making

By Brooke Chieze and Hana Murphy

When thinking of ways to spread the idea of good decisions and a healthy lifestyle, Students Against Destructive Decisions, or SADD, had the perfect idea. After coming to the realization that most elementary students were unaware of their pivotal organization, SADD members decided to show the children what the club was all about. The advisor, Mrs. Hudak, assigned multiple students of the club to exhibit the importance of decision-making. These club members read the book *Is There Really a Human Race?* by Jamie Lee Curtis, and asked a series of questions to elementary students. The students were thrilled to be able to communicate with the high schoolers and answered the questions with excitement, the very result that Mrs. Hudak was hoping for.

Mrs. Hudak found this to be very beneficial to the children. "Developing empathy and a sense of responsibility for self and others in your community needs to occur from a young age. It is a much more powerful message when it comes from young people," Hudak explained. She hoped to incorporate the message of the club and help the elementary students grow through these vital aspects of life. She thought the best way for them to actually listen to and learn these qualities was from SADD members who embody those values, students who are often viewed as "local heroes" by younger Wildcats.

In addition to helping the students learn these qualities, she hoped to encourage them to join SADD when they attend the junior/senior high. Not only was the club trying to bring in the support of elementary students, but hoped to promote the great organization that SADD truly is. Second grader Lindsey D'Angelo said, "I liked the book because it was funny and he thought it was a real race."

It was not only the work of Mrs. Hudak, though. The SADD club members felt strongly about this deed as well. Going to the elementary school gave them a chance to show off the club they are proud to be a part of. One member who read to the children, junior Allison St. John, said, "I really enjoyed reading to the kids because I feel like the book we read showed what our club was about and potentially influenced them to join SADD in the future." Two-year member Robert Presnar thought that this new idea was "really exciting because I got to do something new." It was very refreshing for the members of the club and they thoroughly appreciated being active in their community.

With the success of this project, the SADD club continues to try and spread the values of their club and make the neighborhood a better place. In the future, they plan to keep on motivating others to be better people and make better decisions.



SEL Program Impacts Student Lives

By Christa Bupp and Rhianna Slagle

Shenango School District is introducing a new initiative to its students and staff. Social and emotional learning, otherwise known as SEL, is a program that will “help students to prepare for life effectively by creating a more harmonious social and emotional environment within the public school” says high school assistant principal Al Dorsch. “I believe in our students. Teaching in the high school for over 15 years showed me that not everyone defines respect the same way. We need a tool for setting social expectations, and teaching SEL in a great start.”

SEL is expected to help students in a number of ways. Some of these include making good decisions, maintaining and managing emotions, creating healthy relationships and caring and being tolerant of others and their differences. In the elementary, “the collective decision was made to create and implement our own School Wide Positive Behavior system --The Wildcat Way,” said Mr. Dorsch. “The Wildcat Way, as SWPBS indicates, rewards students for showing expected behaviors.”

Stemming from a team of teachers who partnered with the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV, this team was responsible for taking their knowledge and training the elementary staff, who in turn, “trained all the students and continue to train them regarding the behavioral expectations of The Wildcat Way,” principal Adam Vincent explained. “The Wildcat Way teaches the students how to be safe, responsible, and kind across all settings.” These settings range from the bus to the cafeteria to recess, which helps “maintain a consistent and teachable approach to what is expected of our students,” Vincent said.

The high school took on the initiative with the 7th and 8th grade and then plans to gradually incorporate specially designed SEL endeavors into the 9th-12th grade classes. Field trips for the 7th and 8th grade set the tone for this program. These field trips included the 7th grade Moraine Trip and the 8th grade Camp Lutherlyn trip. “The purpose is for the students to accept the differences of their peers and to treat each other with respect. Students participated in some type of physical activity and had discussions about many topics which required deep reflection on their part,” said school counselor Deanna Othites.

Each trip zeroed in on both life lessons as well as lessons about teamwork. The Moraine trip acronym was WILDCAT (Will, Integrity, Listener, Diversity, Compassionate, Attitude, Teamwork/Trust). Mrs Othites explained, “The setting is great for real life lessons, such as science relating to students that diversity not only takes place within our school and classes, but also in nature.”

At Camp Lutherlyn, 8th graders learned how their interactions with peers can affect them. Eighth grade algebra teacher Jaime Slamecka noted that, “During the field trip, our 8th graders faced several challenging team-building activities. My group of students quickly realized how important positive communication was to successfully completing the tasks,” she explained. “As the day passed, I watched the students improve significantly in their ability to communicate and effectively work together to accomplish their goals. I think it was a challenging, yet rewarding day for students.”

To make these field trips successful, a lot of preparation is necessary on the teachers’ part. “We are not simply going some place off campus to view a play or visit a museum. Our teachers put a great deal of time into activities that the students are doing off campus. So it’s still preparing a lesson with the added pressure of remembering everything needed to make the lesson/trip successful,” said Mrs. Othites.

“My hope is that students will build upon what they have learned by their participation in the field trips and put it into practice not only at SHS, but wherever they go,” said Mrs. Othites. “That is the main goal, providing lessons to our students that will become lifelong practices, which hopefully will help them reach their full potential.”

Another approach to strengthening the new SEL program is an initiative by the social studies classes through the Medal of Honor program. “The program is designed as a resource for students to explore the character traits of courage, commitment, sacrifice, patriotism, integrity, and citizenship,” explained Miss Schuster, 8th grade social studies teacher.

“The program uses the remarkable stories of Medal of Honor recipients as inspiration for our developing citizens,” added 9th and 10th grade social studies teacher Mrs. Merryman.

Through the SEL program, Shenango School District will be able to reach out to the students in a positive and encouraging way. The teachers and staff have been and are continuing to put forth a lot of effort to make this project a success. There is a change coming to Shenango and the SEL initiative is the window for this opportunity.



Alumni Directory Continues To Grow

Shenango has alumni all over the globe doing amazing things and working in an enormous variety of fields. In July the school district unveiled a new Alumni Directory as a means to develop and maintain an alumni network. The purpose of the directory is to increase communication with district graduates and keep track of contact information for people who are interested in working with the district as a resource (job shadowing, internships, college mentoring, career mentoring). Already this fall a survey was distributed to recent graduates in the graduating classes of 2006-2009 to gather feedback on their experiences and preparedness in higher education.

Much like college alumni networks, Shenango alumni are able to go online and update their contact information, higher education degree progress and employment information. We encourage former students to join the 200+ alumni that have already enrolled by submitting their information online at www.shenango.k2.pa.us and selecting “Alumni Database” quick link on the left side of the page.

Shenango High School Goes Digital

By Christina Rapone and Nicole Watkins

Recently, Shenango received a makeover in the form of a new marquee. It has drawn the eye of the public who are all very pleased with the update. “There has been a lot of positive feedback and comments by staff, students, and the community,” said principal Joe McCormick, explaining that the upgrade was well overdue as the old model showed its age and could not hold an adequate amount of information.

“The new marquee allows us to showcase multiple activities and achievements at once. We are also able to update it at a much higher frequency for timely information,” explained McCormick. “We want people driving past the school to be left with a good impression on the district. The marquee, just like the well kept grounds/facilities and positive student behavior, are all representations of the school district. We want those to be positive.”

The district put the marquee to use immediately after it was installed, showcasing how well both the football team and volleyball team performed, advertising the Peer Leadership’s blanket drive, showing weather updates, and informing the community about upcoming breaks. Having the new marquee gives the school the chance to display activities that are going on with ease.

The marquee was funded courtesy of capital improvement money which is mostly used for maintenance, upkeep, and construction costs for the building and grounds. The color scheme was also a collective decision. “We had a lot of discussion about the side and top panels and it was a difficult choice,” McCormick noted. He explained the chosen color scheme of white and blue proved to look the most professional as the yellow options were too florescent when they were backlit.

“There are always technology glitches you have to work out, but we are getting better at using it and understanding the various features,” McCormick said.



Get with the Program

By Brooke Chieze and Hana Murphy

New school year, new program. This past summer, the whole district converted from Edline to Parent Portal. Parent Portal is a tool for parents to stay active in their child’s education and their progress, not solely to check grades. The portal offers many features that Edline did not. It lets parents see their student’s lunch balance and it also shows attendance records. It can also display progress reports, shows schedules, and provides an actual calendar of the students’ week and what assignments were given. It was a huge adjustment for parents and students, but was it a good one?

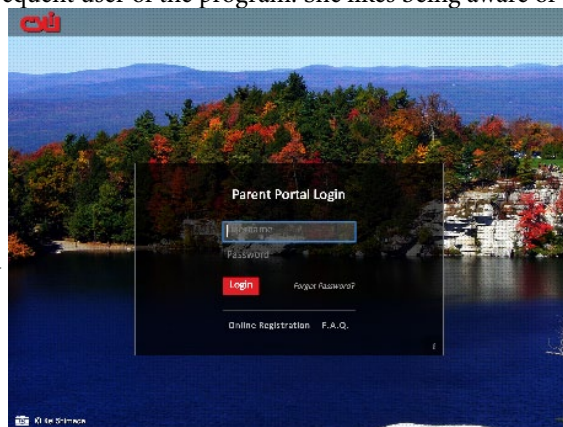
Ask Shenango’s technology director, Rob Heath. Over the summer, he had to convert from the previous system, Edline, to the new and improved Parent Portal. It was a bit different for him because he had to start from scratch. “It definitely has a different look and feel than Edline, and the parent account setup process is different,” he stated. It made so many more aspects of children’s school life more accessible to their parents and should make teachers’ and parents’ jobs much easier. Mr. Heath states that “The content available on the portal is always being improved, so I anticipate more information being available as time goes on.”

Now, let’s put it in a parent’s perspective. Erica Bruce, a very involved parent here at Shenango, loves this program. She finds it to be much more informative than its predecessor. “The information and usage is so much better than Edline. The information is all in one place,” she said. It makes her time go faster and more efficiently. She still has factors that she wishes were improved upon, like an available lunch menu on the website and more notifications on a low lunch balance and when grades are being updated. With these potential new advancements, the program would be a perfect fit for her.

The students have opinions on this website also. Junior Emma Rich is a frequent user of the program. She likes being aware of her grades and the teachers’ lesson plans. She finds it much easier to know of her missed work. “Teachers put up their lesson plans and you can check and see what you missed.” Emma enjoys having this feature when she is unable to attend school and needs her work as soon as possible. In addition, she loves how facile it is to contact the teachers. Since each teacher has their own site, she can just click their link and contact them when necessary. With all of these new features, Emma has easily transitioned to this new program.

Converting to Parent Portal was definitely a huge adaptation. It provided a brand new website for parents and students and offered them so much more. This new program had a good reaction after people set up their accounts and tried it. It was refreshing for the district to bring in something new for everybody.

Parents can access the Parent Portal at <https://parents.csiu-technology.org> or via a link on the district website (www.shenangoschools.org). Initial login information can be obtained by emailing Mr. Heath at rheath@shenango.k12.pa.us.



Administrative Team
Superintendent — Dr. Michael Schreck
High School Principal — Joe McCormick
High School Assistant Principal — Al Dorsch
Elementary Principal — Adam Vincent
Director of Special Services — Christine Moon
Technology Director — Rob Heath

Board of Directors	
President	Mr. Randy Angelucci
Mr. Albert Burick Jr.	Mr. Sam Biasucci
Vice President	Mr. Joe Gaus
Mr. Merle Glass	Mr. Nick Manolis
Secretary	Mr. Dean Owrey
Mrs. Jennifer Haben	Mrs. Denise Palkovich
	Mr. J. Gary Senko

Shenango Area School District

Shenango Area School District
2501 Old Pittsburgh Road
New Castle, PA 16101

Non-Profit Organization
US POSTAGE
Permit# 165
New Castle, PA



SGV comes to Shenango Elementary

The success of Shenango girls' volleyball has caught the eye of elementary students. During some of Mr. Keene's physical education classes, several high school volleyball team members put on performances that brought down the house or we could say they "spiked down the gym!" Each serve, bump, set, spike and dig ignited electrifying cheers from the students that rumbled throughout the elementary building.

Shenango Head Volleyball Coach Mr. Greg Dugan and the Assistant Volleyball Coach Ms. Breehan Kehoe and their team eagerly accepted Mr. Keene's invitation to assist in teaching volleyball skills to SES students. Kindergarten used balloons, primary classes used beach balls, and intermediate grades used volleyballs. The grade level, ability level, and type of ball didn't intimidate the volleyball team members. They adapted to every situation with enthusiasm and patience, to help and encourage their younger Wildcats to identify, describe, and demonstrate volleyball skills.

