Dear Members of the Clark School Community,

These past two relatively mild winter months have been extremely active ones for our district. For example, the Clark Education Fund (CEF), a group that gives most generously to our schools, awarded two mini-grants. The first of these grants was given to the second-grade teaching team at VRS for Snap Circuits Jr. kits. As a result, the elementary Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) program will be enhanced through this tool that will allow the students to engage in hands-on explorations involving electronic circuits. The second grant was awarded to the grade one teachers at FKH. This funding will be used so that their students can participate in Reading for Miles, a new reading incentive program through which they will earn a mile on a map for every book or chapter read. Consequently, the first-grade Humanities curriculum will be supplemented as a result of the students learning about various geographic areas while simultaneously being motivated to read. In conjunction with the Public Library, High School English Teacher Joy Donaldson prepared a History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands (HEART) grant for the digitalization of ALJ yearbooks that we received. In addition, the ALJ Art Department was the recipient of the donation of a potter’s wheel and splash pan from Dr. Amy Gutmann, President of the University of Pennsylvania, on behalf of Art Teacher Janice Gossman. Columbia Bank generously donated $500 towards our new high school transition program. We were also beyond fortunate to receive approximately $3,900 to be put towards this program from the Whole Foods 5% Day in January. A special thanks goes to ExxonMobile for their $500 donation towards our high school science and mathematics programs for the second consecutive year now. We are extremely grateful for the strong partnerships that our schools have with our larger community and the good, supportive work of these groups. As a district, we also want to serve as a resource for the community in any and all possible ways.

Our recent kindergarten registrations were exciting opportunities for us to initially welcome these new and eager students to our two elementary schools. The Preschool Open House on February 13 was also highly successful. This evening was a great way for parents and guardians of preschool-aged children to visit our site and learn about the superior program that we offer. Our staff professional development day on February 17 proved to be a good means for our teachers to gain further familiarity with, for instance, our Reading Wonders program, Google Classroom, and ways to differentiate instruction. In addition, opportunities to collaborate within departmental teams were provided. Our Parent University sessions on January 25 gave insights into understanding testing and supports that can be put into place at home. The next set of sessions on March 29 will focus on health and safety.

Congratulations go to our juniors and seniors who were recently inducted into the National Honor Society. This is one of the most prestigious honors that a high school student can earn. We are also extremely proud of our nine ALJ students who reached the state level of their DECA competitions. This extracurricular activity provides students with real-life simulations of the business concepts that they are studying in class. At the end of January, a VRS International Day was held as a means of outreaching to our community regarding cultural diversity; a similar event is being planned for later in the year at FKH. CHK has been continuing with its new student leadership program and, as you will see throughout this issue of Pride, our athletic teams throughout the district displayed a level of greatness of which we are very proud during these winter months. In fact, junior George Visconti, Jr. became the all-time leading scorer for ALJ Boys’ Basketball during a recent victory over Summit.

It seems as though this current school year just began. As a result, it is difficult to believe that we are already looking towards next year. For example, the ALJ 17-18 Program of Studies which contains a host of exciting offerings and highlights our high school as being a “School of Choice” was approved at the January 24 Board of Education meeting and is now posted on the ALJ website. Our high school students can all develop curricular programs that meet their unique needs and prepare them for the
ALJ Students Share Personal Identities through Poetry

In Arthur L. Johnson’s Holocaust and Genocide Studies course, students shared stories explaining their personal identities through the use of poetry. Students were inspired to write their stories after watching a documentary, *I, Learn America*. The documentary follows students attending the International School in Brooklyn as they not only adjust to school but also adjust to life in America. After watching the film, students were interested in sharing their individual stories as well exploring how to create an inclusive environment within their own school.

“I was very impressed by the impact the *I, Learn America* Project had on our students. Despite their commonalities, students were able to articulate through their poems how unique they really are. I was touched by their honesty, confidence, and desire to spread this message throughout their school,” stated Doreen Babis, Supervisor of Special Services.

“Identity and how people are identified is such a crucial aspect to studying this topic through a human lens. Allowing students to share their individual histories gives value and a voice to recognizing their own stories,” commented Frank Stebbins, teacher of the course. The Holocaust and Genocide Studies course is offered as part of a dual credit partnership with Kean University.

Continued from page 1

most competitive of universities and careers through close collaboration with their guidance counselors. As a reminder, ALJ moved to an A/B block schedule model this year and, as a result, students are able to take an additional course each year and be provided with an activity period during the actual school day. Our fifth through twelfth-grade students took their midyear assessments and these assessment results, along with current course performance and teacher recommendations, will help guide placement decisions for the upcoming year. Our eighth-graders were registered for ALJ during early/mid-February while our current high school students are beginning to move through the course selection process.

With only one inclement weather day having been used at the time that this letter is being written, we still have two additional full days to use if need be. If all of these days are not needed, our schools will be closed for students and teachers in the following order: April 17 for Easter Monday and then May 26 for Memorial Day Friday. With that being said, as we head into spring, I want to thank you again for the immense support of our schools. As always, I am looking forward to seeing you at our events and around town.

Yours sincerely,
Edward Grande

Breaking the Record

Arthur L. Johnson junior, George Visconti, poses with his parents after breaking the 37-year-old record for total individual points scored as an ALJ hoopster. The record, held by the legendary Kevin Boyle, was set in 1980.

Picture shows Frank Stebbins, teacher, and students who were involved in the project.

Pictured First Row: Frank Stebbins, Hailey Lara, Kristen Purcell, Morgana Haub, Julia Melao
Bottom Row: Carimarie Colon, Emely Osorio
Former Arthur L. Johnson Students Participate in Alumni Panel

Former Arthur L. Johnson students participated in an alumni panel discussion hosted by the Guidance Department. The goal of the program was to provide insight into the college experience for current juniors and seniors through hearing from former Crusaders. Questions were created by the Guidance Department, and the panel was led by Erica Stasio, ALJ Guidance Counselor. Some topics ALJ alumni covered were why they chose their respective schools, what they learned at ALJ that helped prepare them for college, and what it is like living away from home. They also discussed deciding on a major and successful studying habits. The ALJ alumni were happy to share their experiences, and current students were eager to learn about college life.

Pictured are: Joe Scardilli, Will Horner, Kristina Geiger, Justin Beceiro, Brandon Fernandes, Nick Makosiej, Georgia Stavrakis, Brianna Lukasiewicz, and Erica Stasio, ALJ Guidance Counselor

Carl H. Kumpf Middle School Students Tour Clark Police Headquarters

Carl H. Kumpf Middle School students in Ms. Marlena Sundo’s LLD class recently completed a science unit focusing on forensics. As a culminating activity, the Clark Police Department hosted the students for a detailed tour of the headquarters. The trip allowed for students to see what happens behind the scenes at the station, communications room, jail, courthouse, and in the patrol vehicles. Special thanks to Detective Brian Soos and Officer Pedro Oliveira for guiding the tour with expertise.

Pictured from left to right: Craig Manning, Pawel Baniukiewicz, Detective Soos, Christopher Niro, Chance Figueroa, Lucas Morrison (back), Daniel Vill (front), Bobby Radovanic, Taher Lokhandwala, and Officer Oliveira are pictured in front of a patrol vehicle.

ALJ Homecoming Rally

In November, Arthur L. Johnson High School celebrated Crusader athletics and newly crowned Homecoming King and Queen, Michael Brennan and Julia Melao, at the 2016 Homecoming Rally. The event was hosted by ALJ’s Student Council and its advisors, Marie Palma and Lisa Bukowiec, who prepared for the rally many months in advance.

The students nominated by fellow ALJ teachers and staff for homecoming queen and king this year included: Michael Brennan, Gina Pace, Vincent Campbell, Brett Roesle, Gianna Randazza, Ty Schafer, Julia Melao, Natalie Carnovale, Julia Sapia, Payton Wiese, Matthew Gallo, Casey Dohn, Jon Duffy, Cameron Hund, Gina Ferdinandi, Alex Hampp, Mike Cepparulo, and Jennifer Casalino.

Prior to the crowning, ALJ Principal Rick Delmonaco stated that he was honored to have the opportunity to congratulate these seniors on their accomplishments, and he was grateful for their devotion to the school and the community.

Picture: Homecoming King and Queen, Julia Melao and Michael Brennan.
Clark Public Schools Host Parent University


Superintendent Edward Grande stated, “The evening was a great opportunity for those in attendance to gain important information and updates regarding various aspects of testing and assessment.”

Prior to this event, the district held a Parent University in November focusing on “Parental Support of Teaching and Learning at Home.” Some topics covered included: helping your child with organization and study skills, improving reading skills, and learning to use the Google Cloud among many others.

The next Parent University is scheduled for March. The district invites all parents and guardians to attend this informative night.

Dracula Makes an Appearance at ALJ

*Dracula* made an appearance at Arthur L. Johnson High School this November as the school’s fall play. The school held two performances on Thursday, November 17th and Friday, November 18th. The play was directed by English teacher Peter Nevargic, and the set was designed by art teacher Brad Terhune. Audiences thoroughly enjoyed the dramatic performances of the high school students whose hard work and dedication was evident.

“Under the direction of Mr. Peter Nevargic and Stage Set Director, Mr. Brad Terhune, *Dracula* delivered an unforgettable evening filled with passion and enthusiasm. The students showcased incredible talent and truly brought the haunting adaptation to life. It was wonderful to see how many school community members came out to support our school,” stated Ms. Yuri Diaz, Supervisor of Humanities.
Elementary School Choir Performs at Holiday Winter Festival in Clark

Each winter, members of the Frank K. Hehnly School Select Choir and Valley Road School Fifth Grade Choir kick off the holiday season at Clark’s Holiday Winter Festival. The festival celebrates the start of the holiday season with a tree and menorah lighting in addition to other festivities. While families enjoyed hot cocoa, candy apples, and other treats or waited in line to meet Santa, smiles filled their faces as they listened to the holiday classics.

The Hehnly School’s Select choir, led by Hehnly’s music specialist, Cassandra DeVita, sang “A Holly Jolly Christmas,” “Once Upon a December,” and “Snow Day” to welcome in the season of giving. “We are so proud of our Select Choir program and excited that the students have the opportunity to share their love of music and the holidays with the community,” remarked Shirley Bergin, Hehnly School Principal.

The Valley Road School Choir, led by music specialist, Patricia Sauer, performed, “The Spirit of the Season” from Polar Express, “You’re a Mean One Mr. Grinch,” and “Here We Come A-Caroling.” “The school choir gave an outstanding performance. The students ushered in the season for the entire community making it a memorable day for all those who attended,” stated Valley Road Principal Joseph Beltramba.

Fall Athletic Awards

On Monday, November 28, 2016, the Arthur L. Johnson Athletic Department held their 2016 Fall Athletic Awards.

2016 Fall Student Athlete award recipient was Janelle Pyar.

The G.P.A. Challenge was awarded to the Crusader Field Hockey Team with a G.P.A. of 3.9079. Members of the Field Hockey Team include: Natalie Carnovale, Nicole Drapinski, Katie Prestinari, Larissa Vena, Gina Strumolo, Emma Francisco, Jessica Lopez, Shelby Lynes, Danielle Nugent, Amy Wysocki, Alyssa Colicchio, Nina Couzzi, Victoria Marano, Kaylee Parkhill, Serafina Perrotto, Amanda Zambrana, Emma Hilton, Taylor Turek, Jordyn Walsh.


Fire Prevention at Hehnly

Students at the Frank K. Hehnly School recently were visited by the Clark Fire Department (CFD). The volunteer firefighters spoke to the children about fire prevention and ways that they can be safer at home and at school.

“Fires can be a very scary subject for students, but it is very important that we teach our children about fire safety,” explained Shirley Bergin, Principal of Hehnly School. “Not only must we teach them what to do in the event of a fire, but how their family can work together to map out a safe plan in the event of a fire in their home.”

Each of Hehnly’s kindergarten through second grade classes were able to get a close look at the fire truck and meet the firefighters.

GPA Challenge Breakfast

On Thursday, December 08, 2016, the Arthur L. Johnson Athletic Department held a breakfast in honor of the 2016 Fall Athletics G.P.A. Challenge winners, the Varsity Field Hockey Team. The event, sponsored by the Athletic Department, was held in the Arthur L. Johnson Cafeteria.


Athletic Director for the Clark School District Gus Kalikas had this to say about the G.P.A. Challenge winners from the Fall Season: “The Athletic Department is extremely proud of all the members of the Field Hockey Team. The team was able to balance athletics and academics at the highest level, not only competing in the State Tournament in the Fall season but also excelling in the classroom, which is evident by the cumulative G.P.A. of 3.9079 that the team held throughout the season. The G.P.A. Challenge was a result of years of hard work, not only by the girls, but by our Head Coach, Katrina Poskay as well. They are a model of what it means to be a student athlete and the Clark School District is proud of all of their accomplishments.”
Hehnly 3rd Graders Are *Filled* with Oral Hygiene

February was the American Dental Association’s “National Children’s Dental Health Month,” and the third-grade students of Frank K. Hehnly Elementary School played their part. Clark orthodontist, Dr. Brian Bosonac, brought his staff to the elementary school on Tuesday, February 21st and did a presentation on oral hygiene, keeping teeth safe during sports, and orthodontics in general. Students participated in a boardwalk game for prizes, and each received a care package, which included various tools to keep their canines healthy in the coming months. The visit was organized by Hehnly’s own Mrs. Conner.

Pictured are Mrs. Conner and third grade students posing with local orthodontist Dr. Bosonac and his staff during their visit to Frank K. Hehnly Elementary School.

Hehnly Fifth Graders Begin DARE Program

Fifth graders at Hehnly School are beginning the DARE Program with Detective Brian Soos from the Clark Police Department. Through the DARE program, students will learn about the physical and mental effects associated with illegal drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. Detective Soos will also discuss bullying from the perspective of both the bully and the victim.

At the conclusion of the program, fifth graders from Hehnly School and Valley Road School will graduate from the DARE program. The course lasts approximately ten weeks in duration and is funded through the Municipal Drug Alliance.

Hehnly Students Create Black History Month Stamps

Students from Mrs. Ullrich’s class celebrated Black History Month by creating “stamps” that represented prominent African-Americans. The children completed research and then wrote a persuasive letter to the Postmaster General to issue a stamp in his or her honor. The letters identified key achievements of each person and their importance in American history.

Pictured are some of the students holding their stamps.
Hehnly Students Thank Veterans for their Service

This Veterans Day students at the Frank K. Hehnly School welcomed veterans who served in various capacities and at different times throughout our country’s history. The honored guests included one of the school’s teachers Mary Arrowood, Jeff Bartkus of the Clark American Legion, and parents or relatives of Hehnly students.

During the assembly, veterans were celebrated for their service to our country. The school’s Select Choir led the assembly in patriotic song. The veteran volunteers then explained the five branches of the military and the true meaning of Veterans Day. Following a rendition of “Thank You, Soldier,” the school recognized those who died in service with a moment of silence. Fifth grade student Kyle Gunsiorowski also played “Taps” as the school remembered the heroes who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

“We are so privileged to host this program each year for our local veterans,” explained Mrs. Shirley Bergin, Principal of Hehnly School. “The students look forward to this opportunity each year to say thank you to the men and women who served our country. Students need to understand the sacrifices that these courageous individuals make to preserve our rights of peace and freedom, as Americans in this great country of the United States of America.”

Second Graders at Valley Road School Say Thanks

Recently, second graders in Mrs. Pinto’s class at Valley Road School celebrated Thank You Thursday. The students discussed what it means to be thankful and how we often forget to thank those we see every day. The students then brainstormed the names of people who help them and got to work writing their thank you cards. School community members were excited to be recognized for their care and dedication. “It was heartwarming to see the students adding more and more people to their lists and receiving such positive feedback from our school community. It was an important reminder in saying thank you,” said Mrs. Pinto.
Holocaust Survivor Visits ALJ

Students in Arthur L. Johnson’s Holocaust and Genocide Studies course had the opportunity to hear guest speaker Fran Malkin’s story of surviving the Holocaust. Ms. Malkin was born in a part of Poland, which is now part of the Ukraine. At five-years-old, she went into hiding with her family for 18 months. During her visit to ALJ, she described her experience hiding in a barn and her eventual journey to America. In addition, Ms. Malkin showed part of a documentary No. 4 Street of Our Lady featuring her visit back to where she spent her time in hiding.

ALJ senior Hailey Lara commented, “Reading about an event in a text book does not even come close to thinking about the actual individuals involved in an atrocity like this. Six million deaths sound unimaginable but the six million lives that existed before this genocide is what matters.”

VRS Paint Night

On the evening of January 12th Valley Road Elementary School held its annual Paint Night! The theme of the evening was, “Snowman”. The students of Valley Road and their families put their brushes to the canvas to create a magical winter piece. Through each color and step, a snowman began to come alive. You could see the excitement of the evening from the smiles on the faces of everyone who attended. The night was filled with fun, family, paint and creativity.

ALJ Key Club Visits Preschool

The members of the Arthur L. Johnson High School Key Club visited the Clark Preschool on December 20th. The ALJ students, along with school counselors Ellen Zamboni and Erica Stasio, engaged the preschoolers in several holiday activities. They read a book about Santa, sang “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,” and played holiday games such as Hot Present, Santa, Santa, Reindeer, Santa Says, and Reindeer Pokey. The Key Club members demonstrated to the preschoolers the importance of helping others and exemplified the core values of the organization including caring, character building, inclusiveness, and leadership. The Key Club is the oldest organization for high school students whose goal is to teach leadership through service.

Pictured are: Franklin Stebbins, Kayla Dias, Alison Bretz, Julia Sapia, Morgana Haub, Fran Malkin
Two ALJ Student-Athletes Sign Letters of Intent

On Tuesday, November 15, 2016, various staff members and administration at Arthur L. Johnson High School participated in a signing day ceremony to honor Gianna Randazza’s and Vincent Campbell’s years of service to Crusader Athletics and commemorate their signing of Nation Letters of Intent to play NCAA Collegiate Athletics. Arthur L. Johnson’s senior student athlete Gianna Randazza signed her letter of intent to continue her athletic and academic career at the collegiate level, where she will continue playing softball at Boston College for the Eagles. The senior pitcher had an outstanding season for the Crusaders as she led her team to a Divisional, County, and State Championship in softball. Gianna also was named first team all state in the sport of softball. Gianna has had a wonderful athletic career as a Crusader. Arthur L. Johnson’s Vincent Campbell signed his letter of intent to continue his athletic and academic career at the collegiate level, where he will play lacrosse at Mercy College for the Mavericks. The senior defenseman had an outstanding season for the Crusaders as he led his team to a Divisional Championship in lacrosse. Vincent has had a wonderful athletic career as a Crusader. Gus Kalikas, Athletic Director at Arthur L. Johnson High School, had this to say about the event. “Gianna and Vin have been integral parts of the success of our athletic programs while attending Arthur L. Johnson High School. More importantly, they have been model student athletes that did things the right way both on the fields, in the classroom, and throughout our community. Although it will be sad to see them leave, the Crusader’s loss is Boston College’s and Mercy College’s gain, and we look forward to following their successful collegiate athletic careers over the next four years.”

Valley Second Graders Learn a Lesson about Recycling

Mrs. Petela’s second grade class at Valley Road Elementary school read a guided reading story titled *The Sounds of Trash*. The students were then encouraged to make their own instruments out of recycled materials. The students thoroughly enjoyed making their instruments and learning about how recycling can help the environment.
Valley Road Students Get a Head Start on Technology

Second graders in Ms. Czarnecki’s class at Valley Road School learned the basics of littleBits, an electronic prototyping platform. They started with a power module and then added an input module and an output module. The students also added a light, dimmer, and fan. Upon completion, students created a personal fan circuit, intruder alert, and a flashlight. Ms. Czarnecki, the computer teacher at VRS, said, “The students cannot wait for their next opportunity to experiment with littleBits.”

LittleBits consists of electronic modules that snap together with magnets. The purpose of littleBits is to provide a system where anyone can build, prototype, and learn about electronics. Each modular component is labeled with a single purpose, and more complex circuits are formed as the units are chained together with magnetic links.

In photo from left to right: Ava Dennigan, Christiano Bigelow, Gavin Ford, Allison Normann

What’s New at the Clark Preschool

In January, Diedre Morley, the new Clark Public Library Children’s Librarian visited for story time and a brief talk about the library. The children were delighted with Miss Diedre’s book selection and her animated story telling. Reading to children is a very important pre-literacy activity and foundation for academic excellence. Books have the power to benefit preschoolers in many ways. Some of the benefits of reading to preschoolers include higher aptitude for learning, reinforcement of basic sounds that form language, and the attaining valuable communication skills. A field trip to the library is planned in the spring.

The month of February was packed with activities at the preschool. The staff and the children of the preschool believe that Valentine’s Day is something everyone should look forward to. At the Clark seniors’ monthly meeting, the children presented their handcrafted Valentine cards to each senior. The seniors were delighted by the children’s heartfelt visit and company.

A member of the Westfield Pediatric Dental Group visited for Dental Awareness Month. She demonstrated proper teeth brushing with Henrietta the stuffed dinosaur, and followed up with a short video. She taught the children about the importance of flossing teeth daily and visiting the dentist regularly. She also talked about proper nutrition, nutrition labeling on foods, and better snack choices according to their sugar content.

We look forward to spring at the preschool and our upcoming study of the lifecycle of insects and Quiver Farm’s chick hatching project. The nurse will present “My Plate” unit to the classrooms throughout March, nutrition month. The nutrition unit is taught in order to help the children develop better eating habits and expose them to foods they may not experience in their daily diets. The power of books is reinforced with the celebration of Dr. Seuss’ Birthday and Read Across America. Our goal at the Preschool is to help our children grow to independent, self-confident, inquisitive, and enthusiastic learners by actively exploring in a safe learning environment.
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