A Message From the Superintendent

These past two mild winter months have been extremely active ones for our district. Winter Blues, an event for our Pre-K to grade five students in Clark and Garwood, took place towards the end of February at ALJ. The children were engaged in various games and activities prior to watching the movie Frozen. The monies raised will be donated to The Valerie Fund. A very special thanks goes to ALJ Assistant Principal Mr. Edward Bucior for leading this endeavor. I am thrilled to report that CHK has been re-designated as a New Jersey School to Watch. A very special thanks goes to CHK Principal Mr. Rick Delmonaco, CHK Assistant Principal Mrs. Amanda Clarke, and the entire CHK faculty and staff for making this re-designation possible.

Our recent kindergarten registrations were exciting opportunities for us to initially welcome these new and eager students to our two elementary schools. We are now looking forward to our sixth-grade orientation at CHK on the evening of Thursday, April 2 and our seventh-grade open house at ALJ on the night of Tuesday, April 21. These events are designed to give our students and their parents/guardians an early glimpse into the superiority of our middle and high school programs. Our staff professional development sessions on February 14 proved to be good means for our high school teachers to work on their Middle States domain assessments, our middle and elementary school teachers to receive behavioral interventions training, and our teachers districtwide to complete their midyear professional practice self-assessments. Our recent Parent University session on March 12 was centered around the viewing of the film Angst and a question-and-answer session. The goal of this evening was to raise awareness about anxiety, and we are most appreciative of those who came out to support the event.

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. At the end of February, an elementary science fair was held as a means through which FKH and VRS students were able to display their good, creative work. Read Across America Day on March 2 was highly enjoyable with the meet-the-author event at VRS. The school was introduced to children's author Jerry Pallotta and the guest readers at FKH. As you will see throughout this issue of Pride, our athletic teams displayed a level of greatness of which we are very proud during these winter months.

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. The ALJ 20-21 Program of Studies, approved at the January 6 Board of Education meeting and posted on the ALJ website, contains a host of exciting offerings and highlights our high school as being a “School of Choice.” ALJ students can all develop curricular programs that meet their unique needs and prepare them for the most competitive of universities and careers through close collaboration with their school counselors. Our third through tenth-grade students are preparing to take their New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) tests this spring and these assessment results, along with current course performance and teacher recommendations, will help guide course placement decisions. We strongly encourage everyone in our school community to have the utmost of seriousness when it comes to these tests.

With no inclement weather days having been used at the time that this letter is being written, we still have three additional full days to use. If these days are not needed, the Board of Education will be closing school for students and teachers on Tuesday, June 2; Friday, June 12; and Friday, May 22 (in that order). With that being said, as we head into spring, I want to thank you again for your immense support of our schools. I hope you and your families enjoy the spring break and holidays. As always, I am looking forward to seeing you at our events and around town.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Grande
Using STEAM Skills for a Turkey Hideout at Hehnly School

The students in Mrs. Arrowood’s 1st grade class were tasked with an important STEAM project for Thanksgiving! The students worked in cooperative learning groups and were tasked with designing a hideout for their turkey so it could not be found for Thanksgiving dinner. The students used materials such as paper, dominos, rods and cubes, craft sticks, pipe cleaners, shape blocks, and dice to create it. The students not only had fun, but learned that many different types of materials are important in designing any project.

Valley Road Teacher Named Union County Teacher of the Year

Bryan Lowe, fifth grade teacher from Valley Road School, was recognized at a recent Board of Education meeting for being named Union County’s Teacher of the Year.

According to Valley Road Principal Joe Beltramba, “Mr. Lowe is not only a considerate and enthusiastic teacher but also a wonderful person who is very dedicated to his students. He meets each student’s individual needs, develops strong connections with each of them, and makes learning fun for all of his students.”

Beltramba stated that some of Lowe’s most notable lessons include role-play of the American Colonists and British Loyalists as well as the Boston Tea Party. Lowe also plans a Colonial Job Fair with his grade level colleagues and uses his guitar to deliver lessons.

Lowe currently serves as the PTA’s Teacher Representative, and has served as codirector of the spring musical. He is the creator of the “Clark Connects” social studies camp, and is a UNICO member.

Last year, Lowe was featured on NJ 12 for his annual 50-mile bike ride to school to celebrate Earth Day. Lowe road an electric bike powered by solar panels.

Beltramba continued, “Mr. Lowe is always learning new ways to reach his students and to make instruction more interesting.” He has attended many professional development programs for history as well as Columbia University’s Writing and Reading Project. Beltramba stated, “Mr. Lowe is always willing to spend time learning and become a better teacher.”
ALJ Inducts 13 Students into National Honor Society

The Arthur L. Johnson chapter of the National Honor Society inducted 13 students in a candle-lighting ceremony held at the Gran Centurions on February 25th.

Kayla White, NHS Advisor, and Nicole Randazza, NHS President, led the night with opening remarks. The candle-lighting ceremony was completed by Nicole Randazza, Robert Lukasiewicz, Heidi Compton, and Gianna Nigro. Each current member discussed the meaning of the pillar and its role in the life of a NHS member.

Superintendent of Schools Edward Grande and Arthur L. Johnson Principal Jennifer Feeley spoke, congratulating the students on their accomplishments and encouraging them to embrace new challenges.

New inductees took a pledge led by Nigro and received certificates. NHS Member Mary Nadolsky also issued a challenge to students to always make time for friends and family while working hard to reach your goals.

NHS Member Daniela Thompson then recognized Ms. Carla Wagner, ALJ Media Specialist. Every year, a staff member is recognized for their dedication to student learning. Thompson spoke about Wagner’s support for all students as a media specialist and cheerleading coach.

The evening closed with “Words of Inspiration” from member Samantha Piesco who reiterated the importance of the pillars and encouraged students to continue to work hard but enjoy the journey as well.

The evening was attended by parents, teachers, administrators, and Board of Education members. Superintendent Edward Grande commented, “This evening is always a most rewarding one in the sense that we are able to honor our students for their academic success, leadership, service towards others, and goodness of character. They exemplify what it means to be ALJ Crusaders and we are most proud of them.”

The 13 new inductees join 13 existing members. To be eligible for National Honor Society, a student must have a weighted cumulative GPA of 4.15 or above and be enrolled in at least 3 honors/AP courses. At that point, students are asked to complete the application process demonstrating examples of the pillars.

Left to Right
Sitting - Ashley Jimenez, Victoria Venezio, Gianna Caldiero, Tara Marie Viafora, Julia Schelhorn, Julia Kalynchuk, Kaitlyn Greenhill
Standing - Joseph Hovick, Matthew Zukowski, Richard Ledden, Patrick Brennan, Daniel McCaffery, Matthew Hartzler
Kumpf Science Olympiad Team Competes

Students from Kumpf Middle School were amongst 19 other middle schools and 20 high schools at the NJ Science Olympiad Regional held on Monday, January 6, 2020, at NJIT in Newark. NJIT is home to one of three regionals that take place all across NJ during the month of January. The Science Olympiad is an international, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving science education. The Science Olympiad tournaments are scholastic competitions that test students on their science knowledge through a series of competitive games at the elementary, middle school and high school level. The team placed 9th out of 20 teams, a great improvement from the 17th place finish in 2019. Kumpf’s 19 team members competed in 14 different areas that included both written tests and device building. The students began their preparation in September and trained with various teachers in the building for their events. Some of the events included: Computer Game Coding, Mousetrap Car Creation, Glider Plane Creation, Ornithology, Fossils, Boomilever creation, Electrical Circuits, and many more.

Mr. Delmonaco, Principal of Kumpf Middle school stated, “We are so proud of all the students who participated in the Science Olympiad. It is not an easy competition and requires a lot of work. Our students did a great job. I am thankful to all the teachers who volunteered to help organize and assist our students prepare for the Science Olympiad!”

Three groups placed in the top 6 in three events, to which the students received medals. The medalists and their events were:

- Write it - Do it (2nd Place) - Johnny Schelhorn and Mikey Shelhorn
- Game On (3rd Place) - Noah Stout and Grace Wright
- Elastic Launched Glider (5th Place) - Antonio Rafoa and Noah Stout

Members of the 2020 Science Olympiad team are:
Dyan Cahill, Nico Cardoso, Kai Caro, Talia Fabrizzio, Jayden Garcia, Kyle Gunsiorowski, Emma Herko, Jennifer Hovick, Isabella Mierzewski, Jillian Olear, Tania Oliveira, Vania Oliveira, Antonio Rafoa, Eva Sarantidis, Nila Sarantidis, Johnny Schelhorn, Mikey Shelhorn, Noah Stout, Grace Wright, Tania Oliveira, Vania Oliveira, and Eva Sarantidis

Coaches of the 2020 Science Olympiad team are:
Mrs. Bihuniak, Mrs. Caravano, Mr. Griffith, Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Lamberti, Mr. Peitz, Mr. Rodriguez, Mr. Serwedes, Ms. Veiksans and Ms. Zaleski

Hehnly School Sends Valentines to our Troops

The students of Frank K. Hehnly School in Clark recently participated in ‘Valentine’s For The Troops’ sponsored by New York’s Country 94.7 radio station. The students, ages Kindergarten through grade 5, sent 600 uplifting messages to our troops. Letters were also accompanied by an illustration.

“The students were excited to show their gratitude to the troops through this special Valentine’s Day project,” stated School Nurse Donna Kircher, the organizer of the project.
ALJ Students Compete in Science Olympiad

Recently, a group of Arthur L. Johnson HS Science Olympiad students went to Union County College to compete in the New Jersey Science Olympiad Tournament. With months of preparation, the dedicated team researched topics ranging from Anatomy and Physiology to Ornithology. Up against 28 other high schools across New Jersey, the students were given the opportunity to build models, perform science experiments, and take several knowledge-based tests.

Participants, Catarina Costa and Joe Hovick competed in the chemistry lab and were thrilled to put their chemistry knowledge to the test. Both enjoyed the written portion along with the acids and bases lab experiment. “I like the Chemistry Lab event because it’s something I’d want to do as my career. It’s a great experience to be in the lab and working with all the materials and equipment,” said Joe Hovick.

Senior, Sophie Bizink and Freshman, Melanie Lipari-Pazienza competed in the gravity vehicle event and felt accomplished when their model was successful. The objective of the event was to release a vehicle down a ramp by the force of gravity. Throughout their countless practice trials, the students were able to identify different ways to alter their vehicle to increase the speed and distance.

According to Bizink, “While at the competition, seeing our vehicle obtain a personal best in regards to distance and speed was truly an accomplishment which we strived for throughout the building process.”

Advisors, Mrs. Suzanne Nagourney, Mrs. Jeanette Morse, and Mrs. Anna Radcliffe were extremely proud of the students’ motivation to expand their knowledge of science outside of the classroom setting.

List of students participating were:
- David Augustyn
- Sophie Bizink
- Catarina Costa
- Deanna Dennigan
- Kaitlyn Diaz
- Hannah Englese
- Claudia Ferreira
- Jorge Guerra
- Jorge Hovick
- Victoria Hrinda
- Martha Kolfenbach
- Jenna Lipari Pazienza
- Melanie Lipari Pazienza
- Rosemary Lopez
- Younan
- Ashley

Valley Road Fifth Grader Wins 2nd Place in New Jersey Association for Gifted Children’s Art and Writing Contest

Tara Mulvihill, 5th grade student from Valley Road School, was awarded second place in both the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children's Art and Writing Contests, themed Giftedness: A Vision for 2020. An awards ceremony where winners received their certificates and prizes was held at the REACH (Regional Enrichment Activities for Children with High Abilities) event, Saturday, January 25th, at Moorestown Upper Elementary School. Keynote speaker, writer, and motivator, S.F. Hochman encouraged students to make the most of their talent and abilities by letting it RIP - Resist…Insist…Persist! Following the keynote, students participated in interactive, hands-on enrichment activities, focusing on higher-level creative thinking and team building.

Cindy Tarello, Gifted & Talented teacher in the Clark Public School District, entered her students work in the contest. She stated, “This is one of my favorite contests to enter each year. I’m so proud of Tara and happy she was recognized for both her writing and artwork.”
On February 09, 2020, Nicole Randazza, of Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark, N.J., joined together with over 140 female student-athletes from New Jersey’s high schools, colleges, and universities at Seton Hall University in celebration for National Girls and Women in Sports Day (NAGWS). NAGWS is one of the largest events in the state that recognizes women’s athletics. Nicole was nominated by her coaches for her accomplishments as an outstanding high school female athlete in Field Hockey, Winter Track & Field and Softball.

NAGWS is recognized in all 50 states to honor the success of female athletes and recognize the struggle for equality for women in sports. The Outstanding Athlete Awards were presented to one individual from each high school, junior college, and college in attendance.

On Saturday, February 22, the Arthur L. Johnson Ice Hockey Team won the McMullen Cup in a victory over the Frisch School by a score of 7-3. This is the first cup championship for the Ice Hockey Team since 2007. Congratulations to Coach Klimchak, Coach LaForte, and the members of the 2020 team.

On Wednesday, November 13, 2019, various staff members and administration at Arthur L. Johnson High School participated in a signing day ceremony to honor Emma Hilton (Field Hockey), Stephen Harrington (Baseball) and Jenna Wiese (Soccer) for their years of service to Crusader Athletics and commemorate their signing of Nation Letters of Intent to play NCAA Division One Collegiate Athletics.

Arthur L. Johnson’s senior student athlete Emma Hilton signed her letter of intent to continue her academic career while playing field hockey at Ball State University in Indiana for the Cardinals. Stephen Harrington signed his letter of intent to continue his athletic and academic career at Hofstra University for the Pride while Jenna Wiese signed her letter of intent to compete for the Dukes of James Madison University in Women’s Soccer. According to Gus Kalikas, Athletic Director at Arthur L. Johnson High School, “Emma, Stephen and Jenna have been integral parts of the success of our athletic programs while competing at 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 their university’s gain, and we look forward to following their successful collegiate athletic careers over the next four years.”
Fall Athletic Awards at Arthur L. Johnson

The 2019 Fall Student Athlete award recipient was senior captain of the field hockey team, Heidi Compton.

The winner of the 2019 Fall Seasonal G.P.A. Challenge was the Field Hockey Team with a G.P.A. of 4.039. Members of the Field Hockey Team include: Heidi Compton, Emma Hilton, Nicole Randazza, Tara Starita, Taylor Turek, Devyn Calas, Gianna Caldiero, Gia Colicchio, Michelle Kukan, Courtney Marano, Victoria Venezio, Peyton Collings, Tatum Dobbins, Angela Aromando and Grace Warnick.


High School and Preschool Students

On Friday, February 28, 2020, The High School Transition class joined the Preschool ABA class to create a sensory play experience for the students. This enabled the high school students to come visit and explore the preschool classroom. The two classes used a scientific approach to mixing different materials in order to stimulate sensory learning. The high schoolers enjoyed ending the session with a “Shake Break” to shake their sillies out!!
Carl H. Kumpf Middle School Celebrates Arts Integration Day

Carl H. Kumpf Middle School celebrated their second annual Arts Integration Day. Arts Integration helps students use critical and creative thinking to gain a better understanding of content. According to EducationCloset.com, “Arts Integration is a research-based approach to teaching and learning that has proven results for the past 30 years. For schools that commit to using arts integration with integrity, the results are astounding. Schools that intentionally use arts integration find student achievement rises by 10% OR MORE across the board.”

On Wednesday, November 27, all teachers in every subject area used visual and performing arts in their lessons to enhance learning. For example, sixth grade science teachers had their students use water colors to make drip paintings to represent precipitation. Seventh grade language arts teachers used the arts to demonstrate mood in reading. Suzanne Hamilton’s language arts students illustrated a comic narrative from parts of The Outsiders. Cheri Fabrizzio used The Dot, a children’s book by Peter Reynolds, to inspire her students to create their own dot by listening to classical music to demonstrate mood and tone. Fabrizzio stated, “The students really made a connection between music and mood. They were able to compare authors’ and composers’ creation of mood. The abstract art component really drove the lesson home.” Danielle Bihuniak, seventh grade science teacher, taught her students using stop motion animation with Legos to demonstrate how atoms interact during a chemical reaction. Shannon Caravano’s science students used wax dripping art to show how rain falls from clouds. Caravano stated, “I love how the students used creativity while applying the concepts taught in class.” Kelli Yetsko had her class write poems using color paint swatches. The students had to finish each line of a poem with the name of the color on the swatch. “This activity gives the students an opportunity to relate emotionally to the colors while also practicing using language to express themselves creatively,” Yetsko stated.

One goal of incorporating the arts is to help the students learn non-arts subject material in a variety of ways that will increase student interest. Another goal is to help the teachers become more comfortable with using visual and performing arts in their lessons. Assistant Principal, Amanda Clarke, states, “We are thrilled that the arts have become part of the daily routine in a good portion of our classes and this day was only a small sampling of what goes on all of the time.”

Carl H. Kumpf Middle School Student Reese Passuth participated in the New Jersey Parent Teacher Association’s Reflections Theme Search Award. Reese’s theme, “Always Put Your Best Foot Forward,” was one of five themes selected by New Jersey middle school students in the statewide competition. Her theme will be advancing to the national competition for recognition. Congratulations Reese!

Fifth Grade Hehnly Students Learning Ways to Destress

Fifth grade students in Mrs. Caplette’s class at Hehnly School are learning ways to cope with stress. “As adults, we need to be aware of the daily stresses placed upon children ranging from academic challenges, family issues, and social interactions. Stress can have a negative impact on a student’s ability to focus in the classroom and on their overall well-being,” stated Mrs. Caplette.

To help students cope when feeling overwhelmed, Mrs. Caplette and her paraprofessional aide, Mrs. Ferrentino, created a “Destress Corner”. Students can either ask to use the Destress Corner or are sent there when it is evident that they need a break. The corner has inflatable tubes to relax on, a coloring option, an interactive message board, books, jokes, stress balls, and inspirational messages that students can take to keep at their desks. The teachers found that students respond very well to the Destress Corner and it not only benefits students focus in the classroom but supports their well-being outside of the classroom as well.
Students in Laura Bundy’s Driver Education class at Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark met Judge Gary Bundy on January 17th to learn about teen driving and the law. Judge Bundy is the Municipal Court Judge for Roselle Park and Garwood, NJ. He shared that there are many different laws drivers have to abide by, especially new drivers. Judge Bundy specifically addressed the provisional license, underage DUI, and DUI and illegal drug use in a vehicle. According to Ms. Bundy, “ALJ students were very engaged in each topic and asked some excellent questions.”

Photo Caption: From right to left, Shannon Heaning, Jose Acosta Lopez, Alexandra Lopes, Judge Bundy, Samantha Gonzalez, Bella Manto and Grace Cassidy.

Students and their parents were invited to attend the Valley Road School Reading Committee’s Reading Cafe. The cafeteria is set up as a cafe’ and grade 5 students dress up like servers and guide parents and grades K-4 students to their table, then serve them a selection of books and snacks. The parents then read the books to their children. This is a fun evening that focuses on families reading together. Mrs. Trish Peitz organizes the event with Mrs. Klimuc from the PTA. The room was packed and all had a good time. Principal Joe Beltramba commented how great it is to see special events that focus on reading and family.
Valley Road School Kindergarten students hosted Applefest; a holiday community service tradition that has been celebrated for many years at the school.

This event encourages the entire school to get involved in the spirit of giving. The Kindergarten classes each bring in an apple-themed craft item and trade them to older students in grades 1-5. The craft item is exchanged for cans or boxes of food. All of the food collected from the Kindergarten children was donated to our local town food bank where many families will be able to enjoy a full Thanksgiving dinner. This tradition brings joy to all of the children involved while creating a nice family project where parents and families are involved together. The students donated over 700 food items to deserving families!

VETERANS DAYS AT VALLEY ROAD SCHOOL

Valley Road School celebrated Veterans Day with an assembly to hear poems, readings and watch a video about veterans of the US military. Then the students and staff were introduced to the many veterans who attended the assembly. Some of the veteran spoke during the assembly. After the assembly some veterans spoke to students in grade levels or classes. To close out this special day the veterans led by flag bearing Student Council leaders marched through the student lined hallways to cheers, thank you call outs and high fives. Patriotic music added to the festivities. The veterans greatly appreciated being thanked for their service to the country.

ALJ Ath ALJ’s Spanish Honor Society Hosts Pet Supply Drive

The Arthur L. Johnson High School Spanish Honor Society in Clark recently hosted a pet supply drive for the Plainfield Area Humane Society. The fundraiser took place between January 21-24. Students and staff graciously donated large quantities of dog food, cat food, litter, blankets, and toys. The members of the Spanish Honor Society choose a different cause to sponsor each year. This year, they voted to help our furry friends who speak a very different language. The Plainfield Area Humane Society was chosen in particular because two of the members (twins) have an older sister who volunteers there. The supplies were delivered to the Plainfield shelter on Feb 1st. The shelter manager stated, “We’re are very grateful for [our] donations. This is a small shelter so [we] definitely needed it.” The owner said she will be thanking the school about this donation on their social media.

Pictured are ALJ Junior, Khadijah Tosun and the shelter manager, Taylor Mockler, of the Plainfield Area Humane Society
Hehnly Students Donate Money to Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s Pennies for Patients Program

During the month of January, students at Frank K. Hehnly Elementary School in Clark raised $2,946.44 in support of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s “Pennies for Patients Program - Every Hero Needs a Squad - Together We Can Change Cancer”. This is the school’s 11th year of involvement in the program. Each child received a box to collect loose change at home, which they were asked to return to school. The money collected is used to search for cures for childhood cancers.

According to School Nurse Donna Kircher who headed the fundraiser, “During my years at Hehnly, I have had a number of students diagnosed with cancer who received our support. This program seeks to accelerate treatments of blood cancers with few harmful side effects so that young cancer patients not only survive but thrive for generations to come. EVERY HERO NEEDS A SQUAD. Hehnly School students are heroes and are a part of this squad.”

Hehnly K-Kids Giving Back

K-Kids, a community service organization at Frank K. Hehnly School, has had a busy few months! In November, the group, led by School Nurse Donna Kircher and a part of the Kiwanis Club, held a successful clothing drive. They also participated in Clark’s Give and Share Program donating over 600 food items and 7 turkeys to the community food bank to feed those less fortunate at Thanksgiving.

As part of their Second Chance Toy Initiative, K-Kids collected and donated over 1,000 gently used plastic toys to two organizations that provided gifts to many children who would not have received any toys for the holiday. Each toy was thoroughly cleaned, equipped with batteries, and individually bagged for delivery. According to Kircher, “The directors of both organizations were stunned by our generosity. They were extremely grateful. While we made a difference in the lives of so many children, we also did our part for the environment as plastic toys end up in landfills.”

As part of their Adopt a Family Initiative, K-Kids, along with the Hehnly staff and PTA, helped provide Christmas for the Colonia family that lost their home in the plane crash/house fire this past fall. The group provided clothing, toys, and gift cards. According to Kircher, “The family was extremely grateful.”

Kircher continued, “I would like to share my deepest gratitude for all the generosity and support for our K-Kids projects that make a difference in the lives of others.”
Combining geography, language arts and social skills, students in Mrs. Kozlowski’s third grade class at Valley Road School created and sent holiday cards to classes in 48 different states around the country. They received cards from numerous classes as part of a holiday card exchange from schools as far as Alaska and Hawaii. It was an exciting and educational experience to receive cards each day.