

HAEE Honors Exceptional Contributors to Education

by Julie Mikus

In every community, there are individuals who consistently strive to serve others, and Hampton Township is no exception.

On February 22, 2025, the Hampton Township Association for Educational Excellence (HAEE), led by Hannalore Merritt, hosted The Heart of Hampton Awards and

Celebration at Lucky Sign Spirits Distillery in Gibsonia.

The evening event celebrating community achievements honored four individuals who have significantly impacted Hampton. The inaugural honorees were Christine Raimondi, Tom Baker, Chad Himmler,

and Christopher Andrews. The Hampton Alliance for Education and Excellence (HAEE) sought nominations from the community to identify the deserving award-ees.

The school board attended the event,
(Continued on page 2)



Photo by Julie Mikus

Honorees: Chad Himmler, Christine Raimondi, Tom Baker and Christopher Andrews accepting their awards at the dinner ceremony. Left to right: Lissa Geiger Shulman, Michelle Espinosa-Clark, Chad Himmler, Christine Raimondi, Tom Baker, Christopher Andrews, Hannalore Merritt, and Angie Raimondi.

Special Olympics Polar Plunge A Day of Bravery and Inclusion

by Laurie Rizzo

On Friday, February 21, the 2025 Special Olympics of Pennsylvania Polar Plunge took place, with over 60 high schools participating in the Cool Schools Polar Plunge event at Acrisure Stadium. The "Cool Schools" initiative partners with the Special Olympics of Pennsylvania to promote the inclusion of all students in high school. This year's event was organized by Terri Koprivni-

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Outreach Program Spreads Blessings on Valentine's Day

by Mary-Theresa Watson

When Hampton resident Linda Scanlon answered a knock at her door a few years ago, she was surprised by a flower delivery courtesy of The Valentine's Day Widow Outreach Project, an organization whose mission is to spread blessings to widows and widowers on

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HAEE

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where Dr. Rebecca Cunningham remarked, "We are honoring the remarkable individuals who generously dedicate their time, talents, and energy to enhance our school district and community, creating an exceptional environment for children."

Dr. Michael Loughhead was also present and expressed his appreciation for the community heroes, noting the selfless contributions of individuals who improve the community. "We have countless individuals in this community who devote their time and



efforts out of love for Hampton. They embody the spirit of our community, and I am immensely proud to be here honoring the awardees!" he exclaimed.

To enhance the special atmosphere of the event, several student musicians entertained the audience with performances featuring violin, guitar, and brass instruments. Additionally, Sprezzatura offered a delightful selection of foods, allowing guests to mingle and engage with one another in the lead-up to the awards ceremony. Lucky

Signs provided the venue, the perfect layout for the attendees to celebrate the awardees.

Seventh grader Mikayla Berke captivated the audience at the Heart of Hampton Awards with her beautiful violin solos. Her performance was met with enthusiastic applause from the attendees. Mikayla shared her thoughts on the experience: "I enjoy playing my violin at events. Plus, I'm playing some of the same music at my violin's teacher's recital next weekend, so this was a great opportunity to practice those songs in front of an audience. I had a lot of fun!"

Several other students showcased their talent; it was also a

(Continued on page 3)



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HAEE

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reminder the importance of supporting young musicians and providing opportunities for them to share their gifts with the community.

Also attending the event was Republican State Representative Jeremy Schaffer who frequently attends many of Hampton's events to express his support and commitment to the community. "Hampton Township is comprised of remarkable individuals who contribute to making the community special. I take great pride in these people and extend my congratulations on their accomplishments," Schaffer said.

The award recipients are dedicated community members who work diligently behind the scenes of the Hampton Township School District. The event was designed to ensure they felt valued and appreciated by featuring heartfelt video messages from numerous individuals whose lives have been positively impacted by their contributions. The video contributions were a clear indicator of how many lives were touched by the awardees and their devotion to the Hampton community.

Jeff Bauman delivered a message to Christopher Andrews in the video segment expressing his gratitude by saying, "I just wanted to say congratulations for a well-deserved award. Your time, efforts, and sacrifice with the Hampton Soccer Club, HAEE, and the Volunteer Fire Department have not gone unnoticed," he said. Videos showcased Mr. Bauman's uncanny ability to fulfill so many different roles in the Township, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to the well-being of the community.

Mr. Sean Desguin, the elementary band director at Hampton Township School District, conveyed a video message to Mr. Chad Himmler, "Congratulations in being selected to receive this year's Heart of Hampton Award! I truly can't think of anybody more deserving and it is an honor to be your friend and colleague," he offered. Several band students also offered heartfelt sentiments, "I really appreciate how much he cares for us!" one student offered. Mr. Himmler is devoted to the school district's music program in numerous ways, exhibiting the band through regional competitions, directing events outside of the school district, such as the Memorial Day program, and creating engaging and elaborate shows for the band to perform.

The video messages directed to Christine Raimondi were profoundly moving, as numerous students conveyed their heartfelt appreciation for her three decades of dedicated service to the district. "I'm so over the moon proud of you.

You are the gem of Hampton Township," Dr. Cunningham said. "Several students came together to express their heartfelt appreciation for Mrs. Raimondi, a beloved educator in their community. In a touching display of affection, the students took turns delivering a simple yet powerful message, each one declaring "I love you, Mrs. Raimondi!" The collective message, spoken with sincerity and warmth, underscored the profound impact Mrs. Raimondi had on her students' lives.

Tom Baker received numerous commendations, with friends and colleagues expressing their sincere admiration for the nonprofit CEO. He leads Variety, The Children's Charity, in its mission to provide adaptive bikes to children with disabilities. The organization is dedicated to empowering children with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. One colleague expressed, "Tom Baker is by far the most dedicated person doing work in the community!"

The event was not only successful in honoring the award recipients but also in strengthening community bonds. When individuals gather to acknowledge the accomplishments of others, it fosters a sense of unity and belonging. This gathering serves as a reminder that our township is interconnected, and such celebrations of service contribute to a greater sense of purpose among us all.

The "Heart of Hampton" Awards was a wonderful opportunity to honor the special people who make our community a better place. If you see these selfless individuals around Hampton, please offer them your gratitude, as they are unsung heroes creating positive lasting change in our community!

More photos on The Hampton News website:
www.thehamptonnews.com



A NOTE FROM THE HAMPTON NEWS

As *The Hampton News* continues to strive to bring you informative and interesting stories, we welcome feedback, ideas and submissions. We are always happy to hear from you and want to help keep the neighbors connected! The deadline for submissions is on the 15th of each month.

Please support the advertisers this month since they help provide this publication, and remember to SUPPORT local!

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Proofreading: Deb Brady

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Library News



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Spring is on its way... Come visit the Hampton Library! We're here to brighten your days with exciting activities and events all season long. Stop by and see what we've got in store to keep the cheer going!

Please note: While we do our best to be here, sometimes Mother Nature works against us! Please call the library, check Facebook or the website to make sure we did not have to cancel a program!

It's a Winter-Wonder-ful World! Drop-in Storytime!

Join us as we fill our mornings with stories, songs and crafts designed to celebrate discovery as we interact with our environment. All ages and abilities welcome! Come early and stay for all the activities or come later and stay for a few; you decide!

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays *Starting Now

10:30 a.m.- "Stories & Songs", 10:45- "Investigate and Create"
11:00 a.m.- "Stories and Songs", 11:30 a.m.- "Parachute Play"
11:50 p.m.- "Stories and Songs", 12:00 p.m.- "Stay and Play"

**times are subject to go longer or shorter*

****Please note spring break will be March 18th through March 21st—there will be NO storytime!****

Card Club!

Wednesdays, from 1 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Adults! Join us Wednesday afternoons for a game of 500 Bid or something new! Come out and show your skill, teach someone a new game or just enjoy some time out with friends new and old!

News and Views!

Fridays, March 7th, April 4th, May 2nd @ 1:00 p.m. in the library.

This longtime discussion group is led by local author and journalist Gerry K. Smith--with a new format inviting members to participate as guest leaders the *First Friday* of the month. Discussion topics welcome from all.

New members are welcome to come share-- or just listen.

Meet Me at the Movies!

Tuesday, March 11th @ 1:00 P.M.

Get ready to "Defy Gravity" and join us in Great Room A of the Community Center.

Will you be cheering on Team Pink or Team Green? Visit the library to find out what movie we will be seeing.

Snacks are encouraged! No registration is necessary.

This is the Book Club You've Been Looking For!

Friday, March 14th @ 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Title: *Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law*, By Mary Roach.

Are you a book lover who craves variety, fresh ideas & rich discussions? Join our newest group: ***This is the Book Club You've Been Looking For!*** Explores new genres each month including

(Continued on page 5)



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Library

(Continued from page 4)

short stories, memoirs, historical fiction & more. Help build a community that loves to explore every corner of the literary world. If interested, stop by the library so we can order the book for you!

Murder by the Book! A Mystery Book Discussion **Wednesday, March 19th @ 6:30 p.m.**

***Justice: A Hollywood Homicide*, by Jeffrey Boyd**

The Mystery Book Group will meet in the library. Please call the library to request a copy of the book. Everyone who is interested in great reads is invited to join us!

Betty's Book Buzz Discussion Group **Friday, March 21st @ 1:00 p.m.**

***Signature of all Things*, by Elizabeth Gilbert**

Betty's Book Group meets in the library. Please call the library to request a copy of the book. Everyone who is interested in great conversations and good reads is invited to join us!

Cooks-N-Books: Restaurant Copy Cats!

Thursday, March 27th, 6:30 p.m. -8:00 p.m.

Cooks-n-Books is a cookbook and food discussion group for people who love to cook and make new friends! No real experience

or culinary expertise is needed- just a desire to share recipes and food!

We meet in Great Room A in the Hampton Community Center. Here's what to do...

- 1) Check out a cookbook
 - 2) Cook that dish and bring it to the group the evening of the discussion. Please bring a copy of the recipe as well.
 - 3) Sample all of the amazing recipes!
- Please note there will be a \$2.00 fee to cover the cost of supplies.

Hampton Community Library Trivia Night! **Friday, March 21st**

Registration begins March 1st.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Trivia begins at 7:00 p.m. Program ends by 9:15 p.m.

Assemble your team and get ready for a night of laughter and friendly competition!

(Knowledge of the Dewey Decimal System not required!)

\$20/person, (6 -10 people/table). Test your general trivia knowledge! Perhaps **your** team will surprise them all! Please note this is an adult program. (BYOB \$5 donation) Space is limited; Registration required. No walk-in teams.

Polar Plunge (Continued from page 1)

kar's Best Buddies club at Hampton High School. A total of 42 students participated, with 37 of them bravely plunging into the frigid pool despite the 20-degree weather. Their determination and spirit were truly inspiring!

Aiden Hanna, the president of the Best Buddies club, played a pivotal role in organizing the event alongside guidance counselor Terri Koprivnikar. Koprivnikar, who sponsors the Best Buddies program and coaches the bocce team at the high school, helped the club raise an impressive \$2,573.39, all of which was donated to the Special Olym-



pics of Pennsylvania. Notably, Christian Rihn emerged as the leading individual fundraiser, contributing over \$700 on his own.

In addition to the Polar Plunge, Koprivnikar organizes several events throughout the school year. One upcoming event is the "Spread the Word – Inclusion" campaign on March 4th, held during the three lunch periods. During this event, students will sign a large banner to show their support for inclusion, and the banner will be displayed at Special Olympic events throughout the year.



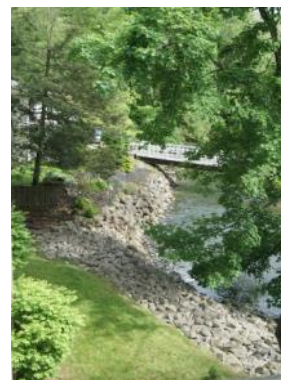


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Blessed Trinity Academy's Service Club Gives Back to Local Community

This year, Blessed Trinity Academy's Middle School Service Club has made it their mission to give back to the local community by bringing some cheer to the residents of Harmony Senior Living located in Indiana Township. Service Club members in 5th through 8th grade have been making regular trips to Harmony to visit with the residents and even bring them some handmade presents. For Halloween, members of the 8th grade class visited to make bracelets and necklaces, play games, and read stories. For Christmas, the 5th and 6th graders entertained the residents with Christmas carols and delivered placemats that the students at BTA made. And most recently, the 8th graders paid another visit to hand deliver fleece tied blankets to the Memory Care unit and homemade Valentine's Day cards to the rest of the residents. Not only has it been a rewarding experience for the residents of Harmony, it has also touched the hearts of the Service Club members when they see how much the residents look forward to talking and visiting with them.



Picture: left to right kneeling: Sara Pomietto, Cecily McGinley, Ella Shapiro, Cayden Ferguson, Annalise Good

Standing left to right: Caroline Tatar, Kayla Paschel, Alana Eiler, Hailey Glass, Kaylie Mitchell, Claire Bandurski, Jillian Jones, Savannah Vogel, Callie Kandravsky

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Valentine

Valentine's Day. The non-profit group has its roots in Charlotte, North Carolina, and its reach is spreading across the country.

The local chapter began in 2021 when Lisa Kostelnik, a Wexford-based gym owner and sister of Widow Project founder Ashley Manning, heard about three young women from her gym who had lost their spouses within months of each other. The project continues to grow as this year, 407 widows or widowers received flowers, treats, and small indulgences; 49 of those live in the Hampton/Gibsonia/Glenshaw area.

"It's such a thoughtful and kind gesture," reflects Linda. "It's wonderful that people remember you on Valentine's Day. This was my third or fourth year as a recipient, and it's so lovely. The first year," she remembers, "was bittersweet. You are so grateful that people remember you, but of course you wish they didn't have to. This is very special, and it truly helps you on a difficult day."



Volunteers gathered at the lodge in North Park and worked together to assemble everything where, Lisa reports, "You could just feel the love. Even the snow stopped for the two days we were working! Volunteers put their whole hearts into this, and the outside world kind of goes away for those couple of days."

Information can be found at www.valentinesdaywidowoutreach.com for those interested in learning how to get involved. Although it's a costly venture, Lisa and her team follow one rule: "It's simple," she says. "If you put people first, it's going to work out. But as soon as you put the money in front of the people, you create obstacles. It is and always will be a people-first project."

(Continued from page 1)

Students to be inducted Into National Technical Honor Society

HTSD congratulates and recognizes eight HHS students who were inducted into A.W. Beattie Career Center's chapter of national Technical Honor Society.

Lily Bender—Early Childhood Education
Spencer Blair—Veterinary Sciences
Tri-An Bui—Health and Nursing Sciences
Kulthoom Dinani and Dylan Eichas—

Sports Medicine-Rehab Therapy
Michala Majewski—Early Childhood Education
Samantha Miller—Advertising Design
Michael Solomon—
Carpentry Building Construction

The award ceremony will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

To be considered for NTHS, students must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a scale, have a grade of at least 95% in their career training program, and miss no more than five days of school. Candidates must also have a clear disciplinary record and belong to a service organization or participate in an extracurricular activity.

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Meet An Officer

Jacob Mitchell

by Jenn Edmonds

Hampton Township Police Department officer Jacob Mitchell has always wanted to get impaired drivers off of the road, and now he has become an expert. He recently obtained a designation of DRE (Drug Recognition Expert), an expert that is called in for possible drug-related DUI's. Mitchell completed the extensive Drug Evaluation Classification Program through the National Highway Traffic Safety Association to become one of only 254 in the state of Pennsylvania.



The DRE is a difficult certification to obtain but one of the best ones to have. It is a 3-week program with training and testing throughout and the final knowledge exam must be passed with a score of 100%. If any questions are missed, the officer must repeat all of the training and testing from the beginning of the course. The final "DRE Matrix" has 150 words and the matrix must be filled out perfectly. "I recorded myself going through it and listened to it in the car on the way to training," said Mitchell. Mitchell passed on his first attempt.

If an officer suspects that a driver is impaired under a substance after completing the standard sobriety testing, Mitchell is called to the scene. Through a 13-step process, he determines if an individual is impaired by drugs or may be having a medical emergency and he makes the judgement on whether a blood draw is needed or if the individual should be taken to the hospital.

When asked what he likes about his job, Mitchell replied that "I really enjoy helping people during their worst times in life, and that every day is different."

Mitchell grew up in Canonsburg and attended Waynesburg University. He played football there for four years and graduated with a degree in Criminal Justice. Following graduation, he worked with the Washington County Juvenile Probation Leader Program, a school-based program teaching life skills to at-risk youth. He then worked in domestic relations collecting child support funds and realized that sitting behind a desk was not for him, which led him to the Police Academy.

Mitchell started working part-time with HTPD out of the Academy for a couple of years and became full-time in 2017. In his off time, he travels with his wife Emily, and his daughters Evelyn (7) and Jane (5) to cheer competitions. "It's a blast. They both love it and it's fun hanging out with family and friends." The Mitchells live in Sarver and also enjoy spending time with their chocolate lab Theo who just turned 9.

Getting to Know Officer Jacob Mitchell

Favorite candy- Reese's Cup

Favorite book- Last adult book

Can't Hurt Me- David Goggins

Favorite movie- *My Cousin Vinny*

Favorite music genre- I pretty much listen to anything.

Favorite subject in school- Science and Math

Beverage of choice- Water since I just got a Cirkul water bottle and can have any flavors

Favorite food- Chicken Wings

Favorite season- Fall

Favorite holiday- Christmas

Favorite sport to watch- Football and College Wrestling

Favorite sport to play-

Football, played 4 years in college

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?-

A professional football player or a chef. If you had an extra \$10 in your wallet, what would you buy yourself?

I never have cash on me, but my children would probably be the ones asking for the money.

People would be shocked to know that you... are a cheer dad.

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4066 LeTort Lane	\$619,900	\$605,000	14
4193 Rothschild Court	\$585,000	\$525,000	117
4353 Winchester Drive	\$429,900	\$438,000	42
3006 Marie Drive	\$425,000	\$426,500	7
5168 Polo Fields	\$335,500	\$330,000	18
2401 Banks School Road	\$349,000	\$318,000	264
3090 Meadow Brook Court	\$265,000	\$265,000	89
4056 Mount Royal Boulevard	\$260,000	\$260,000	47
4307 Hemlock Court	\$232,500	\$225,000	113
3128 Camberly Drive	\$189,900	\$196,000	46

TIP OF THE MONTH:

Shake off winter with a solid look-over of your entire home.

- Tune up the inside and outside of your house to get ready for warmer weather. "Change your clock, change your battery": daylight savings' "spring forward" means it's time for carbon monoxide and smoke detector maintenance. Test and replace the batteries in these life-saving devices at minimum twice per year, and replace any devices that are over seven years old.
- Clean outside of the house from winter debris or grime, replace any damaged, weathered siding, shutters, etc.
- Plant perennials.
- Lawn: Fill in any bald patches before warmer weather arrives and reseed/ fertilize your lawn. If you plan to hire a service to mow and maintain your lawn, spring is the best season to finalize an annual contract.
- Turn on outside faucets and check for damage.

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Sports

From Coach to Ref: The Kohlers' Unique Day at PPG Paints Arena

by Jenn Edmonds

Many hockey fans love watching the Pittsburgh Penguins play on their home ice at PPG Arena but few get the opportunity to step into their skates for a day. One Hampton family, the Kohlers, had that opportunity in a very unique scenario. On February 4, two teams from the Pittsburgh Vengeance took the ice (12U team 1 and 12U team 2) at PPG Arena for a special game. Eleven-year-old Daniel Kohler is a defenseman on 12U team 2 and his dad John is the coach.

In these special non-sanctioned games, the teams have to bring their own referees, and that's where 13-year-old David Kohler comes in. David has been playing hockey for years and this was the perfect opportunity for him to step in to officiate. "I wanted to call a penalty on my brother and I got to," said David. "I loved it." The boys' mother Jamie said that Daniel is nicknamed "Kamikaze Daniel" when he plays hockey so David thought he might get to call a penalty on his brother.

Both of these teams play through the Alpha Ice Complex in Harmarville as their home ice and the Vengeance is a traveling team that plays local Pittsburgh teams. Though the ice at PPG is the same size as at Alpha, David said, "The ice looks smaller when you're on it than from the stands." Daniel added, "It's really bright playing at PPG. The ice is really smooth. It was perfect."

John coached the 15 participating players of his team to a win of 4-2. "It was fun to see both of them experience the joy of being there; to see Daniel playing and David refereeing was pretty cool," said John.

Daniel's favorite part of the experience was watching his teammate Finn Stitt score a hat trick. "(Playing at PPG) was exhilarating, except the part of David refereeing," Daniel joked. "Hockey is so much fun. More people should play it."



Hampton Cheer Team Bonds and Triumphs in Competitive Cheer Season

by Jenn Edmonds

The Hampton Township Competitive Cheer team, led by Coach Kathy Long, has had a lot to cheer about this season. They competed in the Small Varsity D2 division at WPIAL's on January 4th against teams like Ambridge, Elizabeth Forward, and North Catholic and did well enough to advance to the Pennsylvania State Championships (PIAA - Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association) held on January 30 and 31 in Reading, PA.

The team of 17 (15 girls on the floor and 2 alternates) sailed through the PIAA

(Continued on page 14)

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High School Girls Basketball Team *A Season of Growth and Resilience*

The Aquinas High School Girls Basketball team has wrapped up their regular season with an impressive 14-7 overall record and a strong 11-3 mark within their section. Despite facing the toughest schedule in Class A, the Crusaders have shown remarkable resilience and growth, setting the stage for a promising playoff run.

The team faced a significant challenge in their non-section games, playing against top-ranked teams in higher classifications, including Elizabeth Forward, Central Valley, and Ford City twice. These tough matchups resulted in four non-section losses but provided invaluable experience for the young squad. Their section losses were similarly to formidable opponents: the undefeated Union, the reigning back-to-back WPIAL champion and currently ranked 2nd in the state, and St. Joseph, who played Union in last season's WPIAL finals.

The Crusaders did manage to defeat St. Joseph handily earlier in the season, posting a dominant 50-31 victory. However, they fell to St. Joseph 60-54 in the second matchup. In that game, Aquinas was forced to play without their leading scorer and defensive standout, Tess Duer, who had been sidelined due to injury. Despite this setback, the Crusaders proved their ability to compete with the best in their section.

Aquinas is led by a talented group of juniors, with Tess Duer and Elliot Keverline standing out as the team's key players. Duer, who entered the season as the only returning starter from the

previous year, is averaging 11 points per game, 4.2 assists, and 4.3 steals, while also attracting attention from college recruiters. Keverline, who is averaging 9.2 points per game and 5.2 rebounds, has also caught the eye of scouts and has been a crucial contributor throughout the season.

The team has also been bolstered by several other key players. Junior Becca Guillen has been a consistent offensive force, averaging 7.5 points per game, while sophomores Carly Bezila (7.4 PPG, 2.3 APG) and Katie Tarquininio (leading the team with 6.7 RPG) have made significant impacts. Tarquininio, in particular, has been instrumental in the paint, providing crucial rebounding. Sophomores Kay Chufo and Lucy Keverline have also been vital members of the starting lineup and have contributed with key performances.

Looking ahead to the WPIAL Class A playoffs, the Crusaders have qualified and are expected to be one of the top four seeds. With the team returning all 12 players next season, the future looks bright for Aquinas girls basketball.

Aquinas' success this season can be attributed not only to the talent on the court but also to the leadership of Head Coach Andrew Kurzawski. Kurzawski, who took over the program this year, brings with him a wealth of experience. Before coming to Aquinas, Kurzawski turned around the McGuffey High School girls' basketball program, leading them to back-to-back WPIAL Class 3A playoff appearances after a nine-year playoff drought. Additionally, Kurzawski spent ten years as a college basketball coach, with stops at St. Vincent College, Penn State Beaver, Car-

(Continued on page 13)

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20328 R4-23

Aquinas Basketball

low University, and Point Park University.

Kurzawski also reached a milestone this season, earning his 50th career WPIAL win in just his fourth year of high school coaching with a dominant 65-16 victory over section rival Leechburg.



(Continued from page 12)

Assisting Kurzawski is veteran WPIAL coach Tom Obiecunas, a former head coach at Keystone Oaks High School and a key figure in Rochester High School's three WPIAL championships.

Obiecunas' extensive experience adds tremendous value to the team, and Kurzawski acknowledges the importance of his presence.

"Having a great teacher of the game like coach Obiecunas is a tremendous advantage for us," Kurzawski said. "We really want to bring a championship mentality to Aquinas, both in the classroom, on the court, and in the game of life."

With a solid coaching staff, a talented roster, and a strong foundation for the future, this team is poised to make a deep run in the upcoming playoffs and beyond. The Crusaders have already proven their ability to compete at the highest levels, and their growth this season suggests they are only getting started.

Team photo below

2025 WPIAL Gymnastic Championships

Ella Lattimore and Avery Straub

Nicole Bova has been coaching for 18 years, with 12 seasons dedicated to high school gymnastics. She is in her third year with Hampton High School. Ella Lattimore, a 10th grader, competed in vault and beam at the WPIALS. Ella placed 11th in vault and 5th on the beam, while Avery Straub, a 9th grader, showcased her skills on bars placing 7th and floor placing 11th. The WPIALS took place at Moon Area High School in February.



Photo by Rob Guillen

Cheer *(Continued from page 11)*

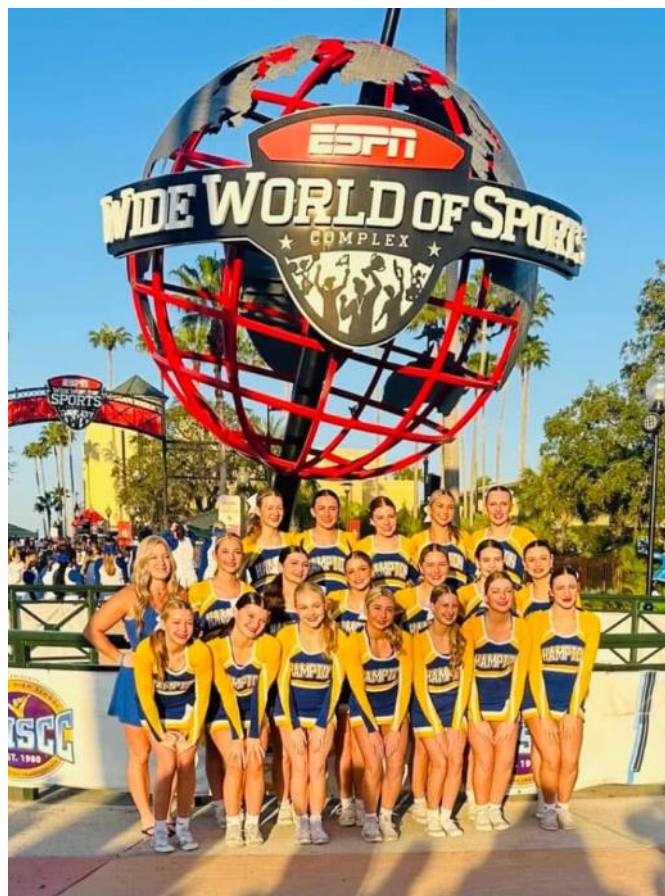
preliminaries and the semi-finals, and advanced to the PIAA finals for back-to-back seasons, placing 7th out of 26 teams. The competition at PIAA is a 2 ½ minute routine set to music involving a number of skill sets and a cheer and is judged by difficulty. They scored the highest in their section for the small varsity D2 division. "Our region is the most competitive. Every team from our region advanced to States," explained Long.

Long attributes the success of this team partially to their talents and abilities but also to their relationships. "They're all really good kids. There was a great bond between all of the 9th through 12th graders. There wasn't a separation among groups of kids."

The competitive cheer team also competed in several other competitions throughout the season. They competed in the Regional competition in Johnstown in

November and clinched their bid to Nationals, which was held at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida over the weekend of February 7. For the first time since Long began coaching this competitive squad during the 2019-2020 school year, the team advanced from the preliminaries to the semi-finals.

The division the team competes in can change from year to year so Long has gotten to know many of the other coaches in the area and the kids get to know each other as well. She tries to build a good bond between the kids in all of the schools and it showed at Nationals. "We were excited to watch them (other local schools) do well and succeed. At Nationals, everyone from PA was cheering for everyone else from PA," said Long. "It was a great experience for the girls."



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Gabby Elk Dominates WPIAL Diving, Earns Second Straight Gold Medal

The Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) held its WPIAL/UPMC Sports Medicine Girls' Diving Championships on February 21st and 22nd at North Allegheny High School. Forty-two student-athletes participated in the competition across two classifications. Hampton junior Gabby Elk successfully defended her Class 2A gold medal.

Elk recorded a score of 444.25, finishing 12.30 points ahead of her competitors. This impressive score surpassed her previous year's winning score of 441.05, establishing her as a two-time champion.

Elk is the 23rd student-athlete to win at least two WPIAL girls' diving championships since 1980. She joins Nikki Perella, who claimed gold in the 1-meter dive for Hampton in 2005. Perella went on to dive in college at Lehigh and was awarded Freshman of the Year in 2006. With this victory, Gabby Elk qualifies for the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) Boys' & Girls' Swimming & Diving Championship, set to take place on March 12-15 at Kinney Natatorium on the campus of Bucknell University.

Madia Photography



Mackenzie Reese: Rising Star from Hampton High to Pitt's Softball Scene

Mackenzie Reese, a former Talbot softball standout, earned recognition at Hampton High School as the Most Valuable Offensive Player of the Year and maintained a perfect base stealing percentage as a senior. Now a freshman at the University of Pittsburgh, she continues to impress both on and off the field. "Mackenzie is a hard-working and respectful student-athlete," said head softball coach Jenny Allard. "She competes fiercely in the batter's box and has been training at both third base and behind the plate."

The girls' softball team started their season strong in February in Florida, finishing with a solid 3-2 record. Mackenzie, who has three siblings—Madeline, Zachary, and Kendall—is the daughter of Rebecca and Duane Reese of Hampton Township.

The Panthers are set to return home in March, with games at Vartabedian Field at 365 Robinson Street Ext. in Pittsburgh on the following dates:

March 21, 22, 23, April 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 29, May 1, 2, 3. They will also play at Robert Morris field in Moon Township on Tuesday, April 1.



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Arts & Entertainment

Bethany Jarmul Explores Identity and Motherhood in "Lightning Is a Mother"

Hampton Township's own Bethany Jarmul, an accomplished writer and poet, has published her debut full-length poetry collection, *Lightning Is a Mother*, with ELJ Editions in February.



Her collection delves into themes like identity, spirituality, motherhood, and nature. The lyrically rich poems portray Appalachia as an Eden-like paradise tarnished by humanity, using Eve, the first mother, as

a starting point for the speaker's exploration of motherhood, earth-dwelling, and self-identity.

"It's a dream come true to publish this book," Jarmul shares. "I hope that these poems connect with poetry lovers and those who are new to poetry."

Sarah Moore Wagner, author of *Lady Wing Shot*, praises the book: "Through motherhood, Jarmul guides the reader to an understanding of how to break through tradition to truth. Eco-poetical in nature, this book is a healing prayer for Appalachia."

Poet Susan L. Leary adds: "This aston-

ishing debut invites us to witness dazzling constellations of self and language burst forth across the ether. All we can do is marvel."

Bethany Jarmul has also authored two previous chapbooks, including *Take Me Home*, a mini-memoir published with Belle Point Press in 2024. Her work has been featured in over 100 literary magazines like *Rattle*, *Brevity*, and *Salamanca*, and has been anthologized in *Best Spiritual Literature* and *Best Small Fictions*. She has also received nominations for The Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net.



Ten Hampton students in grades 8-12 participated in the 49th annual Strings North Honors Orchestra Festival on February 10 at Quaker Valley High School.

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Butler's Got Talent

Lindsay Liebro won first place in the Butler's Got Talent fundraiser for the Musical Theatre Guild of Butler. The contest was held on Friday, February 7. Lindsay submitted her video singing an original song, "Astrology" and won \$250!



Jim, Lindsay and Patty Liebro

Current Events

Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Roundtable

"U.S.C.T. Troops: Department of the South"
presented by Rich Condon.
Monday, March 17th at 7 pm.
Hampton Township Community Center,
3101 McCully Road, Allison Park.

Fit For Boxing Celebrates 10 Years



As Fit 4 Boxing Hampton gears up to celebrate its 10-year anniversary this March, the gym remains unwavering in its commitment to inclusive fitness programming. From offering Rock Steady Boxing classes for individuals with Parkinson's to empowering those with intellectual and developmental disabilities through Down to Box, the organization continues to provide transformative fitness experiences for people of all abilities.

"It is incredible to witness the growth of our boxers," said Brett Burkhart, Fit 4 Boxing Club manager and Down to Box coach. "Watching Joe Hnath take the stage in front of 1,000 people at our event is a testament to his confidence and strength. Our program can instill the same in others! We are very grateful to work alongside DSA of Pittsburgh to make our program accessible to individuals in our community living with down syndrome, autism, and more."

If you would like more information on these classes or to attend a session, please contact Brett Burkhart at brett@fit4boxingclub.com. For more information about DSA of Pittsburgh's commitment to health and wellness programs, visit

www.dsapgh.org or contact Greg Coni at gregory@dsapgh.org. To learn more about Down to Box, visit www.downtobox.org or email

lauren@downtobox.org.

Fit 4 Boxing Club 4706 William Flinn Hwy.

Allison Park, 15101 412-213-3584

Hampton Township Volunteer Fire Department



FISH FRY

March 5
March 7
March 14
March 21
March 28
April 4
April 11

• 4:30pm to 7:00pm

April 18

• 12:00pm to 7:00pm

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Upcoming Events

Community Clean Up Day

The Township will be sponsoring a community-wide program to help clean up township roadside areas from debris on Saturday, April 5, 2025 from 8 am to 12 noon. All volunteers will receive a t-shirt as a small token of appreciation for their service. **Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by at least one (1) parent/guardian who can drive the children to the clean-up locations. All volunteers/volunteer groups must have a driver.**

If you are interested in volunteering, registration is requested in order to schedule clean-up locations as well as provide t-shirt sizes. You can register on the Township's website at www.hampton-pa.org/cleanupday2025. Volunteers will meet at the Hampton Community Center. Gloves, safety vests and trash bags will be provided at that time. Please wear the appropriate work clothes and shoes. For more information and to volunteer, please call Assistant Township Manager Susan Bernet at 412-486-0400 ext. 1303.

Enter To Win a Rain Barrel

The Township of Hampton is giving away two free rain barrels this year! There are two ways to register to win for one of two free rain barrels; stop by the Hampton Community Center to see one of the rain barrels and fill out a registration form, or you can register on-line through the Township's website at www.hampton-pa.org/rainbarrelgiveaway2025.

You must be a Hampton resident, and only one registration per family. The deadline for registration is April 15th; winner will be notified April 16th.

Township of Hampton Egg Hunt

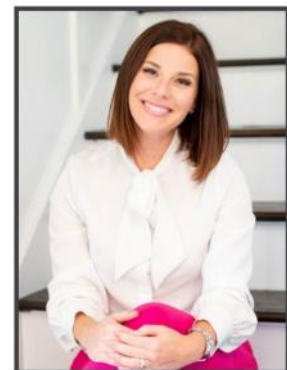
Join us on Saturday, April 12 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Hampton Community Park for an Easter egg hunt for children 10 years of age and under! The egg hunt will be located at Rotary Pavilion. In addition to the egg hunt, there will be child friendly activities, delicious refreshments and an opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny!

Please feel free to bring your own Easter basket for collecting eggs.

Registration for this event is open!

Pre-registration by Thursday, April 3 at 5 p.m. is required for this event to better prepare for supplies.

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Community Blood Drive

Hampton High School is hosting a blood drive on 4/9/2025.

Scan the QR code to donate!

To sustain the needs for local Pittsburgh hospitals, we have to have at least 600 donors a day! Over 70% of America's population is eligible to donate blood but only 10% of people actually do. If you have never donated blood before, we are asking you to come out and make a difference with your donation. There is no substitute for human blood; patients are counting on you.



2025 Pine Creek Cleanup

Join the Allison Park Sportsmen's Club on Saturday, April 12, 2025 from 7:30 a.m.—noon for a morning of community camaraderie and environmental stewardship at the Pine Creek Clean-up event.

Meet at the ballfield parking lot opposite of St. Ursula's church off of Duncan Avenue, Allison Park.

Make sure to dress for the weather; boots and older clothes.

You will get muddy!

Community service hours can be earned.

www.allisonparksportsmenclub.org/allisonparksportsmenclub

Hampton Community Pool



The community pool officially opens for the 2025 season on Saturday, May 24th! Early bird discount passes for residents of Hampton Township available until March 31st, 2025. The outdoor pool is heated which includes a zero foot walk in area and spray feature, four adult lap lanes, two small slides, one large slide and two diving boards. In addition to the pool itself, there are two wooded pavilions; the

Atlantic and Pacific, a concession area along with a shaded seating area, and male and female restrooms and bath house facilities.

Visit www.hampton-pa.org/134/Community-Pool

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UPCOMING EVENTS

"Jumpstart Your Garden at Shaler Garden Club's Plant Sale"

Jumpstart your garden this spring by shopping at the Shaler Garden Club's 71st Annual Plant Sale on Saturday, May 3, 2025 from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, at Kiwanis Park, Wetzel Road, Glenshaw. A large selection of native plants and hardy perennials from members' gardens will be offered at bargain prices, along with herbs, vegetables, houseplants, bulbs, hanging baskets and potted arrangements perfect for Mother's Day gifts. A basket raffle and bake sale will add to the festivities. Are your garden tools dull? Bring them to be sharpened for a voluntary donation. Cash or credit cards accepted. Come rain or shine. Proceeds benefit community projects and philanthropic donations of the Shaler Garden Club. For more information, go to www.shalergardenclub.com

2025 Kids' Fishing Day

Dan Wagner Memorial Place:
Rochester Grove at North Park
When: Saturday, May 3rd Time: 7 a.m. to noon
Registration 7:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.
Fish measuring 9 a.m.—noon
All children ages 2-12 who catch a fish will get first choice of prizes. Hot Dogs & Drinks provided.
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Help Wanted

Hampton Township Summer Positions

Hampton Township is hosting a summer employment recruitment event on **Wednesday, March 19 from 6-7pm** at the Hampton Community Center. Meet staff and learn more about the hiring process and qualifications needed to become a camp counselor, lifeguard, and pool staff! Questions: 412-487-7870.

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Heartwarming Valentine Surprise at Hampton Fields Village

by Laura Beyer, Hampton Fields Village resident

Residents of Hampton Fields Village were delighted by a spe

cial Valentine's Day surprise from the students of Sts. Martha & Mary Early Learning Center. The students delivered large treat bags filled with goodies and soft yellow wraps, bringing warm feelings of gratitude and joy to everyone.



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Rep. Arvind Venkat

30th District

Allegheny County

Food Allergy Safety Bill Passes PA House and a State Budget To Build On

by State Rep. Arvind Venkat

I'm thrilled that the food allergy safety bill I'm prime sponsoring with state Rep. Natalie Mihalek, H.B. 77, has passed the Pennsylvania House of Representatives with bipartisan support and now moves to the state Senate for consideration.

Plain and simple, this legislation will save lives by requiring restaurants and other related establishments to warn of the presence of ingredients that trigger potentially fatal allergic reactions and request customers to convey to their servers what food allergies they might have. As an emergency physician, I've treated countless patients with serious consequences of food allergies and recognize the importance of ad-

ressing this critical public health concern.

Gov. Josh Shapiro recently outlined his proposal for the Commonwealth's 2025-26 fiscal year budget. For one, I was pleased to hear his ongoing commitment to economic development. I also remain committed to ensuring public health, public safety, and public education are all robustly funded through our state budget, with a particular emphasis on funding for school districts such as Hampton.

Please mark your calendar for my spring shredding event on **March 22** from **10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** at the **Franklin Park Municipal Building, 2344 W. Ingomar Road in Pittsburgh**. Please bring no more than **two boxes of paper per household**.

For more information about legislation I have introduced or how my staff and I can help you with state services, please call my office at **412-348-8028** or email me at RepVenkat@pahouse.net. We are always available to address your concerns.



State Senator
LINDSEY M. WILLIAMS
38th Senatorial District



As we move into March, the General Assembly has already started to negotiate the 2025-26 budget. We'll be wrapping up Budget Hearings in the coming weeks. These hearings allow Committee Members in both the House and Senate to speak directly to the administrative departments who carry out large parts of Pennsylvania's annual budget to better understand what their needs are, what programs are working, and what isn't working.

Budget hearings are especially important this year as we navigate the chaos out of Washington, D.C. A significant portion of Pennsylvania's budget comes from federal dol-

lars, whether that is money for education, roads, clean water, farmers, or individuals with disabilities. When funding is indiscriminately cut or frozen from the federal level, that makes it incredibly difficult to plan for our state budget and how we fund the programs that Pennsylvanians rely on to get to work, get an education, and build their lives here in the Commonwealth.

But, we are negotiating this budget without a way to protect that money from waste, fraud, and abuse. That's why I am reintroducing the Commonwealth Fraud Prevention Act with my colleague Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York). This legislation encourages private citizens to come forward as whistleblowers to report those filing false or fraudulent claims against the Pennsylvania government. It includes all of the provisions required for compliance with the Federal False Claims Act, which will allow Pennsylvania to recover an additional 10% of any monies recovered under the law. 44% of government fraud is found by tip. Protecting and encouraging whistleblowers to come forward is the best and most effective way to prevent fraud and protect our tax dollars.



Jeremy Shaffer



Over the past several weeks, I have been busy in both Harrisburg and here at home. Shaler Hampton EMS recently hosted an Allegheny County Emergency Services forum at the Hampton Community Center, and I was pleased to attend and support our vital first responders. I am committed to working with our emergency services to find solutions to the current and long-term issues that EMS providers are facing throughout the state.

In Harrisburg, Gov. Josh Shapiro delivered his annual budget address on Feb. 4. Our state's fiscal year begins on July 1 and lasts through June 30 of the following year. Gov. Shapiro's proposed \$51.5 billion budget would increase spending by 7.5% over the current fiscal year. I am concerned that the rapid growth in government spending will exceed our revenue and require the state to use a large amount of our Rainy Day Fund.

Additionally, the unequal distribution of proposed funding is very troubling.

For example, if we compare the Hampton Township School District to the School District of Philadelphia, we see very different funding proposals. Hampton Township School District currently receives about \$6,000 per student in state funding, and under the governor's proposed budget, the district is slated to get just \$32 extra per student. Compare that to the School District of Philadelphia, which receives \$11,000 per student currently and in the proposed budget will receive an extra \$790 per student.

This proposal penalizes well-run schools like Hampton and others throughout the North Hills.

Over the next few months, I will be analyzing the budget proposal and working hard to find potential changes and improvements for a fairer and more balanced budget. We need a budget that is sustainable, fairly distributes funding throughout Pennsylvania, and encourages growth.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any feedback or insights via my website, RepShafferPA.com, or on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/RepShaffer.

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