Spring 2015





CELEBRATING NEENAH Inaugural Hall of Fame Inductees Chosen

Neenah 4K Program Set to Begin This Fall

Details for Neenah's new four-year-old kindergarten program are beginning to emerge. The program begins in the fall of 2015 and registration is underway.

Over 280 students are already enrolled in the program and registration is still open. Parents may register their children Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Washington School (220 E. Franklin Ave.). Children must be four years old on or before Sept. 1. Registration forms are available at Washington or on the 4K page on the District website.

The voluntary program will be five half-days with a morning and an afternoon session. Classes will be held at Washington School, other District buildings with available classrooms and some community facilities. All classes will be taught by District-hired teachers.

For more information about the program, please contact Washington School at 920-751-6990.

A distinguished group of 10 alumni and former teachers in the Neenah Joint School District have been honored as inaugural members of the District's Hall of Fame.

Those honored include alumni George Edwin Bergstrom, Dr. Theresa Ryan, Ole Jorgensen, James

Keating, John Keating,

and Ron Einerson complete the inaugural and will be eligible for future selection. class.

from Sept. 1 through Nov. 30 and the individuals that included former and current employees and alumni. The class will Oct. 3, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. at Bridgewood ployees in such a significant way.



the inductees

Resort in Neenah as part of the District's homecoming festivities. Tickets for the banquet will be available to the general public and more information will be announced this summer.

The Hall of Fame will induct five new members each year and nominations for the 2016 Cheng, Laura (Coenen) Page 5: read about class will be accepted through

Nov. 30, 2015 on the District website. Those individuals Wayne Kreklow and John Whitlinger. nominated this past year who were not

Former teachers and coaches Joe Braun selected do not need to be re-nominated

"This first class of Hall of Fame inductees A nomination period was conducted represents a wide variety of backgrounds and some of the best to walk the halls of group was selected by a committee of 15 Neenah schools over the past 125 years," said Superintendent Dr. Mary Pfeiffer. "We are so excited to be able to recognize be honored at an induction banquet on our outstanding alumni and former em-

VEX Robotics Team Enjoys Success at World Championships

One of Neenah High School's newest clubs is enjoying tremendous success. In just its third year of organization, Neenah's VEX Robotics teams both advanced to national and world championships. Both teams, under the direction of teacher Adam Hendries, qualified based on their performances at the state meet on Feb. 21.

The team of Alex Mootz, Jordan Altekruse, Evan Dujardin, Mareena Franke, Sam Hintz, Alex Schrampfer and Marissa Bredesen won the "Tournament of Champions" award at the state meet to earn its world championship invite.

The team then finished 24th of 90 teams in its division at the world championships in Louisville, Ky. Neenah went 6-4 in its 10 matches and was the only Wisconsin team in its category, which featured teams from 34 different states and nine different countries.

continued on page 5



Jordan Altekruse, Evan DuJardin and Alex Mootz (L to R) compete at the World VEX Robotics Championships.

District News

Words From the Superintendent



School is about so much more than what our students learn in the classroom on a daily basis.

As many of us can attest, some of our greatest school memories and some of our best learning occurred in school

activities. Our extra-curricular programs are something in which we take great pride in Neenah. With clubs, sports and activities at every level of our educational program, Neenah has as many school-sponsored groups as any District in the state.

In this issue of the *Dialogue*, you'll read about our state champion Special Olympics basketball team, our VEX Robotics teams which participated in national and world competitions and state championship success in swimming and diving. This barely scratches the surface of what Neenah has to offer. From our outstanding music and drama programs to our winning sports teams and our energetic groups and clubs, we are incredibly proud of the success of our students and staff. Best of all, with such a wide variety of offerings, there is truly a group for everyone to participate.

We are grateful to our community for supporting these programs as well. Many of these programs depend on extensive volunteer and financial support. These programs wouldn't exist without our parents and community members stepping up to help. Your attendance at music, arts and sporting events is also appreciated as our students see that support and get the opportunity to show off their talents.

We've got great things happening every day in our classrooms, but we're just as proud of what's taking place outside of the traditional school day. Thank you to everyone who helps support our Neenah activities with pride!

Dr. Mary Pfeiffer Superintendent of Schools

Neenah High School Students Participate in Week of Safe Driving Practices

Through a partnership with the Winnebago County Safe Driving Coalition, students at Neenah High School learned about safe driving through a week's worth of activities.

The week included recognition of positive behaviors and a driving simulator from AT&T (*pictured*). It concluded with the "Choose Your Ride" car at the high school prom.



Planning for the event began months ago after Neenah High School won a \$25,000 grant from State Farm Insurance for safe driving. The Winnebago County Sheriff's Department also was awarded a safe driving grant and led the effort.

State troopers and county officers came to the high school parking lot and stopped student drivers for poor driving practices. Students were given fake tickets to remind them of the proper actions. Staff members also

walked through the lot and rewarded students for positive behaviors.

A display was put up in the high school's link hallway showing safe driving techniques. Police officers presented the AT&T driving simulation and informed students about the "It Can Wait" campaign to remind students to wait to text until finished driving.

Coolidge Elementary Awarded Fellowship Grant to Study Project-Based Learning

Coolidge Elementary teachers have been awarded a fellowship grant from the Department of Public Instruction in connection with the School of Recognition Award the school earned last fall.



The grant is for \$9,999 and will be used for professional learning opportunities in the area of project-based learning. Staff members will attend the Think Forward national conference in Orlando in June, participate in a book study and begin implementation of project-based learning in their classrooms this fall. About 20 grants

are awarded statewide among the 173 schools that received the School of Recognition Award.

Through project-based learning, students will be directly involved in the implementation of their learning standards. The goal is to motivate students to be active participants in their own learning. Relating school-based projects to the community will be a major goal for each teacher. The teachers will attempt to use community resources to help students understand the impact of their project on the community.

For instance, one project may be the implementation of a school garden at fourth grade. Students will go through the process of gaining approval, fundraising, constructing the garden to protect from weather and animals, learning about various types of plants and growing strategies, and maintaining and harvesting the garden. The entire project will incorporate all core areas.

The teachers will monitor the progress of their project throughout the 2015-16 school year and develop professional learning opportunities for their colleagues, eventually sharing their overall student outcomes with schools throughout the District.



District News



Lakeview fourth graders Courtney O'Keefe and Leah Forget planned and carried out a bake sale during Parent-Teacher Conferences at the end of February and raised over \$250 for the Neenah Animal Shelter. They recently visited the Animal Shelter to make their donation.

Kohl Foundation Honors Three Teachers and Two Students

For the first time in 21 years, the Neenah Joint School District has three teachers who received Fellowships from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation in the same year. In addition, two Neenah senior students were honored with Kohl Excellence Scholarships.

Teachers Roxann Barrow, Scott Hertting and Rebecca Van Duser were all honored as Fellowship recipients, marking the first time Neenah has had multiple teachers receive Fellowships since 1998 and the first time the District has had three winners in a year since 1994. Seniors Margaret DiPoto and Celia Nalbach received Excellence Scholarships, which is only the second time since 2006 that Neenah has had multiple students receive the honor in the same year.

Neenah Students Recognized for Habitat for Humanity Project

A project that started behind the idea of 2014 Neenah High School graduate Nick Munce and became a collaboration of students from seven local high schools was recognized with an award from the Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity.



Neenah students were honored by Habitat for Humanity (L to R): Meggie DiPoto, Adelle Sturgell, Celia Nalbach, Ryan Thomas and Sam Galloway with Neenah H.S. Principal Brian Wunderlich.

The students from the seven area schools came together to build a Habitat for Humanity home in Kaukauna during 2014. Ryan Thomas, a 2014 Neenah graduate, received the award and spoke on behalf of the students.

In March of 2014, a group of Neenah High School students came to the

Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity with an idea to build a home for a family in need called Operation: Building Hope. The seven schools involved were Neenah, Appleton West, Appleton North, Appleton East, Kimberly, Kaukauna and St. Mary Central. Students from all of the schools raised the funds through a myriad of small fundraisers ranging from tournaments to movie nights to letter writing campaigns to raise a collective \$75,000 to build the Habitat home to begin between mid-June and August. The students also provided the volunteer labor for the project.

This is the first time that a project of this scope involving as many students across the Fox Valley has been done. Work on the home was completed in August.



Neenah had five recipents of awards from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation on April 18 (L to R): Rebecca Van Duser, Margaret DiPoto, Scott Hertting, Celia Nalbach and Roxanne Barrow.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the foundation, each Fellowship and Scholarship has been increased to \$3,000 for the individual and \$3,000 to the school.

Previously, the recipients received \$1,000 each. A total of 101 teachers and 163 high school seniors from across the state were honored.

Barrow began her teaching career in Neenah in 1991 and has been teaching wellness

education at Spring Road Elementary since 1992. Barrow has created numerous programs outside her daily teaching activities, including family fitness nights, a 100 mile club, "Walk to School Wednesdays" and a family running club.

Hertting has been teaching at Neenah High School since 1993. He has been teaching general physics since 1998 and advanced physics since 2007. He created a program where advanced physics students select a topic to teach to sixth graders at Horace Mann Middle School.

Van Duser has spent her entire teaching career at Lakeview Elementary beginning with first grade in 1990. She has taught second grade since 1994. She recently created a summer reading program at Lakeview and helped redesign a spelling program to enhance student learning.

DiPoto and Nalbach have both taken full schedules of advanced classes and are both active in Key club, math club and cross country. Both students were part of a Habitat for Humanity project last summer that involved students from seven area high schools. DiPoto carries a 4.0 grade point average and also participates in French Club and soccer. She plans to attend UW-Madison and major in biology. Nalbach has a 3.96 grade point average and is part of Spanish Club and track and field. She also will attend UW-Madison and plans to major in chemical engineering.



Student Activities



Two Neenah High School students received awards at the Key Club International District Leadership Conference March 7 in Green Lake. Marissa Bredesen (left) received a Distinguished President Award and Kristen Navis (right) was selected as the District 7 Lieutenant Governor for the 2015-16 school year.

Special Olympics Basketball Team Captures State Title

Neenah High School's Special Olympics basketball team captured a state championship by winning its division at the state indoor sports tournament on April 12 in Oshkosh.

The Rockets beat Fort Atkinson in the championship game 28-18 after defeating West Racine County 44-20 in the semifinal round of Division 9. The team qualified for state at a sectional meet in Stevens Point on March 15 by rallying from a halftime deficit to beat West Madison 20-14 and then getting past Cuba City 34-27. The team won its regional on March 1 in Sheboygan with a 29-6 victory over Sheboygan.

Team members are (*pictured below*, *left to right*): Lyle Julian, Chris Jones, Dominic Doucette, Sam Moder, Daniel Grassi, Ryan Young and Brittany Wendler. Also, Tre Swinford earned a silver medal and Ben Johnson won a bronze medal in the basketball skills competition.

The team is coached by Chad Oeftger and Robin Grable. Neenah is one of only a few school districts in the state of Wisconsin to sponsor its own Special Olympics team. Neenah students also typically compete in bowling, swimming and diving, track and field and softball.



Donnellan Sprints to Neenah's First State Swimming Title

Senior Reilly Donnellan became Neenah's first WIAA state champion in a boys or girls swimming event by setting a school record in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 21.00 seconds. Neenah, which previously had four boys and three girls individual state champions in diving, finished eighth in the team standings with 105.5 points. Donnellan finished in a dead heat with Madison Memorial's Alex Peterson-Weber to share the top spot on the podium.



Donnellan also placed fifth in the 100-yard freestyle and anchored the 200-yard medley relay that placed second with Kyle Hrubecky, Maxwell Boehnlein and Eli Rocke. The 200yard freestyle relay of Donnellan, Hrubecky, Rocke and Jake Enz placed sixth.

Donnellan plans to attend UW-Stevens Point in the fall and compete on the swimming team.



Students at Horace Mann Middle School were treated to music every morning during March as part of "Music in Our Schools Month." Students from schools throughout the District visited the school each day and performed in the lobby as students and staff arrived for the school day.

Dialogue Spring 2015

Inaugural NJSD Hall of Fame Inductees

George Edwin Bergstrom, an 1892 graduate, was the Chief Architect for the Pentagon Building in 1941. He was one of the prominent figures in the rapid expansion of Southern California in the early 1900's.

Joe Braun, who taught math and science from 1946-74, began the Neenah High School baseball program and Neenah's summer youth baseball program.

Dr. Theresa Cheng, a 1979 graduate, worked as a neurosurgeon at Mercy Medical Center in Oshkosh and did a residency at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine. The class valedictorian, she was a member of Neenah's 1978 state champion basketball team.

Laura Coenen, a 1981 graduate, was a three-time Olympian as a goalie in Team Handball. She starred collegiately at the University of Minnesota and ranks second in Neenah basketball history in career scoring with 1,036 points.

Ron Einerson, who taught social studies and coached boys basketball in Neenah from 1968-93, ranks seventh in state history in career victories with his 556-235 career record. He led the Rockets to WIAA state titles in 1975 and 1978 and four state runner-up finishes.

Ole Jorgensen, a 1922 graduate, taught physical education and coached in Neenah for 43 years. Jorgensen was a state high jump champion in high school and also played football and basketball. He coached the basketball team to the 1930 WIAA state title and a 509-258 record in 39 seasons.

James Keating, a 1925 graduate, was a leader at the Neenah Foundry and active in numerous community organizations. While in school, he was captain of the 1925 basketball team that placed fifth at state and also played football.

John Keating, a 1926 graduate, was the first Neenah person to receive an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy in West Point and later served as a Brigadier General in the U.S. Army.

Wayne Kreklow, a 1975 graduate, led Neenah to the 1975 WIAA state basketball title. He was the state Player of the Year and went on to star at Drake University. He is now the volleyball coach at the University of Missouri.

John Whitlinger, a 1972 graduate, was the first person to win four WIAA state individual singles tennis championships and won 109 consecutive matches for the Rockets. He was a singles and doubles collegiate national champion at Stanford and coached the Cardinal for 10 seasons.

Dialogue Spring 2015

VEX Robotics 24th at World Event

continued from page 1

In addition, the team of Adam Burkett, Andrew Belot, Erik Metzig, Angela Butke, Rob Schimdt and Matt Karrmann won the Fox Valley VEX Robotics Competition League title at UW-Fox Valley and qualified to compete in the U.S. Open championships in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The team went 8-2 at the U.S. Open championships and placed 14th of 85 teams in its division.

Every robot in these competitions was designed to play a game called VEX Skyrise. Students use building and programming strategies to create the best robot possible. After competition, the teams redesign their robot to improve game play or increase their robot's capabilities. Many of these skills are learned through Project Lead the Way classes at Neenah High School.

The VEX Robotics World Championship brought together top robotics teams to celebrate their accomplishments and compete with and against top teams from over 500 VEX Robotics competition tournaments happening in cities around the world.

About the Event

VEX Skyrise is played on a 12'x12' square field. Two alliances – one "red" and one "blue" – composed of two teams each, compete in matches consisting of a 15-second autonomous period followed by one minute and 45 seconds of driver-controlled play.

The object is to attain a higher score than the opposing Alliance by scoring colored cubes in a variety of ways.

There are a total of 44 cubes (22 red and 22 blue) in the game. Most scoring objects begin in designated locations on the field, while some are available to be entered into the field during the match.

Each robot (smaller than 18"x18"x18" to start) begins a match on one of its Alliance starting tiles. There are 10 posts and four floor goals that robots can score objects onto. The Alliance with the topmost cube on a post owns the post.

Alliances also earn points for building skyrises on their skyrise base out of skyrise sections, and scoring cubes on skyrises. A bonus is awarded to the Alliance that has the most total points at the end of the autonomous period.



Horace Mann student council members made their annual visits to eight elementary schools in the District. The students brought favorite picture books from home to read to kindergarten through third grade students. In each classroom, the students were divided into small groups with a sixth grader reading to each group.

Staff News **A VITAL COMPONENT** *NJSD and Humana partner in wellness*



Lakeview Elementary staff members participated in Fox Cities Marathon events last fall.

Neenah Joint School District employees have made an added emphasis on wellness during the 2014-15 school year by participating in the Humana Vitality program.

Every staff member under the District's Humana Insurance plan is participating in the program where employees collect points for fitness and wellness activities. Staff members who took the online health assessment and participated in a health screening by Feb. 14 were able to maintain their same insurance premiums as last year. The more employees who earn at least 5,000 points by August 31, the greater impact it will have in decreasing insurance premiums for 2015-16. The District began working with Humana on Jan. 1.

Employees may continue to earn points through activities such as verified workouts, participation in sporting events and leagues, blood donation, dental or vision checkups and many other options. Staff members earn rewards to receive gift cards and other items by accumulating points in the program.

Of the 540 Neenah employees enrolled in the Vitality program, 323 (59.8 percent) have already reached 5,000 points as of April 3. Another 154 employees have already accumulated 4,000 points in the program. Several retirees and family members are also participating in the program and are enjoying the rewards of gift cards and a healthier lifestyle.

Horace Mann Teacher Selected for Amherst College Fellowship

Horace Mann Middle School teacher Anna Zimmers is one of 16 teachers nationwide chosen to participate in a five-week summer seminar on Punishment, Politics and Culture at Amherst College in Massachusetts.

Zimmers received her tuition-free fellowship through the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provides opportunities for K-12



educators to study humanities topics. The course will take place June 28-July 31.

Punishment, Politics and Culture explores the connections between punishment and politics with particular reference to the contemporary American situation. It will look at how crime and punishment has been politicized in recent national elections as well as the racialization of punishment in the United States. The course will guestion whether

the country punishes too much and too severely or too little and too leniently.

"I am very excited for the opportunity to engage in academic discourse with educators from around the country and to become more proficient with the socratic seminar," said Zimmers, who teaches Horace Mann's magnet program. "How different civilizations view crime and punishment sheds light on culture and values and can be a powerful lens through which to study humanity, especially for adolescents.

"I am hopeful, that through this seminar, I will be able to bring a different level of engagement to my classroom that challenges both me and my students to become more critical thinkers and effective communicators."

Zimmers was chosen through an application process that included an essay and letters of recommendation.

NJSD Names New Elementary Principals at Taft and Clayton

The Neenah Joint School District has selected two individuals to fill principal vacancies at Clayton and Taft Elementary Schools.

Amy McKeefry, a veteran teacher in the Pulaski Community School District, will be the new principal at Clayton, while Dr. Lucille Hrib, a middle school principal in Statesville, N.C., has been named the principal at Taft.



McKeefry (*pictured, left*) is in her second year as a Title I/Learning Support teacher at Fairview Elementary School in Pulaski. She is the building coordinator at Fairview and assists with principal duties. McKeefry also taught first grade for 13 years at Glenbrook Elementary School in Pulaski. She earned Elementary Education and Spanish degrees from UW-Green Bay and a

Master's Degree in Leadership at Cardinal Stritch University.

Hrib (pictured, right) is completing her 12th year in administra-

tion in the Iredell-Statesville School District. She is in her fourth year as the principal at West Iredell Middle School after serving eight years as an assistant principal at the elementary level. Hrib also has nine years of elementary and Title I teaching experience. She has an Elementary Education degree from the University of South Florida and earned Master's Degrees in Education Leadership



and School Administration from Gardner-Webb University (N.C.). McKeefry replaces Jackie Munoz-Ellmann, who is taking over

as principal at Horace Mann Middle School. Hrib is replacing Phil Johnson, who is retiring after 30 years in Neenah, including 24 years as an elementary principal.



School-by-School News



Four Neenah High School students won awards at the Fox Valley Area High School Glass Exhibition at the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass. Julia Brechlin, Abigail Helwig, Felix Castro and Catherine Hoelzel were all honored for their work. The event featured art by students from 11 area high schools and charter schools. It is hosted annually by the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass to celebrate Youth Art Month during March.



Shattuck's Sign Language Club will be attending a performance of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" in May at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf in Delavan. The entire show is performed in American Sign Language. Students earned money to fund the trip by selling 48 dozen homemade cookies during a recent fundraising event.



On his way to Indianapolis for the Final Four, Bucky Badger made a side trip to Neenah two days prior and visited an all-school assembly at Horace Mann. Bucky helped introduce the upcoming Badger Assessment testing and then cheered on a March Madness basketball event that featured several student teams, a staff team and members of the boys and girls varsity basketball teams.



Alliance held its annual Knowledge-A-Thon school fundraiser on April 2. Each student was given 100 questions to study and was asked 25 of the questions during the event. Students collected pledges for the number of questions they got correct.

CLAYTON SCHOOL

Clayton held a Celebration of the Arts on March 14. Students showed off their talents, such as artwork, dancing, musical performances and cooking. The event was held in the evening and families came to see the artwork and performances while sampling some of the food.

COOLIDGE SCHOOL

Coolidge held its third annual family math night with a camping theme. Over 225 guests played math-related board games, completed estimation jar activities, explored technology-based math activities, read math stories in a tent, participated in a measurement Olympics and took part in other activities.



Hoover students learned the basics of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math as part of the school's second annual STEM Day in February. High School students coordinated the activities, which provided hands-on problem solving skills, engineering design process and teamwork in seven different stations.



About 80 third through fifth grade students from throughout the District participated in the second annual Graphic Novel event at Lakeview. The workshops were led by District teachers or assistants and conducted in Comic Life, Writing, Pop-Up Books, Reading Graphic Novels and Artist and Her Tools.



Roosevelt and Alliance students showed off their hobbies and interests as part of the school's first-ever Interest Fair. Students created presentations about a particular topic or activity that interests them and showed it off to classmates, teachers, parents and a panel of judges. Students in all grade levels at both schools participated.



Spring Road recently held its annual Career and Hobby Day. The event featured over 24 presenters who shared their career or hobby to students in first through fifth grades. Students were able to attend three different presentations and were reminded how their academics are used in the variety of careers and hobbies.



Taft held a "Spread the Word to End the Word" event on March 20. A whole school rally included peer sensitivity training by the Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin, a basketball clinic by the Neenah Special Olympics team and a pledge-signing opportunity for students and staff.



Students at Tullar took part of their recess time to send notes and cards of gratitude to veterans who typically do not receive any mail. The letters were distributed by teacher Ariel Schmoldt's grandfather, who is a World War II veteran and brought them on an honor flight to Washington D.C.



Washington parents took part in a workshop with physical and occupational therapists to learn which household toys and items may be used to develop large and small muscle skills. The event also shared fun activities for parents to do with their children and strengthen their child's motor skills.



Local author Rick Chrustowski visited Wilson on April 1. He gave four one-hour presentations to the students during the day, breaking them up into grade levels for each presentation. He also gave a one-hour presentation to families at night.



Upcoming Events



410 South Commercial St. Neenah, WI 54956 (920) 751-6800 Website: www.neenah.k12.wi.us ECRWSS Non-Profit US Postage **PAID** Neenah, WI Permit NO. 23

POSTAL PATRON

Upcoming Events

May

2Vintage Show Choir Finale, 7:30 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
6NHS Band Concert, 7:30 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
7Shattuck Band Concert, 7:30 p.m. (Shattuck OJ Gym)
8NHS Student Council Talent Show, 7 p.m. (Pickard Aud.)
12Shattuck Choir Concert, 7 p.m. (Shattuck OJ Gym)
14NHS/5th Grade Choir Concert, 7 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
19NHS Orchestra Concert, 7:30 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
20John P. Mulroy Senior Program, 7 p.m. (Pickard Aud.)

22Early Dismissal - All Levels (Professional Learning Day)
25No School - All Levels (Memorial Day)
27NHS Jazz Concert, 7 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
28Horace Mann Choir Concert, 7 p.m. (Pickard Auditorium)
June
4Early Dismissal - Grades K-8 (End of Semester)
4No School - Grades 9-12
4NHS Graduation, 7 p.m. (NHS Fieldhouse)
8First Day of Summer School
9 First Day of Summer School

Like us on Facebook-Neenah Joint School District

Follow us on Twitter-@neenahschools



www.neenah.k12.wi.us

Board of Education meetings are typically held the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 6 p.m. at the District Administrative Building at 410 S. Commercial St. (Check the NJSD website for complete schedule)