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Softball fields at Hamilton Park

Turtle Creek Rotary Club Turtle Trot Cancelled

We have sad news to announce. We have made the difficult decision to cancel the Turtle Trot for 2020. This would have been our 29th annual race and one of our biggest fundraisers that allows Turtle Creek Rotary to support our community. We had a well thought out plan to keep our runners, walkers and volunteers safe, but due to the recent increase in COVID-19 cases, ultimately we feel cancelling the event would be best. The safety of our community has to come first!

We are still hoping to be able to hold our other big fundraiser; the Annual Golf Outing at Glengarry Golf Links scheduled for September 11.

We appreciate everyone's support and we hope you will run with us again in 2021! Thank you.

Turtle Creek Rotary Club



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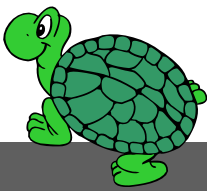
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Woodland Hills Teachers Respond with Creativity, Resourcefulness



Security Officer Pedro Valles, Asst. Principal Charmayne Gather, & Food Service employees Mary Strednak & Monica Prodanovich

Ms. Pearson used a variety of virtual tools to teach (such as Zoom, Google Drive and more.) She says, “My first-third grade students did research on a famous scientist. The scientists were invited to appear on 'The Cathie Pearson Show' (a talk show format where I am the host and they are interviewed portraying the role of the scientist) via Zoom meeting. The students submitted questions for the show to me via a Google Form, designed costumes, backgrounds and props, and delivered wonderful performances on the show!”

Erik Meredith teaches second grade at Edgewood Elementary STEAM Academy, as well as third and sixth grades at Woodland Hills Online Academy (WHOA). He has taught online for four years in WHOA, and teaches online for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit in their Waterfront learning program. Because of his online teaching experience, Mr. Meredith was already prepared for the need for virtual learning, and he was able to share his knowledge and experience with colleagues during the entire move to online learning.

“Working for two school entities in an online capacity gave me a vast amount of experience to assist my colleagues and support them with questions. I felt very supported by Eddie Wilson as we worked together to give every educator in our district the tools they needed to be successful online. It is very different learning and teaching online. It’s an environment I feel very comfortable in and was glad I could use what I normally do to help my colleagues and administrators,” he adds.

Mr. Meredith says his primary mission was ensuring students learned new material and had the opportunity to work on what material would be necessary so they could start third grade successfully.

Ms. Morse, Ms. Pearson and Mr. Meredith were all selected as distinguished educators to lead sessions on effective strategies regarding virtual learning for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

Secondary teachers faced challenges as well. “When you leave your students on a Thursday, have plans to see them again on Monday, only to never see them in person for the rest of the year it is difficult,” said Tammie Wilkes, a Math teacher at the High School. The staff at the High School worked hard to keep students motivated, according to Tracy Weaver, a Guidance Counselor. “Teachers, social workers, and the guidance staff reached out via telephone, Zoom, or Schoology (a communication platform for students, teachers and parents) to ensure that all students had what they needed,” she said. As an example, in addition to working to provide technology to students, Art teachers set up a table to allow students to pick up supplies, and if transportation issues prevented students from coming to the school, materials were taken to students. And employees sought to meet students’ social and emotional needs as well, with information on mental health and coping with stress during trying times. “We tried to continue our jobs but changed the format of how that was done,” Ms. Weaver said.

Looking to the fall, Mr. Willson anticipates changes to the learning platform, based on feedback from parents and educators. “If our reopening plan involves virtual instruction in any way, which seems highly likely at this time, Google Classroom will be our primary platform for virtual instruction,” he said. “We will, to the best of our ability, teach our curricula with fidelity via the Google Classroom platform. We currently have over 100 educators who have gone above and beyond to seek and receive their Google Level 1 Educator certification.”

Student Meal Program Continues Despite Pandemic

In addition to daily learning, many students also relied on the meal program. Due to the pandemic, The Pennsylvania Department of Education received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to allow eligible schools to serve meals to low-income students through programs like a “Grab and Go.”

Woodland Hills offered breakfast and lunch to “grab and go” each day of the week to students at five locations in the district -The Administration Building in North Braddock, the East Pittsburgh Community Center, Rankin School, Turtle Creek Elementary STEAM Academy, and the Woodland Hills Intermediate School in Swissvale. Thanks to the support of donors such as Eat'n Park and the United Way, supplemental meals were also provided at the end of the week for students to have for the weekend.

Food Service Management employees from Nutrition Inc. provided the majority of the labor to produce and distribute the meals. “The small staff of employees worked diligently to prepare attractive and nutritious meals for the kids. They worked more than their regular school year hours to prepare and distribute these meals, providing the students with, not only a good meal, but a familiar face and greeting,” adds Siobhan Nicklow, Transportation and Food Services Director at Woodland Hills.

Ms. Nicklow adds that the Grab and Go Program was a team effort, with the employees from Nutrition Inc., dedicated volunteers, some staff and teachers, along with some of their students – helping to pick-up meals, bag and box meals for distribution, and deliver meals.

See article on Woodland Hills Graduation, page 7

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