

around the VALLEY

WINTER 2020



929 lakeshore drive
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SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Pride of SV Awards 2019



Left to right: Captain Nikki (Lykens) Yogi, Lt. Nathaniel Giorgio, Mr. Adam Moerder and Mr. Derek Gaul

On October 5, Schuylkill Valley honored the achievements of four alumni by presenting them with the Pride of SV Award. The 2019 Wall of Fame inductees are:

Mr. Derek Gaul – Mr. Gaul, a graduate of the class of 2011, participated in the National Honor Society, Science Olympiad, Pennsylvania Youth Education Association (PYEA) and Spanish club. As a member of the SV football team, he holds school records in most career touchdowns, most career rushing touchdowns, most career points, most career rushing yards, longest punt return and longest touchdown run (99 yards, tied for the longest in state history).

He was the first quarterback in Berks County history to rush for more than 3,000 career yards and led the Panthers to their second playoff appearance ever. In addition, he holds the Berks County record in the long jump with a distance of 24' 6", was a two-time PIAA State Champion in the long jump, a three-time District III long jump champion, county long jump champion and Berks County male athlete of the year in 2011. Mr. Gaul received his BS in finance from Lehigh University, where he also was a member of the football and track and field teams. He currently works in the financial planning industry.

Lt. Nathaniel Giorgio – Lt. Giorgio, also a class of 2011 graduate, received his BS in civil engineering from the United States Coast Guard Academy. At SV, he was a two-time state medalist and three-time PIAA state qualifier in wrestling. In his college career, he was a three-time NCAA Division III Wrestling All-American and four-time NCAA National Qualifier, an NCAA Division III Academic All-American, a member of the All-Navy Wrestling Team, and a Greco-Roman World Team Trial Qualifier. After graduation, he was commissioned as a US Coast Guard officer, with his first assignment working in Naval Flight Training in Pensacola, FL. He is a designated Coast Guard Aviator and MH-65D Dolphin helicopter pilot who, to date, has saved nine lives.

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**SCHUYLKILL VALLEY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

929 Lakeshore Drive
Leesport PA 19533-8631

Dr. Cindy Mierzejewski
Superintendent

Mr. Michael T. Mitchell, Jr.
High School Principal

Mrs. Melissa Kelchner
High School Assistant Principal

Mr. Joshua Kuehner
Middle School Principal

Mrs. Courtney Maguire
Assistant Middle School Principal

Mr. Jeremy L. Crills
Elementary School Principal

Mrs. Melissa A. Rhoads
Assistant Elementary School Principal

Mrs. Dawn Harris
Director, Special Education & Pupil Services

Dr. Janet Heilman
Director of Teaching and Learning

Mr. Michael Billman
Director, Information Technology

Mr. Brian D. Feick
Business Manager

Mrs. Changming Wang
Assistant Business Manager

Mr. Casey Blankenbiller
Director, Buildings & Grounds

Miss Stephanie L. Deibler
Athletic Director

Ms. Robin Brightbill
Director of Human Resources

Mrs. Diane Kaag
Food Service Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. G. Dane Miller, President
Mr. George H. Mertz III, Vice-President
Mrs. Linda R. Lash, Secretary
Mr. Paul L. Bendigo
Mr. Robert M. Dempsey
Mrs. Nicoleen M. Kleffel
Mr. David Moll
Mr. Kevin Raudenbush
Mr. Alfonso F. Rossi

BOARD MEETINGS

Committees generally meet the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Board meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the high school's LeRoy K. Seip room.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Administration	610-916-0957
High School	610-926-1706
Middle School	610-926-7111
Elementary School	610-926-4165

Faculty Recognition

Mrs. Marsha Townsend, a 4th grade teacher at the elementary school, was selected as this year's Keystone State Literacy Association (KSLA) Celebrate Literacy award winner. In recognition of her outstanding contributions to literacy education, Mrs. Townsend was presented with her award at the KSLA Awards lunch on October 30 during the Fifty-Second Annual Conference in Hershey, PA.



Mrs. Marsha Townsend and Ms. Gwendolyn Bodner of KSLA



Mrs. Ronda Lee Seymour, middle school art specialist, was awarded Honorable Mention in the PSEA Fabric of Unionism art competition for her original piece entitled, "Keeping Workers Strong." Her winning entry was featured in PSEA magazine in September.

Pride of SV Awards 2019 continued

Mr. Adam Moerder – Mr. Moerder graduated with the SV class of 2003, where he was president of the student council, in Panthers-On-Parade, and a member of the National Honor Society, chorus and Pantherette literary magazine. He was also a member of the varsity track and field and varsity basketball teams, and PIAA AA boys' high jump State Champion in 2002. He received his BA in English language and literature, with honors, from Harvard University in 2007, where he was president of the Harvard Lampoon, the world-famous undergraduate comedy magazine. He has reviewed music for the online magazine Pitchfork, performed as singer and guitarist for Brooklyn-based rock band, Mr. Dream, worked as writer and music producer for the music label GODMODE, as copywriter and associate creative director for BBDO & Grey advertising agencies, and on global accounts for GE, SAP, Mobil 1, Volvo and YouTube Music.

Captain Nikki (Lykens) Yogi – Captain Yogi is an alumna of the class of 2008, where she served as president of the National Honor Society and SODAA club, and participated in concert and jazz band, student council, PYEA, Strength Club and Spanish Club. She was an All-County athlete in field hockey, a two-time District III discus champion, SV record-holder in the discus and bench press, and was named 2008 outstanding female athlete. She earned her BS in aeronautics, with a minor in homeland security, from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU), was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and completed undergraduate pilot training at Vance Air Force Base (AFB). Captain Yogi flew an A-10 in support of Operation Inherent Resolve to defeat ISIS, accumulating 181 combat hours in 29 sorties. She currently has over 1,000 hours in fighter / attack / training aircraft, eighteen temporary duty assignments and eleven decorations. She remains engaged with Air Force ROTC Detachment at ERAU and has facilitated summer/winter break mentorship programs for 28 cadets over three years.

School Board of Directors Reorganization



The 2019-20 Schuylkill Valley Board of Directors

Front row, left to right: **Mrs. Linda Lash**, secretary, **Mr. Kevin Raudenbush**, **Mr. Robert M. Dempsey**, **Mrs. Nicoleen M. Kleffel**

Back row, left to right: **Mr. David Moll**, **Mr. George H. Mertz III**, vice-president, **Mr. Alfonso F. Rossi**, **Mr. G. Dane Miller**, president, **Mr. Paul L. Bendigo**

New Board Member



Mr. David Moll is the newest member of the SV Board of Directors. A resident of Centre Township, Mr. Moll's family includes his wife, Tina, and children Jennifer (SV Class of 2008), Matthew (SV Class of 2010) and Jacob (SV Class of 2013). He is an internal controls/financial audit liaison manager with a Fortune 500 company. His volunteer service includes roles as past president of the SV Athletic Boosters, Boy Scout leader (cub pack, troop, district and council levels), Penn State Alumni Association member and historical presenter at SVMS in blown glass, redware and blacksmithing. Mr. Moll believes that public education is the keystone to the educational system and, as a Board member, intends to provide the best resources that the taxpayers can afford.

Special Thanks to Our Veterans



L-R: Mrs. Christina Miller, Dakota Seidel, Mackenna Holben, Tristan Goda, Nathan Kier, Brisely Cruz Paredes, Ben Ostrowski, Mrs. Christine Wysocki and Mrs. Linda Brancadora

Two teams of sixth graders were honored by the Berks County Patriots for their winning Veterans Day thank-you letters. **Mrs. Christina Miller** and **Mrs. Christine Wysocki**, language arts teachers at the middle school, led groups of students in studying the origins of Veterans Day, accessing information about their own family members' participation in the armed services, and in crafting letters of thanks. The letters were then submitted to the Patriots' contest and the winners selected. On November 21, the six students attended the Patriots' meeting to read and distribute their winning letters to the assembled group. Each student received a framed award and a gift card.



2019 HOMECOMING COURT L-R: Homecoming Court candidates and escorts Gabe Kolasa, Julia Stricker, Graham Haupt, Savanna Stricker, Jonathan Wails, Jesulayomi Adejo, Nicholas Martini, Nicole Danks, Evan Johns, Tessa Dracha, Lilyana Isenberg, Logan Downey, Cassidy Brown, Niccolo Iaccarino, Sadie Goad, Michael Goad, Hannah Phillips and Timothy Horrell.

The district held Homecoming festivities on Friday, October 4, during halftime of the Schuylkill Valley-Fleetwood football game. Senior **Jesulayomi Adejo**, daughter of **Sade and Nurudeen Adejo** of Leesport, was crowned homecoming queen. Senior **Alex Gonzalez**, son of **Reinaldo Gonzalez-Rodriguez** and **Glorymer Rodriguez** of Bern Township, was named Spirit King. Alex donated \$625, the total accumulated in his winning penny war campaign, to St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Homecoming runner-up **Nicole Danks**, 2018 Homecoming Queen **Bridgette Bennett** and 2019 Homecoming Queen **Jesulayomi Adejo**.

Far right:
Spirit King **Alex Gonzalez**



**Spotlight on:
Zen Club**

Amidst the hustle and bustle of student life at the high school, there exists an oasis of calm known as the Zen Club. Created in the spring of 2016 by then-sophomore **Bryce Burtnett** (class of 2018), the club, advised by **Mrs. Adrienne Williamson**, high school business teacher, invites students to manage the stress of home, school and work by focusing on yoga and meditation. The club places less attention on what specifi-

cally stresses students and focuses more on the tools to help deal with what they cannot control. Eschewing a traditional leadership structure by eliminating titles such as president and vice-president, the club has adopted a unified group of officers, each having equal weight in decision-making. **Janalis Acevedo Izquierdo**, **Tatum Brown**, **Ethan Drayer**, **Julia Winkler** and **Alexandria Yeakle** encourage other students to join the



L-R: Spirit King candidates Niccolo Iaccarino, Michael Hall, Brian Porter, Spirit King Alex Gonzalez, Joseph Bakanowski and Graham Haupt.



L-R: Homecoming Court candidates Julia Stricker, Savanna Stricker, Homecoming Queen Jesulayomi Adejo, Nicole Danks, Tessa Dracha, Lilyana Isenberg, Cassidy Brown, Sadie Goad and Hannah Phillips.

Photos courtesy of Purdon Photography.

club throughout the year. Attracting a diverse crowd of athletes, artists and others, the club members practice yoga and guided meditation during and after school, journal, attend yoga classes at the Kula Kamala Foundation and Yoga Ashram in Alsace, celebrate "Zensgiving," and partner with SV's Art Club in a recycling art competition and by helping with the Souper Bowl fundraiser. Namaste.



Members of the high school's Zen Club over the past three years.

2019 HOMECOMING

ALUMNI



Midshipman First Class **Brett Sigoda**, SV class of 2016, has been selected as a Student Naval Aviator. Mr. Sigoda, son of **Mr. Steven Sigoda** and **Mrs. Jane Sigoda**, fifth grade language arts and social studies teacher, and brother of **Mrs. Abby Maulick**, seventh grade language arts teacher, and **Officer Taylor Sigoda**, SV class of 2011, is a senior at Penn State University, University Park. He is an Information Sciences and Technology major and in the NROTC. When he graduates in May, Mr. Sigoda will be commissioned as an officer in the United States Navy and then go to Flight School in Pensacola, Florida. Mr. Sigoda is very thankful to the many staff members at SV who supported and encouraged him during this challenging journey.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Fourth Grade Participates in Trout in the Classroom Program

SV's fourth grade students are excitedly learning about the life cycle of Pennsylvania rainbow trout through the *Trout In The Classroom* program. Partnering with Berks Watershed and Trout Unlimited, our teachers present weekly lessons in the Global Classroom where nearly 200 fish are growing in a huge tank.

Students are exposed to the lifecycle of the fish, their food, and other fun facts about their animal adaptations. They test the water for alkalinity and ammonia, add neutralizers if necessary, and monitor the temperature in the tank. The fish will be studied and enjoyed in the classroom until the spring, when students will have a hand in releasing them into a nearby stream.



PYEA Gold Out



In September, students, staff and members of the community generously emptied their pockets to help the Four Diamonds Pediatric Cancer fund in the PYEA's annual Gold Out event. On September 27, PYEA members canned in the lunchroom and at the football game and sold "For The Kids" tattoos, survivor bracelets and other items. In addition, members of PYEA helped to put together a gift bag for **Riley Rejniak**, an SV 1st grader and cancer superhero who is a Four Diamonds recipient. The football team presented Riley with a signed game ball from the Gold Out victory over Kutztown. SV Youth Soccer also participated by wearing gold socks with their uniforms all month long and collecting money in the stands at games. All totaled, \$2,359 was donated to the Four Diamonds of Penn State Children's Hospital in Hershey. With Four Diamonds families among our SV community, we are truly grateful for the kindness and compassion of all who donated.

Students present the winning game football to SV 1st grader Riley Rejniak.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Solving a Mystery Clue by Clue

The SVHS Drama Club presented the fall play, "Clue: On Stage," directed by **Mr. Scott Piergrossi**, on November 15 and 16. The play is based on the popular 1985 Paramount movie and inspired by the classic Hasbro board game.

The production was a huge success with great audiences, lots of laughs and incredible performances. Much credit goes to the cast and crew. Their love and passion for the theatre led to the success of this production. Additional credit is given to the production staff, which

included many high school teachers, for all their help and support to make this play a huge learning experience, as well as a successful production.

The spring Panthers-On-Parade musical production will be "Little Shop of Horrors," directed by **Miss Katie Heffner**, on April 3 and 4, 2020. Watch for ticket order forms on the main page of the SV website in March.

The cast and crew of "Clue: On Stage."



L-R: **Daniel Koch** as Professor Plum, **Whitney Tomes** as Mrs. Peacock, **Michael Hall** as Wadsworth, **Briana Silasavage** as Miss Scarlet and **Lucas Adams** as Colonel Mustard.

Subaru Gives Back with Book Donations

SV's community partner, Steve Moyer Subaru, once again donated books to the elementary school this fall. The three students pictured, **Gemma Graeff**, **Sydney McNaughton**, and **Ian McNaughton**, participated in the Summer Reads program, where they read and answered questions from seven different stories over the summer. The students, led by reading specialist **Mrs. Deb Werstler**, received their choice of a book from the donation. Subaru loves learning and we are grateful for their generosity.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



At part of November's middle school advocacy program and the theme OPERATION GRATITUDE, all 700 middle school students wrote thank-you cards and holiday greetings to various groups in the Schuylkill Valley school district community. Letters and cards were written to first responders at Northern Berks police, Bern Township police,



Operation Gratitude

Northern Berks EMT, Western Berks EMT, Leesport Fire Company, Greenfields Fire Company, Central Berks Fire Company and St. Joseph's Hospital emergency services, veterans at Veterans Making a Difference and Keystone Military Families, senior citizens at Berks Leisure Living, Berks Encore and Berks Heim, and Schuylkill Valley school district personnel. In addition, several 7th and 8th graders hand-delivered cards,



notes and fresh-baked cookies to the organizations as a way of saying thank you for all they do for our local community. At their stop at Keystone Military families in Shoemakersville, the students helped pack snacks for active duty soldiers and veterans. Thank you to **Miss Dana Carter**, special education teacher at the middle school, for making these opportunities possible for our students.



Holiday Helping Hands

On December 12, students and staff participated in "Ugly Christmas Sweater" day as part of the SVMS food drive.

During the holiday season, middle school students and staff adopted several SVMS families in need of a little extra help. Students brought in more than 1,000 nonperishable items for the school's holiday food drive, staff members bought presents, and money was donated to provide the families with holiday meals, including turkey, fresh fruit and homemade desserts.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Author Visit at SVMS

Prolific author of young adult books, **Mr. Jordan Sonnenblick**, of Easton, visited the middle school on November 15 for a full day of engaging presentations to all grades. The author of *Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie* and *The Secret Sheriff of Sixth Grade* talked with students about his own youth and becoming a writer. His presentations were warm, funny and inspiring. Mr. Sonnenblick also led students in a writing workshop and had the chance to autograph his portrait in the library, where **Mrs. Leanne Moyer**, learning support teacher and artist, is painting a detailed authors' mural on the wall. Special thanks to **Mrs. Emily Calaman**, middle school library specialist, who arranged for the author's visit, and to the middle school PTO, which funded the event.



Girls Soccer Team Gives Back

On September 24, several students from the "Persevering Panthers," the middle school girls soccer team, traveled to *Ian's Boots* in Pottstown to drop off 156 pairs of cleats and shoes collected by the team. *Ian's Boots*, named after a southeastern PA soccer player, **Ian Miller**, who died in a sledding accident at age 12, is an organization that collects sports and other shoes to donate to people in need.

When Ian passed away, his parents started the nonprofit based on a biblical message about perseverance found in his snow boots after his death. Besides learning about Ian's story and his love of the game of soccer, the girls unpacked, sorted and tagged shoes for redistribution.

On October 17, the team traveled to Berks Leisure Living in Leesport for a community service project. The players assisted with bingo, socialized with the residents, handed out harvest cards, sang songs and assisted with the center's pet program. Residents and players alike enjoyed their time together.

CHEERLEADING



The high school cheer team finished as runners-up in the co-ed division of the District III Championship, medaling for the first time in school history. The team also cheered in the PIAA Championship at Hershey on January 10, coming in 9th place and missed going to the semi-finals by just .6 points.

FALL SPORTS



FOOTBALL

Luke Ammarell – All County 1st Team Defensive Line, All County 2nd Team Tight End, All Division Lineman of the Year, All Division 1st Team Tight End, All Division 1st Team Defensive Line

Alex Gonzalez – All Division 1st Team Wide Receiver

Lisandro Gonzalez – All Division 2nd Team Defensive Line

Zach Heffner – All Division 2nd Team Kicker, All Division 2nd Team Punter

Nico Iaccarino – All Division 2nd Team Quarterback

Michael Knowles – All County 2nd Team Wide Receiver, All Division Receiver of the Year, All Division 1st Team Wide Receiver, All Division 1st Team Defensive Back

Tanner Mountz – All Division Honorable Mention Linebacker

Kyle Spotts – All Division Honorable Mention Defensive Back

Nathan Woods – All Division 1st Team Offensive Guard

GOLF

Luke Jozwiak – All Division Honorable Mention

Madison Ziska – All County and reached the PIAA Eastern Finals in golf.



Madison Ziska, golf team

GIRLS SOCCER

Zoe Gannon – All Division Honorable Mention

Sadie Goad – All County

Lily Isenberg – All Division Honorable Mention

Maddie Stichter – All County

Abbey White – All Division

BOYS SOCCER

Jacob Hoffman – All Division Honorable Mention

Joey Loose – All Division Honorable Mention

Brian Porter – All Division

Jayden Seymour – All Division Honorable Mention

Ryan Szymczyk – All Division



CROSS COUNTRY

Girls Cross-Country:

Averi Hidalgo – All Division, medaled at the District III meet and qualified for the PIAA State Championship.

Boys Cross-Country:

Luke Seymour – All County, medaled at the District III meet and qualified for the PIAA State Championship.

FIELD HOCKEY

Ashley Birmingham – All Division

Anna Kate Gwiazdowski – All Division

Abby Rea – All Division

Marlee Rickert – All Division Honorable Mention

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Mara Nagle – All Division Honorable Mention

Jillian Phillips – All Division





929 LAKESHORE DRIVE
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schuylkill valley
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Aquatics

Spring class information will be posted at <https://www.schuylkillvalley.org/Page/5873> in February 2020. Sessions begin in April and include small group lessons, private swim lessons upon availability of instructor, parent-tot classes, aqua exercise, lifeguard certification/recertification and open swimming. Please contact **Mrs. Michelle Rowles** at aquatics@schuylkillvalley.org with any questions.

The next two issues of the Schuylkill Valley School District Newsletter (Spring and Summer) will be available online ONLY at **www.schuylkillvalley.org**. If you would like to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please call the Administration Center at 610-916-0957.

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Every Drop Counts

The Future Medical Professionals of America club, advised by **Mrs. Kelly Musket** of the SVHS Fitness and Wellness Department, will hold one more blood drive this school year, on **March 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the high school**. The public is welcome to participate! Please contact Mrs. Musket at 610-916-5461, or kmusket@schuylkillvalley.org, to schedule an appointment to give blood between 2:45 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on March 12.

