

around the VALLEY

WINTER 2021



929 lakeshore drive
leesport PA 19533-8631

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

This Is How We Do It! Learning During a Pandemic



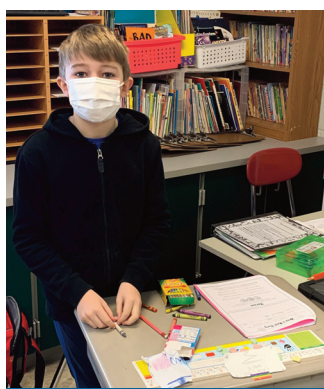
Outdoor learning with Mrs. Mountz



Mr. Beane's class made snowmen!



Mrs. Deren's Discovery class



Social distancing in class



Learning in the library

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SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

929 Lakeshore Drive
Leesport PA 19533-8631

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Mr. Michael T. Mitchell, Jr.
Superintendent

Dr. Sarah Yoder
High School Principal

Mrs. Melissa Kelchner
Assistant High School Principal

Dr. Joshua Kuehner
Middle School Principal

Mrs. Candice Kehres
Assistant Middle School Principal

Mrs. Courtney Maguire
Elementary School Principal

Mr. Jason Williams
Assistant Elementary School Principal

Mrs. Kate Costenbader
Supervisor of Special Education

Dr. Janet Heilman
Director of Pupil Services and Learning

Mr. Michael Billman
Director of Information Technology

Mrs. Changming Wang
Business Manager

Mr. Casey Blankenbiller
Director of Buildings and 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. Instructions to attend the meetings via Zoom or by phone are posted on the district's website.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

This newsletter is the official publication of the Schuylkill Valley School District. Submit news of school or community interest to editor Mrs. Anne Ostrowski at svdistrictnewsletter@gmail.com. Please include your name and phone number for verification.

Meet Mrs. Candice Kehres, Middle School Assistant Principal



The Schuylkill Valley family extends a warm welcome to **Mrs. Candice Kehres**, our new middle school assistant principal. A native of New Jersey, Mrs. Kehres and her family live in Bern Township. She and her husband, an SV Class of 1988 graduate, have two daughters who are SV students. She enjoys spending time with her children making memories, traveling to the Jersey shore in the summers and, this winter, is learning to ski! She also values helping students and families in need, and teaching her daughters the importance of giving back to the community.

An alumna of Bloomsburg University, Mrs. Kehres took graduate courses at Georgian Court University in New Jersey and completed her master's program and administrative program at Cabrini University. Before coming to Schuylkill Valley,

she worked in the Reading School District for 16 years as a middle school English and special education teacher, and in administration.

As assistant principal, Mrs. Kehres' goal is to support our teachers in the continued success of providing students with a positive and safe learning environment that promotes high achievement and academic excellence. "I am extremely grateful to be here!" she said. "I will always strive to guide our students to see their fullest potential and empower them to become successful members of our society." She looks forward to meeting all of our Panther families and being a positive contributor to our community. Best wishes, Mrs. Kehres!

This Is How We Do It! Learning During a Pandemic



Snowflakes from Mr Beane's Class



Music Class on Pajama Day!



SV Panther greeting students



I Can Read the Rainbow / EC

superintendent's **MESSAGE**



Dear Schuylkill Valley Community,

As we near the halfway point of an unprecedented school year, I believe it is appropriate to give thanks and recognition to all of the people who have worked extremely hard to continue providing high-quality instruction during the pandemic. Everyone in our community is going above and beyond any normal expectations to try to make this school year a successful and rewarding one.

First, I would like to thank the Board of School Directors. Our school board has spent a great deal of time and energy during the pandemic helping to guide the school community in a positive direction. Their knowledge, input, expertise and support have been extremely helpful in making all of the difficult decisions we had to make so far this year.

Secondly, our administrators have done an excellent job of adapting and thinking outside of the box during this unprecedented year. Countless hours, and sometimes days, have been spent on contact tracing for the positive COVID cases in our community. The team has spent an exorbitant amount of time and effort in developing creative ways to ensure the continued high-quality education for our students.

Next, our teachers and paraprofessionals have done exceptional work. They prepared for virtual, hybrid and in-person instruction. They've adapted to the different modalities of instruction by researching and learning different teaching strategies to engage our students in any learning environment, and they continue to meet the students where they are. They have done so without hesitation, and simply rolled their sleeves up and put in an inordinate amount of time to educate our students.

Our administrative professionals have had to change procedures with attendance and for parents dropping things off and picking things up at the buildings and in central office. They have come up with safe and efficient procedures to keep things running smoothly.

Our custodial staff had to change procedures and protocols to keep our buildings clean and safe. They have set up and arranged safety materials for social distancing in each of our buildings. Their work has been far from their norm during the pandemic and they have responded like champions.

Our cafeteria staff is another group who had to adapt and do more than expected during this pandemic. They had to change safety and food preparation procedures to make sure that students were able to get their breakfast and lunch as they are accustomed. They've done an excellent job adapting with the new safety protocols.

Our coaches and club advisors had to adapt from their normal way of doing business. They've been extremely successful in doing so. We played our entire fall season and are well on our way to finishing the winter season as well. The coaches and advisors' emphasis on safety protocols have enabled our students and athletes to compete and participate in the activities that they love.

Our bus and van drivers had to update their procedures, social distance students, and enforce face coverings on the busses. They have kept the busses clean and have done a great job adapting to the pandemic and helping our students remain safe.

The community, parental support and communication has been outstanding. Obviously, people are going to have varying opinions and feelings about all the moving parts this pandemic has created – fear of the virus spreading, virtual learning, quarantining and enforcing face coverings. However, our community has remained respectful, raising their concerns and asking questions in a manner that has kept us working together for the greater good. I greatly appreciate the honest, two-way communication that our school community has exhibited during these last few months.

Finally, I want to thank our outstanding student body. They have rolled with the punches and have done an excellent job of following all of our rules, both old and new. As always, they have been respectful and continue doing things the right way, which enables us to properly operate under the rules and guidelines associated with COVID.

Schuylkill Valley is a special place with special people in it. I am grateful to serve as the leader of this outstanding school district. Thank you all for making this such an amazing school community to be a part of and to lead.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael T. Mitchell, Jr.
Superintendent

This Is How We Do It! Learning During a Pandemic



Pride of the Valley Class of 2020 Hall of Fame

The Pride of Schuylkill Valley committee is pleased to announce the members of the 2020 Hall of Fame:

Ms. Katie Campbell

Ms. Katie Heffner

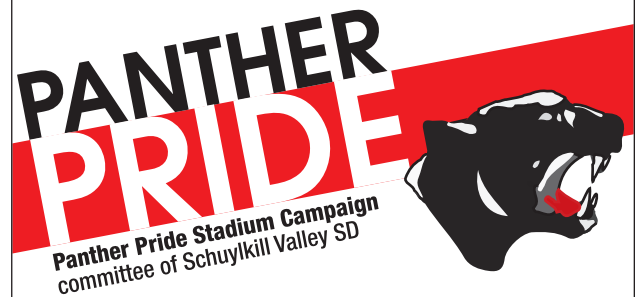
Mr. Phil Krauss

Miss Kelsi Lykens

Ms. Kai Fawn Miller

Mr. Brian Pfennig

May 30, 2021 is the deadline for nominations to the 2021 Pride of Schuylkill Valley Wall of Fame. Individuals may be nominated for consideration by filling out and submitting the form found at this link: <http://bit.ly/3s3mlxU> Nominations may also be submitted via email to **Miss Stephanie Deibler**, Athletic Director, at sdeibler@schuylkillvalley.org or via fax to 610-916-0961.



Looking for Volunteers

The Panther Pride Stadium Committee is seeking interested volunteers to join. Prospective members should be a resident of the district with a desire to work together with the Board of Directors and the local community to see projects completed and funds raised for future stadium projects. For more information, please contact **Mrs. Nicoleen Kleffel** at kleffel@schuylkillvalley.org or **Mr. Terry McKechnie** at tamckechnie@comcast.net

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

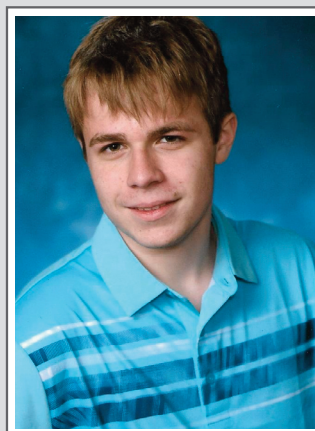
Class of 2020 Valedictorian and Salutatorian

Despite the very different circumstances of a high school graduation during the Covid-19 shutdown last year, Schuylkill Valley proudly celebrated the achievements of its valedictorian and salutatorian for the class of 2020.

Jenna Stoudt, daughter of Joseph and Leanna Stoudt of Leesport, was the valedictorian. As an undergraduate, Jenna participated in the National Honor Society, Leo Club, SV Ambassadors, Science Olympiad and Student Council. Outside of school, she was a Level 10 competitive gymnast at Berks Gymnastics Academy and volunteered at the Reading Health Rehabilitation



**Valedictorian
Jenna Stoudt**



**Salutatorian
Austin Witinski**

Hospital every week. She is now studying Medical Diagnostics and Spanish for Healthcare at the University of Delaware with plans to attend medical school in the future.

Salutatorian **Austin Witinski**, the son of Stan and Lori Witinski of Leesport, is currently studying Electro-Magnetic Engineering at Penn State University, where he is a member of the leadership-oriented Cohen-Hammel Fellowship Program. At SV, Austin competed on the tennis team, robotics team (captain senior year) and Science Olympiad, and participated in Panthers-On-Parade musicals, fall plays and chorus/Valley Voices select choir.

National Merit Scholarship



Aiden Gensure

Senior Aiden Gensure has been named a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist based on his PSAT score, which was among the top 1% in the U.S. Aiden, the son of Joseph Gensure and Lynn Longenecker, is a member of the National Honor Society Executive Board, the World Affairs Club and the Leo Club, competes in Academic Challenge, Mock Trial, Science Olympiad, cross country (team captain) and track and field, and has served as a Schuylkill Valley Ambassador and an SV Outdoor Education Camp Counselor. He will compete for a National Merit Scholarship in the spring.

Photo courtesy of Purdon Photography

High School Students of the Month

The following students, recognized by the Bern Township Lions Club and Central Berks Lions Club, were chosen as Students of the Month from September, 2020 through January, 2021. These students maintain at least a 3.25 GPA and are involved in co-curricular activities at the high school.

September – **Addison Angstadt** and **Mara Nagle**

October – **Jillian Phillips** and **Luke Seymour**

November – **Aidan Gensure** and **Averi Hidalgo**

December – **Lily Dang** and **Sarah Gilbert**

January – **Tanner Mountz** and **Anna Gwiazdowski**

PYEA's Sweet Deliveries

Members of the high school's PYEA (Pennsylvania Youth Education Association) sweetened the community with their deliveries of Santa Sweets to residents on December 19. For a \$5 donation to Four Diamonds Pediatric Cancer Foundation, a bag of candy was delivered to anyone living in the district. All of the candy was donated and PYEA members filled 166 bags, raising a total of \$1,005. All leftover candy was used to fill 33 smaller bags given to high school guidance counselors to use as stocking stuffers for their SV Angel tags. The students who participated were:

Addison Angstadt

Vlad Caba

Lily Crowell

Katie Eisenhofer

Sarah Gilbert

Anna Gwiazdowski

Jordan Houck

Madison Houck

Jordan Shekalus

Samantha Stewart

Marissa Zocco

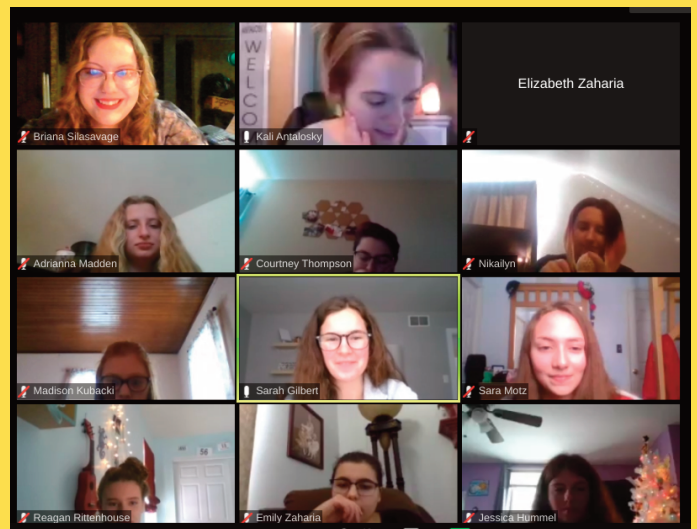
Special thanks to **Mr. Matt Cullen**, technology and engineering education teacher, for making the insert cards for the bags, and to **Mr. and Mrs. Chillot**, math and science teachers, respectively, for advising the PYEA.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Literary Magazine Club

The high school's Literary Magazine Club held its winter meeting via Zoom in December to share student writing, artwork and photography. The club is advised by **Miss Kali Antallosky**, high school English teacher.



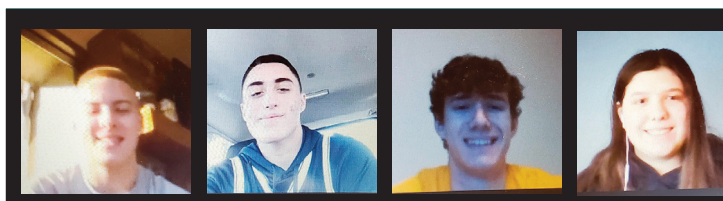
Middle School Students of the Month

These students demonstrated one or more of the following behavior criteria of personal responsibility, respect, integrity, dedication, and/or excellence at the middle school in the months of October, November and December.

OCTOBER

Cameron Alvarez	Kiana Newpher	Andrew Foscone	Abigail Paino	Mackenzie Bachman
Jeremiah Caban	Abigail Paino	Anthony Foscone	Cerina Readinger	Kameron Boyer
Paige Chase	Taryn Ripple	James Fretz	Derian Readinger	Dominic Fasig
Summer DiFatta	Marcus Rodriguez	Lukas Hahn	Leiland Wisniewski	Rowan Gilmer
Cesiley Evans	Brady Ruth	Tara Hirschtritt	Mikayla Scolastico	Addison Kehres
Simón Faust	Lily Stubblebine	Ellie Kehres	Madison Sensenig	Mason Leh
Gabriel Gigliotti	Mabel Walborn	Andrew Kerper	Kayla Shaw	Madeline Mills
Lilah Gilmore	Trent Wargo	Katlin Kier	Connor Stamm	Riley Nolt
Camdyn Gunter	Alessandra Zampelli	Dustin Lerch	Erin Walsh	Elyssa Sellers
Samantha Hassler	NOVEMBER	Owen Machmer	Autumn Watson	Madison Shupp
David Johnson	Brooke Angstadt	Elias Maeder	Ryleigh Weidner	Sebastian Solis
Landyn Keglovits	Tyler Carter	Madison Miller	Mallory Yoder	Andrew Witman
Salinger Kehs-Rossi	Lukis Delong	Nick Moyer	DECEMBER	Ella Yaretts
Dominic Leone	Michael Gauby	Victoria Ortiz	Nathan Anderson	

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



FBLA Students Rise to the Challenge

Several members of the high school's chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) placed in the Regional Leadership Conference, held virtually between December 14 and January 6. All of the winners will be eligible to compete at the state conference in the spring, and the top five winners will advance to the national competition. It's great to know that our future business leaders, advised by **Mrs. Patricia Lacey**, business teacher, are being developed right here in Schuylkill Valley!

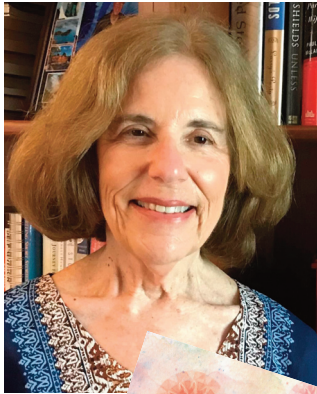
Congratulations to:

Max Beras-Coico – 1st place, Personal Finance
Brenden Bernhart – 4th place, Political Science
Lindsey Giacobello – 1st place, Accounting I



Michael Herman – 1st place, Marketing
Kaylin Loose – 1st place, Computer Problem Solving
Luke Braucher, Joey Loose and **Nate Schaeffer** (Team) – 1st place, Management Information Systems.

EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT



Retired Teacher Publishes Anthology

Mrs. Linda Getz, a retired Schuylkill Valley middle school teacher, found the time during the Covid-19 shutdown to realize a life-long dream – the publication of her new book. Recently, she explained her process, which drove the creation of her anthology of short stories titled *Mood Swings*:

If there's an upside to the COVID-19 pandemic, it's that it has afforded many of us the time to complete some long-neglected household tasks. One day last summer, I decided to clean out my file cabinet and I discovered some fiction stories I had written just before and after my retirement in 2004. I hadn't looked at the stories for a while, so I started to read them one by one. By the time I finished reading all of them, I decided some were really quite good and deserved another round of revising and editing. When I finally finished "tweaking" them, I chose a dozen of my favorites to publish as a collection.

I decided to self-publish my book for three reasons. First and foremost, I had complete creative control over the content, the format and the cover art. Secondly, only a very small percentage of manuscripts submitted to a publisher are accepted for publication. Furthermore, if you are among the fortunate few to be published via the traditional route, it can take months, even years, until your work is finally in print. Finally, a self-published author retains complete rights to her book instead of allowing a publishing house to assume ownership.

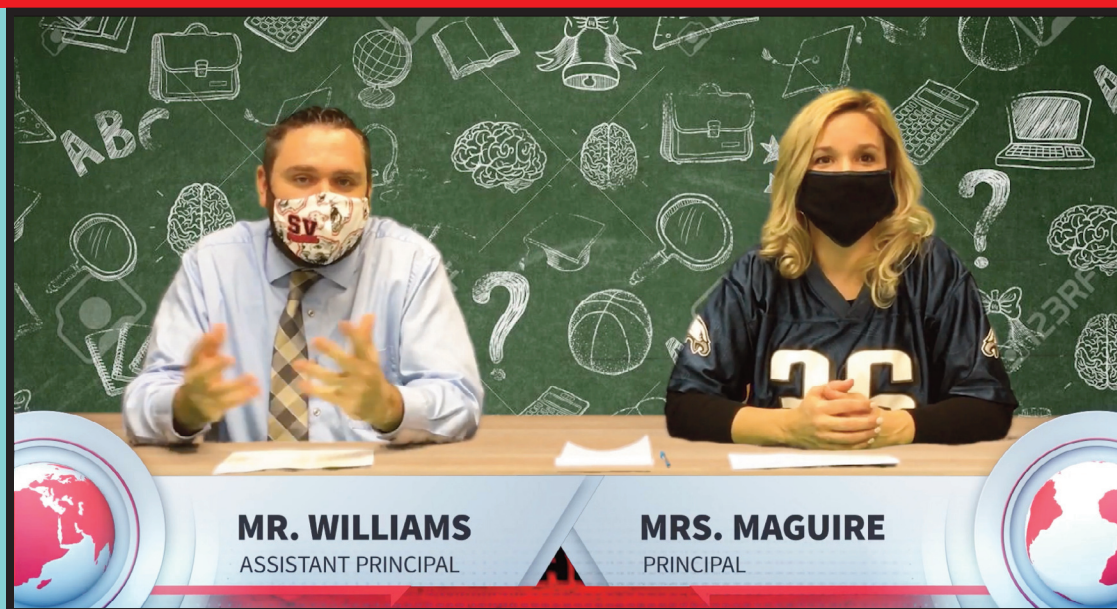
The title of my book, "Mood Swings: A Short Story Collection," reflects the variety of characters and situations readers will encounter. Some people wonder where I find my ideas. My stories come from my imagination, but they may be inspired by places I've visited, people I've known or simply observed, experiences I've had, a news article I've read, or even a snippet of a conversation.

*My book could not have been published without the expertise and encouragement of **Mrs. Cheryl Geiger Sheeler**. Mrs. Sheeler designed the beautiful front and back covers, arranged the text into an attractive, easy-to-read format, and helped me to list my book for sale on Amazon. She was also a helpful critic when I needed feedback about a story, and remains a cherished friend.*

If you have ever thought about being a writer, now might be the perfect time to try. Keep a journal of your experiences, thoughts, and observations. Read some books about the type of writing you would like to do. There are lots of resources available in bookstores or at your local library to help you get started. You might even consider taking an online writing course. The most important advice I can offer is to follow the writing process: Pre-write, write, revise, edit and then publish! And never give up.

*(Linda Susanne Getz's book *Mood Swings: A Short Story Collection* is available in paperback and Kindle format at Amazon.com. It contains mature themes and is not intended for children under the age of 18.)*

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



MR. WILLIAMS
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

MRS. MAGUIRE
PRINCIPAL

“Paws”itive News

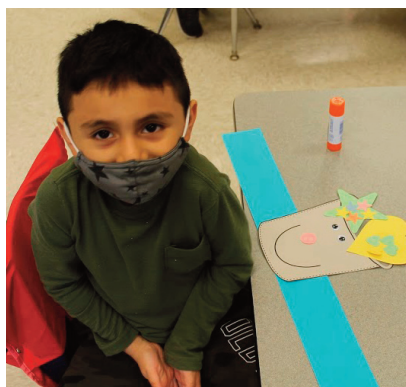
Now for some “Paws’itive News! **Mrs. Courtney Maguire**, elementary school principal, **Mr. Jason Williams**, assistant elementary school principal, and **Mr. Dan Shuman**, elementary instruction and technology integration coach, recently started a weekly Friday broadcast to connect with students,

both in-school and virtually, and notify them of activities around the district. In addition, the trio created an elementary school podcast for parents, which includes information and updates as we continue to navigate the Covid-19 era of education.

Parents can find the link to the podcast here:
<https://anchor.fm/pawsitivepantherpodcast>

World Kindness Day

In December, the students in **Miss Caitlin Robinson’s** Kindergarten class celebrated World Kindness Day with a slate of activities. After Miss Robinson read the book “Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?” the students brainstormed different ways to be a kind bucket filler or an unkind bucket dipper. Each student then made a goal and pledged how he or she were going to be a bucket filler at school. Afterwards, students made bucket filler bracelets and headbands, displaying their promises to be kind. To always remember to be kind, Miss Robinson took each student’s photo showing that they are the “I” in KIND!



GOLF

Cedrick Evans – Honorable Mention

Tyler Fronina – Honorable Mention

Daymond Heister – Honorable Mention



Luke Seymour

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Luke Seymour – All-Berks

Aidan Gensure – All-Division II

GIRLS' SOCCER

Tori Real – All-Division III

Emily Starr – All-Division III

Abigayle White – All-Division III

Zoe Gannon – Honorable Mention

Destiny Giannotti – Honorable Mention

Ava Kichline – Honorable Mention

BOYS' SOCCER

Joseph Loose – All-Division III

Ryan Szymczyk – All-Division III

Timothy Horrell – Honorable Mention

Landen Jamison – Honorable Mention

Caleb Miller – Honorable Mention

Jayden Seymour – Honorable Mention

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Mara Nagle – All-Division II

Jillian Phillips – Honorable Mention

Allison Wolf – Honorable Mention

FALL + WINTERSPORTS

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY



Averi Hidalgo – All-Division II

FOOTBALL

Nathan Woods – All-Berks Defense Second Team; Honorable Mention, Guard

Drew Campbell – Honorable Mention, Quarterback and Linebacker

Zach Heffner – Honorable Mention, Placekicker and Punter

Nate Schaeffer – Honorable Mention, Wide Receiver

Kyle Spotts – Honorable Mention, Back

James Stelluti – Honorable Mention, Lineman

Chanz Stevens – Honorable Mention, Running Back



Nathan Woods



BOYS' BASKETBALL

As of mid-February, the boys basketball team was 10-6 for the season and on the bubble for qualifying for both the Berks and District III Playoffs. The Panthers, coached by **Mr. Taylor Grim**, used a balanced attack on offense this season and the defense is holding opponents to under 50 points per game. In lieu of captains this year, the team was led by varying aged athletes in a group called leadership council. The seven seniors on the team have shared the leadership responsibilities.

FALL+WINTERSPORTS



GIRLS' BASKETBALL

The 2020-2021 girls' basketball team worked tremendously hard, had a lot of fun and played well together during difficult circumstances. The team is led by senior **Abbey White** and junior captains **Sarah Gilbert**, **Lekaiah Solomon** and **Madison Ziska**. **Mr. Jason Bagenstose** is the coach.



schuylkill valley
SCHOOL DISTRICT



Students in **Mrs. Meghan O'Donnell's** kindergarten class created Valentine's Day Lovebugs to celebrate the holiday.

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.

Warming Hearts

The Schuylkill Valley Junior Honor Society (SVJHS) launched a campaign to send 1,000 virtual Valentines to children being treated at St. Jude's Children's Hospital. All middle school students were encouraged to participate. By February 11th, the students had exceeded their goal by sending more than 1,700 Valentine's Day greetings! The SVJHS is advised by **Mrs. Dana Heins**, 8th grade social studies teacher.