

around the VALLEY

WINTER 2022



929 lakeshore drive
leesport PA 19533-8631

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Pride of Schuylkill Valley Awards



SV Wall of Fame inductees,

left to right:
Dr. Katie Campbell,
Mr. Phil Krause,
Ms. Kai Miller,
Mrs. Allyson McKechnie,
Mr. Terry McKechnie,
Dr. Brian Pfennig.
(Not Pictured:
Miss Kelsi Lykens)

On January 15, Schuylkill Valley honored the achievements of seven individuals by presenting them with the Pride of SV Award. The 2020 Wall of Fame inductees are:

Class president and salutatorian of the Schuylkill Valley Class of 2010, **Dr. Katie Campbell** participated in Academic Challenge, National Honor Society, Panthers-on-Parade, *Pantherette*, PYEA, Science Olympiad and World Language Club. She is a 2014 graduate of Pennsylvania State University Schreyer Honors College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry. In

2018, she graduated with a doctorate in Molecular Cell Biology from Washington University.

Katie served on the Associate Member Council for the American Association for Cancer Research from 2020-2022 and was awarded the Cancer Research Institute Irvington Fellowship in 2020 to support postdoctoral research in melanoma and immunogenomics. Dr. Campbell is recognized by the Cancer Research Institute, UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center, and Parker Institute for Cancer Immunotherapy for research in cancer immunology and global COVID 19 immune responses.

IN THIS ISSUE:

2

Superintendent's
Message |
New Board
Member |
Thanks to Dr.
Hottenstein

3

Pride of
Schuylkill
Valley Awards
continued

4

Elementary
School: Holiday
Recap and
#PanthersRead

5

Middle School:
Colonial
Williamsburg
and Leesport
Lesson |
Alumni
Spotlight

6

High School
News | Spring
Musical:
Buy Tickets! |
Panther Profiles
Podcast

7

Winter Sports
+ Fall All
County Recap

8

Join our
SVSD Team!

SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

929 Lakeshore Drive
Leesport PA 19533-8631

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Dr. Cathy L. Taschner
Superintendent

Dr. Janet C. Heilman
Assistant Superintendent

Mrs. Jenny Rexrode
High School Principal

Ms. Lacey Smey
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

Dr. Sue Miller
Interim Director of Pupil Services

Mr. Michael Billman
Director of Information Technology

Mr. John Reedy
Director of Business Mgmt. & Operations

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. David E. Moll, President
Mr. Paul L. Bendigo, Vice- President
Mrs. Linda R. Lash, Secretary
Mr. Robert M. Dempsey
Mrs. Nicoleen M. Kleffel
Mr. George H. Mertz III
Mr. G. Dane Miller
Mr. Bryan J. O'Donnell
Mr. Alfonso F. Rossi

BOARD MEETINGS

Committees generally meet the third Monday of the month at 6:30p.m. Board meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of the month at 7p.m. in the high school auditorium. The public may view the live feed of the meeting by going to our Youtube Channel.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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

superintendent's MESSAGE

Dear Parents, Staff
and Schuylkill Valley Community,

During these past few months at Schuylkill Valley, our students and staff have continued to do many amazing things which you will read about in this issue of *Around the Valley*. While we take great pride in sharing these moments with you, we also recognize that the success of our District is intricately intertwined with the support we receive from our families and community members. It's my hope that this newsletter will not only highlight the excellent education that Schuylkill



Valley provides to students, but that it will also inspire those who may not yet have had the opportunity, to join us at an athletic contest, a concert, or one of our many events which will occur this spring.

With Enthusiasm and Gratitude,

Dr. Cathy Taschner



Meet Mr. Bryan O'Donnell, New Board Member

Mr. Bryan O'Donnell is the newest member of the SV Board of Directors. Mr. O'Donnell is a sales manager for an exterior company and prior to his current employment, he spent several years in the restaurant industry. He and his wife **Dr. Shannon O'Donnell**, an SV graduate, reside in Ontelaunee Township with their twin five-year-old sons and two-year-old daughter. Mr. O'Donnell feels honored to have the opportunity to serve as a leader and representative of the community and as an advocate for the students and the school district.

Thank You!

We would like to acknowledge and thank **Dr. Jordan Hottenstein, DDS**, Central Berks Dental Center, Leesport, for donating his time and services to the children in the Schuylkill Valley School District. Pennsylvania requires dental exams at different grade intervals, and Dr. Hottenstein provides free exams at our three schools for children who do not have a regular dentist. We appreciate your generosity!

Submit news of school or community interest to editor **Ms. Danielle Sabulsky** at dsabulsky@schuylkillvalley.org. Please include your name and phone number for verification.

Pride of Schuylkill Valley Awards continued

Mr. Phil Krause was the president of the Schuylkill Valley Class of 1966 and a District III and PIAA State Track & Field Champion in the Triple Jump that set a new State record. In 1965, he placed first in the District III Long Jump, first in the District III 880 relay, second in the PIAA State 880 relay and fourth in the PIAA State Long Jump. He is a 1970 graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a B.A. in liberal arts and M.Ed. in education. Phil worked at Bloomsburg State College, ultimately as director of Admissions, then assistant to the vice president for Academic Affairs. He had faculty rank of assistant professor with Faculty Emeritus status.

As a licensed nursing home administrator for 30 years, Phil developed, owned, and operated nursing and personal care homes across PA. Residing in Lebanon, he is the husband of Kim Krause, father to Katie and Kelly, and grandfather of Emrie and Asher.

A graduate of the Schuylkill Valley Class of 2010, **Miss Kelsi Lykens** was involved in Chorus, National Honor Society, PYEA, SODAA, Student Council, Valley Voices, Strength and Conditioning and World Language Club. Miss Lykens participated in field hockey, girls' basketball and track & field for four years, and girls' soccer for one year. She was named the Schuylkill Valley Outstanding Senior Athlete for 2010.

Kelsi is a 2014 graduate of West Chester University with a bachelor's degree in Professional Studies and a minor in Health and Professional Education. She played intercollegiate field hockey where she won back-to-back Division II National Champions in 2011 and 2012, was named the 2013 Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Athlete of the Year, and NCAA Division II First-Team All-American in 2012 and 2013.

Miss Lykens spearheaded the inaugural NCAA Division II field hockey program at the University of New Haven in January 2017. In just four seasons, she helped New Haven field hockey reach the Northeast-10 semi-finals in 2021.

Mrs. Allyson McKechnie (2019 Inductee) 1977 Schuylkill Valley graduate was involved in Marching Band (drill team), Vallette staff, and Pantherette staff. She played

girls' basketball for four years under legendary coach, Jessie Rowe, leading the team to multiple division championships and playing in the BCIAA County Championship game in 1976 and 1977. She also played field hockey, ran cross-country and was a member of the track & field team.

Allyson has been coaching for SVSD since 1985. In 1988, she became the head girls' track & field coach with her husband, Terry, serving as her assistant coach. Since 1994, "T" and "A" have been the co-head coaches for the track & field team. She is also the head cross-country coach. In track & field, she has coached 18 Individual PIAA State Champions including at least one State Champion from 2010–2018. Allyson and Terry were named the Pennsylvania Boys Track & Field Coaches of the year in 2018 by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA). They are the only Berks County coaches to receive this award.

Mr. Terry McKechnie (2019 Inductee) graduated from Reading High School in 1971 where he played football as an All-Berks Cornerback and was an outstanding sprinter on the track & field team. As a top Master's Track & Field athlete, he placed in many championship meets.

For 48 years, Mr. McKechnie was a structural designer for Gilbert Associates, working on designs for nuclear, fossil fuel and hydro power plants. He began coaching as the head SV boys' volleyball coach in 1985, leading the team to the club county championship. In 1988, Mr. McKechnie became the assistant track & field coach with his wife, Allyson. Since 1994, "T" and "A" have been co-head track & field coaches. Terry is also the assistant HS cross-country coach. During his tenure, three Schuylkill Valley PIAA state champions held the state record; he coached 74 Individual District III Champions and four District III record holders. He's coached eight BCIAA individual record holders and numerous BCIAA champions.

Schuylkill Valley Class of 1997 graduate, **Ms. Kai Fawn Miller** was involved as an originating reporter for *Voice*, co-editor of the *Pantherette*, FBLA vice-president, National Honor Society, Panthers-on-Parade, soccer, swimming, tennis, Band, Vallette,

Environmental Club and Academic Challenge. A graduate of the University of Houston with a B.A. in Communications, Kai also earned an M.S. in Conflict Resolution at George Mason University and Boston University's School of Communications.

Ms. Miller was a first responder to the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy in 2003, earning four commendations from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). She served as Chief of Staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Information and Technology, establishing the organization's first centralized communications organization and communications strategy.

Ms. Miller is co-owner of Emerald One, LLC, an Executive Leadership, Technology and Communications consultancy. In addition, Kai is also a coach for SV Youth Soccer and SV Girls on the Run.

Dr. Brian W. Pfennig was the salutatorian of the Schuylkill Valley Class of 1984, where he participated in Band, Marching Band, Jazz Band, Pep Band, Panthers-On-Parade Pit Orchestra, Brass Ensemble, Chorus, Mixed Ensemble, National Honor Society and he was the SV Baseball team statistician.

Dr. Pfennig graduated from Albright College in 1988 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry as a Jacob Albright Scholar. In 1992, he earned a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Princeton University with a General Electric Graduate Fellowship.

Brian had a lengthy career as a college professor at Franklin & Marshall College, Haverford College, Vassar College, and Ursinus College. Dr. Pfennig published a textbook entitled *Principles of Inorganic Chemistry* in 2015 with a second edition in 2021. Dr. Pfennig has authored 30 articles in peer-reviewed chemical journals.

May 30, 2022 is the deadline for the 2022 Pride of Schuylkill Valley Wall of Fame nominations. Individuals may be nominated for consideration by filling out and submitting the form found at this link: <https://bit.ly/3GYaOrM>. Nominations may also be submitted via email to Miss Stephanie Deibler, Athletic Director, at sdeibler@schuylkillvalley.org or via fax to 610- 916-0961.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Holiday Activities

During the month of December, elementary students enjoyed holiday parties and activities! Santa stopped by for a visit, fourth graders sang Christmas carols in the halls, and students also had Grinch Day. On February 14, students celebrated Valentine's Day by making arts and crafts and exchanging Valentine's Day cards. Thank you to the elementary staff and parent volunteers for organizing these festivities for our students!



#PanthersRead

The #PanthersRead program aims to build a community of readers at Schuylkill Valley Elementary School. Everyone at SVES reads the same book together and participates in many exciting projects related to the book over a six-week period. The 2022 #PanthersRead book is *Fenway & Hattie* by Victoria J. Coe.

Some of the program activities included decorating the hallways to look like doghouses, staff and students sharing photos of their own pets, and a virtual read aloud with author Victoria J. Coe.

A Lesson on Leesport

Fifth and sixth grade students enjoyed a lesson about the heritage of our local community. Students learned about the historical background of the Leesport area and the Leesport Lock House in particular. Leesport Lock House Foundation curator, **Mr. Ryan Strause**, showed the students artifacts from the Lock House and explained the significance and story behind each piece. With the help of Leesport Lock House Foundation President, **Mrs. Elaine Strause**, Leesport Lock House Foundation volunteer, **Mrs. Vernie Noecker**, and SVSD School Board President, **Mr. David Moll**, Mr. Strause walked the students through the process of making their own piece of traditional PA redware pottery.



Thank you to Mr. Ryan Strause, Mrs. Elaine Strause, Mrs. Vernie Noecker, Mr. David Moll, and middle school art teacher, Mrs. Ronda Seymour, for developing this hands-on program for our students!



MIDDLESCHOOL

Holiday in Colonial Williamsburg



Fifth grade students had their annual Colonial Williamsburg event on December 20. Students acted as tour guides and walked the guests down Nicolson, the Duke of Gloucester, and Colonial Streets. Guests visited 24 shops and attractions where a speaker/shopkeeper provided guests with more information about the site. Guests got to enjoy music and watch dancers perform the Virginia Reel. Students created centerpieces for the event, poinsettia decorations, colonial tri-corner hats, and decorated the Christmas tree with ornaments and strung cranberries and popcorn.



ALUMNISPOTLIGHT



Class of 2005 graduate **Ron DiBenedetto** is the proud owner of Devour Catering, a catering company that aims to build and create custom experiences for each of their clients. Prior to opening Devour Catering, Ron worked for Boscov's Catering, multiple full-service restaurants, was the restaurant and banquet manager at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Reading, and managed different country clubs and sports complexes. After several years of success offering full service and drop-off catering, Devour Catering now has two concession stands at the Santander Arena and is one of six preferred caterers of the Reading Public Museum.

"We are a one stop shop," said Ron. "We service all of Pennsylvania and travel to New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. We cater in all types of environments from barns, backyards, catering halls, and the beach."

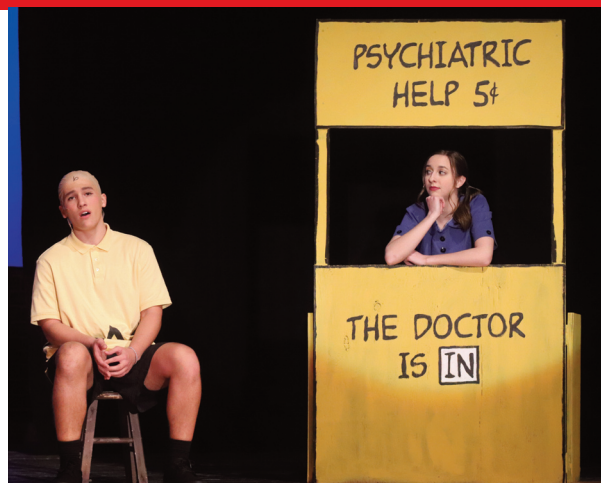
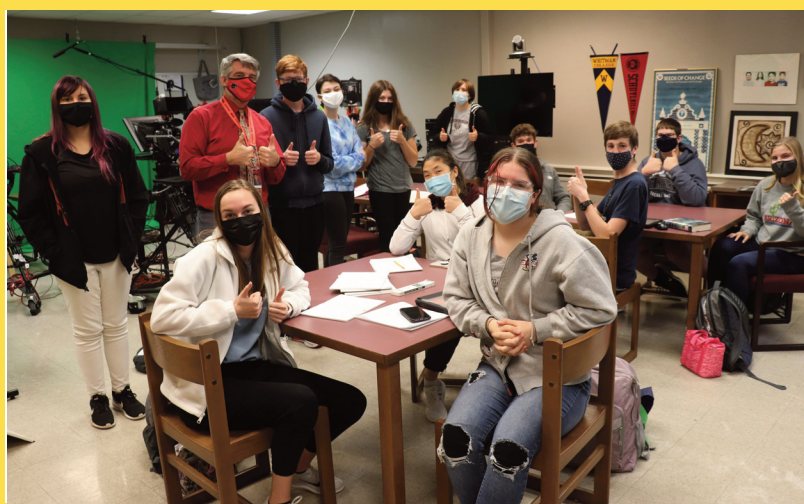
You can find Devour Catering on Facebook at "Devour Catering and Event Design," visit their website www.devourevents.com, or call 610-698-1261.

ALUMNI – If you know a former student who would like to receive emailed copies of the SV District newsletter, please send their email address to dsabulsky@schuylkillvalley.org.

HIGH SCHOOL

Academic Challenge

The SVHS Academic Challenge team had a rewarding 2021-2022 season. Led by Academic Challenge Advisor **Mr. Tod Witman**, the Panthers ended the regular season with a record of 3-1 with wins over Governor Mifflin, Twin Valley, and Reading, and a one-point loss to Fleetwood. The team was ranked third in the county and made it to the semi-finals in the county playoffs. Congrats, students!



“You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown”

The Schuylkill Valley Music Department presented the musical, “You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown,” directed by **Mrs. Kim Makosch**, SVMS music instructor, on January 14 and 15. Based on the Peanuts Comic Strip by Charles Schulz, the musical comedy features the entire Peanuts gang in brief vignettes that span from Valentine’s Day to Beethoven Day. Sophomore **Nathan Searfoss** played the male lead, Charlie Brown, and senior **Mara Nagle** played the female lead, Lucy van Pelt.



Panther Profiles

Check out the brand-new official podcast of the Schuylkill Valley School District, Panther Profiles. Join **Ms. Danielle Sabulsky**, Digital Content and Marketing Specialist, every week as she interviews students and staff about their accomplishments in and out of the classroom. You can find the podcast here: <https://bit.ly/3L48rpN>.

PANTHERS-ON-PARADE

2022

The SpongeBob Musical

The spring Panthers-On-Parade musical production will be “The SpongeBob Musical,” directed by **Mrs. Kim Makosch**. Performances will take place on Friday, April 1, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., and Saturday, April 2, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium.

Tickets are on sale now. General admission price is \$12.00; price for senior citizens (62 years of age or older) and students is \$9.00. Tickets are on a first come/first-served basis and are not refundable. To purchase tickets, please visit svhsa.booktix.com or scan the QR code.



Girls' Basketball

The high school girls' basketball team, coached by **Mr. Jason Bagenstose**, finished the regular season with a record of 20-1, with an 11-0 league record and the first division title since 2008. The Panthers hosted the first-round of BCIAA county playoffs against Reading High and lost 33-43. The team qualified for the PIAA District III playoffs as the #4 seed.



WINTERSPORTS

Cheerleading

The high school cheer team finished in tenth place at the District III Championships in December qualifying them for the PIAA Competitive Spirit Championships in Hershey. The team placed fifth in the PIAA Championships Semi-Finals for the first time in school history.

The Panthers competed in the 2022 ACDA Reach the Beach Ocean City Showdown in Ocean City, Maryland on February 12 and 13. The team won the National Championship in the Small Varsity Division, took home the overall School Division Championship, and won overall high score!



Swimming

The Schuylkill Valley and Muhlenberg swim teams hosted their annual "Coaches vs. Cancer" swim meet on February 1. This meet has been an ongoing tradition between the two schools to raise money and awareness for a variety of causes.

This year the teams held a t-shirt fundraiser and donated all the proceeds to SVHS junior, **Bailey Unterkofler**, who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in December 2021. Both the Schuylkill Valley and Muhlenberg swim teams were able to raise \$2,800 for Bailey!

Fall: Boys Cross-Country

Luke Seymour – Male Cross-Country Athlete of the Year, All County






929 LAKESHORE DRIVE
LEESPORT PA 19533-8631



schuylkill valley
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Around the Valley, Schuylkill Valley School District's 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.

I want to learn more about...

 Athletics

 Title IX

 **HR/Careers**

Join our team!

Check out all job openings online at www.schuylkillvalley.org by clicking on the "HR/Careers" link on the left side of the page. Current openings include positions in Food Services, Buildings and Grounds, and more.

NONPROFIT ORG
PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Reading, PA
Permit No. 208