



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Thursday, September 24, 2015

ARBOR TEACHER RACHEL SULLIVAN BUILDS HOME FOR SANDY VICTIM

Arbor teacher Rachel Sullivan spent her summer at the beach, but she wasn't relaxing under the sun with a good book. Instead, Ms. Sullivan was hard at work with Habitat for Humanity, helping to build a Monmouth County house to replace one destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. The homeowners, a widowed grandmother and her teenage granddaughter, had been living in a one-bedroom apartment since the storm. Habitat built the house and finished the landscaping and Ms. Sullivan also helped furnish and decorate each room in partnership with Warrick Dunn Charities "Homes for the Holidays" program for single parent families. The family moved into the home just in time for back to school!

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Piscataway Township Schools opened its doors this year to over 7200 students in grades Pre-K – 12. Enrollment remains consistent. While the Class of 2016 currently stands at 560 students, the Class of 2028 -- our new Kindergarten class -- welcomed 545 students into the district. Every school welcomed their students under a banner that introduced this year's theme: *You...I...We Inspire*. We wish each of our students a year filled with finding inspiration in their work and in their friendships, and that they in turn, will be an inspiration to others.

WHITE HOUSE RECOGNIZES PISCATAWAY SCHOOLS FOR HISPANIC OUTREACH AND ACHIEVEMENT

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics has named Piscataway Township Schools' Hispanic Outreach Program a "Bright Spot in Hispanic Education." Piscataway's program was one of only 230 nationwide to achieve this honor. The announcement was made by Alejandra Ceja, Executive Director of the Initiative on September 15, 2015 at the launch of Hispanic Heritage Month and in honor of the Initiative's 25th anniversary in Washington, D.C. "There has been notable progress in Hispanic educational achievement, and it is due to the efforts of these Bright Spots in Hispanic Education, programs and organizations working throughout the country to help Hispanic students reach their full potential," said Ceja. Piscataway's program, which covers students from preschool through high school and includes outreach to parents as well as students, is included in the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics' Bright Spots in Hispanic Education National Online Catalog. It can be found online at www.ed.gov/hispanicinitiative.

PHS STUDENTS DISCOVER NEW DNA SEQUENCES

Twenty-six Piscataway High School students took part in a year-long research project at The *Waksman Student Scholars Program (WSSP)* at Rutgers University that yielded important results. The students focused on the DNA sequence analyses of genes isolated from a model organism. These DNA sequences had never been analyzed before and these findings could be of great interest to other scientists. The findings can be published on GenBank, the international repository of all known DNA sequences. Under the guidance of PHS teachers Dr. Craig Lollin and Ms. Lesley Wilson, the students purified and analyzed 38 DNA fragments, and 19 of these are suitable for publication on the NCBI DNA sequence database. Congratulations to our students and teachers!

PHS SENIOR BRIAN PENG NAMED NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALIST

PHS Senior Brian J. Peng has been named a National Merit Semifinalist in the 61st annual National Merit Scholarship program. About 1.5 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2016 National Merit Program by taking the 2014 PSAT, which served as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest scoring entrants in each state. Brian will continue in the competition for some 7,400 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$32 million that will be offered next spring. About 90 percent of the semifinalists are expected to attain finalist standing, and about half of the finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship, earning the Merit Scholar® title.

PISCATAWAY EDUCATION FOUNDATION HOSTS FIRST BOWL-A-THON ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

The Piscataway Education Foundation is hosting its first Bowl-A-Thon event on Saturday, October 24 at 6 PM at Stelton Lanes. The event welcomes bowlers and non-bowlers with plenty of activities throughout the night, including a Tricky Tray with great prizes like restaurant gift cards, sports tickets, and home goods. This is an adult only event with a cash bar. We hope staff and community members will join us for an evening of fun and friendship. For tickets, call 732-572-4688.

ARBOR AND SCHOR ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR GRACE LEE STUDIES AT CARNEGIE HALL

Orchestra Director Grace Lee attended the first ever Carnegie Hall, Weill Music Institute, Summer Music Educator's Workshop from July 9-12, 2015. Held at Carnegie Hall, music educators from across the United States and many other countries attended. This community of middle and high school ensemble directors came together to learn from each other and from top-notch guest faculty, to attend concerts at Carnegie Hall, and to explore their important role as instigators of creativity and musicality.

EISENHOWER INTRODUCES YOU...I...WE INSPIRE WITH A POSTER CONTEST

During Eisenhower Elementary School's September Student Expectations Assembly, Principal Colleen Pongratz introduced students to Piscataway Schools' *You...I...We Inspire* theme, reviewing behavioral expectations and ways students could inspire themselves and others to soar like Eisenhower Eagles. To further the theme and focus, Eisenhower will host a *You...I...We Inspire* poster contest. While posters should be created solely by students, Mrs. Pongratz noted the contest provides opportunities for families to discuss the ways they could find inspiration and inspire others to reach new goals and do their very best in school.

CONACKAMACK TO INSPIRE GOOD CHARACTER

Conackamack kicked off the school year with character in mind. Faculty and staff welcomed students with first-day, "Peanuts-themed" presentations addressing the various definitions of character. This year, the school is planning many events to promote values of good character: kindness, compassion, generosity, heroism, respect, responsibility, and gratitude. The goal is to inspire students to be true "care-actors." Stay tuned for information about how to get involved with events sponsored by the student council, drama club, and art club!

SUPERCHIEFS HOST BAND FESTIVAL ON SEPTEMBER 26

On Saturday, September 26, beginning at 3 PM, twenty-one marching bands will take the PHS field in the annual Superchiefs Band Competition. One of the bands is our own Superchiefs, who will perform their 2015 show – *Four Seasons*. Based on the phases of a tree as it passes through the four seasons, music the band will perform includes *Appalachian Spring*, *Summertime*, *Autumn Leaves* and *Carol of the Bells*. A soprano sax soloist, a vocal soloist, and four color guard soloists represent each of the seasons.