



# THE PAWPRINT



Keeping track of the pack in MCSD





## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Welcome to another issue of the PawPrint.

The first publication of the PawPrint, released in November 2022, received glowing reviews. I want to thank the students from the Mifflin County High School Journalism III class for all their work to make the PawPrint such a success.

In this edition, the PawPrint will demonstrate that a student's education in the Mifflin County School District is dynamic and multi-faceted. There are opportunities for students to pursue their interests, passions, and talents across disciplines, and together these programs and initiatives help them develop into well-rounded citizens who are ready to innovate, collaborate, lead, and create. A few of these opportunities for students are STEM, the fine arts, and community service.

You will find articles about the STEM Buddies program, the STEAM Club at the junior high, PBIS rewards that have included STEM activities, and the high school technology classes' collaboration with Penn State.

The Fine Arts embrace the school musical, the new art electives in the high school and junior high, our choir students' All-Eastern accolades, and a calendar of the district's upcoming art shows and spring concerts.

Community Service includes activities such as a fundraiser for Rescue Our Furry Friends, a project benefitting military service men and women, sponsorship of children for Christmas, the Tally Your Turkeys fundraiser, and many other service projects.

The PawPrint will also keep everyone informed regarding the proposed MCSD Multi-Sport Facilities Project.

Please take some time and read about some of the great things happening in the district with all kindergarten through 12th grade students.

*Vance S. Varner*

Vance S. Varner  
Superintendent

# What's Inside

## HAVING A HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

Page Creators: Rainie Miner & Alyse Traxler



For more than a year, MCSD has been working toward the development of a new multi-sport complex for our student athletes, musicians, and community spectators. In this feature, PawPrint staff members Rainie Miner and Alyse Traxler speak with key members of the planning process, provide an update on the current proposal, and highlight the benefits the project will have for the MC community.



## FINE ARTS TAKES CENTER STAGE

Page Creators: Liv Suydam & Macey Rheam



Over the past several years, the Mifflin County Fine Arts program has continued to excel. From new course offerings in art, to distinguished musicians in band and choir, to a growing Drama Club, self-expression abounds in the Fine Arts halls of every MCSD school. PawPrint staff members Liv Suydam and Macey Rheam shine a spotlight on the accomplishments of Mifflin County's many performers and artists.



## STEM KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR

Page Creators: Gabriela Lynch & Indya Goss



Through the dedication of the STEM Intern and STEM buddy programs as well as several other endeavors, student advancement and engagement in science, technology, engineering, and math is at an all-time high. PawPrint staff members Gabriela Lynch and Indya Goss explore the projects and opportunities available to MC students from elementary school all the way through their senior year at MCSD.



## A COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

Page Creators: Elaina Seeley & Mina Phillips



Excellence doesn't stop at academics in Mifflin County. The district's strong tradition of service and community involvement continues to develop MC students into active leaders and volunteers. PawPrint special contributors, Elaina Seeley and Mina Phillips showcase the tremendous local, national, and even international community service projects organized by students and staff throughout the district.







## PLANNING MOVES FORWARD FOR NEW COMPLEX

*"Once the school board signs a bid to construct the project, we will begin our community level fundraising where people can make gifts to the project. This portion of the fundraising is as vital as the major gifts. One of the things in our plan was that the community needed to be invested in this project. We need to take ownership. Whether that is a \$5 gift or a \$1,000 gift, this project belongs to Mifflin County."*

*-Community Leader,  
John Pannizzo*

"Athletics has always been at the forefront of education. Athletics teaches life-long values and lessons: dedication, hard-work, teamwork, commitment, passion, goal setting, time management, and respect. It is an outlet for students to have fun while pursuing their dreams," notes Mifflin County School District Athletic Director Tish Maclay.

After more than a year of planning, proposals, and presentations, Mifflin County School District is looking forward to a highly anticipated renovation to several of its sports facilities, along with the development of a new athletic complex expected to be completed in October of 2024.

Athletics have always been a huge part of Mifflin County's reputation. While MCHS has only been in existence for a little more than a decade, the community has a long-standing tradition of producing outstanding collegiate athletes, along with holding several district and state titles. Many of those battles have been fought on the same well-loved fields for decades, but the district hopes to create a new and improved environment for athletes and spectators that gives students a true home-field advantage.

Mifflin County wants what's best for their students, and this new complex will provide students with something to be proud of. "Facilities formulate first impressions of our community... and our community and student athletes deserve better," says School Board member, Terry Styers.

Among the safety concerns, current fields have real grass instead of artificial turf. The PIAA requires artificial turf for all playoff games and events as a safety precaution. This requirement puts Mifflin County at a disadvantage against the schools who are used to playing on turf. Styers argues, "Our student athletes deserve to practice and play on the type of surfaces that they are expected to compete on." While turf and grass are similar in texture and appearance, athletic play on these surfaces can be extremely different, and they require different upkeep. The current football field is easily damaged by rain, and it becomes a safety concern in certain conditions. Turf is much more reliable and versatile than grass, creating a safer environment for MC athletes to compete on and requiring less frequent maintenance.



## UPGRADE ALSO HELPS MARCHING BAND

Along with the student athletes being excited about this new upgrade, it is important to recognize that the music department will also greatly benefit. Although the program is award-winning, it has not been able to host competitions due to the conditions of Mitchell Field.

"The biggest positive impact for the band members is that we will host a competition on our home field, so we will have home field advantage. All levels of sports teams, (high school, college, and professional), and other competitive groups prefer competing at home," explained MCHS Band Director, Mr. Belfiore. Not only will the band have the ability to host, thus bringing in additional revenue for their program and the district, they will also have a space much better suited for rehearsal and performing.

MCHS's marching band is highly accredited and a popular part of the MCSD culture, making it crucial that they have access to high-quality facilities as well.

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM NEW FACILITIES

Community members will also be positively impacted by the upgrades. "These facilities will allow us to host multiple events. This will benefit the community as we will be able to host tournaments (athletic and band) and provide a greater influx of awareness for the great community we have in Mifflin County," said Maclay.

Mifflin County has many outstanding youth sports programs. The goal of the athletic complex is that local sports teams will also be able to utilize the facilities for tournaments and other events. This will also provide a new venue for commencement ceremonies, a right of passage for every Mifflin County student and their families.

The current football venue, Mitchell Field, located near the Middle School, has undergone many renovations over the years, but lacks the amenities of more modern spaces. It has low handicap accessibilities, limited parking, and outdated concession and restroom facilities. Traffic, parking, and transportation can be streamlined with a new complex located near the junior high and senior high school complex.

Another goal of the new facilities is to create access for all members of our community. "There are safety concerns and handicap accessibility concerns. Traffic flow and parking/handicap parking," explained Styers.

"The impact that a project like this can have on our county is exciting. Not only in athletics and band, but in our way of life," said one of the project leaders, John Pannizzo.

The upgrades and renovations at the current facilities will provide an improved experience for all of Mifflin County, students and spectators, alike.



Top and above: Architectural renderings depict the entrance and bird's eye view for the proposed athletics complex.



# Fine Arts



## TAKES CENTER STAGE

### DRAMA CLUB ENTERTAINS EVERYONE

Perhaps it's fitting that the Drama Club's transition into musical productions can best be described as a Cinderella Story. In the 2017-18 school year, the Mifflin County Drama Club produced *Grease*, its first musical since the combining of Lewistown and Indian Valley high schools. Since then, the group's growing popularity and quality of productions has turned the annual show into a staple of the second semester, not just for the high school, but for the entire community. Over the years, the productions have pushed the limits of high school theatre, from the flying apparatuses for *The Little Mermaid* and *Mary Poppins* to the whole-cast dance numbers of *Beauty and the Beast* and *High School Musical*. One of the most encouraging aspects of the club is its growing list of cast and crew; this year's production of *Shrek* included students from Mifflin County middle, junior high, and high schools. The Drama Club has come a long way, with hard work and dedication from not only cast and crew but also their advisor, IVEC guidance counselor, Mrs. Campbell and Director Mr. Chris Ruble. The leaders noted that every year the cast and crew continuously raise the bar. Students who participate are able to sharpen their singing, dancing, and acting skills as well as learn how to perform all three at the same time. Participants also get to practice and perfect stage presence, character development, group communication, and improvisation. The magic on stage couldn't happen without the people behind the scenes. The Stage Crew includes members of the junior high and high schools under the advisement of Mr. Matt Moore. The club has built an outstanding relationship with the community. Local business owners have been a huge help including financial support. They have also been able to connect with the community by choosing kid-friendly shows that families can enjoy with their younger children. This year's production featured senior Gunnar Wagner as Shrek, senior Kaitlyn LeFevre as Fiona, sophomore Amaris Fultz as Donkey, and sophomore Dakota Shultz as Dragon, along with a large cast of ensemble characters and stage hands. The group spends countless hours putting their time and effort into perfecting their roles. As always, their three showings delighted the audience; and now, the club and its fans anxiously await the announcement of next year's show!



### JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL ART DEVELOP NEW ELECTIVES

A few new art electives have been offered at the junior high starting in 2022. These courses include Foundations of Art, Ceramics 1, and Drawing and Painting 1. Foundations has students working in a variety of mediums including drawing, painting, clay, printmaking, and collage. This past year, the MCHS art department also offered three new courses for students: Ceramics, Wearable Arts, and Digital Arts. These half-credit courses allow students to focus their skills and talents in popular mediums while mastering tools and programs used in the art industry.



### THE RETURN OF MUSIC CONCERTS

The LES second and third grade choirs performed a fabulous holiday concert this past December. This was their first concert since 2019, so all students were performing for the very first time. Each grade performed three pieces. Second graders performed "Rockin Around the Christmas Tree," "Christmas Canon," and "Santa Needs a Vacation." Third graders performed "A Holly Jolly Christmas," "First Flakes," and "Grandma's Killer Fruitcake." Students across the district are working very hard on their crafts, and they are excited to share them with the community. Check out the calendar below for the dates and times of this Spring's band, choir, and art shows at each of the district's schools.

Spring Art and Music Calendar						
All events at students' "home school" unless otherwise noted.						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MAY 2023	1	2	3	4	5	6 MCMS Art Show- 1 p.m.- 3 p.m.
7 MCHS & MCJH Band- 3 p.m. at MCHS	8	9 MCMS Choir- 7 p.m.	10 LES Choir- 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. at MCMS	11 MCHS Spring Art Show and Senior Showcase- 6 p.m.- 8 p.m.	12 MCSD Jazz Festival- 7 p.m. at MCHS	13 All-elementary Art Show- 11 a.m.- 2 p.m. at LES
14 MCHS & MCJH Concert Choir & Cantata- 3 p.m. at MCHS	15	16 MCMS Band- 7 p.m.	17 MCJH Art Show- 5 p.m.- 7 p.m.	18 SMES Spring Concert- 1:30 p.m. EDES Spring Concert- 10 a.m.	19 IVEC Grades 2-4 Spring Concert- 11:30 a.m.	20
21	22	23 LIS & IVIS Grades 4-5 Band and LIS Choir 7 p.m. at MCHS	24	25	26	27



### FOUR EARN ALL-EASTERN HONORS

This winter, four MCHS students officially qualified to compete in a prestigious musical experience. Alex Garner, Emma Sheetz, Gunnar Wagner, and Emily Shank received an invitation to participate in the All-Eastern Choir conference in New York state. In order to qualify, students went through a challenging application process. The conference is an opportunity for the singers to collaborate with other talented musicians along the east coast. It takes place in April in Rochester, NY, and is hosted by the New York State School Music Association. Choir Director Ms. Fensterbush noted, "These four students are all very hardworking and give 110% to everything they do."

FIND MORE FINE ARTS AT ALPHA

MC students can further explore their interests through electives offered by Alpha, Mifflin County's online learning program. For more information, contact Program Supervisor, Mr. Gill at [cmg29@mcsdk12.org](mailto:cmg29@mcsdk12.org).

Art Appreciation

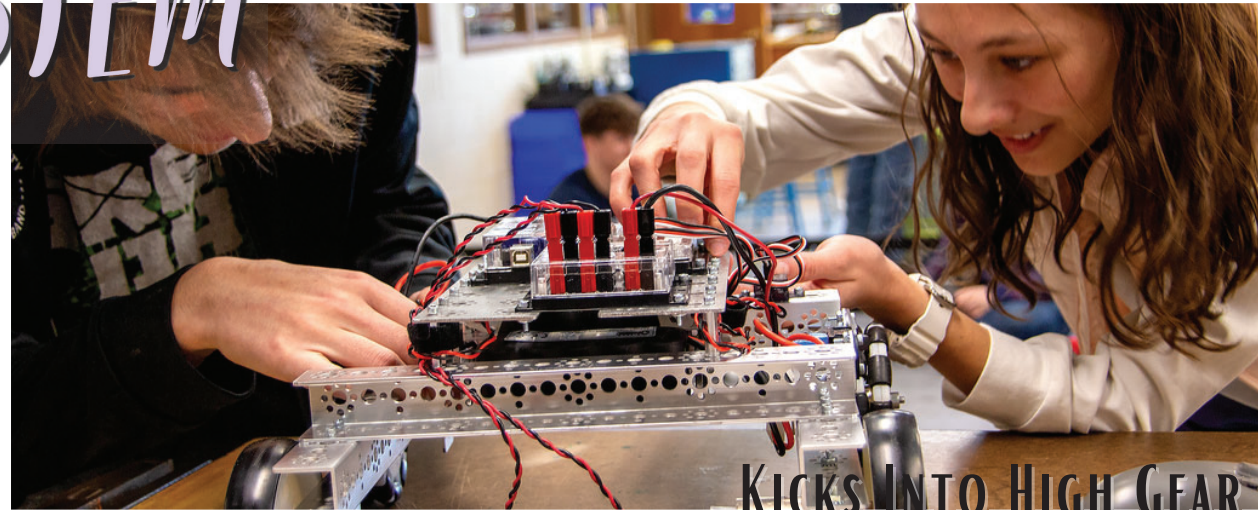
Art History

Music Appreciation

Theatre Studies



# STEM



KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR

## STEM INTERNS BRING TECH TO K-12

The STEM Interns program began in the 2018-19 school year. It is advised by MCHS technology education teacher, Mrs. ConnerMiller. The mission is to create a mutually beneficial program for high school and elementary students. Through the program, high school students interested in education or inspiring younger generations create and facilitate STEM-based lessons, and then elementary students are introduced to STEM-integrated lessons through a collaborative hands-on experience facilitated by the high schoolers.



Strodes Mills and East Derry students participate in Robotics Day with the STEM Interns.

Throughout STEM collaborations, younger students are learning soft skills such as teamwork, communication, and collaboration while also focusing on problem-solving, construction, and translating directions. New collaborations are coming this spring including ECO-Day for all fifth grade students in collaboration with Mrs. Huerbin's Ecology students, STEAM Fair activity stations for elementary students at LIS and IVEC, a PBIS drone activity, and coding training with Mrs. Stimely's and Mrs. Yoder's classes at LIS.

## MCHS COLLABS WITH PENN STATE

This year, through the efforts of Science Coordinator, Mr. King and Mrs. ConnerMiller, students are collaborating with Penn State for two projects: a pinning replicator tool and a precision drug delivery tool.

In these projects, students are developing a variable height replicator tool which has the ability to transfer material from a source and evenly distribute the material on an agar surface. They are also observing and developing a component which allows researchers to safely remove a fragile device called a "TUT" from a testing well while allowing the researcher to make observations of the TUT with the component in place.

To facilitate this project, Mrs. ConnerMiller met with a PSU research professor with the idea of forming a partnership developed through discussion and STEM connections with PSU CSATS department.

These collaborations allow students to participate in a research team prior to attending college or joining the workforce. It gives them a hands-on experience which simulates a real-world job requirement. Students learn to work on a team and develop ideas and solutions which will solve a real problem for a team of researchers. At the conclusion of the collaboration, their device could ultimately be used by the researchers for years to come.



Mr. King, a PSU researcher, and STEM students brainstorm ideas.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS RECRUIT THE NEXT GENERATION OF STEM SCHOLARS



This year's STEM Buddies from Lewistown Intermediate School.

Right: The Lego Robotics ferris wheel STEM Buddies built with younger students.



The STEM Buddies are the leaders of STEM activities presented to primary students in their building (or in the case of LIS, the STEM Buddies walk to LES for projects). This year, one of their big focus areas has been the Lego Robotics kits.

The MCHS STEM Interns came to both LIS and IVEC to help train the 5th grade STEM Buddies with the kits. The LIS STEM Buddies then worked with the second and third grade classes at LES to complete two different Lego Robotics projects. The fifth graders work in small groups with the younger students. They introduce the materials and guide the students as they build.

Together, the students created the Ferris Wheel and the Big Bus and then used block coding to make the creations move.

Beyond using the Lego Robotics kits, the STEM Buddies will also be visiting first grade and kindergarten classrooms this spring for Breakout EDU activities using puzzles and locked boxes.

## MARBLE MAZES IN PROGRESS

The Junior High STEAM (Stem + Art) Club began the year working on coding robots and droids. The group is now in the process of creating marble mazes. The intent is to combine basic physics principles with engineering and design in order to produce a maze that successfully satisfies the given requirements.



STEAM Club creates prototypes for their mazes.

## WHITAKER CENTER WELCOMES FIFTH GRADERS

LIS fifth graders recently took a field trip to the Whitaker Center in Harrisburg. Students were able to participate in hands-on STEM activities that dealt with sound, aerodynamics, measurement, and engineering using keystones. They also watched the 3D movie, "Tornado Alley," where they learned all about the technology that storm chasers use to track tornadoes.



IVEC Space Day Festivities

## SPACE DAY WITH THE ACADEMY

The students at IVEC work towards a school wide goal of 100,000 PAW points. When they reach that goal, students are rewarded with a themed activity day. Recently, Academy students facilitated three stations for the students. They planned a craft and a game, and they played BINGO. All of the activities were based on the theme of outer space. The students had a blast! From asteroid relay to hand-print space monsters, the students enjoyed a day that was out of this world.

## ALPHA OFFERS ADDITIONAL STEM COURSES

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**Renewable  
Energy  
Space  
Exploration  
Marine  
Science**



**Java  
Script**



**Basic Web  
Design**







## A COMMITMENT TO Service

Mifflin County School District students pride themselves on the service projects they complete throughout the school year. Projects are embedded into curricular units or are integral parts of extracurricular and school-wide efforts. From local to overseas, the schools have no boundaries for their service endeavors. As new projects begin and old projects start again, the amount of student participation and diversity of aid given to those in need continues to increase over the years.

### SERVICE IN SENIOR PROJECTS

Mifflin County High School continues to contribute to service in the community year after year. Several clubs within the school focus on donating to local organizations. Another way students contribute to the community each year is by creating senior projects. Seniors in Mrs. Maggie Pascoe's English class create a service project based on their personal interests. Multiple projects were organized this year to raise money for special causes such as Justice Sheaffer's spaghetti dinner to benefit Miracles in Sight and the dodgeball tournament organized by Anastin Bilger and Aubrey Strohecker to benefit Mini-THON. Another community-based project was a toy drive organized by Blake Stringfellow and Bryson Bubb. This drive was held at the Iron River Grille at the Lewistown Country Club this past November.

The idea was to bring a toy and have 10 percent taken off of your bill. In the end, the boys concluded with around 250 toys, nine of which were donated mountain bikes. These projects are just a few examples of how students at Mifflin County High School continue to make a positive difference in the community.



**Blake Stringfellow (left) and Bryson Bubb (right) stand proudly in front of the toy donations they received.**

### ROFF RESCUE DONATION

Lewistown Intermediate School has been donating to ROFF (Rescue Our Furry Friends) since 2011. This service project has been a joint effort between Mrs. Kelly Yoder and Mrs. Laura Stimely's fifth grade classes, along with Mrs. Robin Wilson and Mrs. Carolyn Kline's fourth grade classes. "Our students decided that the best way to show our Christmas spirit would be to help those that can't help themselves," Stimely expressed. "They wanted to make the holidays

a little easier for our 'furry friends,' and those who are dedicated to taking care of them." Items collected for the donation include food, treats, leashes/collars, toys, food/water dishes, litter, litter boxes, and cleaning supplies. Some families are generous enough to send in monetary donations to help cover veterinary appointments and other expenses. ROFF arrives at LIS every year prior to Christmas break to receive the money raised and bring with them a few of their animals. The students are thrilled to have the opportunity to interact with the animals and learn about how the Rescue works. Stimely added, "Over the years, we have even managed to get a few of the animals adopted into the families of our LIS staff."



**Colt, the dog, is eight months old. He was born with a heart condition that required life-saving surgery**

### TALLY YOUR TURKEYS

The Lewistown Middle School contributes to the service of Mifflin County every year with the annual Tally Your Turkeys fundraiser. Mr. Gregory Hetrick and Mrs. Maryann Haines started the tradition in the early 2000s at Lewistown Middle School. The idea originally sparked from the annual "Battle of the Morning Shows" that raises money for the Salvation Army. "We thought it would be a good way to have our students contribute to the community," said Haines. After the initial idea, the project turned into a school-wide, homeroom competition. "After the schools merged, Mr. Hetrick and I decided to continue the project here at Mifflin County Middle School which continues to bring in \$3,000 to \$5,000 a year," Haines explained. Homerooms display a new turkey for every five dollars students collect for the class. "It's cool to walk through the halls and see all the turkeys," Haines added. Students are then rewarded at the conclusion of the event with an assembly. The winning homeroom is rewarded with the opportunity to record a Christmas song which is later aired on MERF radio over the holiday season. Along with the first place homeroom, second and third place also earn a pizza party to honor their hard work.



**The winning homeroom classroom of the annual Tally Your Turkeys fundraiser.**

"We believe this gives the students a sense of belonging in the community since the money stays local," Haines expressed. "It gives them an opportunity to help people in need." The annual Tally Your Turkeys competition is not only a fun and competitive opportunity for the students to participate in, it also helps many in need.



### TWO CHILDREN FOR CHRISTMAS

Mrs. Ali Hartsock's fourth grade class from Lewistown Intermediate School sponsored two children for Christmas this year. Seeing her coworkers donate to local agencies inspired Hartsock to want to do the same. Julie Aungst, a colleague of Hartsock's, suggested that she sponsor children from CYS (Children and Youth Services). Aungst had participated in this service project for about fourteen years, and in her experience, her students were always eager to provide gifts for other children. "Once I told my students that we would be sponsoring two children for Christmas, they were thrilled," Hartsock noted.

**"Once I told my students that we would be sponsoring two children for Christmas, they were thrilled."**

Her class sponsored a two-year old and a ten-year old. Being fourth graders, her students were able to relate very well with the ten-year old which made finding gifts simple and enjoyable. Many of Hartsock's students have younger siblings who helped them select gifts for the two-year old. Hartsock noted, "As a class, we provided many gifts, including toys, clothes, and school supplies." CYS provided the class with a list of items the children they were sponsoring either wanted or needed, along with clothing sizes and interests of both children. Hartsock was extremely proud of her students for spreading holiday cheer and giving back to the community. She plans to make this a holiday tradition in her classroom.

### CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN OVERSEAS

The Mifflin County Junior High decided to commence a new holiday project this year by sending Christmas cards to servicemen and women overseas. "We have a teacher in the reserves who has a son overseas and one of our own MC graduates is also serving overseas," noted Mrs. Tammy Mathews, a computer teacher at the Mifflin County Junior High. "We thought this would be a worthwhile project since they are not able to make it home for the holidays. This way they would know that the people back home are thinking of them and thanking them for their service."



**Army soldiers stand proudly with their cards to send a special "thank you" to MCJH**

Both students and staff participated. "Some (cards) were purchased and lots were homemade," Matthews explained. "The outpour was tremendous; we had so many items and cards that we filled boxes and boxes." The junior high's new project was a success and was incredibly appreciated by all who received a special gift this holiday season.



**Airmen & Sailors from the USS Ronald Reagan, Warship 76 say, "Merry Christmas to everyone back home. Thanks for the care packages. They were great! We received them after we ported in Japan. Much appreciated."**



