



Spotlight on Education

PRIDE IN OUR SCHOOLS

Oak Ridge School

Oak Ridge has become synonymous with Running as this is the fourth year of the incredibly popular program. Fifty-eight fourth- and fifth-graders participated this year in the Running Club and most of them participated in the annual Howl Through the Hills 5K Race. Students who participated in the running club, along with their families and friends, spoke of the sense of accomplishment they felt crossing the finish line at the end of the 5K race.

Dorn School

Dorn kindergarten students are having a great time exploring with the new science program. Students recently worked on the concept of “push and pull.” Students learned about force and friction and when there is a greater force, there is a greater push or pull. They also learned that there is a greater force needed to to push or pull something heavy. Students worked with friction while pushing and pulling as well.

Conrady Junior High

Conrady students and staff donated their time and money to support one of the school’s favorite charities - the Ronald McDonald House. Together, Conrady students and staff raised more than \$500 through a variety of fundraising activities. That amount was matched by a local family who had stayed at the Ronald McDonald House when their daughter was sick. The Conrady team decided to sponsor a family for two weeks through the Ronald McDonald House Charity in Oak Lawn. Members of the Conrady social committee prepared a home-cooked meal for the family. .

Sorrick School

The first-grade ELA class finished its four-week Community Helpers Unit by meeting and talking to real-life firefighters. The North Palos Fire Department conducted a drill for the kids. Firefighters also talked to students about fire safety. Firefighters told the students of the importance of having a fire plan and how to Stop, Drop and Roll. Students were allowed to climb on the firetrucks and ask a number of questions about the various pieces of equipment. Firefighters talked to the students about the importance of having a fire plan in their homes. John Mendoza, a student in Mrs. Leyden’s class, said: “This was the best day ever! This was fantastic way to take what we learned and apply it to real life.”

Glen Oaks School

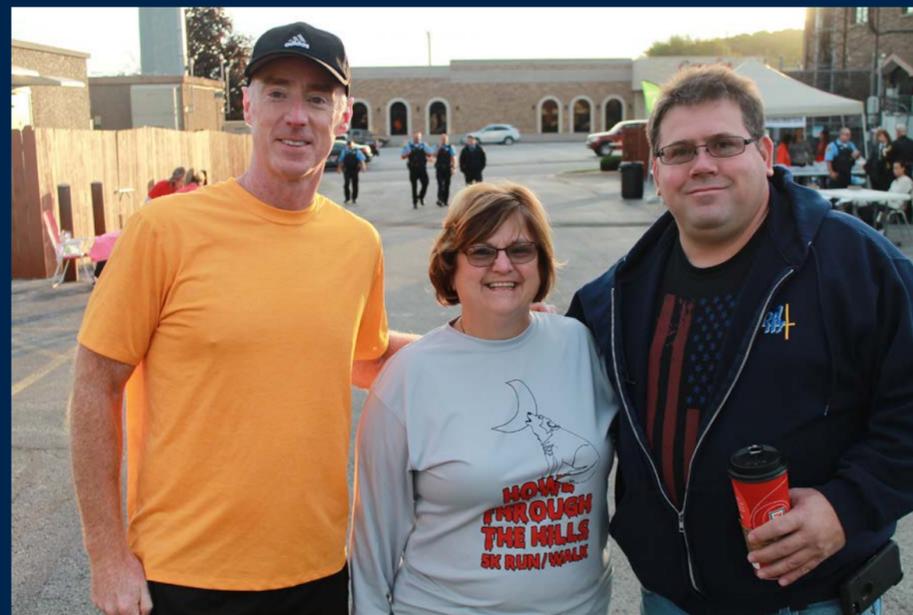
TGlen Oaks’ students teamed up with the American Flag World Record Signature Campaign in an attempt to set a record for the most signatures on the largest American flag. Students paid \$1 to sign their names to a fabric panel that will be sewn together to make the largest American flag in the world. When completed, the flag will be shown/used at sporting events and entertainment venues across the country. Along with the fabric panel, Glen Oaks also sent a donation of \$400 to help military families around the holidays. “We are really proud to be part of this program,” said Darcey Morton, a fourth-grade teacher and program organizer. “It’s great to be part of something that helps others.”

District Office

We’d like to introduce you to Lisa Whitcomb, who is the new assistant to Supt. Jeannie Stachowiak. Lisa replaces Rita Naumann, who retired earlier this school year after some 25 years with the district. Lisa spent the last eight years as the Human Resources Coordinator with the Southwest Cooperative for Special Education. Prior to that position, she spent five years as the Human Resources Coordinator at the SPEED Cooperative. Lisa is from Oak Lawn and lives in Tinley Park. She has a son, Ryan, 22.



“HOWL THROUGH THE HILLS”



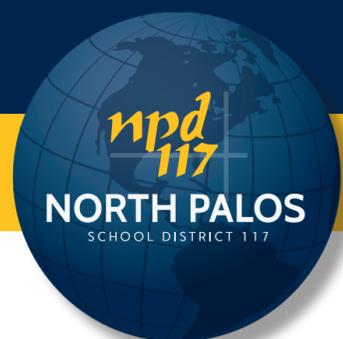
INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE, ONE CHILD AT A TIME

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CHALK

TALK

FALL/WINTER 2017

Where Excellence Matters

In District 117, we believe “excellence is the result of caring more than others think wise; risking more than others think safe; dreaming more than others think is practical and expecting more than others think is possible.”

What better way to celebrate a newly remodeled junior high school than with

word that the school just received the highest educational honor a school can receive. Congratulations Conrady Junior High School on earning the coveted National Blue Ribbon Award for Exemplary High-Performing Schools! Conrady was ranked as one of the highest-performing schools in the nation based on overall student assessment scores, student subgroup assessment scores and student graduation rates. Exemplary High-Performing Schools are those that perform well on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessment or nationally normed tests. Conrady was the only school in the South Cook Region to win this prestigious award and only one of nine Title I schools in the country to receive the National Blue Ribbon. In fact, only one-quarter of one percent of schools across the country receive the award. In typical unassuming style, Conrady Principal Andy Anderson was quick to deflect individual praise and instead focused on the incredible team in place both at Conrady and at the district level. “One of the reasons we won (the Blue

Ribbon) is that we have incredibly caring teachers and staff,” he said. “The staff here is phenomenal because of its ability to work as a team. Everyone here at the school and at the district office is so dedicated to the kids. This truly was a total team effort.” Anderson, who was principal in 2014 when Conrady was named a National Title I Distinguished School, said upping the ante to win a National Blue Ribbon Award was a “milestone and a personal goal



of mine.” He said Glen Oaks School winning a Blue Ribbon in 2012 served as a catalyst to do the same. “I am just so proud and happy for the staff.” Anderson called Conrady an “academic high-performance outlier,” citing the number of subgroups (special

education, English learners and low-income students) who performed well on the assessments. “We are No. 1 for academic performance in the socioeconomic category,” he said. “Other schools that won don’t have the challenges we do in terms of the various subgroups.” Adding another feather to his cap, Anderson recently was named “Principal of the Year” for the South Cook Region of the Illinois Principals’ Association. He was selected based on a number of criteria that included networking with other school principals in the Chicagoland area.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER 21 - FIRST DAY OF WINTER.

DECEMBER 22 - WINTER BREAK BEGINS THROUGH JANUARY 5.

DECEMBER 24 - MERRY CHRISTMAS!

DECEMBER 31 - NEW YEAR’S EVE!

JANUARY 1 - HAPPY NEW YEAR!

JANUARY 8 - INSTITUTE DAY. NO SCHOOL.

JANUARY 9 - SCHOOL RESUMES.

JANUARY 15 - MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY. NO SCHOOL.

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Superintendent's Corner

DR. JEANNIE STACHOWIAK

School districts, like people, are not defined by one thing but rather by their body of work. We in District 117 are immensely proud of our body of work over the years that has led us to become one of the top-performing school districts in the entire state of Illinois. This has not happened by coincidence but through years of hard work, successful systems and the right people in place. We are really proud and hope you are equally proud to have your children attend our amazing schools and taught by amazing teachers who truly care. In NPD 117, we don't blow our horns often, but our Conrady Junior High School recently won the coveted National Blue Ribbon Award for academic excellence. In fact, Conrady was one of only 342 schools in the



country (one-quarter of one percent of ALL schools) to receive this prestigious award. The award is a result of a commitment and dedication to our students by people like Principal Andy Anderson and Assistant Principal Sean Joyce, along with Team Leaders, teachers, social workers, secretaries, custodians, bus drivers and everyone in the district who works tirelessly every single day. We work to ensure students are safe, academically challenged and have every opportunity to be their very best and compete with peers across the street and across the world. Congratulations NPD 117!



Administrator Updates

NEWS IN REVIEW

Melissa Murphy
Assistant Supt. for Teaching and Learning

North Palos School District 117 is preparing students for the global world by offering more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses that align with careers in those fields. For example, students at Dorn,



Sorrick, Glen Oaks and Oak Ridge are experiencing inquiry-based learning opportunities with the newly adapted STEMscopes and FOSS Science materials that are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. There is an emphasis on developing, planning and carrying out scientific investigations while using data to construct explanations and provide support for their arguments. Students have regular access to Google Chromebooks to create, research, communicate and collaborate. Students in grades fifth through eighth bring their electronic devices home daily to continue their studies. Sixth-grade students are working on designing their own energy-efficient homes. Conrady has upgraded its Discovery courses with a program called Project Lead the Way. Design and Modeling, Flight and Space and



Green Architecture classes allow students to put real-world engineering skills to the test and solve problems collaboratively. North Palos School District 117 students had the highest overall math scores of all the District 230 feeder schools on the PARCC state assessment for 2017. Conrady, Glen Oaks and Oak Ridge each have after-school math clubs that allow students to participate in local contests. District 117 also offers the Learning Links After-School Program for students in second and third grades who work with the Challenger Center in Hammond, Ind., to provide E-Missions that allow them to connect with "NASA" to discuss their designs of a space shuttle launch pad and to recover a "missing space shuttle" that had been "on a mission." The Conrady Science Department has worked closely with the Illinois Math and Science Academy Outreach Center to develop Problem-Based Learning Units for students in grades sixth through eighth.



Faces of the District

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE



Conrady Students Learning About Finance, Marketing

There's a lot going on in the classrooms of the newly remodeled Conrady Junior High School. When students and teachers aren't focusing their attention and efforts on the academics that helped them earn the prestigious National Blue Ribbon Award, they are listening with rapt attention to guest speakers who are sharing their knowledge of finance and marketing in an attempt to get their young minds thinking of their futures and possible careers.

Students learned about money and investing from financial planner Michael Conroy, who was a guest speaker in Mrs. Houston's Financial Literacy Class. Topics included what you need to know to buy a new car, the ins and outs of the stock market and short- and long-term savings plans. Jon Profita, an associate finance manager with PepsiCo, shared with Grant Griffith's social studies classes how economic resources impact individuals and groups..



District 117 Retiree's Group Keeps Active - And In Touch

Most have been out of their classrooms or administrative offices for years now, but that hasn't stopped them from getting together and sharing stories and memories from a time that seems not so long ago. They are the North Palos School District 117 Retiree's Group and they stay active and in touch with each other throughout the year. They meet for lunch a few times during the year and they plan short trips to Chicago and other close destinations. They meet as a large group once a year in September for breakfast where they share food and discuss topics from pension reform and substituting in the classrooms to recent vacations and grandchildren they are babysitting. We thank you for your years of service and your contributions.



THANK YOU SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

All the work that gets done within the walls of our five schools and district office would not be possible without the constant support we get from our Board of Education. Education is not a line item on the Board's agenda - it is the main item. Board members serve as the educational and financial watchdogs for our communities helping ensure that all of our students get the best educations for the tax dollars spent.

