



TROJAN TIMES

3rd Quarter
2009

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Preparation is Key

BY BARBARA PARKINS, SUPERINTENDENT

If it seems like we are always focusing on the PSSA tests, it is because it is probably true. The reason is simple. Continued educational and personal growth of each member of our student body is the reason we exist. Improving our PSSA scores is an indicator that we are achieving those goals.

Many of our activities in recent months were in preparation for the current PSSA testing. We are underway and moving forward. The PSSA writing tests were conducted for one week during February. The Reading and Math portions will both involve a week and a half of testing in the near future.

Our students were well prepared because of the hard work of many.

First, I want to thank our

parents for taking the time to ensure that our students were rested and ready.

I also want to thank our dedicated staff of teachers and administrators who implemented and oversaw interventions to improve during the past two years.

Our board of directors also deserves a thank you for their leadership and support of continued academic improvement and student growth.

Most importantly, our students continue to impress me with their hard work and desire to learn and improve. I want to thank them all.

Because of all of you, we are on pace to build upon our past successes in the PSSA testing.

I appreciate your efforts. You are all making a difference.

East Side Stories

From the North Pole to East Side: Santa Claus visited East Side Elementary on Dec. 19, sharing a breakfast with the students while listening to their Christmas wish lists.

Santa said East Side students were nice, and not naughty. A long line formed after breakfast and jolly old St. Nick patiently greeted all the boys and girls.

Numbers for a cause: East Side raised \$1,177.35 to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the premier center for research and treatment of childhood cancer and other deadly diseases, through the St. Jude Math-a-Thon program. East Side participated in the Math-a-Thon for the fifth consecutive year. The Johnstown community sponsored students by pledging an amount-per-problem or a one-time donation. More than 20 students participated in the event.

Third-graders Amaiah Ellis, Gina Smith and Giovanni Capriotti, and fifth-grader Noah Sadler each raised more than \$100. School Librarian Jen Hindman helped distribute and collect materials and donations.

We Are Family: East Side served as a host facility as the Greater Johnstown School District presented "Family Night" parent training on Jan. 29 in the East Side Elementary Parent Resource Room.

Kathy Kurpeikis of the Pennsylvania Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) was the presenter for the training, which was available to Greater Johnstown School District residents and parents of students receiving Title I services at Cathedral Catholic, Our Mother of Sorrows, St. Andrew's, St. Benedict's and St. Patrick's schools.

Family Nights enable parents, teachers and students to participate in a social and educational setting. The "Family Night" training workshop helped parents and teachers of

Photo courtesy of East Side Elementary School



East Side students line up to tell Santa Claus their Christmas wish list during St. Nick's visit to the school for the annual Breakfast with Santa event.

East Side and West Side elementary students to make "Family Night" plans in their respective communities.

Mathematics Lesson: East Side mathematics teachers in grades 3, 4 and 5 received Math Training during a recent Act 80 Day.

Debra Shaw of the Success For All Foundation through John Hopkins University visited East Side for the training sessions and made a follow-up visit. The training also was held at West Side Elementary.

Spirit of Giving: Students, staff and members of the community combined to donate 50 winter coats and jackets that were made available to East Side students from needy families.

Project Click Safe: Members of the Johnstown High School Key Club visited East Side in December as part of Project Click Safe. The program, recommended for students in kindergarten through grade 5, uses computers to promote an anti-bullying message.

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Barbara Parkins

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Thomas Kalinyak, *Business Manager*
Brian McDermott, *Director of Education*

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Michael Vuckovich,
Assistant Principal

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East Side

Doug Henry, *Principal*
Amy Arcurio, *Assistant Principal*

West Side

Robert Beatty, *Principal*
Raymond Arcurio, *Assistant Principal*
With Support from Federal Programs Title I



Contact Us At:

Johnstown High School 814 533-5601
Johnstown Middle School 814 533-5570
East Side Elementary 814 533-5550
West Side Elementary 814 533-5540
Athletic Department 814 533-5601, ext. 1022

West Side Stories

Weather Forecast: WJAC-TV Channel 6 Meteorologist Tony Martin visited West Side and, predictably, talked about the weather. The popular "weather man" spoke to students in Mrs. Shoup's and Mrs. Thomas' second grade classes.

Pennies Saved: West Side Elementary raised \$1,000 in pennies to assist the Johnstown Police Department in its effort to upgrade its police canine corps. On Feb. 13, an assembly was held with Johnstown Police officers recognizing the hard work of the West Side students.

Life Skills Program: "Life Skills" is a 12-week anti-bullying program incorporated at West Side Elementary from late January through April.

Jump Right In: A jump rope or a basketball usually provide students with good exercise. At West Side, those items also helped raise money for a good cause.

West Side students in Mrs. Hoffman and Mr. Garbinski's Physical Education classes had another successful Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart fundraiser in 2008. A total of \$6,033.25 was contributed to the American Heart Association.

Students Trevon Williams, Brady Harrison, Roman Arcurio, Tanner Thomas and Brady Veney each raised more than \$150.

Healthy Habits: West Side Elementary third grade students in Mrs. Mikesic's class and other elementary classrooms learned the importance of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables. Teachers are emphasizing the benefits of healthy eating habits that include plenty of fruits and vegetables in the diet.

Photo courtesy of Kathy Legat



Tony Martin from NewsCenter 6 visits Mrs. Shoup's and Mrs. Thomas' second grade classes at West Side elementary to talk about weather. Mr. Martin is pictured with Mikell Collins, Anastasia Machik, Nassir Rose, and Sabrina Custer.

Every other day, students are taught nutrition facts about the snack that they are sampling. They learn about various types and varieties, history, growing regions and even some fun and interesting ways to eat the foods.

The program also teaches the importance of food safety and germ control. Teachers feel it is a good, healthy way to educate students about the importance of hand washing before handling their food.

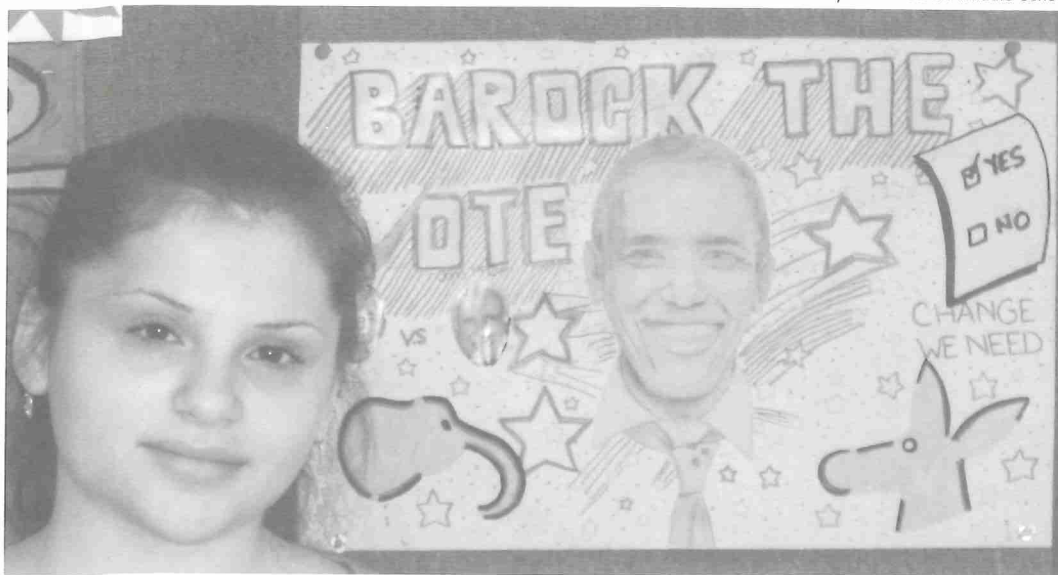
SPOTLIGHT ON...

School Board Members

GJSD's School Board helped establish two new sports programs. The junior high baseball and junior high girls softball teams will provide students at the middle school an opportunity to participate in those sports and prepare for future varsity competition. Kerry Pfeil is head coach of the junior high baseball program, and his assistants are Greg Unger and Don Thomas. Forty-eight students had signed up for the program through early February. Tim Lindrose is the head junior high girls softball coach, and his assistant is Tim McKee.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MILESTONES

Photo Courtesy of Johnstown Middle School



Eighth grader Janaye Schroll created a campaign poster of then-presidential candidate Barack Obama for a project in Mrs. Diane Tomak's Civics class. Janaye's poster was praised for its detail and likeness of the future president and displayed at the JMS cafeteria.

Presidential Art: This wasn't just another class assignment. Eighth grader Janaye Schroll's work attracted attention from students throughout JMS as well as her Civics teacher Mrs. Tomak. Prior to the November presidential election, Mrs. Tomak assigned her students to create a campaign poster for one of the candidates, Barack Obama or John McCain. While most students cut and pasted photos from newspapers and magazines to finish their projects, Janaye produced what has been called a "flawless sketch" of now-President Obama. The posters were displayed in the JMS cafeteria.

Education and Technology: Johnstown Middle School Principal Darren Buchko announced that JMS has been awarded nearly \$150,000 from the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) grant, a competitive grant awarded to 47 institutions for a total of \$9.3 million. The money will be used to upgrade the school's instructional technology hardware and infrastructure.

Buchko plans to use the funds to fulfill a variety of projects, including: audio/visual upgrades to the auditorium, new student workstations in computer labs, interactive mobile carts and labs, SmartBoards, Lcd projectors, as well as digital cameras and

camcorders. Adding even more benefit to the district, East Side Elementary and West Side Elementary will receive the replaced hardware components that remain in good working order.

Buchko recognized sixth grade teacher Mike Dadey for his hard work during the grant application process.

JMS is Lovin' It: McDonald's Restaurants presented JMS sixth grade Learning Support teacher Mrs. Elaine Crooks a \$500 MAC (Make Activities Count) Grant to recognize student achievement. Mike Engleka, Manager of the McDonald's Restaurant presented the grant on Jan. 15.

MAC Grants enable teachers to purchase resources for completing hands-on projects within the classroom. The grant proposal was entitled "Peace by Piece."

A total of \$365 will enable JMS to pur-

chase a sewing machine and material for the making of lap quilts for a community service project. The student-made quilts will be given to individuals in nursing homes, veteran homes, hospitals and hospice care. The hands-on activity fosters responsibility, and teaches students the value of working with others, as well as working independently.

PSA Contest: JMS students in Mr. Wes Bowser's eighth grade Civics class and Mr. Jason Moore's seventh and eighth grade Literature classes participated in the Pennsylvania National Guard Counter Drug Program's "Project Sound Off!" contest.

The public service announcement contest has students produce their own radio or TV commercials. The theme is to tell parents and adults what they might not know about drug and alcohol abuse, and to give them information to help them recognize, prevent or stop abuse.

Johnstown Middle School submitted five videos and four radio spots to the statewide contest.

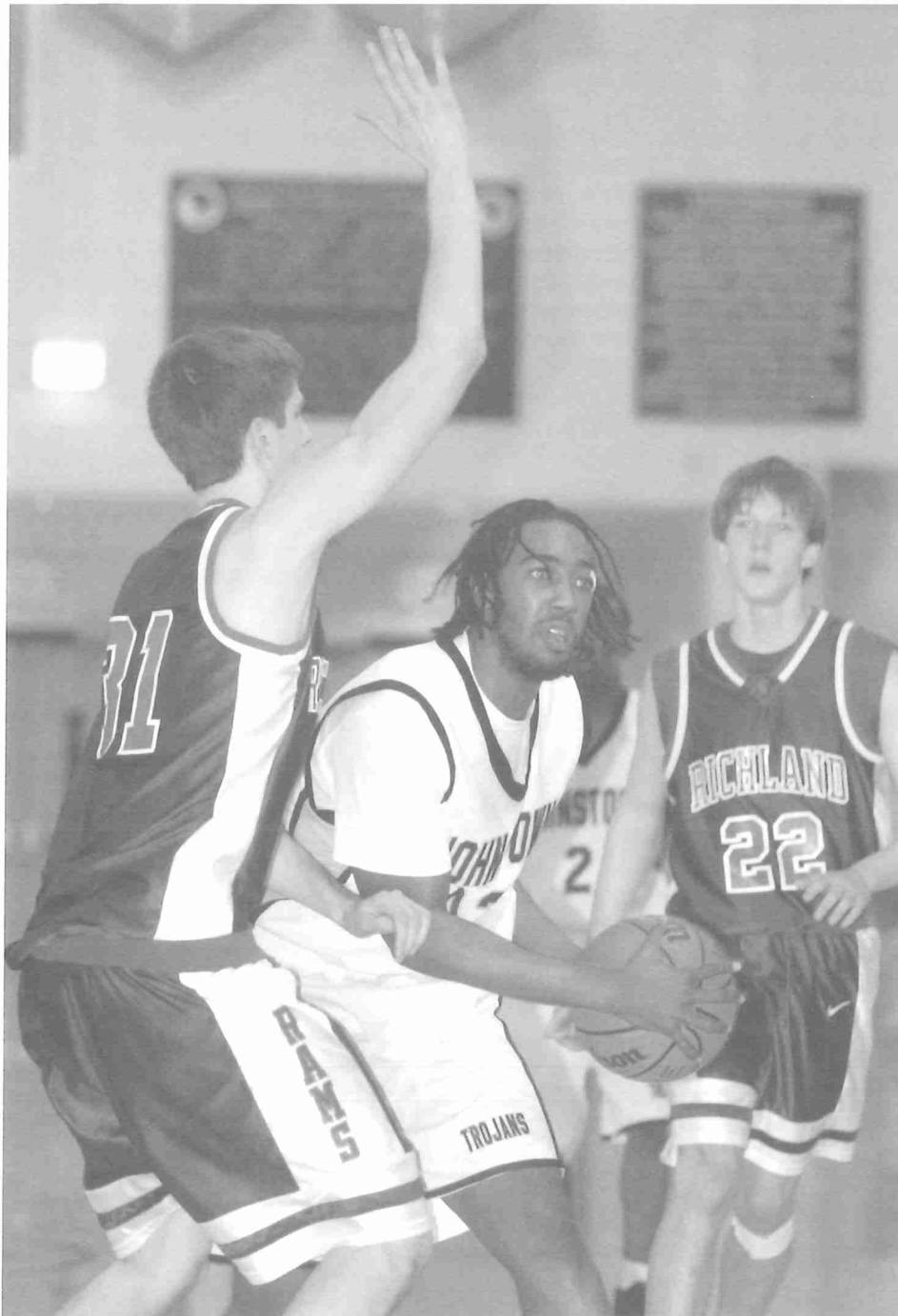
Photo Courtesy of Johnstown Middle School



Sixth grade Learning Support teacher Elaine Crooks accepts a \$500 MAC Grant from McDonald's Restaurants. Mike Engleka, Manager of the McDonald's Restaurant on Haynes and Napoleon Streets, presented the grant.

IT'S GAME TIME

Photos Courtesy of Burns Photography by Roger Kerekes



Trojan senior basketball player Paul Weatherly maneuvers through two Richland defenders in a LHAC game at Stofko Gymnasium.

Milestone Season: Trojans senior basketball player Paul Weatherly surpassed the 1,000-point milestone in a home game against Bishop Carroll and

continued his outstanding season as district playoff competition neared. Through 17 games Weatherly had 284 points, 162 rebounds, 41 steals and 28 blocked shots. The Trojans used depth and teamwork to win 14 of their first

17 outings under first-year Johnstown coach Dave Roman Jr.

Net Results: The Greater Johnstown girls basketball team continued to show improvement in the tough LHAC. Sophomore Tynesha Smith averaged 13.5 points and 3.6 steals a game as the regular-season wound down. Senior Lindsay Lovrich averaged 6.5 points and 4.2 rebounds a game.

Ice Men: The Trojans hockey team continued a successful 25th anniversary season, going 10-5-2 in its first 17 games of PIHL Open Division play. Goaltender David Dunkleberger had a 10-3-2 record with a 2.12 goals against average and .919 save percentage with four shutouts. Derek Grove had 21 goals and 31 points. Daniel Smith, Tess Weaver and Travis Weaver each had 17 points.

Grove, Smith, Ben Pearce, Dunkleberger, Rick Montgomery, Travis Weaver, Jon Maurizio and Zach Henry each represented Johnstown in the 2nd annual Brad Wess Memorial Scholastic Showcase that honored the memory of the former Forest Hills High School hockey player and provided a scholarship to an area senior.

Grappling for Success: Two freshman student-athletes have stepped up to the varsity ranks and are compiling big wins and numbers on the Johnstown wrestling team. Both Gervon Simon (160 pounds) and Malcolm Harris (103 pounds) are on target for 20-plus wins this season. Gervon Simon had compiled a 15-8 record through early February, winning 11 straight matches at one point and looking to build on that number. Malcolm Harris placed second at the Conemaugh Township Tournament and had a 16-6 record. Both wrestlers and their teammates represented the district well on the mat.

Continued on page 8

TROJAN TRIUMPHS

Photo courtesy of Johnstown High School



Greater Johnstown High School was recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a Bronze Medal recipient in the magazine's rankings of America's best high schools.

National Spotlight: Greater Johnstown High School has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a Bronze Medal recipient in the magazine's rankings of America's best high schools.

A total of 21,069 public high schools in 48 states were analyzed using data from the 2006-07 school year. A three-step process is used to determine the rankings. The first two steps ensure that the schools serve all of their students well, using state proficiency standards as the measuring benchmarks. A third step assessed the degree to which

schools prepare students for college-level work. A great high school, the report said, "must serve all its students well, not just those who are bound for college and that it must be able to produce measurable academic outcomes to show that the school is successfully educating its student body across a range of performance indicators."

The methodology used for the school evaluation was developed by Standard & Poor's.

Principal Dan Resenic also noted that the current senior class achieved the highest level yet since the PSSA test was instituted as a condition of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. JHS was recognized statewide as the school with the largest one-year improvement in assessment scores in the state of Pennsylvania. The percentage of students scoring proficient on the

Pennsylvania math assessment has doubled since the inception of the exam in 2002. Improvement in reading scores is nearly as impressive.

Quizzical Nature: The Trojans Scholastic Quiz team is out to another impressive start. Mixing brains with brawn on a Steelers' Super Bowl Sunday, the Quiz team notched a victory over Forest Hills on Feb. 1 at the WPSU-TV station in State College.

Johnstown then faced Juniata Valley in the next round while competing against Central Pennsylvania

schools in the largest bracket.

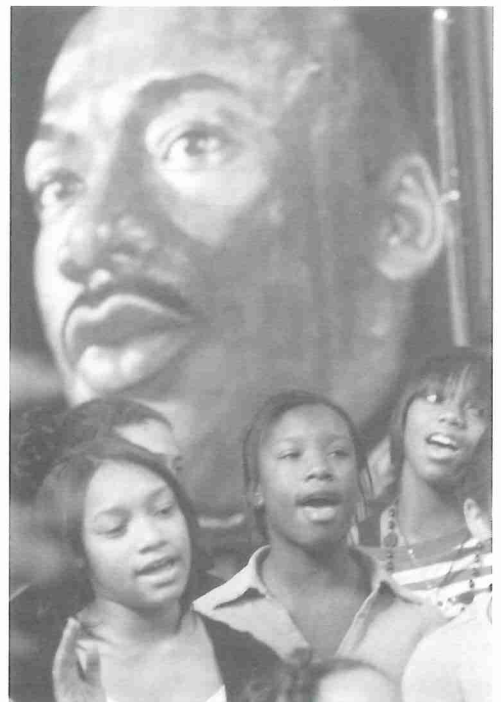
Brian Allison and Wanda Keller coach the Scholastic Quiz team. Members include captain Alex Skufca, Alisha Boerstler, Dan Branigan, Anthony Oravec and Katelin Lindrose (alternate).

Musical Notes: A Johnstown quartet of students fared well during the District Band Festival held at Berlin Brothersvalley High School on Jan. 28-31. Alex Skufca (baritone saxophone), Mike Stiffler (trumpet), Katy Landis (flute) and Alex Haggerty (flute) each participated in the district band event. Mike Stiffler, Katy Landis and Alex Haggerty each advanced to Regional Band competition set in Tyrone on March 5-7.

Historic Bridge: Approximately 40 Greater Johnstown students participated in the historic ceremony that renamed the Walnut Street Bridge in honor of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The span was renamed the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Bridge on Jan. 15. The Johnstown students performed several musical selections.

Photo courtesy of The Tribune-Democrat/
Photographer Todd Berkey



Greater Johnstown School District students singing at the dedication.

Greater Johnstown
School District's

1,000 POINTS OF LIGHT

Photos Courtesy of Burns Photography by Roger Kerekes



GJSD board directors and administrators joined local government officials and veterans during a Veterans Day ceremony at East Side Elementary, illustrating the district's involvement in the community.

This edition of The Trojan Times' 1,000 Points of Light spotlights the Community Involvement Campaign at JHS. "The Community Involvement Campaign is off and running," said Richard Unger, President of the GJSD Board of Directors.

The Campaign highlights the various ways the school district serves the Greater Johnstown area and how the district can partner with community and business organizations to reach the common goals of progress in the region.

John Berzinsky, the board's vice president and

chairman of the Education Committee, is directing the drive, which is designed to address two critical problems: The loss of young adults to other areas because of lack of jobs here; and the need of workers to meet the demand of new technical firms locating here.

Berzinsky cited significant support to the campaign from organizations such as Jacob Fend Foundation, the CTC Foundation, the Glosser Foundation, the U.S. Army Reserve, the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and Cambria Rowe Business College.

Photo courtesy of Johnstown High School



GJSD board members (l-r) Ed Mikesic, Kim Murray and Vince Arcurio discuss the script for a video promoting the Community Involvement Campaign.

Photo courtesy of Johnstown High School



GJSD Board President Richard Unger and Vice President John Berzinsky prepare to tape a public service announcement for the campaign.

IT'S GAME TIME

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On the Dotted Line: Greater Johnstown all-state football player David Istanich made it official, signing a letter of intent to continue his education and football career at NCAA Division I Florida International University. Istanich had verbally committed to FIU in October and made it official on Feb. 4, the first day high school football student-athletes are permitted to sign their letters

Photos Courtesy of Burns Photography by Roger Kerekes



Greater Johnstown all-state football player David Istanich made it official, signing a letter of intent to continue his education and football career at NCAA Division I Florida International University.

00225 *****ERCWSS*** C075
RESIDENT
8 HARDING ST
JOHNSTOWN PA 15905

Building for the Future: The Trojans baseball team already has produced seven student-athletes who will move on to the college ranks at various levels. Those are: Dante Witten (Pitt-Greensburg), Alex Martin (Mount Aloysius), Zach Henry (Allegheny, Md.), Ben Pearce (Behrend College), Jason Lechak (Mount Aloysius), Adam Lechak (St. Francis) and Michael Jackson (Pitt-Greensburg). JHS coach Dee Dee Osborne has 197 wins in 21 years with the program and has helped numerous players go to college.