



MARTHA HOLDEN JENNINGS FOUNDATION

Pro Excellentia

2020



Cultivating Interests

Boys Hope Girls Hope has formed long-term partnerships with highly capable students to complement what is happening at school and at home and to help them develop skills needed to be college and career ready after high school. See story pages 8 & 9.



MARTHA HOLDEN JENNINGS FOUNDATION

Dedicated to fostering
Excellent Teaching and Deep Learning
in Ohio's secular schools

The purpose of the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation is "to foster the development of individual capabilities of young people to the maximum extent through improving the quality of teaching in secular primary and secondary schools" and "to provide a means for greater accomplishment on the part of Ohio's teachers by encouraging creativity in teaching and bringing greater recognition to the teaching profession."

Pro Excellentia is published to describe a sampling of those efforts.

We ask that you please share this copy with colleagues who may gain valuable information and ideas from articles covered in this publication.

Mary Kay Binder, Editor



3
Teaching
During a Pandemic



8
Long-Term
Partnerships



6
Visual Arts
Careers



10
Cooking
Local Foods

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THE HALLE BUILDING
1228 EUCLID AVENUE
SUITE 240
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44115

Thoughts on Education in 2020



“The devastating effects of the pandemic made educating the whole child as important as ever, especially for our most marginalized students. We are grateful for the many Ohio education leaders who found unique ways to ensure students’ basic needs have been met and engaged kinds in synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences that reinforced to students that they matter, their learning matters, and that they can contribute to something bigger than themselves. We continue to learn from the many ways teachers are approaching today’s challenges and seek to utilize these lessons to better ensure deep learning for all.”

DR. DANIEL KEENAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MHJF

“As an administrator, I have had to consistently apply problem solving skills through a lens of empathy, compassion, and optimism. While faced with disappointments, we have also achieved great success with our students that we would not have previously thought possible. I have a much different perspective in regard to what constitutes an obstacle or struggle. Through teamwork, communication, adaptability, and flexibility, I now know that we can overcome any challenge that we are presented with in the future.”

JAMIE HOLLINGER, PRINCIPAL, WATERVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

“I have been referring to this year’s experience as “2020 teaching”. It is an alteration to the researched, validated, and effective methods of teaching. It is important to note that the majority of these alterations are temporary. Teaching science through heightened lectures and less inquiry during remote learning has shown a decrease in student interest. I long for the day I can see my students back in my classroom so we can approach learning through inquiry again. I have learned that there are ways of teaching students even when they are not in school, and that video recording can serve as a helpful accommodation and reinforcement tool.”

JENNI BAUERSCHMIDT, 8TH GRADE TEACHER, PREBLE SHAWNEE JR./SR. HIGH

“Indeed, the fourth quarter of the 2019/2020 school year was a unique time, however our educators quickly transitioned to remote teaching while our students transitioned to remote learning. Thanks to the strong partnerships we have with our families, our students were provided rich instruction, developed and taught by our teachers, and supported by our parents. Students in our Blended Learning classrooms were more successful in their transition to distance learning as they had experience in using chromebooks as instructional tools. Our students had become proficient in their control of the time, place, path and pace of their learning while in the classroom, thus, the transfer of these skills was seamless. Our Blended Learning teachers continued to motivate their students, leading them in academic discovery and connecting concepts with personal experiences.”

KATHI POWERS, SUPERINTENDENT, TWINSBURG CITY SCHOOLS

“This year has undoubtedly been the most challenging of my career. It felt like being a new teacher in many ways. I learned that I could be courageous in the face of many daily obstacles. Most importantly, it renewed my understanding that it is the children that make everything worthwhile—their joy, their patience, and their efforts make every day a special one.”

KATHERINE OWEN, 6TH GRADE TEACHER, CHAGRIN FALLS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

“Our school community lost a lot this school year, but I feel that our students lost the most. I have learned that the teaching profession has many creative and passionate members and we have a lot of ground to innovate! Through surveys and increased written communication with families, we have learned that many parents went above and beyond to support their children and appreciated the work that our teachers did to support their children from afar. The staff always inspires me to keep striving for excellence and to find creative ways to make Pleasant Valley the best school for our members to learn and grow!”

STEPHANIE BOKA, PRINCIPAL, PLEASANT VALLEY ELEMENTARY

“When CMA and the schools closed our physical doors, the Cultivating Creative and Civic Capacities team said to ourselves, this is a moment to really embrace the importance of this work. Long before anyone had heard of this novel coronavirus, we were already facing massive, complex challenges (as well as very local challenges) that demand the ability to imagine and act with a sense of possibility and responsibility to something bigger than ourselves. Our current moment is spotlighting many, interconnected civic challenges and the power of teaching for the capacities we need to envision and create the worlds we want to live in.”

JEN LEHE, MANAGER OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, COLUMBUS MUSEUM OF ART

Jennings Educator Awards for 2020

educator excellence

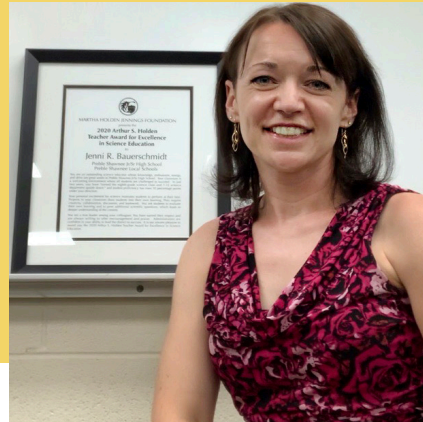
Each year the Jennings Foundation recognizes educators who exemplify its mission of supporting excellent teaching and deep learning through their work in classrooms throughout Ohio. In 2020, while the celebration looked different from past years' and took place during the *virtual* Educators Retreat, there was no less passion, dedication, or effort to continually strive for excellence exhibited by those recognized. Executive Director Dr. Daniel Keenan presented the awards midway through the Retreat to a Zoom audience of educational leaders throughout the state.

“The Jennings Foundation has been around for 60 years, and one of the principles that has held true from day one until today is that we know that teachers are the vehicle that you need to place your bets on if you want kids to thrive. We understand that and we appreciate that. Their work is difficult, and when we see excellent models of it, we want to honor and recognize it.”

DR. DANIEL KEENAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARTHA HOLDEN JENNINGS FOUNDATION

Each awardee was nominated by his/her Superintendent or Board Chair and has received a cash award to implement a specific project within his/her school or district.

The following are the awardees for 2020 with support comments from colleagues.



“My students will see themselves as scientists by designing their own experiments to gather data on questions regarding earthquake formation and seismic wave behavior.”

Jenni Bauerschmidt

ARTHUR S. HOLDEN TEACHER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN SCIENCE EDUCATION

Preble Shawnee Jr./Sr. High School

“Jenni has a great work ethic, and she is dedicated to providing learning to all students. She always wants to improve herself by reflecting on lessons taught. She is passionate about educating young people to become better individuals.”

DIANNA WHITIS, PRINCIPAL
PREBLE SHAWNEE JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL



“I teach students to be mathematicians by modeling the fun in problem solving and the value of growing from mistakes. It is my hope that they find joy and relevance in the mathematics classroom.”

Cassie Muller

GEORGE B. CHAPMAN, JR. TEACHER AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

Graham Middle School

“Cassie’s classroom is a model of engagement and enthusiasm as she draws students into daily math learning targets with intrigue and opportunity. She has one of the strongest work ethics and positive attitudes of anyone I have ever worked with.”

JAMES KUTNOW, EXECUTIVE DEAN
GRAHAM ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

continued on p. 5



“Through inquiry-based learning, our students gain confidence in their abilities. This award will enable us to upgrade our inquiry unit for 8th grade earth science.”

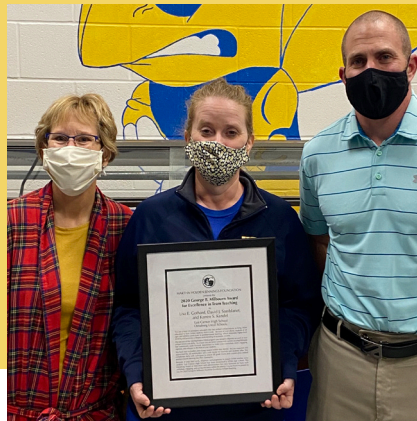
Jennifer Zelei

MASTER TEACHER AWARD

Finland Middle School, South-Western City Schools

“Jennifer has embraced the challenges in teaching students in high poverty demographics. She is student-centered and her mission is to build strong, positive relationships with students while holding them to high expectations.”

LORI BALOUGH, PRINCIPAL
FINLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL



“This award will allow students to integrate graphic and visual arts skills into all PBL projects so they can present their findings in a professional and coherent fashion.”

Lisa Gothard, David Samblanet & Karren Kandel

GEORGE B. MILBOURN TEAM TEACHING AWARD

Osnaburg Local Schools

“One of the most impressive characteristics of this team of teachers is they are never content with current accomplishment and successes. They consistently push forward to make the curriculum more engaging, more rigorous, and more relevant for their students.”

KEVIN FINEFROCK, SUPERINTENDENT
OSNABURG LOCAL SCHOOLS

“I stand in awe of you and I am inspired by you. I am so grateful for what you do every day for your own students and the greater education community in exemplifying great teaching. One of the most exciting attributes of each is your continuing pursuit to be the very best you can be. That pursuit is what drives you and then creates a community of practice that really benefits our students. Keep up the great work and continue to hold us accountable to create conditions that support your work.”

DR. PAOLO DEMARIA
OHIO SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



“We are trying to move away from content as the sole focus of teaching, placing students and their ability to display learning at the center of our work.”

Dr. Robert Hunt

OHIO SUPERINTENDENT OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AWARD

Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools

“Bob has done an incredible job of laying out the foundation for teaching and learning in our district. His vision and ongoing pursuit of growth in programming and learning opportunities truly sets him apart.”

PHIL RANKIN, BOARD PRESIDENT
CHAGRIN FALLS EVSD

Planning for A Visual Arts Career

Great Lakes Visual & Performing Arts Academy / Sandusky City Schools

“Students need a place where they can *experience* careers in the arts.”

ROSALYN SHEPHERD, CHAIR OF PLANNING FOR FINE ARTS
SANDUSKY CITY SCHOOLS



left: Students tour Marsha Carrington’s art gallery in downtown Sandusky to discover how to display art in a professional way.

above: Visiting artist Shani Crowe (ctr.), who worked with students for three days using bead work to create Chandeliers, enthusiastically displays a student’s finished piece.

Creating and managing an art gallery is not a typical assignment for high school art students. Yet, Rosalyn Shepherd says her students, who are enrolled in the Great Lakes Visual & Performing Arts Academy within Sandusky High School, are “taking on the responsibilities like champs!”

By mid-October the teens had set up and hosted their first student-created show—*For the Love of Art*—a virtual experience (due to Covid-19), which displayed 53 paintings, sculptures, and ceramics curated from teachers and students within the district.

The artwork was housed within the newly created “Michele Ziemke Student Art Gallery”, named for a former teacher who spearheaded efforts to intensify art education in the district. The gallery fills a recently renovated classroom in an historic Sandusky school building. The building took on a new role this fall as the Regional Center for Advanced Academic Studies (RCAAS), a 3-6 elementary school for Sandusky students gifted in academics and visual and performing arts.

Learning About Arts Careers in Class

For the Love of Art was the inaugural assignment for the 9-12 grade students enrolled in Mrs. Shepherd’s yearlong Visual Arts course. The class was created and offered for the first this fall to give high school art students time to experience unique opportunities in their discipline.

Mrs. Shepherd immediately enlisted the expertise of Marsha Carrington, a local artist and gallery owner, to discuss the fundamentals that go into running a professional gallery with her class. Through a three-part workshop, Ms. Carrington explained how to select artists, display art, manage contracts, establish budgets, advertise, market, and host a gallery show.

Students toured her business, CARRINGTON Arts, to study what a professional gallery looks like before putting finishing touches on their own space.

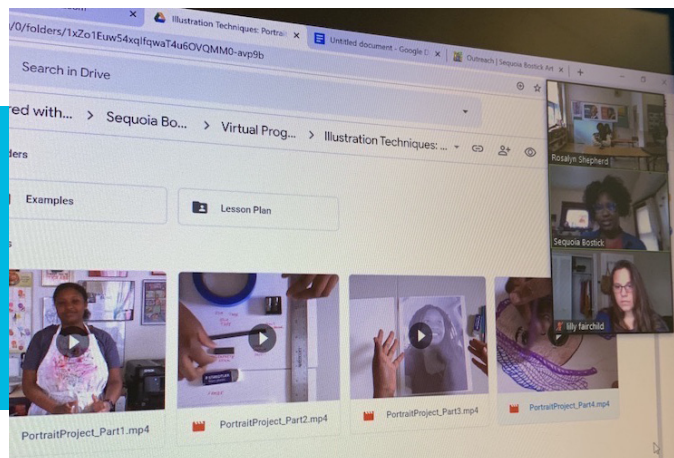
“I believe in hands-on learning,” says Mrs. Shepherd, Chair of Planning for Fine Arts for Sandusky City Schools, who has been teaching art at the elementary, middle, and high school levels for 24 years. “I could talk to students about running a gallery,” she continues, “but until they actually do it, work through the problems, figure out what their options are, make decisions that will ‘make it or break it,’ they are not going to understand the process. Putting every single aspect of this gallery together is giving them that understanding. And the growth I’ve seen in just a few weeks has done my heart good.”

Gallery Management is just one component of the “Arts Careers Project” Mrs. Shepherd is implementing after having received a grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation. An exploration of two additional careers—arts educator and visual arts archivist—is also imbedded in the program.

continued on page 7

Visual Arts Careers *continued from p. 6*

Zoom session with artist Sequoia Bostick and high school art students. A finished piece of art depicting a student's self-image, aimed at tying art to social-emotional learning.



Explaining the reason for the career-focused effort, Mrs. Shepherd says that visual and performing arts students approach high school graduation with feelings of uncertainty. They may excel in the arts but often lack the confidence to continue their studies in college, let alone pursue art careers. Much of this apprehension is due to an unfamiliarity with the hundreds of art careers available.

“I don’t want kids coming out of high school having seen professionals [working in the arts] but not feeling confident doing it themselves,” she remarks.

“This project gives them the opportunity to be hands-on, to be right in the thick of things, to feel comfortable putting themselves out there.”

Mrs. Shepherd’s students will manage all aspects of the art gallery throughout the school year and have scheduled four unique exhibits that will rotate through the space during that time. While they continue to handle those responsibilities, they will also experience what it is like to be an art educator. As a class requirement, they will serve as “assistants” to outside teaching artists who will work with elementary students who attend RCAAS (the school that houses the gallery). Mrs. Shepherd is contracting with a variety of artists from the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning in Cleveland to create monthly projects for these children.

Taking on the Role of Mentor

The first of those artists, illustrator and designer Sequoia Bostick, presented Zoom workshops for the young students and their families in October to introduce them to a project they completed in November. The assignment involved embellishing a self-portrait with words, phrases, or personal anecdotes in an effort that inspires social-emotional growth.

Ms. Bostick also Zoomed with the high school students to illustrate how she creates lesson plans and to explain how her role as a teaching artist differs from that of a licensed art educator. Once the district began holding in-person classes (as of last week in October), high school students began to visit the

elementary classrooms to help the younger children complete Ms. Bostick’s assignment. The teens created their own portraits first to serve as examples to show their younger charges. The finished pieces are featured in the second student-run art show, which opened in-person at the gallery in late November.

“I like to encourage mentoring,” says Mrs. Shepherd, emphasizing how relationships between older and younger individuals benefit both. “The high schoolers feel better about themselves because they are helping someone out; and the younger kids feel they have a support system—somebody they can look up to who is in the position they want to be in.”

The third career students will explore through the “Arts Careers Project” is that of visual arts archivist. Archive librarians will teach the skills and processes needed to professionally archive prints and resources for study. Students will gather items based on artists, eras, style, and media; collect prints; take digital photos; and assemble resources into packets for the new arts reference library located within the gallery.

When the school year ends, Mrs. Shepherd hopes both groups of students will have learned valuable lessons.

“I want the elementary students to see that art is expansive, it’s everywhere, and that they can create something that is artistic even if it’s something that doesn’t go on a wall.”

“I want the high school students to have a stronger sense of self, to feel more confident in their ability to initiate a project and see it through. I want them to feel comfortable starting something innovative that will help society. And I want them to understand how their artistic ability can be used in more than one way.

“They are stepping up in so many ways,” she adds. “They are really interested in the activities and they are taking their responsibilities seriously.”

*For more information contact: Mrs. Rosalyn Shepherd
rshepherd@scs-k12.net*

A Long-Term Guiding Partnership

Boys Hope Girls Hope of Northeastern Ohio

“It pushes me and keeps me motivated... They really listen to you here...It takes you out of your bubble...It’s a great way to meet new people and to make connections...If you are shy, it helps you to open up... It’s special...It’s a blessing...It’s forever.”

These are a few comments from high school students who have been participating in Boys Hope Girls Hope of Northeastern Ohio’s (BHGH) Academy Program year-round since they were in sixth grade. All believe the time they have invested in the experience has been invaluable. They have improved their grades, developed long-lasting friendships, expanded their perspectives, and nurtured their self-esteem. Week after week, they have participated in grade level cohort meetings, engaged in problem-based STEM activities, volunteered in the community, cultivated new interests and skills, explored their entrepreneurial aptitude, and examined possible careers.

A Partnership for the Long Term

Executive Director Timothy Grady defines BHGH as a youth development program that is committed to working with young people outside of the classroom over a very long time frame—from sixth grade through high school and beyond. Since its founding in northeast Ohio in 1986 (one of 14 chapters throughout the country), BHGH has been committed to building and sustaining a long-term and meaningful partnership with each child they serve. The organization guides Scholars (the term used to describe students in the program) as they learn to take control of their own success by providing support in four key areas: intellectual growth, social-emotional development, holistic wellness, and college and career exposure. Explains Mr. Grady:



Student participates in a pod learning program at the Rajan Center during the fall, 2020 semester.

“At its best, Boys Hope Girls Hope complements and strengthens, arguably, the two most important experiences in a young person’s life, which are their home life and their school life. The goal here is to complement the heavy lifting being done by the families and the heavy lifting being done by the schools.”

“We are taking a young person outside of the classroom and helping them to develop themselves and exposing them to lifelong learning,” he continues, emphasizing that BHGH is meant to complement, not replace, life at home and at school. “We work to activate their love of learning through problem- and project-based activities and by introducing them to a number of different experiences they normally would not encounter.

“The most important point about our program is that it is not school. This is a unique, out-of-school place where Scholars can cultivate their interests.”

Each year BHGH accepts 25 new Scholars, all fifth graders at the time, into the program. They attend public, private, and charter schools in Cleveland, Akron, and Garfield Heights, an inner ring Cleveland suburb where the BHGH facility is located. Teachers and guidance counselors refer highly capable prospects who fit the BHGH profile: academically strong, motivated, and well-behaved. These same students, however, are considered to be at-risk because they face limited opportunities due to low family income, enrollment in under-resourced schools, and a lack of exposure to higher education and diverse career pathways. That’s where BHGH aims to make a difference.

“With a long-term partner to help students cultivate their potential, you dramatically improve the odds of the child hitting his/her capabilities at a high level. And when that works, it is extraordinary,” says Mr. Grady, who has led the organization for the past 12 years.

Once a candidate is deemed a “good fit”, BHGH welcomes the child and his/her family into a supportive relationship that will continue for at least seven years. As of fall, 2020, 184 Scholars from 18 middle schools and 24 high schools participate in the program. They work with a trained staff who come to BHGH with varied backgrounds—education, sociology, counseling, and social work. Mr. Grady refers to them as “experienced youth development professionals.”

continued on page 9

Expanded Capabilities Bring About Deeper Learning

In June, 2019, BHGH opened a new facility, the Rajan Center, in Garfield Heights. Due to the expanded physical space (21,000 sq. ft.) and continued grant support from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, the organization has worked to increase opportunities for Scholars and weave deep learning into the fabric of the Academy Program's curriculum.

The new building includes a Maker Space and STEM lab, art studio, reading room, and ample flexible learning spaces, which have been useful for virtual learning during the pandemic. On the schedule before COVID-19 were a variety of STEM-based activities from circuitry and robotics to coding, stop animation, and 3-D printing. A mechanical engineering project that teaches Scholars how to dis-assemble and reassemble small engines was taking place in a shop located in the on-campus Hope Garage. An Entrepreneurial Mindset program was challenging students to design their own small businesses where they learn related tasks such as budgeting, pricing, marketing, investing, and working effectively in teams.

"With the new facility, we hope to layer in ways our Scholars can pursue and cultivate their interests at a deeper level," explains Mr. Grady. He points to one example—the motorcycle repair program—that high school Scholars engaged in last year before schools closed due to COVID-19. The hands-on experience, he explains, exemplifies what BHGH is all about:

"What does getting your hands greasy and learning about a carburetor have to do with anything except possibly a hobby in your garage?" Mr. Grady asks. "Nothing," he answers, "if you don't help young people process the information. But, when they talk about it, learn the vocabulary, absorb knowledge in an area of life they had been uneducated about, they gain confidence and begin to explore and investigate other areas of the world.

"All these activities in isolation don't necessarily result in what you would call deeper learning," he continues. "But, when you layer in the conversation that comes before and after those moments, that is what lifelong learning is about. It's curiosity, wanting to learn more about it, to discuss it, to analyze it."

Last year Scholars also began to use a digital portfolio tool that will allow them to compile examples of their work and personal belief statements each year, tracing their own academic and intellectual growth during the seven years they spend with BHGH. "The discovery a child can have about their own growth over an extended period of time to me is so exciting," says Mr. Grady. "This is an example of the commitment to deeper learning we have made to our Scholars."

Another critical component to the Academy Program is its emphasis on holistic wellness. Mr. Grady describes the need for BHGH to address social and emotional health, particularly with Scholars who have experienced trauma in their lives: "We are trying very hard and partnering with folks in the community

With the expanded facilities at the Rajan Center, students can cultivate their interests at a deeper level.



who use resiliency theory in programming," he explains. "This teaches young people how to identify adversity and use a set of skills to cope and move ahead."

An Unusual Year

As it has with all educational experiences, COVID-19 has greatly interfered with BHGH's plans for the Academy Program in 2020. Mr. Grady explains that 85 percent of their Scholars rely on the organization for transportation to and from the facility. With COVID-19 regulations and students attending classes both in schools and at home, that became a significant challenge. Interviewing for a new class of Scholars was postponed in the spring, a process staff hope to complete virtually in the fall. For the first time in 12 years, the annual 6-week summer mentoring program for new Scholars was canceled, and plans for enrichment activities have been revised several times to adapt to changing circumstances.

Scholars began to return to the facility in October to participate in a pod learning program. In what Mr. Grady calls "a response to the moment" staff members have been available to work with Scholars who are comfortable coming to the center. "We want to make sure we are providing a supportive environment," Mr. Grady says. "It's not our core program, but we are offering students a safe, secure place with snacks, lunch, and access to enrichment."

While anticipating the return to core programming as soon as possible, Mr. Grady and the staff at BHGH continue to invest in the close partnerships they have established with Scholars throughout the years. And their efforts are not lost on the lives they touch.

"They really care about you here," remarks one of the high school Scholars in a zoom interview this fall. "I feel real special being a part of this program. It's not like anything else I have ever been a part of. Everyone here is amazing, and I love them."

For more information contact: Mr. Timothy Grady, tgrady@bhgh.org

Cooking Up Lessons About Local Foods

Spice Acres Field Kitchen / Pleasant Valley Elementary School

Corn, beans, squash, rutabaga, kale, peppers, tomatoes, onions, greens, and leeks. A year ago, first graders at Pleasant Valley Elementary School in Parma did not know much about, and possibly had never heard of, many of these vegetables that are grown locally in northeast Ohio. But through a yearlong partnership with farmers, chefs, and educators from Spice Acres Field Kitchen (SFK), they now can tell you where they grow, how they get from farm to store to table, and even how to prepare them so they taste good.

“Understanding Our Community Food Systems” began in fall, 2019, with funding from the Jennings Foundation. The program’s first objective was to restore a neglected 7,200 sq. ft. garden that had once thrived outside the students’ classroom windows. Staff from SFK worked together with Pleasant Valley educators to re-establish the beds, which would then be maintained by trained volunteers. They purchased needed row covers, ground cover, soil and amendments, tools, seeds and other building materials to make that happen. The goal was to involve students in planting and growing vegetables—such as spinach, kale, and beets—on site to serve in the “Healthy Options Salad Bar” in the school cafeteria.



left: Winter crops, such as kale, spinach and swiss chard, continue to grow in the school garden while students learn from home.

right: Cooking on-site at the farm prior to COVID-19.

“The idea is to expose kids to fresh, nutritious food and teach them where their food comes from, so they begin to back away from the Cheetos and start eating more nutrient dense foods.”

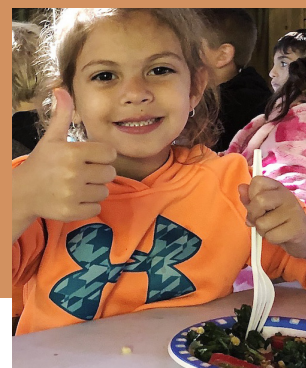
Robert Gorman, Supervisor of Food Service for the Parma City School District, continues to explain: “It’s all about the farm to school movement—when kids are shown how a product’s grown, how to cook it, and how to serve it; they will try it. And often they will like it.”

While the school’s garden space was used as an anchor for the project, lessons from Cornell University’s “Discovering Our Food System” curriculum were embedded in the first grade STEM program, merging culinary arts, agriculture, language arts, social studies, math, and science concepts through class presentations, and hands-on experiences.

Going to the Source

In October, 2019, as the program was just beginning, students were treated to a day long field trip to SFK’s farm, which is located in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Steve Baker, a licensed educator and staff member of SFK, led the students on a tour of the fields where they discovered why soil in the area is sandy, which crops are grown in a green house and which sprout in a high tunnel, the role bees play as pollinators, and why farmers plant “cover crops”. They picked, tasted, and compared the flavors of red and golden raspberries and spotted shiitake mushrooms emerging from holes drilled into stacks of logs.

SFK’s founder, Ben Bebenroth followed the tour with a sensory-filled culinary demonstration set up in the property’s barn. Students watched as the chefs sautéed a mixture of ginger, garlic, oregano, and cilantro that would dress a salad of kale, sweet peppers and corn—fresh produce all sourced from the local area. Small plates were passed around the room allowing students to smell and taste the various flavors and describe if they found them salty, sour, bitter, or sweet.



“We are trying to orient the kids to the shapes, smells, and textures of foods,” remarks Mr. Bebenroth, who encourages the children to taste, smell, and touch ingredients throughout his cooking demonstrations. “I’ve found that kids are amazed at the intricacies of things. They will say they don’t like mushrooms, but if you give them a shiitake mushroom to play with they are amazed at the gills and the stem structure. As they become familiar with it, then they think it’s cool.”

“Our main mission is to educate them about nutritious foods and healthy eating,” he continues. “But mostly we are just trying to introduce them to vegetables. Kids can identify a french fry but they don’t know what a potato is. So we are trying to get them reoriented to the real source of their food—and that’s plants and animals.”

continued on page 11

Cooking Lessons continued from p. 10

“I want to get the students excited about where real food comes from,” adds Pleasant Valley Principal Stephanie Boka, who accompanied the children to the farm. “This is 360 degree learning—they are able to use all their senses, be outside in nature, and see adults who are excited about growing food and working on a farm.”

Mr. Baker planned to visit the three first grade STEM classrooms each month during the winter and spring with a “mobile kitchen” that would allow him to intertwine a cooking demonstration with lessons such as “Global vs. Community Food Systems”, “Food Miles in Your Breakfast”, and “Nutrition, Health & Food Guides.” In January he brought fresh ingredients to Debbie Woodworth’s class to make Garlic and Ginger soup. He introduced students to radishes, cabbage, ginger, and garlic and explained where each ingredient originates.

His objective, always, is to encourage students to “touch, hold, smell, and really feel” each ingredient to become more accepting of unfamiliar foods.

“We have to use all our senses,” he explains to the students as they take turns sniffing cloves of garlic and handling knobs of ginger root. Menus from other sessions included sautéed Brussels sprouts, whole wheat pancakes, and herbs and greens.

Learning Continues Despite Pandemic

The pandemic interfered with in-school sessions in the spring, yet Mr. Baker continued to keep in touch with students and families through Zoom. With an additional grant from the Foundation, he and Principal Boka expected to continue “Understanding Our Community Food Systems” during 2020-21, expanding its reach to both the STEM 1 and 2 classes.

As with many educational projects, flexibility was key as students moved from in person to hybrid to all virtual learning throughout the fall months. “We were able to adjust and plan accordingly with the cooperation of the amazing STEM 1 & 2 staff and administration at Pleasant Valley,” says Mr. Baker. One of the major adjustments was moving the hands-on, culinary sessions that highlight local, seasonal foods to a fully virtual model, calling the educators’ creativity into action.

Their answer: split the learning sessions into two 30-minute segments. Mr. Baker provides lessons and activities in the first session and leads an interactive cooking demo during the second, which takes place with students and their families in their kitchens at home. So far, the menus have included fresh salsa, apple crisp, stove top popcorn, and whole wheat pancakes.

“I want students to take away a better understanding of where their food comes from, to gain a greater appreciation for fresh fruits and vegetables, and to learn the importance of buying as much as you can seasonally and locally,” says Mr. Baker, who was thrilled to learn that several students and their families were inspired to create and tend their own home gardens during the summer.

“We have received amazing support from the students and families who are participating in our lessons,” he adds. “These lessons, especially the culinary demonstrations, have provided families with fun, engaging, hands-on activities they can do as a family, which has been a terrific reprieve during this pandemic.”

“We are providing vital information that connects students to their food in a meaningful way,” he continues, emphasizing that their mission (whether delivered in-person or virtually) is to focus on the importance of supporting our community food systems. And one of the positive side effects of at-home lessons, he reports: “Each student is able to have meaningful and positive interactions with food while also spending quality time with their families.”

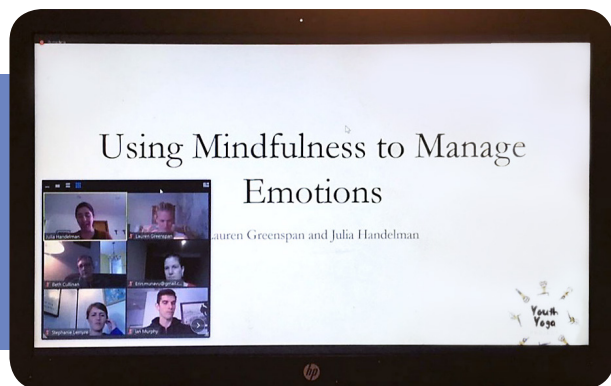
*For more information contact: Mr. Steve Baker
hello@spicefieldkitchen.org*



On-line but still interactive—students learn to make tasty foods, such as fresh salsa, with local ingredients delivered directly to their homes.

Teaching Mindfulness Strategies to Deal with Pandemic Stress

Youth Yoga Project



Teachers involved with the Youth Yoga Project learn how to use movement to enhance their own mental health. “We have done a lot of trainings...and teachers walk away knowing they had a really great training day. They are not just sitting and passively learning, they are engaging with the topic,” says Ms. Greenspan.



“Attending to the emotional well-being of our school communities is something that’s always on the forefront of our minds,” says Lauren Greenspan, co-founder of Youth Yoga Project (YYP), an organization dedicated to supporting the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical health of both students and educators. With the heightened stresses brought on by Covid-19, this concern has deepened.

“When the global pandemic hit in March, it changed the way schools looked. [After an unprecedented spring,] we knew that healing and gaining strategies that build resilience were going to be the primary focuses for educators when they returned to school in the fall.”

Ms. Greenspan, and her colleague and YYP co-founder Julia Handelman, have been working with students and educators in grades K-12 in central Ohio for the past five years to impart the mental health benefits that result from using yoga, mindfulness strategies, and movement to cope with daily challenges and the stress that results.

“We achieve our mission by training teachers to take the tools and best practices they know help them stay well, focused, and calm and teach them directly to their students in the classroom,” Ms. Greenspan explains.

“Our idea is to offer professional development through experiential activities,” adds Ms. Handelman. “We give teachers tools and strategies in an engaging way to use for their own self-care. Then we flip that on its side and say, ‘Now this is how you would use them with your students.’”

Noting the increased strains facing both teachers and learners as the pandemic continued, YYP applied to the Jennings Foundation last spring for a grant to offer a virtual, summer workshop for teachers and administrators. The training would allow participants to learn about and practice mindfulness strategies and then develop tangible plans to help them manage any added stress in their buildings in the fall. As Ms. Greenspan states: “We really wanted to put emotional health at the forefront of back-to-school planning. We knew there would be

so many moving pieces and different priorities for educators as they transition the way they do school. We wanted to make our best effort to encourage them and lift them up. If they aren’t taking care of the emotional health of the school community, then nothing else is going to fall in place.”

With grant funding available for scholarships, YYP reached out to their established school partners in the Columbus and South-Western city schools for participants. Due to high demand, they enrolled almost twice the number they expected. Educators came from 10 different schools—elementary to high school—in the two targeted districts.

Creating Structured Time to Plan

The workshop was designed to engage educators as they worked in school leadership teams. Each team was made up of a building’s teachers, administrators, counselors, and other support staff whose role is to focus on the social/emotional health within their school community. The training was divided into four sessions, which were held weekly in July. Topics focused on the following: psychological impact of Covid-19 on staff and students; educator self-care and mindfulness strategies for educator resilience; practical strategies to empower students to stay learner ready in the classroom; and

continued on p. 13

creating structures that support student and staff well-being. In between the live training sessions, the school leadership teams completed extension work and structured planning. The final assignment was to create a thorough and thoughtful back-to-school plan to help students and staff adjust to the “new normal” created by the pandemic. YYP incorporated follow-up sessions and activities into the program, which have been taking place throughout the fall.

Sample Back-to-School Plans from Summer Learning Series

Systems and Structures to implement to support staff self-care and resilience:

High School

- Utilize “Greeting-Reading-Initiative-Debrief” protocol at staff meetings to build relationships and collectively process and heal.
- Survey staff to better understand their needs and experiences
- Provide opportunities of self-care by offering staff yoga weekly
- Call students by name on Zoom as much as possible
- Utilize school news to share mindfulness activities with students
- Check-in surveys for students to better understand their needs and experiences

Middle School

- Share the benefits of mindfulness
- Mindful mornings
- Common Language and goals for the school
- Tap In/Tap Out (protocol to give teachers breaks when needed)
- Teach students to regulate themselves through mindfulness
- Help students get to a place where they are ready to learn using mindfulness tools

Elementary School

- Post a gratitude board in common area
- Use mindfulness methods at the beginning of staff meetings—breathing techniques to transition after teaching all day
- Use breathing techniques for students with behavior issues or anxieties

Youth Yoga Project empowers students to use their most powerful tool... their breath.



Post workshop comments from educators were very positive:

“This course has been an impactful and eye-opening experience.”

“This training brought us together and, thankfully, forced us to think about SEL needs of our students and staff.”

“This training gave so many practical, manageable ideas for incorporating mindfulness practices into staff and student routines.”

“This training made me think of myself first. I realized how much stress I was carrying and learned how to do small movements and breathing exercises to help.”

YYP continues to offer monthly, on-line, self-care yoga classes not only for the summer workshop participants but for any Ohio teacher who would like to join in: (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLr6pcuYWOB60h-B2gPyAIA>) “We know that teachers really enjoy it when we make it as accessible as possible for them to breathe, move, and relax together,” says Ms. Handelman. “It allows them to think outside of the box—they learn how they can take just five minutes to move their bodies, and it refreshes them.

“To be an excellent teacher you have to have stamina, and stamina over your Zoom link is totally different than in-person teaching. The way to build that stamina is through movement breaks.”

Both Ms. Greenspan and Ms. Handelman emphasize the importance of teachers prioritizing self-care in order to better meet the needs of their students.

“We are a school partner that believes in educators, believes in their potential, and believes the school community is creating positive places for young people to thrive in,” says Ms. Handelman. “We want them to know that they are doing a great job. But we want them to know they need ‘to put their oxygen mask on first.’

“To do your best work, you have to take care of yourselves first.”

*For more information contact: Ms. Lauren Greenspan
lauren@youthyogaproject.net*

Inspiring Tomorrow's Scientists

Painesville City Local Schools

Students in the advanced science classes at Heritage Middle School in the Painesville City Local Schools are thinking deeply about their futures. Climatologist, zoologist, plant ecologist, botanist, and forester are just a sampling of the science-infused professions these 6th and 7th graders are already interested in. One is even considering work as an "Invasion Ecologist" (a scientist who studies the establishment, spread, and impact of invasive and non-native species)—because he likes learning about animals.

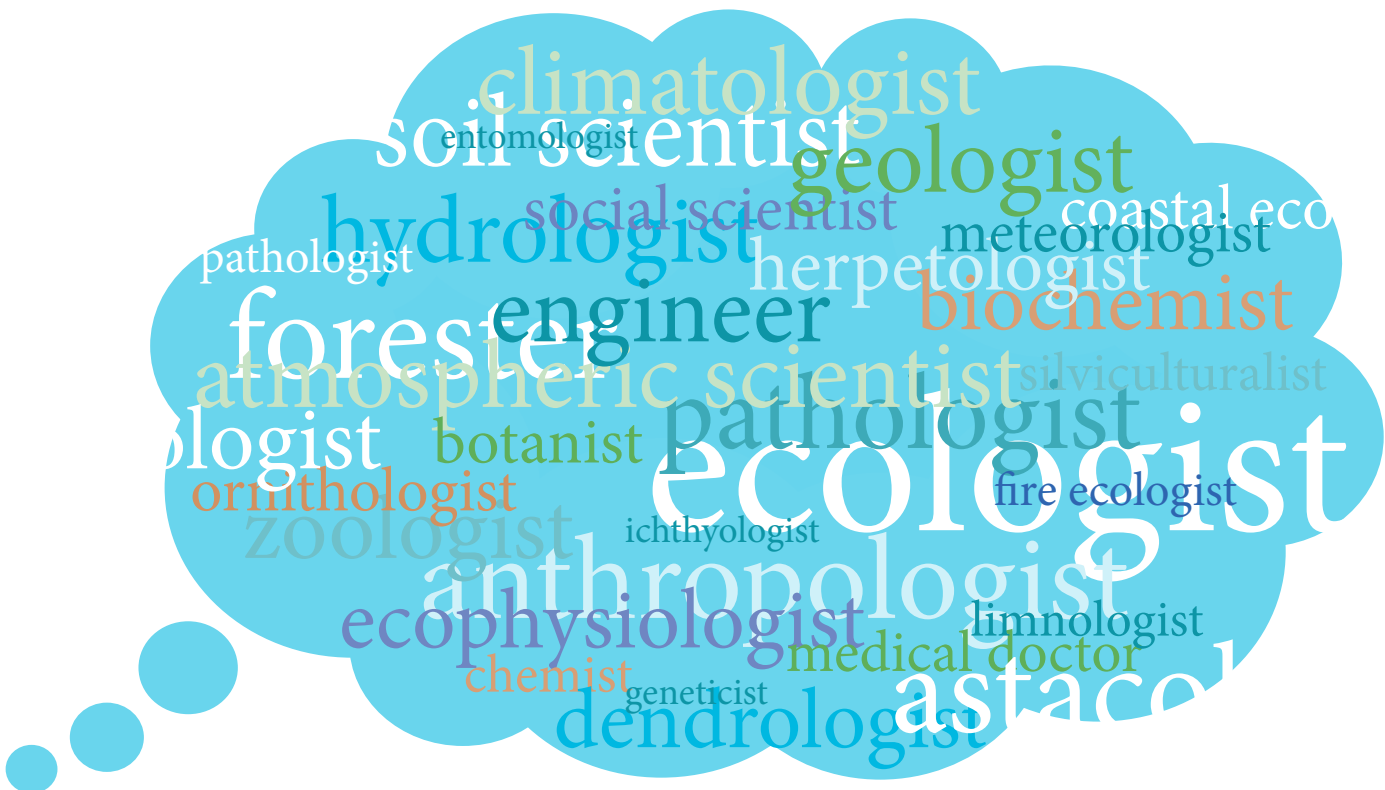
With a grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, two professors, colleagues, and close friends at Kent State University (KSU) designed a program called ELLOS, "Educating Learners & Leaders for Occupations In Science," to introduce young, Latinx students to a variety of science-related careers and to offer them the support they need to envision those titles belonging to themselves one day.

The program is designated for a minority population that is under-represented in science fields, explain Drs. Cassandra Storlie, Division of Lifespan Development & Educational Sciences, and Bridget Mulvey, School of Teaching Learning & Curriculum Studies, of KSU; and it is in the midst of its second year working with students at Heritage. Latinos, they remark, are one of the fastest growing populations, yet they continue to experience educational and economic inequity in exposure and access to

college facilities and science careers. ELLOS aims to help families, teachers, and the community support the academic and career futures of these young people.

ELLOS is intertwined with the students' science studies at the middle school. Assignments, while supplemental to the middle school science content standards, are completed by students both during and outside of class. Drs. Storlie and Mulvey designed specific curriculum modules—one for 6th grade and another for 7th grade—which are presented to students once a month via Google classroom. These units focus on leadership and self-advocacy; science workforce demands; supporting and motivating each other; and information related to college/career readiness. The modules are individualized to both 6th and 7th grade classrooms, and Drs. Storlie and Mulvey continue to refine the assignments with feedback from Heritage teachers. Students also read and journal about specific insights in "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens" (grade 6) and "What Color is Your Parachute? for Teens" (grades 7), assignments that encourage them to explore their own personalities, interests, and leadership qualities. In addition, the students learn about "The Lives of Scientists" through a set of cards that feature biographies of contemporary scientists in a variety of fields and disciplines.

continued on p. 15



Inspiring Scientists continued from p. 14

“We want to make sure to touch students who may not get exposure to these careers or leadership opportunities otherwise,” says Dr. Storlie.

“Career beliefs stagnate by the time students hit high school. By then, it’s too late. Students no longer believe they can get into a science career or participate in any kind leadership opportunity. I feel this is a project targeted to students who need it the most.”

Dr. Mulvey adds that too often science careers are caricatured in the minds of students and even some teachers: “This project opens up the idea that a science career is not just one kind of thing that is done in one kind of place. Science itself is very diverse. You don’t need to love all science to consider a science career. There are so many different types of science to consider and places where it is done.”

An integral component of the ELLOS project is a mentoring program that pairs KSU undergraduate and graduate students with the middle schoolers to provide “near-peer” support. The university students are pursuing majors in a variety of science-related fields yet have broad backgrounds they can draw upon to meet the interests of the middle school students they work with. Contact between students and mentors varies, but Dr. Mulvey says the connection has been formatted to work like social media. Mentors, who were recruited from the Scientistas organization (women who love science) at KSU, have access to the students’ assignments on Google classroom and are

Responses from sixth graders to a question about science leaders in relationship to the pandemic as posted on Google classroom:

“I think that they [the doctors and researchers] are trying to help our country and even our whole world...I appreciate that they care so much that they are putting in money, time and a lot of effort to help us.”

“The scientists and doctors are heroes in this coronavirus because they are helping people and are trying to make a vaccine...”

able to check-in to see what they have accomplished and add positive and encouraging remarks. Informal, virtual conversations between the two also deepen the relationships and the younger students begin to view their mentors as role models, possibly their first exposure to an actual college science major. The younger students are encouraged to ask questions of their mentors to learn more about various science disciplines and to discover what it takes to succeed at the college level. The mentors were selected for their ability to understand and be welcoming to the middle school students as well as their desire to interest others in science.

Dr. Storlie explains that deep learning is entrenched in the ELLOS project as the middle school students will be exposed to science career possibilities and will work to develop leadership skills over the course of many months.

And as one student pointed out:

“I want to be a biologist because I like learning about life and how it works. We should start exploring careers in 7th grade so that we can learn about the career for 5 to 10 years and when we are ready to achieve that, we will have a full understanding.”

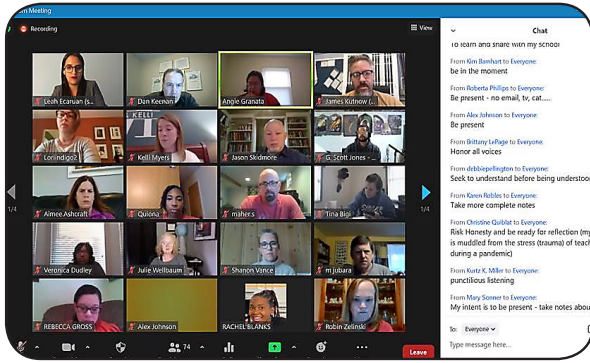
Dr. Storlie believes there are lessons that all educators can learn from the ELLOS project. “The stronger connection you can make to what you are doing in the classroom with something students might use the rest of their lives—such as in a job or career—can be very meaningful to students.

“Also, the more exposure under-represented students get to career professionals who look like them, the more they recognize that career is possible for them. Similar to the student comment I shared, there is a recognition and an acknowledgment that, ‘gosh, if I knew more about this, this could really take me somewhere.’”

“Students need to know about what’s possible,” affirms Dr. Mulvey. “They need to know that science educators think it’s possible for them to have a career in science. Our program is a beautiful integration of focused career counseling in the context of science with the support and mentorship needed to help those possibilities be identified and for students to flourish.”

*For more information: Dr. Cassandra Storlie, cstorlie@kent.edu
Dr. Bridget Mulvey, bmulvey@kent.edu*

thought partner work



Jennings Educators Institute

Session 1 Topic - Creating Cultures of Thinking in classrooms and schools: Stuff you can use on Monday

Presenters: Jason Blair, Wright State University and Dr. Fred Burton, Ashland University

Session 2 Topic - How can you create a culture of professional learning at your school? What does teacher self-care have to do with student growth?

Presenters: Leah Ecaruan, James Kutnow, Greg Brown The Graham Family of Schools

Session 3 Topic - How do we nurture imaginative, critically-aware agency with the student at the center?

Presenters: Jen Lehe and Cindy Meyers Foley, Columbus Museum of Art

Educators Retreat

Presenters: Dr. Michelle Pledger and Ms. Mari Lim-Jones, co-directors of the Deeper Learning Hub

Topic - How efforts to ensure deep learning start and move through meaningful student connection.

Explored - "Shaping the Path for Student Exhibitions" Examining examples of student projects, asking: What work is worthy of exhibition, How is work shown connected and meaningful, and How is the process of critique and revision evident in exhibition?



Ohio educators describe how they felt after the 2020 Educators Retreat. Words to live by as they began a new—and challenging—school year.

Mathematics Institute - Take Aways

Presenters: Dr. Curtis Taylor and Katerina Milvidskaia HTH Graduate School of Education

Math Institute • 6-8 grades Day 1 - Present students with big problems so they can practice mathematical habits, develop mathematical thinking skills and realize there isn't always an answer in the back of the book."

Math Institute • 6-8 grades Day 2 - Classroom discussion is important. With rich discussions students begin to see the valuable insights they bring to the conversation and recognize the wonderful ways they are mathematical. Then they start to formulate their identities as mathematicians.

Jennings 2020 Fund for Teachers

The annual Jennings Fund for Teachers (FFT) program supports outstanding educators who think about their personal and professional improvement in big ways and are willing to take risks to pursue greatness. In spring, 2020, the third cohort of FFT was selected from those who had applied earlier in the year. These teachers had designed educational experiences that would take them to destinations around the globe including western and eastern Europe, Africa, Australia, and Central America. They were to study WWI and WWII battlefields, creativity, biodiversity in Costa Rica, and conservation in Zambia. Closer to home, one group planned to attend a Learning and Brain Conference in Boston while another designed an exploration of the Upper Midwest to examine the history of westward expansion and the resulting conflicts with indigenous populations. Due to the pandemic, all experiences were put on hold with the expectation they will be able to take place in 2021.

COURTNEY TERWILLIGER

Waterville Primary School – Anthony Wayne Local Schools

JODY QUEEN

JESSICA ANDERSON

Litchfield Middle School – Akron Public Schools

JULIE HILL

REBECCA GESELBRACHT

KERRI GUTEKUNST

JILL OSLESON

Amity Elementary School – Deer Park Community City Schools

BRAD BALLARD

MICHAEL DICK

Gateway Middle School – Maumee City Schools

KRISTY DISALLE

Dorr Elementary – Toledo City Schools

AMY BOROS

Hull Prairie Intermediate School – Perrysburg City Schools

KIMBERLY NOFSINGER

R.G. Drage Career Technical Center – Stark County Area Vocational

BRIAN SHAVER

Fostoria Jr./Sr. High School – Fostoria City Schools

ILONA JUREWICZ

John Marshall School of Engineering – Cleveland Metropolitan Schools