

Over the Fence

PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAM RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY

For the past 10 years, the Peer-to-Peer program in Fraser Public Schools has provided a platform for students with autism spectrum disorders and peer buddies without disabilities to form friendships and gain experiences they may not have otherwise had.

"Students engage in mutually beneficial activities that promote social justice and acceptance of, and dignity for, differences that exist among all peers and individuals," said Patty Kovacs, social worker at Fraser High School.

Since 2010, the Fraser staff has worked with Tony Alvarez, a professor at the University of Michigan, to infuse adventure activities in the program. The activities are grounded in the seven adventure beliefs: safety, trust, belonging, freedom, challenge, effective communication and enjoyment. At the monthly FHS meetings, students use the activities as metaphors for challenges they experience in their day-to-day lives, Ms. Kovacs said.

The work of the past seven years was summed up in the article, "Infusing a Peer-to-Peer Support Program with Adventure Therapy for Adolescent Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder," that will appear in the *Journal of Experiential Education* in December. The journal is a primary source of current research for Association of Experiential Education members. It was published **online in August** and is accessible to AEE members.

Ms. Kovacs and a team of staff and students from Peer to Peer attended a recent Board of Education meeting and showed board members and district administrators some of the adventure activities they use, including "Tony's Tubes," a challenge activity that involves the group standing in a large circle and holding hands.

"This particular activity presents challenge, focuses on appropriate boundaries,



and promotes belonging and effective communication among participants," Ms. Kovacs explained.

Several hula hoops are hooked on someone's arm, and must be passed around the circle without disconnecting hands. The hoops travel in different directions and as the activity progresses more hoops are added.

The program has grown since its beginning, both in numbers of students participating, expanding it to elementary schools, and in students who participate.

"Surveys given to student anchors in the program repeatedly cite that they have established and maintained friendships with peers that they would never have formed without being in P2P," Ms. Kovacs said. "Students with ASD have experienced growth in the social domain during their four years of high school as evidenced by annual self-rating scales. Parents of both groups of students have expressed gratitude and provided support for the impact the program has had upon their teenagers. Finally, the depth of pride and joy that the FHS P2P staff and Tony Alvarez experience while guiding activities and facilitating debriefings with P2P students, and the growth and maturity they achieve, is immeasurable."

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fraser Families,



We often tell you about the different initiatives and learning transformations happening in our schools. But, what about when students leave our buildings and begin their lives after high school? How does the Fraser Difference affect students once they graduate?

Last month we shared with you a story about Emily Bankes, a 2013 graduate whose fashion design won her a spot at New York Fashion Week.

This month we share the story of Melisa Rutkelis, Class of 2003, who has worked her way to the upper ranks of our nation's third-largest public school district in Chicago. (You can find her story on page 6.)

Both Ms. Bankes and Ms. Rutkelis attribute their success in part to the teachers and learning opportunities they had in Fraser Public Schools.

We know there are many other stories out there. Throughout the year we will be sharing stories of the great things our **#FraserFamily** grads are accomplishing.

If you or someone you know has a professional or educational achievement or accomplishment you want to share, let us know. It could be featured in an upcoming district newsletter or on our website, social media or cable TV station. You can submit stories online at <http://bit.ly/FraserAlumniSpotlight>.

With Fraser Pride,

Dr. Richards

CURRICULUM CORNER

DISTRICT HOSTS EUREKA MATH PARENT NIGHT

Parent involvement in the learning experience is key for student success. In the beginning of October, more than 250 parents attended the first Eureka Math Parent Night hosted at Fraser High School. After a brief introduction from Assistant Superintendent Carrie Wozniak, parents chose breakout sessions to attend where they could learn about the program in specific grades.

"The goal of the parent night was to make sure parents know what our students are learning in math and how they can support them," said Ms. Wozniak.



Each grade level has a lead Eureka Math teacher that works with the other teachers in that grade at all elementary schools. Additionally, all teachers had several days of professional development dedicated to Eureka Math.

Ashley Fenech, fifth-grade teacher at Salk Elementary, and Andrea Filip, third-grade teacher at Disney Elementary, led one of the breakout sessions. They explained that at times Eureka Math may seem harder, but it is building a stronger foundation for students as they progress through school.

"My kids are in the district with yours," Mrs. Filip told the room of parents. "Just trust the program. I know at times it's going to be hard. But, the thinking that comes from these students is mind blowing. And the math students that they are going to turn into compared to what we were, is really exciting."



Parents could also attend a breakout showing how to find parent resources and lessons in the learning management system, *ItsLearning*. Eureka Math also shows teachers the skills that students master and struggle with. That allows the teacher to pull a small group of students for remediation based on their mastery.

"In Fraser, we want to make sure our kids know the skills; they're not just playing the game of education and going through the hoops of schools to get that A. It's really that they understand the material so that it carries on through their life," said Dr. Donna Anderson, principal at Salk Elementary.

The presentations and parent resources shared at the night are available on our Eureka Math page, www.fraser.k12.mi.us/eurekamath.



Eureka Math in DK

DK students at the Dooley Center are learning math through what they think is classroom play. Our teachers are using Eureka Math to teach the kids how to identify, describe, sort and compare objects.

The students were asked to sort (a new vocabulary word) objects into two groups. After each sorted their objects, classmates discussed the groups with their partners.

Students asked each other how they sorted the objects and listed the similarities and differences between the groups. These discussions allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts being presented, and build collaboration skills.

In addition, students are learning and using their new vocabulary words to describe, express ideas and make connections — ultimately building a solid math foundation for the rest of their educational career.





SIXTH GRADE CAMP PUTS LEARNING INTO ACTION

In Fraser Public Schools, we strive to teach students skills that will help them succeed throughout their education and beyond. Having a growth mindset, working collaboratively and communicating with each other are some of the core skills we teach.

At Disney Elementary, it is tradition for sixth-grade students to spend several days at Camp Copneconic. Teachers, Principal Aaron Sutherland and the chaperones work to make every moment count for the three classes while they are at camp, and provide an opportunity for students to use the skills they've learned in real-life applications.

"During the challenge courses, we dealt with frustration and lack of communication and organization," said sixth-grade Teacher Stephanie McGuffey. "However, we overcame our struggles and had to work through as a team. Forever memories were made, and this camp experience catapulted our sixth graders into an exciting year of life lessons and cherished takeaways."

Manufacturing Day Offers Glimpse of Career Opportunities



The future looks bright for Ramblers seeking manufacturing careers. This year, 120 Fraser High School students visited four local partners to see manufacturing jobs first-hand.

Manufacturing Day is a celebration of modern manufacturing meant to inspire the next generation of manufacturers. In Macomb County, more than 2,000 students visited 60 companies on October 6.

Ramblers visited Faurecia Interior Systems, DWM Holdings, Futuramic Tool & Engineering, and Fisher Dynamics.

"Students were immersed in industrial facilities to learn more about the bright, clean, safe and advanced career opportunities that

await them in our own backyard," said Brent Brasure, CTE Director at FHS.

This year, partners in Macomb County distributed "All-Star Career" trading card kits. The kits were designed to better assist students in understanding the hourly and annual wages, education requirements and job details associated with the most in-demand manufacturing related careers in our region.

RMS STUDENTS ENJOY INDEPENDENT READING

When students find books enjoyable, they will want to read even more. This simple idea is behind Reading Specialist Sara Holcomb's book bin at Richards Middle School.

Students bring a book from home that they have already read, and their donation earns them any book from the collection. This program gets new reading material into the hands of students without any due dates or late fees.

The book bin has a variety of genres and authors. After students realized the books were free, they began gravitating towards favorite authors or series they were familiar with.

"My hope was to get kids carrying and talking about books. When you find something that you like, you want to share it with others. Hearing middle schoolers talking about books they liked is priceless! I wanted to create a culture where reading is just something we do," said Mrs. Holcomb. "The Book Bin is just one more way that we can help our students become life-long learners. Helping our reluctant or struggling readers get excited about reading is the ultimate goal."





WISHING YOU A BOO-TIFUL AUTUMN AND HALLOWEEN SEASON

Edison Latchkey Little Artists worked hard to create a craft that would wish you a BOO-tiful Autumn and Halloween season! Each Little Artist took the raw materials and personalized it in their own special way. These Little Artists enjoy bringing their own personal touch to everything they work on and are very proud of this first project they've created for the 2017/2018 school year. They look forward to bringing many other projects to life as the year goes on.

Until then, the Edison Latchkey Little Artists and staff, wish you a Happy Halloween!



NJHS Kicks Off Year

The Richards Middle School National Junior Honor Society has jumped right in to the new year — electing officers and volunteering in the community.

Nearly two dozen members spent a recent Saturday at Gleaners Food Bank in Warren, volunteering lifting boxes and pallets and folding plastic bags for a neighborhood food donation effort. Each bag holds six pounds of food to help the hungry in metro Detroit.

After two and a half hours, the students had folded 3,625 bags! That's nearly 165 bags per student.

The week before their trip to Gleaners, the 8th-grade students elected four officers. Each candidate gave a brief speech about how they met the five pillars of the organization — service, leadership, character, scholarship and citizenship. After a secret ballot vote, the following officers were elected:

- President** – Molly Upton
- Vice President** – Olivia Rehman
- Secretary** – Avery Sikorski
- Member-at-Large** – Joseph Johnson



Eagles Support Hurricane Relief

The students of Edison Elementary rallied together to help support victims of the recent hurricanes. On Hurricane Help Day, students were encouraged to wear red, white, and blue, and bring in monetary donations.

Students surpassed the goal of raising \$1 per student, to raise a total of \$515.50! All money will be donated and designated to the hurricane victims through the American Red Cross.

ALUMNI VETERANS' PLAQUE

The 4A's recently purchased a second plaque to honor Fraser High School alumni who joined the armed forces. The first plaque was purchased by the Class of 2011 and all 200 spaces were filled up last year.

The second plaque also has space for 200 names. Requirements include that the individual has graduated from FHS and completed boot camp. Alumni who have served can have their names added by sending the following information to Ingrid.Fryia@fraserk12.org:

Full Name • Graduation Year • Branch of Military



Slam-Dunk Presentation

Disney Elementary students got a slam-dunk visit from Jim "Basketball" Jones. This powerful assembly strengthened Disney's PBIS program. In his presentation, "Basketball" Jones focused on making good choices, respecting others, being responsible and being safe.

His talented basketball skills kept everyone entertained as he inspired students and staff to be positive and to work hard to achieve their dreams. Jim shared his personal story of learning as a child with dyslexia. He explained that with perseverance and determination, anyone can overcome obstacles. He continued saying that with the help of dedicated parents and teachers, he succeeded and graduated both high school and college.

Students learned that they choose the effort they put into things and are responsible for their choices, both good and bad.

The purpose for the presentation was for students to understand they can have pride in their school and themselves, to have compassion for others, to persevere when faced with a challenge, and, most importantly, to realize they are strong, important and matter.

SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS FEATURED FUNDRAISERS

Did you know that you can support our schools while doing your regular shopping or going out to dinner? Many of our schools have programs and events that make it easy to support them. You will also find that often our schools are raising funds for local charities or disaster relief. Below is a current list of upcoming events. Please check their homepages to keep up with what they are doing.

DOOLEY LITTLE LEARNERS CENTER

Yankee Candle Fundraiser – 40 percent of funds raised go to Dooley to purchase classroom material. October 20 – January 10. Order online at www.yankeecandlefundraising.com/store.htm and enter group number 990058776 in the Start Shopping Box. Orders will be delivered 2 – 4 weeks from receipt of order.

EDISON ELEMENTARY

Meijer Rewards – If you shop at Meijer, please fill out an online application for the Meijer Community Rewards Program. Type in code #839453 and select Edison. There is no cost to sign up. The more you shop, the more Edison earns.

Target Rewards – If you shop at Target and have a Target Red Card, you can sign up for 'Take Charge of Education' and designate Edison to receive up to 1 percent of your Red Card purchases. Enter code #61707.

EISENHOWER ELEMENTARY

McDonald's Night – McDonald's at the corner of 15 Mile and Utica. Teachers and staff will be taking your orders! November 21, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

TWAIN ELEMENTARY

Chuck E. Cheese's Night – November 6, 3:30 – 8:00 p.m. at 31920 Gratiot, Roseville, MI 48066. Mention you are with Mark Twain Elementary and a percentage of your purchase will be sent to the Mark Twain Parents Club, which sponsors many of the activities at Mark Twain.

FRASER HIGH SCHOOL

Carson Coupon Books – To raise funds for a plaque to honor alum who are currently serving in the military. Community Days 2017 – Coupon Booklets for Carson's are \$5 each. Coupons can be used from November 8 – 11, even on Bonus Buys. Over \$500 of coupon savings included in the book. To order online, [click here](#). The books will be mailed to your home for free. Or email Ingrid.Fryia@FraserK12.org or Nancy.Scopas@FraserK12.org

Yankee Candles – The National Honor Society will be selling Yankee Candle products October 26 – November 7. Orders should arrive prior to Christmas. To shop online, go to www.yankeecandlefundraising.com and enter group #990089129 in the Start Shopping box. Proceeds go toward our local chapter expenses and various community service projects.

ALL SCHOOLS

Kroger Rewards – All of our schools participate in Kroger Community Rewards. You must re-enroll each year to continue participating. Visit krogercommunityrewards.com. Sign in to your Kroger account and select Enroll Now. Search for your school or program of choice. A percentage of your shopping total will help support assemblies, field trips and other school activities. Search for any of our schools or enter the code below.

DISNEY ELEMENTARY – 91475

EDISON ELEMENTARY – 90225

EMERSON ELEMENTARY – 83823

EISENHOWER ELEMENTARY – 90787

SALK ELEMENTARY – 44800

TWAIN ELEMENTARY – 90156

RICHARDS MIDDLE SCHOOL – 42763

FRASER HIGH SCHOOL BAND – 17663

FRASER HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR - 90484

FRASER
HIGH
SCHOOL



**Moonlight
Madness
AUCTION**

Silent/Live Auction

Friday, February 23, 2018

7:00 p.m. – Midnight

Vintage House

31816 Utica Road, Fraser

\$30 per person

*Includes Hors d'oeuvres,
Pasta Bar, Dessert,
ALL Beverages, Dancing
and FUN for ALL!*

**TICKETS ON
SALE NOW!**

Contact

Ingrid Fryia
ingrid.fryia@fraserk12.org

Athena Kovalcik
athena.kovalcik@fraserk12.org

*Must be 21 or older
Benefits FHS Student
Activities and the Classes
of 2018-2021*



FHS ALUM LEADS CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS MUSIC PROGRAM

Melisa Rutkelis, Class of 2003, was recently named the Arts Education Specialist for Chicago Public Schools — a district of more than 600 schools and 400,000 students.

While at FHS, Rutkelis participated in multiple art and athletics programs, including band, choir, theater, dance and tennis.

“My junior year, I auditioned for drum major and began leading the marching band. For me, that was the true moment when I knew I wanted to be in front of a musical ensemble for my career,” she said.

Her career path took her to schools in both Indiana and Illinois, before landing her a job at Mark Twain Elementary in Chicago Public Schools in 2012.

“There was no band, choir or afterschool music [at Mark Twain Elementary School],” she said. “I received over \$55,000 in grants I wrote for the school. I funded a band, choir, rock band and mariachi program. All of these happened after school, and I saw 900 students K–5 in general music during the day.”

This past summer, she was promoted to Arts Education Specialist for the district. One of her main duties is running the All-City Program, which is a collection of dance, theatre, modern band, jazz band, concert band, orchestra, choir and alternative music ensembles. She will also lead district-wide professional development and music festivals.

Rutkelis added that all of the arts teachers at FHS supported her and encouraged her to challenge herself to achieve goals that seemed impossible.

“I can tell you though, I won’t stop here, I will keep on climbing for the rest of my life. Never stop learning and challenging yourself.”

RMS Knights Honor the Castle

For the second year, Richards Middle School is working hard to connect students, parents and staff to the school community through the Honor the Castle philosophy.

The mindset reminds everyone that the RMS community is made up of many components and each one contributes to make the whole better.

“The word ‘honor’ is the currency of elevation and one cannot be an extension of a place they do not honor,” RMS Principal Huston Julian explains. “Why the word ‘castle’? It connects to our nickname, the Knights, but also relates to the purpose of a castle during medieval times being a large building fortified for protection. I want our RMS community to feel that RMS is home and a place worth valuing.”

Different connectors are used each month to engage the RMS community and provide everyone with opportunities to become involved in that theme. They are continually looking for ways for the staff, students and families to be a part of the theme each month.

October’s theme was about creating goals for achievement and success. Goal-setting skills are essential for the Knights. Goals can empower students to strive for self-improvement and have control over their action steps. By reaching these goals, Knights continue to gain confidence and are able to identify, adopt and maintain the actions that will help them be successful in the future.

One goal-setting model that Mr. Julian shares with students involves three steps. First students



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— **Huston Julian**
Principal, Richards Middle School

identify a clearly-defined and measurable goal. Next, they create and design an action plan for accomplishing the goal. This includes breaking their goal up into smaller steps (if needed) and identifying what resources are needed in order to reach their goal. Finally, students reflect upon whether their goal was met or not.

“Every single person that comes in contact with RMS, I believe, has the same common goal. And, that is our students’ success and growth,” explained Huston Julian, Principal of RMS.

Marching Band Extends Streak



The Fraser High School Rambler Marching Band has extended its streak of excellence — taking home straight First Division ratings and the honor of being the largest band in the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association District 16 Marching Band Festival.

This is the 17th year in a row the band has earned straight First Division ratings and the 12th year in a row to be largest in District 16, which includes all of Macomb and St. Clair counties and a portion of Oakland County.

The 260-member band performed in a steady rain before a panel of three judges at Warren Mott High School. The judges award ratings in three categories: Music, Marching, and General Effect/Showmanship. A First Division, or superior, rating is equivalent to an “A.”



FraSer Performing Arts
preSents

Seussical

the Musical

Friday, November 10th - 7 PM
Saturday, November 11th - 2 PM
Friday, November 17th - 7 PM
Saturday, November 18th - 7 PM

Ticket information:
www.frasertheater.org
(586) 439-7312

Fraser Performing Arts Center
Fraser High School
34270 Garfield Rd.
Fraser, MI