

# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

Volume 8 Issue 4

HAMS

January 2014

## Principal's Message

Dear HAMS Parent,

Happy New Year from Huntingdon Area Middle School! As we try to stay warm during these frigid days, we look forward to some exciting events on the horizon.

### St. Jude's Math a Thon

The week of February 10th Huntingdon Area Middle School students will be participating in a St. Jude Math a Thon to raise money for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. St. Jude Math-A-Thon is a free, education-based fundraising program for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The program includes a free math curriculum supplement for grades K-8 that students complete after obtaining sponsorships from family and friends. All math problems are also aligned to common core standards. The funds raised by the students benefit St. Jude, where doctors and scientists work to eradicate childhood cancer and other catastrophic childhood diseases. St. Jude designed St. Jude Math-A-Thon to supplement a teacher's existing curriculum, while also teaching students the importance of helping others. To participate, students ask family and friends for pledges to solve math problems in the St. Jude Math-A-Thon Funbook. We feel this win-win, by participating our students will be sharpening their math skills while helping other children less fortunate. It embodies what it means to be a BEARCAT!

### CDT

A second round of Math and Reading CDT testing will take place this month as well. It is exciting to know this data will be



B

E

A

R

C

A

T

S



referenced throughout your child's career here at Huntingdon Area School District. We will be able to track their progression through various 'reporting categories' as they move forward to the high school.

Pennsylvania Writing Field Test

### ELA Field Test

HAMS students grades 6-8 will be participating in a stand alone writing field test for the state. The results will be used to implement a writing component into the proposed grades 6-8 English Language Arts assessment.

### Cyber Safety/Parent Meeting

Cyber Safety is an important issue for all of our students, inside and outside of school. Knowledge is power and we want your children to be as educated as possible about the risks associated with social media, online activity and technology. We have arranged for two gentlemen from Intermediate Unit 11 to present to our students on Cyber Safety on Monday January 13. Mr. Jigar Patel and Mr. Eric Yoder will be presenting as well as surveying the student body about their online accessibility and behaviors. The questions will be answered using hand held devices while students sit in the seats and is totally anonymous. The data will be presented to parents beginning at 5:30pm in the Large Group Room at the middle school.

### Huntingdon House

On January 28, 2014, Nicole Houck, a representative from Huntingdon House, will make a presentation on Sexual Harassment to all eighth grades students. Education regarding comments, physical contact, and sexting is paramount for ensuring the safety

### **Principal's Message—Cont.**

of all students. What begins as a joke can have serious legal repercussions.

### **Financial Aid Night**

Dan Wray, a representative from Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency will meet with interested parents./guardians regarding postsecondary studies and financial advice on April 17, 2014 at 6:30 PM. As a graduate of the Coast Guard Academy and the father of five grown children, Mr. Wray provides a wealth of information. He is an inspirational speaker who will our students find success in a struggling workforce.

### **Computer Animation Club**

There will be sign ups for an after school Computer Animation Club. The club can have 20 members and will meet Mondays after school from 2:45pm - 4:00 in room 221.

End of Semester/ 9 weeks

A reminder that the 1st semester and 2nd nine weeks ends on January 23. Also, there is no school for students on Monday January 20th.

### **Bus Assignments**

A reminder that students can only ride their assigned bus. Any changes to that must go through Central Office.

As always, please contact Mrs. Rieffannacht or myself here at the Middle School with any questions or concerns.

Have a great January!

Mr. Brian Pelka

## **Models, Microscopes, and Music!!!**

**By: Mrs. Thomas**

During the course of our Science Curriculum, we learn about all of the kingdoms of life. One of the stops on our quest to learn is “Protists”. Because most protists are microscopic, a great deal of time is spent looking at them under microscopes.

A few species of protists live in mutualism with termites. How do both organisms benefit? The protist benefits as it gets its food from the wood the termite eats. The termite benefits from the protist as the protist helps the termite to digest the wood they consume.

We also had a close-up look at some pond-dwelling protists: the amoeba, the euglena, and the paramecium. Each organism moves and eats in a different manner, and the microscope was able to validate this point.

Working cooperatively with a partner, each group also developed and created models of a protist. Students learned about the cellular structure of protists and their functions, and were able to use the microscopes to get a close-up look at their movements as well as their cellular structure.

Music was incorporated into this unit using a song about protists. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dGzPStabVs>

Next up is the Fungus Kingdom! Stay tuned!

### ***Middle School***

**“Working together  
so all students can  
learn”**



## Travel Club Festivities

By: Mrs. Decker



On November 25, the Travel Club had an out of the ordinary activity period. Students in the club brought food from around the world. WE were able to experience foods that originated in Australia, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, and Latin America to name a few. Thanks to all of the students and their families who participated! We has such tasty treats!



In addition, thanks to Linda Miller, we had two distinctive guests, Dan and Galla. Dan entertained us on the accordion, while Galla shared her talents on the balalaika. Information was shared about Russian style music. Every student had an instrument to play from the Treschyotka, Buben (tambourine), Kolokolchiki (bells), to the spoons and Bororodskyoye (pecking chicken). There were also some lovely sets of Matryoshka dolls to examine. Overall, this experience was quite amusing for all involved.



## 7/8 CATS

### Reading and Language Arts

By: Mrs. Perez (Miller)

While the weather outside is frightful, Reading and Language Arts classes for the 7/8 Cats are so delightful!

Seventh grade students in language Arts and reading recently finished reading an adapted version of Dicken's class tale "A Christmas Carol." Students analyzed the play version of Dickens classic and created Christmas Carols they felt would appeal to Scrooge. Such memorable classics include an adaptation of Miley Cyrus's hit "Wrecking Ball" and an adaptation of "Jingle Bells" entitled "Jingle Money." Coming back from break, in the spirit of Ebenezer's change of heart, students will be researching a charity of choice, and writing a persuasive speech to convince their peers to donate to that charity.

Eight grade language arts students are exploring dialect across the United States and its effect on connotative language in our society. They are then applying that knowledge to Mark Twain's classic story, "The Jumping Frog of Calveras County." In the weeks following break, our eighth graders will be creating their own short stories written in the various dialects found across the United States.

For eighth grade reading, students are finishing up their unit on the Holocaust. After reading the play, "The Diary of Anne Frank," an historical fiction novel, The Boy Who Dared, and one nonfiction book of choice, students creating an Animoto project. In order to do this, information was synthesized from the three passages to briefly summarize the text-to-text connections. Students then shared the significant similarities and differences with the rest of the class. While the topic is quite dismal, intrigue is usually high as information is attained about this event in history.



## Financial Aid Presenter

**By; Mrs. Miller, Guidance Counselor**

On April 17, 2014, all parents and guardians will have the opportunity to listen to an informative presentation by Daniel Wray, a representative from Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. This distinguished individual met with all eighth grade students during the months of November and December at HAMS. Mr. Wray, a graduate of the United States Coast Guard Academy and father of five children, visits with students across the state regarding career aspirations. Although it may seem premature to discuss financing post secondary studies, Mr. Wray will share pertinent information explaining how students may begin searching for scholarships as early as the seventh grade. In addition to financial aid points of interest, he will discuss career trends for the future. Because of the positive response to Mr. Wray, numerous students in the eighth grade asked that he return for an evening presentation with interested parents/guardians of all middle school students. The middle school years will go quickly and we aspire to prepare all young people for success.



**HAMS**

**2500 Cassady Avenue  
Huntingdon, PA 16652**

**(814)-643-2900**

**Fax: (814)-643-6513**

**Website: [www.huntsd.org](http://www.huntsd.org)**

## HAMS Fights Cancer

**By: Mr. Mazurowski**

Cancer is a terrible disease that seems to affect everyone in some way. It's easy to see why so many have been affected when the looking at the statistics, which are staggering. According to the National Cancer Institute, from 2005 to 2009, about 54% of males in the United States were diagnosed with some form of Cancer. That obviously means that men have a better chance of getting cancer than staying cancer free. Females are not far behind. During that same time period, about 42% of females were diagnosed with cancer. The mortality rates are heartbreaking as well. 21.9% of males and 15.1% of females in the United States have died because of cancer from 2005-2009.

Huntingdon Area Middle School has been affected as well. A few years ago, one of our science teachers, Joe Hammers, what diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Most people would take this news into depression and start asking questions like "why me?" Mr. Hammers did not. His outlook was optimistic and inspiring. He would say things like "I have been given 50 years of a great life, I can't complain." Even though he was knowingly fighting a losing battle, he never gave up. He left us with an old saying that is still referred to around the middle school, "Winner's never quit, and quitters never win." In honor of him, HAMS started a Relay for Life team through the American Cancer Society, appropriately named "Joe's Bros and the Per-Sisters."

One of the main goals of Relay for Life is to raise money to support cancer victims and help fight cancer through research. Cancer is not a disease that goes away on its own and researchers have been working hard at finding treatments and cures. This research obviously takes a lot of money. The HAMS Relay Team has raised thousands of dollars for this worthy cause over the years.



HAMS Fights Cancer– Cont.

Just before the Holiday Break, HAMS held a Student vs Faculty Basketball game. Coordinated with this game, students were asked to donate money to help fight cancer. As an added incentive, the homeroom that raised the most money was given VIP seating in the Bearcat Zone and had the opportunity to play in part of the game. This year, Mrs. Dickson’s homeroom took these honors. There was also a half court shot at halftime where the students paid \$1 per shot and if they made it, they would receive \$10. In the end, Huntingdon Area Middle School raised nearly \$800.

We hope our efforts will help save lives and ease the burden of cancer of victims and their families. We have already had a success story with Mr. Alan Secrest. He is a special education teacher at HAMS who was diagnosed, battled and has survived cancer. As a middle school family, we are proud of Mr. Secrest and all of the students who have taken this challenge to heart and have truly made a difference.



## 7 BEARS

**By: Mr. Thurber**

It is January and before you know it HAMS will be halfway through the school year. The second round of CDTs are starting. The CDTs will help teachers and students determine how they are doing in regards to the standards. It is important that each student tries their very best on these, as it will help them prepare for the PSSA testing that is right around the corner.

In math class we are in the middle of the graphing chapter. Students will be reviewing terms like coordinate plane and functions. Then they will be asked to apply what they know to new terms like linear function, slope, and rate of change. Upon the conclusion of the graphing chapter students will enter into percents and data collection. The students will be working in groups for many of these lessons. This will allow them to share ideas and create solutions to problem solving type questions.

We are looking forward to warmer weather as the second half of the year approaches. Winter sports are in full swing, and students will have the option to switch to a new activity soon.

## 6 Bears Spring

**By: Mr. Vescovi**

After a long holiday break we are back at school and the 6 Bears have lots to do in the new year. In January the students will be taking Math and Reading CDT tests again. The second marking period will also come to an end this month as well, marking the half way point of the school year.

In Holt 1 math classes, the students will shift their focus onto collecting and displaying data as well as performing arithmetic operations with fractions. In Holt 2 math classes the students are exploring graphs and functions. All classes are currently preparing for the PSSA tests which are coming up in the Spring.



## A High School Student Reaches Out

**By: Mrs. Miller, Guidance Counselor**



Hello! My name is Madeline Suba and I am a junior at Huntingdon Area High School. Right now I am working on completing my graduation project: helping several girls in sixth and seventh grade to explore college/career plans and prepare for successful futures. So far I have really enjoyed getting to know these young ladies, they all have tremendous potential and I look forward to seeing them build dreams and set (and achieve) both short- and long-term goals. As for me, at the high school I enjoy actively participating in as many music programs as possible as well as playing soccer and running track. I have had the opportunity to take three semesters of Russian at Juniata College and this spring will continue my Russian studies in addition to taking an English class at Juniata. When I'm not at school, rehearsal, or sports practice, I spend time performing at the McConnellstown Playhouse, volunteering at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, and helping out on my family's farm. In my spare time I like to read, watch documentaries, and run. After high school, I plan to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to serve my country and study psychology, continue to law school, pursue a career in criminal justice, make the world a better place, and never stop learning.



**Mrs. Dickson**

Homeroom that raised the most money for the Teacher vs Students basketball game to be given to the American Cancer Society.



## It's Time to Try School Breakfast

**By; Mrs. McNitt, Food Service Director**

The majority of Americans feel breakfast is important, but hectic mornings make it difficult to fit the meal in every day. Every parent has probably already mentioned to their child(ren) at one time or another that 'breakfast is the most important meal of the day'. Even with that in mind, 40 percent of families say that their child does not eat breakfast daily, according to Kellogg's Breakfast in America survey.

Too many children show up at school hungry and hungry children cannot learn. Eating breakfast at school can help families save time in the morning. Each school day, the District's breakfast program offers students a healthy breakfast that will help them get set for a busy school day. Breakfast items offered include fruit and fruit juice, whole grain breads and cereals, and a variety of low-fat and non-fat, flavored or unflavored milk. Each school breakfast served meets federal nutrition standards limiting fat, calories, and sodium.

Currently, students can participate in the Middle School Breakfast Program between 7:30 AM and 7:45 AM. Students eat breakfast in the cafeteria and are dismissed from there when it is time to report to homeroom. The price of a full price school breakfast is \$1.00, while students who qualify for reduced price meals pay \$.30. Students who qualify for a free lunch can also get a free breakfast.

To meet the needs of Middle School and High School students, and to encourage increased participation in the School Breakfast Program, Huntingdon Area Middle School and High School will be starting a Bearcat Breakfast Cart Program. This mobile cart will help to make breakfast more accessible to students in the morning. Students will be offered different menu choices including limited hot entrée items along with the breakfast program offered in the cafeteria.

Please watch for more details this month concerning the beginning of the Bearcat Breakfast Cart at the Middle School.

## Phys. Ed.

**By: Mr. Carlson**

This year in PE, we have brought back one of our favorite activities....Archery. So far, the boys have dominated the archery championships, until Heather Gutshall came along. She channeled her inner Katniss Everdeen and took home the championship for the 7/8 class in the 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period. Hopefully, this will give the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester girls some motivation to catch up to the boys. This year is exciting, because we are planning to get all of the winners together to compete and become our school wide champion. We still have 10 more spots to fill, so bring your "A game."

## Homework Help

Monday through Thursday of each week, help for students will be available. Our homework Help tutoring program is available to all students that need more time to develop academic skills and time to complete homework. Hours for help are 2:45 –4:00 PM and transportation will be the responsibility of the parents. Please contact the school if you are interested in the program.



## Students vs Staff

### Basketball

**By: Mr. Mitchell**

The 4th annual Teachers vs. Students basketball game took place in the Huntingdon Area High School gymnasium December 20th. The Huntingdon Area Middle School teachers have had a Relay for Life team for several years and decided to use the game to bring awareness to cancer and as a fundraising event. There is currently a teacher that has battled cancer, there has been a loss of a teacher in the recent past, and multiple families who have lost loved ones from cancer.

The students were encouraged to bring in a donation to support the cause. The homeroom with the most money enjoyed "special" courtside seats in the Bearcat Zone. They were also given an opportunity to play several minutes against the teachers. Mrs. Dixon's homeroom 115 brought in \$145.08. Students were given a chance to win \$10 at halftime of the game by taking half court shots for one dollar. Jack Ritchey and Cuyler Leidy managed to sink this difficult shot and were rewarded with \$10.

Every student who entered the gym attempted a shot from the foul line area to help give the student team a head start against the teachers. The scoreboard read students-67 teachers-0 before the tipoff. The All Stars had some difficulty early on in the game. They couldn't seem to managing hitting the bonus 10 pointer awarded for a half court shot. Once they got on a roll, things were not looking so bright for the Junior High Boys and Girls Basketball players. Sixth grade math teacher, Mr. Vescovi, only managed to dunk once this year, much to the dismay of the student body.

Mrs. Mykut provided a very lively play by play. The teachers also had to face multiple "challenges" throughout the game. Some of these challenges were no-hands defense, 23 on 5, defense staying in the paint, girls only scoring, and only teachers with a 4 in their number were allowed to score. It was a hard fought battle down to the last few seconds. The final score was Teachers 109 and students 101. The most important stat of the game was **\$775.84**. That was the grand total that will be donated to cancer research. A big thank you goes out to everyone that supported this wonderful cause.

## **EVENTS**

January 15, 16 & 17– Math CDT’s  
 January 20 No School  
 January 23 End of the 1st Semester  
 January 29 Report Cards go Home  
 January 27, 28 & 29—Reading CDT’s

### **Mission**

**Our community engages all students to maximize their learning and leadership potential as global contributors.**

### **Vision**

**Our students achieve their full potential and experience success, leaving school inspired to continue learning every day.**

### **Values**

**Safety, Excellence, Respect, Integrity, Lifelong Learning.**

## **Yearbook**

Orders can be placed NOW for the 2013-2014 Yearbook. Orders can be placed ONLINE with Jostens, Inc.  
[www.jostens.com](http://www.jostens.com)  
 Search Huntingdon Middle School  
 Cost: \$22.00 + Tax= \$23.32  
 Order your Yearbook now!

## **TELEPHONES**

A telephone, located in the main office, is provided for students’ use. A student MUST first have permission from the teacher to come to the office to use the phone. The student will then gain permission from the office staff. The student is then required to fill out the phone log located by the telephone. **Student phone calls are limited to forgotten school work, lunch or an item needed for class. Students will not be given permission to call regarding after school arrangement of other non-school related questions.** Phones privileges may also be suspended if a student is not forthcoming with their reason to call . (Page 17 of the Student Handbook)

## **ALTERNATE BUS ASSIGNMENT**

Alternate bus assignments will NOT be granted for social reasons. Parents MUST contact Central Office, transportation 643-4140 ext. 2126 to have this approved.

## **SNOW MAKE-UP DATES**

February 14 and April 17, 2014

--	--