

# POTTSTOWN PRIDE

ACADEMICS AND ACTIVITIES  
PARTNERS FOR EDUCATIONAL  
EXCELLENCE



## SPRING-SUMMER 2024

**Our Mission:** *Prepare each student, by name, for success at every level.*



# POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## POINTS OF PRIDE

### SPRING-SUMMER 2024



Student activities are an integral part of our educational program. Co-curricular programs are not only a way for students to have fun, but also a valuable educational tool. Activities provide an opportunity for all students to participate and help build community recognition and identity.

Co-curricular activities are designed to instill school pride and teach life-long lessons. They support the academic mission of the school district and promote citizenship and sportsmanship. The activities program is a testing ground for the physical and emotional development of our young people.

**IT IS BETTER TO BUILD STRONG CHILDREN THAN TRY TO REPAIR ADULTS.**

For more information about Pottstown School District,  
visit our website at [www.pottstownschoools.org](http://www.pottstownschoools.org) or call 610-323-6274.



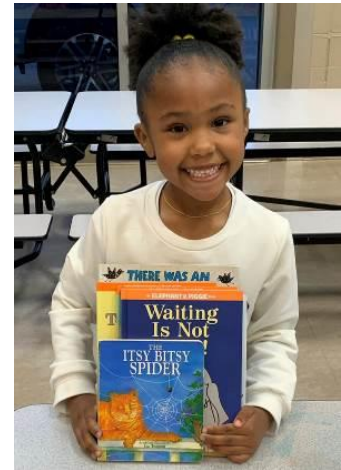
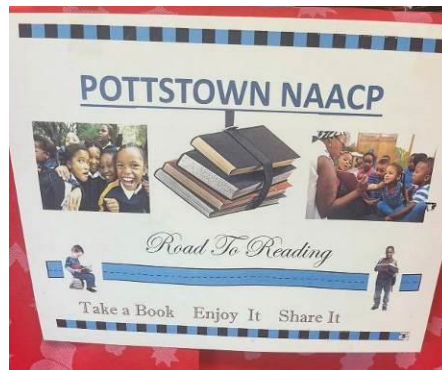
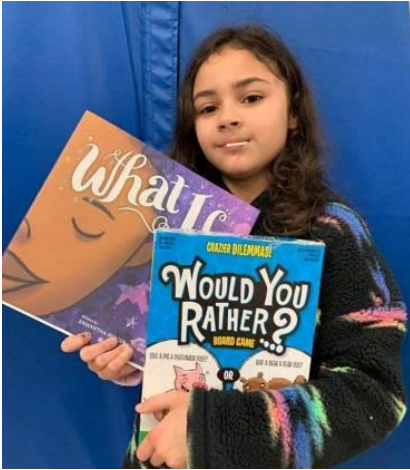
**Pottstown School District is proud of its past and confident of its future.**

Go to <http://www.pottstownschoools.org/AlumniPages.aspx> and then click on any of the highlighted years. The yearbooks provide an engaging narrative into the proud history of Pottstown. One can go as far back as 1914 to see the interest and fashion of the day. Pottstown School District may be one of a few districts in the country to provide this unique feature as a way of sharing community pride in our schools. Pottstown High School has over 20,774 graduates who have gone on to distinguish themselves in every field of endeavor and given us reason to say *Proud to be from Pottstown*. It is an honor to share this look back to younger days with our graduates. We are not posting our most recent yearbooks because the High School still has some hard copies for sale. Not every yearbook is posted. The missing years are listed on the website. If anyone is willing to lend us one for scanning, please contact John Armato at 610-323-6271 / 484-256-7491 or [jarmato@pottstownk12.org](mailto:jarmato@pottstownk12.org).



## **Partnership with NAACP puts students on Road To Reading**

Thanks to an anonymous donor and a strong partnership between the school district and the local chapter of the NAACP, hundreds of students now have reading books that they can take home and keep for a personal library. Read all about it in [Mr. Evan Brandt's](#) story published in the Mercury.



## **Pottstown School Board adopts zero tax hike 5th straight year**

At the May 16 board meeting, the \$84.8 million budget was adopted by a vote of 7-0. Board members Steve Kline and Deborah Spence were absent.

And while the 41.96 mill tax rate will remain the same for the fifth straight year, some tax bills may look a little different nonetheless.

### **PA Property Tax / Rent Rebate Program**

Income	
\$0 - \$8,000	\$750
\$8,001 - \$15,000	\$578
\$15,001 - \$18,000	\$345
\$18,001 - \$35,000	\$285
\$35,001 - \$45,000	\$285

- 2024 Program increased maximum from \$650 to \$1,000
- Pottstown Rebate Amount \$285-\$750
- 2024 Income Requirement Raised from \$35k to \$45k
- Claimant Data based off \$35k income threshold
- Pottstown median Household Income (2022) \$57,647

During last year's budget adoption, the board voted to deliver on its pledge to return money to taxpayers with some of the increased state aid the district received, and that was done by providing an \$87 rebate to all property owners, which reached several thousand people.

However, that method provided no financial relief to renters.

This year, the board is taking a different approach with its tax relief, targeting low-income residents and renters by "piggybacking" onto an existing state program targeting that same group.

## **Grant Supports Diverse School Libraries** - \$60K grant helps make Pottstown school libraries more diverse.



Barth Elementary Fourth Graders with Lori Cushman, President Justamere Foundation, seated at center. Rear, from left, are Joe Rusiewicz, Executive Director Foundation for Pottstown Education, Nikki Alutius Barth Elementary Librarian and right, Kelli Wolfel, Barth Elementary Coach (Photo courtesy of Anthony Santiago)

The Foundation for Pottstown Education was recently awarded a \$60,330 grant from the Exton-based Justamere Foundation to enable the purchase of a diverse collection of books for all six Pottstown School District libraries. This grant will provide more than 2,700 books underscoring the commitment to fostering inclusivity and representation within the Pottstown School District.



## State Rep Joe Ciresi speaks up for public education



Thanks to our State Representative Joe Ciresi for speaking on the floor of the PA House of Representatives advocating for public education and calling for the passage of House Bill 2370. The HB2370 was successfully passed and now moves on to the Senate.

House Bill 2370 would put into law the recommendations of a bipartisan commission that found Pennsylvania must spend an additional \$5.1 billion to erase school funding disparities that a state court ruled unconstitutional. The legislation would also end what critics call gross overpayments to cyber charter schools and set minimum salaries for teachers.

## School officials and students urge passage of education funding proposal

Montgomery County school officials and students urge legislature to pass education funding proposal.



## **School is out for the summer BUT...**

School may be out for the summer, but there is still lots of activity and opportunities for students. Student athletes who are hoping to improve their skills were taking part in football drills on Franklin Street fields and basketball at high school Strom gymnasium. Our career technical education program, is sponsoring an exploration week. Each day, small groups of students meet with instructors of the various programs and spend the morning learning about that particular career path while taking part in hands-on activities. Seeing all of these students actively involved in positive activities along with coaches and educators giving their time to make a positive difference in our community makes me proud to be from Pottstown.



## **Pottstown Celebrates Juneteenth**

Thanks to **Mr. Evan Brandt**, for not only capturing the events of the day and the historical significance, but sharing the sense of community and pride in Pottstown.



A large crowd came out Saturday for Pottstown's Juneteenth Community Celebration on High Street.  
(Evan Brandt — MediaNews Group)



## **BASEBALL**

### **PHS Student Athletes Honor Fallen Heroes**

Members of the PHS Trojan baseball team and coaches spent a rainy Saturday morning at Highland Memorial Park, placing American flags at the gravesites of members of the military who served our country. Coach Chris Petro said, "I am proud of the members of our team, who understand and recognize the importance of honoring those members of the military, who sacrificed so much to preserve the freedoms that we enjoy in our country."



## **SENIORS 2024**





**Baseball Seniors:**





# SOFTBALL

## Named to The Mercury All Area Honorable Mention Team

- Keiara Lesley
- Savannah Richards



## Softball Seniors 2024:



Keirara Lesley



Savannah Richards



Jayla Zipay



# GIRLS' LACROSSE

## Lacrosse Seniors 2024





## Lacrosse Seniors 2024



LaRayna Rosado



Sa'ryah Young

### Named to The Mercury All Area Honorable Mention Team

- Ebony Brown
- Kaitlyn Campbell





## **BOYS' TENNIS SENIOR DAY**



Kyle Chaney



Dominic DiPietro



Christopher Fuentes



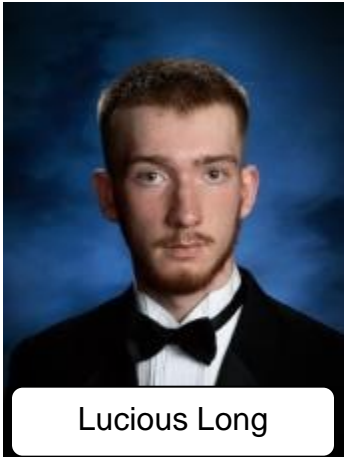
Mehki Jenkins-Glover



Anthony Kutsch



## BOYS' TENNIS SENIOR DAY



Lucious Long



Jayden Pray



Austin Sundstrom



Ethan Yost



# **BOYS' and GIRLS' TRACK**

## **Off to a Running Start - The Glenn Report**

Congratulations to the student-athletes of our boys and girls track teams and their coaches. They took part in the Phoenixville Classic along with 25 other teams. Here are some of the highlights in the report from Coach Glenn:

### **Girls Shot:**

- Ashley Weller - 2nd Place with a distance of 31 feet 8 inches
- Nyel Thompson - 4th Place with a distance of 30 feet

### **4x100 Relay:**

- The girls' team achieved 5th place with a time of 55.27 seconds

### **4x200 Relay:**

- The girls' team secured 4th place with a time of 1 minute and 59.04 seconds

### **Boys 110 Hurdles:**

- Tyrese Washington clinched 1st Place with a time of 14.81 seconds

### **High Jump:**

- Dillon Mayes achieved 5th Place, clearing a height of 5 feet 8 inches

### **Boys 4x100 Relay:**

- The boys' team took 3rd place with a time of 46.52 seconds



## **Named to The Mercury All Area First Team – Boys' Track – 110 Hurdles**

- Tyrese Washington

## **Named to The Mercury All Area Honorable Mention Team – Boys' Track – 110 Hurdles**

- Dillon Mayes

## **Named to The Mercury All Area Second Team – Girls' Track - Shot Put**

- Nyel Thompson

## **Boys and Girls Track Seniors 2024**



Aliza Banks



Layla Bearden



Jayden Bostic



Mujahid (MuMu) Corbitt



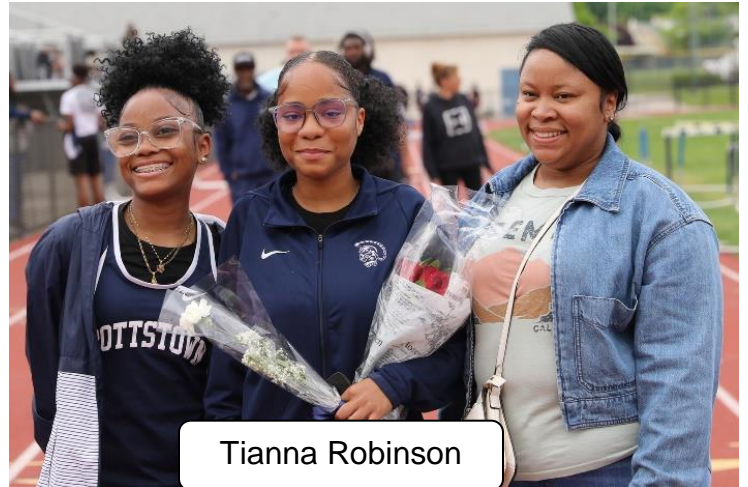
## Boys and Girls Track Seniors 2024



## **Boys and Girls Track Seniors 2024**



DiMark Lyons



Tianna Robinson



Tyrese Washington



Ashley Weller



## Unified Track celebrates Inaugural Season

Trojan Proud of the student-athletes of our first ever Pottstown High School Unified Track Team. The team coached by Renee Soeder and Gianna Fazio have enjoyed participating in our school's inaugural Unified Track season. Coach Soeder said, "Our athletes and partners have worked so hard this season and I am so excited for our district and community to see an underrepresented population of students recognized and celebrated. I love watching our opportunities for students with disabilities grow within our district. We have the opportunity to be an example of inclusion and acceptance for our entire community and it is my hope that through this, we can open more doors and create more opportunities for our population of individuals with disabilities within the community as well."



**Nayianna Clyde** was recognized during the Senior Day program.



Coach Soeder shared some of their individual accomplishments during the season.

### Stats this season over 3 meets:

- ☆ **Elizabeth Fine** - A 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finish in the 100m; 2nd place finish in the Mini Javelin
- ☆ **Xavien Vasquex** - 1st and 2nd place finish in the 100m, two 3rd place finishes in the Mini Javelin
- ☆ **Geovanni Houpe** - 1st and 3rd place finish in the 100m, a 1st and 2nd place finish in the Long Jump
- ☆ **Nayianna Clyde** - 1st and 2nd place finish in the 100m
- ☆ **Malaysia Williams** - two 3rd place finishes in the 100m, two 2nd place finishes in the Mini Javelin
- ☆ **Alana Young** - two 1st place finishes in the Mini Javelin
- ☆ **Crystal C Gonzalez Guardado** - two 2nd place finishes in the 110m
- ☆ **Daniela Castillo** - two 1st place and a 3rd place finish in the 100m





## UNIFIED TRACK SENIOR





# HIGH SCHOOL

## The Trojans Have Landed

PHS 2024 Italy Tour - The Trojans have landed from the parking lot of PHS to the beautiful artwork and scenery of Italy; our PHS students and sponsors are enjoying a rewarding and culturally educational tour.





## **PHS Students Advocate And Celebrate**

Students from PHS Early Childhood Education program traveled to Harrisburg with a twofold mission to both advocate and celebrate. They met with our state representative, Joe Ciresi, and state senator Tracy Pennycuik, to talk about ways to support preparing students to enter the workforce. As part of the celebration of Technical Education Day at the State Capitol our students also prepared informational displays.





## **A tree grows in Pottstown**

Thanks to members of Pottstown CARES, a youth organization of students from Pottstown High School, and the Hill School, who helped improve the environment and add to the aesthetic appeal of the high school landscape. Students and their advisor spent Saturday morning digging holes and planting trees that will become part of a tree garden in front of the high school. School board member Tom Hylton lent a helping hand with the planting and shared some of his expertise about the role that trees play in improving the quality of air we breathe.

Not all of the student effort was put into digging and planting. Pottstown teacher Robert Decker added to the educational element of this project as several of his students were responsible for surveying the plot of ground and determining proper placement to ensure healthy tree growth. Justin Baker, Pottstown School District Director of Co-Curricular Activities, and one of the advisors of Pottstown CARES was also part of the planting crew. He said, "I am proud of our students who are making a positive difference in our community and doing their part to support a healthy environment."





## **Come Grow with Us**

Who knew that PHS has its very own vegetable garden. Where our students are learning the skills needed to be a successful gardener and much more. Thanks to PHS teacher Marci Bieber and her students of the Pottstown High School Gardening Club we have a very productive vegetable garden in the high school courtyard.

The club has an ambitious set of goals which include:

1. Share the food we grow with the community members in need.
2. Teach elementary kids how to garden/grow food.
3. Create a pollinator garden.
4. Plant a sensory garden for our students with special needs.
5. Expand our garden by adding additional beds, trellises, and a wooden fence with an actual gate.
6. Plant flowers around the garden area.
7. Add raspberry and blackberry bushes.
8. Grow our own seedlings under the grow lights we received through DonorsChoose.
9. Learn about soil health and how to improve it.
10. Begin a composting program to make good use of culinary and cafeteria food scraps.

During the weekend, some of the students who were on hand preparing the garden for the next crop included: Michele Cocar, Rooney Salazar, Ariana Wilson, Lauryn Kutsch, Youssef Mahmoud, Leslye Manzanares.

Miss Bieber said, "I'm very proud of these students who are not only learning important skills, but are developing a sense of community service. I encourage our students to come grow with us, we are growing plants, knowledge, friendships, and community. We have strong leadership with our officers."

President – **Annasophia Chhern**

Vice President - **Aniyah Wells**

Secretary - **Michele Cocar**

Historians - **Rooney Salazar, Anilyse Arey, Carliam Rodriguez**

Co-Treasurers - **Youssef Mahmoud & Ariana Wilson**





## **DECA Students take on National Competition**

Thanks to **Emily Castillo**, Pottstown High School DECA Public Relations Officer for her report. DECA chapter members at Pottstown High School participated at the ICDC conference in California, April 27-30, 2024. DECA has over 35,000 members worldwide. The international conference is an opportunity to test their skills in a number of marketing events. The purpose of DECA is to educate students about various aspects of business, while promoting leadership, hard work, and productivity. Through DECA, students are encouraged to explore numerous occupations and utilize resources to challenge themselves. Our attendees were challenged to complete a test as well as role plays in front of judges.

PHS had a total of 4 students who attended to compete. Those individuals were Adam Alaoui, Elizabeth Adedeji, Layla Bearden, and Jayden Pray. Layla Bearden and Elizabeth Adedeji competed in the School Based Enterprise category. Adam Alaoui competed in the Personal Financial Literacy category and Jayden competed in the Restaurant Food Service Management category.

Adam stated, "I had an amazing time, it was a great opportunity. I was able to network with so many people from around the world."

Elizabeth thanked DECA and Pottstown school district, "It gave me the opportunity to connect with students who had the similar interests as me."

They may not have won the elusive DECA award, but had a memorable experience.

DECA president Layla Bearden stated, "Nationals was such a great event, I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity, I will cherish these memories for a lifetime".





## **Your Vote Counts**

Representatives of PA Youth Vote visited the high school to talk to students about the importance of civic responsibility and utilizing the vote to have their voice heard on issues of concern. Ten new eligible voters were registered today and will be able to participate in the next election.



## **PHS Students Earn a Million Dollars**

Pottstown High School seniors **Mehki Jenkins-Glover,**

**Najae Perez, Austin Sundstrom,** and **Regina Fleming,** after having been accepted to Lehigh University, and receiving multiple scholarships, can appreciate what it means when we say hard work pays off. The total four-year value of the scholarships they have received is approximately \$1 million. Their academic excellence, along with good citizenship and participation in co-curricular activities made them attractive candidates to Lehigh University. Additionally, Mekhi, Austin and Regina were accepted into the engineering, four + one program which will enable them to graduate in five years with both a bachelors and master's degree. No question hard work pays off. Thanks for giving us another reason to say, proud to be from Pottstown.





## [Class of 2024 Information](#)

The Class of 2024 is Pottstown High School's 144th graduating class.

- Class of 223 students
  - Number of girls – 114
  - Number of boys – 109
- Post High School Plans:
  - Continuing Education:
    - 4-year college/university - 73
    - 2-year college/university - 32
    - Trade/technical school - 25
  - Armed Services – 4
  - Work World – 14
  - Other (homemaker, unemployed, unknown, etc.) – 65
- Scholarships/Awards – total value for senior class - **\$7,653,752**



For the 144th year Pottstown High School said farewell to our graduates. This year's class of 223 grads adds to the list of over 20,774 PHS Trojans who have gone on to distinguish themselves in every field of endeavors. They become part of our proud past and give us reason to be confident about the future. Congratulations to them and thanks to teachers, staff, administration, school board, parents, family and community who has played a role in shaping their future.

You are all reason to say "Proud to be from Pottstown."

No matter where the journey of life takes them - Once a Trojan, a Trojan Forever!

You can also visit our district [Facebook](#) page to see a recording of the entire ceremony.

### Class of 2024 Photos and Remarks

- ❖ The Valedictorian is **Austin Sundstrom**.
- ❖ The Salutatorian is **Emily Castillo**.
- ❖ The Class President is **Adam Alaoui**.
- ❖ The class was led out onto the field by **Mr. Cal Benfield**, PHS Teacher for 22 years.





## Sharing a Meal Together

At Pottstown High School today we took time at the ESL picnic to celebrate the diverse cultures in our community. A great opportunity to learn about and appreciate the variety of backgrounds that help make up our Pottstown community. What better way to have discussion and share viewpoints, then while enjoying some outstanding homemade foods.





## **Firefighters on call 24/7**

**Beckem Cole** and **Jesse Ryder**, Pottstown High School class of 2024, found out firsthand what it means to be a volunteer fireman on duty 24/7. Early the morning of their high school graduation they were called to a high-rise fire at Robert P. Smith Towers on High Street in Pottstown. As members of the Pottstown Phillies fire company they helped put down a fire on the fifth floor of the building and assisted in the evacuation of 60 residents. By 10 AM they had turned in their firefighter gear and were taking part in the high school graduation rehearsal program. Later that evening, in their cap and gown, they joined the other 221 members of the 144th Pottstown High School graduating class to receive their diplomas. The Phillies fire engine was on hand outside the stadium to give a blast of their horns and lights to recognize the achievements of their fellow firefighters. along with the entire class of 2024. PHS students serve the community, another reason to say, proud to be from Pottstown.





## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### Middle School Students' Reading Skills Earn Awards

Congratulations to the members of our middle school Reading Olympics team for their recent success in the county competition. Combining their reading and comprehension skills with teamwork, they placed second in the competition that involved three rounds of rapid-fire questions testing the recall and comprehension abilities of students. The 60 questions were selected from a 45-book reading list that each team had to read.

Eighth graders, **Lucy Zuniga** and **Lillian Green** lead the team that was a successful blend of Reading Olympic veterans and first-time participants. Special thanks to our scorekeeper, Kim Petro and Mr. Luke Johnson for providing a post competition team dinner.

Activities like Reading Olympics, promote a strong culture for academic achievement and teamwork that provides us with another reason to say, proud to be from Pottstown!





## Pottstown Middle School band director Katherine German reports on the Jazz Band



The 7/8 Jazz Band performed at the Emmaus Jazz Festival on Friday, April 12th. They received the second highest rating of "Outstanding". The saxophone section was rated the best section in our band and **Levi Jaycox** received recognition for his drum solo in "Watermelon Man." There are still lots of opportunities to hear them perform with 8 more performances this school year including the spring concert, Conrad Weiser Jazz Festival, High Note Festival, PSMA Craft/Vendor Fair and trips to all four elementary schools



## They came for the music, stayed for the rides

The Pottstown Middle School 7/8 Concert Band, 7/8 Jazz Band and 5/8 Choir participated in the High Note Festival in Allentown. The morning started off with a judged performance. The concert band and jazz band, under the direction of Mrs. Katie German, each earned the highest ratings of "Superior." The choir, under the direction of Mrs. Lori Hoshaw, represented Pottstown with a solid performance and rating of "Good." Following this event, all the students and their directors enjoyed the rest of the day on the rides at Dorney Park.





## **The North Bay Experience**

Many of our middle school students, along with their teachers and volunteers, are gaining valuable experience in developing self-confidence, teambuilding, communication skills, and environmental knowledge. They are on a five-day learning experience at the North Bay Educational Center in Maryland. They are taking part in a wide variety of activities which challenge them to expand their boundaries and build self-confidence.





## **Middle School library 10,000 stories and counting**

The Pottstown Middle School Library has been a busy place this year. Librarian Andrea Roberts happily reports that over 10,000 books have been checked out so far this year by students and staff. Roberts said, “The library is of tremendous value to our district and the students. It holds materials for everyone and this year, by tracking each month I found circulations reaching above 10,000. We surpassed where we were last year. I was able to add thousands of books to our collection to meet student reading interests.” She paid specific attention to who materials were circulating to, and how they were used.

“I noticed a need to have books in languages other than English available to our students. As quickly as books written in Spanish were purchased and put on the shelves they were quickly checked out. Now we have more books on the shelves for students who read in multiple languages. Early in the school year a student checked out two copies of Charlotte’s Web, one in English the other in Spanish. The student said, this is my mom’s favorite book and now she can read it to me.”

Roberts noted, “Our Middle School library is where students gather for programs, classes, and clubs. Colleagues are in and out of the library to collaborate and find resources. Our library is available to students and staff every morning, throughout the day, and after school. Having an operating school library provides daily access to high-quality materials to students. So many heartwarming moments happen in our school libraries.”





## Simply the best

After looking at the results of the Conrad Weiser Jazz Spectacular, “simply the best” is the only way to describe the Pottstown Middle School Jazz Band. They won every award given!

- ☆ **Aiden Ondik** won Best Saxophone Soloist
- ☆ **Royer Rodriguez** was awarded Best Brass Soloist
- ☆ **Levi Jaycox** was given the Best Rhythm Section Soloist award



The band's director, Katie German said, “This year's jazz band is a group of go-getters who are intrinsically motivated because they love playing jazz music. We learned a total of 6 tunes - they were always hungry to keep learning! The band is a tight-knit group with strong friendships and support for each other.” Their hard work has paid off and given us another reason to say, proud to be from Pottstown.





## ELEMENTARY

### Good Citizenship Recognized with Science Assembly

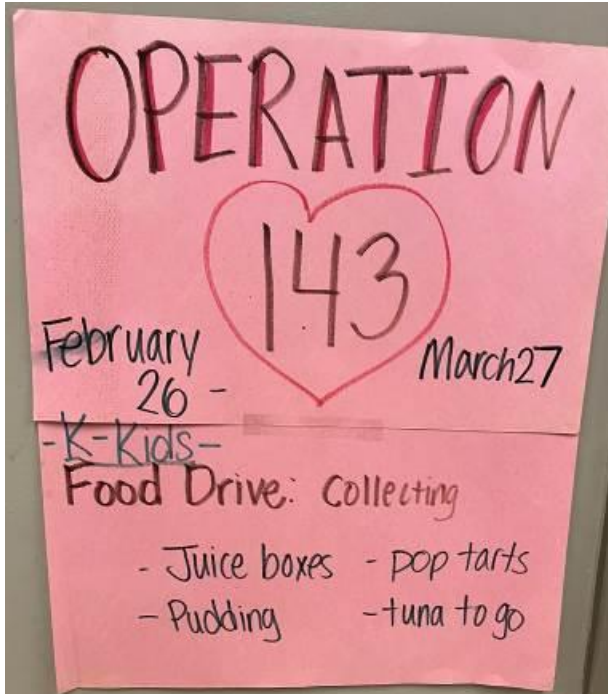
Students at Lincoln Elementary school learned that following the school's merit rules can earn them a schoolwide science assembly. Thank you to all at Lincoln Elementary for helping to build a culture of good citizenship, and desire to explore new ways to achieve academic success.





## Student Club Lends A Helping Hand

Student members of Rupert Elementary School's K Kids, which is a youth organization associated with the local Kiwanis, are doing their part to help families in need. With the help of their teacher advisors Kelsey Hultz, Lisa Stephenson and Athena Procsal, the fourth graders collected several hundred pounds of non-perishable goods that were donated to Operation 143, which provides backpacks of food each weekend to students in need. Kelsey Hultz said, "I am so very proud of our students who are learning at an early age, the importance of community engagement and lending a helping hand to those in need. We are helping to build a strong culture of good citizenship." This effort by the students is another reason for us to say, proud to be from Pottstown.





## Students Welcome The Eclipse at Special Events

Students and teachers across the district took part in special eclipse viewing events. Thanks to Mr. Evan Brandt from the Mercury for covering some of the festivities in photos and on video.





## **PA Education Secretary visits Rupert for Drop Everything and Read Day**

**Khalid Mumin** even talked a bit to the Pottstown children about fair school funding.

You might not know it from looking at him, but 6-foot-6-inch Khalid Mumin considers himself to be a real “couch potato.” At least that’s what the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education told the students at Rupert Elementary School Friday where he visited for Drop Everything and Read day. The book he chose to read to two fourth-grade classes was, by no small coincidence, titled “Couch Potato” and Mumin’s animated reading of the story made clear that he started his career in education as an English teacher.

According to the American Library Association, Drop Everything and Read day, or D.E.A.R., is “a national celebration of reading designed to remind families to make reading a priority activity in their lives. This day is celebrated every year on April 12th for author Beverly Cleary’s birthday.”





## Let's Have Lunch



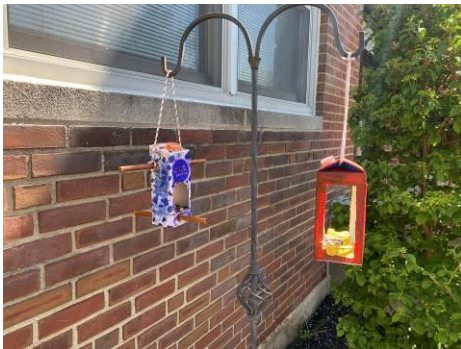
If you could have lunch with anyone in the world, from any time period who would you select? That interesting question was the topic of this year's **Pottstown McDonald's writing contest**. Elementary and middle school students used their writing skills to express why they selected their lunch partner for the day. Hope you enjoy reading their responses and appreciate how they express their feelings. A special thanks to **Bruce and Marcia Graham**, the owners of the local McDonald's restaurant for their continued support of our students. They have sponsored the writing contest for over 20 years and host the awards program at their restaurant where winners received T-shirts, bookbags and of course a Happy Meal.





## **Lincoln Students give Mother Earth a helping hand**

Students at Lincoln Elementary school spent time on Earth Day, giving mother earth a helping hand. They cleaned up the school grounds to help beautify the campus. Some students created bird feeder projects at home that they brought to school, and filled with seed for their feathered friends. Hoping to add some colorful plants to the landscape, students walked through the meadow in back of the school to spread wildflower seeds. In the classroom, students learned some lessons about the importance of preserving the environment and protecting mother nature. Writing stories and coloring pictures about their love of nature were all part of the day.





## **Rupert Students Celebrate Bike to School Day**

Students and adults at Rupert Elementary school helped celebrate National Bike To School Day on May 16. Over 90 students, some with their parents accompanying them, rode their bikes to school today. Members of the Pottstown Police Department were on hand to provide students with free bike locks, book bags, and literature about safe biking. Principal Matt Moyer said, "I'm very happy to see so many of our students enjoying a healthy and environmentally friendly way to travel to and from school. I hope that it becomes one of their choices for a lifelong recreational activity."





## It's all happening at the Zoo

Barth elementary students and staff took an educational field trip to the Philadelphia Zoo. Students got to see and learn about many species of animals while at the same time enjoying the day of camaraderie with their fellow classmates and teachers. Principal, Mike Ishler said, "Typically this is a first-grade field trip. However, the consensus of the teachers was that the learning experience and team building opportunities were something that our entire school could benefit from and serve as a topic for classroom discussion."





## **On the Road to Success**

Pottstown Pre-K students celebrated their graduation today, prepared to enter kindergarten in the Fall. They are on the road to success and becoming the PHS Trojans class of 2037. Their hard work will pay off and give us more reasons to say, proud to be from Pottstown.





## **Let's have a Picnic and Read**

Students, family members and teachers at Franklin Elementary picked a beautiful day to celebrate their annual reading picnic. Several hundred family members and students found a cozy spot on the Franklin campus to eat lunch and enjoy, reading some favorite stories. Principal Beth Kramer said, "I'm excited to see so many of our family members joining our students and teachers sharing some positive relationship building moments and reinforcing for our students the importance and joy of reading."





## TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Congratulations to Pottstown School District educators who were selected by their peers to be recognized as their building teacher of the year. They were honored at our school board meeting. Read what their colleagues had to say about them, and you will know another reason we say, proud to be from Pottstown.



### Barth Elementary

**Jaime Stringer** is an essential part of Barth Elementary School. First and foremost, Jaime is an excellent teacher! She goes above and beyond to care for and educate her students to their highest potential. She uses real life situations to teach her students on their level. They are always having fun while learning and they are definitely given lots of love! The class makes pancakes and all sorts of other goodies, and they go on fun field trips! Stringer makes sure that her students are included in every activity no matter their age, disability and/or capability. She always goes above and beyond to ensure her students' success and love for learning. The love and dedication she shows her students is invaluable!

Stringer has great respect and compassion for her students and colleagues. She has gone above and beyond for her students and colleagues in so many ways. Stringer wears many hats at Barth. She's kind, patient and so caring. She is a welcoming and supportive co-worker anytime we need ideas and suggestions to better meet the students' needs. She is a great asset to our building. Jaime does more for Barth than she should. She works all day long - oftentimes not even leaving her classroom for lunch or prep. She organizes our building pretzel sales, which the students and staff look forward to each week. Jaime orchestrates our building spiritwear sales which everyone loves! She is always a bright voice during our kickball games, cheering everyone on from behind the microphone!

Mrs. Stringer is the BEST! Stringer should most definitely be the Barth Teacher of the Year!



### **Edgewood Learning Center**

**Tricia Mitchell** is the 4th and 5th grade emotional support teacher at Edgewood. She has worked in the district since 2016 and has previously taught emotional support at Rupert Elementary and learning support at the Pottstown Middle School. Tricia is an amazing educator. She is constantly providing her students with engaging lessons that teach to their level. Her teaching is not only appropriate for her students' needs but also helps them to learn, grow and improve their skills. She is consistent in her teaching and in her expectations for behavior. Her diligence in providing appropriate education while holding her students to a high standard is seen by how many of her students have found success at Edgewood and have transitioned back to their home schools successfully. Tricia exemplifies what it means to be a special education teacher. Tricia is calm, patient, knowledgeable, and innovative; everything you want in a teacher. She is always willing to help and assist others. Tricia is our building union rep and has consistently been available to assist union members. She is always willing to answer questions or help to find answers to questions if she doesn't already have the answer. She is always willing to help and assist with any of our students in the building. She is a fantastic coworker as well. She is always there to be a listening ear, provide support or throw around ideas as to how we can best support our students. She has trained her dog, Maizie, to become a therapy dog. Maizie spends several days a week in Tricia's class providing support to both students and staff at Edgewood. Tricia is a dedicated and professional educator. The time and care she puts into planning and implementing new and engaging lessons is second to none. Her work as an educator is to be admired.

### **Franklin Elementary**

**Bridget Volinskie** is the 2024 Teacher of the Year for Franklin Elementary School. Bridget was born and raised in Pottstown. She graduated from Pottstown High School in 2008. She attended West Chester University where she received her Bachelor's of Science degree in Special Education. She has been a learning support teacher at Franklin for 10 years. She resides in our community with her husband Geoff and their two wonderful children. Her oldest son, Colton, is currently a pre-kindergarten student at the North End Early Learning Center.

Bridget is extremely dedicated to our profession and her students. She goes above and beyond to prepare for teaching everyday and for assisting her paraprofessionals. She is always prepared for IEP meetings and is professional when conducting the meetings. She uses the required materials to teach her students who are on many different grade levels. She makes sure to customize the individual needs of each and every student. Bridget utilizes a plethora of researched based materials such as Language for Learning, SRA Connecting Math Concepts, SRA Decoding and SRA Corrective Reading. She is always creating social stories to address any needs that her students may have. She utilizes a classroom reward system that she uses daily to motivate students. Bridget has also created and customized additional behavior/reward systems for her students. Bridget communicates with her homeroom teachers and parents/guardians on a daily basis. She is organized with her schedule, but is always flexible in adjusting her schedule to accommodate the students and the teachers that she works with. Bridget supports her students with obtaining their weekly goals on Lexia, Dreambox and Reflex. She also incorporates additional resources such as Kahoot, EPIC and Freckle to make sure the children are gaining extra practice.

Bridget is a member of the Leadership and Fall Fest committees at Franklin. She is the Franklin Special Education Representative and attends the quarterly meetings. Bridget is often seen at Trunk or Treat, the 4th grade chorus/band concerts and Art and Music Night. Bridget plays a large part in helping to organize and run the 4th Grade Awards Ceremony each year with her colleagues. She has also been a mentor to several of our new special education teachers at Franklin. She is an active member of the Pottstown community and can be seen around town at various events with her family. Thank you, Bridget, for everything that you have done for your many Franklin students and colleagues, the Pottstown School District and the community of Pottstown. Congratulations on being chosen as the 2024 Franklin Teacher of the Year. It is very well deserved!



### **Lincoln Elementary**

**Gerri Poulos** works tirelessly to make sure the needs of some of our most struggling students are met. She has had to do extra work this year with her team being short staffed. She comes to work with a positive attitude and a smile on her face everyday. She is always willing to help another teacher when asked. Gerri works with research-based programs with her intervention students. She makes them fun and engaging. The students are always happy to work with her. Gerri made the books your ticket to the world to encourage students to read and organized assemblies for students. Gerri will cover classes to help teachers out. She shows up to work with a positive attitude every day. She has a great relationship with her students and works hard for them every day.

### **Rupert Elementary**

Rupert is both pleased and proud to announce [Kaylee Weldon](#) as our teacher of the year. I first met and worked with Kaylee during summer programs. At that time she was still Kaylee Shumaker. Since then Kaylee has married Steve and has a beautiful daughter Harper. She is one of the hardest working individuals I have encountered.

The staff at Rupert said the following things about Kaylee and why she was selected:  
Kaylee is always ready and available to help a teacher with whatever they need.

Mrs. Weldon has gone above and beyond to help me with students who are struggling. She makes things simple to understand and makes herself available amidst all of her other responsibilities.

She works really hard and advocates for us.

Kaylee is very well organized with her support for teachers. She is dedicated and helpful. Her presentations are very thoughtful and clear. She goes above and beyond with her support!

Kaylee wears so many hats in this building. She advocates for not only the students but the teachers. She is always there for us to support the teachers in their academic planning and just as a listening ear. She is an asset in this building. Kaylee runs around the building jumping in where and when needed, often without being asked. She is patient and works hard every second of every day.

EVERY time I ask her for help, she responds instantly with the information, or assistance. She has helped me several times when I needed a last-minute regular ed teacher for an IEP meeting. I think she really understands the challenges that all the different departments face (special ed, ESL, intervention, etc.) and does a good job facilitating compromises. I can't think of anyone more deserving of recognition than her.

She is a pleasure to work with. She is able to answer questions and is willing to help find answers to help our students.

Kaylee has been an amazing addition to our Rupert family and we are so happy to have the opportunity to work with her.

### **Pottstown Middle School**

During her 15+ year career at Pottstown Middle School, **Kim Petro** has been a strong, consistent presence and advocate for the children, the teachers, and the community. It's difficult to imagine the building running without her and her myriad contributions. In her classroom, in the school as a whole, and for her students as individual human beings, she should be respectfully considered for a long-deserved honor as "teacher of the year." Kim is clearly dedicated to her craft as an educator, and always striving to add more to the experience she gives her students in language arts. She could go up against any expert on what is best for 7th grade language arts students through her deep content knowledge, building up our school's curriculum, constantly adjusting with the data and district initiatives. She seeks out and implements the newest techniques for challenging topics like teaching writing. She also keeps her students' learning perspectives and abilities in mind, coming up with creative, engaging projects for stories as diverse as Christmas Carol to Rikki Tikki Tavi to Jackie Robinson, yet tying them all together to prepare her pupils for not just the tests, but life. Kim has gone above and beyond, not just balancing many different roles, but adding to her plate every school year. When she tackles a task, she devotes



herself to the details and implementation. Just to name a few, she has served as: department chair, grade/team leader, union representative, sophisticated ladies advisor, spelling bee organizer, field trip organizer, staff mentor, curriculum writer, summer and afterschool teacher, and more. Her room is always open for patient and understanding advice and counsel, for many hours after school, for students and teachers alike. Finally, Kim is respected by many past graduates as one of their most influential teachers throughout their Pottstown k-12 education. It's always fascinating to watch the 12th graders read the 7th grade letters written from her class. It's especially the case that she is a role model to many girls who are high achievers, who she kept pushing into the advanced learning and into seizing extracurricular opportunities. She has kept tabs on how her students progress not just through high school, but college, and beyond. She is the first to volunteer herself to step up and get the job done. She will make sure she masters the task to deliver it to her team. Her students always show progress in their scores.

### **Pottstown High School**

**Mr. Woodley** is constantly evolving as a teacher. He reflects on each lesson and works tirelessly to incorporate relevant and interactive strategies to engage his learners. He continually designs Escape Rooms for his students along with other teachers in his hallway.

In Personal Finance, he designed a classroom money economy where students use Personal Finance money to pay bills, such as chair rent, cable bills, and water bills but they can also use it to purchase tickets to sporting events or culinary lunches. One of the more elaborate games is the Cash Fall Game where two students stand at the bottom of the stairs with buckets and the other students throw money over the rail and the students at the bottom get to keep what they catch for their personal finance bank accounts.

His MIS Students created a Semester at Sea Voyage utilizing all of the MIS Skills. This project requires students to make spreadsheets, databases, and websites of the voyage that they have mapped out. This year, the focus of the voyage is heritage, with them adding to their voyage each month based on the culture being celebrated that month. For Example, March will be Irish heritage and they will research popular landmarks, languages spoken, currency, and cultural celebrations in this region of the world. Students then work their way through each other's voyages, learning about other countries that they did not visit on their voyage. His MIS students, known as the MISfits, also provide in-house IT support for teachers in the building.

Some of the other exciting ideas are his semester-long project Rollercoaster Tycoon and multiple vocabulary games that also involve seasonal themes. Students play Monopoly in Personal Finance where they keep track of their money with a check register and they write checks to pay for their purchases throughout the game. He uses movies and games, such as Buddy the Elf and Super Mario to create assignments that are engaging and entertaining. He also created a review game based on the television show Squid Games for Personal Finance.

In 2015, Dave Woodley began the Trojan Man Club. This club continues to grow each year. Dave has mentored more than 50 students. He remains in contact with many of them, helping with college and/or obtaining jobs following graduation. They have raised money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and the Breast Cancer Coalition. He is also a member of the PBIS team and the ERT team at the high school.

He cares about all students. He works with the Special Education Department and ESL teacher to ensure that all students who enter his classroom are welcomed and challenged. He approaches each day with excitement and an admirable energy. Dave is a valued team member, working with his peers to make PHS an enjoyable place to work. Lastly, Mr. Woodley is a graduate of PSD and is proud to give back to his community.





## **FALLEN TROJANS**

The Pottstown School District is proud of the members of its Trojan family and will honor its deceased alumni by recognizing them and their accomplishments in our "Fallen Trojan" section. Anyone wishing to have alumni recognized should provide appropriate information to:

John J. Armato, Director of Community Relations,  
230 Beech Street, Pottstown PA 19464 or email [jarmato@pottstownsd.org](mailto:jarmato@pottstownsd.org).

- ♦ **James Earl Rodgers** – **Class of 1953** - Retired Pottstown Police Chief James Earl Rodgers of Pottstown passed away peacefully on April 9, 2024, in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Born in Williamston, North Carolina on September 9, 1934, to the late Violetta Leola (Biggs) and Osborn Rodgers, he was the oldest of four children. He relocated with his family to Pottstown, Pa on September 1, 1947. Jim or Earl as he was called by many was educated in the North Carolina and Pottstown School System and graduated from Pottstown High School in 1953.



While in high school, he was on the track team and captain of the cross-country team, as well as a member of the choir and playing the tuba in the band. He accepted the Lord at an early age at the Second Baptist Church located in Pottstown, Pa. Later, he went on to earn an associate degree in the Administration of Justice and Community Service from the Pennsylvania State University in 1975. In 1981 he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in the Administration of Justice also from the Pennsylvania State University. In 1954 he joined the United States Air Force where he rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant within the U.S. Air Force Training Command. He later served at bases in New York, New Mexico, Washington DC, and Wyoming. During his military career which spanned from 1954 to 1958 (active) he was tasked with the training of maintenance and support crews for those assigned to Lockheed U-2 spy planes. He later served in the reserves from 1958 to 1962. After serving his country Jim was Pottstown's police chief from 1974 to 1991, after serving for five years as a sergeant and one year as the captain of the force. As a part of his law enforcement training, he achieved the rank of expert marksman. As Chief, he created several lasting and impactful initiatives. He instituted a Crisis Intervention Service, a Crime Prevention Unit, and a Police Award Program. He was instrumental in the development of a cooperative instructional program between the police department and local school districts. Chief Rodgers also created an honor guard within the Pottstown Police Department to represent the Borough of Pottstown. He is credited with updating and utilizing the latest computer technology and police communications system of its time. Himself a recipient of the department's medal of valor award, Rodgers also received recognition from the International Police Chiefs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Executives, the Jewish War Veterans and a United States Navy recruiting award, as well as numerous other community and national law enforcement honors. Upon retiring and ending his career in law enforcement, he acted on his passion to help others by establishing the Interfaith Community Development Corporation. The goal of this organization was to assist low income and families in need with securing affordable housing. This included the building of new property, the rehabilitation of existing properties, and courses on credit, borrowing, and overall financial literacy. He spent 6 years with ICDC. For the last nearly 10 years of his professional career Earl was employed by the Vanguard Group in Malvern PA.

- ♦ **Neil Raden** - Class of 1970, and a 1974 graduate of Webster University in St. Louis. He was a mathematician, an industry analyst, and a widely published author and speaker. Known as the father of data warehousing, he was a recognized authority of AI Ethics and founded his own company, Hired Brains Research, in 1985.





## ALUMNI

- ♦ **PHS Grad Emmy Award Winner** - Trojan proud of 2010 PHS grad, **Courtney McKain Snyder**, who is the video editor at ESPN. She has received two Emmy awards, recognizing her excellence as a video editor. While at PHS, she was a member of the band, choir, yearbook and newspaper staff. Reflecting on her high school career, she said, "I am most proud of creating the PHS video yearbook for three years." Courtney went on to attend Hofstra University where she graduated in 2014 with a degree in television/video production. Her advice to students, "Never let someone tell you that you can't. I work in a male dominated field and for the last decade have been told time, and again that I couldn't do this, or that. But that just made me work harder to prove them wrong. Strength and resiliency are qualities I learned at Pottstown High School. Proud to say I am a Trojan Forever."



- ♦ **TROJANS FOREVER** - Some members of PHS class of 1954 got together for lunch where they shared stories of their high school days and memories of classmates no longer with us. There was no mistaking, after 70 years, they still share the pride of being a PHS Trojan and the belief once a Trojan a Trojan forever. Their challenge to the class of 2024 make sure to share your Trojan Pride in 2024.

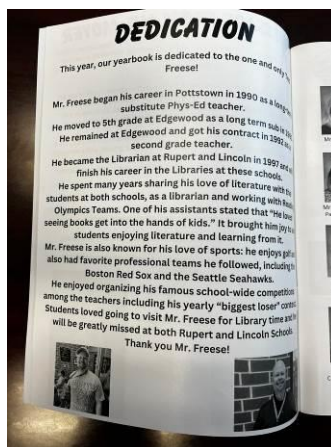




- ◆ **PHS Grad's early finish leads to great start** - Pottstown High School 2021 graduate **Hannah Wilson** needed just three years to complete all of her course requirements to earn a degree in biochemistry with a minor in chemistry from Eastern University. While at Eastern, she was a teacher's assistant for general chemistry students. She earned awards for the highest academics in biochemistry and organic chemistry and was inducted into Sigma Zeta, where served as their president her senior year. She was also involved in the Earthkeepers club. This spring Hannah received the highest achievement award from the American Chemical Society. At the graduation ceremony, she received the academic honors award for maintaining a 4.0 GPA every semester at the university. Immediately after graduation, she began working at Fox Chase Hospital in their laboratory division for cancer research. Recently, she said she would like to thank her PHS teachers, especially those in the science department who helped nurture and interest in love of the sciences "I felt very prepared to handle my college science classes", her words of encouragement to the students at PHS "dream big and you are capable of more than you think you are."



- ◆ **PHS Grad goes from sub to yearbook honoree** - **Mr. Ted Freese**, Pottstown Trojan Class of 1985 returned to the Pottstown School District after graduating from East Stroudsburg State College. He began his hometown career as a substitute teacher in our district. In 1992 he became a full-time contracted 2nd grade teacher at Edgewood. He became a certified librarian and has been serving both the Rupert and Lincoln libraries since 1997. The students and staff at Rupert Elementary honored Mr. Freese by dedicating the 2024 school yearbook to him. It is always rewarding to recognize dedication and commitment to our students, and community, it is particularly gratifying when that recognition is for one of our own homegrown Pottstown School District family members. Mr. Freese, thanks for giving us another reason to say, proud to be from Pottstown.





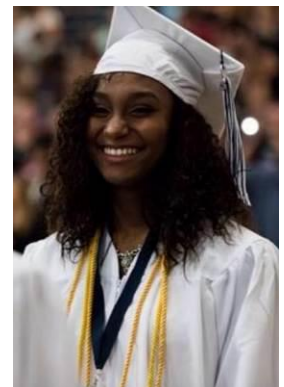
- ♦ **PHS Grad honored by French government** - Trojan Proud of Pottstown High School class of 1941 graduate **Ted Novak**, who served in the United States Army during World War II . He was awarded the Bronze Star for action in combat and twice received the Purple Heart for being wounded in action. At the age of 100 years, he will be traveling to France to receive the country's highest honor, by being named a Knight of the Legion of Honor.



- ♦ **PHS Grad "Rocks"** - Pottstown High School Class of 2020 graduate **Bobby Richards**, is prepared to rock the world as he launches his business *Richards Rocks*. He is a graduate of Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology where he majored in Masonry Technology and was a Dean's List student. He was honored with the Frank Mamrak Award for excellent leadership and quality craftsmanship. Richards was also a member of the championship football team. Speaking of his high school days, he said, "I was motivated to succeed in academics and athletics by my teachers and coaches who always encouraged me to work hard and demand my best effort." He shared these words of wisdom for our PHS students, "It's never too late to figure out what you are going to do or want to do. Things take time to fall into place and you must have patience and keep your goals in sight."



- ◆ **PHS Grad - Animals Best Friend** - Pottstown High School 2016 graduate **Maya Pope** earned a bachelor's degree in Animal Behavior from Utica University. Her goal is to earn a PhD and continue working with people and their pets. While at PHS she was very active as a member of the cross country and track teams. Maya was also a member of the National Honor Society, and Student Government. She said, "I was fortunate to have qualified for the dual enrollment program, it allowed me to earn enough credits to graduate college a year early and provided me the opportunity to understand how college work differs from high school. I made lifelong friends from PHS by being involved in programs I was passionate about. Those opportunities gave me the ability to learn more about myself and express myself confidently. My advice to the students of PHS is to find an activity you're passionate about to keep you motivated in school and develop a group of friends who you can freely express yourself to."

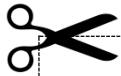






## We Are Pottstown ...

Stay connected with all of the friends of the Pottstown School District with this exclusive membership. Learn about what is happening with the Foundation for Pottstown Education with the newsletter, stay connected to updates and news through social media, engage in networking and career opportunities at special Pottstown Pride Society events, and much more. Together we will build a better community and continue to provide opportunities for the children of Pottstown School District. Be sure to stay tuned to social media and [www.foundationpottstowned.org](http://www.foundationpottstowned.org) for the Pottstown Pride Society page as we grow. We would love for you to share your successes along the way to help encourage those who follow you. Together we provide opportunities for children of Pottstown.



## **Pottstown Pride Society** **Yes, I'm Interested in More Info**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate of Pottstown? If so, Class of \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Pottstown Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **WE ARE POTTSTOWN!**

Return to: Foundation for Pottstown Education  
230 Beech Street  
Pottstown, PA 19464

Learn more about Pottstown schools:  
Visit [www.pottstownschoools.org](http://www.pottstownschoools.org) and  
register for our FREE email information service.