

Education Update

May 2019

MOHS named a top US high school

MOUNT Olive High School was recently named one of the best high schools in the country by U.S. News and World Report. The school received a score of 92% and was ranked 61st in New Jersey. The scoring criteria included college readiness, the percentage of students completing AP courses, the graduation rate, and the percentage of students proficient in math and reading.

faculty, students, and the community are all to thank.”

Kevin Stansberry has shepherded the school’s curriculum and culture for the past 16 years as principal. Added courses, two major facilities improvement projects, creation of a state-of-the-art makerspace, and a diploma program that recognizes students for specialization in certain subject areas are some of the initiatives completed during his tenure that have shaped MOHS into the school it is today.

“It’s really been an incredible journey to be a part of the high school’s evolution,” Mr. Stansberry said. “We’ve performed well on standardized tests and AP exams, but ultimately it’s not about numbers or awards. Mount Olive High School provides a wealth of incredible opportunities and experiences so that all students can explore, find their place in the world, and be successful. Hands-on, minds-on college and career readiness is something our amazing team here prides itself on.”

U.S. News and World Report also honored MOHS last year.



ACED IT!

Lindsey Rogoff dances away during Mountain View Elementary School’s participation in Project ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously). The entire student body took part in the event which was held to highlight National Physical Fitness and Sports Month and National Physical Education Week.



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Kevin Stansberry
MOHS principal

website that compiles data to determine the nation’s best places to live, work, and learn.

“There are a wide variety of external school rankings from a wide variety of organizations,” said Dr. Robert Zywicki, superintendent of schools. “Because they have different criteria, each individual ranking should always be taken with a grain of salt. However, when examined as a whole, it’s clear that Mount Olive High School and the entire Mount Olive School District provide children with tremendous opportunities and a world class education. The dedication and support of parents,

SchoolWay retired

SchoolWay, the messaging app, will be discontinued by the software developer on July 1. Please sign up for Twitter and follow the district @MountOliveTSD, Superintendent Rob Zywicki @ZywickiR, and the schools:

- MOHS – @KevinRStansber1
- MOMS – @mtolivemiddle
- CMS – @CMS4Learning
- Mountain View – @MtView07836
- Sandshore – @MOSandshore
- Tinc Road – @tincroadschool



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ENTREPRENEURS

Students learn the secrets of business

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From page to the screen

STAFF members of the Digital Dish, Sandshore Elementary School's student newspaper, transitioned from written word to the spoken one when they produced a newscast of their final edition. Recorded at the television studio at Mount Olive High School, the video featured a look at recent schoolwide and grade-level activities.

Before recording day, teacher and newspaper adviser Tricia Mitchell taught students some of the differences between writing to be read and writing to be heard. As a group, the staff also reflected on the structure and visual language of typical newscasts, and practiced reading the news using inflection and emphasis to keep viewers engaged.

Chris Praml, MOHS television production teacher, provided an overview of the studio equipment after students arrived on set. The



Chris Praml, MOHS television production teacher, places a mic on Logan Berg as Danielle Cabsaba awaits her turn

24 young broadcast journalists then became a part of the magic of the medium when they recorded their segments in front of a green screen. Chromakeyed behind them were graphics related to the stories that were read.

The edited newscast was recently shared with the families of Dish staff members at a screening and premiere party.

Basketball math game a hit

ABASKETBALL-THEMED game recently introduced at Mountain View Elementary School is helping students hone their math skills.

NBA Math Hoops is a board game that combines basic math skills (e.g., addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) with probability and chance. Just like in the real game, there are free throws, fouls, steals, and turnovers. But you really don't need to know basketball to play and have fun.

Dr. Tracey Severns, the district's former director of student performance, gave Mountain View a set of eight games that she had received. Physical education teacher Mike Schwartz learned about the game on Twitter around the same time and became so enamored with its ability to motivate kids, he reached out to the developer and was given a set of eight more.

"I'm a basketball guy and when I saw NBA, I was in," Mr. Schwartz said. "I love doing something different with the kids and they get so excited playing it. I've always loved math so it's fun to me, too."

All fourth and fifth grade classes have played the game and the students



Gabriella Damelio and Sidney Hazen play NBA Math Hoops

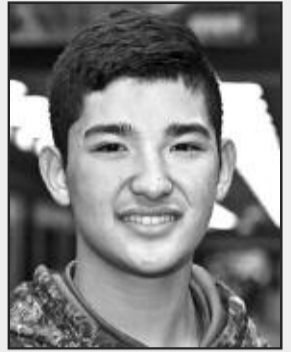
enthusiastically gave it a thumbs up.

"Learning math facts in the context of game play makes math a lot more relatable to students than just solving a set of problems on a page," said teacher Cheryl Conte. "The game compels them to think strategically and make thoughtful choices."

NBA Math Hoops is most often played two on two, but can be played one on one. There are a variety of ways to rev up the complexity of the gameplay, too, as students become more proficient in math. A 16-week curriculum is also available for teachers to use.

Eighth-grader wins leadership award

James Moore, an eighth-grader at Mount Olive Middle School, recently received a Morris County Superintendent's Middle School Leadership Award. Presented by the Morris County Association of School Administrators, the award is given annually to one student from every middle school in the county who best represents the qualities of model citizenship and effective leadership.



James received his award at a ceremonial dinner held at the Hanover Marriott in Whippany. His parents, brother, and Matt Robinson, school principal, also attended the dinner to help him celebrate his achievement.

High honors for MATE team

Mount Olive High School's Marine Advanced Technology Education club took second place in the Pennsylvania MATE regional event and qualified for the international event in Kingsport, Tenn.

MATE is an annual competition in which teams construct underwater remote-controlled vehicles that can tackle specific missions that are modeled on real-life scenarios. For 2019, the teams constructed vehicles that could inspect and make repairs to a hydroelectric dam, monitor water quality, and mark and recover sunken artifacts.

Mount Olive's MATE club also won category awards in sportsmanship, product demonstration, and engineering presentation. Dave Bodmer, the industrial design and engineering teacher who serves as club adviser, was honored with the Exemplary STEM Coach Award.

STEAM team wins top award

A team of Mount Olive Middle School students recently won first place and two other awards in the STEAM Machine competition sponsored by the New Jersey Consortium of Gifted and Talented Programs.

The eighth-graders were challenged in science class to create a Rube Goldberg machine that would drop a penny into a piggy bank. Their NASCAR-themed device contained 16 steps that involved dominoes, ramps, motors, magnets, a pulley system, and, of course, a race car.

The team also won awards for creativity and teamwork.

A lesson about being fearless

FOURTH grade teacher Rebecca Hople is fearless. And she wants the students of Tinc Road Elementary School to be fearless too.

At her presentation for students in grades 3-5, Mrs. Hople delivered a message of the importance of working hard and overcoming obstacles – all wrapped together with a lesson about a piece of art that became a cultural phenomenon.

Kristen Visbal, an American artist born in Uruguay, created a sculpture for 2017's International Women's Day that took the world by storm. "Fearless Girl" is a bronze of a 4-foot-tall young girl with her hands placed on her hips and her head tilted upward in undaunting confidence. The sculpture quickly became a sensation when installed in

front of Wall Street's famed "Charging Bull," its photo garnering more than one billion Twitter impressions in the initial 12 hours of being tweeted.

The juxtaposition of the bull's size and ferocity with the diminutive girl's superhero-like resolve underscored Ms. Visbal's theme of female empowerment. "Fearless Girl," however, conveys so much more. The statue became a reminder for generations of both men and women to face the fears and obstacles that stand in the way of success.

Mrs. Hople recently received a smaller-

scaled bronze reproduction of "Fearless Girl" as a gift from her uncle who knows Ms. Visbal. That was the genesis of the presentation.

"I've always been attached to her message of being courageous and facing your problems head-on," Mrs. Hople said about the sculpture. "I really felt her message should be shared."

With the 22-inch version of "Fearless Girl" on display next to her, Mrs. Hople discussed the artist's history, apprenticeship in New Jersey, and prior works, and the casting technique used to make the sculpture. She also engaged the students in a discussion about what being fearless means to them and showed off a word cloud that her class had made using fearless synonyms.

By conducting her "fearless" presentation, Mrs. Hople became "Fearless Teacher" by conquering (or at least taming) her fear of public speaking.

"My kids knew I was terrified all day before the assembly," she said.

That personal story of overcoming a fear exemplified for her class the message of the entire presentation. The students wrote reflective paragraphs on "Fearless Girl" and discussed the key points gleaned from the talk. Some seemed to find inspiration from Mrs. Hople's own fearlessness and personification of the sculpture's ideals.



Rebecca Hople and her "Fearless Girl"

"Always have confidence and be proud!" wrote Olivia Lisi. "'Fearless Girl' inspired me to always try my best even if you expect the worst to happen."

"Fearless Girl" is now permanently displayed in front of the New York Stock Exchange and attracts visitors from all over the world.

Braille book takes first place

AN ORIGINAL story produced in Braille was one of Mount Olive Middle School's first place winners in the New Jersey Technology Student Association State Conference.

"I Can Not See But I Can Imagine" by Vidhika Ramchandani, Ipshita Mamoon, and Tejashree Nagaraj was designed with a blind MOMS student in mind. The short book follows Liam, a blind teen, who is told by his sister of a new technology she read about that can help the visually impaired better navigate their surroundings. Liam's parents purchase it for him, changing his life and in the process bringing the family closer together.

The text was printed using the Braille printer in the school library and illustrated with tactile drawings. Different materials such as cotton and felt were incorporated into the illustrations to make reading a sensory-rich experience.

Before finalizing the book, the girls asked for feedback from the blind student that helped inspire the project.

"When I saw him touching the book it was the best moment," said Vidhika. "Just to see the

smile on his face made it all worthwhile. We wanted to do something special for him and it felt like our hard work had all paid off."

The project was also personally important for Ipshita. The eighth-grader has a sister who is blind in one eye and Ipshita tried to inject into the story some of her own feelings and real-life family experiences.

"It was kind of special," she said of developing the book. "I hope it raises awareness that there are new technologies being developed every day that can help out people with disabilities."

The MOMS team took home a total of eight awards, including five first-place trophies.

The TSA conference was held at The College of New Jersey. Forty-six MOMS students competed against students from about two

dozen middle schools throughout the state in competitions involving STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math).

Teacher Beth Cohen is the school's TSA adviser.



Vidhika Ramchandani, Ipshita Mamoon, and Tejashree Nagaraj show off their award-winning Braille book

Kids run their own businesses

ON THE stage at Chester M. Stephens Elementary School, instructional supervisor Jen Curry looked out over the gymnasium and the fifth-graders standing ready at their table of wares. She took the microphone in hand.

“You look phenomenal, you look professional, you like businessmen and businesswomen,” she said. “And I can’t wait to open those doors.”

The visitors waiting patiently on line in the hallway were then let in and the TREP\$ 2019 marketplace began.

TREP\$ is a national, two month-long program that teaches business basics and allows students to experience the rigors and successes of entrepreneurship. Led by several CMS teachers afterschool, the fifth-graders went through the complete product development process, from concept to completion, and created their own unique hand-made crafts, toys, and novelty items.

TREP\$ provided students with authentic skills and insight. The fifth-graders met weekly to learn a different business skill. For example, one week students were writing business plans, another week they were learning about marketing and effective advertising, and another it was salesmanship and customer service.

The program’s finale is the marketplace

where the young entrepreneurs sell their products. The marketplace isn’t just where students reap the rewards of their hard work; it’s a vital component of the program. Here, students gain the experience of interacting with real customers and making change with real money.

The CMS marketplace was held in the early evening.

Hundreds of parents, community members, friends, and faculty members packed the gym to shop. As the sales started to add up, the students beamed with the satisfaction and sense of achievement that can only come from seeing an idea become a successful reality.

CMS has run TREP\$ for the past five years. It’s been wildly popular. Younger students who experience the excitement of the marketplace can’t wait to get into fifth grade to be a part of the program.

“My older cousin did TREP\$ and since then I’ve always been excited about it,” said Jillian Moscatello, who made keychains for her “store,” the Keychain Gang. “I’ve been thinking of ideas since the second grade.”



Above, Emma Anglero points out one of her favorite mugs; **right, Lucas Chalef** stands in front a table of decorative bags



Inspiring women to pursue STEAM

“My advice is ‘Push yourself and don’t let anyone, especially that inner voice, influence how high you’re going to go.’”

Dr. Gretel Pérez
Director of science & STEAM

THE day before the district’s annual Women in STEAM conference began, a 29-year-old female computer scientist became the face of one of this young century’s most notable scientific achievements: the first image of a black hole.

The conference couldn’t have asked for a better contemporary success story than Dr. Katie Bouman’s. In her opening remarks, Dr. Gretel Pérez, the district’s director of science and STEAM who coordinated the conference, spoke about Dr. Bouman to prove that not only could women compete in fields traditionally populated by men, but they could rise to the tops of their professions. Dr. Bouman’s vital role in successfully imaging the black hole underscored the goal of the conference: to encourage female students to pursue careers in the sciences and empower

them with the self-confidence to stand tall against any gender bias they encounter.

The message was particularly relevant to the two dozen female students in grades 6-12 who were in attendance. Nominated by teachers, the young women received certificates of recognition for their exceptional talent, potential, and scientific curiosity. Posters with the students’ bios, interests, and teacher recommendations were hung throughout the Mount Olive High School recording studio where the ceremony and reception were held.

“I want to give girls the understanding that they’re just as strong and just as capable as anyone,” said Dr. Pérez, who also spoke about her experiences growing up. “I want to nourish their interests and abilities. Like them, we all go through self-doubt. But my advice is

‘Push yourself and don’t let anyone, especially that inner voice, influence how high you’re going to go.’”

Inspiration was delivered firsthand by a number of guests, too. Cindy Rampersad, a woman from a poor village in Trinidad and Tobago, told her tale of struggling with a learning disability and forging ahead in pursuit of her electronic engineering degree at County College of Morris.

Ms. Rampersad later joined a panel of women working in STEAM to share their thoughts and insights. Included on the dais were a chemist and a mechanical engineer from Picatinny Arsenal, as well as the district’s own Dr. Rebecca Kreider, STEAM teacher in the middle school makerspace.

This was the first year that the conference recognized the STEAM accomplishments of students.

Michael Cravotta - editor

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