



BEAR TRACKS



A NEWSLETTER OF THE SCRANTON SCHOOL FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING CHILDREN



The Scranton School Welcomes Lt. Governor Mike Stack

The Scranton School was pleased to welcome Lt. Governor Mike Stack to campus on February 11, 2016. Lt. Governor Stack enjoyed a wonderful tour of the campus and reading a story to elementary students. Part of the tour included a visit to the new Communications Classroom where Lt. Governor Stack was able to see our new Distance Education equipment. He was very impressed with the services being offered to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. We appreciate his support of our school and hope to host him again! ■



Our Vision

It is the vision of our school to be a **Total Learning Environment** for our students.

The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children is a special place where...

- Our students achieve at the same level as other children in our society
- Our students reach their highest potential in academics and citizenship.
- Our students achieve independence, high personal aspirations, and pride.

The Scranton School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

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Dr. Seuss' Birthday

Our school held its annual Dr. Seuss' birthday celebration. The birthday fell on a Wednesday this year which fit in perfectly with our "Wacky Wednesday" theme. Students came to school wearing wacky outfits and ready for a fun day of reading. The activities started with our guest reader, Police Chief Yarns of Clarks Summit, reading "I Can Read with My Eyes Shut." Students enjoyed interacting with Chief Yarns and asking questions about his job. Later, students were involved in many Dr. Seuss-related activities. Our middle school students worked in pairs to sign Dr. Seuss stories to the elementary students. Students also completed art projects and played games related to Dr. Seuss books. The biggest thrill of the day was when not one, but two "Cats in Hats" arrived to join the students! ■

Go For the Greens Day

Celebrated annually in March, Go for the Greens Day promotes green veggies and fruits as good food and good fun! This year, the day coincided with St. Patrick's Day which just gave everyone one additional reason to wear green and celebrate the fun! Our chefs, Bryan Carey and Michael Danylak, created a wonderful display of healthy veggies representing a train theme while delicious fruits were carved into roses and beautifully arranged. All students had an opportunity during the last 10 minutes of gym class to learn about the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet, which includes adding many servings of fruit and vegetables into their daily meals and snacks. The purpose was also to open young minds and taste buds to the greatness of greens, by offering all students the opportunity to sample a variety of different foods that they might not have tried otherwise. Some green veggies that were included in the display were broccoli, peppers, cucumbers, celery, asparagus, snow peas, edamame, and zucchini. By making this experience hands-on, we were able to bring healthy choices to life. ■



Sign Connection Performing Across Northeast Pennsylvania

The Scranton School is committed to preparing students for their future through providing opportunities to be involved with their community. Seven of our Middle School students were able to take advantage of that opportunity by joining the Scranton School's Sign Connection performance team. After going through the audition process, the staff coordinators selected this year's performance team. The new team then met twice a week with Hannah Theborge and Mackenzie Flanagan to prepare for their performances. Sign Connection was honored to be asked to perform at the Coaches vs. Cancer game hosted by the Scranton Preparatory School. They were also invited to perform at a recent Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins hockey game as well as a Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Railriders baseball game.

The Sign Connection team practices very hard to not only sign the songs correctly, but also to represent our school with pride. For this, we are extremely proud of them and look forward to seeing them out in the community again. ■



PSO Easter Egg Hunt



Pastel-colored eggs covered the floor of the second floor playroom as children eagerly waited to search for prizes. As they picked up treasures of stampers and necklaces, they had one more surprise – a tall white and pink figure emerged with giant ears and a fluffy cottontail. You guessed it – The Easter Bunny had arrived!

Choices for Children families, along with Pre-school and Elementary students participated in the annual Easter Egg Hunt. The event is sponsored by members of the SSDHHC Parent Staff Organization. The children also received coloring books and visited with the Bunny to pose for pictures and another bag of goodies, which included coupons from the local McDonald's and Wendy's restaurants, and bowling passes from Idle Hour Lanes. The children also chose a bubble wand or a box of large chalk.

Volunteers set and re-set for the hunt as four groups of children not only looked for Easter treasures, but the golden egg. The child who found the golden egg won a \$10 Toys R Us gift card.

Secondary students were not left out as they, too, received bags of treats, including coupons from Burger King and some other fun items like finger-held lights.

The PSO meets four times a year and recently nominated new officers to a two-year term: Nicole Miller, President; Paula Tribe, Vice President; and Joy Zeiss, Secretary. Outgoing officers are Denise Locker, President; Mrs. Miller, Vice President; and Maureen Manzano, Secretary. ■





After School Activities

Varied learning environments offer lots of fun challenges, grow character, and develop skills

The After School programs offered by The Scranton School are designed to provide students with a wide spectrum of recreational activities, environments and developmental objectives. One of the most challenging environments and activities can be found in our weekly Polar Bears Ski Club. Each week our students gear up with appropriate winter clothing and helmets for safety, and then hit the slopes under the watchful eyes of our ski club staff. Weekly lessons from certified instructors help turn beginners with no experience into confident and capable intermediate level skiers and snowboarders. Intermediate skiers and boarders learn and practice advanced skills until they are ready to head for those black-diamond expert trails. What fun it was to watch and see the improvements first-hand.

This year, The Scranton school responded to a PSO (Parent Staff Organization) request to investigate the possibility of swimming lessons. Through another terrific partnership, with the Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Scranton, The Scranton School was able to offer 16 weeks of organized swimming lessons for Elementary and Middle School students. Under the guidance of our excellent swim instructors, and under the watchful eyes of the life guards, our students learned about water safety rules, floating, basic swim strokes and even a few advanced/competitive swim skills. Thank you to Ms. Paula Hermon and all of the fantastic staff at the JCC - we can't wait to come back!



Finally, not to be outdone, our Middle School Hoopsters had an awesome basketball season competing once again in the Abington Youth Basketball League. The coaches had much to be proud of, as the Bears played hard in every single game. Players' skills and knowledge of the game improved through the season and great sportsmanship and terrific teamwork was on display in each game. ■



100th Day of School



Family Literacy Workshop

We were excited to have Karen Roudybush back for another Family Literacy Workshop on March 5 and 6 (in Camp Hill and then at SSDHHC). We had many of our Preschool and Elementary school families in attendance. The parents received so much useful information on strategies to enhance literacy skills. The stories, crafts and "edible projects" were a huge hit with everyone. However, the main attraction was a visit from Mr. Bowen (husband of our speech language pathologist, Mari) and an inside look at the ambulance! Everyone had a chance to climb in and get an up close look at all the equipment inside of the ambulance. We also had the opportunity to meet some aspiring physicians from The Commonwealth Medical College and a local trauma physician! We all agree that this Family Literacy Workshop was time well spent. ■



Career Mentor Day

Technology on display

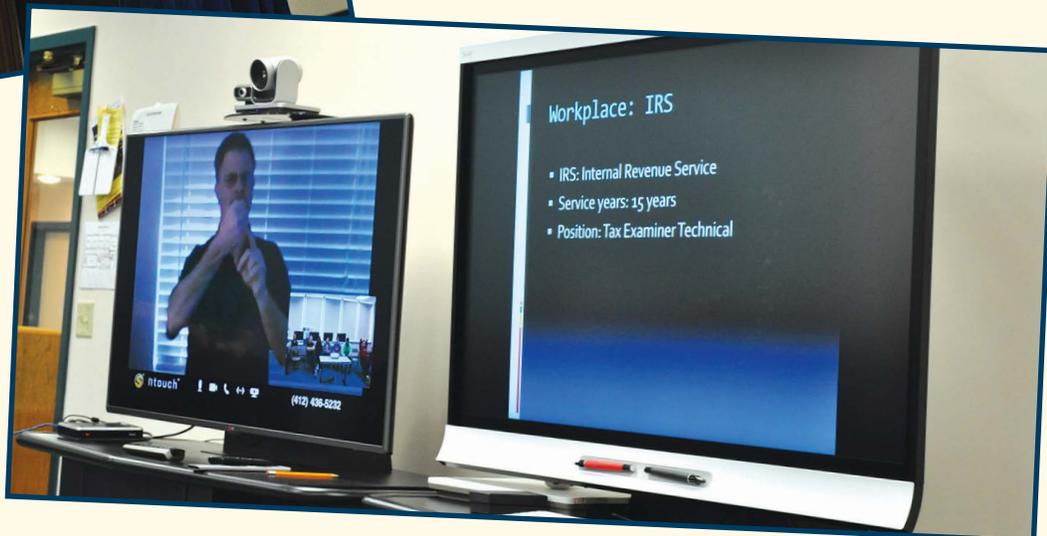
Middle School & High School aged Applied Studies students gathered in our brand new communications classroom and spent Career Mentor Day with three guest speakers who highlighted and demonstrated the roles of technology in business. In addition to sharing their careers with our students, each of our speakers also encouraged students that "success starts today" with their study habits, creativity, and hard work.

Mr. Tim Corey, a local Software Developer and Internet Technology Specialist shared experiences about his work and accomplishments. Mr. Corey demonstrated how software developers write computer code that allows apps and programs to interact with users. Mr. Corey also reminded students that they have answers and ideas for solving problems in the future - and right now.

Ms. Denise Brown, a WPSD/Scranton School Board Member, explained her work with the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services division of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Ms. Brown spent her time helping students understand the critical advocacy role played by the ODHH and gave students tips and ideas for how they might use those services in the future.

Finally, Mr. Tim Boersma joined us live from California via videophone to interact with students about his role as a Tax Examiner with the Internal Revenue Service. Mr. Boersma talked about the ways that his education at the NY State School for the Deaf and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, as well as his life experiences, had prepared him for his 15-year career. He discussed how he and other Deaf employees with the IRS use technology and support services like the ODHH to interact with hearing colleagues, supervisors, and customers each day. Mr. Boersma challenged students to remember to "work hard right now" as they reach for their career dreams and goals for the future.

We are so thankful for each one of our speakers taking the time out of their very busy schedules to share their careers and challenge our students! Are you interested in sharing your career with our students? Please contact Doug Boersma, Dean of Students at dboersmathescrantonsschool.org. ■



Community Sign Language Classes

At the beginning of the first class, the instructor asked each student to introduce themselves and explain why they were in the class. The most common reason given was "I've always been interested in learning Sign Language but I never knew where to go to learn more." We here at The Scranton School have been proud to open our doors to the Clarks Summit area and offer an opportunity to learn Sign Language and so much more.

The last two sessions of Sign Language classes were no exception. Members of the community came to our campus and learn Sign Language, Deaf history, Deaf culture, and learn about famous Deaf people. One of the highlights of the sessions was Val Wojton's visit to the classes. He is the Athletic Director and Sign Language instructor at WPSD. Students enjoyed watching him sign stories and explain jokes in Sign Language. The second highlight was the Deaf panel that was held on the last night of the class, which lasted almost two hours. The panel consisted of four Deaf members of the community who described their life story and experiences. Students were able to ask them questions and gain perspective about the Deaf community here in Northeast Pennsylvania.

We were also excited to see the expansion of our classes to the Wilkes-Barre area! Twelve students signed up for the first Sign Language class, which was lead by one of our retired teachers, Gloria Spicer. The Scranton School is thrilled to see this new class increase Sign Language awareness in the Wilkes-Barre area. If you are interested in receiving more information about the Sign Language classes offered in either Clarks Summit or Wilkes-Barre, please contact Hannah Thebarger at (570) 585-1000. ■





Residential Life

Residential philosophy fosters sense of community and confidence

When you set foot inside the dorm at The Scranton School, you immediately know this is a special place. We believe our unique approach to develop a sense of ownership, personal responsibility and community involvement contributes to a strong sense of well-being and belonging for each one of our residential students.

Students are encouraged to embrace responsibility for completing their assigned daily chores with excellence. Chores range from making beds and assisting with laundry to age-appropriate responsibilities for helping with meal preparation and clean up. These assignments help students take ownership of the dorm environment as they work together to care for their shared living space. Students progress in these daily chores of learning basic cooking skills and safe food handling practices through various fun, hands-on activities throughout the school year.

Whether visited by family members, our monthly Guest Chefs, or Mystery Dinner Guests, our students beam with pride as they put their efforts on display. Visitors often remark on the confidence and absolute comfort with which our students carry themselves in the residential environment. ■



Speech Series



Sarah Briggs is a Speech-Language Pathologist at The Scranton School for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children. She is a 2011 graduate from Bloomsburg University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders and a 2013 graduate from Syracuse University with a Master of Science degree in Speech

and Language Pathology. She enjoys working with the pre-school and middle school students at The Scranton School and loves seeing students use the speech and language skills they are taught in their academic classroom and with peers and staff members.

This year's Bear Tracks will feature a 4-Part series on Speech and Language Services at The Scranton School. The series will be authored by Speech Language Pathologist Sarah Briggs, and will detail the variety of services and instruction offered using our All-Inclusive Communication approach.

We are pleased to have WPSD Graduate and Gallaudet Professor Bobbi Jo Kite co-author this article in the 3rd installment of the Series.

Developing Rich and Meaningful Vocabulary and Language for our Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

R-u-n.

Run is a simple three letter word, yet it can carry so many different meanings: to move at a speed faster than a walk, to compete in a race, to be in charge of something, to operate a car or a machine, to be a candidate in an election, the flow of a liquid, and even a baseball score. The word 'run' is signed differently depending on the meaning and the context of the sentence however the word, run, sounds and looks the same in English.

Many of our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students struggle with the task of reading. They have difficulty decoding words due to limited or no access to sound. Most are reading a language that is secondary to their primary language (American Sign Language) and must interpret the text to be able to sign the meaning in a conceptually accurate way. In the example mentioned above the word 'run' is easy to decode, but has several definitions and usages. Once the word is decoded, the student needs to analyze the text and determine the best way to sign the correct usage in ASL. Students must learn, and parents should facilitate, the bilingual strategy of translating. Translating is used to compare and contrast the characteristics of each language, to learn the meaning in text, and to explain the multiple meaning of words and signs (Baker, 2006). Adults often translate English text to ASL during instruction, which does not allow for students

Bobbie Jo Kite is a member of the Faculty in the Department of Education at Gallaudet University. She has earned a BA in Early Childhood Education and an MA in Deaf Education from Gallaudet University. Currently, she is a Doctoral Student with specialization in Early Childhood Education at George Mason University. She is a Board member of the National American Sign Language/English Bilingual Consortium for Early Childhood Education in Washington D.C. and is a proud alumna of The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.



to decode the meaning of language. There needs to be opportunities for dialogue with students to understand both meaning and form of languages in context. The example provided earlier with the word 'run' allows for such dialogue with our students to discuss conceptually appropriate signs for different meanings. It is critical to engage students in this type of dialogue as they move through each grade level and are encountering a more complex vocabulary with increased reading demands. This increased level of complexity can decrease their understanding of the message. As educators and parents, we need to develop social and academic vocabulary skills in our students - both in print and in conversation- that cover a wide range of contexts in order to provide them with the tools that they will need in order to be successful in and out of the classroom. Providing language accessibility in all aspects of a student's life (e.g., at home, in the car, at a baseball game) increases the likelihood that a student will have opportunities to benefit from the incidental learning experiences and abundance of language (Suskind, 2015).

In conclusion, having a natural, incidental learning experience and abundance of language development opportunities requires our students to engage, interact and use languages on a daily basis in various contexts and contents. Engage your student in a dialogue about the water running off of the roof, about who is running for President, or how many runs were scored in the baseball game last night.

The Summer Edition of Bear Tracks will feature several evidenced based interventions and techniques that are used during speech and language therapy at The Scranton School.

References:

Baker, C. (2006). Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism (4th ed.). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters

Suskind, D. (2015). Thirty million words: Building a child's brain. New York: Dutton. ■



Outreach News



Hershey Preschool

2016 started off snow-covered and cold for us here in Hershey. We focused on winter activities inside as well. In January we practiced learning our body parts and those of snowmen. We played with snow and ice in our water table. We had visitors and tours come through that kept us busy. In February we enjoyed learning by focusing on our Friends and Family theme.

We celebrated Valentine's Day with our preschool friends. During the celebration, we made Valentine's Day treats and cards, decorated heart shaped cookies, watched the kindergarten play, and played games. We enjoyed a few outdoor recess days, but not enough! We just started our transportation unit. We are learning our sight words, word families, colors, counting, patterns, and shapes through transportation activities. We are looking forward to some field trips when the weather becomes warmer and many more memorable activities! ■



Camp Hill Toddler Group

We didn't let the snow and cold weather stop our fun at Toddler Group this winter. We learned about shapes, celebrated our friendships through Valentine's Day, and even learned about scary monsters. Our favorite sensory activity was purple spaghetti. The toddlers' favorite snack was cheese squares and jello and the adults loved making the monster pops. We read together, laugh together, play together, and are building such great friendships. Because of this offering, the interest in our Hershey Preschool program has increased. Outside therapists for the children who attend are beginning to come to Toddler Group alongside their client as they view this program as a benefit all the way around. ■



You Are Invited!!

Summer Day Camp for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children and Their Siblings

Fishburn United Methodist Church, 1215 Fishburn Road, Hershey, PA 17033

June 27-July 1

Ages 7-10

\$50 per child

9:00 a.m. - Noon (snack and lunch included)

Daily theme change

(educational themes e.g. solar system, camping, etc.)

July 25-July 29

Ages 2-6

\$50 per child

9:00 a.m. - Noon (snack and lunch included)

Week-long ocean theme

Transportation is not provided.

Increase your sign language knowledge through academics and fun. Make new friends along the way.

You are free to drop off your child(ren) and leave, or stay and take advantage of the free wifi and quiet room at the church.

Please contact Jessica Marks at jmarks@wpsd.org to register or for more information. Please make checks payable to WPSD and send check and registration forms to 3820 Hartzdale Drive Camp Hill, PA 17011, attn: Summer Camp.

Deadline to register is June 10, 2016.

Space is limited. First come first served.



Literacy Workshop in Camp Hill

The Literacy Workshop "Hooked on Books: About Safety" came to Camp Hill over the weekend. This workshop shared emergency-related signs, encouraged reading and offered hands-on safety activities. A special thank you to officer Speck, a local policeman fluent in sign language who helped our children determine the difference between what is safe and what is dangerous. ■

