



# STEEL VALLEY NEWSLETTER

District News • Stories • Events

## November 2023

---



Isabella Gardini has been crowned as the 2023 Steel Valley High School Homecoming Queen. Gardini was bestowed the honor during halftime of the Steel Valley football game on Friday, October 13. Reigning queen Leah Estes-Harris returned to crown her successor.

This year's homecoming court included Gardini, along with escort Gannon Haddad; fourth runner-up Shelby Novak, escorted by Ryder Varhola; third runner-up Ava Caiarelli, escorted by Tyler Pielin; second runner-up Isabella Ruston, escorted by Duane Carter, Jr.; first runner-up Jaelyn Burwell, escorted by Quaron Pierce; Madison Gillespie, escorted by Brandon Escobar; Alaina Hartnett, escorted by Michael Guzzi; Alexis Menefee, escorted by Antonio Bray; Tiera Menefee, escorted by Mason Lafay; and Michayla Rager, escorted by Haneef Capers.

The crowning capped a festive spirit week that included pep rallies, creative outfits on specific theme days, and a thrilling Powder Puff game that went down to the wire.

[For more photos, check out the gallery on the district website.](#)



## STEEL VALLEY SPOTLIGHT





The Steel Valley School District Board of Directors formally appointed assistant superintendent Bryan Macuga as the district's interim superintendent during its October voting session on Thursday, Oct. 26.

The appointment comes after superintendent Edward Wehrer submitted his resignation and departed the district earlier in the month. Mr. Wehrer accepted a new position in education outside of the district. Mr. Macuga has been a fixture in the district for almost two decades, serving as a teacher and building principal before becoming assistant superintendent. In a letter to families, staff and students announcing Mr. Macuga's appointment, the school board wrote that, "It is important for our schools to continue to operate seamlessly during this transition, and we thank Mr. Macuga for stepping into this role."

The board also took a moment to update the district community on its search for the district's next superintendent. The board engaged with the Pennsylvania School Board Association earlier this year to conduct the search. Community members were surveyed in August and September regarding the qualities they'd like to see in potential candidates. "We are encouraged with the progress the PSBA has made," the board wrote in the letter, "and the feedback we have received from all stakeholders has been invaluable. We look forward to the next steps in this very important process."

Also at the Oct. 26 board meeting, the Steel Valley board elected to appoint Stephanie Hughes to the board to fill the vacancy created by William McLaughlin's resignation. Her term will last through 2025. The next Steel Valley School District Board of Directors meeting will be Monday, Dec. 4 when the board reorganizes following the November municipal elections.



Did you know that Steel Valley has partnered with the University of Pittsburgh in order to offer College in High School courses?

These courses are taken as part of the regular school day and taught by high school teachers. Along with Advanced Placement courses, these rigorous classes challenge students, prepare them for college-level academics, and allow them to earn college credit through the University of Pittsburgh. From taking the stage to debate the classic concept of inherited versus learned behaviors during Communication and Rhetoric to diving into high level math in Calculus, College in High School courses are available for students with a wide range of interests.

Some of the classes even provide a choice where students can either take the course through the University of Pittsburgh or take the Advanced Placement exam, providing students with options when it comes to earning college credit.





Steel Valley students who are taking part in the CNX Mentorship Academy met with Nicholas Deluliis, the president of CNX Resources Corporation; Dr. Shani Yeldell, CNX Foundation Community Relations Manager; and John Sabo, Vice President of Business Development at Deep Well Services and a Steel Valley alum.

The three guests talked to the students in-depth about the different pathways available to them that lead to successful careers. The CNX Mentorship Academy exposes the students to a wide range of career possibilities that don't require a college degree.

They shared information about the training available to them at companies like Deep Well, talked about the blend of hands-on work with emergent technology, and stressed the importance of networking, including through professional sites like LinkedIn.

The students were able to ask questions about potential career paths, including what they need to do now to ensure that they have this possibility open to them upon graduation.

Students in the CNX Mentorship Academy will be visiting the Pittsburgh Airport on Thursday to view the ongoing construction work and learn about the wide range of career opportunities available there.





## BARRETT ELEMENTARY'S 12 DAYS OF GIVING ARE BACK!

Over 12 days in November, Barrett Elementary will be looking at various ways we can make a difference through giving. Each day, we will be highlighting a new way to give back. While we do have a day to celebrate each, donations for all days can be made any time from November 2<sup>nd</sup> through November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

On Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, the KDKA Turkey Fund will officially kick off our project. For a \$1 donation, students will receive a pumpkin they can decorate at home with their family. Pumpkins are available for purchase now and can continue to be purchased throughout the month of November. You can be as creative as you wish when decorating your pumpkin. Pumpkins will be available for purchase in the mornings in Counselor Fisher's office. Just be sure to return them to your teacher when they are completed, so we can put them on display in our Barrett Elementary Giving Patch!

*All are welcome to join in and purchase a  
pumpkin for our patch!*

REMEMBER, while we are highlighting a different cause each day, all donations can be made any time from November 2<sup>nd</sup> through November 22<sup>nd</sup>. A table will also be available for donation drop off during parent teacher conferences.

THE DAYS OF GIVING CALENDAR IS ON THE BACK OF THIS LETTER.



## *The Barrett Elementary 12 Days of Giving*

### *Sneak Peek*

#### *Day 1 (Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>): A Turkey for a Family in Need*

Purchase a \$1.00 pumpkin for our Giving Patch. Decorate it at home and return it to your teacher. Pumpkins are available throughout the month of November and all are welcome to purchase a pumpkin and join in the giving! All proceeds benefit the KDKA Turkey Fund.

#### *Day 2 (Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>): Tabs for RMHC*

Throughout the month of November, we are collecting pull-tabs from pop cans and other aluminum cans to be donated to The Ronald McDonald House in Pittsburgh, supporting families with sick children in their time of need.

#### *Day 3 (Monday, November 6<sup>th</sup>): Towels for the Shelter*

Bring in a roll of paper towels to help out the White Oak Animal Shelter.

#### *Day 4 (Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>): Soup for the Kitchen*

We are collecting cans of "Hearty" or "Chunky" soup to be donated to The Rainbow Kitchen.

*(Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> is Parent Teacher Conferences. There will be a table set up if anyone would like to drop off any donations.)*

#### *Day 5 (Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>): Coins for the Cure*

All month, we are collecting coins to help raise money for *SV Softball's Annual Fast Pitch for the Cure*.

#### *Day 6 (Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>): Socks for the Homeless*

Bring in a pair of new socks to help keep the homeless warm this winter.

#### *Day 7 (Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>): A Random Act of Kindness*

It costs nothing to be kind! Today let's spread kindness around like confetti and bring a smile to someone's day! Classrooms will be coming up with ideas of how to spread kindness.

#### *Day 8 (Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>): Care for the Closet*

Let's help stock the Steel Valley Caring Closet with travel size toothpaste, Chapstick, or deodorant.

#### *Day 9 (Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>): Coloring Books for Batch*

Bring in a new coloring book to donate to the *Batch A Toys* program.

#### *Day 10 (Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>): Thanks for All They Do*

We are asking each grade level to bring in sweet treats so we can send a big THANK YOU to our Steel Valley School Resource Officers and Security Guards for all they do to keep us safe while we're in school.  
(Kindergarten: Hershey's Hugs and Kisses, 1<sup>st</sup>: Life Savers, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mints, 3<sup>rd</sup>: Starburst, 4<sup>th</sup>: Bubble Gum)

#### *Day 11 (Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>): We're Kicking Cancer to the Curb*

\$1.00 high-heel shoe and sneaker cut-outs will be on sale in honor of our family and friends who have battled cancer. Fill out your shoes and return them to school so we can show everyone that Barrett Elementary wants to help KICK CANCER TO THE CURB!  
All proceeds will be donated to The American Cancer Society.

#### *Day 12 (Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup>): Love to Our Students*

A gift of thanks for the students will be provided by staff.



Congratulations to Mick Pavasko on his final day of work at Barrett Elementary. The staff surprised him with breakfast and gifts to celebrate his last day. Barrett could not be more grateful for everything Mick has done for the school and everyone wishes him well on his retirement.

Barrett students are in the midst of their second attendance challenge, which will run until November 17. All students who have zero tardies and zero unexcused absences will receive a pizza party.

The Barrett Elementary School PTO hosted Trunk or Treat with a bit of Barrett pizzazz added in. The Homestead Fire Department, Homestead Police Department, MAPS and Millie's Ice Cream all made generous donations of resources and treats for the event. The students and families had loads of fun!

Kindergarten students conducted their sixth annual ABC Boot Camp Fashion Show. Kindergartners spent the first 26 days of the school year learning their letters and their sounds. The ABC Boot Camp Fashion Show celebrates their learning as each student was assigned a letter and a vest to decorate. Families were able to watch the fashion show.







The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile will visit Steel Valley High School on Monday, November 20 from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration closes at 1:30 p.m. The Care Mobile is a collaboration between UPMC Children's Hospital and the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh and Morgantown. It provides medical care to children with no out-of-pocket cost to families. The Care Mobile offers immunizations, physical exams, sick child visits, adolescent and young adult health care, WIC form assistance, and more.

## Park Elementary News



Park second graders had fun and learned a lot on their recent trips to the pond and garden. After a nice walk through the community, students rinsed out planting containers, "harvested" carrots by pulling them out of the ground, and removed the beans from green bean pods, all under the direction of Mrs. Schott. They also spent time looking for ducks, turtles, and fish.

The fourth grade Halloween Dance, Trunk-or-Treat, and the Halloween Parade through Munhall were all a lot of fun and helped get everyone at Park



Elementary into the holiday spirit. Over 300 students participated in Trunk-or-Treat, along with over 40 decorated vehicles, including police and fire trucks.

The Park Cash Bash was a huge success. Park is fortunate to have a wonderful PTO that goes above-and-beyond to make the school a better place. Fire Safety Day was also terrific -- the kids loved hearing from all of the firefighters, many of whom came through Park when they were younger.

Inside the classroom, October was full of fantastic learning experiences. Mrs. Ambrozic showed off her baby axolotl, which helped second graders learn all about the amphibian through fun activities. Meanwhile, students in the Life Skills / Autistic Support classrooms recently worked with Ms. Taylor Couch from the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. They talked about emotions and then danced and moved their bodies to show emotion.







The fall temperatures were perfect for Mr. Owston's classes to learn about thermal conduction by making s'mores over a Bunsen burner. The students discussed how the heat from the burner flame made the metal in the s'more stick hot while the wood remained room temperature. Treats and science are a delicious combination!

Halloween also brought out some fun competition on the fifth grade floor. The students went through activity stations that promoted creative thinking and collaboration. Mrs. MacDonald and Mrs. Clark had students deduce clues to solve a mystery item in the box, while Mr. Large challenged the students to put their art skills to the test in a coloring contest. Ms. Noblet had a host of Halloween-themed games, including monster pick-up and spider races, while Ms. States created a Halloween trivia game on the iPad.

Mrs. MacDonald's ELA classes chose a book to read and then brought it to life with a special project. Students chose from project platforms like writing, art, or digital media, all in an effort to improve their vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency.

Ms. Noblet has put together a postcard campaign for the fifth graders. With the support of families and the community, the students have received postcards from all over the globe. Ms. Noblet reports that postcards have come in from as close as West Virginia and as far away as Japan. The program is ongoing, so if a community member would like to donate Pittsburgh or Pennsylvania themed postcards, please send to Ms. Noblet at the middle school.



## High School News



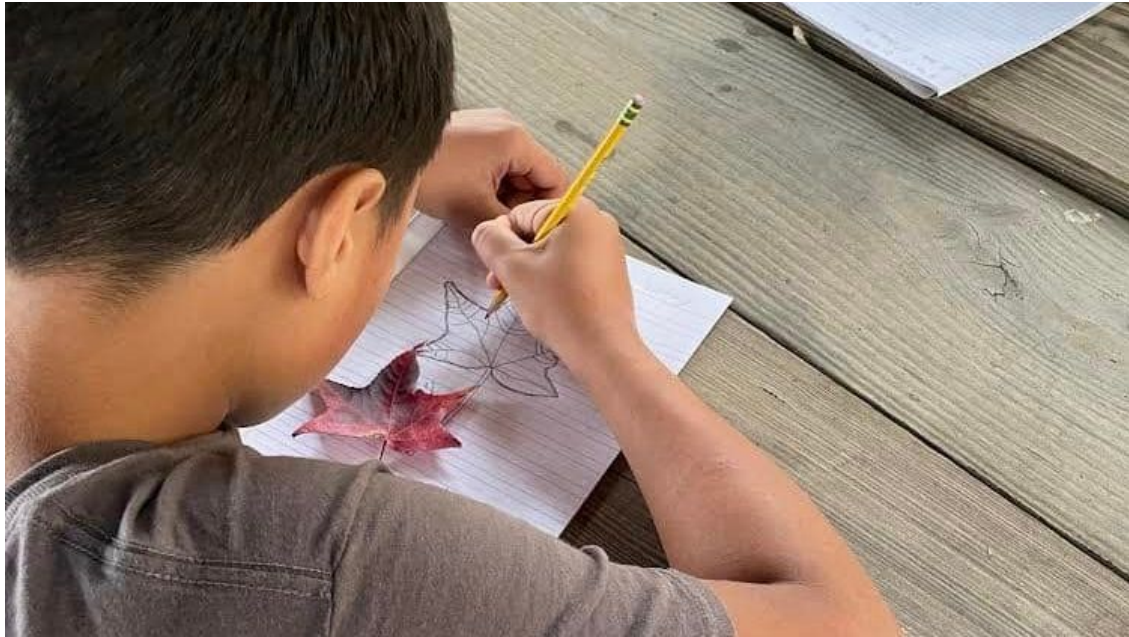
Four Steel Valley students participated in the Unified Champion Schools Three Rivers Youth Summit on October 26. These four students, along with two others, will form Steel Valley's first ever Unified Sports Indoor Bocce Team, which will compete during the upcoming winter sports season. This team and their coaches, Mr. Shawn McCallister and Mrs. Beth McCallister, are very excited to begin practice and hope to see everyone at their matches. Dates will be announced in the near future. Team members who attended the youth summit are senior Vinton Kellar, junior Abigail Fitzgerald, sophomore Shatterra Meadows and freshman Matthew Fulmore.

The varsity football team opens the WPIAL Class 2A playoffs as the No. 1 seed. The Ironmen are on a quest to defend their championship, and after receiving a first round bye they will take on Western Beaver on Friday, November 10 at 7 p.m. at Campbell Field.



As the fall sports season comes to a close, multiple students earned all-section recognition in their respective sports. In volleyball, senior Isabella Ruston was named to the Section 2-2A second team, while juniors Abbie Fitzgerald and Ryan Cameron were named to the third team. In girls soccer, goalkeeper Sau' Mara was named to the all-section team while Kylie Salopek earned all-section and all-WPIAL honors. In boys soccer, A.J. Karstetter earned all-section honors while Nate Yuhas earned an honorable mention.

Mrs. Tracy's biology classes have been busy inside and outside of the classroom. They used their puzzle skills along with their knowledge of genetics to decipher clues in order to escape Room 215. They also made a trek over to the pond to work on their journaling skills as they documented the structure, shape and colors of the changing leaves.



Stay up to date with what's happening on our social media accounts! The district has a Twitter account and Instagram account, as well as individual Facebook pages for each of our four schools. Click the respective icons at the bottom of the newsletter to make sure you're following us!



---

*Copyright © 2023 Steel Valley School District.  
All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**  
Steel Valley School District  
220 E. Oliver Rd. Homestead, PA 15120

To submit information for the newsletter, please email: [communications@steelvalleysd.org](mailto:communications@steelvalleysd.org)

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).