

WISSAHICKON SILVER LININGS

WISS NATION'S
ROUNDUP OF THE
UPLIFTING AND UPWORTHY



June 2022

Celebrating the Class of 2022 & our Difference Makers

As part of our Class of 2022 celebrations, seniors were asked to choose a WSD employee who they identified as a “Difference Maker”. This is a person who has positively impacted a student’s academic journey and/or personal life and proven to be dependable, encouraging, and a positive guide for students.

This year, more than 80 seniors chose to recognize a Difference Maker by writing them a personal letter. They also had the chance to connect with their Difference Makers during the school-wide Victory Laps and commencement ceremony.

In case you missed it, a selection of our students were recorded reading their letter to their Difference Maker: [WATCH THE VIDEOS](#)

Commencement Highlights

Hats off to all of our 343 seniors who celebrated Commencement on June 9th! It was a beautiful, breezy evening for the ceremony which included remarks from Valedictorian Alexandria Jiang, Superintendent Dr. James Crisfield and Dr. Jason Bialka, Shady Grove Principal. Master of Ceremonies Phillip Dias did an excellent job of emceeing the program, stopping to take a selfie on stage to capture the momentous occasion. Graduation Speakers Jeffrey Perlmutter and Taylor Piergrossi shared an original poem while the WHS Camerata accompanied Principal Dr. Lynne Blair in her traditional speech interjected with song! She encouraged seniors to keep their “inner-kid” alive. “Don’t lose sight of the fact that one of the kindest things you can do for someone else is to believe in them and love them. Don’t allow hate to own any piece of you because as simplistic as it may sound, trust me, love and kindness are truly all that really matter. Embrace diversity, be accepting, be inclusive, and always root for the underdog. As a little kid, being kind was the only thing we knew.”



Seniors enjoyed decorating their caps, a new tradition that began last year!



"We have been told things are harder in the 'real world,' that the 'real world' is different from the life we have lived while in school. But it's not. We have seen and faced adversity, have defended ourselves, and have encountered people whose views contrast greatly from ours. That is the real world. We have sought out our own opportunities, spent some weeks working day and night, and overcome hardships. That is the real world. We have equipped ourselves to succeed wherever we go, and for that, I am proud of us all."

Excerpt from Speech by Valedictorian Alexandria Jiang



"I know that I am standing here today to show you, everyone's milestone of wisdom - it is true. The grad class of 2022, will have their diplomas given to. And love will find a way,

to guide us out there every day. All of us are together on this momentous day, we will all move on with elegance away. We all are special and that is okay. What I want to convey as I wrap things up today is to say thank you Wiss, congratulations Class of 22, and... Hurray!"

Excerpt from Speech by Graduation Speaker Jeffrey Perlmutter



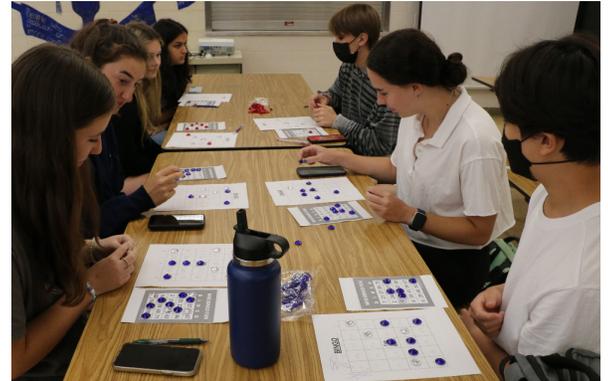
Congrats to the 60+ seniors recognized at Senior Awards Night for their outstanding academic and scholastic accomplishments, community service work, athletic talents and student leadership! Kudos also to our scholarship recipients who were recognized at the WHS Scholarship Night Ceremony. In total, 151 scholarships worth \$351,812 were awarded to the Class of 2022.

- [VIEW SENIOR AWARDEES](#)
- [WATCH SENIOR AWARDS NIGHT](#)
- [WATCH SCHOLARSHIP NIGHT CEREMONY](#)

On May 2nd, seniors wore their college gear as they celebrated National College Decision Day.



End of year event favorite! All WHS students participated in an afternoon of fun and games on Blue and Gold Day (formerly Wissapick'em) and enjoyed ice cream with the works!



Woot! Woot! The Class of 2022 was cheered on by staff and students during their Victory Laps at the middle school and elementary school they attended. Seniors enjoyed seeing the special signs made in their honor and playing with the younger students on the playground.

On to Middle & High School: 5th & 8th Graders Celebrate Promotion

Families, students and staff at our elementary schools enjoyed promotion ceremonies to recognize and celebrate our wonderful 5th graders as they head off to middle school next year. There were lots of smiles, but some tears as well, as students bid farewell to their teachers and school. Congratulations are also in order to our 8th graders who celebrate their promotion to high school on June 14th!



Social Emotional Learning (SEL) IN ACTION



Last school year, five WHS students – **Talia Roizman, Clare Kelly, Gabby Jones, Charlotte Zager and Katie Fath** - decided they wanted to connect with students in another school to reinforce that we are all one community. The girls chose Shady Grove, where they had once attended, and created social emotional learning (SEL) lessons for 5th graders to help them prepare for middle school. Mr. Opper's class was selected and the WHS students began mentoring the students via Teams. "We created Power Points about different life lessons – being kind to everyone, being a good sport, how to prepare for middle school and to

just give our advice because when it comes from other kids, other students really listen. We really wanted to create bonds with the students and create a bridge between us," Talia said.

This school year, Talia, Clare, Gabby, Charlotte and Katie journeyed to Shady Grove to meet the students in person! "They were really excited to see us," Talia said.

5th Grader Lilian Hartkorn agreed, "I really liked meeting this group of girls and liked their lessons. We learned a lot about socializing and decision-making and we had fun."



"We're There When You Need Us." That's the motto of the fabulous **WHS WissLink** crew who recently held their Spring Development Day in preparation for the 2022-23 school year. The 80 WHS student leaders and 4 advisors are trained as mentors to help incoming freshmen with a successful transition to high school. Great way to help younger students feel welcome at WHS and learn skills to navigate social and academic challenges!



Shoutout to **Stony Creek Student Council** for hosting a super successful Alex Lemonade Stand. All grades came out to buy a cold glass of lemonade and were very generous with donations - \$2200 was raised with more online donations still coming in!

WHS students broke their record again raising more than \$43,000 at their annual Mini-THON to help fight childhood cancer with Four Diamonds. Students organized a multi-hour, fun-filled event involving games, music, dancing and activities. Such an impressive demonstration of philanthropy and engaging our school and local community!

Student & Staff **ACHIEVEMENTS**

At the end of each school year, our **WHS National Merit Scholars**



present a book with a personalized message to a teacher who made an impact in their life. Congrats to our Merit Scholars & kudos to our awesome teachers who inspired them and all of our students:

- Ella Chang – Dan Meyer, Stony Creek
- Sophia Furman – Heidi Butt, WHS
- Adam Grossberg – Frank DeRuosi, Blue Bell
- Alexandria Jiang – Jen Castor, WHS
- Suyong Lee – Meredith Falatek, WHS
- Katelyn Lu – Chad Towarnicki, WMS
- Christina O’Farrell – Maureen Kroener, Lower Gwynedd
- Joon (Alex) Shin – Ryan Perlman, WHS
- Richard Wang – Kirk MacMinn, WHS

[WATCH THE PRESENTATION](#)

Wiss Nation thanks seniors, **Alex Gindea and Morgan Wilson**, for their service as student representatives on the WSD School Board. Alex and Morgan served on the Board since July 2020 and, in the midst of the pandemic, they attended meetings virtually and shared their student perspective on important topics that impact our school community. Next steps: Alex will be studying finance at the University of Florida and Morgan will be studying study sports management or marketing at the University of Delaware. Best of luck to these outstanding seniors!



Great news! The WMS MathCounts Club has been recognized as a Gold Level Club for a record 15th consecutive year. This year they were one of only 6 schools in the state of Pennsylvania to earn the distinction. Join us in congratulating **7th graders Gabe Gold, Derek Liu, Mihir (aka The Fly) Khanna, and Tyler Freund** and **6th graders Eli Perilstein, Anagha Sunhil, and Albert He** for all of their hard work. Watch the video the club members submitted as the final requirement here: [Tix-Tac-Toe Mania](#)



Congrats to the fabulous **Rising Stars Homework Club**, selected as the recipient of the 2022 Mideastern Region PSEA Friend of Education Award. This prestigious award recognizes Rising Stars "for providing not just homework help, but also enrichment, social and emotional learning and team building experiences for the students in Wissahickon." Additionally, Rising Stars and Heather Maltin and Patti Fabiani, who organize the club, were featured on 6abc News. [View 6abc News Feature](#)



Congratulations to **Danielle Ciliberto!** For the third year in a row, Danielle has been selected as a player for Team Italy in the Triple Crown International Challenge in Colorado. Games were not able to be played in 2020 due to Covid. Last year, Team Italy earned a Bronze medal. Travel softball players from across the country tried out



to represent the country of their heritage. Only 400 girls were selected to make up teams representing 20 different countries who will compete later this month. Good luck to Danielle and her teammates! Buona Fortuna!

BELONGING: Equity & Inclusion Update



BELONG, INSPIRE, ENGAGE, EXCEL



At the June 6, 2022 School Board meeting, the Board approved the district's Comprehensive Plan to submit to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Required every three years, the Comprehensive Plan identifies priorities and action plans to help

districts focus on continuous improvements in leadership, teaching, and learning. The Comprehensive Planning Process for 2022-2025 was steered by three essential groups – Leadership Council, the District Equity Planning Committee, and the Board's Racial Equity Oversight Committee. These three groups represent a diversity of stakeholders – students, parents/guardians, staff, administration, Board of Directors, and community members. During the 2021-2022 school year, each group met monthly to explore relevant data, reflect on current practices, and identify action steps for improving our district efforts. These action steps are now reflected in the Comprehensive Plan 2022-2025, which can be viewed on our website.

One component of the Comprehensive Planning Process is to review and revise the district's vision, mission, and shared values statements. In response to feedback, the vision and mission statements include revisions intended to further highlight the district's commitment to valuing belongingness, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, the revised shared values align with social-emotional learning competencies.

Our Vision

“Belong, Inspire, Engage, Excel”

A learning community where all students and staff feel a sense of belonging and are inspired to engage and excel to their fullest potential.

Our Mission

The mission of the Wissahickon School District – a learning community where diversity is valued, and equity is an ongoing commitment – is to empower each student and staff member to excel to their fullest potential and meaningfully contribute to the greater community.

Shared Values

We believe all students and staff will...

- develop healthy identities
- value diversity and inclusivity
- maintain positive relationships
- feel and show empathy for others
- achieve personal and collective goals
- make responsible and caring decisions
- contribute to safe and just communities

Belonging Video Series: Professional Learning in Action & Our Students' Voices



We hope you enjoy the second video in our Belonging video series, which highlights the professional learning our staff has been engaged in this school year to support inclusion and equity efforts. Additionally, we invite you to view our Students' Voices video in which they highlight the importance of belongingness, inclusivity and social emotional learning and the many ways they share their voice and are involved in the school community.

Thank you to our staff and students who participated, **Keziah La Torre, Director of Equity and Cultural Responsiveness; Jen Schmidt, Director of**

Curriculum and Instruction; Allie Monahan, SCE 3rd Grade; Tim Smyth, WHS Social Studies; Sean Stovall, WMS Social Studies; Marissa Samit, WHS Counselor; Sue Kanopka, LGE Principal and our students, Morgan Wilson, Senior; Mia Owusu-Antwi, Junior; Aaron Rouse, Sophomore; Kavya Mattal and Kelley McCormack, 8th Grade; Wayde Craig, SGE 4th Grade and Anoosha Shukla, Sophomore.

[PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN ACTION VIDEO](#)
[OUR STUDENTS' VOICES VIDEO](#)

Learning SPOTLIGHTS



Ms. Ferretti's class is using the Stony Creek vegetable garden to learn about the plant life cycle. Students enjoyed reading garden books, planting the garden and learning about the different vegetables.



Mrs. Smerecki's 3rd grade class at Blue Bell Elementary enjoyed learning about watersheds from Mrs. O, a member of the Wissahickon Trails.

Mrs. Tecce's class at Stony Creek learned why the Leaning Tower of Pisa leans during a virtual field trip to Italy! Mrs. Tecce's cousin gave the students a walking tour of Pisa via Skype, showing them the famous tower as well as the surrounding streets, shops and restaurants, including the family-owned Pizzeria Moonlight. Mrs. Tecce will be staying in Pisa with her family for nearly four weeks this summer. Students learned about the history and culture of Pisa as well as some neat facts like the difference between gelato and ice cream. Did you know they even make blue cheese gelato in Italy?!



hello 
SUMMER
Snack Attacks
June 21 - August 25, 2022
Tuesdays, Wednesdays,
Thursdays
4:30pm - 5:30pm
Ambler Borough Building
131 Rosemary Avenue



Summer Food Support Programs

This summer, We Care is pleased to announce a new partnership with Philabundance and Maddie Dixon Community Cupboard to provide meals for any family in need.

Through its new Let's Eat program (June 13th-August 6th), Philabundance will drop off 100 boxes each Tuesday which will be ready for pickup from Maddie Dixon's on Wednesday. Each box will have two meals for four people. (Larger families may get a second box).

Snack Attack is also back - June 21 – August 25, 2022 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4:30pm – 5:30pm. Come to the Ambler Borough Building to pick up a free lunch bag filled with healthy snacks including a protein, fruit, treat and drink!

Wiss Nation HAPPENINGS

Thanks to the **Shady Grove 5th grade class** for their generous gift of a new sign by the school parking lot and fields. This is something the school community will enjoy for many years to come!



Shout out to the **5th grade class at Blue Bell Elementary** who gifted a great new sign with the school's mascot, the Blue Shark, and the school name. The sign is visible to everyone driving along Skippack Pike and is an amazing way to share our school spirit with the whole community!



In celebration of **Teacher Appreciation Week**, WMS shared a sweet treat and message with our staff: "You're Worth a Mint" while WHS enjoyed a "Nacho Average Teacher Bar!" Leave a comment for your favorite teacher!



Lower Gwynedd Elementary had a great turnout for Bike to School Day on May 4th (even in the drizzle)! On this special day, students got to ride their bike with their brothers, sisters and friends. Thanks to the Lower Gwynedd Police Department for blocking the streets and directing traffic to make this event possible!



The **Stony Creek community** enjoyed the return of the Stony Creek Slam, an end-of-year event where the fifth graders take on the teachers in a basketball game. So much fun for everyone!



Check out the beautiful front gardens at **Blue Bell Elementary!** Parent volunteers joined teachers and students to plant flowers along with a colorful display of their painted rocks. Students felt a lot of pride in their school and in themselves for their hard work. Thanks to those who donated flowers and supplies, the Student Council and Girls on the Run for their help, and the organizers!



The **34th Annual Art Show** featuring the artwork of WMS and WHS was a huge success! Visitors enjoyed seeing the variety of talent from students in Ceramics, Photography, Graphic Design and Art. Elementary families also enjoyed viewing student artwork in the shows held at their schools.



Wissahickon Students Fighting Cancer through the Relay For Life



With a long tradition in our community, the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life is back live and in person after being canceled for two years because of the pandemic! Relay For Life is not a race; it's a community event that welcomes people of all ages to celebrate cancer survivors, remember loved ones lost, and support the fight against a disease that has taken too much from too many. It's also an opportunity to come back together with family and friends for food, fun, activities, and entertainment. This year, the event will be held at the WHS Stadium on Saturday, June 25,

from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

As Wissahickon senior and Relay For Life participant Lauren Kooman explains, "Within the past two years, COVID has been huge, but even though we have had a global pandemic, cancer is still affecting individuals and families everywhere, so supporting this event will go a long way." Lauren has been involved in Relay For Life, since 2019, both as part of a fundraising team and as a student liaison with the goal of publicizing the event within the Wissahickon community.

Wissahickon senior Christina O'Farrell shares Lauren's enthusiasm for the Relay For Life. Since Christina's three older brothers had participated in Relay, she was certain that it was something she wanted to get involved in, not only because of the fun but also to support the cause. Knowing two teachers who had experienced cancer while she was in high school, Christina said, "There are so many people in our own Wissahickon community that have been affected by cancer that students could help by participating in Relay."

Freshman Roman Aberant is another active Relay For Life participant. Roman, whose mother is a cancer survivor, describes feeling like he had a "responsibility to help." And help he has! He has been co-captaining a Relay For Life fundraising team with his mom since he was in sixth grade. He raised money for the cause even during the pandemic years when the event went virtual, and he is thrilled to finally be back in the stadium this year.

Although the 2022 Relay For Life takes place just after school ends, Key Club and National Honor Society have agreed to allow students who volunteer at the event to earn credit and carry it over to next year.

Join us for some fun in support of a good cause! [Click here for more information on Relay For Life.](#)

Cultural Recognition and Celebrations

Shout out to the Wiss Asian Student Association on a VERY successful first-ever Asian Culture Fair this May! Activities included a jiu jitsu demonstration, a Kathak and Bharatnatyam classical dance show, a Taekwondo demonstration, and a traditional Chinese dance performance. Attendees learned how to play ddakji and write Japanese calligraphy, enjoyed different cuisines, learned more about Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month and how to combat AAPI hate crimes.

A HUGE thank you to the Chinese parent group, AAPI parent group, and community members who supported us with not only their generous donations for the inaugural Asian Culture Fair, but most importantly their encouragements. We look forward to our continual partnership!



The WHS Asian Student Association held a Read-a-Loud for Lower Gwynedd Elementary students with a selection of books celebrating the many cultures and stories of the AAPI community.



Blue Bell Elementary AAPI Heritage Projects and Book Raffle Winners

Blue Bell students who chose to do a take home project for AAPI Heritage Month were entered into a raffle for a chance to win a prize (a book donated by the new AAPI parent group)! Students enjoyed learning about the wonderful diversity of Asian American and Pacific Islander culture and heritage.



WHS Alumni Hall of Fame 2022

Congratulations to the 14 outstanding WHS alumni selected for induction to the 2022 Alumni Hall of Fame. These alumni are recognized for their exemplary achievements in the areas of post-graduate career accomplishments; leadership within career organizations/industries; community service and voluntary leadership in their community; prior recognition and honors; and/or innovative accomplishments. The community is invited to attend our celebration of their achievements during the Alumni Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Friday, October 7th at 5 PM. [READ MORE ABOUT OUR INDUCTEES AND TO RSVP.](#)



Mehrdad Barikbin
Class of 2000



Kristin Beckett
Class of 2007



Bill Deering
Class of 1986



Joseph Donahue
Class of 1985



Anne French
Class of 1978



Dr. Stephen M. Hahn
Class of 1977



Shelleah Jackson
Class of 2012



Hope Thompson Laird
Class of 1978



Keith Oliphant
Class of 2014



Tim Miller
Class of 1988



Kirsten Jahn Richardson
Class of 2003



Melissa Schiller
Class of 2009



Ross Shanken
Class of 1988



Gregg Walker
Class of 1990

HOLD THE DATE: WSD Community Invited to Hypnotizing America

We are so excited to host a super fun event for the entire school community on October 6, 2022! One of our Hall of Fame inductees, Tim Miller, and his wife, Michelle (also an alumna) are bringing their show - Hypnotizing America - to WHS! Attendees will get to see Mr. Miller hypnotize staff, students and other audience members during the comedy hypnosis show guaranteed to entertain you! Ticket information will be shared at the start of next school year. [WATCH THIS SHORT CLIP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SHOW!](#)

Class Spotlight: Shout out to the Class of 1972 on their ongoing generous support of scholarships for WHS students each year! Since 2013, more than \$33,000 has been awarded to help the scholarship recipients attend college or vocational school. Over 90 members of the Class have participated. "I can't stress enough what an honor it is to coordinate and administer this initiative on behalf of our class. Even though it's been 50 years since we graduated, we all have a dear spot in our heart for Wissahickon," said alumnus Bob Wolff.

Bob and classmate Nelson Krupp (pictured with the 2021 scholarship recipients) enjoy attending the Scholarship Awards Ceremony each year to personally congratulate and award the scholarships to our students. This year, more than 150 seniors will be awarded a scholarship from various individuals/organizations and recognized at the ceremony.

