

WISSAHICKON SILVER LININGS

WISS NATION'S ROUNDUP OF THE UPLIFTING & UPWORTHY

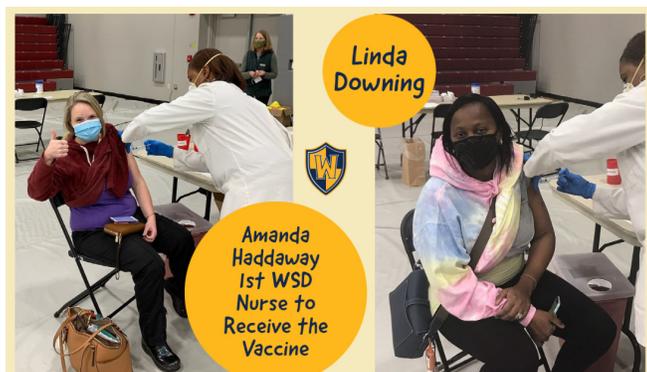


February 2021

WSD Staff Start Receiving COVID Vaccine

Our amazing school nurses received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine this January. Amanda Haddaway was the first WSD nurse to receive the shot followed by the rest of the nursing team. Vaccines are also currently being scheduled for staff in the PA Department of Health's Phase 1A category (persons ages 65 and older and persons ages 16-64 with high-risk conditions).

"It is so important for everyone in our community to get the vaccine to protect themselves and stop the spread of COVID. There is nothing to fear. The shot didn't hurt – I had just a slightly sore arm the next day – and I was thrilled to be among the other health professionals who are receiving the vaccine," said Linda Downing.



Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Students, staff & families across the district participated in academic and community service activities in recognition of Martin Luther King Day. Stony Creek hosted three opportunities to give back to the community including a food drive for Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard and school supplies for Mitzvah Circle. Additionally, they wrote notes of thanks and encouragement to frontline workers, including:

- Whitpain Police Department
- Centre Square Fire Company
- Doctors and Nurses
- Grocery store workers at Giant & McCaffreys

WHS Alumnus Headed to Super Bowl

Our very own, Tanoh Kpassagnon '12, #92 Defensive End with the Kansas City Chiefs, is headed to the Super Bowl AGAIN as the Chiefs seek a back-to-back championship! Check out the exciting news on CBS3 including a #WissNation shout out from Coach Jeff Cappa.

[WATCH CBS NEWS SPOTLIGHT](#)



144 Inducted into National Honor Society

The Wissahickon National Honor Society inducted 144 new members in a virtual ceremony on January 21st. NHS members are required to hold a 3.5 unweighted GPA at the end of their sophomore or junior year and complete an extensive application demonstrating their Service, Character, and Leadership.

This year, NHS officers also honored four incredible WHS staff members for their Scholarship (Mr. Heppel), Service (Mr. Rooney), Leadership (Mr. Ford), and Character (Mr. Brodie).

[WATCH THE NHS INDUCTION CEREMONY](#)



Robotics Team Alumni Speaker Series

Here's a great story about WHS alumni staying connected, supporting other students, and making our school community proud! Through a new virtual Alumni Speaker Series, launched by the WHS School FIRST Robotics Competition Team #341, Miss Daisy, alumni who participated in robotics are sharing their college/career experiences and providing advice to other students.

"Our Alumni Speaker Series was conceived as a way to bring current robotics students in direct contact with people who have literally sat in their seats before by being on the Wissahickon HS robotics team themselves," said Kirsten Jahn Richardson, Robotics Head Coach. "Showing our current students the value of dedicating themselves to the robotics team, along with where their futures can take them, is exciting and needed during these difficult times. Our alumni share stories, lessons learned, and the paths they have taken post-high school and in developing successful careers."



Gina Triolo

341 ALUM ~ SOFTWARE ENGINEER ~ MICROSOFT



In a video presentation by Gina Triolo '10, Senior Software Engineer, Microsoft, she summarizes her four years on the team, including being part of the Chairman's Award team during their championship

win, resulting in her meeting President Barack Obama at the inaugural White House Science Fair. She recaps her time at Princeton University and how she landed multiple internships at Microsoft, including her work on Microsoft's display ad business, Microsoft Excel, and a Windows communication enhancement.

[VIEW GINA'S VIDEO](#)



DARIYA ROBERTS

Penn State - Electrical Engineering Student

Dariya Roberts '17 reviews why she joined the team, summarizes her four years on the team, and what she learned. She discusses her decision-making

process surrounding her major (mechanical engineering vs. electrical engineering/computer science) and the struggles she encountered during her first couple years at college.

[WATCH DARIYA'S VIDEO](#)

CONGRATULATIONS

JULIET O'FARRELL
RICKY SEBECK
ELLA MARRA



Congrats to SGE 5th graders, Juliet O'Farrell, Ricky Sebeck and Ella Marra, for their impressive work in the Rendell Center's Citizenship Challenge. Juliet and Ricky, who researched and wrote essays stating their opinion on the electoral college, were chosen as finalists from over 100 schools throughout PA. They were asked to recruit a third team member for finals so Ella joined the team. The students worked with Dr. Sheldon's (SGE teacher) help for several weeks doing further research to prepare for the event. Although they didn't place in the top three out of the 12 participating schools, they are winners! They had the opportunity to meet the judges, Governor Edward Rendell, Judge Marjorie Rendell, and Franco Harris and they enjoyed a virtual tour of the Constitution Center.

What's the Scrabble Word Score for BRAVO?

Dathan Lang, a 9th grader, competed in his first Gladiators World English Language Scrabble Players Association (WESPA) Youth Cup this January. WESPA is an international online youth Scrabble championship in which 96 players from the 16 countries contest for the virtual Scrabble youth cup. He played a total of 18 Scrabble games against Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Nepal. He was selected as part of the USA Team with five other kids from different states. The USA team won the game against Nepal and a very close game with Malaysia. Dathan also participated in the annual Halloween "Terror of the Tiles" Youth Scrabble Tournament in November. They had 41 players from 1st-12th grade from 9 different states including former NASSC and NASPA champions. In the Advanced Division, he won first place.



FUN FACT: If you use all seven of your tiles in one play, it earns you a bonus of 50 points. That's called a "bingo," in Scrabble lingo.



The buck stops with the WSD Business Office! If you have never met them, the team is (back row, l to r): Wade Coleman, Kim Marcellino, Karen Wargo, (middle, l to r): Rachelle Halteman, Tim Matthews, Denise Lavanna and (front) Beth Valerio. Shout out to Beth, Business Office Administrative Assistant, who made these great masks for the department.

MathCounts Competes and Wins!

Twenty-eight WMS students participated in the 15th Annual School MathCounts competition. Students completed the individual written rounds online and the team round involving a mix of socially distanced groups at school and virtual collaboration for distance learners. The results of school competition were used, in part, to determine this year's official school team: Joseph Chang, Gabe Gold, Charles Lee (3rd Place tied), Andrew Li (2nd Place), Kevin Li, Parth Patel (1st Place), Raymond Pelletier (3rd Place tied), Stefan Preutu, Jake Tan, and Hannah Yum.

These students will now increase their weekly practice time in preparation for the February 5th Chapter Competition where their performance will be measured against the region's best mathletes. Winners get the chance to participate in the Chapter Invitational Competition on February 25th.

Additional congratulations to Parth Patel for being recognized with "honors" for placing in the top 5% in the nation in November's AMC 8. Sixth grader Nathan Bacon was also awarded "merit" for his score relative to all 6th graders who took the competition this year.

WMS Virtual Art Show

Poison Dart Frog

Hannah Chang



Hannah L
Contour Line Drawing



Mask Project
Kylee Park



Check out the amazing artwork featured in these WMS Virtual Art Show padlets.

[6th Grade Art](#)

[7th Grade Art](#)

[8th Grade Art](#)

WMS Librarian Selected for Leadership Role



WMS Librarian Janice Conger was chosen to be a member of the 2020-21 PSLA Leadership Institute for School Librarians (LISL) - dedicated to transforming teaching and learning through quality school library programs.

The 2020/21 Leadership Institute for School Librarians provides professional development, training and strategic planning to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in Pennsylvania school libraries and education.

Mrs. Conger participated in three 90-minute training sessions and will participate in other sessions to develop the tools, knowledge and skills to transform teaching and learning with diverse and inclusive school libraries. She has also volunteered to be a mentor to other school librarians!

Junior Selected for Leadership Award & Scholarship

Junior Madeline Frustaci has been selected to receive the Widener University High School Leadership Award. As a recipient, if Madeline enrolls at Widener University as an undergraduate student, Madeline will take part in the Apogee Leadership Scholars program and receive a \$20,000 scholarship over four years!

This award program is designed to recognize high school students in the region, like Madeline, who embody the university's commitment to develop and inspire leaders to affect positive change. The Awards Committee recognized Madeline's ability to demonstrate leadership by standing up for what is right, finding a way to address a wrong, or making a difference in a significant way.

Words of Encouragement Wednesdays

CALLING ALL MEMBERS OF THE WHS CLASS OF 2020

<https://tinyurl.com/y2hstuqw>

Do you have "Words of Encouragement" for the Class of 2021?

Class of 2020: Share a short message of encouragement with the Class of 2021 to show your support for what they are going through as seniors during this challenging time.

We will share these thoughts and shout-outs with the Class of 2021 each week for "Words of Encouragement Wednesday."

Attention WHS Class of 2020: Spread some cheer and encouragement from your class to the Class of 2021 during these difficult times. **Send a Note:** <https://tinyurl.com/y2hstuqw>

Learning In Action

WHS CASA Club students (Celebrating All Students Achievement), in coordination with the Social Studies Department, are planning some great events in recognition of Black History Month this February.

1. CASA students are making short videos to share in Social Studies classrooms each week for each of the four weeks of February. The videos will focus on implicit bias and conclude with a wrap-up question to further thought and/or discussion. The topics for each of these videos are as follows:
 - Week One: Bias
 - Week Two: Prejudice vs. Racism vs. Discrimination
 - Week Three: Systemic Racism
 - Week Four: "Reverse Racism" - Fact or Fiction
2. CASA students will read four children's books featuring people of color through the month of February. These videos will be available through the WSD YouTube Channel and on WSD Facebook/Twitter. The books are: *Snowy Day*, *Last Stop on Market Street*, *Hair Love*, and *Monster Trouble*
3. Quotes that celebrate Black History Month and diversity will be posted each day in February to Schoology. These quotes were selected and shared by various members of CASA.
4. TV Lab students will post 1-minute Black History Month videos on the televisions throughout WHS during the month of February. Some of the topics are: Tuskegee Airmen, Birmingham March, and Harriet Tubman.

Miss Stern's 3rd graders at **Stony Creek Elementary** watched some kid-friendly videos related to Inauguration Day and shared the great facts that they learned. Make way for our future presidents!



Do you know what an idiom is? Ms. Russo's 3rd graders at **Lower Gwynedd Elementary** do! Two great examples: "We see eye to eye" and "I hope you don't get cold feet!"



Stony Creek Student Council helped organize a wildly successful Vocabulary Day! All staff and students (in-person and virtual) chose a word to represent through artwork and costumes. Students enjoyed every minute of teaching each other the meaning of their words through presentations and videos.

[WATCH: Vocabulary Videos from Miss Stern's Class](#)

Who wore it best? Mrs. Swangers' 4th Graders at **Shady Grove Elementary**

watched a Mystery Science episode and were challenged to recreate the artwork images.



Mrs. Neft's 2nd Graders at **Blue Bell Elementary** focused on ways to express themselves in English Language Arts. They read and watched different musical performances, finishing up by making their own musical instruments out of recycled material.



SPOTLIGHT on WHS Extracurricular Activities

The **9th Grade Wellness** classes just completed a program called “Too Good For Drugs” sponsored by Aldersgate Youth Service Bureau and co-taught by Rachael Tobinus, the WHS SAP Counselor and the Wellness teachers. The topics dealt with real world challenges teens face in high school. They explored practical guidance for understanding the negative health effects related to prescription drug misuse, underage drinking, marijuana abuse, opioid abuse, and nicotine use. Students also explored the stages of addiction and the risks associated with experimentation, the social and peer influences they face, as well as the internal pressures to take unhealthy risks to fit in with their peers or to escape. The interactive activities offered through a program workbook and games challenged the students to explore healthy alternatives to unhealthy risks as they work to reach their goals.

FRESHMAN CLASS COMMITTEE

The Freshman Class Committee has been working on a Freshman T-Shirt Sale and a Virtual Trivia Night for the freshman class in the near future. Some of their work has been on hold or postponed due to the pandemic but stay tuned!

WISSPALS

Wiss Pals held lunch meet-ups during the months of December and January. This gave members time to catch up, hang out, and reinforce social skills.

FEMINIST CLUB

Feminist Club is a debate and discussion-based club that focuses on creating an environment where young women feel safe and empowered to share their opinions about current issues in women’s rights and politics today. Feminist Club has been meeting twice a month since the beginning of the school year. There are three wonderful club leaders, Breea Booker, Ellie Kroznuski and Kenzie Pickett, who are taking turns organizing, preparing and leading meetings. They offer interesting ideas to discuss and engage members, whose numbers are constantly growing (up from 15 at the beginning of the school year to 26).

The club has discussed the history of feminism, views on feminism and stereotypes, women’s inequality in the work place, discrimination of black women and school dress codes - sharing their perspectives and personal stories.

AMBASSADOR, CASA and NHS

Ambassador, CASA and NHS members helped to organize and run the Program of Studies Night Jr. for incoming 9th graders regarding electives and the course selection process. They helped create PowerPoint presentation, ran breakout channels including a Kahoot and Q & A session and provided a Wiss Link virtual tour of the building.

WAQT

The Wissahickon Academic Quiz Team has been in full swing with practices every other week and tournaments monthly. Although they can’t travel to compete, the officers pictured below (Amelia Heppe, Adam Grossberg, Sophia Furman, and Jacky Zheng) worked hard to find alternative events on line. The team hosted Upper Dublin in a spirited dual meet and hope to redeem their record when they host Springfield at the end of February. The experience of the team’s juniors and seniors gives them the edge, but they also welcomed back a 10th grade force to be reckoned with and some promising 9th grade recruits.

Their next practice will feature only “trash” questions, which means pop culture, movies, TV, music and memes. All students are welcome to join on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Stay up to date through the Schoology page with access code 7F27S-77FG6.



MOCK TRIAL CLUB

Students in Mock Trial Club have been working to prepare for the Montgomery County Mock trial competition, crafting opening statements, closing statements, direct examinations, and cross examinations for a civil case. Most recently, students had a scrimmage against Lower Merion.

PROJECT LIT

In Project Lit, students have been reading and discussing books monthly. So far, choices have ranged from memoirs and dystopian sci-fi books to realistic fiction, including titles like *Born a Crime*, *Nyxia* and *On the Come Up*.

JAZZ BAND

The Jazz Bands have been playing at home during rehearsals and working through a new repertoire as well as deeper dives into active listening and improvisation techniques. The musicians send in mp3s of their parts which they record to a guide track created by the band director who then edits their parts together into a complete piece.

MINI-THON

Mini-THON has been staying active the first half of the school year by coming up with socially distanced fundraisers to raise money to end childhood cancer and support families with hospital bills. The club hosted a car wash, an outdoor cycling and yoga event, and held a holiday shopping day where Ambler businesses helped out with the cause. Along with these fun, safe, in-person events, the club was able to “flock” our Wissahickon community by putting flamingos on the lawns of those nominated. The general members nominated the first person “flocked” who made a donation and nominated the next person to be “flocked” and the chain continued. Stay tuned for more Mini-THON events in the second half of the school year!



BULLET JOURNALING

In lieu of in-person meetings, Bullet Journaling Club has been coming up with ways to connect, create and get organized virtually. Recently, they started a hand-lettering unit, teaching members how to do calligraphy and more with supplies they have at home - pencils, pens, markers, etc. In addition to Ella Chang and Helen Chang, founding members and co-presidents, they welcomed four new officers - Melissa Kim, Meena Rajesh, Dora Stavenger, and Kelly Lee - to the club leadership unit. Follow the club @wissbujo on Insta or join the Schoology group for updates about club activities.



HOMECOMING COURT

Congrats to the WHS Homecoming Court. Interested candidates paired up to submit videos viewed by other students, who voted for their favorites. Five couples were selected:

- King and Queen: Alex Yum and Dagmar Daniel
- Santo Carbo and Paige Benning
- Maggie Bianchini and Jen Winter
- Noah Miller and EJ Schriener
- Sophia Chiodo Ortiz and Jackson Tappen

MODEL UN

The Model UN has been having a lot of fun diving into parliamentary procedure and crisis simulations. Next up will be the General Assembly protocol. The members also discuss issues across the world and their perspective on the news of the day as well as the responses of real-life UN delegates.

In lieu of their traditional pancake breakfasts this season, the **Wissahickon Water Polo** teams decided to give these breakfast staples back to the community. They held a collection and donated boxes of pancake mix and syrup to the Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard which were delivered on Martin Luther King Day.



Stay Connected & Smile

We encourage you to follow us on our social media to see more great stories, pictures and videos.

Facebook - [@wissahickonschooldistrict](#)

Twitter - [@WissahickonSD](#)

Instagram - [@WissahickonSchoolDistrict](#)

YouTube - [Wissahickon School District](#)

REMINDER: there are other Facebook Groups administered by school community members. The school district does not post or engage in discussion on those group pages and the content does not reflect the viewpoint of the district.

Don't Be Shy Wiss!

We are thrilled to celebrate the uplifting and upworthy happenings across the district. Don't be shy about telling us about your stories, learning activities and achievements. Send your news and pictures to kristen.rawlings@wsdweb.org so we can highlight them in future issues of our community newsletter.