



Trojan Talk

Newsletter from
Wissahickon High School



September 2021

Note from Dr. Blair, WHS Principal

The school year is off to a great start, despite a tornado-created detour during week 1. (Our thoughts continue for our families who have been impacted by the devastation, as well as our neighbors in the Upper Dublin schools.) The week before our students returned, our staff participated in three days of professional development getting ready to welcome back our students to the building. In addition to teaching and learning focused professional development sessions, you may have also seen groups of teachers from WHS running around the streets of Ambler competing in a team-building scavenger hunt activity. (Check out some of the pictures below) By the end of the week, we all were anxiously waiting for the morning of August 30th when the students would return. We kicked off day 1 with a guest speaker sharing his funny and engaging take on our Choose Happiness WHS theme. After participating in some team-building activities with their homeroom friends, the students then had a chance to meet all of their teachers, learn how to successfully navigate the knuckle, and then catch up with their friends during grade-level ice cream socials at the end of the day. We are now back in the routine with our academic schedule, our Fall sports teams are into their season, and our clubs and activities are getting our students back together and doing great things.



Safety Update

Thank you to our students and staff for their patience and teamwork during our recent lock-out and safety concern. I know what a stressful experience that can be, especially at the start of the year when our 9th graders are new to the school and some of our 10th graders are just starting back to in-person learning as well. After the information was shared with you the evening of September 13th about the incident and fights, we worked as a school team to investigate the series of events with support of our local police, as well as worked to look at how we can promote positive decision-making skills and a safe learning space for all of our students. We don't tolerate fighting at WHS – it isn't who we are as a school and the events of that day were disappointing to all of us. I continue to encourage all of our students to please rely on a trusted adult in the building if you have any concerns. Our community can only be as strong as our members.

Traffic Updates



As predicted, our morning and afternoon traffic patterns on Dager and Houston Roads are hectic, to say the least. Over the course of these initial weeks, we have seen some definite improvements with the spacing and timing of all of our parent drop-off arrivals. I continue to encourage families to shift

their arrival time a bit; the window from 7:29-7:35 AM is the time when we are seeing the most significant back-up. If you can try and shift your arrival a few minutes earlier, that would certainly alleviate some (but not all) of the traffic. We are going to continue with our parent drop-off in the morning in the auditorium loop and our parent pick-up in the afternoon in the front circle (please don't use the parking lot in the apartment complex across the street from WHS) until we have more information to possibly create a more efficient approach. The district has brought in traffic engineers/experts to help us collect some data (time windows, number of cars, etc.) and to look at the advantages and disadvantages of alternate approaches. Stay tuned! As we learn more, we will share it with our community. Thank you for your continued patience and flexibility.

Musical Programming for 2021-22

As we all know, Covid has created disruptions to pretty much everything we do! We continue to do our best to balance two top priorities at WHS – keeping our students and greater community safe and providing as much “normalcy” as we can for our students. We know that our musical programs – our instrumental groups, our vocal groups, our Fall Drama, and Spring Musical – are a significant part of many of our students' experiences at WHS. We are happy to share that this year, we have more opportunities and experiences that resemble “normal” than we had last year (but we aren't able to return entirely to the pre-Covid ways).

Our Band, Chorus, and Orchestra are meeting during the school day with restrictions in place to manage student safety, including student spacing and locations of practices/performances, but we are excited that the classes are meeting in-person this year with these modifications in place. Our procedures will constantly be evaluated and modified based on changing guidelines from the district and/or county. Our Fall Drama will be held in-person again this year; we will be following distancing protocol, the venue will be moved to our larger auditorium space, and the audience size will be limited, but the students will perform together on stage. Our winter concerts are still “TBD”. At this point, we don't know what restrictions will be in place at that time but we do recognize that outside concerts in December are very impractical. As we approach these events, we will make decisions based on the landscape of the situation at that time. That same “TBD mindset” holds for our Spring Musical at this time.

Homecoming Plans

Student Council is busy preparing for Homecoming! This year's Homecoming game is scheduled for Friday, October 8th. Spirit Week will be as follows:

- Monday 10/4 – Pajama Day
- Tuesday 10/5 – Twin Tuesday
- Wednesday 10/6 – Luau/Hawaiian theme
- Thursday 10/7 – Dress to Impress!
- Friday 10/8 – Blue vs. Gold

The Pep Rally will be outside at the Stadium on Friday, October 8th during school. Seniors: keep an eye out for Homecoming Court nominations early next week!

The annual Homecoming bonfire will be held outside of WHS on Thursday, 10/7 from 6:00PM-8:00PM. There will be food and dessert trucks so be sure to bring your appetite and small bills.

Other Homecoming events to keep an eye out for signing up...

- 3v3 Basketball Tournament
- PowderPuff Flag Football game with Mini-THON
- Homecoming game Tailgate before the game!

Beginning Friday, 9/17, Student Council will continue with bagel sales in the cafeteria. Stop by for a fresh bagel when your bus drops you off.



Congratulations to our WHS Students of the Month September 2021

Join us in celebrating our September WHS Students of the Month!
We are so proud of each of you!

Rohan Singh
Science



Nicholas Husa
Art and Music



Kevin Lynch
Social Studies



Daniel Boyle
Language Arts



Rodrigo Ramirez
NMTCC



Alex Gindea
Math



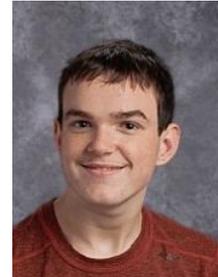
Dora Stavenger
Business/Technology/FCS



Lauren Kooman
Athlete



Charles Ignatius
Good Citizen



Melody Gittes
Kindness



Marvin Chen
World Language



Alexandra Davenport
Health/PE



Support Services

As a reminder, WHS offers support to students during the school day through our Math and Writing Labs located in the Library. The Labs help support our second chance learning approach and we encourage our students to take advantage of the services. Additionally, we have our Extended Learning Time (ELT) tutoring after-school. Our STARS Tutoring Program is also in full-swing. As a counterpart to our teacher-led Labs and ELT interventions, the Stars Tutoring program is an opportunity for students to support other students through a peer-tutoring model. Students can volunteer to either provide or receive help in specific subject areas. Last year, we had about 120 students participate in this great program and we are hoping to have even more students work together this year! Meetings occur at mutually agreed upon times either during Study Hall, after-school, or during I/E periods. Students interested in STARS should complete an application, which can be found in the library or in the counseling office. You can also contact Mr. McCabe through Schoology or email him at bmccabe@wsdweb.org.

National Honor Society News

Congratulations to the **2021-2022 National Honor Society Officers**: President Rohan Singh, Vice President Nate D'Aquanno, Treasurer Katie Buck, Secretary Alex Shin, Events Coordinator Lexi Hobson, Reporter Emma Kershner, and Webmaster Melissa Kim. In the next few weeks, all 11th and 12th graders should keep an eye out in Schoology for invitations for potential acceptance into Wissahickon's chapter of the National Honor Society. In order to complete an application, you must accept the invitation. Eligible students have a minimum 3.5 unweighted GPA, are involved in three or more activities (sports, activities, jobs), and have completed the application in its entirety. Once you accept the invitation, the application window will be open for two weeks. If you have any questions, please reach out to Ms. Estock in room B01 or Mrs. McLaughlin in room M01.

1st Recipient of Wissahickon and Gwynedd Mercy University Opportunity Scholarship



Congratulations to **WHS senior, Toni Robinson!** Toni is the first recipient of the Wissahickon and Gwynedd Mercy University Opportunity Scholarship. Toni will be attending GMercyU next year with a focus on majoring in education. We believe in Toni and look forward to all of the great things she is going to do in our community in the future.

9/11 Memorial Concert

On Monday, September 13th, our **WHS Camerata held their 20th annual 9/11 Memorial Concert** offering a place for our community to reflect on the historical and devastating tragedy that impacted our nation twenty years ago. The students, under the direction of Mr. Conahan, did a wonderful job honoring those lives lost, the heroes of 9/11, and their families.



Wiss Link 9th Grade Orientation

On August 27th, our **Wiss Link student leaders and club advisors** welcomed approximately 350 9th graders to WHS for our Freshmen Orientation. The student mentors and 9th graders had a chance to get to know each other through team-building games and activities, as well as learn about WHS and participate in a building tour. Prior to the August 27th event, the Wiss Link Student Leaders and four Link Crew Advisors (Ms. Butt, Mrs. Lehman, Mr. Shoemaker, and Mr. McKenna) participated in a two-day fun-filled training where the leaders engaged in the same activities that they delivered to the 9th graders during the orientation. Thank you to our Link Crew Advisors and our Wiss Link Student Leaders for their commitment, school-spirit, and mentorship! Class of 2025: please don't forget that your Wiss Link Student Leaders are always here to support you – as you can always see on their purple t-shirt, "We're here when you need us".



Class of 2022 Kick-Off

The Class of 2022 kicked-off the start of their Senior year the day before opening day by decorating their parking spots. They had a great time getting back together with friends, reconnecting while they decorated, and enjoying ice pops. It was a great way to celebrate the start of their final WHS chapter. Check out some of their work. The Class of 2022 officers are busy planning and brainstorming their plans for a November senior celebration. The students are planning an activity that will bring the students together and also adhere to our school district's Covid safety protocol.



Learning Highlights

A shout-out to **Ms. Pronko's AP Seminar students** who kicked off the school year by practicing their collaborative skills. The students were challenged to create a cup-tower without touching the cups themselves and to create the letter Q (which stands for questions which serve as the foundation to this course).



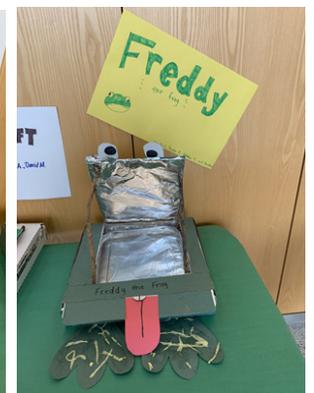
Students from **Dr. Malcolm's and Ms. Jarvis' AP Environmental Science classes** have been taking advantage of the sunny, warm weather to practice their surveying skills. APES students learned that holding the stadia rod takes concentration and skill.



Another shout-out to **Ms. Shahbazi's Chemistry students** for igniting the "flame of knowledge" on the first day of school by using the Bunsen Burner and to Ms. Shahbazi's homeroom playing Rock-Paper-Scissors on the first day of school.



A HPE shout-out goes to **Mrs. Kane's Adventure Education class**. The students created solar ovens, harnessing the power of the sun's UV rays to create and enjoy some delicious s'mores. (Sadly, I wasn't invited!)





TROJAN TRIUMPHS

Athletic Update from Jim Cairnes, Athletic Director



FENCING:

Congratulations to Dominic Joseph for being awarded USA Fencing All-American: First Team Honors as well as USA Fencing All-Academic Honors: First Team.

FOOTBALL

In an excellent example of neighbor helping neighbor, the Wissahickon & Upper Dublin Football teams joined forces to turn a spirited neighborhood rivalry into a “Food Drive Blitz” competition that benefitted the Maddie N. Dixon Community Cupboard. Our Trojans delivered a total of 2,105 pounds to UD’s 1,568 pounds for a total of 3,673 pounds of food. It was a lot of fun for everyone involved and for a worthy cause. We are very proud of our all of the participants. [Check out the article that was shared by Suburban One.](#)



FIELD HOCKEY

The Wissahickon Field Hockey team has gotten off to a great start with back-to-back wins. They were able to defeat a strong Council Rock South squad in overtime with a “no time on the clock” goal from Co-Captain Brynne Miller. In their second game, the team defeated Hatboro-Horsham by a score of 8-0. The Captains: Brynne Miller, Julia Schools, Kate Lovensheimer and Alli Wood are leading this strong team through their amazing work ethic and positive attitude. This is going to be an exciting season!



TENNIS: Girls’ Tennis is off to a strong start with 5-1 record, and their only loss came at the hands of State Championship team of 2020 Springfield, posting strong singles competition and competitive doubles. Wissahickon outperformed perennial District 1 contender Radnor, as well as having non-league successes with Council Rock North, Central Bucks East and North Penn. In Suburban One League competition, Wissahickon girls have decisively beaten Plymouth Whitmarsh and will try to retain the SOL team title after facing Abington and Upper Dublin in coming matches. Seniors Ella Chang, Lauren Kooman, Katie Fu and Ella Sanders bring strong D1 experience to Wissahickon's returning lineup.

WATER POLO: The Wissahickon Girls’ Water Polo Team has started their season 2-1 with wins over Hill School and cross-town rival Upper Dublin and dropping a non-league game to Wilson. The Trojans will face a trio of Western Conference teams: North Allegheny, McDowell and Villa Maria at the Screamin Eagle Tournament on September 18th.

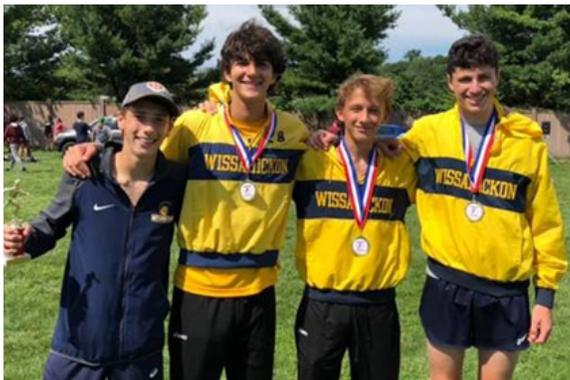
VOLLEYBALL: The Wissahickon Volleyball team has been fighting hard in their first few games. They won their first game against Upper Dublin High School. Mija Bendzuite had 13 kills and Sadie Paxson had 6 digs. Jill Suchodolski, Sadie Paxson, Mija Bendzuite, Alex Bladek, and Ava Kelly all led the team with multiple aces throughout the match. The Wissahickon Volleyball team is excited to keep this momentum going as they head into the rest of the season.



CROSS COUNTRY: The Boys' and Girls' Cross Country teams competed in their first invitational in two years at Abington on September 11th. They returned to competition in style bringing home 16 medals! Novice Boys medalists were Alex Gobin (16), Evan Vichnin (17), Luke Morehouse (18), and Michael Lambright (20).



JV Boys medalists included JV Champion Grayson Ruffner, Josh Sasson (7), Martin Vandergrift (13), and Micah Margolis (25).



Varsity Boys medalists were Matt Winkowski (10), Brendan Tatko (14), Jake Licata (21), and Dean DiGiovanni (22).



Novice Girls medalists were Emma Reilly (2) and Alexa McCabe (13).



Varsity Girls medalists were Leah Dubin (14) and Mila Jovanovic (23).

