



# The Irish Highlighter

Volume 5 : Issue 1

## Seneca High School

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### COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2015

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# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

Rising above...



expectations!

## Board of Education Corner

**Seneca High School** creates an environment where every student has the opportunity to rise above and accomplish great things. Whether it is rising above adversity, rising above the standard expectations, or rising above their own personal goals, students are provided a safe and nurturing environment. Making mistakes, learning, and growing as a person are all part of every student's experience in life and at Seneca High School. No one ever attains success by simply doing what is required. The job of the Board of Education, parents, educators, and the community is to encourage and provide the environment in which going above and beyond expectations is the norm and not the exception.

In this newsletter, we will highlight examples of going above and beyond expectations. The role of a board member encompasses the guardianship of all areas of the school. Curriculum, co-curricular, finance, personnel, building, grounds, transportation, policy, school improvement and school climate span a broad spectrum of disciplines that are all equally important. Meeting the expectation of going above and beyond in all areas is not an easy task, yet it is an important one.

Seneca High School, through implementation of The Seneca Way, has started many new initiatives this year. A two day Freshman Orientation, extended school day, learning centers for student success time and additional dual credit courses are up and running. Re-vitalizing the West Campus, upgrading the HVAC control systems, and meeting financial goals were accomplished this summer. These are just a few of the examples of going above and beyond expectations that the Board of Education is proud to share with the community.

I hope you enjoy this edition of The Irish Highlighter. The 2015-16 school year is off to a great start with the finish of the first semester. On behalf of the Seneca High School Board of Education, I wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

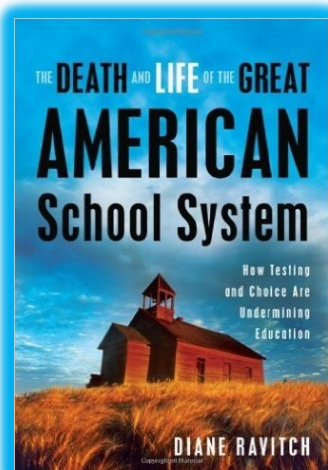
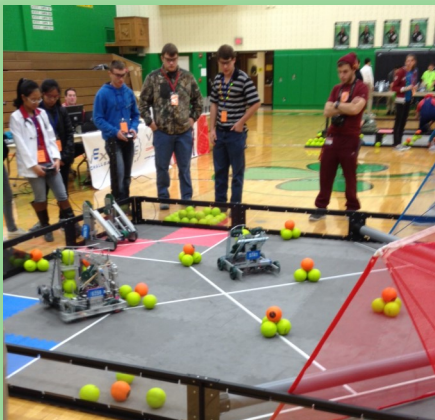
Ron Frye  
Board President



**"We aim above the mark to hit the mark." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson**



## A message from Superintendent Jim Carlson



If you have been around SHS for a while, you probably have seen the commons and gymnasium undergo many interesting metamorphoses. The spaces have served as the venue for graduations, senior citizen dinners, homecoming and prom dances, Veterans' Day celebrations, sports banquets, assemblies, staff trainings, parent-teacher conferences, and much more.

On Saturday, October 31, 2015, I witnessed an original conversion. For the day, the Seneca High School commons and gymnasium were transformed into a pit area, practice area, charging station zone, skills challenge field, and two competition arenas for our inaugural hosting of the VEX Halloween Robotics competition. Illinois high school teams from Carbondale to Chicago and its surrounding suburbs participated in the event, testing their team's unique robot creations against those made by other high school students throughout the state. Team Seneca, aka Fighting Irish Robotics, was comprised of Junior Truman Daggett, Junior Anthony Bernhard, and Sophomore Tyson Elias, members of our TSA club. The atmosphere held a buzz of excitement as participants prepared their robots for competition.

This vignette serves as yet another example of the opportunities Seneca High School students have to rise above mediocrity, stretch their learning to new heights, and challenge themselves to become just a bit more than they thought they could be. Over the past few years, the faculty and staff of Seneca High School have worked diligently to ensure our students are offered a high-quality college and career ready pathway to success, including opportunities to experience the arts and career/technical education. Upon this foundation, we have built an advanced route for students wishing to challenge themselves even more. This year, alone, we have added Honors Chemistry I, Honors English I, and Dual Credit opportunities in American History, Psychology, College Algebra, Trigonometry, and Physical Education. Additionally, we are piloting the Food Sanitation course in our Foods & Nutrition class and the Advanced Child Care Certification through the American Red Cross in our Child Care class. We refuse to stand still, however, as more educational opportunities to rise above are being planned for next year as well.

In her book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, Diane Ravitch (2010) writes, "Schools that expect nothing more of their students than mastery of basic skills will not produce graduates who are ready for college or the modern workplace. Nor will they send forth men and women prepared to design new technologies, achieve scientific breakthroughs, or accomplish feats of engineering skill. Nor will their graduates be prepared to appreciate and add to our society's cultural achievements or to understand and strengthen its democratic heritage" (p. 226). For these reasons, SHS is making a shift from merely mastering content knowledge to developing core competencies such as critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, creativity, and collaboration in all of our students. Progress toward the acquisition of these competencies is the mechanism through which our students can rise above.





# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

## 2014-15 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Rising above...



financial goals!

### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- \* Financial Recognition from State: Highest Rating 4.0
- \* Approved 5 Year Negotiated Agreement with Certified Staff
- \* Reached Goal of One Year Operating in Fund Balances
- \* Completed HVAC Control Project with Grant Money

### 2014-15 Audited Financial Statements

#### Operating Revenues

Real Estate Taxes	\$	9,574,953.00
Local Sources	\$	1,011,455.00
State Sources	\$	412,496.00
Federal Sources	\$	193,977.00
General State Aid	\$	144,617.00

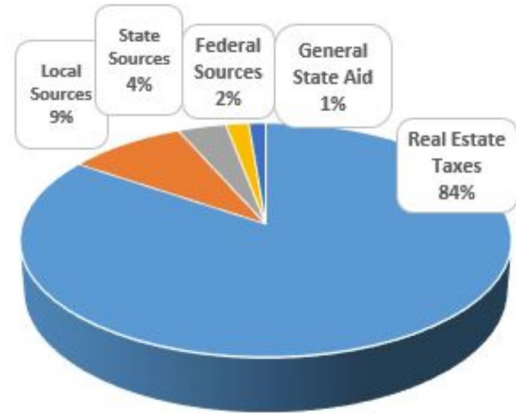
**Total** \$ **11,337,498.00**

#### Operating Expenses

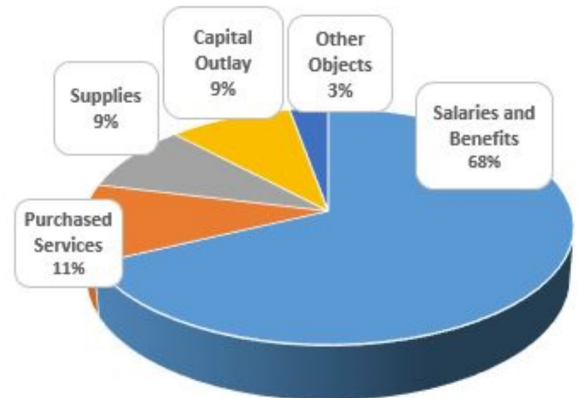
Salaries and Benefits	\$	6,518,645.00
Purchased Services	\$	1,028,798.00
Supplies	\$	877,951.00
Capital Outlay	\$	887,761.00
Other Objects	\$	274,958.00

**Total** \$ **9,588,113.00**

### Operating Revenues



### Operating Expenses

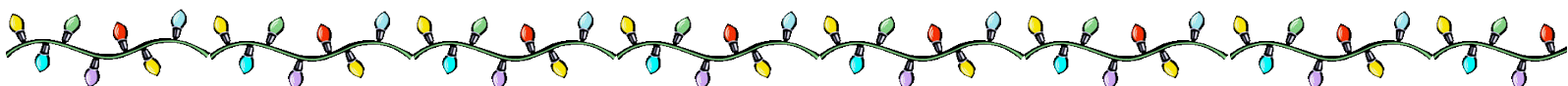


Being good stewards of the district's finances is critical in order to sustain quality educational programs and maintain community trust. With the economic uncertainty facing K-12 education, maintaining healthy fund balances provides the district stability and prevents the need for drastic and sometimes devastating programmatic cuts. In 2013, the SHS Board of Education created a series of goals to provide direction to district leaders. Below is the financial goal the Board adopted.

- ◆ **Provide financial resources to meet the goals of the district in a fiscally responsible manner.**
  - ◇ Target spending to goals.
  - ◇ Maintain fund balances equal to one year operating costs.
  - ◇ Adopt a balanced budget.
  - ◇ Prepare a levy that balances the needs of the district with the needs of the taxpayer.
  - ◇ Provide stewardship of district resources in a manner that builds trust with stakeholders.



The financial information contained on this page is taken from the 2014-2015 Audit. As you will see, the district has made exceptional progress toward meeting the Board's goals. Anyone interested in learning more about the financial status of the district may contact Superintendent Jim Carlson at the school.



The Board of Education, Administration, Faculty and Staff of Seneca High School wish all of our students and their families and members of the SHS Community a very happy and safe Christmas, New Year, and Holiday Season!





**“Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.” ~ Henry Ford**



## Semester news from Principal Marty Voiles

### **“New Beginning” for Freshmen at Seneca High School ...**

As many of us know and have experienced at one point in our lives, beginning high school can be a daunting and intimidating occurrence. Understanding “high school life” today is much more complicated than when you and I attended grades 9 through 12 years ago. In keeping a consistent theme relating to Seneca High School’s changes, new events, and first time experiences, I would like to provide you with a summary of our inaugural Freshman Orientation program that was implemented on August 17 & 18, 2015.

**Monday, August 17, 2015**, kicked-off the first day of school for the Class of 2019. Freshman students arrived at school at 7:30 a.m. and were greeted to a continental breakfast provided by the staff and administration. Following breakfast, students received instructions for the day, reviewed activities planned, and were placed into smaller groups for learning sessions throughout the day.

After the high school’s staff was introduced to the freshman class by Mr. Haines, students were assigned to various areas of the building and prepared to participate in Seneca High School’s **Four Stages of Success** program. The main theme behind the Four Stages of Success was to introduce students to the essential information that is necessary for all freshmen students. In other words, let’s show them what they need to know prior to the first full day of school attendance when all other grade levels report.

Class schedules were handed out and classrooms were visited so the freshmen could associate the teachers with each of their classes. Students also met with guidance counselors to discuss “everyday life” and future academic planning. Additionally, freshmen students received information relating to all SHS clubs and activities.

At the conclusion of these four 40-minute rotations, each student was given an “Irish Pride” t-shirt, which they were required to wear on their second day of the orientation program.

**Tuesday, August 18th**, marked day two of our program and consisted of a light breakfast upon the students’ arrival on campus, followed by a full day of activities. The students again traveled through their classroom schedules. Highlighting day two, the freshmen students and all staff participated in an interactive program provided by guest speaker, Mr. Ted Wiese.

Mr. Wiese’s presentation included activities such as team building in small groups, which magnified the need for role-playing, collaboration, communication, problem solving, team work and much more. This presentation was well received by both staff and students alike. We actually had students complete a survey following this program and results indicated that Mr. Wiese’s presentation was the most significant and valued aspect of the two day event.

If you would like to learn more about Mr. Ted Wiese and the wonderful work he does with schools and organizations across the country, please visit his website at [www.heartedtalk.com](http://www.heartedtalk.com). In planning for the fall of 2016, we have already secured a commitment to have Mr. Wiese return for our next freshman orientation program.



**Overall**, our freshman students expressed that this was a valuable experience that helped make them feel more comfortable as all grade levels attended the first day of school. Our staff is currently making adjustments to this new program and hopes to improve the overall quality of the orientation as we plan for August 2016.





# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

Rising above...



the crowd!

## Students of the Month

### AUGUST 2015



**Student of the Month: Ross McCormick; Role Model: Caleb Miller; Most Improved: Kaitlyn Ludvigsen; and Rookie: Isaac Brockman**

### OCTOBER 2015



**Front—Role Model: Michaela Coughlin; Student of the Month: Colleen Kinsella ; Back—Rookie: Samuel Grushkin; and Most Improved: Jesse Thompson**

### SEPTEMBER 2015



**Student of the Month: Julia Petterson; Role Model: Wyatt Quigley; Most Improved: Amber Morgan; and Rookie: Molly Baker**

### NOVEMBER 2015



**Role Model: Daniel Armstrong; Co-Student of the Month: Kaylyn Groth; Rookie: Brittany Alsvig; Co-Student of the Month: Lyle Marshall; and missing from photo, Most Improved: Keagan Cook**



### DAR Good Citizen Award - Student Honored

Michaela Coughlin was recently honored with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizen Award for Seneca High School. She is the daughter of Michael and Carrie Coughlin of Mazon. The Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen Award honors an outstanding senior who exhibits the qualities of dependability, leadership, service and patriotism. The selection was voted on by the faculty and staff.

Michaela is an excellent student, and is extremely involved at Seneca High School and in the community. She is a member of the Health Occupations Student Association (HOSA) and serves as the chapter treasurer. Michaela is a member of the Teens Resisting Unhealthy Social Temptations (TRUST). She is on the volleyball and softball teams and was initiated into the National Honor Society.

After high school, Michaela will attend Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. She plans to major in nursing. Being the recipient of the DAR Good Citizen Award, Michaela has completed an essay that will have the opportunity to advance through state and national levels of judging. The DAR Good Citizens program and scholarship contest is sponsored by the Illini Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.





# "Your life is yours and yours alone. Rise up and live it."

Terry Goodkind, Author



## Notes from Assistant Principal Mike Coughlin

To be quite honest, I was struggling a bit with my contribution to the newsletter this semester. Trust me, it's not because we haven't had great things to report or as if we haven't had much going on around the school lately. Seneca High School never stops with activities in which students can participate or have an opportunity to cheer loudly. However, a couple of specific events that I witnessed stood out as I sat reflecting on recent happenings. One in particular was when our very own Seneca High School pep band played at the home basketball game on Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>. As I found myself watching the students in the pep band wonderfully belt out "The Horse" and "Hey Baby," I was mesmerized by the fun that the members were having as they played their music. It was just a small moment in one day, but it certainly made a lasting impression as to the importance of continuing to provide great opportunities for SHS students.



Yet another significant event was the 2015 Holiday Concert held on Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. This event was significant to me, even though I'm not at all musically inclined, and to the students and parents because of all the effort it takes to be able to perform at such an event. Again, I found myself captured by the musical performance and abilities of our Seneca High School students. At one point, I thought about the senior students and their loved ones. I'm pretty sure they were thinking about how fast four years goes by; after all, it was going to be their last high school holiday performance. So, to bring a little relevance to the above quote, "Your life is yours and yours alone. Rise up and live it," I feel that

many of these young students have done an excellent job of rising up to take advantage of their extracurricular opportunities. They will remember and cherish these times and friendships for years to come. Best wishes to all for a wonderful Holiday Season!



From Left to Right: Sara Cahill, Taylor Vroman and Eve Odum

## Seneca High School HOBY Participants

Sara Cahill, Eve Odum and Taylor Vroman, Seneca High School sophomores, have been selected to represent Seneca Township High School at the 2016 HOBY Leadership Seminar.

The Leadership Seminar is designed for high school sophomores to recognize their leadership talents and apply them in becoming effective, ethical leaders in their home, schools, work-place and community.

The students will participate in hands-on leadership activities and meet state leaders in such areas as business, government, education, media and the non-profit sector.

Each September, every accredited public, private, and charter high school in the country is invited to select and register outstanding sophomores as representatives to their local state seminar. Currently, nearly 9,000 sophomores, representing as many high schools nationwide, attend HOBY Leadership Seminars annually.

Sara Cahill is the daughter of Timothy and Amy Cahill of Kinsman. Eve Odum is the daughter of Alby and Kelly Odum of Seneca and Taylor Vroman is the daughter of Eric and Joyce Vroman of Seneca. All Seneca High School sophomore students were invited to pick up applications and submit essays for the opportunity to attend this seminar.



Congratulations to Sara, Eve, and Taylor on being selected to represent SHS!







# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

## Community Connection



*"We are a Community... Our individual fates are linked; our futures are intertwined."*

Former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter

**Veteran's Day Assembly**—On Wednesday, November 11, 2015, SHS once again honored our Nation's Veterans with an all school assembly which included a band and choral tribute to their service. Featured speakers for this event were WWII Veteran Mr. Raymond Johnson (Joliet, IL) and Vietnam Veteran Mr. Steve Koeppenhoefer (Seneca, IL). Honor Guard was presented by the Mazon American Legion/Seneca Kasal Post, followed by singing of our National Anthem by Freshman Emily Eltrevoog. The SHS band played, and a Veteran's Day history was read by FFA member Wyatt Quigley.



Our first guest speaker, Mr. Raymond Johnson, was accompanied by his daughter, Cheryl Johnson-Brown, who spoke of the life-long bonds that her father and all veterans share in common. Mr. Johnson, now 92 years old, presented a heartfelt remembrance of his military life to the attentive audience. Veteran Johnson received a standing ovation as he ended his speech. With the help of his daughter Cheryl and social media outlets, Johnson was able to reunite with a fellow LST-218 shipmate. Mr. Raymond Johnson can be seen in a soon to be released WWII documentary entitled [THE LAST SIGNAL](#).

Taking command of the gym floor, Mr. Steve Koeppenhoefer focused on the teens in the crowd...hoping to instill a sense of pride in them by asking the young members to make sure they volunteer in the community more often. He gave them examples of what they might do to help out those in need. Mr. Koeppenhoefer also spoke of the service and dedication of all of the honored Veterans in attendance and of all current and retired members of the U.S. Military. SHS would like to thank all of the participants for yet another successful event, which ended with an Armed Forces musical tribute, poetry readings, currently enlisted roll call, and a Taps performance by trumpeters Kathryn Lawrence and Zack Zilm.



**Senior Citizen Dinner/Play performance held**—The 2015 Fall Senior Citizen dinner and school play was held on Wednesday, November 5th. A hot meal, refreshments, and dessert were served to all who attended, followed by the performance of *Northwoods Nonsense* by our high school play cast. Each year this event is open to all Seniors who reside in the district. The Senior Citizen dinner/show began in the Spring of 1986 and continues to provide theatrical entertainment to our local Seniors today. Seniors can look forward to the upcoming Spring musical, *Hello Dolly*, to be held in March of 2016. As the date gets closer, you can contact the SHS main office at 815-357-5000 to make your reservations for an evening of fun with a dinner and a show!



**Seneca High School, in collaboration with the Seneca Park Board, opened the West Campus Community Room.** The two first floor rooms, a meeting room, and kitchen area have been newly renovated and will be available for rent through the Park Board. Dr. Carlson, Superintendent of Seneca High School, explained that the West Campus is a valuable resource, not only to the school, but to the community. School Board President Ron Frye indicated he was pleased to see the connection between the Seneca Park Board and high school in brainstorming possible uses for the building. According to Mr. Fran Kasten, the Park Board is excited to work with Seneca High School in providing an area that can be used by the community for showers, birthday parties, and senior citizen activities. Anyone interested in renting the West Campus Meeting Room or Gym may contact the Village Hall at 815-357-8771.



***“You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.” — Maya Angelou***



### **Reflections from Activities Director Steve Haines**

As Athletic Director, I continually talk to students and parents about getting involved and how being involved will help the student to learn about teamwork, discipline, hard work, cooperation, and the satisfaction of accomplishment. All of these qualities will not only help the student become a better athlete, but also a better student and person. This November at the Thanksgiving Turkey tournament, Seneca HS honored the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fighting Irish 1990 Football State Championship Team, which gave me another reason to promote involvement in activities. There are bonds made on those teams that students will take with them for life. It does not matter if the team won a state championship or only won half its games; those bonds of working for something side-by-side for an entire season will last a life-time.

This past fall, I was able to see many events which show that our Irish athletes will rise above and reach heights that they may never have thought possible.

- ◆ Senior Dan Armstrong shot a 50 on the front nine at the regional golf tournament, knowing that it was going to take some miraculous playing on the back nine to extend his season to sectionals. Dan shot a 38 on the back nine for a total score of 88, which made him the final qualifier to the sectional golf tournament.
- ◆ I also watched a boys cross country team compete in a regional without their captain and number one runner, Ross McCormick. There was a possibility Ross would be cleared from his injury if the team qualified for sectionals the next weekend. In order for that to happen, the team would have to qualify with Ross. I watched those seven other guys run their hearts out on that Saturday morning; many of them running the best time they had ever ran, but it wasn't enough. They failed to qualify this year.

That is what sports teaches us. Give it your all, rise above the obstacles, and sometimes you qualify and sometimes you don't. As my old basketball coach used to tell me, “somedays peanuts, someday's shell.”

Other great accomplishments: Irish JV Volleyball team finishes as I-8 Conference Champs; Eva Bruno finishes 16<sup>th</sup> at the State Cross Country final and is named to the All-State Team; and the Girls Cross Country team finished 9<sup>th</sup> in the state.

As we move into the winter sports, I would like to wish everyone a very “Happy Holidays,” GO IRISH!



**1990 Fighting Irish State Championship Football Team honored at Seneca High**—On the evening of November 27th, a quarter-century old football team came together to celebrate and share memories of becoming the first SHS and LaSalle County team to win a state football title. The reunion brought together the coaches, players, and their families, who all contributed to the victorious and hard fought 14—0 season. Former 1990 assistant football coach Don Brown spearheaded the event with help from current head coach Ted O'Boyle, and AD Steve Haines. Refreshments and an ice breaker time took place before the formal presentation began. A film of the championship game, which was held at the ISU football stadium so many years ago, played on a projection screen during the pre-ceremony event. Much laughter could be heard, and even a few tears may have been shed, as the evening progressed on. The event was a great success with about twenty team members and four coaches able to attend. Among the attendees was former head coach Dave Lett and former A.D. Roger Eckert, who both had fond memories to share. Coach Brown would like to give many thanks to all who took the time to attend, and a special thanks to the SHS Administration for providing the commemorative t-shirts and refreshments for the big event!







# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

## In the Classroom...



Jill M. Rockrohr,  
M.S., N.C.S.P  
School Psychologist

The new school year brought several changes to Seneca High School, with one of the most notable being the lengthening of our school day. From these additional minutes each day, Student Success Time (SST) was born. Student Success Time is a thirty-minute intervention block built into the school day for all students. Students are assigned to a teacher for SST, during which time they are able to complete academic work or study for tests in a small class setting with teacher support. Two aspects of SST make it unique: the creation of Academic Centers and the flexibility built into our SST program. During SST, our English, Math, and Science teachers provide support in an Academic Center for each core content area. Some students are assigned to a specific Academic Center based on grades or teacher recommendations, with these assignments reviewed and revised at mid-term and the end of each quarter. However, all students are able to visit Academic Centers by obtaining a pass from their SST teachers. In this way, students are encouraged to advocate for themselves and seek support when they need it.

In addition to the creation of Student Success Time and Academic Centers, this fall also saw the return of the Student Assistance Program (SAP). The SAP Team consists of our guidance counselors, school nurse, school psychologist, START teacher, and Assistant Principal. The team meets every two weeks to review student concerns and identify academic and behavioral interventions to best support struggling students. Our new electronic referral system allows teachers and coaches to refer students with ease, while also documenting the outstanding supports they are already providing their students both in and out of the classroom. The SAP Team is off to a busy start, with changes to SST and Academic Center assignments occurring regularly in addition to START placements, connections to community services, social-emotional support, and increased parent communication.

These daily inclusions to our student support program, in addition to the good teaching practices demonstrated by our teachers, highlight the ways in which Seneca High School strives to exceed expectations. Seneca High School students are not only encouraged to set the bar high, but more importantly, they are provided with the tools they need to reach their goals.



Erica Read  
FACS Teacher

## Family and Consumer Science - real world opportunities...

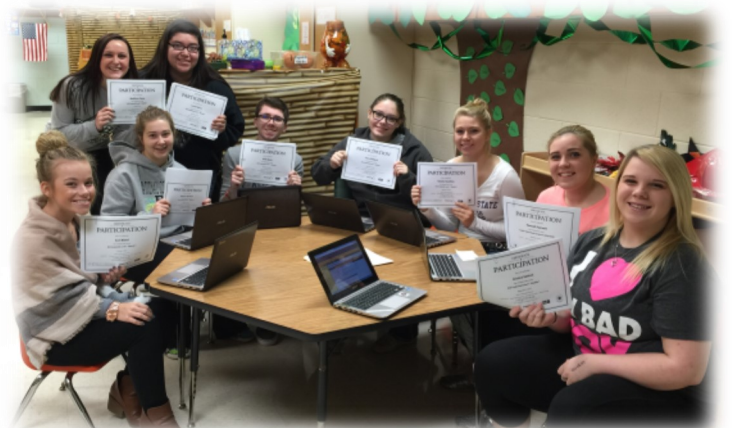
Two previous SHS students, who completed the ECE Level 1 Credential program last year in the Family and Consumer Science Department, are receiving **The Gateway Scholarship** and qualified for 90% of their tuition paid for at IVCC and JJC. This is a new opportunity all senior Early Childhood Education students have. Does it get any better than that?

Also in effect this year, our Kids Camp launched a new way to connect parents and instructors. The high school students are using the Application called **Tadpoles**. Using the Internet, this App provides security and verification for the parents by receiving pictures and reports on their child. It allows the student teachers to communicate daily lesson plans and learning goals with the parents, along with any concerns they may have during the day. The parents have been very receptive and many have commented on how much they appreciate this App being used. This type of communication is used in programs throughout the US. The students knowing how to use this App efficiently will give them an edge in ECE centers outside of SHS.

The Foods and Nutrition students are piloting a **ServSafe Certification** through IVCC. The students will learn about foodborne illness, how to prevent them, and how to train employees in food sanitation. They will also have the opportunity to earn a Nationally Accredited Food Safety Certification from the National Restaurant Association.



Tadpoles App used by ECE Classes



Students in ECE Classes earn Level 1 Certification



***“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”***

**- John Dewey**



## **Welcome New SHS Teaching Staff**

***Mrs. Ruth Ann Henson- School Nurse & Health Occupations Instructor*** (Article submitted by Junior student Eva Bruno)



One of the new faces in our building this year comes from the nursing department. Mrs. Ruth Ann Henson said she became a Health Occupations teacher because she couldn't decide between becoming a teacher or a nurse and combining the two gave her the "best of both worlds." Before coming to Seneca, Mrs. Henson attended the University of St. Francis and then worked at the Technology Center of DuPage, where she taught CNA for one year. She also worked at the Grundy County Vocational Center for seven years, teaching CNA and Medical Terminology.

When asked about her favorite aspects of teaching, Mrs. Henson said she loves watching as students who start out with little confidence and lots of uncertainty gain knowledge and confidence in their skills. When she's not busy keeping our school healthy and preparing students to help keep us healthy in the future, Mrs. Henson enjoys reading, going out to eat, and seeing movies. One of her favorite authors is Jodi Piccolt, and her favorite restaurants are Japanese steakhouses. Mrs. Henson makes a great new addition to our staff here at Seneca High School.

***Mrs. Molly Gerke—Special Education Teacher*** (Article submitted by Junior student Emily Woods)



The special education department gained a new asset to their program this year at Seneca High School. Mrs. Molly Gerke, a former teacher's assistant for six years at Serena High School, joined the faculty in a "nice and easy" transition. She was grateful for the welcoming aura that she received from the Seneca staff. This helped her comfortably dive right into cheerfully providing the extra help that her students needed. Satisfying their needs was what drew her to teaching special education, and she reported that she thoroughly enjoys working with the students.

Along with teaching, Mrs. Gerke coached the freshman volleyball team this past fall. She said of her experience, "It was awesome and so much fun. The girls had a very successful season." She loved being on the court again with a team. When asked what her favorite part of the school day is, she replied with a smile, "I do not have a favorite part—the whole day is fantastic!"

***Mr. Andy Applebee—Auto Shop Teacher*** (Article submitted by Junior student Madison Carr)



Although this is Andy Applebee's first year teaching at SHS, he certainly isn't new to the community. "I've been around here since I was three because of my dad," he said with a laugh. "Pretty much everyone here knows me." Mr. Applebee graduated from Seneca High School in 2007 and has now returned to fill the position of auto teacher. He attended Eastern Illinois University and chose to major in technical education, inspired by his father's own profession. Before starting here, he taught at Minooka High School for three years.

Outside of teaching, Mr. Applebee spends his time taking care of his two children. When asked what three words would best describe him, he gave the humble answer of "hard-working, fun, and happy." If he were to give his best piece of general advice, it would be, "When in doubt, put barbeque sauce on it." Although he is starting as the new auto teacher, his favorite subject in high school was actually building trades. One of his favorite aspects of teaching is being able to talk and work with all of the students here at SHS. Mr. Applebee says he is very excited to be back in the Land of the Irish, and we are just as thrilled to have him with us once again.





# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

Rising above...



the norm!

## Honorable Students...

**Congratulations** to the following Seneca High School seniors for being named **Illinois State Scholars**.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission selects Illinois State Scholars based on class rank and ACT scores.

The Illinois State Scholar program is an honorary recognition without any monetary award. The SHS Administration, Faculty, and Staff are very proud of these honored students for their hard work and determination to rise above!



From Left to Right Bottom: Lyle Marshall, Ross McCormick, Kole Gallick  
From Left to Right Top: Mackenzie Maierhofer, Julia Petterson, Colleen Kinsella, Hannah Brickey, Sam DeGraaf, Kaylyn Groth, and Abigail Seul



## Two SHS Graduates were awarded the American FFA Degree at the 2015 FFA National Conventions held in October.

Molly Novotney and Mackenzie Granby were formally recognized during the awards portion of this year's convention. Both of these young ladies are furthering their education by obtaining degrees in Agriculture. Miss Novotney is attending the University of Illinois and Miss Granby at Joliet Junior College. SHS Ag teachers (FFA advisors) Mr. Kent Weber and Mr. Jeff Maierhofer, along with everyone at SHS, are full of pride at the accomplishments of Molly and Mackenzie.

Molly & Mackenzie receive their American FFA Degrees



SHS FFA students attend the 2015 National Convention





***“Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.”***

Anthony J. D'Angelo



## Bits and Pieces...

### Start Your New Year in a healthy way and join the SHS Fitness Center!

The SHS Fitness Center is open to the community for membership. Members are able to utilize a fully functional facility with everything from weight to cardio training. The Fitness center is open Monday-Friday before and after school.

Members have the option of paying quarterly or annually.

- Quarterly: \$30.00
- Annually: \$100.00 (Represents a \$20.00 Discount with prepaid annual membership)

College Student Winter Break: \$10.00 / College Student Summer Break: \$30.00 / SHS Student: Always Free

Member Requirements:

- Sign a release form
- **Reside in the Seneca High School District**
- Purchase a key FOB with a \$10.00 deposit. Upon return of the Key Fob, the \$10 will be refunded



For more information on joining the SHS Fitness Center visit [senecahs.org](http://senecahs.org) (You will find the fitness center link under the Parent/Student Tab) or stop in the fitness center during community hours. Cooperate Memberships are available please call 815-357-5000 during school hours for more details.



#### SHS FITNESS CENTER HOURS

##### Morning Hours:

Monday thru Friday:  
5:00 a.m. — 7:00 a.m.

##### Evening Hours:

Monday thru Thursday  
4:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m.  
Friday 4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Times may vary due to special events or school closings and will be posted.



Click on this photo above to view a short video clip of our adorable preschoolers as they perform *We wish you a Merry Christmas* for the 2015 Kids Camp Holiday Concert!





**THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**

**SENECA TWP HIGH SCHOOL**

[www.senecahts.org](http://www.senecahts.org)

**OFFICE: (815) 357-5000    FAX: (815) 357-5050**

# THE IRISH HIGHLIGHTER

Seneca Township High School

307 East Scott Street

Seneca, IL 61360