



WYOMISSING AREA

SPARTAN
SCOOP
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Inspiring Excellence, One Spartan at a Time!

Music in Our Schools



Each year students and staff at WHEC celebrate Music In Our Schools. For the past sixteen years, Mrs. Dawn Main has organized this event by inviting parents, relatives, community members, and employees of the Wyomissing Area School District to perform during the students' lunches. Students are able to enjoy many genres of music, including both vocal and instrumental performances. Music In Our Schools is cherished by all students and staff, and WHEC is incredibly thankful for Mrs. Main's hard work in arranging the exciting event.

Due to this year's circumstances, Mrs. Main and Mrs. Benkert were very creative in showcasing the musical talents of Wyomissing Area families, staff, and students. Anyone interested in performing for Music In Our Schools was asked to submit a video of their performance and a compilation of the videos was created. Students were able to watch the video performances in their classrooms and from home. Mrs. Main and Mrs. Benkert are so proud of all of the performers who joined in celebrating the importance of music in our schools, and they are incredibly thankful for Wyomissing Area's appreciation and engagement in music! If you would like to watch this year's Music in Our Schools performance, visit the link here: <https://app.vidhug.com/BJv94ocNd/hug>

Wyomissing Area's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition

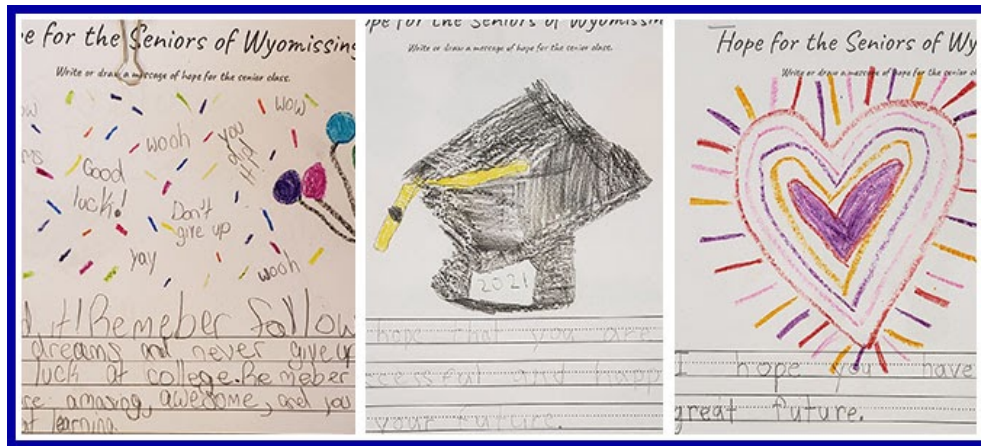


The Music in our Schools event each year is one way Wyomissing Area celebrates the value of music in our school community. This year, for the fourth year in a row, Wyomissing Area School District has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. Now in its 22nd year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Ms. Godek answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas. Congratulations to all students and staff involved in music education on this well-deserved recognition!

WHEC Picture Book Bracket

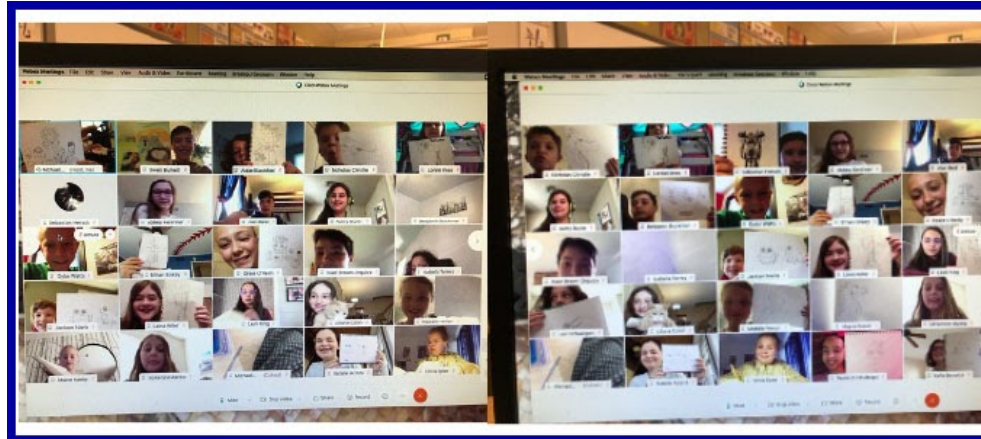
In March, our second-grade teachers generated some excitement around March Madness and reading with a March Madness Picture Book Tournament! Sixteen teachers from WHEC recorded themselves reading various picture books which students listened to on their at-home learning days. Students then voted for their favorite books using a Google Form for each round. The students really enjoyed this engaging activity watching the bracket be updated in real-time! Thank you to our second-grade teachers for their creativity in developing this activity for our students.

Hope for the Seniors



The day after spring break, the specialists at WHEC facilitated a "Hope for the Seniors" project. Every student was able to write and/or draw a letter of hope to the senior class at the High School. The letters will be distributed to the seniors before the end of the school year as part of a school-wide Giving Hope project run by Ms. Rebekah Stem and Dr. Toni Wengerd. Spreading hope and finding opportunities for connection among students in our school community is more important than ever this year and we are so excited about this special project.

The Drawing Club at WREC



This year presented many challenges for so many school activities, but the Drawing Club at WREC grew in its number of members. Over the course of the year, about 90 students participated in the club. In the past, WREC has had several different Art Clubs, including Drawing Club, Art Service Club, and Collaborative Projects. This year, Art Club exclusively was Drawing Club, and it met virtually for both Hybrid and WAVE students. The focus of most drawing lessons was to improve on the dimensional qualities of drawing. These "draw-along lessons" with Mr. Mike Miller included components of perspective, shading, proportion and challenged everyone to improve on their drawing skills. Students could share their best work in a Padlet Gallery for all to enjoy.

Permanent Painting for the WREC Art Room: Reviving an Old Tradition



Over the past several years, sixth-grade students have volunteered to create original paintings for ceiling tiles of the WREC Art Room. This tradition goes back decades, when Mrs. Scaramastra, the WREC Art Teacher, would invite an accomplished 6th-grade art student to create a ceiling tile. Mr. Miller says "after teaching here for almost 30 years, I know some of the original painters, and they have gone on to pursue careers in the arts, graphic design, and art therapy".

This year Rhea Patel, MJ McGinnis, and Joscelyn Martinez gave up several weeks of their recess time to create a most inspiring image. Rhea was the designer of the project. Here are her thoughts regarding the image:

"I wanted the meaning of the artwork to have a powerful punch. A bright blossom bursting through a concrete path and flourishing up to the sky for all to see. The flower expresses the confidence of being bold in ordinary society. It symbolizes a person shining even when it seems impossible. I can relate to this flower, as I imagine many others can too. I also wanted to encourage messages of kindness. You can see these messages written on the concrete and they support the growth of the flower to reach for the sun."

MJ's experience with this project was very much in keeping with this theme. She explains, "I was never really a person that would do art just because, but when I saw Rhea's sketch I was inspired. The flower reminded me of myself with art. The flower starts at the bottom but proves everyone wrong when it blooms. I hope that because of this project, I will change my artistic skills for the better."

This artwork will be a welcome addition to the collection in the WREC Art Room for years to come.

Article by Mr. Mike Miller

Seventh Grade Gifted Students Participate in the Global Landmark Games



The seventh-grade gifted program students participated in the Kidlink Global Landmark Games this past month. The Global Landmark Games include teams of students from all around the world! Teams select a landmark and develop clues and hints for the other teams to use to guess their landmark. The goal of the game is for teams to figure out as many of the other team's landmarks as they can. Our seventh-grade gifted students chose the Mountain of Seven Colors in Peru as their landmark and won the entire game! Congratulations to our students! This is a wonderful enrichment opportunity and a great chance to develop and practice critical thinking skills.

The Service Club Participates In Canstructure

The service club at Wyomissing Area Jr./Sr. High School is participating in the Youth Volunteer Corps Canstructure Contest! Canstructure is a building contest where teams around Berks County build incredible structures entirely out of donated canned goods which will be donated to the Helping Harvest food bank after the competition. Our service club has been working hard to get ready for competition day! Last year, the club collected over 1,700 cans just in time for the shutdown that occurred in March and won first place in the contest! After the contest, the service club was able to donate those cans to people affected by the shutdown. The Canstructure competition's theme this year is "Stronger Together" and will take place at various locations in Berks County from April 28 to May 2, 2021. We can't wait to see how many cans the service club collects and how they do in the competition!

The Governor's STEM Competition



This year's Governor's STEM Competition team is composed of Spartans Emma Motze, Cooper McCaffrey, Lucas Terefenko, Alex Kauffman, and Owen Jakubek along with Dr. Brian Liskey and Mr. Nate Miller. The team has been developing their project throughout this school year for the Pennsylvania State Competition. This year's competition theme is the "betterment of the quality of life for Pennsylvanians" through the accomplishment of a series of practical tasks that fulfill real-world needs. Our Wyomissing Area team chose to address the issue of access to healthy foods in Pennsylvania. Through the process of hydroponics and aquaponics, they created a system that allows people to grow herbs and vegetables indoors without the need for soil or outdoor growing space. After many trials and errors while working through the engineering design process, they were able to create a system that has successfully taken rosemary, thyme, sage, lettuce, broccoli, basil, dill, lavender, parsley, and tomatoes from germination to harvesting. The plants can be used by cooking classes to promote a healthy option for growing food in an urban setting. A video presentation is being submitted for the Pennsylvania State Competition held at the end of April. Good luck team!

JSBS Art Installation



As a branch project of the group "Stand Together Against Racism" (or STAR), Wyomissing Area students completed a beautiful art installation in the JSBS breezeway to showcase our Spartans' voices for justice, equality, and inclusion. Students volunteered their time to work together to create this work of art, expressing their thoughts and feelings through art, words, or whatever felt true to them. The incredible amount of student participation and positive feedback proves how powerful the voices of our students really are. This is just the beginning! Well done, Spartans!

Special Spartan Accomplishment: Emerson Gagnon



Senior Emerson Gagnon represented Wyomissing Area School District at the Virtual PMEA All-State Festival from April 14-17 after being selected by audition to play oboe in the Wind Ensemble. Emmy competed against students from across the state for this honor. The Wind Ensemble was directed by Dr. Brad Genevro from the University of Texas at El Paso and the students are putting together a virtual recording of *Sun in C* from [Symphony No. V: Elements](#) by Julie Giroux. The music department is very proud of Emmy's achievements and wishes her well as she continues to pursue music as a student at Lebanon Valley College next year.

The Wyomissing Area Education Foundation



WAEF

WYOMISSING AREA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Enriching Education in the Wyomissing Area School District



In lieu of holding the annual in-person Blue & White party this year, WAEF is focusing on an online auction running from 5/3/2021 to 5/8/2021! The success of this fundraising event will ensure WAEF's ability to continue to enhance educational opportunities in the Wyomissing Area School District through teacher-driven grants. Please follow WAEF's Facebook and Instagram accounts for up-to-date information, and visit the auction starting on May 3! The auction will feature exciting trips, self-care, packages, artwork, experiences, and more!

<http://events.handbid.com/auctions/2021-waef-online-auction>

Additionally, WAEF is pleased to offer an amazing raffle this year! Purchase your tickets for \$25 each or 5 for \$100 and have your chance(s) to win a Peloton bike, delivered to your home! This offer is open to anyone – you do not have to live in the WASD to win. Email mmurrill@wyoarea.org for your tickets!

WIN A PELOTON!

YOU COULD WIN THE GIFT THAT GIVES BACK
WHILE SUPPORTING
WYOMISSING AREA EDUCATION FOUNDATION!

**TICKETS:
\$25 EACH
OR 5 FOR \$100**

WINNER WILL RECEIVE:
*PELOTON BIKE
*1 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY
*IN-HOME DELIVERY AND SET-UP

**THE WINNER WILL BE DRAWN ON 5.8.2021
DURING WAEF'S ONLINE AUCTION EVENT!**


Scan. Pay. Go.

A Special Note of Thanks and Recognition

It goes without saying that this school year has been different from any school year we have ever experienced. With many new challenges and unique situations to navigate, our teachers, staff members, and students have had to innovate, be flexible, and have worked diligently to maintain the high-quality education that the Wyomissing Area School District has to offer while adapting to new protocols to ensure safety for all Spartans. In this edition of The Spartan Scoop, we would like to recognize some of the work that went on behind the scenes to make this year a success and offer our thanks.

~The Communications interns

When our students and faculty arrive on campus each day, they are greeted with a well-maintained, welcoming learning environment, thanks to the dedicated work of the Wyomissing Area School District **custodial staff**. The custodial staff members deserve our recognition and appreciation every year, but this year especially. COVID-19 has made the threat of germs all the more dangerous and the necessity of decontamination even more essential. Our custodial staff has adapted their regular cleaning procedures, doing everything possible to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in our school buildings. Some of these adaptations include using electrostatic sprayers to help disinfect large areas quickly, including additional custodial training to better prepare each employee to combat this pandemic, providing each staff member with personal protective equipment, and contracting outside custodians to help strengthen our current custodial staff. The hard work put in by our custodial staff has supported us as we operated on a hybrid schedule throughout the year and has allowed us to safely return to school fully in person for the last quarter of the school year. We could not be more grateful for all they have done to guarantee our school year goes smoothly and all of our Spartans have a safe and clean learning environment.

In addition to our custodial staff, we would like to recognize the hard-working members of our **cafeteria staff**. Our cafeteria staff members have the important job of keeping students fed during each of the numerous lunch periods throughout the day and keeping the kitchen clean and germ-free. If you ask many students, lunch is the highlight of their school day as a time when they can connect with friends and take a break from their challenging course load. This year, the extra work our cafeteria staff members put into maintaining pandemic regulations while preparing and serving food, and their efforts to accommodate serving lunch in multiple locations, has helped to keep our students fed and energized for school while being as safe as possible. On top of their hard work during school hours, our cafeteria staff has also been able to guarantee that all of our students had access to food during school closures and virtual learning days. They prepared lunches and manned the pick-up locations for students who took advantage of the opportunity to receive school meals. This initiative is one of many examples that demonstrates how our cafeteria staff has gone above and beyond to keep students nourished and safe throughout the year. We are appreciative of all they have done.

In-person learning throughout the year means paying special attention to the health and safety of all of our students and staff. Our talented, caring, and dedicated **nurses** have gone above and beyond to support all of us during this time. Mrs. Beth Delp and her assistant for the year, Mrs. Jessica Pinkasavage at WHEC, Mrs. Mary Kelly at WREC, and Mrs. Sally McNichol and Mrs. Amy Kern at the Jr./Sr. High School have all worked hard throughout the 2020-2021 school year to keep everyone safe and healthy in our school environment.

Our nurses worked to accommodate new protocols and procedures this year helping all of us to feel confident that Wyomissing Area School District is a safe learning environment following all safety guidelines. The nurses explained that they “do a lot of COVID case management” keeping track of students who are sick or exposed to the virus and working closely with the administration to prepare new health and safety plans. In addition, the nurses “created videos, participated in assemblies, and worked with the administration to deliver clear guidelines to the school community.” Thank you to our nurses for working to ensure the Wyomissing Area School District has and will continue to function as safely and efficiently as possible.

In all three school buildings, our **guidance counselors** have been working hard to make sure all of our students have the best year possible. This year has brought about many changes but they have worked to be flexible and creative in meeting the needs of students. One of the biggest differences our guidance counselors at WHEC, Ms. Stem and Mrs. Cheslock, have noticed is their use of technology this year. Although the two of them believe technology is a great tool for distance learning, they admit the increased use of technology has been challenging. WREC guidance counselor, Mrs. Kramer echoes the challenges of being a guidance counselor behind a screen. Ms. Stem points out that “home has always been home, and school has always been school. Now, they are blending together and this is hard for everyone- students, families, and teachers.”

Our guidance counselors for students in grade 7-9, Mrs. Barletta and Mr. Skovera have worked to find ways to balance their time between in-person and at-home students. Mrs. Barletta believes “the most challenging part is not being able to see students as easily when they need something”. Senior High guidance counselors, Mrs. Mayberry and Mrs. Quinlivan, experienced a similar challenge with Hybrid scheduling. While they did see students virtually on the days that they were not in the building, most students preferred to meet face-to-face. Mrs. Quinlivan said this made the pace of scheduling appointments beyond hectic. It also meant sometimes things had to be planned three times— one time for Hybrid A; one time for Hybrid B; one time for WAVE students. Along with finding a balance between at-home and in-person students, Mrs. Mayberry has found that interacting with students is more difficult. “Counselors are people-oriented by nature, but right now we can’t interact with students the way we used to. Meeting with students as they wear a mask, I lose the facial expressions and all the non-verbal cues that help a student communicate the things sometimes they can’t find the words to say” Mrs. Mayberry says. Despite the common challenges experienced by our counselors in all three buildings, they have been able to work together with the other staff members and have watched their students and fellow staff grow throughout the year! Seeing students thrive, even in the middle of a pandemic, helps our counselors stay positive and focused on doing the best they can for students and families. Mrs. Cheslock says that she’s stayed positive by focusing on the purpose of her job, which is to work together with families and staff to help students grow academically, emotionally, and socially. Thank you to all of our amazing guidance counselors for all of your hard work this year! We appreciate everything you’ve done for us!

In addition to academics and school-day experiences, one of the most consistent sources of pride and accomplishments for many students is their participation in extracurricular activities and at the Jr./Sr. High School, athletics. Sports serve as a creative outlet for students where they can look forward to time with friends, a win in their next match, or a simple release of endorphins through physical activity. Without the planning and guidance from the athletic department and sports medicine, students would not have the ability to pursue athletics this year, and they would be missing a very special and important part of their school experience. As such, we would like to recognize our **athletic directors and trainers** for their efforts in making athletics possible this year.

Mr. Frank Ferrandino, Wyomissing Area School District's athletic director, oversees all athletics for students in grades 7-12 and assesses any necessary accommodations for sports issues. As a former player and coach of both football and wrestling, Mr. Ferrandino has a direct insight on necessary changes to enhance Wyomissing Area athletics. The main responsibilities of athletic directors involve scheduling all athletic contests, overseeing the athletic budget, determining eligibility, and providing a safe environment for all athletes. Although tasked with many duties, Mr. Ferrandino reminds us that the kindness of the Wyomissing Area community is the greatest reward of the job. He explains, “There is no better community than Wyomissing. I would not want to live, raise a family, or work in any other district. So many people are supportive of athletics and understand that it is a huge part of the educational process. I have been blessed with so many examples of great people.” Mr. Ferrandino highlights Mr. Bob Wolfrum and Mr. John Thomas, as they have dramatically influenced his work within the “athletic arena.” He also expresses his gratitude to Mrs. Jen Auman, Dr. Corey Jones, and Mr. Matt Redcay for enhancing his work experience on a daily basis. Not only are his friends and coworkers a treasured piece of being an athletic director, but his family—Kelly, Maggie, Rocky— and parents—Frank and Nancy—have unconditionally supported his aspirations as a teacher, coach, and director for as long as he can remember. Without our athletic director, there would simply be no athletic program for our students. Wyomissing Area is incredibly lucky to have such a devoted athletic department.

Not only are our athletic directors a crucial piece in coordinating and organizing Wyomissing Area athletics, but our sports medicine personnel are also a necessary feature in running every sports season. Mrs. Lauren Mieczkowski began working at

Wyomissing Area in 2012, recalling an amazing first year working with the state champion football team. Although cherishing memorable wins with all athletes is a highlight of her job, Mrs. Mieczkowski says working alongside Mr. Daniel Giesen, also known as “Geese” to many, is the most valuable aspect of her work. She notes, “Geese has well over two decades worth of experience which makes it easy to learn from him. Working alongside him makes me a better athletic trainer and person. I am so grateful to have Geese in my life.” Whether it’s finding mentors like Geese or forming unbreakable friendships with her athletes, Mrs. Mieczkowski is thankful her profession has given her the chance to form so many everlasting relationships.

Mrs. Mieczkowski and Mr. Ferrandino are two notable members of our athletic department and sports medicine personnel, and we thank the entire department for their tireless work- especially navigating this year’s new circumstances.

Beyond athletics, the **advisors of extracurricular activities** across the district have had to respond to this year’s unique circumstances and develop novel ways to engage students in the special experiences their clubs offer. All students and advisors have been working to combat the challenges our students and clubs are facing during the pandemic. At WREC and the JSHS, the Student Council students and advisors have been working behind the scenes to develop fun events in this time of chaos and bring some joy and community-building to our schools. The Wyomissing Area High School Student Council is led by Mr. Alex Krick and Ms. Meghan Tierney. The Junior High student council is led by Ms. Teresa Wood, and the student council at WREC is led by Mrs. Kelly Ferrandino and Mrs. Eileen John. When asked how he and the students have adapted to the uniqueness of the year, High School advisor Mr. Krick, responded with: “The greatest adaptation this year has been the ongoing pivoting with Spirit Week. We’re excited for this unique opportunity of a spring-time Spirit Week, coming May 17 – 21.” Spirit week is many students’ favorite part of the school year, and the High School Student Council has worked to establish a fun sense of normalcy during these difficult times. Ms. Wood and the Junior High Student Council have also been working to continue fundraising for the school to support future activities and adapted to meeting virtually to accommodate this year’s unique schedule. We appreciate all of our club advisors and the work they have done to continue to provide opportunities for our students to learn, connect, and grow in many areas.

The various teachers and staff members recognized in this newsletter are just the beginning of the list of names we would love to recognize for all they have done this year for our school and community. Our students, fellow staff members, administrators, and community members see all of the work that has gone into the wonderful things our district has accomplished this year despite these unprecedented circumstances. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and supportive team and are genuinely grateful for the work everyone has done. We, the Communications interns, are confident that we speak for our entire community when we say, “Thank you.”

About the Authors

This year the Junior-Senior High School is proud to continue to partner with the internship program to include a communications internship. Students in this role work under the supervision of Communications Coordinator Meghan Tierney to gather information and updates about various district events and support the sharing of news via social media, as well as to co-author the monthly editions of the *Spartan Scoop* newsletter.



Keira Auchenbach chose the communications internship because her future plans include studying a field related to environmental activism, and felt that the experience with reporting, journaling, and presenting would be valuable to her. Keira is very involved with academics, clubs, and sports. Most notably, she is a leader on the Mini-Thon Committee and in Student Council but also participates in Service Club, Science Olympiad, Best Buddies, the WAEF student committee, cross country, and track and field. Outside of school activities, Keira also enjoys painting, hiking outdoors, and spending time with friends.

Cece Banco, a junior, is involved in many school activities. She enjoys participating in the French Club, Service Club, Drama Club, and the Mini-Thon committee. Additionally, Cece is a member of the girls' tennis team and is involved in the school's music program as part of the chorus and chorale. Cece is considering pursuing a future in media and chose this internship in hopes that it would help develop a more specific sense of the path she may want to follow.

Emma Care is a junior at the JSHS. She is a teammate on the girls' soccer and lacrosse teams and is a committed member of the Environmental Club, Service Club, Model United Nations Club, Mini-THON, and student tutoring group at Wyomissing Area. In the classroom, Emma strives for academic and personal excellence and loves to push herself to new limits. In her free time, she enjoys volunteering throughout the community and spending time with loved ones. After high school, she plans to attend college on a pre-law or business track and plans to use the skills from this student internship to guide her along the way. Emma values hard work in school and life but embraces the importance of excitement and fun even more. Emma is excited about working as a student intern for Wyomissing Area this year!

Grace Diehl is a senior at Wyomissing Area JSHS. She loves to read, write, draw, sing, and play piano and ukulele. Her interests are reflected in the activities she participates in at school including participating as a member of the Wyomissing Area Drama Club, serving as co-editor for the school yearbook, and serving as President of the school newspaper. Grace is also a member of our school's chorus and choral small group. Outside of school, she is involved with her church's youth group in many ways including volunteering at both Opportunity House and Safe Berks. Grace also volunteers at the Wyomissing Public Library and holds a leadership position there as the Secretary of the library's Teen Advisory Board. In the future, Grace would love to pursue a career in the English field. Her path may include becoming a high school English teacher or professor of literature at the college level or pursuing the idea of starting her own business or working to publish her own book.

Julia Gehris, a senior, is excited to reach her senior year after attending Wyomissing Area since kindergarten. She is actively involved with the school community, participating in volleyball from grades 7 through 11, as well as participating in

Environmental Club, Mini-THON, Peer Mediation, WAEF, and Ski Club. Julia was also recognized as a member of the National Honors Society during her junior year and joined the Senior High Student Council for her junior and senior years as well. She gives back to the community by volunteering with VoiceUp Berks to benefit the lives of those who lack the opportunities and privileges they need to live successfully. Some of Julia's favorite hobbies include spending time with her closest friends and family, going on walks with her dogs, and watching her favorite movies and TV shows. She is gearing up for her senior year and is ready to tackle what is to come!

Sara Steber is a current senior at Wyomissing Area JSHS. In school, she is involved in a wide variety of clubs; from Theater to Golf to Model UN to Quiz Bowl, she can be found almost anywhere. She is passionate about writing and excited to be publishing articles and reporting on the District for the second year in a row. Though she is unsure of where she will end up for college, Sara is planning on studying History and Philosophy to become a college professor or litigator.



Ms. Meghan Tierney is the mathematics Department Chair at the Junior-Senior High School in her seventh year in the Wyomissing Area School District. She received her bachelor's degree from Albright College and earned a master's degree in Teacher Leadership through the University of Delaware. Currently, she is pursuing a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction Supervision at Gwynedd Mercy University. In addition to her role as a classroom teacher, she advises the High School Student Council, and the Model UN Club, and serves as the Communications Coordinator for the school district. Meghan really enjoys the opportunities she has to work with students both in and out of the classroom and loves being a Spartan. Outside of school, Meghan enjoys spending time at the beach and being with family and friends.

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