

# INTERACTIONS

Fall & Winter 2016

## Interact Conference:

This years Interact Conference was held on October 27th at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Greentree. Over thirty clubs from schools in the suburbs and inner city of Pittsburgh attended. The attendees met to confer about the actions and means of improving their individual Interact services as well as help new clubs start up.

After a quick breakfast, the conference began with the current student District Governor welcoming all attendees and saying the pledge and a prayer. Interact conference chair, Sue Kelly, was introduced as well as other representatives of the local Rotary Districts. They explained the history and mission of Rotary club and also how they decided to branch out and start organizations with the same purpose at the middle school, high school, and collegiate level. Rotary's first project was buying a horse for a country doctor c 1905, and from then on has accumulated over 1.2 million members and 35,000 clubs. The biggest success of Rotary and its branches was essentially eradicating the Polio disease from the World.

Next on the conference agenda came a speaker named Darren Miller. He talked about his passion for completing the feat of swimming all the notorious channels of the world. Darren explained to us about what he learned through accomplishing his adventure and rising above all of its trials and tribulations. He focused on the points of using one's passion to help others, taking a step into the unknown, and waking up everyday appreciative of the breath one gets to take. Throughout his motivational presentation, he explained the 'Hardening Process of Life' that applies all previously mentioned points into the challenge to "do something each and every day that you don't want to do". By avoiding the noise and being dedicated to the challenge, one will be successful. He defined success not as the size of the pocketbook, but rather how one impact and helps people through. (Find his mission *Every Breath A Gift @DarrenEMiller*)

After the nominations for the new Student District Governor were made and presented, the assembly split into groups to rotate between rooms. The rooms had a variety of different information available. One room was devoted to explaining Rotary's Foreign Exchange program. Six students from countries including France, Belgium, Brazil, Spain, Venezuela, and Denmark were introduced earlier that morning and then had a chance to explain their journey, sponsored by Rotary. Another room displayed the opportunity to go to the RYLA leadership camp this summer and meet new students and develop confidence as well as leadership skills.

The next couple areas were available for spokes persons from a dozen different benefactory programs to speak on behalf of their mission and help Interact clubs get involved. These projects ranged from *Volunteering with Animal Friends*, to *Global Links (a medical supplies collection)*, to the *Shelter Box*, to *Shoes to Nicaragua*. The last station was similar to a round table for students from a plethora of schools talk openly about the successes and struggles of their clubs back home. This provided a great way to hear even more new ideas for events and start joint projects with apt clubs.

Following lunch, the announcement of the winner for the new Student District Governor and the assistant position was made. The conference ended after further information for the workings of Rotary was discussed then everyone boarded their buses to head back to school.

## In This Issue

- Page 1 - Interact Conference
- Page 2 - TJ and Chartiers Valley Updates
- Page 3 - Montour and Carlynton Updates
- Page 4 - South Park and Gateway Updates
- Page 5,6,7 - Pictures



## TJ Updates

This year's Interact Board members are: Alexandra Downer, President; Jessica Taylor, Vice President; Audrey King, Secretary; Cole Majernik, Treasurer; Avery DeGruttola, Junior advisor. The Club is sponsored by TJHS English teachers Denise Breisinger and Deneen Loughran. After being on hiatus last year, the group re-organized to attend the Annual District 7300 Interact Conference in October. This newly organized 50 member group has actively volunteered with Hundred Acres Manor, TJHS fall play, Pleasant Hills Library holiday activities, TJHS Veterans' Day Ceremony, and WJHSD Curriculum Night/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation.

Additionally, the TJHS Interact group has been involved in two service projects. They chose a November Food Drive to benefit the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank as a short term community-based service project. Inspired by a presentation at the District Conference, they have chosen to raise funds for a ShelterBox as their long term global service project. One can read more about the ShelterBox at <http://www.shelterboxusa.org/> where it states that the organization "delivers emergency shelter and other lifesaving supplies to help families begin to rebuild their lives after losing their homes and possessions following a natural disaster or humanitarian crisis." A ShelterBox usually contains a family tent, water filter, blankets, cooking and eating utensils, tools, children's activity pack, mosquito net, etc. To raise the \$1,000 needed to support one ShelterBox kit, the Club has chosen two primary methods. First, administration has generously permitted them to collect \$2 per faculty member on Dress Down Fridays. Secondly, the Interact members have signed a "Water Bottle Dime Pledge." They have agreed to fill empty regular sized (half liter) throwaway water bottles with dimes; a bottle full of dimes results in \$100. Their goal is to combine funds from the filled water bottles with those from the teachers' Dress Down Days to support at least one ShelterBox by May 1. Once the funds have been submitted to ShelterBox, the Interact Club will be assigned a box number which will allow them to see where their box was delivered (track the box). The Club is responding to and raising awareness of the needs within their local community as well as considering those around the globe.

The TJHS Interact Club is honored to be guests at the Pleasant Hills Rotary Lunch on Tuesdays. November Rotary Students of the Month were Jessica Taylor and Avery DeGruttola; December students were Alexandra Downer and Alexa Uhlyar; January Students were Audrey King and Kelcie Stachtiaris. The Rotary, too, has supported the selection of ShelterBox for the long term project.

## Chartiers Valley

The CVHS Interact Club had the winning recipe at the annual Bridgeville - South Fayette Rotary Chili Cook Off on October 2nd at Fairview Park. The group had initiated a friendly wager with the South Fayette High School Interact Club on which school would receive more votes, but CVHS Interact went ahead and won both the People's Choice and Best High School for its Colt Country Chili!!

The CVHS Interact Club raised money selling bandanas during the Pink Out held in October. On December 9th Interact Student Officers Nicole Cain, Kali Bunecicky, and Courtney Chiurazzi presented St. Clair Hospital Representative, Kristen Beattie, with a check for \$500.00. All funds support uninsured women receive mammograms.

CVHS Interact Club also held two **holiday** food drives at Thanksgiving and Christmas time. All food items and canned goods were donated to Bethany Presbyterian Church Food Bank in Bridgeville. The food bank supports many local families in our district and surrounding area.

## Montour High School

Life Skills Olympic Day is "Special Olympics" for High School Special Needs Students in this area.

Interact members organized all of the 12 activities on the Football Field, provided food, music, and medals for all of the Olympians. Events included: bean bag toss, long jump, football punt, soccer kick, dance contests, etc.

The medals we paid for with the pie sales at Christmas!! We bought 170 medals this year.

Food: we got donations!! Thanks!

This year we had schools from ALL over. Trinity, Moon, Washington, Elizabeth Forward, Montour, Sto Rox (13 total) participate.

Thanks for all of your help and support!



## Carlynton Fall Updates

At the end of last year we, a group of students and a new teacher revived the Interact Club at Carlynton Junior-Senior High School. Although we are a newly formed club, we have done a lot so far!

Our first project promoted literacy in our community by building and installing two Little Free Libraries at both of our elementary buildings. Students and families in the community are able to "Take-A-Book" and "Leave-A-Book" at any time for no charge. Students are also able to access the books during the summer months.

This fall we held a pull tab competition between homerooms. The pull tabs were taken to a scrap metal yard and recycled. The money was then donated to the Ronald McDonald House. Arthur Moats of the Pittsburgh Steelers even matched our donation! We also toured the Ronald McDonald House to see how we are helping other children and families.

Each December our school hosts a Santa Breakfast to raise money for our backpack program. Our club members volunteered many hours of their time to helping to decorate and run the event.

During December we also sold candy grams. Both students and teachers joined in on the fun. The money we raised was donated to The Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh. Currently, we are holding a plastic grocery bag competition between homerooms. We will be joining the ladies of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Carnegie to learn how to crochet them into mats. We will also be making fleece blankets with their help. These items will be donated to a homeless shelter.

## South Park Updates

This school year, the South Park Interact Club, a group of individuals dedicated to their community and those less fortunate, participated in the South Park Shops Christmas event. At this event, families with small children can enter different stores in the South Park Shops plaza, each with a different activity for kids to participate in. Prizes can be won, as well as fun games played, by the children excited for the upcoming holidays. Hot chocolate and small candies are offered to passersby, and memorable carriage rides are also very popular. Two of Santa's elves, whom greet children and their families with candies and read classic stories to the children throughout the night, could be seen during the event, spreading their holiday cheer to participating families. At this event, Interact members helped bring joy to young kids excited for the holidays, and gave families an enjoyable event to attend. This event occurred several weekends of December and were a hit each time, for both families and interact students alike. This event is one of the most popular for students of our interact club to attend, and the students never fail to bring joy to people of their community.

The South Park Interact club also helped buy Christmas gifts for kids in need. Gift tags were placed out for members to sign up for, and the tags they chose from would have the age of the child, grade of the child, type of gift they should get them, and possibly their gender, such as: 5th grade, girl, Barbie. Students would put their name down on a sign in sheet along with the tag that they chose. Once these gifts were all collected, they were loaded up and taken to their location for giving. There the gifts were given to the appropriate children whom are less fortunate. The holiday season's of these children were brightened significantly by the generosity of our interact members, whom found equal joy in purchasing gifts for someone in need.

## Gateway Updates

The Gateway Interact Club has had an amazing semester! The club has accomplished a great deal, from volunteering at family-fun community events such as the Monroeville Park Halloween Fun Night and Snacks with Santa at the local firehouse. There have also been considerable public relations advancements this year, such as the appointment of Meryl Wiratmo as District Interact Governor, newfound popularity at this year's Multicultural Festival, and the *continuing success of the annual Coffee-for-A-Change event*.

Coffee-for-A-Change is an event that takes place every winter at the North American Martyrs Church. The Interact Club buys dozens of bags.



# Pictures

## Chartiers Valley



## Thomas Jefferson







Montour Interact

South Park  
Interact

