



# PantherPride NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME BACK!

Dear Parents:

I am honored to be a member of the Middle Township School District family. The MTSD is routinely recognized for its academic and extracurricular achievements. Such recognition doesn't occur by chance. It is the result of three things: motivated students, dedicated staff members, and involved parents.

For generations, Middle Township schools have been the educational homes to students across our community, as well as critical factors in what makes our township such a great place to live. As Superintendent, I am thrilled to be part of a district where traditions are held in such high regard, and where best teaching and learning practices are valued. All of this ensures that every student is supported in terms of academics, co-curriculars, and social-emotional learning.

According to Kathryn Hoffses (2018), there are 10 ways to help your child succeed in school. They are:

- 1) Attend back-to-school nights and parent-teacher conferences.
- 2) Visit the school and district websites.
- 3) Send your child to school ready to learn.
- 4) Teach study skills.
- 5) Know the disciplinary policies.
- 6) Get involved.
- 7) Take attendance seriously.
- 8) Make time to talk about school.
- 9) Teach organizational skills.
- 10) Support homework expectations.

I am confident that you are active in your child's education. According to Juliette Sivertsen (2015), "parental involvement is directly linked to improved behavior, regular attendance, and positive attitudes. As a result, children whose parents stay involved are more likely to have higher self-esteem, be disciplined, have more self-motivation and tend to achieve better grades, regardless of their ethnic, social or racial backgrounds." Be an integral part of your child's educational future!

I look forward to working with you this school year. Let's make it the best one ever!

Dr. David Salvo  
Superintendent of Schools

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# PantherPride NEWS

## Welcome to the Middle Township Family:

Jaimi Beck — H.S. English  
 Rachel Berlin — M.S. English Teacher  
 Julia Beyer — H.S. Special Ed Teacher  
 Domonique DeCamillo — M.S. Guidance  
 Elizabeth DiRusso — M.S. Science  
 William Dorner — Coastal Teacher, P.E.  
 Brinley Edwards — Band/Music Teacher  
 Devon Fitzpatrick — Special Ed Teacher  
 Samantha Hearon — 1st Gr. Teacher  
 Carolyn Kerr — Special Ed Teacher  
 Gavin Liepe — Health/PE Teacher  
 Jenifer Matlack — Preschool Teacher  
 Karen Oliver — School Nurse's Aide LPN  
 Shannon Risko — M.S. Special Ed  
 Kimberly Russo — English Teacher  
 Pamela Shute — Supervisor of  
 Elementary Education  
 Kayla Yuhas — 2nd Gr. Teacher  
 Arnold Zappasodi — H.S. English Teacher

### SUPPORT STAFF

Crystal Clark — Bus Driver  
 Cynthia Jones — Bus Driver  
 Karl Hess — Custodian -FT  
 Liznel Sanchez — Custodian - FT  
 George Tucker — Custodian - PT  
 Michael Linhares — F.T. Armed Guard  
 Perdomo Eric — F.T. Armed Guard  
 Frank Smyth — F.T. Armed Guard  
 Joseph Sykes — F.T. Armed Guard  
 Brian Turner — F.T. Armed Guard  
 Patricia Talbot — Keyboarding Clerk I - H.S.  
 Jaime Perez, Jr. — Maintenance Worker  
 Paul Loefflad — P.T. Armed Guard (Sub)  
 Ivana Bozhinovska — Teacher's Aide - #1  
 Ekaterina Hamann — Teacher's Aide - #1  
 Savannah Hulme — Teacher's Aide - #1  
 Nancy Kershaw — Teacher's Aide - #1  
 Regina McCaffery — Teacher's Aide - #1  
 Antoinette Thermopoulos — Teacher's Aide - #1  
 Grace Suttera — Teacher's Aide - Coastal

### L.T. SUB TEACHERS

Chris Castor — L.T. Substitute  
 Eric Emmel — L.T. Substitute  
 Andrea Glenn — Supplemental  
 Julia Grlica — L.T. Substitute  
 Chris Hagan — Supplemental  
 Kyle Mallon — L.T. Substitute  
 Christine Marcinkiewicz — Supplemental  
 Hannah Seitz — Supplemental

## Guidance Corner

### High School Parents:

**Mark Your Calendars for  
our FAFSA Workshop!**

**October 20 — FAFSA  
Workshop w/ guest expert**

### Parents of seniors:

This workshop will help you to  
unravel the complex FAFSA®  
(Free Application for Federal  
Student Aid) process.

Information Nights are held on  
Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m.  
in the Performing Arts Center.



### Parents will need to bring:

- FSA ID and Password (for the student and at least one parent).
- Copy of all 2020 Federal Income Tax Returns and W-2 forms for student (if applicable) and parent(s).
- Social Security numbers for parent and student; If the student is not a U.S. Citizen, bring the Alien Registration number or documentation as U.S. Permanent Residents or U.S. Citizens.
- Records of balances in checking and savings — for student and parent(s).
- Marital status of parent(s) and date of marital status (for example, the date of marriage).
- Student driver's license # (if applicable).







## Athletic Complex Dedicated to Local Legend John Roberson



*L-R: MTHS Principal George West, Middle Township Mayor Tim Donohue, Middle Township Board of Education President Dennis Roberts and Craig Roberson (son) holding dedication plaque.*

Community members gathered under Friday night lights as Middle Township School District dedicated the John Roberson Athletic Complex at Memorial Field during the Panthers' season opener on Sept. 9.

Roberson, a 1948 graduate of Middle Township High School, was a triple-threat halfback on the football team. He scored 92 points and passed for 72 more in his senior year, leading the team to a co-county championship. Known for his fine passing arm and superb kicking and

running, he became one of Middle Township's most famous all-around players.

Roberson went on to play football for Indiana University, which landed him the opportunity to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers for two seasons as a running back. His professional career was cut short when he was drafted to serve in the Korean War and suffered an injury. After teaching in Ohio for three years, Roberson returned to Middle Township High School in the early 1960s to teach and coach football until his retirement in 1979.

"John Roberson was a pillar in our community," said MTSD Superintendent Dr. David Salvo. "We feel that this is the most fitting and appropriate way to remember someone who was so loved and respected."

Roberson's No. 27 jersey was retired during a ceremony at the high school in 2018. He died at age 91 in July 2021.

## Anchor Bowl Trophy Stays with Middle Township Panthers

The 105th annual Anchor Bowl football matchup between Middle Township and Lower Cape May Regional established a new tradition by taking place in late September instead of Thanksgiving Eve.

Wet weather canceled the family carnival that was scheduled to precede the game. But the night was still a winner after the Panthers pushed through the rain for their 5th straight victory in the series.

Middle Township's Anchor Bowl record now stands at 64-37-5 against Lower Township Regional.



*Middle Township High School Football team celebrating win over Lower Cape May Regional.*



*Photo credit: Tom Grayson*





## Bus Driver Continues Elementary #1 Program, Visiting Students to Promote Reading, Love and Growth

Herman Cruse was hired as a bus driver for the Middle Township School District, but he does more than get students to and from school safely.

His extra activities began midway through the last school year after Elementary #1 teacher Alexandra Byron shared the proud news that one of her kindergarten students started reading. The milestone inspired Cruse to step up for some of Middle's littles learners.



*Herman Cruse with kindergartener Corbyn Conroy, who was the first student he read to as a volunteer.*

The father of five started volunteering twice a week to read to a few of Byron's students and give them some extra one-on-one attention. By the end of the school year, Cruse was at the school four days a week, reading regularly with more than a dozen kids from kindergarten through second grade.

The program started back up early in October. "When you see me driving around the district, know that I'm more than just the A28 bus," said Cruse.

"Mr. Herman was coming all the way from Egg Harbor City," said Byron. "He told me about how he was looking for something fulfilling to do to make the most of passing the time in between his routes instead of driving home, but he could have never imagined making an impact on these kids the way he does now."

The popular volunteer helps students with more than phonics and letter sounds.

"They look to Mr. Herman for support," said Byron. "He's so humble and so gentle with these kids. He teaches them love and how to work through emotions. He truly is a very selfless and genuine person."

Cruse refers to Byron as "an angel" for giving him the opportunity for such meaningful volunteer work.

"I'm so thankful that I am in a position to help kids. In return, they get to know me, which creates a bounty of relationships throughout the building," said Cruse. "Reading is a source of encouragement and lets them know that there's a bus driver out there by the name of Mr. Herman who cares about their well-being and academic success."

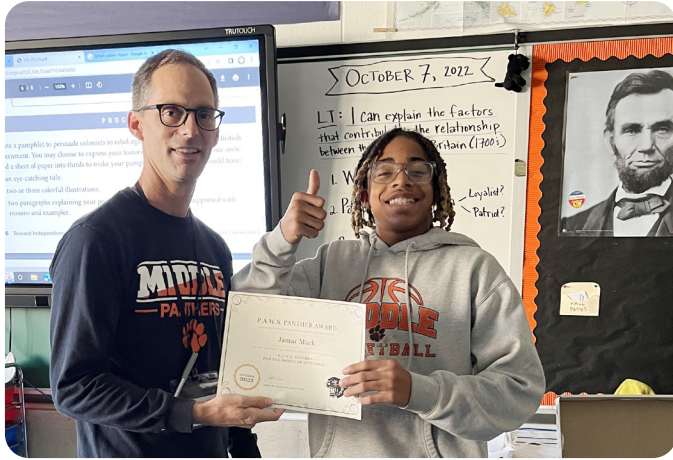
## Come check out our NEW LIBRARY at Middle Township Elementary #2



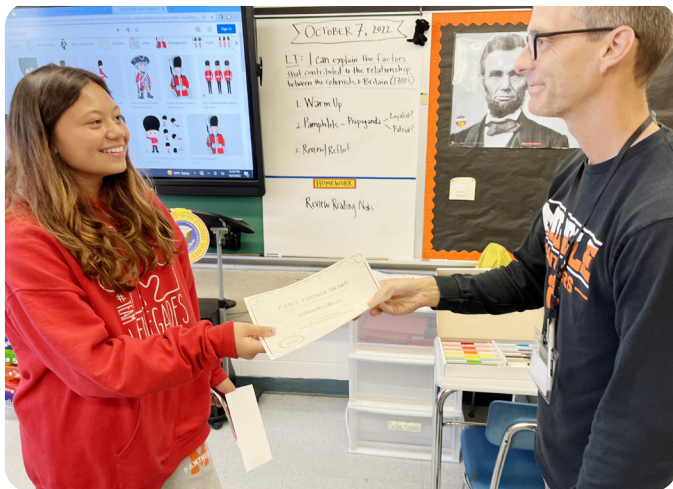




## PAWS Program Emphasizes the Positive



*Jamar Mack receiving a PAWS Award for the month of September.*



*Gabriella Oliver receiving a PAWS Award for the month of September.*



*Omar Garcia-Barrios receiving a PAWS Award for the month of September.*

For about three years, the Middle Township Middle School has used the PAWS program to encourage positive behavior, safety, and high achievement among the student body.

PAWS stands for Practice Safety, Act Responsibly, Work Together and Show Respect. There are three components to PAWS.

### 1. Monthly PAWS Awards

At the beginning of each month, the teachers are notified of a theme, such as “demonstrating respect” or “acting as a positive role model.” At the end of the month, teachers submit the name of one student from each of their classes who has exhibited that behavior. The students receive certificates that are displayed in school.

### 2. Positive Referrals

Whenever a teacher observes positive student behavior, they can fill out a confidential referral form for the student. The student is then called to the Assistant Principal’s office, where Mr. Hodges offers his congratulations to the (now-relieved) student! Mr. Hodges also sends a letter home to the student’s family.

Mr. Hodges also instituted a one-week-a-month “positive phone call challenge” to the teachers. During a particular week, teachers are challenged to notice positive student behavior and to call home to share the compliment. One name is chosen from each grade level to receive a reward.

### 3. Marking Period Color-Coded Cards

During each marking period, students can earn color-coded cards for good grades, attendance, and positive behavior. The colors are purple (the lowest level), red, blue and gold (the highest level). Special criteria and rewards are associated with each color and level. At the end of each marking period, all students who earned any color card are pulled out of class for a fun activity.





## Four High School Students Recognized Not Only By Their Peers and Teachers, But Also Nationally For Their Academic Achievements



*L/R: Justen Wen, Olivia Clarke, Sofia Jurusz, and Dylan Villano earned special recognition from the College Board.*

**Olivia Clarke, Sofia Jurusz, Dylan Villano and Justen Wen** have been singled out by the **College Board National Recognition Programs**.

All four talented students earned awards because of their academic achievements in school and outstanding performance on the PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and/or AP® Exams. To be eligible, students must have a GPA of 3.5 or higher and must have excelled on the PSAT/NMSQT or PSAT 10, or earned a score of 3 or higher on two or more AP exams.

The National Recognition Programs grant underrepresented students academic honors that can be included on college and scholarship applications and that connect students with universities across the country, helping them to stand out during the admission process. Olivia, Sofia and Justen earned the NRSTA (National Rural and Small Town American Recognition Award) and Dylan earned the NAARA (National African American Recognition Award).

**The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC®) awarded Sofia Jurusz a Letter of Commendation from the 2023 NMSC®.**

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2023 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2023 competition by taking the 2021 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®).

*Our talented students have big plans for their futures.*

Olivia plans to earn her bachelor's degree in statistics or applied mathematics. She aims to earn a master's degree as well. Sofia wants to major in environmental science or environmental studies and minor in education. Dylan will pursue pre-veterinary medicine and hopes to own a veterinary practice someday. Justen wants to enter a computer science engineering program in college. His goal is to engineer something that will impact the world in a positive way and leave a legacy.





## Step Back Foundation Donates School Supplies



*MTMS teachers and administrators gather to showcase recent donations from Maddie McCracken and the Step Back Foundation.*

We offer a big “thank you” to Maddie McCracken and the Step Back Foundation for donating backpacks and school supplies to the high school at the start of the school year.

McCracken, an MBA student at Stockton University, founded the nonprofit Step Back Foundation in Cape May County to support kids’ success in an activity of their choice. The passion project was inspired by McCracken’s love of sports. The 2019 Wildwood High graduate was a star soccer, track and basketball athlete, and holds school records in track.

Step Back originally provided sports clothing and equipment to students who were not able to

participate in organized athletics because they couldn’t afford to buy their own gear.

“Sports have been important to me and my whole family,” McCracken said. “I wanted to help make sure that every student had the chance to experience the feeling of success on the playing field or court. I believe that sports teaches us a lot about life, and I wanted more students to learn those lessons of teamwork, persistence, and good sportsmanship, among others.”

Cracken has been raising money for her foundation since high school. Today, Step Back funds are used for school supplies in addition to sports equipment.

### REMINDER:

**Middle Township School District launched new websites for all schools!**

#### **District Site:**

[middletownshippublicschools.org](http://middletownshippublicschools.org)

#### **Elementary #1 Site:**

[elem1.middletownshippublicschools.org](http://elem1.middletownshippublicschools.org)

#### **Elementary #2 Site:**

[elem2.middletownshippublicschools.org](http://elem2.middletownshippublicschools.org)

#### **Middle School Site:**

[middleschool.middletownshippublicschools.org](http://middleschool.middletownshippublicschools.org)

#### **High School Site:**

[highschool.middletownshippublicschools.org](http://highschool.middletownshippublicschools.org)