

Students at Elementary #1 and Elementary #2 had fun while raising funds for their schools at the recent Glow Run/Walk

# Panther Pride Newsletter

## *Take Time to Reflect*

Dear Parents:

As we spring into the second half of the school year, we look forward to seeing how our students and schools will continue to develop and grow. There are many possibilities and opportunities that await us, and I am excited to go on this educational journey with you.

But before we head into the future, let's reflect on the accomplishments our school community has achieved as winter comes to a close. Here are a few of the highlights:

- 🐾 Middle Township High School's Mock Trial Team earned the Cape May County champions title after defeating Lower Cape May Regional High School at the championship competition. The team went on to compete in the regional competition and won the first round. Congratulations to these students on their successful season.
- 🐾 Speaking of having a successful season, our winter sports teams thrived! The season culminated with the girls basketball team claiming its second consecutive NJSIAA Group 2 South Jersey Championship.
- 🐾 Our new English Language Arts program at Elementary #1 has already resulted in higher student achievement after

less than one year of being implemented. We saw positive testing results quickly after the initial investment.

- 🐾 Elementary #2's Step Team participated in the district's annual Black History Month celebration. The event's theme was "Love Theory," which shared the message that only love can end hate. The team used its dance skills to represent the African American community's positive attitude, powerful history and willingness to continue bettering the country.

Our schools' achievements encompass what it means to have Panther Pride. Each accomplishment represents our appreciation for fellow students, teachers and staff, our schools, education, unity and the community. Panther Pride means strongly valuing diversity, too, and respecting the differences among people.

I am proud of our students and schools and look forward to working with you and celebrating the successes the rest of the school year brings.

Dr. David Salvo  
Superintendent of Schools





# Panther Pride Newsletter

## Upcoming Events

**MARCH 14 Elem. #1** Early Dismissal - Parent/Teacher Conferences 1:45-3:30 P.M.

**MARCH 14 Elem. #2** Early Dismissal - Parent/Teacher Conferences 1:45-3:45 P.M.

**MARCH 14 MS & HS** Early Dismissal for Staff PD Day

**MARCH 14 HS** College Fair & Info Session 5:30-7 P.M.

**MARCH 15 All Schools** Closed for Staff Development Day

**MARCH 18 Elem. #1** Class Picture Day

**MARCH 21 Board of Education** Meeting 6 P.M.

**MARCH 26 MS** NJHS Induction Ceremony 6:30 P.M.

**MARCH 28 All Schools** Early Dismissal for Spring Break

**MARCH 29 All Schools** Closed for Spring Break

**APRIL 1-5 All Schools** Closed for Spring Break

**APRIL 8 All Schools** Reopen

**APRIL 20 HS** NNDCC Military Ball 5-9 P.M.

**APRIL 25 HS** SAT Day

**APRIL 25 Board of Education** Meeting & Public Hearing 6 P.M.

**APRIL 26 MS** Musical 7 P.M. - PAC

**APRIL 27 MS** Musical 2P.M. - PAC

**APRIL 27 MS** Musical 7 P.M. - PAC

**APRIL 30 HS** NNDCC Awards Ceremony 6:30-9 P.M. - PAC

**MAY 1 HS** Panther Choice Awards 6 P.M. - PAC

**MAY 6-10 Teacher Appreciation Week**

**MAY 6-17 HS** AP Testing

**MAY 8 MS** Spring Concert 6:30 P.M. - PAC

**MAY 9 HS** Spring Music Concert 6:30 P.M. - PAC

**MAY 14 Elem. #1** 2nd Grade Concert 10 A.M. - PAC

**MAY 15 HS** Spring Dance Showcase 6:30 P.M. - PAC

**MAY 16 Board of Education** Meeting 6 P.M.

**MAY 17 MS & HS** Early Dismissal

**MAY 17 - HS** Promenade 5 P.M. – HS Main Entrance

**MAY 17 HS** Prom 6:30 P.M. – Flanders Hotel

**MAY 17-18 HS** After Prom 11 P.M. – 4 A.M.

**MAY 20 District** Panther Scramble Golf Tournament

**MAY 22 Elem. #2** Band-Chorus Concert 6:30 P.M. - PAC

**MAY 24 All Schools** Early Dismissal

**MAY 27 All Schools** Closed for Memorial Day

**JUNE 4 Juneteenth Celebration** 6 P.M. - PAC (Dinner to follow)

**JUNE 6 Board of Education** Meeting 6 P.M

**JUNE 6 Elem. #1** Preschool Graduation 10 A.M. & 1 P.M. - PAC

**JUNE 10 HS** Senior Awards & Scholarships 6:30 P.M. - PAC

**JUNE 10 MS** Carnival

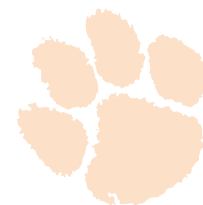
**JUNE 11-17 All Schools** Early Dismissal

**JUNE 12 HS** Senior Walk 8 A.M.

**JUNE 13 MS** 8th Grade Promotion 4 P.M.

**JUNE 17 HS** Graduation 4 P.M. - Memorial Field

**JUNE 17 Last Day of School** for Students





# Panther Pride Newsletter

## Joelle's Guidance Corner

### Important upcoming events:

#### March 14 - MTHS 11th annual College Fair & Information Session

More than 50 confirmed colleges, universities, trade schools and military representatives will be participating in the annual College Fair & Information Session featuring keynote speaker John Iacovelli from Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA). Students will again be provided with QR codes through StriveFair.com to scan via mobile devices. This allows representatives to follow up with college information sent directly to their personal emails. Please register prior to the event at StriveFair.com.

The event will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at MTHS Gym A. A Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) representative will be presenting information on the college process from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Media Center.

#### May 2024 - Date TBD

Senior Tommy Barber will be representing MTHS in the planning of a regional Teen Summit on Trauma-Informed Communities and Resiliency in May. This event is hosted by the Coalition for a Safe Community Atlantic County Chapter. Each high school involved has one student representative working to plan the summit, and five MTHS students will attend in May.

#### Winter Highlight: Career Day

Career Day at Middle Township High School featured over 30 presenters in a variety of fields including business, IT, finance/banking, medicine, real estate, culinary/baking, law enforcement and public safety, counseling and higher education, giving students a chance to explore multiple jobs and career interests.

## Middle Township Public Schools

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Joelle Tenaglia, Director of Guidance



#### Winter Highlight: The College Process for the Student-Athlete Presentation

The National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association's Bruce D. Whitehead Distinguished Service Award winner Mike Gatley presented on The College Process for the Student-Athlete to Middle Township High School students. Gatley has also won NIAAA's Program of Excellence Award in 2021, the National Football Foundation South Jersey Chapter Leadership Award in 2021 and held many other titles such as the president of the Cape-Atlantic League and the National Football Foundation South Jersey Chapter. He was also named Athletic Director of the Year by the Directors of Athletics Association of New Jersey in 2002.





## Elementary #2 welcomes Carrie Sinone as the school's new principal

Middle Township School District (MTSD) and Elementary #2 are happy to welcome Carrie Sinone as the school's principal.

Formerly the assistant principal of Elementary #2,

Sinone heads into the second half of the year replacing Nancy Loteck, a longtime administrator who decided to retire after joining MTSD 20 years ago. Before becoming a part of the MTSD team, Loteck worked at the Margaret Mace School in Wildwood.

Sinone will focus on the school's mission to build upon the education started at Elementary #1 while also deepening and strengthening skills and knowledge to prepare students for success at middle and high school. She will continue

to assist students with their educational success by strengthening academic and social-emotional foundations such as the Positive Behaviors in School (PBIS) program.

The PBIS program helps students make good choices and develops their character. Students who exemplify positive behaviors are awarded Pawsome tickets, are given Panther Achiever Awards at the monthly school assembly or receive Pawsome Praise Passes.

Sinone looks forward to working together with students, families and the community to provide a positive experience for all at school. She encourages reaching out to her with questions, suggestions or concerns.

Congratulations to Carrie Sinone as she continues to build on Elementary #2's legacy.

## Middle Township School District staff spreads holiday cheer to those in need

**Middle Township School District's teachers and staff helped make the holidays even merrier for 48 families, including 170 children, in the township by collecting gifts for students in need through Kanen's Christmas.**

This is the third year staff has provided gifts for families through Kanen's Christmas, an organization created in memory of Kanen Keating-Wear. Kanen was a Middle Township student who succumbed to Ewing Sarcoma, a rare cancer, at age 12 in 2019. The organization, established in 2021, was a collaboration among the district's Supervisor of Elementary Education

Pam Shute, Elementary #1 Guidance Counselor Kelly Cox, and Lauren Keating-Wear, Kanen's mother.

This year, the holiday outreach expanded to include ShopRite gift cards to Middle Township families in need due to the efforts of Lindsey Tyler DeLollis and several local businesses within the community.

The Kanen's Christmas crew gave a special "thank you" to those who helped make the season brighter, including Sturdy Savings Bank, Coldwell Banker, Anzelone Electric Co., Burke Motors Group, Monzo Catanese DeLollis Law Firm, Home Innovations, the family of John

Savarase, the Woodrow Family, Cyndi Arnold, Donia Mills, Laura Lambert, Shantelle DelConte and Katie Taylor.

And thank you to the Middle Township School District staff who helped bring joy to families by purchasing more than 340 gifts for the students in need.





# Panther Pride Newsletter

## Students brighten up their schools at Glow Run/Walk fundraiser

Students at Elementary #1 and Elementary #2 had fun while raising funds for their schools at the recent Glow Run/Walk. **Each school reached its goal by earning \$15,000 which will be used for field trips, guest speakers, incentives and more.** Elementary #1 had contributions from across the nation and world, including 22 states and two countries.

The annual fundraiser is organized by the schools' Boosterthon Team, who works with teachers and administration to provide fun incentives for students after they meet certain goals. The fundraiser culminates with the Glow Run/Walk, and high energy activities take place throughout the day such as playing music during arrival and dismissal at the schools.







## Students celebrate diversity at Elementary #1's first Multicultural Night

Elementary #1 students and families explored different cultures, traditions and perspectives across the globe at the school's first Multicultural Night. The event's theme, "One World Many Stories," included performances, activities and displays that celebrated diversity and fostered inclusivity.

The foundation of the event was based on the first- and second-grade classes' social studies projects. The students researched countries such as a Canada, Brazil, Mexico and others to make a display for Multicultural Night. Two kindergarten classes also contributed and made displays. Thanks to the support of staff, teachers, students and families, the event flourished.

Upon arrival, students were given passports and encouraged to travel to each continent – which were different rooms in the school building. After they completed their passports, they were given a goody bag with crayons and a coloring book featuring countries across the world that was provided by the Middle Township Education Association (MTEA).

During their travels, families could watch a performance by the Middle Township Step Team, a traditional Filipino folk dance and Irish dancing, and listen to music played on bagpipes. Middle Township families also contributed to the event, and shared their cultures by bringing in household items, clothing, food, handmade displays and more from the Philippines, Tunisia, Dominican Republic, Macedonia, Armenia, Lithuania, Algeria, Germany, South Africa, Palestine, Vietnam, Romania, Ireland, and Italy.

Three hundred guests attended the school's first Multicultural Night, which will now become an annual event on the Elementary #1 calendar.







## Elementary #2 Drama Club students performed Disney production to sold-out audiences

Elementary #2 Drama Club students' talent, energy and excitement thrilled audiences at their performance of Disney's "The Lion King Kids" on Jan. 11 and 12. On both nights, the young learners and performers entertained sold-out crowds.

More than 260 students participated in the show and helped make the production a tremendous success. The drama

club continues to grow each year, and this production welcomed 50 more students than the previous one.

Directors Nicole DelCorio, Christine Sundstrom, Christine Law and Julie Moore began working with students in October to learn lines, songs, choreography, and build sets. Their work and the students' talents brought the show to life.







## Elementary School #2 students join Middle School & High School Step Team, shine on stage during Black History Month performance

Sixty-two fourth- and fifth-grade students at Elementary #2, new members of the district's Step Team, recently joined with the Middle School and High School dancers, and delighted their classmates, friends and families by participating in the district's Black History Month event.

The annual performance features the talented performers, but also shares an important lesson about Black History. The title of this year's show was "Love Theory," and was chosen based on Dr. Martin Luther King's quote, "Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

About 120 students from grades four through twelve reflected on the division in the country, and used their dance skills to portray the message that only love can end hate. Each dance reinforced this theme, and songs were

chosen to represent the African American community's positive attitude, powerful history and willingness to continue bettering the country.

This was the first time many of the younger performers got on stage in front of a packed audience, and the Step Team advisors were proud of the students' work, dedication and support of each other. Currently, there are 51 middle school students and 15 high school students that are part of the Step Team.

The district's Step Team is a club for students of different ethnic backgrounds to come together and use dance to promote a positive message. It was established 27 years ago as a high school activity and has grown steadily to now include elementary school students.







## Elementary School #2's fifth-graders receive love from across the world

Elementary School #2's fifth-graders made a Valentine's Day goal to receive one handmade card from each state in the country – little did they know their efforts would be heard across the world.

After campaigning through the school's Facebook page and receiving 600 shares in 24 hours, cards began pouring in from all 50 states and other countries. More than 170 fifth-grade students began tracking the cards by placing heart shaped stickers on a world map. The map was on display in

the fifth-grade hallway and featured hundreds of stickers.

In addition to all 50 states, the students received cards from Canada, Guam, England, Germany, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Ireland, Australia, Denmark, Denmark, and Saudi Arabia where the New Jersey Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing was stationed. The fifth-grade students responded to some of the cards they received - making friendships and spreading love across the globe.



## Middle Township High School Mock Trial Team wins Cape May County championship

The Middle Township High School (MTHS) Mock Trial Team defeated Lower Cape May Regional High School's team during the recent championship competition held at the Cape May County Superior Court, becoming the Cape May County champions.

Teams at the championship competition were scored based on witness testimony, ability to answer questions on cross-examination, and ability to develop and be in character. Also, attorneys were judged on their direct and cross examination questions, opening and closing statements, and using legal objections and arguments throughout the trial based on the Mock Trial Rules of Evidence.

The MTHS mock trial team, consisting of 11 students ranging from freshmen to seniors, have practiced daily since receiving their case in October ensuring they were prepared for the competitions that began in January. This year, the students received a criminal case alleging fraud in college admissions.

After earning the title, the MTHS

students competed in the regional competition held in New Brunswick. At the competition, the Cape May County champions defeated the Cumberland County champions in round one and then faced Mainland Regional High School, the Atlantic County champions. Although Mainland Regional High School was declared the winner, the MTHS team had an amazing season.





## Middle Township School District's Little Free Libraries make big news on NBC10

Middle Township School District's (MTSD) Little Free Libraries recently made big news on NBC10. The news station wanted to feature the district and Jennifer Heun, a middle school special education literacy teacher, after learning of their efforts to install Little Free Libraries throughout the schools.

Heun diligently worked to establish these free "take a book, leave a book" exchange libraries for more than a year. Upon receiving a cancer diagnosis, Heun decided to retire after teaching in Middle Township schools for about 20 years. However, her fellow teachers and district administrators would not allow the illness to halt her vision and continued to complete the project she inspired.

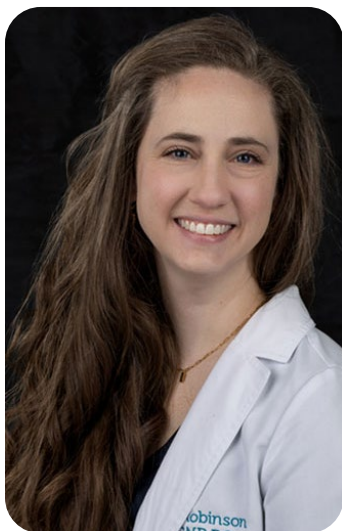
Each of the custom Little Free Libraries was installed

throughout the district during Read Across America Week in March making Heun's goal to help support students on their reading journeys come true, and bringing her joy as she continues to battle the disease.

To watch NBC10's segment on the MTSD Little Libraries, [click here](#).



## Rad Grad: Nurse Taylor Robinson, a MTHS alumnus, earns award for exemplary patient care



Once she walked the halls of Middle Township High School as a student eager to learn, but now Taylor Robinson can be found in the halls of Beaufort Memorial Heart Specialists in Beaufort, South Carolina as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). Robinson enjoys her career, and successfully builds trust and listens to her patients so she can provide them with top-notch individualized care.

Robinson recently earned the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses from a nationwide program that recognizes registered nurses who exemplify outstanding compassion, courage and integrity. She received the award for initiating the Critical Care Pain Observance Tool, which

helps determine a patient's pain level when they are unable to report it themselves. This tool assists nurses in effectively managing their patients' pain treatments.

As part of the board-certified team at Beaufort Memorial Heart Specialists, Taylor works with cardiologists to help patients with cardiovascular diseases and conditions. Her areas of expertise include heart failure, heart catheterization care, atrial fibrillation, hypertension and lifestyle modification.

After graduating from MTHS in 2006, Robinson attended Washington College and earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology in 2010. She then studied to receive a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Drexel University in 2011 and a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of South Carolina.

When not working, Robinson spends time with her husband, Adam Kajfez, and their dog, Cooper. Together they explore national parks, hike and kayak.





# Panther Pride Newsletter

## Middle Township High School welcomes Gavin Liepe as head football coach



Middle Township High School introduced Gavin Liepe as the new head football coach at the start of the winter athletic season. Liepe, 25, is a physical education teacher at Middle Township Middle School and has extensive experience in the sport.

Liepe, an Atlantic County native, was recognized as an outstanding football player while attending Holy Spirit High School, earning First Team All-Conference and First Team All-Press of AC honors. After graduating high school in 2017, Liepe played four seasons of college football, one at

Christopher Newport University and three at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ). At TCNJ, Liepe was a two-time All-NJAC outside linebacker, leading the Lions in tackles for two seasons.

He then gained professional experience by playing two seasons in the German Football League, one with the Kirchdorf Wildcats and one with the Frankfurt Universe.

Liepe is replacing Frank Riggitano, who recently retired after working for 36 years with MTHS. For 22 of these years, he was the head football coach and Cape May County's all-time leader in high school head football coaching victories.

## Middle Township HS Athletics Season Highlights

Middle Township High School wrapped up another championship winter sports season with a featured highlight in **girls basketball**. The season came to a close just after the team claimed its second consecutive New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Group 2 South Jersey Championship. The girls finished with a 23-9 record with seniors Hannah Cappelletti, Iyanna Bennett, Gabriella Cruz, and Madison Palek leading the way. The future is bright for this group as several players from this year's championship team will return for next season.







# Panther Pride Newsletter

## Athletics Season Highlights Continued

In boys basketball, the team captured the school's second-ever Cape-Atlantic League (CAL) Championship before falling to the eventual state champion in the NJSIAA Group 2 South Jersey Championship game. The boys were led by seniors Anthony Trombetta, Bubba McNeil, Michael Zarfati, and Re'ale Basquine. Not only was this season one for the books for the entire team, but brothers Bubba and Jamir McNeil also both reached their 1,000-career point marks.



On the mats, the **Panthers wrestling team** won the first-ever playoff match in school history with a thrilling 32-30 win over defending group champion Haddonfield. The team ended the season with an 18-7 record, which included a second place finish during the prestigious Buc Classic at Red Bank Regional High School. Maurice Matthews, Shaun Watkins, Dontae Kelly, Max Adelizzi, and Tyler King advanced to the Region 8 finals in individual competition.







# Panther Pride Newsletter

Throughout the season, the **Dance, Cheer, and Pom team** was ever-present with its high-energy performances at all home basketball games and even traveled with the teams for the CAL semifinals and championship games.



In the pool, this year's **boys and girls swim teams** had a record number of participants, with more than 70 student-athletes competing. The boys swim team advanced to the NJSIAA Group C Semifinals, falling to eventual South Jersey Champion, Seneca in a last race nail-biter 86-84. Senior Brandyn Acevedo broke the school record in both the 100m backstroke and 400m freestyle events but missed the NJSIAA Meet of Champions by a mere 0.2 seconds.

