



Scribe

Back-to-School Report

2017



DEER LAKES

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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www.deerlakes.net

**The Official Student-Achievement Biannual
Magazine of the Deer Lakes School District**

East Deer | Frazer | West Deer



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Deer Lakes Board of School Directors are (from left): Jodi L. Banyas-Galecki, Louis W. Buck, Lisa E. Merlo (Vice President), Gary W. Torick, Clara Salvi (President), William A. Lupone, Jr., and Leanna Shurina. James F. McCaskey and Phillip Ziendarski are not pictured.



Most of the content seen within this magazine is the work of Deer Lakes Communications Specialist, James T. Cromie. If you have any questions or wish to offer feedback, please call 724.265.5300 Ext. 2131 or email jcromie@dlisd.k12.pa.us.

Message from the **SUPERINTENDENT**



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year! Last year was filled with wonderful accomplishments and opportunities for our students. Looking back at the archived information on our website and in our social media, it shows an incredible amount of awards, programs and initiatives accomplished in one short school year. Our students' awards and accomplishments reflect positively on our community and create a sense of pride and school spirit.

We have worked diligently over the summer to provide even more initiatives to add to this upcoming school year. Part of our district mission states that we will provide a dynamic, comprehensive educational program to ensure the success of Deer Lakes' students. Our focus continues to center on college and career readiness, increased academic rigor and relevance in the curriculum and a myriad of opportunities for social growth through athletics, job shadowing and co-curricular activities. One of the goals of our administrative team is to encourage and prepare all of our students for the career path they wish to pursue.

Our administrative staff has spent the summer attending workshops, reading the latest educational books such as *Personalized Learning/Digital Convergence* by Shawn Smith and *Mass Customization of Learning* by Charles Schwann. Those trainings will assist us in preparing for the "accelerated rate of technological change to our traditional educational structures". We are excited to embark on new and innovative ways to meet student needs and prepare them for future careers, some of which we can only imagine.

In line with technology and digital convergence, we look forward to unveiling our new middle school innovation center. This center will be a place for teaching, innovating, learning and will be a true "Makerspace." We have upgraded our technology infrastructure and software to build capacity for the increased use of mobile devices with our middle school 1:1 technology initiative and are adding the necessary hardware to provide a robust and dependable computing environment. Another truly innovative program will be our robotics lab and classes at the high school. These STEM centered classes will help students master the fundamentals of robotics and the engineering design process while learning to use design software.

Communication remains among our top priorities. If you are a student or a parent or a staff member or even just a concerned member of the community, please feel empowered to reach out to us. We don't pretend to have all the answers and we welcome your feedback. Also, I urge parents and guardians to update your contact information on the Skyward Parent Portal. If you are having difficulty doing that, please contact our technology department, 724.265.5300 Ext. 2656. Finally, follow us on social media and try to attend as many events as your schedule allows.

I look forward to another great school year, as we support our students' educational endeavors and continue to be amazed by their discoveries and accomplishments. Please know that I welcome your ideas and input. Deer Lakes is an amazing place and I'm honored to be a part of this community.

Yours in education,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JLB', written in a cursive style.

JANELL LOGUE-BELDEN, ED.D
Superintendent, Deer Lakes School District

On Wednesday, June 7, the 150 member Deer Lakes High School Class of 2017 said goodbye to the school district for the final time as students during a one-of-a-kind commencement ceremony that began under bright, sunny skies, was briefly interrupted by a passing shower, and finished with a brilliant rainbow that arced high over a strikingly tranquil Lancer Stadium.

The whole evening seemed perfectly emblematic of the students' respective journeys thus far, as well as those that surely lie ahead.

Members of the DLHS Class of 2017 have big plans post-commencement, from furthering their education to serving their country, or entering the workforce. Whatever paths they ultimately choose to pursue, we are proud to have known them and worked alongside them, and we look forward to following their stories going forward.



What's Over the Rainbow for the Class of '17?

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| ^^Ashley Aliff, Pittsburgh Tech. College | Gabriel Greenway, Ohio Tech Powersport Institute | Damon Peluchette, Northwestern Ohio |
| Brandon Anderson, Fashion Institute of Tech. | Alexa Grill, Liberty | Jarret Pipes, Rosedale Technical College |
| Abbigail Augustine, Employment | Jacob Guiciardi, CCAC-Boyce | Margaret Pogel, Carlow |
| Dorentina Ballanca, CCAC-North | Camron Guy, Clarion | Morgan Popendieker, Robert Morris |
| Jiri Banyas-Galecki, Lock Haven | Caitlyn Hazlett, CCAC-North | Jacob Potter, Employment |
| Daniel Bauer, IUP | Mark Heim, Penn State New Kensington | Justin Probs, Franciscan |
| Joshua Bechtold, Penn State-Behrend | Michael Hilliard, Pitt | Tyler Raub, South Carolina |
| Robert Bergman, Army | Joshua Hineman, Point Park | Caitlin Reading, IUP |
| Emily Bigley, Edinboro | Jacob Hines, IUP | Nicholas Remo, Slippery Rock |
| Ryan Bombich, Slippery Rock | Rebecca Hoffman, Robert Morris | Zoe Ricketts, Pitt |
| Matthew Borczyk, Robert Morris | Shelby Hood, Employment | Shae Robson, St. Vincent |
| Taylor Bowers, Pitt | Haley Horchar, St. Margaret School of Nursing | Maria Rossi, Duquesne |
| Brendan Bridge, Penn State | Tyler Hotovec, Employment | Kristin Rudy, Clarion |
| Evan Brunette, Arizona State | Isaac Hott, Slippery Rock | Brandon Ruffalo, Pitt |
| Alexa Burke, Penn State-New Kensington | Brandon Hudecek, Pittsburgh Technical College | Clemente Runas, CCAC-North |
| Megan Butler, CCAC-North | Michael Hudecek, Pitt-Johnstown | Hannah Runas, Slippery Rock |
| James Campbell, Akron | Antonino Itri, Westminster | William Runas, Slippery Rock |
| Maya Cannon, Employment | Matthew Kadlick, Penn State | Sydney Rusek, Savannah College of Art & Design |
| Joshua Cendrowski, Slippery Rock | Helen Kanaitis, Westminster | Jasmine Russell, CCAC-North |
| Connor Chirdon, Westminster | Brooke Kopinski, Westminster | Adam Sack, Slippery Rock |
| Frank Chirico, Marines | David Kozlowski, Penn State-DuBois | Samuel Saldutte, Slippery Rock |
| Cassidy Chmura, CCAC-Allegheny | Lehman Kretz, Pitt | Vincent Sammartino, Waynesburg |
| Gino Ciotola, West Virginia | Nick Latte, Kent State | Mason Schroeder, Navy |
| Joshua Cravener, La Roche | Jacob Lavrich, Allegheny | Alyssa Scoccia, CCAC-Boyce |
| Christine Crawford, Pitt-Johnson | Abigail Lisowski, Ohio State | Kayla Seitz, Employment |
| Gage Crawford, CCAC-Allegheny | Shawn Logan, Penn State-Behrend | Alan Sharick, Goodwill Training Program |
| Quinn Cush, CCAC-North | **Zachary Lubick, Virginia Wesleyan | Cameron Sharkins, La Roche |
| Aaron Cyphert, Employment | Billy Maher, Marines | Justin Skirda, Waynesburg |
| Noah Darsie, IUP | Noelle Manchini, Robert Morris | Katelyn Slagel, Pitt |
| Ethan Debee, Air Force | Samantha Martin, Employment | Alexis Slavicek, Point Park |
| Brittany Dengler, Washington & Jefferson | Lesley Martinez, Beattie - Cosmetology | *Samuel Smallwood, Pitt |
| Miranda Dobransky, Employment | Mallory Marzolf, Chatham | Jacob Spirnock, Westminster |
| Christina Donatelli, Slippery Rock | Barbara Matthews, Grove City | Matthew Stanga, Penn State-New Kensington |
| Courtney Drum, Employment | Brianna McAfee, CCAC-North | Benjamin Stewart, West Virginia |
| Dylan Erickson, Cal U | Mya McElligott, CCAC-North | Julie Stillwagon, Slippery Rock |
| Katherine Falkner, Robert Morris | Nicholas McGrath, Penn State-New Kensington | Blake Thomas, BCCC |
| Mark Febinger, CCAC-Boyce | James Milbert, Employment | Megan Tristanti, CCAC-North |
| Peter Ferrante, La Roche | Kyle Miller, Beattie | Austin Turley, CCAC-Boyce |
| Annalee Fink, Penn State-Altoona | Joella Miller, Coastal Carolina | Kelsie Urbanek, Niagara College |
| Joshua Fisher, Employment | Austin Moore, CCAC-North | Kaelin Vioral, CCAC-North |
| David Fleming, Westminster | Claire Morrison, Allegheny | Parker Waynar, Carpenter's Union Apprenticeship |
| Courtney Frederick, CCAC-North | Drew Mort, Coastal Carolina | Micah Williams, Pitt-Greensburg |
| Abigail Fredley, Slippery Rock | Hunter Mravintz, Arizona State | Marina Woodson, Slippery Rock |
| Noah Freeman, Triangle Tech | Alexander Nichols, Chatham | Austin Yates, CCAC-North |
| Katelyn Frinsco, Pittsburgh Tech. College | Sarah Nicholson, CCAC-North | Tyler Yeager, CCAC-North |
| Deborah Fritch, Slippery Rock | Maggie Nowakowski, Chatham | Emily Yourish, Penn State-New Kensington |
| Amber Garland, Employment | Steven Ostrowski, CCAC-Allegheny | Megan Zaremski, CCAC-North |
| Brooke Godlewski, Robert Morris | William Palmiere, Clarion | Brooke Zawalnicki, IUP |
| Kamilah Graham, Kent State | Cameron Pampena, West Virginia | Shea Zetwo, Employment |
| Daniel Gray, Edinboro | Dakota Patrick, Employment | Charles Zubik, Penn State |

*Class Valedictorian; **Class Salutarian; ^^AW Beattie Class Salutarian

Academic & Community News

From Around the Deer Lakes School District



Curtisville STEM Camp

In July, just as summer was kicking into high gear, approximately 100 of Deer Lakes students going into grades 1-3 voluntarily took math and science classes at Curtisville Primary Center as part of Camp Curtisville, a series of week long summer camp sessions that focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

For just \$30 per session, students had the opportunity to learn more about computer coding, fairy tale-inspired maker challenges, garden science, kinesiology through intramural athletics or kitchen science.

Curtisville principal Jennifer Cavalancia helped organize and run the three week event and she could not have been happier with

the community's response. "The goal of the STEM camp was to give the students the opportunity to spark their interests and heighten their curiosity for STEM related work while giving the students an arena to work through problem solving, critical thinking and logical reasoning," she said.

District Announces New College and Career Readiness School Counseling Plan

In an initiative that began last year and will be fully integrated at all four schools this year, school counselors are implementing a new comprehensive Chapter 339 School Counseling Plan that focuses on a number of growth areas including college and career readiness.

The new plan, which has been developed over the past few years by school counselors as well as an advisory council composed of administrators, teachers, parents, community members and even students, is an effort to focus students on their post-Deer Lakes ambitions from their first day of kindergarten through the day they graduate from high school.

Last year, as part of the plan, Curtisville Primary Center held its first ever "Career Day" in which community members spoke to the children about their respective professions. Also, the high school had a few lunch and learn events. This year, all four schools will host similar events for our students and we would welcome anyone willing to participate in any of our college and career readiness events.

This year, students in grades 5-12, and their parents, will have access to the Career Cruising software program, where they can begin to explore careers, make a career portfolio, and conduct college searches among others. Also, all high school sophomores will be required to participate in a job shadowing experience. According to assistant superintendent Bobbi-Ann Barnes, the new plan is designed to enable Deer Lakes students to make informed career decisions. "The district is dedicated to ensuring that every student has meaningful career exploration and career planning opportunities and a viable post-secondary plan by the time they graduate," said Barnes.

Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program

Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program now covers all uninsured kids and teens (up to age 19). No family makes too much money for CHIP. Coverage includes doctor visits, dental care, eye care, prescriptions, immunizations, mental health and much more. All families need to do is apply!

For many families, CHIP is free, with no co-pays or monthly premiums. Families with higher incomes may qualify for low-cost or at-cost CHIP, which still includes the same comprehensive benefits. Families whose incomes fall below CHIP guidelines may be enrolled in Medical Assistance. Visit chipcoverspakids.com or call 800-986-KIDS to apply or for more information. You can also contact district social worker Todd Schachter at tschachter@dlsd.k12.pa.us or 724.265.5300 Ext. 2673.

Notable Achievements

From Around the Deer Lakes School District



Dylan Quairiere

Senior, Deer Lakes HS

Deer Lakes senior Dylan Quairiere recently participated in the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI) Academy.

Quairiere was one of approximately 60 students nationally chosen to participate in the prestigious eight-week summer program which strives to provide cutting edge research and career preparatory experiences to a diverse group of highly motivated high school students who are pursuing higher education and careers in STEM fields, especially research and medicine.

East Union Intermediate Center teacher Shelly Znosko recently earned rave reviews from all corners for her efforts in bringing the first ever Science Olympiad to Deer Lakes School District.

The day-long school-wide competition, which featured a generous contribution from the Spectroscopy Society of Pittsburgh, featured students in grades three through five working together in small mixed groups to accomplish a variety of STEM-related activities.



Shelly Znosko

Teacher, East Union IC



Benjamin Manchini

Grade 7, Deer Lakes MS

Deer Lakes Middle School student Benjamin Manchini certainly had an interesting summer. The seventh grader from East Deer made his silver screen debut as he traveled to Tampa, Fla., to shoot a few scenes for "On the Arm," a feature film about 1980s Youngstown, Ohio, when it was still known as "Crimetown USA."

Manchini plays the lead character, Jeffrey Torin, as a boy. "On the Arm" is due to be released in the spring of 2018.

Deer Lakes High School junior Katrina Taliani participated in the Pennsylvania-West chapter (Region B) of the Hugh O'Brian Youth (HOBY) Leadership Training Program in June at Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pa.

Annual HOBY programs are conducted throughout the United States and serve local and international high school students with the goal of inspiring and developing young leaders to become adults committed to a life dedicated to volunteerism, leadership, service and innovation.



Katrina Taliani

Junior, Deer Lakes HS



One-to-One Initiative

Deer Lakes' brand new 1:1 Technology Initiative will mean that every middle school student will receive his or her own personal Chromebook. For more information about the program visit www.deerlakes.net/Chromebook-Program.

The new Chromebooks arrived over the summer and were ready for Deer Lakes students and teachers to start using on day one of the school year.

"We're extremely happy to put a tool into our students hands that will give them unlimited access to the resources they need to be successful learning in the 21st century," Deer Lakes Middle School Principal David Campos said.

Distribution of the Google-based Chromebook laptop computers started in early August through a series of two hour information sessions with the students and their parents. The sessions went over things like how the program will work and what the district's goals and expectations are to how the students and their families can best use their new devices.

Technology Director, Daniel Lauletta, who created the program at Deer Lakes, said it's not enough to simply pass out laptops to the students.

"We wanted to make sure that we were not only providing the students with an amazing learning tool, but that we were also supporting them along the way and showing them precisely how to use their new device to its fullest extent," he said.

According to Lauletta, that meant also teaching the student's support

system how the devices work and what that will mean to their student's academic future.

"The new devices are incredible and will allow our students to achieve things no class before them has ever achieved," said Lauletta. "However, we are still talking about technology and if there's one thing I have learned over the years it's that technology breaks down from time to time."

"That's why it was so important for us to work with the students' parents so that we are all on the same page with regard to our expectations as well as their needs."

The training sessions also covered information about an optional but recommended insurance program for the devices that costs \$30, with a discount for families with more than one child.

The insurance covers any accidental damage to the screen, keyboard or charger not covered by the manufacturer's one-year warranty.

Many people don't realize that this is actually Year 2 of the Google Chromebook program. It was piloted in some eighth grade classes last year and the results were outstanding.

This year, the program is being piloted in a handful of classes at the high school level in the hope of taking it live for all middle and high school students in time for next school year.

However, Lauletta cautions against putting the cart before the horse. "Our Chromebook experience was outstanding last year and we are very excited to try it among the entire

middle school student body this year," he said. "However, that was in a targeted environment.

"This year, we will take it to a much broader audience and I'm sure we will learn a lot of lessons through that experience as well as through the programs being piloted at the high school.

"I think we need to first analyze those lessons before we commit to anything beyond this school year."

Superintendent Janell Logue-Belden, who implemented a similar program at her former school district, Avella, before coming to Deer Lakes, has overseen the project. She insists that the project is a necessary component of modern instruction.

"The One-to-One Technology Initiative is timely due to the overwhelming amount of research that suggests that there is a strong link between technological training and academic and professional success," said Dr. Logue-Belden.

"When we also considered the emergence of digital convergence in our public educational system, it really became an important educational priority for the entire school district," she said.

Middle School Innovation Center

Deer Lakes' oldest building - the middle school - is undergoing a major transformation in what is arguably the most important room in the school.

The brand new innovation center replaces the former middle school library and it promises to fundamentally change the way students study, learn, discover and collaborate.



Former Middle School Library

The project, which took the entire summer to complete and cost approximately \$65,000, will transform what was formerly a traditional school library into a dynamic and interactive 21st century learning space with fully mobile tables. That will allow the entire room to continually be transformed to suit the needs of every group of students that uses it. It will also have new carpeting, freshly painted walls, interactive monitors along the walls and a student conversation area.

Library media specialist Christina Beaufort and Technology Director Dan Lauletta each spearheaded the project. Their primary objective from the beginning was to create a more dynamic and functional space for students.

"The way teachers deliver information and more importantly, the way students consume information has changed

radically over the years," said Beaufort. "Unfortunately, many school libraries haven't kept pace with that cultural sea change and that hinders schools' ability to reach their students."

Beaufort and Lauletta visited a number of area schools that have made similar changes and took meticulous notes along the way.

"Every school we visited had something different and some things worked better for our needs than others," said Lauletta. "We tried to incorporate most of the best concepts we saw elsewhere with some ideas we had already developed and I think we did that very well."

The "IC," as it will be called, will also serve as a stimulating environment for students with walls coated in dry erase paint that frees students up to be creative, innovative and collaborative.

"We want to modernize the way we are able to engage our students in a way that is authentic

and hands-on to them," said Beaufort. "To do that, we needed to fundamentally transform the way we reach our students and this center allows us to do that."

The interactive television screens, which are in the back of the IC, will allow students to hook up their Chromebooks to a much larger monitor when they are working collaboratively in a group setting.

Another new feature in the innovation center will be the introduction of a team of trained student-volunteers on hand throughout the school day to assist their classmates in various ways including technological issues and helping to restock the stacks.

Finally, book lovers need not fear. The library has pared down some of its collection but many of the most important and/or popular books still remain.

"Physical hard copy books remain a very important part of any child's education," said Beaufort. "However, a modern school library is a lot more than just books and this innovation center really demonstrates that transformation in very dramatic ways."



Deer Lakes Innovation Center
21st Century Learning
Est. 2017

DEER LAKES
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Notable Achievements

From Around the Deer Lakes School District



Noah Glaister

Junior, Deer Lakes HS

Deer Lakes' production of "Little Shop of Horrors" earned a prestigious Gene Kelly Award for Excellence in High School Musical Theater for Best Lighting Design in the Budget Level I division.

The award was the school's first in the past 15 years and was due in part to the hard work of junior Noah Glaister. Deer Lakes was also nominated for Best Costume Design.

Nominees and winners were chosen by a panel of 32 judges who attended the spring musicals presented by 27 Allegheny County high schools.



Xiah Zepeda

Grade 2, Curtisville PC

Xiah Zepeda, a second grader at Curtisville Primary Center, is going into his third season as the Junior Reporter for Steelers.com.

His hilarious video segments can be found on the Steelers' website and run the gambit from football analysis, to holiday wishes to everything in between.

According to his father, Tom Ninehouser, Xiah has always been a fanatical fan and was approached by the Steelers a few years ago at training camp to assume this role because of his infectious personality.



Desiree Rotondo

Teacher, Deer Lakes HS

Deer Lakes High School French teacher Desiree Rotondo was among 42,000 runners able to overcome sweltering 78 degree temperatures and a grueling 26.2 mile course to complete the world-famous Schneider Electric Marathon de Paris.

"I obviously have a passion for France," said Rotondo, who has chaperoned Deer Lakes student trips to that country for the past two decades. "I saw this as a potentially wonderful experience for me and one that I may be able to share with my students."



Sonnet Robertson

Sophomore, Deer Lakes HS

For the past seven years, high school sophomore Sonnet Robertson and her mother, Margaret have returned to East Union IC to share their amazing rock, fossil and mineral collection with the school's third graders. The tradition began when Sonnet was a third grader herself.

The Robinson's decades-old collection has taken them to all kinds of interesting places and created a number of fascinating stories.

The visit was a part of an initiative by the Monongahela Rockhounds, a club dedicated to educating the public on rocks, fossils and minerals.

Safety Measures

The start of the new school year is nearly upon us and preparations have long been underway for the 2017-2018 campaign. Classrooms have been cleaned, technology has been added, some curricula has been developed and the grounds have been freshly landscaped.

However, one area that is important to everyone but is often overlooked is the district's ability to safely deliver children to and from school each day.

Each summer, Deer Lakes, like every other school district in the Commonwealth, is subjected to a rigorous inspection process by the Pennsylvania State Police to ensure that its busses are fit to serve the community.

Prior to the police inspection in July, in which they go bumper to bumper checking safety equipment, brake adjustment, seats, lights and everything else that goes along with a vehicle of that size, Deer Lakes conducts its own inspection of its fleet.

Perhaps it is for that reason that for the 25th consecutive year, Deer Lakes has received

a perfect evaluation from the state police.

Head district mechanic Chuck Gray is understandably proud of his department's achievement.

"We are fortunate to have a lot of dedicated professionals working hard every day to ensure the safety of our students," said Gray. "We value the vote of confidence from the state inspection process, but we also understand that student safety is an ongoing challenge."

School Bus Safety Tips for Parents and Students

1. Please be sure that your child is visible and at his or her assigned bus stop at least 10 minutes early. Schedules can vary depending on student ridership, road conditions, traffic, construction delays and a host of other factors.
2. When waiting for the bus, always line up at least 10 feet away from the curb or the roadway to avoid traffic.
3. Never run after the school bus if it has already left its stop. It is never a good idea to be rushing towards a moving vehicle.
4. Never walk alongside a moving school bus.
5. Never push another student when getting on or off the school bus.
6. Always cross at least 10 feet in front of the stopped school bus so that the driver can better see you.
7. Before crossing a road to board the bus, wait until the school bus driver has activated the red flashing lights and engaged the crossing arm. Also, make sure that all traffic has come to a complete stop in both directions.
8. Once on the school bus, remain in your seat facing forward, especially when the vehicle is in motion. Also, never put your head, arms or hands outside the window.
9. Never play with the emergency exits.
10. Backpacks, band instruments, or sports equipment may not block the aisle or emergency exits. If there is an emergency, please listen to the driver and follow his or her instructions to the letter.
11. If students leave something on the bus or drop something just outside of the bus, never go back for it. The driver may not see the student and may have begun moving the vehicle.
12. Never speak to strangers at the bus stop and never get into a stranger's car.

Following these simple steps will help keep your student safe throughout the school year. If you have any questions, please contact the Transportation Department at gdixson@dlsd.k12.pa.us.



¡Mucho amor, Ecuador!

Deer Lakes High School Spanish teacher Señor Josh Destein recently led a small group of students and parents on a nine-day trip to Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands

Earlier this summer, Deer Lakes High School Spanish teacher Señor Josh Destein organized and led a group of students and their adult chaperones on a nine-day trip to Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands. He was kind enough to keep a travelogue on his experiences and generous enough to share them with the greater Deer Lakes community.

The trip, which was arranged through EF Tours, was Señor Destein's seventh Spanish-themed tour abroad. The student travelers included: Ashley Aliff, Jimmy Campbell, Christina Donatelli, Jack Lovey, Barbara Matthews, Benjamin Ramsey, Tyler Raub, and non-Deer Lakes student, Giovanni Vigilante. James Ramsey and James Campbell were the adult chaperones.

Quito, Ecuador's capital city is seemingly surrounded by snow-capped volcanoes and is located approximately 15 miles from the equator. The ancient city sits high atop the Andean foothills at an altitude of more than 9,200 feet above sea level, which can make simple breathing somewhat challenging at times due to a dearth of oxygen.

Ecuador experiences what most of us would consider spring-like weather all year round. The ancient city, whose name comes from the ancient Quitua tribe, served as an important hub during Incan and pre-Incan times, has a population of more than two million people and is one hour behind Eastern Standard Time. As of 2000, the currency of Ecuador changed from the Sucre to the U.S. dollar.

Day 1 (June 27, 2018): We flew into Quito's brand new Mariscal Sucre International Airport, where we were greeted by our guide, Jorge Castillo as well as by teachers, parents, and students from a school in Maryland with whom we spent the entire trip. From there we took an hour-long bus ride to our first hotel.

Day 2: We went to the equatorial line monument (La Mitad del Mundo) with a visit at the Intinan Museum. Our group stood on Latitude 0 (pictured above), which allowed us to stand simultaneously in both the northern and southern hemispheres. Students also were challenged to place an egg upright. We were shown demonstrations on how water drains in different directions on both sides of the equator as well as observing sun clocks. We also toured some ethnographic exhibits and were shown shrunken heads and how they were made!

After the visit, we traveled back to Quito and toured Independence Plaza, the Government Palace, and La Compañía de Jesús. Quito's Old Town was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978. Our group posed for pictures with palace guards dressed in blue, red, and gold representing 19th Century uniforms.

From 1901-1948, Ecuador went through 39 governments and four constitutions. At one point, the notoriously unstable country churned through four presidents in just 26 days.

Constructed in the 17th century, the La Compañía de Jesús took 163 years to complete. The ornate structure with gold leaf covered altars has often been called "Latin America's most beautiful church."

Academic & Community News

From Around the Deer Lakes School District

We took a bus ride up Cerro Panecillo, a steep and winding hill overlooking the Old Town of Quito. It is topped by a statue of the Virgin of the Americas. Deer Lakes students ascended the statue and walked around the observation deck for beautiful views of Ecuador's historic capital.

Just outside of Independence Plaza, we enjoyed a traditional Ecuadorian lunch that included fish, chicken, rice and vegetables; along with an Andean corn beverage called Chicha.

Day 3: We departed Quito and took a 2.5 hour flight to San Cristobal Island in the Galápagos Islands.

The archipelago is located nearly 600 miles from mainland Ecuador and is made up of 13 major islands, six small ones, and 42 islets that are simply large rocks. The islands are all of volcanic origin and cover nearly 30,000 square miles. They became famous when a then 26 year-old Charles Darwin landed here in 1835. By 1859, Darwin published "On the Origin of Species," which theorized evolution by natural selection.

We were greeted at the beach by dozens of sea lions roaming freely among the tourists. For everyone's protection, humans must maintain a minimum two-meter distance from the wildlife.

We learned that the Galápagos Islands are popular among wildlife because of the cold and warm currents that exist within them.

Day 4: Today, we embarked on a morning hike along the coast, known as "La Lobería," to observe some of the amazing wildlife in their natural habitat. We were also introduced to three local guides, Daniela, Maritza, and Katty, with whom we'll spend the remainder of our island tour.

Large and small black iguanas regularly crossed our paths or would remain camouflaged among the black volcanic rocks. We also saw a variety of finches and sea lions on our walk. Afterwards, we visited the San Cristobal Interpretation Center before hiking up Tijeretas Hill for an amazing view of the island.

Later, we snorkeled at the very site where Charles Darwin first arrived on the islands. The famous blue-footed booby was seen flying and posing for us on the rocks. This bird got its name after the Spanish word "bobo" (dunce/fool). Early sailors were surprised that the birds would not fly away when approached. These birds have a rather comical ritual. They tend to dance toward one another. While transferring from island to island, all travelers must go through "quarantine" where luggage is inspected for dirt, sand, foods, plants, and animal life that might pose a threat to another island.

Day 5: We visited a tortoise reserve, shopped for souvenirs and visited with locals.

Day 6: Today, we visited the Darwin Research Station on Isabella Island. It serves as the breeding station for giant tortoises, from which the collection of islands got its name.

The name "Galápagos" translates into "saddle back" resembling the shell of the tortoise. The embalmed body of the famous "Lonesome George" tortoise was also on our tour. Believed to have lived for well over 100 years, "Lonesome George" was the last known survivor of the Pinta tortoise species and one of the rarest creatures on earth. He remains a Galápagos Islands icon.

Day 7: Today we bid, "Adiós Galápagos" and made our way back to Quito. The flight into Quito featured views of the snow-capped Cotopaxi Volcano in the distance.

Day 8 (American Independence Day)

Day 8: Today we took a two-hour bus ride along Quito's beautiful countryside to visit, shop, and bargain at the legendary Otavalo Market, which was the perfect place to see Andean culture on full display. Local indigenous peoples were dressed in colorful, traditional garb. Vendors set up booths ready to sell and negotiate prices of all sorts of handicrafts, paintings, clothing, etc.

Our students used their Spanish speaking skills and negotiating savvy to negotiate fair prices. Lunch today also included the chance to order and enjoy cuy, or guinea pig, an Andean cuisine. Some of us drank Inka Cola, a popular Peruvian soft drink, or Fiora Vanti, Ecuador's favorite soft drink.

After an emotional farewell dinner with our guide, Jorge we exchanged gifts including a Terrible Towel -- which every Pittsburgher knows is a true honor.

Day 9: After pulling an all-nighter, we departed Quito at approximately 2:30 a.m. After a grueling day of travel, our group finally arrived home at approximately 5 p.m. where we were eagerly greeted by friends and family members.

Oh, the many stories, pictures, and videos we have to share!

Gracias, Ecuador!





Valley News Dispatch Players of the Year

Deer Lakes' Zach Lubick and Katelynn Blair were each named the Valley News Dispatch's 2017 Players of the Year in baseball and softball respectively.

Blair, a junior, batted a team-high .672 with 17 doubles, nine home runs and 38 runs batted in while leading Deer

Lakes to the WPIAL Class 4A championship game and PIAA quarterfinals.

Lubick, a 6-foot-5, 230 pound right-handed pitcher, struck out 73 batters in 53 2/3 innings en route to leading the Lancers to the WPIAL Class 4A semifinals. Lubick also boasted a robust .455 batting average with nine doubles,

two home runs and 21 runs batted in.

An excellent student, Lubick graduated in June as Salutatorian of the Class of 2017. He will play baseball at Virginia Wesleyan University in Virginia Beach.



Thanks, Bucs!

You may have noticed some improvements recently made to our spring sports athletics facilities. They are thanks in part to a trio of generous contributions from Pirates Charities.

Over the past three years, the Pittsburgh Pirates' charitable foundation has donated more than \$14,000 to Deer Lakes athletics, which has allowed the school district to make significant improvements to the drainage and fencing at the baseball and softball facilities.

Individual Recognition Spring Sports

SOFTBALL

Makayla Blair, Fr., C: P-G All-Section 1-3A; 1st Team, Valley News Dispatch All-Star
 *Katelynn Blair, Jr., IF: P-G All-Section 1-3A; 1st Team, Valley News Dispatch All-Star
 Danielle Huffman, Jr., IF: P-G All-Section 1-3A; 1st Team, Valley News Dispatch All-Star
 Brittany Dengler, Sr., 3B: 2nd Team, Valley News Dispatch Softball All-Star
 Shae Robson, Sr., OF: P-G All-Section 1-3A

BASEBALL

Shawn Logan, Sr., IF: P-G All-Section 1-4A; 1st Team, Valley News Dispatch All-Star
 *Zach Lubick, Sr., RHP: P-G All-Section 1-4A; 1st Team, Valley News Dispatch All-Star
 Jake McCaskey, Jr., SS: P-G All-Section 1-4A; 1st Team, Valley News Dispatch All-Star
 Jake Spimok, Sr., C: P-G All-Section 1-4A; 2nd Team, Valley News Dispatch All-Star

BOYS VOLLEYBALL

Dan Hutchinson, Jr., OH: P-G 1st Team WPIAL Class 2A All-Star
 Tyler Osselborn, Jr., OH: P-G 1st Team WPIAL Class 2A All-Star
 Trevor Sutch, Jr., MB: P-G 2nd Team WPIAL Class 2A All-Star
 Josh Solomon, Jr., S: P-G 3rd Team WPIAL Class 2A All-Star

* Valley News Dispatch Player of the Year

The student-athletes' listed grade levels are based on the 2016-17 season/school year.

Homecoming 2017

Deer Lakes School District invites all members of the communities of East Deer, Frazer and West Deer townships to join us in celebrating the 2017 Homecoming festivities, including the annual Homecoming parade, football game and coronation, all of which will take place on Friday, Sept. 22, 2017. This year's Homecoming theme is "Disney at Deer Lakes."

As in years past, parade participants will assemble at the Deer Lakes Middle School parking lot by no later than 5 p.m. on the day of the event. The parade

QUICK FACTS:

Date: Friday, Sept. 22, 2017
Parade Starts: 6:00 PM
Opening Kick Off: 7:30 PM
Opponent: Valley Vikings

will begin promptly at 6 p.m. and will again follow East Union Road from the Middle School to the Deer Lakes High School. The entire length of the route is approximately 1.2 miles.

After the parade, all participants are

encouraged to cheer on the Lancers varsity football team as they take on the Valley Vikings at 7:30 p.m.

School and community organizations or groups wishing to participate in this year's parade should contact Mrs. Sandra Hazlett, Deer Lakes School District at (724) 265-5340 Ext. 5101 or send her an email at shazlett@dlsd.k12.pa.us by Friday, Sept. 11, 2017. For staging purposes, we will need to know approximately how many students will be participating and if they will be walking or riding in a vehicle on the parade route.

Fall Varsity Sports Schedules

GOLF

Aug. 21 @ Winchester-Thurston (3:30 PM)
 Aug. 23 @ Valley
 Aug. 25 Northgate
 Aug. 28 @ Vincentian Academy
 Aug. 30 Summit Academy
 Sept. 1 @ Eden Christian Academy (3 PM)
 Sept. 6 North Catholic
 Sept. 7 Winchester-Thurston
 Sept. 13 @ Northgate (3:30 PM)
 Sept. 15 Vincentian Academy
 Sept. 18 Section Qualifier
 Sept. 20 @ Summit Academy (3:30 PM)
 Sept. 22 Eden Christian Academy
 Sept. 27 @ North Catholic (3:30 PM)
 Oct. 2 Freeport

** All game times are 3:15 PM unless otherwise noted
 # Home matches are played at Pheasant Ridge Golf Course*

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Sept. 2 Deer Lakes Tournament (8 AM)
 Sept. 5 Carlynton
 Sept. 7 Apollo Ridge
 Sept. 12 @ Burrell
 Sept. 14 East Allegheny
 Sept. 16 @ Plum Tournament (8:30 AM)
 Sept. 18 Hampton
 Sept. 19 @ Valley
 Sept. 21 Derry
 Sept. 26 @ Freeport
 Oct. 3 @ Apollo Ridge
 Oct. 5 Burrell
 Oct. 9 @ Kiski Area
 Oct. 10 @ East Allegheny
 Oct. 12 Valley
 Oct. 17 @ Derry
 Oct. 19 Freeport

** All game times are 6 PM unless otherwise noted*

FOOTBALL

Sept. 1 @ Apollo Ridge
 Sept. 8 Freeport
 Sept. 15 @ Keystone Oaks
 Sept. 22 Valley (7:30 PM)
 Sept. 29 @ Brentwood
 Oct. 6 Seton-La Salle
 Oct. 13 @ Laurel
 Oct. 20 @ Shady Side Academy
 Oct. 27 Burrell

** All games start at 7 PM unless otherwise noted*

GIRLS SOCCER

Sept. 1 Winchester-Thurston (3:15 PM)
 Sept. 6 Springdale
 Sept. 9 @ Highlands (11 AM)
 Sept. 11 Beaver
 Sept. 13 Burrell
 Sept. 15 @ Riverview (3:45 PM)
 Sept. 18 @ East Allegheny (6 PM)
 Sept. 20 Valley
 Sept. 23 Keystone Oaks (10 AM)
 Sept. 25 @ Freeport
 Sept. 27 @ Springdale (7 PM)
 Sept. 30 Penn Hills (TBA)
 Oct. 2 Highlands (7 PM)
 Oct. 7 @ Burrell
 Oct. 9 East Allegheny
 Oct. 11 @ Valley
 Oct. 16 Freeport
 Oct. 18 Carrick (7 PM)

** All game times are 7:30 PM unless otherwise noted*

** Please note that all game times and dates are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information on Lancers athletics, visit our website: www.deerlakes.net.*

BOYS SOCCER

Sept. 5 Mt. Pleasant
 Sept. 7 @ Derry (4 PM)
 Sept. 12 Knoch
 Sept. 14 Burrell
 Sept. 16 @ Shady Side Academy (10 AM)
 Sept. 19 Valley
 Sept. 21 @ Freeport (7 PM)
 Sept. 23 @ Mt. Pleasant (10 AM)
 Sept. 26 Derry
 Sept. 28 Penn Hills
 Oct. 3 @ Burrell (7 PM)
 Oct. 7 Avonworth
 Oct. 5 Shady Side Academy
 Oct. 10 @ Valley (7 PM)
 Oct. 12 Freeport
 Oct. 14 @ North Hills (10 AM)
 Oct. 17 Carrick (7 PM)

** All game times are 7:30 PM unless otherwise noted*

CROSS COUNTRY

Sept. 2 @ Gateway Invitational (8 AM)
 Sept. 6 @ Freeport Invitational
 Sept. 12 Ellis, Indiana, Riverview
 Sept. 16 @ Montour Invitational (8:30 AM)
 Sept. 19 @ Freeport
 Sept. 26 @ Southmoreland
 Oct. 3 @ Greensburg Central Catholic
 Oct. 10 Highlands
 Oct. 14 @ Slippery Rock Invitational (9 AM)
 Oct. 18 @ Freedom Invitational (3 PM)

** All meets start at 3:30 PM unless otherwise noted
 # Home meets are run at Deer Lakes Park*



DEER LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT

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