

YOUR SCHOOLS

2011

Aurora City School District

From the Superintendent

By **RUSS BENNETT**
Superintendent of Schools

During tough economic times, it becomes especially important for individuals and businesses, including school districts, to be as efficient as possible. The Aurora City School District has always taken the responsibility of being a good steward of taxpayer funding with the utmost priority and care. It is because of this that I am extremely pleased that our school district was recently recognized by Ohio Education Matters, a subsidiary of KnowledgeWorks, as a district that is efficient in the spending of non-teaching funds. Our district was one of only 17 school districts in Ohio, and the only one in Portage County, that received this recognition. This is quite an accomplishment and one that shows the leadership of our Board of Education, our Treasurer, William Volosin, and our administrative staff. To read more about this study and the results, please read the cover story in this issue titled "Aurora Schools Recognized for High Efficiency."

As Superintendent, along with the Board of Education, I am constantly striving to oversee that we as a district are utilizing our funds for maximum efficiency. This means that we may have to adopt new and sometimes innovative ways to maintain and improve our efficiency. Conservation is a key aspect of our efficiency and our efforts to continue to find new ways to conserve energy are on-going. As another example, we try to join or spearhead consortiums in

See Superintendent p. 4

AURORA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT RECOGNIZED FOR EFFICIENCY

The Aurora City School District has been noted by Ohio Education Matters, a public policy think tank subsidiary of KnowledgeWorks Foundation, as a district that is exemplary in being efficient at spending non-teaching dollars. They conducted a benchmarking study of Ohio's school districts that identified districts that get more for their money in non-instructional spending. The report stated that, "All of the non-instructional spending to pay for staff, equipment and materials that transport students to and from schools, keep the buildings open and running, make and serve food, and oversee the entire operations...is important to the success of any school or district."

Russ Bennett, Superintendent, said, "I'm proud of a report written by Education Matters that did a study of Ohio school districts and how they spend their non-teaching dollars. I'm also very happy to report that Aurora is one of the few districts in Ohio that was noted for their high efficiency in spending dollars. This exemplary efficiency is the product of our school board and administrators working together to carefully watch district spending and find alternative ways to continue to save money. We have strived to continually provide the Aurora community with an excellent school system at a minimum cost to taxpayers."



Canton City Schools were ranked as the most efficient district among 10 smaller urban schools. In the report it was stated that "nearly \$1.4 billion in state and local dollars could be saved annually statewide if other districts were as efficient at those in Akron/Canton." Aurora was designated as an exemplary district. "We should be proud that we are considered to be very efficient," stated Bennett. "That in itself should speak volumes for our budget control and the leadership of the treasurer, board and administration," he added. Efficiency, as always, will continue to be a top priority for our school system.

NEW MENTORSHIP PROGRAM EASES TRANSITION FOR FRESHMEN

Aurora High School implemented a new mentorship program at the beginning of the last school year. The freshmen class of 2014 was the first to participate in the program. The goal of this Freshmen Mentor Program was to make the transition into high

See Mentorship p. 7

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Superintendent's Message.....1	Sport Report3	Who's Who & What's New6
Aurora Schools' Recognized for Efficiency1	Hats Off To Graduates4	Harmon 8th Grade Inventions7
Freshmen Mentor Program1	Outstanding Greenmen Awards4	Class Acts8
Dr. Alicia Lopez Retires2	Greg Pollock5	
College Board Recognition3	Alumni Pathways.....5	

Dr. Alicia Lopez Retires; Aurora High School Library Named In Her Honor

After 12 years of tireless commitment to the Aurora City Schools, Academic Director Dr. Alicia Lopez retired effective June 30, 2011. “She will be sorely missed,” said Superintendent Russ Bennett. “She has been the consummate professional and I have been honored and proud to have worked so closely with her,” he added. Aurora School Board President Gerald Kohanski said, “I can quite simply say that without Alicia’s efforts and leadership, the Aurora Schools would not be where they are today. Her creativity, professionalism, and awesome dedication

have inspired the rest of us to reach heights of performance never imagined possible. To simply describe her in a few words: brilliant, caring, nurturing, unassuming, incredible work ethic, humble, sweet, committed, and driven.”

Regarding her retirement, Lopez explained, “One of the reasons why leaving Aurora will be so difficult for me is because the Aurora City Schools have become family. Aurora was not just a job to come to every day; but rather, a beautiful place that allowed me to learn, grow and do what is best for kids. The Aurora community gave me the opportunity of a lifetime - to live out

my career journey passionately working collaboratively with administrators, board members, parents, students, support staff and teachers for positive change. Aurora has character and so much history. Aurora has a story to tell

now and in the future. It is definitely a district on the move. I am fortunate to have been a part of its history with all of you.”

During the Aurora Schools’ Commencement Ceremony on Wednesday, June 1, 2011, Kohanski presented Lopez with a plaque acknowledging the renaming of the Aurora High School library as

the Dr. Alicia Lopez Library in her honor. Kohanski said, “I will now present her with this plaque upon the occasion of her retirement that expresses our gratitude for her efforts. But she will have to return it to us, for this plaque will be mounted at the entrance of what will from now and forever be known as the Dr. Alicia Lopez Library at Aurora High School. Bennett was delighted, saying, “What a deserving recognition for such a true professional.”

When asked about this honor, Lopez expressed her appreciation by saying, “words truly cannot capture my deep gratitude. I am extremely



overwhelmed...” She said, “Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the honor and the opportunity to be part of your family during my tenure with the Aurora City School District. Thank you for enriching my life in wondrous ways. The Aurora Family will always remain in my heart.”

The plaque can now be viewed hanging at the entrance to the high school library.

*Superintendent
Continued from p. 1*

order to pool resources and achieve a common goal, thus reducing costs. I am always interested to learn more about ideas from students, parents, staff, peers, and community members regarding ways to increase efficiency.

I am proud that as a district we have worked together with our staff and the Aurora community to attain this level of efficiency and that we have been recognized for this achievement. We will, of course, continue with our efforts and I look forward to another highly successful school year in the fall.



YOUR SCHOOLS

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Your Schools is a publication of the Aurora City School District. Its purpose is to keep residents of Aurora informed of current events and progress in the Aurora City Schools and to foster pride and a continuous communication link between the schools and the community.

Your Schools has been awarded the “Mark of Excellence” and “Best of the Best” Awards by the Ohio Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association for service as a school district newsletter. *Your Schools* is a quarterly publication, mailed to all residents of Aurora. For information, comments, or story ideas, e-mail Editor Stacey DeAnna at: yourschools@aurora-schools.org.



COLLEGE BOARD RECOGNIZES AURORA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Aurora City School District is one of only 25 Ohio school districts that have been recognized by the College Board for expanding Advanced Placement (AP) exam access while maintaining or improving the rate students earn college credit for passing the exams. The Ohio Department of Education announced the listing of schools districts and Aurora was not only one of 25 in the state, but one of only 388 school districts nationally to appear on the AP Achievement List for 2011!

Inclusion on the list was based on several criteria, including an examination of three years (2008-2010) of AP data. "Ensuring that an increased number of students succeed in Advanced Placement courses is absolutely important to preparing Ohio students for success in college," said former State Superintendent Deborah Delisle.

"An important element of Ohio's Race to the Top strategy is to expand Advanced Placement opportunities for students across the state, so it's especially impressive that these 25 districts have been recognized. They will serve as excellent guideposts for other districts to emulate," Delisle added.

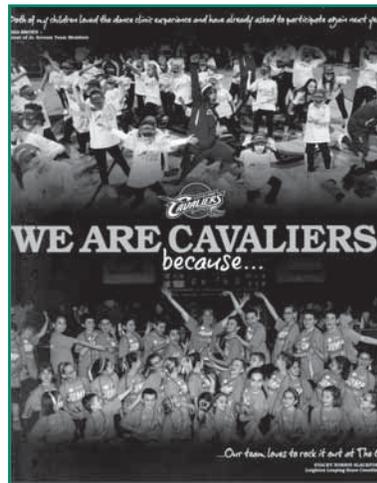
SPORT REPORT

Congratulations to our **Aurora High School wrestlers** who placed in the state competition! **Kyle Brezovic** earned 3rd place, **Ryan Cash** took 4th place and **Danny McNamara** received 8th place. Congratulations to coach **Dick Bliss** and the entire wrestling team for a great season.

Jessica Baker and **Jeff Smith** both represented Aurora Schools in the **State Track Meet** in June. Jessica came back with a 4th place finish with a high jump that tied her season best, personal best and school record height of 5'8"! Jeff participated in the State meet for the first time and returned with a 9th place finish in the boys 800 meter run. What great representation we had!

The **girls' basketball** team and their coach **Erika Schultz** had an amazing season ranked at #5 in the Associated Press (AP) poll and finished with the most wins in Aurora School girls' basketball history at 15!

Stacey Slackford and her **Leighton Leaping Stars** jump rope team were highlighted on a Cleveland Cavaliers flyer!



Aurora Wrestler Ryan Cash Signs National Letter of Intent with Princeton University

Front: (left to right) Hayley Cash, Jackie Cash, Ryan Cash, Coach Dick Bliss
Back: Aurora 2010-2011 Wrestling Team and Coaches

The **boys' tennis team** had an outstanding season and won the Chagrin Valley Conference (C.V.C.) Championship title. The team was comprised of **Jannick VonRoden, Michael Kuryshev, Scott Adsit, David Will, Justin Bunka, Misha Shatkhin, Ben Sender** and their coach **Dania Banc**.



Aurora two-time State place wrestling winner **Ryan Cash** signed a National Letter of Intent with Princeton University. His 136-38 career record places him in a tie for 4th place on the career wins list here!

Jaclyn Spirtos coached her Aurora **softball team** to a C.V.C. Championship title win, capping a fantastic season. This is their second consecutive title.



HATS OFF TO THE CLASS OF 2011!

We congratulate our Aurora High School 2011 graduates! There were a total of 243 students that graduated on Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at Parkside Church. The class colors were Green and Gold and the class flower was a white rose. We are proud of their accomplishments and wish them good luck in all of their future endeavors!



Emilie Lothet
Valedictorian
Case Western Reserve
University



John Michael Sudsina
Salutatorian
University of Southern California



Stephen Wong
John Hopkins
University



Miranda Amey
University of Evansville



Reshma Patel
Indiana University



Anne Dankelson
University of Missouri



Brian Katona
Kent State University



Brianna Lajeunesse
John Carroll University



Walter "Chad" Blackham
Ohio State University



Taylor Atwood
University of Cincinnati

CLASS MOTTO:

“ Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail. ”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

FIRST ANNUAL OUTSTANDING GREENMEN AWARDS CEREMONY

The First Annual Outstanding Greenmen Awards Banquet took place on March 24, 2011 at the Barrington Country Club. This awards ceremony honored the educators that were selected by twelve high achieving Aurora High School students as having the greatest impact on their success.

Congratulations to the following teachers who were selected and honored with the students at the ceremony:

INSTRUCTOR:

Mark Abramovich
Laura Bell-Peters
Mark Dingman
Sarah Farnsworth
Melissa Lindley
Mary Beth Manfroni
David Munson
MaryPat Pavicic
Josh Rakow
Erika Schultz
Ryan Wason
Kevin Wilcox

STUDENT NOMINATOR:

Jenna Lovasz
Whitney Ohman
Michael Dankelson
Stephen Wong
Annie Dankelson
Brian Katona
Brianna Lajeunesse
Miranda Amey
Kevin Rahill
Heather Schroeder
John Michael Sudsina
Reshma Patel



1st row (on knee): Stephen Wong, Kevin Rahill, Brian Katona
2nd Row: Melissa Lindley, Anne Dankelson, Laura Bell-Peters, Whitney Ohman, Sarah Farnsworth, Heather Schroeder, Mary Pat Pavicic, Miranda Amey, Reshma Patel, Brianna Lajeunesse, Jenna Lovasz
3rd row: Kevin Wilcox, Mike Dankelson, Mark Dingman, Josh Rakow, Mary Beth Manfroni, Erika Schultz, Ryan Wason, John Michael Sudsina, Dave Munson, Mark Abramovich

Greg Pollock Means Business These Days

Greg Pollock really does mean business. Not to worry, Greg Pollock, the popular former principal at Leighton Elementary School, is still a familiar face at Aurora Schools. He just has a lot more business and transportation on his mind. Last summer, he accepted the position of Director of Business Operations and Transportation for the Aurora City School District.

As the first principal of Leighton Elementary School, trusted with the job of opening and overseeing the new school, Pollock excelled. The school won numerous awards, including the Buckeye's Best Award for exemplary commitment to the health and wellness of students and staff, while students continued to excel in testing scores. He stated he was "proudest of his students" and Leighton School "for being named as a Hall of Fame School" by the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators in 2007.

He now runs the district's business operations and transportation, which includes managing the bus drivers, custodial staff, cafeteria crew and the maintenance and grounds crew. Before starting his new position he said, "I am looking forward to working with all those people who really make a difference in the schools and don't always get recognized so to speak." In all, he is overseeing a staff of almost 100 people. He believes district bus mechanic Dave Renzel, who maintains about 38 buses, "is probably the most important person in the district, at least in my eyes, because if these buses aren't safe and ready to go, students can't come to school. Dave is a critical component to the success of the schools."

Pollock's background includes undergraduate degrees from Westminster College in Pennsylvania and Kent State University. He began his career in the Brecksville-Broadview Heights Schools District. He then went on to earn an Elementary and Secondary



Principals License and a master's degree in Leadership Education (K-12). Pollock also has his Superintendent License and Education Specialist Degree. Prior to his new position, he added a Business Manager License to the list. He has been in the education field now for the past 24 years.

He became interested in becoming

a business affairs manager because he "enjoys working with the people who make our schools safe and clean for students. I like the energy conservation side of things, saving the tax payers money," he added.

Pollock's goal in this position is to "get a good handle on some maintenance schedules... to streamline by using technology to its maximum in order to get a better handle financially on where to allocate funds, while

being fiscally responsible during that process."

So far he has enjoyed "working with all of the people on the front lines," and "developing trusting relationships with them." We are glad to have Pollock making the Aurora Schools' business his business.



AlumniPathways

Deanna Wolford, Aurora High School 2008 Salutatorian, was one of seven juniors initiated into the academic honor society Phi Beta Kappa at The University of the South in Sewanee, TN. She is majoring in Environmental Studies-Natural Resources and French Literature. Phi Beta Kappa was founded in 1776 at the College of William and Mary and is perhaps the most prized honor a college student can receive. Congratulations!

An **Aurora High School Multi-Class Reunion** for the **classes of 1966-1972** will take place over Labor Day weekend on Sunday, September 4, 2011. It will be held at The Bertram Inn in Aurora from 5:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m. For complete details, please go to the website created for this occasion by **Bill Riley** at www.aurora2009.myevent.com.

Congratulations to **Becky Fussner** (Class of 2009) who has been accepted into the 104th Class of the Bucket & Dipper Junior Class Honorary for the 2011-12 school year as an exceptional member of the Ohio State University. This second oldest organization at The Ohio State University is made up of just 30 outstanding juniors with members described as "distinguished first and foremost in their dedication to the ideals of scholarship, leadership, and service within the Ohio State and Columbus communities."

Aurora High School 2008 graduate **Alyssa Hale**, Junior at Otterbein University, was a key player at the soccer Division III National Semi-Final. Third ranked Otterbein lost to Hardin-Simmons University 4-2 in penalty kicks. With Hale's help, the Otterbein Cardinals ended their season unbeaten at 20-0-4, the best ever in program history.

Who's Who & What's New

Aurora High School Principal **PAT CICCANTELLI** will replace retired **DR. ALICIA LOPEZ** as the new Academic Director.

BRIAN BROOKHART will take over as **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL** at Aurora High School, replacing **MIKE ROBERTO** who will become the new high school **PRINCIPAL**.

Congratulations to the **AURORA HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMEN CLASS** for winning the "**CLASS OF THE YEAR**" award. They were treated to a picnic that took place on Friday, May 27, 2011.

Fifth grade student **NATALIE BOLLHEIMER** won first place in Portage County in the **2011 CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST** sponsored by the Portage Soil and Water Conservation District and the Portage County Garden Clubs.



The winners of the **AURORA ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION SOLO COMPETITION** were **HEATHER GOSNELL** - 1st Place, **STEPHEN RILEY** - 2nd Place, **ZACH STAHL** and **REID STEPHAN** - 3rd Place in Concert Orchestra. In Philharmonic Orchestra **JONATHAN MANZETTI** and **CJ SUCHOVSKY** - 1st Place, **LAUREN BOWEN** - 3rd Place.

Congratulations and thank you to **JIM MEYERS** and **CHAR** and **DICK CIAMMAICHELLA** for being recognized as "**FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL**" by the **AURORA SCHOOLS FOUNDATION** at their annual dinner.

Congratulations **LAQUITA TIMBERLAKE**, Harmon Middle School Language Arts Teacher, for winning the **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING SERVICE AWARD**. Her nominator, **RENEE CAMINATI**, stated, "I have never known a teacher more dedicated to students.... the extra hours she spends in the building are legendary..." Thank you for being such a great leader both in and out of the classroom!

Craddock School Head Custodian **JOE MCCLINTOCK**, won the **EXCELLENCE IN CLASSIFIED SERVICE AWARD**. **KIM ARMBRECHT** and **JODI ROSCOE** nominated him saying, "Joe displays, on a regular and continuing basis, exemplary service to Craddock School." His dedicated service and

extra efforts are greatly appreciated throughout the school district!



Our **QUIZ BOWL TEAM**, comprised of high school students **STEPHEN WONG**, **JASON RENLUND** and **KATIE CLARK** (alternates are **BRIAN KATONA**, **IAN KROPP** and **KELSEY STUMMER**) competed on **NEWSCHANNEL 5'S ACADEMIC CHALLENGE** and earned one of the highest scores ever! This allowed the team to move on and compete in the final competition round which was aired on June 25, 2011. They finished in third place and won a \$2,000 grant. Congratulations to the team and their coach, **ANNIE WALKER**, too.

Congratulations to all of the **AURORA EXCEL TECC PROGRAM 2010-2011** award winners: **KENNETH BRADY**, **CHERISH CRONIN**, **MASON DALGHREN**, **ALAN JASINSKI**, **SAMANTHA MCCUNE**, **KASEY MCGINNIS**, **MIKE PRICE**, **JUSTIN RETTBERG**, **JORDAN THORN** and **KEISHA TURNER**.

The Aurora School District wishes the best of luck to our retirees **DENNIS ALEXANDER**, **DIANE BUSH**, **PEGGY KATSILOMETES**, **SONJA KINNAN**, **ALICIA LOPEZ**, and **PATTY STEDMAN**.

Congratulations to Craddock School's "**THE ANNOYING ORANGES**" **DESTINATION IMAGINATION TEAM** members, **ILANA CHSTNEY**, **SEAN FRITINGER**, **PAIGE HALEY**, **MATTHEW LUCAL**, **JJ MCGEE** and **JUNA SAITO**. They used their creativity to produce an original play called "Big Bug's Bad Day."

"**THE BIG BAD WOLVES**," **LEIGH GOFF**, **COURTNEY KOHANSKI** and **KATIE MCARTHUR**, climbed 804 stairs to reach the top of the Terminal Tower in downtown Cleveland! "They huffed and they puffed" their way to the top while participating in the American Lung Association's "Fight for Air" climb.

The **AURORA HIGH SCHOOL**

ROBOTICS TEAM had their first year of competition end at the **SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND INNOVATION**, where they placed 6th nationally in the **2011 ION NAVIGATION CHALLENGE**. While competing at the Smithsonian, they also presented their robotics solutions to the general public in attendance that day. **ROTEK INDUSTRIES**, a generous sponsor of the AHS Robotics Team, invited the team to present their robotic design and engineering approach to the Rotek administrative and engineering team. The team was then given a tour to view large-scale and unique robotics and engineering solutions in action.

Congratulations to the students who won honors at the **2011 OHIO GOVERNOR'S YOUTH ART EXHIBITION**. They are **TAYLOR ATWOOD** (on display at the Governor's Office), **SARAH CARBONE**, **SAMANTHA HIRSCH**, **ALAN JASINSKI**, **CAMERON LADA** (on display at the Governor's Office), **CANDACE MURAWSKI**, and **KAYLEE ROSE**. Aurora High School had the third highest number of pieces selected to be in the 2011 Ohio Governor's Youth Art Exhibition out of all of the schools competing in the State of Ohio.

The following Aurora High School students won 1st Place honors at the **2011 PORTAGE COUNTY ART SHOW**: **EMILY BEZILLA (2)**, **OLIVIA COADY**, and **SAMANTHA HIRSCH**.

Congratulations to Aurora High School student **ALFRED BECKSTROM** who won first prize in the **2011 NORTHEAST OHIO SECTION OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY (NEOACS) YOUNG SCIENTIST AWARD**. He was awarded \$500 and the top three recipients received embossed copies of the fourteenth edition of the Merck Index. To qualify students were required to obtain a science teacher recommendation and compose an essay on what they thought was the most significant discovery in the field of Chemistry in their lifetime. Beckstrom (recommended by April Nenadal) cited the advancements made in stent therapy for patients with coronary artery disease as his choice for the most significant discovery in his lifetime.



HARMON 8TH GRADE STUDENTS CREATE ONE-OF-A KIND INVENTIONS

Harmon Middle School Technology Instructor Shawn Reilly had an idea. Challenge his students in 8th grade (2009-10) to come up with something that would solve a “real” problem. What they came up with was quite remarkable!



Each of the students signed their name on the bottom edge after it was finished. They were able to present the final device to Peyton and her family.

Reilly had attended a conference, entitled “Problem Based Learning,” several years ago. When he heard about another Aurora teacher who had a niece that suffers from Rett Syndrome, he saw the opportunity to “experiment with the students” to help solve a “real” problem based on the concepts that he had learned. Rett Syndrome is a developmental disorder that causes problems in brain function. For now 5 year-old Peyton, one of the functions most notably affected was her ability to remain upright. She had spent her first four years either lying down or in a stroller. The family was unable to afford the device that would help her to stand.

“I specifically waited for the 8th graders,” he said, “because they already had the skills needed from the 6th grade computer, 7th grade technology and 8th grade wood-working rotations.” He posed the problem to his class. A 4 year-old little girl, who suffers from Rett Syndrome, needs an apparatus that would help her to strengthen her legs. It was the ideal project,” said Reilly.

“The main goal,” he told them was to find out “how we can make a “stander” in such a way that it is sturdy/safe, cost effective, lightweight, adjustable and collapsible.”

Next, came a lot of research and actual construction of the “stander.” Reilly built it to be almost completely collapsible.

The students were so proud of their one-of-a-kind mobility invention,” Reilly explained, “I don’t think it really registered with the students until they gave it to her.” For the first time, with the ingenuity and hard work from the students, Peyton was able to stand upright! With the students looking on, her happiness was evident in her wide eyes and beaming smile! Peyton’s family was thrilled with the invention and personally thanked each of the students!

This past school year, Reilly’s 8th grade class worked on a project to help one of Lauren Barker’s special needs preschoolers, Shane. His 8th grade technology students used the problem based learning concepts to create several innovative pieces of equipment and introduced them to the preschool class in April to resounding success! The preschool class took to the equipment immediately.

“This is what I want my program to be, a design process with all of the things that are involved in the making of something,” Reilly clarified, while creating something “real.” Staff members have already contacted him regarding future project ideas. “We will happily accept donations of any kind, like wood, plastics, bubble wrap, etc.” “I like to recycle items,” Reilly explained, “and these projects can get expensive.”

What will Reilly’s future problem solving students come up with next?

Mentorship – Continued from p. 1

school easier for incoming freshmen students. Aurora High School Assistant Principal Mike Roberto was instrumental in developing and running the program during this introductory session.

The program partnered incoming freshmen students with upperclassmen at a ratio of approximately 25 freshmen to each upperclassman. According to Roberto, the purpose of this new program was “to fulfill the concern that was expressed by freshmen students, teachers and parents that there was a need to ease the transition from going from Harmon to the high school. And so to help meet that need we thought a program like this would be beneficial.”

“After talking with and visiting different schools about the orientation programs they had in place, we took a little bit from here and a little bit from there and came up with our own program. Our student orientation groups met with the 67 upperclassmen mentors about 10 times during the first semester of the freshman’s year,” Roberto explained. Topics of discussion included study strategies, managing time, dealing with stress, balancing their social life with academic obligations, preparing for exams, etc.

Students who showed leadership, character and the ability to work with others were asked to be mentors. Recent graduate Anne Dankelson said that when she was asked to participate as a mentor, “I thought it would be a really good opportunity to give back from my experiences in high school.”

As the program came to a close, Roberto said, “We had a lot of positive comments about the program so we know we are headed in the right direction. It’s no surprise we’re going to tweak it and make adjustments. We are looking to break down the groups a little bit more,” he explained, “maybe five to six mentors in a group of 25.” Roberto added, “The program helped the culture of the building. It was definitely good for the freshmen to have upper classmen to look up to. Seeing familiar faces in the hallway helped them to not be intimidated.” This program will begin again in the fall and, as it evolves, will continue to be an invaluable resource to help freshmen during their pivotal freshman year.

CLASS ACTS

The **Aurora Schools Foundation** is sponsoring a brick campaign (**LTACP Brick Campaign**) for a new tribute patio at Veterans Stadium named after long time school volunteer **Linda Tacl Allenspach**. "She was the most perfect volunteer any community or school district could want," said Aurora Schools Foundation **Vice President** and **Campaign Chairperson Flip Eavenson**. Please log onto the Aurora Schools Foundation website at auroraschoolsfoundation.org for more information and a brick donation order form. All proceeds benefit Aurora City Schools' student programs.

Harmon Middle School students found a way to reach out to fellow 8th grade student, **Ikumi Nakahata**, who was returning to earthquake stricken Japan. They started a grade level penny wars competition. The \$1,105.00 funds that were raised were donated to the **American Red Cross** for the Japanese earthquake relief effort in the Nakahata family's name.

Miller students raised \$2,186.00 for the **American Heart Association** during their "Jump Rope for Heart" fundraising campaign.

The **Sports World Company** and **Aurora community members** sponsored an assembly for students at **Harmon Middle School**. They listened to former NFL lineman **Rich Garza**. He conveyed his message that choices are the key and repeated, "you're not born a winner; you're not born a loser; you're born a chooser." He candidly talked with students about bullying, peer pressure, choosing the correct friends and always being open and honest with parents. He emphasized the importance of academics, goal setting and a good work ethic.

Kim Exton and her **students** raised \$160 for the **Domestic Violence Center** by holding a fashion show in April.

Harmon Middle School sixth grade language arts teacher **Tricia Perry** won the weekly "**Terrific Teacher Tribute**" sponsored by **News Channel 5**. She was featured in a story that can be seen by following the link: http://www.newsnet5.com/dpp/news/education/terrific_teacher/terrific-teacher-harmon-middle-schools-mrs-tricia-perry

The **Alliance for Young Artists & Writers** announced the **2011 National Scholastic Art & Writing Award** winners and our district is included. A district must be ranked in the **top 1% of the schools in**

the country to earn this distinction!

Band Director Lindsay Draime and the **Impact Percussion Ensemble** won their very first competition in Michigan.

The **Aurora Quiz Bowl Junior Varsity Team** showed remarkable sportsmanship during the **Portage County Quiz Bowl Tournament** when, after outscoring all other teams and remaining undefeated all day, they lost a match to Field High School. Our Aurora team technically had the most total wins, but they felt that because the Field team had been undefeated and beat us, that it was only right to secede the Junior Varsity win title to them. What a great example!

Several students on **Bus 11** were treated to a fossil learning experience arranged by their **Aurora bus driver Skip Schweitzer**. His daughter, **Dr. Carrie Schweitzer**, a professor at Kent State University, taught students about fossils, erosion, minerals, etc. Schweitzer explained that he organized the trip because so much of his job revolves around discipline that he likes to talk to the well-behaved students, as well. From talking to these students he learned of their interest in fossils and so began the "**Aurora Bus 11 Fossil Club**."

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