

ISSUE 10

CLAIRE WILLIAMS O'NEIL FOUNDATION





THE CLAIRE WILLIAMS O'NEIL FOUNDATION

*Dedicated to expanding educational opportunities
for Susquehanna area youth.*



FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER ISSUE 10

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Our Annual Newsletter

This past year has been one of steady progress for the Foundation. A new leadership team has arrived at Susquehanna Community School District, and they have encouraged us in our work to support the school.

CWOF scholarships were awarded to four graduating seniors at SCHS, all of whom show exceptional promise. They are JT Burke (Marywood University), Lilliana Matis (Rochester Institute of Technology), Jackson Maby (Oneonta State University), and Paytyn Sellitto (Syracuse University).

The DT Midstream scholarship was awarded to Cooper Payne, who will attend the Pennsylvania College of Technology in Williamsport, PA.

Our Foundation supported two field trips during the year. In September 2023, DT Midstream hosted SCHS students to learn about local careers in technology, project management, and business. In November 2023, a group of students visited Johnson College to explore its facilities and learn of the various academic programs available.

In addition, we facilitated a new program in which Cornell University conducted a college application workshop at SCHS to give college bound juniors a solid understanding of the admissions process and how they should prepare for it.

We continue to provide full support for the high school mentorship program, Project Jump Start, which connects promising SCHS students from the tenth grade onwards with mentors, many of whom are from our group of past scholarship winners. Currently, we have nine mentor-mentee pairings in operation. The Foundation would like to express our appreciation to the mentors who are committing considerable time and energy to this work.

Of crucial importance to the success of Project Jump Start is the leadership of coordinator Paula Stone with the assistance of Emily Staros, both of whom are former CWOF scholars.

The governance of the CWOF is provided by our board members, all of whom serve without compensation. Our work is augmented by our board associates – individuals who have stepped forward to work with the SCHS and Foundation in various capacities. In April of 2024, our Foundation added two new board associates to our team: Paula Stone and Emily Staros. They join Dr. Melissa Kukowski. These three individuals are devoting their talents to help SCHS students, making the work of the Foundation more successful and enriching the Susquehanna community.

We are fortunate to have three strong partners. DT Midstream provides annual scholarships for SCHS graduates seeking advanced education in technology and business-related fields and assisting the school in other areas. The Honesdale National Bank continues to provide first-rate financial literacy courses for our students. The Susquehanna County Arts, Education, and Healthy Community Fund supports individual projects designated by the school. We are grateful to these partners for their ongoing support of the school and the community.

This past year has seen significant changes in the leadership of the Susquehanna Community School District. John Rushefski is the new district superintendent, Brent Soden moved from high school principal to become principal of the elementary school, Richard Emmons became high school principal, and Pete Supko continues as curriculum and assessment coordinator. Our Foundation looks forward to cooperating with the new leadership team and working with them for the success of the school.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of our Foundation board, partners, and donors who support us and the faculty and administration of the Susquehanna Community School District who are nurturing and inspiring our area's youth.

Roger O'Neil
CWF President

2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

JT Burke

Winner of the 2024 Claire Williams O'Neil Scholarship

JT will attend Marywood University and major in biology/pre-physician assistant studies. Highlights of JT's high school career include:

- Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizen of the Year Award
- Class Secretary and National Honor Society
- Scholastic Scrimmage/Academic Challenge Team, Yearbook Committee, and Interact Club
- Cross Country, Track & Field, and Basketball
- Volunteer Activities: SCHS Food Pantry, Little League, Basketball Club, Salvation Army, Saber Buddies

"JT is an exceptional student athlete with a strong sense of self-discipline. His approach to both academics and sports includes careful, accurate, and thorough work. He demonstrates a high level of maturity through his strong work ethic."

– Bridget Milos, Susquehanna Community High School Counselor



Jackson Maby

Winner of the 2024 Claire Williams O'Neil Scholarship

Jackson will attend the State University of New York at Oneonta to pursue a degree in adolescence education in mathematics. Highlights of Jackson's high school career include:

- Valedictorian Class of 2024, WVIA Scholar of the Year, and LIAA Scholar Athlete of the Year
- Class President, National Honor Society, Yearbook Editor & Chief, Scholastic Scrimmage/Academic Challenge Team Captain, Interact Club
- Varsity Wrestling Captain, District Wrestling Champion, and Varsity Baseball
- Volunteer Activities: Blue Ridge Youth Wrestling, Saber Buddies, SCHS Food Pantry, Susquehanna Field Day

"Jackson is a mature and disciplined scholar athlete. He displays strong leadership skills in the classroom and on the wrestling mat. Jackson has a natural talent when it comes to math and science, and he enjoys educating and helping others." – Bridget Milos, Susquehanna Community High School Counselor



Lilliana Matis

Winner of the 2024 Claire Williams O’Neil Scholarship

Liliana will attend Rochester Institute of Technology to major in medical illustration. Highlights of Liliana’s high school career include:

- Scholastic ART & Writing Gold Key Award, Scranton Times Tribune Artist of the Month in 2022 & 2023, and 2023 SCHS Student of the Year Rotary Club Award
- National Honor Society, Student Council Treasurer, Scholastic Scrimmage/Academic Challenge Team, and Mini Medical School
- Drama Club and Assistant Dance Instructor at Susquehanna Dance Academy
- Volunteer Activities: Children’s Food Pantry, American Legion Fish Fry, Susquehanna Fire Department, Saber Buddies



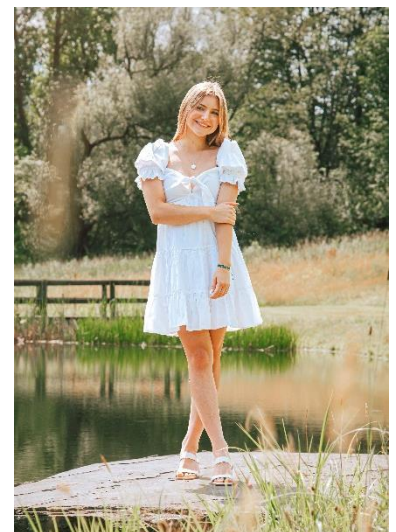
"Liliana is a stellar student who goes above and beyond anything that is asked of her. She has a unique talent and passion for the arts. Her attention to detail and creativity are simply extraordinary." – Bridget Milos, Susquehanna Community High School Counselor

Paytyn Sellitto

Winner of the 2024 Claire Williams O’Neil Scholarship

Payton will attend Syracuse University to study biology with the goal of becoming a geneticist. Highlights of Paytyn’s high school career include:

- National Honor Society, HOBY Leadership Recipient, Yearbook Staff Editor, and Academic Athletic Award
- Captain of Cross Country, Basketball, and Softball Teams
- Volunteer Activities: Saber Buddies, Parent Involvement Committee, American Legion, Children’s Produce



"I am thankful for the opportunities the O’Neil foundation has provided for me and my peers. Specifically, the mentor program was extremely helpful in choosing my higher education major. My mentor, Emily Staros, will become a lifelong friend and advisor." – Paytyn Sellitto

"Paytyn has a fun, charismatic, and outgoing personality. She is always up for a challenge academically, and her drive for success is clear. Her perseverance is nothing short of amazing." – Bridget Milos, Susquehanna Community High School Counselor

Cooper Payne

Winner of the 2024 DT Midstream Technology Scholarship

Cooper will attend the Pennsylvania College of Technology and major in heating, ventilation and air conditioning. Highlights of Cooper's high school career include:

- Senior Homecoming King & Junior Prom King
- Yearbook Committee
- Football, Basketball (Co-Captain), and Track & Field

“Cooper has a fierce determination to make the best out of any situation. He has a personality that people come to love and the ability to make people smile or laugh the minute they meet him. I am amazed by his accomplishments and achievements.” – Bridget Milos, Susquehanna Community High School Counselor



2024 COLLEGE GRADUATE'S

Taylor Huyck

Elizabethtown College '24 | Bachelor of Science in Biology

Taylor graduated from Elizabethtown College with a Bachelor of Science in biology and a minor in human services. At Elizabethtown, she was a member of Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society, Elizabethtown College Honors Program, and Emergent Scholars. In addition, she was the captain of the women's basketball team.

During her senior year, she submitted a research project on healthcare access for the homeless.

Taylor plans to continue in the physician assistant program at Elizabethtown College with the goal of receiving a master's degree in physician assistant studies.

“In high school, I thought that I wanted to enter the medical field without being sure what exact route I wanted to take in college. I did job shadowing in the medical field, and this experience helped me decide to enter the physician assistant program. My advice to students at SCHS is to find opportunities to explore careers and take these opportunities seriously. Then, I would interact with as many professionals as you can, discuss their careers, and determine if you could see yourself in their kind of position.” – Taylor Huyck



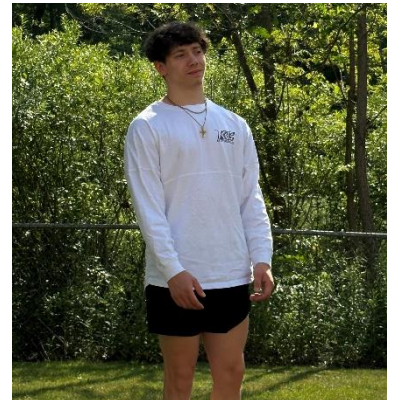
Jason Smith

Keystone College '24 | Associate of Science in Business Administration

Jason graduated from Keystone College with an associate's degree in business administration and was awarded high honors with an overall GPA of 3.7. Jason's research project focused on corporate leadership, investigating the roles of leaders and learning various leadership styles.

Jason's passions are to own a gym complex and to initiate an e-commerce business called "Fortitude Fitness."

"When you do something, make it worthwhile. Time is of the essence; don't sit back and wait for your future to just fall into place. Some people just sit and think while the successful ones get on and move forward." – Jason Smith



CURRENT SCHOLARS

Kimberly Swartz

University of Pittsburgh | Bachelor of Science in Biology

Kimberly is a senior at the University of Pittsburgh where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in biology. Kimberly is on the board of Students for Sensible Drug Policy, a member of Pittsburgh Attacks Cancer Together, and a member of the German Club. This past year, Kimberly participated in an antibiotics research lab with a focus on antibiotic resistance in farm animals and amphibians. She learned and applied lab techniques to identify chemical structures that contribute to antibiotic resistance.

Kimberly is currently a pharmacy technician at UPMC Presbyterian Hospital. Upon graduation, Kimberly plans to attend graduate school to obtain her MBA.

"When looking into colleges and careers make sure you can see yourself enjoying that place or that career." – Kimberly Swartz



Meghan Kiernan

Lehigh University | Integrated Bachelor of Science in Engineering, Arts, and Sciences

Meghan is a junior at Lehigh University seeking an integrated degree in engineering, arts, and sciences with concentrations in mechanical engineering and product design. She is on the dean's list and a member of club basketball team and STEM club.

Meghan's research focuses on the restoration and improvement of urban infrastructure with an emphasis on sustainability. During winter break, she was fortunate to participate in a "Maker Bootcamp" hosted by AccelerateX to learn new prototyping and fabrication techniques.



During the summer months, Meghan worked as a mechanical engineering intern with the optics team at Gentex Corporation in Carbondale, PA.

"Take advantage of all the opportunities you can! If you are passionate about something, there will be a way to make it possible. All you have to do is ask around, and someone will be able to help you achieve what you want. You will meet all types of new people at college, and as important as grades are, be sure to make time to nurture your friendships! Your professors are also important, so don't be afraid to go to their office hours and talk to them outside of class! In high school, take dual enrollment classes and get the credit for them. They will save you a lot of time (and money)." – Meghan Kiernan

Joseph Staria

Rochester Institute of Technology | Bachelor of Science in Game Design & Development

Joseph is a junior at the Rochester Institute of Technology studying computer game design and development.

Joseph is an RIT Student Ambassador for the School of Interactive Games and Media and a teaching assistant. He has achieved the dean's list in his first two years of college. He is working as a co-op for a game project let and produced by RIT.

"College is great, providing structure to learning while giving you freedom to do what you need. At RIT, I can branch out into interests such as sound design, coding, art, level design, and spatial algorithm problem solving. If I had the chance to go back to high school, I would have taken more dual enrollment credits. I can graduate a semester early as of right now, but if I took more, it could've been a year earlier." – Joseph Staria



Joshua Marco

University of Pittsburgh | Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

Joshua is a junior at the University of Pittsburgh studying mechanical engineering. Joshua is a member of the Pitt Ski and Snowboarding Club and currently works as an applications and development engineering intern on a project to develop a machine that shapes infrared glass in order to reduce material waste.

“Since leaving high school I have learned to balance accomplishments and setbacks. Just because something did not play out exactly how you planned, it does not mean you are a failure. Every day, you should be pushing yourself to be the best version of you possible.” – Joshua Marco



Juliann Downton

University of South Florida | Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences

Juliann is a sophomore at the University of South Florida pursuing a degree in biomedical sciences as part of the 7-Year BS/MD Program. During her first year, she achieved the dean’s list. Juliann participated in a service-learning trip to Ghana during the spring semester. During this trip, she joined a team of other honors students to create educational materials for young men and women to learn about sexual, reproductive, and menstrual health. She also spent time teaching at an orphanage in Bawjiase.

“It is vital to dedicate most of your time to studying, but it is also important to socialize and have fun! To me, college is all about being willing to grab new experiences. In order to do this, it is absolutely essential that you manage your time well. Time management skills can truly make or break your college experience. I am so glad that I have had the opportunity to explore different parts of our world and experience new places, cultures, and ideas.” – Juliann Downton



Reilly Potter

Reilly Potter | Bachelor of Science in Electrical & Computer Engineering

Reilly is a sophomore at Cornell University majoring in electrical and computer engineering with a minor in robotics. He is a member of the Big Red Marching Band and the Cornell University drumline that won first place in the New York State Percussion Circuit.

Much of Reilly’s freshman year was spent adjusting to the new environment and workload that Cornell required of him, but he was able to meet people who helped him find his place and to overcome the challenges he faced. In the fall, Reilly plans to join a project team. One example of a project team program is the Cornell Mars Rover project where a team is designing a rover that could operate on Mars. This past summer, Reilly worked as a computer engineering intern at Universal Instruments Corporation.



“The PLTW classes I took in high school along with the physics and computer science courses were essential in helping me to succeed academically in college. The adjustment from SCHS to Cornell was a big one, but the support of the O’Neil Foundation, my community, and Cornell mentors gave me the help I needed. Adjusting my study habits was extremely important as tests are more challenging in college. Changing what I expected of myself was important. It took time, but I had many resources to help me adjust to Cornell’s environment.” – Reilly Potter

PAST SCHOLARS

Kaylee Landry

2019 Claire Williams O’Neil Scholar | Seton Hall University ‘23 | Bachelor of Science in Biology

Following my graduation from Seton Hall, I enrolled in Gwynedd Mercy University's Accelerated BSN Program as the next step to a career as a registered nurse. Right now, my interest is pediatric nursing, but I'm open to anything as I gain more knowledge and clinical exposure! I've been employed with Target since shortly after I graduated high school. In the last four years, I've been able to work at three different locations with hours ranging from on-demand to full-time. This has allowed me to continue working, graduate with my BS in biology, move to a new city, explore my career options, and ultimately pursue a career in nursing.

Gwynedd Mercy’s program is tailored for students who have an existing bachelor’s degree and are looking to pursue a career in professional nursing. Upon graduation in September 2025, I will receive my Bachelor of Science in Nursing and will be an RN.



My time at Seton Hall gave me so much more than a high-quality education. I was exposed to more of the world than I ever expected. Living in North Jersey and near New York City gave me valuable life experience. I use my biology background every day in nursing school, and I firmly believe that I will be a better nurse because I have taken the time to consider my options and decide what professional life I truly want.

“So many people will tell you how to best learn/study, to be adaptable and open-minded, make friends, join extracurriculars, and to be prepared for challenges. This is all true and useful. My advice is to grow through what you go through. Be self-aware, reflective, and maintain your integrity. Persevere through failure. There will be many times when you will feel you're on the wrong track or you're not meant to be where you are. Life has a funny way of opening and closing doors at exactly the right time. Trust your gut and follow your instincts. There's a place out there in the world for everyone.” – Kaylee Landry

Paula Stone

2005 Claire Williams O’Neil Scholar | University of Notre Dame ‘08 | Bachelor of Science in Finance & Accounting

“Exactly twenty years ago, I was entering the summer before my last year of high school. I felt that I had all the time in the world to sort out who I wanted to be and where I wanted to go, and I thought I didn’t really want to go anywhere. I’ve always found Susquehanna to be quaint and charming and I never wanted home to be anywhere else. I’m now writing this from my home in Susquehanna, occasionally gazing out the window at Broad Ave. I’m

reminded of Bilbo Baggins, and like Bilbo, I am home after a very unexpected journey possessing riches I didn't have at the start.

My senior year was typical. I applied to universities and sat for the SATs. By January, with all applications in, the waiting game started. I didn't have a dream school but was keen on going to Susquehanna University. I had visited close friends there and enjoyed the coziness of campus – plus it was Susquehanna University – at least I would be in Susquehanna if only by name. I also applied to Notre Dame but had put the idea of attending Notre Dame in a locked box in a back corner of my mind. I was sure I wouldn't get in and even if I did, I couldn't imagine life hundreds of miles away in Indiana.

At some point in the winter, I attended an information session for the CWOFF Scholarship where they stressed that the recipient would need to reach outside their comfort zone. That night, I pulled the box out of that dusty corner of my mind and turned the idea of heading to Indiana around in my head. It definitely was out of my comfort zone, so I tucked that pesky idea away and thought of other things until spring came. One April day, I walked over to grab the mail. In those days, we didn't wait expectantly for acceptances to zoom into our inboxes, we just pulled down the door of the mailbox to see what was inside. A large envelope greeted me, and I pulled it out. It was addressed to Paula Freitag and moving my eyes to the upper corner, I saw the well-known Notre Dame logo. The box in the back of my mind sprung open in an instant as I ripped open the envelope.



I had been accepted to Notre Dame, and it threw a wrench into my life. I didn't want to go to Indiana. I had a nice new boyfriend who was not in Indiana. No president has been born in Indiana; surely Pennsylvania's Buchanan is better than none at all. I found any possible excuse to not be in Indiana. That lasted for a few days until the morning of my CWOFF interview. I begrudgingly grabbed my Notre Dame acceptance letter and a picture of my family and headed to school. Maybe the interviewers preferred the endless mountains of NEPA to the flatness of Indiana, I hoped. After the interview, also, I took that box out and started toying with the idea of going to Indiana. No! I was not going to Indiana – I pitched the box back into the corner of my mind and threw some mental junk on it for good measure.

Later in the evening the phone rang. Everyone perked up as I grabbed it and ran down the hall. It was the CWOFF. I was selected to be the 2005 CWOFF scholarship recipient. But there was a caveat. They assumed I would be going to Notre Dame. Mounting a swift rebellion against my brain trying to protect me from Indiana, my mouth quickly and resolutely affirmed that yes, I would be attending Notre Dame in the fall. My mouth had brazenly kicked me right out of my comfort zone. My eyes shed tears, my stomach fluttered, and my mouth, understanding what needed to be done before the rest of me, did the only thing left to do – smiled. I went to Notre Dame and spent four happy years in Indiana. The nice new boyfriend who was not in Indiana became the wonderful husband with a job in New York City. So, after graduation, I headed for New Jersey to work in information technology at Johnson and Johnson.

Over the years, I've become something of a corporate Swiss Army knife, moving from IT to quality to communications within J&J. I go wherever they need me, never scared to say yes to new things, even if they are ambiguous. I don't tuck scary ideas into a box inside my head anymore. After that first big life decision, I realized that once you push through your comfort zone, the discomfort doesn't actually last, and each successive challenge becomes less and less uncomfortable.

In 2020, with both my husband and I suddenly working remotely, we packed up the kids and tore through that comfort zone once again to return home after fifteen years away. After a long and unexpected journey, I am home. I don't know how long this season will last, so I'll relish the time here now comfortable in the knowledge that I can rise to whatever circumstances the next adventure will bring.” – Paula Stone

CAREER FIELD TRIPS & PROGRAMS

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the CWOFF supported SCHS student field trips to DT Midstream and Johnson College. Students benefit from these trips by discovering possible future careers and learning how to prepare themselves for college. The field trips are possible because of the generosity of people in the community who have made contributions to the CWOFF.

DT Midstream

In September 2023, SCHS students visited DT Midstream where they received an in-depth tour of a compressor station operation. DT Midstream staff then provided presentations on the different job opportunities in the natural gas industry such as finance, purchasing, project management, technology, and engineering.

“It was an exceptional experience for our students to observe first-hand compressor station operation and have the opportunity to talk directly with staff to learn about career opportunities. We thank the DT Midstream personnel for providing this opportunity.” – Wes Parks, Susquehanna Community High School Teacher



Johnson College



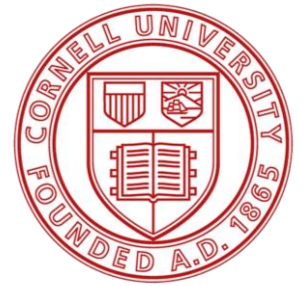
In November 2023, SCHS students traveled to Johnson College where they were introduced to the different academic programs the college has to offer. The tour included programs in auto-technology, HVAC, radiologic technology, biomedical, welding fabrication, carpentry, cabinetmaking, electrical construction, and electrical engineering. The students were able to walk freely around the lab and shop areas and ask questions. Several students who initially expressed interest in directly joining the workforce after high school are now attending a technical college as a result of this field trip.

“I learned that through the Johnson College HVAC program, they do actual installations right at the school and there is a lot of pipe fitting work. I am now interested in pursuing a career in HVAC.” – Cooper Payne, SCHS Student

“I learned there is a high earning potential in the trades. It is hands-on learning, which I excel at. I now plan on pursuing a career in HVAC.” – Mason Parker, SCHS Student

Cornell University Application Workshop

In May 2024, a Cornell University admissions representative held a college application workshop at Susquehanna Community High School. Twenty college-bound juniors attended the hands-on workshop and actively learned about the college admissions process. It began with a brief overview of what an admissions counselor looks for in student applications in deciding which students to accept or deny. Students were very surprised to hear the importance of well-written essays because admissions counselors only have a limited amount of time to go over each application. Afterwards, students were divided into groups of four and were shown some actual applications. They had to analyze them within a short period of time, make notes, and determine if they would accept or reject the applicant. In the end, they had to select ONE application out of three that they would admit to their college. Students actively participated in this event and learned what the common application looks like. They were able to see the rating forms that both school counselors and teachers use to evaluate students.



"This was a highly beneficial program for these college-bound juniors, and I hope we will be able to offer it again next year." – Bridget Milos, SCHS Counselor

PARTNERS

We are delighted to continue our strong partnerships with DT Midstream, The Honesdale National Bank, and the Susquehanna County Arts Education and Healthy Community Fund. These partnerships are making important contributions to the Susquehanna community.

DT Midstream



DT Midstream owns and operates natural gas pipelines, storage, and gathering systems for gas and electric utilities that serve industrial customers across the United States and Canada. Since coming to Susquehanna County in 2012, DT Midstream has become a major employer in the area.

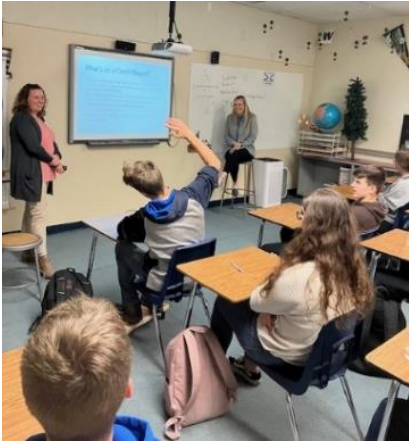
In 2015, DT Midstream joined with the Claire Williams O'Neil Foundation to establish a scholarship program for SCHS students interested in careers in business and technology. To date, DT

Midstream has provided over \$100,000 in scholarship funding to Susquehanna Community High School students.

In addition to providing grants, DT Midstream managers participate directly in the scholarship selection process and in mentoring scholarship winners during their college years. DT Midstream also supports SCSD by hosting annual student career field trips, funding the acquisition of digital equipment for the school, being involved in student mock interview sessions, and taking part in career day presentations at SCHS.

"DT Midstream has been a partner that year after year goes out of its way to help Susquehanna students. We are extremely grateful to them." – Brent Soden, Susquehanna Community High School Principal

The Honesdale National Bank



The Honesdale National Bank (HNB) is an independent financial institution serving northeast Pennsylvania and the Southern Tier of New York. Their mission includes “acting in the best interest of ... our communities.” In 2018, HNB demonstrated its commitment to this mission by establishing a partnership with SCSD to conduct a financial literacy program at the school. With this program, HNB helps high school students learn the skills necessary to navigate the modern financial world.

HNB’S financial literacy curriculum includes a full range of financial topics, real life market simulations, and presentations by HNB personnel. Students learn about banking services, credit scores, investing, student loans, mortgages, and retirement savings.

Our partnership with Honesdale National Bank continues to help SCHS students with their financial literacy skills. Financial literacy is a crucial life skill. Financial literacy equips students with the knowledge to manage their personal finances effectively and understand concepts like budgeting, saving, and the importance of managing debt. HNB provides students a chance to hear from financial experts directly. This year, Tina Verrastro and Ted Radu spoke to students at SCHS about how to establish credit lines, invest, and set up retirement plans.

“They told us to invest as soon as possible, and even though we are young, retirement is not that far away!” – Rebecca Haley, Susquehanna Community High School Student

“I learned that saving sooner will help you when you retire. More specifically, I remember a chart where there were three people: one started saving at 25, one at 35, and one at 45. This graph showed that the person who started saving at 25 had six times more retirement savings than the other two.” – Destiny Mays, Susquehanna Community High School Student

“HNB’s commitment to financial literacy education in high school curricula is imperative for preparing students to navigate the complexities of the modern financial world. By equipping them with these skills early on, we empower the next generation to make informed decisions and achieve financial independence.” – Brent Soden, Susquehanna Community High School Principal

“In 1836, The Honesdale National Bank was founded on the concept of supporting growth in the community. In that very notion is the root of HNB’s commitment to financial literacy. Enabling our community members and businesses to thrive by learning skills at every life stage is part of what drives the HNB team. We aim to provide subject-matter experts that can build student skills and the motivation and confidence to use them. The criticality of financial literacy is vastly underrecognized today and we aim to be a catalyst for change for NEPA.” – Elizabeth Nagy, Vice President and Director of Sales, Marketing, and Digital Banking

R: The Honesdale National Bank continues their support of the SCHS financial literacy program. In 2024, Honesdale National Bank presented Susquehanna Community School District with a \$4,000 donation.



Susquehanna County Arts, Education, and Healthy Community Fund

In Spring 2024, through the generosity of the Susquehanna County Arts, Education, and Healthy Community Fund, a donor-advised fund at the Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains, the SCHS gymnasium sound system was completely upgraded at the cost of \$5,000. The benefit of this upgrade extends further than just the impact it will have at sporting events. The gymnasium is the only location within the school where the entire student body can gather at one time. The upgrade will also allow for the arts to be “brought to the people” by highlighting student singers/musicians at sporting events. The newly installed system was introduced this year for two formal events, class night and graduation.

“The Susquehanna Community School District is extremely thankful for the support that Ken Goody has provided over the years.” – Brent Soden, Susquehanna Community High School Principal

PROJECT JUMP START

In 2021, SCHS principal Brent Soden set up a pilot one-on-one mentorship program wherein high-achieving SCHS students can begin to explore careers and discover aspirational universities during their sophomore year. The CWOFF was invited to suggest mentors and provide support. The resulting program, called Project Jump Start, is now in place.

In the summer of 2023, Soden took the decision to appoint Paula Stone, the 2018 CWOFF Scholar, as the coordinator for this important program. In that role, Paula recruits mentors and provides them with the knowledge they need to be effective and monitors the program.

This spring, we hit a major milestone for the program. Three Project Jump Start mentees (Jackson Maby, Lilliana Matis, and Paytyn Sellitto) graduated from SCHS and all three went on to become CWOFF scholars.

During the 2024-25 school year, Project Jump Start will have nine active mentor-mentee partnerships in the program. Two of the pilot mentors, Emily Staros and Alyssa Hubal, have signed on to take on new sophomore mentees while Sarah Serfilippi is onboarding onto Jumpstart. We are excited to have her join the other mentors and bring fresh insights and perspectives. We will also pursue different ways to expand the program with SAT prep offerings, guest speakers, and field trips. We look forward to continuing and strengthening Project Jump Start and working with the new SCHS principal, Rich Emmons.

MINI MEDICAL SCHOOL



Dr. Melissa Kukowski, a 2013 CWOFF Scholar and resident physician at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, conducted a Mini Medical School at SCHS for the second time. The program was designed by Melissa to introduce students at SCHS to medicine and to provide them with the opportunity to learn about the topics and procedures done by medical students and healthcare professionals.

The curriculum consisted of didactics and hands-on experiences. Topics included musculoskeletal anatomy and conditions, psychiatry, neurology, cardiology, pulmonology, and dermatology. Experiences included scrubbing in for surgery, doing

a physical exam, suturing, surgical knot tying, and giving injections. The program was augmented by hands-on experience at Barnes-Kasson Hospital using vital signs monitor and performing an ultrasound examination.

“I really enjoyed learning about all types of things in the medical field. We were able to go into depth and learned a lot.” – Shyanne Gerhold, Susquehanna Community High School Student

“I had a positive experience with the Mini Med School. It taught me basic but meaningful things about the medical field and was easy to follow and understand.” – Destiny Mays, Shyanne Gerhold, Susquehanna Community High School Student

BOARD ASSOCIATES

One key goal of the Foundation is to expand the community’s support for Susquehanna youth and to encourage new initiatives to help the school. A few years ago, the Board created a new category of membership for those who help advance this work and provide them with a formal way of suggesting initiatives they would like the Board to consider.

This year, two new board associates were elected. Paula Freitag Stone, the 2005 CWOFF Scholar and coordinator of Project Jump Start, and Emily Staros, the 2014 CWOFF Scholar and leader of college application workshops at SCHS.



Paula Stone

Emily Staros

The CWOFF Board welcomes our new board associates and is grateful to them for their commitment to SCSD and the Foundation.

INSPIRATION LAB



In the 2024-25 school year, the lab operated as home to SNN, the school’s daily news broadcast, and was utilized throughout the year by the Social Studies Department and for a eighth grade communications course. Plans are in place to expand and increase accessibility to the technology that the lab has to offer for the 2024-25 school year. Under the leadership of Mr. Peter Supko, coordinator of curriculum/instruction/assessment, the lab will offer up two new exciting technology learning experiences.

The first will be within the school’s art classroom. Art students will be able to utilize iPads to work on their digital art skills. Creating art on iPads is important as it merges traditional artistic expression with modern technology. iPads serve as portable canvases equipped with a vast array of digital tools and applications that empower artists to explore and experiment without the constraints of physical materials and

allow artists to try new techniques, manipulate colors and textures, and iterate on their work seamlessly. The second learning experience involves two 3D printers within Mrs. Carpenter’s STEM 8 and STEM 9 courses. Every student in eighth and ninth grade will take part in forty-five-day rotation courses. 3D printers have emerged as transformative tools in high schools, revolutionizing education by offering hands-on learning experiences that bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application. These devices empower students to materialize their creative ideas into tangible objects, fostering a deeper understanding of concepts in science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM). By enabling students to design and fabricate prototypes, 3D printers cultivate the critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for future careers in fields such as engineering and design.

The Inspiration Lab is 100% community funded. Its goal is to provide an environment for students to be creative, innovative, and independent.

“I am proud of the excitement Ms. Sussman and Ms. Carpenter have created by offering new experiences to their students through these two Inspiration Lab offshoot projects.” – Brent Soden, Susquehanna Community High School Principal

DONATIONS

The Foundation is grateful to all those who have contributed to our work in the past and continue to do so. Your donations allow the students of Susquehanna Community High School to participate in programs beyond the standard high school curriculum and use technical equipment that is cutting edge.

Please send contributions to the Claire Williams O’Neil Foundation to:

Claire Williams O’Neil Foundation
Michael Flanagan, Treasurer
2720 36th Place NW
Washington, DC 20007

Please send contributions to support the SCHS Inspiration Laboratory to:

Susquehanna Community High School
Mr. Richard Emmons, Principal
3192 Turnpike Street
Susquehanna, PA 15213

or

Susquehanna Community Inspiration Lab Fund
Community Foundation of the Endless Mountains
270 Lake Avenue
Montrose, PA 18801

Electronic contribution for the Susquehanna Community Inspiration Lab Fund can be made using the following link: <https://community-foundation.org/fund/susquehanna-community-inspiration-lab-fund>.