

### PiscatawayREADS Wins National School Boards Association Award

The Piscataway School District's *PiscatawayREADS* program has been named a national First Place Winner in the *American School Board Journal's (ASBJ)* 20th annual Magna Awards program.

The Magna Awards recognize selected districts across the country for outstanding programs that advance student learning, and encourage community involvement in schools.

The award is presented to the most creative and innovative school programs that demonstrate school board leadership and successful student achievement. There were almost three hundred submissions, and Piscataway is the only district in New Jersey to receive first place honors.

Students in grades Pre-K through 12 are provided with free age-appropriate books through the generous support of Brown & Brown Benefit Advisors, Scholastic Books, United Way, and Johnson & Johnson Healthcare Systems.

Over the course of several weeks, book discussions are conducted in class, and the themes of the books are explored in writing, art, and music lessons. *PiscatawayREADS* activi-

### Message from the Superintendent

As we burrow out from under this winter's snowfall and look forward to the spring sunshine, we celebrate the recent achievements of our district and students.

- *PiscatawayREADS*, our community literacy initiative, has been awarded First Place in the National School Boards Association Magna Awards, recognizing innovative school programs.
- Six Piscataway High School seniors received perfect SAT scores of 800 in math, critical reading and chemistry. Three of the students had perfect scores on multiple tests.
- Piscataway has been selected by the NJ Department of Education as a pilot district for field testing of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, or PARCC, an online national test to gauge student progress. PARCC will be implemented statewide next year.
- Piscataway Chiefs Special Olympians have been selected to compete at the 2014 Special Olympics USA National Games in June. They have won medals in recent regional track and field, and bowling competitions.

The Board of Education and I are proud of these accomplishments and many others highlighted in this newsletter. Our goal is for every child to achieve in school, leading to success in college and careers.

—Teresa M. Rafferty, Superintendent of Schools



Members of Piscataway High School Debate Teams 1 and 2 competed at the Annual School Ethics Bowl, hosted by the Stevens Institute of Technology.

### Ethics Debate Team Takes First Place

Piscataway High School Ethics Debate/Team 1 took First Place in the Seventh Annual High School Ethics Bowl competition, hosted by Stevens Institute of Technology. Team 1 members Nick Buchinski, Sabika Mustafa, Srikar Gudipati, Cameron Moy, and Taylor Thurmond defeated twenty teams from New Jersey and New York in the debate format competition, answering questions about ethical issues raised by contemporary science and technology. The team moves on to the 2014 National Ethics Bowl in North Carolina in April 2014.

### Quibbletown Student Wins GENYOUth AdVenture Capital Grant

As an athlete, Anisha Patel, grade 7 at Quibbletown Middle School, understands the importance of a healthy lifestyle. So much so, that a grant in the amount of \$3,000 was awarded to her school by the GENYOUth Foundation's AdVenture Capital program for Anisha's proposal to support the installation of the "Quibbletown Family Fitness Trail."

The trail will have five exercise stations, and is designed to motivate students and community members to stay active. Anisha applied for the grant through the "NFL Fuel Up to Play 60" program, which encourages students to get 60 minutes of exercise daily.

Anisha has recruited Quibbletown students and staff to assist in the installation of the fitness trail components, and hopes to have the trail completed by the end of May.



ties culminate with a family evening event on Wednesday, April 2, with participation by students, parents, staff, and community volunteers.

The Magna Awards are supported by Sodexo School Services. Each of the winning school districts will be recognized on Saturday, April 5, at the Best Practices for School Leaders Luncheon, which is part of the National School Boards Association's Annual Conference, and winning programs will be highlighted in the March/April issue of *American School Board Journal*.

# Stem in Full Steam

## Skimmers, Car Races and Robots

Students in grades 7 and 8 are learning about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems, as they design and program cars and robots in the middle school “Automation and Robotics” course. The activities are part of the *Project Lead the Way* (PLTW) science curriculum, which challenges students to solve problems using technology, collaborative teamwork, and creativity, while developing critical thinking skills. Students were required to program their “derby” cars to clear a distance of twenty feet, and robots to travel across the room, pick up a piece of trash, and drop it off in a garbage can.

Sixth grade students are creating wooden letters, and building floor gliders called “skimmers,” as part of the PLTW “Design and Modeling” course. Working in teams, they use design software to create a 3-D playground, build a scale model, and record their research in a log book.



## Learning About Structural Design from the Three Little Pigs

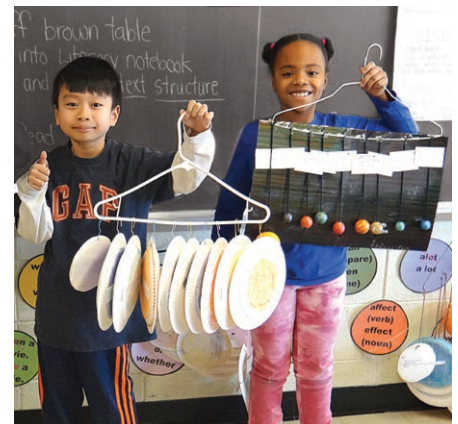
Kindergarten students got an early, but important start to STEM with participation in a “Kindergarten Mini-Challenge.” They were given the task of assisting a fourth little pig to build a strong structure house, using various household materials. They also examined current designs of structures already in use, such as bridges, and were asked to create their own design “blueprint” to make it better. The students made cup towers, marshmallow towers and gumdrop globes as they experimented with various materials.

## “Forever Green” wins the Core Values Teamwork Award

Piscataway’s FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) LEGO League Team 8878, “Forever Green,” won the Core Values Teamwork Award, demonstrating cooperation, clear goals, and a high level of respect for all participants, at the New Jersey FIRST LEGO League Competition, hosted by Hillsborough High School in December. The award qualified them to participate in the State Championships, held this month. The all-female team, comprised of students in grades 4 – 8 from Schor, Conackamack, Arbor and King Schools, was required to complete a series of tasks to avert the effects of natural disasters with their programmed LEGO robot.



Members of PHS Robotics Team 224, Sara Koshy and Sunny Patel, right, and their coach, PHS engineering instructor Charles Giacomarra, mentor Piscataway’s FIRST LEGO League Team 8878 members Jasmine Johnson and Maiya Dabare in preparation for a statewide robotics competition.



Students in Nichole Molinaro’s third grade class at Eisenhower School crafted mobiles that displayed the planets of the solar system as part of a recent science unit.

## Award Winning PHS Robotics Team Back on Track

Piscataway High School’s FIRST Robotics (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Team 224, known as “The Tribe,” competes in local and regional events based on a robotics “game” announced in January of each year. The FIRST Robotics Competition combines the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology. The 25-member PHS team won the Mid-Atlantic Robotics Regional District competition at The College of New Jersey last spring, and will compete in several regional events this month and in April.

Many of the team members gain the knowledge for completing the challenges of developing the robot through enrollment in engineering, physics, electronics, and architecture courses available at PHS. Teams have six weeks to design, build and program a 120-pound robot that accomplishes specific tasks of the game. Previous competitions have required robots to shoot basketballs into hoops, fling Frisbees through targets, kick soccer balls into goals, and climb 10-foot towers. Volunteer professional mentors from local companies lend their time and talents to guide each team.

# THE HALLS ARE ALIVE WITH The Sound of Music...



## Children's Corner PreSchool Accepting Enrollment for 2014-15

Children's Corner PreSchool, a Piscataway learning center for children ages 6 weeks – 5 years old, is now accepting registration for the 2014-15 school year. The school has two campuses: *Children's Corner by the River*, located at 2300 Cooper Street (former St. Frances Cabrini School), and *Children's Corner by the Pond*, located at 499 New Market Road (former Our Lady of Fatima School).

Students at Children's Corner enjoy a variety of daily activities built upon the "Tools of the Mind" curriculum, incorporating music, art, science, reading, math and development of social skills. The tuition-based preschool program offers full-day and half-day programs, and before-and after-school child care. Classes are staffed by certified teachers and qualified assistants.

For additional information or to register your child, visit the Children's Corner PreSchool website at [www.ccprek.com](http://www.ccprek.com) or call the Community Education Office at 732-572-4688.

## 3rd Annual Pway 5K

We'll Give You a Run for Your Money!

Tie those shoelaces and gear up for the 3rd Annual Pway 5K Run/Walk on Sunday, April 27 at Piscataway High School. Proceeds benefit the Piscataway High School Class of 2014 Project Graduation and the Piscataway Education Foundation.

The event will feature music, prizes, gift cards and giveaways, courtesy of local sponsors, and the top male and female runners will each receive a gift certificate from Road Runner Sports. All advance registrants will receive a commemorative t-shirt.

The 5K race kicks off for runners at 9:00 a.m., with walkers beginning immediately after. Check-in begins at 7:00 a.m. Convenient online registration, race route, and sponsorship information are available at [www.pway5k.com](http://www.pway5k.com).



## Piscataway Summer Camp and Enrichment Program

Get ready for fun in the sun at Piscataway Summer Camp! Registration is now open for convenient 8 ½, 6, and 4-week sessions. Camp offers a wide variety of activities to choose from, including weekly trips, arts and crafts, LEGOs, theater, rocketry, gymnastics, fencing, swimming, cooking, music and dance. The program, located at Piscataway High School and Children's Corner PreSchool River Campus, is scheduled from Wednesday, June 25 through Friday, August 22. Infants (age 6 weeks) to eighth grade students are eligible to enroll for camp, which runs from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Additional information on Piscataway Summer Camp and Enrichment Program is available at [www.piscatawaysummercamp.com](http://www.piscatawaysummercamp.com) or by calling the Piscataway Community Education Office at 732-572-4688.

- The music program at Piscataway High School was nominated for a GRAMMY Signature Schools Award, designed to honor exceptional public high school music programs across the country. PHS is one of only four schools in New Jersey selected to move on to the semi-final round in the national competition. Criteria for selection included submission of a grant proposal, as well as recordings of various PHS performance ensembles.
- Seven PHS singers were chosen to perform in New Jersey Music Educators Association Region II vocal ensembles. Senior Jennifer Shepp joins juniors Hannah Aberin, Joseph Ahn, and Tanaea Schmalz, and sophomores Mac Andrew Nelson and Dvorah Southland in Mixed Chorus. Kezia Van Lare, freshman, was selected for the Women's Choir.
- In addition to these talented vocalists, three PHS seniors were selected for Region II instrumental ensembles. Christian Lopez was named 1st Chair Percussion in Orchestra, Emmanuel Solano was named 2nd Chair Percussion in Symphonic Band, and Marco Jaimes was named 1st Chair Bass Trombone in the Wind Ensemble.

- Not to be outdone by the high school musicians, Ethan Chan, grade 8 violist from the Conackamak Middle School Orchestra, was chosen to perform with the Central Jersey Music Educators Association Regional String Orchestra.

- Fifteen students from King School, and sixteen from Arbor have been selected to participate in the Central Jersey Music Educators Association Elementary Honors Orchestra. They performed with the regional ensemble on March 29 at Woodbridge High School.

The vocal and instrumental competitions included students from schools throughout Hunterdon, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth, Somerset and Union counties.

## Piscataway High School Artists and Writers Receive Recognition

Nine artistic students at Piscataway High School received recognition for their entries in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, a juried competition sponsored by the Alliance for Young Artists and Writers. Criteria for selection includes works that best exemplify originality, technical skill and the emergence of a personal vision. Congratulations to:

### Art Awards

Priyanka Malhotra	Gold Key
Natalia Pena	Gold Key
Darren Tolud	Gold Key
Aliyah Bradley	Silver Key
Tatiana Florival	Silver Key
Chioma Egekeze	Honorable Mention
Brianne Tomaro	Honorable Mention

### Writing Awards

Rhea Tata	Gold Key
Marina DiCostanzo	Honorable Mention

## “Common Core”-ner

With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards as the driver for curriculum development in New Jersey schools, districts are continuing their efforts to help parents understand the differences in how their children are educated, and the expectations for demonstrating proficiency in English Language Arts and Mathematics.

A new “app,” known as *Common Core*, outlines the Standards in a concise format, and provides resources for parents and teachers. Available tools on the free app include a complete listing of the Standards by grade level or course, a glossary of terminology, and measures to evaluate end-of-year expectations at all grade levels, leading to college and career readiness. For example, by selecting “Language Arts” in the “Resources” section of the app, users will see options for learning how to read the Standards, as well as characteristics of students that meet the Standards.

The app, developed by “MasteryConnect” in a partnership with the Common Core State Standards Initiative, is available for Apple, Android, Windows and Amazon users.

We encourage you to download the *Common Core* “app” and “Explore the Core.”

# Staff Members IN THE NEWS

## Piscataway School District Represented on White House Educational Task Force

It’s not every day that you get a phone call inviting you to serve on a task force created by President Barack Obama. But L-Mani Viney, Social Studies teacher at Piscataway High School, was ready to serve when the call came from David J. Johns, Executive Director of the *White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans*.

Mr. Viney was selected to serve on the *President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans*, established to identify “best practices” in student achievement. His participation on the task force comes as a result of his involvement in local and regional programs that support academic success, particularly for African American male students.

He is the only non-collegiate teacher selected to serve on the national task force, which is largely made up of representatives from the US Department of Education, national civic organizations, and businesses. Mr. Viney hopes to cite various Piscataway High School programs that promote positive school/community relationships, and serve as interventions for at-risk African American students.

## Piscataway Staff Members Selected for NJDOE Panel

Glennysa Jurado-Moran, Chair of the PHS World Languages/ESL Department, and James Overton, physical education teacher at Quibbletown, have been appointed to serve on the New Jersey Department of Education’s 2014 Standards Revision Project Committee as a result of their content area expertise and demonstrated excellence in World Languages and physical education, respectively. As committee members, Ms. Jurado-Moran and Mr. Overton will review and recommend updates to NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards to ensure student preparedness for college and career readiness.

*Publication of this newsletter is supported through a grant from the Office of Community Education; no taxpayer funds were used.*

**RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER**  
\*\*\*\*\*E\*\*R\*\*W\*\*S\*\*\*\*\*

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
William J. Irwin, President  
Alexandra Lopez, Vice President  
Tom Connors  
Ralph Johnson  
Margaret King  
Thomas Mosler  
Atif Nazir  
Mark R. Okamoto  
Ira Stern  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
Teresa M. Rafferty

**PISCATAWAY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS**  
1515 STELTON RD • PO BOX 1332 • PISCATAWAY, NJ 08855-1332  
(732) 572-2289 • [www.piscatawaytownshipschools.org](http://www.piscatawaytownshipschools.org)



NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ  
PERMIT NO. 933