

MAY 2023

VOLUME 2022/23, ISSUE 3  
THE DISTRICT NEWSLETTER FOR REETHS-PUFFER SCHOOLS



# ROCKET CITY NEWS

## Kids Today



Kids Today...

Go ahead; finish the sentence.

If you are like most generations of adults, you might follow with something like “Kids today have bad manners and contempt

for authority. They contradict their parents and tyrannize their teachers. Children are now ...” Sound familiar?

It should. It has been repeated by generations of adults, in some iteration, since Socrates was first quoted, in a similar form, in 470 BC. Yes, the original quote is almost 2,500 years old. Little

did he know at the time, but Socrates was talking about the youth that would go on to lead some of the most important developments in history in mathematics, astronomy, and language.

My point?

If one of the greatest thinkers in history was so wrong about youth, is there a chance much of what we hear or believe in the negative is also wrong?

How about this? “Kids today are resilient, resourceful, adaptable, moldable, inspiring, and... our future.” More impressively; they are all of those things while much of the world is embroiled in political, economic, and social strife. It’s a complex, and, in many cases, unkind world that we are handing to the next generation. They didn’t create the strife, but they will be charged with cleaning up the mess.

As you read through this edition of Rocket City News, you might get a sense of why I am filled with optimism about their ability to do just that. While excellence and achievement is about more than just grades, take a look at our “Top 10 Graduates” and pay attention to the number of things in which our kids are choosing to be involved. Leadership, performance arts, athletics, philanthropy, volunteerism, and so many other impactful endeavors.

Rockets, the next time someone starts a sentence with “Kids today”, I hope you can fill in the blanks better, and in a more positive manner, than we have in the last 2,500 years.

*Steven L Edwards*

Sincerely, Steve





# Reeths-Puffer High School Class of 2023

## ~ TOP TEN GRADUATES ~



Valedictorian of the Reeths-Puffer High School Class of 2023 is Lauren Nelson. Lauren is the daughter of Bill and Dawn Nelson. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.463. Lauren is Student Council

President, National Honor Society President, and was Junior Class Student Council Treasurer. She has been involved in IMPACT, PALS, Spanish Club, girls' lacrosse, and volleyball. She received Academic All-State for lacrosse and volleyball, was a team captain of lacrosse and volleyball, where she was also named MVP. Lauren is the Reeths-Puffer 2023 West Michigan Student Showcase Academic Achievement Honoree. Lauren plans to attend a four-year university to pursue a degree in nursing.



Salutatorian of the Reeths-Puffer High School Class of 2023 is Kennedy Hynde. She is the daughter of Gene and Diana Hynde. Kennedy has a weighted grade point average of

4.444. She has been Class President all four years, Vice-President of National Honor Society, a member of IMPACT, Spanish Club, PALS, and volunteered with the Northside Lions Club. Kennedy ran cross-country, where she was named MVP, All-City, and All-Conference. She also played girls' lacrosse where she was team captain, MVP, was named All-Conference and Academic All-State. Kennedy was chosen by her peers as the 2023 Reeths-Puffer Homecoming Queen. She has been awarded the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy through the Michigan Department of Education. Kennedy plans to attend Kalamazoo College where she was awarded the Lux Esto Scholarship. She has committed to play lacrosse while studying psychology to eventually become a forensic psychologist.



Kendall Kozik, daughter of Chad and Renae Kozik, is graduating number three in the Class of 2023. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.417. During high school Kendall was a member

of Spanish Club, National Honor Society, and served as a College Ambassador to the RP College Advisor. She was also a member of the West Michigan OsteoScholars and

OsteoCHAMPS Program. Kendall has received a Certificate of Merit from the Society of Women Engineers. She plans to attend the University of Michigan to major in biology and will pursue a career as an osteopathic physician.



Graduating number four in the Class of 2023 is Emma Ruch. Emma is the daughter of Bryan and Jenny Ruch. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.352. Emma is involved in Vocal Fusion and the

spring musical, Mamma Mia. She has been awarded the Michigan State University Honors College Scholarship and the Michigan Resident Scholarship. Emma plans to attend Michigan State University and major in criminal justice, eventually pursuing a career in forensics.



Eva Shinabery, daughter of Karen and Todd Shinabery, is graduating number five in the Class of 2023. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.351. Eva is the Vice-President of Student Council

and the Secretary of National Honor Society. She is involved in IMPACT, PALS, Spanish Club, band, and is a varsity athlete in cross-country, track, and lacrosse. Eva was awarded Honorable Mention All-Conference twice in cross-country, and Academic All-State in lacrosse. She plans to attend Northern Michigan University, earning the Wildcat Merit Scholarship and the Michigan

Achievement Scholarship, where she will pursue a degree in sports medicine.



Kyle Schlaff is graduating number six in the class of 2023. He is the son of Paul and Regina Schlaff. Kyle has a weighted grade point average of 4.333. He has been the Vice-President of his class for four

years, is a member of the National Honor Society, and sings with the Madrigals. He has been awarded the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy through the Michigan Department of Education. Kyle was a Senior Captain of the varsity basketball team, and a Junior and Senior Captain of the varsity baseball team, where he was recognized with an All-Conference Honorable Mention and an Academic All-State award. He also received the "Showstopper Award" at the 2023 talent show. Kyle plans to attend the University of Michigan, where he will pursue a degree in environmental engineering.



Cade Borgeson, son of Wendy and Max Borgeson, is graduating number seven in the class of 2023. He has a weighted grade point average of 4.324. Cade is a member of the National Honor

Society, served as a College Ambassador to the College Advisor, and has been involved with the Spanish Club. He also has been involved in basketball. Cade plans to attend either the

University of Michigan or Central Michigan University after graduation to pursue a degree in environmental engineering.



Graduating number eight in the Class of 2023 is Bryan Ramirez. He is the son of Sonia Sanchez. Bryan has a weighted grade point average of 4.315. He has been a member of the Spanish Club at

Reeths-Puffer High School and the RCIA program at Prince of Peace Catholic Church. Bryan has been awarded the Michigan Seal of Biliteracy through the Michigan Department of Education. He has also been awarded the Hail Scholarship and the Go Blue Guarantee Scholarship at the University of Michigan. After graduation, Bryan plans to pursue a degree in neuroscience at either the University of Michigan or Michigan State University to become a neurosurgeon.



Claire Woodrum is graduating number nine in the Class of 2023. She is the daughter of Ben and Stephanie Woodrum. Claire has a weighted grade point average of 4.314. She is involved in the

National Honor Society, IMPACT, and Student Council. Claire is a Madrigal and has received Division 1 ratings at District Solo and Ensemble, and sang with the MadriGALS who were selected as the top choir in the state and performed at Michigan State University last spring. She is also

very involved in the music and youth programs in her church. Claire plans to attend Cornerstone University to pursue a degree in vocal music education.



Kylie McNeilly, daughter of Shawn and Karen McNeilly, is graduating number ten in the Class of 2023. She has a weighted grade point average of 4.306. Kylie is a three-year member of Madrigals and

has performed in the musicals; Mamma Mia, Guys and Dolls, The Descendants, and Newsies. She is a member of National Honor Society, a member of her church's band, and a counselor at Camp Break-A-Leg. After high school, Kylie plans to attend Muskegon Community College on the Muskegon Promise Scholarship before transferring to a university to pursue a bachelor's degree in the science field.







# CKH Leadworthy

In partnership with our positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) systems and Caring School Community social emotional learning curriculum, students have been developing as learners and leaders through the CKH Leadworthy program.



Each month is themed around an important character trait essential to building a positive culture here at school that inspires and empowers students to lead with heart. To date, we've emphasized empathy, self-direction, teamwork, responsibility, respect, kindness, and courage. We'll finish out the school year with perseverance and integrity.

Themes are supported by classroom lessons and activities to reinforce key concepts and give students the opportunity to apply their character

learning within the classroom and throughout the school. Additionally, many teachers have woven Leadworthy into curriculum units, buddy classroom activities, writing prompts, and read alouds throughout the year.

These efforts have proven impactful. Data shows a decrease in office referrals every month this year compared to last, and 83% of students fall within the 0-1 referral range for the entire year. In addition, peer to peer support is becoming more and more prevalent and impactful across the building. The Rocket Way is on display, and leading with the heart is a big reason!



## ONWARD with PBL/PBE



Central Elementary continues to enhance units of instruction through project-based learning and place-based education by exploring new innovations and authentic learning opportunities for our learners. Recently, students and staff produced our very own maple syrup after tapping campus trees and boiling sap in the campus courtyard. Soon, we'll partner with food service to provide students a pancake meal accompanied with R-P Syrup!

Upcoming PBL/PBE plans include planting trees at the State Park Campground, gardening projects in the courtyard to study and support native plants and animals, making canoe paddles to be used during an upcoming camping trip, exploring invasive fish species on a research vessel, and releasing the salmon we've raised since the fall here at school in a local stream.

Incredibly exciting is the grade level and building-wide collaboration taking place in designing instruction to be more increasingly engaging and authentic, and the community partnerships that continue to expand as a result. Most importantly, student engagement continues to increase as curriculum units become more hands-on, outdoor based, and applicable to real life!





Recent walkthrough data in the area of literacy environment showed schoolwide improvement on each of the nine indicators. This includes things like making classroom libraries more exciting and accessible, streamlining book selection processes, adjusting the physical environment to improve the reading experience, and utilizing reading prompts and anchor charts for literacy referencing and support.



regularly to evaluate effectiveness. Soon, walkthrough data will be collected on small group and individual instruction practices. We anticipate this data showing considerable improvement also.

# LITERACY GROWTH AND LEADERSHIP

Literacy leaders at both the building and district levels have ramped up efforts this school year to improve literacy practices in accordance with identified areas for growth aligned with the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy. Strategies for supporting staff in improvement efforts have included classroom walkthroughs, learning labs, targeted coaching, and individualized professional development.



Great things are happening every day for our young Rocket Readers, and I am proud of our students and staff for their continued focus on literacy. As always, keep reading with your child(ren) at home!

## HELP SUPPORT YOUR ROCKET CITY NEWS

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## ROCKET CITY NEWS

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## NOTICE OF RIGHTS AND PRIVACY

Parents of Reeths-Puffer school children are hereby notified that the school often publishes for public view the names and/or pictures of Reeths-Puffer students. The purpose varies and may involve honor rolls, attendance lists, special awards, athletic rosters, etc. If, for any reason, you do not wish your child's name or picture to be published, please contact your school office immediately. This notice is in compliance with the Rights and Privacy Act, P. L. 93.380.



# Pennsylvania Elementary Kindergarteners Go All Out for Kids' Food Basket



March is National Nutrition Month, when people across the country recognize the importance of eating healthy food. Perhaps you have heard of “Go Orange with Kids’ Food Basket”. It helps raise awareness about childhood hunger and provides healthy, nourishing meals to kids right here in our community. Kids’ Food Basket packs and delivers over 10,000 healthy sack

suppers EACH WEEK DAY to West Michigan children.

Since community outreach projects are a very important part of our program at Pennsylvania Elementary, we reached out to our families to help with our 2nd annual



supper pack drive. Their generous donations allowed us to purchase enough items to fill 312 packs (and donate some extras)! After reading a couple of books and watching a short video shared by KFB on the journey of the sack supper, our 40 kindergartners used their caring hearts and helping hands to pack all of these bags.

Each of them took their “job” very seriously to make sure every pack had what it needed!

We also were able to donate a few hundred decorated bags we have been working on all year to help with the effort!

Miss Luci came to thank the kids and talk to them about the impact they had on the community. The kids loved helping her load up the van so she could make sure the supper packs got into the hands of children who need them!

This project allowed many hearts and minds to be filled with the love of helping, and have a greater understanding for how critical the problem of hunger is, even here in our community.

Thank you to our Pennsylvania families and our kindergartners for all of their help!



- Driveway Grading
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# Animal Defense Mechanisms

One of the 4th grade EL (Literacy Units) is Animal Defense Mechanisms. Fourth graders at Central, Twin Lake, and RPEL enjoyed the opportunity to extend their learning about defense mechanisms of animals in Michigan. Wildlife biologist, Trish Brockman shared her knowledge with students about physiological and behavioral defenses of many animals including but not limited to Monarch Butterflies, Short-tailed Shrew, Massasauga Rattlesnake, and Eastern Newt. Students learned about the animal defense mechanisms of mimicry, camouflage, poison, venom, stink/smell, and teamwork.

## Reeths-Puffer Elementary



## Central Elementary



## Twin Lake Elementary



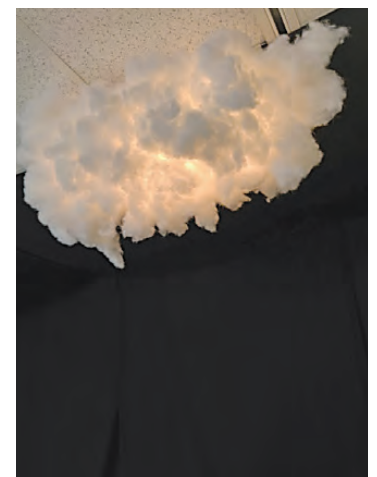
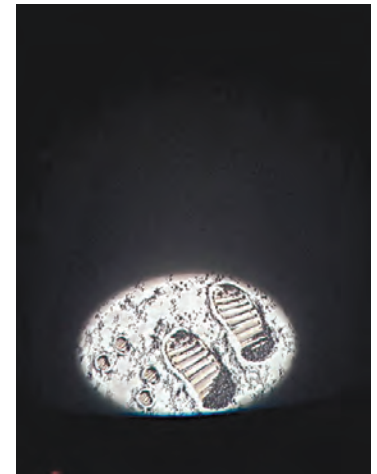
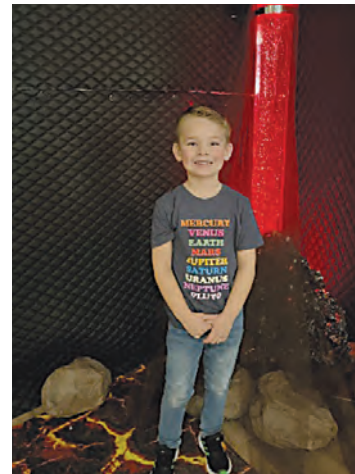


# Out of this World!



First graders from RPEL took a trip that was “Out of this World”. In first grade, students study the Sun, Moon, & Stars in their literacy module curriculum. The planetarium at Muskegon Community College was a great place to bring their sun, moon, and stars lesson to life. The students watched a movie about traveling to the moon. In their module lesson, they learned about the 8 phases of the moon. Students were making great connections. Students learned and witnessed the change of daytime to nighttime. Relating classroom learning to the outside world is what teaching and learning is all about! This was the first college visit for many of our students. The students were able to eat lunch at the college, and visit the museum. It was so amazing to see the kids having fun outside of the halls at RPEL.

Thank you to all the first graders for showing Respect, Pride, and Integrity at the college. Thank you to our bus driver, Mr. Bruce. Mr. Bruce drove us there safely and was able to contribute and participate in learning with us. We enjoyed having him be a part of our trip! Thank you to MCC for making this trip possible.





Future.Focused.

# What Do You Want to Do When You Grow Up? Second-Graders Talk Careers

## SIX CAREER ZONES

These broad categories or "zones" help students start to identify general career direction based on their interests and skills at an early age. By using these Career Zones, teachers and parents have a wonderful opportunity to help students become aware of their possibilities, including occupations that may be nontraditional for them.\*

Zone  
01

### Industrial & Engineering Technology—The Building and Fixing Path

Related careers: plumber, architect, air traffic controller, auto mechanic, electrician, carpenter, surveyor, engineer

For students who are curious about how things work, enjoy working with their hands, or like reading, designing, or drawing structures



Zone  
02

### Natural Resources & Agriculture—The Nature Path

Related careers: farmer, landscaper, veterinarian, greenhouse manager, food scientist, plant scientist, floral designer, fish and game officer

For students who are curious about plants or animals, like to work outside, or who enjoy gardening or mowing the lawn



Zone  
03

### Business, Management & Technology—The Business Path

Related careers: hotel manager, bank teller, office manager, salesperson, travel agent, shipping clerk, administrative assistant, or accountant

For students who are organized and like planning activities, like to work with numbers or ideas, being a leader, and talking



Zone  
04

### Arts & Communications—The Creative Path

Related careers: journalist, reporter, film director, dancer, computer programmer, video game designer, artist, or designer

For students who are creative thinkers, have a good imagination, or like making crafts, drawing, playing an instrument, taking photos, or writing stories



Zone  
05

### Health Sciences—The Health Path

Related careers: dentist, pharmacist, nurse, physical therapist, athletic trainer, lab technician, doctor, or paramedic

For students who are interested in how the body works, like to care for people, like learning about science

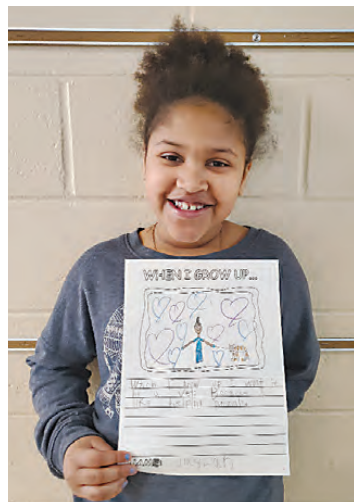


Zone  
06

### Human Services—The Helping Path

Related careers: social worker, police officer, chef, teacher, firefighter, librarian, lawyer, or cosmetologist

For students who are friendly and enjoy talking to people, like to help people solve problems, or like reading, storytelling, traveling, or working with children



The second-grade students at Reeths-Puffer Elementary were able to listen to the book, *Whose Hat is This?* By Sharon Katz Cooper. They were able to look at pictures of characters wearing hats and performing their job. Then they guessed the jobs of each hat. Students were also introduced to the 6 Career Zones. The six Career Zones are pictured to the left. Lastly, they were able to think about what job they want to do when they grow up. They drew a picture of themselves in that career and also wrote about it. It was a great activity that gave the 'why' of school and the learning we do every day to help prepare them for their future.



\*To broaden the occupational choices for students, the 17 Career Clusters will be introduced in middle and high school.



## Jeffery L. Williamson Skilled Trades Education Fund

Supporting the skilled trades programs at the Muskegon Career Tech Center

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*Together We Can Strengthen Our Community*







# R-PEL Fourth Graders Journey to Lansing

RPEL fourth graders took their learning on the road to our state capitol! In the classroom, the students had been learning about the Women's Suffrage Movement and the 19th Amendment. They read the book *The Hope Chest* which took the readers on an adventure in time during the Tennessee House Vote which officially added the 19th Amendment to our US Constitution. The students learned about our constitution and how changes are made to it through amendments. During our visit to the state capitol, the students were able to observe where the Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan Senate meet to decide on important issues for our state. They were able to take in the rich history of our state and left with more knowledge than they came with! On our trip we also visited the Michigan Historical Center Museum to see how Michigan has changed throughout the years. Many students made ties to their learning about how community members and politicians work to address issues in our communities. The fourth graders have many plans for how they will begin to make important and impactful changes. Make sure you tune in to our next news release about how these amazing students are turning their learning into action in Muskegon!





## Laketon Bethel Church

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# Twin Lake Elementary Third Graders Kick Off our ‘Read to Feed Project’



One of our goals this year in third grade is to develop **caring and responsible students**. To accomplish this goal, one strategy is to announce the return of **The Read to Feed Project**.



**What is The Read to Feed Project?** The Read to Feed Project is a project that builds stronger, more fluent readers while working to benefit those less fortunate in our community. In partnership with Meijer Inc. and the Muskegon Rescue Mission, we READ lots of books to help FEED and stock the food pantry at the mission.

The project began with a guest speaker from the Muskegon Rescue Mission. She visited our classrooms and shared important information about needs in our local community. Our local Meijer store committed to paying our learners for every minute they read during the month of March. Our learners reached out to their friends and family members asking them to sponsor their learner as they read for the month of March. These sponsorship pledges helped us raise money to go towards the needs at the Muskegon Rescue Mission. **Every cent has helped our community!**

For the month of March, the TLE third graders read outside the normal school day to reach their reading minute goal that they individually set. Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Kolbe had many exciting reading activities planned. Our students-built reading forts, read for FREE Ice Cream from HomeTown Creamery, Read for Double Bubble Gum, and the list just kept going!

**Our learners were excited and energized and were ready to help those in need!**

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*The Muskegon Teen Health Center offers medical, mental, & dental services, ages 5 to 21 years old.*

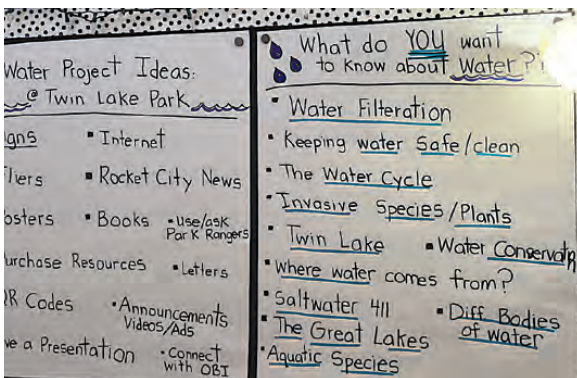
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# 3rd/4th grade Classroom Water Unit

While trying to design how to integrate two grade levels into an authentic learning environment around the EL curriculum using two different modules, Mrs. Kolbe has sparked curiosity amongst her students.

Mrs. Kolbe's 3rd and 4th graders made a commitment to using a Project Based Learning (PBL) pedagogy around two EL modules this school year (water for 3rd grade and 19th amendment for 4th grade). Executing this with two grade levels in one classroom takes on a completely different level of planning and processing. To begin, Mrs. Kolbe's students engaged in learning about the freshwater around the world while emphasizing student voice and impact on a cause.

Students took a walk down to Twin Lake Park where they brainstormed, in the space close to freshwater access, how they could make changes for a healthier environment. As well as, how can they have an impact through voting? After brainstorming, students went back to their class and wrote down their ideas. They also wrote down what they still wanted to know about water.

The next steps for Mrs. Kolbe's class was to learn more about water. During this stage of the process, students at the third-grade level had pull out sessions to read the book One Well (focus

on water). Fourth graders were pulled into small groups to read The Hope Chest (focus on 19th-Amendment). Students then collaborated and informed each other about their learning. Students engaged in brainstorming possible solutions and project ideas that would allow them to share their learning with others. The students voted on what projects they wanted to move forward with.

The consensus was that they first needed to demonstrate their learning. So, they created a Gallery Walk for people to come and listen to them about what they have learned about freshwater. Students created posters and also had scripted information to share with their audience. The passion and excitement from the students were felt by those who walked the gallery.

Next up, brainstorm an actionable list of ideas that can make a change. One idea, in the Spring students want to display information on water conservation around Twin Lake Park. Information such as, "on average one individual, in the United States, uses 55 gallons of freshwater a day; whereas places like Ethiopia an individual uses less than 1 gallon of water per day." It truly is amazing the impact kids can make when they are given authentic opportunities to learn.





# It's Been a Wonderful Year So Far in Elementary Music!



1st through 4th grade students across the district have been busy singing, drumming, moving, playing, and learning in general music with Mrs. Clifton.

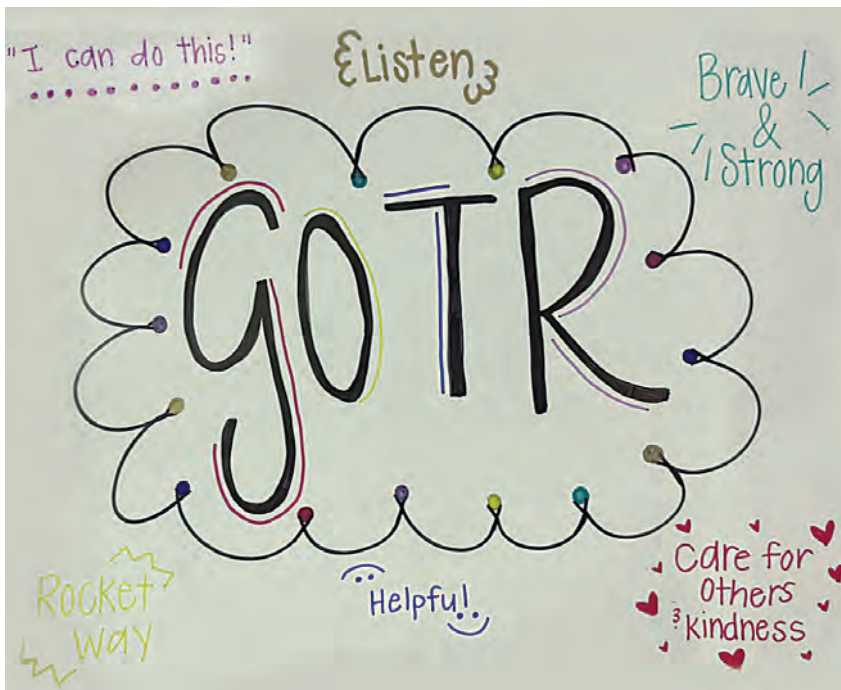
Students have also added performing to their repertoire, as Central Elementary gave a whole school Musical in December, and Twin Lake Elementary 3rd & 4th Graders presented a fantastic concert to their families in March. Reeths-Puffer Elementary 3rd & 4th Grade families can look forward to their own musical at the end of May!







# GOTR (Girls on the Run)



Third and fourth grade girls at TLE are learning to face their anxieties and overcome their inner challenges through fostering healthy relationships during this Girls on the Run season. Through exercise and running, working up to running a 5k at the end of the season, the girls are learning to lean on one another through words of encouragement as they encounter challenging tasks and topics. They are engaging in activities that are helping them find their true inner beauty and strengths, to promote confidence and March's CKH theme of courage within themselves. With their new-found confidence and courage, the GOTR are engaging more with curriculum, strengthening peer relationships, and learning to navigate uncharted territories (when things may not go how they expected). They're learning to take risks, utilizing their new coping skills or strategies.

*Below and to the right: Second graders in Mrs. Kinstner's classroom at Twin Lake Elementary are sorting words with the Consonant +le syllable at the end. Partner A reads the word aloud, not allowing their partner to see the word card. Partner B listens for the Consonant +le ending in each word to decide which column on the chart they belong.*

## SIX TYPES OF SYLLABLES (USED IN 2ND GRADE)

Syllable Type	Description	Examples
Closed	Short vowel sound with at least one consonant following it.	sun, cat, mop
Open	Long vowel sound with nothing after the vowel.	so, go, he
R-Controlled	Vowel is heavily influenced by the letter 'r' immediately following it.	car, fork, bird
Silent e	The initial vowel is a long vowel sound because of the silent e after a consonant.	cane, kite, ate
Vowel Teams	Two vowels sit side-by-side to create either a long vowel sound from the first vowel, or a diphthong (gliding) sound.	beat, rain, join
Consonant + le	This is a "stable final syllable," meaning that it only appears at the end of words. Common combinations include: -ble, -tle-, -dle, -cle, -kle, -gle.	rattle, table





# Second Grade Syllable Sleuths



Very early in their schooling career, students at Reeths-Puffer learn that “every syllable has a vowel sound.” There is even a song that reinforces this message! Syllables are important; they are not just “claps” or “beats” in a word. Second graders throughout Rocket City also learn about six syllable types. By mastering the six syllable

types, students increase their ability to decode (read) and encode (spell) multisyllabic words. When visiting a classroom, you may encounter the class playing Syllable Sleuth, a routine or “game” used to decide where to segment (divide) a word and determine what syllable type each syllable is. They use this information to sound the word out. Even a long, unknown word can be deciphered with syllable type knowledge! Our second graders are becoming expert Syllable Sleuths, which helps them to read and comprehend more complex texts!

## First Congregational Church



Come see us in person or check us out online for services Sundays at 10:30AM.

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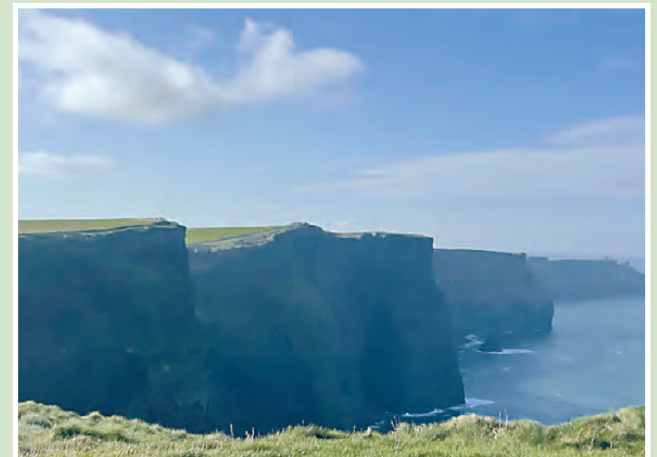
# New Books For the Library!

Mrs. McManus, one of the amazing library clerks here at Reeths-Puffer, recently applied for a grant from the Northside Lions Club and the Muskegon Community Foundation. We were able to purchase 54 new books for our kids to read! We are so appreciative of her work and dedication to getting books that students love into their hands! Thank you, Mrs. McManus!



# Leaving on a Jet Plane

We are excited to announce that our Reeths-Puffer Bands will be traveling in 2024 & 2025! Giving our students an experience of a lifetime is a fundamental goal of our program. In 2024, the High School Bands will be traveling to Ireland, and in 2025 our Middle School Bands will be traveling to Walt Disney World! Here are a couple pictures of Mr. Harris in Ireland and photos from our last trip to Walt Disney World. We are looking forward to these exciting adventures with our R-P Band students!





# So, What is Empathy?



Mrs. Peterman and Mrs. Matz's classes learned that empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. To show their understanding, students became authors when they were given an opportunity to write their very own empathy story. The authors worked with community members to improve and finalize their stories. The stories were then placed into hardcover books, and the authors designed their own illustrations to enhance the empathetic story they were telling. Once completed, the authors visited Reeths-Puffer elementary classrooms to share their story with younger Rockets to spread awareness and the importance of being empathetic. After much practice for fluency and getting past the nerves, the authors were so proud of what their hard work accomplished. Great job Rockets!



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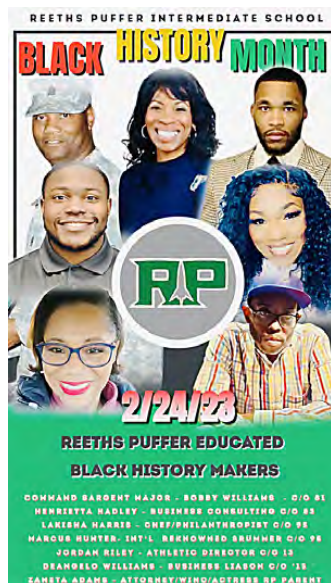




# Everyone Belongs...

We explored Fitting In vs Belonging, what gives us the feeling of belonging, and what we can individually do to create belonging for others.

A culminating event involved talented speakers connected to RP either as a Rocket Graduate or as a Rocket Parent.



**Command Sergeant Major Williams & Deangelo:** *"We must know yourself to be able to include others."*

**Henrietta Hadley:** *"Walk like you belong, because you do!" "Learn all you can and carry the Rocket Flare wherever you go." "We don't have time to make people feel they don't belong. We bring love when we know we belong."*

**LaKisha Harris & Marcus Hunter:** *"Appreciating our differences is what makes this community special."*

**Jordan Riley:** *"Hold off on judgment until you get to know someone."*

*Sometimes your greatest teachers could be the people you least appreciate right now."*

**Zaneta Adams:** *"One kind word can change someone's entire day." "I treat people the way I want to be treated, not necessarily how they treated me."* Zaneta was just sworn into Deputy Assistant Secretary IGA, Department of VA as part of the Biden/Harris Administration.

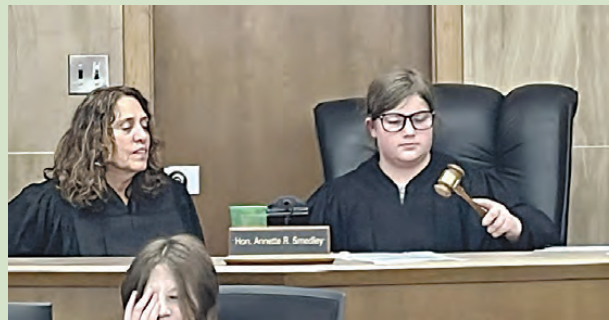






# MOCK TRIALS

The Overway and Marvin team took two historical events to trial! The Boston Red Coats were charging the Sons of Liberty with trespassing and destruction of property; The Colonists were charging the British Red Coats with the death of 5 colonists in the Incident on King Street. Students dug into primary and secondary resources, examined evidence, gathered witnesses and took on the roles of Judge, Attorneys, Witnesses, Bailiff, Court Reporter, Plaintiff and Defendant. To ensure that they did the courtroom justice, they took a trip to the Muskegon Co. Courthouse to learn from the experts! When all was ready, the narrative prepared, jurors notified (parents) and witnesses identified...Court was IN SESSION!



## Rocket Scholars Ticket to the Future

What is Rocket Scholars ? A scholarship fund foundation for RP students. We offer 8, \$1,000 scholarships to RP students, looking to further their education or enter a trade program beyond high school.

Annual Event- Ticket to the Future: Our annual event is held once a year in the spring, and allows the committee/foundation to continue to offer scholarships. The event is a reverse raffle with a potential to win \$10,000, with 50/50 drawings, 2nd chance goodie bags, food, fun and raffle drawings.

What is a reverse raffle? One ticket purchased is good for entrance for two, two drink tickets, Hors D'oeuvres and a night of fun! Your ticket number is placed in a drum and in time increments, 10 tickets are drawn out...you hope yours isn't drawn or you are out. If you are in the top 10, you are eligible for up to \$10,000.

**Join us: Thursday June 1st, 2023**

**6 - 9 pm**

**Hilt Building in downtown Muskegon**

Visit the RP website for more information  
or contact a Committee Member

Stacy Carmean-Johnson  
Corey Johnson  
Lynelle Brainard  
Jenny Fansler  
Dan Beckman  
Shalyne Harris  
Denise Sheffer





# RPI Band Setting a new Standard

Our RPI Band students are doing exceptional work! Each week, we receive photos from the families of kids demonstrating their diligence and love of practicing and learning.

We hope you can join us for our Spring Concert on May 10 as we celebrate the success of our most excited band students. We are extremely proud of them for all of their hard work and dedication! Success starts here!



# Ride With Pride

*Written by Abigail Haak*

The STATS coalition is making exciting moves with the 2023 Ride With Pride program. The Ride With Pride program was put in motion in 2022 and boy has it excelled! Every year STATS has been hard at work making improvements to RWP. Some growth within the program has been a greater outreach to our local middle schools and elementary schools. STATS gives presentations to the community's youth about a range of issues. Such as drug use for our HS and MS students and safety tips for our younger grades.

Rynberg's Car Company has graciously donated a car to give out at our end-of-the-year celebration at RPHS this year! A hug thanks also to Dean transportation, Yodels, Hobos Tavern, Bellacinos and Mary at Style Bar for their donations this year. The end of year events brings the Reeths-Puffer community together to celebrate our amazing students. Not only does it unite RP, but it also improves our school environment. At the beginning of the school year, students are asked to follow pledge points throughout the year in order to be eligible for the drawings. These help to enhance our community, schools, and the lives of youth. Look for this year's winners in our August Edition of Rocket City News.



# STATS Straight Talk About Tough Stuff

Written by Brooke Ferski - 11th grade

On January 29th, ten students from the STATS (Straight Talk About Tough Stuff) traveled to Washington D. C. to attend the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America National Forum. CADCA's main goal is to strengthen the capacity of community coalitions by creating and maintaining safe, healthy, and drug-free communities globally. Attending this event, students in STATS have broadened their knowledge and understanding of drug use in their community. The event gave them insight on other substances they weren't fully knowledgeable on; one of these drugs being fentanyl. Although CADCA mainly focused on drug use among teens and prevention, it also shed light on other topics. The convention also addressed the dangers of human trafficking and how to help a teen in a potentially dangerous situation. STATS members learned what to do if a minor is involved in an unsafe situation, and what methods are



best to get them the proper help.

A large part of CADCA National Forum is Capitol Hill Day. On Wednesday, Feb. 1st the group spoke with Senator Gary Peters and Congresswoman Hillary Scholten in their respective offices. The group discussed the history of STATS, why they are passionate about this work, what they have been learning and what changes they would like to see in their community. These meetings were entirely student led with all questions being answered by STATS students. This meeting not only gave the students an opportunity to talk about what they are doing back home but also to get some insight into how to advocate for policy changes in their community.

Ultimately, the group was able to gain new information to bring back to their community in hopes of growing awareness & building better understanding. These ten students became deeply involved in the program and learned important skills & strategies to ensure a safer community for all. Since these students reach young audiences, the change will start from the beginning at elementary and middle schools in hopes of educating & preventing future substance abuse & misuse. By getting to the root of the next generation, we are able to change the language being used by these students, educate them on the dangers of using substances, and teach them how to identify an unhealthy relationship.



## March 2023 Harvest "Rainbow Carrots"

At RPEL/RPI & Central Elementary this month featured "Carrots". So, we added a little color to the story and introduced "Rainbow Carrots" to the students at RPEL/RPI/Central. SFE partnered with Muskegon County Food Literacy in

providing samples of different colors and shapes of carrots to the students. We featured "Maple Glazed Carrots" on the Lunch Line in addition to providing samples and educational take home sheets that the kiddos could share with their parents.





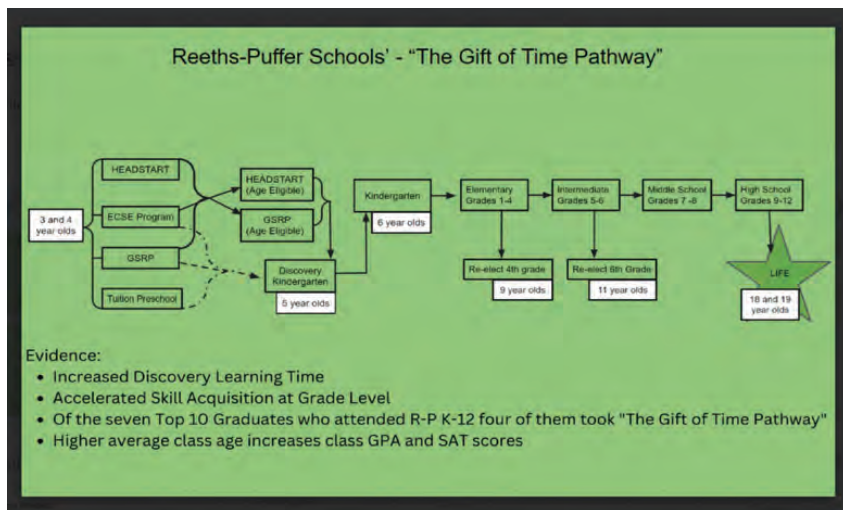


**Nate Smith**  
Director of Instruction and Learning

## Discovery Kindergarten and “The Gift of Time Pathway”

Reeths-Puffer created “The Gift of Time Pathway” to ensure our students entering R-P as Discovery Kindergarten students are leaving R-P ready for college and career life. This pathway is designed to emphasize skill building in the early years of school where early literacy, numeracy, cooperative play, community, trust in adults, friends and sense of belonging develop in our children. As a community,

we have an important responsibility to guide our students to reach their highest potential in life. This pathway is intended to provide students with the necessary tools and support to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and resources to lead their best life. At Reeths-Puffer, we are here to help you with your decisions and to work in partnership with you to support your child’s development and belonging in the community!



### Pathway #1

Most Rockets associate their best year of school, project or experience with an elementary teacher, class or friends. “The Gift of Time Pathway” emphasizes the developmental milestone years, ages 4 - 6, with added time to develop the sense of community, exploratory learning and key developmental literacy skills, and number and relational skills that their entire learning future will require. The Discovery Kindergarten curriculum is based on community centers, exploration, cooperation and developing skills to be a reader. It has a very specific curriculum that is grounded in community and routines to support the developmental milestone years through discovery activities and learning centers.

### Pathway #2

There is no one single path for all students and the desires of our families. Meaningful

conversations between teachers, staff and families is critical. Some students may need extra time to improve their skills. On “The Gift of Time Pathway” we realize that some families see the transition to R-P Intermediate, where students, for the first time, will choose a class elective, as a big jump. This is why there will be open conversations with the 4th grade teacher, 5th grade principal and the family to consider reselection of 4th grade. Reselection of 4th grade allows students a chance to stay in the self-contained environment for another year and use that year to fine tune literacy and/or math skills before having specialized teachers in 5th grade.

### Pathway #3

School should have clear connections to life and/or things students are interested in or desire to be. This is the biggest part of the Gift of Time Pathway. As students enter Middle School and start to pick their electives, their grades now have accountability to assessments in their classes. There are now choices in advanced math, Spanish and science. Students are able to elect stand-alone virtual classes and will have up to 10 teachers over the course of the school year, they will also start their College and Career exposure process through Xello. This is where Pathway #1 really starts to emerge, students need to be able to advocate for themselves and make decisions that will have an impact in their future years, they will need to have a say in their interests and the classes that appeal to them. Students are trying athletics, clubs and exploring their interests. They may even be trying to pick up a credit for High School or want to spend a year in MCVA (Muskegon County Virtual Academy) to see if virtual learning is right for them. With “The Gift of Time Pathway” a student and family, in partnership with the school, could reselect 6th grade if they have not already taken advantage of a year for growth.

### Pathway #4

High School is a busy time, trying to keep up with school work and get credits but friends and events take time too. At this level students have even more choices, they design their schedules around their interests and their plans after High School. They have access to college classes, dual enrollment, internal and external internships, AP classes in all four core subjects, advanced performance classes and much more. Students are now driving, competing in sports, robotics teams, and/or in performing arts. You will not see this on “The Gift of Time Pathway” but a student who is in 8th grade and struggling should have an opportunity to reselect 8th grade if they have not done this in a previous year.

As we navigate each child’s path from Discovery Kindergarten to Graduation we must always do it as partners. They are worth the conversations and the time it takes to make the difficult decisions. By implementing “The Gift of Time Pathway” we strive to ensure Reeths-Puffer students have the necessary support and resources to reach their full potential and are ready to impact the world when they take their unique talents, abilities and gifts beyond Rocket City.

## Beyond Our Walls

At Reeths-Puffer we want our students to get everything possible out of their 14 years here and take their unique talents, abilities and gifts to the world around us!

Over the last 4 years we have been working on designing pathways that students can access as they are in their capstone years at Reeths-Puffer High School. Having choices allows our students to launch out of the classroom and begin to contribute to others and see what and where they can make a difference in the world.

Here are just a few of the lesser known skills/trades and applications of passion that



our students can engage in while at Reeths-Puffer.

**Virtual Learning** - Reeths-Puffer has 35 students that are full time virtual students and will graduate from Reeths-Puffer after taking classes in Rocket Virtual with Muskegon County Virtual Academy (MCVA). Reeths-Puffer also offers standalone virtual classes to students that we do not offer in our face to face schedule. We also have a virtual learning lab where students can demonstrate standard mastery for classes when an alternative placement is needed either temporarily or for select classes. In total 7% of our students were involved in virtual learning at some point this year.

**Internal and external internships** - Students that have a desire to learn skills and trades on location can apply for internships. These placements range from health care to small business. Students link their internship to their Xello College and Career fit. We also have a variety of internships that take place within the school system including our media center, Teacher Readiness Training and management.

**Career Tech Center** - We normally have 40 students that spend half their day at the Muskegon County Career Tech Center where they can focus on nursing, criminal justice or culinary arts just to name a few.

**Dual Enrollment or Early College** - Each year students at R-P are taking college classes while in high school. Students in these programs are enrolled in classes with College Teachers and take classes both off site and virtually.

**AP Classes** - College Board supports classes that have specific curriculums and pacing that are college equivalent. In all core subjects at R-P students are able to take AP classes with the possibility of earning college credit with a high enough exam score. These credits can be used at many universities.

We continue to offer core classes and student favorite electives like select programs, fine arts, specialized leadership classes, physical education, and history but our kids have access to so much more as they equip themselves in any pathway beyond our walls.

## Summer Acceleration 2023

Summer Acceleration Programs are back for the Summer of 2023! R-P will be offering the extensive “free” program supported by Federal Grant money. Summer Acceleration has been a success for the last 2 summers with over 1,300 students K-12 participating and learning throughout Rocket city!

This year the program will run Monday - Thursday, for 6 weeks, from June 19 to June 29 and July 10 to August 3. Busses will run throughout the community, students will be picked up at bus hubs in the morning and returned safely in the afternoon. Students will have an emphasis on science, problem solving, connecting literacy to experiences and accessing resources around Muskegon and the county.

The K-6 program will run through Reeths-Puffer Elementary/ Intermediate and the 7-12 programs will run through the Reeths-Puffer High School. Learning will be designed around the interests of the group, the talents of the teacher and students and connections to the community partnerships around the city.

This year we will be partnering with Duck Lake State Park, Muskegon Sports Complex, Lakeshore Museums, Career Tech Center, MAISD Science Center, MSU extension, Muskegon County Gardening Alliance, Muskegon Nature Preserve, Country Dairy and many more.

We are so fortunate to have the funds to keep this learning experience going for our Rockets again this summer and look forward to the opportunities it creates for our students to grow as a person and learner!

# STATS Students Engage with Community



The Saturday after mid-winter break, Feb. 25th, the STATS coalition partnered with the Safe and Healthy Task Force to bring a new community event to the area, Snow Much Fun. This event hosted 38 vendors with interactive activities, a bike rodeo, a substance misuse prevention station, family fun

games and speakers. The goals of these events are to get families talking about the tough issues, provide resources and support for any questions that they may have through fun and engaging activities.

The STATS students were instrumental in making this event a success. Compliments poured in from vendors and volunteers about how great our youth were at working this event and how helpful they were with any questions that arose.



Due to the success of the event this is becoming an annual event for the STATS coalition and Safe and Healthy Task Force. It will continue to be held the first Saturday after Mid-Winter Break.

**Snow Much Fun** marked the third community event that STATS students have partnered on for this school year. August saw **Rocket City Kickoff** partnering with the Athletic Department to host any vendors or school organizations who support Rocket City. While the weather didn't cooperate, several hundred people still came out and had a great time. October brought **Cartoonversation** partnering with Wheeler Creative Studios at the Playhouse at White Lake. STATS students read stories to kids, performed substance misuse prevention skits and gave away



prizes. 75% of STATS students were new to the program this year. Not only did STATS students assist with these events but they have traveled 8 times to local middle schools, traveled 24 times to RP elementary schools, and spent a week in Washington D.C. for a national conference. Ending the year STATS

students will assist with the Ride With Pride Assemblies across the district.

Please join us next year at these exciting events as we continue to make them better than ever.

**Rocket City Kickoff** - The day of the First Home Varsity Football Game at RPHS

**Cartoonversation** - Oct. 14th at the Playhouse at White Lake

**Snow Much Fun** - Saturday after Mid-Winter Break at RPHS



# Social Action in Action: Communication is the Key

While most students were spending March 24th enjoying a day off of school, 7th grader Jonathan was busy teaching the teachers.

Earlier in the month, Jonathan had provided the Middle School staff an opportunity to learn how to support kids with communication differences in the classroom. His presentation was so powerful that he was invited to present to the High School teachers on their professional development day where over 50 professionals learned more about stuttering and how to facilitate positive communication experiences for their own students.

Assisted by Ms. Julie Raynor, Middle and High School Speech Pathologist and Ms. Ella Reck, Speech Pathology intern from CMU, Jonathan asked the principal for permission, created an invitation, wrote and practiced a short talk about stuttering and hosted a showing of the video: Kids Who Stutter Support Teacher: Branch Out as well as a Question and Answer session. Link to video on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/JBq6Mkmfst8>.

Jonathan began stuttering when he was 4 years old and has been receiving speech therapy since that time. As a young child, he often experienced frustration when he had difficulty communicating. When he was 8, he was offered the opportunity to attend Camp Shout Out: Youth Who Stutter (CSO), which helped him grow as a communicator.

CSO is an award-winning program founded in 2011 with the support of Reeths-Puffer Ed. Inc. and RP graduate and employee Julie Raynor. Camp Shout Out is a week-long program providing specialized services for youth ages 8-18 who stutter, combined with hands-on training for graduate students and speech-language pathologists within a traditional overnight summer camp environment. Since 2011, CSO has



served more than 500 campers and 450 speech pathologists and graduate students and has provided more than 17,000 hours of therapy and 26,000 hours of professional training. Participants from around the country and the world have attended CSO.

Stuttering is a communication disorder occurring in up to 5% of all school-age youth which for many results in significant emotional & social consequences, including communication withdrawal, bullying, & shame. A survey by the National Stuttering Association revealed that 80% of youth who stutter reported being bullied & 40% of adults had been denied a job or promotion.

Jonathan's presentation, along with the film and the free Student /Teacher /SLP Advocacy Guide, helped RP teachers learn: "It's ok to approaching students privately to come up with a communication plan", "Each student has different needs", "How I can create a classroom environment that is more welcoming to students with communication differences." One teacher stated, "I am not a new teacher, I've been around for many years and I

wish I would've had this information a long time ago, thank you Jon for teaching us." While another teacher said, "There are some things I heard in the film that really challenged the way I've used some activities. I need to re-evaluate some of my 'go-to' activities."

Thank you, Jonathan, for using your communication difference as a tool to help inform teachers and speak for others who are still working on finding their confidence in order to advocate for themselves.

Jon and Ms. Raynor would love to present to your school or organization about making your space a safe place for all people to communicate. Please reach out to [raynorj@reeths-puffer.org](mailto:raynorj@reeths-puffer.org) for more information.





# Winterguard Success Is a Result of Talent and Commitment

A combination of talent and commitment combined to result in a hugely successful season for our Winterguard. During each performance, the Winterguard team displayed an emotional and captivating show called “Dream State,” embodying the nostalgia of childhood. After winning several competitions and earning historic high scores, the team has been ranked among the top nationally and has so much to be



proud of. The show encapsulates athleticism along with artistic expression and requires a precision that only hours of daily practice could provide. Beyond the skills, the students have learned and demonstrated for others that hard work, vision, commitment, and team work result in success and pride. The team has made Rocket City proud!





# Staff vs. Student Basketball

From start to finish, our students planned a memorable event. The pre-game started with recognition of all of our students that participate in clubs and activities. From successful sports teams to a long list of clubs, it is clear that R-PHS has something to offer every student. We know that participating in something outside of the classes a student takes increases a sense of belonging and results in more success at school. There really is something for every student and it was great to recognize so much success.

The event ended with staff winning a competitive game of basketball versus a team of students. The game was close and the competitive spirit of our staff took a few people by surprise.

Our students planned the promotional materials, videos, announcements, referees, and coaches. The student leaders created an opportunity for students to connect with staff in a unique and enjoyable way.



## Honoring Our Veterans Through Collaboration

The student leadership teams from many buildings came together around one cause with the Veterans Basketball Game. Students collaborated to create many strategies to honor the heroes that have served our country and also raise money to support veterans right here in our community. Students were able to practice the leadership skills needed to collaborate around one event. When multiple grade levels, from elementary to high school, come together in partnership, amazing things happen. Once the donations were finalized, students met with the Jaeger Foundation to deliver a check for over \$5,000! The Jaeger Foundation helps purchase and train service dogs for veterans in our community to help them live the healthiest and most fulfilled life. Thank you to all veterans for your service.

Thank you, Rocket City, for your support with this event!







# Mama Mia

During March 9-11, R-P Fine Arts presented the hit musical, Mamma Mia! This is a show that cherishes building relationships and challenges typical family dynamics... Especially when that family includes three dads! Audiences enjoyed listening to the nostalgic sound of ABBA performed by some of R-P's best vocalists. R-P Fine Arts would like to thank our community for the unending support for our wonderful theatrical and musical programs that continue to grow and make positive changes in the lives of our students. Through the opportunity that the musical offers, students practice problem solving skills, communication, time management, collaboration, leadership, creativity, and technical skills along with developing lasting friendships and community belonging.







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# UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

May 15, 2023

June 12, 2023

July 17, 2023

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