

# Inside PPS

FEBRUARY 2012 • AN INTERACTIVE MONTHLY



**Portage** Public Schools

THE FUTURE LEARNS HERE

***What's Inside:***

- *New President*
- *Anti-Bullying Workshop*
- *Get Connected*

# Livingston Becomes President of Portage Education Foundation

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Peter Livingston, a partner at Varnum attorneys at law, has been named president of the Portage Education Foundation.

Livingston previously served as vice president of the Foundation and has been on the board since 2007. He replaces out-going president Dorilee Schieble, who served as president since 2009 and remains on the PEF board. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame and Notre Dame Law School, Livingston is chair of Varnum's corporate practice group, focusing on mergers and acquisitions and business succession planning. He has served as chairman of the Small Business Council of the Kalamazoo County Chamber of Commerce and as president of the Kalamazoo Country Club.

Other trustees of the Foundation include Jon Werme, Deb Droppers, Dorilee Schieble, Sarah Bricknell, Linda Lueth, Randy Van Antwerp, Ryan Cahill, Scott Williams, Dan Gavlas, and Judi Beam. Interim Superintendent Ric Perry serves as ad hoc advisor to the PEF.



*Peter Livingston, new PEF President*

The PEF is a 501c3 nonprofit established in 1990 to provide grants and scholarships in support of Portage Public Schools. Read more at: <http://www.portageeducationfoundation.org/>

## PEF Scholarship Deadline February 17

The deadline for Portage Education Foundation scholarships is Feb. 17.

The scholarships are for graduating seniors and range from \$500 to \$4,000. PEF scholarships available for both Central and Northern graduating seniors include the \$2,500 Joyce A. Vlieg Endowed Scholarship, being offered for the first time this year, for someone who plans to pursue a degree in elementary education with a preference for special education.

Scholarships are paid out directly to the college during the summer. Read more at: [www.portageeducationfoundation.org/scholarships.php](http://www.portageeducationfoundation.org/scholarships.php) or call the Foundation at 323-5167.



PPS

## News & Links

Everything Portage Public Schools Every Week

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PPS

**ON THE COVER** Portage Governments Launch Collaborative Marketing Effort. (see more on Page 4)  
• Inside PPS is published monthly and it is edited by Communications Specialist Traver McLaughlin: (269)323-5166 or [tmclaughlin@portageps.org](mailto:tmclaughlin@portageps.org).

## Snow Day Announcements

In the event that the District must cancel school due to weather, there are several ways to stay informed.

Prior to 6 a.m., the announcement will be on the School Closing Hotline (323-6800), sent out via Twitter and Facebook, posted on the District's homepage ([www.portageps.org](http://www.portageps.org)), through electronic communications such as the District's "News & Links" subscription list and individual school e-mail lists that parents subscribe to, and through the news media. Sign up for this free service at:

[www.portageps.org/sign-up\\_forms/sign-up\\_form\\_district.aspx](http://www.portageps.org/sign-up_forms/sign-up_form_district.aspx)

## "Pink Game" raises \$2500

Portage Central may have defeated Portage Northern in double overtime 55-53 on January 20th, but both teams set out to help defeat Cancer in the Second Annual "Pink Game" at Portage Central.

This year's \$2500 donation will be going directly to "American Cancer Society Hope Lodge". It offers lodging and transportation to and from Grand Rapids cancer treatment centers free of charge. The "Pink Game" made local headlines with the Kalamazoo Gazette/Mlive.com with articles before and after the game.



Team Members from Portage Central and Portage Northern Womens Team holding up the donation check in the amount of \$2,500 for Hope Lodge

## Recognize Excellence In Special Education



The KRESA Special Education Parent Advisory Committee would like to notify parents of students with IEPs about the opportunity to recognize school district personnel for the outstanding work they do with our students. This may be any person who works with the schools.

Deadline for submission is March 5th. Go to [www.kresa.org/pac](http://www.kresa.org/pac) to nominate.

Find Portage Public Schools on Twitter!  
 @PortageSchools  
 #GetConnected

## High School Parent/Teacher Conference Schedule Online

Portage Central Exam Schedule

<http://www.portageps.org/schools/high/chs/>

Portage Northern Exam Schedule

<http://www.portageps.org/schools/high/nhs/>

## Kindergarten Enrollment

### 2012-2013

If you have a child who will turn five before December 1, 2012, now is the time to let your elementary school know. If you do not know which school, check out our District Street Guide at: [http://www.portageps.org/departments/transportation/routes/streetguide\\_20112012.pdf](http://www.portageps.org/departments/transportation/routes/streetguide_20112012.pdf) to find out which elementary building is your home school.

### Kindergarten Parent Nights

March 1st	12th Street	Cafeteria	6:30
March 6th	Woodland	Activity	6:30
March 8th	Angling	Cafeteria	6:00
March 8th	Moorsbridge	Cafeteria	7:00
March 13th	Haverhill	Gym	6:00
March 15th	Amberly	Cafeteria	6:30
March 15th	Central El.	Gym	6:00
March 15th	Lake Center	Cafeteria	6:30

## Northern High Bands Online

Portage Northern High School Band is online and wants everyone to know about it. Students can find out what band has to offer, information for parents, and shared experiences by past and current members of PN Bands. They are also on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Go to <http://www.joinpnbands.org/> to get connected.



## Portage Governments Launch Collaborative Marketing Effort

*“Portage community values the collective strength of its municipal resources for the most efficient and affordable services”*

The City of Portage, the Portage District Library, and Portage Public Schools have agreed to band together for collaborative marketing to promote their services to residents and businesses, in addition to presenting a unified message to attract new families and business. Within the past week, a proclamation was approved by all three units of government: The Library board on Jan. 23, the City Council on Jan. 24, and the board of education on Jan. 30.

Leaders from the three units decided a joint effort would be economical and powerful. This initiative will help position Portage as a place that communicates with one voice and projects a cooperative spirit. Portage Mayor Peter Strazdas, Portage District Library Board Chair Betty Lee Ongley and Portage Schools Board President Bo Snyder all indicate that this collaboration could become a model for local governments in making the most of precious resources.

The proclamation states that the “Portage community values the collective strength of its municipal resources for the most efficient and affordable services” and how it is “imperative that the key governmental agencies work together as closely as possible to ensure the highest quality of life for the residents of the community” through governmental cooperation.

A joint-campaign, consisting of coordination of existing communications by all three entities – primarily social media and electronic communications – will be begin this spring, and since it is based on existing resources, will be largely cost-neutral. The effort will also be a resource for groups such as Southwest Michigan First and the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce.

One of the visible changes will be library and school information appearing in the City’s “Portager” publication, delivered by mail every other month to residents and businesses. The library and schools, both no longer publishing print editions of their community news, would share any additional costs with the city. Other joint communications will include a video and news featuring officials from the three units appearing together talking about the community and its resources.

The three entities have cooperated in marketing before, such as featuring links to one another’s web sites and information sharing, but this collaboration goes to a higher level with a combined marketing plan.



The three elected leaders following a planning meeting for the initiative: Gathering recently at City Hall (from the left) are Mayor Peter Strazdas, Library Board Chair Betty Lee Ongley, and Board of Education President Bo Snyder.



*Continued on Page 5*

# Bullying Prevention Workshop

On February 9th, renowned bullying prevention speaker Marcia McEvoy will be working with Woodland students on friendship skills and how to stop mean behavior and bullying. Teachers will be trained after school; a parent presentation will be given in the gym 7:00-8:30 on Feb. 9. This free event will help parents get information and tips that will help you help your child.

In this workshop, parents will be presented with information about how to work collaboratively with the school to reduce mean behavior. Strategies for addressing mean teasing, exclusion, name calling, bullying, ridiculing, threatening, intimidation, and harassment will be shared.

In this often humorous and interactive presentation, parents will learn about the dynamics of mean behavior as well as the impact of peer cruelty on students. Our school's plan to address even mildly hurtful behaviors will be discussed.

Parents will be taught strategies to help their children whether their students are bystanders, targets, or acting aggressively.

### About the Presenter:

*Dr. Marcia McEvoy is a licensed psychologist who has worked in a variety of professional settings including public schools, community mental health, a child guidance clinic, and two universities. She has been a clinician, prevention specialist, lecturer, author, and university instructor. She presently owns her own private consulting business. Dr. McEvoy is an expert in the area of violence prevention, including the prevention of youth suicide. She is the co-author of a book entitled Preventing Youth Suicide: A Handbook for Educators and Human Service Professionals. She is currently co-authoring a book on the prevention of school-based aggression, with an emphasis on bullying, mean teasing, intimidation, and harassment. She has trained thousands of school personnel, parents, and students on this topic, and is sought as a consultant to schools all over Michigan and the midwest.*

**HELPING KIDS GET ALONG AT SCHOOL:  
WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO REDUCE  
STUDENT CRUELTY AND IMPROVE  
PEER-TO-PEER RELATIONSHIPS**

**Marcia McEvoy, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist**

McEvoy Consulting, LLC  
Grand Rapids, MI

**February 9, 2012  
Woodland Elementary**

**7:00-8:30 PM**

**No cost**

# Portage Rotary Club Supports Community High Programs

The Portage Rotary Club was recognized during the January 30th Board of Education meeting for their involvement in the Portage Public Schools community, primarily Community High.

“Rotary’s motto is Service Above Self...” Portage Rotary Club President Randy Orwig stated while giving his recognition speech. “For the last 19 years we have annually provided college scholarships to Portage area youth ranging from \$500 to \$3,000 each. During the last two years, these have totaled over \$16,000 per year.”

Orwig elaborated on why in 2011 Community High was one Rotary’s local areas of focus. “Recognizing that most of the students are dealing with challenging circumstances in their social and home environments, we began by providing special recognition at their graduation event, and later started a student of the month program to provide ongoing encouragement.” Orwig continues, “The Portage Rotary Club strongly believes that you can truly make a difference in someone’s life, and bridge cultural differences through direct involvement, one person at a time.”

Rotary is a worldwide service organization, with over 1.2 million members. The Portage Rotary Club will be celebrating our 45th anniversary on March 20th.



From the left, Dr. Craig Ross, Portage Education Center administrator; Bo Snyder, president of the Board of Education; Randy Orwig, president of Portage Rotary Club; Randy VanAntwerp, vice-president of the Board of Education; Dr. Ric Perry, interim superintendent; and Clint Wagner, principal of Community High School.

### Portage Rotary’s Recent Community High Activities

- Providing meals at parent-teacher conferences, boosting attendance
  - Driving students to competition against other high schools
  - Providing school supplies, and helping to judge the talent show
- Providing a mentoring program where mentors act as “life coaches”
  - Developed a weekly Parent Mentoring Program
- Developing after-school programs with the Portage Community Center (This has recently received a grant from the Greg Jennings Foundation)
- Creating an Interact Club to facilitate leadership and community service projects

Like Portage Public Schools on Facebook and  
be in the know like over 1,000 Already have



# A "Master Class for Choirs"



Kalamazoo Bach Festival Society's 14th annual High School Choral Festival on Wednesday and Thursday, February 8 and 9, in Kalamazoo College's Light Fine Arts Building. Clinician Dr. Jerry Blackstone, Director of Choral Activities, Professor and Chair of Conducting, University of Michigan School of Music, will coach eleven school choirs from across southwest Michigan.

On Thursday, February 9, Portage Central and Northern, along with Marshall, Schoolcraft, and Three Rivers high school choirs will take part in the Festival at the Light Fine Arts Building on the Kalamazoo College campus. The Festival runs from 9:10 to 1:30 on Thursday. Blackstone will prepare and conduct all students in a performance of "Skip to My Lou," a traditional American folk song arranged by Paul Busselberg, from 12:20 to 1:20 p.m. each day with all choirs singing together.

The High School Choral Festival in February is open to the public. For further information regarding any of the Bach Festival's educational outreach events or concerts, visit their web site at [kalamazobachfestival.org](http://kalamazobachfestival.org).

# Fox 17 Hails Portage Teachers in Back-to-Back Months

For the second straight month, a Portage Schools Teacher has been honored by Fox 17 as their Teacher of the Week. January saw Woodland 4th grade teacher Michelle "MK" Kounelis. Mike Avery of Fox 17, taped a segment at Woodland that was aired on Fox 17's Morning Show Friday, January 27th. In December, Portage Central High French Teacher Sara Heil was honored with the same award.

## American Legion Offers Scholarship

American Legion post 207 is offering a \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior or graduate of Portage Schools, with a deadline of Friday, March 16, submitted to the American Legion Post, 10011 Liszt St., Portage, MI 49002. The scholarship is for a child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of a veteran, or for a veteran. Applicants provide a copy of a parent's, grand-parent's, or their own honorable discharge (DD form 214); high school transcript with 3.5 or higher GPA, cover letter with contact info, and a short personal statement up to 100 words on education goals.

## CURIOUS KIDS PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 29

6:30 - 8:00 P.M.

@ CURIOUS KIDS IN THE COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION CENTER

OPEN TO ALL FAMILIES WHO HAVE A

CHILD WHO WILL BE 3 OR 4 BY  
DECEMBER 1, 2012.

*Curious Kids*  
Portage Public Schools


# Northern Volleyball No. 1 GPA in State

"It is part of the culture that we are trying to build" said Varsity Volleyball Head Coach Dave Laing regarding Portage Northern being ranked #1 in the State for overall GPA. The team topped all Varsity Volleyball squads with a staggering 4.13 GPA. A complete List of Schools and the Rankings can be found on the Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association website.



Front Row (l-r): Kelsey Lewis, Sara Riesener. Second Row (l-r): Rachel Evans, Claire Piper, Sierra Penny, Abbey Lewis. Third Row (l-r): Coach Dave Laing, Rachel Lutz, Shayla Wolf, Kayla Morin, Liz Corbus, Madeline Franks, Kristen Higgins, Coach Sandy Simmons.





**Portage Education Foundation**  
PUTTING EXCELLENCE FIRST

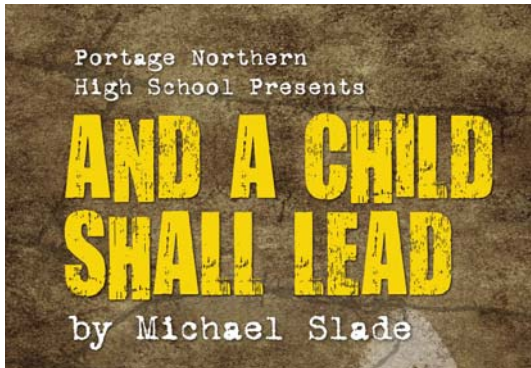
WHEN EDUCATION IS THIS GOOD POWERFUL THINGS CAN HAPPEN

## Spring Classic

auction & dinner

Sunday, March 25th  
5 - 7 p.m.  
The Commons  
Portage Central High School

269.323.5167 [www.portageeducationfoundation.org](http://www.portageeducationfoundation.org)



*And A Child Shall Lead* contains an ensemble cast starring John Kramer(12), Haley Labian(10), Nolan Marsh(12), Adam Mayer(11), Emily Morgan(12), Nathan Novaria(12), Katie Noyes(12), and Allyson Williams(12).

## Taking on a Tough, True Story

Northern High is taking a stuff story and putting it on stage with “And A Child Shall Lead” on select February dates, concluding on Feb. 12. A true story of children coming of age in Terezin, the “Jewish city” established by the Nazis near Prague as a way station before the death camps. In the face of unspeakable horror, these children use their determination and creativity to build lives filled with hope and beauty at the peril of being executed. Actual poems and stories are woven into a fast paced drama, evoking the universality of children caught in the insanity of war.

On-stage tickets are offered providing the audience with an intimate experience. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students online at [www.seatyourself.biz/pndrama/](http://www.seatyourself.biz/pndrama/). Post show talkbacks are planned. Some with our special guest, Dr. Larry Beer from Child & Family Psychological Services.

## Sign Language Class Connects to Elementary Students

The PCHS American Sign Language class hosted an activity program for our Woodland Elementary students in the Hearing Impaired Program. The ASL students held a pizza lunch then designed arts and crafts and game stations for the little ones to rotate through. The students had to utilize their signing skills they've been learning 1st semester to give directions and socialize with their new "buddies". A good time was had by all along with the added bonus of new friendships. The little ones were amazed



*Kelly Mott and Madie Burke with Woodland students (L to R) Kadeidra Epps, Mykl Makela, and Lexi Lane (piggyback)*

## Happening in the High Schools

Click the schools newspaper links below



**Northern  
Light  
READ NOW**



**Central  
Stampede  
READ NOW**

## Trio inducted into Huskie Hall of Fame

The 2012 Portage Northern Athletic Hall of Fame will induct Michael Im, Carl Latora, and Kim Taskey-Wise on Feb. 17 at the Igloo.

The Hall of Fame reception for the honorees begins at 5 p.m. and the ceremony taking place between the womens and mens basketball games at Niles.

**Michael Im '97- Swimming:** Two selections to All-state team, Class A state champion in the 100 yard backstroke. All-American his senior year. All-American honors in three disciplines at Harvard University.

**Carl Latora** – Former football, wrestling, baseball coach, teacher and athletic director. He retired in June of 2006.

**Kimberly Taskey-Wise '99-** two sport standout; Basketball and Volleyball. Three selections to the All-State team in basketball. In Volleyball, Two-time Gatorade Michigan Player of the Year and All-American in 1999.

# The Portage CONNECTION

Award Winning Alumni e-Magazine  
Alumni & Friends of Portage Public Schools  
Its a Free Bi-Annual Publication

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## Get Connected



## Get Up to Date with Portage Public Schools

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Award-winning Alumni e-Magazine **"The Portage Connection"**

Write on our **"Teacher and Staff Tribute"** Blog

Click the Logo to the Left to Visit our Website

## Over 1,000 "Like" Us



In case you missed it: January 13th, 2012 Facebook was able to notify all followers within seconds of the official announcement with this message of a Snow Day.

Dont miss out anymore, "Like" us today by clicking the logo to the left



**Portage Public Schools**  
**January 13, 2012 4:53 a.m.**  
**Portage Public Schools are**  
**Closed today due to Weather**

## @PortageSchools #followus



Keeping The District informed 140 characters or less

Daily tweets for everything Portage Public Schools

Followers are always the #firsttoknow the latest happenings @PortageSchools

Get daily news by clicking the logo to the left

# The Future Learns Here

## Portage Schools Begins Using Electronic Flyers

**NO MORE PAPER.  
THE DISTRICT'S  
E-FLYER PAGE  
IS ONLINE NOW!**

**CLICK HERE**

With the start of the new-year, Portage Schools has begun its electronic flyer program, as announced back in October. "The District is trying to be more efficient in how it distributes community organization information to students," says community relations manager Tom Vance.

Flyers are now posted on a new flyer web page. The site includes information for students, as well as general information for parents. Individuals with questions about the new system may call the Community Relations Office at 323-5167. Check out the new electronic flyers webpage at [www.portageps.org/departments/communications/flyers.aspx](http://www.portageps.org/departments/communications/flyers.aspx)

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