On September 13, members of the Senior School Student Diversity and Leadership Club engaged Middle School students in a conversation that increased their cultural competency through the topic of “Our Multicultural Selves.”

Hendrikia de Vries, author of “When a Toy Dog Became a Wolf and the Moon Broke Curfew,” spoke to Grade 8 students on September 17 about her personal experience as a child whose mother was a member of the resistance in Nazi-occupied Europe. Ms. de Vries vividly recalled memories, both hopeful and chilling, of her past, setting the scene for the students who were studying the Holocaust in their civics and English classes.

In October, the Middle School Community Builders organized a school-wide pink out in support of breast cancer. Students in all grade levels joined in by wearing pink on October 10.

Hugh Vasquez, a diversity and equity educator, gave a talk on campus about “Bias and the Brain,” which was open to the public, on October 23. He also imparted an equity and inclusion professional development session to faculty and staff and offered a drop-in session for students while visiting the Academy.

On November 2, Sewickley Academy hosted its annual FIRST Lego League Regional Robotics Tournament in the Events Center and Means Alumni Gym. Eighteen teams from across Western Pennsylvania attended, competing in two divisions. Sewickley Academy’s Middle School RoboPanthers Red and Black teams placed third and tenth, respectively, in their division.

On November 4, the Model United Nations Club participated in the 23rd Annual University of Pittsburgh Model United Nations Conference. Senior Luke Tyson was awarded the best delegate designation in his committee and was honored with a special certificate.

On November 5, members of the Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center visited Sewickley Academy to discuss Native American cultural practices. In two separate assemblies, the performers shared parts of their culture with our students, including traditional music and dance.

During the first week of November, 17 Senior School students went on a five-day Global Studies trip to Puerto Rico. The students, known as the Salsa Star Team, provided students the unique opportunity to work with a small school, Espacio A, in old San Juan, spending two days collaborating on activities and taking part in the school’s haunted house.

Sewickley Academy hosted two Veterans Day assemblies on November 11 to commemorate the service of our military heroes. Current parents Jim Balet, who spoke to Lower School students about the origin of Veterans Day, the work of our armed forces, and the importance of service, and Lieutenant Colonel Bryan Christopher Glass, who shared personal reflections of his experience in the military with Middle and Senior School students, were guest speakers.

Juniors Navin Rana and Simran Bedi represented Sewickley Academy at the Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education Honors Systems Conference at the Harker School in San Jose, California, on February 21-25.

Sewickley Academy celebrated Black History Month throughout February with guest speakers, cultural performances, workshops, and three divisions. On February 11, Sean Gibson, the executive director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, spoke to Middle and Senior School students about the history of the Negro Baseball League and the legendary Joshua Gibson, his great grandfather. On February 21, members of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority and Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity came to campus to explain the history of stepping to Lower and Senior School students.

On February 24, Middle School students had the opportunity to hear from the Director of Equity & Inclusion and Service Learning LaVern Burton as well as a panel of Senior School students who identify as African American plus alumnus Anthony Suber ’93. The following day, Lower School students attended a Black History Month assembly featuring special guest Mrs. Aisha Gunter who sang, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” Sophomore Anthony Wiles spoke to his peers about his great-uncle, Charles “Teenie” Harris, a famous photographer in the Pittsburgh area whose work now resides in museums and exhibits across the country, on February 26. Finishing out the month’s festivities on February 28, producers Tom Poole and Billy Jackson presented a documentary film about Wendell G. Freeman, civil rights activist and Tuskegee Airman, to Senior School students.

In partnership with Penguin Bookshop in Sewickley, the Lower School hosted author Gillian McDunn on March 5 in the Marion Hutchins Library. Students in Grades 4 and 5 had the opportunity to learn about writing, how to create memorable characters, and the importance of the revision process to transform stories into finished pieces.

The Lower School Student Council held a bake sale in March to support One Tree per Child Pittsburgh, which raised $780.

On May 1, faculty, staff, and administrators delivered congratulatory yard signs to each member of the senior class. The event was sponsored by the Alumni Office.

The annual Spirit of Community Thanksgiving Food Drive raised $775, which covered the cost of 35 turkeys and multiple Giant Eagle gift cards, for St. Vincent De Paul’s Good Samaritan Food Pantry in Ambridge.

Students participated in the annual Stack Up! Challenge in November, where students in 26 countries around the world tried to break the Guinness World Record for sport stacking. The new record, 638,503 stackers, was over 13,000 stackers more than in 2018. Congratulations to our Lower School students for being a part of a new Guinness World Record title for the “Most People Sport Stacking at Multiple Locations.”

Grade 5 student council representatives delivered 15 bags stuffed with toy donations from the annual Lower School Spirit of Giving Toy Drive to the East End Cooperative Ministries in East Liberty on December 11.

Sewickley Academy hosted its annual Taste of SA, which celebrates our cultural differences through cuisine, live performances, and more, on January 25.

Award-winning author Candace Fleming shared her passion and inspiration for writing with students in Grades 3-5 on February 11. She read from her book, “Clever Jack Takes the Cake,” and walked them through the process of writing “Giant Squid.”

On February 13, the Middle School Shakespeare Competition Club ventured downtown to the O’Reilly Theater to perform Shakespearean scenes and monologues for the Pittsburgh Public Theater’s annual contest. Two of our students’ scenes received honorable mentions, including “Macbeth” Act I, Scene IV in the Lower Division, and “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” Act I, Scene II in the Upper Division.

On February 24, Senior School students collaborated with School Registrar Debbie Mankowski to make blankets to help keep children in the Mooncrest neighborhood in Moon Township warm during the winter.

During the week of December 9, finalists from Grades 4-8 participated in the National Geographic GeoBee sponsored by the National Geographic Society. Katherine Varghese advanced to the qualifying test for the state competition.

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In February, junior Christina Walton and her robotics team won their third state title in the FIRST FTC Robotics Championship. In addition to being the winning alliance captain, the team was awarded the first place Innovative Award for a unique odometry system that Christina designed and built, the 2nd place Control Award, and the 3rd place Inspire Award.

Prateek Adurty, Tim Han, Aditya Menon, Ashwin Tayur, and Jiai Wang competed in the 29th Annual Western Pennsylvania Regional Science Bowl on February 22 at the Community College of Allegheny County’s South Campus, earning second place and a $790 cash prize for the Academy. The National Energy Technology Laboratory sponsored the competition.

Junior Ace Song received anHonorable Mention for Aspirations in Computing from the Western and Central Pennsylvania Affiliate of the National Center for Women & Information Technology for her manuscript, “Association of Air Quality and Cancer Mortality Rates: PM2.5 and O3 Trends Across U.S. Counties,” which was submitted to the Journal of Emerging Investigators.

Grade 7 student Rayna Thakkar participated with hundreds of students from across the region in the 2020 Pittsburgh National History Day competition, placing third in the junior individual website category for her project, “The Internet: Breaking Barriers and Connecting People through a Virtual World.”

Sewickley Academy Senior school students won the 56th Annual Indiana University of Pennsylvania Mathematics Competition, placing first with a large margin of victory.

In the National Latin Exam, Leon Jiao earned a gold medal, Natasha Karlik, Sarah Cao, and Gary Peng were awarded silver medals, and Spencer Krysinski and Joshua Kurian were presented with Magna Cum Laude and Cum Laude certificates, respectively.

Daniel Torres, Ayus Türkay, and Madeleine Wren were recognized in a high school Chinese speech competition organized by the Asian Studies Center at the University of Pittsburgh and the Chinese Language Teachers Association of Western Pennsylvania. Daniel earned two awards – an Excellent Speech Award for his presentation on introducing a Chinese movie “I Belonged to You” (我的全世界) and he received the Best Talent Show Award for a video of him performing Chinese yo-yo. Ayus’s presentation on a Chinese idiom story “对牛弹琴” and Madeleine’s presentation on introducing “One Memorable Birthday Party” both won Excellent Speech Awards.

Sophomore Srimayi Mulukutla’s original research, entitled “Antibacterial Effects of Copper Surfaces,” was published in the journal of Emerging Investigators this spring.

For the second year in a row, Sewickley Academy was recognized by Jostens for its dynamic and engaging yearbook, earning the 2020 National Yearbook Program of Excellence Award.

Sewickley Academy was awarded the Trib Media Sports Cup for the seventh time in the seven-year history of the cup! Sewickley Academy earned 375 points to finish 70 points ahead of Greensburg Central Catholic.

Senior J.F. Aber took the gold in the WPIAL Class AA Boys Individual Golf Championship on September 26 at Allegheny County Club with an even-par round of 70.

The varsity golf team won its seventh consecutive WPIAL Class AA title on October 10 at Cedarbrook Golf Course with a 406 stroke total.

The varsity girls tennis team captured the WPIAL Class AA title for the third straight year with a 3-2 victory over Knoch on October 17 at Oxford Athletic Club in Wexford.

The varsity girls tennis team defeated Knoch 3-0 on October 26, earning the PIAA Class A A title at Hershey Racquet Club. This is the team’s second consecutive state title and third in program history.

The varsity golf team won the PIAA Class AA championship by one stroke over Scranton Prep on October 23. This is the team’s second state title in three years.

The varsity cheerleaders held the inaugural Youth Night at the boys basketball game on January 17. Students joined the cheerleaders on the court at halftime to cheer the Panthers on to a victory over Mohawk, 54-27.

The swimming & diving team competed in the WPIAL Class AA Swimming & Diving Championship on February 27 at the University of Pittsburgh’s Trees Hall Pool. Sophomore Isabel Huang captured the gold medal in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2:06:04 and won the gold medal in the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 57:00. This is the second consecutive year that Isabel has earned two gold medals in WPIALs. Junior Simon Iwanokiv finished second with 422.90 points at the WPIAL AA Diving Championships.

Senior Zoe Luther was one of 20 scholar-athletes who received a $1,000 James Collins Scholar-Athlete Scholarship Award from the WPIAL.

Senior J.F. Aber, Alexis Barlock, Arjan Bedi, and Dimitri Garry will continue playing their sport at the collegiate level. J.F. will play golf at Wittenberg University, Alexis will play softball at Mount Union University, Arjan will play tennis at Carnegie Mellon University, and Dimitri will play baseball at Saint Vincent College.

The class collectively volunteered 4,760 hours of community service during their time at SA.

25% of the class graduated with a Global Studies Certificate.
Sophomore Betsy Watters won first place for her photo “Trash Under the Bridge” in the Pennsylvania Resource Council’s annual Gene Capaldi Lens on Litter photo contest in February. The picture shows the Sewickley Bridge with its reflection in the water, with litter accumulated on the shore. She also conducted a clean-up of the area for bonus judging points.

On December 10, sophomore Yidi (Sylvia) Wang performed at Carnegie Mellon University’s Holiday Harp Ensemble in the lobby of Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland. The ensemble consisted of members of the Pittsburgh Symphony, CMU Harp Department, Pittsburgh Opera Orchestra, Pittsburgh Youth Orchestra, and Ringgold School Harpists. The 30 harpists performed holiday favorites including “Waltz of the Flowers.”

On February 23, seventh-grader Rishul Sharma performed at Carnegie Mellon University School of Music's Philharmonic & Chorus concert at Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland.

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The Pittsburgh Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recognized three Sewickley Academy students for their impressive writing skills in February: Sophia Fruehauf received an honorable mention in the humor category for her essay, “Gambling at Jesus Camp,” and a Silver Key in the personal essay and memoir classification for “It Was Not Death.” Ayse Turkay received an honorable mention for her political cartoon, “Trump’s New Low,” and a Gold Key for her critical essay, “Make Room for Comics.” Anthony Wiles submitted seven pieces to three different categories – “If the Trees Could Talk,” a poem, won an honorable mention; his personal essay and memoir submission, “So, So, So Soulful Soul Food,” won a Silver Key; and his journalism entry, “The Invisible Mountaineers,” won a Gold Key. His four poems, “Chitlins’ and Hair Grease,” “For the Bone Marrow and Stem Cell Research,” “So, So, So Soulful Soul Food,” and “The Maid,” won Gold Keys.

On March 13, the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers announced the winners for the National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Ayse Turkay received a Gold Key for her critical essay, “Make Room for Comics,” and Anthony Wiles earned a Silver Key for his poem, “Chitlins’ and Hair Grease.”

Freshman Avari Venkat was scheduled to perform as a member of the children’s ensemble, playing a street uchen in the Pittsburgh Opera’s production of Carmen this past spring.

During the Academy’s annual opening assembly, Senior School English teacher Mrs. Ann Russell was named the Clark Faculty Chair and Middle School history teacher Ms. Kate Lukaszewicz was named the fifth R.P. Simmons Family Chair for Excellence in Teaching.

Health and PE teacher Shannon Rankin was inducted into the North Hills-Sports Hall of Fame on September 12. Shannon, North Hills Class of 1998, is one of five honorees who was recognized at the football game on September 13 at Martorelli Stadium.

School Library Connection, an extensive learning resource center for school library professionals, published an article written by Director of Libraries Ruth Neely in its October issue. Entitled “Sources, Censorship, & Sensibility,” the article was the result of multiple discussions last year about the Grade 8 capstone, “Citizen Action Project.”

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The first Wenning Workshop, designed to be a one-day creative project for a group of high school students hosted by the Academy, was on March 10. The workshop pays tribute to the remarkable artistic spirit of Bill Wenning ’85, who inspired his friends to explore the worlds of ideas and art, including David Darby ’85 and Sandra Hudak ’85, who initiated an endowment to fund this project.

Siovhan (Norris ‘02) Christensen appeared in several episodes of season two of Netflix’s Mindhunter in 2019 as Beverly Belt.

Carolee T. Bull ’81, professor and head of the Department of Plant Pathology and Environmental Microbiology in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University, is the project director for an interdisciplinary, multi-university team of researchers exploring bacterial pathogens causing leaf spot diseases that are damaging valuable crops such as watermelon and pumpkin. The project received a nearly $4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture in October.

Elizabeth “Betsy” Wentz teamed up with Jason Leviere of Santom Upholstery in Ross Township to produce masks for local businesses to do their part to contribute and help support those who need protective equipment. The duo has created 500 masks and has supplied several dozen to Sewickley Academy, Quaker Valley School District, local restaurants, military personnel, funeral workers, and grocery stores, including Safarini’s.

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Sewickley Academy
FOR WHO YOU ARE. FOR WHO YOU WILL BECOME.

315 Academy Avenue | Sewickley, PA 15143-1213

Breakthrough Pittsburgh celebrated 25 years of partnership with Sewickley Academy on August 1, 2019. This collaboration has enabled over 2,000 students to graduate from high school and be accepted into many colleges and universities across the nation.

On October 19, Sewickley Academy held its 12th annual Pancake Breakfast in honor of our local heroes and first responders who keep us safe. Over 130 people attended the breakfast, raising $785, which was split equally between the Sewickley and Edgeworth Police Departments and Cochran Hose Fire Company.

The 14th Annual Hansen Cup Memorial Golf Tournament raised $45,015, which directly benefits a current Sewickley Academy student by awarding them the W. Gregg Hansen Memorial Scholarship.

On Giving Tuesday, 132 donors contributed $34,645 to help unlock a total match of $20,000 due to the outpouring of support from parents, alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents, friends, faculty, and staff. Giving Tuesday raised $54,645 in support of Sewickley Academy’s 2019-2020 Annual Fund!

As the last decade ended, Sewickley Academy received a planned gift of nearly $600,000 for student scholarships from the estate settlement of Ms. Henriette E. Rougraff ’45.

On February 8, the Academy hosted its 33rd Annual Auction, “World of Pure Imagination,” at the Kimpton Hotel Monaco Pittsburgh. With the help of our sponsors, advertisers, donors, parent underwriters, and participating businesses, the Auction grossed over $206,000 to support educational excellence at Sewickley Academy.

Sewickley Academy’s Day of Caring was held on May 28 and raised $33,305 from 101 donors. The generosity of our community during the COVID-19 pandemic is much appreciated by the students, faculty, and staff.