

COMMENDATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS
APRIL, 2017

Boyce/Ft. Couch

The regional STEM Design Challenge was held on Monday, March 27, 2017, at Duquesne University. Teams of students are given a challenge to design and build a K'Nex structure, create a blueprint, and write a narrative about their structure. The teams of students must then build their structure from the blueprints within a 2-hour time period. At the 4-5 grade level, Boyce students Leona Chen, Rachel Thomas, and Ananya Tripathi earned second place. At the 6-8 grade level, Fort Couch students Will Closser, Joe Reeder, Zach Sileo, and Linus Friedman earned first place. Will, Joe, Zach, and Linus will be invited to participate at the state-level STEM Design Challenge in Harrisburg, PA, on Friday, May 19, 2017.

High School/Middle School

The regional PA High School and Middle School Computer Fairs were held on Wednesday, March 22, 2017, at the Heinz History Center.

At the high school level, Connor Byrnes earned first place in the Logo category, with his CPU inspired design for the 2018 PA High School Computer Fair. Connor also placed third in the Programming category, with his mobile app that connects to the high school's website to download and organize important information for students.

At the middle school level, Fort Couch students Reshma Gudla, Richa Mahajan, and Sophia Shi earned first place in the Logo category, with their *Bridge to Innovation* design for the 2018 PA Middle School Computer Fair. Fort Couch students Phoebe Chen, Sophie Chen, and Shana Reddy earned third place in the Web Page Design category, for their *Color Blindness* website. Boyce students Matthew Earley and Connor Hyatt placed first in the Animation category, for their *Dreamland: Adventures in Alice*.

Performing Arts students from the High School and Ft. Couch Middle School recently participated in the 2017 PMEA Music Performance Assessment on Thursday, March 30. Congratulations are extended to the High School Wind Ensemble and the Ft. Couch Symphonic Winds on receiving Superior Ratings.

High School

Upper St. Clair High School senior Mahima Reddy recently placed third in the 2017 Philadelphia Classical Guitar Competition, a two-day festival held on April 8-9, 2017. The Philadelphia Classical Guitar Society is a community of members dedicated to the advancement of the art of the classical guitar.

Upper St. Clair High School senior Aidan Grogan was recently awarded the G. Napier & Ellen T. Wilson Scholarship in recognition of his volunteer efforts at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Pittsburgh.

The scholarship, administered through the Pittsburgh Foundation, recognizes seniors who have served a minimum of 100 volunteer hours at the VA hospital and demonstrate dependability, loyalty, a good attitude and effort. Aidan volunteered more than 200 hours at the hospital for the past two summers.

In addition, Aidan has been involved with Carnegie Mellon University's Project Ignite, a student-run outreach program that provides an opportunity for students to work in a team and gain hands-on experience planning and executing a project. Aidan and his team built a robotic arm that will be showcased later this month.

For the second year in a row, a team of twelve Upper St. Clair High School students won the regional Mock Trial championship and advanced to the state finals. The 34th Annual Pennsylvania Bar Association Statewide High School Mock Trial Competition was held March 24-25, 2017, in Harrisburg.

The team is comprised of seniors Arushi Kewalramani (Team Captain), Amna Amin, Tyler Clark, Raahema Durrani, Yash Lahoti, Natalie Urban, Vicki Wang, junior Wyatt Keating, and freshmen Sunny Chai, Sam Dvorin, Ian Rankin, and Anika Sinha.

The Upper St. Clair High School Speech & Debate Team captured its first ever Pennsylvania High School Speech League Championship on March 18, 2017, at Bloomsburg University.

In addition to the PHSSL championship, the team had more students advance to the second day of competition than any other school that qualified for the tournament, and led District #3 (South Hills of Pittsburgh) to the district championship. The USC Speech & Debate Team is coached by teachers, Ben Edwards and Dave Watson.

Two Upper St. Clair High School students recently earned first place finishes at the regional Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science competition at Duquesne University, advancing to the state level competition.

Junior Kevin Chen earned a perfect score for his presentation and won the Directors' Award in the computer science category for his project titled, "Deep Learning Models of Transcription Factor Binding."

Sophomore Tanvika Sriram won special awards from the University of Pittsburgh Center for Energy and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Engineering Outreach Award. Her project is titled, "Clean Energy Using Bladeless Wind Turbine."

In addition to Kevin and Tanvika, junior Josh Meyer earned a second place score in the regional science competition for his project, "The Effects of Caffeine on Planaria."

Two individual swimmers and one relay team from Upper St. Clair High School earned medals at the PIAA Swimming Championships March 18-19, 2017, at Bucknell University.

Jack Fitzpatrick medaled in three events – finishing fourth in the Boys 100 Yard Backstroke, seventh in the Boys 200 Individual Medley and eighth as a member of the Boys Medley Relay team. Other members of the eighth place relay team include Nick Mudry, Jacob Jaime and Brandon Novak.

In addition, Abby Matheny earned a fourth place finish in the Girls 200 Freestyle.

Upper St. Clair High School Technology Education Teacher, Fred Peskorski, has been selected as an Honorable Mention for the 2017 Carnegie Science Awards in the High School Educator award category. The Carnegie Science Awards program was established in 1997 to recognize and promote outstanding science and technology achievements in western Pennsylvania. Mr. Peskorski will be honored at the Carnegie Science Awards on Friday, May 12, 2017, at the Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland.

An Upper St. Clair High School junior is one of two SWENext Northrop Grumman Community Award Recipients from the Pittsburgh area. Kriti Shah was formally recognized during the Society of Women Engineers conference, hosted by the Pittsburgh chapter, in February. Students were asked to propose a solution to improve Pittsburgh's infrastructure that helps both people and the environment. Kriti's solution was to melt snow on roads and bridges by using solar panels. As an award recipient, Kriti had the opportunity to help at the SWENext Design Lab Pittsburgh, a hands-on engineering experience designed to encourage girls to choose a career in engineering. In addition, she was honored at a banquet where she received a 3-D printed trophy and an Amazon gift card from the Northrop Grumman Corporation.

Upper St. Clair High School junior Kevin Chen has been selected as a 2017 Recognized Carson Scholar – having previously been honored with a Carson scholarship award.

Kevin is among nearly 8,000 gifted students from across the country that have been named Carson Scholars. Kevin was honored at the Carson Scholars Fund Annual Pittsburgh Awards Banquet on Saturday, April 8, 2017, at Heinz Field where he received a commemorative pin and certificate to acknowledge his continued academic and humanitarian achievements.

Congratulations are extended to Julie Swiech for being named student of the month for March, 2017 at Parkway West Career and Technology Center. Julie is a senior at the high school and a second year Veterinary Technology student at Parkway West.

Boyce

Matt Henderson, STEAM design teacher and 1:1 Initiative facilitator at Boyce Middle School has been selected as a National School Boards Association's 20 to Watch educator for the 2016-17 school year. Matt was honored during the Consortium for School Networking Conference on Monday, April 3, 2017, in Chicago.

The 20 educators identified for this prestigious recognition include classroom teachers, technology directors, and superintendents from 12 states. Submissions were reviewed by a national panel of educators comprised of previous 20 to Watch recipients.

Ft. Couch

A Fort Couch Middle School student earned a Silver Medal in the national 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Eighth grader Jaron Maine's print titled, "Jellyfish," was recognized among the top one percent of all submissions. By receiving a Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Silver Medal, Jaron joins a legacy of celebrated authors and artists. The 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards garnered more than 330,000 works of art and writing submissions by students in grades 7–12. Jaron advanced to the national art competition by earning a Gold Key Award at the regional awards competition.

A team of Upper St. Clair students is headed to Michigan to compete in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals set for May 24-27, 2017, at Michigan State University. To qualify, the Division 2 team finished second in the performance problem at the state finals.

Team members include Joseph Markovitz, Max Murtough, Brianna Lin, Eric Wang, Sammie Seewald, Victoria Cuba, and Constantine Tripodes. Their solution to the problem – 'To Be Continued: A Superhero Cliffhanger' – included a larger-than-life brain setting, a unique choreographed battle and a special smoke effect, earning them top marks for their problem solution and style elements.