

COMMENDATIONS & RECOGNITIONS

April 2020

HIGH SCHOOL

Upper St. Clair High School junior Morgan Meddings was recently selected as a 2020 Carson Scholar. The Carson Scholars Fund awards \$1,000 college scholarships to students in grades 4-11 who excel academically and are dedicated to serving their communities.

Nominated by School Counselor Thomas Marquis, Morgan is an active member of the Upper St. Clair High School community. She supports her classmates as a Natural Helper and Junior Mentor. She is a member of the mock trial team, Ski Club, National Honor Society, and Best Buddies, for which she was recently named president for the 2020-21 school year. Beyond her school involvement, Morgan is active within the greater community as well. Carson Scholars must have a minimum GPA of 3.75 and display humanitarian qualities through community service.

An Upper St. Clair High School sophomore was recently selected to serve as one of two student representatives on the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. Eva Rankin will begin a two-year term this spring. Each year, the Pennsylvania Association of Student Councils selects one student to serve in a two-year term as representative on the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. These students become an active voice on the State Board of Education by working closely with the adult representatives to draft and implement policies for basic and higher education in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As a State Board of Education student representative, Eva will represent Pennsylvania's students at bimonthly meetings in Harrisburg.

Five Upper St. Clair High School students recently earned Academic All-American Awards from the National Speech & Debate Association. Seniors Vivek Babu, Basir Khan, Alex Lampe and Anusha Neupane as well as junior Maddie Nolen have been honored for their academic rigor, competitive speech and debate success, and personal excellence. To earn this coveted honor, students must meet the following minimum requirements: 3.5 unweighted GPA; 1300 SAT or 27 ACT score; and 750 National Forensic League Honor Society Points. From more than 141,000 student members of the National Speech & Debate Association, fewer than one percent of students earn the Academic All-American Award each year.

An Upper St. Clair High School junior was recently selected as the first recipient of the Youth Mental Health Leadership Award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Keystone Pennsylvania. Elle Snyder was honored during the organization's statewide Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference on Friday, Feb. 28, 2020, at the Pittsburgh Airport Marriott. Elle is a founding member of the Student Wellness Steering Committee, a group that works to raise mental health awareness at the high school. She is also a member of the varsity girls' soccer team, which has also devoted significant time to the issue of mental health awareness. In addition to receiving the Youth Mental Health Leadership Award, Elle served as a presenter for the conference. In her presentation, "Creating a Movement: Why Young Voices Matter," she articulated why youth voices are critical in starting the conversation among their peers.

Three Upper St. Clair High School students placed first in the 23rd annual High School Japanese Speech Contest on Friday, March 6, 2020, at the University of Pittsburgh. Earning first place finishes were Alexis Wright, Level 1 – Poster Presentation; Stephanie Lu, Level 2 – Beginner Speech Presentation; and Caroline Knizner, Level 3 – Intermediate Speech Presentation. More than 100 high school Japanese language learners of all levels from the tri-state area compete in the regional speech and poster competition.

USCHS sophomore Vidhur Senthil received a mini grant through the Community Foundation of Upper St. Clair to offer a voluntary grocery delivery service. Vidhur will coordinate volunteers to deliver groceries to USC residents who are essential workers or those at a high risk of contracting COVID-19. This service will have no extra delivery fee making it very accessible for everyone. The grant will be used to provide 25 \$10 gift cards, which will be given to volunteers who complete three deliveries.

Jennifer Kirk, Upper St. Clair High School counselor and curriculum leader, was recently elected as the 66th president of the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association, (PSCA). Currently, Mrs. Kirk is serving her second consecutive year as PSCA secretary where she has assisted in a wide variety of initiatives designed to lead school counselors in PA. For the upcoming 2020-21 school year, Mrs. Kirk will serve as PSCA's president-elect. She will assume her presidency on July 1, 2021, and will serve until June 30, 2022.

FORT COUCH

A team of four seventh graders from Fort Couch Middle School placed first in the 6-8 grade division at the regional STEM Design Challenge on March 3, 2020, at Duquesne University. Ryan Buonomo, Max Biedrzyck, Ben Seewald and Ryan Popp qualified to compete at the state-level competition. The STEM Design Challenge encourages students to collaborate as they apply the Engineering design process to accomplish a given goal. The students' winning design is intended to help generate clean energy using the motion of the waves.

A robotics team, comprised of Fort Couch Middle School seventh graders, took home the gold at the Western Pennsylvania Middle School IQ State Championship. The team, which also earned the STEM Research Project Award, is comprised of Owen Bell, Ian Dvorin, Ryan Hyatt, Rohan Mehta and Carlee Santel. This marks the second consecutive year that the team, Gear Grinders, has won this competition. The robotics tournament was held on Thursday, March 5, 2020, at Clarion University.

BOYCE

Boyce Middle School sixth grader Ayan Amin was named among 100 semifinalists eligible to compete in the 2020 National Geographic GeoBee State-level Competition for Pennsylvania. In December 2019, Ayan was crowned Boyce champion at the school-level competition. School champions were administered an online qualifying test, which was submitted to the National Geographic Society.

BAKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

An Upper St. Clair fourth grader was crowned champion at the 70th Annual Western Pennsylvania Spelling Bee on Saturday, March 7, 2020, at Robert Morris University's Yorktown Hall. Raana Parchuri, from Baker Elementary School, advances to the Scripps National Spelling Bee.