

# Connections



Volume XXVI No. 3

Summer 2008

## Class of 2008 ready to take on the future

The Northville High School Class of 2008 had a lot to be proud of as the more than 500 graduates received diplomas during the May 31 graduation ceremony at Compuware Arena in Plymouth.

Fifteen students qualified as National Merit Scholars and the class was awarded a record \$12 million in scholarship funds.

"What you have accomplished in your academic careers has been nothing short of amazing," Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski told the class. "We have watched you become the outstanding people you are today. But now is not the time to rest on your laurels. You still have much to do, so much to learn, so much to give. Beginning tomorrow you will take the first steps in your new journey — one that will help to define how you will make a difference in the world."

"Many of you will pursue education or training that will lead to your chosen careers. Others will enter the working world right away. Regardless, it's not so much about the type of work you choose to do as much as the passion and dedication you bring to the job each and every day."

Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan gave the evening's keynote address.

*See GRADUATION on page 6*



### Celebrate!

**Class of 2008 graduates Christopher Fowlkes (left) and Courtney Gates make their way into Compuware Arena for the ceremonies.**

*Photo by Steve Fecht*

## Training helps crisis teams practice response in event of a disaster

One Friday afternoon last spring Northville Public Schools officials gathered with local police and fire officials at Hillside Middle School to plan for something they all hope will never happen — a crisis in or near one of the district's school buildings.

At the meeting, the crisis teams from each of the district's 12 buildings — comprised of the school principal and five to nine other key individuals — were presented with an emergency scenario (called a "table-top exercise") and asked to detail how they would react using the district's emergency response protocols. Police and fire officials from Northville Township, Novi and Plymouth also were on hand to share their protocols, offer suggestions for improving the district's response plans, and to describe the support and resources they can offer the district in a crisis situation.

"It was extremely valuable to have these first responders from our local police and fire departments there to react and offer suggestions as our teams formulated their plans," said Northville Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Dave Bolitho. "While they already have copies of our protocols, the table-top exercises helped our police and fire officials see how we would put these plans into action. We also gained a better understanding of the important role our crisis teams play during that critical time before police and fire officials arrive on the scene, as well as how we can support these first responders once they are there."

For their table-top exercises, crisis

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District Newsmakers

## Northville Board of Education approves three-year contract with custodial, transportation, food service and maintenance employees

The Northville Board of Education at its June 24, 2008 meeting approved a three-year contract with Teamsters Local 214 representing the school district's more than 160 custodial, transportation, food service, and maintenance and maintenance technology employees. The agreement will save the school system about \$1.2 million over the life of the contract, enabling the district to continue to employ these valuable support services workers.

"We are pleased with the terms of the contract and appreciate the understanding and dedication of our support services employees during these challenging budgetary times," said Northville Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski. "The decision on the part of the Board of Education earlier this year to explore the privatization of support services as a way to control costs and protect classroom learning was a difficult one. We already have great employees and great service in all these areas.

"Approval of the contract means the district will forgo implementation of privatization of services for the duration of this agreement. We look forward to continuing the outstanding relationship we have enjoyed with our support services employees for so many years."

The agreement, which covers the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years, includes a two percent reduction in the current wage schedule and a "salary step" freeze for the three years of the contract. ("Salary steps" increase an employee's wages based on his or her years of service to the district.) A two-tier wage scale will go into effect on July 1, 2009 with wages for new employees 22 percent below the scale for current employees.

In addition, employee annual contribution toward the cost of Community Blue PPO2 health plan coverage will increase to \$390 a year. Employees will still have the option to select coverage under Community Blue PPO1 or Health Alliance Plan (HAP) and pay the difference for the more expensive coverage.

Other components of the contract include the elimination of longevity; a reduction in over time; and the ability to schedule staff for field trips, snow days and school breaks in a more cost-effective manner.

"The board is deeply grateful to the custodial, transportation, food service and maintenance staff for their support in reaching this agreement," said Northville Board of Education President Joan Wadsworth. "We recognize the sacrifice involved. We are delighted to be able to keep our terrific staff and know that the school community is delighted as well."

Contract negotiations between the school district and the Northville Education Association (NEA) (representing the district's more than 500 teachers), as well as the district's other bargaining units, are expected to continue throughout the summer. The NEA contract expires on August 25, 2008.



**Connections** is a publication of Northville Public Schools.

We would like to hear your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to e-mail

Janet Naughton, Editor, at [jmnaught@aol.com](mailto:jmnaught@aol.com).

You also can find *Connections* on the district's website at

[www.northville.k12.mi.us](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us).



### Picture perfect

Thornton Creek Elementary School fifth graders painted their school community from their perspective in a colorful mural that dons a wall in the Thornton Creek cafeteria. Art teacher John Betley (left), with Student Council representatives from the four fifth grade classes, oversaw creation of the mural. "The mural supports our student culture," said Principal Sharon Irvine, "It is student-generated, it represents our students' perspective, and it adds an artistic dimension to our cafeteria." Funding for the mural was provided through a grant from the Mothers' Club of Northville.

# Alicia Parsons new principal of Ridge Wood Elementary School

A highly skilled and compassionate teacher and school principal for 13 years, Alicia Parsons has been named principal of Northville Public Schools Ridge Wood Elementary School.

The Northville Board of Education at its June 10, 2008 meeting unanimously approved Parsons' appointment. She succeeds Nancy Raynes, who retired at the end of the 2007-08 school year after 35 years as an educator including nine years with Northville Public Schools. Parsons assumed her principal duties on July 1.

"Alicia comes to us with outstanding credentials as both a teacher and a school administrator who has a clear understanding of the complexities involved in ensuring educational success for all children," said Northville Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski. "As a principal, she has faced some very challenging issues and, each time, has acted responsibly and compassionately in the best interest of her students and families.

"With Alicia's extensive knowledge and experience, I am confident we will continue the legacy of educational excellence and a strong school community at Ridge Wood."

For the past four years, Parsons has been principal at Hamburg Elementary School, part of Pinckney Community Schools. Prior to becoming a principal, she served in various teaching positions at Pinckney Middle School and Navigator School (grades 5-6) working with students with special needs.

While at Navigator, Parsons received a three-year Quality Assurance Review Grant from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Educa-

at Hamburg to provide teachers with additional resources and materials. She also worked with her staff to develop a Professional Learning Community at Hamburg in which teachers continuously work with ongoing assessment data to improve instruction and student learning. The strategies were later adopted across the Pinckney school district.

"I am excited to be joining the Ridge Wood community," Parsons said. "I look forward to meeting

*"Alicia comes to us with outstanding credentials as both a teacher and a school administrator who has a clear understanding of the complexities involved in ensuring educational success for all children."*

*—Northville Superintendent  
Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski*

tion and Early Intervention Services to study how best to use data to support and focus instruction so students in all categories achieve at the same rate.

As a principal, Parsons participated in the development and supervision of a district program for elementary students with emotional impairments, as well as helped secure funds and oversee the creation of a building-wide book room

the outstanding teachers, students and families. I want to know what they are most proud of about their school community and what they love most about their school. And, I want to know in what areas they would like to see their school community grow and what they would like see happen more. This will help me picture where I fit in, how I can help, and where I need to learn.

"I'm also excited to be joining a school district with such a vast experience and strong commitment to Professional Learning Communities as a way to enhance student learning and success."

Parsons earned her bachelor of science in elementary education with an endorsement in special education, mentally impaired, from Eastern Michigan University. She has a master of education in education leadership from Wayne State University.

Parsons lives in Chelsea, Michigan, with her husband, Terry, and their two children — Courtney, 15, and Alex, 14.



**New Ridge Wood Principal Alicia Parsons**



Visit our website at

[www.northville.k12.mi.us](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us)

# Join the Northville Educational Foundation Corral Club

The Northville Educational Foundation (NEF) Corral Club is welcoming new members, as well as encouraging past contributors to renew their memberships and invite a friend to join.

With each membership, Corral Club members help build the Northville Educational Foundation's endowment funds, which support a variety of academic and enrichment programs offered by Northville Public Schools.

Donors who contribute \$150 or more to the Northville Educational Foundation will become members of the Corral Club, and, in recognition of their generous donation will receive:



- A reserved Parking Pass for all Northville High School (NHS) Home Varsity Football Games: Corral Club members receive a parking pass for a space in the prime parking lot behind Cooke School for fall Northville High School home varsity football games on Thursday, August 28, and Fridays, September 12, September 26, October 10 and October 17. The Corral Club parking lot is reserved for Corral Club members only with a parking attendant.
- Membership in the Northville High School Athletic Boosters Club and a 2008-09 NHS Family Sports Pass: The NHS Athletic Boosters Family Sports Pass will permit the Corral Club member's immediate family entry into all regular season NHS sporting events, including hockey, throughout the 2008-09 school year (a \$75 value).
- Member reception and reserved priority seating at the NHS Winter Holiday Concert and the Spring Musical: Purchase

reserved tickets with priority seating at a selected performance of the NHS Winter Holiday Band and Choir Concert and the NHS Drama and Spring Musical. The Foundation will host a reception at Northville High School for Corral Club members prior to each event with light refreshments.

The NEF Board of Directors formed the Educational Foundation in 2000 as a supporting fundraising entity for Northville Public Schools and is recognized as an exempt 501(c)(3) organization. The Northville Educational Foundation is building an endowment to support academic and enrichment programs offered by Northville Public Schools. The Foundation's earnings will help support programs that cannot be supported by the district's operating funds.

The Corral Club is accepting new members, as well as membership renewals for the 2008-09 school year. For more information or questions, contact Jan Purtell at 248-344-8458 or e-mail NEF@northvilleschools.org or visit the NEF website at www.northville.k12.mi.us/district/educational-foundation.asp

Please complete the form below and send your donation of \$150 or more payable to the Northville Education Foundation by August 8, 2008. Memberships will be assigned in the order qualifying donations are received. After receipt of donations, sports passes and parking passes will be mailed to home addresses prior to the first football game. Later in the school year more information will be sent via e-mail regarding purchasing tickets to selected concert and musical performances.

## Northville Educational Foundation Corral Club Membership

Member Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print or type)

Membership Status: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Membership

Sports Passes: \_\_\_\_\_ None required \_\_\_\_\_ # passes (number of people in immediate family – list members below)

List Family Adult Names: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

List Student/Child Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: (City/State/Zip) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Cell: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ \$150 Corral Club Membership \$\_\_\_\_\_ Additional Donation

*Donations that exceed the value of donor benefits received are deductible to the full extent permitted by the law.*

**Please send this form with your donation payable to the "Northville Educational Foundation" by August 8, 2008 to:**

Northville Educational Foundation, c/o Northville Public Schools, Education Partnerships, 501 W. Main St. Room 310, Northville, MI 48167

### Northville Educational Foundation—Enhancing Educational Excellence

Phone: (248) 344-8458 - Fax (248) 347-6928 • E-mail: NEF@northvilleschools.org

c/o Northville Public Schools—501 W. Main St.—Northville, MI 48167

Web site: www.northville.k12.mi.us/district/educational-foundation.asp

Northville Educational Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization that solicits and manages endowment funds, tribute gifts, bequests and donations that will benefit Northville Public Schools. Donations that exceed the value of donor benefits received are deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

# PTA Reflections competition yields record number of winners for Northville schools

How can you make a difference? That was the question facing Northville students who chose to compete in this year's National PTA Reflections program.

Each year, kindergarten through 12th grade students from across the country enter the PTA-sponsored arts competition. Work can be entered in six categories: literature, music composition, visual arts, photography, dance choreography and video production. As the title of the program implies, entries must "reflect" that year's theme.

Northville Public Schools always has a large number of student entries, but the 2007-08 school year marks the first time that seven students have gone beyond the state competition to the national level.

Northville students submitted 579 entries, of which 121 went on to the state level. Twenty of those entries were chosen to receive state level awards, including the seven that were selected to go on to the national competition.

"I've been the district coordinator for Reflections for several years, and I've never seen more than three entries go on to nationals," said Northville parent Sue Laabs. "What a wonderful honor for Northville Public Schools to have seven this year!"

"The icing on the cake is that one of those seven won an award of merit at the national level!"

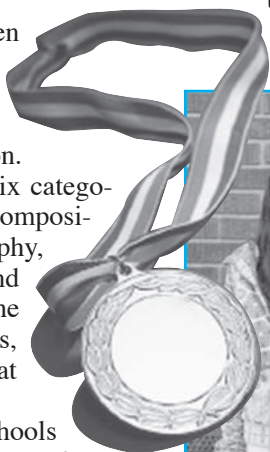
That national winner is Hillside Middle School photographer Adam Pond. Adam's photo depicted a tomb of an unknown soldier and was entitled "I can make a difference by... remembering the forgotten."

Two other Northville students received special awards in the Michigan PTA Reflections competition. Northville High School student Mark Maguire's photo entry showed a person's face below the eyes and reflected his thoughts on how he can make a difference by not judging people by their appearances. This entry earned him

the "Best of Theme" out of all the K-12 photography entries in the Michigan competition. Silver Springs student Victoria Zaremba's musical composition titled "I'm sorry" earned her the esteemed Connie Ernst Award. This award is bestowed on the

best interpretation of theme from all state entries submitted, in all categories and all grade levels.

All 20 state level winners were honored at the Northville Board of Education meeting on May 13. Next year's Reflections theme is "WOW!"



Eight of the state Reflections winners attended the May 13 Board of Education meeting. They are (back row, from left) Sonia Prabhu, Meads Mill Middle School; Isabella Corsi, Ridge Wood Elementary School; Victoria Zaremba, Silver Springs Elementary School; and Mark Maguire, Northville High School (NHS). (Front row from left) Rachel Holmes, Thornton Creek Elementary School; Nicholas Maiz, Moraine Elementary School; Josh Herdoiza, Thornton Creek; and Collin Kittrell, Amerman Elementary School. Not pictured are Jacquelyn Genaw, Moraine; Jacquelyn Turner, NHS; Chandler Candela, Hillside Middle School; James Xue, Amerman; Adam Pond, Hillside; Laura Pond, Hillside; and O'Malley King, NHS.

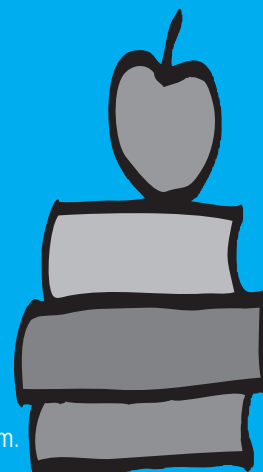
## First day of school, Tuesday, Sept. 2

Tuesday, September 2, will be the first day of the 2008-09 school year for Northville Public Schools students. In a June meeting, the Board of Education announced the start date, which will be a full day of school. High school and middle school orientation days for 2008-09 are:

- Northville High School
  - 9th Grade — Tuesday, August 19, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
  - 10th Grade — Wednesday, August 20, 8-11 a.m.
  - 11th Grade — Thursday, August 21, 8-11 a.m.
  - 12th Grade — Wednesday, August 20, 12:30-3 p.m.
  - Make Up Registration — Monday, August 25, 8-10 a.m.

- Hillside Middle School — Monday, August 25
  - 8th Grade — 8-10 a.m.
  - 7th Grade — 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
  - 6th Grade — 1:30-3:30 p.m.

- Meads Mill Middle School — Monday, August 25
  - 8th Grade Last names A-K at 8 a.m. • L-Z at 9 a.m.
  - 7th Grade Last names A-K at 10:30 a.m. • L-Z at 11:15 a.m.
  - 6th Grade Last name A-K at 1:30 p.m. • L-Z at 2:15 p.m.



## Graduation

*Continued from page 1*

### Class of 2008 highlights include:

- 3 National Merit Scholar Finalists
- 1 National Merit Scholar Semi-Finalists
- 11 National Merit Scholar Commended students
- 79 students graduating Phi Beta Kappa
- 80 students graduating Summa Cum Laude (GPA 3.8-4.0)
- 95 students graduating Magna Cum Laude (GPA 3.5-3.79)
- 165 students graduating Cum Laude (GPA 3.0-3.49)
- 155 President's Award for Excellence in Education honorees
- 205 Michigan Competitive Scholarship—Certificate of Recognition recipients
- 350 Michigan Merit Award recipients



From left: Jack Higgins, Allison Holmes and Scott Hetu.



Natasha Gaiski



Class officers (from left) Rob Barcelona, Michael Collins, Habib Khan, Carly Goldberg and Eve Avdoulos.

Photos by Steve Fecht

## District Newsmakers

### School Bus Driving Champ

Congratulations to Northville school bus driver Dave Shannon who recently placed third in the Wayne County School Bus Driving Championship and seventh in the statewide competition.

Shannon competed against 67 other school bus drivers from throughout Wayne County on May 17 at Northville High School. At the state championship on June 19 in Grand Ledge, Shannon competed against 47 of the top school bus drivers in the state of Michigan. Drivers were judged on 11 different precision driving maneuvers, a written test and a vehicle inspection.

Shannon has been a bus driver for 18 years, including five years with Northville Public Schools.

"Dave is a very safe driver," said Northville Transportation Coordinator John Bojanowski. "He knows what a school

bus can and cannot do and he knows the danger zones around the bus. Dave really enjoys his job."

### Winchester School of Excellence Award

Winchester Elementary School has been certified by the National PTA as a Parent Involvement School of Excellence. The certification recognizes schools that uphold the highest standards of parent involvement. Winchester is one of only eight schools (including Northville's Amerman Elementary School) statewide and 649 nationwide to receive the designation.

### Mustang pride

The 2007-08 school year marked the most successful year ever for Northville High School athletic teams with 16 Western Lakes Athletic Association (WLAA) Division Championships, nine WLAA Conference Championships, six state dis-

trict championships and two state regional championships. In addition, nine teams received state rankings including Boys Cross Country, ninth in the state; Girls Golf, third in the state; Boys Tennis, 13th in the state, Boys Soccer, state semi-finalists; Girls Swimming and Diving, fifth in the state; Boys Swimming and Diving, sixth in the state; Gymnastics, fourth in the state; Girls Tennis, eighth in the state; and Boys Golf, third in the state. During the school year, 35 students also achieved individual All-State honors.

Northville student-athletes not only perform well on the field of competition, they also excel in the classroom. More than 40 student-athletes were recognized as Academic All-State and eight teams were named Academic All-State Teams including Girls Golf, Volleyball, Boys Tennis, Girls Swimming and Diving, Boys Swimming and Diving, Boys Basketball, Softball and Girls Soccer.

# Response *Continued from page 1*

teams for Northville High School, the district’s two middle schools and the Cooke School special education center program were asked to respond to an active shooter in their individual schools. The crisis teams for the district’s six elementary schools, the Old Village School special education center program and the Early Childhood Center responded to a toxic spill near their schools.

“Overall, our crisis teams did a great job of assessing the threat and designing the appropriate response for their individual buildings and student populations,” Bolitho said. “We also were able to identify areas where we need to improve such as being consistent in implementing protocols across all of the buildings so our police and fire first responders will know what to expect when they arrive.”

Northville Public Schools is part of a six school district consortium awarded a \$569,000 grant by U.S. Department of Education in summer 2007 to help enhance and fortify readiness and emergency response management plans in their schools. Other school districts participating in the Western Oakland-Wayne (WOW) Safe Schools Consortium are South Lyon, West Bloomfield, Huron Valley, Plymouth Canton and Walled Lake. The consortium is one of only five in Michigan and 92 nationwide to receive funding under the federal Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grant program.

Crisis team training using table-top exercises is just one component of the consortium REMS grant. In preparation for the table-top exercises, the crisis teams at each of the schools participated in National Incident Management System (NIMS) and threat assessment training.

The next step in crisis team training will take place on September 18, 2008 when each of the school districts in the WOW Consortium will simultaneously conduct a full scale disaster

simulation — including participation from local police, fire and other community support agencies — at one of their schools. Meads Mill Middle School has been selected as the site for Northville’s simulation. The exact nature of the disaster simulation will not be known (except by a few consortium and district officials) until it happens.

“Our first priority is always to provide a safe place for our students to learn by regularly assessing and enhancing our school safety and security measures and training our employees to recognize and react to potential threats with

an eye towards preventing an incident,” Bolitho said. “At the same time, we need to be confident that we have the knowledge and training we need to respond should an incident occur.”

The status of the other components of the WOW Consortium grant include:

- A district-wide emergency alerting system for

school families will be in place by the start of school in September.

- Electronic tactical maps of Northville High School and Hillside and Meads Mill middle schools will be completed and made available to local law enforcement officials by the start of school in September.
- The district’s Pandemic Influenza Plan was completed and approved by the Wayne, Oakland and Washtenaw county health departments in June.
- Safe schools workshops to help school families identify and report safety issues will take place across the district during the 2008-09 school year.
- A new-hire training DVD that outlines safety and security procedures for all new hires and substitute staff

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*“Our first priority is always to provide a safe place for our students to learn by regularly assessing and enhancing our school safety and security measures and training our employees to recognize and react to potential threats with an eye towards preventing an incident.”*

—Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Dave Bolitho

**Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy**

It is the policy of the Board of Education and the School District not to unlawfully discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, height, weight, marital status, handicap or disability. Concerns or questions may be directed to the following offices at 248.349.3400. Title IX and Title VI, the Office of Instructional Services; and Section 504, the Special Services Department. (See Board Policy No. 1440.93.)

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Those who sign up for the electronic mailing list can select the school district information they receive via LISTSERV. Options include details about school closings and other emergencies, transportation, athletics and the district’s Early Childhood Center program, as well as important news from specific schools.

To subscribe to the Northville Public Schools LISTSERV service, go to the district website ([www.northville.k12.mi.us](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us)) and click on the LISTSERV option in the upper right-hand corner. News sent to subscribers will include short bulletins with critical information and, when appropriate, links to the district website for more details.

