

# Connections



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## Northville and Detroit students join forces to feed the hungry here and around the world

School children from suburban Northville and inner-city Detroit joined forces to learn about world hunger and, most importantly, do something about it through the Kids Against Hunger Michigan Coalition "Michigan Project."

The seven food packaging events, which took place between January 27 and April 7, brought together young people from different experiences and cultures to work and learn at Detroit area landmarks including the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Gleaners Community Food Bank in Detroit, Fort Street Presbyterian Church in Detroit, Compuware headquarters in Detroit, and the Mexican Community Center in Detroit.

Kids Against Hunger is an international, volunteer-driven organiza-

tion dedicated to providing food to malnourished and starving children throughout the world, including right here in Metro Detroit. The organization partners with local schools, churches and other community groups to organize food packaging events where as many as 20,000 meals can be assembled in a three-hour period. Through the Kids Against Hunger "Michigan Project," which specially tailors food-packaging events to the school setting, last year alone Michigan school children assembled more than 1.1 million meals.

This marks the fourth year Northville and Detroit students have come together to package food for Kids Against Hunger as part of a partner-

*See HUNGER on page 10*

## District school improvement process tool for enhancing student success

Over the past 11 years Northville educators from across the school district have come together through a powerful, district-wide continuous school improvement process that enhances and sustains student learning with the ultimate goal of ensuring success for all students, at all levels and abilities.

The annual school improvement process begins at the individual school level where school improvement teams comprised of the principal, teachers, parents and students meet throughout the school year to identify student learning and school climate improvement goals specific to the school, review data, establish plans, implement interventions, and document results.

Then once a year, all of the individual school improvement teams come together with the District School Improvement Team over a two-day period in November and December (the meetings are scheduled a week or two apart) to present their school improvement plans, share successes, grapple with challenges and exchange ideas.

"The process of bringing all of the school improvement teams together through the District School Improvement Team meetings is extraordinarily positive, and has been a catalyst for improvement efforts across the district," said Assistant Superintendent Mary Kay Gallagher, who leads the annual gatherings. "As early childhood, elementary, middle school, high school and special education center program teams share their improvement goals, successes, and challenges we continue

*See SUCCESS on page 11*



**Silver Springs third graders work side-by-side with students from Detroit's Bennett Elementary School at Gleaners Community Food Bank to package food for Kids Against Hunger.**

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## District officials closely monitoring impact of federal Stimulus Plan on schools

There has been much speculation and discussion recently about the impact the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Stimulus Plan) will have on local school districts in Michigan. However, the truth is, much remains unknown.

Northville Public School officials are working closely with representatives from the Wayne County Regional Educational Agency, the Michigan Association of School Boards and the Michigan Association of School Administrators to monitor and interpret information at both the state and federal levels as it becomes available.

In an effort to keep school families and community members informed, district officials will provide regular updates on the district website ([www.northville.k12.mi.us](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us)) and via its LISTSERV e-mail service as details of the Stimulus Plan and its impact on Michigan and Northville unfold.

“While we are most appreciative of the financial assistance from the federal government in support of our state and our public school students, no one at this point can say definitively how these funds will be divided between K-12 and higher education, how funds can be used at the local district level, or how much will go to each individual school district,” said Northville Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski. “As we wait for the specifics to become clear, it is important for school parents and community members to remember that the Stimulus Plan is a short-term solution to our state’s long-term economic stability and any dollars received by Northville Public Schools will not reflect a financial windfall for the school district.

“With this in mind, as the Northville Board of Education and district officials begin planning for the 2009-10 school year, we will continue to be committed to creating a budget that is reasonable, responsible and focused on protecting the important learning that takes place every day in our classrooms,” Dr. Rezmierski added.

## Northville students continue strong MEAP performance

Northville Public Schools’ students across all grade levels performed well on the 2008 Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test, according to results released April 2, 2009 by the Michigan Department of Education.

“We are pleased that our students have continued their strong performance on this important state assessment,” said Northville Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski. “It is a demonstration of the hard work our students, teachers and families do everyday, that even during these challenging economic times for our state, and for public schools in Michigan, our students continue to succeed.”

“As we do each year, administrators and educators across the school district will carefully study these MEAP results and use the data — along with other assessments of student learning — to modify our curriculum and enhance student intervention and support programs with the goal of ensuring success for every student.”

In October 2008, third through eighth grade students across the district were assessed under the MEAP in math and English language arts (which includes reading and writing) to comply with federal mandates. In addition, fifth and eighth grade students were assessed in science and sixth graders took the MEAP social studies test. Northville High School ninth grade students were assessed in social studies only. (See chart below for Northville 2008 MEAP score comparisons with state averages by grade level.)

The MEAP is one of the criteria used by the State of Michigan in assessing public schools under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Michigan’s accreditation system for schools — called Education, Yes! — issues annual report cards for individual public schools across the state. Each school is graded on a number of different factors including performance on the MEAP (which comprises two-thirds of a school’s report card grade), the percentage of students who take the test, and graduation rates.



**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).

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
<b>READING</b>							
Northville	96%	96%	96%	97%	94%	92%	—
State	86%	83%	82%	81%	80%	76%	—
<b>WRITING</b>							
Northville	86%	75%	87%	93%	92%	91%	—
State	61%	44%	63%	76%	78%	74%	—
<b>TOTAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</b>							
Northville	96%	93%	95%	95%	94%	93%	—
State	83%	77%	78%	80%	80%	77%	—
<b>MATH</b>							
Northville	98%	96%	90%	95%	97%	90%	—
State	91%	88%	77%	80%	83%	75%	—
<b>SCIENCE</b>							
Northville	—	—	97%	—	—	93%	—
State	—	—	83%	—	—	76%	—
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES</b>							
Northville	—	—	—	94%	—	—	91%
State	—	—	—	74%	—	—	72%

\* These numbers represent the percentage of students who performed at the "proficient" or "advanced" levels on the MEAP tests.

## 26 NHS seniors receive National Merit Scholar honors

An impressive 26 Northville High School seniors have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as academically outstanding based on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test taken in their junior year. High school staff and district officials honored the NHS National Merit Scholars and their families at a February 4 breakfast.

Sixteen Northville seniors have been named National Merit semi-finalists, ranking them among the top 1 percent of their peers across the nation academically. They are: Adam Arevalo, Joshua Buoy, Armen Changelian, YongLu Che, Joy Chen, Chelsea Glenn, Valerie Juan, Aarti Kamat, Amol Kamat, Jimmy Li, Lauren Mancina, Shafer Oudeh, Savannah Sisk, Emee Ta, Linda Wang and Sravya Yandamuri.

As semi-finalists, these students have the opportunity to qualify for some 8,200 National Merit Scholarships, worth more than \$35 million. Recipients will be announced in the spring.

Ten other Northville seniors earned National Merit Commended honors ranking them in the top 5 percent of their peers across the nation. These students include Aarthi Arab, Shuowen Chen, Philomela Gan, Steven Hoelscher, Mark Jackson, Humza Khan, Cena Larsen, Katherine Li, Janet Skrbina and David Uberti.

“As National Merit Scholars, these students have demonstrated exceptional academic ability and have the potential for great success in rigorous college studies,” said Northville Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski.

“We honor their outstanding achievement and look forward to all that they will accomplish in the years to come.”

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 to conduct the annual National Merit Program. Scholarships are underwritten by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and by some 500

business organizations and higher education institutions that share the goal of encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence.

More than 1.5 million juniors in more than 21,000 high schools entered the 2009 National Merit Program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test in the fall of 2007. The nationwide pool of semi-finalists, which represents less than 1 percent of U.S. high school seniors, includes the highest scoring entrants in each state.



Northville High School 2009 National Merit Scholars pictured above are, front row from left, Armen Changelian, Shafer Oudeh, Valerie Juan, Aarti Kamat and Chelsea Glenn. Back row from left are David Uberti, Adam Arevalo, Joshua Buoy, Amol Kamat, Mark Jackson, Cena Larsen and Humza Khan.

### Sign up for LISTSERV® e-mail service

Northville Public Schools offers a district LISTSERV® e-mail subscription service. By signing up for this service, parents and community members can receive essential district, building and program level information via e-mail. You can subscribe through the district website or the following link: [www.northville.k12.mi.us/listserv](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us/listserv).



### School families help keep schools safe

Providing a safe place for students to learn and grow is one of the most important responsibilities of any school system. Along with school officials, teachers and staff, school families play a critical role in preventing and responding to school emergencies.

When a crisis occurs, Northville Public Schools officials follow detailed emergency response protocols — developed, practiced and refined in partnership with local police and fire officials — aimed at keeping students and staff safe during an emergency situation.

For more important information about the Parent's Role in School Emergencies, visit the district website at [www.northville.k12.mi.us](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us) and click on the "Parent" link.

### 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.)

## Summer Connections offers wide range of learning, enrichment opportunities

Northville Public Schools will once again offer a wide range of learning opportunities through its Summer Connections summer school program including enrichment opportunities for students of all ages and credit recovery options for current high school students.

Classes will be offered for incoming Northville High School freshmen enabling them to complete some high school Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements over the summer, providing greater flexibility in their school-year schedules to explore elective courses and/or take additional higher level classes.

The majority of classes will take place from June 22 through July 23, 2009 for high school and middle school students, and from June 22 through July 22, 2009 for elementary school students. All classes will be held at Northville High School, unless otherwise noted.

### High School Connections

A variety of credit classes are offered to high school students including English 9 and English 10, Algebra I, Biology, Earth Science Essentials, U.S. History, Civics, International Issues, Economics, Physical Education, and Seminar. New to the schedule this year will be an Algebra I Concepts & Skills class, Geometry, Chemistry Prep, and the state-required Health Education class.

The high school Summer Connections program also will offer online Michigan Virtual School PLATO credit recovery courses for students in Algebra I, Geometry, English 9 and English 10, Civics, U.S. History, Biology and Chemistry. The online courses are an additional credit recovery option for students who have previously taken the course as part of their regular academic schedule and need to recover credit. These classes are student-directed, self-paced and entirely online with some support from a mentor teacher.

In addition, several other Michigan Merit Curriculum aligned courses will be offered by the Michigan Virtual High School under its FLEX program, which provides online instruction beyond what is offered in the PLATO program.

For the first time this year, several shorter, non-credit classes will be offered through the high school Summer Connections program to help students better prepare for the rigorous math and science courses required by the Michigan Merit Curriculum including a two-week class focused on the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens."

Incoming ninth graders may earn credit for the successful completion of Algebra I, U.S. History, Physical Education or any of the Michigan Virtual High School FLEX courses over the summer. Current eighth graders considering this option should be passing all of their eighth grade classes and are strongly encouraged to seek a recommendation from one of the Northville middle school principals who will consider the student's overall GPA, class selection and general school performance.

### High School and Middle School Transition

Classes for High School Transition (for current eighth graders entering high school) and Middle School Transition (for current fifth graders entering middle school) students are being offered again this year through Summer Connections. The courses build confidence and self-esteem by strengthening academic, organization and study skills. Students also have the opportunity to meet classmates from the other middle schools and elementary schools and get answers to questions about social issues, lunch hours and other components of the middle and high school day.

### Elementary and Middle School Connections

Math and English classes, as well as an English Language Learners course, are available for middle school students. The math class will help students who wish to enhance their math competency. The English class provides language arts enrichment and reinforces spelling, process writing, grammar and literature skills.

Elementary students getting ready to enter first grade can continue to build reading/writing readiness and math skills through the First Grade Development Class. Other elementary classes include Reading and Writing Workshop I (Foundations in Language Arts) and Investigations into Math and Science I for students who have completed first or second grade. Reading and Writing Workshop II (Constructing a Complete Language Arts Learner) and Investigations into Math and Science II are available for students who have completed third or fourth grade.

The popular Fun Friday Enrichment classes will return again this year for elementary students, including Junior Pi-cassos, Claying Around and Mad Scientists.

In addition, the district's nationally accredited Early Childhood Program has summer offerings for pre-kindergarten and school-age children, and Camp Invention® is back by popular demand from July 13-17 at Thornton Creek Elementary School.

Registration for Summer Connections classes will begin May 11, 2009 and end June 22, 2009. Brochures and registration forms are available now in each school building and on the district website at [www.northville.k12.mi.us/instruction/summerschool.asp](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us/instruction/summerschool.asp). Registration also is available in person at the Northville Public Schools Board of Education offices, 501 West Main Street (three blocks west of Center Street), or by mail.

Parents are encouraged to register students early to ensure classes are not canceled due to lack of enrollment.

For more information about the Summer Connections programs, contact the Office of Instruction at 248-344-8447 or e-mail Bob Boshoven Summer School Principal, at [BoshovRo@northville.k12.mi.us](mailto:BoshovRo@northville.k12.mi.us) or Janice Henderson, Curriculum Facilitator, at [HenderJa@northville.k12.mi.us](mailto:HenderJa@northville.k12.mi.us).

*Registration for Summer Connections classes will begin May 11, 2009 and end June 22, 2009. Brochures and registration forms are available now in each school building and on the district website at [www.northville.k12.mi.us/instruction/summerschool.asp](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us/instruction/summerschool.asp).*

## Board of Education honors outstanding educators, staff

Six Northville Public Schools teachers and staff were honored by the Board of Education at its March 10, 2009 meeting as the district's recipients of the Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency (WCRESA) 2008-09 Outstanding Educators and Employees awards.

Northville's honorees are:

- **Elementary Teacher of the Year** — Margie Carroll, Amerman Elementary School learning consultant, with the district for eight years.
- **Middle School Teacher of the Year** — Janet Gillies, Hillside Middle School seventh grade math teacher, with the district for 13 years.
- **High School Teacher of the Year** — Scott Szukaitis, Northville High School science teacher, with the district for five years.
- **New Teacher of the Year** — Morgan Cox, Northville High School English and social studies teacher, with the district for three years.
- **Support Employee of the Year** — Candace Bingen, Moraine Elementary School administrative aide, with the district for 12 years.
- **Ancillary Professional of the Year** — Trish Murray, Hillside Middle School learning consultant, with the district for 24 years.

"We are very pleased to be able to honor these exceptional individuals," said Northville Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski. "They personify the incredible group of teachers and staff who every day touch the lives of the nearly 7,000 students in our schools."

In nominating Margie Carroll for Elementary Teacher of the Year Amerman Principal Dr. Stephen Anderson said, "Mrs. Carroll's positive relationship with students, colleagues, and parents is enhanced by her passion for her subject. Her enthusiasm comes through in everything that she does and helps to encourage and motivate students. On a given day, you can find Mrs. Carroll working with small groups or going into classrooms to demonstrate reading and writing techniques. With her encouragement and support students explore new techniques and then feel

empowered when they are successful."

Hillside Principal Jim Cracraft said in nominating Janet Gillies for Middle School Teacher of the Year, "Mrs. Gillies has a natural rapport with middle school students and has the ability to bring out the best in each of them. Sev-



**Northville Teacher of the Year honorees (from left) Janet Gillies, Scott Szukaitis and Margie Carroll.**

enth graders are naturally inquisitive and Mrs. Gillies demonstrates great skill in promoting student inquiry and participation. Her ability to relate to students with warmth, enthusiasm and encouragement is a true strength. She is an educator who never takes 'no' or 'I can't' for an answer and constantly seeks ways to make a lesson relevant to all learners."

In nominating Scott Szukaitis for High School Teacher of the Year North-



**Northville Employee of the Year honorees (from left) Candace Bingen, Morgan Cox and Trish Murray.**

ville High School Principal Rob Watson said, "As a teacher, Scott actively shares his passion for the environmental sciences with his students through experiences that enable them to see first-hand how they can make a difference. Scott regularly takes advantage of the high school's proximity to Maybury State Park and Maybury Farm. Working in partnership with the farm's

staff, Scott and students in his Michigan Natural Resources and Advanced Placement Environmental Science classes develop, plant and maintain the 15,000-square-foot organic garden at Maybury Farm."

According to Watson, New Teacher of the Year Morgan Cox has done an exceptional job working with students in her English as Second Language class, even meeting with some of them over the summer to ensure their success in learning English. "Having observed Morgan numerous times I have been very interested in how she motivates students new to the English language," he said in nominating Cox for the honor. "Her easy-going, thoughtful attitude comes through very clearly to the students. I have personally witnessed her students' enthusiasm for the class."

Moraine Principal Denise Bryan can't imagine Moraine without Candace Bingen in the office. "Mrs. Bingen is a self-motivated worker who is focused on quality," Bryan said in nominating Bingen for Support Employee of the Year. "She does the work that needs to be done efficiently, yet kindly. Her interaction with staff, students and families is unfailingly kind and friendly. Mrs. Bingen is frequently the first to arrive in the morning, ready and eager to start the school day."

A former award-winning Varsity Golf coach, Trish Murray's coaching expertise comes through in her work with struggling students at Hillside Middle School, said Principal Jim Cracraft. "Trish both inspires and motivates students to do their best," he said in nominating Murray as Ancillary Professional of the Year. "Communication and follow through are strengths for Trish. She builds relationships throughout our building as she advocates for kids, parents, and colleagues. She is a true team player and an asset to the entire learning community at Hillside."

All six Northville honorees also will be recognized at the Wayne County RESA 23rd Annual Celebration of Excellence in Education on May 5, 2009 at Laurel Manor in Livonia.

## Study committees examine full-day kindergarten and International Baccalaureate Program

Two studies examining the impact and value of full- and partial-day kindergarten and the potential benefits of offering an International Baccalaureate Program are underway by Northville Public Schools.

Investigation of the two programming options is among six district goals for 2008-09 approved by the Northville Board of Education in September. The two committees charged with studying the options are comprised of educators, district officials and parents (in the case of the kindergarten study) from across the district who have knowledge, experience or an interest in the subject areas.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of Michigan school districts offering full-day kindergarten, as well as an increased focus at the state level, said Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services Mary Kay Gallagher who is leading the kindergarten study.

The kindergarten study committee is reviewing literature on the impact of full- and partial-day kindergarten programs on student learning and success during kindergarten and throughout a student's elementary career, Gallagher said. The group also is conducting a cost/benefit analysis of the two kindergarten options in areas including the profile of the kindergarten day, the impact on the elementary programming, facility impact, staffing costs, classroom set up and materials, impact on the early childhood program, transportation costs, other operational costs, and state funding allocations. Families currently in the district pre-school program also will be surveyed about where they plan to have their children attend kindergarten (inside the school district or through an outside program) and what factors they are considering in making the decision.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit educational organization, recognized as a leader in the field of international education by encouraging students to be active learners, well-rounded individuals and engaged world citizens. Founded in 1968, IB works with more than 2,519 schools in 132 countries to offer programs at the elementary, middle and high school levels to more than 684,000 students from age three to 19.

The IB Diploma Program, a two-year curriculum primarily aimed at students age 16 to 19, is widely recognized by the world's leading universities.

The Northville IB study committee is in the process of completing a literature review regarding student learning and success under the IB program, as well as talking with staff and students at schools who currently have the programs, said Northville High School Principal Rob Watson who is leading the committee together with district Curriculum Facilitator Janice Henderson. The group also has made site visits to IB schools in the area including the International Academy in Birmingham, Lone Pine Elementary School in Orchard Lake, and Herbert Henry Dow High School in Midland.

"It has been helpful to see the curriculum in action and observe how the students and teachers respond and interact," Watson said.

Both the kindergarten and IB study committees will share their findings with the Board of Education in June.

## A fond farewell and a warm welcome

Recently retired Northville Board of Education member Judith Wollack was honored at a December school board meeting for her hard work and the unique perspective she brought during her eight years on the board.

Wollack was presented with a painting her son had donated to the district as a student and a fund was set up in her honor with the Northville Educational Foundation, which supports a variety of academic and enrichment programs offered by Northville Public Schools. The mother of Northville graduates, Wollack will continue her work as executive vice president for Wolverine Human Services, the social services agency for children her husband founded 21 years ago.



**Judith Wollack**

Newly elected Board of Education member Dottie Garrity took over Wollack's spot on the school board in January. A six-year resident of Northville, Garrity has been active in a number of school district and community groups. She has two children attending school in the district.



**Dottie Garrity**

The Board of Education also elected its new officers for 2009 at its first meeting in January. Kenneth Roth will serve as president; Libby Smith as vice president; Joan Wadsworth as treasurer; and Judith Handley as Secretary.

# District Newsmakers

## Genitti's first recipient of 'Community Appreciation Award'

Northville landmark business Genitti's hole-in-the-wall Restaurant and Little Theater is the first recipient of the Northville Public Schools "Community Appreciation Award" created to recognize local businesses and community organizations who through their support help enrich the lives of Northville students.

Northville Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski and Board of Education President Kenneth Roth presented family member Andy Genitti with the 2008-09 Community Appreciation Award during a special presentation at the February 10 school board meeting.



Board of Education President Ken Roth (left) with Andy Genitti.

"We appreciate the many ways in which founders John and Toni Genitti, and the entire Genitti family, have so willingly supported Northville students and staff over the years," Dr. Rezmierski said. "On a personal level, they have been outstanding parents and grandparents always happy to help at the schools their children and grandchildren attend. But more than that, they have been true partners in supporting educational excellence by opening their business to numerous district programs and events."

Over the years, Genitti's has welcomed third graders during the Friday morning Victorian Festival tour; hosted the New Teacher Orientation luncheon, the district staff retirement reception, and the Unity in the Community program on Martin Luther King Day; and provided facilities and meals for the Northville High School Robotics Team. Genitti's also has donated food, prizes and money to the district's choir, drama, and athletic programs (including sponsoring the basketball score table at the high school), and purchased ads in various event programs and the high school yearbook, as well as helped coordinate food donations to local food banks with the district's Food Service Department.

A part of the Northville community for more than 30 years, Genitti's hole-in-the-wall Restaurant and Little Theater is located at 108 East Main Street in Downtown Northville. For more information call 248.349.0522 or visit [www.genittis.com](http://www.genittis.com).

## Meads Mill and Silver Springs open student-run credit unions

Meads Mill Middle School and Silver Springs Elementary School celebrated the grand openings of their new student-run credit unions in February. Meads Mill is the second middle school and Silver Springs the fifth elementary school in Northville to partner with Community Financial's student-run credit union program.



Student-run credit unions at Meads Mill Middle School (below) and Silver Springs Elementary School are open for business.

Through the program, the students who volunteer to work for the student-run credit union learn valuable career skills and those who join learn the importance of savings and gain an understanding of financial planning and financial services.



Along with the student-run credit union program, Community Financial team members give classroom presentations to students throughout the district about basic savings, various economic concepts, and skills for making educated financial decisions.

"Our program is designed to help students build on their financial skills as they progress from elementary school to the upper grade levels," said Mary Kerwin, education partnership coordinator for Community Financial.

## Tabor honored with science teaching award

Amerman fourth grade teacher Richard Tabor is the recipient of the 2009 National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Sylvia Shugrue Award for Elementary School Teachers. NSTA is the largest professional organization in the world promoting excellence and innovation in science teaching and learning. Its Teacher Awards Program honors K-12 teachers, professors, principals and others for their outstanding achievement and innovative programs in science education.



Tabor was honored, along with other NSTA awardees, at the organization's 57th National Conference on Science Education in New Orleans on March 21.

## **Public hearings set for “abstinence-only” human sexuality component of state-required high school Health Education course**

The Northville Public Schools Board of Education has scheduled two public hearings for school parents and community members to comment on the proposed “abstinence-only” human sexuality component of the new Michigan Merit Curriculum required high school Health Education course.

An “abstinence-only” approach means that abstinence is taught as the only 100 percent physically, emotionally, and economically safe and healthy choice for teens without including any risk reduction strategies. The “abstinence-only” curriculum will be a second option available to students beginning in the 2009-10 school year.

An “abstinence-based” version of the human sexuality curriculum, approved by the board in June 2008, was offered for students during the 2008-09 school year as part of the Health Education class. The “abstinence-based” health class focuses on abstinence as the only 100 percent physically, emotionally, and economically safe and healthy choice for teens and teaches about risk reduction strategies for when individuals become sexually active later in life. This is referred to as an “abstinence-based” or comprehensive approach to health education.

Human sexuality and sexually transmitted infection (STI) education comprises about three weeks, or eight lessons, of the one-semester (20-week) Health Education course, which is required for all high school students (beginning with the class of 2011) under the state’s new graduation requirements. Other health-related topics covered in the class include nutrition, personal health and wellness, safety, and the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drug use.

At the two public hearings, the school board will hear comment on the proposed “abstinence-only” curriculum and instructional materials, as well as some minor revisions proposed for the “abstinence-based” curriculum and materials. The hearings will take place:

<b>Tuesday, April 21, 2009</b>		<b>Wednesday, April 29, 2009</b>
6:45 – 7:45 p.m.		7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
<b>Northville High School – Forum</b>	— and —	<b>Northville High School – Forum</b>
<b>45700 Six Mile Road, Northville</b>		<b>45700 Six Mile Road, Northville</b>

The district offered a variety of opportunities in early April for school parents and citizens to review the “abstinence-only” curriculum and materials, as well as the revisions to the “abstinence-based” instruction, prior to the public hearings. Anyone still interested in reviewing the curriculum and instruction materials (in a user-friendly lesson by lesson binder) as well as the DVDs proposed to supplement several of the lessons, can do so by contacting the Office of Instruction at 248.344.8442, or sending an e-mail message to [CommitteeMail@northville.k12.mi.us](mailto:CommitteeMail@northville.k12.mi.us).

The proposed “abstinence-only” human sexuality curriculum and instructional materials, as well as the revisions to the “abstinence-based” class, have been recommended by the school district’s Health Advisory Board, and are under consideration by the District Curriculum Council and the Board of Education. The 22-member Health Advisory Board is comprised of parents of children attending Northville Public Schools, as well as educators, high school students, local clergy, and a community health professional, as required by law.

The primary program materials under consideration by the district for the “abstinence-only” curriculum (as well as the “abstinence-based” curriculum) were developed by the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Department of Community Health through a cooperative effort by parents, teachers, and professional organizations statewide. In addition to being aligned with the curriculum requirements for human sexuality education and instruction required by Michigan law, the program also meets the Michigan Merit Curriculum credit guideline for health education.

Although a one-semester Health Education course is required for graduation under Michigan’s new graduation requirements, parents continue to have the right to review all human sexuality lessons and materials in advance, and to make decisions about each student’s participation in any or all of the human sexuality lessons.

Please contact the Northville Public Schools’ Office of Instruction at 248.344.8442, or visit the district website ([www.northville.k12.mi.us](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us)) for additional information.

## Northville students celebrate 'Unity in the Community' on MLK Day

Northville students shared their reflections on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s messages of peace, unity and service to others during a special "Unity in the Community" event on Martin Luther King Day.

The evening, hosted by Genitti's Little Theater in downtown Northville, featured readings by the student winners of a district-wide writing contest with the theme "Remember. Celebrate. Act." that focused on how the principles taught by Dr. King are still alive today.

Nine writing contest winners were selected including one from each of the six elementary schools' fourth grade and fifth grade entries from across the district, and one each from Hillside Middle School, Meads Mill Middle School and Northville High School. Winning posters, selected from entries by the school district's special education center program students at Cooke and Old Village schools, were displayed on the cover of the "Unity in the Community" event program.

All winners received a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond provided by the Northville Educational Foundation. The Foundation is recognized as a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to encourage and manage contributions for the benefit of Northville Public Schools.

Contributions from school district employees, families and community members are helping to support academic and enrichment programs — such as the "Unity in the Community" event — offered by Northville Public Schools.

"Every day in our schools, and our homes, we encourage young people to be kind, get along with others, and act in service to others," said Lynne Mossoian, director of Special Services for Northville Public Schools and chairperson of the school district's Martin Luther King Day Planning Committee.



Photo by Steve Fecht

**Unity in the Community writing and poster contest winners (front row from left) Maria Cholack, Meads Mill Middle School; Claire Matthews, Thornton Creek Elementary School; Macy Afsari, Thornton Creek; Harnoor Singh Arora, Ridge Wood Elementary School; Yannis Bi, Amerman Elementary School; and Angela Steinberg, Moraine Elementary School. Middle row from left, Jacob Anderson, Winchester Elementary School; Steven Gietzen, Hillside Middle School; Mitchell Gray, Moraine; Daniel Manuel, Cooke School; and Alexis Aulepp, Silver Springs Elementary School. Back row from left, Drew Currie, Northville High School; Eric Barritt, Northville Educational Foundation president; Dr. Donald Burwell, president and chief executive officer Kids Against Hunger Michigan Coalition; and Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski, Northville Public Schools superintendent.**

ful event for our school district, our students and our community celebrating the principles taught by Martin Luther King that still have so much meaning for us today," said Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski.

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—Lynne Mossoian, director of Special Services for Northville Public Schools and chairperson of the district's MLK Day Planning Committee

"This is a positive and thoughtful event for our school district, our students and our community celebrating the principles taught by Martin Luther King that still have so much meaning for us today," said Superintendent Dr. Leonard R. Rezmierski.

The January 19 event also featured songs celebrating Dr. King's message of peace and unity in the world sung by Northville High School choir students. A special presentation by

Dr. Donald Burwell reflected on the importance of service to others. Dr. Burwell is president and chief executive officer of the Kids Against Hunger Michigan Coalition. (See related story on page 1)

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ship with Bridgepointe (a local non-profit organization that brings together school children from different backgrounds to learn and work), the Plymouth Kiwanis, the Conrad Charitable Foundation, Mothers' Club of Northville, and other local school and community groups.

During the food packaging events, students work together on an assembly line to measure, weigh and seal 13.8-ounce bags of nutritious rice-soy casserole mix that can each feed six adults or 12 children. One-third of the food from each packaging event goes to local food banks to help those in need in the community, one-third goes to feed the starving in Third World countries, and one-third goes to help those in the U.S. and worldwide struck by natural disaster.

"Through Kids Against Hunger, students learn that hunger is a world problem and that we have a responsibility to contribute to its solution," said Kids Against Hunger Michigan Coalition President and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Donald Burwell. "Building relationships between students and their community helps children understand that working together for a common purpose is an important way to make a difference. Ultimately, these children experience the joy of hands-on giving — a lesson we believe will influence a lifetime of thinking and behavior."

The opportunity to host the food packaging events at Detroit area locations so rich in education and history offered students an even greater learning experience, said Bridgepointe Co-Founder and Kids Against Hunger Michigan Project Coordinator Sue Simcox.

"We are grateful to these organizations for opening their doors to Northville and Detroit school children and offering tours, educational programs and other community service opportunities in addition to supporting the Kids Against Hunger food-packaging events," Simcox said.

When the 100-plus students from Winchester Elementary School in Northville and Holbrook Elementary School in Hamtramck visited the Arab American National Museum on January 27 to package food for Kids Against Hunger, they also toured the museum to learn about Arab American history and culture. This was especially meaningful, given that nearly 85 percent of the students at Holbrook are of Arab descent.

"Over the past year, staff and students from Holbrook and Winchester have formed a strong friendship of sharing and learning as pen pals, through Kids Against Hunger and by visiting each other's schools," said Holbrook Principal Michael Zygmuntowicz. "What is so great about Kids Against Hunger is the opportunity for students from both schools to

interact with peers whose experiences and culture are different than their own, and at the same time help others in need. This means a lot to our students because they are so often the ones receiving the help. At the Arab American National Museum, our students were able to learn alongside Northville students and share their culture and history."

Winchester Principal Pat Messing couldn't agree more.

"The Kids Against Hunger experience shared with Holbrook allows students from both schools to meet kids close up and personal from a culture different than their own and yet, not so far from home," Messing said. "Meeting people face-to-face gives us a different perspective, it makes a culture we are not familiar with real, and the experience informs."

Young people are a very important audience for the Arab American National Museum with students and teachers making up nearly half of the 50,000 people who visit the museum each year. The museum is the first in the world devoted to Arab American history and culture.

"We're proud to host an event that directly impacts the hungry here in Metro Detroit and in other parts of the world, while also encouraging our young people to get involved in volunteer service," said Anan Ameri, museum director. "Experiencing the

Arab American National Museum is always educational and entertaining, but experiencing it with a new friend from a faraway school enhances some of the lessons we try to teach — that immigrants founded and grew our nation, and that our diversity is an asset."

When Northville and Detroit students gathered at the Gleaners Community Food Bank, in addition to packaging food for Kids Against Hunger they toured the massive facility and learned about the important work the organization does providing food for those in need in southeastern Michigan. A portion of the food packaged during the three Kids Against Hunger events at Gleaners was donated to the food bank.

Northville fifth-grade teacher Rose McDougall believes the Kids Against Hunger experience "is one of those unexpected gifts" that will impact and influence students' lives for years to come. Each year, students from Northville's Amerman Elementary School and Roberto Clemente Elementary School in Detroit form friendships as pen pals, by working alongside each other at Kids Against Hunger, and through numerous other experiences.

"I hope students from each of the schools walk away from the Kids Against Hunger event with a better awareness of their community and others," McDougall said. "Gleaners is a wonderful location in which to do the packaging because it makes students aware that hunger isn't something that only happens in Third World countries. It affects kids right here

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**Amerman fifth grader Max DeDonna shows off 13.8-ounce bags of nutritious rice-soy mix that can each feed six adults or 12 children.**

## Success

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to learn with and from one another in very significant ways.

“The opportunity to see the progression from early childhood through high school graduation is powerful, as are the common themes that emerge across programs. The connectedness we share as a district continues to grow through this process.”

The data and information collected through the school improvement team process is used in each school’s annual Education Yes! report to the Michigan Department of Education and is an important component as the district enters into the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement district accreditation process during the 2009-10 school year.

However, the value of the school improvement process experience for Northville educators, district officials, parents and students goes far beyond any of these requirements.

As the school improvement process has evolved over the past 11 years, the most significant outcome has been a change in the approach to setting the district’s annual goals that better connects the great work of the individual school improvement teams in addressing student learning with the larger, often operational, work of the district.

Two years ago, the Northville Board of Education and district leaders set student learning as the ongoing, overarching district goal that influences decision-making in every other area from budgeting, to programming, to staffing.

“Everything we do, every decision we make centers around how we can

best support student learning and success,” Gallagher said. “This is nothing new for us. However, the act of putting it in writing and defining student learning and success helps keep all of us — leaders, teachers, students, parents and the community — focused as we make decisions about priorities and resources.”

At the individual school level, the school improvement process is the connective tissue that enables the school community to reflect, self-evaluate and produce a vision for improving, said Sharon Irvine, principal of Northville’s Thornton Creek Elementary School.

It was in the context of the school improvement process four years ago that Thornton Creek teachers determined the school needed to pursue a comprehensive approach to developing the whole child.

“Our epiphany in this area is that teacher intuition, as a counter to the exclusivity of hard data, is a valid source for identifying areas of improvement and bringing about meaningful school change,” Irvine said.

After much discussion the team set three general areas of the whole child to focus its energies on — the emotional/social, the physical, and the cognitive. Through the “Bucket Fillers” character education program the Thornton Creek school community now has a unified language to impact behavior, safety

and other school issues. The institution of Brain Gym throughout the building provides movement breaks for students during the school day as a way to improve attention, focus and learning.

“We have found that by incorporating our school improvement goals into our annual school theme — through school activities and PTA and parent involvement — we are able to generate synergy for school improvement goals,” Irvine added. “School improvement for us is the collection of experiences that every child in our school will have in every classroom, every year.”

As an educator, Northville High School art teacher Cheryl Brooks says the school improvement process empowers her to understand how students learn and how she can help them reach their goals.

“School improvement gathers information about areas in the school that need improvement and directs the team’s energy towards those areas,” said Brooks who chairs the high school’s North Central Association Accreditation Committee. “At the high school, we focus on academic success, but also look for ways to improve the social climate in the building. As teachers we need to understand that outside forces — such as home life and social circles — can distract students and make it difficult for them to focus and learn.

“We can never give up on our quest to improve.”



**Thornton Creek School Improvement Team members (from left) fourth grade teacher Maureen Nichols, Principal Sharon Irvine, first grade teacher Chris Modrack and parents Tina Souphis and Cynthia Straky.**

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at home — kids very much like them, who don’t have food to eat when they get home.”

Gleaners, the third-oldest food bank in the United States, distributes nearly 27 million pounds of food annually (or 404,000 meals a day) to those in need in southeastern Michigan.

“More than 36 percent of those receiving food assistance in the United States are children,” said Gleaners President W. DeWayne Wells. “Kids Against Hunger is a great way for kids to directly help their peers, while learning about how hunger affects our community. We’re grateful to Kids Against Hunger for their support and for helping to raise a generation of young people

who care about this issue.”

For additional details about the Kids Against Hunger Michigan Coalition visit [www.kidsagainsthungercoalition.com](http://www.kidsagainsthungercoalition.com) or [www.bridgepointenonprofit.org](http://www.bridgepointenonprofit.org). For information about the Arab American National Museum go to [www.arabamericanmuseum.org](http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org) and for Gleaners Community Food Bank visit [www.gcfb.org](http://www.gcfb.org).

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Pictured (from left) are: Jim Sourges, Amy Storm, Judy Wollack and Mark Knoth.

## Foundation elects new directors

The Northville Educational Foundation (NEF) elected four new members to its Board of Directors at its March 31 meeting. Each member brings a wealth of community involvement and commitment to the mission of the foundation.

The new directors are all school district residents and have volunteered to serve without compensation. The newly elected directors serving three-year terms are Mark Knoth, Jim Sourges and Judith Wollack. Amy Storm will serve a one-year term filling a recently vacated position on the board.

The new board members join current NEF directors Eric Barritt, president; Mike Poterala, vice-president; Jay Dunkerley, secretary; Todd Knickerbocker, treasurer; and directors, Mark Cousino, and Jerry Rupley. Ex-officio directors include district staff members Dr. Leonard Rezmierski, superintendent, Art Fischer, John Street, and Jan Purtell. School board member Karen Paciorek, also serves as an ex-officio director.

The NEF is recognized as a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization whose mission is to attract, manage and distribute charitable gifts to provide educational opportunities that enhance Northville Public Schools' commitment to excellence. The NEF Board of Directors manages the business and oversees the finances of the foundation.

Northville Public Schools employees, families and community members contribute to the foundation to help support a variety of academic and enrichment programs offered by the school district. These include the Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Writing and Poster Contest. NEF fundraising programs include the Corral Club and Tribute/Memorial gifts.

## Northville Public Schools accepting kindergarten enrollment for Fall 2009

Northville Public Schools is now accepting kindergarten enrollment for Fall 2009. If you have a child who will be five years of age on or before December 1, 2009, please contact your local elementary school for kindergarten enrollment information. The Northville Public Schools kindergarten sessions are half-day programs, offered in the morning or afternoon. Elementary school phone numbers are as follows:

Amerman	(248) 344-8405	Moraine	(248) 344-8473
Ridge Wood	(248) 349-7602	Silver Springs	(248) 344-8410
Thornton Creek	(248) 344-8475	Winchester	(248) 344-8415

Please note that attendance boundary information is located on the school district website at [www.northville.k12.mi.us/district/boundary-maps.asp](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us/district/boundary-maps.asp). If you have further questions, please contact the Northville Public Schools Office of Instruction at (248) 344-8447 or visit our website at [www.northville.k12.mi.us](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us). A parent meeting for incoming 2009-10 kindergartners will take place at each school during April and May 2009.

## Early Childhood – Wondergarten Registration Information

The Northville Public Schools Early Childhood Education and Extended Day Program offers a program called Wondergarten for the other half of the kindergarten day. This half-day class, specifically designed for kindergarten children, is offered at each elementary school, space permitting. It is scheduled either in the morning, from the start of the school day until afternoon kindergarten begins, or from morning kindergarten dismissal until the end of the school day.

To further extend the school day, Kids' Club is offered at each elementary school from 7:00 a.m. to the start of school and from school dismissal until 6:00 p.m.

Program Request Forms are available on the district website at [www.northville.k12.mi.us/earlychildhood](http://www.northville.k12.mi.us/earlychildhood). Please contact the Early Childhood office at 248-344-8465 if you have any questions. Specific offerings are dependent on enrollment; space is limited.