



November 24, 2020



BETHLEHEM TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

To our Bethlehem Township Community--

I want to express my gratitude to all the members of our community as we enter into a long weekend and celebrate Thanksgiving with our families.

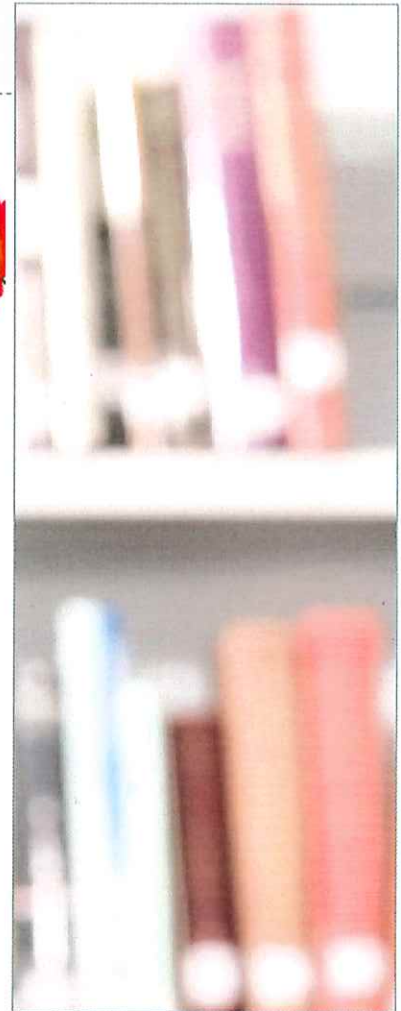
During this reflective time I want to thank our families for their strong partnership with our schools and our staff during this difficult time. Our instruction may look different over the next six weeks, but our purpose remains the same, to provide a safe, nurturing child-centered environment that challenges each child to maximize his/her potential.

One of our tasks for next week is to review the nominations for our New Jersey Governor's Educator of the Year Program that we present to deserving staff each year in our schools. We have 28 nominations of 16 teachers this year and look forward to meeting with our committee to specifically see how these exemplary staff members are helping our students. Our selection process includes rating each nomination and ranking the information in a common rubric to make an informed choice for the Educator of the Year. It is difficult to narrow down our finalists for the award but is a most rewarding experience for all of our committee members.

To honor the 2019-2020 Educator's of the Year in Bethlehem Township, we are featuring them in our inaugural newsletter. Our November 2020 edition is dedicated to Mr. Thomas Brotzman and Mrs. Lindianne DeSavino. Please take a few minutes to read their biographical information to see what Tom and Lindianne are all about!

We look forward to a strong finish of 2020 and wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,
Gregory C. Farley, Ed.D.
Chief School Administrator/Hoppock Middle School Principal



Special Points of Interest:

- A note of thanks
- Mr. Brotzman
Teacher of the
Year
- Mrs. DeSavino
Teacher of the
Year



THOMAS BROTZMAN—HOPPOCK TEACHER OF THE YEAR



I have had the pleasure of being an educator in Bethlehem Township for over 20 years. When I was considering taking a 5th and 6th grade Writing teaching position in 2000, I remember someone telling me Bethlehem Township would be a good "starting" place for me. Now, it has become my second home and hopefully will also be a great "ending" place to my career.

During my time here, I have had the pleasure of experiencing so many uplifting and rewarding events. Watching the children of Bethlehem learn and grow as students and become contributing members of the community never gets old. Unfortunately, there have also been some somber moments during my time here, including one of my student's father being killed in an automobile accident the second week of my career and the tragedy of 9/11 at the beginning of my second year of teaching at Hopppock. And, who can forget the fire that caused extensive damage to Hopppock during my fourth year here.

Last school year, I suffered multiple tragic events in my personal life within a very short period of time. These happenings made it difficult for me to concentrate on my teaching responsibilities, but in the long run, they made me a better teacher. I learned that while I may have been the worst teacher of the year academically, in another way I

may have been the best teacher because I was setting an example for my students. I modeled what it was like to get knocked down 2, 3, 4, or even 5 times and still get back up. My hope is that maybe I taught my students about sharing feelings, about heartache, and about persistence.

The most important thing I learned last year was I realized what it is like to be a student. What it is like to have other things on your mind about life and not being 100% mentally into what you are doing. Because I had so many things going on in my head last year, I feel like I was able to connect with what it is like to be a student and feel what many of my students feel like everyday, when they have all kinds of things going through their heads when they come to school.

Connected. In my mind, the word "connected" is at the core of teaching. Now, more than ever, I believe an essential part of education is making special connections with students. Human interactions that are based on trust and understanding can go a long way in helping all of us through very trying times.

LINDIANNE DESAVINO CONLEY TEACHER OF THE YEAR



My name is Lindianne DeSavino, formerly Lindianne Wellbrock. I am so honored to have been named Teacher of the Year. I was raised in Hunterdon County and attended Voorhees High School. I attended West Chester University of Pennsylvania and earned a BS in Education with certifications in both elementary and special education.

I began my official teaching career with a journey to St. Lucie County, Florida where I taught fifth grade. After many emails to Amy Bundt and Peggy Andrews expressing interest in being a part of the Bethlehem Township team, I was finally contacted by Sally Klemm. I was ecstatic to fly home to New Jersey to meet with Sally and Jane. I felt like I was home, like I had finally made it to where I wanted to be.

I accepted a special education position at Ethel Hopppock and started my Bethlehem Township journey alongside some of the most wonderful middle school teachers. In my six years here, I have taught a variety of students and worked with many different teachers. I am thrilled to be teaching first grade this year with Leah Byk and Betsy Knaub.

I believe that, as a teacher I am also a learner. As teachers, we learn from our colleagues, our students and our students' families. I believe that the classroom is a community; a family. I refer to my students as "friends" instead of *girls and boys* because I believe that our experiences, including the way I speak, shape this community; our family. Everything I do and say is a lesson to my students. Together we learn, we laugh, we make mistakes and most importantly we grow. I believe that I am an advocate for every child in my community. Children have the right to be heard, feel respected, encouraged and loved every day. It is my intention to empower my classroom family to wonder, to solve problems and to believe in themselves. I believe that classrooms should be busy, children should be talking, moving and engaged with learners around them. This year, I have fourteen family members to learn and grow with.

I truly am the luckiest.