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SUMMER 2017

AROUND THESE HILLS

A publication for alumni and friends of **Ottawa Hills Local Schools**



Christine Brennan ('76), OHJH Student Body President Sophia Stone, Phil Mattingly ('05), Erica Silk ('89), OHHS Principal Ben McMurray

STUDENTS & ALUMNI CONNECT IN WASHINGTON, DC

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LIBERTY MEMORIAL HONORS OH GRADS WHO SERVED IN ARMED FORCES

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Help Us Reach Our Goal

Our alumni and community supporters' commitment to OH continues to drive our fundraising momentum. Donor support plays such a critical role for our district and greatly enriches the experience of our students as it allows us to maintain our position as the #1 school in Ohio.

Since the inception of the Foundation, we have been humbled with the overwhelming response from our alumni and community. Your gifts work to support the best of Ottawa Hills—exceptional academics, distinctive student programs, and outstanding faculty—and will do so for generations to come.

We continue pursuing our **March to a Million** goal to support the endowment fund, with the specific goal of raising an additional \$100,000 by June 30, 2017 to the **STEM Fund (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)**, or to any one of our named funds: **The Talmage Family Fund** to support emerging needs and initiatives; and the **Eleanor Seifried Fund** to support the dramatic and vocal arts. Please visit ohschoolsfoundation.org or complete and return the enclosed giving envelope to donate today. We are grateful for your support. Thank you.

Best Regards,



George Lathrop
President
Ottawa Hills
Schools Foundation



Erica Silk ('89)
Director of
Development
and Alumni
Relations

MEET THE TRUSTEES



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Resident and Involved
Mother of Three OH
Students



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ERICA (GACHEL) SILK ('89) Executive
Director of Ottawa
Hills Schools
Foundation



JEREMY NIXON
Ottawa Hills Science
Teacher; Faculty Rep
to the Foundation



KEVIN MILLER
Superintendent
of Ottawa Hills
Local Schools

The mission of the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation is to permanently enhance and extend the unique experience of excellence that defines Ottawa Hills Schools.

**SUPPORTING THE OH
FOUNDATION IS EASY!**



Visit the Foundation's website at ohschoolsfoundation.org and give online or use the envelope attached to this newsletter.



Students and Alumni JOIN TOGETHER IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 18 was a special evening for Green Bears in Washington, D.C. as the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation brought eighth graders and alumni together to meet with two accomplished alumni members and to honor a third.

The evening began with eighth graders, who were in Washington, D.C. for their annual trip, hearing from two guest speakers—OH alumna Christine Brennan ('76), best-selling author, award-winning national sports columnist for *USA Today* and commentator for ABC News, CNN, PBS NewsHour and NPR, along with alumnus Phil Mattingly ('02), CNN's congressional correspondent covering policy and political events on Capitol Hill for both television and print.

"It's all about finding what you want to do and then working your tail off."

—Phil Mattingly ('05)

Christine encouraged the students, "In eighth grade, you're asking yourself, 'I have hopes and dreams, is it possible they can come true?' The answer is, 'Absolutely your dreams can come true.' How does it happen? It's hard work, dedication to the task, and finding something you love and going after it."

Phil added, "It's all about finding what you want to do and then working your tail off. It's lucky breaks and having good people around you."

The evening's program ended with a special presentation made to Becky Acklin ('60), wife of the late Jim Acklin ('58). Along with fellow alumni Bill Potter ('62) and Glenn Rudy ('62), Jim was integral in making the Liberty Memorial at OHHS a reality. The Memorial honors Ottawa Hills graduates who served in the Armed Forces.

Pictured top, left to right: Christine Brennan ('76), Glenn Rudy ('62), OHHS Principal Ben McMurray.

Pictured bottom left to right: Betsy Ankney ('05), Duncan Phillips ('05), Darcy Phillips ('07), Annie Keener ('07), Sara (Kuehnle) Crifasi ('06)

"Tonight's gathering of students, teachers, alumni, family, and friends of Ottawa Hills offers all of us an opportunity to think about the importance of our education, honor the work and sacrifices of those who came before us and to be diligent in maintaining our democracy," explained Ben McMurray, OHHS Principal.

After the evening's presentations, more than 35 alumni and guests enjoyed an evening of connecting and re-connecting at the alumni reception to celebrate the link they all share in Ottawa Hills Schools.

"It's hard work, dedication to the task, and finding something you love and going after it."

—Christine Brennan ('76)



Christine Brennan ('76) with OH eighth grade students

LIBERTY MEMORIAL: LEGACY OF LOVE FOR SCHOOL AND COUNTRY



Left to right: Gay MacArthur ('62), Jim Acklin ('58), David Baehren ('78), former School Board President Gary Wilson, Glenn Rudy ('62), Bill Potter ('62), OHHS Principal Ben McMurray

The Liberty Memorial was born when different streams of thought came together to create one amazing idea. Today, this indelible part of the landscape of Ottawa Hills High School pays tribute to almost 400 Ottawa Hills alumni who served their country in the Armed Forces.

For Bill Potter ('62), the pieces started to fall into place when he met Gerry Coffee, a retired Naval Captain. Bill notes, "I read his book, 'Beyond Survival,' which tells the story of his captivity from 1966 to 1973 during the Vietnam War. Gerry was the pilot of a plane shot down by the Vietnamese. He was captured, but his rear man was killed—unbelievably, it was Bob Hanson ('62), my classmate from Ottawa Hills. I knew we had to do something to honor Bob and Ned Dybvig ('62), another OH grad and friend killed in Vietnam. I got in touch with OHHS Principal Ben McMurray, and he told me some other things going on regarding the same idea."

The "other things" involved OH alumni Jim Acklin ('58) and Glenn Rudy ('62). When

receiving the Liberty Memorial Award on behalf of her late husband, Jim's wife, Becky, explained, "At the 50th reunion of the OH Class of 1958, he told his classmates a memorial needed to be created for OH grads who had lost their lives in Vietnam."

Jim Acklin shared the idea with Glenn Rudy. "Jim knew what it took to get an idea to come to fruition," Glenn said. "He became determined to find out how many from Ottawa Hills had served in the Armed Forces."

By this time, the team of Acklin, Potter and Rudy, all Vietnam Veterans themselves, had come together. The result was a memorial to all Ottawa Hills grads who had served in the Armed Forces. Location was the next question. Bill notes, "We focused on the school campus, and from there, turned our attention to the flag pole area. We knew the flag pole was dedicated by the Class of 1941, Ottawa Hills' first graduating class."

The team recruited architect and Village resident Todd Kime. Todd's design included a circular brick walkway surrounding a

pentagonal flag base, upon which are the names of those who have served, with a special recognition to those who lost their lives. The design also included a "Ring of Respect" to acknowledge OH classes who have contributed to the Liberty Memorial. Former OH student Marty Pritchard and alumni John Longthorne ('72) and Rich Effler ('00) led the memorial's construction.

On September 6, 2012, the Liberty Memorial was dedicated, and Jim Acklin, Glenn Rudy and Bill Potter saw their dreams come true. Glenn shares, "Jim Acklin had cancer during this time. The Liberty Memorial would become his last great present to the Village."

Bill and Glenn point to others who helped to make the Liberty Memorial a reality—Gay (Kransberger) MacArthur ('62), Gretta (Fleck) Laskey ('63), David Baehren ('78), Gary Woodbury ('58), Tom Kabat ('62), Gary Cohane ('61), and many others.

OHHS principal Ben McMurray notes, "Whenever I see the Liberty Memorial, I am reminded of the serious sacrifices and the thoughtful stewardship of our Veterans. I think of the enthusiasm and commitment of Jim Acklin, Bill Potter and Glenn Rudy. They have left a legacy that demonstrates their love for Ottawa Hills and for our country."

If you would like to make a financial contribution to the legacy of the Liberty Memorial, please contact Erica Silk at 419-214-4838 or esilk@ohschools.org.



OHHS Principal Ben McMurray and Becky (Katchka) Acklin ('60)



OH Grads Give Back



Sharon Abendroth ('80)
Classroom Connections

"I get choked up at graduation every year. It makes me think of this school system and how I can say 'Thank you. We are where we are today because of you.'"

On the second floor of the junior / senior high school is a classroom. It's unremarkable except, until a few years ago, it had old orange carpet that covered the floor and ran halfway up the walls! To the educator who teaches there, it represents one of many connections to Ottawa Hills Schools. Sharon Young, Class of 1980, would enjoy "Senior Talk Study Hall" in that room. Little did she know, 37 years later that room would be her classroom where she would work with many students as an intervention specialist for Ottawa Hills Schools.

Sharon Young Abendroth's connection to that classroom spanned decades, but it will end when she retires at the end of the school year. Yet, her connection to Ottawa Hills Schools will not end as this school system has been part of her life for far too long. The same would be true of her husband Paul ('80) and children Brent ('08), Lauren ('11), and Matt ('15)—all members of the kindergarten club. Throughout her 15

years of teaching at Ottawa Hills High School, Sharon and her husband have enjoyed sharing in their children's own Ottawa Hills experiences. The success of her children causes her to reflect on the role Ottawa Hills has had in the lives of her family. "I get choked up at graduation every year. It makes me think of this school system and how I can say 'Thank you. We are where we are today because of you.'"

Sharon admits the decision to retire wasn't easy. "I've loved what I've done here. I've learned so much from each teacher I've worked with." She shares, "A student stopped by the other day. He gave me a big hug and said, 'I wouldn't be at college if it hadn't been for you.' There will be new teachers and new students who use that second-floor classroom, but no one will ever claim it like Sharon Abendroth can. You would be hard pressed to find another with as many connections not only to that classroom, but to Ottawa Hills Schools."

May 1, 2017 began a new chapter in the life of OH alumna Tamara (Tammy) Talmage as she began as Ottawa Hills' new Athletic Administrator.

Tammy has a Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education and Health from Wittenberg University and a Master of Education in Recreation and Leisure Studies with an emphasis on Athletic Administration. She completed an Athletic Director internship at Waite High School. Since 1987, Tammy has coached a variety of sports, mostly for Ottawa Hills. In 2006, she became the head coach of the Ottawa Hills Field Hockey program, a position she will be sad to leave as she assumes her new duties.

In 2015, Coach Talmage achieved her 100th victory as Head Field Hockey Coach. That same year, she was awarded the "Sportsmanship, Ethics, and Integrity Award" by the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

"I have a passion and love for all sports, understand the culture of the Ottawa Hills community and the school system, and I am part of a loyal Ottawa

Hills family," shares Tammy. "I consider being Athletic Administrator my 'dream job' and love continuing my career where I started, right here in Ottawa Hills." OH alumnus and Village resident Mark Wagoner says, "I speak on behalf of our family when we say that having Tammy Talmage as the next Athletic Administrator at Ottawa Hills is exciting! Tammy has our full support, and we believe that she will be a tremendous asset to the future success of the Ottawa Hills Green Bears."

Tammy shares, "My philosophy regarding athletics is that we have sports programs that support the emotional and physical development of a student-athlete regarding a balance of athletics and academics, team play, sportsmanship, ethics, integrity and life lessons. And, it will be the priority of the athletic department to ensure all coaches have to focus on is coaching and all players have to focus on is playing. All of this will be to ensure our coaches and athletes represent our school and community and bring distinction to the jersey the players represent."



Tamara Talmage ('82)
Named District's Athletic Administrator

"I have a passion and love for all sports, understand the culture of the Ottawa Hills community and the school system, and I am part of a loyal Ottawa Hills family."



LEGACY LUNCHEON Honors School-Community Connections

The Legacy Luncheon, held on April 7, was an opportunity to honor Village residents for their role in establishing a legacy of excellence in our community and school system. The event allows the school to maintain connections with the community, and it gives OH students a chance to give back. Throughout the day, guests were entertained by students sharing their wonderful singing and musical talents.



BRAVO TO CAST & CREW OF HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL!

The school and community of Ottawa Hills were treated to another spectacular spring musical from the OHHS Theatre Arts Department. The strong vocal performances, well-orchestrated choreography, authentic acting, and dramatic sound and visual effects created a powerful and memorable experience for the audience.

This production included more than 100 high school students, over a third of the student body. Congratulations to the entire cast and crew, and to artistic director Darrin Broadway and vocal musical director Donna Wipfli for their unwavering support.

Photos by Kathleen Clayton



OH elementary students were enjoying the outdoors in our elementary school Land Lab planting next fall's harvest.

Planting NOW... Pizza LATER!

Students at OHES are planting vegetables in the Land Lab now in anticipation of using the fruits of their labor to make a delicious treat. "This planting will culminate in the fall when the different classrooms will make homemade pizza from our school crops," says Jonathon Seibenaler, 6th grade teacher. "We are so excited to grow all of the ingredients to make pizza!"

Students have also planted some native plants in the Land Lab that will provide an acceptable habitat for monarch butterflies.

CONGRATULATIONS SENIORS Graduating with SUMMA CUM LAUDE!

MORGAN BILLSTEIN



Morgan will continue her education at The Ohio State University. On attending OH Schools, she says, "Ottawa Hills is such a tight-knit community where I've made life-long friends and memories. So many teachers from kindergarten through senior year have helped me tremendously, and I wouldn't be as successful as I am today without them."

SPENCER COLTON



Spencer looks forward to attending Northwestern University. "I'm certain there is no place where I would have thrived more than OH," he says. "I've never found a more accepting, open-minded group of people, and I owe half of the person I am to the challenges this school has given me."

SHANA CAPUR



Shana will join classmate Spencer at Northwestern University. She explains, "Ottawa Hills has provided me with the opportunities, support, freedom, and rigor that have helped me grow and succeed. I have truly enjoyed my years here and all the relationships I have made."

GILLIAN HECKLER



Gillian looks forward to studying at Kenyon College. Regarding her time at Ottawa Hills, she says, "I'm thankful for the quality, in-depth teaching, and resources that are available as an OH student."

CAMERON ROLLER



Cameron will attend Dartmouth College. He says, "I can truly say the community has allowed me to explore my interests in a way that wouldn't have been possible elsewhere. The sheer number of dedicated teachers and professionals who inhabit the school and community has been instrumental in my development."



GREEN BEARS SUCCESSFUL IN SPRING SPORTS!



Girls softball won their first Sectional Title in 22 years. They made it to the first round of Districts, but lost to competitive Eastwood High School.

2017 was the first official varsity season for the boys lacrosse team. The team finished 14-3 for the season. The team had a successful first season, making it to the second round of the Regional Qualifier.

Girls lacrosse had a strong showing this season, making it to the first round of the Regional Qualifier.

The boys varsity tennis team finished fourth in the Division II team tournament in Columbus. OHHS Senior Tyler Gargas won his first match at the state tournament before being edged out in the second round.

The OHHS varsity baseball team captured the TAAC title this year. The boys finished the season with a 17-12 record under the direction of coach Chris Hardman.



Glimpse of the Class of 2017

100% 72 graduating seniors with 100% graduation rate

68 **Recipients** of scholarships valued at more than \$7.5 million

TOP 5% 4 National Merit Commended Scholars—**top 5%** in the nation for their scores on the PSAT

TOP 1/2% 2 National Merit Finalists—**top 1/2%** in the nation for their scores on the PSAT

5 **Students** receiving summa cum laude recognition

40 **Recipients** of an Ohio Honor's Diploma

29 **Recipients** of the Presidential Award

21 **Members** of the National Honor Society



Ottawa Hills Local Schools

Ottawa Hills Local School District
3600 Indian Road
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Don't forget to
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To join the mailing list, OH friends
and alumni should contact Erica
(Gatchel) Silk '89.

esilk@ohschools.org | 419-214-4838

ALUMNI CAN ALSO
REGISTER ONLINE AT:

[ottawahillsschools.org/
content2/ohalumni](http://ottawahillsschools.org/content2/ohalumni)



LOVE OF PERFORMING ARTS INSPIRES **The Eleanor Seifried Fund**



Eleanor Seifried "Ellie" had a deep love for Ottawa Hills. In the early 1960s, she moved to OH with her husband, George, to whom she was married for nearly 41 years. She was a devoted mother to John Seifried ('80), Susan (Seifried) Wiland ('81) and Todd Seifried ('85). Todd and Jenny Seifried live in Ottawa Hills where they are raising their three children. Jenny is a member of the Ottawa Hills Garden Club where she gets to see many of Ellie's life-long friends.

"Ellie had a deep love for the performing arts, specifically theatre, choir and dance. She loved the community, she loved the school," Jenny remembers. Ellie's musical affinity led to her memberships in several choirs, including the Masterworks Chorale, Symphony Chorale and Toledo Choral Society.

The Eleanor Seifried Fund for the Performing Arts was established by Ellie's family to commemorate her love of Ottawa Hills Schools and its tight-knit community. Ellie has six grandchildren, with four of those grandchildren actively involved in the performing arts. Through the Eleanor Seifried Fund, Ellie's love for the performing arts lives on and ensures that future generations of students have continued access to unique educational experiences.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION TO THE
ELEANOR SEIFRIED FUND, PLEASE VISIT
<https://www.ohschoolsfoundation.org/givetoday.php>
OR CONTACT ERICA SILK AT 419-214-4838.

Open for MORE NEWS from
AROUND THESE HILLS!