



Parkland board honors students, hires two assistant principals

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SOUTH WHITEHALL TWP. Pa. -

It looked like only a weightlifter could hoist the large silver trophy setting in the front of the Parkland School Board meeting room Tuesday night.

In fact, Parkland High School's weightlifting team was at the meeting to be honored for placing second in a state championship last month.

But the biggest trophy in the room had been won by future scientists who attend Springhouse Middle School and participated in a 30th annual National Science Olympiad earlier this month in Florida.

"That's like the Stanley Cup," quipped Springhouse principal Michelle Minotti.

The school board also recognized Parkland High students who help other Parkland students avoid going hungry on weekends.

And it appointed two new assistant principals.

Daniel M. Repsher was hired as assistant principal of Parkland High School and Jude T. Sandt was named assistant principal of Springhouse Middle School, where he now serves as dean of students.

Repsher, who is currently assistant principal at Lehigh Area High School, will replace Donna Steckel, who is retiring as assistant principal at Parkland High at the end of this school year.

Repsher's annual salary will be \$87,000. Before becoming an administrator, he was a middle school math and computer teacher in Bangor and taught alternative education math and science in Easton Area School District.

Sandt's annual salary will be \$85,000. Before becoming an administrator, he was instrumental music teacher and band director at Orefield Middle School.

Sandt replaces Robert Holmes, who will become principal at Ironton Elementary School when Lynette Smith, the principal at that school, retires this summer.

Science Olympiad



Nearly 7,000 teams from across the nation compete in the annual Science Olympiad.

The Springhouse Middle School team won the first-ever DuPont Team Enterprise Award, a silver trophy given for the best overall performance by a team that had not attended the previous year's Science Olympiad national tournament.

"We were the best new team in the nation," said Dr. Sam Ghosh. He and his wife Zubeda were the team's parent advisers/coaches.

The award was presented because the team not only did the hard work required to make it to the national competition, "but succeeded at a high level."

Teams participate in 23 very varied scientific events, which had names such as crime busters, disease detective, dynamic planet, sounds of music and experimental design.

The Springhouse team first won in the regional Science Olympiad at Kutztown University, winning 22 of the 23 events.

It went on to earn second place in the May 2 state competition at Juniata College in Huntingdon, winning 13 of the 23.

That earned it a slot to participate in the May 16 and 17 national competition at the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

In Florida, Ghosh said, the Springhouse team only won two of the 23 events, but placed in the top 10 in six events. It ranked 17th out of the 60 participating teams.

Team members recognized at the school board meeting included Nishant Chitluru, Roy Ghosh, Sabrina Ghosh, Maanasi Gothoskar, Nehali Gupta, Sahil Inaganti, Rhea Kadakia, Ryaman Khandelwal, James Kim, Aditi Pallod, Vikram Pandian, Sun Min Park, Shaumik Phadke, Rashmi Raghuraman and Habeeb Salau.

An unusual feature about the Springhouse team is that its coach advisers were parents, rather than faculty members. Ghosh said other parents who have children on the team also helped coach several subjects. He said other teams at the national competition also plan to bring in parents as advisers and coaches.

Athletic accolades

School board members frequently praise the district's focus on academics, athletics and the arts and Tuesday night's meeting was no exception.

Members of Parkland High's power lifting team, which placed second in the last month's state high school championship, were introduced and presented with certificates from the board.



Parkland's team was one of 17 competing in the championship. It won five individual gold medal state championships, seven silver medals and six bronze medals.

Team members at the board meeting included Justin Anderson, Matt Atiyeh, Zach Davies, Mario Delis, Stephen Ewald, Patrick Ferry, James Gallagher, Liam Gallagher, Danny Geinosky, Nigel Redmond, Alex Reede and Amir Wallace.

Service salutations

The school board also recognized Parkland High students who are members of a new Interact club that participate in Operation Snack Pack, an Allentown-West Rotary Club

program aimed at making sure less fortunate students in the school district receive nutritious food on weekends.

The 35 students in the club plan, prepare and deliver the snack packs to Parkland elementary and middle school students.

“I’m proud of my club members who stay after school, giving their time to help their fellow Parkland students,” said Parkland High English teacher Kathryn Solderitch, the club’s adviser.

Interact Club members at the board meeting included Kylie Buck, Caitlin Carlson, Brittney Daniel, James Franke, Gianna Garcia, Samantha Holender, Ali Jamal, Meredith Lipson, Ceren Ozcan, Alizay Speight and Benjamin Zager.

Also honored during the meeting was Michael Falco, who served as student representative to the school board this year.

The recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance was unusual at the beginning of the meeting.

The pledge was led by four children from the same family, all attending Cetronia Elementary School.

They were Autumn, Mary, Nancy and Dale Winand. Autumn is in kindergarten, Mary is in first grade, Nancy is in second grade and Dale is in fourth grade.

“It’s rare that you have four siblings at the same time at the same school,” said James Giaquinto, the school’s principal.

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