



PENN · HARRIS · MADISON
— SCHOOL CORPORATION —

**Twenty-eighth Annual
Employee Recognition Dinner**

May 15, 2019



**Thanks to our friends at TCU
for underwriting the
P-H-M Employee Recognition Dinner**

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Program

Master of Ceremonies

Michael Lureman, Director of Human Resources

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Jerry Thacker, Superintendent

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Christine Austin
Walt Disney Elementary School

Secondary Teacher of the Year

Jeanie Mitchell
Penn High School

Award to Teachers of the Year

Mari Linn Wise, Executive Director
Penn-Harris-Madison Education Foundation

Classified Employee of the Year

Diane Dyer
Kids Club Assistant Program Coordinator

Invocation

Jerry Hawkins, Executive Director of Business Services

Dinner

**10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45
Year Service Award Presentations**
Donna Humes & Michelle Bogart

Retirement Recognition Awards

Dr. Jerry Thacker
Chris Riley, President, Board of School Trustees
Dawn Bachtel

◆ *Thanks to Teachers Credit Union for underwriting the P-H-M Employee Recognition Dinner.*

◆ *Thanks to Lavon Oke and the Kaleidoscope Jazz Combo: Santi Retzloff, Alto Saxophone; Maggie Zielinski, Tenor Saxophone; Michael Forry, Trumpet; Bradley Ziegelmaier, Trombone; Ben Cameron, Bass; Brian Oke, Drums; and Mikhail Baskakovas, Keys*

Service Awards

45 Year Service Award

Virginia Wery - Meadow's Edge

40 Year Service Award

Mary Ann Bogucki - Schmucker

Kathy Minix - Transportation

35 Year Service Award

Lisa Baldrige - Schmucker

Susan Rece - Moran

Dominic Ball - Penn

Rhea Trowbridge - Penn

Christine Fisher - Elm Road

30 Year Service Award

Dennis Bontrager - Discovery

Susan Roberts - Horizon

Michele Bortone - Prairie Vista

Matthew Russell - Penn

Kathryn Campoli - Grissom

Katharine Shreiner - Elm Road

Jennifer Denniston - Transportation

Heidi Tornquist - Elm Road

Kristene Dussel - Horizon

Dawn Troyer - Penn

Donna Hipsher - Schmucker

Susan Verduin - Transportation

Pamela Hunsberger - Penn

Tamara Webster - Mary Frank

Brenda Jakubowski - Madison

Lisa Zachary - ESC

Suzanne Jones - Discovery

Patricia Zakrocki - Transportation

Anne-Marie Reininga - Prairie Vista

25 Year Service Award

Jacqueline Anderson - Elm Road

Bonnie Manningham - Penn

Michelle Ball - Penn

Coleen Manspeaker- Discovery

Melissa Brazeau - Penn

Barbara Miller - Penn

Douglas Burggraf - Meadow's Edge

Rosemarie Montgomery - Prairie Vista

Terri Byers - Transportation

Mary Nicolini - Penn

Debbie Casper - ESC

Debbie Parisi - Elm Road

Megan Decker - Bittersweet

Lisa Pawlik - Penn

Nancy DeMeulenaere - Horizon

Pamela Peters - Transportation

Suzette Doolittle - Horizon

Kimbell Reitz - Penn

David Hall - Penn

Jacqueline Trader - Schmucker

John Hedrick - Discovery

Kris Verash - Grissom

Eric Kline - Horizon

Bonnie Wolfgang - Penn

Susan Lynn - Northpoint

Laura Zahner - Penn

20 Year Service Award

Barbara Colburn - Northpoint

Mila Pierce - Penn

Les Crooks - Penn

Jill Riggs - Penn

Jennifer Doms - Northpoint

Lee Riley - Schmucker

Linda Dunlap - Penn

Nancy Schultheis - Moran

Diana Ehresman - Bittersweet

Eileen Sherk - Meadow's Edge

Service Awards-continued

20 Year Service Award-continued

Paula Fadden - Elm Road	Diann Sinclair - Technology
Julie Fleming - Moran	Brenda Smith - Transportation
Beth Freet - Grissom	Kathleen Snelling - Transportation
Patricia Green - Prairie Vista	Kendra Suddarth - Northpoint
Frances Haughee - Bittersweet	Lola Sult - Penn
Jane Hostetler - Madison	Rebecca Tagliaferri - Penn
Mary Lee - Penn	Vicki Topolski - Prairie Vista
Shannan Lindzy - Penn	Michelle Treber - Exceptional Education
Jeremy McCaskill - Horizon	Teresa Weaver - Exceptional Education
Virginia Mueller - Pennway	

15 Year Service Award

Melisa Bennett - Moran	Tamara Morgan - Elsie Rogers
Linda Brown - Schmucker	Dan Osler - Schmucker
Elizabeth Cook - Meadow's Edge	Bruce Quick - Prairie Vista
Marni Cronk - Penn	Jill Reppert - Elsie Rogers
John Federnok - Transportation	Amanda Stanifer - Exceptional Education
Laura Frye - Mark Frank	Kathleen Trusty - Prairie Vista
Kaza Green - Mary Frank	Virginia Vargo - Horizon
Patricia Heidkamp - Bittersweet	Kelley Watts - Penn
Robin Hissey - Schmucker	Camala Weir Soule - Meadow's Edge
Christine Kruk - Grissom	Larry Wheeler - Maintenance
Michael Lureman - ESC	Debera Yoder - Penn
Stacy Marker-Miller - Meadow's Edge	

10 Year Service Award

Hassan Abdullah - Maintenance	Nathan Lower - Transportation
Bruce Bergeron - Penn	Carrie Morton - Penn
Susan Bieganski - Exceptional Education	Judy Nickerson - Elsie Rogers
Michael Bowe - Mary Frank	Morgan O'Grady - Penn
Cameron Brundage - Discovery	Sherry Oswald - Transportation
Sarah Burdue - Elm Road	Carolyn Palonis - ESC
John Corban - ESC	Stacey Parker - Transportation
Marsha Davis - Schmucker	Michael Phipps - Meadow's Edge
Angela Edwards - Exceptional Education	Michelle Sanchez - Prairie Vista
Emi Effertz - Penn	Laura Scott - Moran
Rachel Fry - Penn	Joseph Sierzputowski - Penn
Kelly Gustafson - Mary Frank	Margo Skeels - Penn
Maureen Hemmerling - Penn	Mikel Stephens - Discovery
Brenda Hoffman - Transportation	Jeanette Stevenson - Transportation
Laura Holderbaum - Transportation	Ruben Vasquez - Grissom
Jessie Kinney - Elm Road	Randy Williams - Penn
Sherry Klosinski - Moran	William Wilson - Maintenance

Elementary Teacher of the Year

**Christine Austin
Fourth Grade Teacher
Walt Disney Elementary School**

Christine Austin is in her sixth year of teaching. She started with P-H-M full-time in 2014 as a teacher at Prairie Vista Elementary School. She moved to Walt Disney in 2015 and is currently teaching fourth grade there.

Fellow teachers describe Christine as innovative, creative, and willing to try new things in her ongoing quest to get her students engaged and keep them engaged. She is proactive and is able to differentiate instruction in the classroom, exploring all avenues to provide excellent, personalized instruction to all students. Her students' consistent growth is evidence that her dedication and ability to go above and beyond for her students pays off.

Christine is devoted to her students working in a number of after school co-curricular activities serving as a Spell Bowl Coach and as a sponsor for After School Learning Clubs; she also teaches Saturday Enrichment for the District and has volunteered for Young Authors' Conference.

She shows extraordinary commitment not just to her students, but in the leadership and support she lends to her colleagues. Christine's an important integral part to Disney's Teacher Leadership Team (TLT), supporting all grade levels as well as her own fourth grade team. She's even led staff PDs for Guided Math, Guided Reading for Exceptional Education, and presented at Technovation. Christine is a mentor not only for beginning teachers, but is also a great resource for veteran teachers.

She's involved in many school related programs and activities including PTO and serves on the Cultural Night Committee. In the past, Christine has also been a coach for Running is Elementary and for Girls on the Run.

Christine and her husband Lamar lived in Bulgaria for several years doing humanitarian work. Christine volunteered at an international school in Sofia, Bulgaria. When the couple moved back to the U.S. in 2008, that's when Christine completed her teaching degree. Christine and Lamar Austin have three children: a son who is a senior at Penn, a daughter who is sophomore, and a 4th grade son at Horizon Elementary. In the local community, Christine volunteers at the humane society with her children and helps in the nursery at her church.

Secondary Teacher of the Year

**Jeanie Mitchell
Freshman Academy Leader & World Languages French Teacher
Penn High School**

Madame Jeanie Mitchell came to P-H-M and to Penn High School to teach French in the World Languages Academy in 2008. Last September, she also became Freshman Academy Leader.

Through her French classes, Mme. Mitchell brings the world to her students providing classroom project based learning projects, as well as field trips to the French Market in Chicago and even to France! Mme. Mitchell sees her role as a French teacher is to “encourage students to gain a better understanding of themselves and their own world by studying and relating to the practices and beliefs of others.”

As the Freshman Academy Leader, Jeanie helps make the transition from middle school to high school more manageable and less daunting for incoming freshmen. She worked with other Freshman Academy teachers to recognize two freshmen “Students of the Month” (two from each of the four freshman houses); so far more than 50 students have been highlighted this year.

Jeanie has also worked on a Tier 3 Rtl program to identify Penn’s most at-risk freshmen students pairing them up with an administrator, counselor or dean. These students not only get the wraparound support they need, but more importantly they also come to realize that they have trusted adults who care about them and who they can go to for help. Speaking of help ... Jeanie is also a member of Penn’s Natural Helper’s program, which helps students to not only care for themselves, but to also show compassion and reach out and help others.

Jeanie is a leader among her peers at Penn, frequently leading staff professional development on a variety of topics such as technology, literacy strategies, effective parent communication, and how to use social media to develop teachers’ personal learning networks.

Jeanie and her husband Ryan have a daughter in 2nd grade and a son in kindergarten at Horizon Elementary School.

Classified Employee of the Year

Diane Dyer Assistant Program Coordinator, Kids Club Elsie Rogers Elementary School

Diane Dyer has worked for P-H-M for five years; she started at Prairie Vista Elementary School as a Kids Club Assistant in August 2014. In 2015, she was promoted to Site Coordinator at Horizon Elementary. And in February 2019, she was promoted as the Kids Club Assistant Program Coordinator, based at Elsie Rogers Elementary School, helping to train the other Site Coordinators. As Program Coordinator, Diane is now working with the rest of the Kids Club staff to put into place the best practices at all other nine P-H-M Kids Club locations.

During her time as a Site Coordinator for Horizon, Diane implemented "After Homework Clubs" like LEGO League, Cooking Club, Helping Hands, Art Club, Tai Chi, Comic Book Club, Reading Club, Board Games Club and Knitting Club among several others. Her goal was to enhance the experience for the students by extending the academic experiences. In doing so, Diane brought about a cultural change helping Kids Club to be seen as an extension of the school. Her work at Horizon Kids Club now serves as a benchmark for the other locations.

Horizon's Kids Club has the largest Kids Club enrollment. Students absolutely love coming to the program, even over their other evening extracurricular activities like sports!

"Great collaborator, positive, kind." "She goes above and beyond; she's committed and gives her all every day!" These are just some of the many ways Diane's co-workers describe her. As a true leader and role model they say she strives to make Kids Club better than the day before.

Diane and her husband, Sam, have two children, 10 grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. They also have been foster parents to several children. Diane has volunteered at Prairie Vista in the past as well as at a food pantry and at her church. Most recently, she was a member of the first ever Kids Club dodgeball team participating in P-H-M's annual Dodgeball Tournament benefiting Riley Children's Hospital.

Honored Retirees

Dennis Addison
Teacher

Thomas Hartman
Administrator

Kathleen Strycker-Healey
Educational Assistant

Mark Baldwin
Teacher

Pam Hollenberg
Teacher

Vicki Topolski
Teacher

Debra Barrier
Transportation

Jane Hostetler
Teacher

Laura Vanderheyden
Teacher

William Bauer
Food Service

Joel Howard
Custodian

Denise VanHulle
Educational Assistant

Diane Bowersox
Teacher

Lynn Johnson
Custodian

Debra Wassenhove
ESP

Donna Christensen
ESP

Leslie Kistler
Teacher

Mark Watts
Teacher

Lorri Csakany
ESP

Charlotte Koelndorfer
Kids Club

Nietta Wright
Teacher

Tom Csenar
Teacher

Barbara Langle
Food Service

Conley Yoakum
Transportation

Cynthia Davenport
ESP

Susan Lynn
Educational Assistant

Mary Davison
Teacher

Ann Metzner
Educational Assistant

Karen Edison
Educational Assistant

Richard Moroni
Custodian

Janet Germann
Transportation

Deb Nehls
Teacher

Cindy Grover
Exceptional Education

Valerie Ong
Teacher

Kimberly Grunawalt
Teacher

John Rice
Teacher

Jan Hank
Teacher

Richard Roberts
Custodian

Sheryll Harper
Administrator

Eileen Sherk
Educational Assistant

Retirees

Questions

What is your favorite memory or what did you like most about working at P-H-M?

What words of advice would you give to your fellow colleagues?

What new adventure awaits for you in retirement?

Dennis Addison

Teacher

33 Years of Service

Early in my career, two colleagues (Mel Lenig being one of them) and I developed an animal lab for elementary Hands-on Science. Lots of smells, but lots of real learning went on in our rooms with snakes, rodents, birds, spiders, hedgehogs and more. Learning and teaching was fun!

Do what is best for students ... always! Don't worry about test scores. Don't forget to do some hands-on activities that empower students. Critics are everywhere, keep focused on what you know is right. And finally, turn this assault on education around.

Second career coming up ... I am moving to Indy with my wife so we can be closer to grandkids and have more diverse employment opportunities for my wife and me.

Mark Baldwin

Teacher

37 Years of Service

I, Mark Baldwin, am retiring after 37 years of teaching science all at Schmucker Middle School. I have also coached a total of 100 seasons of football (33), track (34) and wrestling (33). A memory I will never forget is getting snowed in and spending the night at Plymouth with 150 wrestlers in February 1990.

My wife, Ronda, and I are retiring on Prince's Lake near the Brown County/Johnson County boarder in southern Indiana. We will be within an hour of our two daughters, Kyle and Courtney, and our four-year-old grandson, Mason. I will be enjoying relaxing, fishing, boating, hiking, kayaking, and golfing.

Diane Boxwersox

Teacher

27 Years of Service

One memory from my years at Penn was when a senior, who was not particularly conscientious about attending class, realized he needed to pass my second year Chemistry class to graduate. He had missed the final exam, but I agreed to give it to him separately. After finishing, he left but came rushing back in a minute. He thanked me for the opportunity to let him pass the class even though he was not going to college. He concluded with, "Thank you for not giving up on me. I always knew you believed in me." I chose this memory because I think it best reflects my philosophy of teaching.

My advice to other teachers is to have a sense of humor and to insert an element of fun into every day.

I have no particular new adventure planned for retirement, but I am looking forward to spending more time with my family and to have more opportunities to enjoy motorcycling, hiking, fishing, gardening, kayaking, snowmobiling, and just relaxing outdoors.

Donna Christensen

ESP

19 Years of Service

Every expectation I had as an 18-year-old entering college as an education major, has been exceeded during my 45 year career. I've worked in Illinois and Indiana, in classrooms with students from pre-school through high school, as a volunteer, substitute, teacher's aide, teacher, department chairman, and guidance counselor. Working at P-H-M, and specifically at Prairie Vista, has been the most fulfilling. I have done my most significant and rewarding work with the support of Prairie Vista's amazing principal, staff, parents. I feel so lucky to have had my very best experiences in the P-H-M School Corporation.

Tom Csenar

Teacher

34 Years of Service

Over the past year, many of my family and friends have been enthusiastically yet unknowingly preparing me for my retirement. Through their kind words and anecdotes, I found it to be very therapeutic that after 34 years on a job I truly loved that so much fun and gratification has occurred. As many of you know, I am not sad about retiring. As a new teacher, it didn't take very long to realize that there is no better vocation. The rewards that I have experienced will forever be with me since they are not only stored in my mind, but also in my heart. To see a student transform in the classroom, or make contributions in society, or even say "Thank you" are as rewarding as anything I could ever imagine, so much so that I have frequently quipped "They don't have to pay me today" when these events occur. Thus to paraphrase Dr. Seuss, *I will not cry because it is over, I am smiling because it happened.*

There are so many people who have contributed to my wonderful career. I first would like to thank all of my teachers, coaches, neighbors and friends who help mold me in my formative years. From simple gestures to incredible guidance, I know that my “village” had an instrumental influence on my life. To all of the staff at Grissom and Penn who were always there in times of need or support, I can only hope that I have helped some of you just as you have helped me. To my parents, whose hard work and sacrifices gave me the opportunity to pursue my dreams, they also exemplified two of the most perfect role models for me to follow. And lastly to my wife (Meg) and daughters (Katie and Rachel) whose love, compassion, and understanding through all of those years of coaching or late nights grading, made it all possible. No person can be more proud of their family than I am of you.

Cynthia Davenport

ESP

10.5 Years of Service

Everyday something new happens. From the kids’ point of view, especially elementary school students, so much is really new. I liked the excitement the students had when they move from not knowing something to realizing they have learned and can now read a word, read a page, tell time or solve a math problem. I loved the first day of school each year. I enjoyed the kids’ pleasant reaction and excitement to the year’s first snow. I enjoyed when the kindergarteners came to school for KDI testing. The world is so exciting and sometimes scary for kids.

My advice for my colleagues is to see that something new is always happening. Keep the kids delighted in learning something new in the world and when it’s scary reassure them that it will be okay. If you focus on this, your efforts will be worthwhile.

In retirement, I plan on enjoying time with my family, seeing new places, learning new and fun things, exercising, taking on home improvement projects, and spending time on creative projects. I want to find new things to do and enjoy. I’m already retired and I’m enjoying it.

Cindy Grover

Exceptional Education

38 Years of Service

I have worked in three different corporations over the span of 39 years as a speech pathologist, but most of those years were spent in P-H-M schools—lots of friends and success stories for sure. I worked at Walt Disney (when full inclusion started in Special Education), Fulmer, Elsie Rogers, Madison, Schmucker, Meadow’s Edge, and Moran Elementary Schools. I learned from classroom teachers about curriculum and behavior management alongside resource teachers. P-H-M was always trying something new and I had to learn beside the teachers to help students. I enjoyed being part of a team when working with my speech students. It seems like I was always on the learning curve whether it was in my own profession, or other professionals.

I have been lucky enough to supervise student teachers, interns, and graduate students at St. Mary's College. I have done private practice, rehabilitation services, and participated in summer speech camps through the Dyslexia Center and sorority sponsored programs like Tiny Talkers. I would tell my colleagues in speech pathology to take a chance and try any of these situations because you grow in skills as a teacher and experience the profession differently. You bring new knowledge to your school students.

I have been retired for almost a year and it has been GREAT! I continued to work in the field part time, next to friends in my profession with little stress. I have been supplying my daughter Mari with care packages since she is serving in the Peace Corps in Rwanda, Africa. She is living in a village and teaching English as a Second Language. My husband and I are helping her collect books to set up a library in her school. We will visit soon and take a safari. We will attend graduation ceremonies for my son Jeff, who will complete his Ph.D. from the University of Arizona in Molecular and Cellular Biology.

**Sheryll Harper
Administrator
32 Years of Service**

As a beginning elementary music teacher in Mulvane, Kansas, I received the district's Teacher of the Year award. My most favorite memories of working as a teacher in Iola, Kansas, were of time spent in my self-contained sixth grade classroom! Taking students to Washington, D.C. to the National History Day competition was another highlight. While at Grissom Middle School, I loved teaching students in general music, 7th and 8th grade social studies honors, and especially being the academics competitions coach for Future Problem Solving and History Day. I recall one group researched Knute Rockne and even had a luncheon with several members of his family at Notre Dame. To this day, I have always understood and stressed the importance of "primary sources" over secondary sources. Direct, first-hand evidence is authoritative! As principal of Elm Road, I loved the people ... such a supportive community and group of hardworking, student-loving staff and parents! Of course, Discovery has been an amazing journey ... one filled with China exchanges, Europe destinations (with literally hundreds of students), National Blue Ribbons, state academic competition and school awards, daily desires to learn in every classroom, and the most wonderful, dedicated staff in the world!!!! Students at Discovery are filled with wonder, adventure, and the desire to be the BEST they can be! They truly AIM high!

My advice to my colleagues is to LOVE every minute of it! Working with staff and with students brings the greatest joy and fulfillment!!!!

My husband and I have several trips planned beginning this summer through to next spring, from Maine to Hawaii. We are also going to spend time in Tempe, Arizona, visiting our oldest granddaughter who will be a student there in the School of Psychology. This destination will give us lots of nearby places to explore too! I have always LOVED growing people, whether they are 5 or 50. When opportunities are made available, growth can happen! When support is given, the sky's the limit!!! Enjoy every day!

Thomas Hartman
Administrator
33.5 Years of Service

A memory that comes to mind occurred during my first six years at P-H-M. When I was hired in 1985, the Administration was anticipating doubling the size of Penn High School, because of continuous student growth. During my first two years, I was part of the committee that made decisions regarding what the future student needs would be in the larger, newly renovated high school. Two architectural firms (one from Grand Rapids, Michigan and the other from Massachusetts) worked as a team to develop the plans and specs for the project. Because of the scope of the project, we developed a 10-phase plan that was to take place over a four-year period. Needless to say, it was quite challenging. We had to move students around the building during different phases of the construction. I felt sorry for the students who endured that for all four of their high school years.

The thing I liked most about working at P-H-M was the people I worked closely with, and all of the construction personnel I met along the way. I can't count the friendships I have made throughout my years at P-H-M.

If I had any advice for my fellow colleagues, it would be to be fair and honest in all of your interactions. Also, I would recommend relieving stress in your life as much as possible. Look at all of your perceived problems as challenges to be conquered.

My wife, Joyce, and I have lived in the same house in Wakarusa for 45 years. We plan to catch up on many things at the house that we have let slide during our working years. We have started already. I also look forward to playing golf, just for fun, without any pressure. Joyce and I will do some traveling within the United States, as well. My retirement will also involve spending more time with our three grandchildren.

Pam Hollenberg
Teacher
14 Years of Service

What I liked most about working at P-H-M are all the friendships I've made, and all the support I've received. P-H-M people are great about supporting each other. I've always been proud to say that I am a P-H-M employee. I've also enjoyed working with our students. Middle school students are so much fun, and you never know what to expect from one day to the other.

My advice to my fellow colleagues would be to take advantage of all that P-H-M has to offer you. Also, do not be afraid to put yourself out there. Eat lunch with your colleagues. Go to the after school staff events. The more connections you have, the more supported you will feel.

My new adventure after retirement will be to spend more time with my family, especially my granddaughter. I will also be able to work on my green thumb skills.

Jane Hostetler
Teacher
20 Years of Service

My memory of teaching is a conglomeration of tender moments, hilarious situations, and fun times with colleagues and students. Included are times of concern overcome by the support of others. All of these times have been special.

I would advise colleagues to always remember to learn from others—especially from those a fraction of your age.

In the coming years, I intend to give more attention to family, faith, friends, and fun.

Lynn Johnson
Custodian
15 Years of Service

I clearly remember my first day of work for the P-H-M School Corporation back in October 1998. I was preparing to serve lunch at Penn High School, and feeling VERY nervous that I would not remember the students' orders and that I might create a huge mess by spilling food and drinks everywhere. My supervisor was very calm and kind, reassuring me that everything would be just fine. That helped to ease my fears, and to my surprise everything did work out okay! I worked in Food Service for about twelve years, then transferred to the Custodial Department where I worked until retiring this past February. I have worked in every P-H-M school as well as the ESC, either on a daily basis or as a sub, and have consistently found co-workers, teachers, administrators, and support staff to be as friendly, supportive, and always willing to help me as the person I worked with on my first day. I only wish that I could personally thank everyone that has helped me through the years, as well as those that have taken the time to teach me new skills and to do my job more efficiently and safely. It has been a pleasure for me to work with these wonderful individuals, and I have many cherished memories that I will always hold dear.

While I believe I have been experiencing “withdrawal from P-H-M,” I have also found it quite refreshing to be able to get to a lot of things that have long been neglected in my home. I also am enjoying spending more time with my family, and look forward to keeping in touch more often with family and friends. I also hope to do some travelling to visit family as well as to places I have never been.

**Les Kistler
Teacher**

29 Years of Service

I have *many* wondrous memories--too many to count! To name a few: the annual Christmas potluck luncheon with PHS teachers; socializing with colleagues outside of school; traveling with student teams to academic competitions and chess competitions; and building friendships with teachers in every division. Furthermore, I am continually amazed at the brilliance, compassion, and strenuous efforts from teachers in my building. Finally, I've learned more from my students than I ever thought possible.

Never give up on teaching, your colleagues, or students. In education, surrender is not an option.

“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.”

—William James, American psychologist and philosopher (1842–1910)

I plan to visit family members and friends scattered across Indiana, raise my US Chess rating to the level of Master, improve my musical skills, continue fighting for teachers and for public education ... and maybe get some rest and lose weight! And somewhere inside me is a book waiting to be written.

**Susan Lynn
Educational Assistant**

25 Years of Service

My favorite memory of my working career was coming to Northpoint. I had been at Disney and Schmucker and was transferred to Northpoint to work with a little guy in kindergarten. Janet Birch showed me around and welcomed me as the newest member of the “P-H-M family.” It was so crowded that one teacher was teaching 2nd grade in the ELA behind rolling blackboards. The next year they expanded the building and I never left. It's been my home away from home ever since. It's the best team I've ever worked with and I have met some amazing students, parents, and teachers.

Words of advice? I would say keep doing what you love doing. Frank Sonnenberg said “If work isn't fun, you're not playing on the right team.” I feel that Northpoint has been that team for me. I've worked in my field in three states and I continue to be impressed by the work ethic at P-H-M.

My retirement plans aren't fancy. I'm not going to Europe ... yet! I'll see my daughter safely to her junior year of college at IU and then my mother-in-law is moving in with me. We're going to visit the library and I'll listen to her stories of days gone by and hopefully we'll make some new memories together. I have plenty of grandchildren to keep me busy and I also hope to volunteer in first grade at Northpoint.

Richard Moroni

Custodian

28.5 Years of Service

A few of my memories of working for P-H-M are working at three different schools (Penn High School, Northpoint Elementary, and finishing at Discovery Middle School); the many students and staff that made me feel welcome at their schools; having a ladder collapsing and dropping me approximately 15 feet to the stage floor tearing my rotator cuff; and twice having sprinkling heads burst in the cafeteria and the massive clean-up of water.

Words of advice to my colleagues ... not sure of making changes to another school, the stories you hear about the change of staff and how you will be received are unfounded; it all seems to work out for you as long as you do your job as you are expected to do.

My plans in the future include spending time with family and friends, working on the "Honey to-do list" and just relaxing and doing some traveling.

John Rice

Teacher

26 Years of Service

Penn-Harris-Madison has graciously allowed me to be in the team picture of an organization that is greater than the sum of its parts, and thus allowed me to succeed beyond my skills. I have been honored to work with many talented and dedicated people at Schmucker and across the Corporation, and have especially enjoyed working many hours with the outstanding middle school math staff to build and rebuild and reinforce the curriculum.

Retirement from a dream situation doesn't come easily to me. My grandfathers both worked decades beyond their life expectancies, and my Dad kept his assistant superintendent's position until he was 68, just to stick it in the ear of a superintendent who wanted Dad to retire so that he could bring in a friend to fill the position. My time has come, though. There are two grandsons who will be starting in P-H-M in what, at my age, seems a very short time, and I look forward to being a bigger part of their lives. With that in mind, as a grandfather and a taxpayer, I hope to see the wonderful staff at P-H-M be gifted with more time for teaching and learning, with a sharp decline in state and federal gobbledegook. Thank you all for letting me play a part!

Vicki Topolski
Teacher
20 Years of Service

My favorite memory will be all the field days we had over the years and seeing all the kids having so much fun.

My advice to fellow colleagues would be to be humble and kind to all; we are all striving to achieve the same goal.

The new adventure that awaits me is to do a lot more volunteering for my church and for the city of Mishawaka.

Debra Wassenhove
ESP
16.5 Years of Service

Nothing could be more heartbreaking and yet as exciting as this moment in my life. I treasure every moment, every child, and every person I have encountered throughout the past 17 years. Each one has taught me a new lesson, a new way of thinking, or given me a greater perspective on life's meaning. It is the achievements of the children, my colleagues, and the moments when you have no choice but to throw your hands up and laugh through the difficulties that I will remember the most.

If I could share one word, one piece of advice, it would be "compassion." It is such an important element in connecting to those around you, especially our most precious gifts ...our students. Life is too short, too crazy, and our world is full of such negativity. Be positive, speak kindly, softly and warmly, always show appreciation to everyone, and most of all listen deeply, not just with your ears, but with all of your heart and your soul. Be playful, be present, and always keep an open mind. These things will lead you to great success in working with others.

As for retirement, well I am tired, so I am going to try to enjoy some of my days just relaxing. I am not one to sit idle and I do enjoy being busy. I plan to spend my time helping my son climb his Mount Everest. He is Autistic, and is struggling his way through his first year of high school, so that will be my top priority. I also plan to do a little travel, and home remodeling as well. Don't be surprised to see me on occasion in your building as a sub. I thank each and every one of you that has welcomed me into your schools with open arms and made my experience at P-H-M a wonderful one! You are all shining stars in my eyes, twinkle away!

Mark Watts

Teacher

28 Years of Service

The awesome thing about working for P-H-M School Corporation is that **every day** is teacher appreciation day! By this I mean they provide excellent resources, facilities, opportunities, and encouragement to be creative and enthusiastic teachers. True story ... One day, after we had literally just discussed flood control measures, we were “fortunate” enough to have a hallway pipe break and my students demonstrated their new flood control skills, using sand bags to keep the water from entering the room. P-H-M stops at nothing to create a teachable moment!

Come up with new lessons as often as you can. If you find yourself the slightest bit bored, your students surely will be as well. New challenges will keep you and your instruction fresh.

As the newly appointed “home engineer” I have been tasked with improvements and renovations throughout our home. Our two dogs, Anika and Pippa, have volunteered to help so this might take some time! They tend to lose their focus and want to take breaks to play ball or Frisbee.



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