

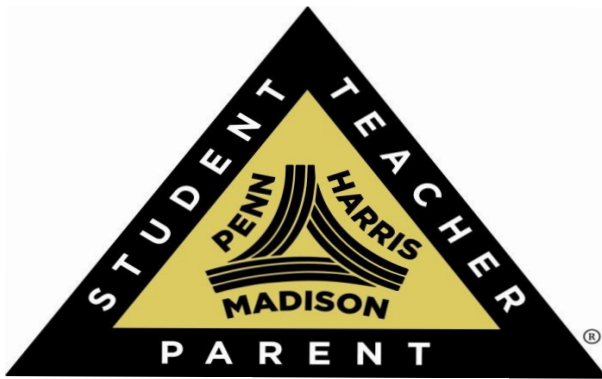


**Thirty-second Annual
Employee Recognition Dinner**

May 17, 2023



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



The Triangle of Success
connecting students,
teachers, and parents.

Jackie Trader
Educational Assistant
28 Years of Service

I was blessed for many years to work with the students and young adults that I did and have so many memories that I will carry with me forever. For a number of years when I worked at Penn High School, every spring I took a group of students to the prom and to watch the excitement on their faces and how much fun they had with their peers was an awesome experience.

One thing I learned was every student is unique in their own way and sometimes they just need someone to help them realize the potential they have. Always look for the positive in each student and keep the passion for teaching and learning going.

I am enjoying the time to read more, working on more crafts and starting new projects, having time to volunteer, and taking trips is in my future at some point. I miss being with the students, but I am enjoying being retired!

Carol Whittaker
ESP
28 Years of Service

When you have great students and staff greeting you every day, you can't help but like what you are doing. Penn might seem big, but when you become a part of it, the walls appear to shrink. Being in the Library for over a quarter century allowed me to establish many wonderful friendships, both with the staff as well as the students.

My advice to fellow colleagues is to always look for the little things you can do to make another person's day better. They might not remember you for the work you did, but they will always remember that you were kind and caring. Sometimes just being an ear for someone is a great service.

Our youngest daughter and her husband live in Montana, so we have plans to visit with them this summer. We have nine grandchildren, and love our roles as Nana and Papa. Whatever opportunities come our way; we are certainly more available now.

My sister Sandi has also added great support through the years. I really appreciate her coming to games and being there for me win or lose.

When I was a young coach, I was fortunate to learn from the best. Besides Coach Miller, my coach at Tri-State, Mark Peterman, was a great small college coach. From 1975 on, I was trained by the best coaches Indiana has ever seen. My first year I worked for Basil Mawbey at Angola High School. Basil is the hardest working coach the state has ever known. I learned from competing against the best coaches in Indiana history: Bill Harrell, Sam Alford, Jim Hammel, Jack Edison, and Bill Green, just to name a few. Finally, the greatest coach ever, John Wooden was a constant influence in our program. The Pyramid of Success always played a major role!

Having coached a final four team in each of five decades, I don't think the game ever passed me by. I have studied basketball all my life and am extremely proud of my past players and their successes on and off the court. I would also like to thank all my assistant coaches from all the schools I coached at. Also I worked for great administrators and I appreciate all they did for our programs, especially Dr. Jerry Thacker. Penn High School has been great to work for. Dr. Thacker's vision as an educator is tremendous and he brings out the best in all around him.

It has been a great ride and I have done my best!

Lee Riley
Auxiliary
24 Years of Service

I've been at Schmucker Middle School for 31 years, first as a volunteer in the library and then as the Building Tech. I help people deal with technology issues, and recently started a program teaching students how to help their classmates with technology. What has kept me coming back every year are the wonderful people at Schmucker. They are creative, flexible, willing to learn, and committed to helping children succeed in whatever they do. And I have always felt appreciated!

My husband, Rob, is already retired, and we're hoping to travel more in the next few years. I'm also hoping to get back into genealogy, and to spend more time gardening. Mostly I'm looking forward to enjoying the freedom to hike on a Wednesday whenever the weather's nice!

Remember, if something isn't working, "Magic Reboot" will fix most things!

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Program

Master of Ceremonies

Dr. Lisa Soto Kile, Director of Human Resources

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Jerry Thacker, Superintendent

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Robi Davidson
Walt Disney Elementary School

Secondary Teacher of the Year

Eric Bowers
Penn High School

Award to Teachers of the Year

Jennifer Turnblom, Executive Director
Penn-Harris-Madison Education Foundation

Classified Employee of the Year

Julie Mead
Horizon Elementary School

Invocation

Bob Thompson, Director of Alternative Education

Dinner

10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40

Year Service Award Presentations

Dr. Lisa Soto Kile

Retirement Recognition Awards

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

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

◆ *Thanks to Lavon Oke and the Penn High School Kaleidoscope Jazz Combo.*

Retirement is a gift of time. I enjoy time with family, time to savor simple moments, time to live life fully, and time to make memories with family and friends. Working at P-H-M brought me into a “family” that will remain part of my life long into retirement. Thank you to all who touched my life with their friendship.

Tomi Perkins

Teacher

37 Years of Service

When I began my student teaching at Schmucker Middle School in 1985 with Mr. Jim Terkos, I had no idea what a big part Schmucker would play in my life. I knew it was a special place by the way the staff and students welcomed my growing family and I from the first day. I never thought I would spend most of my adult life in middle school, but I know now that it was exactly where I belonged. I feel so fortunate to have been able to spend my career sharing things like creating art, exploring new places, and trying new things with my students.

While teaching has been memorable in its own right, some of my favorite memories have come from the activities and opportunities presented to me as an educator outside of the classroom. From field trips to amusement parks and musical productions to ski slopes and museums in Washington DC, I have enjoyed every moment of showing my students that beauty and art can be found in more than a middle school art classroom.

Because of Schmucker Middle School, I have not only had the pleasure of watching thousands of young students become happy, successful adults, but I have also been blessed to have developed lifelong friendships with fellow parents and colleagues. As I begin my retirement, I look forward to relaxing, traveling, spending time with my children and grandchildren, and enjoying the freedom of my own artistic endeavors.

Al Rhodes

Teacher

15 Years of Service

In 1967, I met the new Penn High School Coach Jim Miller. Jim taught us about pursuit of excellence and that the Indiana State Championship was the ultimate goal that could be achieved. For the past 56 years, I have pursued that goal with all my heart. The byproduct of what Coach Miller taught me has been a wonderful life. I have tried my best to be the best husband, father, teacher and coach that I could be. I owe everything to my parents, my wife, and Coach Miller!

I would like to thank my wife Kathy for all of her support through the years. She is a very special person, nurse, mother, and wife. It is not easy being a basketball coach's wife in Indiana. She has been a great one!

As a father, I am extremely proud of my two sons, Chris and Curtis. They both understand the pursuit of excellence and are building great lives for themselves and their families. I am glad they never complained about all the time I spent coaching.

My advice would be to find those “go to” colleagues that can help you with anything such as technology, lesson plans, and just general procedures when you have questions. Also, if you teach middle school, when appropriate, try to add humor to your class. It seemed to work for me.

When the weather is nice, I like to golf, work around the house, and hit the Misha-waka Riverwalk. I may find a part-time job or sub in the winter. I also look forward to cheering on my favorite college football team, the USC Trojans, at midwest college campuses when USC joins the Big 10 Conference in 2024.

**Barb Miller
Teacher**

29 Years of Service

When Dr. Sweeney gave me lemons and I made lemonade in teaching photography, even without equipment one year and without a darkroom the next. My kids were awesome and we did all kinds of fabulous things to make the class run, including building camera obscuras from refrigerator boxes, a film exchange room from two big screen TV boxes, and a light tight doorway from skids from the trash, and blankets and foam from the Goodwill. Those kids learned so much that year and I still hear back from some of them. Where there is a will, there is a way!

I was shocked off my chair to find out I had received the Indiana State Art Teachers Association for Indiana Art Teacher of the year for 2021. That was a huge honor that I still am in shock over.

Always maintain a sense of humor! It is imperative to make it through the difficult times. Did I hear someone say COVID? Phew! And PRAY, never again to go through something like that.

Having time for a personal life, doing my own artwork, time with my family, getting up after it gets light out, and just making time for me, for a change.

**Linda Knapp
Teacher Aide
29 Years of Service**

I began employment at P-H-M in March of 1993 as a Teachers Aide at Mary Frank, then one year at Horizon. In 1996, I began 25 years as the Media Aide at Elm Road School. My favorite memories of being the Media Aide have been the family atmosphere I shared with the students and staff. I enjoyed reading aloud in the “nest,” working with our CAMPE team, celebrating holidays, implementing Screen Free Week, going to Camp Eberhart, teaching STEM classes, and being involved with all the grade levels. It was a privilege to know each student as they advanced from grade K-5. I loved being part of a wonderful staff who always worked together to bring out the best in each student.

My advice to P-H-M staff is to remember that sometimes the days seem long, but the years are short. Make each day count by sharing smiles with kids and colleagues.

Service Awards

40 Year Service Award

Christine Nisley - Mary Frank
Cheril Sadural - Moran
Brenda Schlemmer - Penn

35 Year Service Award

Julie Adams - Northpoint
Kathleen Dance - Madison
Karin Logan - Elsie Rogers

30 Year Service Award

Jeneane Arter - Northpoint
Christina Campbell - Elsie Rogers
Amy Hartman-Fadorsen - Horizon
Sandra Hunter - Penn
Susan Lestinsky - Mary Frank
Becky Sechrist - Schmucker
Suzanne Trowbridge - Bittersweet
Julie Unrue - Madison
David VanOoteghem - Moran
Anita Weaver - Discovery
Denise White - Penn

25 Year Service Award

Leonor Archias - Penn
Terry Arter Jr. - Discovery
Cindy Binion - Transportation
Susan Brew - Exceptional Education
Jeffrey Carnall - Schmucker
Karyn Delio - Bittersweet
Jennifer Grannan - Northpoint
Natalie Hapke - Horizon
James Howard - Discovery
Karen Hunsberger - Prairie Vista
Troy Kauffman - Discovery
Lynn Killelea - Northpoint
Debbie Lanning - Elsie Rogers
Judith Marosz - Elm Road
Kevin McNulty - Penn
Stephanie Newcomer - Elm Road
Stacey Rach - Penn
Amy Richardson - Bittersweet
Kevin Runyan - Exceptional Education
Denise Sanders-Honaker - Penn
Judy Sheyko - Meadow's Edge
Laurie Stanton - Transportation
Wendy Stevens - Penn
Lorraine White - Northpoint

20 Year Service Award

Rebecca Allen - Exceptional Education
Kari Allsop - Northpoint
Karen Barcome - Grissom
Douglas Barnbrook - Pennway
Candice Beelaert - Penn
Jan Desimone - Northpoint
Andrea Dunn - Mary Frank
Aaron Leniski - ESC
Maureen Munger - ESC
Pamela O'Neal - Prairie Vista

Service Awards-continued

20 Year Service Award-continued

Eric Bowers - Penn
Dorothy Carnall - Schmucker
Pamela Christofield - Madison
Todd Crist - Penn
Lavon Dean-Null - ESC

Sara Osler - Bittersweet
Curt Rallo - Penn
Robin Tharp - Transportation
Patricia White - Meadow's Edge

15 Year Service Award

Amy Aschenbrenner - Transportation
Stephanie Betzer - Moran
Sara Bowen - Elm Road
Katie Carroll - Walt Disney
Samantha Creakbaum - Mary Frank
Angela Edwards - Exceptional Education
Ruth Gay - ESC
Marcia Gillean - Transportation
Nicole Greene - Mary Frank
Sara Hammond - Prairie Vista
Kathleen Harting - Discovery
Tamara Kenna - Exceptional Education
Lisa Kreiger - Penn

Rachelle Mammolenti - Penn
Sarah McCambridge - Horizon
Thomas H. Miller Jr. - Penn
Jeanie Mitchell - Penn
Scott Nate - Bittersweet
Jess Preston - Penn
Alan Rhodes - Penn
Lyndsey Smith - ESC
Mary Spite - Penn
Cynthia Sudlow - Walt Disney
Robert Thompson - Pennway
Amy Zimmer - Penn

10 Year Service Award

Julianne Anderson - Walt Disney
Christine Austin - Horizon
Madelyn Beers - Elm Road
David Bikneris - Transportation
Danielle Black - Penn
Karl Black - Schmucker
Ronald Campbell - Maintenance
Jeannie Chettleburgh - Horizon
Candace Cussen - Northpoint
Kimberly Drew - Horizon
Jeff Fisher - Transportation
Amanda Fox - Elsie Rogers
John Gensic - Penn
Erika Huemmer - Schmucker
Cherri Jackson - Penn
Ellen Lechlitner - Pennway
John Lord - Prairie Vista

Kelly Lyvers - Meadow's Edge
Stephanie Martin - Meadow's Edge
Aaron Noppenberg - Penn
Jessica O'Connor - Northpoint
Holly Odynski - Penn
Sarah O'Hara - Mary Frank
Sarah Ormsby - Grissom
Karen Parks - Meadow's Edge
Michelle Polizzotto - Bittersweet
April Pressler - Horizon
Andrea Pynaert - Penn
Kelli Rogers - Penn
Sarah Schiff - Prairie Vista
Timothy Trethewey - Transportation
Brandon Tugmon - Transportation
Kylee Wetzel - Penn

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?

Jerry Hawkins Administrator 6 Years of Service

I have spent 33 years in public education taking a non-traditional path after high school. I bought my first house at 18 and owned several businesses and rental properties before attending college. I sold those businesses and real estate to go to college to become a teacher and coach. I then spent 10 years teaching high school math and coaching football, baseball, basketball, wrestling, and golf. From there, I went straight into administration as a Business Manager. I spent 17 years between two districts before coming to P-H-M in 2017. Less than a year later, I was promoted to Executive Director of Business Services.

Coming to P-H-M has been a great experience working for and with Dr. Thacker, Dr. Leniski, and the other administrators have been a tremendous joy. I have always felt respected and appreciated while working here at P-H-M.

On a personal level, I have always been busy with many different projects and hobbies, from being a DJ for weddings and parties to remodeling houses to building furniture. I love golfing and completing many different woodworking projects. After losing my wife to cancer in early 2021, I went on a crazy streak and built a 20 ft. x 40 ft. inground pool by myself (completed in less than 3 months), started a go-kart track and a shooting range on my property. The go-kart track has hit a few snags, but the shooting range will be finished this summer. I am currently remodeling an older home in Michigan trying to update it while maintaining its wonderful character. My future plans are filled with many things to do, most of which are from a list provided by my three kids. I am also looking forward to playing more golf (I certainly need the practice) and traveling all over the country.

Brendan Hess Teacher

32 Years of Service

My favorite memories working at P-H-M are just the many outstanding students I taught, players I coached, and the colleagues I worked with and I still remain good friends with many of them today. A highlight, earlier in my career, was when a student of mine won the state geography bee which resulted in a free trip to Washington, D.C. to watch him compete in the national competition hosted by Alex Trebek.

Honored Retirees

Leonor Archias
Educational Assistant

James Kominkiewicz
Teacher

Victoria Roush
Auxiliary

Patricia Boner
ESP

Mary Lee
Food Service

Susan Scott
Transportation

Judith Dahlstrom
Transportation

Constance Lugar
ESP

Brenda Smith
Transportation

Lynn Dodd
Food Service

Barbara Miller
Teacher

Vickie Stickel
Educational Assistant

Michael Furnas
ESP

Kari Miller
Teacher

Darlene Stump
Transportation

Cynthia Gearhart
Educational Assistant

Nancy Newcomer
Auxiliary

Jacqueline Trader
Educational Assistant

Gary Gervais
Custodian

Lavon Oke
Teacher

Anne Tschetter
Teacher

Jerry Hawkins
Administrator

Tomi Perkins
Teacher

Carol Whittaker
ESP

Brendan Hess
Teacher

Douglas Radican
Transportation

Tami Wisniewski
Custodian

Kimberly Kalman
Educational Assistant

Alan Rhodes
Teacher

Debera Yoder
ESP

Linda Knapp
ESP

Lee Riley
Auxiliary

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Robi Davidson
Music Teacher
Walt Disney Elementary School

Walt Disney Elementary School Music Teacher Robi Davidson Davidson has worked for P-H-M for 11 years, but has been at P-H-M nearly his whole life! Davidson at-tended P-H-M's Madison Elementary School, Grissom Middle School and graduated from Penn High School in 2007. He has taught music at Walt Disney Elementary for 11 of his 12 years of teaching.

If Davison is not leading students in the school ukulele group, running the Walt Disney News Network broadcast, or DJing a school dance or school wide assembly, he is chairing Walt Disney's signature event. Davidson became the head organizer of "Culture Night" in 2014 and works with the PTO and other Disney staff to pull off this incredible evening. Culture Night is more than an event, it is a celebration! Davidson describes it as the "true heartbeat" of Walt Disney!

With more than 30 different languages spoken in the homes of Disney families, the school started "Culture Night" in 1999 so that families of all backgrounds could share their cultures with the entire school community. The month-long celebration is now incorporated into all aspects of the school day including global lunch menu options and gym and music units that explore various music and games played by children around the world. Davidson, a former Kingsmen Marching Band member, has also gotten Penn's Fine Arts Academy students involved with band, choir, orchestra, and dance performances. Various community groups also come in and participate.

Davidson doesn't lend his musical teaching talents to just his Disney students, he also coaches the tuba section for Penn's award-winning Marching Band and also works on the sound design team with the front ensemble. Davidson teaches private tuba lessons to middle and high school students. He loves helping fifth graders transition to their middle school experience by working on the "Instrument Selection Nights," where students get to try out and choose an instrument to pursue in middle school music class.

"It is always a treat to see my elementary students and their families," said Davidson "and it is always very special when I get to re-meet many of my elementary students again as high schoolers when they begin their marching band careers. Seeing their growth and the new versions of individuals they become, and to be able to be a part of their educational process during both those points in their lives is really special."

Secondary Teacher of the Year

Eric Bowers
AP History Teacher & Tennis Coach
Penn High School

Eric Bowers started at P-H-M 20 years ago as a student teacher and has been teaching history/social studies at Penn High School ever since. Bowers has also been the Penn Boys and Girls Tennis coach his entire time at Penn. His coaching record includes 26 Sectional Championships, 10 Regional Championships, had four Semi-state appearances, and coached one individual State Champion in 2013. Coach Bowers was named the 2018 Indiana Boys Tennis Coach of the Year by the Indiana High School Tennis Coaches Association.

Bowers was named a Fulbright Scholar in 2017—one of only a handful chosen from more than 3,000 applicants. Fulbright's are given the opportunity to research, study and teach in a country of their choice. Bowers chose to study at Regensburg University in Germany. In March 2022, Bowers was selected to participate in the inaugural Genocide Education (GenEd) Project Teacher Fellowship Program. In July 2022, the group participated in a 10-day intensive professional development program in Armenia. Bowers is scheduled to speak at the National Convention of Social Studies this year in Philadelphia as part of the Genocide Project. He attended the European Union Conference held in Brussels. Next summer, he will participate in the USS Midway Institute for Teachers, which offers educational seminars providing more in depth information about the Cold War, the wars in Korea and Vietnam, and World War II in the Pacific.

Bowers' shares his history expertise both as a teacher and club sponsor overseeing Model UN and Social Studies Academic Super Bowl, both since 2018. This year he is also the teacher sponsor of the Muslim Student Association and the newly formed 180 Days Culture Club—which features a monthly speaker, usually a student, who explains their family or native country culture to their classmates.

But probably one of Bowers most favorite and most notable student activities is the annual legendary "Pennstock!" You know it's close to the end of school when you see nearly Penn's entire junior class clad in tie dye shirts and other 60/70s attire.

Talk to Coach Bowers for five minutes and it's clear that he LOVES teaching, "Do what you can to not only promote your classroom but your school as well. I would encourage every teacher to find time to help with at least one club, group, sport, music, theater, or activity to better identify with their students," says Bowers. "The excitement of a student when a teacher helps out, volunteers, or even attends an event is priceless."

Classified Employee of the Year

Julie Mead
Teacher Aide
Horizon Elementary School

Dr. Thacker and Principal Amy Fadorsen popped into a kindergarten class on Friday, April 28 where Mead was leading a Reading Learning Club session to surprise her with the news that she was P-H-M's 2023 Employee of the Year. Mead was so taken off guard she didn't realize the award was actually for her until Dr. Thacker said her name.

Mead first came to P-H-M as a parent. All of her three children have attended P-H-M schools and she says grateful for all the opportunities P-H-M has provided for her children and now herself, "Best decision we could have made, not only for our three kids, but for our family as a whole. Not only have they had wonderful educational experiences, but I've been able to find a job that is more like a family at Horizon."

Mead started working at P-H-M in January 2019 as a Universal Substitute at Horizon. A year later she transitioned to a Teacher's Aide position, staying at Horizon. This school year, Mead has also become an Early Learning Academy Teacher's Aide—the only ELA Teacher's Aide at Horizon!

Mead loves that she's able to interact with students and staff throughout the building, "The job of a TA is a unique one. You spend so much of your day in small time frames all over the building. I touch each grade level daily. I get to learn about each and every year these students spend in the building and I get to help them year after year grow in their learning." Mead says she's found her calling as a TA, "I count it a blessing to be able to help so many all over the building! ... There is so much joy in my day to be able to see those little lightbulbs go off above the students' heads."

Mead is appreciated not just for the assistance she provides in the classroom, but for what she does outside the classroom as well. Her list of school activities include: leading staff after school workouts, helping coach Horizon's "Running is Elementary" teams, taking care of Horizon's outdoor learning space known as the environmental lab, serving as a school traffic guard through VSS, and organizing a school blood drive for staff and the community.

Horizon teacher Jeffrey Hardman, who nominated Mead, explains how important she is to the building community "Mrs. Mead social emotional personality to help and lift up those around her is above and beyond what is needed in our workplace. She brings a cheery and secure personality to work each day." Hardman also states her "positive behaviors have left us all feeling better at the end of the day."