

NEWSLETTER

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EXPLORING COAL COUNTRY

The Anthracite Coal Region is home to one of the largest known deposits of coal in the world. Exports from this area helped fuel the Industrial Revolution in the United States. Remnants from this time have become popular tourist attractions. Two of our programs dove into the history and legacy of coal mining in the area; The NOVA program at Packer Ridge Academy toured Eckley Miners' Village, and the ISST program at Willow Academy toured Mine No. 9.

Eckley Miners' Village was home to an area chock full of coal. Immigrants from Ireland, Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, and Italy, all descended upon the town looking for work. They mostly lived in deep poverty and amidst rampant corruption and favoritism. Our students received a guided tour of the village, which was saved from destruction by a movie (1970's *The Molly Maguires*). The tour gave our NOVA students a chance to see relics barely touched aside from time itself, such as two churches, and houses stocked with cookingware and silverware as old as the late 1800s.

Mine No. 9 in Lansford took our intrepid ISST students deep into the historic "Wash Shanty." The rail ride transported them 1,600 feet into the mountain to see the mine shaft, the mule way, and a miner's hospital carved into solid rock. The mine was operational from between 1855 until 1972. Once abandoned for 20 years, the Panther Creek Valley Foundation has taken control of the mine shaft area and has given tours of the historic mine since 2002.



BREAKING RECORDS

BHA's community presence started on a strong note in September. The yearly Tunnel to Towers fundraiser hit a new level for the 25th anniversary of 9/11. Staff turned a typical dress-down fundraiser into a chance to wear their patriotic best to pay tribute to the lives lost, especially the first responders who gave everything to try and save lives on that fateful day.

The \$576 donation, presented by Lisa Bartel, a teacher with the PRIDE program at Ashfield Academy, was given at the Tunnel to Towers 5K Run and Walk in New York City. The funds will provide mortgage-free homes, housing assistance, and supportive services to homeless veterans. As of 2026, the organization has provided 1,700 homes, all in memory of Stephen Siller, a firefighter who passed away on 9/11 while trying to help ordinary Americans in the midst of crisis.



FIRE UP THE GRILL

It may not be peak grilling season, but our Career Employment Program students are enjoying the sights, sounds, and tasks of one of our new partner businesses: AK Farms.

Students were given the opportunity to go fully hands-on in the process. It starts with grabbing the beef from the fridge, and putting the chunks through the meat grinder. Then, you have to take that ground beef and weigh it and package it for purchase at the Palmerton Public Market.

You thought it was just ground meat? Our students are working with filling and twisting sausage links from the long and winding ropes. It's a lot of work for these Career Employment Program students, but they did it with a smile as they got to be such a big part of the process.



HUMAN RESOURCES CORNER

by Alyssa Spotts — Director of HR

October is recognized as National Work and Family Month—a great opportunity to pause and reflect on how we balance the demands of our work with the people, activities, and priorities that matter most outside of work. Our days are filled with supporting students, collaborating with colleagues, communicating with families, planning, problem-solving, and responding to the unexpected. The work we do is meaningful, but it can also be demanding.

Work-life balance is not about dividing our time perfectly between work and home. It is about creating healthy boundaries and making space for both our professional responsibilities and our personal well-being. When we take time to rest, recharge, and focus on our lives outside of school, we give ourselves the opportunity to return to work with renewed energy and focus. Taking care of ourselves also helps us continue providing the patience, compassion, and support that our students and colleagues need.

Consider a few simple ways to create more balance:

Take breaks - Give yourself permission to step away and recharge during the day.

Prioritize your responsibilities - Focus on what needs your attention most and recognize that not everything has to be done at once.

Set boundaries - When possible, establish a clear transition between your workday and personal time.

Use your time off - School breaks, personal days, and vacation time are opportunities to rest and reconnect with the people and activities that are important to you.

Support one another - A strong school community is built on teamwork. Don't hesitate to ask for help or offer support to a colleague.



MENTAL HEALTH CORNER

by BHA Outpatient Staff

October is National Bullying Prevention Month. Bullying does not discriminate by age and it can lead to damage to the victim's mental health.

According to the PACER National Bullying Prevention Center, more than one in five students will be bullied this year. The act of bullying can affect not only the victim, but the witnesses as well. It can promote a feeling of helplessness and fear.

All of us have a role to play in bullying prevention. All of us need to call it out when it is happening to create an environment where it is not acceptable. Simply ignoring it is not the right play.

Don't be a bully. Be kind, and promote an environment of kindness and respect.



SAFETY CORNER

October 4 through 10 is Fire Prevention Week. The National Fire Protection Association's theme is "Charge Into Fire Safety™. Safe Charging Is a Superpower." Just about every electronic we have today needs a charge. Did you know there are safer ways to charge your devices? Here are a few tips to ensure your electronics don't cause a house fire:

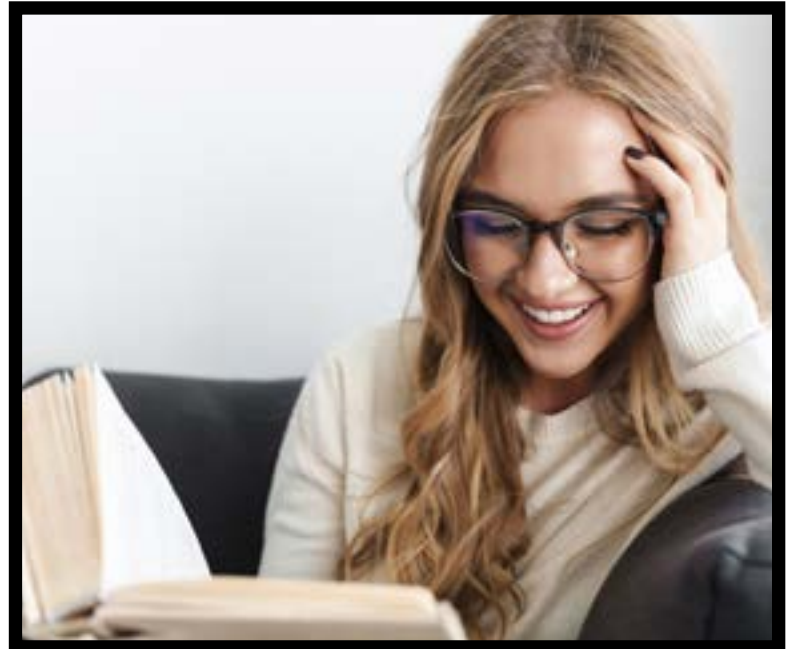
- Don't chance a cheap charger. Use the charger that came with your device.
- Charge on a hard, flat surface. Softer surfaces can catch fire if they overheat.
- Once a device hits 100%, unplug it.
- Charge e-bikes, scooters, and power tools outside when possible.
- Does your device feel hot? Stop using it—especially if it starts swelling, leaking, or smoking.
- On a flight? Keep it in sight.



GOOD NEWS CORNER

There is far too much bad news out there in the world today. Here are a few good stories:

- A leopard-spotted rock found by the Perseverance Rover is potentially the clearest sign of ancient life on Mars. The rock sample is currently in a tube on Mars, but the hope is to get some of these samples back to Earth for further, more intensive, study.
- A British company called Pavegen tested a technology that could turn normal footsteps into electricity during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. The test was successful, but costs remain high. It could be the power of the future.
- Reading for pleasure, according to a study from the University of Cambridge, resulted in better mental health. One study showed a 33% reduction in the risk of Alzheimer's disease.
- The United Nations voted to use a more accurate version of the world map. While it's not completely possible to represent a spherical object on a flat surface, the plan is to better represent Africa's true size and shrink Greenland.





WHERE EDUCATION MEETS UNDERSTANDING.



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