



# THE DEVIL'S HERALD

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Avon Grove High School, West Grove, Pa.

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## SCHOOL DISTRICT

# What's old is new again

## Old AGHS transforms into the new Avon Grove Middle School

By  
Myles Ruess  
Staff Writer

Space was running out and patience was wearing thin. A new and more sizable school needed to be built for Avon Grove's middle school students.

While the new Avon Grove High School was being completed during the 2022-2023 school year, the middle school was receiving its long overdue facelift and remodeling. The total budget for the AGMS remodeling was \$22 million.

"Some of the most significant improvements in the school was in the infrastructure and things

you don't really see," says AGMS principal Ms. Janice Lear. "We have a whole new roof, we have a whole new HVAC system, and some new flooring."

The main office was also reconfigured and a new main entrance was created, taking the place of what was once a courtyard that housed English classroom trailers. The courtyard became a newly paved parking lot, decorated with flower beds.

Along with the new infrastructure changes, there was also a lot of repainting done. Classroom halls now glow crisp colors of maroon and white and the lockers have been painted over, covering



-Photo by Myles Ruess

The new main entrance at AGMS takes the place of what was once a courtyard.

what was once peeling paint.

There is no more significant construction left to be done. The new main focus of AGMS is to update technology; the goal is to update the PA system, and a new sound system in the auditorium.

Part of the long range plan for each school year is to invest in all aspects of technology to ensure that the building stays up to date.

Just like the change of routine for the Avon Grove High School students in the new building, the same is happening for the middle school students.

"The best thing about it is having sixth graders in the building as well. I love having three grades of students because I think it gives us a better opportunity to build connections with our students,"

says Lear.

Overall, the most notable change for staff and students alike is the size of the school. Crystal Hocking, staff member at Avon Grove Middle School, agreed that the building is massive.

The renovations have made the building better, but it will take a good effort to adjust.



-Photo by Myles Ruess

The new flooring stretches from the auditorium to the library.

## SCHOOL POLICY

# Vending machines must follow guidelines

By  
LeeAnn Baker  
Staff Writer

Many students are wondering why the vending machines are restricted during certain school hours, whereas in the past they were unlocked all day.

Numerous students have expressed their thoughts on the limited hours on the vending machine.

"I have study hall in the morning. I'm hungry and the vending machines are always closed. The only time they are open is during lunch when I'm already paying for the school's lunch or after school when I have practice," said sophomore Sienna Kleinguenther.

Field hockey player Julia Sarkissian stated that right after school, "I change and go straight to practice. So when I do want something to eat before, there aren't any good options to choose from."

Avon Grove High School principal Dr. Snead stated that, "Hours for the vending machine were determined to be in compliance with the USDA for the non-Smart

Snack machines and to limit distractions during instructional time."

Ms. Elizabeth Julian, Director of Food Service at Avon Grove School District, stated that the snack choices are determined by USDA's Smart Snacks rules.

Pennsylvania's policy with USDA's nutrition standards states that vending machines must contain at least 50 percent of grains as whole grains, meet the nutrition criteria, and no deep fried foods. Seventy-five percent of the beverages must be water, 100 percent juice, or milk—along with other nutritional guidelines that must be followed.

"The vending machines in the athletic area are not Smart Snack approved and can't be open during the school day," stated Julian.

The food and beverage choices have more variety in these vending machines due to more freedom with the nutrition requirements.

USDA defines a "school day" from midnight until 30 minutes after the last bell.

A Smart Snack calculator is used to determine which snacks

to put into the Smart Snack approved vending machines in the cafeteria.

The Fresh Healthy Vending company decides on which snack to fill in the vending machines based on what is the most profitable as well as following USDA's rules.

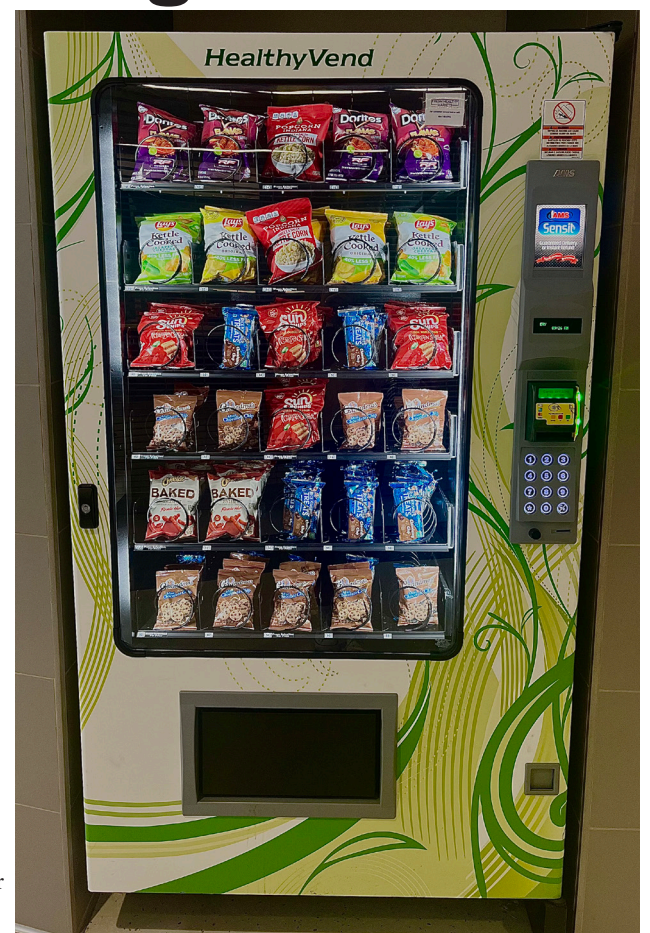
It was also suggested by Avon Grove student Charlotte Sabol that the vending machines should be opened throughout the school day because her lunch doesn't start until 12:25p.m., when she already had the majority of her classes.

"If I was able to get a snack then I would have more energy for my classes," said Sabol.

"Faculty brought concerns to the administration at the beginning of last year as students were spending time out of class utilizing the vending machines so the hours were changed to limit distractions," stated Dr. Snead.

-Photo by LeeAnn Baker

There are several vending machines in the school, ranging from the cafeteria to the gym.





## PROFILE

# Transitioning back to Germany

## Exchange student shares the differences between two cultures

By  
Giselle McCullough  
Staff Writer

As young children, we used to think of and dream about what it would be like to live across the world in Antarctica, Africa, Asia, or Europe. But what happens when in your adolescence you gain the opportunity to live and learn in another continent for a year?

That's what happened to Helena Zander. Helena traveled from her home in Hannover, Germany and landed herself at Avon Grove High School for the 2022-2023 school year.

"We've always been very interested in Germany. So, we decided to host a German student in hopes of learning about their culture," says Mrs. Rosati, Helena's host mom.

Most understand the great differences in culture, politics, economics, technology, and language of places around the world. But no one really understands the extent of those differences until they experience it for themselves. Helena knew that would be the case, but boy was she in for more of a shock than she bargained for.

Her first shock came within the first few weeks of school...during an intruder drill. Schools in the United States tend to have intruder drills and fire drills frequently. In Germany, they have a single fire drill a semester and have never had the uneasy procedure of an intruder drill.

There were major differences in school, life, and feelings.

First and foremost, schools. In Germany, the primary subjects are chosen by the school; there are no such things as electives. All schools have 10-12 subjects consisting of German, English, math, history, music, religion, physical education, sciences, another language, and social studies.

Testing is also not a problem for German students. They have

one or two "big" tests in every class per semester. All these tests occur within the same few weeks. Standardized tests do not exist for German students.

Grading is also significantly different. Instead of grades A-F they grade 1-6 with 1 being an A and 6 being an F.

The language standard provides English starting in primary/elementary school. Other languages are offered, but knowledge of the English language is a must.

Most students at AG would agree that our school lunches are relatively ok or good, but in Germany, only grades 1-5 and sometimes grade 6, buy lunch from school.

"Most German schools have bakery-like stores where sandwiches, donuts, candy, drinks, ice cream, and more are available for us," says Helena.

They tend to have six 45 minute periods throughout the day with "5 minute break intervals between every class and 15 minute break intervals between every two classes."

One of the things Helena found most exciting at Avon Grove were school dances. School dances are not a common occurrence in German schools.

"We have a formal graduation ball for the graduating classes but these are typically organized by parents and students themselves," she explained.

Now for life differences. Expenses in Germany in comparison to America are drastically different.

"Due to inflation, America is much more expensive than Germany. Things I would've spent \$1-\$2 on at home cost at least \$10 in America," she claims.

Transportation is much different too. Cars are rarely used for individual purposes and are typically only used when the family is traveling together or for routine

outings to the grocery store and other such places. Public buses and subways are the typical motorized forms of transportation.

"Germans also love to stay active and either walk or bike for short distance travels."

Speaking of transportation, the driving standards for adolescents under 18 are also very different. Germans start training for their drivers license at 17 rather than the typical 15 or 16 for US adolescents.

"It's extremely complicated. It takes months to finish and is very expensive. Once earning a driver's license, you still aren't legally capable of driving until you're 18 without supervision."

The supervision standards are much more strict than America's. The supervising person must have a certain amount of driving experience and have no past accidents. This is the only person who can supervise a teen's driving, and it is written down in a legal document when that choice is made.

The majority of people can connect to feeling homesick after being away from home for college, vacation, medical, or other life occurrences. Can you imagine what it would be like being away from your family for an entire school year in a different time zone?

Helena remarked loving the freedom she had here in the American school system.

"I adored my teachers. They made class so much more fun. Teachers in Germany are much more strict. I loved having electives I could choose from on my own. It made me feel more independent. I enjoyed learning about things other than the basics."

On top of that, Helena made so many friends during her time here.

"I miss my German girl so much," says Avon Grove student Meg Willis, grieving the departure of Helena.



- Photo courtesy of Helena Zander

Helena Zander enjoyed the Junior Prom with her friends.

And her host family accepted her and welcomed her as a part of their own family.

"We learned that family can be more than just being related. Helena will always feel like family," remarked Mrs. Rosati.

Though Helena had her new American friends to comfort her through her homesickness she described not really feeling that homesick at all.

"I didn't really get homesick because I knew I'd be going home and see everyone again. It was much harder for me to leave America.

"I recognized that I would never live this life again. I would be leaving these people I came to love and care about and this distinct adventure. The times I come back will only be for visits."

Though American and German life have many significant differences, Helena never really had a problem adapting to life here.

Mrs. Rosati claims, "She acclimated quickly to our routine and was able to submerge herself into our culture without issue."

"Other than a few culture shocks, life was relatively easy to grasp," Helena said.

Nor was re-adapting to life back home in Germany hard for her.

"Coming back home to Germany was like coming home from vacation: refreshing," she proclaimed.

While there were places and things she wished she had had the opportunity to do, like amusement parks and a few select restaurants and special locations, she still greatly enjoyed her time here.

And, finally, a word of advice from her to other exchange students: "Enjoy every second of it like it could end tomorrow because these 10 months will go by much faster than you'd like."

## COMMUNITY

# Manhunt hits close to home

By  
Maddie Butler  
Senior Editor

Windows and doors were locked, plans for working outside were dropped, and schools were closed.

Although these schools may not have been Avon Grove, the escape of 34-year-old Danilo Cavalcante definitely affected those at Avon Grove High School.

English teachers Mr. and Mrs. Wimer live within the search area that was most prominent throughout the convicted murder's two-week escape.

Though they live near Chester County Prison, Mr. Wimer says that they have never felt worried before about their location.

The prison has always been an integrated part of the community and "nonviolent offenders do landscaping for parks in the area, and some even are allowed to work at the Pocopson Home, which is an old folks home," according to Mr. Wimer.

Mr. and Mrs. Wimer revealed that they never would have expected Cavalcante to stick around as they "always assume when this happens that the person just goes far away and tries to get out of there as soon as possible."

They were shocked when he was spotted in the next neighborhood over on a video doorbell camera.

A couple days after they found out, Mr. Wimer shared a particular event in which Mrs. Wimer "was out watering the garden, and we saw seven U.S. Marshals with drawn firearms surrounding our neighbor's shed to make sure he wasn't in there."

Both reflected on this instance as a real wake up call about the Cavalcante situation, and the point at which they entered into a much more serious state of lockdown.

Their lockdown entailed driving into their garage and shutting the door before getting out, hiding their car keys within the house so the fugitive couldn't find them, and locking their shed.

These extra precautions, according to Mr. Wimer, were not only for their safety, however, but also to hopefully help police to locate Cavalcante.

A major takeaway that Mr. Wimer had from this situation was that a role as citizens is to avoid "making things more difficult for [law enforcement]" during times like this, so many of the actions they took directly followed advice from news updates and police of-

ficials.

This search also caused complications with everyday routines as Mr. and Mrs. Wimer were on their way to work when they found out their daughter's daycare had closed, so Mrs. Wimer had to stay home for a day.

As many are aware, the escape of Cavalcante affected traffic and highways as well.

Route 100 from Fairview to Ridge roads (Route 23), and a large stretch of Route 23 west at Route 100 were closed to traffic for most of the period in which the whereabouts of Cavalcante were generally unknown.

Additionally, police were doing routine traffic stops to check the back of them for Danilo Cavalcante, which is what happened to Jack Dembosky, a former Avon Grove student on his way to work as he was passing the Ace Hardware Store off of Pocopson Road.

Mrs. Wimer shared that she frequented the Next Door app, a neighborhood forum for updates, quite a lot during those two weeks. This allowed her to reflect on how "we all came together to look out for each other."

One example shared by Mrs. Wimer of this community outreach is the story of a local gas station that was closed to the public, but

was kept available for police to stage the area and grab drinks throughout the day.

According to Mrs. Wimer, the gas station has now received increased support from the community to make up for this loss of business.

Mainly, Mr. Wimer wants to "ap-

preciate how the authorities did their best" in a stressful situation, and were able to catch Cavalcante in the end.







# HERALD SPORTS

● **Sep. 30**  
**Football**  
vs. Academy Park, 1:00p.m.

● **Oct. 2**  
**Golf**  
@ Ches-Mont Championships  
**Girls Tennis**  
@ Sun Valley, 3:30p.m.  
**Girls Soccer**  
@ Great Valley, 7p.m.

● **Oct. 3**  
**Field Hockey**  
@ Great Valley, 3:45p.m.  
**Girls Volleyball**  
@ Great Valley, 5:00p.m.  
**Boys Soccer**  
vs. Great Valley, 7:00p.m.

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## FOOTBALL

# Red Devils look for a winning season

## Head Coach Joe Coffey believes they can break 14 year drought

By  
**Mary Kate D'Ambrosio**  
Staff Writer

Stadium lights ring and flicker above as they wake up from their long off-season nap. Metal creaks and scrapes along the cobblestone sidewalk as the entrance gates are pushed open. A rumbling is heard on the far left field from the stomping of shoes against the bleachers.

These sounds only mean one thing. Football is back.

"Avon Grove has had one winning record in 21 years of football. This team will be the second," said Head Coach Joe Coffey of the Avon Grove High School football team during a pre-season interview.

Each year the team is different. New players try-out and veterans work and train during the off season. Coaches modify and strengthen their coaching styles, and the bond between players and coaches becomes stronger.

Under fourth year coach Joe Coffey, the class of 2024 will be the first group to have navigated high school football together.

For the potential of the team to fully be shown, direction and responsibility lie heavily on the four senior captains: Lucas Laganelli, Gavin Picard, Harrison Watson and Cole Walsh.

Laganelli is making Avon Grove history as the first ever fourth year varsity starter; which if you do the math, means he's been starting for the team since his freshman year.

He appreciates the opportunity he has had "playing with different classes throughout the years. While it's sad to see them go, it's a great experience of having different people come up with you and play," Laganelli articulated.

Last year, Picard's season came to a screeching halt when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He was a promising top wide receiver for the team, but was sidelined for the rest of the season due to his life-threatening diagnosis.

Fast forward to this season. Picard is finally healthy and taking on his newest challenge of switching from wide receiver to tight end. Don't worry, he will still be catching the ball and running it in for touchdowns, but he is aiming on working towards strengthening his overall blocking skills.

To anyone who has been to an Avon Grove game, when a touchdown is scored, it is no surprise when number four, Harrison Watson's name is called.

Standing at 5'6" and often looked over due to his size, Watson's abilities to run and protect the ball should not be underestimated.

Watson believes that his skills



-Photo courtesy of Jason Palmer

Avon Grove running back Harrison Watson rushed for 85 yards against Owen J. Roberts on September 8.

and abilities will be best utilized at running back and on the defensive side of the ball.

"I know there are certain skills that I've have to work on and I've just got to make myself a stronger player," he noted.

Described as a defensive voice on the field, Cole Walsh was asked how he looks to connect with the defense.

He feels that his approach will

be to make sure he is "prioritizing the defense's success, and making sure everyone is on the same page, while also calling the defense and getting the call from the coaches. Making sure everyone knows what to do and where to be at, at the right time and isn't arguing."

The season is far from over.

After a heart wrenching 4-6 season last year and sitting at a

2-2 start as of September 21, the football team seems very optimistic about their chances to have just the second winning season in program history.

Their next game is on Saturday, September 30 for Homecoming. Kickoff is at 1:00p.m. against Academy Park.

## Watson shines from the backfield

By  
**Joe Lewis**  
Staff Writer

In his first two games, Harrison Watson dominated the run game for a total of 5 touchdowns and over 400 yards.

One of those touchdowns included Watson in the wildcat formation as he took a direct snap and scored.

Watson's talents are not unnoticed. He has interest from colleges.

His top two schools include Fairmont State University in West Virginia and Millersville University.

Watson is fueled by those scouts who label him as "too short." Harrison always stays motivated and always focuses on his game.

The 5'6" running back says that the smaller NFL running backs such as Boston Scott and Darren Sproles, have made an impact on him.

"I like to copy and imagine how

they run and how hard they run."

Watson doesn't listen to outsiders. He knows that he will have doubters and he knows how to overcome that.

Watson has been playing football since he could remember learning his alphabet. He doesn't plan on stopping anytime soon.

Watson is a very agile runner with strength and speed, and runs with a lot of passion.

Teammates label him as a leader, beast, and humble.

Head Coach Joe Coffey said he's often the last to leave, and he understands that he can only control the controllables. He is the perfect mix between confidence and humility.

Watson will look to reach the 1,000 yard milestone for the season as he has nearly 500 yards after four games. He averages nearly 8 yards per carry, according to MaxPreps.com.

## Okonowicz leads kicking game

By  
**Connor Graber**  
Staff Writer

Adam Okonowicz started kicking a soccer ball before he tried a football. The senior tried both sports before fully devoting himself to the football team in his sophomore year.

Now he's in his senior year and he is rated by recruits as a 4.5 star (a "5" is the best) kicker.

He toured 14 schools this past summer and he won 7 kicking competitions. The competitions challenge place kickers to make 10/10 on field goals from different yardages. Okonowicz said that this helped him gain attention.

The camps that he won at were Connecticut, East Carolina, James Madison, William and Mary, Towson, Slippery Rock, and West Chester. He placed second at West Virginia.

His journey has been long and hard.

"Recruiting is definitely a rough journey of hard work, dedication, and lots of communication with coaches," said Okonowicz.

From these experiences, he

does not have a favorite.

"I like FBS (Football Bowl Subdivision), FCS (Football Championship Subdivision), and some D2s (Division II). I don't have a favorite because I like a lot of them."

Okonowicz played soccer for the majority of his life and switched in his sophomore year. He feels that experience has helped him with contact and speed.

He has been working hard on his technique and power and has kicked from over 55 yards while practicing.

"I have more range on field goals and I am more accurate this year."

He is 3 for 4 with a long of 47 yards.

He gives credit to Zane Franz



-Photo courtesy of the AGHS Yearbook

Adam Okonowicz hit a 47 yard field goal at Oxford.

the long snapper, Harrison Watson the holder, and the offensive line and thinks that they are the best operation in the league.

Okonowicz said that the dream is to make it to the NFL but right now he is just focusing on enjoying his senior year.



## GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

## Lady Devils start strong, have high hopes

By  
Cailin Maley  
Staff Writer

As of September 20th, the Avon Grove girls volleyball team started off the season going 6-1 so far. With this record so far, they are expecting a great rest of the season.

"The girls volleyball season has started off really well. I believe it's because of this really special group of girls who play very well together. They are positive, encouraging and have lots of energy. I think we will be a good contender to make districts this year and I'm very excited for the second half of the season," says Head Coach Chantel Brown.

If you know some things about sports, you may know that practice is one of the keys to having a great team and being a great player.

"Our practices are important for our team to improve and run better plays against certain teams," says Hannah Fluharty, a senior volleyball player.

This is especially true in a sport like volleyball where the relationship with your team also

plays a key role and how your team performs.

"Everyone on and off the court works very well together and supports one another which has led us to our 6-1 record so far," says senior Maddie Arnold.

The captains for varsity this year are Taylor Mills, Hannah Fluharty, and Maddie Arnold.

"I've been on the Avon Grove volleyball team for four years and have always looked up to the captains. Being voted captain by my teammates this year is a real honor and has pushed me to step up my leadership," says Arnold.

Arnold does online school, and says that volleyball is her greatest connection to the Avon Grove community.

The varsity volleyball team's libero is sophomore Brooke Bellaver.

"I am confident that with this team, we can continue to work hard and win, hopefully making playoffs in the end," says Bellaver.

Last year, Bellaver was a freshman on the varsity team, and this year she is the team's libero.

This will be seniors Lauren



-Photo courtesy of the AGHS Yearbook

Seniors Taylor Mills, Hannah Fluharty, Lauren Riess, Maddie Arnold, Erin Gallagher, and Monserrat Paredes have led the team to a 6-3 record (as of September 22).

Riess, Erin Gallagher, Montserrat Paredes, Taylor Mills, Hannah Fluharty, Maddie Arnold, and Heidi Stumpf's last year on Avon

Grove's volleyball team.

"Playing volleyball has taught me teamwork, leadership and accountability, as well as creating

close and lifelong friendships," says Fluharty.

## NEW TEACHERS

## New business teachers bring experience

By  
Riley Wiercinski  
Senior Editor

Business is everywhere. From ordering Starbucks before class to smiling at your teachers in the hallway, business is a constant part of life.

This is precisely why schools want to teach students the implications of their financial and social decisions.

Through electives like Personal Finance, Microsoft Office, and Introduction to Business, students can learn how to provide for themselves and become assets to any company. But these courses are nothing without the amazing teachers who work to engage students and Avon Grove welcomes three new faces: Mr. John Perotti, Mrs. Therese Tolley, and Mrs. Carin Zecca.

**Mr. Perotti**

Businessman turned teacher, Mr. Perotti, has years of experience in the field to help interest and educate his students. Though he only has one year of prior experience teaching, Perotti dreamed of becoming a teacher when he was in high school.

"I wanted to become a Spanish teacher. In fact, I majored in education when I first started my undergrad."

Perotti attended Archbishop

Ryan High School in northeast Philadelphia, where most of his time was spent playing football.

He went on to receive a bachelor's degree from East Stroudsburg University and eventually earned a Master's of Business Administration from Penn State University.

After college, Perotti went into consulting.

"I worked in business for a while. I've been in a lot of corporate headquarters and [the new school] is nicer than some of the ones I've worked in."

Perotti then moved his focus to educating students about the business world. He earned a Master's in Education from Temple University.

"[Avon Grove] is a really highly rated school. I've found the staff to be very engaging and professional. I heard that our students are high-performing and I really wanted to be around students like that."

Outside of school, Perotti is a family man with two sons. One is in the military with two children, and the other is a businessman, who specializes in predictive analytics.

He also enjoys reading, landscaping, and going to the gym and was so glad to have the opportunity to relax over the summer.

**Mrs. Tolley**

From a substitute to full-time teacher, Mrs. Tolley is a jack of all trades. She holds two degrees in business and psychology, along with a minor in biology from Penn State University and the College of Notre Dame after originally being a pre-med major.

"I got my degree in psychology two years ago to study consumer behavior and see how we all act and behave from a business perspective."

Even when she attended Joppatowne High School in Harford County, Maryland, Tolley played soccer and lacrosse while playing an active role in student government and environmental clubs. She went on to become an All-American soccer player at the College of Notre Dame.

This is her second year teaching after filling in for Mrs. Roberts last year and has always been part of the Avon Grove community. Her daughter graduated from AG and now attends West Chester University to study psychology, while her son just started at our new middle school.

Currently, Tolley teaches Introduction to Business and Marketing.

Tolley's classroom is full of inspirational quotes from famous athletes, like Serena Williams, pictures of her family, and one extremely large poster of a gold-

fish with a shark fin attached to its back.

"I believe mindset is everything. Everyone has the ability to bring something new and different from what other people think they are."

Tolley is very active outside of school, as she enjoys hiking, kayaking, and watching her son play football for the Avon Grove Wildcats.

**Mrs. Zecca**

With 20 years of teaching experience, Mrs. Zecca is no stranger to the classroom, though this is her first time teaching business and computer science.

"This past January, I got my certificate in computer science and business. My original degree was in elementary and early childhood education, and learning supports."

Zecca has earned a Master's in Education from Arcadia University and has worked in the Oxford and Garnet Valley school districts.

She attended Camp Hill High School, which is outside of Harrisburg, where she played percussion in the marching band, ran track, wrote for her school newspaper, and was a member of both National and Foreign Language Honors Society.

Zecca was also a member of the drama club. Her favorite production was *Pure as the Driven Snow*, in which she played one of

the villains.

Ever since she was in second grade, she knew she wanted to become a teacher.

"At first, I thought I wanted to do elementary education. When it came to high school, I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to school just to come back.

"But then I started volunteering at an organization for the profound and severely disabled, and I fell in love. It was so much fun working with those students and being able to make a difference in their lives. So, I decided I wanted to continue in special education as well."

One of the most important pieces in her classroom is her chime.

"My parents gave me this chime when I graduated high school, since I played all the mallet instruments and that was a commemorative piece from that, which is probably my only 'special' decoration. It's also very loud, but my classes are usually quiet, so I've never had to use it."

She admires the students for their compassion for one another, their motivation to succeed, and the confidence they display.

Business revolves around all of us and there is no better place to learn a foundation than here at Avon Grove under the skillful teachings of Mr. Perotti, Mrs. Tolley, and Ms. Zecca.

## ASTRONOMY CORNER

## Scientists discover new comet

By  
Adam Swift  
Column

This has been an exciting month for astronomy. Our top story for our first edition has caused a stir in the mainstream media. You may have heard news sources spread claims stating stuff like, "There's life on an exoplanet!"

These claims are easily explainable, so don't get too excited about aliens existing. The story of these claims is quite simple actually.

The James Webb Space Tele-

scope (JWST) looks at exoplanets and based on the reflectivity and wavelengths of light it reflects, it can judge the atmospheric makeup of the planet, according to NASA.gov.

It happens that when JWST looked at the exoplanet K2-18b, it found some evidence of methane, carbon dioxide, and very slight evidence of dimethyl sulfide (DMS).

The thing that has people up in arms is that dimethyl sulfide is only produced by life found on Earth. If we had truly definitive evidence of DMS and that it can only be formed by life, this would

be proof of life.

However, the planet is 120 light years from us, and the evidence is not definitive. So at least for the time being, this is not proof of aliens.

Onto our second story, a new comet has been discovered.

C/2023 P1 Nishimura is a newly discovered comet making an approach around the Sun. It was discovered by the amateur astronomer, Hideo Nishimura, in mid-August.

It is only visible around sunset and sunrise because of its proximity to the Sun. Its nucleus is ex-

pected to break up as it makes its closest solar approach.

It currently has an apparent magnitude of about 5, so it is very faint. You'll need binoculars to see it.

If it doesn't break apart near the Sun, it'll be back around in 400 years, and it will only be visible for a few days. So I suggest you get out there and find it.

For our final story, get excited for National Astronomy Day! National Astronomy Day is October 9, so mark it in on your calendar.

As for planetary viewings, Neptune will be in position on October

19.

Jupiter is plainly visible after it rises at about 9:30p.m. at a magnitude of -2.6. This makes it the brightest thing in the sky at that time of night.

Finally, Saturn is visible after sunset with a magnitude of 0.51. This makes it about as bright as some stars. Plenty of deep sky objects can be seen at the zenith this time of year, including the m13 globular cluster, the Ring Nebula, and the Andromeda galaxy.



### CLUBS

## Best Buddies, REACT work together to build community

*Clubs foster connections between life skills students and student body*



Members of the AG Best Buddies pose with the Chapter of the Year Award won on April 29, 2023.

By **Will Gorman**  
Staff Writer

The REACT (Recreational Experience Activity Club for Teens) and Best Buddies club work together to develop bonds between life skills students and the rest of the student body.

REACT enters its 16th year and is led by special education teacher Mr. William Stahler, while the Best Buddies club started a few years ago.

REACT and Best Buddies provide the life skills students a unique opportunity. It provides them an opportunity to socialize with each other as well as other students at AGHS to provide a bond between each other forming a community of sorts between everyone.

"This is what makes the club so amazing," said Mikaela Cavanagh, a former club member and vice president of the Best Buddies Club and REACT member. "That bond that you have with these kids and how connected we are is what makes the group so special and is my favorite part about the club."

Stahler envisioned this type of community when he came to AG and when REACT was started 16 years ago.

"I wanted opportunities for kids with IDs (intellectual disabilities) to be able to communicate and socialize with each other every other Friday throughout the school year."

Every other Friday REACT events are held and occasional-

ly Best Buddies events are held. These events are bigger events involving not just within AG, but also other schools with Best Buddies organizations including the biggest event of the year: the Friendship Walk held in King of Prussia.

Last year students from all over the Philadelphia region got to walk with students who have special needs.

The REACT events are what everyone looks forward to on Friday and over the years there have been some great events.

"The best event was the Blue Rocks game we all went to last year," said Mikaela Cavanagh, as she took a minute to think about the question. After this she said, "It's a hard question to answer because there have been so many great events."

It is events like this that make the members of the club eager to see what they will all do together next.

With the foundation set, Stahler is excited for what the future brings for the clubs.

"We want to keep expanding and do even more events that can perhaps even roll into the summer if it is green lit which would be amazing," he said.

It is certainly interesting to see what the future holds for these clubs but Stahler wants it to be remembered.

"This club set the precedent and a model for other schools to follow in the future. It is truly the first of its kind."

He echoed the fact that he hopes that other schools can do

the same as he has.

"Other schools have tried to replicate and even join our club," said Stahler.

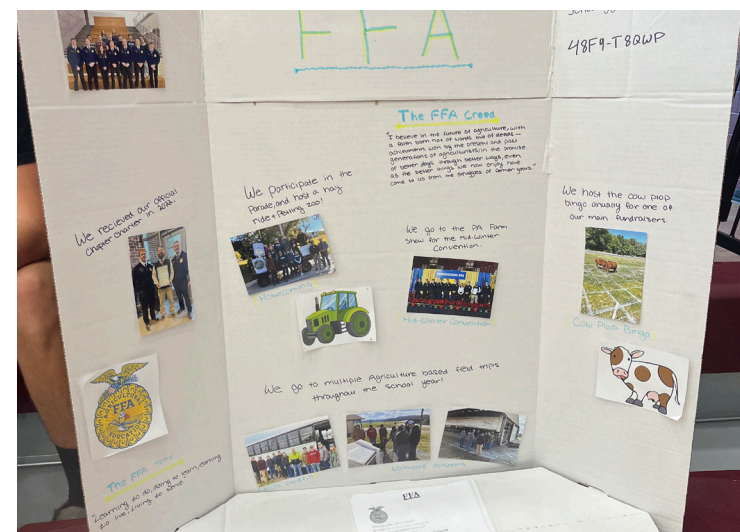
This shows how much the club has grown over the 16 years since its establishment.

Most of all, he wants it to be remembered as a club that brought joy not only to the life skills students, but also the student body at Avon Grove High School.

-Photo courtesy of Mikaela Cavanagh

### CLUBS

## Activity Fair introduces ways to make the most of high school



-Photo by Erin Harrington

The FFA activity fair poster. FFA is a club for any student interested in building leadership skills and learning about agriculture.

By **Erin Harrington**  
Staff Writer

High school is just a brief moment in all of our lives. We should all strive to make the most out of this moment. The most memories, the most friends, the most involvement.

Joining clubs is a great way to meet all of these goals.

Many students went to this year's Activity Fair, where different clubs showed off posters and gave out join codes, so students can get involved, and make the most of their year.

Avon Grove High School has over 50 clubs and activities and students can learn more about each club by going to the Avon Grove High School website and that is where one can contact advisors or find codes for Schoology pages.

If you are looking for a club that will help you make a difference in your community, the Leo Club or the Humanitarian Club might be for you.

"It's a great club if you want to get volunteer hours for NHS, or you want to put a good club on your college application. Or even if you just want to help out in your community," says Lily Perrin, who was one of the members representing the Leo Club at the fair.

"We do a lot of volunteer work, as well as helping at events and festivals," added Alena Kurtz.

Similar, but also very different to the Leo Club, the Humanitarian Club strives to make a difference.

"We do a lot of community service," says Alice Degnan, one of the representatives of the Humanitarian Club. "We volunteer at Project C.U.R.E."

Project C.U.R.E. is a non-profit organization that delivers medical supplies and equipment to developing countries. They are located in Jennersville down the road

from the shopping center.

"We also do a lot of food drives, with canned goods, and food drives for less fortunate families," Emma Schmitt included.

These clubs are great, but if you are looking for a different way to be involved, you might be interested in joining the Yearbook Club.

"We take pictures of all the school activities through the year, and then use those pictures to make pages in the yearbook," says Delaney Stein.

"It's really great because it gets you involved and you get to meet a lot of really nice people, and you get to go to all the events, which helps you see what this school has to offer," said Lily Armstrong.

If you want to meet nice people, then join Best Buddies. Best Buddies is a nationwide program that creates one-on-one friendships between students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"In Best Buddies we hang out with kids with special needs, and make a bunch of new friends. We meet sometimes in IE and we meet outside of school a lot," said Hannah Rappa.

This year the Best Buddies club will participate in the Best Buddies Friendship Walk, where the Avon Grove chapter of the club will walk with all the other Philadelphia clubs. The group also has holiday parties and group outings like bowling and dinners.

This year's activity fair was incredibly successful, as it introduced so many clubs to students.

If you still haven't found something you like, consider talking to Mr. Christy, the athletic and activities director, about starting a new club.

Make the most of your moment in high school.



## AG LIFE

# Students can see the world in a summer

By  
Maddie Reisinger  
Staff Writer

Someone once said, "Fill your life with experiences, not things. Have stories to tell, not stuff to show."

Whether you love to travel or have never done it before and want to try it, exciting adventures await. Mrs. Shrake and Mrs. Deleguardia have exciting opportunities planned for interested Avon Grove students.

In July 2024, Mrs. Shrake will lead a 14-day trip from the Alps to the Mediterranean coast. Students on this trip will visit Switzerland, Italy, France, Monaco, and Spain. They will see the tranquil lakes of Lucerne and Como, the Mediterranean shores, and the architecture of Provence and Barcelona.

In the spring of 2025, Mrs. Deleguardia will lead students on a trip to Japan, backtracking the golden route. This 9-day excursion will visit Osaka, Kyoto, the Fuji-Hakone-Izu region, and Tokyo. Students will experience

Japan's rich culture and historical landmarks, with stops at the breathtaking Mount Fuji and the modern metropolis of Tokyo.

Interested in history? In the summer of 2025, Mrs. Shrake will again bring students to Europe.

For 14 days, they will visit World War II sites and historical places of significance in England, France, Belgium, Germany, and Austria.

All these trips are with EF Tours. EF Tours prides itself on its customer service, and Mrs. Shrake, who has previously led students on trips to Iceland, Japan, and the South Pacific with EF Tours, says she's never had "a less than great" experience with them.

All trips with EF Tours include flights, hotels, bus and/or train transportation, entrance fees to attractions, most meals, travel insurance, and a full-time tour director in the tour price. The tour director not only travels with your group during the day, but also stays in the same hotel to provide assistance anytime it is needed.

EF Tours also offers multiple funding options, emergency as-

sistance, and even COVID-19 assistance, so if a student contracts COVID while traveling, EF will fly a parent overseas to be with them.

Travel is an eye-opening experience that exposes students to new cultures, people, and places.

"France was an awesome experience. I got to go to Europe with my friends and explore a new country," said senior Emma Mariner, who traveled to France on an EF Tour in the summer of 2022.

Avon Grove art teacher Mrs. Deleguardia said her high school travel experience was "unforgettable" and that "all students should have a chance to have this experience" during the recent Avon Grove travel meeting.

If you are interested in any of these trips, contact Mrs. Shrake or Mrs. Deleguardia with any questions or to request additional information.

These trips are not associated, sponsored, or sanctioned by Avon Grove High School or the Avon Grove School District.



-Photo courtesy of Mrs. Shrake  
Mrs. Shrake and others on a tour of an Iceland glacier this past summer.

## AG LIFE

## Tips for studying smarter, not harder

By  
Ella Bartnik  
Column

Similarly to the beginning of a new calendar year, the start of a new school year brings a sense of hope and excitement for what lies ahead.

Many of us set resolutions and aspirations for this fresh start, pledging to maintain laser-like focus, stay organized, study hard, and become more involved.

However, as the novelty of the school year slowly comes to an end, so do many of our well-intentioned resolutions.

In a competitive academic environment where taking over four AP courses is considered the "norm," it's important for students to develop study habits that balance the complexities and stresses of their coursework and exams.

Having completed many AP courses during my high school years, I've acquired practical strategies to study effectively and

manage the pressures of tests and schoolwork.

As any Honors Chemistry student can tell you, it's not just the AP courses that pose challenges!

In psychology, there is a concept called active recall, which involves retrieving information from your memory.

This concept is especially vital during exams, particularly in subjects heavy on vocabulary and formulas, as it is used anytime you need to remember and utilize something quickly.

You can improve your memory recall by making lifestyle improvements, such as maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep.

In addition, to improving your lifestyle choices I have outlined specific study methods that will be sure to help you on exam day, according to the *USA Today*.

**Spaced Studying:** Avoid cramming the night before an exam. Instead, break down your study sessions into short timeframes (ideally 30-45 minutes)

over several days leading up to the test. The day before the exam should be used for reviewing material you've already studied and ensuring you are well-rested.

**Feynman Technique:** This is one of my favorite techniques to use for studying. This technique involves explaining complex information in simpler terms, as if you were teaching it to a child. You can do this by discussing the subject with a parent, sibling, or even speaking it aloud to yourself. Using this technique allows you to simplify it which allows for easier recall on test day.

**Pomodoro Study Method:** The Pomodoro method emphasizes time management by alternating study and short break periods. Study for 25 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. Repeat this cycle four times before taking a longer break (around 20 minutes). This technique may not be ideal for everyone, but if you can discipline yourself to take short breaks this may be the study technique for you!

**PQ4R Study Method:** PQ4R stands for: Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, and Review. It was developed by researchers Thomas and Robinson in 1972 and helps to improve overall reading comprehension. When studying, first preview the material, ask any questions you may have then reread over the material. Afterward reflect on what you have read, recite important information and finally review what you have learned.

**The Leitner System:** The Leitner System is simply a fancy way of using flashcards. Believe me, I understand how tedious and time consuming it can be to write detailed definitions for countless vocabulary words. However, it is a proven strategy that will help with memory and recall.

To use this method you should start by placing all flashcards in a box, let's call it box 1. If you get a card correctly then you should move it to the second box, let's call it box 2. You repeat this

process until all the cards are located in box 2. This system helps best divide which terms you need the most work with, and which words you already have a pretty good understanding of.

**The Blurting Method:** Popularized by content creator Unjaded Jade, this technique involves reading a section of your textbook or notes and then attempting to write down as much information as you can recall without looking. By using this method, you engage your memory more effectively and help to assemble this new knowledge into long-term memory.

In summary, you don't need to pull all-nighters to succeed on exams.

Instead of cramming your studying into a single night, space out your study sessions and employ targeted study methods.

Using the techniques I outlined above will help you have a successful and happy new school year.

## CLASS OF 2024

## Seniors provide their best tips for transitioning freshmen

By  
Hannah Strawhecker  
Staff Writer

Everybody hates the first day of school. The irksome ring of the 7:25a.m. bell on August 28 is a wake-up call that marks the beginning of the worst portion of the year. Arguably the scariest part is that for about 400 young scholars, this is their first time ever stepping foot in Avon Grove High School.

Besides the typical first-day jitters, the biggest change for some freshmen is the size difference between the high school and the old middle school. However, some claim that the biggest difference is the increased workload along with the less welcoming atmosphere of the high school.

Learning how to cope with these changes can be intimidating and difficult. Here's what this year's Avon Grove seniors have to say to the transitioning fresh-

men.

### Get involved

Become involved in as many clubs and sports as possible.

"It helps you to get to know the people in your school and learn about the people in your community," said senior Cassidy Ashworth.

Ashworth recalls feeling young and scared freshman year, "It was a huge school to me and everyone seemed much older."

Joining clubs like Cancer Society, National Honors Society, and playing on the field hockey team all four years has helped Cassidy assimilate into the school community and feel comfortable where she is.

### Stay motivated

Avoid distractions and be determined. Getting school work on time is a struggle for many.

Senior Joe Lewis advises students to take advantage of opportunities like IE period and study

hall to complete assignments on time.

"Make sure you stay on a path because you don't want to get distracted," said Lewis. "You don't want to have to take yourself out of sports and clubs."

### Ask questions

Mostly everyone can agree that asking questions is frightening. Remember that going out of your way to ask for help is the best way to ensure you are reaching your full potential as a student.

Joe Lewis advises underclassmen to "always ask questions" and "make sure your grades are straight."

Don't be afraid to try and fail and try again. You have four years to figure it out, and your classmates and teachers will be with you every step of the way.



SENIOR TIPS  
FOR INCOMING  
FRESHMEN

1. Get Involved
2. Stay Motivated
3. Ask Questions

