

# IDENTITY

GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC • IDENTITY MAGAZINE • SPRING 2019



  
GJR®  
George Junior Republic  
*we never stop believing.*



# GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC BEGINS 2019 WITH A NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



George Junior Republic's Board of Directors is pleased to announce Nathan M. Gressel as the new chief executive officer of George Junior Republic and Affiliates. Previous CEO Richard Losasso will stay on through February in order to support the transition.

Mr. Gressel has spent ten years in leadership positions at Beacon Light Behavioral Health System in Bradford, Pennsylvania, including serving as the executive director. During his tenure, he was responsible for all clinical service lines and the provision and oversight of all fiduciary responsibilities, including a \$26 million operating budget and 600 staff members in 21 Pennsylvania counties. Under his leadership, Beacon Light's service delivery system expanded to include Joint Commission accredited services. In addition to serving as executive director at Beacon Light, Mr. Gressel has served on a number of children and youth services committees and has led various strategic initiatives.

"I am looking forward to working with George Junior Republic's team of professionals. Additionally, I am excited to look at new opportunities for the agency while carrying on the mission of the organization," states Gressel.

Established in 1909, George Junior Republic has served over 60,000 youth on the 500-acre campus in Grove City, Pennsylvania. In addition, 1,300 youth and families are served each day through services provided by affiliate organizations George Junior Republic in Indiana and Preventative Aftercare, Inc., and through a partnership with the Colorado Boys Ranch.

Gressel, as the new chief executive, will oversee operations for George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania, George Junior Republic in Indiana, George Junior Republic Realty, Preventative Aftercare, Inc., and Republic Risk Retention Group, as well as the parent company, George Junior Republic.

The search for George Junior Republic's chief executive officer began in the fall of 2017 and was led by the national search firm Lambert & Associates.

**For more information on George Junior Republic, contact Susan Boland, Director of Development, at [sboland@gjr.org](mailto:sboland@gjr.org).**

On the Cover:  
Campus Director Steve Gilliland celebrates a youth's transition to adulthood.

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A copy of the Drug & Alcohol Program Annual Report is available for review through the Chief Financial Officer, whose office is located in the Administration Building on the George Junior Republic campus.

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**Susan Boland**  
*Director of Development*  
(724) 458-9330, x2171

# GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC THANKS DONORS

Donations Received March 1, 2018 through February 14, 2019

## FINE ARTS PROGRAM

Ms. Janet Deifel  
Erie Arts and Culture  
PNC Charitable Trusts  
Dr. Betty Jo White

## CAREER AND TECHNICAL CENTER CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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Mercer County State Bank  
Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company  
PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.  
Sharp Properties  
UPMC  
Waste Management

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The Pew Charitable Trusts

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## VETERANS DAY CEREMONY AND LUNCHEON

Schneider Downs Wealth Management Advisors, LP  
VFW Post #519 (Game of Chance Account)  
Mr. Douglas Bashline  
The Iron Bridge Inn

## ADDITIONAL GRANTORS

Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency  
Highmark Foundation  
BNY Mellon Wealth Management  
TJ Kavanagh Foundation

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR YOUTH

Church of the Beloved Disciple  
North Salem United Methodist Church

# GJR PARTNER WINS AWARD

In November 2017, Valvoline Express Care operations manager Ken Frenchak was named Emerging Leader of the Year by the Grove City Chamber of Commerce. One year later, Ken received the Pioneer Award by Valvoline. The Pioneer Award recognizes his willingness to take risk for the benefit of the greater good, provides constructive detailed feedback, and “socializes” the concept with his team. Ken is willing to take on new and innovative projects and use his business location as a test center. He has exhibited this pioneering attitude in regards to his work with the youth at George Junior Republic as well. Ken works with and mentors student employees in hopes that he can provide them the opportunity to transition from a student based work experience to a full-time job when they return home. Congratulations Ken on your achievement.



*Valvoline Express Care operations manager Ken Frenchak*

## A JOYFUL HOLIDAY



Youth across campus were greeted with the bright red and green of Christmas presents on Christmas morning thanks to the generous Christmas donations provided by parishioners of the Church of the Beloved Disciple parish and the North Salem United Methodist Church.

George Junior Republic would like to thank everyone involved in bringing happiness and the spirit of the season to our young residents.

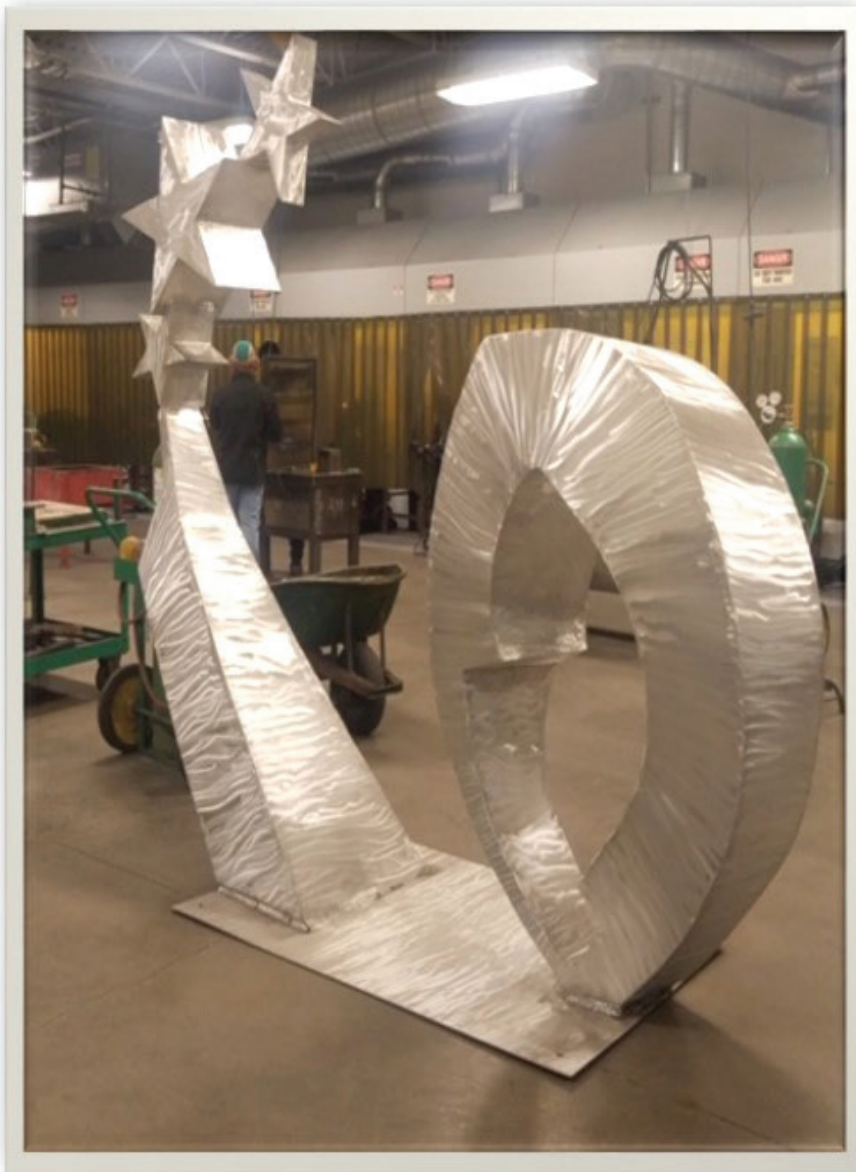


# LOSASSO RETIRES AFTER 42 YEARS AT GEORGE JUNIOR REPUBLIC

When Richard (Rick) Losasso began his tenure at George Junior Republic, he was a young Slippery Rock University college student in need of a job. At that time, he was not aware, nor did he realize, he would spend his entire career advancing up the ladder at

George Junior Republic and making an impact in the lives of tens of thousands of young men. A native of Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, Losasso came to George Junior Republic in search of a job, but ended up developing a passion for struggling youth and families.

During his tenure at the organization, Rick held many positions. In 1976, he served as a recreation supervisor responsible for the oversight of the activities of assigned student groups. Two years later, he became a program director. In April 1987, he was promoted to agency liaison, and was responsible for youth admissions, the family therapy program, and serving as the campus director for Barnes Hall. During the years that followed, George Junior Republic established two additional nonprofit affiliates – George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania and George Junior Republic Realty. In June 1989, the organization continued to grow and Rick was promoted to director of social service. It was during this time that the parent company developed Preventative Aftercare, Inc., and established in-home services in Indiana and Pennsylvania. Rick was named vice president of administration in June 1997 and in February 2002, he became the organization's chief executive officer.



Rick led the organization and its growth over the past 42 years. In November 2018, a sculpture was designed and constructed to honor the leadership, guidance, and dedication that he provided for the organization in his decades of commitment and service to George Junior Republic.

The sculpture was inspired by the George Junior Republic logo, specifically the head, outstretched arm, and the stars of the logo. These three parts symbolize Rick's qualities as a leader and visionary of George Junior Republic.

**The head** symbolizes wisdom in leadership. The head is where the mind and knowledge reside. All five of our senses are experienced here and help us to think creatively and purposely. A good leader sees a clear vision, sniffs out concerns, listens for solutions, communicates purpose, touches the lives around them, and tastes the sweet flavor of success.

**The outstretched arm** symbolizes strength in leadership. The arm and hand put vision into motion.

The arm is the power to make things happen, putting vision into action. A good leader strengthens, protects, guides, and serves the people around them.



**The stars** symbolize inspiration in leadership. Stars are metaphors for the aspirations, inspirations, dreams, and creative pursuits that live within us all. A good leader inspires those around them providing them opportunity to aspire to achieve great things.

As Rick begins the next chapter of his life, we want to thank him for his dedicated service and his commitment to youth and staff.

On behalf of the youth entrusted in our care, our staff, and the board of directors, we wish Rick all the best life has to offer.



George Junior Republic



**'Believe'**

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**Donated by the Board of Directors and the employees of George Junior Republic, this sculpture was designed and fabricated by George Junior Republic youth in 2018.**

**This sculpture is dedicated to Richard L. Losasso, Chief Executive Officer, for his 42 years of service to this organization.**

# FILLING THE GAP



In a nation with a current and significant need for skilled trade workers, U.S. employers are struggling to find employees willing to put in the effort and hard work that a skilled trade requires. “We hear from employers all of the time that they have a really hard time finding people willing to show up and put in a hard day’s work,” said Stephanie Sumner, guidance counselor at the William H. Gladden Career and Technical Center. “Unfortunately, we sometimes see that same trend too when the work starts to get hard. The hard work you’ll do in the shops here isn’t always appealing to a teenager – especially when so many adults are still telling high school students that a four-year college is the only path to success. It’s hard to combat that idea when it’s been drilled into their heads for so long. On top of that, you have to be ready to walk through these doors every day and take constructive criticism from your “boss” or instructor. Accepting criticism is not typically a teenager’s strong suit.”

Despite that, the William H. Gladden Career and Technical Center offers six sought after programs for the students.

These six programs, thanks to their instructors, give students exposure to find strengths they never realized they had. One of those instructors is Ray Dennis, masonry teacher at the CTC for eight years. Masonry can be an especially hard trade for employers to fill today because of how physically demanding it can be, not to mention the elements of the weather that have to be braved in this field. Ray is tackling those drawbacks in order to make masonry a trade that students are proud of and want to stick with after high school. Even if they won’t, it’s his hope that they at least leave equipped with as many employability skills as possible.

“The masonry program here at George Junior Republic emphasizes a foundation of employability skills and an underlying theme of a strong work ethic,” Dennis says. “Couple this with trade skills pertaining to brick, block, veneer stone, ceramic tile, job layout and concrete, students have many opportunities to become part of a skilled labor force. The program also tries to arm students with OSHA certifications and safety training that will open doors of opportunity and give them

an edge when competing for employment.”

For the programs’ younger students, the staff hopes to light a spark that can continue for them when they go home, possibly transitioning to their local career and technical center. For the older students, they hope to prepare them for employment and help them to make potential employment connections in their hometown before going home. Each day, the instructors welcome their students with these very intentions, in their efforts to prepare them for their successful futures. Because of Ray’s work in masonry and the work of the instructors in carpentry, welding, auto body, automotive mechanics technology, and food service, students who participate in the programs offered at the William H. Gladden Career and Technical Center are learning and preparing to fill in that skills gap.

**For more information about the skilled trade education classes, contact Guidance Counselor Stephanie Sumner by calling (724) 458-9330 x3712.**



# FOOD DRIVE BENEFITS GROVE CITY COMMUNITY

For the past 12 years, special education teacher Julie Strouss has been engaging the students in her English classes in collecting food for the Grove City Area Food Pantry. Each student is responsible for writing a persuasive essay early in November. Students then distribute their essays across the campus community right before Thanksgiving, asking people to donate food. The essays include facts and

information about hunger in America, as well the numbers of families faced with hunger in the local area.

Over a three-week period, food is collected and then it is delivered to the food pantry. "This project teaches my students the power of persuasive writing, as well as the importance of helping others who are in need," states Strouss.

This year, two additional teachers, Mrs. Albertini and Mrs. Hemmerlin, participated with several of their classes. Life skills teacher Mrs. Bleakney had her students sort and pack the food for delivery. In total, 1,243 food items were donated to the local food pantry.



# TEACHING SKILLS ACROSS CAMPUS

Through the generous support of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), youth across campus are participating in a variety of classes outside of the school day teaching them the skills needed for future success. The OVR curriculum entitled, "Skills to Pay the Bills," provides an excellent tool to teach career planning and preparation, and to build on skills needed for post-secondary education and employment.

The group-based curriculum is provided one time per week with approximately 11 youth per session. Currently, over 200 youth have participated in the program. Coupled with the classroom teaching is youth participation in additional employment and job

shadowing experiences in the community.

Currently taught by three staff members on campus, the curriculum supports the three basic skills taught across campus and supports the development of life skills. According to OVR facilitator Jack Walk, "The importance of this program is to support the youth in building a vision with their future. Proper planning and education provides youth with skills they can implement when they return home. Many of our youth have high levels of anxiety about their future, but OVR shows them they can be successful and integrate what they are learning in order to develop a future vision."

The campus instructors agree that many of the youth are

faced with significant barriers and stressors when they return home. Through the provision of group education, students can focus on the specified subject matter in order to teach them ways to understand, manage and overcome potential barriers once they return home. By assisting youth in developing a self-vision, they can begin to learn and act on what they need to be successful. One youth participant stated, "I am hungry for these skills. I have a lot of anxiety about going home and there are pressures I face in the community. The skills I am learning will help me understand how to handle better the challenges I will face when I leave George Junior Republic."

"The best thing about the OVR group classes is 'youth voice,'" states OVR instructor Charity Saunders. "By participating in these classes, our youth realize they have a voice in their success. They begin communicating more and begin to realize they are in control of their future success."

For more information about OVR programming on the campus of George Junior Republic, contact Vice President of Compliance and Treatment Services Sandy Dillon-Dick at [sdillon-dick@gjr.org](mailto:sdillon-dick@gjr.org).



*Sandy Dillon-Dick, Vice President of Compliance and Treatment Services, takes time to meet with the OVR education team (Charity Saunders, Jack Walk, and Tiffany Lorange).*



# COMMUNITY SERVICE BRINGS HOPE TO LOCAL VETERANS

Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) Director Matt Louise was excited to support veterans as part of the Mercer County Community Food Warehouse food distribution program entitled MilitaryShare. MilitaryShare provides private food distributions throughout the county at specially designated sites for veterans and active duty and inactive military personnel and their families struggling to make ends meet. Distributions occur every other month throughout the year.

Every other month three youth and three staff support the work of MilitaryShare by distributing food to less fortunate veterans. "BARJ unloads vans of food and distributes the food to

participants. At each session, we help to distribute food to approximately twenty veterans," states Louise. "MilitaryShare further supports the BARJ principles of accountability, competency development, and community protection and is one of many community-based programs that provide youth the opportunity to give back." Additional programs include feeding the homeless at the City Rescue Mission in New Castle, supporting the Grove City Area Food Pantry, caring for and maintaining the Grove City Rotary Memorial Gardens, and supporting the Mercer/Lawrence County Electronic Recycling Program.

Every day, youth have an opportunity to become

involved and pay back monies owed to their county of residence. Since October 2013, \$508,497 was placed in youth accounts to pay for court costs, fines, restitution, and associated fees and an additional 53,477 hours of community service was completed. In total, over 3,000 youth have participated in this program over the past five years.

Does your group need assistance in completing a project? If so, contact BARJ Director Matt Louise 724-458-9330 x3131.

For more information about MilitaryShare, contact Lauren Moyer at (724) 981-0353 or email [lmoyer@foodwarehouse.org](mailto:lmoyer@foodwarehouse.org).



# A LONG JOURNEY TO FIND A FOREVER FAMILY

By the time Andrew turned 16, he had been placed in seven different foster homes. When he arrived at George Junior Republic in April 2017, he was very nervous and did not think he would be able to accomplish very much. He certainly did not believe he would find a forever family. Unfortunately, his experiences in residential programming had not been the best. He feared he would not appropriately follow his responsibilities and the program's requirements. "When I was at other placements, they really didn't provide me with much useful information," states Andrew. "I was worried when I arrived that George Junior was going to be the same. However, I was wrong. Here, I had the chance to meet many new people that were concerned about my future and me. The staff helped me understand the program and what I needed to do to be successful."

Although George Junior Republic met Andrew's treatment needs, he was still lacking something more. "My goal has always been to be

He had been working with the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) for quite some time. By working with a

child recruitment worker at SWAN, Andrew had the opportunity to meet with various potential parents and their families. Over the past several months, Andrew's

**"DON'T GIVE UP! I HAVE BEEN THROUGH MANY CHALLENGES. IF YOU GIVE UP, YOU WILL NOT GO FAR IN LIFE. WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T QUIT."**

adopted," states Andrew. "Unfortunately, due to my age, I knew this was going to be a challenge. Most families are looking for young children. I met multiple families during my time here, but there were various challenges and things didn't work out." Recently, though, things changed for Andrew. With the help of Campus Director Steve Gilliland and Treatment Team Coordinator Danielle Hamner, Andrew had successful visits and home passes with a new adoptive family.

The transition to adoption was a long road for Andrew.

Children and Youth Services caseworker would send him information on families with interest in him to review. Andrew, in return, sent them a book about his life and a powerpoint slideshow. After months of searching, Andrew began exchanging calls with one particular family. Eventually he met the family, their other adopted children, and soon he was able to spend an overnight at their home.

Today, Andrew is a few months out from being adopted into a loving family. "Even after I am adopted, my caseworker will continue to



be involved for a few months in order to make certain everything in the home is safe and my needs are being met," states Andrew. After six months, Andrew will go to court and will be officially adopted. Andrew shares a big smile when he describes his new home, the shared interests he has with his new family, and the fact he will have four new siblings.

Andrew is very proud of what he has accomplished during his time at George Junior Republic. "I learned a lot! I was able to participate in programming provided through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation while on campus and I even participated in various supportive work experiences at Slippery Rock Giant Eagle, Pine Instruments, and at the Grove City Pizza Joe's. These employment experiences taught me how to communicate with managers and co-workers on the job."

In February, Andrew transitioned from campus to

the home of his new family. When asked what advice he would give to other youth seeking a forever family, Andrew stated, "Don't give up! I have been through many challenges. If you give up, you will not go far in life. Whatever you do, don't quit."

To learn more about the treatment program at George Junior Republic, contact Vice President of Operations John Horgan at [jhorgan@gjr.org](mailto:jhorgan@gjr.org).



# 2018 VETERANS DAY CEREMONY AND LUNCHEON



The 12th annual Veterans Day ceremony and luncheon once again commemorated all those living and deceased men and women who served in the United States military in peacetime and wartime. Their service and the service of those currently active in the military have provided millions of Americans with vast opportunities as

members of a free society and nation.

During the ceremony, guests took time to remember World War I and the 100th anniversary of a four-year battle that was called the 'war to end all wars.' To that end, all attendees at the event received a small bag of poppy seeds. It seemed only fitting to distribute

poppy seeds in honor of the 16 million soldiers and civilians alike that lost their lives during the four years of battle and in remembrance of Flanders Fields.

The speaker for the event was Lieutenant Colonel John MacRae. Lt. Col. MacRae attended the US Air Force Academy and the US Military Academy at West





Point. MacRae has flown fighter aircraft for the last 14 years and was deployed on six occasions in support of contingency operations and theater security packages. He is an experienced mission commander, instructor, evaluator, and combat pilot in the F-16, F-22, and F-35 fighter aircraft. He is a graduate of Squadron Office School, Air Command and Staff College, and the United States Air Force Fighter Weapons School. He

is a fifth-generation fighter subject matter expert for Rickard Consulting Group and is a member of the Florida Air National Guard assigned to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, as the chief instructor for F-35 pilot training. This year, Lt. Col. MacRae plans to transition to the Vermont Air National Guard where he will help lead their transition from the F-16 to the F-35. Lt. Col. MacRae spoke to the 200 attendees about his

experience in the Air Force during both peace and wartime.

George Junior Republic would like to thank all those that made the 2018 Veterans Day ceremony and luncheon possible: Cashdollar and Associates, Schneider Downs Wealth Management, The American Legion 220, Air Force Veteran James McClelland and Myra Walton, and The Iron Bridge Inn

**VETERANS DAY  
CEREMONY  
and  
LUNCHEON**



**November 12, 2018  
11:30 a.m.**

**In Flanders Fields**

**In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.**

**We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.**

**Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.**

**-John McCrae, May 1915**



The words “Aim High” are contained in the slogan of the U.S. Air Force. For Richard R. Stevenson, board chair of George Junior Republic, this slogan is also modeled by his career and service to residents across the state. The retired member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives served the people of Armstrong, Butler and Mercer counties over many years. This former United States Air Force Sergeant (1968-1972) and Airborne Korean Language Specialist served for seven consecutive terms in the House representing the 8th district (2001-2015), with advancing levels of responsibilities, including four years in leadership.

‘Dick,’ as he is known, advanced his career both in the communities he served and with the citizens of Pennsylvania. The one-time owner of Stevenson and Company found interest in community service early in his professional life. This interest led him to being elected to serve on the Grove

City Borough Council for eight years from 1985-1993. Employing his leadership and team building skills, which supported his ability to work with local residents in addressing the needs of the community, he served the borough for six years as council president. Based on his success at the local level and his continuing interest in politics, Dick ran for the position of Mercer County commissioner. He began his term in 1996 and served all four years in the position of chairman, where he further developed his leadership skills.

Although Dick was born in Mercer County and has family here, he was raised in New Jersey and decided to move to Mercer County as an adult. “It was a good decision for us,” states Stevenson. “Grove City is a great community, has good schools, and is a wonderful place to raise a family.” Although some community members retire and decide to move south, Dick and his wife of 48 years, Sue, plan to stay here and enjoy

family activities with their two daughters and their families, which include six grandchildren, all of whom reside in Grove City.

Under Dick’s leadership as commissioner, many positive changes occurred in the county. Dick was instrumental in the establishment of the Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission. “At that time, establishing a new service delivery system for human services was a challenge, both locally and at the state level. We merged several county-based human service agencies and established a one-stop-shop which streamlined and improved client services while saving tax dollars. Although similar county-based, client focused commissions are now common across the state, Mercer County was the first to move to this ‘new’ service delivery model,” states Stevenson.

After his term as commissioner, Stevenson

was excited to be elected to the Pennsylvania House where he could have a greater role in the state issues. "My focus was on serving the residents of Pennsylvania, and I never lost sight of how my actions would impact the people in my legislative district." Dick has many things he is proud of accomplishing during his years of public service, one being the Brain Injury Caucus he established and led. "A mother, whose son had sustained a traumatic brain injury, opened my eyes to the need for better treatment for such life-altering injuries. Based on my interaction with her, I came to realize there was a lack of understanding with regard to the possible implications of head trauma and the importance of immediate medical attention when those injuries occur. Due to the combined efforts of Brain Injury Caucus and subsequent legislation, today all public schools in Pennsylvania have medical personnel on the sidelines during school sporting events and established concussion protocol."

As the newly elected George Junior Republic board chair, Dick looks forward to serving the organization with the same passion and dedicated service he brought

to his roles in local, county and state government. "I'm pleased and honored to serve as board chair and look forward to utilizing my background and experience to support the organization's leaders and the board in securing additional funding and developing additional programs for youth in need. George Junior Republic plays a vital role in the lives of youth from across

the country. Through our intervention and the services we provide, we can help lead youth on a pathway to recovery and assist young people in living full and productive lives. The mission statement of the organization is more important today than ever before. All young people can become productive citizens and reach their goals."





## MAN UP

Nationally renowned Pittsburgh-based sculptor Jim West and George Junior Republic's fine arts director Glen Sanders, in cooperation with the Hoyt Art Center in New Castle, are working with on-campus student artists to develop artistic sculptural pieces which will be presented at the "MAN UP" Exhibit at the Confluence in New Castle from May 30 - August 1, 2019.

As the organization's public art program continues to expand, it has partnered with new communities and developed new partnerships. The new relationship with West and The Hoyt are no exception. Students began working on the "MAN UP" museum display since the fall of 2018. The "MAN UP" project is a collaborative endeavor that involves students in Rebecca Limberg's art classes at the Maurice B. Cohill, Jr. Academic Center, the Art20 fine arts program, and instructors Chad Weierstall and Mike Jenkins from the William H. Gladden Career and Technical Center's carpentry and welding classes.

The "MAN UP" display will have 2-D multimedia art, relief sculptures and a large collaborative metal sculpture based on the theme of "MAN UP". In discussing what it means to "man up" with each of the participating young men,

West's vision is for the art developed "to become the tool to allow us to perceive what we are dealing with from the past, present, and future in a positive way. The project will help the young men understand how emotions play a critical role in expressing ourselves throughout our lifetimes. Expression through the arts can be done using a multitude of materials and mediums. Color, texture, line angles, renderings and drawings all can come together or singularly to tell a story. I want to capture this information, these raw emotions from these young men. The project will embrace their "MAN UP" stories from their past and help them as they transition into their futures."

Fine Arts Director Glen Sanders stated, "This is a whole new opportunity for our students to experience art as they create their MAN UP stories in a public venue. We have been very lucky

to find such a wonderful partner as The Hoyt. The hope is that by using art as a mechanism for storytelling, our students' work will be accepted in other venues and be displayed so that their stories can be shared with many diverse audiences across Pennsylvania." Arts & Education at The Hoyt is a subsidiary of The Hoyt Center for the Arts, a regional arts center and museum located within the North Hill Historic District of New Castle, PA. Its mission to "expand and enrich the life of our community through participation in the arts" is carried out through a diverse schedule of exhibits, classes, workshops, events, school programs and after-school programs offered year-round from two 1917 mansions. Standard gallery hours are Tuesday - Thursday, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. and Friday & Saturday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. For more information, call 724-652-2882 or visit [www.hoytartcenter.org](http://www.hoytartcenter.org).

## RIVERS OF STEEL

Through a generous grant by PNC Charitable Trust, the Pointing the Way public art program is working closely with sculptor Jim West and the Rivers of Steel Pump House located in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Working together, a sculpture is being designed to be placed at the Pump House location. This is an incredible opportunity for George Junior Republic students to work with a nationally recognized and locally grown artist. "To be provided the opportunity to create and fabricate a sculpture for this very important landmark commemorating the steel industry is truly an honor," states Sanders. This is where the working class poor rose up and challenged the steel mogul Carnegie. The created sculpture will serve as a remembrance of the battle between the workers, the unions and the industry tycoons. During this period, many families suffered tremendous

loss. In commemoration of these events, George Junior Republic students are fabricating the "Yellow Dog" sculpture. This sculpture will be completed and unveiled at the Pump House in October 2019. In order to further engage the youth in the arts, the Rivers of Steel will be providing youth at the Career and Technical Center the opportunity to participate in a metal casting workshop on March 22. This project focuses on the basics of mold and pattern making to provide students with a working knowledge of additive processes for casting forms in molten aluminum. The workshop begins with teaching students how to create a basic pattern design from household materials that will become the positive form ultimately recreated in aluminum. Students

will then work with the instructor to prepare their own molds that capture the form of these patterns in resin-bonded sand. Students will use a variety of common hand tools and materials during the pattern-making workshop. These involve the use of scribes, xacto knives, glue guns, scissors and plasticine (oil based clay). Once the sand molds have hardened sufficiently, the students will remove the pattern materials to reveal the open-faced molds ready for casting. This project will culminate with an aluminum casting demonstration by Rivers of Steel Arts, during which time students will see witness their customized designs cast in solid aluminum. Following the pour, students will take these items with them.



# APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

In recognition of Child Abuse Awareness Month, we asked a client to share his story of abuse in hopes of bringing awareness to child abuse that occurs each day in Pennsylvania. In order to protect his first-person account of abuse, his name is not included in the story.

My childhood was not the greatest. My father tried to physically abuse my sister when I was four years old

and it is hard to forget those things. During this time, my mom was always out drinking or partying, and when she did decide to come home, she slept. Although my older brother and sister's step-dad was around, my mom eventually kicked him out of the house.

As a child, I was always getting hit and punched. My mom was really hard on all of us. Because of my surroundings and what I had to deal with at home, at the age six or seven I started bullying others at school and I got into a lot of fights. But, this was the only way I knew how to deal with what was happening at home. I was frustrated with the conflict at home, so this was how I responded. I knew I was being abused and neglected. There were days when I was not fed at all.

This led to me becoming very aggressive and abusive. When my brother turned 12, he decided he couldn't take the abuse any longer and he left. This was very hard for my siblings and me because he was always fighting to

protect us. When he walked away, my world crumbled.

On October 12, 2006, when I was 8 ½ years old, Children and Youth Services removed my siblings and me from our home. At first, we all stayed together, but later we were separated and had to live with different families. Eventually, I was placed at a foster home with my sister, but she had a very hard time adjusting because she had dealt with so much abuse. She continued to act out over and over again, and one point she was placed by herself in a foster home.

Over time, I joined my sister and some of my siblings at various foster homes. When we started to develop a bond with a family, something would happen because we had such a hard time forming positive relationships with others. Family normalcy was a foreign topic for us. Subconsciously, we didn't want to get close to anyone because we were fearful we would be removed. During the summer of 2010, an elderly couple wanted to





adopt us, but once again chaos ensued. Over the next several years, me and my siblings were adopted, but the adoption did not develop into the positive family environment we had hoped. Up until 18 years of age, I got into a lot of trouble. During my last violent experience, I became physically violent against another teenager. This experience scared me straight. I didn't want to cause harm to another person, but this was the only way I knew how to handle my emotions. Once I realized the severity of what I had done, I became depressed and started struggling with suicidal thoughts.

After this incident, I realized I could change my ways and become a different person. This is about the same time a referral was

made for me to participate in Preventative Aftercare (PAC) services. PAC helped me develop a strong positive bond with another person and helped me realize that I did not need to be a product of my abusive environment. Finally, someone was focused on what was best for me and through the development of a trusting relationship, my attitude and the way I handled my emotions began to change. Eventually, I started picking the pieces up and started to make progress in a positive direction. I even began focusing more on my schoolwork and employment prospects. In April 2017, I attended Hiram G. Andrews and took a job at PetSmart. At that time, I didn't realize that in 2018 I would graduate from Hiram G. Andrews with a 3.56 GPA at the top of my class,

and be the recipient of the Citizenship Award because I was helpful across the campus community. Today, I am looking toward the future and the positive things that are in store for me. I have learned how to overcome violence and I realize my response to situations can be handled in a positive manner. Before, I always acted as a victim, today; I am in control of my future.

**For more information about Preventative Aftercare, Inc., contact Vice President of Admissions and Community Based Programs Andrea Donatucci at [adonatucci@gjr.org](mailto:adonatucci@gjr.org).**





## ACT LIKE A CHAMPION

Basketball coach Pat Devine and physical education teacher Bobby Thorne collaborated again during this year's basketball season to offer the players educational lessons under the title, "Act Like a Champion." The champion character class teaches young athletes skills they can use both on and off the court. Each week the basketball team members were required to meet for four hours per week and participate in classroom learning that included the memorization of vocabulary words, guest speakers, inspirational movies and discussions, and concluded with a 'Make a Difference' project.

The materials provided to the team were used as tools for teaching, motivation, and future success. Discussion topics surrounded the topics of accountability, ownership, sportsmanship, integrity, composure, and poise. Although the program occurred because of a youth's participation on the basketball team, the lessons were applicable both on and off the court.

**THE TIGERS BASKETBALL TEAM 2018-2019 RECORD WAS 2-14-0**

## TIME FOR TRACK AND FIELD

The end of basketball season marks the beginning of spring and track and field. On January 28, youth from across campus tried out for the Tigers team which will be managed under head coach Jamie Stucchio. Youth tryouts consisted of physical tests, a written application, and an interview with the



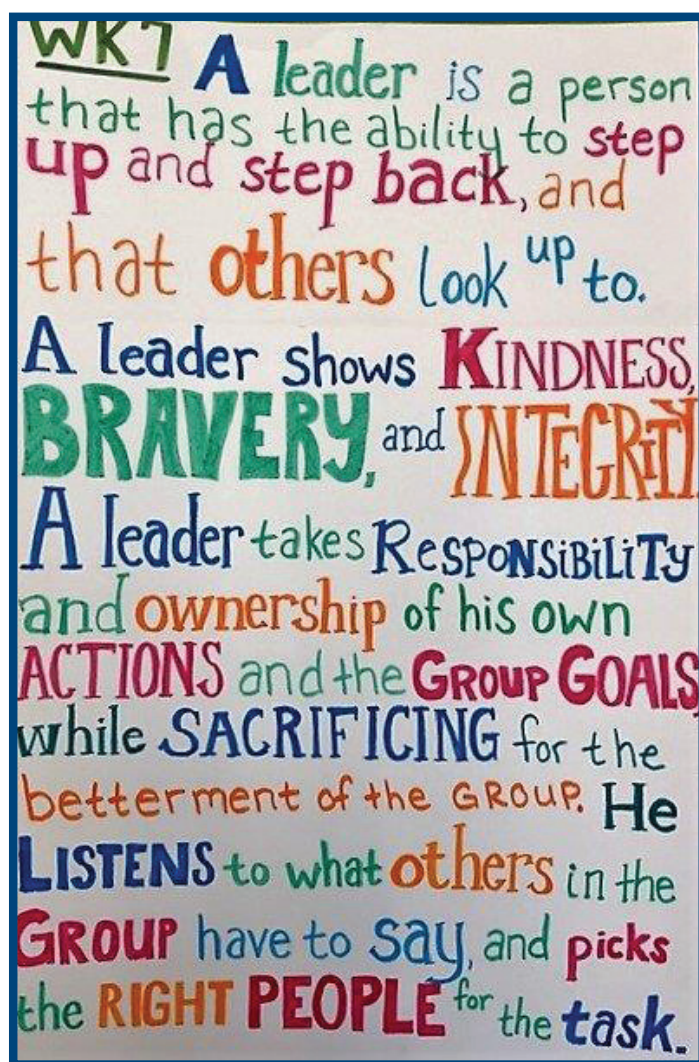
coach. Unlike a typical high school track and field program, in order to participate, George Junior Republic students must have a successful February home pass and be successfully progressing through the treatment program. This year's team will be competing at the AA level. Best of luck to our student athletes!

# DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERS

During the cold winter months, the Adventure Based Counseling program focused on helping youth develop positive leadership skills. Over the course of eight weeks, youth had the opportunity to learn and grow through experiential activities and group discussion. Youth took an assessment to identify their personal leadership style, practiced leading from their identified style, and were challenged to approach tasks from others' viewpoints. Through a process of self-evaluation, peer critique, and staff feedback, youth were able to hone and practice their defined leadership style.

As the group progressed, the experiential activities increased in difficulty. From basic problem-solving at ground level, to complex, multi-tiered activities with multiple moving parts, youth rose to the challenge. The program culminated with the development of a youth-defined cohesive definition of leadership based on their experiences.

For more information about the Adventure Based Counseling program, contact Director Gillian Martin at 724-458-9330, x2066.





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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**APRIL 2019** – Child Abuse Prevention Month and Financial Literacy Month

**MAY 2019** – National Mental Health Month

**MAY 9 – 10, 2019:** George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania hosts an Advanced TF-CBT Training with a focus on Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency is funding this training. For more information, visit [www.episcenter.psu.edu/node/771](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu/node/771)

**MAY 27, 2019:** Visit the Mercer Memorial Day 500 and see the George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania Student Float. For more information, visit [www.mercermemorialday500.org](http://www.mercermemorialday500.org)

**MAY 29, 2019:** George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania Student Art Show Opening Reception at the Maurice B. Cohill, Jr. Academic Center (4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

**MAY 30, 2019:** Graduation Day

**MAY 30, 2019:** ManUp Opening Exhibition Reception at The Confluence in New Castle, Pennsylvania. This event is in partnership with Hoyt Arts and Education (5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)

**JUNE 15, 2019:** Bikes to Native Americans Project (delivery day)

## ADDITIONAL SUMMER ACTIVITIES

**JULY 22 - 26, 2019:** George Junior Republic Employee Recognition and 110th Year Celebration

**AUGUST 2019:** George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania sponsors a Back to School Parent and Student Resource Fair (date to be determined)

**AUGUST 26, 2019:** First day of school

**SEPTEMBER 2019:** Suicide Prevention Month



*Erie Arts & Culture Program Director Melinda Meyer presents a check to Fine Arts Director Glen Sanders.*