

# CONNECT

PIONEER SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS



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## Food Service Dept. finds recipe for slicing deficit, making healthier meals

The Pioneer Food Service Department was pleased to welcome Buddy, a 7-foot chicken mascot, in an April 27 visit to the high school cafeteria. But he just as easily could have been the bluebird of happiness.

That's because the Tyson Foods icon stopped in at a time of brightening skies for a program that has faced some difficult times.

Buddy gave away gift certificates to one lucky student per lunch period. The winners included Lacey Stauffer, Cris Davis, Grant Claypool, and Kathleen Burfield.

The new Tyson Chicken Food Court in the cafeteria offers students at least two new regular combo menu choices each day. In addition, a premium



High school assistant principal Robert Coniglio and senior Chad Armstrong visit with Buddy, the Tyson Foods mascot.

combo meal is offered, featuring specialty products such as Tony's Personal Pan Pizza, Tyson Sunset Strips, and Tyson Hot and Spicy Chicken Patties.

Regardless of which meal they choose, students eligible for free meals pay nothing, and

reduced-lunch students pay 25 cents. Regular prices are \$1.50 for regular combo meals and \$2.25 for premium combo meals.

**ALL FUN ASIDE,** Pioneer's Food Service Department, under the guidance of director

Catherine "Cate" Pritchard, has been taking steps over the past three years to make the program financially solvent. As recently as 2003, the food service fund was over \$80,000

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# Food Service improvements

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in the red, prompting a call for drastic changes in the program's operation.

One of the first measures was to survey students about their food preferences and how to make the cafeterias more enjoyable places. Meal prices were also increased slightly last spring, resulting in a revenue increase of \$15,763 from March to June 2005.

Overall, the program experienced a \$56,388 income increase from 2003-2004 to 2004-2005, due largely to the increased sale of free and reduced meals. These meals are reimbursable.

Also, breakfast participation increased by 4,000 to 71,138 meals over the same period, and lunch participation increased by 6,300 meals to 293,136.

Over the last three

years, the department has used a variety of measures to trim its losses from \$83,179 in 2002-2003 to \$33,712 last year.

As of April 2006, cafeteria income was running \$20,000 ahead of what it had been in 2005.

This dramatic improvement was achieved in part through increased income, larger federal reimbursements, and by reinstating vending machine sales at lunchtime.

Food service staff work schedules have also been reduced in order to bring program costs down. The combination of measures is meant to combat rising food prices and increased costs of retiree/worker benefits.

**SINCE THE START** of 2005-2006, food service staffers have

worked as a team in reviewing and revising recipes, with a goal of using ingredients more efficiently and making tastier, healthier meals. They have also attended a workshop on sanitation, revised breakfast menus at the high school and middle school, and redesigned lunch production reports.

February saw the department draft a plan for the Tyson Food Court, taking advantage of lucrative savings involved with serving the company's chicken products exclusively. A student taste test helped to further pinpoint the likes and dislikes of students who utilize Pioneer's cafeteria operations.

"They indicated they

would like to see more chicken and pizza served," said Mrs. Pritchard.

A second Tyson Food Court is in the planning stage for Pioneer Middle School.

Currently, the state Education Department is reviewing the nutritional quality of meals served at Pioneer. Training opportunities, menu development, cost analysis, and implementation of a food safety manual all remain on the department's radar in the coming months.

Maybe next time Buddy visits, it can be to celebrate a food service program that rules the roost.

## KINDERGARTEN SCREEN SHIFTS TO JULY

Elementary schools in the Pioneer School District will hold kindergarten screening this year on Wednesday, July 12, and Thursday, July 13, at Arcade Elementary and Delevan Elementary.

The schools have two screenings each day, at 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Screenings take approximately two hours, and parents are asked to stay to hear about school and district information. They may also ask any questions they have at that time.

For students who register after July 13, an additional screening will take place in August.

State and federal regulations mandate that Pioneer makes the same kindergarten screening services available to parents of children who attend private schools, such as Central Baptist Christian School in Yorkshire. For more information, please contact the district's 504 compliance officer, Michael Lucow, at 716- 492-9345.



### TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

Several members of the Pioneer staff brought their offspring to school on Take Your Child to Work Day. At left, Delevan Elementary pre-1st teacher Joanne May and daughter Chelsea visit with student Tristan McAfee.



### UP AND ATOM

*Students in the Pioneer Middle School class of Mr. Eric Kramer display their work after completing a unit on atoms. Front row: Richard Fancher, left, Zackary Neamon, Tyler Davis, and Charles Peterson. Back row: Stephen Roberts, Joseph Miller, Ashley Carnes, Megan Daughtry, and Kara Montalvo.*

## Makeover for Pioneer web site continues

In the next several months, visitors to the Pioneer School District web site ([www.pioneer.wnyric.org](http://www.pioneer.wnyric.org)) will notice some dramatic changes meant to make it more interactive, user-friendly, and attractive.

A process that began last fall will culminate on July 1, when Pioneer makes the full transition to a site associated with SchoolWires, a company that specializes in optimizing the Internet for education.

Pioneer director of computer operations Jill Holbrook said there are many advantages to this move.

"The company that has hosted our teacher web pages is no longer an option. Teachers will receive training on using the system to build their own pages, which is really quite easy.

"In addition, parents and students can register to receive certain handy features, such as email alerts when an area they visit often has been changed or updated," said Mrs. Holbrook.

Staff members in each building and various departments have been trained in using the new system to provide and update information and graphics. Emphasis has been placed on making the material timely, accurate, and organized.

## Changes afoot at Arcade Teen Center

Arcade Teen Center, which operates under the auspices of the Youth Together Organization (YTO), is announcing procedural changes that are designed to make the center safer.

The center is open Friday evenings in the former Arcade Fire Hall at Main and Liberty streets.

Starting June 1, only teens who have a completed registration and behavior contract

on file at the center will be allowed to attend and participate in activities there.

Also as of June 1, students who enter the center and then leave will not be allowed to return. YTO officials said the risks associated with teens being able to enter and leave at will are too great.

Teens who leave the center will not be allowed to stand or sit on the front steps of the center,

or otherwise loiter in the immediate vicinity.

Parents and teens are also advised that teens are to leave the facility and its surrounding grounds no later than 11:00 p.m., or risk violating the village curfew. If they choose not to leave, the police will be asked to intervene.

YTO officials said they hope these new policies will help eliminate some of the potentially risky situations for both parents and the volunteer staff.

Parents and teens who are new to the center may attend on Friday evenings to become acquainted. Anyone who would like to volunteer or has questions about these policies may call Donna Schiener at 585 492-2420, or Kay Kilburn at 716 492-2897.

The Arcade Teen Center is a community partner of the Pioneer A-OK Program.

### **DELEVAN PTA NOTES**

- Delevan PTA held its annual Family Fun Night on March 17. Over 300 parents and students attended the event, which included bounce houses in the gymnasium and a basket auction in the cafeteria. Each classroom was assigned a theme for its basket, and items were collected to make available a wide array of prizes. PTA raised over \$500 in support of school programs and activities.

- Increased membership numbers will keep Delevan PTA an active and important organization for many years to come. According to chairperson Tammy Smith, the PTA has 228 members this year, an increase of 24 over 2005.

# Pioneer's tax rate among lowest in Southern Tier

New statistics provided by Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES indicates that Pioneer School District's true value tax rate is among the lowest in the Southern Tier.

Sixteen out of 21 component schools provided BOCES with true value tax rate information. The true value tax rate is the rate that results when

all property is assessed at its full value.

Analysis of the data indicates that Pioneer's true tax rate, projected to be around \$14.25 for 2006-2007, is the lowest among the 16 districts reporting.

Not only do Pioneer taxpayers enjoy the lowest true value tax rate, but the figure is also \$6.64 lower

than the average tax rate of all reporting districts, according to Pioneer business administrator Nicholas Silvaroli.

The average true value tax rate for 2006-2007 is \$20.89. The highest rate among reporting BOCES districts was \$32.07 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

Pioneer's proposed 4.63 percent tax rate increase for 2006-2007 ranks ninth out of 16 schools.

"We are proud to be able to say that we give our residents the best value for their tax dollars," said superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Bowen.

# Home School Association tree honors volunteers

The Home and School Association (HSA) of the Pioneer Elementary School at Arcade has honored its 2005-2006 volunteers by planting a tree and creating a plaque.

The HSA is the fund-raising organization for Arcade Elementary. The group is responsible for raising money to fund educational field trips and transportation for their students as well as a

variety of other expenses not covered by the school budget.

Last year the HSA purchased some additional equipment for the playground, and this year made substantial bequests to the art, sports, music and library programs.

Parents, grandparents and family and friends volunteer at Arcade by helping teachers in their

rooms, assisting with the many fund-raisers and a variety of other tasks which assist the school, the teachers, and the children greatly.

"We thank to them for their selfless efforts. This tree will be a reminder forever of their

endeavors," said Lorrie Chmiel of the HSA.

The HSA also wishes to thank Gerry Bookmiller, Head Custodian, for purchasing and planting the beautiful Snowing Fountains Weeping Cherry tree.



*A new cherry tree has been planted by Home School Association members near the entrance of Arcade Elementary, in honor of school volunteers. From left: Ronda Brown, Kim Bragg, Angel Madden, and Lorrie Chmiel.*

## 'PHISHING' FRAUD: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Pioneer's Instructional Technology Department is warning residents of email messages from companies claiming to be PayPal or a bank, and which request personal information.

These messages are not legitimate and are the work of *phishers*, or scam artists who specialize in sending messages that look genuine but really take you to a web site masquerading as a bank or another service. Their purpose is to fool the recipient into entering user names, passwords, Social Security numbers, and financial information. The scammers can then log into the real financial accounts and clean them out.

"Legitimate companies never ask for personal or financial information via email," said Jill Holbrook, Pioneer's director of computer operations.

Things that indicate a phishing scheme:

- Any email that asks the recipient to update user information is most likely a scam;
- Phishing messages often contain spelling errors, and often ask the recipient to update their information immediately or risk the account being closed. The message might also state that the account is being charged.

The best way to handle phishing scams is to not open the email message or respond in any way.



## Pioneer improves to 51st among 97 WNY schools

The yearly rankings of Western New York public and private schools by *Business First* indicate that Pioneer Central has improved to 51st place among 97 districts.

Last year's ranking was 52nd. This year's spot was the highest Pioneer has attained in 10 years of rankings.

Pioneer High School wound up 59th among 114 high schools. The school's 90.1 percent Regents diploma graduation rate ranked 47th-best.

Among the top half of the middle school rankings was Pioneer Middle School, which finished 62nd out of 144 schools.

Once again, Pioneer's elementary schools were in the top 100. Delevan (71) and Arcade (93) were compared against 230 other primary school programs.

*Business First* noted that Pioneer was third among 12 Cattaraugus County districts. The school was also deemed an "overachiever," meaning that its academic performance was much better than its socioeconomic profile would indicate.

## ACHIEVERS

• Pioneer High School principal **Sharon Huff** can now be officially called "Dr. Huff." On March 28, she successfully defended her University at Buffalo doctoral thesis, which focused on a Pioneer case study of a portfolio development program and related professional development, measuring the relative effects. Mrs. Huff's oral defense was a "brutal test," according to her advisor. Mrs. Huff was "hooded" as a doctor of education on May 12.

• Senior **Elaine Siczkar** of Delevan was nominated for a 2006 Ray of Light Award, sponsored by the YWCA of Western New York. Elaine was one of a select group of young women from across the region to be honored in one of four categories - academic achievement, personal achievement, sports, and the arts. Elaine received an engraved trophy and a \$600 scholarship check.

• Twenty-one Pioneer Middle School 8th grade students took part in the American Scholastic League Competition. The top three scores were recorded by Amber Potter, Chelsey Smith, and Drioux Danielson. Other participants were Robert Battaglia, Vicki Vogt, Monica Metzger, Alesssha Williams, Justin Maher, Jessica Langer, Ashling Flannery, Ryer Becker, Danelle Eckert, Kaileigh Domster, Kyle Clever, Aaron Snyder, Morgan Landphair, Kelsey Rebman, Brandon Bernard, Marcus Perrington, Brandy Krolczyk, and Julie Hoffman.

• Congratulations to Pioneer High School agriculture teachers **Mary-Lou Genaway**, **Jonathan Clayson**, and **Martin Krause** for winning 2006 Pathfinders Awards from *Business First* magazine and Independent Health. They were nominated by assistant principal Robert Coniglio for forging partnerships between education and business.

## Student Solutions team tackles teen pregnancy issue

A team of Pioneer High School business students recently made a presentation to the Wyoming County Board of Supervisors.

Pioneer's Student Solutions Team was composed of students Jennifer Dryndas, Justin Lewandowski, Felisha Woolley, Kevin Deahn, and Jessica Felschow. Their topic at the April 11 meeting of the Board of Supervisors was teen pregnancy, and in particular how to engage students more effectively

to promote "youth voice" among the community.

The students spent numerous hours researching teen pregnancy, identifying three major factors that contribute to teen pregnancy in the local area. The solutions presented included more education, community service, parental involvement, and abstinence-only programs.

The Student Solutions Team was advised by business teachers Ms. Joni Martin and Mrs. Gail Nahs.



*Pioneer's Student Solutions team consists of high school business students. Front row: advisor Mrs. Gail Nahs, Jessica Felschow, Felisha Woolley, advisor Ms. Joni Martin. Back row: Justin Lewandowski, Kevin Deahn, Jennifer Dryndas.*

## HOST FAMILIES SOUGHT FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS

Representatives of International Fellowship Inc. recently visited Pioneer High School to make information available about their foreign exchange student program.

The Westfield, N.Y.-based group has been successfully arranging exchanges to and from the U.S. since 1952. Pioneer families are invited to reach across borders to host a high school-aged exchange student for the summer, semester, or academic year.

Students come with their own spending money and are covered by health/accident insurance. All that is required of a host family is to provide room, board, laundry facilities, and TLC.

For details, visit [www.internationalfellowship.org](http://www.internationalfellowship.org).

# District rules on student conduct extend into cyberspace

As more and more students communicate electronically through the use of blogging web sites, virtual chat rooms, instant messaging, and social networking sites, Pioneer School District is taking further steps to ensure that such means are not violating the basic rights of others.

Parents are urged to monitor these forms of communication because of the potential dangers that are present when students use these forums. The specific dangers involve online predators, and the posting of damaging or false information about others.

District officials warn against any posting of personal information online. "Anything posted online is available to friends and strangers alike, and some of those strangers are dangerous," said superintendent Jeffrey Bowen.

While Myspace.com and other

potentially dangerous web sites have been blocked on the district's information network, they still can be accessed at home and could be used against a fellow student or staff member.

In accordance with Pioneer's Code of Conduct, students must recognize that every student has the right to a safe environment where everyone is treated with respect. Furthermore, students need to be aware that any threatening or offensive language posted online is treated seriously, with the persons responsible held accountable by law enforcement.

"Even if this is done at home, it will not stop the district from pursuing legal action," said Dr. Bowen. "Content that represents character assassination or slander will be dealt with in the strictest way possible."

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## In-school homework aid helps avert warm-weather blues

Spring has sprung, and only a limited number of days remain for academic instruction. It becomes difficult for students to focus diligently on learning with all the distractions and warm weather associated with the end of the year.

A good way for students to keep their grades on track is to finish their homework at school. This can be achieved through after-school programs that offer academic intervention services.

At Pioneer Middle School, the after-school program offers a homework helper station run by teachers who are versed in a variety of subject areas. The help is free, and run from the end of school at 2:20 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. (early bus), or 5:10 p.m. (late bus).

"Many students attend the homework helper program before

they engage in the recreational aspects of the after-school program," said principal Ravo Root. "This allows the students to leave their books and schoolwork at school so they can go home and enjoy the evening without the stress of studying hovering over them."

Parents of students whose current routine does not seem to be working are urged to check into the after-school program. Permission forms for staying after school are available at the middle school office (716 492-9371).

Additional information about daily student assignments can be accessed via the Homework Hotline at 716 492-9488. Parents and students will need to know the phone extension of the teacher in order to hear the message.

## SKATEBOARD ADVISORY REISSUED

Skateboarders need to use greater care when using Pioneer School District property, especially when their activities pose a risk to themselves, other people, and facilities.

"If skateboarders are going to use district property, they need to act responsibly," said superintendent Jeffrey Bowen. "It is unacceptable for them to move or damage tables, benches and bike racks."

Dr. Bowen encouraged skateboarders to wear protective gear, thereby reducing their risk of injury. Another skateboard-related problem is that participants often choose areas which are populated by pedestrians or motorists, the potential for injury — either to innocent bystanders or the skateboarders themselves — is high.

If abuses continue, Pioneer may need to consider policy changes and greater enforcement. Parents are asked to do their part in monitoring how and where their children skateboard.

Skateboarders should avoid jumping off docks or bringing in makeshift ramps or staging equipment, as this can lead to serious injury. At Pioneer Middle



School, no skateboarding is allowed before 5:00 p.m.

Signs are due to be installed at each of Pioneer's four schools to remind students and other residents that school grounds close at 8:00 p.m. No loitering after this time will be tolerated.

Skateboard riders age 14 or younger are required by New York State law to wear approved helmets. Parents or guardians of children who violate the law can receive a fine of up to \$50.

# National teach-in focuses 6th graders on alcohol risks

On April 24 and 25, the Pioneer A-OK Program, along with Pioneer Middle School health teachers Jana Landahl and Debra Lutz, hosted a Teach-In for the 6th grade health classes to discuss the risks of underage alcohol use.

Pioneer A-OK Peer Educators Jamie Root, Ashley Roberts, Cala Galiota, Andy Slocum and Adam Slocum, as well as School Resource Officer Jason Soderlund, joined leaders across the country who conducted similar teach-ins during April, which was Alcohol Awareness month. They followed lesson plans presented in the "Reach Out Now" materials produced by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with Scholastic, Inc.

At the end of the Teach-In, the 6th grade students were able to describe some of the effects of alcohol on the brain and the body, including:

- a loss of coordination, poor judgment, slowed reflexes, distorted vision, memory lapses, and even blackouts
- damage to every organ in the human body. Alcohol is absorbed directly into the bloodstream and can increase the risk factors for a variety of diseases, including cancer.
- depression of the central nervous system, as well as lowering inhibitions, and impairing judgment. Drinking can lead to risky behaviors.

They learned that rapid or excessive use of alcohol can cause poisoning, which can lead to coma or even death.

"If you're around people who are drinking, you have an increased risk of being seriously injured, involved in car crashes, or affected by violence," said Kay Kilburn, director of the Pioneer A-OK Program.

Alcohol can affect the teenage brain differently than the adult brain. Adolescents are more sensitive to some of alcohol's effects on the brain, and repeated exposure to alcohol may alter the path of a teen's brain development.

The teach-in also helped students identify effective alternatives to using alcohol.

Sixth graders who participated in the Teach-In were given copies of the Reach Out Now materials to take home for their parents to read and review with them. The materials encourage all parents to

start talking with their children before they start drinking.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, each day, more than 10,000 young people between the ages of 12 - 20 take their first drink. The good news is that parents are still the most powerful influence on their child's behavior. And they have more influence on their child's values and decisions about drinking before he or she begins to use alcohol.

The key is to have a strong, trusting relationship with their child - one that is based on good communication. By developing open communication with their child, they will increase the likelihood that he / she will confide in their parent when faced with a serious issue or problem. This begins with taking the time to talk.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has identified six key actions parents and caregivers can take to prevent childhood alcohol use:

- 1) Establish and maintain good communication with your child.

Encourage conversation by actively listening to your child talk about things of interest to him or her. This paves the way for communication about topics that concern you.

- 2) Get involved and stay involved in your child's life. Hold regular discussions about your child's school performance and activities, attend after-school events, and get to know your child's friends.

- 3) Make clear rules and enforce them with consistency and appropriate consequences. Develop clear family rules. Establish appropriate penalties and consequences for breaking the rules and enforce them consistently.

- 4) Be a positive role model. Set a good example for your child. Talk to your child about the positive things you do that he or she might consider or follow.

- 5) Teach your child to choose friends wisely. Talk to your child about the qualities that really count in a friend, such as being kind and trustworthy rather than being popular or "cool."

- 6) Monitor your child's activities. Be aware of your child's plans and whereabouts.

## TEACHER, 2 GRADS, STUDENT HONORED AT WYOMING COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU AWARDS

The Wyoming County Youth Bureau has honored several individuals associated with Pioneer at its 2006 awards banquet.

- Class of 2005 members Hannah Mayer and Seth Sampson were both honored with honorable mention awards for Outstanding Service By Youth. Hannah's volunteer school activities included Reading Partners and Special Olympics. Seth has been a 4-H member and has also helped raise guide dogs for the blind.

- Senior Sarah Hanley won a certificate for Outstanding Service By Youth. Sarah is a member of Pioneer PRO and helped spearhead this year's holiday Giving Tree program.

- High school math teacher Kathy Morris received honorable mention in the Outstanding Adult Career Service to Youth category. She helped revive Student Congress and founded Pioneer PRO in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001.



ABOVE: One of the award-winners at the Wyoming County Youth Bureau Awards Night was Kathy Morris (right), shown with fellow Pioneer High School teacher Janice Fisher, who nominated Mrs. Morris.

# Final high school band concert of the year May 24

The Pioneer Senior High Symphonic Band will be presenting its final concert for the 2005-06 school year on Wednesday, May 24, at 7:30 p.m., inside George C. Crawford Auditorium.

The band, under the direction of Mrs. Christine Perkins, will be performing:

- *Second Suite for Military Band*
- *Coastal Overture*
- *Summon the Heroes* (music from the Olympics by John Williams)
- Selections from *Les Miserables*, and
- Music from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Included in this program is "Within These Hallowed Halls" which features retired faculty member and local historian Jeffrey Mason as narrator.

Also included in this concert will be *Dixieland Jamboree*, which spotlights a Dixieland



*Pioneer High School Class of 2006 band musicians will perform for the final time May 24. Front row: Jeff Dorfman, Matt Salzler, Beth Hobin, Rachel Walden. Back row: Phil Rivera, Mitch Carlson, Amelia Morgan, Erin Raun, Jessica Sampson.*

combo. The musicians in this combo are: Kyle Conroy (clarinet), Kristopher Cleveland (tenor saxophone), Jessica Perkins (trumpet), Mackenzie Pierce (trombone), Bethany

Hobin (tuba), and Mattew Salzler (drum set).

Class of 2006 band members featured for this concert are:

- Mattew Salzler (percussionist), who

will be performing a percussion improvisation on the drum set, tympani drums and mallet percussion, and

- Jeffrey Dorfman, who will be performing an original composition for piano. His choice for this concert is "Hallows Eve", a piece in ragtime style.



## ASSETS TO THE COMMUNITY

Wally and Donna Schiener were recently honored by the Arcade Area Chamber of Commerce as its Volunteers of the Year for 2005-2006. The Schieners have worked hundreds of hours on local events, particularly Arcade Winterfest. Mr. Schiener is employed as head custodian at Pioneer High School.

*Pioneer Central School is in compliance with the U.S. Civil Services Rights Act of 1964 and the Title IX Education Amendments of 1972, Part 86. The District provides equal employment opportunity to all individuals and does not discriminate on the basis of color, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age or handicapping condition. The 504 compliance officer can be reached at 716 492-9435. The Title IX compliance officer can be reached at 716 492-9351.*