



2017

A YEAR IN REVIEW



GREATER PORTAGE YOUTH EDUCATION FOUNDATION, INC.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This past year was a transition year for the GPYEF board as long-time president Mike Nelson and vice president Tom Pinion stepped down from their positions after nearly 10 years. Mike and Tom were both instrumental in getting GPYEF to the successful level that it is today. Thankfully, both Mike and Tom have decided to remain on the board so that we can continue to draw on their knowledge and expertise.

We were able to hold several successful events this past year and wanted to share some photos and articles of a few of those groups we had the pleasure of supporting.

Portage is a generous community and the GPYEF board is aware that you are asked by multiple charities for financial support. GPYEF is honored to be included in your charitable giving and you can be assured that we take stewardship of your gifts seriously. We understand that when you make

a gift to GPYEF, you are investing in teachers, students and the youth of Portage.

Over the past three years, GPYEF has been able to issue grants totaling more than \$28,000 to various youth projects and events. We have also awarded \$12,000 in scholarships over the last 3 years to graduating seniors who are going on to higher education.

With your help, the GPYEF board is hoping to improve significantly on these numbers over the next three years, and beyond.

Thank you for your ongoing support!

Tim Bressers, GPYEF President



THANK YOU TEACHERS!

A Special Thanks to the teachers in Portage for their dedicated support and monetary contributions towards the GPYEF! We are happy to serve you and help with the needs of your students!



SPANISH TRIP 2017

The first bi-annual trip for the Spanish club was completed this last Spring of 2017!

TEACHER FEATURE

Beth Loomis and Emily Grasweski, teachers of the Spanish language department at Portage High School in 2017, made the dreams of the Spanish club a reality in the Spring of 2017.

We had a chance to sit down with them and talk about the Spanish Exchange Program that they helped initiate. The German program has had an exchange program for decades, but the Spanish students did not, until this past year.

Mrs. Grasweski, who taught in Portage for 5 years, stated that early on they were able to arrange a week-long trip to Costa Rica, but it wasn't a true exchange program like the students really wanted. She and Beth Loomis, who has 20 years of teaching experience with the last two of those teaching in Portage, researched options on their own time. They were able to find a company that was a "perfect fit" in that it focused only on exchanges with Spain. They then took their proposal to the board and both admit it was "not a tough sell".

A program was created where Spanish students would come to Portage for 3 weeks in the fall and the Portage students would travel to Spain for 2 weeks in March to include spring break. The cost for each student was \$1600. The group was able to offset the cost to students through various fundraisers.

GPYEF was very pleased to supply some funds to help with the cost of the trip.



Both teachers say the entire community was very supportive and they want to give a "big thank you" to all of those who helped. A total of 26 students were able to travel to Spain this past March.

The students lived with the families of the same students who had been here the previous fall. They really enjoyed seeing the every day aspect of life in Spain. They did attend a local high school part of the time. The town was of a size that they felt safe and over time gained confidence to explore and practice their language skills with the locals.

Both teachers love to travel and practice their language skills. Now, through hard work and dedication, they have established a program to provide the same opportunities for their students.

Thank you so much for all your efforts!!

HALL OF FAME 2017

Our sincere Congratulations to all the 2017 Inductees and their families! Thank you to the community for your participation in the golf event and the Hall of Fame dinner and ceremony

DENNIS DORN Portage High School 1968

Dennis Dorn and his brother Ron are business partners at Portage Lumber Do-it Best which was started by their father, Ray, in 1953.

"You have a corporate responsibility not just to be a nice guy or a nice company, but a responsibility to give back", according to Dennis. That mantra has encouraged Mr. Dorn to work on diverse projects like the PHS

HALL OF FAME 2017 (CONT.)



Building Trades Program, Habitat for Humanity, The Portage Center of the Arts, Portage Historic Indian Agency House's advisory board, Rotary Club, The Wisconsin State Historical Society Board, The Divine Savior Healthcare Board and the Committee to launch Tivoli Nursing Home among others. Dennis also brought The Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra (WCO) to Portage.

GREGG STEINHAUS *Portage High School 1982*

Gregg Steinhaus left PHS as the 2nd leading career scorer and rebounder in Warrior boys basketball history. As a Senior, Gregg guided his team to a 23 & 2 record, winning the final 20 games on their way to Portage's only WIAA State Boys Basketball Championship. Steinhaus went on to have a successful college career on scholarship as a University of Wisconsin Badger playing all 4 years, including 13 starts his senior season. He is Portage's only male 4-year D-1 NCAA basketball player.

That being said, Gregg's community involvement would have had him up for consideration for the PHS HOF in the future.

SUSAN POMLUN CAWLEY

Portage High School 1961

Susan Pomlun Cawley was a very active PHS student involved with the Warrior Newspaper, Latin Club, all things musical from band to choir to glee club & plays; participating in G.A.A while earning the D.A. R.'s Good Citizen Award. Susan was one of the top 11 students in her Senior class. She used her skills from PHS to benefit 1000's of students in the Racine School District for 40 years as a music instructor.

Mrs. Cawley's teaching excellence earned her the 1995 PTA Wisconsin Teacher of the Year. Susan Cawley has remained connected to her hometown school, co-sponsoring two \$500 scholarships each year to PHS Seniors (1 boy & 1 girl).

ALEX NELSON *Portage High School 2001*

Alex Nelson was a four time WIAA State wrestling qualifier and the 1st PHS wrestler to ever win 2 State Championships going 80-0 during his Junior and Senior seasons in the D-2 152 lbs. weight class. After graduation Nelson went on to wrestle at the collegiate level at NIU where he had a successful career, including 52 wins and a 3rd place finish in the Mid-American Conference Championships.

Alex also did PHS proud his Senior year of college by being named an

NIU Scholar Athlete while earning the Student of Excellence in Physical Education Award and making the Dean's List. It should be noted that Alex was a 3 sport athlete at PHS; playing baseball and also as starting quarterback on the football team.

DAVID BENNETT *Portage High School 1946*

David Bennett was a philanthropist, District Attorney, University of Wisconsin Regent, real estate developer, personal attorney and advocate for Boys Scouts throughout Wisconsin. Mr. Bennett can be credited with the location of our current High School after David donated the valuable land needed for East Collins St. to be built. He served Columbia County, UW System Regent and made a profound impact on Wisconsin's Boy Scouts.

2005 GIRLS D-2 WIAA STATE SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM *Coached by Dave Mills (1977) & Amy Zeihen*

The 2005 Girls' Softball team completed their regular season with a 18 & 2 record and a 2nd straight Badger North Conference Championship. They went on to beat Wisconsin Dells and Lodi during their championship run. Coach Mills and Coach Zeihen lead the PHS Girls' Softball team to its 1st WIAA State Championship.

MUSICFEST 2017



On Saturday, August 19th 2017, the 10th Annual MusicFest was held at the Columbia County Fairgrounds by the Bidwell Building.

Nashville Recording Artists, BarDog Sitters, and Irish Rock Band, Reilly, took to the stage and put on an entertaining show!

The High School Band showed off their repertoire for the year during the break between the stage bands with the Middle School band joining in on some of the action as well.

All Proceeds were donated to the Music Departments of Portage Schools!



OTHER ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS/ EVENTS:

Special Thanks to **Jack's Tap** for your ongoing support of the GPYEF! We were able to hold a successful and fun Meat Raffle on September 23, 2017 and raise funds for future scholarships and youth education programs.

PRESIDENT

Tim Bressers

VICE PRESIDENT

Thom Weilgus

TREASURER

Scott Bublitz

SECRETARY

Ginni Hamele

DIRECTORS/MEMBERS

Tim Bressers

Scott Bublitz

Mike Nelson

Ginni Hamele

Mike Hurd

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