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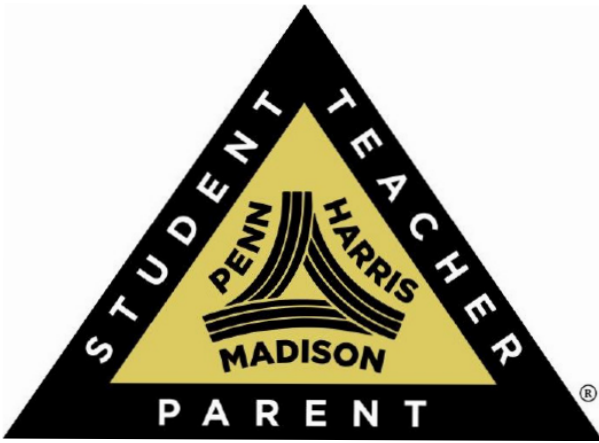
**Thirty-third Annual
Employee Recognition Dinner**

May 22, 2024



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P-H-M Employee Recognition Dinner**



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Program

Master of Ceremonies

Dr. Lisa Soto Kile, Director of Human Resources

Welcoming Remarks

Dr. Jerry Thacker, Superintendent

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Nichol Mondy
Northpoint Elementary School

Secondary Teacher of the Year

Jeremy Starkweather
Penn High School

Award to Teachers of the Year

Jennifer Turnblom, Executive Director
Penn-Harris-Madison Education Foundation

Classified Employee of the Year

Brenda Speedy
Schmucker Middle School

Invocation

Bob Thompson, Director of Alternative Education

Dinner

10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40

Year Service Award Presentations

Dr. Lisa Soto Kile

Retirement Recognition Awards

Dr. Jerry Thacker

◆ *Thank you to Everwise Credit Union for sponsoring the P-H-M Employee Recognition Dinner.*

◆ *Thanks to the Penn High School Kaleidoscope Jazz Combo.*

Service Awards

40 Year Service Award

Lisa Baldrige - Schmucker

Cory Yeoman - Penn

35 Year Service Award

Dennis Bontrager - Discovery

Matthew Russell - Penn

Kathryn Campoli - Grissom

Katharine Shreiner - Elm Road

Jennifer Denniston - Transportation

Heidi Tornquist - Elm Road

Kristene Dussel - Horizon

Dawn Troyer - Penn

Donna Hipsher - Schmucker

Susan Verduin - Transportation

Brenda Jakubowski - Madison

Lisa Zachary - ESC

Suzanne Jones - Discovery

Patricia Zakrocki - Transportation

Susan Roberts - Horizon

30 Year Service Award

Jacqueline Anderson - Elm Road

Coleen Manspeaker - Discovery

Melissa Brazeau - Penn

Rose Montgomery - Prairie Vista

Terri Byers - Transportation

Debbie Parisi - Elm Road

Debbie Casper- SSC

Lisa Pawlik - Penn

David Hall - Penn

Kris Verash - Grissom

John Hedrick - Discovery

Bonnie Wolfgang - Penn

Eric Kline - Prairie Vista

Laura Zahner - Penn

Bonnie Manningham - Penn

25 Year Service Award

Les Crooks - Penn

Cindi Minegar - Madison

Jennifer Doms - Northpoint

Jill Riggs - Penn

Paula Fadden - Elm Road

Nancy Schultheis - Moran

Julie Fleming - Moran

Kendra Suddarth - Northpoint

Frances Haughee - Penn

Lola Sult - Discovery

Shannan Lindzy - Penn

Michelle Treber - Grissom

Jeremy McCaskill - Northpoint

Teresa Weaver - Exceptional Education

20 Year Service Award

Melisa Bennett - Moran

Lorraine Reichenadter - Exceptional Education

Linda Brown - Schmucker

Jill Reppert - ESC

Marni Cronk - Penn

Amanda Stanifer - Exceptional Education

Kaza Green - Mary Frank

Virginia Vargo - Meadow's Edge

Michelle Leniski - Bittersweet

Kelley Watts - Penn

Dan Osler - Schmucker

Service Awards-continued

15 Year Service Award

Hassan Abdullah - Penn	Carrie Morton - Penn
Michael Bowe - Mary Frank	Judy Nickerson - Elsie Rogers
Cameron Brundage - Schmucker	Morgan O'Grady - Penn
Sarah Burdue - Elm Road	Carolyn Palonis - ESC
Marsha Davis - Schmucker	Stacey Parker - Transportation
Kelly Forsey - Mary Frank	Michelle Sanchez - Horizon
Rachel Fry - Penn	Laura Scott - Moran
Maureen Hemmerling - Penn	Jeanette Stevenson - Transportation
Brenda Hoffman - Transportation	Ruben Vasquez, Jr. - Grissom
Laura Holderbaum - Transportation	Cara Watt - Schmucker
Jessie Kinney - Moran	William Wilson, Jr. - Maintenance
Sherry Klosinski - Moran	

10 Year Service Award

Rosa Bancroft - Penn	Dr. Lee Morris - Penn
Denise Birong - Penn	Leonard Norris III - Transportation
Travis Block - Exceptional Education	Diane O'Konski - Transportation
Norma Bloomer - Penn	Christina Palmer - Elsie Rogers
Tara Bogaert - Grissom	Josiah Parker - Penn
Emily Breeden - Meadow's Edge	Tammy Parsons - Bittersweet
Sharry Bruster - Penn	Franca Peluso - Walt Disney
Allison Callender - Penn	Michael Phipps - Meadow's Edge
Peggy Checchio - Northpoint	Jane Piercy - Transportation
Jill Clark - Transportation	Debbra Pletcher - ESC
Elizabeth Coleman - Elm Road	Terry Richards - Horizon
Shelia Cox - Grissom	Jerry Rings - Transportation
Diane Dyer - ESC	Rebekah Roberts - Madison
Erin Elliott - Elsie Rogers	Kimberly Ross - Transportation
Andrianna Eutsey - Penn	Julia Rulli - Horizon
Lisa Feltz - ESC	Karen Russell - Elm Road
Makesha Fritz - Elm Road	Cassandra Scarsella - Bittersweet
Leah Gerbeth - Bittersweet	Sami Schlundt - Moran
Tomasita Grise - Mary Frank	Shannon Sherman - Prairie Vista
Barry Hawkins - Transportation	Jennifer Sidorowicz - Horizon
Dean Holderman - Maintenance	Danielle Snoeyink - Horizon
Ashley Keough - Elm Road	Kyle Snoeyink - Schmucker
Colleen Lane - Elsie Rogers	Amy Tiebout - Penn
Jennifer Laverty Sautter - Penn	Jennifer Tobin- Mary Frank
Laura Lehr - Schmucker	Gena Todd - ESC
Abby Lyvers - Moran	Amanda Tugmon - Horizon
Diana Mendelsohn - Walt Disney	Deanna Ward - Penn
Sharon Miller - Moran	Susan Weber - Grissom
Mandy Morrett - Elm Road	Danyell Weesner - Grissom

Elementary Teacher of the Year

Nichol Mondy 3rd Grade Northpoint Elementary School

The joy of teaching is different for every teacher. For Nichol Mondy, her joy comes when a “huge guitar shaped package arrives,” she gets “giddy!” Every year in time for Arbor Day, Nichol orders 100+ free trees for every student in 3rd grade to take home and plant.

“I want my students to see that they can do great things,” says Nichol. “Just knowing the correct answers to their weekly test will not change our world for the better.”

Nichol is in her 12th year with P-H-M and all at Northpoint; she started as a Teacher’s Aide at Walt Disney. She started out as a kindergarten teacher, but has chosen to stay a 3rd grade teacher so she can continue to coach Northpoint’s 3rd grade Spell Bowl Team, which has quite the record!

Prior to the P-H-M Education Foundation purchasing Spheros for all 11 elementary schools, Nichol was already hard at work helping to build this new culture of robotics integration at Northpoint. She worked with the PTO to purchase a set of Sphero Bolts and Interactive Game Balls for the school. By helping her fellow teachers learn code and how to utilize the new resources in their classrooms, she in turn was instrumental in helping all Northpoint students learn coding. She then used the bots for after school learning clubs, as well as school day projects and learning experiences.

Nichol put her creativity to work and organized Northpoint’s own “Macy’s Day Parade.” Third graders programmed their Sphero Bolt to hold a balloon and make it go a specific distance down the hallways. She was the perfect person to help organize Northpoint’s first STEM night this past April. The hope is that this is the first step that will lead to the IDOE naming Northpoint a STEM Certified School.

Whether it’s with trees or robots, Nichol continues to help her students grow, learn and try new things.

Nichol also serves as Northpoint’s High Ability and Academic Coordinator and leads the school’s Teacher Leadership Team (TLT). In her TLT role, she leads discussions with her fellow teachers on how to make lasting impacts on student learning, solving problems and finding solutions, and advocating for the learning potential of every student.

When it comes to her students, Nichol says she always tries to remember that children grow up to be adults and that teachers, and others have lasting impacts, “There are always times to show the sweet kids love, but what the class will notice most is when you show love to ones that push away that love. You show that you care when it is hard to love.”

Northpoint Principal Lorraine White says of Nichol, “She is one of those people who brings joy to all those around her. She has a contagious joy about her that makes people laugh—students, staff and community members alike.”

Secondary Teacher of the Year

Jeremy Starkweather
English, Debate and Communications
Speech & Debate Coach
Penn High School

Jeremy Starkweather is wrapping up his 7th year of teaching at P-H-M; but including his time as a student, student-teacher, and now a teacher, he's been at Penn for a total of 12 years! He's even still on the Speech & Debate Team just like he was while in school, except now he's the coach! Jeremy is everywhere; he serves as the Assistant Coach for the Boys Cross Country Team, Coaching Consultant for the Education Foundation's Running is Elementary, and Vice President of the Penn Building Trades Board of Directors.

Jeremy's interests have carried over from his student days into his teaching career. Along with teaching English, Jeremy also teaches Debate, and has been serving as Penn's Speech and Debate Coach since his first year of teaching. Prior to Jeremy at the helm, the team struggled to attract student participants; now Jeremy has made it cool to be on the Speech and Debate Team! The 2023-2024 school year both teams did extremely well. The Speech Team has 20 students advancing to the national tournament this summer; and the Debate Team not only won the State Championship, but a couple of the students even broke a record previously held by Coach Starkweather when he was a student!

For the first time in Penn history, the Debate Team won a State Championship. Additionally, out of all five state championship debate categories, three Penn students came in 1st place in two categories (one team and one individual) adding two more State Titles to the list. One of those wins was a student duo in the Policy category. Policy received a traveling trophy that has been around almost a century; and the last time the trophy was in Penn High School's possession was when Jeremy and a teammate won it back in 2013 (his senior year)! How's that for full circle?

Until recently, Jeremy was known for his big bushy, blonde afro. However, thanks to Jeremy's topnotch debate coaching skills, his team captains convinced him last summer, when the team was at the national competition, that if the team won the State Championship, he would allow the students to shave his head. Jeremy Starkweather is a man of his word! He didn't just allow his students to cut his hair, he let ALL the Speech & Debate students, Speech teacher Danielle Black, and Superintendent Dr. Jerry Thacker get in on the action. It took over an hour to cut off 9 inches of his golden locks! Now that's showing commitment and dedication to your students!

Speech and Debate has become so popular at Penn that Jeremy enlisted the help of his top students to see if they could create the same interest at the middle school level. Not only was there interest, there's now Debate teams at all three middle schools with over 80 students. The past few summers Jeremy has also been offering Summer Debate Camp.

What is Jeremy's secret to creating such an interest for Speech & Debate? It could be that he has the best and rowdiest student club floats in Penn's Homecoming parade; but it's also because he quite simply cares about his students and they know it.

There's no "debating" it!

Classified Employee of the Year

Brenda Speedy Educational Assistant Schmucker Middle School

Now in her 17th year with P-H-M, all at Schmucker as an E.A. Brenda Speedy co-teaches in math classes utilizing her strong content knowledge of middle school math. The support Brenda lends in the classroom benefits all the students and the teachers.

Brenda is well respected and beloved, "The students love her and always ask where she is on the rare occasion she misses work," says 8th grade Schmucker Math Teacher Tony Kruppa who nominated Brenda for this honor. "We couldn't do our jobs as teachers without our E.A.'s and in my opinion there are none better than Mrs. Speedy."

"She pours everything she has into each day and always pushes our students to be their best. Working with her the past few years has made me a better educator," says Kruppa.

It can be said that Brenda works magic with students; she is able to find a connection and relate to them. She naturally forms bonds, "Mrs. Speedy works with one student in particular and she has done so much for him this year. This student is nonverbal, but the excitement on his face when he sees her is priceless. They joke with each other and even play a few pranks on me. I have enjoyed watching the bond she's made with the student and how she has helped his personality develop and shine. This is just one instance of Brenda helping the 'whole' student be successful and prepared for life beyond the walls of our school. She does things like this every day," says Kruppa.

Brenda loves her job as an educator, "Watching students' confidence and independence grow is the most satisfying experience. I am lucky to have worked with some of the most amazing teachers here at Schmucker. They are truly incredible. I appreciate all their support."

Honored Retirees

Julie Adams
Teacher

Cherri Jackson
Teacher

Cheril Sadural
Teacher

Michael Adams
Custodian

Leanne Kemmerling
Guidance Aide

Diann Sinclair
Corporation Computer Tech

Bruce Bergeron
Teacher

Maryellyn Knight
Teacher

Dr. Lisa Soto Kile
Director of Human Resources

Adrienne Blunt
Custodian

Tamara LaRue
Educational Assistant

Sherri Tavares
Teacher Aide

Michael Burkholder
Custodian

Susan Lestinsky
Teacher

Scott Thompson
Teacher

Theresa Byszewski
Teacher

Rebecca Macht
Teacher

Sheila Toth
Teacher

Jan Desimone
Educational Assistant

Kathleen Martinczak
Teacher

Rhea Trowbridge
Teacher

Diana Ehresman
Teacher Aide

Kevin McNulty
Teacher

Julie Unrue
Teacher

Marcia Gillean
Bus Operator

Phyllis (P.J.) Powell
Transportation Dispatcher

Cory Yeoman
Teacher

Phillip Hoffman
Custodian

Michael Powell
Bus Aide

Barbara Zuidema
Volunteer Coordinator

Jacki Hueni
ENL Aide

Retirees

Questions

What is your favorite memory or what did you like most about working at P-H-M?

What words of advice would you give to your fellow colleagues?

What new adventure awaits for you in retirement?

**Julie Adams
Teacher**

36 Years of Service

Thirty-six years of teaching will give you a lot of memories. My favorite memories come early in my career. I worked at Prairie Vista and we took our fifth graders to camp. I had an extremely outdoorsy team. We camped at Camp Eberhart. I remember camping in snowstorms of October, a headless horseman riding up on his black horse, snipe hunts, sleeping in cars due to lack of beds, and the humor and laughter we all had. This year will be my 23rd year of attending camp! The other memories are the friendships I have made over the years. You know who you are! I also remember the many opportunities I had in the early years being included on committees to adopt texts, plan curriculum, and have input on the four new elementary schools: Prairie Vista, Horizon, Meadows Edge and Northpoint.

My main piece of advice for my colleagues is to start each year, new. By that I mean, do not try to use everything you did in the past over and over. You may have siblings or parents who will say they've been there, done that. Seriously, you can find new ways to teach the same concepts. Never stop learning new ideas. Do not fall into a gutter and teach what you are comfortable with but what makes you nervous. We learn from mistakes and from our students and it is perfectly okay.

I will have many new adventures in my retirement. I plan on fixing things that I have put off forever. I am a grandma of a beautiful young lady, Evelyn, and in July will become a new grandma to her little sister, Mable. I also plan on traveling a bit to some bucket list places. The rest is left to write itself.

**Michael Adams
Custodian**

12 Years of Service

Working with some really great people. Those cold winter mornings, plowing the snow. The kids with their ever-changing ideas to make it more fun or hard for me. Me going to a school where I could be a kid and wear costumes on Holidays.

No matter what happens each day, remember at the end of day make sure kids are safe and do your best. Life will still keep moving forward. Your job will be always waiting for you. Work with each other and always remember to treat others like you want them to treat you.

I'm not retiring; I'm moving on to another job. My job with veterans is the most important thing I can give to others. You never really ever retire. You will do and learn something new each day. The joy of giving money to veterans that need it. We pledge our lives and receive very little in return.

Bruce Bergeron
Teacher
16 Years of Service

There are so many fond memories, it is impossible to list just one. Of course, number one on the list was building community in the classroom and fond memories of students. Grace's smiling face every day as she came to class; Alex's wry sense of humor. Andrew, Aiden and Josh's friendly greeting every day. And then there is Jenna and Will who continue to stop to say "Hi" even though I have not had them in class for two years.

I cannot forget my Physics teacher colleagues, those still here and those retired—Mr. Kistler, who taught me the importance of humor. My current colleagues, Mr. Conner and Mr. May, as we share ideas and equipment. I also want to mention Jim Schmitt and Kelley Watts for their work with the teachers' union and the help they gave me when I needed it.

Finally, I had a great experience helping chaperone Ms. Wolfgang's students on their trip to Japan—another bonding experience with some of my Physics students who were on the trip. The Japanese people were such gracious hosts. It's an experience I'll never forget.

In this time of upheaval in our society and changing winds, you must figure out what your moral compass is and follow it, regardless of what others are doing or believe. But always remember, everything you need to know you learned in kindergarten: Be kind to each other, share milk and cookies with each other, and if you are tired, take a nap!

I plan to relax in nature by spending more time gardening and tending the chickens.

Marcia Gillean
Bus Operator
15 Years of Service

I loved working with the kids, kindergarten to 12th grade, special needs and young adults.

All kids don't have the same home life. Start the day out with a big smile and "hello." Try to make the day special for each.

Remember there is always someone having a worse day. My future is full of new adventures and travels.

Cherri Jackson
Teacher
11 Years of Service

What I loved most about working at Penn was being able to share my passion for the Spanish language and culture with others. My students made all the hard and long hours worth it. Even if I inspired just a handful of students to keep up the Spanish language in their adult life, that is what makes the twelve years of teaching worthwhile. I also enjoyed creating a culture of acceptance and safety in my classroom.

I only have one piece of advice being that I am not retiring due to age or years of experience, but due to the realization that my values and beliefs no longer align with public education. May you find the strength from within to be courageous and inspiring. Retiring for me means that I am done with public education and moving into a new career. I am the owner of TC Auto Sales, LLC in Elkhart. We opened our doors in December of 2023. I am looking forward to continuing to use Spanish at my workplace, growing the company over the next two years, giving myself a raise, and expanding into new entrepreneurship adventures as time allows.

Maryellyn Knight
Teacher
24 Years of Service

I loved working at Penn over the last 24 years, but I have especially enjoyed my colleagues both new and old. I have worked with so many dedicated teachers over the past years and that has challenged me to be a better educator. When I started at Penn, in the fall of 2000, I came here with 18 years of experience, but I was a rookie yet again. The Math & Science teachers helped me tremendously by sharing their expertise, the Penn “Triangle of Success,” and the importance of developing relationships with both colleagues and my students. The people at Penn will be what I miss the most.

The atmosphere in any high school has changed tremendously over the past 42 years; however, I have always believed that if you work hard, the rewards will come. This is my advice, work hard, don’t expect others to do your job for you. In the Math department especially, I appreciate and love that I work so well with my higher level math PLC. All of us value the hard work that we share. The reward of seeing “the light bulb going on” when a student finally understands a concept is your payment. Take the time to get to know your students and they will feel more comfortable asking for help. I have taught many students during my time as a math teacher, and I have enjoyed them all, mostly anyway!

After working with students for 42 years, I am so looking forward to my retirement. I plan to spend some time with my family. I have three grandchildren and enjoy hosting them at our lake house. Hopefully my husband Michael and I will do some traveling and I will complete some of the little projects around the house that I keep putting off. I will also continue to keep in touch with my Penn family with our dinners around town.

Michael Powell
Bus Aide
2 Years of Service

I can remember in 1970, graduating high school (Penn) and starting college (Ball State) with a major in Physical Education. I wanted to work with kids, who weren't gifted athletically and may have even been considered handicapped or kids with special needs. That goal never came to fruition, and I've often regretted much of my decision-making during that period of my life that actually hindered achieving that goal. Functioning as a Bus Aide the last 2-1/2 years of my working career has given me the sense that I was able to somewhat fulfill that dream I had so many years ago. Thank you, Penn Transportation, for giving me that opportunity to fulfill that dream. My biggest regret is that I didn't start earlier.

Now to fulfill my second dream and retire with at least a few more years of good mental & physical health with my beautiful bride PJ of 38 years. We hope to move to a more tropical environment, maybe do some fishing, short trips, and enjoy nature and each other. I'm also hoping to have more time playing guitar, and also spend more time studying the Holy Scriptures.

Phyllis (P.J.) Powell
ESP
21 Years of Service

I am very thankful for the many opportunities to learn and refine new skills throughout my years as a P-H-M employee. As Kinder Club Site Coordinator at Meadows Edge, I enjoyed working with staff to provide our youngest students with a variety of learning tools to help them to grow and succeed. As Dispatch/ Receptionist for Transportation, I had many responsibilities: video requests/stop arm violations, processing-field trips, some routing, decorating the entrance and lounge, general dispatch/receptionist duties, rapport with all schools/staff/drivers/aides, etc. As these responsibilities evolved and became more complex, I continued to refine my skills to keep up with these changes. I always tried to do my best and treat others with respect.

My hope is to maintain lasting friendships within the P-H-M community. I want to keep in touch with my P-H-M family. My advice to them would be to "...enjoy what you do and do it to the best of your ability." Also, remember if at all possible, when you go home for the evening, leave your work at work. Family is most important!

Our family would eventually like to relocate to some place that is relatively warm year-round. Our bodies are having difficulty handling the extreme cold weather here in northern Indiana. We are considering moving to Florida because we have family living there. To avoid getting too lethargic and bored with retirement life, I plan on continuing my crafting and decorating skills. We shall see what our future as retirees has in store for us. Thank you P-H-M!

Cheril Sadural
Teacher
41 Years of Service

I have been very proud and grateful for the opportunity to be a part of P-H-M's commitment to academic success for 41 years. The years have certainly flown by as I have thoroughly enjoyed doing what I love. I have so many wonderful memories of my colleagues, administrators, and especially the students who have enriched my life in countless ways. One of my most treasured memories was seeing my first class of first graders fit the puzzle pieces of literacy together and become readers. It was so exciting and empowering to think that I could be a part of something so transformative. Even after 41 years, the most rewarding part of being a teacher, to me, is knowing that each day presents opportunities to be a difference maker in the lives of children.

My advice to my colleagues is to reflect often on fun times with your students and their academic successes, because these will sustain and motivate you through your more challenging times. I also encourage my colleagues to foster great working relationships, as they can lead to some of the best life-long friendships.

It will feel strange next August to not be fully immersed in the start of a new school year. However, I am looking forward to the gift of time to devote to my family and friends as I approach retirement. I am also looking forward to having more time to indulge in my hobbies and interests, and to explore some new interests on my retirement "To Do" list.

Diann Sinclair
Technology
25 Years of Service

I worked at Horizon for 20 years then moved to the Tech Dept. for the last five. Some of my favorite memories are what some of the younger students say ... A kindergartener was crying on Grandparents Day because the wrong Grandpa came. Students couldn't hear in their headphones because they were plugged into the wrong computer, the whole row! A first grader informed me there was a swear word on their computer, they were working on the letter "F." A student writing the word MOM and her neighbor said my mom spells her name the same way.

My advice to anyone who is working for a school system ... Get to know your secretary and your custodians and get on their good side. They are the ones who you'll need to go to for so many things. You spend your days with some great coworkers, enjoy your time with them both during school and outside of school.

Once I retire, I plan to take more trips with my husband, spend more time with my kids and grandkids, do some volunteer work, and not answering to an alarm clock.

Dr. Lisa Soto Kile
Administrator
32 Years of Service

There are various meanings of the term Kingsmen. Some might refer to a Kingsman in relation to a military ranking, similar to a private. Some might even think of a 1960s rock band and start singing the song, "Louis Louis." When I think of the term Kingsmen, I think of Penn High School and Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation. I think of the 45 years I have been a part of something truly amazing as a student and an employee.

P-H-M has given me lifelong friendships that I will cherish forever. My roles as a student, teacher, and administrator have allowed for great opportunities and positive experiences that I will never forget. I have been blessed to work with so many amazing people and am certainly a better person because of my relationships with my colleagues, students, supervisors, and parents. Working in schools and different grade levels in Penn, Harris, and Madison Township has given me a true appreciation for the entire district. Each experience has allowed me to grow and develop in a unique way. I am filled with gratitude that I was able to serve in all of our buildings and work at the Educational Services Center in the Learning Division and Human Resources Department.

Starting my career at the "newer" Prairie Vista was exciting. Many of us were beginning teachers and we enjoyed learning a new communication tool known as email. I remember the beginning of Prairie Days and Art Smart. Although my experiences at Northpoint and Gifted and Talented were shorter in duration, the impact of each opportunity was lasting. Opening Meadow's Edge was nothing short of amazing and I enjoyed the pace of working at both Meadow's Edge and Madison as a School-wide Enrichment Specialist. I was able to spend nearly a decade at Madison as a teacher and principal. The rich history at Madison allowed me to connect with the community and staff in a special way. Growing the Madison Alumni History Center, riding in the Riley Bike-a-Thon, and enjoying the Jonah Fish Fry Saturdays certainly allowed for family fun and staff connectedness. Madison Township is close to my home and will always be close to my heart.

My time at Elm Road was particularly important to me, as I spent nearly a third of my career as an Eagle. Working with Elm's close-knit staff, being a champion for students in need, and having some of my most memorable experiences, will always be a great treasure. I was able to see nearly two complete cycles of K-5 students move through the course of their elementary years. I enjoyed getting to know the parents and families so well. I will always cherish how others taught me "The Elm Road Way." We were a staff, but we were a family too. We worked hard and played hard. We enriched our students academically every single day. We loved our students, and we loved one another. We saw the best and the worst of times together, and because of our shared experiences, supported each other in a way that others outside our circle may not have understood. The staff worked countless hours to become STEM certified, supported our Jumpin' Eagles, and listened to the tunes of our xylophone enthusiasts in the lobby. We sang together before winter break, greeted Frosty each year, and spent many exciting nights at camp. We enjoyed a family picnic to celebrate new beginnings and a new school year, did back flips and cartwheels as we waved goodbye to students on the last day, drank rootbeer floats and told stories of the year nobody else would believe. We made academic gains and pushed through when it wasn't easy. The retention of the staff members for decades is one important chapter of our rich story. What a great student body, staff, and parent success journey that continues to grow each day! I am honored to have been a part of something so amazing.

I will forever be grateful for my affiliation with P-H-M. The rich tradition of excellence in all that we do is a source of pride. I will miss so many things about P-H-M, but I know that the strong relationships I have developed with others will continue long into the future. I hope to add the title of volunteer to my list of experiences. I am thankful I will always be a Penn Kingsmen!

Go Penn!

Sheila Toth
Teacher

38 Years of Service

My favorite memories of teaching at P-H-M were the many opportunities I had to demonstrate leadership and provide support for teachers and students. I was able to share my passion for this job with others and see the difference an action or word can make. These interactions gave each day joyful moments.

Find something everyday that validates your efforts. Take care of yourself first, even when you don't think you can. "Remember that every day matters, every word matters, and every interaction matters...Everyday!"

Take care of myself first. Time with my family. Time with friends. Enjoy Lake Michigan views. Time to travel. Relax and enjoy not having such a rigid schedule everyday! Take a 2-hour lunch break. Sleep, I will miss my DMS family.

Julie Unrue
Teacher

31 Years of Service

There are so many memories I hold dear to my heart in the years I have been an educator for P-H-M, specifically at Madison! Choosing a "favorite" has been challenging, but since this is my FINAL assignment, I'd better follow directions (smile!). My ALL TIME favorite memory was the day I stepped foot through the doors at Madison Elementary School where Cyril Cole was Principal, Laurie Chimel Secretary, and a host of valued educators and support staff took me under their wings and allowed me to become part of something UNBELIEVABLY WONDERFUL! I became a member of a community that didn't just "teach," we whole-heartedly believed in guiding children or anyone entering Madison's space to become the best versions of themselves they were meant to be! Adults within the Madison community trusted us to take what they valued and expected at home into the classroom, and WE DID! Our leader, Mr. Cole, guided by example! I vividly remember him telling me, "You are coming to a place where you might be seen as an outsider and you will have to prove yourself to many. Once you do, Madison will become YOUR HOME." My favorite memory is simply this. Madison is my home and the community that established its existence lives STRONG in each heart that it touches! I AM A PART OF THAT! I HAVE BEEN BLESSED! Madison is small, but the connections, relationships, values, expectations, and care for ALL ... is MIGHTY!

Having taught Kindergarten for 24 years prior to my time in 2nd Grade, Robert Fulghm's quote says it best, my advice is to remember that "All you need to know about life, you learned in Kindergarten!"

I am looking forward to being able to spend more time with my family, especially my GRANDCHILDREN!

**Cory Yeoman
Teacher**

40 Years of Service

What I liked the most about working at P-H-M was the people ... "You Win With People," and we have the BEST people at P-H-M!

Dr. Thacker's leadership and vision of P-H-M; Dr. Speicher for bringing our family to P-H-M. The ESC and Penn High School administrative team and staff. All of the members of the Athletic Department over the years. All of the teachers and building staff and students I worked with. Coach Geesman for creating something very, very special! Coaching with my Dad, brothers, son, and nephews. All of the great football coaches and players that make up the "LONG BLACK LINE!" The fabulous football families that make up "The Mom's Club." It has been an HONOR to coach, teach, and go to school at Penn.

Enjoy the Ride. My worst day at Penn was still great!

Enjoying family time and cheering on the Kingsmen!

**Barbara Zuidema
Volunteer Coordinator**

23 Years of Service

P-H-M offered me the opportunity to interact with students, parents and staff as the volunteer coordinator.

Winter Dance was my absolute favorite event. It was my honor to work with such caring people, parents and staff.

I will spend time with my children, and five precious grandchildren, winters in Florida and continue to help others.

Thank you for years of help and support.

