

# Highlands/Oberg JAA Program

## Junior Apprentice Advantage Program Right Choice for a "Gold-Collar Career" in Advanced Manufacturing

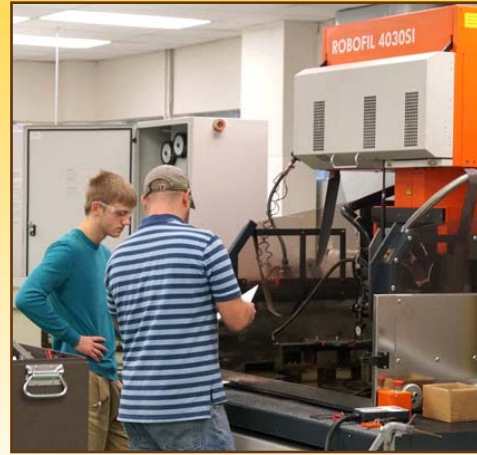
The Junior Apprentice Advantage (JAA) program is a new educational initiative offered to seniors at Highlands High School. This program is a partnership between Oberg Industries and Highlands School District to offer students a head start in learning the technological skills required to pursue a career in the challenging and lucrative advanced manufacturing industry.

Students who demonstrate select aptitudes work towards preferred placement in Oberg Industries' state-certified Apprenticeship Program. A specific curriculum consisting of Computer-Aided Design (CAD), Geometric Tolerance and Dimensioning, Measurement Science (Metrology), and Advanced Geometry/Trigonometry is taught by Highlands faculty in conjunction with traditional academic classes. Additionally, students travel to Oberg's facilities one day each month during the school year for lesson-specific, learning enrichment, and job shadowing experiences working with Oberg's skilled craftspeople.

Students who complete the JAA program courses in good academic standing and satisfy Oberg's apprenticeship entrance requirements will be pre-qualified for hire as full-time apprentices at Oberg Industries upon graduation. "This is an exciting opportunity for our students to learn hands-on, develop a plan for their futures, and contribute to a global market right in their hometown community," said **Dr. Michael Bjalobok**, Superintendent of Highlands School District.



During a "Train the Trainer" session, **Roger Edmonds** (right) from Oberg's quality control department explains the use of metrology equipment donated by Oberg Industries to Highlands High School teachers **John Malobicky** (left) and **Dan Krynicki** (center).



Highlands senior **Alex Telford** learns about a wire electric discharge machining (EDM) while at an Oberg learning enrichment day.

If you have never considered a career path other than college or were not aware of the wide-range of success connected to advanced manufacturing...now is your chance! There is a growing shortage of qualified candidates for precision manufacturing openings according to the U.S. Department of Labor. More than 500 yearly job openings are projected for highly-skilled precision manufacturing workers over the next decade.

The Junior Apprentice Advantage is off to a promising start and we are looking for more students to participate beginning in the Fall semester. "I think the classes are quite fun and different than anything else we have done in school. I became interested in the JAA program because I wanted to set myself up for a good future," said **Elijah Anderson**, a JAA Highlands senior.

If you are a high school junior with specific questions or are interested in obtaining more information, please contact Highlands teachers **John Malobicky** (724.226.1000, x1202) or **Mike Santucci** (724.226.1000, x5204).

## Community Conversations

Join Dr. Michael Bjalobok, Superintendent, at 9 AM on **Wednesday, February 25** at the Highlands Community Center for "Community Conversations," a forum meeting that will discuss current events at Highlands and other Education News.

Call Misty Chybrzynski at 724.226.2400 x4550 to RSVP. Parents and community members welcomed!



**Highlands School District**  
P.O. Box 288, Natrona Heights, PA 15065  
724-226-2400 [www.goldenrams.com](http://www.goldenrams.com)

Find details about these and more  
**UPCOMING EVENTS on [www.goldenrams.com](http://www.goldenrams.com)!**

**Feb. 28 - Spaghetti Dinner to benefit Grandview's Science Olympiad; 2-7pm, Highlands High School**

**Mar. 2 - Family Night sponsored by Title I 6:30-8:30pm, Highlands Middle School**



# Inside Highlands

Parent Newsletter

Spring 2015

## ARTS ALIVE! At Highlands

The Arts Program is thriving at Highlands and students, staff and parents are gearing up for the annual musical productions in March!

Highlands High School will present **TARZAN! The Stage Musical** from **March 6-8**, directed by teacher **Michael Zeiler**. **The Music Man, Jr.**, directed by teacher **Renee Shreffler**, will premiere at Highlands Middle School on **March 27 and 28**. Both productions require a school-wide effort in order to pull off the impressive shows the community, families and friends of Highlands see on Opening Night. From arts department faculty to talented student performers and the orchestra to artistic students and backstage parent volunteers - hours of dedication, rehearsal and set creation contribute to the annual event. This year, it took more than two weeks and a varied list of recycled items to complete the Tarzan set.

Secondary level students are offered a menu of creative electives, but even at a young age the arts come alive for Highlands students. Elementary students are introduced to art and music "specials" beginning in Kindergarten. Art teacher **Meghan Ziemianski** and Music teacher **Amy Karavlan** coordinate lessons for cross-curricular activities that involve learning a lesson, learning a song or melody, and then creating an art piece that ties all three together in a visual project. Students begin extended art and music lessons in third grade with teacher **Rebecca Harvey**. Complex art mediums are introduced and student work is used to create art gallery displays. In January, elementary students created handprint cutouts that are being included in a Kids for Peace display in a Dignity Health Hospital in California as part of a Guinness Book of World Records challenge to promote anti-bullying and positive peer relationships.

Middle School art teachers **Dawn Miller** and **Daniel Surovchak** expand students' knowledge of art history and use a variety of mediums to be creative in the classroom. Recently, Mrs. Miller's 8th grade students participated in their own "Cake Boss" competition by fabricating designer cakes using art materials. More details and photos of the competition are posted on the district website.

**Teresa Emeloff** and **Renae Yoder**, Art teachers at the High School, pursue opportunities beyond the typical sketch and paint high school art course. This year, a grant from the Pittsburgh Glass Center, with support from the

**HIGHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM 2015**  
BASED ON THE **DISNEY FILM**  
**TARZAN**  
THE STAGE MUSICAL  
**March 6 & 7 at 7:00 pm** **March 8 at 2:00 pm**  
Tickets: Orchestra - \$9, Mezzanine - \$7, Balcony - \$6  
Auditorium box office open weekdays starting Feb. 23 from 3-5pm at HHS. VIP packages and Backstage Tour Passes are also available for purchase. More details available on [www.goldenrams.com](http://www.goldenrams.com).

Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and the Highlands Community Education Foundation, allowed students in a Jewelry and Metals class work alongside artists at the Glass Center to create jewelry from handcrafted glass that will be featured in a Fashion Show in conjunction with "First Fridays" in Pittsburgh. Student art will also be on display in several other venues, such as the "Arts Alive" Art Show at Penn State New Kensington and the "Arts in the Valley" Gallery at Allegheny Valley Hospital, both in March. The Indiana University of PA Art Invitational will include art from **Breanna Balog**, **Sarah McDonough** and **Hollie Metzgar** with other student art selected from submissions from across the state in the University Gallery in Sutton Hall. The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards will feature art work from **Cassie Olszewski** at LaRoche College and the Scholastic Writing Award will feature short stories written by **Abby Kuchek**.

Students also begin extended musical lessons beginning in fourth grade at Grandview Upper Elementary, where they can sign up for chorus with teacher **Mary-Parmer Taube** or learn to play an instrument in band with teacher **Lisa Evans**. Twice per year, students pack the house at Grandview for the very popular chorus concerts and band shows.

Besides the annual musical event, the arts program at Highlands Middle School is a top-notch and stringent music program that trains students to hone their vocal talents and become dedicated to learning and performing the various instrumental offerings in school, at after-school practices and in preparation for several performances throughout

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## Arts continued

the school year. Students who excel are offered opportunities to perform at the High School level with the Varsity Marching Band and with various band ensembles. Students who continue to the High School music program work with **Lee Lynn** (band teacher at the Middle School) and **Matt Beresik** (band teacher at the High School) to incorporate band lessons in their school schedules, perform at athletic events, travel to PMEA and Honors Band competitions with students across the state, and present several community performances throughout the school year. Highlands will be collecting used instruments through the **Horns-A-Plenty Program**. Check the [www.goldenrams.com](http://www.goldenrams.com) website for details about this tax-deductible program for instruments to be put back to use in education.

Under the direction of Ms. Shreffler (MS) and Mr. Zeiler (HS), chorus students at the Middle and High School levels also have chorus classes and lessons in their daily school schedule, perform several times through the year and perform at various events in the community. Whether students are caroling in the winter or performing at corporate events, spectators enjoy the talent at Highlands.

### COMING UP!

The faculty and alumni of the Highlands School District Music Department will host the annual **Highlands Gives Back** concert again this year on **Friday, April 17** at the Clarion Hotel, Tarentum Bridge Road, New Kensington. This year's performance will feature the Highlands Charity Big Band, Highlands Alumni Choir and the Murphy Music Center Big Band. Ticket options include dinner and the performance for \$25 (pre-sale, reserved seats) or a General Admission performance ticket (\$7). Additionally, raffles for gift baskets, prizes and a Vendor Show will be at the event. For more details or to donate, visit the event website at [www.highlandsgivesback.weebly.com](http://www.highlandsgivesback.weebly.com). Proceeds benefit Allegheny Valley Assoc. of Churches Food Bank, Highlands Area Meals on Wheels and Alle-Kiski HOPE Center.

### Highlands Middle School presents

MEREDITH WILLSON'S  
**THE MUSIC MAN JUNIOR**

MAR. 27 at 7pm

MAR. 28 at 2pm & 7pm



Ticket details for the shows will be announced on [www.goldenrams.com](http://www.goldenrams.com), Facebook & Twitter.



Technology continues to remain on the forefront of priorities at Highlands School District, from engaging our youngest learners in computer-based learning to pursuing E-rate fund reimbursement for an upgraded Internet Service Provider network.

Students in Fawn and Fairmount Primary Centers rotate through Computer Classes during Specials time with teacher **Andrew Lynch**. Kindergarten through 2nd Grade students use computers for letter recognition, reading digital stories online, learning how to use Microsoft Word and creating "How To" stories, depending upon grade level. Grandview Upper Elementary students utilize tablets and computer time during Flex periods, for Compass Learning and for NWEA and MAP testing, an analytical website and tool. Grandview students have logged more than 90,000 minutes of computer time! Students also create "All About Me" posters, PowerPoints, and are working on keyboard practice. Get frequent updates with resourceful websites and helpful online articles from Mr. Lynch's teacher page on the Fawn, Fairmount or Grandview school websites!

Highlands Middle School teacher **Christina Kurtz** is engaging students in Grades 6 to 8 in the Tech Kidz Club – a group of students who explore the computer programs offered at HMS further to create layouts for flyers, greeting cards for sick children and tutoring peers in tech skills. The student-led initiative also offers assistance to faculty for projects or programs.

Highlands High School students are engaging in Multimedia Design with the Writing Lab's addition of iPads and the Adobe Suite professional-grade software. Students working with teacher **Ryan Wilpula** are creating videos, editing them and adding special effects. The students also update articles daily for the online high school newspaper, *The Rampages* on [www.hhsrampages.com](http://www.hhsrampages.com). Students also continue in the STEAMM Academy and CAD drafting courses.

Most recently, the Highlands School Board approved allowing Epic, Inc. to seek contracts for an Internet Service Provider upgrade project that will condense the amount of servers from 14 to four, replace routers and switches in the buildings, and allow Highlands students to take online courses next school year. Epic will pursue E-rate fund reimbursement for up to 85 percent of the \$300,000 project. The funding is available to assist in telecommunications and Internet access cost for schools and libraries.

"We're looking to enhance our virtual education," Superintendent **Dr. Michael Bjalobok** said. "We had in our comprehensive plan that every Highlands student should have the opportunity to take an online course, and this will facilitate that."

# Changes to Law Impacts School Volunteer Clearances



Volunteers are an essential part of district operations and provide a stronger connection between home, school and community that enhances our students' educational experiences on a daily basis. Highlands administration and teachers value our volunteers and are excited to see YOU soon in our schools the remainder of this year!

**Changes to the state's Child Protective Law Services that passed at the end of 2014 will require parents and community members who are willing to volunteer in our schools to apply for and submit official clearances from the state of Pennsylvania with the school district.**

Previously, background check software that checked the same records but was made available through the district at no cost to the volunteer was required to participate in classroom activities, field trips and booster groups. **Parents or volunteers who had undergone this background check process will be required to provide the state clearances before volunteering again after July 1, 2015.**

The clearances that will be required under Act 153 for all volunteers are the **PA State Criminal Record Check** and the **PA Child Abuse History Clearance**. If a volunteer has resided in the state of Pennsylvania for the past ten (10) years, they may sign an Arrest and Conviction Verification Report signing off that they have not been convicted of any of several listed crimes. A Federal Criminal History Report is required through the FBI as well if a volunteer has not lived in the state for the past 10 years.

**Costs of the clearances from the state are \$20. If the federal clearance is required as well the total cost is \$47. Costs of the clearances are the responsibility of the volunteer. Clearances will need to be updated and resubmitted every 3 years.**

*Parents will still be permitted to attend award assemblies, afterschool family functions and events on school property and performances without submitting clearances.* Volunteers who wish to donate time in other capacities, such as classroom parent, party helper, field trip chaperone, backstage assistants for performances, volunteer team coaches or any other volunteer position that includes direct contact with children must submit clearances.

As always, any visitors into a school building will still be required to check in through the Raptor system with a valid state-issued photo ID or Driver's License. The Raptor system is a visitor log that also instantly alerts the school administrators of anyone who is a registered sex offender and custody or security issues. More than 12,000 schools nationwide utilize the Raptor System in their school security procedures. Highlands was the first district in the state to implement the procedure in 2008.

Quick links and tips are included in the box below. Detailed, step-by-step information about how to obtain these requirements and an FAQ sheet is available on the district website, [www.goldenrams.com](http://www.goldenrams.com) on the homepage under the Headline "Be Involved... Volunteer!" Clearances can be submitted to **Misty Chybrzynski** at the Administrative Center, Box 288, Natrona Heights PA 15065 or emailed to [mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com](mailto:mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com). Call 724.226.2400 x4550 with questions.

## What Volunteers Need

### ACT 34: Pennsylvania Criminal History Check

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

Go to "New Record" and follow the instructions through to the Certification Page. Once the Search Results Table appears, click on the Control Number. (Hint: Write down the Control Number for future reference.) The Record Check Details page is opened. Click on the Certification Page to access your official Clearance. The Record Check Details page is only a receipt and not acceptable as a "clearance". Email your PA Criminal Clearance to [mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com](mailto:mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com)

### ACT 151: Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearance

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>

You will be required to set up a Username and Password to apply for this clearance. Be sure to include your parents first (alive or deceased) in the family history section. Also include former addresses. Email your PA Child Abuse Clearance to [mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com](mailto:mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com)

### \*\*IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN A RESIDENT FOR 10 YEARS IN PA\*\*

#### ACT 114 - FBI Clearance

<https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index.htm>

Register with Cogent through the above site for the Department of Education FBI clearance. Take receipt and a valid photo ID to a fingerprinting site. Once you have registered and had prints scanned, return your registration ID number (PAE number) to [mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com](mailto:mchybrzynski@goldenrams.com)