Bentley Students and Board Member Honored for Community Service

Bentley Board of Education trustee Toby Bauldry was recognized for her commitment and contribution to both the Bentley School District and the Burton community at the Children’s Champion Award Breakfast held at the Riverfront Banquet Center on February 7th. Toby was nominated for the Lifetime Achievement Award by former board member Penny Kentish McWilliams and was invited to a celebratory breakfast where she and other nominees were recognized for the important work they have done to improve quality of life for children and families in Genesee County.

Also honored at the event were high school students Lauren Phelps and Olivia Gooch, who were nominated for the Outstanding Youth Award which recognizes students who have done something special to help make Genesee County a better community for children.

Lauren Phelps and Olivia Gooch were honored for their outstanding service to better the community for children.

Toby Bauldry and family attended the Children’s Champion Breakfast to honor Toby’s years of service to children in Genesee County.

Online Dangers: Working Together to Protect Our Children

While the internet can be a beneficial tool for research, communication, and entertainment, access to unlimited information also comes with great risks: inappropriate content, cyberbullying, online predators, and identity theft, among many others.

In a world where 95% of teens have access to a smartphone and 45% say they are online almost constantly (Pew Research Center), parents must be vigilant in monitoring their children and educating them on the dangers and benefits of the internet. Research has shown that children who are consistently using technology have an increased risk of depression and suicide. In fact, a study from the National Center on Drug Abuse shows that “eighth-graders who are heavy users of social media increase their risk of depression by 27 percent.”

Moreover, parents and children need to be wary of human traffickers and child predators who are using social media as a platform to find victims. Even in Genesee County, there have been numerous instances of human trafficking which have resulted in over 22 arrests since April 2019. In fact, Genesee County has established the Genesee Human Oppression Strike Team (GHOST) to stop human trafficking and child sex predators in the county.

Clearly, this is a present danger in our community.

Using popular social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp, traffickers prey on children. Sometimes they lure users in with false job openings—often “fast cash” or “travel” opportunities. At other times, predators will monitor students’ online accounts to get to know their weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and exploit them as they form online relationships. Social media is also used against victims to isolate them from their support systems, impersonate victims, spread dangerous rumors, distribute intimate images, or stalk victims.

What can we—as parents, teachers, mentors—do to ensure our children do not fall victim to the dangers lurking online? While there are many ways to help our children, it is beneficial to be present, be aware, and be interested in your students’ lives:

- **Watch for warning signs.** Is your child spending large amounts of time online, especially at night; receiving calls, texts, messages from someone you don’t know; receiving gifts from unknown people; using an online account that belongs to someone else; becomes withdrawn from family?
- **Limit online access.** Set an example by putting down your own phone; utilize parental control apps; set “down time” schedules, such as during dinner, before bedtime, and during the night.
- **Know what your kids are doing online.** Know what social media platforms they’re using; know their passwords; monitor their accounts for unusual activity; know who they’re chatting with online; monitor the information they post about themselves.
- **Know where your children are hanging out.** Where do they go after school? At night? On the weekends? Who do they hang out with? What are they doing?
- **Teach your children resiliency.** Help them to manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. Make sure they know who to turn to when things get tough.
- **Model appropriate online behavior.** Set an example by using your own social media in a positive manner; use the Internet to learn fun facts with your family; set aside your phone during family-time; limit the amount of information you post about your children online.
- **Maintain open, constant communication.** Be someone that your children can confide in; talk to and have honest conversations about dangers such as human trafficking and suicide.
- **Provide family-strengthening opportunities.** Provide positive alternatives to the smart phone: take a walk; visit a museum; plan family game night; make dinner together; exercise together; have a technology-free dinner.

The staff at Bentley Community Schools takes the physical, emotional, and social health of everyone in our community very seriously. If there are any concerns regarding any of our students, please contact the building principal; we will work to put families in touch with resources, including our own social worker and counselor.

The community also has many resources to help parents and children learn more about the dangers of depression, suicide, and human trafficking. For more information, please visit the following:

Bentley Community Resources: 810.591.9100, www.bentleyschools.org/community

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.8255, suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Michigan 211: Dial “211” from any phone, www.mi211.org

Voices for Children Advocacy Center: 810.238.3333, www.voicesforac.org

Genesee County Human Trafficking Task Force: 888.373.7888, geohumantrafficking.org
 lately, my thoughts keep circling around what it means to be on a winning team, because who doesn’t want to be on a winning team? And when that team is the local school system, it’s particularly important that the team is strong and cohesive. What makes a winning school system? High SAT scores? Lots of graduates? Happy students? A strong athletic program? Innovative programming? There are many ways success could be measured in a school system. While there are arguments for each of the examples I just listed, there are certainly other metrics that could be used. Research tells us that the most important determiner of student success is the degree to which they are supported at home.

All of us—you the families and us the school—want our youth to be successful. To really ensure that, we need to work together. When you are frustrated, we need you to call us—not in anger but as someone who is concerned and wants to work with us to address an issue.

When we are concerned, we need to call you—not in anger or with judgement but as people who are concerned and want to work with you to address the issue.

We need to work together to help our youth navigate school and life. It’s not easy, but it’s one of the most important things we do.

Please accept this invitation to be part of the Bentley team—staff and parents working together in service of our kids. They deserve it and they’re worth it!

With gratitude,

Team Bentley—Are You In?

Working to meet the needs of the students and community, Bentley Community Schools operates several support programs throughout the year. Based in the high school, students and staff coordinate a food pantry with supplemental food available to Bentley families needing assistance. Every month families have the opportunity to receive a box of food that includes several pounds of chicken, beef or pork as well as “all-you-can-use” produce.

During the warmer months, thousands of pounds of food are distributed during giveaway events at the back high school parking lot. Bentley also participates in the Backpack Program with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan to send home food for the weekend with 24 elementary students throughout the school year. So far this year, over 62,000 lbs. of food have been distributed.

Bentley also has a clothes closet stocked with donated, adult-size clothing and accessories. The clothes are available to any Bentley family who would like to come take a look. Over the years, the clothes closet has helped students start new wardrobes after losing weight due to illnesses, as well take care of wardrobe malfunctions that may occur during the school day. There are many sizes and styles of formal dresses and dress shirts in a rainbow of colors, too.

In addition to providing food and clothing support, Bentley also has the Holiday Assistance Program which helps families provide gifts for their children at Christmas. This past year the Bentley community provided 136 students with gifts and food during the Christmas season.

Essential to the success of these programs are the community partners who help supply students with coats, athletic shoes, winter boots, and prescription glasses. Because of this support, Bentley has also assisted families with some very specific needs such as baby clothes, furniture and appliances.

The food and clothing pantry is located in the back of the high school building. Visitors may make an appointment and visit the pantry through the side door. As the weather improves, several more food giveaways will take place in the athletic stadium parking lot; information on dates and times will be released on the district Facebook page. Anyone with questions regarding the programs offered can contact the Student and Community Resource Coordinator, Lisa Gaby at 810.591.9522.
Students collected 810.7 pounds of nonperishable items during ABC12’s School Spirit Cup event in October.

School Spirit

Parent Partnership Event:
Mark Your Calendars!

On Wednesday, March 18th from 5:30-7:00 p.m., Bentley will be hosting a “Parent Partnership” event at the high school.

There will be three concurrent sessions parents can attend:
• Completing FAFSA and planning for life after high school
• Supporting tweens and teens social emotional needs
• Reviewing the third grade reading law.

There will also be child care available thanks to our National Honor Society students.

Following the sessions, there will be a free spaghetti dinner at the middle school for all attendees. Please join us at this Parent Partnership event on March 18th; we hope to see you there!
March is Reading Month

Barhitte has some exciting things happening during the month of March. Our theme this year is Dr. Seuss. Students will be challenged to read 10-20 minutes a day (depending on grade level) and enter their name in a raffle drawing for completing the challenge. In addition, each classroom will decorate their doors/hallways with a Dr. Seuss theme. We will also have a March Madness board to vote on our favorite books, dress up days will happen the first and last week of the month, guest readers will be visiting classrooms throughout the month, and Dr. Seuss trivia will be happening on the morning announcements. During the week of March 9 - 13th, parents will be invited to school to join their child for Breakfast with Books! Parents will enjoy a hot breakfast, listen to a book, have a reading strategy modeled for them by our Title I teachers and then the students will each get a book to practice with their parents.

Flint Firebird Fun!

Some of Barhitte’s third, fourth and fifth grade students sang the US and Canadian National Anthems at the Flint Firebirds game on Friday, January 31st. A couple of our lucky students got to ride on the Zamboni between periods.

Nature-Focused Kindergarten Experience with For-Mar Nature Preserve

Bentley’s kindergarten program is a hands-on, nature-focused learning program that partners with For-Mar Nature Preserve, transporting students to the nature center several times a week to engage in nature-focused learning. While visiting For-Mar students exercise their bodies, play directional-based active games related to the weekly theme, and have hands-on learning centers. One of the students’ favorite activities is opossum tag which help students learn how opossums protect themselves from danger, as well as encouraging the kids to be active and work together as a group. Some of the centers are done in the For-Mar classroom include building, art, manipulatives, and sensory play. The learning objectives are typically introduced in the classroom, and the kindergarteners are given opportunities and encouraged to decide what they would like to work on. The centers are then designed around these learning goals and interests.

On Fridays, For-Mar teacher Alisha Sligh comes to Barhitte and works with the students outside, utilizing the nature-based playground. “Sometimes it’s messy, sometimes it’s just running around playing spider tag or Bear tag! We also have some inside activities to divide up our time for the program. Inside there is usually a messy, themed craft and a hands-on learning activity they do with their teacher. We do our best to incorporate what they are also learning during normal class days in with our For-Mar lesson,” said Ms. Sligh.

Special guest readers, Owen Lalonde and Cody Morgan, from the Flint Firebirds read to Mrs. Gusie’s students in November.

Students engage in sensory play in the mud kitchen located at Barhitte.

Mrs. Leonard’s class created a community animal feeder at For-Mar.

Students in Mrs. Smith’s class made soup that the animals can eat.
100th Day!!

The kindergartners at Barhitte have been anticipating the 100th day of school since the very first day when they began counting and the activities planned did not disappoint. They counted to 100 many times as they made patterns, hats, towers out of 100 cups, a special snack, and more. They also decorated special 100th day of school glasses. Even the hallways of Barhitte were filled with learning as the kindergartners enjoyed a fun activity with their 4th Grade buddies where they used QR codes and the ipads to go on a scavenger hunt. Answering math questions correctly and finding the correct quadrants on a graph helped them make a 100th day picture. All agree that 100th Day was a success!

Michigan’s Third Grade Reading Law

In 2016, the Michigan Legislature passed a law that requires schools to identify learners who are struggling with reading and to provide additional help. The law states that third graders may have to repeat third grade if they are more than one grade level behind beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

Interested in finding out more?

Please attend the Bentley Parent Partnership meeting on March 18, 2020 from 5:30 - 7:00 pm being held at Bentley High School to find out more information on the law, what constitutes a retention, what your options as a parent are, what an IRIP is and how you can help your child. Dinner will also be provided following this meeting. Parents with students in grade three or younger should attend this meeting.

Attendance is important!

Across the country, more than 8 million students are missing so many days of school that they are academically at risk. Chronic absence — missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason—excused, unexcused absences and suspensions, can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing subjects and ninth-graders dropping out of high school.

Regular, consistent attendance at school is important for academic progress and future success. Parents must provide an explanation for their child’s absence on the day of the absence or by the following day by calling the Barhitte office at 591-9661.

The school entry bell rings at 8:15 am. Children should be in their classroom promptly at 8:25 am. Students will be considered tardy when they miss up to 1 hour of instruction time. Any student missing more than 1 hour of instruction time will be considered absent for that part of the day (1/2 day).

Dismissal is at 3:30 pm. If students leave before this time they will be recorded as left early, which counts the same as a tardy.
Bentley Community Schools

Middle School News

8th Graders Visit Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills

Our eighth grade students, along with several teachers and parents, had the opportunity of touring the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. The Holocaust Memorial Center honors Holocaust survivors. In addition to viewing displays, artifacts, and other memories from the time period, students were fortunate to hear a presentation from a survivor of the Holocaust during their time at the center.

The field trip was a learning event following ELA assignments that the students completed. The students read the novel Prisoner B-3087, by Alan Gratz. The text is about a young Jewish boy who survived ten concentration camps, and the students also expanded their learning by writing a literary essay on the theme of the book.

Blueberry Ambassadors Complete Acts of Kindness

Students at the middle school have completed their three acts of kindness as part of the Blueberry Ambassador program. The program encourages students from all around the county to engage in acts of kindness and then share those acts with their communities. The middle school students did a variety of kind actions around Genesee County. Students visited the Humane Society; helped the homeless by providing scarves, hats, gloves, and hygiene products; helped a neighbor find a lost dog; and many more acts.

The 6th-8th grade Blueberry Ambassadors are: Abby Jones, Alex Parnell, Alexandria Congdon, Alexis Williams, Aniko Green, Brianna Asbury, Cole Bowman, Ella Thao, Emma Koplen, Gabrielle Logan, Gavin Neal, Kathleen Robinson, Kennedy Alston, Lillian Burger, Maddy Jones, Makenna Kassing, Nathan Williams, Nina Parnell, Quinn Kelly, Shaun Klemish, Shelby Bowman, Solina O’Keefe, Talena Poole, and Ty Hyde.

Spelling Bee Winners Announced

Congratulations goes to the winners of the middle school spelling bee. Winners from the eighth grade are Randi Dunkley, first place; Jacki Merritt, second place; and Faith Hicks, third place. Seventh grade winners are Kyle Bonter, first place; Alexander Halpin, second place; and Kendall Gatica, third place. The top winners from the sixth grade are Nina Parnell, first place; William Slayton, second place; Kathleen Robinson, third place.

The Spelling Bee is organized by Mrs. Allison Frey. In March, the first place winners from each grade will compete against students from area schools at the county-wide competition, which is held at the Genesee Intermediate School District.

Be the “I” in Kind

Bentley Middle School would like to give a huge thank you to Barry Anders, production manager at ESIGNs in Brighton, Michigan for donating the “Be the ‘I’ in Kind!” Banner. The banner will hang in the hallway to remind students to be kind and will provide a great backdrop for many pictures.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spent his life serving others. January 20, 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the day of service that celebrates the Civil Right’s leader and his legacy. “A Day On, Not a Day Off” has seen enormous impacts across our community.

The United Way of Genesee County is a non-profit organization that fights for health, education, financial stability, and basic needs for all residents in Genesee and Shiawassee Counties. For the past 3 years, The United Way has organized a Day of Service in which they pack meals to provide to local Genesee County residents who are experiencing food insecurity. This year was bigger than ever with 700+ volunteers and over 200,000 meals packed and distributed throughout Genesee County!

What does a Day of Service look like for the Bentley Community? Bentley staff members and their families, students, and the Flint Affiliation 11U basketball team came out to support The United Way and the community by packing meals. As a result, we were able to bring back over 1,500 meals to our own Bentley Food Pantry.

We at Bentley Schools are proud of our staff, students and young volunteers who gave back to the community via this great event!

In an effort to encourage students to pursue post-secondary education and meet Governor Whitmer’s goal of 60% college attainment by 2030, Bentley High School students attend events like career fairs, college fairs, and college campuses throughout the year. It is our goal at Bentley High School to encourage a college-going culture and post-secondary education attainment, whether it be going to college, trade school, or earning industry-specific certification.

In October, Bentley High School participated in a trades-based career fair called MI Career Quest hosted by GST MI Works! at the Dort Federal Credit Union Event Center. During this event, high school students rotated through quadrants highlighting in-demand career opportunities that exist locally. Interactive exhibits, created by employers, showcased various in-demand occupations. Students were able to have a hands-on learning experience and talk with professionals who do those jobs every day. A total of 27 students attended the MI Career Quest Event.

That same week, Bentley students were also invited to the Mott Regional College Fair, hosted by Mott Community College. The event is one of the largest college fairs in the region, with over 50 colleges and universities from around Michigan and beyond. They provide information regarding their school, programs, and educational opportunities. We had 37 students attend the fair, and all were able to learn more information about prospective colleges.

In November, Bentley coordinated a campus tour to Eastern Michigan University and a total of 50 students attended. During our tour, students were able to get a first-hand view of the campus, talk directly with students who attend, gain a better idea of college costs, and experience campus life. Students also ate in a campus dining hall to complete the experience.
There have been some very exciting upgrades recently in and around our athletic facilities here at Bentley High School. To start, we have updated the gym with a brand new Bulldog logo and new Genesee Athletic Conference team banners. In the hallway outside of the gymnasium, you will find our new state-of-the-art Touch Pro Hall of Fame screen. It now has every yearbook from the 1953-54 school year to the 2018-19 school year uploaded on it.

Additionally, two brand new trophy cases have been built to showcase years’ worth of Bulldog celebrations, which have recently been recovered from storage and refurbished to their original glory. Finally, the varsity softball field will have a new scoreboard this upcoming season. It will be installed as soon as the weather breaks, just in time for the softball season.

There have also been some athletic facilities upgrades at both the Middle School and at Barhitte Elementary. In the middle school gymnasium you will find four brand new backboards complete with our Bulldog logo, while at Barhitte, the softball field is in the process of being renovated so that it will be ready to use come spring.

There has also been some excitement recently with our teams. Our winter sports seasons are well underway and all the teams are competing hard. The girls Varsity Basketball team, for instance, is having the best year that they have had in a decade. Our Varsity Powerlifting has qualified three lifters for this year’s state meet already. Also, our Varsity ESports team is looking to build off of last year’s success with many students signed up to participate and compete.

If you have time, we would love to have you come on up to see the new improvements or just to catch a game. It’s a great day to be a Bulldog!