

COLFAX

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PITTSBURGH COLFAX K-8 PTO I VOL 9, NO 5 MAY, 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome | Elementary Updates | Sports | Field Trips Wake Up The Garden | ML Musical | Dancing Classrooms...

















IMPORTANT DATES
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

June 9 - Colfax Carnival

June 10 - 8th Grade Promotion

June 13 - Last Day of School

August 29 - First Day of School September 1 - First Day of School (Kindergarten)

WELCOME NOTES

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Passing on the Torch

After serving as the Colfax PTO President for the past four years, I decided it was time to step down. It has been an amazing ride as well as an honor and a privilege to be a part of such a special community. I've met so many wonderful families and have gotten to know and appreciate many of our teachers, staff and administration who work at Colfax. I have collaborated with four different executive boards and have come to know some truly magnificent volunteers. People who have really made a difference at our school. As I look back I'd like to share a few of our accomplishments along the way.

First and foremost, our population has exploded. When I first took the helm, Colfax had a population in the 600's and now we are close to 900. I believe this is partly because our PTO has an excellent reputation and does a tremendous job providing so many extras and good things for our students and our school as a whole. There just aren't many schools in the area that can compare to ours.

Our newer parents may not be aware that our pool was once in a sad state. The floor was cement that received a coat of paint once a year. After a few days it started to chip leaving layers upon layers of chipped paint on the floor. The pool had missing tiles and part of a wall had started to crumble. Needless to say, the pool area was very unattractive. It was not a selling point and was not on any tour. As an executive board, we made the pool a priority and met with contractors about what was possible. Eventually, we settled on putting decking on the cement and a liner in the pool. This was going to cost about \$28,000. With some help from our former principal and former custodian, along with some charm and luck, we convinced facilities management to pick up the tab. This was a huge win for Colfax.

Four years ago, our executive board decided to expand into the arts. We thought the middle level could benefit from hosting its own musical. After searching

for the perfect director, Bridgette Purdue was interviewed and hired. She has been amazing. This past year, we put on our third musical with a cast and crew of over sixty students! Students from every neighborhood came together and put on a fantastic show. We've also invested in a stage curtain that has provided a backdrop for our talent show, orchestra, and choral concert as well as our musical.

It has been a long tradition that our 1st graders attend the Frick Environmental Center and our 2nd graders go to the Frick Mansion as enrichment programs. When the FEC offered a new program for 4th graders, we were all over it. Last year, we applied and were accepted into the Park Steward Program. Like the FEC and Mansion programs, the new Park Steward program has been a resounding success. I hope this will be another long standing tradition for 4th graders at Colfax.

Many of you may not realize, but the PTO President works very closely with the principal at Colfax. During my tenure, I had the privilege to work with four different principals who were all distinguished in their own way. While Colfax was in these periods of transition, the PTO remained a constant supporter of our school. I feel proud that I was able to lead this fantastic group and keep our part of the ship sailing.

Although I will no longer serve as President, I will still remain on the board. This coming year I will be our VP of Fundraising and advisor to our new President, Julie Wilson, who will do an outstanding job.

There are many terrific schools throughout western Pennsylvania and across this Commonwealth. But I can't imagine even one matching the diversity that has made Colfax so special.

Warm Regards,

Abbie Campsie-Haber

PTO President

WELCOME NOTES

PRINCIPAL'S REMARKS

Dear Colfax families,

Well here it is, our final newsletter for the 2015-2016 school year! It seems like it was just yesterday that I was drafting a self-introduction and welcome letter for the new school year. As the year comes to a close, I have come to realize how awesome our school, staff, students, and families are and it has been an honor to have experienced my first year at Pittsburgh Public with you all!

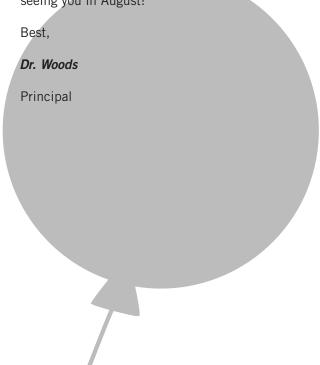
It is my intention to spend the beginning part of this summer focusing on the feedback received from parental surveys, informal/formal parent conversations, teacher input, and most importantly overall observations of what's best for our kids. All of this knowledge will factor into our planning for the upcoming school year.

During the summer months, please remember to incorporate reading, writing, science, and math into your child's regular activities. We know this can be difficult to do, however, we also know that it is key in decreasing learning loss. Some simple examples of ways in which students can be academically engaged over the summer are:

- Keeping a journal to detail daily activities, family vacations, and excursions
- Visits to museums, landmarks, arts festivals, and other local cultural events
- Participation in the Carnegie Library's summer reading program
- Using measurement tools and recipes to cook with your child

More educational activities and ideas to engage students during the summer months can be found at educationalworld.com

I hope you all enjoy a safe, relaxed, and exciting summer break with your loved ones. I look forward to seeing you in August!



FIRST GRADE COBRA CLUB: ANIMAL CARE

(written by Ms. Horne)

Our first grade Cobra Club has been learning how to care for animals. So far we have learned about fish, hamsters, bearded dragons, cats and dogs. We have been able to touch and feel all of these real live animals in our classroom! We discovered what these animals can look like, their habitat and what they need to survive. We also learned interesting facts about each animal. At our last Cobra Club, we were delighted to have a visit from Hurley, Ms. McKenna's 11 month old Golden Retriever. Hurley was very excited to come to our class! He gave the children lots of kisses and showed off his tricks. Hurley can sit, shake hands, fetch a ball and will do anything for an ice cube! The children were able to ask Ms. McKenna many questions about caring for a puppy and a dog. It takes a lot of work to care for a pet. Thanks Ms. McKenna for sharing Hurley with us! This was an experience the students will never forget!



SEVENTH GRADERS ATTEND ALUMNI THEATER COMPANY PERFORMANCE (written by Ms. Dawson)

On April 29, 2016, Colfax 7th graders were treated to a performance of the Alumni Theater Company's amazing Face Off: Wild'n Out! Our students joined groups from other Pittsburgh area schools to watch, applaud, and vote for competing teams of incredibly talented middle school students, including Colfax sixth grader, Carl Terry. The performers rocked the stage (and the audience area) with original and popular works of poetry, song, and instrumental music, directed by Bridgette Perdue, who also is the director of the highly-successful Colfax middle-school musical, Guys and Dolls. We are grateful to the Alumni Theater Company for their invitation to this show, and to our PTO for providing us with the buses to take us there. What a wonderful afternoon this was!













THIRD GRADE TROLLEY TOUR (written by Mrs. Dulak)

We are extremely thankful that we were able to indulge in a taste of some of Pittsburgh's finest landmarks, courtesy of Pittsburgh History Landmarks Foundations (PHLF): Building Pride/Building Character Tour. Due to limited space, we split the tour into two different dates: Mrs. Lasek and Mrs. Pozza on March 17, 2016, followed by Ms. Campione and Ms. McCann's homerooms on May 4, 2016. The experience is one that we will all treasure.

Our day began at 8:30 a.m. Students were picked up by the trolleys at Colfax and immediately drove to the City-County building followed by the Allegheny County Courthouse. Our next adventure was held at Point State Park, where students learned more about the history of Fort Pitt. Both classes met at the museum and gathered to watch a short movie, followed by our lunch. The final stop was the Duquesne Incline and the statue of George Washington and Guyasuta.

I appreciated the rich history that PHLF shared with us about our beautiful city. They also included a Tour Journal that was completed during the tour, and students were able to reflect upon their experience in our upcoming classes. They provided additional lessons that would build upon their new knowledge. and would also serve as additional resources to share with their families.

In addition to the Trolley Tour, we went to the Strip District Stroll on May 12 and May 18, which provided us with the history of the Strip District and also created connections with the story "The Macaroni Boy" that students are reading in their ELA classes.

A special shout out to all the parents and volunteers that helped make our field trips extra special as well as our fabulous PTO for providing the buses and ice cream from Klavon's! This third grade class is AMAZING. We are so glad we were able to offer these experiences for the students and staff!

FOURTH & FIFTH GRADE TRACK DAY









DANCE, DANCE, DANCE (written by Ms. Stefanyak)

Did you know that Pittsburgh Colfax 5th graders participate in an amazing ballroom dancing program? The students receive 12 lessons at school and learn 5 different dances. In the fall of 2009, the prevention program of Pittsburgh Mercy Health System brought the renowned Dancing Classrooms to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They introduced the program to 300 children in six Pittsburgh Public Schools.

Dancing Classrooms is about much more than dance. It's an innovative strategy and approach that enhances learning readiness and social development, providing students with:

- practice in problem solving, as children are challenged to overcome personal shyness and to learn intricate dance steps and participate in a variety of performance venues across diverse audiences;
- development of creative thinking skills, as children develop discipline in approaching the "new" and become comfortable that they can move from not knowing to knowing using their own imaginative and personal skills:
- resiliency in facing challenges and the unknown, as children learn to improvise to correct for mistakes and come to better understand the importance of trial and error in improving performance;
- training in professional courtesy and behavioral skills that enable children to move across and interact with various levels of society, including various workplace and educational settings;
- appreciation for various cultural backgrounds of others and widened understanding of and support for cultural differences;
- team building and cooperation, both of which are essential to successful workplace, educational, and social success; and
- greater senses of self-efficacy and personal commitment to consistent effort and practice to reach a goal, qualities that are essential for anyone, but that are particularly essential for children in poverty who face far greater hurdles each day than most of us can imagine.

At Pittsburgh Colfax, we embrace this program. In the beginning of the program, the 5th grade students are always very reluctant to dance. By the end of the program, the students LOVE it! So many of the students want to be chosen to go to the competition at the end of the year. This year's competition team competed on Saturday, May 14, 2016:





Captains: Ben Stolarz & Jennifer Lin

Fox Trot: Ian Kuchera & Xanthe Schandelmeier-Gilgunn

Merenge: Bianca Star & Victorious Sankofa

Tango: Dora Gordon & Liam Friedlander

Rumba: Zoe Obenza-Bridges & Ezra Dubowitz

Swing: Caden Harper & Jaden Delarosa

MIDDLE LEVEL UPDATE

ML SPRING MUSICAL GUYS & DOLLS

(written by TraOnna Malloy, 7th grade)

For the past three years, Colfax has been fortunate enough to produce a musical. This year we performed Guys and Dolls Jr. under the direction of Ms. Bridgette Perdue. For me, it has really been an interesting experience, in the best way.

At first no one in the cast really knew how the play was going to come out. In the beginning many of us were upset with the parts we got. However, being a part of the musical last year, I learned that no matter what you are, you are an important part. Eventually, most of the cast realized that we were all important. I remember one day there were a lot of people missing and it affected the whole scene. We couldn't practice the scene because we needed everyone, regardless of their role.

Since the first few week we have progressed so much. I have strengthened my acting, singing, and even dancing. I have even started friendships with people I thought I would never talk to, and the entire cast and crew this year have a great bond. Of course, we have fun practices and not so fun practices, but we have all came along way from the first few days. The character I portrayed is a little out of my comfort zone, but I learned to persevere and now I feel like I am the Grandma. I can honestly say I had fun.

Guys and Dolls is a fun and upbeat. The songs are so catchy and the dances are very energetic. I hope a lot of people enjoyed the result of our hard work.









COLFAX SPORTS

GIRLS SOCCER

(written by Coach Montgomery)

The Girls Soccer team had a wonderful season. We finished with 5 wins and 2 losses. We made it to the playoffs, but unfortunately lost to South Brook - our long-time rivals. We have a lot of athletic girls who play soccer just for Colfax and gain enough skill to make it to the play-offs every year. We will miss our eight graders next year. We wish them luck playing in high school. Emma, our goal keeper, volunteered for goalie just this year but did a fabulous job and was praised by many coaches. Even though we have students leaving the team, I'm super excited for our new editions and the girls that have worked so hard this year.

BOYS SOCCER (written by Coach Lydon)

We got t-shirts this year and put a saying on the back that has spoken to the character of this special team. It reads: "Respect All-Fear None". This team has shown talent, class, sportsmanship and teamwork all season and continued to get better and better with every game. As of writing this update we stand with a record of 9-1 and are due to play in the semi-finals, hoping to play our way into the finals. The kids are special in that they are a fun group of guys to be around. It has truly been my pleasure to be around them.

We have a big group of 8th graders who will move on next year. These students have been with me for many years and they will be truly missed. The members of this year's team were Jose Higuera #10, Alex Weisbord #14, Will Ganger #2, Henry Rosenberg #34,Alex Ganovsky #26, Peter Jacobs #1, Dylan Olmsted #5, Dennis Chibisov #35, Jonathan Sendera #13, Josphat Mukogosi #40, Angelo Goldberg #11, Ben Lund #41, Abe Kurzweg #7, Elijah Copich #12, Luke Chinman #18, Jonah Saitz #19, Nathan Feinstein #16, Neel Willis #22, Bernardo Pereira #3 and Ethan Rosenberg #21. I thank them and the parents, the teachers and the school for the support all season long and wish us luck to finish off what has already been such a successful season!

WRESTLING

(written by Coach Schmiedlin)

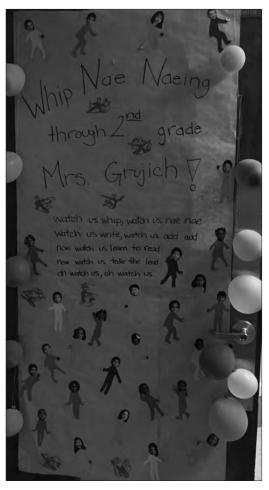
The 2016 Colfax wrestling team had an outstanding season. On Friday May 6, 2016, the wrestling team capped off an undefeated season by winning the team championship at Carrick high school. Leading the way were individual champions, Dylan Mayer (85 lbs), Darius Bruce (90 lbs), Lacey Hill (95 lbs), Troy Jacobson (100 lbs), Sean Graves (122 lbs), Mason Feldstein (185 lbs) and second place finishers Josh Morris (122 lbs), Jack O'Connor (130 lbs), Jay Henderson (165 lbs) and Dutch Mulder (250 lbs). Throughout the season, the Colfax wrestling team displayed an outstanding work ethic that included dedication, hard work, perseverance and intensity. I am very proud of this group of student athletes are they represented Colfax as true and deserving champions. Thank you to all the parents, teachers, and the Colfax community for the continuing support for Colfax wrestling.

EIGHTH GRADE PROMOTION

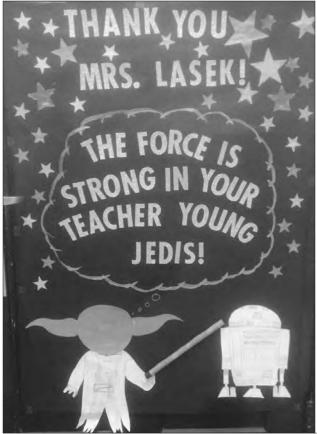
This year's 8th grade class will be promoted on Friday, June 10, 2016. The ceremony will begin in the Colfax gymnasium at 9:30 a.m. Please contact the front desk with questions.

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK











THANK YOU TEACHERS











COLFAX COMMUNITY

CMU SCIENCE SQUAD (written by Mr. Wolfe)

In March 2016, we told you about the ten outstanding students who won the right to represent Colfax at the PA Junior Academy of Science competition, held on May 16, 2016.

This was such a fun trip. We really have amazing students at our school. Our first place finishers: Owen Capo Stewart, Ian Denshaw, Will Ganger, Guillermo Harris, Matthew Langer, Claudia Musser, and Aaron Ritter. Taking second place were Lana Edwards, Dylan Olmsted, and Ian Zimmerman. I cannot ever convey enough gratitude for all your support and enabling of this truly unique program.



DES DIECS

APRIL MOVIE NIGHT (written by Heather Sendera, VP Events)

Thanks to everyone who joined us for our awesome April Movie Night on Friday, April 29, 2016! We had lots of Colfax students and families pack the gym and cafeteria to watch "The Good Dinosaur" and "Goosebumps". Lots of snacks, lots of laughs and a good time was had by all!





GARDEN NEWS

WAKE UP THE GARDEN (written by Farmer Paul)

On Wednesday, May 18, 2016, the Colfax PTO and Grow Pittsburgh sponsored the Wake Up the Garden Open House event at the Colfax school garden. The entire Colfax community was invited. There were over 100 attendees! The opening ceremony featured the Colfax Chorus made up of over 20 students who sang a medley of garden-themed songs about insects, seeds, flowers, and rain. They even played triangles, rain sticks and other noise makers to simulate sounds of a rainstorm. After their performance, the Allderdice High School Jazz band, led by Mr. Lee, provided music during the rest of the evening's activities. They played some classic jazz standards and some family favorites like the "Cruella De Vil" theme song from 101 Dalmatians.

During the Jazz set, the event's other activities got under way. There was a salsa bar, banana and kale smoothie samples, student-led garden tours, Frick nature activities, and lasagna for sale. In addition, Eva from Grow Pittsburgh led a mural painting project. She designed a water cycle themed mural that will adorn the new new raised bed in the school garden. With Eva's guidance, students helped paint different sections collaboratively. The mural project will be completed before the end of this school year.

Thanks to all who attended the event and helped make it awesome. Also, a special thanks goes out to the cafeteria and custodial staff who really made the event run smoothly.

If families are interested in signing up for summer garden care, please email Farmer Paul at paul@growpittsburgh.org.

As ominous clouds float overhead, the Allderdice Jazz Band gets ready to follow the Colfax chorus' inspired performance.

Eva from Grow Pittsburgh leads Colfax students in a water cycle themed mural around the new raised garden bed.

Children get hands on play time using natural materials, with help from our friends from the Frick Environmental Center

PI DAY: MARCH 14, 2016







ROMP & ROLL













COLFAX CARNIVAL

GET READY FOR CARNIVAL!

(written by Heather Sendera, VP Events)

Who: EVERYONE!

What: Celebrate the end of school

When: Thursday, June 9, 2016 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Where: Colfax

How: With your help!

Come celebrate the end of the school year in style at the annual Colfax Carnival! We will have food, games, inflatables, a dunk tank, petting zoo, cultural tents and more. We hope to have lots of Colfax students and families join us for the fun!

We need help to make this a great event. Please consider helping with the following:

- Games/Inflatables/Dunk Tank/Petting Zoo
- Food
- Cultural Tents
- Prizes
- Ticket Sales

And last but definitely not least: set up and tear down! Watch for an online volunteer sign up or check the PTO website for details! Please contact Heather Sendera at hsendera@gmail.com or 512-470-7743, with any questions or to volunteer. See you on the 9th!!













PTO UPDATE

TREASURER REPORT (written by Ray Obenza, Treasurer, and Marjorie Carlson, Assistant Treasurer)

The 2016-17 PTO budget was approved on Monday, May 16, 2016.

Colfax PTO Budget, 2016-2017		
INCOME	\$52,000	
Winter Fundraising Event (Party for Play)	\$27,000	
Ask Drive & other donations	\$19,000	
Other fundraisers (e.g., box tops, fun run, plant sale)	\$6,000	
EXPENSES	\$69,350	
Field Trips	\$10,000	
Principal Discretionary Fund	\$10,000	
Enrichment Activities (e.g., teacher grants, chess club)	\$9,000	
Technology (e.g., laptops, tablets)	\$8,000	
Grow Pittsburgh (gardening)	\$6,500	
Spring Musical	\$6,000	
Frick Environmental Center (field trip)	\$5,400	
STEAM program (one-time expense)	\$4,500	
Midlevel event/Cobra Store	\$3,000	
Frick House (field trip)	\$2,500	
School Infrastructure (e.g., outside equipment, pool)	\$2,000	
Miscellaneous (e.g., 8th grade promotion)	\$1,000	
PTO Business Expenses (e.g., playground insurance)	\$850	
Staff Appreciation	\$600	
PROPOSED DEFICIT	\$17,350	

STAY INFORMED ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT COLFAX! (written by Julie Wilson, VP Communications)

Are you on Facebook? Come "like" us on our Facebook Page to receive up-to-the-minute information, connect with other parents, and communicate with your PTO. You can find us at www.facebook.com/pghcolfax.

We are only as successful as our audience. Please encourage others to sign up for the PTO's weekly emails. It's easier than ever! Just go to the Colfax PTO website, at www.colfaxpto. org and click on the big blue "Sign Up" button at the top of screen.

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Looking to learn more about Colfax? Want to meet some fun people? Just want to get out of the house? Volunteer!

- * Classroom volunteers
- * After-school tutors
- * Morning bus supervisors
- * Breakfast/Recess/Lunch supervisors
- * School tours
- * Office assistance
- * Babysitting cooperative
- * Fundraising
- * Special Events (Fiesta, Party for Play, etc.)

Contact VP Volunteer Coordinator Tiffany Stuckey at tcstuckey18@me.com for more information. Note that some opportunities require that volunteers have state criminal and child abuse clearances. If your clearance is more than three years old, it must be renewed to be valid. See the PTO website for more information on obtaining a new or renewed clearance.

Colfax Communicator

Your Ad could be HERE!

Looking for an affordable way to advertise your business or program?

Reach hundreds of Colfax families and support the Colfax PTO by placing an ad in our newsletter!

Size of Ad	Width x Height	Ready to Print Ads:
		Price Per Issue
		(25% discount 4+ issues)
Business Card	3.65" x 2.275"	\$27
Quarter Page	3.65" x 4.84"	\$48
Half Page	7.5" x 4.84"	\$78
Whole Page	7.5" x 9.875"	\$153

Please email a pdf of your ad to Leslie.Grodin@verizon.net and sivanearnest@hotmail.com

Advertising Guidelines

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- Logo or photography files should be should be in .eps, .tiff or jpeg formats, 300 dpi at the usable dimension and sent via email (faxes and images pulled off of web sites are not acceptable as they will not print clearly). Please do not email files larger than 5 megabytes.
- Communicator will email the advertiser a pdf proof for final proof-reading purposes.
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Improve comfort and efficiency. Create more living space.



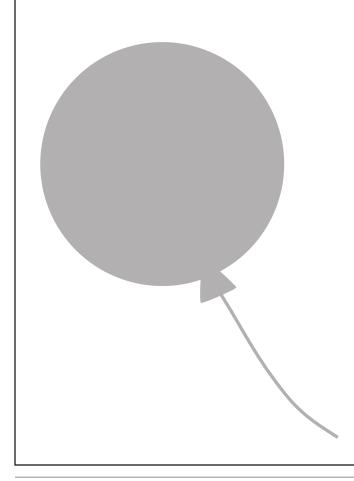


Older houses our specialty

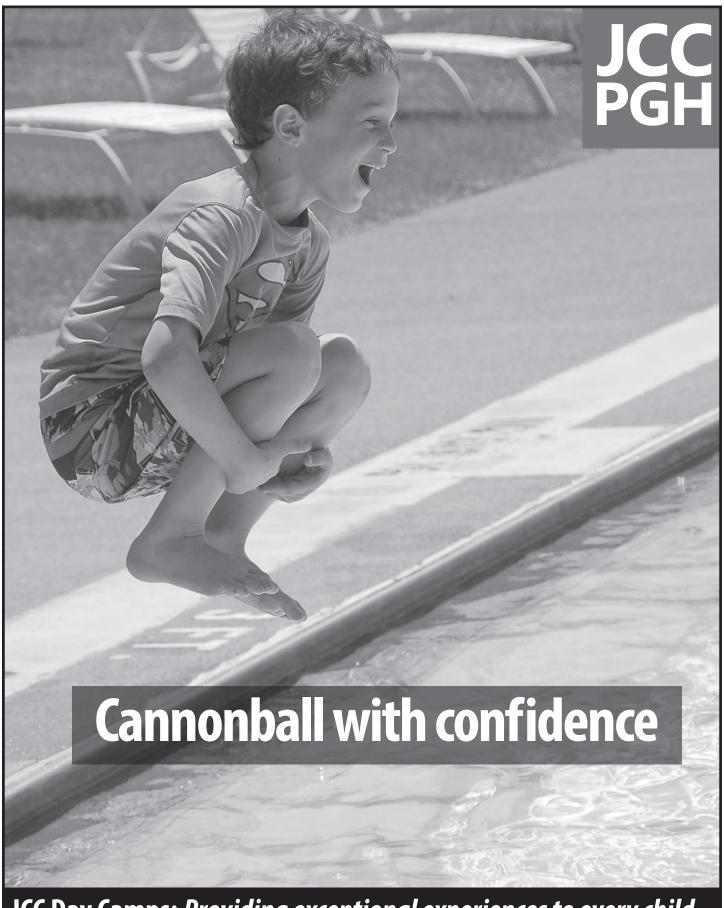
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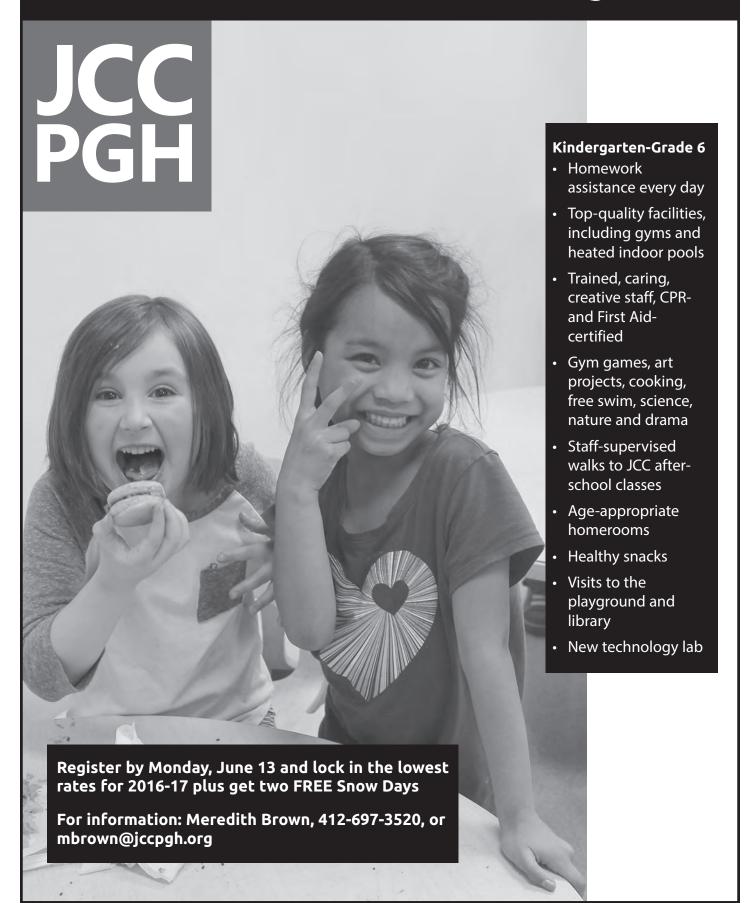
Haye a
wonderful
summer!
from the
Colfax PTO



JCC Day Camps: Providing exceptional experiences to every child

J&R: Lewis Sohinki, 412-697-3537 or Isohinki@jccpgh.org • Specialty: Meredith Brown, 412-697-3520 or mbrown@jccpgh.org

JCC Clubhouse After-School Program



Colfax PTO Site: www.colfaxpto.org

Join us on Facebook and Twitter: ColfaxPghPTO

www.facebook.com/pghcolfax

The Executive Board:

2015-2016 Colfax PTO Executive Board

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