

January 2026 NEWSLETTER



New Year, New Rolls!

The Conemaugh Township bocce ball team kicked off its season with a match against Berlin on December 16th. Their next match will be on January 5th against Meyersdale at 4 PM.

"Through bocce ball, we find the joy of making new friends, the thrill of friendly competition, and the warmth of camaraderie. I'm excited for this season to start." -Senior, Addie Miller

"Bocce is a great way to bring these kids together. It allows them to participate fully in a sport with their peers, no matter the situation. We are so lucky to have such a strong program here at Township!"-Junior, Emily Purdy

They will have five total matches this season, with home matches on the 12th and 21st of this month. Come out and show your support for the team!



Rhythms and Resolutions

The adapted music class completed their winter concert on December 16th with a successful run of these songs: "One More Sleep till Christmas," "Feliz Navidad," "Frosty the Snowman," "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," "Carol of the Bells," and "Jingle Bell Rock."

Their next performance will be a talent show on January 29th at Westmont. The class will now be rehearsing songs for their spring concert.

"I am so proud of the progress we have made as a group. Our concert was amazing, and we are so beyond thankful for all of the support in the school. The students have been working hard and having fun learning these songs, and I am so glad that they had the opportunity to showcase their abilities to everyone. We are ready to do it all again in the spring!"

-Emily Purdy, Adapted Music Teacher



2025: The Year to Give Back

ETHAN MATERA

Ethan Matera, a senior athlete at Township, was diagnosed with T-cell Lymphoblastic Lymphoma last year, and our school has been supporting him in every way we can. The senior football players started these fundraising efforts by unanimously deciding to donate the remaining money raised for their new black-out jerseys, which totaled \$1,176.25. Soon after, a T-shirt fundraiser was released for the community from both the volleyball and football teams, followed by games to fundraise as well. Our football boosters even invited involvement from our competitors, receiving financial support from their teams, fanbase, and even their local VFW in Cambria Heights. \$7,500 was the additional amount raised by the football team, and \$1,262 was raised by the volleyball team. The cheer squad also donated \$145. Finally, the SADD club held its annual volleyball marathon and donated \$8,600 to Ethan. The Conemaugh Township community as a whole has raised over \$18,600 so far for Ethan Matera and his family. While the financial support for the Ethan and his family has been immense, the camaraderie shown by all of these students in support of one of their own really makes this entire effort so special. Our boys basketball team highlighted this unity when Coach Lesko debuted the new team warm-ups and team motto of "One Heartbeat" and our boys and their coach stepped up to shave their heads in a show of unity with their teammate. Thank you to everyone in the community for donating, volunteering, and supporting this cause. This is truly what it means to be a part of Conemaugh Township.

ROTARY

At the start of the school year, our CT Rotary Interact instantly started giving back to the community by collecting used but like-new sneakers to donate. In September, they also gave back to previous members by sending out college care packages and helping raise money for ovarian cancer at our "teal out" game. In October, they cleaned community roads and started their Operation Christmas Child project (delivering 25 boxes in November). In November, the members showed up to decorate Laurel View with the residents, wrote and delivered over 160 veteran cards, over 170 thank you cards, and teacher appreciation cards. They also held a blood drive. In December, the officers went to the radio station in Westmont to record Christmas wishes, got donuts for the faculty and staff of the high school, and made cookies with Cafe 118.

MUSIC MAKES US STRONGER

The Music Makes Us Stronger program was founded by Mrs. Suzette Gardenhour, a former band director at Conemaugh Township, who has been open about her battle with breast cancer.

Mrs. Gardenhour was diagnosed in 2016, and the unwavering support she received from the music department encouraged her to keep fighting. According to Mrs. Gardenhour, "They are the legacy that makes us stronger. They are why that exists, and how we continue to help the community and students." Her inspiring journey prompted her to establish this wonderful program that continues to give back to the community through the power of music. Prior to the concert, several rehearsals were held for each branch of the music department, which gave current members the ability to meet the 115 alumni from previous years. After each section's performance, a basket raffle coupled with a live auction took place, where audience members were encouraged to bid on a wide variety of goods.

Overall, the concert raised upwards of \$13,000 to help support community members and families dealing with cancer. Because of this sensational occasion, the former band and choir directors were given the opportunity to conduct, once more, alumni had the ability to see their legacy being carried out, and all who participated could contribute to a wonderful cause.

Music Department

REVOLTING CHILDREN: A 2026 EDITION

The Conemaugh Township Music Department will be presenting this year's musical, *Matilda*, on March 12th-15th.

The cast began practices at the beginning of December and have been working hard to make the show memorable. The stage crew will begin their work at the beginning of January and are very excited to set the scene for the show and bring the magic of *Matilda* to life. "I'm super excited to see how the Township cast and crew will bring together such a fun show!"-Anna Hunsberger (*Matilda*, Friday and Sunday)



2026 IS DEFYING GRAVITY

On Tuesday, January 27th, the music department will be traveling to the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh to see the musical *Wicked*. This musical follows the story of Glinda the Good and the Wicked Witch of the West throughout and after their time at Shiz University.

The students attending are all very excited to see the show, especially after the release of *Wicked: For Good* in theaters. In their last trip to the Benedum, they saw the musical *Hamilton*, and they are all very excited to have another experience like that.



STARTING THE YEAR IN HARMONY

On January 7th-9th, the following members of Conemaugh Township's choir will be showcasing their talents at Richland High School: Daniel Turley, Chris Yoder, Adah Konieczny, Anna Hunsberger, Greta Mock, and Emily Purdy. They will be performing the following pieces in their program: "Dies Irae," "Cry out and Shout," "Joy," "Man in the Mirror," "I'll Be On My Way," "O Have You Blessed," "Behind the Stars," and "There Shall A Star From Jacob Come Forth." The students will also have the opportunity to audition for Regionals at this event.



SWINGING INTO 2026

Two of our Conemaugh Township Music Department students auditioned for the Jazz Ensemble. Addison Lasure was successful in making the Vocal Evolution portion, and Daniel Turley was successful in making it to the festival on the piano for Modern Rock. The festival will be held at Johnstown High School from January 15th-16th, with a concert to take place on the evening of the 16th. Congratulations to both students on their successful auditions!



Sports

SPARKLES AND SHARP SHOOTERS



The rifle team started its season with a win against Salisbury and is currently 1-4. Roy Oswalt has stood out as a top two shooter with a score range of 249-250 as a sophomore. Two freshmen, Zoey Conley (Windber) and Kourtney Saylor, also stand out on the team with impressive scores. Senior Micah Lehman excels as the number one shooter. They are hopeful of winning more match-ups in the future and continue to improve individually and as a team.

"The team needs to improve on focusing on our consistency when shooting, myself included, as even the slightest difference in our positioning can drastically influence the core of each shot."

-Senior and number one shooter Micah Lehman

BASKETS AND BLING

Going into winter break, the boys basketball team has a record of 10-0. This record includes their tournament wins in both the Ron Davidson Tip-Off Classic and the UPJ Mountain Cat Tournament. The team will continue their season with a home game against United on January 5th.

"The team has been playing well together, we've been cohesive and hope to continue that while also stacking up wins throughout the rest of the season."-Senior, Jacob Bartis.



The girls team began their season with difficult games, leaving them a record of 2-6. Their season will return on January 7th with a home game against Cambria Heights. The team is hoping to redeem itself after a loss to Heights earlier in the season.

"We've been dealing with some injuries within our starting lineup, which has hurt us, but we're hoping once everyone is back and healthy, we can get back in the groove of things and end up with a successful season." -Senior Kat McCann

PINNING GOALS IN THE NEW YEAR

So far, the varsity wrestling team has started its season with a record of 1-1, with a win against West Shamokin and a loss to Westmont. As they have more matches, they are hopeful to boost their record.

"The season is going well. I'm doing pretty well so far, as well as the rest of the team. We're hoping to see more of us place at tournaments and qualify for states later on."

-Junior Noah Stultz

"I would say that the season is going pretty well. We're 1-1 right now, but it's still early in the season. Overall, everyone is looking decent, but Carter Christ and Landon Huffman are two wrestlers who stand out. They are both very strong and valuable players."-Senior Jacob Furda



Student Athlete Spotlight

SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS

We currently have four students participating on the Johnstown Trojans ice hockey team, representing one of the four schools on the team. These schools include United, Johnstown, Windber, and Township. The Township players are Brandon Petrilli, Stephen Hofecker, Ethan Coulter, and Landon Oakes. The Trojans currently have a record of 4-4 and are working hard to get a winning season.

"For me personally, coming back from the injury, it's been pretty good. As for the team, there are some things we can improve on, but we're doing better." -Senior Brandon Petrilli



NEW YEAR, HIGHER SETS

Township has seven players continuing their volleyball season into the winter on the Greater Johnstown Volleyball Club, also known as Laurel Elite Volleyball. These students are Addison Lasure, Danika Black, Averie Seibert, Cora Oswalt, Mary Matera, Sarah Swank, and Quinn Moser. At Ridgetop Volleyball Club, Madee Roman, Mya Nemeth, and Hazel DeSantis are among some of our CT competitors. Their season will begin mid-January, and they are excited to grow in the off-season.

"Individually I'm looking to improve on my personal skills as well as my abilities to be a teammate and help them thrive as well. Looking at the roster I have very high hopes, as my teammates all very skilled in their positions!"

-Junior Averie Seibert



KICKING OFF THE NEW YEAR

There are many Township teams who participate in the indoor soccer league at Turfside. This includes various teams of soccer players and a team of some of our Senior football team. Township has had many students participate in the league for multiple years now. It is both a great way to bring teams together from other sports and a good way for our senior and junior high soccer teams to practice in the off-season. There are also brackets for our younger players, allowing them to grow their skills in a game environment before AYSO begins in the spring.

"It's going good for our team. We started off our first game winning 6-1. Our team needs to work on connecting with each other while we're on the field, but overall we're making improvements." -Sophomore Colbi Hunsberger



Student Athlete Spotlight

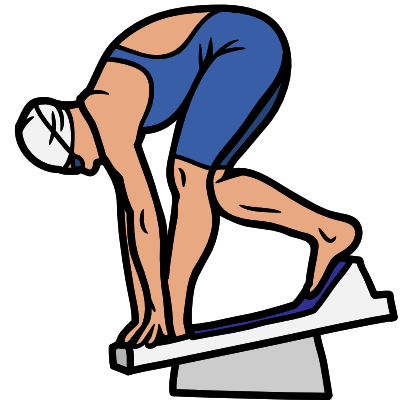
RIDING INTO THE NEW YEAR

Tennyson Keafer has been competing in two riding associations, the Youth Equestrian Development Association (YEDA) and the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA). YEDA is an all western riding and horsemanship competition, and AQHA is a hunter under saddle competition. Tenny ended up placing first in nationals for YEDA last year and has continued to win first, second, and third-place ribbons.

"I am really looking forward to the coming AQHA season. My horse and I have been working very hard, and will continue to throughout the winter. I am very excited to succeed in the next upcoming years!"-Tennyson Keafer

Kennedy Lehman has been competing with one riding association, the Pennsylvania Quarter Horse Association (PQHA). The PQHA is a western ranch riding style. She has two of her own horses, Cinnamon and Peppy, that she competes with.

"I really enjoy riding at my horse shows with my friends. I met a lot of great people who showed up and supported me. My horse and I are getting ready for the 2026 show season. I can't wait to see what this show season may bring."-Kennedy Lehman



DIVES AND DISCO LIGHTS

Aidan Burnworth and Damirr Thomas are independent swimmers who compete in many meets. They train with their competitive team at the Johnstown YMCA. Aidan's best times are 22.14 seconds in the 50 freestyle, 49.1 seconds in the 100 freestyle, and 1:05 in the 100 breaststroke. Damirr's best times are 27.72 seconds in the 50 freestyle, 1:30.89 in the backstroke, and 1:30.35 in the breaststroke. The two qualified for the District meet. Damirr qualified in the 100 fly. Aidan qualified in the 50 free, 100 free, 100 breaststroke, 100 butterfly, and 200 freestyle.

"The transition from football to swimming season felt abrupt and was initially very challenging. However, things have been going very well, and I have high hopes that, by the end of the season, swimming at CT will receive more attention despite its limited participation."

-Senior, Aidan Burnworth.

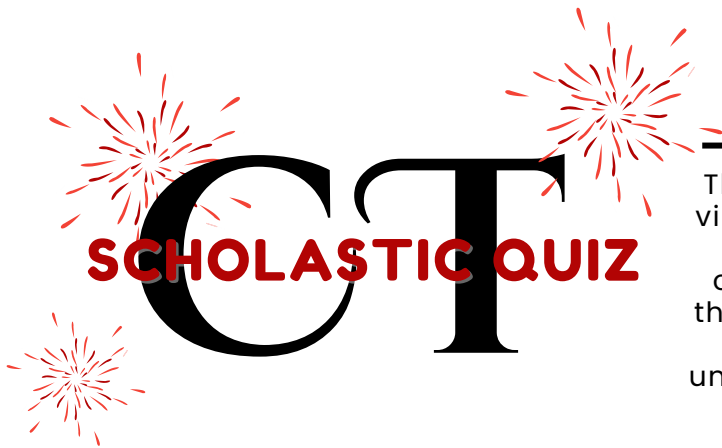
"I'm doing well with the events I'm in, and Aidan is doing well in his. I'm looking forward to having a great year and placing first."

-Freshman, Damirr Thomas

CLUBS

EASE(L) INTO 2026

The Conemaugh Township Art Club made a trip to St. Francis Sharing and Caring on Monday, December 10th, to showcase their skills in the area. They painted a wintry scene on the windows of the building, bringing the store into the holiday spirit. After their hard work, they continued to give back by volunteering inside the store, organizing the donations, tagging clothes, and moving donations into the store.



SCHOLASTIC QUIZ

The Senior High Scholastic Quiz team had its annual virtual competition on Monday, December 8th. This is a competition that takes place in Mr. Rising's classroom, after school, and has a list of questions that the students work together to answer as a team. It allows the students to collaborate on their own unique strengths to win. This year, the team consisted of Noah Nagy, Wesley Mock, Isaac Marsh, Loïe Oliszewski, Anna Hunsberger, and Greta Mock.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The month of January is School Board Appreciation Month. The members of the student council will be bringing cookies, pastries, and various beverages to the January board meeting to thank our board members for the hard work they put into the school and community.

"We are all very grateful for our community members on the school board. They all put so much time into the well-being of Conemaugh Township, and it is very appreciated!" -Junior member, Danika Black



Our Fireworks of Excellence

Middle School Students of the Month



"Macey Whetzel is ready to help at any time. She has a bright smile and a positive attitude with both her teachers and her peers."

"David Alwine is thoughtful and analytical. He works hard and thinks deeply about the world around him. He is also respectful towards his teachers."



"Brayden Beeman is a genuinely good person. On his best and worst days he greets me with a "hello" and a high five. He's honest, loyal, and not afraid to take on a challenge. I'll take many more kids like him any day of the week."

Senior High Students of the Month



"Evan Johnson is a great student and is immensely helpful in the library. He is kind and respectful."

"Izzy Bihun is a hard-working and diligent student, always focused and on the top of her game. She is involved in so many activities and is a natural leader in her class."



"Emmy Allison is a fantastic representative of our student body. She volunteers so much of her time and academically is an all star."

"Charlotte Worst is so helpful and kind, making everyone feel included and involved. She is polite and respectful and an overall fantastic student."



SHINING INTO 2026 WITH MRS. SPENGLER

Mrs. Bethany Spengler has been part of the Conemaugh Township family in more ways than one—first as a student from 2010–2014, and now as the district's 6th–12th grade Art Teacher since 2018. Born in Johnstown, PA, she spent her childhood between the Forest Hills and Davidsville areas, moving between her mom's and dad's homes. She was an only child until 2008, when her sister Karly was born, bringing an age gap of about eleven years and a unique dynamic to her upbringing. A proud CT graduate (Class of 2014), Mrs. Spengler went on to attend Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Greenville University, ultimately earning her Bachelor of Science in PreK–12 Art Education from IUP and her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Greenville. Before returning "home" to teach at Township in June 2018, she held several interesting jobs—including the unexpected role of a government service intern for PennDOT (a fancy title for a road flagger!)—and also worked as a long-term substitute teacher at Windber.

Mrs. Spengler's life beyond the art room is full of joy, adventure, and family. She is married to her high school sweetheart, Luke Spengler, whom she met right here at CT in the art room during a crafts class in 2012. Luke graduated in 2012, and the two have now been together for 14 years. Together they share two wonderful children: Josie Beth (5) and Jasper Dean (16 months). When she's not teaching, she loves traveling the world, going on family adventures, thrift shopping, collecting antiques, and giving back to the community. Her colleagues and students hold a special place in her heart, and she feels incredibly grateful to work alongside such talented educators and remarkably creative young artists.

Most importantly, Mrs. Spengler's story with Conemaugh Township is one of gratitude and transformation. She openly shares that she struggled during middle school before transferring to CT after 8th grade—a decision she believes truly changed her life. Township became a safe haven, full of welcoming teachers, kind classmates, and lifelong memories that helped shape who she is today. Now, as a teacher, she brings that same spirit of warmth and acceptance into her classroom. "I adore this place," she says. "CT is one of a kind and very special. I have so much love for this school and a passion for what I do because of how incredible this community is." Her dedication, empathy, creativity, and genuine love for her students make Mrs. Bethany Spengler an irreplaceable part of the CT family.

"Mrs. Spengler teaches art, but what she truly teaches is heart! She brings creativity, laughter, and compassion into every space she enters. She gives her time freely to her students, her coworkers, and community, and she does it all with a huge heart and a sense of humor that makes even the most difficult days brighter. We are honored to work with such a great friend every day!"
—Mrs. Forgas and Ms. Leasock



"I have known Mrs. Spengler since she was born and I've watched her move into this district as an educator. She has done an awesome job as an educator at Conemaugh Township because she focuses on students, maintaining a positive environment, and growing a program that is often overlooked in her art room."
—Mr. Adams



"Mrs. Spengler is by far one of my favorite teachers I've ever had. Her leadership, guidance, and support have always been admirable. She is also such a trustworthy teacher who many students tend to go to for help and advice."
—Elanor Luscher



20
26



Upcoming January Events

1st - 2nd | Winter Vacation

16th | Act 80 Dismissal

19th | M.L. King Day Vacation

20th | End of Nine Weeks



Who is in charge in 2026?



Jr. Editor

Emily Purdy

Emily Louise Purdy is from Davidsville, PA. She participates in soccer, golf, hockey, bocce ball, basketball, track, softball, and is a cheer captain. She also has been a part of four musicals. Emily has participated in District Choir for one year and is a part of numerous clubs including Girl Scouts, Rotary, NHS, Student Council, and SADD. Her interests include singing, reading, writing, traveling, ice skating, and volunteering. Emily is also an active member at Camp Parc and is an Adapted Music teacher.

Sr. Editor

Maya Denault

Maya Lynn Denault is from Hollsopple, PA. She is the captain of the rifle team, a dedicated dancer both recreationally and competitively, and has also participated in many musical productions. Maya has lettered twice in rifle, competed at Nationals twice for dance, and is actively involved in leadership and service as the runner / editor of two newsletters, a member of the National Honor Society, and Vice President of Rotary. Her interests include photography, volunteering, crafting, reading, gardening, and, of course, dancing.

Jr. Editor

Hannah James

Hannah Grace James is from Jerome, PA, where she actively contributes to her community through involvement in organizations such as Rotary Interact, Spanish Club, and Tribe Time. Beyond her community contributions, Hannah has a passion for playing piano and singing. She also likes to spend time with her friends during her free time. Additionally, Hannah is eager to explore new experiences, always striving to learn and grow both personally and academically.