

Holland's Heros:

How HTS students are getting inspired by their role models.

By: Amelia Carpenter



HTS Students & Staff brought in photos of their heroes that are displayed in the front bulletin board.

When you walk through the front door of Holland Township School, you may notice many faces scattered all over the walls outside of the cafeteria.

The people on the walls live different lives, and most of them have never interacted. These people covering the walls are the heroes of HTS students.

The Hero Project, as it has been called, asked students from Holland for two things: 3 printed out pictures of their heroes, and the reasons why they chose them.

The hope for the project is to empower students by encouraging them to recognize everyday heroes, and to recognize the hero in themselves. The project was also meant to foster a better sense of belonging and kindness in the school.

The leader of the project is Mr. Michael Spence. Mr. Spence is hoping to help create a positive environment at Holland Township School.

"I want to improve the culture of the school, and show that not all superheroes wear capes," Mr. Spence stated.

When asked about the results of the Hero Project, he stated "I love it actually. I love the outreach, and the outcome."

A majority of the wall is made of parents, grandparents, other family members, musicians, and actors. But what surprised both Mr. Spence and Mrs. Snyder the most was seeing Holland's own teachers on the wall.

"I believe I saw someone put a teacher up there. There's actually a handful of teachers. You don't put your name by your hero, so the fact that these students brought their teachers in, and identified someone in their building as a hero, speaks to the culture and the impact that the staff is leaving on the kids here," Mr. Spence said.

When Mrs. Snyder was asked, she had a similar response

"Similar to Mr. Spence I'm super excited about the response. I mean, we thought that we were going to fill one small bulletin board and we filled the hallway, and it continues to be an inspiration when parents are here in the building. They stop with their children and they recognize the heroes, and I see someone new up there every day that I didn't notice before. Whether it's a grandparent, a teacher, or an administrator. Even Mr Spence is up there."

The Holland Herald

Of course, not everyone brought in pictures. When Mr. Spence was asked about how he felt about that, his response was surprisingly optimistic.

“I would say I felt discouraged at that point, but you know it’s expected. I think that what I love is seeing other students hold their peers accountable; so in that bag I don’t believe in loss, I believe in lessons. They’re [the pictures] still a lesson for the kids to learn, and watching them [learn that lesson] is just as good as all the students bringing it in.”

Aside from the Hero Project, Mr. Spence also has his sights set on other goals to continue to make Holland a better place.

“I want to continue to improve the culture alongside Mrs. Snyder and the amazing staff. I want to continue to just build with the kids and have great relationships. When I first walked into Holland, I was the tall black man that looked like LeBron James to them, and now it brings joy to my heart when I see kids say ‘Hey Mr. Spence, hold up your hand to see how high I can reach’. But the kids don’t really recognize that I’m just as excited to see them. I never have, no matter what is going on during my days at Holland, had a bad day. I never have bad days, so I love that part.”

When speaking with Mr. Spence, it’s easy to see why Mrs. Snyder chose him to help continue to build a strong culture at Holland.

“His history and background is fascinating to me, because he truly rose above what life gave him and is an inspiration. I learn from him everyday. Just from the first conversation that I had, he started to teach me things that I was not aware of, and just ignorant to. People who I respect highly just spoke volumes of his character, and that’s why he’s here, and he’s awesome. I think that most people agree.” Mrs. Snyder said.



Mr. Spence, photo courtesy of michealinspire.com

Mr. Spence has already made an impact on the school. I’m sure a lot of us are wondering “What’s next for the Hero Project?”

“We will continue to actually build on the Hero In Me program, and for the next couple months we’re going to speak on the superpowers that Heroes have, such as character, leadership, kindness, gentleness, and courageousness. But we are also going to get into the community service aspect of it, where we are going to just continue to give back. As you know we gave cards to children who are in the hospital and we also get cards to the community leaders and First Responders in our community, so we are going to continue to speak to that community service aspect.” Mr. Spence said.

I think that in the end, Mr. Spence was able to perfectly summarize his goals for our school and our community in one sentence “We want to make sure that when people think of Holland, they don’t think of a school, they think of a town that’s together, on one page.”

Clubs

HTS' Passionate Performances

HTS Drama Club rocks the stage!

By: Cali Travers



Cast members of Annie perform in front of a live audience.

This December the HTS Elementary Drama Club was back on stage to perform in front of the HTS community. The club treated the audience with an outstanding performance of the classic musical Annie Jr.

There were around 60 total children involved, all of which did exceptionally well. Despite the power outage that canceled one of their shows, they had two other shows that exceeded the expectations of many. The classic show was perfect for the holiday season, enchanting all those who had the privilege of seeing it.

Some notable names in the show were of course Charlotte H, who played the adorable little trickster orphan, Annie; Anthony B as the billionaire nobleman Oliver Warbucks; Layla S as the kind secretary of Warbucks; and Madeline B as the antagonizing yet humorous administrator of the orphanage.

All of the children involved did remarkably well, as well as those who auditioned for the role of Annie. However, what made Charlotte take the cake was how well she sang "Tomorrow", which blew everyone away and landed her the role.

Middle School Ready to Take the Stage

Up next on stage will be the HTS Middle School section of the club. Which is set to perform Into The Woods Jr in March.

"For Into the Woods we are going to expect an exciting show with the middle school kids in the Drama Club," remarked Mr. Bigelli. "We also incorporated the elementary school students as the narrators. The whole group is enjoying learning aspects of musical theater. We could not ask for a better group of kids for our first middle school show."

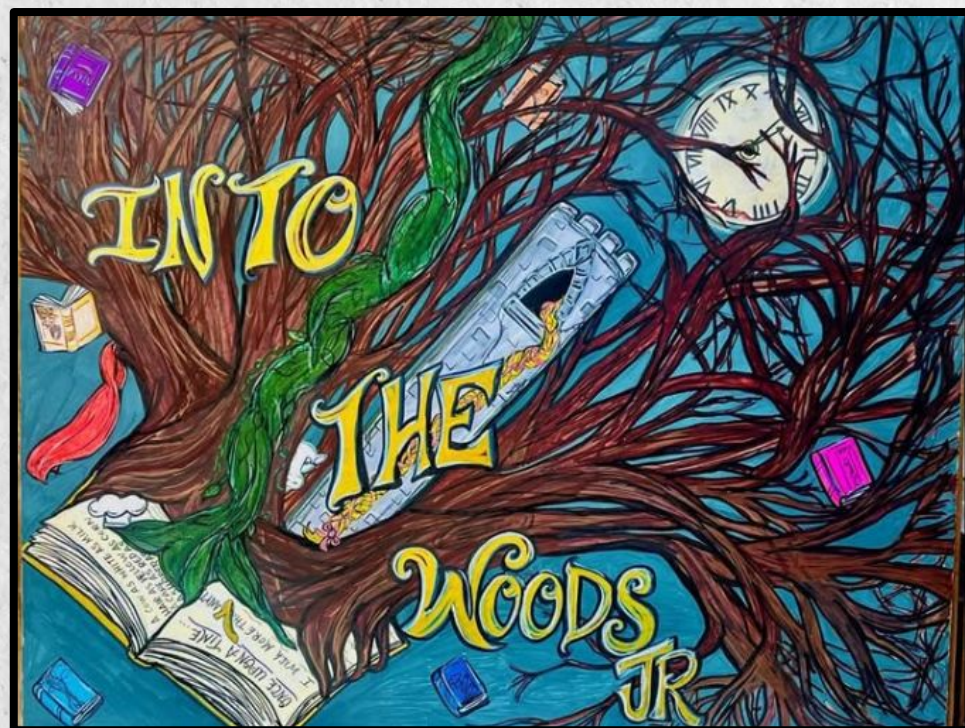
Into the Woods is a magnificent show where classic fairytales are taken and intertwined with each other, and the characters involved must make an exciting journey into the woods, and do their best to figure out how to make their wishes come true.

The main fairytales included in Into the Woods are Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Rapunzel. Each story and character mixed in is interesting and vital to the show and Mr. Bigelli and the Drama Club appreciates everyone involved.

The Drama Club at HTS not only contributes a show to the audience, but it also contributes a valuable experience for everyone involved. It helps them "have a creative outlet", letting the children express themselves in a positive way. It allows the students to gain confidence, learn how to speak and perform in public, and have a useful learning experience.

"If students have the opportunity to give it a try even once, it may spark their interest," noted Mr. Bigelli.

The Drama Club is very proud to perform their shows for all who attend, so be sure to keep a lookout for their next hit Into the Woods on March 13, 14, and 15!



Clubs

Mr. Bigelli's Successful Choir

By: Ben Lusardi



Mr. Bigelli talks to crowd at the Winter Concert.

After many years the chorus has gotten a new leader to lead their program, and his name is Mr. Bigelli.

Mr. Bigelli also runs the drama club here at HTS. Both of these clubs under his leadership have been extremely popular among the HTS students. "We have about 45 students in the chorus, and 30 students in the show choir." Said Mr. Bigelli.

Mr. Bigelli loves to include students in his clubs, but when he was running the Drama Club and the Chorus, he saw that the younger students had a lot of talent, and there aren't many clubs for the younger grades, so he decided to include the 4th graders in his clubs.

"4-8th graders can now join Chorus, it used to be 5-8th grade, but the 4th graders also had a lot of talent and couldn't join the club, so I allowed them to join, and got as many students as possible." Said Mr. Bigelli.



HTS students perform their winter concert.



If anybody ever got confused about the difference between chorus and choir, there is a minor difference.

"Chorus sings in a group together and in performances. On the other hand, Show choir is singing with dancing movements." Said Mr. Bigelli.

Both chorus and choir have amazing students with amazing talents, and they have fantastic performances, but many people don't know when chorus and choir have performances.

"In total there are 3 winter performances, The winter concert, the arts festival, and the tree lighting." Said Mr. Bigelli.

The arts festival was at Del Val High School and the choir concert was at Holland Township School.

Mr. Bigelli is hoping that his club can spark students' interest in performing arts and music and have a similar experience that he had when he was a student.

"Why I wanted to run chorus and choir is to have kids love music and appreciate it. When I was in school I had the same programs and that's how it made me who I am today, and I wanted to give kids the same experience." Said Mr. Bigelli.

If you are interested in joining in the choir be sure to be on the lookout next school year when signups become available.

Clubs

Mr. Kries and His Amazing Clubs You Can Join!

By Maximo Badolato



Students building robots out of Legos in Robotics Club.

Mr. Kries has a lot of exciting and fun activities after school, but you might not know what they are about. Some of his clubs include Chess Club, Computer Club, Passport Club, and Robotics Club. Some of the clubs have over fifty students!

The first club Mr. Kries offers during the school year is Passport Club, which takes place in October, and is offered for third and fourth graders. Mr. Kries runs it like a gameshow with world trivia, and the students learn about capitals of nations, landmarks, and other cool geographic facts and trivia.

“It is a fun way to learn about the world and flex your trivia muscles,” Mr. Kries said.

Another club run by Mr. Kries is Chess Club. This club is offered to third through eighth graders and this club is run during the month of November. It is the most popular club, this year having around fifty students! Chess Club is interesting because even if you don't know how to play chess, you play against a computer that teaches you how to play the game. If you know how to play, you can play against a harder computer or a real person to sharpen your chess skills.

“It's a fun way to be involved in school activities outside the normal school day,” Mr. Kries said.

Chess Club is a fun way to learn how to play chess, or have fun playing chess against your friends.

Computer Club happens in December through January, and is available from grades 5-8. In the club, you play Minecraft on a shared server in creative mode, where you can build anything you want, or survival, trying to survive against zombies, skeletons, and more. Mr. Kries also makes fun Minecraft Challenges for the students to conquer.



The last club Mr. Kries hosts is Robotics Club, which goes on during the months of February and March. In the club, you can build robots (mostly made of Legos), and even put wheels on them so they can move. You can program the robots, but if you don't know how to code, Mr. Kries can teach you and you can have lots of fun!

To conclude, Mr. Kries has many clubs that you may qualify for, so join the club that is right for you.

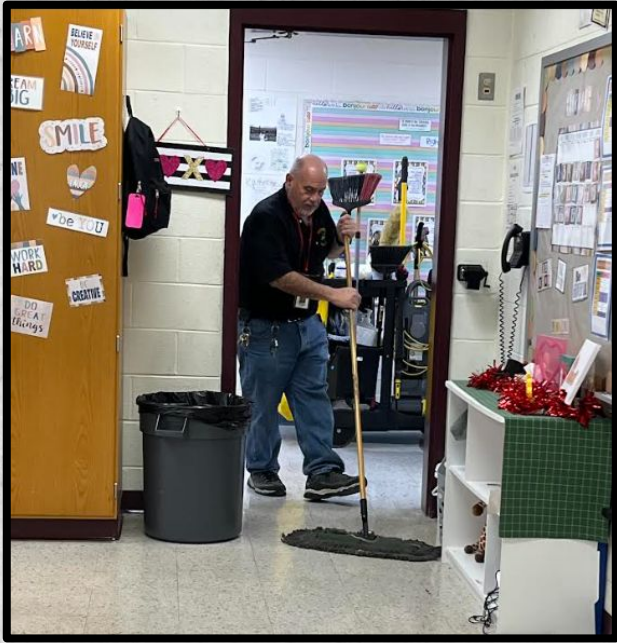


The Holland Herald

The Collective Effort of Cleaning Holland School

How we can help our janitors to keep the school clean.

By Amelia Carpenter



Mr. Parenti working hard to keep the school clean after school

When was the last time you wiped down your school desk? Your locker? Your cafeteria table?

Our school custodians do these simple jobs everyday. They take care of the school so the students can learn and teachers can teach.

Our custodians work long hours to keep our school clean.

“My hours are 9-5:30. 6:45-3:15, the night staff works 2:30-11:00.” Mr. Parenti says.

Holland Township school has 5 full time custodians that work long hours to help clean the school on a daily basis.

This time of year especially, living in the cold, snowy mountains, the custodians work much harder.

“This time of year salt is a big challenge because the salt gets tracked from the outside to the inside.” Mr. Parenti said.

Our custodians even work weekends, and come in after storms to make sure the school is safe.

“A few weeks ago, on a Sunday, it took four and half hours to chop ice off the sidewalks and parking lot. It takes a lot for us to make sure the school is ready to open,” Mr. Parenti stated.

Winter is not the only season the custodians have to work overtime for.

“During baseball season and softball season, we are in charge of maintaining the fields. Mr. Bidwell cuts the grass. We are in charge of all landscaping.”

Mr. Parenti shocked me when he said that summer is the most chaotic part of the year.

“Summer is the busiest time. Every room gets cleaned, top to bottom, and the tiles on the floor get rewaxed so it’s ready in August for the school to be ready.”

On a day to day basis, Mr. Parenti said that “The biggest challenge is keeping up with the daily cleaning.”

So what can we do to make our janitor’s lives easier?

Mr. Parenti said that above all else, “Flushing the toilets and washing your hands. That would save me a million.”

Other than basic hygiene, picking up trash when you see it and respecting the school environment will go a long way.

“I think it’s important that we as a school take ownership and do our part to keep the school clean. We have an absolutely beautiful school, and we are extremely lucky and fortunate to call this place home. We need to really focus on doing our part so that we make the jobs of the custodians as easy as possible, and make Holland the best place it could be,” Mr. Horak says.

Holland Township School is a beautiful place, let’s all do our part to help our janitors keep it that way.

The Holland Herald

The Positive Benefits of Snow Days

By Addison Simini



Students aren't the only ones who benefit from snow days! 4th grade teacher Mr. Horak enjoys a day off from school to play in snow with his two children.

Snow Days!

Every child in NJ dreams of a day when there is no school and the ground is covered in a cold white dust. Snow.

Snow occurs when ice crystals suspended in the atmosphere fall to the ground, accumulating creating a soft fluffy landing ground. On average New Jersey receives between 43 to 47 inches per year of snow.

Snow days are a day when children can take a break from school and enjoy the outdoors by building igloos, having snowball fights and sledding.

"Playing in the snow, building forts, or engaging in imaginative indoor activities can boost creativity and overall happiness," said school counselor, Mrs. Deniz.

Winter falls in the middle of the school year grind. Snow days are unexpected breaks in the school week and can be an opportunity for students to relieve stress.

"I think that snow days provide a perfect opportunity for students to focus on their mental health and well-being! They give children and families a great chance to take a break from the usual school routine, allowing their minds and bodies to rest, which helps with focus and emotional regulation," Mrs. Deniz stated.

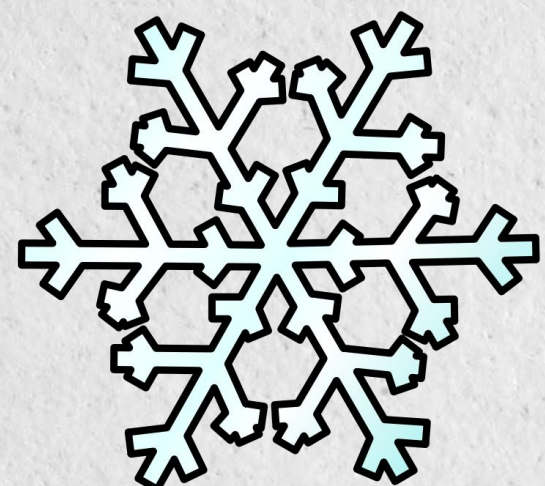
However, too many snow days can cause negative results for students who want an early start to summer break.

Schools in NJ are only given a built in snow days a year to stop them from going late into June however after those days are up all days that are used are added on to the end of the year. That could cause the school year to go to as late as July!

At the time of this article HTS has only used one snow day so far this school year so, Dont stress! When a snow day comes, enjoy it!

"I always encourage students to embrace snow days as a time for self-care so they return to school feeling refreshed and ready to learn," said Mrs. Deniz.

Whether you hate or love snow, everyone can agree that the occasional snow day is worth it!



Events

Student Council Hosts Several Events for HTS Students

By Cooper Howe

Student council is responsible for many of our school's activities. Student council plans the dances, activities, fundraisers, and more.

"Student council does their best to host an activity once a month," says Mr.Pfenning. "The activities are for different grades so all students can participate."

The last dance hosted by the student council was the winter formal. "About 100 tickets were sold for the winter dance," Mr. Pfenning said.

The winter formal took a lot of planning and required a lot of preparation to pull off a successful event.

"Planning for the dance starts in September when Ms.Leap and I pick a date for the dance. Then as the dance approaches, Ms.Leap and I talk to student council members about if they want a photo booth at the dance, pizza, and other snacks. We also have to go through our decorations to see if we have to go out and buy new ones. Then we send out signup sheets for the student council to help at the dance," Mr.Pfenning stated.

The most popular dance is the Halloween dance. "Most kids sign up for the dance to see if they like student council dances," said Mr.Pfenning.

The next dance for Student Council will be on March 14th for any student interested in having fun.

Student Council is for middle school students, so if you are in middle school, you can sign up!

Upcoming Student Council Events

- March 14th- Spring Dance
- April 25th- TBD
- May- TBD
- June-End of the Year Student Council Party

Events

PTO Continued Support of HTS

By: Cooper Howe



The Holland Township School PTO is an organization at the school who has been helping creating events and setting goals to enrich the student experience at HTS.

The PTO's first task is to help raise enough money to build an outdoor pavilion at the school. Back in October the PTO sponsored a bubble fun run to raise money for the structure. The bubble run was a major success!

"This was the event of the year! Not only was it successful, but it brought the entire school community and surrounding community together," said PTO President, Mrs. Bickhardt. "As you could see in our world map, not only did we touch our community, but we touched 42 states and two other countries! The participation from the students, teachers, staff, administration, parents and extended family was key. Raising Over \$30,000 is incredible. "

Now that the PTO did its part to raise money the project is ready to take the next steps in the process.

"The township and school are speaking with an architect to guide the next steps. Most likely these are placement, grading, and permits," Mrs. Bickhardt stated.

As the project inches closer to the next phase the PTO is excited for the potential the finished product will have.

"Raising money for the pavilion, one that is going to serve everyone in our school community as well as our surrounding community, will show the breath of how this money is going to be working for everyone for years to come," Mrs. Bickhardt said excitedly.

The Bubble Run is just one event that PTO sponsors. The organization also has a number of other fun activities planned for the future.

"The PTO was committed to doing one large fundraiser this year, and we have some really great fundraisers planned for later this year. The large fundraiser was, of course, the bubble run. And some fundraisers we had or will have coming up. Are the Q crew barbecue, Valentine's Day Heart shaped pizzas, cookie decorating kits, and a trip to Medieval times!"

The PTO also does events for families, not just students!

"In addition to fundraising, the PTO does some amazing family events. During the fall season, we had a movie night, where families were able to view the Grinch and home alone, two seasonal favorites. There were snacks and hot cocoa. The school community loved it. We are planning another family event for the spring, stay tuned," said Mrs. Bickhardt.

If you enjoyed the fun run this year, then you will be looking forward to a similar event next year!

"We plan on doing another fun run with some theme next fall. This will be to add additional funds needed for engineering, permitting, Land, excavation, etc. that may be needed to put up the pavilion," Mrs. Bickhardt stated.

The PTO helps Holland Township School be the great school it is! If you see someone who works for the PTO, thank them for their work!

Sports

Girls Basketball Completes Conference Championship Season!

By Cali Travers



Girls Basketball Team Celebrates Conference Championship at North Hunterdon High School.

The 2024-2025 HTS Girls' Basketball team had a legendary championship season.

The team capped off their season by winning the conference championship at North Hunterdon High School. They finished with an astonishing record of fourteen wins and only one loss.

"It was an amazing game. We lost the first game by three to Bethlehem. We were the second seed and got redemption. We got to play at North Hunterdon High School. We beat Bethlehem by twenty with great passes and amazing teamwork. The bleachers was packed with a huge audience," proudly stated Ms. Raulf. "It was a true team effort and it was great to get rewarded with the championship trophy."

Ms. Raulf really enjoyed coaching the team this year, and is excited to see how next year's team will be on the court.

"I had a really respectful, hard working team that really cared about the sport. The team wanted to improve their games. I had girls staying after practice because they wanted to get better."

The girls this year were very determined to win, always putting their best foot forward and bringing their A games.

The team can credit a lot of the team's success due to the veteran leadership on the team.

"All my 8th graders were wonderful. I hope they continue their basketball journey. I am very excited to see them at the next level at high school and plan to watch them," Coach Raulf stated.

This year, our graduating 8th graders are Quinn W, Avery T, Gwen M, Leah W, Josalyn C, and Arrow.

Though we are sad to see them go, Ms. Raulf has high hopes for the upcoming 2025-2026 season.

"I think next year's team has a lot of potential," says Ms. Raulf. "We will miss our eighth graders but I'm excited to see what the sixth graders can do next year, and we can have a great season."

Though the whole team worked together beautifully and each had their own strengths and skills, 8th grade MVP Quinn W stood out with her ability to lead the team and boost their morale.

"I could see Quinn has a strong chance to make the varsity roster at Del Val High School. I also think her career could go beyond high school," confidently stated Ms. Raulf. Quinn W herself said "We worked very hard throughout the season and never quit."

Ms. Raulf's final remarks were "I am so proud of this team. It makes me smile everytime I talk about them. Everyone had a major impact on this team."

No matter what the future holds, the 2024-2025 girls' basketball season will definitely go down in HTS history and won't be forgotten anytime soon.

Sports



Members of the 24-25 HTS Boys Basketball Team.

Boys Basketball Steadily Improves in 2025 Season.

By Cooper Howe

The Holland boys basketball team has worked really hard this season. They had a great season and showed much improvement!

The basketball team had 8 wins and 6 losses this year. The best game they had was the playoffs against Union.

“The Union game was the best game all year. Took the momentum quick and went with it,” said Coach Kirshman on his team’s upset win.

“The playoff game vs Union was a memorable one. Our team really came together and played our hearts out and deserved to win. We were the 6 seed the last team in the playoffs and they were a 3 seed. It was our very first game of the season and we lost by 20. So seeing the turnaround and the way we were able to overcome the adversity and beat them on their home court was awesome,” stated eighth grade standout Michal H.

The team has its share of great players that were major reasons for the team’s success.

“Michal H was the best player. Great shooter and aggressive,” replied Coach Kirshman. “Cole and Diego did a great job holding down our defense.”

Sadly not all of the team will be back next year.

“We will lose 4 of our starting 5. But we will rely on a lot of younger guys next but we are still expecting to be solid,” says Coach Kirshman.

This is Coach Kirshman’s first year of coaching at Holland Township School. Coach Kirshman is also a Holland Township School graduate from the class of 2016. Coach Kirshman encourages anyone interested in playing to come out next year and give it a shot.

“Everybody should try out. No harm in trying out. Try to get as much experience as you can at this level,” answers Coach Kirshman.

“It is a very fun experience to play for the school team that is all about winning games,” replies Michal H on his experience playing for the middle school team.

So if you are interested in playing basketball, don’t be afraid to try out for the team! Congratulations to the boys basketball team for working hard.

Sports

Why is NASCAR a Great Sport?

By Cooper Howe (Opinion)



Some people think that NASCAR is just about cars going in circles. But it is not! There are a lot of great things about NASCAR. After you read this, you will see why NASCAR is an awesome sport!

Statista states that 45% of Americans are NASCAR fans. There are plenty of reasons why fans like NASCAR. Here are a few of the reasons:

Food: If you ever go to a NASCAR track, most likely you will find great food! Hot dogs, burgers, chili, and more!

Surprise: It is impossible to predict what will happen in a race. So when something does happen, you would not see it coming! You can make your own guess about what will happen!

Tracks: The tracks are awesome! They are not too small or too big. The pit road can be short, long, narrow, wide.

Cars: This is probably one of the biggest reasons. The cars are fast, cool, have great drivers, and have company logos. People love their speed!

Crashes: This is not a good reason, but people love action!

NASCAR is an amazing sport. The fans LOVE it! Maybe you will, after reading this. Watch a race and see if you enjoy it!

From HTS To CFP

HTS Alumni Tyler Holzworth plays in College Football Playoff

By: Mr. Horak



Photo courtesy Penn State Athletics Communications

The Penn State Nittany Lions had an incredible season. PSU finished the season with a 13-3 record and were just one game away from playing in the National Championship Game.

The Nittany Lions came up just short in a hard fought battle vs the Notre Dame Fighting Irish.

One of the players making plays this season for the Nittany Lions was former HTS student Tyler Holzworth.

Holzworth originally played for Del Val University in Doylestown, Pa after graduating from Delaware Valley Regional High School. After a year at the Division III level, Holzworth decided to chase his dream and enroll at Penn State University. Tyler decided to walk on and try out for the football team and earned himself a role on the national ranked Nittany Lions.

Holzworth appeared in a total of 10 games this season and saw an increased role on several special teams units.

Aside from being a great athlete, Holzworth has also shown great dedication to his studies in the classroom earning Academic All-Big Ten honors. This is sure to make his former teachers at Holland very proud.

Holzworth has one more year of eligibility remaining and will be a redshirt senior next season. Penn State returns many of their returning starters next season and should be in position for another return to the College Football Playoff.