



# APOLLO-RIDGE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Enriching Education

PO Box 219, Spring Church PA 15686

724-478-6010

www.apolloridge.com

## SOME STUFF WE BET YA DIDN'T KNOW ...

- Over the past two years, Apollo-Ridge moved up **17 places** in the Pittsburgh Business Times 2010 Guide to Western PA Schools.
- Dr. Cheryl Griffith became the first female superintendent in Apollo-Ridge history** when she was hired to replace Dr. Michael Vranesevic in 2007. The trend continued in 2009 when Dr. Griffith's successor, Mrs. Margaret DiNinno, was hired.
- The **Apollo-Ridge Virtual Academy, an on-line learning resource, was developed in 2008** in response to the loss of students to cyber schools. The program will evolve in 2011-2012 to provide students with remediation and enrichment opportunities.
- The code used to alert staff that Principal Barnett was visiting the Elders Ridge Elementary School was **"the cat's on the mat."** "The kitten's on the mitten" was used for the assistant principal.
- The Apollo-Ridge Kindergarten program, started in 1970-1971, was made possible through the generosity of the professional staff.** The teachers forfeited their salary increase that year. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, Kindergarten students will attend a full-day program.
- In the early days, before clearances were necessary and school lunches weren't mandated by the state, **if a cafeteria employee was unable to come to work, they would call one of the neighbors to serve the meal.** At that time, hot food was served one day a week to some, but not all of the buildings due to the distance of the outlying buildings from the main kitchen. Today's food service staff are certified by ServSafe.
- Apollo-Ridge was able to present a preliminary budget for 2011-2012 that called for **no tax increase for the third year in a row** through creative financing and use of district personnel. The \$20.4 million budget is also \$1 million less than the 2010-2011 budget.
- Apollo-Ridge was one of the **first school's to start an email newsletter.** The eNewsletter thrives 2011 with a database of over 800 subscribers.
- The Sherwin Williams names for the paint colors used by the District are **Honorable Blue and Cheerful Yellow.**
- In order that each child learns to their fullest potential, **plans to customize education plans are being developed for every student for both enrichment and remediation.** The use of tools like interactive whiteboard technology; A-RVA, Apollo-Ridge's Virtual Academy, an on-line cyber school using A-R curriculum; educational team meetings that include the student, parents and teachers; Professional Learning Communities (PLC) or time set aside for teachers to review individual student progress; and powerful data analysis programs will enable this goal to be accomplished in 2011-2012.
- In 1969, **Vicki (White) Myers entered a contest to write the words to the Alma Mater** because she needed money to buy her boyfriend a Christmas present. She was awarded \$10 for her efforts.
- At the Iselin Elementary building, water was in short supply. Students would line up to wash their hands in the same bowl of water when returning from recess or before going to lunch. **A Clorox bottle was used as a meter to determine how much water was in the tower.** If the bottle was hanging high, it meant low water and no school.
- A cross country team was added to the athletic program with the District merger. As interest flagged, the sport was dropped. It is hoped that cross country will return in 2011-2012 because of the interest generated by the current track coaching staff. A running club was started in 2009-2010 and a fitness trail is set for completion in September 2011. **The Community Fitness Trail will support all physical education classes and be used to train all of the District's athletes. It will also be a health and wellness resource for the surrounding community.**



Rumor has it that the buildings at Elders Ridge were haunted by a woman in a black dress.

# Apollo-Ridge School District

## Becoming Vikings

### 40 Years of Merging Tradition with Innovation

\$5.00 each copy

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#### MERGER BACKGROUND

Act 561 in 1961 attempted to reduce the number of districts to one-fourth of the then existing 2,277 districts. Act 299 of 1963 added incentives for consolidation by providing for special payments to union and merged districts, as well as jointures and newly-merged districts. Act 150 of 1968, amended both acts by providing for additional consolidations for those districts not included in the previous consolidations. The number of districts in Pennsylvania was reduced from a high of 2599 in 1909-1910 to 505 in 1979-1980.

PA PSBA-MERGER-DOCUMENT

#### FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The Apollo-Ridge School Board purchased the 55-acre Tomicek farm for \$65,000 on which to build the Apollo-Ridge Senior High School in April of 1972. It took until 2004 for all Apollo-Ridge students to be housed on a single campus in Spring Church.

In the mid-1960's, Pennsylvania supported nearly 2300 school districts. The Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction determined that two new districts would be formed in Armstrong County: the Northern Armstrong School District and the Southern. Apollo was to have merged with Freeport, Leechburg and Elders Ridge to form the Southern Armstrong District.

On July 1, 1969, the Pennsylvania Department of Instruction authorized the merger of Apollo and Elders Ridge, ending a sports rivalry that had gone on for nearly two decades.

As you can imagine, the merger was met with opposition from both sides. Apollo's Tigers were resistant to being schooled with "farmers" and were used to walking downtown at lunchtime. Elders Ridge's Ram weren't interested in being bused into town.

The Elders Ridge curriculum continued to focus on agricultural and vocational education, and for a time, students living in Kiski Township had the luxury of deciding which high school



The Apollo-Ridge Board authorized obtaining gas wells and rights for an additional \$27,500 when they purchased the Tomicek Farm.

building they wished to attend based upon their academic interests.

The conflict wasn't limited to the students. Parents and staff were also divided over the decision and School Board minutes indicated that the merger wasn't welcomed.

By the time the Apollo-Ridge High School was completed in 1975, many of the barriers had been taken down, and the Tigers and Rams had become Vikings. The blue and white of "The Ridge" and Apollo's black and orange had blended into the blue and gold of Apollo-Ridge.

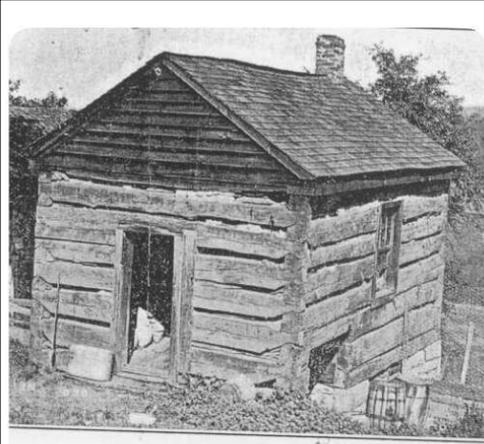
As with most things, knowing where you came from helps you to get where you are going. And Apollo-Ridge is no different in that respect. The District's philosophy on what is best for student success is coming full circle as it works toward developing an academy-style learning environment for students — much as Elders Ridge did many years ago.

Technological advances in the classrooms of 2011 help customize student learning to meet post-secondary needs, much like our predecessors did through the courses of study offered at the Elders Ridge Academy. Internet and computers allow Apollo-Ridge students to learn from "virtually" anywhere. Smart board technology and learner response systems allow students to learn the way they play.

So turn the page to go back to the future ... *Enjoy the Journey!*

## ELDERS RIDGE - A RICH HISTORY

Much of the rich history of the District comes from Elders Ridge. From log cabin to elementary school, Elders Ridge went through several incarnations before being sold in 2005. While the building stands vacant today, it was a portal of learning for thousands of scholars.



ELDERSRIDGE ACADEMY IN 1839.

Photo courtesy: Indiana Historical Society, Indiana, Pennsylvania



Reverend Dr. Alexander Donaldson came to the town of Elders Ridge to be pastor of the Presbyterian Church and was asked to give private instruction in the classics, as well as other subjects, to young men who were preparing for college. After it's humble beginning, the enrollment of the academy continued to increase except for a spread of the typhoid epidemic and the Civil War. In 1849, a woman's department was begun. However, it was abandoned in 1858 because there weren't any suitable boarding areas for them.

### ELDERS RIDGE ACADEMY

"Back in 1832 a few persons began reciting privately to Rev. Alexander Donaldson in the second story of a log springhouse at Elders Ridge."

This was the beginning of the famous Elders Ridge Academy. With no thought of an institution evolving from the lessons he gave, Rev. Donaldson agreed to give private instruction in the classics and other branches to young men preparing to enter college. However, during the winter and spring of 1847, the number of applicants for instruction had so increased that Rev. Donaldson was faced with the decision of either giving up the instruction or obtaining assistance in teaching.

J.M. Barnett of Blairsville, then an undergraduate in Jefferson College, was engaged as an assistant. On April 16, 1847, the academy school was opened in Rev. Donaldson's study with 16 pupils. 31 were admitted during the first two sessions, with a total of 62 students being taught in the 7th year.

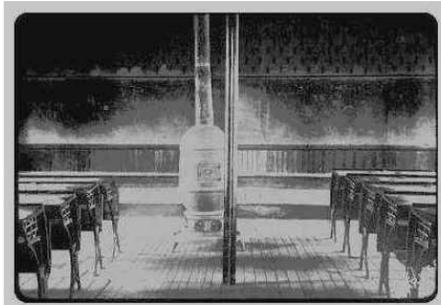
The first schoolroom was a small one-story frame building designed to accommodate from 20 to 30 students. Rev. Donaldson built the schoolroom at his own expense for \$320. Later in 1852 at a cost of \$2000 he erected a two-story brick building.

The purpose of the institution from the first was twofold; to prepare young men for entering college and to provide properly qualified teachers for common and other schools. In both of these aims the academy had considerable success. The academy came to have representa-

tives from Pennsylvania and the surrounding states, principally the middle and western, but also Mississippi and Louisiana.

About a dozen families within a radius of two miles, for a few years at first accommodated the students with boarding at one dollar per week. Within ten years, John Smith, Christopher Iman and John

(Continued on page 3)



The date of this photo is unknown; however, it is probably from the very early 20th century. The wood floors and wood wainscoting can be clearly seen. Above the black-board there appears to be patterned wallpaper. The coal-fueled potbelly stove was used to heat the classroom.

Photo: courtesy Indiana County Historical Society Indiana, Pennsylvania, Elder's Ridge Academy folder



Elder's Ridge Academy, Class of 1906

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### APOLLO-RIDGE SPEAKERS SERIES

#### The High School Staff

Mr. Gary Davis  
Ms. Deborah Wright  
Ms. Sheryl Baum  
Ms. Marlene Buchner  
Ms. Marian Schmid  
Mr. Bob Zoldak  
Mr. Matthew Curci

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Ms. Cindy Bush  
Ms. Linda Slicker  
Ms. Linda Rollinson  
Ms. Kim Altmire  
Mr. Greg Fox  
Ms. Danielle White  
Ms. Sue Arnoldy

#### The Graduates

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Ms. Debra Knepshield  
Ms. Virginia Madison  
Mr. Harold Geiger  
Mr. John Simon  
Ms. Afton Dobrosky  
Ms. Danielle White  
Ms. Joyce Scibek  
Mr. Matt Curci  
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Ms. Linda Faiola  
Ms. Joyce Scibek  
Mr. Robert Skwirut  
Ms. Carolyn Richards  
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Ms. Marcia Broman  
Ms. Sharon Jaworskyj  
Ms. Carol Rodnicki  
Mr. William Naser  
Ms. Lena Ferrero

#### History of Apollo, 1916 to 1976

Mrs. Nancy Stevens  
Project Advisor

#### Apollo Area Historical Society

#### Indiana Historical Society

#### Kiski Valley News (Apollo News Record)

#### Indiana Gazette

#### Melissa Glasser

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TRINA GAME ANSWER KEY 1. July 1, 1969; 2. Rams, Tigers and Vikings; 3. Blue/White; 4. Darlene Hughes and Helen Eaton; 5. April Foods Day - April 1, 1975; 6. October 10, 1976 Carolyn Ferrence, Mark Miedel, Robert Zoldak; 7. Problems with the insulation; 8. The walls could not move and there were no doors; 9. The Indiana County Fair on August 26, 1993; 10. Seminar Room and Library Classroom; Seminar room has 2 doors; 11. 1969-1970; 12. 1984; 13. 1989-1990; 5 years; 14. Vicki Myers - Lynch; 15. Mitchell - Music; 16. Tomcek and Gasser Farms; Tomcek Farm; 16. Apollo, Elders Ridge, Leachburg and Freeport; 17. Extremely cold temperatures; Pants were worn under skirts to school than removed; 18. John Koontz; 19. Future Farmers of America; Future Teachers of America; and Future Homemakers; 20. 1970-1971; Teachers forfeited pay increases; 21. 2nd Street; 22. Township Garage; Thompson's Garage and the Church Basement; 23. April 1847; December 2003; 24. No lights at the field; 25. Runestons; carved stones used by Vikings to communicate; 27. Bill Toland, Pat Dancho, Joe Rinaldi, Rich Zuchelli and Suzy Ferry; 28. Eimer Morgan-Coach; Jim Sapsky; Tucker Schultz; Doug Laedlin; Mike Tamki; Mike Booker; Lynn Hillman; John Simon; Chuck Pazzo; Shawn Brown; Eric Meyerhuber; Steve Brown; Eric Morgan; Greg McDemott; Mike Orndt; Jim Galnae; Dave Hemick; Mike McCallum; Doug Shupe; Dom Romeo; Tony Bonanni; Ron Widmer; Steve Aungst; Todd Ruggert; 29. October 26, 2001; Burnell; 30. 14; 31. Greg Fox; so that he could participate in extra-curricular activities; 32. PTA due to deteriorating conditions of the existing building; 33. Student Council held a contest; 34. Michael Hancock; 13; 35. Gary Davis and Bill Brayshaw; Mark Timko - 53 points; 36. 1970-1971; Lorraine Cadwell; 37. Iselin Elementary; the bottle determined the water level in the water tower - no water; no school; 38. Apollo; North Apollo; Sunnyside; Elders Ridge; 39. January 3, 2004; Learning Festival-May 2004; 40. Reflections

## 40 YEARS IN 40 DAYS

## APOLLO-RIDGE HISTORY DETECTIVES



The 40 Years in 40 Days Innovative Projects Grant, funded by the Apollo-Ridge Education Foundation, included the creation of the Apollo-Ridge History Detectives Club.

The History Detectives — Ashley Worst, Kayleigh Jenkins, Shannon Bittinger, Michael Glasser and Michael Connor — researched the District's history by searching through yearbooks, newspaper clippings, school board meeting minutes and, finally, by inviting District stakeholders to participate in the Speakers Series.

The Detectives developed a Scavenger Hunt Trivia Game to strengthen the school / community / business bond. The Game served as a fund raiser for the 2011 Learning Festival — a celebration of the 40 year history of the District. Funds also supported the development and construction of the Apollo-Ridge Community Fitness Trail.

The 40 Years in 40 Days Trivia Challenge — see if you can answer these questions about Apollo-Ridge!

- On what date was the Apollo-Ridge School District authorized to be established by the Department of Public Instruction?
- Name the mascots for Elders Ridge, Apollo and Apollo-Ridge, respectively.
- Name the school colors for Elders Ridge, Apollo and Apollo-Ridge, respectively.
- At the groundbreaking for the Apollo-Ridge High School, Governor Milton Shapp was in attendance. Name the students photographed with him that day.
- On what minor holiday did the first High School students occupy the new building?
- On what date was the Apollo-Ridge High School dedicated and name three faculty members still on.
- What happened on the fifth day students occupied the new Apollo-Ridge High School that caused school to be closed?
- What was unique about the newly-constructed High School?
- Where was the first public performance of the Apollo-Ridge marching band?
- Name two High School rooms that now serve different purposes than originally designed and which one was the only one with two doors.
- At the end of what school year did the first class graduate from Apollo-Ridge?
- Name the first Drama Club production at Apollo-Ridge High School.
- In what school year did Apollo-Ridge go "broke" and how many years did the recovery plan take?
- Two individuals were responsible for the writing of the Apollo-Ridge Alma Mater—name them.
- Name the two locations considered for the site of the new Apollo-Ridge School District. Which one was chosen?
- The original merger plan was to have only two districts in Armstrong County. Name the schools that were to comprise the Southern Armstrong School District.
- It wasn't until the mid-70's that females were permitted to wear slacks to school, with one exception. What were the conditions for the exception?
- To whom was the 1979-1980 Apollo-Ridge Middle School yearbook dedicated?
- Name the three "future" clubs from the time of the merger that are no longer active.
- In what school year did the kindergarten program start and what significant event helped to fund it?
- On what street was the "red building" located that housed the Jr. High School and the cafeteria?
- On May 4, 1951, fire destroyed the Elders Ridge High School. Where were classes held for the remainder of that school year?
- When did the Elders Ridge Academy open and in what year did the Elders Ridge Elementary School close?
- Why were Elders Ridge football games played on Saturday afternoons?
- What was the first full year spent in the new Apollo-Ridge Middle School?
- What was the name of the Apollo-Ridge Middle School yearbook until 2005? What does the word mean?
- Five 6th grade teachers called themselves "The Jackson Five." Who were they?
- Name the head coach and three players who were on the championship track team in 1984.
- On what date did Apollo-Ridge clinch their 2<sup>nd</sup> straight Allegheny Conference football title and what team did they beat?
- Apollo and Elders Ridge were football rivals for fourteen years. How many games did Apollo win?
- Which 1989 Apollo-Ridge graduate completed high school with a perfect attendance record and why?
- What group began advocating for a new middle school to be built?
- How were the school colors and mascot chosen when the District merged?
- Who was the Western PA Spelling Champ in 1972 and how old was he?
- Name the coaching team who took the Apollo-Ridge Boys Basketball program to four consecutive section championships in the 1980's and the player who earned a record for points scored.
- In what year was the first Middle School newspaper published and who was the editor in chief?
- Which elementary school building was deemed open or closed depending on the status of a Clorox bottle?
- Name the four elementary schools that merged when the Apollo-Ridge Elementary School was built.
- On what date was the Apollo-Ridge Elementary School occupied and at what event was it dedicated?
- Name the PTA program that challenges students to create art inspired by a specific theme.

Answers on page 19!

## ELDERS RIDGE—A RICH HISTORY

## ELDERS RIDGE ACADEMY

(Continued from page 2)

Thom had erected boarding houses. During the same time boarding rose to \$1.25 and increased from year to year until it was raised to \$3.50.

In 1849 a woman's department of the academy was opened under the care of Miss Martha Bracken but it was abandoned in 1858 because of the difficulty in securing suitable boarding places for them. Some years later the academy admitted females upon condition they would keep up with the males in class work and its doors were never closed to women after that.

In 1876 Rev. Donaldson, wishing to secure in a legal way the perpetuation of the academy after he would be separated from it, selected a board of 19 trustees from the different religious denominations in the vicinity. The agreement contained the condition that in selecting the faculty, the principal should always be a Presbyterian. To this board of trustees, Rev. Donaldson conveyed all his right, title, interest and claim to the academy building, its grounds, etc. asking in return that whenever any of his descendants should be sent to it as a pupil, no charge should be made for tuition. In 1885 he sent a letter of resignation as principal of the school to the board. It was accepted and Professor T.B. Elder who had been associated with him as assistant for nearly half the time since the school's organization was chosen principal.

Around 1910 the school ran into financial troubles and was about to be sold when Lucius W. Robinson, president of the Rochester and Pittsburgh Coal Company agreed to give the school \$3000 to help pay off the debt and turn the school over to a board of trustees in five years, provided it could be conducted in a self-supporting fashion.

In 1914 the Elders Ridge Vocational School was established. It was the pioneer school of its type in the state. On October 31, 1932, the gymnasium with the original log academy burned. In 1933, a large yellow brick building was erected on the site of the old gym. Most of it was destroyed by fire on March 4, 1951."

Article courtesy: Indiana Gazette, Indiana, Pennsylvania.



The campus of the vocational school consisted of three buildings. The first building, the Academy Building, was constructed in 1852. A red brick building, it contained three classrooms and stood on the site of the present Donaldson Building. The Academy Building was destroyed by fire in 1936.



The other two vocational buildings were the gymnasium and the dormitory. The gymnasium (foreground), a wooden structure, was built in 1900. It housed the gymnasium, the agricultural classrooms and a laboratory. Also destroyed by fire in 1932, it was located on the site that would later become the Allshouse building. The third building, the dormitory, housed boys who had no transportation to school. The principal's residence and the homemaking department were also located here. The building was torn down in 1954.

Photo courtesy Indiana County Historical Society, Indiana, Pa.

## Elders Ridge High School Alma Mater

Where the top of Elders Ridge meets the eastern sky,  
Proudly stands our Alma Mater on the hilltop high.

Flag we love, blue and white, floats for aye,

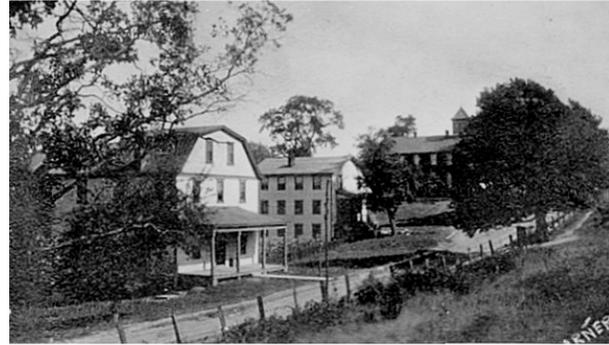
E.R.H.S. o're thee, may thy sons be true and loyal to thy memory.



## ELDERS RIDGE – A RICH HISTORY

### ELDERS RIDGE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Although a number of influential citizens discussed the idea of a high school, it was decided that graduates of a vocational school would be of more value to the community. This was the first state-supported school of its kind in Pennsylvania. Just as the Academy enjoyed many years of success and acclaim, so did the Vocational School. Although academic subjects were taught, the emphasis was on practical training in areas such as agriculture for male students and home-making for female students. Tuition to the school was free to those who passed the entrance exam. A number of the buildings used by the Academy were used by the Vocational School.



A rare photo of all three buildings of the Vocational School taken before 1932.

Clarence D. Stephenson, Indiana County, 175th Anniversary History, vols. 3, 4  
(Indiana, Pennsylvania: Halldin Publishing, Company, 1979, 1983), 336-38, 103.

### ELDERS RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

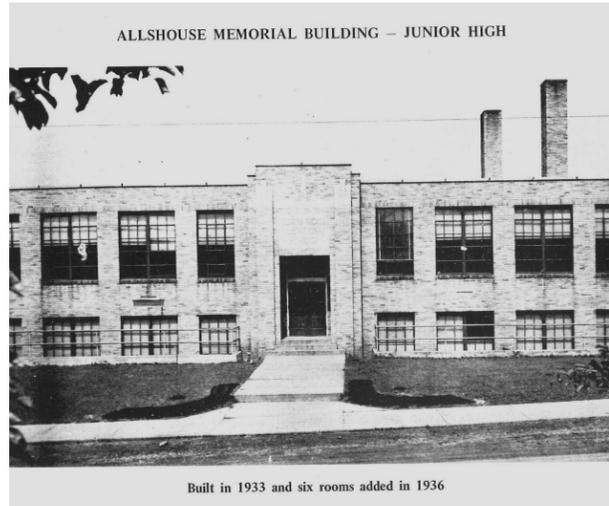
In 1937, the Vocational School ceased and became a high school for the students from Elders Ridge.

In 1951, a fire, which started in the vocational shop, gutted the building. Ten classrooms were destroyed and only four rooms at the front of the building were saved. The estimated loss was \$334,000 at the third fire at the school within a 15 year period.

At the time of the fire, the Donaldson Memorial Building was under construction. On March 4, 1954, the Donaldson and Allshouse Memorial Buildings were dedicated. The Donaldson building was named after Dr. Alexander Donaldson and the Allshouse building after Charles Allshouse, a former school board president.

Also dedicated at that time was the Yuha Memorial Field named in memory of John Yuha, a student who died after injuries suffered during a football game.

When Elders Ridge merged with Apollo in 1969, the Elders Ridge High School became known as the Apollo-Ridge High School. The buildings were used in this capacity until 1975 when the new Apollo-Ridge High School opened in Spring Church. In 1975, the Donaldson Memorial building became the Elders Ridge Elementary. The Allshouse building was torn down in the interim.



Built in 1933 and six rooms added in 1936



Allshouse building gutted by fire in 1951.

## APOLLO-RIDGE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

### ENRICHING EDUCATION

The Apollo-Ridge School District faces many challenges in educating the students of the district. The most urgent one is the need to continue providing quality educational opportunities for students and the chance to succeed in life.

The Apollo-Ridge Education Foundation was formed in 1996 to provide concerned individuals with the opportunity to contribute tax deductible, charitable donations to enhance educational programs.

Over the years, the Foundation has distributed more than \$25,000 to classroom teachers. Projects funded include Civil War photography; Artist in Residence program through a partnership with IUP; a virtual autopsy where students watched a videotaped autopsy and solved for cause of death; a fifth grade Invention Convention; visits by the Mobile Ag Science Lab from Penn State University; a World War II retrospective celebrating the 60 year anniversary of the end of the war; and a birding club tracking blue bird activity in Pennsylvania.

The Foundation is heavily involved in strengthening community relationships through memberships in the Apollo Area Historical Society; the Apollo Area Business Association; the StrongLand Chamber of Commerce; and Armstrong County Chamber of Commerce.

Currently students volunteer at the local food banks and participate in community clean-up efforts. A plan is underway to involve senior citizens in a volunteer program that offers tax rebates for service to the school.

The Foundation invites local business and community leaders to participate on the Board of Trustees to further its mission of enriching education.

### INNOVATIVE PROJECTS GRANTS

Each year the Education Foundation's Board of Trustees awards grants of up to \$500 to educators for classroom projects that enrich existing curriculum.

#### GIVING SUPPORTS THE GRANT PROCESS

The Foundation is available to all donors of varied interests and giving capabilities. Depending on the size of the gift, a donor may:

- make a general contribution;
- designate an area of educational interest, such as technology;
- designate an area of geographic interest, such as the Middle School;
- or restrict the donation for a specific project.

The Foundation will pool all donations to maximize returns and further enhance each gift's impact. Distribution is then made at the discretion of the Board of Trustees or the donor, if specified, as a restricted donation.

The Foundation offers donors recognition for their gifts, often honoring a loved one, a family member, or a former teacher. Along with gifts of cash, contributors may take full advantage of tax reduction incentives offered through charitable gifts of securities, real estate, insurance trusts or a will.

If you would like more information or would like to discuss the Foundation with a trustee, please call 724-478-6010.

### 2010-2011 GRANT HIGHLIGHTS



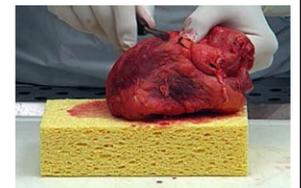
The Annual Veterans Day program complemented the A-R SALUTES WWII grant written by Mrs. Ferrence.



Mr. Barta's grant brought Penn State's Mobile Ag Ed lab to the Elementary School to teach students the correlation between the food on the table and the crops in the field.



The grant written by Mrs. Fryer and Mrs. Colamarino encouraged fifth grade students to create a product and display it at an Invention Convention. Students also took a field trip to learn how to market their inventions.



Students in Mrs. Blyshaks anatomy class watched a videotape of an actual autopsy accompanied by live narration by a forensic pathologist. The students then worked through the "case" and solved for cause of death.

## SCHOOLS MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

### Community Engagement

Investing in the school district where your home or business is located is a wise move. Good school districts pique the interest of sophisticated home buyers.

**School districts have a major impact on home values.**

Good districts increase property values.  
Potential home buyers want to live in good school districts.

**Increased home ownership translates into valued consumers for area businesses.**

Increased consumerism generates interest by potential business owners.  
More businesses mean less tax burden on residents.

**Increased tax revenues provide better resources for schools.**

Better educational programming increases student achievement.  
Increased student achievement draws potential home buyers.

### What is Community Engagement?

Ongoing, collaborative process in which the school district works with the public to build understanding, guidance, and active support for education of children in the community.

### What is the Value of Community Engagement?

**Increased student achievement and strengthening of the whole child**  
*It takes a village ...*

**Enhanced role of schools in community**

Educates the public on the programs and resources offered by the school.

**Strengthens representative democracy**

Develops advocates for the school within the community

### Assessment of Past/Current Activities

**School Sponsored Events**

*Athletic Competitions; Musical Concerts and Art Shows; Drama Club Productions; Dinner/Show to showcase students; Senior Citizen Luncheon; Transportation Technology Bicycle Project; Apollo Idol; Title I Activities*

**Track**

*Athletic Events and Community Health/Wellness Resource*

**Stadium**

*Graduation Ceremony; Moonlanding; Fourth of July Celebration; Salute to the Armed Forces*

**Elementary Playground**

**Community Service Programs by Law Enforcement and First Responders**

*Internet Safety/Cyber Bullying (Kiski Twp Police)  
Mock Accident for Prom-goers (Kiski Twp Fire Department)*

**Educating Public through Various Forums**

*Website; Weekly eNewsletter; School Activities; Community Events; Monthly School Board Meetings; Bi-Annual District Newsletter; Educated senior citizens  
Partnerships with Local News Media: Valley News Dispatch; Indiana Gazette; Kiski Valley News*

**Superintendent Focus Sessions**

*Key Communicators & Community Members*

**Rockin' the PSSA Pep Rally**

*Educate through Entertainment; Showcase students*

**Open Dialogue with State Representative**

*Invitations to attend school functions; offering the District grant-writing opportunities*

**Sharing of District Resources**

*Kindergarten Curriculum with Pre-School/Day Cares  
Technology with Local Non-Profits: Apollo Library; Apollo Area Historical Society; Apollo Area Business Association;  
Spring Church Evangelical Lutheran Church*

**Revamp of Education Foundation**

*No longer "active" but continuing to fund Innovative Projects through membership dues and Mothers Day Flower Sale  
Building community relationships in anticipation of re-activation: Stadium Events—Groundbreaking; Sneak Peek Lunch; Grand Opening; and 40 Years in 40 Days Grant; Speakers Series*

**Building tours**

**Scavenger Hunt**

*Engaging community with businesses*

**Learning Festival Revival**

*Celebrating learning with all stakeholders*

**Memberships in Business/Community Organizations**

*Apollo Area Business Association—Steering Committee  
Apollo Area Historical Society—Board Secretary  
Armstrong County Chamber of Commerce—Silent Auction  
StrongLand Chamber of Commerce—Member  
Healthy Armstrong*

**Speaking Engagements**

*Apollo Senior Center  
StrongLand Chamber of Commerce-Kiski River Sojourn*

### Future Plans

**Communication**

*Focus sessions with front-line employees;  
Facebook; Increased Access to the Schools*

**Health/Wellness**

*Fitness Trail; Spinning Bikes; Yoga*

**Stadium**

*Birthday parties; concerts; Sports activities;  
Alumni football; Taste of the A-K Valley*

**Healthy Armstrong**

*County-wide health/wellness initiative  
Partnerships with local organizations  
YMCA; Valarena; Roaring Run Watershed; Apollo Pool*

**Fundraising Events**

*Concerts at the stadium  
Speakers Series  
Talent/Variety Shows*

**Community Involvement (through AABA)**

*Community service projects for students  
Beautification of business area  
Spring clean-up day  
Mini triathlon—bike / run / kayak  
Spotlight on community resources  
Back-to-school fair for kids  
Business/community/school bond*

## ELDERS RIDGE - A RICH HISTORY

### New Buildings at Elders Ridge Joint High School Near Completion

Ridge Echo, Elders Ridge, Pa., October 6, 1953

By early November the students of Elders Ridge High School will be housed in an ultra-modern school building. This new structure will have the most modern, adequate facilities available.

Upon completion, the facilities will include physics and chemistry laboratories, music, art, bookkeeping, kitchen, cafeteria, and library. There will also be a combined auditorium and gymnasium.

The interior of the building will also be the "last word" in school beauty. When the building is completed, the senior high students will utilize it.

An addition to the partially ruined old building is being completed. This project will house the industrial arts and vocational agriculture shops. The classrooms in the old building will be used by the junior high students.

Upon termination of construction of both projects, the school will contain accommodations for about 750 students. The enrollment this fall is exactly 500.

A dedication is being planned when both the Donaldson Memorial Building and the junior high buildings are completed.

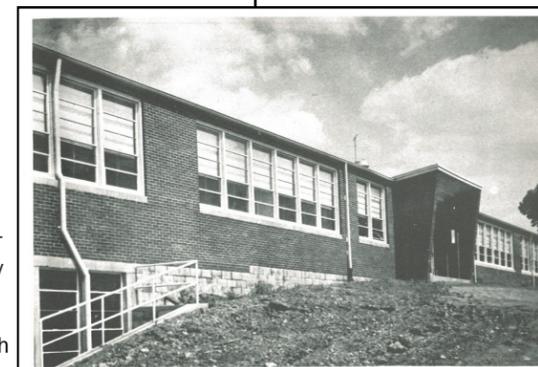


1<sup>st</sup> Grade Classroom, Elders Ridge Elementary School, March 2003

### ELDERS RIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The photo above is of a typical classroom in the Donaldson Memorial Building as it appeared during the

last year of use for elementary education. The floors were carpeted and the ceilings were low-ered. The rooms were brightly lit and had colorful posters on the walls. A computerized heating system controlled the climate within each classroom. Internet service and computers were slowly making their way into the building.



Donaldson Building completed in 1954 - Senior High Building

The Donaldson Memorial Building was vacated in December 2003 when students were moved to the Apollo-Ridge Elementary School. It still stands today, owned by a family from the Pittsburgh area.



In the fall of 1968, an unidentified Ram walks off Elders Ridge High School's Yuha Memorial field for the last time. The following year he would play as an Apollo-Ridge Ridge Viking at Owens Field in Apollo.

## THE HIGH SCHOOL

In April of 1975, the new Apollo-Ridge High School was opened to students. The opening of the \$5.3 million building brought an end to many years of planning and many months of construction. Ground-breaking ceremonies were held for the school on Thursday, October 25, 1973. Among the people attending the ceremony was Milton Shapp, Governor of Pennsylvania.

A few of the special features inside the new building included a beautiful library, a gymnasium with a tartan floor, various student activity rooms, agriculture and industrial arts shops, and an auditorium that could be divided into five classrooms. The outside athletic facilities included tennis courts, a soccer field, a football field, and an all-weather track. At the time of the merger, the boys' athletic program consisted of cross-

country, track and field, football, basketball and baseball teams. Girls could compete in basketball, softball, and volleyball.

The architectural design of the building was selected for exhibit at the 1976 National Convention of the American Association of School Administration. The schools' design was the 25th selected by the association in a nineteen year period.



Governor Milton Shapp poses with Darlene Madison and Helen Eaton at the Groundbreaking ceremony for the new Apollo-Ridge High School.

Included in the planning for the construction of the new high school was the abandonment of three obsolete elementary buildings — the two at the Iselin campus and one at Coal Run.

The former Apollo High School, a yellow brick building on Pennsylvania Avenue in Apollo, became a middle school building. The Donaldson Memorial building in Elders Ridge became an elementary school.

In 1988, the Middle School was added to the High School building in Spring Church and the yellow brick building was sold. It is now known as the Tiger Gym.



**TOP RIGHT:** An aerial view of the High School in 1976 before the addition of the Middle School.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** The entrance to the High School as it appears in 2011.

A unique design feature of the high school was movable walls enabling the classrooms to be reconfigured. Initially the classrooms had no doors, however, the sound from one classroom became a distraction for a neighboring classroom and doors were later added.



### APOLLO-RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

#### BUILDING DATA

- 31 CLASSROOMS
- LIBRARY
- 2 INDUSTRIAL ARTS SHOPS
- VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE SHOP
- BAND ROOM
- CHORAL ROOM
- AUDITORIUM
- 2 LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTION AREAS
- 3 SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION AREAS
- 2 SEMINAR ROOMS
- 4 INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING CENTERS
- 2 STUDENT ACTIVITY ROOMS
- GYMNASIUM AND LOCKER ROOMS
- REMEDIAL GYMNASIUM
- TEAM ROOM
- HEALTH SUITE
- DINING ROOM—COMMONS
- KITCHEN
- AUDIO-VISUAL STORAGE
- BOILER ROOM

## THE TOOLS TO GET THERE...

- Interactive white boards are in every regular and special education classrooms thanks to grants written by District personnel.
- Every grade level in every subject showed positive academic growth according to PVAAS—an indicator of individual student progress from one grade level to the next.



Elementary students learn mathematics concepts in phys ed class. Here, a student measures the distance a puck traveled.

- Student Achievement through Interdisciplinary Learning (SAIL) at the elementary level incorporates the core subjects of reading, math and science into the fine arts subject. SAIL was selected for inclusion in the Magna Best Practices Database, one of only 114 highly-scored programs selected for this special recognition from the 359 nominations received in 2011. SAIL is being expanded into the Middle and High School for 2011-2012.

- Realignment of staff to support A-RVA, the Apollo-Ridge Virtual Academy (online learning using Apollo-Ridge curriculum for remediation and enrichment) will save thousands of dollars as tuition will not be paid to cyber charter schools for this service.
- Development of new programming with existing resources. Classes like Math in the Work Place, Current Events, and Social Development address the "whole child."
- Increased dual enrollment options for students so they can receive college credit while still in high school. Apollo-Ridge currently partners with Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Butler County Community College and Clarion University.
- Arena Scheduling at the High School gives students control of their schedule and give them the real-world experience of scheduling at the college-level .
- Incorporated a true Middle School Teaming model allowing for daily collaboration amongst team members. Individual student data is reviewed by all educators who have a hand in the child's education enabling them to customize that individual students' needs.
- Infused technology for each core subject area at the Middle School and all core areas except science at the High School through grant funding of the CFF and EETT Grants. A teacher-coach instructs the educators on how to use technology to enrich the curriculum.
- The Apollo-Ridge School District works collaboratively with Penn State New Kensington and ARIN IU 28 to create STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) aware-

ness for students and staff. Through collaboration and grant funding, increased professional development for staff in these areas takes place. Students go on field trips to the Penn State New Ken campus and local industries, and curriculum is being examined and revised to best prepare students for careers in these areas.

- Last year Apollo-Ridge students set grade level performance records for our district on the PSSAs in Grade 11 Writing (95.4%) and Eighth Grade Reading (87.4%).
- Our district ELI Team (Educational Leadership Initiative - in cooperation with the University of Pittsburgh) has increased leadership opportunities for faculty. Teachers are highly involved in planning and presenting much of their own professional development. Involvement in ELI has also created a network of opportunities to share educational best practices with other local districts. In April, Apollo-Ridge hosted the ELI Regional Learning Academy, welcoming teachers and administrators from Burrell School District, Greater Latrobe School District, and Greensburg Salem School District.
- A revised maintenance plan for the District ensures that the facilities are well-kept and safe for staff, students and the community.
- Renovations to the District's softball and baseball fields included the addition of a new scoreboard for the 2010-2011 school year. The fields are used by student athletes and various community ball clubs.
- An extensive upgrade to the school's gymnasiums, inclusive of a new scoreboard, occurred in time for the 2010-2011 athletic season.
- Demolition and rebuilding of the Owens Field Stadium was accomplished in the spring and summer of 2010. The oldest athletic complex in the Alle-Kiski valley is not only a facility for school use, but also serves the community for festivals during the summer months.



Keith Means, Joe Velesig, and Isabelle Glass represented Apollo-Ridge at a taping of Hometown High Q which was televised on KDKA-TV2. Host Ken Rice is pictured with the team.



Mr. Kenneth Prahl, of Hyde Park, painted a 3-D mural of a Viking crashing through the High School gymnasium wall during the 2009 upgrade to the facility.

WHO WE ARE . . .

**We are the Vikings — Mighty, Mighty Vikings!**

**MISSION** "Preparing Students to be Responsible Citizens and Lifelong Learners"

**ALMA MATER** Apollo-Ridge High school is in our memory;  
Her colors remain with our hearts eternally.  
Viking school we honor, Blue and gold esteem.  
Apollo-Ridge High School, A unity of strength and dreams  
Alma Mater hail!

**WEBSITE** www.apolloridge.com

**SCHOOL MASCOT** Viking

**EMPLOYEES** 225 staff members  
180 professional staff and 45 support personnel

**ENROLLMENT** 1451 students Elementary K-5: 610

**SPECIAL SERVICES** ARIN IU 28 provides educational needs for pupils with special needs and training for professional staff

**BUDGET** Approximately \$20 Million

**PARTNERS IN EDUCATION** Indiana University of PA; Penn State, New Kensington; Butler County Community College; Clarion University; University of Pittsburgh; Seton Hill University

**POPULATION** A quiet residential population of 9,000 persons in a 70 square mile area encompassing the boroughs of Apollo and North Apollo and the townships of Kiskiminetas, Young and Jacksonville/Blacklick.

**DISTRICT THEME** "Going the EXTRA Mile!"

**SCHOOL COLORS** Blue and Gold

**BUILDINGS** One elementary school with grades K-5; one middle school with grades 6-8; and one high school with grades 9-12.

**SPORTS** Full complement of sports for both girls and boys; member of PIAA and participates in District VI competition

**TAXES** MILLAGE: 59.5 — Armstrong County

**PARTNERS IN HEALTH** Indiana Regional Medical Center; Armstrong County Memorial Hospital, Healthy Armstrong



WHERE WE ARE GOING . . .

**CUSTOMIZING INSTRUCTION FOR EVERY STUDENT**

The Apollo-Ridge School District has been through many changes in the past 40 years. New ways of teaching, combined with advancements in technology and student data analysis, are used to differentiate and target an individual student's specific educational needs.

From specialized classrooms, like life skills and emotional support, to on-line learning through A-RVA, the Apollo-Ridge Virtual Academy, each student is provided with the specific tools necessary for enrichment or remediation.

The 21st Century learning environment requires technological advances and educators who address the "whole child." At Apollo-Ridge, students are taught critical thinking and problem solving skills — not just "readin', ritin', n' 'rithmetic."



Students of today learn very differently from the students in Rev. Donaldson's day. Smart Board technology replaces slate and chalk. Laptops and netbooks are the new pencils and tablets for the students at Apollo-Ridge. Every classroom was outfitted with a Promethean board thanks to an EETT grant received in 2010.



THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

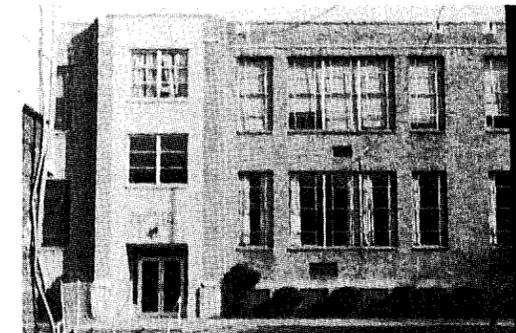


After the construction of the high school was completed, the PTA began lobbying for a new middle school to be built. It would take more than a decade for this to be accomplished.

In 1976 three buildings served the middle school students—two for classes and one for storage. When originally constructed, the storage building had two floors with six classrooms; however, in 1975, the second story was eliminated and a roof was put on the remainder of the building. The original use for this building was for an elementary school.

A red brick building on second street used as for the Middle School was built in 1913 at a cost of \$30,000. At the time, it had the distinction of being the first high school building in the area with a gymnasium. It contained eleven rooms including six regular classrooms, a directors' room, a principal's room, and the combination gymnasium-auditorium. An addition made to this structure in the 1970's included nine classrooms, a teachers' lounge, an activity room, and a gymnasium. The building was used as a high school until another building was erected on Pennsylvania Avenue in 1931. At that time, the red brick building became a junior high school. It continued to serve in this function until 1975 when it became one of the Middle School buildings used for students in grades six through eight.

In 1988, an addition was built onto the high school in Spring Church. Students moved in partway through the 1987-1988 school year. The new facility boasted a library, gymnasium and industrial arts classroom of its own. Two design features that were included in the plans, but never came to be were an elevator and a swimming pool.



One of the buildings used by Apollo-Ridge as a Middle School as it appeared in 1977. Located on First Street, it also served as District Administration for a time.

The yellow brick building shown below, having been used for a high school and middle school, is now the Tiger Gym, named after the Apollo High School mascot.



Above is a photo of the main entrance to the Middle School that is part of the High School/ Middle School complex in Spring Church.

The building shown at right in an undated post card, is the elusive "red building" that served as a high school, middle school and elementary school. The post card lists it as the High School, but a handwritten notation indicates "grade school." The building was located on Second Street beside the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church.



**Apollo High School Alma Mater**

The light of our learning is still brightly burning, our thoughts ever-turning to old Apollo High. Our memories never fade of dear friends we have made, of plans that we have laid in days far gone by. The walls that have housed all hopes for the future, the lights that have led us through life's stumbling ways, nor will we forget the challenge we have met! We cherish her yet—**Hail Apollo High!**

- 1969 Alma Mater

## THE APOLLO AREA SCHOOLS

Over the years, many buildings were used to educate students who resided in Apollo, North Apollo and Kiskiminetas Township.

Many had been closed and either sold or demolished

by the time of the merger. The locations of those buildings included Sugar Hollow, the Iselin "Campus" (so-named because there were two buildings at this location), Coal Run, a red brick building in Apollo that served

as both an elementary and a middle school, Cherry Lane, Shady Plain, Horrell, Jackson and Brownstown.

Until the completion of the Middle School, the former High School building (known today as the Tiger Gym) served as the District's Middle School.

Four buildings in North Apollo, Apollo, Spring Church (Sunnyside), and Elders Ridge served the District as elementary buildings until the new state-of-the-art \$16 million structure was completed and occupied on January 6, 2004. Sunnyside housed all of the Kindergarten students. North Apollo educated students in grades 1 and 2 and then moved them into the Apollo building for grades 3, 4, and 5. Elders Ridge had two classrooms each of students in grades 1 through 5. It was the only building with a Life Skills classroom.

## NORTH APOLLO SCHOOLS

In December of 1930, a school was set up after the incorporation of Pegtown, Allison Lane and Luxemberg Heights into the borough of North Apollo in March of that same year. There were two schools, one along the old canal bed in Pegtown and the Allison School built near the present-day intersection of North 16th Street and Hickory Nut Road. The Allison School burned in 1908 causing some of the students to attend Sugar Hollow School until the new building was finished in Luxemberg Heights. This building served the community until 1954 when another building was built on Wilson Avenue. At that time it became an elementary school for students in first and second grades. The North Apollo School closed in December 2003 upon the completion and occupation of the current Apollo-Ridge Elementary School in 2004.

The North Apollo Elementary School was sold and used for a Christian Academy until 2008.



South Bend School Class Picture c. 1914 - 1916

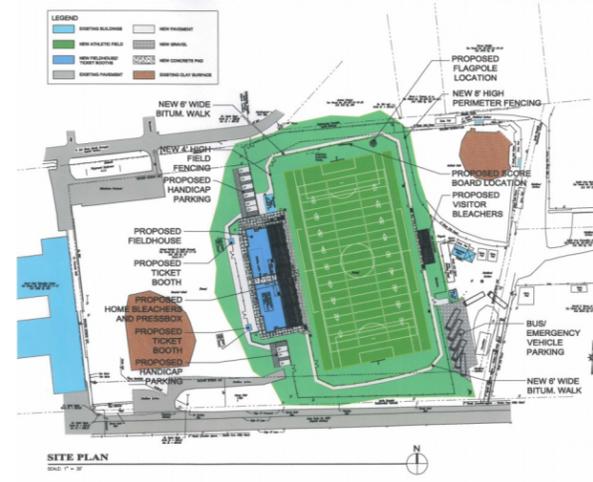


The Apollo-Ridge Elementary School, truly state-of-the-art facility, built in 2003, replaced four elementary buildings — most of which were built in the 1950's. Those buildings included the Sunnyside Kindergarten Center, located in Spring Church; the North Apollo Elementary School, Grades 1 and 2; the Apollo Elementary School, Grades 3 through 5; and the Elders Ridge Elementary School, grades 1 through 5 and a life skills classroom. All four buildings still stand today, however, only the Apollo Elementary School is in use.

## INVESTMENTS BY AND FOR THE COMMUNITY



A study in contrasts ... the brick field house (top left) completed the stadium project begun in 1982 with the help of local community members. It was replaced by a modern facility that opened to the public on September 24, 2010.



### OWENS FIELD STADIUM

**Property Donated by Owens Family: 1919**  
**Block Building Construction: 1980-1990**  
**Demolition: Monday, May 10, 2010**  
**Groundbreaking: Monday, May 24, 2010**  
**Grand Opening: Friday, September 24, 2010**



The iconic stadium, at 90 years young, was demolished and rebuilt at a cost of \$3 million dollars in 2010.

The oldest football stadium in Pennsylvania is the site of community-sponsored events throughout the year, including the annual 4th of July and Moon Landing Celebrations, High School graduation, and Veterans programs.

**FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS** School Board member, Sharon Jaworskyj, and Board President, Gregory Primm, at the stadium's grand opening on September 24, 2010.



### APOLLO-RIDGE COMMUNITY FITNESS TRAIL

Funded completely by grants and donations from local businesses, the community, and school employees, the Apollo-Ridge Fitness Trail is a fine example of how school/community/business partnerships can benefit all stakeholders. In addition to being used for Apollo-Ridge health and physical education classes, the trail will be used to train all A-R athletes. The trail will be used extensively in the rebirth of a cross-country program for the school and as a wellness resource for the entire school community.

### PROJECT GOALS

A committee of teachers, administrators, maintenance staff and school board liaison have the goal to complete the project by the start of the 2011-2012 school year.

- |                        |                                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Projected Cost:</b> | <b>\$15,000</b>                     |
| <b>June 2011</b>       | <b>All Funding Obtained</b>         |
| <b>July 2011</b>       | <b>Construction Begins</b>          |
| <b>August 2011</b>     | <b>Fitness Station Installation</b> |
| <b>September 2011</b>  | <b>Grand Opening &amp; 5K Race</b>  |

## NEW BEGINNINGS AND OLD TRADITIONS

### A-R ELEMENTARY CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF NEW PLAYGROUND

Thursday, May 5, 2005, was another historic milestone for the Apollo-Ridge School District. One-hundred and fifty students, the PTA parent representative and teachers who served on the playground committee, and several school board members and district administrators were on-hand for the official opening of the new Apollo-Ridge Elementary School playground that was completed in late April.



Last fall, an elementary playground committee was formed to investigate the needs of the elementary students. Suggestions were made and catalogs were combed to find just the right combination of equipment that would be cost-effective, durable and provide adequate recreation for the students. Based upon the findings of the committee, a design was submitted and bid upon. Sports & Recreation Associates, locally represented by Mr. Mark Ford, won the bid and broke ground on Thursday, March 17.



Special thanks to the Apollo-Ridge Elementary PTA who donated miscellaneous items that can be used by the students on the playground.

The playground was unofficially opened to the delight of the students on April 15. The completion of this facility brought to a close the construction of the Apollo-Ridge Elementary School which was officially dedicated on Saturday, May 14, during the Learning Festival.

### A MONUMENTAL-LY MOVING EXPERIENCE

When the Apollo-Ridge School District sold the Sunnyside Elementary School, it faced the dilemma of moving a veteran's memorial placed there from Jackson Elementary School when it was vacated many years ago. Quotes obtained from local contractors were nearly \$5,000. A cost effective solution was needed... and it came from a very unlikely source.

Orren Vigo, a Boy Scout from Troop 552

(Poke Run Presbyterian Church), was in search of a community service project.

On Wednesday, October 17, 2007, Orren, his father, Joe, and two other members of his Scout Troop, Jason Temple and George Petree, began cultivating a base for the monument's placement. Mr. Scott Deemer, using equipment donated by JV Rigging, would use a 26-ton forklift to remove the monument from the former Sunny-

side Elementary School and place it in the new location in front of the recently-built Apollo-Ridge Elementary School.

The memorial was dedicated at a ceremony on Veteran's Day that included members of local veterans organizations along with Orren's Scout Troop.

Scott Deemer, Orren Vigo and his father, Joe Vigo, proudly stand by the project in the photo above.

## COMPLETION OF THE MERGER

### The Dedication of the Apollo-Ridge Elementary School Completes Elders Ridge and Apollo Union

An article published in the Apollo News Record, June 2004

As part of this year's Apollo-Ridge Learning Festival, the Apollo-Ridge Elementary School was officially dedicated. Although the building has been

Courtney Gibson, Student Council President, lead the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Having been with the district for thirty-three years, Mr. Fetterman conveyed several colorful stories that contrasted the past with the current state of affairs in the elementary. He detailed how the elementaries were consolidated from the original nine (Apollo, North Apollo, Coal Run, Sunnyside, Iselin, Horrell, Jackson, West Lebanon and Cherry Lane) to the previously existing four (Elders Ridge, Sunnyside, Apollo and North Apollo). He likened the new building to that of the metamorphosis of a butterfly, which in this case took thirty-six years, to transform from a fragmented cocoon into a thing of beauty.



Dr. Michael Vranesevic, district superintendent, and Mr. William Naser, school board president, are all smiles as Mr. John Missell of Hayes-Large Architects officially turns over the key to the new building during the dedication ceremony that was held on May 14, 2005.

In closing, Mr. Fetterman pointed out the time capsule that will be buried outside the entrance doors. A plaque will be placed over it indicating that the capsule is to be opened in twenty-five years revealing the historical artifacts that have been placed therein. He encouraged everyone to sign the guest register as it will be included in the capsule.

open and operating since January 6, 2004, the event was well-attended by students, parents, current and former school board members and several support staff members.

Mr. Mark Fetterman, Principal, welcomed everyone to the historic event calling it a major milestone in the history of the Apollo-Ridge School District since its formation in 1969. His opening comments included the philosophy that the elementary schools are the foundation upon which our children's future educational successes are based. The fact that this new building exists is testimony to the fact that our community embraces that philosophy.

Mr. Fetterman introduced the members of the fourth and fifth grade chorus ensemble, fronted by lead vocalist Amy Grace Manofsky, a fourth grader from Mr. David Notte's room. The ensemble lead the gathering in the singing of our National Anthem. At the conclusion of the anthem,

Before introducing Ms. Robin Barber, Assistant Principal, Mr. Fetterman pointed out the brick garden made possible by a fund raising initiative of the Apollo-Ridge Education Foundation. The guests were invited to participate in Phase II of the "Paving the Way" program. He encouraged everyone to visit the newly installed elementary playground that completed the construction phase of the elementary school. Mr. Fetterman thanked Ms. Cris Kostiuk, Administrative Assistant to Dr. Vranesevic, for her contribution to the day's events.

Ms. Barber introduced visitors of note who included Mr. William Naser, school board president, and Mr. John Missell, the architect representing the Hayes-Large Architectural firm. She also introduced current school board members, Mr. Raymond O'Neil, Ms. Kathleen Taylor, Dr. John Helgeson, Mr. Timothy Stewart; and former school board members, Ms. Debra Schrecengost and Mr. Mark Shaffer. Several district employees were also in attendance and they included Mr. Frank Davis, A-RSD Director of Building and Grounds and Clerk of the Works during the building's construction; Ms. Lynne Snyder, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; elementary secretaries, Ms. Amy Kunkle and Ms. Kim Akins; and elementary paraprofessional, Ms. Michele Brown.

(Continued from page 9)

At this time, Mr. John Missell of Hayes-Large officially turned over the key to the new building to Dr. Michael Vranesevic, the district's superintendent. The chorus ensemble returned for the singing of America the Beautiful.

Mr. Fetterman then turned the podium over to Mr. William Naser, current school board president. Mr. Naser's comments were brief, but to the point, when he discussed how this building would enable all students to receive a quality education—equally. This building ensures that students will not be required to be transported from Apollo to Elders Ridge in order to balance class sizes. He emphasized that this building will provide all students a safe environment in which to be more efficiently educated. Mr. Naser's closing remarks included a thank you to the community for their support of the board's decision to make the vision a reality.

Former school board member and current president of the Apollo Area Economic Development Council, Mr. Mark Shaffer, emphasized that by doing proper research and planning, and by presenting a factual report to the community, this project was met with no resistance. He talked of the late 60's when the school board was told by Pennsylvania's Department of Education to merge Elders Ridge and Apollo and how in 1969 it was accomplished. He commended those board members for their vision in purchasing the sixty acres necessary to create the beautiful campus we have today. He pointed out the fact that each building was built seventeen or eighteen years apart enabling each structure to be

paid for before the next phase began. This allowed effective, efficient growth without burdening the community.

Mr. Shaffer next emphasized the purpose of the Apollo Area Economic Development Council is to increase the tax base to further the success of the District. He discussed how the district and community exist in a symbiotic relationship: the community supports the district through its tax base and the district, in turn, feeds the economy of the community. He estimated that over 50,000 students have passed through the Apollo-Ridge School District, including his children. He feels that Apollo-Ridge gave them a successful foundation to carry them through the college years. Mr. Shaffer expressed that all of our students now have the potential to benefit from the educational experience at Apollo-Ridge and, hopefully, bring their experience and knowledge back to this community to further its success.



Mr. Mark Shaffer, President of the Apollo Area Economic Development Council, expressed the importance of the Apollo-Ridge School District and the surrounding community working together to form a mutually beneficial relationship. Mr. Shaffer's children benefited from the district's academic program, and he credits their success to the time spent at Apollo-Ridge.

The next speaker, Ms. Anita Bafik, former school board member and current District treasurer, addressed the gathering on the importance of supporting the Apollo-Ridge Education Foundation. The Foundation was formed to provide concerned individuals with the opportunity to contribute tax-deductible donations to the district to support technology, educational programs, sports and wellness, and the performing arts that go above and beyond the educational opportunities the children already receive. Ms. Bafik announced that the A-R Education Foundation is launching a Phase II of the "Paving the Way" brick program. Through this fund-raising opportunity, staff, parents, students, alumni, local businesses or any other organizations, can purchase a brick. This purchase will not only create a meaningful legacy for the Elementary building, but generate funds to support the Foundation's mission. The bricks come in two sizes: 4"x8" (\$50) or 12"x12" (\$75) and are engraved with your special message in black. Ms. Bafik thanked everyone for their past support and asked that the effort be continued.

The final speaker, Dr. Michael J. Vranesevic, Apollo-Ridge School District Superintendent, opened by thanking Mr. Fetterman for bringing all the components together to make the dedication successful. He expressed that Mr. Fetterman, having the most years of service with the district at today's gathering, was the "heart and soul" of the Apollo-Ridge elementary. His thirty-plus years in the district have given him an exceptional historical perspective on the evolution of the elementary from its humble beginnings to today's culminating event.

Dr. Vranesevic recognized the school board members and district administrators who were involved in making the courageous decision to build the new elementary building. The decision-making process started several years ago. Data was collected and five options were developed, with the building of a new elementary being the fifth. All options were presented to various civic groups for their opin-

(Continued from page 10)

ions. Due to the diligence of the researchers, the facts and figures were in alignment. The decision to merge the elementary schools was made meeting with little to no resistance. Dr. Vranesevic recognized Hayes-Large for their tremendous effort in developing the proper facility to meet our needs. He discussed how they met with the teachers and administrators for their input. After digesting all the information, plans were drawn up and construction began in the spring of 2002. Mr. Frank Davis, Apollo-Ridge's Director of Building and Grounds, was commended for his perseverance in keeping the project on time and within the budgetary constraints.

Dr. Vranesevic commented on the strategic planning that was involved in getting the move accomplished, particularly since it occurred during the school year, rather than over the summer break. He remarked how it was a new experience for all of the district's leadership and acknowledged Mr. Fetterman, Ms. Barber and the district's faculty, secretaries, food service workers and custodians for the considerable effort they made to accomplish this task. He was thankful for the efforts of Mr. William Naser, school board president, and Ms. Coleen Steim, former A-R business manager, who stayed on top of the construction's progress and the financial needs to keep the project running smoothly. Dr. Vranesevic credits the entire experience with giving him a wealth of experience and new-found knowledge.

This new building, in Dr. Vranesevic's mind, proves that we are a progressive learning community and are not afraid to take risks to improve the educational opportunities for our children. He noted that we are fortunate to have a staff that sets high standards for our children. He gave the PTA high marks for supporting our district and working so well together to merge themselves into one unified organization.

Dr. Vranesevic ended his address with the African proverb that states, "it takes a village to raise/teach a child," and encouraged us to give life to its meaning.

Mr. Fetterman concluded the program by inviting everyone to take a tour of the building and playground and to stop by the brick garden at the front of the building.

Ms. Anita Bafik, President of the Apollo-Ridge Education Foundation, encouraged the community to support the school district's educational programming by purchasing a brick for Phase II of the Paving the Way to a Brighter Future fund raising effort. The Education Foundation has provided approximately \$15,000 in grants to teachers at Apollo-Ridge for innovative ideas to encourage student learning. The Brick Garden was unveiled as part of the Elementary School's dedication program. At right, Mr. Mark Fetterman, Mr. Frank Davis and representatives of Sports & Recreation ponder the layout for the Brick Garden.



At two-o'clock p.m., standing underneath the archway of the elementary lobby that is emblazoned with the quote from Earl Nightingale, "People with goals succeed because they know where they are going," Mr. Mark Fetterman, Principal, welcomed everyone to the historic event. The archway mural was designed and created by Ms. Crystal Bowser of Crystal Ball Creations.



ABOVE: The Apollo-Ridge Elementary Chorus ensemble, fronted by lead vocalist, Amy Grace Manofsky, lead the singing of the National Anthem and America the Beautiful. The students who participated are Logan Stewart, Willy Duff, Katie Silvis, Elyse Kardos, Shayla Hunker, Amber Brown and Courtney Reddy. RIGHT: Miss Courtney Gibson, Student Council President, lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

