CONTENTS:

Superintendent’s Message..........................2
Maintaining Safety & Health.........................2
Focused on Long-Range Planning..................3
Communication at PACS...............................3
Powering Minds Through Healthy Eating..........4
PACS Works with Harvard University Affiliate to Improve Rural Districts’ Needs, Improve Post-Secondary Outcomes.................4

Prioritizing Efficiency to Meet Transportation Needs.............................................5
Revolutionizing the Classroom.......................5
Business Office Keeping PACS Fiscally Sound Spending & Planning Allows for New Academic Programs.................................5
Special Programs......................................6
PACS School Resource Officers Building Safety Through Trust.....................................6

Elementary School Opportunities.....................7
Middle School Opportunities........................8
High School Opportunities..........................9
Music & Arts:
Every Cloud Has a Silver Lining......................10
Blue Devils Athletics Perseverance
Leads to Success......................................11
Academic Center......................................12
The Make Sense Shop................................12

www.pulaskicsd.org
The 2020-21 school year was one of unprecedented challenges, but it was also a year of significant accomplishments at PACS. I am grateful for our staff, students, and community, and for what we have accomplished together under very difficult circumstances.

Our shared commitment to keeping school open full time and vigilance with safety protocols meant students spent more time in school. Through the dedication, flexibility, and creativity of our staff, we were able to provide an extraordinary level of programming and opportunity to keep our students engaged.

This Annual Report will highlight some of those successes and talk about what we hope to achieve moving forward. You will find the same themes permeate across all of our departments. Long-range planning, improving service, capitalizing on efficiencies, and increasing opportunity for students are all priorities for 2021-22. Despite the challenges we continue to face, I remain optimistic and enthusiastic about what we can accomplish together.

If you have any questions or comments as you read through this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Tom Jennings
Superintendent

We are happy to have all of our students back in our buildings every day. Despite our hopes, things are not completely normal. Vigilance against the spread of COVID-19 is still a top priority in the nurses’ offices. We continue to follow current guidance from the NYS Department of Health and Oswego County Health Department to reduce the risk of transmission in school.

The cooperation of families is critical in this endeavor. Please, keep your child home if they are having ANY possible COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, headache, body aches, headaches, nausea or vomiting). Please notify the school nurse if you have kept your child home with symptoms and/or they have had a COVID-19 test.

We understand that this is challenging and frustrating. These guidelines are in place to protect the health of our student population and minimize student quarantines and illnesses. Contact your child’s school nurse if you have any questions or if you need assistance with getting a testing appointment.

As always, the school nurse’s offices are available to meet the health needs of all students to support their academic success. Each school also has a School-Based Health Center (SBHC) through ConnextCare. Students enrolled in this program can be seen by a medical provider in school for preventive care (immunizations and physicals), as well as treatment for acute and chronic needs, including COVID-19 testing.

Sue Clark, Elementary School Nurse
Alyson Tighe, Middle-High School Nurse

COVID-19 UPDATES: www.pulaskicsd.org/CovidUpdates

Safeguarding the health of our students and staff is paramount as we continue the 2021-22 school year. Our reopening plans comply with state and federal guidance and take into account feedback from parents, students, and staff. Please visit the COVID-19 Updates page on our website for detailed information regarding the District’s response to COVID-19. Please contact your child’s school or the district office with questions.
Facilities Department Focused on Long-Range Planning

The Pulaski Academy & Central School District Facilities Department is focused on long-range planning this year. Specific needs are being assessed annually and addressed in both the short and long-term.

Ongoing maintenance and minor facility improvements are being made at each building by department staff. Smaller capital outlay projects are being planned annually to address needs with costs up to $100,000, and planning for the next major capital project begins this school year. The District receives state aid of 94% for both smaller capital outlay projects and major capital projects.

Communication at PACS

Our goal at PACS is to establish clear, effective lines of communication between the District and our community. We work hard to: be the first and best source of information about our school and education; encourage dialogue that is informative, factual, thoughtful, and civil; and promote excitement about education, scholarship, and our school.

Our Board of Education meetings provide an opportunity for the public to provide comments during a designated public comment period. Additionally, the superintendent hosts periodic coffee and conversation events, where community members are encouraged to attend and address any District-related questions in a casual environment. All members of our administrative team are also available by phone and email to discuss concerns and answer questions.

Notifications & Reminders

We use a robust notification system to alert parents via phone, text and email in the event of an emergency school closing, upcoming events or other issues that concern you and your child. Please contact your child’s school to update your contact information or with any questions about the alert system. Important notices will also be found on the homepage of the website. You may also register for notifications of specific events on the District’s calendar page.

Returning Phone Calls & Emails

District faculty and staff are expected to return non-emergency phone calls and emails within two school days of receiving a message. Emergency phone calls are returned immediately.

Who to Contact

Frequently, parents and other community members request help in knowing the best way to communicate with the school. Please see the Staff Directory, pulaskicsd.org/directory, and Who To Contact chart on our website, pulaskicsd.org/contact
POWERRING MINDS THROUGH HEALTHY EATING

Full in-person enrollment at Pulaski Academy & Central School District means a shift back to standard menus and more options for students to enjoy.

The Food Service Department surveyed students about food choices and offerings and says they are happy with the options offered in the cafeteria.

The menu has gone back to a traditional menu where we’re serving homemade foods and concentrating on two different entrees rather than just one. It’s a huge relief from last year now that everybody is back.

Breakfast participation at PACS Middle-High School has grown with over 200 students being served throughout the district. New products and options, including cereal and muffin grab bags, have been popular with students as well.

The department looks forward to continuing to provide nutritious meals to fuel them for days filled with learning.

PACS WORKS WITH HARVARD UNIVERSITY AFFILIATE TO IMPROVE RURAL DISTRICTS’ NEEDS, IMPROVE POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES

Pulaski Academy & Central School District is working with the Harvard University and the National Center for Rural Education Research Networks (NCRERN) as part of an initiative to identify effective practices to better prepare students for careers after graduation.

The district, now in the second of a three-year grant commitment through NCRERN, is working with the research group as part of its bi-state effort in New York and Ohio to engage high school students in preparing for college and future careers.

District Principal Michael Bateson is working with school counselor Sue Evans, and the District Data Coordinator Alan Woods, and they are hopeful the district can have its kickoff for post-school readiness intervention soon. The kick-off will involve a survey of half of each class of freshmen, sophomores and juniors to learn students’ interests in career areas. The district team will then invite guest speakers across specific careers in to present to the students about the soft skills, content knowledge, and establish the connections between high school and career.

“Our goal is to educate students on how the skills and content knowledge they develop in high school relate to post-school readiness in college and careers,” Bateson said. “It’s really more of an intentional focus to prepare students to develop the skills and knowledge needed for post-HS success directly related to career paths. We want to help the students identify goals to get them where they want to be.”

While participation is not mandated, the district principal says full effort allows Harvard to do a second data breakdown at the end of the year that focuses specifically on PACS.

Mr. Bateson says this initiative will complement the annual alumni career fair where current students have the opportunity to learn about prospective jobs with those who also attended their alma mater.

Please contact our High School Guidance Office with questions and for support.
Prioritizing Efficiency to Meet Transportation Needs

Pulaski Academy & Central School District’s Transportation Department is making the best of its staffing shortage which has also affected many school districts across the state.

Transportation Director Bryan Philips said his department started the year with five fewer bus drivers than at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year and, as a result, bus routes had to be altered.

“We condensed and eliminated one of our regular, larger bus routes and that was quite a learning curve,” he said. “Another adjustment was made for two of the runs to even out the number of students on the buses and get the drop-off and pickup times closer.”

Transportation staff have continued to step up where they are needed most, helping to fill in gaps when needed.

“The most positive thing is we are still transporting students every day and we’re extremely safe and efficient as we possibly can be,” Philips said.

Revolutionizing the Classroom

While last year’s shift to remote learning welcomed the addition of new, innovative software and technologies for Pulaski Academy & Central School District students to use at home, a new classroom device is transforming the way students learn in district buildings.

Approximately 80 SMART Boards — interactive, touch-screen white boards that easily integrate technology from multiple devices — were installed over the summer to enhance students’ learning and allow lesson material to be shared more easily.

PACS Technology Director Mike Davis says the integration of SMART Boards helps to complete the implementation of last year’s one-to-one initiative which provided each student with a Google Chromebook.

“They have remote sharing capabilities where students can show their work through their Chromebooks,” he said. “Teachers have the ability to save and instantly share information written on the SMART Board screen with students.”

The district also installed a fiber optic line from the district’s bus garage to the Middle-High School stadium to increase wireless capabilities to allow for future athletic games, concerts and ceremonies to be livestreamed.

Looking ahead to next school year, Davis said the district will receive 125 new desktop computers to replace current ones which are at least five years old.

Fiscally Sound Spending & Planning Allows for New Academic Programs

Following a fiscally sound 2020-21 school year, Pulaski Academy & Central School District continues a pattern of responsible planning and spending to ensure a healthy financial outlook for the future.

Having prepared for a potential 20-percent reduction in New York State aid, there was instead a historic investment in public education through COVID-19 relief funds and New York State’s commitment to fully phase in Foundation Aid to schools.

Through these funding streams, PACS was able to offer after-school academic programs and new Summer Enrichment Programs that provided local, fun-filled, and educational opportunities for students at all grade levels.

PACS’ 2021-22 budget of $27,929,000 includes $7 million in property tax revenue and the district employs 200 full-time and part-time employees.
SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Special Education Department at Pulaski Academy & Central School District works hard to develop programs that fit the needs of our diverse learners through collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers.

While the last school year saw a shift to hybrid learning for many students, Director of Special Programs Vanessa Phillips, said PACS students receiving special education supports were fortunate to be able to receive in-person instruction five days a week. All students who receive extra support are fully back this school year.

“We do our best to try to make sure we are having individual planning conversations to meet students’ needs as we work on programming for each student. We focus our discussions upon the supports and pieces that need to be in place for students to be successful,” Phillips said.

This year, parents will receive surveys which will be submitted for the district’s performance plan indicator. Also, Special Education Department members and teaching assistants are receiving targeted professional development to work through proactive strategies with students to support behavior management.

PACS SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS
BUILDING SAFETY THROUGH TRUST

Pulaski Academy & Central School District’s School Resource Officers (SRO) Timothy Farley and Regan Roach say trust and positive relationship building are key to fostering a peaceful learning environment among students and staff.

Officer Farley, who began working at Pulaski Middle-High School this school year, says just being present in the building and talking with students has allowed them to understand an officer is just as much an ordinary person as they are.

“For some of them, it changes the way they look at law enforcement,” he said. “It humanizes us and, at the same time, builds trust while giving parents the peace of mind knowing there’s an officer here.”

Officer Roach, who this year had his golden retriever River trained as a permanent therapy dog at Lura M. Sharp Elementary School, says the presence of a dog has helped stabilize the emotions of some students when they needed it most.

“The kids’ response to the dog is overwhelmingly positive,” Officer Roach said. “Aside from the obvious protection and security aspect of what we do, we want to help out wherever we can by making ourselves available in whatever context to advance the overall mission of the school.”
At Lura Sharp Elementary School, we focus on creating a healthy and positive school atmosphere. Our small class sizes allow us to support students in all academic areas and challenge them to reach their highest potential academically and with positive behavior. PACS Elementary teachers are highly qualified to teach and engage in ongoing curricular review to continually improve our educational programs. Each year, teachers review NYSED testing data, local assessment data, and benchmarking data to identify students’ strengths and the areas for targeted growth on NYSED and national educational standards. Grades Pre-K-5 have continued providing instruction using Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) as our ELA and literacy curriculum, and we incorporate Heggerty models of instruction to help our students grow as readers. In doing this, PACS implements a continual curriculum growth model and strives for ongoing for continued improvement with curricula revisions. At Lura Sharp elementary, we strive to broaden students’ choices and opportunities, and to make learning fun. Our students are reminded that they are respectful, responsible, safe, a problem-solver, and that they matter.
At Pulaski Middle–High School, our focus is student-centered. Our highly qualified teachers work to foster growth in academics, character and social-emotional development. Students are provided opportunities to pursue their own interests in academics and extracurricular activities, and to begin to develop their sense of self. Assessments are closely aligned to NYS Learning Standards with teachers reviewing NYS testing and local assessment data to identify students’ strengths and areas of targeted growth. Decision making is a shared process involving administration, staff, parents, and our student government in the desire to give all stakeholders a voice and to strengthen communication and processes throughout our learning community for the betterment of all students. The skills developed in our school programs lay the foundation for their future success as thoughtful and productive citizens.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES**

**Patrick Vrooman**  
Principal  
315.298.5103

**Jim Karcz**  
Assistant Principal/  
Athletic Director  
315.298.5103

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS**

- English grades 6, 7, & 8
- Math grades 6, 7, & 8
  - with advanced option
- Social Studies grades 6, 7, & 8
- Science grades 6, 7, & 8  
  - with advanced option
- Science Fair grades 6, 7, & 8
- Spanish I grade 8
- Chorus grades 6, 7, & 8  
  - with group lessons
- Band grades 6, 7, & 8  
  - with group lessons
- Marching Band grades 7 & 8
- Introduction to Piano grades 7 & 8
- Art grades 6, 7, & 8
- Family and Consumer Science grade 7
- Health grade 7
- Physical Education grades 6, 7, & 8
- Computer Applications
  - grades 6 & 7
- Technology grades 7 & 8
- Library grade 7

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**SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

- Special Education Services & Programming
  - Academic Field Trips
  - Advisement Period
- Character Education
  - Counseling
- School-Based Health Center
- After-School Tutoring
- Academic Intervention Services

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**MIDDLE SCHOOL CLUBS**

- Drama Club
- Student Council
- Art Club
- Book Club
- Science Club
- Battle of the Books
- Seeds of Success
- All County Band & Chorus
- STEM Club
- Trivia Club

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**ATHLETICS (GRADES 7 & 8)**

- Cross Country
- Soccer
- Football
- Swimming
- Basketball
- Softball
- Volleyball
- Wrestling
- Indoor Track
- Baseball
- Track & Field

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## High School Opportunities

### English Language Arts
- English 9
- English 10
- English 11
- AP Literature & Composition/College English 11
- English 12
- AP Language & Composition/College English 12

### Math
- Algebra 1
- Intermediate Algebra
- Geometry
- Algebra 2
- Consumer Math
- College Precalculus
- AP/College Calculus

### Science
- Living Environment with lab
- Earth Science with lab
- Chemistry with lab
- Physics with lab
- AP Environmental Science
- Anatomy & Physiology

### Social Studies
- Global History 9
- AP World History 9
- Global History 10
- AP World History 10
- US History 11
- AP US History 11
- Participation in Government 12
- College Government 12
- Economics

### Foreign Language
- Spanish 2
- Spanish 3
- AP/College Spanish 4
- AP/College Spanish 5

### Health & Physical Education
- Health
- Food & Nutrition
- Physical Education grades 9, 10, 11, & 12

### Art
- Studio Art
- Painting & Drawing
- Ceramics
- Digital Photography
- AP 2D Art & Design
- AP Art History
- Media Art 1&2, 3D Art
- Advanced Art

### Music
- Chorus with group lessons
- Piano
- Band with group lessons
- Marching Band
- Drumline
- Jazz Band
- Music Theory
- All County
- NYSSMA

### Technology & Business
- Personal Professional Planning
- Exploring Business
- CAD/Advanced CAD
- Drawing & Design for Production
- Trades 1 & 2
- CITI Programs
- Advanced Metal Manufacturing
- Auto Body Repair
- Auto Technology
- Computer Coding
- Construction Technology
- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts
- Digital Media Technology
- Early Childhood Education
- Heavy Equipment Repair & Operation
- Industrial Electrical Technologies
- Nursing Assistant
- Outdoor Power
- Equipment Technology
- Public Safety & Justice
- Welding Technology
- New Vision Allied Health
- New Vision Law & Government
- New Vision Specialized Careers
- P-TECH
- Special Programs
- Special Education Services & Programming
- Make Sense Shop
- Work-based learning program
- College and Career Advising
- Counseling
- Academic Center
- Alternative Education Program
- Distance Learning
- Online Courses
- Advisement Period

### High School Clubs
- Peer Leaders
- National Honor Society
- Student Council
- Art Club
- Varsity Club
- Envirothon
- OCAY League
- Mock Trial
- Yearbook
- Trivia Club
- Drama Club
- Game Club

### High School Athletic Offerings
- Cross Country
- Soccer
- Football
- Swimming
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Wrestling
- Indoor Track
- Hockey
- Baseball
- Softball
- Track & Field
- Tennis
- Golf
MUSIC & ARTS: EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING

Pulaski Academy & Central School District
Fine Arts Chair Jack Jennings is planning what he hopes will become an annual community event that merges fun, barbecue, and the music of PACS chorus and band students.

The idea came to Jennings following the success of an outdoor concert held in June that showcased PACS Middle and High School Chorus students’ talent through a selection of popular music. Community members, he said, were receptive to the performance that had to be moved outdoors due to COVID guidance.

“People really loved it,” Jennings said. “That was one of those unusual things that came out of the COVID pandemic that’s a positive.”

A larger outdoor event in late spring is in the works to incorporate more music from PACS students, along with food.

“We all thought ‘This concert was really cool, let’s do it next year anyway,’” he said. “It would be one heck of a night.”

With the return of in-person instruction this school year, band students are now able to rehearse in the band room as a group following distancing guidelines. Students, he said, have been resilient and cooperative with ever-changing county, state and federal guidance.

“They’re just rolling with it like everybody else and want this to be over just as much as we do,” he said. “They love being back in school with all their friends where the whole band can play at the same time.”

Despite a more normal return to chorus and band rehearsals, Jennings says there remains a balance in keeping students safe. Band and chorus concerts, at least for this winter, will be broadcast virtually and theatrical performances will be live.

“We’re trying to be mindful of what we can do to showcase our students’ talent while maintaining safety,” Jennings said. “Our goal in the spring is to do have formal, indoor concerts back in the auditorium.”

PACS Middle School Drama performed its play, “The Princess King,” in November, and a PACS High School Drama performance is scheduled later in the school year.

New Kiln, Complex Art Opportunities Await Elementary Students

After spending most of the 2020-21 school year with Art on a Cart, students at Lura M. Sharp Elementary School are excited to be back in the art room for the 2021-22 school year! Being back in the art room means that we can work on more complex projects, such as sewing, printmaking and working with clay. We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of our new kiln so that we can start working with clay.

Fourth and fifth-grade students this year may choose to participate in Art Club. Art Club meets once a week after school, in addition to the regular art class. Art Club members have all received their own sketchbook and are learning to use it and care for it like a professional artist.

It is early in the year to send artwork to art shows, but we are hoping that we will be able to fully participate in the annual NYSATA Legislative Student Art Exhibition, NYSATA Region 3 Student Art Exhibit, and the Elementary Art Exhibit at Beaver Lake. This past spring, we were proud to submit the artwork of Jeremy W., Keyara L., Dawson R., Adam W. Noah S., Avery K. and Ameliana M. to NYSATA’s Legislative and Region 3 Virtual Art Exhibitions.

Middle School Adds 3D Art Track

Students who want to create artwork outside of drawing and painting have a new option through the addition of a 3D art track at PACS Middle School.

Middle School Art Teacher Samantha Cook says students have enjoyed the new, hands-on projects which include creating paper mache pumpkins, looms for weaving textiles and wire sculptures.

“A lot of people when they’re doing art think to themselves ‘I can’t draw,’” Cook said. “One of the things I try to reiterate as an art teacher is, if you can practice a sport, why not art as well?”

She began the school year by taking students on a nature walk to find inspiration outside of the classroom and provided them with a list of artists to find a style with which they can connect.

“I kind of gave them free range to discover some new materials and explore what they wanted to,” Cook said.

She plans to introduce students to ceramics with the addition of a new kiln at the Middle-High School and building upon the new 3D art track.

High School Art Thrives

At the High School level, we had seven students participate in the Regional Scholastics Competition in January, earning five honorable mentions and two silver keys. Two students participated in the virtual Legislative Exhibit. We had many of our students represented at the Oswego County Award Show this past April with their works hanging in the Salmon River Fine Arts Center and, of those many participants, nine earned awards. We took first place and received two honorable mentions in the 7-9 grade category, as well as a Sally Deaton award. We also received five honorable mentions and one Sally Deaton Award in the 10-12 grade category. This year we are planning to get involved in more of the usual shows we take place in as they become available to us again. We plan to hold our annual in-house Artist of the Year Show in March, featuring famous collage artist Jacqueline Valenzuela, and bring back our End of the Year Show in June as well.

Some other exciting news is that we have a brand-new kiln for the Middle-High School. Our Media Arts track is expanding as I am able to offer two sections of Media Arts 1 this year and am hoping to move forward with a Media Arts 2 course next year. Art Club is officially up and operating again this year as well after not being able to hold meetings and activities last year.
Pulaski Athletics is flourishing this year with successful seasons in all our offerings. We are very proud of the level of engagement of our athletes and their commitment to their sports, coaches and each other.

We are very lucky to have the students, coaches, parents, community members, facilities and staff that make our programs special every year! We began this year being nominated and recognized as a School of Excellence by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association for our student athletes. Seventy-five percent of the athletes on our teams reached scholar athlete status which helped us garner that honor.

The Board of Education and Superintendent Tom Jennings have allowed us to develop a plan to complete all our programs within State and Department of Health guidance. All coaches follow guidelines from the New York State Department of Health to ensure the highest level of safety and care is given to all our student athletes.

We have used the opportunity this year to showcase our athletes through our schools and social media as well as provide assistance to multiple charities through donations and awareness. Our department and athletes have raised money on multiple occasions for food banks, memorials and animal shelters. We look forward to continuing this for many years to come.
ACADEMIC CENTER

The Pulaski Academy & Central School District Academic Center (AC) continues to provide a supported, self-paced education in an alternative and flexible setting to students in grades nine through 12 in the Pulaski, Altmar-Parish-Williamstown (APW), Sandy Creek and Mexico school districts.

Academic Center Teacher Ashley Hurd provides hands-on instruction through a blend of traditional, in-person learning and online software called Edgenuity. This digital platform provides credit recovery and allows students to earn credits toward a high school diploma.

Through student success maps implemented this year, students can track their progress toward grades and completion of courses, one of which is a new elective that teaches practical adult learning. In its first month, students visited a car dealership to learn how to purchase a vehicle and, later, were paid a visit by a mechanic who taught proper car maintenance that includes changing a tire. In December, students learned about taxes and money management.

“Students are incorporating some nice skills through that elective credit course to help prepare them for life after their diploma,” said Vanessa Phillips, who oversees the AC’s operations.

Frequent communication with students, home districts, and with parents and guardians occurs to best help students achieve their educational goals.

THE MAKE SENSE SHOP

The Make Sense Shop, located at 4901 Jefferson St., offers many services to the community from participating students in the Pulaski, Altmar-Parish-Williamstown (APW), Sandy Creek and Camden school districts. Customers can enjoy shopping in the gift shop, or grabbing breakfast or lunch from the café.

Student employees this year have been busy in the Make Sense Shop’s restaurant, serving customers food and crafting some of the items for sale in the retail shop. Following last year’s limited café hours, students planned and hosted a Thanksgiving meal for the shop’s partners. The Make Sense Shop has also purchased some new, reusable shopping bags with the shop’s logo which will be a nice way to help cut down on some of the waste from using bags. The Make Sense Shop enrolls about 24 students with half scheduled each in the morning and afternoon. By offering an opportunity to learn employment and life skills, the Make Sense Shop offers critical developmental learning for the benefit of all students and the surrounding businesses with whom we cooperate.

Hours of operation are:

Gift Shop: 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m., Monday - Friday
Cafe'/Kitchen: 9 a.m. -1:30 p.m., Monday - Friday
Both are closed from 10:30 a.m. – 11 a.m

Vanessa Phillips
Director of Special Programs
315.298.5188