

# AAPSNews

News, features, profiles and activities in The Ann Arbor Public Schools

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## T-shirts for Japan popular with students

By Emily Hsiao  
AAPSNews Service

When Huron High School freshman Andy Hsiao heard about the Japan earthquake and tsunami two months ago, he had a different reaction from many people. Instead of fear and desperation for the people of Japan, he had ideas about how he could help.

Hsiao, who has friends and family in Tokyo, immediately turned to them for advice: "What do you need? What do the people in Sendai need?" His sister emailed Rotary clubs in both Tokyo and Sendai, an area devastated by the tsunami, asking them what foreigners specifically could do to help.

Tokyo replied with a project



Huron High School students wearing T-shirts of hope: Katie Yeatts, Mariam Souweidane, Jack Petersen, Tanner Ward, Gary Huang, Alex Weigel, Kevin Mei, Owen Veesser and Andy Hsiao. (Courtesy, Kevin Masini)

sending messages of hope over Twitter to victims and Sendai – just a month ago – confirmed that what they need is not blankets, first-aid kits, or food, but funding.

His T-shirts are in Japanese. They

read, "Ganbare, Nihon!" which roughly translates into "Fight on, Japan!" Ascott Printing in Ann Arbor printed the shirts locally at

See *T-shirts*, [page 2](#)

## Survivor walks on in Relay for Life

Preschool Center's Amy McConnell joins Balas team in 2011

By Casey Hans  
AAPSNews Service

When Amy McConnell visited her doctor in 1994 and had a biopsy on her breast, she could hardly believe her diagnosis. At age 28, McConnell was told she had breast cancer and subsequent surgery showed that she had involvement in two lymph nodes.

Now 45, the Ann Arbor Preschool & Family Center secretary is celebrating her 17th "birthday" of being cancer-free. She will go to Washtenaw Community College on June 25-26 as part of a Balas Administration Building team walking in the 2011 Relay for Life Ann Arbor, a fundraiser that benefits the American Cancer Society.

The event begins at 10 a.m. June 25 on the college campus on

See *Relay for Life*, [page 6](#)

## Club documents school in yearbook

By Casey Hans  
AAPSNews Service

Students at Carpenter Elementary School will receive a special memento of their school year this week, as each get a copy of a new, student-produced yearbook.

The 60-page book features individual class pages and special photo spreads of events either taken by the fifth-graders who produced it, their advisers or from photos submitted by staff, students and families. They even left room for students to have their friends sign the

See *Yearbook Club*, [page 5](#)



Carpenter fifth-graders work with parent adviser Pam Powell on a yearbook page.

## T-shirts, from page 1

a discount. The goal of the T-shirts, according to Hsiao, was to not only benefit Japan through funding, but also show the Japanese how much people here in the United States are supporting them.

They were marketed through outlets such as Facebook and Twitter and caught the attention of students at Huron, Pioneer, Community, Skyline and alumni. He even got orders from Arizona, Tokyo, Florida, and Okemos.

The T-shirts became a community effort throughout Ann Arbor. Daniel Huang, Aaron Brodkey, Emily Gucwa, Danny Langa, Stephanie Liu, Hoai An Pham, Ben Walsh, Gary Huang and Davis West were among the first who volunteered to pitch in. Each recruited more students to help. In the next two months, the Pioneer Student Council and students from Huron, Skyline, and Community sold T-shirts at each of their respective schools.

The navy-colored T-shirts were spotted frequently around town. Students wore them to school, encouraged friends to buy them and bought extras for siblings and friends. Others donated their money towards the cause.

"It's great to see how much people care about the Japan and the citizens of Japan," says Hsiao. "It's especially great that the entire community volunteered to not only buy, but help sell and spread the word. Even when the economy is down, people are still willing to help those in need."

In all Ann Arbor high schools, 443 shirts have been sold so far, raising \$2,436.50. One hundred percent of the profits from Hsiao's T-shirts will go to the Rotary Japan Disaster Recovery Fund, which will then be allocated to Rotary clubs in afflicted areas. Each individual community will use the money as they see fit to rebuild their lives.

Pioneer and Huron students also sent in photos of themselves with their "messages of hope" to Japan via Tokyo's Twitter project.

Hsiao's T-shirt fundraiser was one of the many community efforts Ann Arbor college and high school students put together for victims of the Japan disaster including Huron High School student Kaily Daida who encouraged students to buy and fold thousands of paper cranes. Anyone interested in purchasing a T-shirt can contact Andy Hsiao via e-mail at [andyh1996@gmail.com](mailto:andyh1996@gmail.com). He is doing a third and final order of the shirts.

*Emily Hsiao is a 2009 graduate of Huron High School and attends the University of Pennsylvania. Andy Hsiao is her brother.*

Chartwells, the district's food service provider and The Agrarian Adventure, the nonprofit volunteer organization that operates the Tappan Agrarian Garden, partnered last week to serve homegrown items directly from the garden.

The small pilot project was a first in the Ann Arbor Public Schools: Produce that had been planted by students was harvested and enjoyed in middle school cafeterias.

Seventh graders studying an Edible Ecology unit in science harvested the crop earlier in the week, which included lettuce and radishes. Students were able to sample the fresh product on Thursday and Friday. About 150 pounds of lettuce and 50 bunches of radishes were cleaned and served.

Students were encouraged to sample the school-grown food and it was also used in preparing some of the school meals, said David Lahey, director of Chartwells Food Service for the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

Lahey said Chartwells set guidelines in place under which it would use the homegrown food from Tappan and that they approached the project with great care and caution. The produce was harvested by Agrarian Adventure volunteers and students, and then was transported to Chartwells' facility at Pioneer High School where it was cleaned and triple washed before being used in the school lunches.

Each student had a chance to try it, Lahey said. "We're hoping to do it again in the fall."

"This is a huge deal at the national level," said Elissa Trumbull a founding member of the Agrarian Adventure board.

"It was phenomenal," she said of the tasting. "It's a really good opportunity. I hope it inspires other school garden projects. It's going to be good for the kids and good for the



# Fresh. Yum.

## Student-grown produce at Tappan introduced to middle school cafeterias

From AAPSNews Service

there are school gardens throughout the Ann Arbor Public Schools and that Chartwells is looking into using produce from those gardens at those specific schools in the future. He said they would also be looking to work with the organizers of the Green Adventures Camp, run through AAPS Community Education and Recreation in the summer, to possibly use produce from that off-site garden.

The Tappan garden is run and kept going by AA volunteers, but many students and teachers participate in the venture throughout the school year. Students not only learn about gardening and healthy eating, but teachers also use the garden for a variety of lesson planning and inspiration for students.

*The Agrarian Adventure is still seeking volunteer to water the hoop house and garden during the growing seasons on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Saturdays. Visit [www.agrarianadventure.org](http://www.agrarianadventure.org) for more information and to volunteer.*

schools."

Trumbull said the partnership is unique in the state and, perhaps, in the country.

She said a change in Chartwells corporate policy made the pilot possible.

"It's been a lot of work over time," Trumbull said. "The Agrarian Adventure working in the garden over nine or 10 years, the school district supporting healthy choices in the cafeterias. It all adds up over time.

"We're paving the way – that's how I see it," she said of the Ann Arbor effort.

Lahey said Chartwells set up policies for using produce from school gardens and Trumbull said that the same care and standards that are used in local farms are used at the Tappan garden.

Lahey said that

# Abbot students get first-hand lesson in dissection

## St. Joe's surgeon teaches 5th-graders learning about circulatory, respiratory systems

From Abbot Elementary School

Fifth-graders in Tracy Barrett and Rebecca Waits classrooms at Abbot Elementary School learned from a pro on May 17, dissecting deer plucks under the direction of Dr. Manek Sood, a cardiothoracic surgeon with the Saint Joseph Mercy Health System.

Barrett coordinated the deer heart and lungs dissection to supplement the students' study of the human circulatory and respiratory systems. This is the second year that she has overseen this project.

To participate, students signed a 'Lab Rules' sheet that outlined proper lab dress code and protocols. Groups of three to four students were paired with a parent volunteer who wielded the scalpel for the dissection incisions.

Throughout the year, Environmental Education teacher Dave Szczygiel harvests the deer hearts and immediately freezes them to prepare for this project. Abbot is the only AAPS elementary school that performs deer heart dissections.

The hearts were about the size of a large coffee mug, making it easy for students to see and touch



*Dr Manek Sood, right, a cardiothoracic surgeon with Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, works with parents and students at Abbot Elementary School dissecting deer hearts and lungs.*

all of the key parts of the heart. Dr. Sood performed the dissection while he projected it on the screen using the classroom digital document camera so everyone could easily see everything he was doing.

The goal of the dissection was for the students to learn the basic parts of the heart and the path the

blood takes through the heart and lungs. Each was encouraged to touch and probe the heart and lungs as soon as incisions were made and they were given the all-clear sign.

"It was amazing to see that the left side of the heart was thicker than the right side," said fifth-grader Megan. Classmate Ben added, "The

lung was so squishy and bloody. The valves in the heart were so small and thin. I'm surprised that they last that long."

Duncan noted: "The esophagus had ridges of cartilage. It felt all scaly." Student Kory concluded by saying, "It was an amazing experience to really know what is inside of me. It was totally gross, yet totally cool."

When the dissections were complete, Szczygiel recycled the dissected plucks at the Green Adventure's Camp farm. A heat-and-motion sensitive camera was able to monitor the pile of plucks, as they became part of the woodland's food chain.

The school offered special thanks to Barrett for coordinating this effort, to Szczygiel for harvesting the deer hearts and to parent Alicia Nalepa for coordinating the time of Dr. Sook.

Scalpels for the dissection were purchased through an Abbot PTO grant this spring.

Every classroom at Abbot has a digital document camera purchased by the Abbot PTO and Barrett used hers to project the dissection.

## Ann Arbor Kiwanis Club gives out 29 scholarships to AAPS students

A total of 29 Ann Arbor students from Pioneer, Huron, Community, Roberto Clemente, and Stone high schools received scholarship awards from the Ann Arbor Kiwanis Club in May. Serving as masters of ceremonies were Rip Kinney, Don Kossick and Peter Schork.

The recipients by scholarship type were:

**Hunter/Clague Scholarships** – Garrett Wood, Community High, attending the University of Michigan; Ellen Dowling, Huron High, attending Notre Dame; Megan Masten, Pioneer High,

attending U-M.  
**Carpenter Scholarships** – DanYelle Hugan, Community High, attending Washtenaw Community College; Chi Tran, Huron High, attending WCC; Yoojin Chang, Pioneer High, attending Michigan State University.  
**Naylor Scholarship** – Jason Greene, Pioneer High, attending Michigan Career Technical Institute.  
**Ray & Eleanor Cross Foundation Scholarships** – Kyle Mills, Huron High, attending Michigan Tech; Akio Kakishima, Huron High, attending U-M; Tenzin Tsundu, Community High, attending Berea

College; October Lewis, Stone High, attending Ross Medical Institute.  
**Kiwanis/Cross Foundation Collaborative Scholarships** – Matthew Hing, Pioneer High, attending Notre Dame; Serina Johnson, Clemente High, attending Eastern Michigan University; Stephanie Lu, Huron High, attending U-M; Lucy Holland, Pioneer High, attending U-M; Chinyere Onimo, Huron High, attending U-M; Daniesha Scott, Pioneer High, attending Clark Atlanta University; Emily Burns, Pioneer High, attending U-M; Jesse Burrison, Huron High, attending

WCC; Christian Arreola, Clemente High, attending WCC; Sha'rae Hendricks, Pioneer High, attending Spelman College; Dahlia Bigelow, Community High, attending Boston University; Alfredo Munoz, Pioneer High, attending U-M; Gerardo Longoria, Huron High, attending EMU; Samantha Waldrop, Pioneer High, attending Alma College; Nathaniel Coryell, Community High, attending U-M; Eric Miller, Pioneer High, attending Central Michigan University; Awah Ditah, Huron High, attending WCC; Jasper Hanifi, Pioneer High, attending MSU.

# Coyotes headline conference

## Skyline freshmen study evolution of Michigan wildlife

From AAPSNews Service

Teacher David Coupland offered his ninth-grade biology students at Skyline High School a unique opportunity this spring involving a topic much on the minds of area residents: The apparent prevalence of coyotes in populated areas such as Ann Arbor.

Two teams took the challenge: Michael Rochell, Joel Frison, Shannon Cowley and Zena Shunnar did a web-based survey of the community about coyote sightings and analyzed the data and Alexandra Lund, Danielle Sarns and Jeremy Glick studied the evolution of the coyote.

All presented their findings at Skyline's first Conference on Evolution of Michigan Wildlife as part of the ninth-grade ACIS I Biology classes. Their findings can also be found online at the Google Site page: <https://sites.google.com/site/washtenawcoyote/home> which includes their survey analysis and a Google Earth map plotting the sightings.

Of the more than 200 residents responding to the survey, most said they had seen no direct effects from coyotes, though many said they wouldn't let their children walk their dogs or let their cats out to roam at night. "They've been able to coexist well with humans," noted Rochell, who plotted the coyote sightings on the Google Earth map. "A lot of people said they're alright (with the coyotes) as long as they're not hurting me," added Shunnar. A total of 14 of those responding said they had lost a pet to a coyote.

The evolution project is a joint effort between Skyline and the University of Michigan Exhibit Museum of Natural History and is led by Skyline teacher Johnna Coleman with support from Kira Berman, education director at the U-M Exhibit Museum. Groups of three to four students chose an animal to research and produced an online interactive poster called a "glog" ([www.glogster.com](http://www.glogster.com)), presenting their projects to a group of parent judges on June 9.

The glogs selected to be among the best will be linked to the Exhibit Museum website.

Coleman said the project was designed to make learning more authentic for students, especially involving the collaboration with U-M. "We're trying to get them to be more analytical," she added.

A total of 425 ninth-graders took part, studying a



*Skyline students present their findings from a coyote study done around Washtenaw County during the school's first Conference on Evolution of Michigan Wildlife. About 50 parents and community members attended and viewed the projects, offering students feedback.*

variety of species including the least weasel.

Jonathan Shiplett, Hannah Gauss and Savannah Middleton were on a least weasel study team. Their study history of the species covered four continents and a timeline over 7 million years. "Due to forests disappearing, it reduced in size ... to allow it to get into the holes of rodents," Shiplett explained. He said he was most impressed with the least weasel being able to take down much larger animals five to 10 times its size.

Parent Kathy Shay served as one of the 50 judges for the June 9 Conference on Evolution of Michigan Wildlife at Skyline. She said she was impressed with the students' work, but noted that some were better prepared than others; some communicated well, shook hands and introduced themselves, she said.

"I think it's really positive," she said. "It's an opportunity to learn to communicate about what they're learning. I think it's a great idea and I really like being invited."

Coupland said he was impressed with all of the student work, but said submitted that the coyote project broke some scientific ground. "As far as know, this data's never been collected," he said. "They did some science that's not been done before."

Freshman Joel Frison said the group stepped up for the coyote project because they thought it would be fun to work together. "It's a big topic and a lot of people have been talking about it lately," he said. "It was a lot of hard work, but it was definitely worth it."

## Google donates 35 Chromebooks

Google has given a free classroom set of 35 Chromebooks to the Ann Arbor Public Schools to use in district instruction. The notebooks, which run on the Chrome operating system and use the Chrome web browser, have been tried out in classrooms at Skyline High School and Ann Arbor Open @ Mack.

Director of Instructional Technology Monique Uzelac explained that the Chromebooks are not like traditional laptops computers, but operate only on the Internet. "They're thinking that enough people have gone to the cloud now, that they will adapt to this product," she said.

The district is expected to use the Chromebooks for projects that use online research and Google applications. Chromebooks are being beta tested by districts around the country. "We're looking forward to expanding the partnership between Google and the schools," she added.

## Ed Foundation campaign under way

The 2011 One Million Reasons campaign is under way for the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation, seeking \$1 million by July 30 to support the Ann Arbor schools during the 2011-12 school year. The AAPSEF helps fund programs in the Ann Arbor Public Schools including world language, instrumental music, environmental science, and many math, science, art and history programs. "But growing state budget issues now threaten even the 'basics' in our schools," said Wendy Correll, the AAPSEF executive director. "We can't afford to let this happen." A \$60 gift for every student in the schools would generate nearly \$1 million, Correll added. This is the second year of the One Million Reasons campaign. Visit [www.SupportAnnArborSchools.org](http://www.SupportAnnArborSchools.org) for more information or to make a donation. Details: Contact Correll at 734-994-1969 or e-mail [wcorrell@aapsel.org](mailto:wcorrell@aapsel.org).

## Exceptional Education

# Red carpet treatment

From AAPSNews Service

**L**ogan Elementary School teacher Emily Fairless took her third-graders on a special end-of-year trip – down the red carpet and into a special evening of Oscar awards during a recent assembly with students and families.

Oscar Night took place on June 1, an activity that Fairless created to celebrate all of her students' successes. Students and their families were invited to select a pair of colorful sunglasses, which they could wear while coming down a red carpet, flanked by stars with student handprints to each side.

Families enjoyed dinner and the awards ceremony, for which students voted on each other's Oscars, giving multiple awards in five categories: Helping Hands, Best Listener, Most Improved, Above & Beyond, and Team Player.

Third-grader Ananya told the group that the awards were "a way of appreciating each other. A lot of times, we don't notice the little things people do that I think are pretty big."

Fairless told the parents that her students had a great year and this was a way for them to honor each other. "It was creating that intensive



*Students walk the red carpet at Logan Elementary before enjoying dinner and an awards program during the third-grade Oscar Night.*

motivation for these students," she said. "All of these things were accomplished and more."

Fairless did an Oscar Night last year when she worked as a long-term sub in a fifth-grade at Logan. She said she decided to do it again with her own third-graders this year.

"The purpose was to totally create a team," she said. "I really wanted these kids to feel like celebrities."

## Yearbook Club, from page 1

books.

The project was coordinated by fifth-grade teacher Natasha York and art teacher Meredith Giltner and parent Pam Powell who worked as the yearbook adviser for the school's first Yearbook Club.

"They're learning desktop publishing. They're learning photography. It's a great teamwork thing," said Powell.

She said the project also taught fifth-graders how to deal with teachers by making appointments and interacting with them on the project as they planned the book. It also connected the older students with

younger students at Carpenter as they took photos.

"This was our big adventure this year," said York, who leaves Carpenter at the end of this school year to become the new principal at Thurston Elementary School in the fall. "My big thing was for them to connect with other kids in the building. They have to get to know all the kids for this project."

"Miss York had the idea – we really wanted a yearbook," explained Emily. Added Maryam: "We got to put it together ourselves – it's really fun." Kaleb said his favorite part of the project was running around the

school, taking candid photos of fellow students.

Student worked in teams and were each assigned a classroom, where they visited, coordinated with individual teachers and took headshots of each student. They then laid them out and had the teachers proof the pages to ensure that they had put the correct names with the photos.

Events such as the school's spring Field Day, class trips and all major school events are part of the book. "We wanted it to be representative of the entire school," Powell added.

Students wrote and obtained

a grant from the Ann Arbor Youth Council, an award from the Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop and an ad from the shop, which helped to increase the budget. Malloy, an Ann Arbor publisher, offered to print and bind the books for \$2.19 each, which fell within the project's budget. Powell said there is even a bit of seed money for others to take the project over next year.

"It gives them a nice focus and the teamwork is important," added Powell. "They're really working together."

# Exceptional Education

## Relay for Life, from page 1

Huron River Drive and runs for 24 hours, where 39 teams, including the Ann Arbor Public Schools team from Balas, will raise money for breast cancer research.

“When I was diagnosed, I never wanted to know this much about cancer,” she said. “Going through cancer brought a different life knowledge.” She recommends to others facing cancer to “try to have a good outlook – cancer’s not contagious. Truly learn how to laugh. It will help you heal and mend.”

The hardest part of her cancer diagnosis and journey was the loss of her hair as she began six months of chemotherapy.

“That was probably the most traumatic,” she said. Once she realized her 3- and 5-year-old daughters were looking to her reaction to her health, she picked herself up and moved ahead. “Every day, I had to decide it was going to be a good day and I wouldn’t cry in front of my girls,” she said. “

Laughter and support of friends and family got her through, she said. “Seventeen years ago, a lot of people didn’t even want to use the word ‘cancer’, she said. “It was a secret. The only way I could deal with it was to make light of it. It helped as I

### 2011 Relay for Life Ann Arbor

**What:** An annual 24-hour relay to raise money for cancer research through the American Cancer Society.

**Where:** Community Park on the campus of Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E. Huron River Drive.

**When:** Saturday, June 25 starting at 10 a.m., running for 24 hours. A survivor celebration lap takes place at 10:15 a.m. and, at dusk, a luminaria ceremony will be conducted at the site.

**New:** Sign up to be part of a Cancer Prevention Study, that will allow the ACS to draw a blood sample from healthy individuals and survey you over a 30-year period to determine cancer tendencies.

**Details:** <http://main.acsevents.org>.

went along. I had to minimize it – it probably helped me to deal with it and heal faster.”

McConnell has two daughters from her first marriage and another daughter with her husband, Phil McConnell, who is retired from the Ann Arbor Public Schools. Amy McConnell said she did genetic testing before having her third child to determine whether she carried a gene predisposing her to breast cancer. She does not have the gene, so said she still does not know why her cancer developed.

That is part of the reason she walks in the Relay for Life each year: to raise money for cancer research. This is her first year walking in Ann Arbor; in previous years, the Whitmore Lake resident has participated in Brighton’s Relay for Life in Livingston County.

Her older daughters are now 20 and 22. “They do the Relays with me – they’re my biggest fans,” said McConnell, who is a Huron High School graduate. And her younger daughter, who is 9, started coming to Relays with mom when she was a newborn. “She grew up knowing mommy was sick at one point and is better now,” she said. “We brought her up knowing what was going on.”

The 2011 Relay for Life Ann Arbor has already raised about \$63,000 toward its \$100,000 goal and that number is updated real time on the ACS website. “We’re very much on target to meet or surpass our goal in Ann Arbor this year,” said Alex Garnepudi, an American Cancer Society staff partner for the Ann Arbor event and also an Ann Arbor resident and University of Michigan graduate.

The Relay for Life Ann Arbor

has taken place since 2005, after a larger Washtenaw County Relay was split into smaller community events. Garnepudi said the local approach is important. “What’s really special is that Relay comes to each community,” he said. “We want each of these communities to be able to fight back (against cancer) while keeping their local feel.”

Ann Arbor’s is one of 5,166 Relays held around the world in what has become the American Cancer Society’s signature event. It was started in 1985 by Dr. Gordon Klatt, who took pledges and walked a track in Tacoma, Washington to raise money for cancer research.

McConnell said the Relay gives the community a way to give pause and reflect. “It’s setting aside the time to say, yes I’m good, I’ve moved on. But it deserves its due. It’s a time to gather together and honor those who we have lost or those who have survived.”

On a related note, two transportation staff members from the Washtenaw Intermediate School District are working on two quilts that are being raffled by McConnell to raise additional money that will be donated to the Balas Relay team. Contact her at the preschool at [mcconnea@aaps.k12.mi.us](mailto:mcconnea@aaps.k12.mi.us) for ticket information.



Junior Girl Scout Troop 40682 at Carpenter Elementary School just finished a community service project to earn a Bronze Award, bringing both goodies and warmth to local children who are ill. The troop designated C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital beneficiary for their troop’s Cookie Share program within the annual Girl Scout Cookie Sale. That means a large portion of cookie sales were designated to purchase fleece fabric to make into blankets to be given to sick children at the hospital. In addition, customers could donate toward the cost of a box of cookies, or buy boxes of Girl Scout cookies to be delivered to the hospital for the family lounge. The troop delivered their finished gift to the hospital on June 6. This year, the troop of 18 girls presented C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital with 25 finished blankets and 52 boxes of Girl Scout cookies.



Northside Elementary School hosted a new school fundraiser on June 7, creating a full mini-golf course in the school’s gym. Physical Education teacher Rick Dekeon said the event was designed to raise money, but also to bring families a fun event. “It was a great success added to our other fit type activities,” Dekeon said. The school hosts Kids Rock Camp, Cross Country Kids, Friday morning floor hockey and special floor hockey nights.