

# City School District Tonawanda

A publication of the Tonawanda City School District Board of Education

FALL 2011

## A Message from the Superintendent:

Dear Tonawanda City School District Residents:

Thank you to our parents, staff and students for a successful start to the 2011-2012 academic school year. Recently Business First ranked nearly 430 school districts across Upstate New York and Tonawanda City School District was ranked as 145th. Further, the District is ranked number twenty for school districts found in Erie and Niagara Counties. There has been a continued marked increase in academic performance and district efficiencies over the past four years. Kudos to our staff, students and, most assuredly, parents for striving for the best!

In September District voters approved an \$11.9 million Capital Renovation Project that will include new roofs at Mullen and Riverview as well as A.D.A. renovation work, a new bus loop and expanded parking lot at the Middle/High School, a community fitness center, renovated special education classroom space and work station(s) for occupational and physical therapy, new art classrooms, new band and choral classrooms, renovated guidance and social workers' suite, and new Middle/High School office space, a new traffic loop at the back of the Middle/High School, renovated athletic locker rooms, and an entirely renovated and new athletic complex behind the Middle/High School including a new all-weather track, renovated softball fields and auxiliary fields and a synthetic turf field (for soccer and football built within the new Clint Small Stadium.)

Our district administration is currently working with Wendel (architectural firm) along with members of our faculty in finalizing the design of interior and exterior site/classroom and office spaces.

The Board of Education has selected Pike Construction to serve as the construction management firm that will provide the on-site eyes and ears for the District as well as to work in concert with Wendel and any of the construction firms that successfully bid for project work.

Logistics planning is on-going as the district proceeds toward actual planned stages of the project. As an example, until the new art, band and choral classrooms are constructed in the front of the building, they cannot be relocated from existing sites.

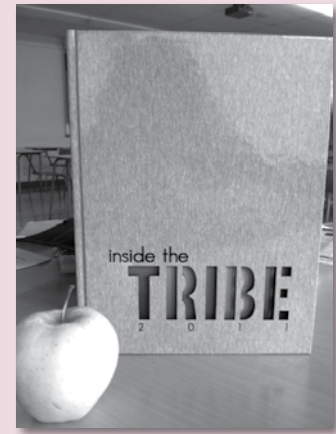
A project of this nature with the various pieces is complex. We will be monitoring progress closely in an effort to maintain the "normal" flow of operations. One of the roles of the construction manager is exactly that—to monitor progress of the project so that there are as few conflicts as possible.

Individuals have inquired as to when the project will be completed. A fair answer cannot be offered until we have secured a construction manager (done), received State Education guidance on final design details as developed by the architect and developed a working staged calendar of events after working with SED, Wendel and the construction manager. All of these parts of the project are now being developed.

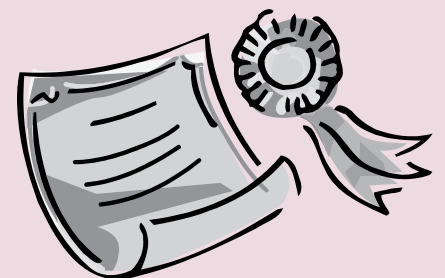
I would ask for patience and understanding from everyone as the project gets underway. There will be noise, heavier than normal volumes of traffic, possible inconveniences in parking and other potential disruptions of "normal" daily activity, but that is all part and parcel of a construction project.

*continued on page 2*

## The Tonawandan 2011 Wins Award



The 2011 Tonawandan won a Special Achievement Award for Excellence in Yearbook Design and the book will be used as an Eastern Region Sample Book by the publisher Jostens. The book grabs attention with the graphic design cover and theme "Inside the Tribe" while the content of the book covers the 2010-2011 school year in a chronological order highlighting the many great events and teams that make up Tonawanda High School. The original order of books sold out, but the publisher overprinted, so there are still copies available. Contact the adviser Tina Edholm-McNelis if interested.



# TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Parent's Right to Know

As a parent of a student attending the Tonawanda City School District you have the right to receive, upon request to the district, certain information as authorized by federal law regarding the professional qualifications of the children's classroom teachers. Parents have the right to request the following information:

- Whether the teacher has met New York State Education Department qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas he/she teaches;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which New York State Education Department qualifications or licensing criteria have been waived due to special circumstances;
- The teacher's college major (undergraduate level); whether the teacher has any graduate certifications or degrees and, if so, the field of discipline of the certification or degree;
- Whether your child is provided services by any teaching assistants and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to receive this information, please contact your child's school principal.

## A Message from the Superintendent (cont.)

The District will provide as much notice to the community regarding progress information as the project proceeds as well as communicating to staff and outside entities as to possible curtailment or rescheduling of activities and events that may be impacted temporarily by construction.

This is a project that has been overwhelmingly approved by our community residents. It is our fervent hope that as it progresses, the community will be excited about the eventual final product and will join the District in celebrating. Plans are now being percolated as to how to celebrate the change from the old Clint Small Stadium to the new Clint Small Stadium and to enjoy the newly built art, band and choral classes as well as the community fitness center.



Preparation of the 2012-2013 operating budget will start soon. This cycle will be very trying for all in the school district. We believe that the steps instituted over the past four years have positioned the District favorably; however, a careful scrutiny of expenditures and revenues will still be required, which may involve difficult decisions regarding programs and members of staff.

A new tax cap has been added to the decision making and discussion. It is very important that residents understand what this new tax cap truly means, for example:

- NYS has a property tax cap—not a 2% cap
- The cap limits the school district levy. The individual bill of residents will still be affected by assessed valuation.
- The actual allowable tax levy increase will vary by school district
- The formula allows for certain expenses to be exempt from the cap
- Boards of Education can override the cap but need 60% voter approval
- Voters are still approving the spending plan (budget) as well as the tax levy.

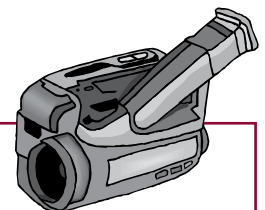
As in the past, we will utilize a Budget Advisory Committee working with the Board of Education and administration. There will be opportunities for members of the community to listen to the discussion and seek clarification.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I thank you for your continued support of the efforts of the district.

Thank you.  
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Whitney K. Vantine".

Whitney K. Vantine, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



## NEW VIDEO COURSE OFFERED

A new Introduction to Video course, taught by Mr. Lodovico, has high school students creating anti-bullying videos, public service announcements and also recording after school events like the Powder Puff game. The students are learning a variety of video techniques, creative problem solving and brainstorming in a constructive way.

# TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



## DISTRICT GOALS 2011-2012

### FOCUS ON INSTRUCTION

The district shall provide a curriculum, instruction and programs for the effective education of all students.

#### Objectives:

1. Explore District staffing levels and establish program goals for minimum and maximum class size levels.
2. Provide an Enrichment Curriculum for Grades 3-5 for 2011-2012 with exploration for program growth. Compare prior year results with current.
3. Promote a positive school environment through the installation and implementation of programs such as Leader in Me, Rachel's Challenge and the Olweus Program and develop a mechanism to record events in order to measure progress.
4. Ensure that District curriculum aligns with Common Core Standards across all academic disciplines with the intent to increase Mastery levels in all assessments by 10% over prior year results.
5. Positively affect District attendance and drop-out rates by strengthening the District's RTI program, increasing attendance to greater than 95% at the elementary level, 92% at the secondary level and reducing dropouts by 50% from the prior year.
6. Choose and implement a program of evaluation for District Faculty and Building Administrators based on Chapter 103(c) Regulations.
7. Prepare a Professional Development Plan for those staff members identified as needing improvement.



*Back Row: Demelt Shaw, Jackie Smilnich, Jennifer Mysliwy (Vice-President), Robert Starr, II.  
Front Row: Lynn Casal, Sharon Stuart (President), Diane Misner*

### FOCUS ON SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS:

The district shall promote a positive image and provide a pathway to continue building strong relationships with community, students and staff.

#### Objectives:

1. Prepare a plan of action to develop a Marching Band at the Tonawanda Middle/High School.
2. Prepare a plan of action to conduct public sessions to promote a/the Capital Renovation Project.
3. Evaluate current and explore new means for the dissemination of District initiatives and information.
4. Incorporate the Task Force Model to encourage community input on District issues.

### FOCUS ON FISCAL STABILITY AND FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT

The district will continue to explore the effective use of district facilities in order to provide an improved educational environment and to control future costs of the district.

#### Objectives:

1. Proceed to implement the recommendations that affect the District athletic and educational facilities.
2. Present a balanced budget to the community that supports students and program while reflecting the current economic climate and legislative initiatives.
3. Continually monitor the status of all sources of revenue and take appropriate actions to accommodate any deficiency or surplus.
4. Evaluate and review aspects of the District transportation program.

# DISTRICT GOALS

*Adopted by the Board, August 23, 2011*

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NEWS

## Students Adopt New “Habits”

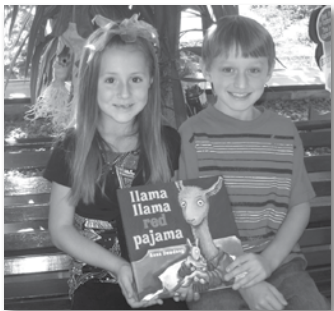


*Pictured is Alyssa King speaking about “Habit 3 – Put First Things First” at the Fletcher Elementary School assembly.*

This September students at Mullen, Riverview, and Fletcher Elementary Schools learned about a new process they would be involved in during the school day. The process is from the book written by Sean Covey titled, *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids*. The seven habits were introduced during kick-off assemblies. The program teaches students how to take charge of their actions and help them achieve their goals in life. Each school and each classroom has created a new mission statement which embodies these habits. The students signed and agreed to follow their classroom’s mission statement. Each school has the seven habits posters displayed showing the characters and describing each habit.

Not only are the students participating in this new process, but the staff and teachers are as well. Staff and teachers attended a three-day summer training session to better understand how the habits can help them and their students be successful. Each school has set up a Lighthouse Team to help facilitate the progress in each building. The program includes Habit 1 – Be Proactive, Habit 2 – Begin with the End in Mind, Habit 3 – Put First Things First, Habit 4 – Think Win-Win, Habit 5 – Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood, Habit 6 – Synergize, and Habit 7 – Sharpen the Saw. Ask any student at Mullen, Riverview or Fletcher Elementary School and they will tell you what each habit means. Everyone is energized about this new program.

## Mullen ‘Reads for the Record’



*Pictured are students Kylie Amidon and Brandan Handley.*

Mullen Elementary School participated recently in the Sixth Annual Jumpstart’s Read for the Record. This event involves millions of people across the country reading the same book *Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney, on the same day. In partnership with the Pearson Foundation, the students try to set a world record and spread the word that all children should receive a quality early education.

Principal Jessica Lyons read the book live on the television news which is broadcast throughout Mullen. Her lively rendition of the book kept the attention of students, staff and faculty. The students said they enjoyed seeing

Ms. Lyons on the news and look forward to having her read other books during the year both on the news and in person in the classrooms.

## Successful Book Fairs at All Schools



*Pictured is Madison Thomasula with a book chosen from the fair.*

The school year is in full swing and we are off to a great start! The first months of school have featured a variety of events including a Scholastic Book Fair held for all students at each of the buildings throughout the district. The Book Fair offered specially priced books and educational products, including new releases, award-winning titles, children’s classics, interactive software, adult books, and current bestsellers from more than 150 publishers.

With the Book Fair open to families and the community to come and shop the fair in the evening, there was a great

## Students in Punt, Pass, Kick Finals



*Pictured l to r, front row: Jacob Witkopf, Melissa Large, Quiten Badner and Zach Braddell; back row: Zoe Oliver, Madison Majchrzak, Lynzy Miller, Austin Schroeder, and Jeff Frey, physical education teacher.*

In September, eight Fletcher school students participated in the annual Tonawanda Punt, Pass, and Kick finals. The event was originally scheduled for Clint Small Stadium but due to the poor weather conditions, the competition took place on the track at the High School.

The results are as follows:

8/9 years old (Girls) -  
Melissa Large, first place;  
Zoe Oliver, fourth place

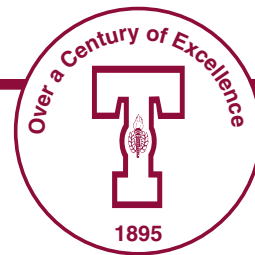
8/9 years old (Boys) -  
Quiten Badner, first place;  
Austin Schroeder, fourth place

10/11 years old (Girls) -  
Lynzy Miller, fifth place;  
Madison Majchrzak, sixth place

10/11 years old (Boys) -  
Jacob Witkopf, second place;  
Zach Braddell, sixth place

*(article continued from the left)*

opportunity for adults to assist their children in their book selections as well as to stock up on some good books for themselves or as holiday gifts! The Scholastic Book Fair is hosted district-wide by the PTSA and the profits earned benefit the students in each building in the support of activities, events, and building purchases. A shout of thanks to all volunteers who helped work the fair.



## Tonawanda City Schools Encourage Anti-Bullying Behavior

The recent events regarding bullying behavior in the news has touched us all and Tonawanda City School District is taking strong measures to encourage positive, healthy, and respectful behavior and attitudes among all students.

In an effort to set students on the straight path from the start, all elementary schools in the Tonawanda City School District are undertaking initiatives to combat bullying behavior. At Fletcher Elementary School, each school day begins with daily announcements that encourage positive behavior. "Green Goodies" are student-created messages emphasizing positive character traits such as respect and responsibility and are read on the morning announcements.

Fletcher School Principal Dr. John McKenna holds monthly assemblies for all students that focus on positive character traits and emphasize treating others with respect. In addition, Dr. McKenna also goes into classrooms each month to read a book highlighting positive character traits. The students are then asked to respond to the reading in ways they can turn the words of the books into actions. The books emphasize positive character traits such as empathy, cooperation, responsibility and kindness.

Over the course of the school year, Fletcher Elementary School and the secondary school complex participate in the nationally recognized "Rachel's Challenge" program which challenges kids to perform acts of kindness and empowers students to step up and stop bullying behavior. Each building notes all acts of kindness by creating a "Links of Kindness" paper chain that is displayed signifying kindness toward others.

Riverview Elementary School also strives to promote positive behavior in every student and to encourage every student to stand up against bullies. School Counselor Carol Kvetkosky attended an anti-bullying conference called "Bully Prevention: Research Highlights and Vision" sponsored by the Alberti Center at the University of Buffalo. As a result, she gained further information and brought ideas back to the school district.

Mrs. Kvetkosky is working closely with Riverview Principal Claudia Panaro to put forth their commitment to anti-bullying through classroom posters, assemblies, school-wide announcements and hosting a bullying prevention week program. Both counselor and principal also push-in to the classrooms to incorporate bullying prevention through literature tie-ins as well as utilizing a variety of online resources.

Mullen Elementary School also works tirelessly to address this serious issue and to encourage positive behaviors in their students. Mullen Principal Jessica Lyons reports the PTSA is looking at bringing in a speaker to present to students on the

subject. In addition, Mullen School has worked with Riverview School to introduce the same initiatives so all students in grades prekindergarten to third grade may learn and participate in action in this important and sensitive social concern.

District-wide, all teachers have classroom management plans that model school-wide rules that emphasize anti-bullying themes. The habits of respect, responsibility, positive leadership and striving to do one's personal best, not only need to be learned, but lived so that students may grow to be positive role models for others and to make the world a better place to live.

## Welcoming New Staff



*Pictured are Brandan James, Brian Stone, Emma Mattrey, Principal Jessica Lyons, and Jessica Donovan.*

### Jessica Lyons, Mullen Principal

Mullen Elementary School is fortunate to have Jessica Lyons as their new principal. Ms. Lyons earned two masters degrees; one in educational administration from Canisius College, the other in science education from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Her Bachelor of Arts degree was also earned at State University of New York at Buffalo.

Before coming to Mullen, Ms. Lyons was employed at the Tonawanda Middle/High School complex as assistant principal.

She was involved with the mentoring program, helped develop an anti-bullying program and was the disciplinarian. She served her administration internship at East Aurora High School and Iroquois summer school where she participated in various programs. Since coming to Mullen, Ms. Lyons has been instrumental in guiding the students, teachers and staff in the Leader in Me process.

One of the new programs that Ms. Lyons began is a "lunch bunch". Various students are chosen each week to have lunch in the principal's office with Ms. Lyons. She feels this gives her the opportunity to meet the students in a more personal setting and hear their thoughts about the happenings at Mullen and their personal stories.

# MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

## Working to Build a “Bully-Free” Environment

Board of Education President Sharon Stuart stressed the importance of eliminating bullying in our schools in her greeting to the faculty and staff at the start of the new school year. By doing so, she has made it clear that an anti-bullying campaign is a top priority.

Implementing the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) at Tonawanda Middle-High School is a goal that has been adopted by the Board of Education. As a school, TMHS is determined to incorporate this program into everyday activities.

The OBPP is the most researched and best known bullying prevention program available today. With over 35 years of research and successful implementation all over the world, OBPP is a whole-school program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting.

To date, TMHS has established a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC) and is in the process of educating

staff, students, parents and community members about preventing and handling bullying situations as well as achieving better peer relations.

The Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee has been meeting once a month since December and is composed of students, teachers, support staff, administration, board and community members. The committee focuses on proactive approaches to bullying and creating a more positive school climate. In preparation for the Dignity for All Students Act which will become effective in July of 2012, we are exploring:

- Positive Alternatives to In-School Suspension
- An anonymous reporting system
- Programs and speakers
- Support Chain Links and FOR Club as a part of Rachel's Challenge

Over the summer, several members of the BPCC were trained on how to implement the OBPP and will train all other Middle High School staff members during the March Staff Development Day.

The BPCC is looking forward to a big kick-off celebration for students and the community in September 2012, in addition to other initiatives that will be researched and implemented throughout the school year. These activities will pave the way for a new way of thinking throughout the school district. There has been a tremendous response from community members thus far with the hope that this will continue. The BPCC's goals are designed to improve peer relations and make the school and community a safer and more positive place for children to learn and develop.

The District recently adopted the slogan: “You're not big when you make others feel SMALL”.

## Welcoming New Staff *(cont. from page 5)*



### **Amy Edgerton, Director of Special Education**

Amy Edgerton comes to the district from Chautauqua County where she has been an educator since 1990. She is a certified teacher for the blind and visually impaired, an orientation and mobility specialist, and a certified special education teacher. In 2004 she earned her administrative certificates from SUNY Fredonia and became the principal of special education at Erie 2 BOCES. She spent her last six years at Pine Valley Central School as director of student personnel. She also served as director of special education at Pine Valley.

Ms. Edgerton is excited for her new opportunity to be able to work in the district in which she lives and for the challenges our larger district offers. She loves being close to or in the water and has found a home in Tonawanda near the river.

During the warm months she enjoys biking, walking, and blading at the river. She also enjoys swimming. Although all of those activities are relaxing and enjoyable, her beloved sport is golf.



*Christine Slayton,  
Personnel Specialist, Central Office*



*Amy Tabone,  
Teacher, Fletcher Elementary*



*Emily Herberger,  
Teacher, Fletcher Elementary*

# MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

## Clubs Have Positive Focus

In an effort to expand the reach of the Rachel's Challenge program, two clubs were formed to carry on the message of Rachel Scott who was one of the first students to be shot to death at Columbine High School in Colorado in April 1999. The goal is to pass on Rachel's personal message of compassion and kindness she displayed for many years by reaching out to students who were different, disabled, new to their school and those who had been bullied by other students.

**Tonawanda Middle School Chain Links** club recently placed cutouts of Rachel's hands on lockers throughout the entire Middle School that say: Instead of bullying I\_\_\_\_(students write their own responses). Throughout the school many positive messages were written. For example: "Instead of bullying I make sure I go out of my way for others", "...I make sure that no one sits in lunch alone", "...I go out of my way everyday to do something nice for someone".

Teachers hand out chain links when they witness a student doing something positive for another. The club's goal is to see that the chain goes around the entire school! Officers are Devan Roetzer, president; Anthony D'Arrigo, vice president; Jessica Brinker, secretary. Club Advisor is Mrs. Boling.

**Tonawanda High School FOR Club** recently made a chain of links that represents random acts of kindness and is searching out the best location to hang it. Members will make t-shirts and have discussed fundraising. Officers are Jackie Ball, president; Patrisha Thompson, vice president; Alie Nuccio, second vice-president; Sarah Bailey, treasurer; Ashley Crouch, secretary. Club Advisors are Ms. Dischner and Mrs. Warnes.

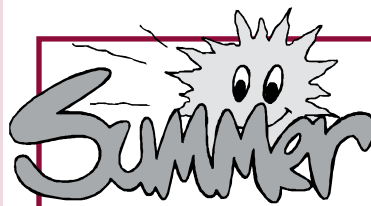


## Getting Ready for College



*Senior Peter Folmsbee discusses Buffalo State College during a recent college fair in the high school LMC where 20 local colleges offered information.*

Every fall, the guidance department arranges a visit for seniors to a few local college campuses. This year there were five campus visits arranged to University at Buffalo, Buffalo State College, Niagara University, Hilbert College and Niagara County Community College. A campus visit includes an overview of the programs and requirements for acceptance, a campus tour, and a cafeteria stop. Students pictured on the campus at Niagara University are (l to r) William Styslowsky, Colin Reboy, Ryan O'Brocta, Wesley Weber, Brian Burkett, Kila Gilcart, Warren Weber, Kasey Weaver, Wil Strehlow, Brandie Brown, Amber Ryalls, Kayla Rivera, Stephanie Wright. They were accompanied by high school counselor Dr. Fezer.



## Summer School Update

Summer school at Tonawanda High School has taken on a new attitude. All of the courses offered were online through our virtual learning program.

This program resulted in four students graduating in August. They are Joseph Beach, Lance Yaeger, Stephen Taggart and Kyle Tessier.

Approximately 100 students were enrolled in the program either for credit recovery, preparation to retake an exam, or to fulfill the NYS requirements in Physical Education. Eighty-three students were enrolled in APEX, an internet-based credit recovery program that offers the opportunity for students to earn credits for courses already taken. A total of 67 credits were earned; some were full credits, some for half credit courses. This was the first use of APEX by the District. The program appears to have been very successful. The Virtual Learning Lab continues to be utilized throughout the school year and will now use a combination of NovaNet and APEX.

## SADD Club News

The SADD Club (Students Against Destructive Decisions) held Red Ribbon Week Oct. 24-28. Students paid \$1 and signed a contract for life stating "I Am Drug Free". In return, they received a red ribbon and a chance for prizes such as a Tim Horton's Gift Card. Club officers are Chad Willis, president; Dustin Holland, vice president; Shelby Gallagher, treasurer; Ashley Crouch, secretary.

City School District  
**Tonawanda**

Tonawanda City School District  
100 Hinds Street  
Tonawanda, N.Y. 14150-1815  
[www.tonawandacsd.org](http://www.tonawandacsd.org)

**Board of Education:**

Mrs. Sharon Stuart, President  
Mrs. Jennifer Mysliwy, Vice President  
Ms. Lynn Casal  
Mrs. Diane Misner  
Mr. Demelt Shaw  
Mr. Robert Starr  
Mrs. Jackie Smilinich

Dr. Whitney Vantine, Superintendent

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## Tonawanda Central PTSA News

The Tonawanda PTSA is a centralized PTSA for all five schools in the district. We would like to give a warm welcome to school to all parents, students, teachers and staff! Please support your PTSA by purchasing a membership card at a cost of \$5 per adult and \$4 per student. Your membership entitles you to a vote at general meetings and Convention. Our goal is to reach 500 or more members this year. If the goal is reached, PTSA will host a District Bash at the end of the school year with many fun and educational activities for the community. Fundraising is needed for PTSA to provide scholarships to our graduating seniors, many educational and safety programs, as well as fun activities such as dances, holiday parties and more. An exciting ongoing fundraiser is School Mall. Log onto [www.schoolmall.com](http://www.schoolmall.com), choose either Mullen, Riverview or Fletcher, then click [Merchants](#) and shop. It is that easy! The PTSA earns a percentage of any sale purchased through [www.schoolmall.com](http://www.schoolmall.com).

**2nd Annual Winterfest:** January 28 starting at noon...co-sponsors Tonawanda Central PTSA, City of Tonawanda School District and the City of Tonawanda Recreation Department. Like last year we will hold a Chili Cook-off, video game competition, a basketball tournament, crafts and games, movies in the auditorium, a basket raffle and concessions will be available for sale through the City of Tonawanda Youth Board. Outdoor contests and activities will take place depending on the weather. If you would like to enter the Chili Cook-off Contest or to volunteer for this event, please contact Betsy at 694-5058.

## December Activities:

**THS:** Dec. 19, 6-8 p.m., Volleyball Sports Night.

**TMS:** Dec. 16, 7-9 p.m. Middle School Fun Night with Video Game/Dance, Just Dance, Guitar Hero, Rockband and Xbox Kinect.

**Fletcher:** Dec. 20, Winter Concert.

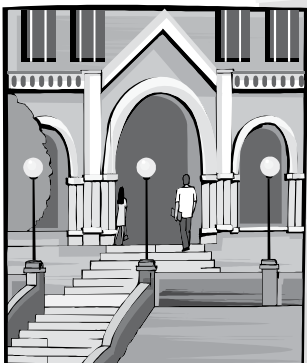
**Mullen:** Dec. 13, Mullen PTSA Meeting at 6 p.m. in the Mullen Library Media Center.

**Riverview:** Dec. 9, Holiday Party, 5-8 p.m. with Glenn Colton Holiday Concert, pictures with Santa, a holiday story read to the children by Mrs. Claus; Dec. 12, Holiday Helpers, 6-8 p.m., parents drop off kids for snacks and a movie while they get last-minute shopping done for the holidays.

**Dec. 23-Jan. 2: Winter Recess**

## Halloween Thanks

Students at Mullen, Riverview and Fletcher Elementary Schools thank the PTSA for the activities they planned and Officer Tim Toth for speaking on Halloween safety.



## Landscape Update

A recent project by the TMS Service Club was the beautification of the entrance to the City of Tonawanda Library. Students used their landscaping skills by digging up, transplanting bulbs and planting trees and bushes.