

# HIGHLANDER HIGHWAY

*The official newsletter of the Oak Hills Alumni & Educational Foundation*

The Oak Hills Alumni & Educational Foundation will enhance the achievement, heritage and educational opportunities for Oak Hills students and staff by providing alumni and community resources to promote unity and pride, and build a legacy for a stronger community.

## Greetings Highlander alumni,



Welcome graduated class of 2020. You are now Alumni of Oak Hills High School! What an exciting time in your lives!! However, this was something different, wasn't it? It certainly was not anything you expected (even though you were at home like you had an extended vacation!) or wanted. We are in the midst of a pandemic and everything has changed. No senior prom, no last day of school as seniors, no senior pranks and no graduation ceremony are what have been handed to you and your graduating class.

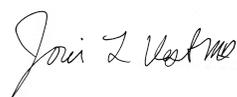
What happens when life hands you lemons? You make lemonade, of course!! The class of 2020 has figured out how to make lemonade. There may have been a few tears and maybe some flat out disappointment/anger for some. Certainly that is understandable. But what you have learned from this pandemic is more than any book or teacher could ever teach you. You have found qualities in yourself that you never knew you had such as grace, tenacity, innovation, strength, and a certain maturity that others have not possessed at your age.

Your future is as bright as it could ever be. Some of you will go on to college, some into the military, and some will learn a trade and add to the workforce. Always know that Oak Hills is proud of who you are and who you will become. You have been prepared to boldly step out into this world with confidence and the knowledge to succeed.

To our alumni and community supporters, **thank you**. We certainly understand and share with you the uncertainty of these last 2-3 months. We have needed to make changes to a few events to comply with the Ohio guidelines for observing social distancing. Our annual dinner at Western Hills Country Club to recognize distinguished alumni and staff is moved to October 7th. Also, our annual golf tournament is moved to July 24th. Class reunions listing will be in this offering of the Highlander Highway and are subject to change as well.

Stay healthy and safe Highlanders!

Respectfully yours and Highlander Strong!



*Joni L Vest MD '81*

*President, Oak Hills Alumni and Educational Foundation*



# Distinguished Alumni Awards

Twenty years ago the Oak Hills Alumni and the then Business Advisory Board began the tradition of annually honoring an Oak Hills graduate with the "Distinguished Alumni Award". Nominations were expected to be graduates that were considered worthy of this recognition.

The criteria for nomination is threefold. The graduate is to have displayed excellence in their career. The nominee displays a dedication of exemplary service to the Oak Hills school district or business community. The nominee should be seen as a model for students of Oak Hills. With almost 35,000 alumni, we have many individuals we could call "Distinguished". We, the Oak Hills Alumni and Educational Foundation, do our best to recognize the alumni that is the most representative of successful distinguished graduates. Congratulations to this year's winners, **Mike Hudson Class of 1971** and **Brian Duerring Class of 2000**.



**Mike Hudson ('71)** is a loyal fan and supporter of the Oak Hills Local School District. Mike was instrumental in the development of the Oak Hills Alumni and Educational Foundation. He held numerous offices including President and Secretary of the Foundation. Being part of the Oak Hills family is a Hudson Family Tradition. Pam, Mike's wife is an Oak Hills graduate of 1973 and children Maura, Class of 2000, and Nathan, Class of 2003. Mike's involvement in Oak Hills included the Boosters, Oakette Dads, and various scholarship committees. We have all benefited from Mike's commitment to payback Oak Hills for the great education and memories.

Mike enjoyed a successful career in supply chain management and logistics with W.R. Grace. He is now retired. Mike and Pam plan to spend more time traveling to see their children and grandchildren.

**Brian Duerring ('00)** began his education at Oakdale Elementary. It was here that he credits learning his skill to trouble shoot and solve problems. This skill became the foundation for his successful career in developing technology based solutions. After Oak Hills, Brian attended Xavier University and earned a BSBA in information systems. His career path included developing newsroom technology for WCPO. Cincinnati Bell was next to benefit from Brian's talents. While there Brian developed an online database, The White Pages, putting an end to the aging, heavy and usually outdated phone books. And again it was these skills which led Brian and his wife Laura to solve a problem at their church. How to reach people who for various reasons could not come to church? The solution became "Streamspot". Streamspot now produces live streaming productions in 50 states and 11 countries reaching millions of viewers and has earned recognition in the Cincinnati Business Courier.



Brian volunteers time as a wrestling coach. He is an active Dad with his children's activities. He and wife Laura have 2 children and live in Cleves, Ohio.

The Foundation also recognizes Distinguished Staff. The Staff award for 2020 will be given to Betsy Struckman. She is a beloved English teacher who taught in the Oak Hills Local School District for 35 years! Also to be honored is Debbie Streicher from Delhi Middle School. Debbie, now retired, was the "spirit of Delhi" for 20 years.

Please join us to celebrate all the recipients on October 7th, 2020 at Western Hills Country Club for the annual recognition dinner. For tickets and additional information please go to our website [www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org](http://www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org).

## Hall of Honor Award



The Oak Hills Board of Education and it's selection committee for the Hall of Honor has selected **Frank Shaut**. Coach Shaut started with the Oak Hills family immediately following college. Football was his sport of choice and he attended the University of Cincinnati on a football scholarship. While in college, Coach Shaut helped UC start their wrestling program. As both teacher and coach, Shaut showed a passion for wrestling and teaching. For nine years (1965 to 1974) he coached wrestling at Oak Hills High School. He coached Oak Hills to 6 league championships, 4 district championships and 4 city championships. In 1974 Oak Hills placed 3rd in the state and had an individual champion. Coach Shaut is a member of the University of Cincinnati Athletic Hall of Fame.

Additionally, he is recognized in the Ohio and the Southwest district Wrestling Coaches Hall of Fame.

In 1974, Coach Shaut went to Delhi Junior High as the Assistant Principal and then on to Oak Hills High School as Class principal from 1980-1993.

We have had the privilege of knowing Frank Shaut as a teacher, coach, and administrator. He will be receiving his award on October 7th, 2020 at the Annual Recognition Dinner at Western Hills Country Club.

## Class Reunion Review

Is your class hosting a class reunion? Contact us at [OHHSAlumni@ohlsd.org](mailto:OHHSAlumni@ohlsd.org) for a reunion planning checklist, or find it on our website. Your event will be added to the reunion listings on the website as well as the official Alumni Foundation Facebook page and we'll tweet about it! Reunion information will also be included in future issues of the Highlander Highway so be sure to keep us updated on your reunion plans and details. Below are the listings of upcoming reunions. Additional details including ticketing can be found on our website, [www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org](http://www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org).

### 2020

**1970:** October 9, 2020, Receptions West. Want to help? Contact the reunion committee with questions at [ohhsclassof1970reunion@yahoo.com](mailto:ohhsclassof1970reunion@yahoo.com).

**1975:** September 11, 2020, Western Hills Country Club.

**2010:** July 11, 2020, JTapps, 6441 Glenway Avenue, 45211.

**2015:** June 20, 2020, Westside Brewing (Search "OHHS Class of 2015 Reunion" on Eventbrite).

If you don't see your class listed here and you are planning a reunion, please let the alumni office know by emailing [OHHSAlumni@ohlsd.org](mailto:OHHSAlumni@ohlsd.org).

## Now Accepting Donations

- Mail check or money order payable to OHAEF
- Send checks to the office at Springmyer Elementary
- Donate via credit card at [sparkypark.ohlsd.org](http://sparkypark.ohlsd.org).

Questions? Contact our Playground Committee at [TheSparkyPark@gmail.com](mailto:TheSparkyPark@gmail.com).



**Dear Class of 2020,** Some people believe hard times build character. I believe they only reveal it. The grace, class, and maturity you have shown this spring -- as the Coronavirus altered your senior year -- weren't qualities you discovered. They were qualities you uncovered. They were in you the whole time.

The Class of 2020 is built with a sturdy foundation. You don't easily come off your game or lose your way. When something appears to be taken from you, you dig down deep and find it in yourselves. All of which proves that you are ready to leave this special place you've come from and to go out and succeed in the world.

We hope, as you do, that you don't forget us. We can assure you we will never forget you. Our highest hopes and warmest wishes go with you. We salute you. We admire you. And we are incredibly proud to share Oak Hills' best with the world.

All good wishes,

  
Jeff Brandt, Superintendent  
Oak Hills Local Schools



## OAK HILLS ALUMNI & EDUCATION FOUNDATION GRANTS

Shortly after the Oak Hills Educational Foundation was established, the Foundation felt one way to support the district was to fund grants for programs that could not be funded by tax dollars (due to lack of funds or the scope of those programs). So for the 2001-02 school year, the Foundation funded five such grants with the limited funds that it had. As the donor base increased in the last almost twenty years and as the Foundation has undertaken more fundraising activities, the number of grants increased to 51 for the 2019-20 school year totaling over \$28,000. In the last ten years, the Foundation has provided over \$160,000 for these educational grants.

Those of you who have had the advantage of receiving an OH education know that you were blessed with gifted, innovative, challenging and caring teachers who did an outstanding job with the resources the school district had. I am happy to report that the teaching staffs of today have carried on that tradition. They are also very gifted, innovative and caring teachers who go to any length to provide extra learning and enrichment opportunities for their students. The Foundation is privileged to be able to assist them through the grant program as they challenge their students and provide diverse opportunities for them. A BIG thank you to those who have donated to the Foundation and made these grants possible. Some of the programs funded are listed below, but the list is far from exhaustive. Thank you again for your support. We seek to help the district stay strong, innovative and a leader in the educational world.

Some of the grants funded for 2019-20: Student led tutoring programs, student led community service projects, teamwork projects for students with disabilities, musical instruments and props, musical concert experiences, musicals at all elementary and middle schools, resources for differentiated learning in math, student art projects to enhance their buildings, STEM projects at various levels, science fairs, programs to improve skills of at-risk students, after school reading clubs, team building activities for grade levels, career building experiences, production of products applying knowledge gained in class, programs to supplement everyday curriculum that help apply learned concepts, special needs class physical fitness programs, incentive programs for student attendance and achievement, activities that extend learning beyond the regular class day curriculum, enrichment programs beyond the regular curriculum, visual art project for BLINK representing OHHS. You can see that they have a wide range and reflect the work teachers are doing well beyond the regular school day and curriculum. I hope this has provided some insight as to how the OHAEF is supporting the district and how the teachers are providing varied opportunities for their students.

## Great Things Happening in Virtual Learning

It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, the last 12 weeks of the 19-20 school year has come to an end in a way none of us could have ever imagined. The educational system was turned upside down to put it mildly, but Oak Hills staff throughout the district, not only rose to the occasion but in many cases surpassed the expectations put upon them.

At Springmyer Elementary, second grade teachers, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Luebbe, and Mrs. Burtke each drove to their second graders' houses, delivering smiles and sidewalk chalk messages. "We let them know that we were coming so we were greeted with chalk messages and door signs, and little faces smiling through windows!" The teachers set up penpals in their class and students keep in contact with each other while practicing their writing. The physical education teacher, Mrs. Elliott, included Springmyer in the National Field Day on May 8th. Teachers and staff recorded themselves completing the events and posted them on the Springmyer Fame Facebook to encourage students to participate. Kindergarten teachers Kristen Niehaus and Mrs. Casey really had a lot of fun learning and creating new things during this remote learning! They have utilized Google Classroom and created teaching videos, but their favorite has been using Google Meet to interact with their students. They always end their day with a Scavenger Hunt -where kids are given clues, and based on those clues, the students have to search their house for the item described. "We learn while having fun and of course we get to see those sweet faces!" said Mrs. Niehaus.

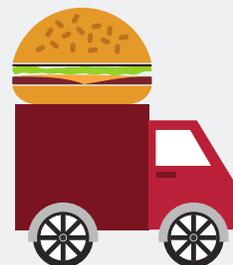
At Bridgetown Middle School, 6th grade Laserbeam team, Melissa Claus, Nichole Miller, Theresa Kroeger, Erin Eiser, and Eric Rothwell have gone to houses to continue to carry on their Leading Laserbeam award.

Another great thing happening is by first year Art teacher, Ms. Katie Jacob, at Oak Hills High School. She has formed a really good bond with her Tartan Time students and is having weekly virtual meetings with her students just to connect and build morale. She's done a fantastic job meeting the social emotional needs of her group. This is not a requirement of teachers but she is going above and beyond because she knows her students value their TT group. Thank you, Katie Jacobs!

Heather Packer and Jenni Budde from Oakdale Elementary have continued lessons and story time which is a big hit. Who doesn't love to be read to, even if it is done virtually!

Thank you Oak Hills teachers for all that you do!!

### Save the Date!



Fingers crossed the Oak Hills Alumni and Educational Foundation will be able to hold the Fabulous

**Food Truck Frenzy**  
Saturday, September 19th!

Stay posted for information to follow!!

If you have received this publication in error, please call the alumni office at 513-574-3200 or email OHHSAlumni@ohlsd.org to remove your address

## Calendar of events and activities

### 2020

- 7/24: Annual Golf Outing @ Aston Oaks Golf Course (originally 6/26)
- 9/19: Food Truck Frenzy @ Oak Hills High School
- 10/7: Annual Dinner @ Western Hills Country Club (originally 5/6)



### Connect your Kroger Plus card to the Foundation

Visit the Kroger website, <https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow> to link your Cincinnati Kroger Plus card to the Oak Hills Alumni & Educational Foundation today! We are #CV794



## Connect with us!



### "Find us" on the web

[www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org/](http://www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org/)

Please visit us to find class reunion dates, grant project summaries and updates, and event information.



### Please update your contact information

Visit [www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org/contact](http://www.oakhillsalumnifoundation.org/contact) to update your contact information so that we may stay in better contact with you.



### "Watch" us on Vimeo

[www.vimeo.com/ohalumniedfoundation](http://www.vimeo.com/ohalumniedfoundation)

See acceptance speeches from this year's award winners.



### "Follow" us on Twitter

[www.twitter.com/OHAlumniAssoc](https://www.twitter.com/OHAlumniAssoc)

Follow us to receive instant updates on events, reunions and grads in the news!



### "Like" us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/OHHSAlumni](https://www.facebook.com/OHHSAlumni)

Thank you for liking us and spreading our good news. Share your achievements so we can celebrate you!



### "Network" with us on LinkedIn

Search group: Official group of Oak Hills High School Alumni

Network with other alumni professionals to connect and share your events, job postings and more.