

# New "All Mules Matter" program underway at Bedford High School

By Jackie Giroux  
Reporter

Sometimes kids with disabilities, especially those diagnosed with autism or asperger's syndrome, are lacking in social skills.

Bedford High School speech language pathologist, Jennifer Harrison and French teacher and mother of a child with autism, Michelle Maynard have recently brought the "All Mules Matter" program to Bedford High School in an effort to aid these students. "... Learning more appropriate behavior as well as making friends," Ms. Harrison said.

In preparation of the implementation of the "All Mules Matter" program, Ms. Harrison and Ms. Maynard attended "Peer to Peer" training sessions at Monroe ISD.

Typical students who have volunteered to be a part of the program receive some training where they learn about autism or disabilities. Four or five volunteers are then paired with a student with a disability and meet weekly. "They play games, have snacks and conversation," Ms. Harrison said. Additionally, she said, "We are encouraging typical students to speak to a student with a disability if they see them in the hallway and maybe walk them to their class. If a student is in their class, they are encouraged to include them so they are not left out.

"In the past, students with disabilities were more segregated – just interacting with other students with disabilities in their class or adults," Ms. Harrison said. "Statistics show that in high school 50% of those with autism have no peer interaction. When most students leave school, they don't have relationships outside of



BHS Speech Language Pathologist, Jennifer Harrison is one of the founders of the "All Mules Matter" program, which pairs volunteer BHS students with students with disabilities focusing on helping them with social skills, making friends and making BHS inclusive. She and the students pictured are working on completing a team building project.

their home. Eighty percent live at home and only 20% have competitive employment."

Ms. Harrison and Ms. Maynard hope through the "All Mules Matter" program that those statistics improve for students with disabilities attending Bedford High School.

The "All Mules Matter" program is already having positive benefits for both the volunteer students and the students with disabilities. Typical students are learning that having a disability is not a bad thing. "They have a better understanding, they are learning compassion, developing more

self-worth and thinking about others – not just about themselves and their friends," Ms. Harrison said.

She related that a typical student that had some behavior problems recently was one that she requested to be a part of "All Mules Matter" and is working out well in the program. "That student is brilliant with the kids," she said.

In addition to learning more appropriate behavior and how to interact with their peers, Ms. Harrison said students with disabilities are benefiting by stigmas being broken down, BHS is becoming more inclusive and they are making

friendships that may last after school ends.

Reflecting back on her 23-year career as a speech and language pathologist Ms. Harrison said, "I easily feel this is the most important thing I've done in my career. "All Mules Matter" has the potential to make a big difference in lives. We want parents to know what's available for their kids."

If you have a student that attends BHS that you feel would benefit by the "All Mules Matter" program, contact Jennifer Harrison at Bedford High School at (734) 850-6100 or email to jennifer.harrison@mybedford.us.

## Bedford business owner announces candidacy for Trustee

TC Clements, owner of Premier Cruise Planners, announced recently that he is seeking a Trustee position for Bedford Township.

"I believe that the residents of Bedford deserve more," he said. "My platform is really simple. Continue to improve roads, controlled and conscientious growth, sound fiscal management and maintain the charm and spirit we know as Bedford," Clements said.

When asked about specifics, he said, "Road improvements are obvious and underway. However, we need to continue to monitor maintenance and expenses so that we don't bounce back and forth between delighted and desperate in regards to our road conditions over the next several years.

"As for growth, we can control it and encourage growth so it is beneficial to our community and does not distract from the charm of Bedford. We need an anchor business or two for the Temperance and Lewis corridor. An anchor store, however, does not mean a big box retail store. Several small businesses could stimulate growth in this area, which in turn brings jobs, produces new income to existing businesses and increases our tax base, which increases home values."

Clements moved to Bedford in 2012 because he knew it



TC Clements

was the ideal place to raise a family. "My wife was raised here and when I visited Bedford in 2003, I fell in love with the charm, the community spirit and the fantastic location to things in the area. I have a young family and a passion to improve Bedford. We have as much to offer as any other community around us and I want to be part of a team that focuses on moving Bedford forward. Bedford has the unique opportunity to control its own future in the next four to eight years. If we do that well, we will be successful. If we mismanage or squander the opportunity, we will be in a hole that could prove difficult to get out of."

Clements is a Florida native. He previously worked in law enforcement, which included

gang intelligence, school resource, traffic, public information officer and deputy chief.

In the private sector, he worked as a senior level executive and entrepreneur. He currently owns a fast-growing full-service travel agency.

Clements is very active in Bedford and Monroe County business development and politics. He serves on the Board of Directors with the Bedford Business Association, the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce and Habitat for Humanity in Monroe County and is active in the Monroe County Republican Party.

TC and his wife Jamie (Zell) have three children, Trey (15), Callen (5) and Kinsey (3).

For questions or more information you can contact TC Clements at TC@TCforTrustee.com or visit www.TCforTrustee.com.

## Easter Bunny coming to Olde Schoolhouse Commons

The Easter Bunny will be hopping on into Lambertville on Saturday, March 19 to visit with kids who come to the Olde Schoolhouse Commons between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Each child will have the chance to chat with the Easter Bunny and will also receive candy and a coloring book.

A photographer will be on hand to capture that special shot of the kids visiting with the Easter Bunny.

The Schoolhouse lunchroom will be open for your breakfast or lunch and the shops will also be open for browsing.

This will be the Easter Bunny's only stop at the Olde Schoolhouse Commons, located at 8336 Monroe Rd., corner of Secor Rd.

Be sure to save the date for a fun event to share with your kids!

**Join us every Friday during Lent EVERY FRIDAY, thru March 25 • 4:30-7:30 p.m.**

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