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NEHS NEWS

Shout It from the Rooftops

Use the Adviser Resource Center for tips to spread good news about your chapter

Promoting your NEHS chapter is important for a multitude of reasons, and we have all the resources you need to help spread the word. In our online Adviser Resource Center (www.nehs.org/arc), we have an entire section called “Promoting Your Chapter” dedicated to helping you share your chapter’s news with the entire community. When you log in, here are a few things you can expect to learn.



Publicity Through Local Media

The first and most common way to promote your chapter is through the local media. Local media outlets always have been, and still are, effective ways to circulate news about your chapter.

You can get started by identifying the proper outlets to approach and drafting a press release. The Adviser Resource Center provides suggestions to help you identify those key outlets and includes templates to help you draft press releases. Everyone loves a feel-good story, and we’re sure your chapter has plenty to share, so make sure you are getting your story out there.

Leverage Social Media

Another way to promote your NEHS chapter is through social media. While social media may not be a means to reach your member audience, it is a great medium to spread the word to parents and the community about the wonderful things your chapter is doing inside and outside the classroom.

There are many ways you can leverage social media to get the word out. First, you can use it to simply spread the word about your projects. Share photos from a service project you participated in recently or challenge your followers to do something similar on their own. You can also use it to keep in

contact with past members. Ask for project feedback or share meeting dates and general announcements via your chapter’s Facebook, Twitter and/or Instagram page.

In addition, you can leverage social media as a means to contact your local media. Now more than ever people are pitching journalists via Twitter, therefore it is important to be present and leverage the platform. And remember to use caution when posting on social media. The Adviser Resource Center provides tips on what chapters should keep in mind when it comes to sharing information.

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ADVISER FAQs

Q: Can we select “probationary members” for our chapter?

A: No. The NEHS Constitution has no provisions regarding the designation of students as probationary members. To define any other type of membership, other than the honorary category noted in the constitution, violates NEHS national policy and creates numerous technical problems where the management of the chapter is concerned.

This phrase (“probationary”) is not the same as students who are “on warning” with the chapter as a result of a disciplinary decision. It is not acceptable to identify “probationary” members—students who have the potential to become members who are then charged with completing tasks such as service hours, leadership experiences, etc., in order to “earn” membership.

“Candidates” are those students who have met the scholarship criteria and are eligible to be considered for selection. If a candidate does not meet the criteria for membership, and is not selected, they are not members—there is no “gray” area where membership is concerned. The faculty council must vote to either select or not select a candidate. Membership conveys certain rights and privileges, particularly regarding due process. Please be sure that your current selection procedure conforms to this policy.

In this issue, we answer your questions about probationary membership and faculty input forms.

Q: What advice can we give to our faculty members when completing the faculty input forms during the chapter’s selection process?

A: Chapters are not required to use the faculty input form, but many do incorporate such assessments as part of their local selection process. Alternatives include soliciting teacher recommendations from a limited number of staff. These two options are

explored in Chapter 4 of the *NEHS Handbook*. Whether using input forms or recommendations, here are some guidelines that can be covered with staff either orally during a faculty meeting or via the instructions accompanying the forms:

- To start, **be professional**. When composing your recommendation or comments on an input form, don’t write anything that you wouldn’t write on a progress report, report card, or other professional communication with a student and/or parent.
- **Substantiation**. Can your ratings or recommendations, particularly low ratings or negative comments, be substantiated, i.e. based on actions? Such actions avoid speculation being the basis for evaluation and also avoid catching either the student or parents (or both) off guard.
- **Opt out**. The recommended forms for faculty input should provide an ‘opt out’ for any teacher. The option can be used when the teacher has no professional interaction with a candidate or when, due to extenuating circumstances involving one or more students, the teacher simply wishes to remain outside of the evaluation process for the Honor Society.
- **Signatures**. In all cases, whether using recommendations or input forms, teacher signatures are imperative. Anonymous evaluations simply will not stand up to scrutiny if challenged, and, in a few states run contrary to established policies.

CHAPTER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES ARE JUST A CLICK AWAY!

Have you visited the new online Adviser Resource Center? Log in on the NEHS website at www.nehs.org/arc to check out the new features and resources! You’ll find sample forms, customizable templates, documents, and much more. The Adviser Resource Center is designed for both new and experienced advisers. Visit the site now whether you’re brand new or need a refresher.

CHAPTER PROFILE

Promoting Excellence and Compassion at Taylorsville

How is NEHS making a difference at your school?

Tell us by emailing nehs@nehs.org and you could be featured in an upcoming edition of *NEHS News*.

Located at the edge of their school district in southeastern Indiana, Taylorsville Elementary School prides itself on focusing on the needs of their highest achievers as well as students struggling academically and economically. Taylorsville serves a mostly blue-collar population and the small town school has a high percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students who receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Because Taylorsville is a Title I school, it has a special focus on closing the achievement gap between low-income and other students. Of note, the school operates a “schoolwide program,” which means that more than half of its students are low income and requires a plan to improve academic achievement of all students with Title I funds.

That fact turned out to be a driving factor for the school to become an NEHS charter member in 2008.

“The reasoning behind it was that we had multiple programs in place for students who struggled academically,” said Susan Calabrese, a third grade teacher and NEHS adviser at Taylorsville. “The principal thought it would be nice to have an organization for students who were high achieving.”

Taylorsville’s road to NEHS began when a former principal at the school approached Calabrese about starting an NEHS chapter, and she led the charge from there. For the past eight years, Calabrese, along with one or two other advisers each year, has been promoting academic excellence and service to the school’s more than 600 students, from pre-K to grade 6.

“Our school is in a small community on the edge of our district, so I really feel that whatever NEHS does has a big



impact,” said Calabrese. “It also highlights students who might be overlooked, especially in a Title I school.”

To be considered for membership, the Taylorsville advisers look at honor roll, statewide testing information, behavior and attendance, and faculty recommendations and evaluations. Once they’ve become a member, students participate in service projects such as gathering donations for less fortunate families; giving tours and helping out with kindergarten students; making Christmas cards for soldiers; and planning a “goodie day” for Teacher Appreciation Week.

Calabrese’s favorite success story as an NEHS adviser is hearing the compassion and concern from her chapter members after they deliver donations to families they might know. “NEHS helps with teaching students compassion—that there are needs and service projects all around us, and that even at their age, they can be a part of helping out,” she said.

Whether you are a new adviser or a more seasoned one like Calabrese, she offers a few pieces of advice based on her experience thus far.

“It’s helpful to have more than one adviser to bounce ideas off of and to spread out the work,” she said. “Also, it’s important to listen to teachers when considering students, because not all things are reflected in the academic scores. Lastly, try to meet with the students as often as possible—we try to do a service project every nine weeks. As the advisers, we come up with a need, and then meet with the students to gather their ideas and agree upon what ideas are doable.”

At Taylorsville, NEHS is not only enhancing the school’s culture of academic achievement—it’s also showing students the importance of service and personal responsibility.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAYLORSVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

IDEA EXCHANGE

THOUSANDS OF IDEAS JU

Have you started thinking about your fall activities yet? Get inspiration from these projects pulled from the more than 5,000 ideas in the National Student Project Database at nehs.org/projects.

SWEATS FOR VETS/
HOODIES FOR HOPE

GREENVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL
GREENVILLE, NY

In honor of Veterans Day, Greenville Middle School's National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) and high school Interact Club students collected gently used hoodies and sweatpants, along with winter clothing. The high school Functional Skills students assisted by washing, repairing, sorting, and packaging items for donation to the homeless veterans initiatives in surrounding communities. More than 300 items were collected and distributed. Members of the school, community, and other organizations came together to effect change and improve quality of life. The project was originally developed by a class of 2015 student who was a participant in Empire Girls State of the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary. Her original project in the fall of 2014 was extremely successful (400+ items), embraced by the local community, and much appreciated by the various entities that received the items. As a result of the project's success, the NJHS chapter decided to continue this project on an annual basis.



VETERANS DAY PROJECT

LOWER MACUNGIE MIDDLE SCHOOL
MACUNGIE, PENNSYLVANIA

This NJHS chapter developed its own unique way to honor veterans. Students, faculty, and staff submitted names of veterans to appear on the 'Roll of Honor' wall. This wall is located by the school auditorium and is visible as visitors enter the school. For each submission, NJHS members created a star with the veteran's name, the conflict or war in which the veteran served, and the relationship to the student or staff member. The stars were mounted on a dark blue banner. More than 250 names were submitted and the entire wall was filled. The banner was displayed throughout the month of November, and on November 11 the school held an assembly that community veterans were invited to attend. NJHS students served as greeters and three students read essays on why they appreciate veterans during the program.

ST A CLICK AWAY



For more ideas and to submit your own projects, visit the National Student Project Database at nehs.org/projects.



HAUNTED HALLOWEEN

**NOLAN MIDDLE SCHOOL
BRADENTON, FL**

Last October, the NJHS chapter at Nolan Middle School planned, organized, and implemented their second annual Nolan Middle School Haunted Hallway event. The goal was to raise money and awareness for the American Cancer Society. The first year the chapter raised \$1,500. Hoping to raise more money than the previous year, they set out to enhance the experience with the hope that guests would take multiple trips through the hallways (a fee is charged for each visit).

Through the efforts of the advisers, members, and volunteers, the NJHS chapter was able to raise \$2,500 at the event, \$2,000 of which was donated to the American Cancer Society. The chapter members are hopeful that other schools can also learn from their experience and hold similar efforts to support great organizations.

SIMPLY SMILING

**ACADEMY OF GREATNESS AND EXCELLENCE
TEANECK, NJ**

One of the pillars of NEHS is service, and that is what the NEHS students from the Academy of Greatness and Excellence provided at the Woodcrest Healthcare Center. Students visited the elderly of their community, spending quality time with them and bringing smiles to their faces. In addition, they collected donations from their student body for the residents to enjoy and they also decorated a banner consisting of inspirational quotes that they gifted to the center. As a result of this project, weekly visits were set up with the center in order for the student body to regularly spend time with the residents.



WHERE'S WATSON?

MARY WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Watson, the official NEHS mascot, had quite a busy spring this year! In Dumfries, VA, Watson had a grand day at **Mary Williams Elementary School** before heading off on a journey to Texas. Watson was able to participate in the school's Beautify Mary Williams School Day and take part in two chapter meetings. Watson also helped provide inspiration to third, fourth, and fifth grade students before their end-of-year SOL (standards of learning) assessments. The students enjoyed his visit and are looking forward to having him come back next year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Watson also had an exciting time at **Converse Elementary School** in Converse, TX. He visited several classrooms and got to meet with the city mayor and the city police department. He was also able to help the chapter thank the Converse Police Department for their service during National Police Week. He received many hugs and even got to visit Judson Middle School, the school that Converse students will be attending next year.

Would you like to have Watson visit your school and participate in events?

Email your request to nehs@nehs.org, subject: Watson Visit. Please note, requests are considered and scheduled in the order received. Please include the dates of the visit and your school's name and mailing address.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONVERSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



CONVERSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Shout It from the Rooftops (Continued from page 1)

Contribute to NASSP publications

As an NEHS chapter you also have the opportunity to share what you're doing through our various NEHS member communications. Have you completed a successful project with your members or do you have a project planned? We want to hear all about it. Do you have valuable advice you want to share with NEHS chapters across the U.S.? We'd love to hear that, too. Writing for *NEHS News*, *NEHS E-News*, or NASSP's *School of Thought* blog are all ways you can promote your chapter while

helping other chapters at the same time. Submission instructions for these publications can be found in the Adviser Resource Center.

Enter the Spotlight

So, just what can a little publicity do for you? For Annapolis Elementary School in Maryland, a story in the *Baltimore Sun* highlighted a mix of students and NEHS members who helped bring back to life a spring garden. Students spent time with their fifth-grade teacher restoring a garden that was put in place

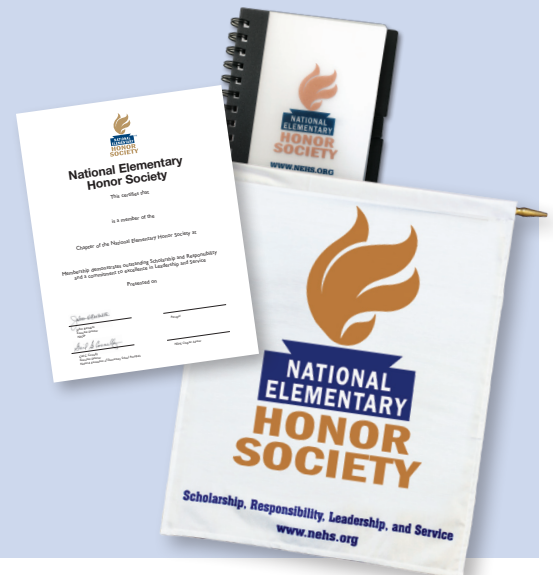
to honor a retired fifth-grade teacher. The garden will continue to be a place of beauty thanks to the hard work of NEHS members and fifth-grade students at the school.

While it may seem a story like this is small, the impact of the positive recognition gained by Annapolis Elementary School's NEHS chapter is immeasurable. And your chapter could be next! Visit "Promoting Your Chapter" at www.nehs.org/arc today to access resources to help you spread the good news.

WHAT'S IN STORE?

Get ready for the school year and shop the NEHS Store by browsing the **2016–17 NEHS Adviser Resource Guide!** You should have received it with this edition of *NEHS News*, and it includes all of the items you'll need to run your chapter with efficiency and style.

Whether it's a banner for your classroom or certificates to hand out after an induction ceremony, start the school year off on the right foot with new NEHS gear. You can also browse and purchase items online by visiting **NEHS.ORG/STORE**.



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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



Your experience counts!

All NEHS advisers are invited to contribute to a future issue of *NEHS News*. Do you want to tell your chapter’s story on a national level? Or maybe you have an outstanding student member who is worthy of being profiled. Email nehs@nehs.org with your ideas and submissions.



For more inspirational quotes and NEHS information, “like” the official NEHS Facebook page at facebook.com/elementaryhonors.

“Do what you can with all that you have, wherever you are.”

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

