

HUDSON COMMUNITY FIRST NEWSLETTER


 UPCOMING
EVENTS
December 6

Holiday Shoppe &
Community Craft Fair
10am - 1pm @ East Woods

January 26

Community of Care
Speaker: Tanner Clark
HMS @ 7:00pm

February 4

HPD Presents "What You
Don't Know & Why You
Should"
HMS @ 7:00pm

February 27

Toast to Hudson
Gala Fundraiser
Lake Forest Country Club
6:30pm

March 5

Career Panel
Hudson High School
7:00pm

March 17

Uncharted Waters
Hudson High School

THE ANNUAL GREAT GRAPE ESCAPE WAS A SELL OUT SUCCESS



On September 25, Hudson Community First hosted its annual ladies-only night out at The Wine Mill. Guests were treated to an elegant and festive fall atmosphere, complete with live acoustic music that set the perfect tone for an evening of connection, laughter, and community support.

Some lucky winners walked away with one of our more than 10 raffle baskets, generously donated. Executive Directors Jennifer Fisher and Laura Jones shared updates on Hudson Community First's mission and upcoming programs. The combination of laughter, live music, delicious bites, and shared purpose made this event a resounding success. It was truly a wonderful night out for a great cause.

HUDSON COMMUNITY FIRST SPONSORS SETON CATHOLIC SCHOOL'S LITERACY NIGHT

Hudson Community First was proud to sponsor Literacy Night at Seton Catholic School, celebrating the joy of reading with students, families, and staff while highlighting the asset of **creative activities**. The evening spotlighted Anne Wright, beloved Seton teacher and author of the "Mostess the Ghostess" series.

As part of the celebration, every student received a copy of *A Magical Mostess Halloween*, generously donated by Hudson Community First.

We are grateful to Seton Catholic School for hosting this event and to Anne Wright for reminding all of us that reading opens doors to curiosity, courage, and community.



PARENTING IN THE DIGITAL WORLD: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. DEVORAH HEITNER

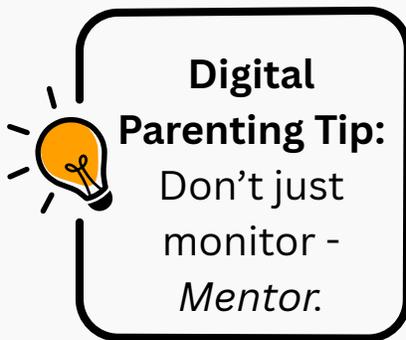
On October 15, Hudson Community First was proud to welcome Dr. Devorah Heitner, author of Growing Up in Public and Screenwise, for an evening focused on "Parenting in the Digital World." Over 80 parents attended this timely and insightful session aimed at helping families navigate the challenges of raising kids in an always-connected age.

Dr. Heitner emphasized the importance of mentoring, not just monitoring, our children's tech use. By modeling positive digital behavior and talking openly about the challenges of online life, parents can build trust and guide their children toward healthy, responsible use of technology.

Some key takeaways included:

- **Family tech culture matters.** Understanding your family's collective skills, values, and expectations around devices helps kids feel supported, not policed.
- **Teach life skills through tech.** Kids should know how to email teachers, manage group texts, and understand they don't need to be "on" 24/7.
- **Support emotional well-being.** In a world where social media can amplify comparison and stress, help your child build self-esteem offline.
- **Privacy and consent are essential.** Ask your child's permission before posting their photo. This models respectful digital boundaries.
- **Sleep matters!** One of the most practical steps: keep phones out of the bedroom at night.

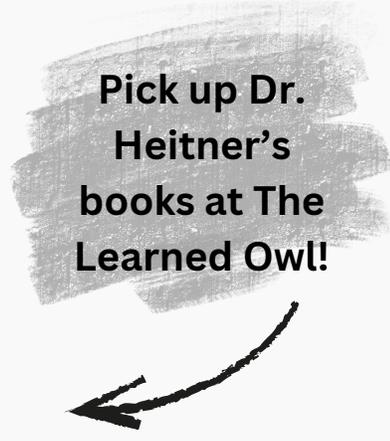
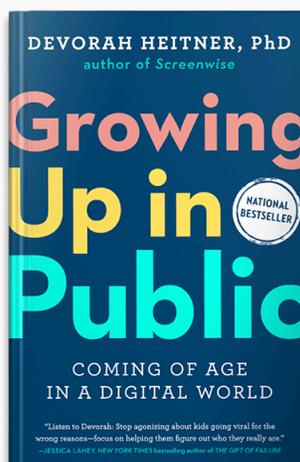
From screen time to self-regulation, reputation to relationships, Dr. Heitner encouraged parents to foster open conversations and treat technology as a tool, not a threat. Her bottom line? Raise digital citizens who lead with empathy and character.



READY, SET, RELAX

On Monday, November 3, Hudson Community First partnered with Hudson City Schools, Seton Catholic School, and Hudson Montessori School for our annual Ready, Set, Relax, one special night with no homework so families can slow down, connect, and simply enjoy time together. Whether you watched a movie, baked cookies, took a walk, or played in the leaves, we hope the evening helped everyone recharge and reconnect.

A huge thank you to all the families who shared photos for our contest. Your smiles and cozy snapshots captured the spirit of the night perfectly. We loved seeing how each household made it their own!



Raising Resilient Kids with Dr. Meghan Barlow

Hudson Community First welcomed Meghan Barlow, Ph.D., for two engaging sessions of “Raising Resilient Kids,” a presentation designed especially for parents of preschool and kindergarten-aged children. Over 100 parents attended the sessions to learn practical ways to nurture resilience in young children. What is resilience? It’s the ability to get knocked down, stand back up, and keep going.



Dr. Barlow began by reminding parents that resilience is built, not born. Children grow stronger when they experience, and work through, frustrations, setbacks, and disappointments. “Resist the temptation to protect your kids from every hurt or challenge,” she advised. “These moments are necessary and not so terrible. They’re opportunities for growth.”

Throughout her talk, Dr. Barlow emphasized the importance of letting children try, fail, and try again, even when it’s inconvenient or messy. Parents, she explained, can serve as “emotional anchors” by staying calm and demonstrating the behavior they hope to see in their children. When frustration arises (like tears over spilled hot chocolate), she encouraged parents to first pause and breathe, assess the situation, and then guide their child through the steps of problem-solving:



- **Validate the frustration** – Affirm, acknowledge, accept, and reflect their feelings.
- **Begin problem-solving** – Define the problem, start small, and offer guidance as needed.
- **Move forward** – Try again, create a new plan, or simply do the next thing.
- **Debrief (optional)** – When calm, review what worked, praise efforts, and reframe the moment as a success story.

“Kids need to learn that they can rely on their own ideas,” Dr. Barlow said. “Our words and actions matter. We can ‘prime the pump’ by reminding them of past successes and showing confidence in their ability to handle new challenges.”

Her practical, compassionate approach left parents with new tools, and renewed confidence, to help their children grow stronger through life’s everyday ups and downs.

RESILIENCY PLAYLIST

I’m Still Standing
– Elton John

Fight Song
– Rachel Platten

Titanium
– David Guetta
(feat. Sia)

Survivor
– Destiny’s Child

Stronger
– Kelly Clarkson



EXECUTIVE BOARD

Marietta Marquart, President
Alisa Wright, Vice President
Jim Yurak, Treasurer
Tim Clepper, Secretary
Lynn Krapf, member
Jack Lieske, Emeritus Member

CO-DIRECTORS

Jennifer Fisher
jfisher90@yahoo.com

Laura Jones
joneslau@windstream.net

VOLUNTEER BOARD

Looking to get more involved in the community? We are always happy to have more members as part of our volunteer board. Volunteer Board members assist with various events and programs throughout the year. Contact a director for more information.

TWELVE OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY MEMBERS HONORED AT HCF'S ANNUAL TAKE A SECOND. MAKE A DIFFERENCE. AWARD LUNCHEON

October 24 was declared Take a Second, Make a Difference day and community members gathered at the Country Club of Hudson for the Take a Second. Make a Difference. Luncheon. We honored neighbors, educators, students, and community members who noticed a need and acted, strengthening the skills, relationships, and opportunities that help Hudson's young people thrive. The 2025 honorees showed how a single second of care can change a day, a classroom, or a life. Below is a brief spotlight on each recipient and the reason for their recognition. If you see one of these recipients, please extend a congratulations on a well-deserved recognition.



Damien and Adelaide Baran

Siblings Damien and Adelaide Baran were honored for turning their brother Vincent's memory into a force for compassion and service at Western Reserve Academy and across our community. As student leaders, they rally classmates for the Mighty Vincent Day of Service and other volunteer efforts, drawing students across grades into meaningful community work. Their energy, passion, and dedication strengthens a culture of **service** and helps young people feel empowered to make a difference.



Penny Tschantz

Hudson Middle School secretary Penny Tschantz was recognized as the heartbeat of Hudson Middle School. She is the go-to for students, staff, and families, creating a caring, welcoming environment while holding students accountable and guiding them to problem solve. Penny devotes countless hours outside school to organize events so everyone feels seen and celebrated. Through countless behind-the-scenes acts of kindness, Penny helps everyone who walks through HMS doors feel supported and proud of their school. She exemplifies the **caring** asset that builds positive values in young people.

Marty Bach

Hudson High School AP U.S. History teacher Marty Bach transforms class into a story students cannot wait to enter. He creates a welcoming, confidence-building space where mistakes become chances to grow and every learner feels included. Students say he explains concepts clearly, keeps discussions focused and engaging, and models the "Portrait of an Explorer" traits by nurturing adaptive problem solving skills and critical thinking. He exemplifies the **school engagement** asset that strengthens a young person's commitment to learning.



Caitlin Fritz

As Director of Education Technology at Western Reserve Academy, Caitlin Fritz enriches campus life every day. She brings expertise and dedication to the tech department, and she goes far beyond to support anyone who needs help. Whether she is solving a technical challenge or offering a shoulder to lean on, Caitlin meets every situation with compassion, patience, and a willingness to do whatever it takes. Her selflessness builds lasting relationships and fosters a **caring school climate** that strengthens students' sense of support.



Chris & Patty Gurreri

Patty and Chris Gurreri pour their time, energy, and hearts into Hudson. Most notably, they helped bring Hudson Community Living to life, creating a supportive path to greater independence for young adults. Through extensive efforts, partnership-building, and hands-on leadership, they model selfless service and joyful commitment. Their work strengthens a **caring neighborhood climate** and shows young people what it looks like to lift others up every day.

Paige Krabill

Dr. Paige Krabill, school psychologist at Hudson Montessori, was recognized for making a profound difference in the lives of children and families. Her guidance helped one young child navigate difficult transitions with greater comfort, consistency, and confidence, and her calm, skilled approach created a ripple effect of support for students, parents, and staff. Dr. Krabill exemplifies the **another adult relationship** asset that strengthens a young person's sense of support.



Caroline Martin

East Woods Intermediate fifth grader Caroline Martin was celebrated for her kindness, courage, and unshakable positivity. Caroline is described as a friend to everyone who lifts others up and chooses the bright side. This year she also navigated osteosarcoma, enduring chemotherapy and surgery, yet she continues to smile, support friends, and model compassion. Caroline exemplifies the asset of **integrity**, showing how values guide choices in hard moments.

Jennifer Platek

Hudson Middle School choir director Jennifer Platek creates a joyful, safe haven where students feel seen, heard, and inspired. Students describe her as a "guiding star" with a heart of gold and a voice they could listen to all day. In her room, concerns are taken seriously, trust is built, and confidence grows. Jennifer exemplifies the **adult role models** asset that helps young people understand boundaries, expectations, and their own potential.



David Skoczen

Former Hudson Kiwanis Youth Baseball president David Skoczen is a steadfast champion for kids and families. He managed the complex logistics of baseball and softball seasons for the last 6 years, serving 1,000+ participants. Colleagues praise his tireless, collaborative leadership and kids-first mindset, calling him a true role model and unsung hero. David exemplifies the **youth programs** asset that supports a young person's constructive use of time.



Daphne Smith

(Pictured is Daphne's nominator, Riley, accepting on her behalf)

Daphne Smith models **positive peer influence** every day. Daphne stays supportive through tough transitions, checks in on classmates who are down, and lifts the mood with kindness and empathy. She sets clear, caring expectations for how peers treat one another and helps her school feel safe and connected.

SMILE DAY BROUGHT ALL THE SMILES

Hudson Community First and all Hudson schools celebrated Smile Day on October 1, while on October 2, Seton Catholic School joined in with small acts of joy. At Hudson High School, the Youth Board greeted students with a smile and a sticker. At Hudson Middle School, the band played as students entered the building and faculty in each Hudson school building enjoyed Smile Day cakes. At Seton, special thanks to 4th grade teacher Laura Zaleski for spearheading a joyful lineup: 4th-5th grade Student Council greeted families with smiley-face stickers; smiley Post-its with affirmations brightened every locker; and 4th graders delivered "Smile" bookmarks to homerooms along with a quick "smile challenge" moment.



DR. MEGHAN BARLOW PRESENTS UNDERSTANDING & BUILDING EF IN OUR CHILDREN

On November 6, Hudson Community First welcomed back Meghan Barlow, Ph.D. to Hudson Montessori School for a practical talk on “Understanding and Building Executive Functioning Skills (EF) in Our Children.”

Executive Functioning is the set of brain-based skills that help kids manage emotions, behavior, and goal-directed tasks. Dr. Barlow described EF as an orchestra: individual sections (impulse control, working memory, emotion regulation, self-monitoring, planning/prioritizing, task initiation, organization, and flexible thinking) playing together for everyday “performances” like getting ready, waiting their turn, or finishing homework. Every child has a unique profile of strengths and growth areas; EF challenges can appear with ADHD or autism, but any child can benefit from support.

How families can help:

- Use visuals, cues, and timers for routines; plan backward, execute forward to make steps concrete.
- Coach transitions: acknowledge the switch from preferred to non-preferred tasks and keep momentum with the “next step.”
- Build skills through games and passion projects, talk about characters’ choices in books/shows, and model your own self-talk (“First I set a timer, then I sort...”).
- Try collaborative problem-solving (define the problem, brainstorm, choose a plan, reflect) to strengthen all EF areas.

Resources & next steps:

Explore Smart but Scattered (Peg Dawson) for child/teen questionnaires to spot strengths and needs, and partner with teachers to calibrate appropriate parent support.

Thank you, Dr. Barlow, for equipping families with clear, compassionate strategies to raise confident, capable kids.



FALL CAREER PANEL RECAP

Hudson Community First hosted our Fall Career Panel on Thursday, November 6 in the Hudson High School Media Center, welcoming over 50 students from Hudson High School and Western Reserve Academy. Thank you to our panelists, all HHS graduates, who spoke about their career paths and professions:

- **Gwen Hubach Bowen**, Project Manager, VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System
- **Katharine Huntley**, Reporter, WOIO Cleveland 19 News
- **Sarah L’Hommedieu**, Esq., Associate Attorney, L’Hommedieu & McGrievy, LLC
- **Kate Disney**, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Assent Behavior Consulting, LLC
- **Matt Price**, Police Officer/School Resource Officer, Hudson Police Department

We are grateful for their time, insights, and support of Hudson students. We’re also building our roster of local professionals for future panels. If you’re interested in participating, please email director@hudsoncommunityfirst.com.





DON'T FORGET TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

HUDSON COMMUNITY FIRST
**HOLIDAY
GIFT SHOPPE
and Craft Fair**

EAST WOODS - 120 N. Hayden Parkway
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 10 am- 1 pm

Kids (Preschool-Age 12) secretly shop in the supervised Gift Shoppe while parents enjoy the Craft Fair.

The Craft Fair is open to the public and will feature 25 talented local vendors.

CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED
cash or check
(Gifts range in price from \$3-\$15)
Gift Shoppe open while supplies last

Contact hcfholiday@gmail.com for more information.
www.hudsoncommunityfirst.com

Toast TO *Hudson*

PLEASE JOIN US TO SUPPORT
**HUDSON
COMMUNITY FIRST**

FRIDAY | AT 6.30 PM
FEB 27, 2026 | LAKE FOREST CC

100 LAKE FOREST DRIVE
HUDSON

LOOKING FOR WAYS TO GET INVOLVED?!

Hudson Community First is a local nonprofit organization that promotes positive youth development and seeks to unite individuals, organizations and our schools in an effort to nurture competent, caring and responsible children and adolescents. Here are a few ways you can become more involved:

- Consider being a panelist on a future career panel
- Join our volunteer board
- Donate a good or service to our Toast to Hudson silent auction
- Attend one of our fundraising events
- Attend a Hudson Community First Community of Care program - Educating yourself about positive youth development and the issues our youth face is always a great way to be involved!
- and lastly... just show support for Hudson's Youth!!