

news & views

Springer Celebration Welcomes Alum and NFL Player Mike Wright

A Springer Celebration! 2015 will cater to the sports fan in all of us by honoring alumni athletes and featuring sports-themed activities. The guest speaker for the evening will be Michael Wright, Springer alumnus and defensive end for the New England Patriots for seven years. Reminiscent of last year's fundraiser, *Game On! Experience. Learn. Achieve.* will feature fun activities for sports enthusiasts and everyone else. Alumni parent and former member of Springer's Board of Trustees Nick Spadaccini will chair the event this year.

"I am honored to Chair the Springer Annual Celebration, especially this year with Michael Wright as the Alumni Honoree," said Nick. "Michael's parents and my wife and I are friends, and we have a special bond in being Springer School Alumni parents. Both of our children experienced, learned, and achieved because of strategies taught by Springer. Being a young child and learning how to cope and confront the challenge of learning disabilities is a valuable life lesson in perseverance that will lead to better outcomes when they face other challenges later in life. Many children and families come and go from Springer, but the lessons learned and the support will be with them forever."

Mike Wright graduated from Springer School and Center in 1996 and from Purcell Marian High School in 2000. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal



Celebration guest speaker Mike Wright (left) with Event Chair Nick Spadaccini

justice with a minor in real estate at the University of Cincinnati, where he played for the Bearcats, who were undefeated during one of his years there. Mike was signed by the New England Patriots in 2005.

"When I came to the Patriots, there were five guys ahead of me, one of whom was a 5-year pro from Ohio State," Mike remembered. "I decided I had to do whatever it took, so that at the end I'd have no regrets, no excuses. The Patriots under Bill Belichick is the kind of team that sees in young players what they don't see in themselves, and they saw something in me."

"I'm excited to be involved with Springer's Celebration because this is where it all started for me," said Mike. "Springer is where I learned that work ethic outweighs everything." In his current role as trainer for young athletes, Mike puts to use the lessons he learned at Springer and with the Patriots. "More than physical training, the work I do with kids is focused on body maintenance and mindset as well," Mike said. "I do a lot of work with the mind-body connection."

In line with the athletic theme, the Celebration will be held in the ballroom and

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LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In reading about the contributory activities and special events described in this newsletter, one could easily conclude that Springer is no different from other elementary schools. A focus on contributing to one's community, after-school activities, visits from authors, musicians and theater groups are elements that can be found in many schools. Yet, it is just for this reason that it is especially important these elements are part of the Springer experience. For a child, the three, four or more years spent at Springer represent a significant amount of time in a young life. To that end, we strive to provide for our students a holistic experience – one that balances the typical experiences of childhood with instruction specialized for students with learning disabilities.

And, it probably goes without saying that it is far easier to capture in words and photos a special event or activity than it is to capture the daily work in which our students are engaged. Within each lesson, many things are happening simultaneously – older students, for example, might be selecting and applying comprehension strategies, while also developing their executive function skills as demonstrated in their ability to efficiently organize their notes or shift from one activity to another.

Recently, I had the chance to literally peek over the shoulder of one of our eighth graders while she competently moved from screen to screen on her computer, demonstrating some of the strategies she employs to help with reading comprehension and memory. With each new screen, Ashley explained what was meaningful and useful to her, and how she prepared notes on her computer, listened to text and highlighted it, and used reminders to make sure that she is working toward her goals. Ashley has developed an enviable set of skills, of which she says, "I will definitely use these next year when I'm in high school."

Even our younger students are developing strategies and an awareness of how they best learn. During a classroom morning meeting, 11 eager students patiently wait their turns to tell me about the strategies they use and why these strategies work for them. These ten- and eleven-year-olds recognize their difficulties with attention, with reading comprehension, math computation or writing, and they openly share techniques they've found to be effective, strategies such as underlining the spelling patterns in new words or using a graphic organizer before starting to write a story. They know the

benefits of speech-to-text software and can also speak to the challenges of using it. With their self-understanding and strategies at hand, they're squarely facing their challenges and moving forward in their learning.

At the same time, if asked what they like best at school, their answers range from participation in an after-school club, a special unit on drumming or time with friends at recess. After all, our students are like children everywhere. They simply need a school that isn't exactly like everywhere else...they need a place like Springer, where they can thrive.



Shelly Weisbacher

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concourse that overlook the Musketeers' basketball arena at Xavier University's Cintas Center. Displays on the concourse will celebrate Springer alumni who have participated in a variety of sports. Local 12 WKRC TV News Anchor Brad Johansen will emcee the evening that will include dinner, cocktails, and live and silent auctions. A Springer Celebration! 2015 happens from 6:30 to 9:00 on Wednesday, April 29. Visit www.Springer-LD.org/celebration_15 for more information.



Auction Chair and Springer parent Gina Goings (left) with Development Specialist Kirstin Eismín.

Student Honored by ReelAbilities for His Artwork

When representatives from ReelAbilities visited Springer Upper School students in November, Keelin Ware had no idea that in February he'd be enjoying lunch at the Hyatt Regency with Hollywood stars Marlee Matlin and Danny Woodburn, and being awarded a check for \$500.

ReelAbilities is an advocacy group that hosts film festivals around the country with a mission to promote awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories and artistic expressions of people with different disabilities. The luncheon Keelin attended on February 27, along with his

parents and Springer art teacher Corrinne Thaler, marked the kickoff for this year's ReelAbilities Cincinnati festival.

Keelin received his award for First Place in the ReelAbilities "Different, Like You" art contest. To be considered, entries were to address stereotypes, point out social stigma, raise questions and/or help explore the meanings of ability and disability in any context, all while focusing on our universal diversity. Corrinne set the Springer students the challenge of creating a self-portrait in the style of an established artist.

"I was surprised and happy to win the contest," said Keelin. "I liked meeting Marlee Matlin and Danny Woodburn. Especially Danny - he was funny!"

Corrinne submitted the self-portraits to the Different, Like You contest, and the organizers liked them so much that many of them were published in a book, *Different, Like You*, with Keelin's portrait on the cover. ReelAbilities will give the book away, and a copy will be available for viewing in the school library.



Upper School student Keelin Ware is embraced by Academy Award Winner Marlee Matlin at the ReelAbilities Film Festival Awards Luncheon.



Dr. Peg Dawson to Speak on Executive Function

On March 18, author and psychologist Peg Dawson, Ed.D., NCSP, will address parents, sharing strategies for helping struggling students to find success. The program, *Calming the Chaos: Essential Skills That Help Smart but Scattered Students Reach Their Full Potential*, will discuss the "executive function" skills that support organization, planning ahead, staying on task, getting started on assignments, and getting needed materials home from and

back to school.

Expert in the assessment of learning and attention disorders in children and adults, Dr. Dawson has co-authored several books with Dr. Richard Guare, including *Smart but Scattered* and *Smart but Scattered Teens*. She has worked at the Center for Learning and Attention Disorders in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, since 1992, and is the 2006 recipient of the National Association of School Psychologists'

Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. Dawson's visit is being sponsored by The Family Resource Center and The Center for ADHD at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and by Springer School and Center. The program will be held at the Sharonville Convention Center from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18. Visit www.Springer-LD.org for more information and to purchase tickets.

Technology Tools Support Academic Skills

When Springer alumnus Andrew Brinkman had the chance to test-drive the Kurzweil 3000 text-to-speech software suite with study supports, he was impressed. "If I'd had this when I was a kid," he mused, "my life would have been so much easier."

Without those supports, Andy earned a math degree from Hiram College, and a Master's in Special Education from Wilmington College. He is currently Director of Goalkeeping for a Major League Soccer team, the Columbus Crew, owner and director of GK1 Goalkeeping Academy in Lewis Center, Ohio and distributor for AdvoCare, which sells health and nutrition products.

Andy is a huge fan of technology tools now, making use of speech-to-text tools every day in his work life. "There's no way I could effectively do my profession without Apple's speech-to-text capabilities, search engines like Siri – even the Google search bar," he said. "If I don't know how to spell something, I start typing into the Google search bar, and the right word will pop up. It's actually helping me to learn to spell those words."

The use of technological tools that support reading, writing, math, organization, memory and other academic skills have gained much attention in recent years.

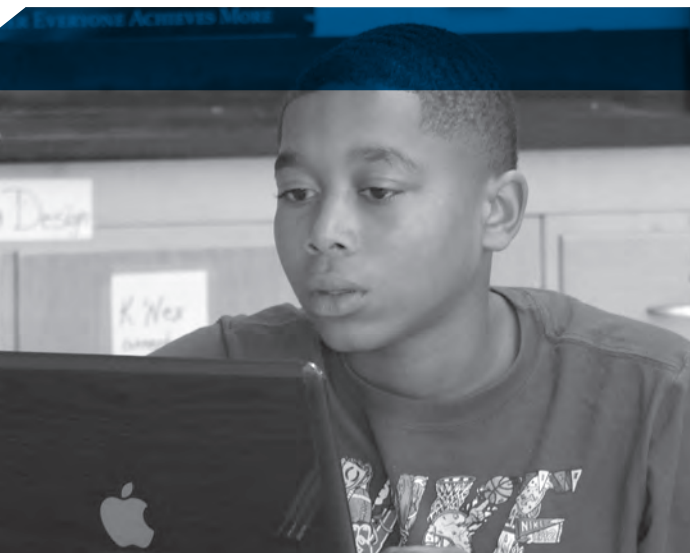
More than 50 parents attended a recent program presented by Center Program Coordinator Barbara Hunter. The program, "Supporting Academic Achievement Using Technology," helped parents understand not only what tech tools exist for students who struggle in school, but also why they are so important.

"It's like using a cast on a broken arm," explained Barbara. "The weakened bone doesn't grow stronger by forcing it to be used, but by building support around it that allows it to strengthen." Students who have learning disabilities in reading, writing or math, and those with weaknesses in "executive functions" such as planning, prioritizing, remembering, flexible thinking and self-regulation, need supports around them, both so they can achieve what their intellect is capable of achieving, and so they can better "show what they know."

Barbara introduced parents to the variety of tech tools available today, products such as Inspiration and Kidspiration, which help with organizing thoughts, the speech-to-text package Dragon Dictate, Notebook for organizing homework, assignments and deadlines, and Kurzweil 3000, which combines text-to-speech capability with note-taking, highlighting and study skills tools.

"The tools themselves are clearly important for the students," Barbara said, "but equally important is direct instruction in how to use the tools, when to use them, and even why each student needs the tools that are most useful to him." Students who understand the how, when and why of technology tools are able to take that knowledge to higher education, and to adult life. They will understand how to seek out, evaluate and adopt the tech tools that will support their achievement throughout their lives.

The program for parents was developed because of experience gained through the Upper School's one-to-one laptop program, which was launched in 2012. "Students in the laptop program gained quite a functional understanding of their needs and the tools that best meet those needs," said Barbara. "They wanted to take that structure with them to their next learning environment and beyond. This program helps parents to support their students in that endeavor."



SPRINGER HOSTS STEEL BAND DIRECTOR AS MUSICIAN IN RESIDENCE

It felt like a tropical day in December, when 2014 Norita Aplin Musician in Residence Dr. Chris Tanner brought the island music of Trinidad and Tobago to Springer School and Center. Dr. Tanner is Associate Chair of the Department of Music at Miami University, and the founder and director of the school's Steel Band. During his week-long stay at Springer, Dr. Tanner introduced students in all departments to the various elements of a steel band and the history of steel band music. Working with a group of Intermediate students, he gave instruction on the instruments, known as steel pans. At the end of the residency, the students demonstrated what they had learned in a performance at the school's Holiday Assembly.

"It was confusing at times, but once I got the hang of it, it's fun!" said student Nick Comarata about learning to play the steel pans. Isabel Roebel said, "It was a lot of fun to try something new!" The students learned their parts without written music, and played by memory for the performance. "I really liked it," said Hunter Jones. "But it was hard because you have to remember all the different patterns."

"I always enjoy the chance to work with younger students," remarked Dr. Tanner. "With these students, I was especially struck by their self-awareness – their own awareness of how they learn best. To be in a place where everyone – students, faculty, and staff alike – are unwavering in their common purpose is inspirational.

I am proud to have the opportunity to be part of the Springer family for a brief time."

Dr. Tanner was Springer's very first Musician in Residence when the program was launched in 1998 to honor former Springer Executive Director Norita Aplin for her 14 years of leadership to the school. He has returned several times, alternating steel band and African drumming for his work with the students. Dr. Tanner is the author of a book on developing a steel pan program for schools, and has released a recording of his original music, and five recordings with the Miami University Steel Band.



Dr. Chris Tanner (right) with Dr. Norita Aplin and her husband Stanley Ragle.





Bill Niklas of Honor Flight Dayton receives check from Upper School students Ashley Suttner and Natalie Sparling.

Meeting Needs and Fulfilling Dreams

With the goal of nurturing students toward active citizenship, Springer encourages participation in contributory activities – opportunities for students to give to those in need. This year Springer’s Student Council sponsored the “Power Packs” initiative, in which students gathered toiletry items and assembled them into packages that were donated to the Walnut Hills Kitchen.

Each Power Pack contained soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, lotion, shampoo and conditioner. The students collected enough toiletry items to fill more than 300 Power Packs for the Kitchen, which serves hot meals seven times per week – nearly 101,000 meals annually.

“There are no words to express our gratitude to the students of Springer School and Center for preparing over 300 Power Packs to be distributed to the poor and homeless in our community,” said Patricia Wakim, Executive Director of the Walnut Hills Kitchen. “The acknowledgement that we received from our guests was overwhelming as the toiletries were a ‘special’ addition to the grocery bags we distributed during the week.”

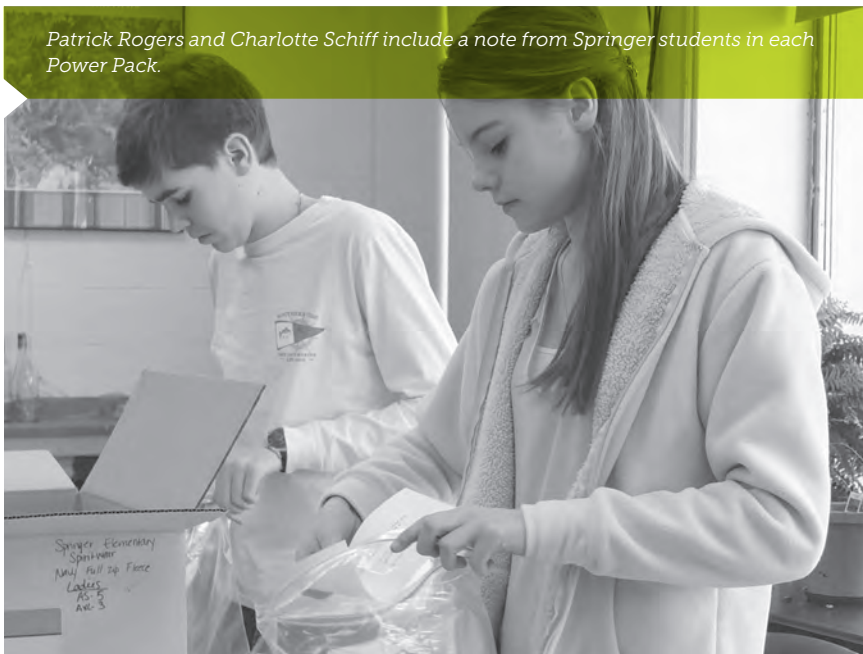
In observance of Veteran’s Day, Upper School students earned money by doing extra jobs at home, and solicited friends and family, to raise money for Honor Flight Dayton, a nonprofit with a mission

to take veterans of WW II, Korean, and the Vietnam War(s) and terminally-ill veterans of any armed conflict to see their national memorials in Washington, D.C.

The students raised \$2005, which they presented at a reception to Bill Niklas, a representative of Honor Flight Dayton. Mr. Niklas shared a video presentation that gave students an idea of what happens during an Honor Flight trip, and how such a trip impacts those who participate. The students raised enough money to send five veterans to Washington.



Springer Assistant Principal Siobhan Taylor works with Avian Dawson to assemble Power Packs.



Patrick Rogers and Charlotte Schiff include a note from Springer students in each Power Pack.



Students Abby Woodruff (L to R), Hannah Frank and Will Bertsch oversee final assembly of the Power Packs, as Springer parent Peggy Kuhlman looks on.

ALUMNA RETURNS FOR INTERNSHIP



Springer alumna Grace Mancini

Springer is very pleased to have alumna Grace Mancini join us this year, serving as Alumni Liaison Intern in the Development Department. Grace sees her spring semester internship as both a way to gain valuable on-the-job experience, and a way to give back to Springer.

“When I look back, Springer helped shape me into the person I am,” said Grace. “Talking about my learning disability is a passion of mine.”

During her internship, Grace’s responsibilities will include making contact with alumni through email and social media, gathering their stories, and connecting alums by sharing their stories on social media. She will be looking for ways to build a sense of community among alumni, and for opportunities for alumni to stay involved with Springer. In addition to these responsibilities, Grace will assist with preparations for *A Springer Celebration! 2015*.

Grace attended Springer from fourth grade until eighth, and then went to high school at Saint Ursula Academy, where she graduated in 2014. She is currently a freshman at the University of Cincinnati, majoring in marketing.

Springer Offers Variety of Hands-On Experiences

Springer believes that a rich environment for learning goes beyond classroom instruction, and is committed to providing students with a variety of hands-on experiences throughout the school year.

A page 5 article describes Dr. Chris Tanner's visit as this year's Norita Aplin Musician in Residence. Previous residencies have brought opera singers, a playwright, guitarist, harpist and an expert in electronic music, among others. A similar program brings a working artist to Springer each year. The Maureen Wenker Artist in Residence has brought artists who work in sculpture, cartooning, papier mache, quilt-making and painting to share their expertise with our students. Glass artist Sandra Gross is visiting this month.

Springer welcomed award-winning author and photographer David FitzSimmons for a two-day stay in October. FitzSimmons introduced the students to his unique approach to photographing animals on a pure white background, and then guided them in making their own photos of a trio of bearded dragons. The students used iPad minis to shoot the lizards inside a photographer's light tent, a cube

of translucent fabric. Student Gabrielle Luckenbach said she found the program inspirational. "I liked that he showed us how to zoom in on certain parts of the animal," she said. "It was cool," said Ben Garvin. "I've never actually taken a picture of such a small animal before."

Springer has hosted visitors from outside the United States several times this year. In November, a group of students visiting Cincinnati from Mexico City presented a program on Mexican culture that featured music and dancing. The 5th and 6th graders shared with our Intermediate students about the food, entertainment and holidays they enjoy in Mexico. The Mexican students are part of an exchange program with St. Mary's school in Cincinnati. Two visiting teachers from Cincinnati's sister city, Liuzhou, China, met with Primary students in January. The teachers spoke about their city, and about the traditions and customs they observe at home.

Springer has hosted several theatre groups this year. ArtReach, a division of the Children's Theatre of Cincinnati presented two programs at Springer in November. Intermediate and Upper School students

saw the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in World War II through the eyes of a Jewish girl, in the company's performance of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Primary students enjoyed a humorous tale complete with a wicked witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. In January, the National Theatre for Children presented *Resource Raiders*, a program on natural resources and conservation sponsored by Duke Energy, for Upper School students.

Numerous After-School Programs provide additional opportunities for students to learn and grow. Physical activities such as bowling, basketball, Taekwondo, dance, skiing and Newcombe, a game similar to volleyball, provide opportunities for growth in ability, teamwork and fitness. Creative programs offer a chance for students to express themselves through writing, pottery and drama – there's even a group where students can learn magic tricks.



Adam Attabary practices his punches in the Taekwondo after-school program.



Clockwise from top L: Students learn techniques for handling clay in the Advanced Pottery after-school program.

Carter Slocum cautiously touches one of the bearded dragons, held by author and photographer David FitzSimmons.

Visiting students from Mexico share a traditional dance with Intermediate students.

Students have a chance to ask questions of the children visiting from Mexico.

Primary students enjoy a production of Hansel and Gretel.



Alumni Connections

Kylie Bojack '14 is a sixth grader at Sunman-Dearborn Intermediate School. She plays hockey for the Cincinnati Swords, and has been playing hockey since she was three years old.

Cameron Adams '14 is an ambassador for McNicholas High School, where he is doing very well in his freshman year.

Will Goderwis '14 was accepted to play for the Ryle Raiders freshman football team at Ryle High School. Will says, "Since the day I started, I am loving playing football. It has changed my life for the good!"

Allison Schoster '13 is a sophomore at Badin High School. She has been swimming for Badin and in the summer she was the 3rd fastest freestyler of 15-18 girls. She has made lots of friends and really enjoys Badin.

Andrew Rudy '13 is in his sophomore year at McNicholas High School. Andrew serves as a school ambassador, and in other service opportunities. He is in his third year of competitive biking, and participates in mountain, cyclocross and road races.

Adam Hofmann '10 graduated from Wyoming High School in 2014. Adam

attends the University of Cincinnati, where he is studying Criminal Justice.

T. J. Veerkamp '09 graduated from Moeller High School in 2013, where he made the honor roll many times and participated in a summer mission trip which he loved. T.J. is now in his sophomore year at The College of Mount St. Joseph. He is considering a major in business, but is still undecided. T. J. keeps in touch with several friends from Springer, and still uses the strategies he learned there. "The strategies I learned while at Springer have been extremely helpful," he said, "and I am grateful for all those who made attending Springer possible."

DeMarcus Banks '04 graduated in December from Northern Kentucky University with a Bachelor's degree in Public Relations, minor in Organizational Leadership. He began a new job as a Congressional Staffer in Washington, D. C. in January.

Alexis (Mikki) Martin '04 graduated from Purcell Marian High School in 2008 with perfect attendance. She attended Wright State University, where she received her degree in Liberal Studies

on May 3, 2014. She is currently working part time at a law firm and seeking full time employment.

Maggie Stone '03 graduated from Wyoming High School in 2007. She then attended Antonelli College and graduated with an associate for photography in 2010. Currently she is working with Montessori schools in the area while completing education courses at Cincinnati State.

Danielle Hardy '02 is a 2006 graduate of Wyoming High School. Danielle attended Miami University for 2 years, and after living in Dallas, Texas, for 2 years, returned to Cincinnati to complete certification as an aesthetician at Salon Professional Academy.

Amanda Olden '00 loves her job at the Jackson Adult Center with the Hamilton County Board of Developmental Disabilities, where she has worked for seven years. Amanda graduated from Vincennes University in 2007. She enjoys zumba three times a week, and lives in Anderson Township.

Tim Bigner '99 and Jane Tenover were married May 31, 2014 in an outside ceremony at Nathaneal Green Lodge in



Green Township, with a reception following. Springer alumni were in attendance: **Stephen Harten '99** (Groomsman) and **Caroline Feldhaus '00**. Tim and Jane honeymooned in Jamaica. They live in Bridgetown with a dog, Abby and a cat, Belle. Tim is Construction Supervisor for Bigner Construction, and Jane is a Store Team Leader for Joann Fabrics.

Erin Katherine Knecht Munir '98 resides in Hallandale Beach, Florida, with her husband Mazhar Munir and their calico Ms. Audrey Hepburn. On Friday, November 29, 2013, Erin wed Mazhar in an Islamic Nikkah (wedding) ceremony in Pembroke Pines, Florida. Erin is in her final year of Graduate school at Florida Atlantic University. She will obtain a degree and license in Exceptional Student Education with a Gifted and Talented endorsement in the summer of 2015. Upon graduating with her Masters in Education, Erin's dream is to teach in a Resource Room setting at the high school level. In her spare time Erin enjoys going to the beach and reading memiors, volunteering with the Sierra Club of Miami, Florida, and traveling with her husband to see extended family members that live in Charleston, South Carolina and across the pond in London, England!

Andrew Farnham '96 graduated from Maine Maritime Academy in 2008, and has since worked for Overseas Shipholding Group (OSG). He is currently serving as Chief Mate on a vessel that carries refined oil products, mainly in the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River. He has recently passed the Captain's examination, and has been promoted to the rank of Captain. In April 2014, Andrew married Kara Habel in a ceremony at St. Ursula Academy. He and Kara are living in Hyde Park. In his free time, Andrew enjoys cycling, golf and playing with his dog Nala.

Blake Dowlin '94 graduated from Wright State University with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in management. He has interned with Senator Rob Portman in Washington, D.C., and worked for Former U.S. Representative Jeanne Schmidt in Cincinnati. Blake has nearly completed a master's program in special education at Xavier University and was recently married. He is currently employed at Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries.

MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES

(as of 3/2/2015)

In memory of Jane Kaderli
Linda and Mike Walsh

In memory of David and Anne McConnell
Michelle Platz

In memory of Eleanor Sheffey
*Denise Danielson
Terri and Earl Moorhead
Julie Pratt*

In memory of James B. (Bucky) Tincher
Sally and Edward Kamphake

In honor of Dr. Greg Sherman
Kenwood Dentistry Staff





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Game On!

**EXPERIENCE.
LEARN. ACHIEVE.**

Special Guest Speaker: Springer alumnus
and NFL player Michael Wright

Sports-related activities will make for an
evening of fun!

Wednesday, April 29, 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm
Springer School and Center
2121 Madison Road

Please contact Springer School and
Center at (513) 871-6080 for more details
www.Springer-LD.org/celebration_15

