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Wednesday, December 22, 2021

All Sides of the Story

Reasoning Behind EMT Firing

by Brandon LaChance

Samantha Marshall, a Dwight paramedic since April, 2020 was terminated at the Village of Dwight Board Meeting on December 13.

The reasoning behind the firing was because of improper Covid-19 personal protective equipment -- not wearing an N95 Mask -- during a call on Dec. 7, according to Dwight Mayor Paul Johnson.

Marshall feels the decision to remove her from the Dwight EMS staff was unfair and unjustified.

"We had a patient come in in obvious severe respiratory distress. We had an ambulance down. Our lone ambulance was on a call," said Marshall, who has 12 years of paramedic experience and has earned Life Saver Awards. "They didn't call for a change of quarters like they should have. We should have had another ambulance from another town sitting there when this patient came in. They didn't call for that. They also didn't get disciplined for

bay. The patient was in the fetal position and we had to aggressively treat this patient.

"When we started treating her, our last thoughts were, 'Oh, I'm going to look for a mask for five minutes.' It could have very easily been a life-or-death situation for the patient and we had to act fast."

The patient was 47-year-old Wilmington resident Dawn Trizna, who is the mother of Marshall's co-worker Rachel Groll (who was also on the call) and Marshall's friend.

Trizna had been diagnosed with Covid on Nov. 26, but has doctor paperwork stating she wasn't contagious as of Dec. 5. With the incident taking place two days later, Marshall, Groll, and Trizna felt helping Trizna breathe was more important than wearing a mask.

"During my time with Covid I was fine. I had a little bit of a cough and I lost my taste and smell. That was no big deal," Trizna said. "Then I started having flu like symptoms. I told my doctor I wasn't ready to go to work and he said

I was so weak that they had to walk me up to the door, wheel me into the facility with a wheelchair. My oxygen level was fine at the time because I used my inhaler. They did a chest x-ray and gave me some new medications. They said I should go to the emergency room because I may be dehydrated."

Trizna called Groll and told her she was still having trouble breathing.

The mother, daughter, or Marshall didn't know if her issues were because of Covid, possible pneumonia or an allergic reaction Trizna had suffered through most of November.

After Trizna drove to the Village of Dwight Services Complex to meet Marshall and Groll, her measurement of oxygen going through her blood was read. A normal reading is 98-100. Trizna's was at a 93 while her face and neck were red.

"They had my husband pull into the bay because the ambulance was at Morris Hospital. They treated me inside of the



Something different...

Shaking up Christmas

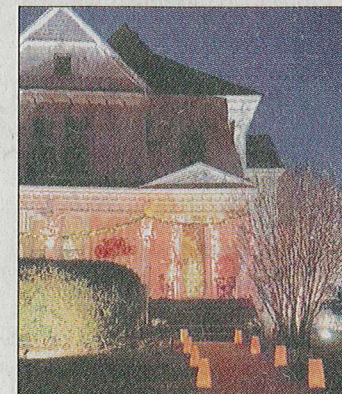
by Brandon LaChance

Christmas is part of all of our lives.

Every December we get excited about the holiday and spend time with our families.

Just like everything else in

settings at the table for the unexpected visitor," Schultz said. "In Catholicism, if the holy spirit shows up, there is a place for the holy spirit. As kids, we would say it's for the weary traveler. If they stopped by the house, we had a place for them to sit.



Gardner-South Wilmington High School District #73 Board Briefs

On December 15, the Board of Gardner-South Wilmington High School District #73 held a Public Hearing on the 2021 Levy and their Regular Meeting.

Superintendent, Mr. Josh DeLong, reviewed the Levy with the board. It is anticipated that the tax rate will stay steady or go down some from last year once the final EAV numbers from the assessor are released.

There was no public comment on the 2021 Levy, or during the Regular Meeting.

Principal, Mr. Engelman, was not present at the meeting, so Mr. DeLong discussed the following:

- Attendance report
- Discipline report

Mr. DeLong discussed the following in regards to the Buildings and Grounds Report:

- Library – They have added photos to the walls and some cosmetic work has been done with the money donated from

old yearbook sales.

- Squad Room – This room is up and running for the basketball season.
- Café – Finishing touches have been completed.

Superintendent DeLong presented the following:

- New courses for next year were discussed. Mr. DeLong and Mr. Engelman have been working with the teachers for a couple of months to make these changes. The new CTE and STEAM courses are being paid for with grant funds.
- Triple I Conference Reports – Board members discussed the recent Annual School Board Conference that was held in Chicago November 19-21. All members attended this year.
- Superintendent search update – Mr. DeLong updated the board on the current applicants and a tentative timeline was discussed for interviews and final board approval. It is anticipated

that the new superintendent will be approved at the February 16 board meeting.

- Non-Mandated curriculum options for 2022-2023 – Recent state legislation (SB 818), The Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act, creates new standards for personal health and safety standards. These standards are controversial and progressive in nature. School districts do not have to adopt these voluntary standards. If the board does adopt the standards, they would go into place for the 2022-2023 school year. Mr. DeLong recommended that they do not adopt them at this time.

- Robin Schwartz Attorney fee increases – They have not raised their rates in three years.

- Co-op discussion with Dwight High School – Dwight has been in discussions with them about bringing GSW back into the football co-op. Mr. DeLong and Mr. Engelman have met with interested students to discuss logistics, etc. Coach Standiford and Coach Thompson from Dwight recently met with the interested players as well. There are conversations happening about what it would take to make a potential co-op better and stronger for both schools than it was before it was disbanded three years ago.

Action Items included the following:

- Approve the 2021 Tax Levy
- Approve the Certificate of Compliance with Truth & Taxation
- Appoint the Superintendent to review closed session minutes
- First Reading of Press Policy 108
- First Reading of Paraprofessional job descriptions
- Approve the District Bullying Policy
- Approve new courses for 2022-2023 as presented: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math), SEL (Social Emotional Learning), RUSH (Recent US History), Integrated Science, Public Speaking / SPEECH, Business Entrepreneurship and Accounting.

by Brandon LaChance

When Bret Heinrich graduated from Dwight Township High School in 1985, Eureka College, Western Illinois with a Masters Degree in fine arts and theater performance, he didn't predict what would become his most valued career move.

For the last four years, Heinrich has been the CEO and president of Wings of Hope, a non-profit organization based out of St. Louis.

"We are a global, humanitarian organization that saves and changes lives through the power of aviation," said Heinrich, who was born in Streator. "We're 58-years old and have worked in 51 countries around the world. We reach into some of the most remote parts of the world to give people access to a better life."

"A lot of times it will be taking health care or supplies into these remote areas. We also take people out of remote areas to give them the care that they need."

Wings of Hope has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize twice.

This year, the nonprofit has worked in 10 countries. Currently, Heinrich and his team is trying to set up a telehealth program in Columbia. After building a surgical theater at a school or cinder block hospital and performing surgeries, there isn't always the means to follow up with the patients.

This telehealth program will develop a process to allow Wings of Hope and medical professionals to track patients using remote patient monitoring to connect local midwives in communities to physicians in Bogota.

Monitoring at-risk pregnancies isn't only happening in Columbia as Wings of Hope travels to 27 different African villages every two weeks to help get ahead of diseases. Heinrich says they're seeing a reduction in infant mortality as babies are living longer.

Health care in the air

Heinrich improves travel time with airplanes



Bret Heinrich

The health aviation services are also in the states as the organization helps fly Americans to access specialized care not available in their community.

"If a child was born with severe club foot at birth and there wasn't an orthopedic surgeon in driving distance, we would fly the parents and the child to a place that supplies that type of surgery," Heinrich said. "We would take them as many times as it takes until the issue is remedied."

"We do that at absolutely no cost to the family."

If the patients are not being charged, who is?

"One piece of our funding comes from traditional, charitable giving as people, individuals, or groups give gifts to Wings of Hope," Heinrich said. "The second bucket is event income. We have a gala each year and we raffle off an airplane twice each year. For \$100, you could win an airplane, which is pretty cool."

"The third area is airplane donations, which is people who maybe have decided they're done flying. They've reached a point in their lives where they're no longer able to fly. Instead of selling their airplane, they want to see it go on and do good work in the world. They'll donate it to Wings of Hope. If we can use it in the field, we will. If we can't use it, we'll sell it for program revenue."

Volunteers are a huge part of Wings of Hope as there are 350

volunteers and 17 paid employees.

"People who have retired from Boeing in St. Louis will come help us work on airplanes," Heinrich said. "This year, we had 25,000 donated volunteer hours, which is just phenomenal. I've never seen another organization that uses volunteers the way we do."

Heinrich began his career as a teacher at Tokoyo International College in Japan. When he came back to America his plan was to move to Chicago, get married and take advantage of his Masters and become an actor.

However, he was contacted by a contact in Japan to help start a program promoting cross cultural exchange between Japan and USA. This was his introduction to non-profit work.

After 20-plus years of fund raising for older adults in St. Louis who need assistance, he entered the national search for the next president with Wings of Hope.

"I had two predecessors as Wings of Hope president and they were both aviation experts. I am not. The search community was looking for someone who had non-profit leadership experience, so that is why I was ultimately able to be selected for the position."

"This has really been the highlight of my career, so far."

Heinrich, who gives credit to Dwight for being a large part of his journey, is extremely happy with his career path.

In fact, he continues to push this path all across the world.

"I feel very blessed to be able to do this. It fills me with a great sense of purpose," Heinrich said. "A purpose and also urgency because there are so many people that need our help. The need is never ending. "We will continue to provide assistance throughout the world. While we're sitting comfortably in our homes, there are people around the world who need access to a better life."

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