

COLE MANOR

FIT FALCON TRIBUNE

VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

FALL 2025

Newspaper celebrates big birthday

Cole Manor's school health newspaper turns 20 years old in December. To mark this achievement, the newspaper has a new name. The *Healthy Comet* is now the *Fit Falcon Tribune*.

School leaders said it seemed like a good time to rename the paper so it would be the same as the school's mascot: the falcon. Until a few years ago, the mascot had been the comet.

In a recent interview with Principal Dr. Nicole Poncheri, fourth-grade reporters learned about the impact of the school's health newspaper over the past 20 years. This interview has been lightly edited.

Q: Why is it important that the school has this newspaper?

Dr. Poncheri: The newspaper



Illustration by Jax Hunt

gives students a voice and a chance to share important information about health and wellness with their classmates, our fami-

lies, and our school community. Beyond this, it also allows students an opportunity to work in the field of journalism and create a real product. It is a wonderful experience for them. It also teaches skills like writing, research, teamwork, and communication—all while helping students learn about healthy choices. I am always impressed by the products that we see from our school paper students!

Q: Why do you think it has lasted so long?

Dr. Poncheri: It's lasted because it's meaningful to the school community. Every year, new students bring fresh ideas and energy, and

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Volunteering can benefit your health

"Volunteering brings me so much joy," said Mrs. Kristine Thompkins, parent volunteer, in a recent interview with *Fit Falcon Tribune* reporters.

Mrs. Thompkins and several other parent volunteers said they became volunteers at a young age and it became an important part of their lives. Volunteering with your children and setting an example for them can be a way to inspire them to find ways to volunteer as they grow up, they said.

Mrs. Thompkins said some of her favorite childhood memories include helping at her church's soup kitchen. She learned that she really loved listening to people and sharing food. She also fondly remembers her own mother being present at her school.

Mrs. Stephanie Polkowski, parent volunteer, shared that her passion for helping others started in high school when she volunteered with the National Honor Society. She also remembers volunteering at church with her mother.

Mrs. Jenny Rosen said she also started volunteering in high school and remembers that her mother volunteered at her preschool building sets for a puppet show. Her father was also an active volunteer and helped to found the Stony Creek Anglers, a local fishing club and nursery. "I always believed that volunteering gives me more than I give to others," said Mrs. Rosen, and shared that volunteering has helped her

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School newspaper is now 20 years old

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the teachers and staff support it. The topics—fitness, and positive living—are always relevant, so it continues to grow with each generation of students. It is something that impacts everyone either in a positive or challenging way and therefore it connects to everyone. I believe it is important.

Q: What is the newspaper's impact on the reporters?

Dr. Poncheri: For the reporters, it's an invaluable experience in many ways. They learn new things, find their own strengths and passions, and step outside of being just a student into something bigger and more impactful in their eyes. They learn to express their ideas, meet deadlines, and see their work published for everyone to read. It also encourages responsibility and pride in their school.

Q: What is the newspaper's impact on its readers?

Dr. Poncheri: Readers get helpful tips and inspiration to make healthy choices. It helps create a culture of wellness and reminds everyone that small actions—like being active or eating well—make a big difference. It gives teachers a tool to use in classrooms as an additional piece of literature that is student generated and more!

Q: What is the newspaper's impact on families?

Dr. Poncheri: We hope that families often read the articles together, which helps spread the message of health and positivity beyond the school. We add it



Illustration by Fit Falcon Tribune reporter

to social media outlets and our newsletter and post it in the school. It's a great way for parents to see what their children are learning and contributing to while also learning about health and wellness.

Q: Why did the newspaper change its name?

Dr. Poncheri: The name change reflected how the newspaper has grown and evolved. It's still rooted in promoting health and wellness, but the new name better captures its broader focus and the creativity of today's students. The focus changed and therefore we felt a new name better reflected the mission of the publication.

Q: What do you hope the newspaper can accomplish?

Dr. Poncheri: We hope it continues to inspire students to be curious, kind, and healthy. Maybe it can even expand online or include multimedia elements like videos or podcasts created by the students.

Volunteering is good for you and for others

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manage her anxiety by showing her that she can step out of her comfort zone and do hard things.

Seeing volunteering at a young age can inspire you for life. Mrs. Rosen recalled that her grandmother was a Cub Scout leader for her sons and volunteered every year at her voting polling place.

Parent volunteers said they help with classroom parties, trips, field days, and local sports teams. Even though people are busy with their jobs and families, Mrs. Polkowski encourages people to volunteer in spaces where they would naturally be anyway. It made sense to her to volunteer in the snack stand at her son's baseball game because she was there for games anyway. Mrs. Thompkins said that with some

thoughtful planning and keeping track of activities on a calendar, she can make time for volunteering.

Parent volunteers said they also help in other organizations like Cradles to Crayons, youth sports teams, and Norristown Area Education Foundation.

—By Fit Falcon Tribune staff

Cole Manor Fit Falcon Tribune

The Fit Falcon Tribune is a publication of the Norristown Area School District in Norristown, PA. Fourth-grade staff members include Mia Ayala, Azura Boozer, Paul Bucci, Ailin Gomez Ramirez, Jax Hunt, Savio Meshreky, Henry Rosen, Victoria Strangler, and Brighton Thompkins. The Fit Falcon Tribune's faculty advisor is Ms. Armour and the school principal is Dr. Poncheri.

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