



Chester County Intermediate Unit
Media Release

May 6, 2024

For immediate release:

Oxford Area High School Alumna Addresses Chester County Student Forum as Keynote Speaker

Contact:

Christa Fazio
Communications, Marketing and Engagement Director
Chester County Intermediate Unit
484-237-5171 | christaf@cciu.org

Beth Edwards
Communications Generalist
Chester County Intermediate Unit
484-237-5485 | bethe@cciu.org

Malvern, PA – High school students from across Chester County gathered on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, to celebrate the culmination of the 2023-24 Chester County Student Forum with a banquet at the Desmond Hotel. The event featured a presentation by keynote speaker Margaret (Maggie) Walsh, an Oxford Area High School alumna and former member of the Chester County Student Forum.

“Student forum was the first time I started to realize how big the world is. I was able to interact with students from all over, of diverse backgrounds, and I started to realize how differently we were all experiencing the same things and how different it was for everybody,” said Walsh.

Walsh addressed this year’s members of the Chester County Student Forum, recounting her experiences after high school graduation. Hers was not a linear journey from high school to college to career, but instead was punctuated by service in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, including periods during which she took breaks from college to serve during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philadelphia protests in June of 2020, and the unrest in Washington, D.C., in January of 2021.

Walsh's message was one of perseverance and gratitude, highlighting that while things don’t always go according to plan, being open to the opportunities available can result in positive outcomes. She encouraged the members of the Chester County Student Forum to continue to engage in discourse, learn from each other, and use each other as resources.

“Listen to each other and lean on each other, especially as you go forward. Things change, life happens, you go into different worlds and it’s always nice to be able to have somebody to help you out along the way and use each other’s experiences,” said Walsh. “Student forum opened my eyes to a whole bunch of experiences I had not had before and being able to rely on my classmates that had been through those things was essential for me.”

“It was important for this formative audience to hear from Maggie, who was in their shoes not too long ago. Taking in her journey of overcoming huge obstacles and coming out grateful for it helps the students to understand that it’s okay to experience setbacks and ask for help,” said Kathy Gurnee, special events coordinator for the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU). “Maggie is a shining example of what the Chester County Student Forum stands for: to strengthen the bonds between Chester County high schools and the community and to foster student leadership.”

The Chester County Student Forum, sponsored by the Children’s Fund of Chester County and facilitated by the CCIU, is comprised of student leaders from Chester County’s public, non-public, and charter schools. Students are selected to become members of the Chester County Student Forum by their school’s student forum faculty advisor. Participants meet monthly to discuss issues that are relevant to them. To learn more about the Chester County Student Forum, please visit www.cciu.org/student-forum.

###



Photo One: Pictured is Margaret (Maggie) Walsh, Oxford Area High School graduate from the class of 2017 and former Chester County Student Forum member.



Photo Two: Keynote speaker Margaret (Maggie) Walsh addressed the members of the 2023-24 Chester County Student Forum at a celebratory banquet.

About the CCIU: The Chester County Intermediate Unit is an educational service agency that exists to provide quality, cost-effective services to the community and its residents. The Chester County Intermediate Unit administers instructional, enrichment and administrative programs and services to Chester County's 12 public school districts and to over 45 private and parochial schools in the county. These programs include instructional, remedial and enrichment services for regular and special education students. Other IU services support teachers, school administrators and school directors. The diversity of CCIU programs enables IU staff to interact with school district personnel at all levels and to maintain a cohesive educational network throughout Chester County.