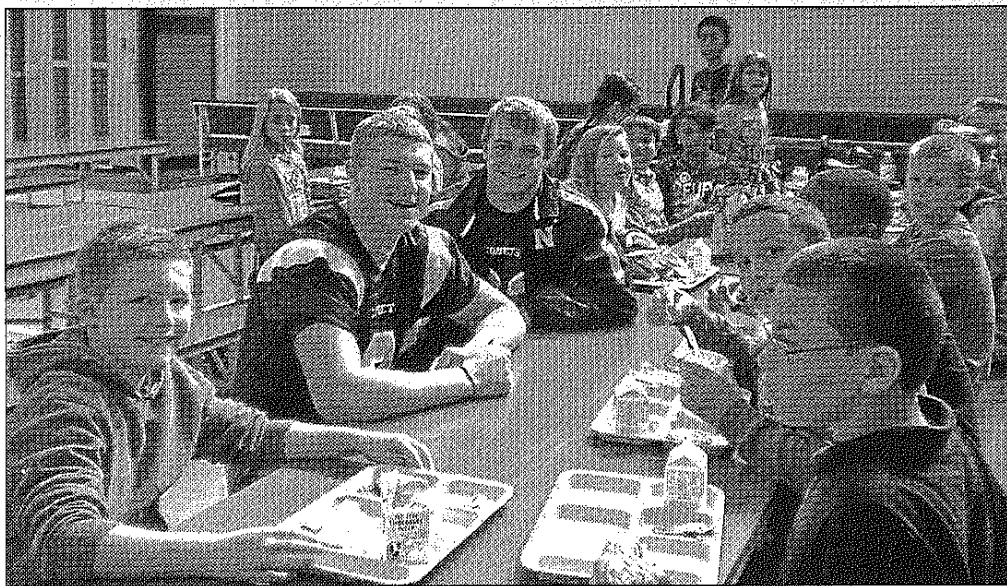


Local

tan Ed WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2012, LANCASTER, PA.

PM athletes coach young readers



Elaine J. Jones

Penn Manor football players Charles Bell, of table, visit with Central Manor Elementary School students during lunch.

BY ELAINE J. JONES
Correspondent

Penn Manor varsity football team has an important message for the district's younger generation: keep reading!

Over the past two weeks, several starting players visited the elementary schools to talk about the importance of reading every day.

"It's a huge factor in life," said quarterback Adam Sahd from the cafeteria of Central Manor Elementary on Sept. 26.

Sahd, a Central Manor alum, explained that the best chance of success in high school is "to incorporate a love of reading early."

Fifth-grader Ryan Buckwalter said it was "pretty cool" to have lunch with the players, though he admitted to favoring math over reading.

Classmates Julia Paitsel and Anna Aston didn't need much convincing.

"I like reading mysteries," said Julia, while Anna said she prefers fantasy books.

"I'm a big sci-fi fan," Anna said.

The Penn Manor Football Literacy Initiative is designed to encourage students in grades K-6 to make reading a priority and to strengthen the district's culture of literacy.

The team also visited Hambright on Sept. 24 and planned to visit Martic on Monday. All elementary students are eligible to participate in an incentive program that runs through Oct. 25.

Students who read every day for at least 20 minutes and keep a log signed by a parent will be invited onto the field during the home football game of Oct. 26.

To up the ante, eligible children can join the team

on the sidelines for warm-up starting at 5:40 and then welcome the team onto the field at 6:30 with the spirit line and marching band.

Those readers also will receive an autographed picture of the varsity football team.

Elementary parents received a written message from the team explaining their mission to teach, challenge and support every student in the district and to help them realize their maximum potential.

As on the field, the players received support with the reading initiative from members of the varsity cheerleading team.

Amaiah Gonzales and Kayla Sheppard, both juniors, joined the athletes at Central Manor to reinforce the message of reading every day.

"I want to encourage the kids to keep reading," Gonzales said.