Standing Up for their Beliefs

Students at all three YCSD high schools joined the national movement this week to support students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.

Students from Mahoning Valley Sojourn to the Past organized the walkout/rally, coinciding with similar student events across the country honoring the 17 students and teachers killed last month in a shooting at their school. Students from Choffin Career and Technical Center also observed the remembrance.

While some Mahoning Valley schools chose not to allow students to participate in the walkout, CEO Krish Mohip believed it was a great opportunity for students.

“This is something that was student driven,” he said. “It presented a wonderful opportunity to learn about the First Amendment and about standing up and speaking out about something that they believe in. Some of the best lessons can be learned outside of a classroom.”

School staff and members of the community joined the young people and Sojourn students invited area lawmakers to take part in the walkout.

State Sen. Joe Schiavoni joined students at Chaney High School. Youngstown Mayor Tito Brown came on board at East High School and DeMaine Kitchen, city council president, connected with the Youngstown Early College event. Members of Youngstown State University’s Student Government Association joined with YEC’s Sojourn students in presenting the program.

Chaney sophomore Janiya Day said the rally was to support students and staff at the Florida high school where an assault rifle toting gunman sprayed his classmates and teachers with bullets, killing 17 people.

“We are also asking the Ohio General Assembly and the United States Congress for stricter gun laws,” she said. “If they will not, then we need to elect legislators who will. If you are registered to vote, then make a commitment today to vote in the next election. If you are not registered to vote and will be 18 by next November, you can register to vote today and then vote in the next election.”

At Chaney, about 200 people gathered on the track outside, braving the cold for the 17-minute program — for each of the 17 people killed in the massacre. YCSD students read the name of each individual killed in the Parkland school as part of the programs.

Across the country, thousands of students participated in the rally/walkout.
The new weight room at Chaney High School is ready for some heavy lifting. The equipment was installed in a room inside of the South Hazelwood Avenue school to prepare for spring sports as well as to get ready for the addition of more sports at Chaney next school year. Due to the proximity of Chaney to Mill Creek MetroParks, practices for spring sports are at that school. That enables players to take advantage of the park’s fields. All of the equipment in the room is new. Studies show that weight training is important for all athletes. It improves strength, increases flexibility, bolsters bone mineral density, reduces injury risk, speeds up a person’s resting metabolism and boosts self esteem.