

Traditions

District Publication of
Fort Thomas Independent Schools



SPECIAL FOCUS:
CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVER

FALL/WINTER 2019

From the Superintendent

I can hardly believe that the 2019–20 academic calendar ushered in the *third* year of Fort Thomas Independent Schools' Portrait of a Graduate (POG) pursuit. As a reminder, our portrait describes what we want every student to know, do and be like when they graduate. It ensures we accomplish our mission to provide engaging and challenging learning experiences that foster creativity, curiosity and innovation.

The competencies of our POG are:

- Courageous leader: one who displays high levels of leadership, optimism and hope

POG

Profile: Creative Problem Solver

- Empathetic collaborator: one who not only knows how to work with others but who respects others' perspectives
- Global communicator: one who demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively in writing, verbally and interpersonally
- Curious and critical thinker: one who values inquiry and is always seeking to learn more
- Creative problem solver: one who demonstrates creativity and entrepreneurship

Last year, we concentrated on creating instructional blueprints for each of the five competencies. Teachers worked in teams to research and generate strategies for developing the skill sets of each of these competencies at every grade level.

Before this school year began, our teachers participated in professional development days where they presented their findings to one another and students spoke on specific ways they employed one of the POG competencies, such as:

- A robotic camp they put on for kids
- How they created a chapter of March for Our Lives after researching the issue of gun control
- The fashion dream that turned into a successful clothing online business

This year, teachers are putting into practice the strategies they've devised to ensure that students acquire the skills identified for each competency. Students are creating portfolios that showcase the competencies they've acquired so they can gain admission into the college they desire or secure the job they want.

In this issue of *Traditions*, we're highlighting how students are growing as creative problem solvers. (Check out the hashtag #CreativeProblemSolver on Twitter to see more examples.) We're committed to helping all students strengthen their creativity muscles and cultivate confidence so they can influence their communities for good.

I hope you will be as delighted as I am to see how our students are growing in their confidence as problem solvers, deepening their creative capacities, taking the initiative to be a catalyst for change and discovering how much stronger they are together than apart.

I know you'll be as proud as I am of the work our teachers are doing to prepare your children for their futures.

— Dr. Karen Cheser, Superintendent, Fort Thomas Independent Schools



Moyer 1st-grade students present their FTIS Central Office Community Art Project to Superintendent **Karen Cheser**.

Cover: HHS seniors (L-R) **Finn Murphy** and **Magnus Sieverding** work on programming for the new district radio station – WFTS (found on LIVE365 app). Photo courtesy of **Wyatt Richards**.

Traditions is published two times a year (fall and spring) by the Fort Thomas Independent Schools. *Traditions* is sent to all homes in the 41075 ZIP code, teachers and tuition students who do not live in the district, alumni and all Fort Thomas Education Foundation donors.

Calendar 2019–20

January

- 6 Return from Winter Break
- 10 Second Quarter Report Cards Sent Home
- 13 Board of Education Meeting
- 20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day—No School
- 22 Late Arrival Day
- 23–26 HMS Musical *Oliver*

February

- 6 JES Wax Museum
- WES Wax Museum
- 10 Board of Education Meeting
- 17 Presidents Day—No School
- 19 Late Arrival Day
- 21 HMS Talent Show
- 25 HHS Choral Concert
- 27 HMS Strings Concert
- 28 WES Variety Show

March

- 3 HMS Choral Concert
- 6 MES Talent Show
- 9 Board of Education Meeting
- 10 MES Fine Arts Night
- 14 Annual FTEF Dance
- 17 Third Quarter Report Cards Sent Home
- 24 Elementary Drama Production
- 26–29 HHS Musical *The Secret Garden*

April

- 3–12 Spring Break
- 20 Board of Education Meeting
- 16 Taste of Moyer
- 23 JES Spring Concert
- District Fine Arts Show
- 28 JES Spring Chorus Concert
- HHS Band Concert
- 29 WES Choral Concert
- 30 HMS Strings Concert

May

- 3 HHS Spring Choral Concert
- 5 HHS Spring Strings Concert
- 11 Board of Education Meeting
- 14 HMS Spring Choral Concert
- 24 HHS Graduation (tentative)
- 25 Memorial Day

Welcome New Faculty & Staff

Certified

Mary Bose, HHS Special Education

Ryan Mahoney, HHS Mathematics

Chasity Ogle, JES Kindergarten

Bethany Howard, MES Music

Lindsey Van Orsdel, MES 5th Grade

Mark Gaskins, WES Special Education

JulieAnne Metheny, WES Special Education

Brittany Humphreys, Speech Language Pathologist

Meghan Laux, Speech Language Pathologist

Classified

Christopher Gratsch, HHS Instructional Assistant

William Huddleston, HHS Special Education Instructional Assistant

Ashley Cunningham, HMS Custodian

Ryan Kissel, HMS Custodian

Laura Witte, HMS Cafeteria

David Johnson, MES Custodian

Abigail Orme, WES Instructional Assistant

Brooke Riesenbeck, WES Instructional Assistant

Jason Sexton, WES Custodian

Amanda Cowans, District Health Coordinator

Connie Copenbaker, District Bus Driver

Jennifer Prejan, District Bus Driver



Seniors **Jackson Bibb** and **Ryan Garvey** learn through a hands-on experiment in the 3-D Modeling Club.

Save the Date: March 14

Mark your calendars now for the annual Fort Thomas Education Foundation (FTEF) Dance!

www.fortthomas.kyschools.us

Vol.24 No.2 Fall/Winter 2019

Welcome

Modeling and Molding Creative Problem Solvers

Since 2013, Fort Thomas Independent Schools' (FTIS) mission has been focused on providing students with engaging learning experiences that foster creativity. It's the right mission, but we didn't have the intentional strategies outlined for how teachers could deliver on this goal. Now we do.

FTIS has created an instructional blueprint for how to design lesson plans that cultivate problem solvers who can confront obstacles with creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset. As students learn this process and acquire its associated skills, they will be ready to address whatever challenges they face in life, work and the world:

- Discover: uncover the task, gather research, decide what needs to be solved and identify the audience
- Dream and design: start the design process by defining, ideating and exploring ideas, and then test ideas and imagine possible solutions
- Dive in: contribute to group ideas, value others' input, work through ambiguity and challenges
- Deliver: create a shared work that demonstrates an understanding of the design challenge
- Debrief: participate in shared evaluation of the project's progress and identify next steps

Additionally, we want students to have the skills to create a job in the industry about which they are passionate. For example, if students are interested in music, we don't want them to not pursue this field because they don't think it's a viable career option. We want students to think creatively and innovate a job opportunity or niche for themselves that allows them to do what they want as a sustainable career.

As FTIS equips students to attain their dream jobs, we also work to model creative problem solving. Currently,

we are operating with decreased funding from the state. Our challenge is to continue to create top-notch learning experiences and a diverse menu of learning options and extracurricular activities. So, we've had to get creative.

This challenge was the catalyst behind our new Launch facility. We established that space with no charges for renovation because of a community partnership; we now have additional learning space where students can pursue innovative ideas and get hands-on experience for their future career paths.

We've also partnered with Northern Kentucky University to offer dual-credit opportunities and career exploration tracks. Students can take college-level courses to explore their specific field of interest, including education, computer science, entrepreneurship and health science.

Additionally, two more of our schools have become designated *Leader in Me* schools, an education model that equips students with the leadership and life skills they need to thrive in the 21st century. We've added new programming, including e-sports and Unified bocce, a game that partners abled students with students with special needs.

We hope our students are seeing the rewards of being creative problem solvers through their own expanded educational opportunities. Although we don't know what the world will look like for our future graduates, we are confident that we can prepare them to enter it fully ready to use their creative problem-solving skills to make their lives and the world around them better.

— **Karen Cheser**, Superintendent,
Fort Thomas Independent Schools

Our challenge is to continue to create top-notch learning experiences and a diverse menu of learning options and extracurricular activities.

Dan Gorman: Creative Problem Solver

By **Lexie Crawford** and **Maggie Schroeder**, HHS journalism editors

From building homes in Africa to helping Fort Thomas Independent Schools construct its vision of Launch, **Dan Gorman** has exemplified his creative problem-solving skills throughout his work.

Growing up in Madeira, Ohio, Gorman attended the University of Dayton after high school. Gorman first grew interested in electrical engineering and pursued it as a major, but after several cooperative education opportunities and internships, he realized he didn't truly connect with his degree.

Seeking a career he could connect to after college, Gorman managed a jewelry store and later opened his own diamond business, United Diamond Brokers. Later, he also followed his religious roots and traveled to South Africa with his church group, Crossroads, to be involved with kids.

While in Africa, Gorman noticed the slow process behind building houses for the communities, as well as the poor quality products they produced.

"They were made out of cement blocks, assembled precariously, and took forever to complete. I knew there had to be a better, faster way to complete this process and help more people," says Gorman.

He took the initiative to fix this problem, developing United Property Group Africa in 2013 as an extension of an already existing commercial real estate investing business. To further develop this plan, Gorman hired a couple of full-time collaborators in Africa to work with the government and set up meetings with government officials. At the end of all of this work, Gorman's goal is to be able to build at least one solid concrete house a day until they work their way up to building full-fledged neighborhoods.

Gorman is currently still working on this Rwanda project while being involved with several others, including Fort Thomas Independent Schools' (FTIS) Launch @ 20 Grand.

Gorman originally purchased 20 Grand, the building where Launch is located, noticing its potential to be an important part of the Fort Thomas community.

"20 Grand was in a great location, right next to the highway and on an important corner in town. The building took very little renovation to open up a world of



Dan Gorman

possibilities. I had no idea what it would grow into, but I'm very proud of what it is now."

The idea for Launch originally came about through a country-wide tour conducted by FTIS. While in Minnesota, district representatives discovered a collaborative workspace and decided to create something similar.

Gorman realized that 20 Grand was the perfect location for Launch and proposed to FTIS that their vision be housed there.

Before Launch formed in 20 Grand, a couple of businesses were already located in the building, taking up the third and part of the first floors. FTIS took over the rest of the building, working to form its perfect image of Launch.

"Launch solely exists as a product of creative problem solving," Gorman states. "The focus of the location is to mirror real-life experiences and allow students to have the feeling that they've entered the real world by providing a creative business space."

The district is grateful for Gorman's generosity in renovating the 7,000-square-foot space to create a boardroom/convening room, maker studio, student entrepreneur pop-up shop, and a professional studies center where students currently engage in app development, entrepreneurship and health innovations. The building provides a creative space for hundreds of students and teachers to meet after school as well as for activities such as robotics teams, STEM clubs, special projects, Odyssey of the Mind teams, teacher professional development and business partnerships.

The Entrepreneurship Flight Path students are currently marketing Launch @ 20 Grand for outside rental when the space is not being used. For more information, contact Superintendent Karen Cheser.

Gorman notes that one of the most important traits in a creative problem solver is to be on the constant lookout for problems that need remediation and then to find a partner to collaborate with toward a single vision.

He advises students: "If you recognize a problem, don't just walk by. By taking initiative, you stand out to peers and adults through your maturity."



Johnson Elementary School

Problem Solvers in Their Own Backyard



JES 4th-graders (L-R) **Maggie Taft, Aaron Zaebst, Knox Duke, and Caroline Dalton** all lend a hand to create their wildlife habitat.

Johnson 4th-graders love spending time on their playground, but they have just as much enthusiasm for the space behind it: a wooded area that is home to diverse wildlife. Students have spent hours in the woods during their science lessons, learning about local fauna, flora and animal habitats.

"When students heard that the woods would be disrupted during construction of the new Johnson building, they became even more curious about how the wildlife would survive and find a new home," says **Jillian Booth**, 4th-grade teacher.

Heidi Neltner, elementary digital learning coach, set up a trail camera in a tree to photograph the animals that lived in the area. Over two weeks, the camera captured deer, squirrels, rabbits, raccoons and even a fox. "When she showed the photos to the students," says Booth, "they immediately felt motivated to help solve the problem, and the Johnson Outdoor Habitat Project was born."

Last year's 4th-graders participated in the first phase of the project. They created and offered compelling presentations to the community around Johnson to encourage them to provide habitats in their backyards that could help animals survive during construction.

This year's 4th-grade class is tackling phase two. Students have spent the semester

researching and designing the features the new Johnson building should have in order to promote the return of native plants and animals after construction.

"My favorite part was learning about the animals and how to create a habitat for them at Johnson," says 4th-grader **Gus Ketterer**.

The students have even partnered with Highlands High School students to help bring to life their ideas, including bat boxes, owl brooding boxes, water features and birdhouses. In December, students will make formal presentations of their plans to the Board of Education, which excites 4th-grader **Bailee Class**. "I'm looking forward

to presenting our projects," she says.

During 2020–21, 4th-graders will endeavor to secure funding through grants, then the 2021–22 class will work to construct the wildlife area and determine its maintenance.

"This project began because students were empathetic to the threat our wildlife was going to undergo during construction," says Booth. "They saw the problem and used their creativity to figure out how to protect the wildlife and stimulate its return."

These kinds of projects teach students how to solve problems creatively and make them competent in their future personal life and professional careers.

Fourth-grader **Katherine Heilman** is proud of what they've been able to achieve. "I learned how to create habitats that help animals and to work together with others to solve a big problem."



(L-R) **Ava Sketch, Maren Orme, Coleman Strange, Adriana McCafferty and Caleb Gubser**, JES 4th-graders, inspect their finished product.

Moyer Elementary School



Kindergarteners Find Confidence Through Creativity

The kindergarten students at Moyer were given a challenge: In teams of three, design a container that can hold three apples when held up. Their materials were paper, pipe cleaners, yarn, tape and a stapler, and they had just 40 minutes to complete the task.

"I gave them no guidance on how to build it," says kindergarten teacher **Julie Steppe**. Instead, she encouraged them to keep trying throughout the time allotment.

Students grappled with whether to make the handle first or the container. Some teams made the container too small or too big. When students tested their carriers, some found them to be too weak and started again or strategized on how to strengthen them.

Matthew Hyme encouraged his team, "Come on guys, we need to make this stronger; let's put more tape!"

Norah Meier reported that her team had difficulty fashioning part of the base. "The hardest part was the sides," she reported.

But the simple activity demonstrated to students their ability to think through a problem from beginning to end and create a solution. "I learned that we can't give up," says **Bay Burkart**. "We have to keep trying."

Moyer kindergarteners daily hear, "Solve your problem; be a problem solver," from Steppe. When students see a crayon on the floor, they consider what to do about it, or how to respond to a peer who is unfriendly on the playground.

When Steppe reads stories to her students, she asks them to consider how the main character solved his or her problem and then asks students to consider how they might solve the problem differently. "We read 'Little Red Riding Hood' and the students

must figure out how to build a catapult to get the cookies to Grandma," says Steppe. Students design a way for Rapunzel to escape the tower and build a bridge for the Gingerbread Man.

Steppe's students also use robots called Bee-Bots for problem solving, which introduces them to programming. First, students learn how to give commands to the robot, and then they use it throughout the year for problem solving, like finding a path Little Red Riding Hood could take to escape the wolf.

"These 5- and 6-year-olds are quite capable of creative problem solving when you ask them a question, give them time to think and provide them with the opportunity to lead their own projects," says Steppe.

As the year goes on, Steppe witnesses her students becoming more proactive and independent in their problem solving. "By

the time they graduate from college, it's likely they will have to create their own jobs," says Steppe. "We have to help them develop that competency, and I'm confident these students can and will do it!"



Moyer kindergarteners (L-R) **Carter Chan, Wynn Willis and Harper McDowell** design and create their container for the project challenge.



MES kindergarteners (L-R) **Alice Bricking and Bayleigh Burkart** strengthen their creative problem solving skills as they program Bee-Bots.



Woodfill Elementary School

Gardens Grow Problem Solvers

When 4th-grade teacher **Elizabeth Waymeyer** won an FTEF grant to acquire a Tower Garden for her classroom, she was elated. Tower Gardens are vertical, aeroponic growing systems that allow gardeners to grow numerous vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers indoors, in less than three square feet. Waymeyer says she wanted students to be invested in growing their own food. She also wanted them to use the process in science class to:

- Make observations of the structures and functions of plants
- Measure how plants change over time
- Test hypotheses and analyze results

As students set up the Tower Garden, they tested the water for the correct PH level, labeled the plants, transplanted them to their slots, and set timers for the lights and water to come on and off. Along the way, students made decisions about where to place certain plants based on size. Then, after observing their growth, students figured out how to better light, water or position the plants for optimal growth.

The 4th-graders waited nearly a month before deciding to harvest their crops of bibb lettuce, gourmet lettuce, kale, arugula and rainbow chard. They celebrated with a harvest party where they sautéed certain greens and assembled salads. “I didn’t know if I would like the bibb lettuce,” reported student **August Brumer**. But after he tasted the crops he said, “I look forward to eating more kale and lettuce. It tastes so good!”

The next phase of the Tower Garden project will be to see if the crops will grow back. “Students brainstormed ideas about what the next step in our garden should be,” says Waymeyer. “They decided to see whether the crops will grow back if we cut them, and, if so, will they turn out just as big? Will they take longer or shorter to grow?”

The students have also decided to conduct an experiment to test if the aeroponic gardens can produce more food in ways that use less land and water compared to traditional soil-based growing methods.

“The students are learning to take risks, try new things, and if something doesn’t turn out how they planned, figuring out how to solve the problem,” says Waymeyer. Her students also had to work together throughout the project to plant, observe, make alterations and harvest. Perhaps one of the biggest lessons they learned was the importance of patience in problem solving. “Gardening requires patience.



Woodfill 4th-grade students (L-R) **Isabella Roderick**, **Roland Hensley** and **Adam Walker** work together on the Garden Tower project.

It takes time to nurture plants and determine how to grow them most efficiently,” says Waymeyer.

Student **James Uhl** agreed that the most challenging part of the project was “waiting for the plants to grow.” But **Simon Dickow** reported that it produced patience. “Being patient is definitely a life skill I’ve gotten better at.”

Students are developing persevering and independent spirits through the Tower Garden project, and those skills will serve them well in the future, at home in the garden or at work in a lab.

Highlands Middle School

Experiments Produce Perseverance

If you popped your head into one of the science classes at Highlands Middle School (HMS) this semester, you might have heard students discussing what brand of gum makes the largest bubble or whether the size of a football affects the distance it can travel or what detergent will get the most pizza sauce out of a shirt. These were just some of the questions HMS students came up with for their Science Learning Collaborative Project.

HMS students had been learning about the scientific method, so to showcase their understanding of it, they divided into small teams and brainstormed a question and hypothesis they wanted to test using the scientific method process. Teams designed an experiment to test their hypothesis and were able to make improvements and adjustments to their experiments along the way if something didn’t work or needed to be modified.

“As students executed their experiments, some teams came across problems,” says **Stephanie Ewald**, HMS science teacher. “They had to work together to solve the problem, and it was great to see the different solutions the students came up with.”

Seventh-grader **Shelby Shields** benefitted from working in a team environment and realized the advantages of listening to her partners’ ideas. “I liked how we got to work in groups because we could share ideas,” she says. “We could discuss the problem together and see what each person thought.”

Determining how to perform a successful experiment regardless of the obstacles was one of 7th-grader **Gemma Farris’s** favorite parts. “When we had problems,” she says, “we worked through them together step-by-step and didn’t give up.”

HMS science teacher **Holly Workman** says the project gave students the opportunity to practice advanced skills in the creative problem solver competency, including:

- Gathering research and deciding what needs to be solved
- Imagining the project in a variety of ways and engaging in design thinking
- Demonstrating flexible thinking, working collaboratively and persevering through challenges
- Creating an original or useful work that demonstrates learning and meeting the needs of the design challenge
- Evaluating the progress of the project and revising it based on critical feedback

Not only did students get to practice the skills needed to solve a problem creatively (and find out what brand of bubble gum makes the largest bubble), but they also realized they were able to overcome obstacles through perseverance and working together. “Students demonstrated grit,” says Workman, “pushing through the problems until they figured out the right solution by engaging one another’s thoughts and ideas.”



HMS 7th-graders (L-R) **Jenna Richey**, **Brennan Bucher** and **Kayla Lehn** experiment to see which mints will react with the carbon dioxide in soda.

SCHOOL UPDATES

Highlands High School

Students Solve Problems with New Skills

When teachers or students at Highlands High School (HHS) need a 3-D design solution, their first stop is the Maker Club. **Jason Gay**, HHS media specialist, communicates weekly with the Maker Club's 20 students and meets with them monthly. They work through a thinking process to provide a design solution for such needs as a model, a repaired part, a functional design or a prototype.

Students get in touch with their "client" and use 3-D design and printing to create functional pieces that address the client's problems. "I really like the Maker Club because it gives me space to be creative outside of school," says sophomore **Valerie Mead**. "It teaches me to use equipment I wouldn't have learned to use otherwise, like the 3-D printer."

Although it may take several tries to construct or design parts that provide a working solution, going through the trial-and-error process is one of the most valuable parts of the learning experience. "Students learn how to think creatively to

work through setbacks and ultimately find solutions for their clients," says Gay.

So far, students have created a range of products, including:

- Safety modifications for stoves
- Pool block caps
- Camera parts
- Dry erase board safety pieces
- 3-D printer modifications
- Customized virtual reality mask
- Stands for A/V

Gay plans on expanding the Maker Club services to include project management, which would allow students to use 3-D modeling to solve problems outside of the school.

"Throughout high school I've looked for a way to exercise my thinking and work on my ideas to bring them to life in different and unique ways," says senior **Magnus Sieverding**. "The Maker Club has been the enabler that has let me realize those ambitions."



HHS seniors (L-R) **Kathryn Rose** and **Ella Goebel** use a micrometer to examine the exactness of the 3-D printed pieces.

SCHOOL UPDATES

New Advisory Program Offers Support and Sparks Creativity

During the early days of the Portrait of a Graduate initiative, **Nina Kearns**, Highlands High School (HHS) psychology teacher, was researching how other schools were creatively and effectively supporting their students holistically—academically, emotionally and socially.

She noticed that several schools were using an advisory program, which pairs students with a teacher who would offer support and guidance through all four years of the student's high school experience. "It gives teachers a view into students' lives they may not have had before," says Kearns, "and helps them target areas of need a student may have, from managing stress to developing study skills."

After investigating the program and getting input from its teachers, HHS developed and launched its advisory program this year, matching small groups of students with a teacher. The groups meet at the beginning of every day for 13 minutes. The teacher checks in with students, provides a short activity and offers grade-level support. Activities teachers might facilitate in their morning meetings include, among others:

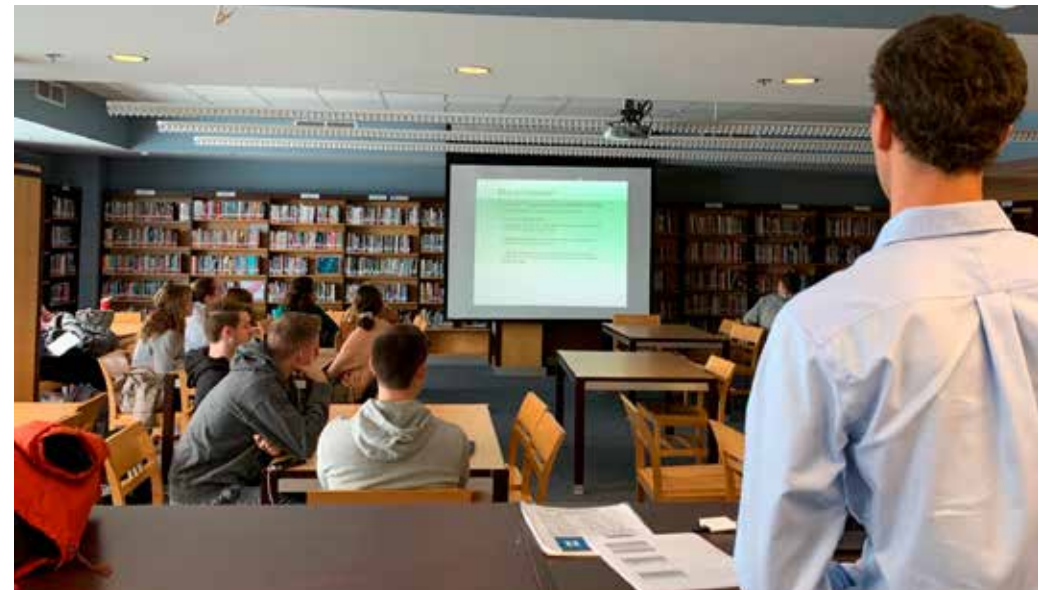
- Team building
- Yoga
- Study skills
- Breathing techniques
- Informational videos

- Goal setting
- Current events
- Computer tricks and tips

"We hope this program will provide academic support for students through individual and unique activities in goal setting and long-term planning," says Kearns. "We also hope it will offer emotional support for students as they grow as a group and support one another through the successes and hardships of their high school careers."

Freshman **Elisabeth Davidson** already appreciates the new friends she's discovered in her advisory group. "Since I didn't have any of my close friends in my group, it forced me to make new ones, and I am so glad I did," she says. "It's another source of connections and a support system."

The new advisory program is working everyone's creative problem-solving skills too, says Kearns, which is a bonus. Teachers are devising how to create the best, customized experience for their advisory group, identifying their group's specific needs and building group chemistry without the shared experience that comes from course content. Students have also been asked to brainstorm what would be most helpful in their advisory groups, what they need support in to be successful and to lead activities that address the needs of their individual advisory groups.



HHS seniors in **Jason Gay's** advisory period learned useful information on why and how home, auto and life insurance work.



Kindergarten Class of 2020 – Johnson



Kindergarten Class of 2020 – Johnson



Kindergarten Class of 2020 – Johnson



Kindergarten Class of 2020 – Moyer



Kindergarten Class of 2020 – Moyer



Kindergarten Class of 2020 – Woodfill



Kindergarten Class of 2020 – Woodfill



Class of 2020



Sixth-Grade Class of 2020 – Johnson



Sixth-Grade Class of 2020 – Woodfill



Sixth-Grade Class of 2020 – Moyer



Class of 2020 – as Freshmen



Class of 2020 – Seniors

Class of 2020 High School Seniors!

2019 Hall of Fame Inductees

Individuals

- **John Bankemper** – 1979–83; Football, Track
- **Nicole Muehlenkamp Cherry** – 1993–97; Diving, Soccer, Track
- **Debbie Reed Keefe** – 1964–68; Swimming
- **Megan Arnzen Krieg** – 1990–94; Basketball, Softball, Swimming, Volleyball
- **Jared Lorenzen** – 1995–99; Basketball, Football
- **Mark McEntire** – 1985–89; Soccer
- **John Schlarmann** – 1979–83; Football, Track & Field
- **Derek Smith** – 1995–99; Basketball, Football
- **Milton Walz** – 1947–51 – Baseball, Basketball, Football



Coach

- **Dale Mueller** – 1994–2013; Football



Team of Distinction

- 1993–94 Girls Basketball Team



Photos courtesy of Ed Harber

Jared Lorenzen Honored

On October 4, Bluebird fans joined to honor the memory of 1999 HHS graduate Jared Lorenzen who passed away in July. In conjunction with the retirement of Jared's jersey, the family was also presented with a Legacy Locker.

Jared's college alma mater, the University of Kentucky, was also a part of the evening. The UK Marching Band performed a pregame and halftime show in addition to a postgame show where they marched with the HHS marching band.



Thanks to supporters of the FTEF Jared's name has been added to the #22 locker as a way to honor his legacy as a Highlands Bluebird.

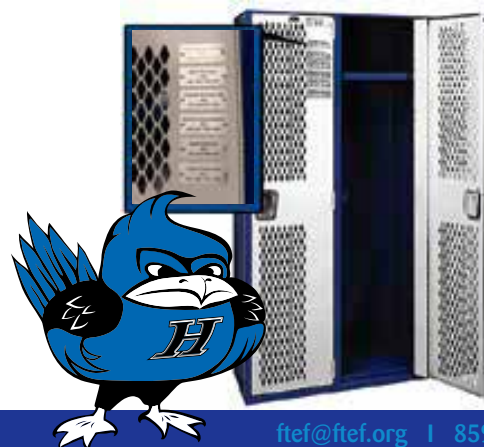


During the pregame ceremonies Jared's jersey and Legacy Locker were presented to the family.



UK Marching band performing at halftime.

HIGHLANDS HIGH SCHOOL LEGACY LOCKERS



Football Basketball Volleyball



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Tradition Never Graduates

2019 Homecoming Weekend

We welcomed alumni and friends back to the Nest on September 20 at the Tail Feather Tailgate before the football game (Highlands beat Ryle 27-0). Classes of 1964, 1969, 1979, 1999 and 2009 all celebrated reunions during Homecoming Weekend.



Josh McInstosh (Class of '05) provided entertainment during the event.



Free BBQ sliders courtesy of Rob Pinkston (Pinky's Pit), Class of '88.



HHS Marching Band marched to the tailgate and performed the alma mater and HHS fight song.



Classmates from 1979 enjoyed the game together in the HHS Hall of Fame Suite. Contact us for rental information.

Alumni Spotlight: Alison (Reik) Murphy ('90)

After graduating from the University of Kentucky with a BA in Communications, Alison Murphy came home and began working at an advertising agency in downtown Cincinnati. She enjoyed her experience working in advertising and gained tremendous business skills she uses today while running her own business. Branch Out Design is a landscape design and installation business serving clients in the Greater Cincinnati area. Owning her own business has allowed Alison to pursue her passion while also having the flexibility of scheduling around family life with three children.

Alison is a *creative problem solver* every day in her profession. She designs and creates functional, beautiful landscapes out of challenging spaces. On a daily basis, she meets her clients' desires while working with the constraints of the site—ranging from limited space, lack of water, steep grades and varying sunlight.

Alison encourages HHS students to be *creative problem solvers* because it is not enough just knowing how to do a job when everything is going in the right direction. Successful students who become successful employees identify problems and opportunities to improve the situation, then solve challenges in new ways. Being a creative problem solver is not just for careers. It is a great skill for all aspects of life.

Her advice to current students: Throughout her career, she has had great mentors who taught skills and guidance. Students should seek out people who can help them succeed, whether it's a teacher, counselor, principal



or someone who has a career you want. Don't worry if you do not have all the answers right now. It will all come together with hard work and perseverance.

SAVE THE DATE:



Alumni & Teacher of the Year Dinner

April 17, 2020

@Highlands Country Club



FTEF Grants in Action

The HHS Robotics Team—Where Kids Walk In and Creative Problem Solvers Walk Out

The HHS Robotics Team, known in competition as “The Bluegrease Crew,” is led by teacher **Tim Auch** alongside two professional coaches, **Bob Steller** and **Mike Smith**.

The team consists of 20–25 students grades 9–12. “Our mission is to allow students to gain experience in science, technology, engineering, math and business, all while developing important life skills like teamwork, finance, planning and communication,” says Auch.

The Robotics Team builds and competes with a 120-pound robot, combining the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology. The experience is as close to real-world engineering as a student can get. Students develop and sharpen skills like design, programming, and strategic and creative thinking.

The HHS Robotic Team was established in 2001. “We practice *gracious professionalism*, a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others and respects individuals and the community. Solving problems of tomorrow is created by everyone working together as a team,” says Auch.

Team awards include:

2008 Engineering Excellence Award

2010 Industrial Design Award

2017 Miami Valley Regional Runner-Up

Sponsorship opportunities are currently available to help with travel expenses, competition fees, tools, equipment and ongoing maintenance. Volunteer mentorships are also available for real-life engineers to give back to the community.

For **sponsorship** and/or **volunteer** information, please email Mike Smith at mike@headquarters.events.

.....
YOU
helped us give
over \$12,000 to the
“Bluegrease Crew”
last year!
.....



BUILD SEASON begins January 4, 2020, and continues through competition on February 26–29, 2020, at FIRST FRC Miami Valley Regional (Nutter Center, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio).

It's Annual Appeal Season!

The primary function of the FTEF is to continue to provide funding for new and innovative resources and tools for our teachers and students so we can carry on our strong tradition of excellence. We are continually asking **WHAT IF** as a way to think of big, crazy ideas and then are humbled when **YOU** help us make them a reality. The FTEF Annual Appeal is a crucial tool in helping us fund opportunities, and we need everyone's help to make it happen.

Please consider a contribution to the FTEF Annual Appeal today. Every dollar contributed is necessary and appreciated.



SAVE THE DATE FOR
Bluebird Palooza – an Indoor Music Festival
Newport Car Barn



What If...

- ... **we expand** our World Language Programs K-5?
- ... **we finish** Johnson Elementary to compare to all our other schools?
- ... **we sponsor teacher sabbaticals** so they could spend a year in the workforce learning what their students will do when they graduate?
- ... **we have a curriculum incubator** to always be thinking about new teaching areas and methods?
- ... **we acquire property** to expand athletic and academic facilities?

Introducing...

The Blue Feather Society

A membership program of the FTEF to support our mission to enhance educational excellence.

Put a **FEATHER**
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Johnson Elementary — Coming Fall 2020!

You're Invited!

The Board of Education of Fort Thomas Independent Schools meetings take place the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm at Launch located at 20 N. Grand Ave. Visit our website to confirm the time and place.

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