



Pirate Pride

The Newsletter of the
Merrillville Community School Corporation
November 2020

Board, administrators celebrate new school entrance

Board members and administrators of the Merrillville Community School Corporation held a ribbon-cutting at Clifford Pierce Middle School to ceremoniously open its newly constructed entrance.

The \$1.6 million construction project increased the security of the main entrance by bringing the administrative offices to the front of the building and changing visitor traffic flow.

Board members experienced the new entrance and checked out the new administrative offices and workspace.

"We thank the board for supporting this project and their continued focus on the needs of our students," Superintendent Nicholas G. Brown said.

"We can better monitor visitors and see what's going on in front of the school," said LaFonda Morris, principal. "We also have better access to the cafeteria where additional supervision may be necessary."

In addition to the increased security, the new entrance allows visiting parents to have better access to administrators.



From left: Hilda Damianick, assistant superintendent; James Donohue, board member; Linda Jonaitis, board member; LaFonda Morris, Pierce Middle School principal; Dr. Dexter Suggs, assistant superintendent; Judy Dunlap, board vice president; Thomas Bainbridge, board president; Mike Akins, Pierce Middle School assistant principal; Marnita Taylor, executive director of curriculum and instruction; Mark Lucas, board secretary; Nicholas Brown, superintendent.

Fielers receives \$5,000 donation

Burlington Stores, the national off-price retailer, through its partnership with AdoptAClassroom.org, a national non-profit organization, has donated \$5,000 towards school supplies to Merrillville Community School Corporation's Fielers Elementary School in celebration of its new store now open in Merrillville Plaza, 2020 E Lincoln Hwy.

A representative from AdoptA-



Fielers Kindergarten Teachers (from left) Michelle Frey, Amy Burkhart, Nicole Olson appreciate the gift from Burlington.

Check out our
new video series:
"Inside Merrillville
Schools."
Click here!

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Meet your school nurse, get health info on website

The Merrillville Community Schools' nurses have launched their own [website](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us), which is linked from the school corporation website, www.mvsc.k12.in.us.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the new website. It's a great resources to meet your school nurses, get detailed updated information on COVID-19, mask usage, hygiene and the latest on immunizations.

As the year progresses, the website will be updated with pertinent information.

ation.

Parents, remember if your child has medical issues or requires medications at school, please contact your designated school nurse.



Immunizations must be completed by Nov. 16.
For more information, contact your school nurse.

Prepare to earn your high school equivalency diploma

Merrillville Adult Education (MAE) can help individuals earn their High School Equivalency Diplomas by preparing them to complete the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) Test.

Upcoming TASC Test dates include Nov. 9 and 10, registration deadline Nov. 5; and Nov. 23 and 24, registration deadline Nov. 19; and Dec. 7 and 8, registration deadline Dec. 3.

MAE's free TASC preparation classes are designed for students to go from their current knowledge to a point where passing the TASC test the first time is a reasonable goal.

Instruction is available Mondays through Thursdays, as long as the Lake County COVID-19 numbers allow. MAE also offers modified online classes.

TASC Preparation classes are not required prior to taking the TASC Test.

Free career training is available to



those who qualify.

For more information, visit the [website](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us) or contact sgreen@mvsc.k12.in.us or 219-650-5318. MAE is located using the Door F entrance of Merrillville High School, 276 E. 68th Pl.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Thomas G. Bainbridge
President

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SUPERINTENDENT

Nicholas G. Brown, Ed.S.

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of Pirate Pride. If you have story ideas, questions or comments, please contact the Corporation's Public Information Officer at dstuckert@mvsc.k12.in.us or 219-650-5477.

You scream, we scream for ice cream!



Thank you Bethel Church Verge Student Ministry for sponsoring some delicious ice cream treats for Merrillville High School teachers and staff on a beautiful September afternoon! We really appreciate your support and hospitality!

Much appreciation to our custodial employees

National Custodial Worker's Recognition Day on Oct. 2, reminds us to say **THANK YOU** to these hardworking individuals, who are on the frontlines helping to keep our staff and students healthy and safe!

Janitorial work is hard physical labor, and includes tasks many people don't like doing, including cleaning up all types of bodily fluids; removing trash filled with food, liquids and other items; lifting heavy bags of trash; moving furniture; scrubbing floors; using all kinds of chemicals; and sanitizing all high traffic areas over and over again.

Next time you see a custodian at our schools, tell him or her how much you appreciate their hard work. They are essential workers and important members of our staff.



Some of our Merrillville Intermediate School custodial staff.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Nov. 13

Second grading trimester ends.

Nov. 25-27

No school/Thanksgiving.

Dec. 10

Grades 9-12 Parent/Teacher Conferences, 3:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Dec. 21-Jan. 1

No school/Winter Holiday

Jan. 15

Third Grading Period Ends

Jan. 18

No school/Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan. 21

Grades 7-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

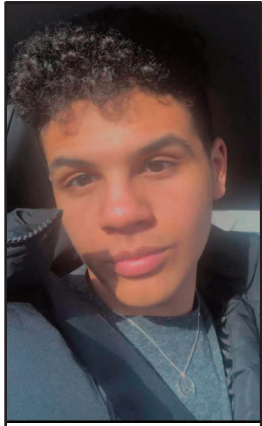


Some of our Pierce Middle School custodial staff.



Some of our MHS custodial crew.

MHS senior's good deed goes viral



Izayah Edwards

Another day of work presented itself to MHS senior Izayah Edwards, or so he thought. He had no idea the day's events would make him a viral sensation.

Izayah, who works at the Crown Point Jewel as a courtesy clerk, was bagging an elderly women's order. As the lady was getting ready to pay, she found she was short about \$20.

The lady was ready to put back some of the food she had hoped to purchase, when Izayah stepped in to help pay for the rest of her order.

"She thanked me and began asking me if I worked the next day so that she could repay me, but I insisted that she didn't need to pay me back," Izayah said.

That evening, Izayah's mom, Michelle Ward, returned home from shopping, and Izayah filled her in on his day's events. As Mrs. Ward was telling her husband what happened with her son, she just happened to look at her Facebook page when she saw her son's good deed posted in the Crown Point Neighbors Helping Neighbors Facebook feed.

"I remember my mom yelling 'Izayah come here!' and her showing me the post," Izayah said. "I was very shocked that someone had taken a photo that had captured that exact moment."

The lady in line behind the elderly woman took the photo and posted it on Facebook.

Izayah said the post was gaining a lot of attention, and at first he felt a little bashful. After seeing all the comments, he felt really happy.

"People were speaking highly of my character and saying that my parents had raised me right," he said. "They even

went as far as trying to find out who I was."

The next day, Izayah said people were coming up to compliment him, and some even tried to hand him money.

"It was crazy," he said. "I had no idea that my one small gesture was going to touch so many people."

He thinks that people were drawn to his good deed because of all the recent negativity in the world.

"I was just glad that I stepped in to help," he said. "It is imperative that we as people, not pass judgment on others."

"We should be more understanding, as everyone's personal and financial situations vary," he continued. "I am still

clueless about the elderly woman's situation. I hope that someone can identify her, so that we can make sure that she's okay."

"I was not surprised by Izayah's actions at all; he is the most caring, compassionate, selfless individual I know," his mom said.

"It was so nice that the lady that posted the picture was nice enough to recognize Izayah's good deed," she continued. "I'm so glad that there was such positive light shed on the story. I am so proud to have such a wonderful son. I am truly blessed that God chose me to be his mother."



Schools offer curbside libraries

John Wood Elementary School Librarian Carlita Echols is here to tell you that curbside libraries are available at each school!

Need a book? Jump online, order it, then swing by during the advertised hours and pick it up!

[Use this form to order your books today!](#)

School meals are free for the year!

The USDA has granted a waiver allowing free meals for all children ages 18 and under. Free meals will continue until the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Miller Elementary School will no longer be a pickup site beginning Nov. 16, the first day of the second trimester.

Parents, drive through and pick up meals for your children. Go to [any school listed](#); you do not have to go to the schools your children attend. You'll receive [three breakfasts and lunches on Mondays](#) and [four breakfasts and lunches on Thursdays!](#)



Food service manager finds lifelong career at alma mater

Penny Parmley, cafe manager at the high school Freshman Center has been in Food Service for the Merrillville Community School Corporation for more than 43 years.

Mrs. Parmley is a graduate of Merrillville High School and says she has “always felt comfortable here. The people are amazing.”

According to Mrs. Parmley, “Food Service really became a priority in my life. The constant changes and challenges have enriched my life in ways that probably wouldn’t have happened if not for this job.”

She says she really doesn’t have any plans to retire until her boss tells her she’s no longer doing her job correctly.

What will she do when she retires?

“Get a dog,” she said.

What inspires her to keep going? According to Mrs. Parmley, “Never knowing what the day will bring. I like

to be challenged. I have met so many people and made at least two friends! (Maybe more.)”

One of her favorite stories she refers to is the “pickle incident at Iddings.”

“We had a self-serve line,” she said. “Students were loading up their trays with pickles. I announced that they should not be doing that and got ‘booed’ by an entire cafeteria full of fifth graders.”

“The principal made them write letters of apology to me after which one of the moms brought me a large jar of pickles saying, ‘This is because you apparently don’t have enough pickles for the students. Did it ever occur to you that they need a lot of pickles to cover up the bad taste of the food?’” Mrs. Parmley said.

“Another story from just the other week when there was a squirrel running around in the freshman cafe,” she added.



Mrs. Parmley says she has no plans to retire, but when she does, she'll get a dog.

“My assistant and I chased that little guy around with brooms for a good 20 minutes before we got him trapped in the lobby leading outside.”

Head custodian has been cleaning MHS for 45 years



Mrs. Moravskij says she likes the work and that's what kept her here so long.

She says she will retire, but she doesn’t know when. Helen Moravskij likes what she does here at Merrillville High School, and she’s been doing it for 45 years.

Mrs. Moravskij was hired as a custodian, and after five years, she was asked to take the head custodian position.

“I really didn’t want it,” she said.

She worried about her language barrier and felt she didn’t speak or write English well enough; however, the staff at the school encouraged her to take the job.

“I like being busy; I’m not afraid of the work,” she said. “That’s what kept me here so long.”

When asked what she will do when she retires, Mrs. Moravskij said, “Good question. I don’t have a hobby, and that’s

why I’m still here.

“If I retire, I might be a couch potato,” she joked.

She really hopes to be able to talk her husband into traveling, saying he really doesn’t like to travel and is afraid to fly.

“I have family in Australia I hope to be able to visit,” she said.

TECHNOLOGY HELP DESK

For tech problems that your children may be having, please have them contact the helpdesk at 219-650-5376 or email helpdesk@mvsc.k12.in.us.



*Click here to order your spirit wear
to show off your PIRATE PRIDE!*



Co-Athletic Director says she loves family atmosphere, students

Janis Qualizza says the students, staff, administration and exemplary school board have inspired her to enjoy a career that spans more than four decades.

Ms. Qualizza has been the MHS athletic director for 39 years and started for the corporation as assistant athletic director, a position she held for four years.

She says she likes working for the Merrillville School Corporation because of “the family atmosphere that we have grown within our department and throughout the school corporation” and has stayed so long because she “bleeds purple and white!”

It doesn’t sound like Ms. Qualizza is

too interested in retiring, but she says it “has to happen some time!” When she does, she looks forward to traveling, golfing, boating and relaxing.

Of her time here, she talks about the four-year facility renovation that started in 1988 and ended in 1992.

“It was quite an ordeal,” she said. “Lots and lots of work went into the planning of what eventually turned out to be a wonderful facility.”

Think of the tens of thousands of students that have benefited and will continue to benefit from that facility and from Ms. Qualizza’s inspiration!



Athletic Director Ms. Qualizza has been with the Merrillville School Corporation for 43 years!

Tips, website help high school students apply to colleges

Merrillville High School marked College GO! Week in September by sharing some important information and reminders to students considering college after graduation.



With nearly 5,000 colleges and universities in the United States, there’s a lot of exploring to do! Students are encouraged to plan a trip on the weekend with family or friends or check out virtual tours from the comfort of your

couch. [Click here](#), scroll down to the middle of the page, and choose the “Show Table” button for a list of colleges you can explore virtually!

School counselors remind students and parents that they would love to help students get that essay in perfect shape,

write a recommendation letter, or even talk through any questions they might have; and so will their teachers!

Seniors are not the only ones encouraged to research colleges; underclassmen should also spend time comparing them: [Click here](#) to find the right fit for you!

For additional resources, check out the virtual “Learn More Indiana” magazines for useful college and career information. [9th & 10th Graders, click here](#); [11th & 12th Graders, click here](#). Visit [IndianaCareerReady.com](#) to learn more.

Here are some videos to help our seniors complete their FAFSA:

[Create an FSA ID video](#);

[How to fill out the FAFSA video](#);

Our underclassmen can [click here to begin their scholarship search](#).

FAFSA open for 2021-22 school year

Merrillville students and families are encouraged to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

With more than \$350 million in state financial aid available, as well as billions of dollars in federal aid, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education reminds Hoosiers that filing the FAFSA by April 15, 2021, is imperative for securing money for college.

Filing the FAFSA is required for

many of Indiana’s scholarship and grant opportunities, such as the 21st Century Scholarship and Frank O’Bannon Grant, and many colleges require a completed FAFSA to award merit and need-based scholarships.

Students earning a variety of degree types – including short-term certificates,

[Click to read more.](#)

**VIRTUAL
FINANCIAL AID
EVENT
Nov. 4, 6 p.m.**

[Click here
for more info.](#)

Merrillville Education Foundation funds hot spots

The Merrillville School Board of Trustees recently accepted a gift of \$6,000 from the Merrillville Education Foundation to purchase hotspots for families who need internet connections.

During a normal school year, the foundation usually offers two rounds of grants to fund teacher projects based on innovative and creative approaches to learning in the classroom.

With the school corporation offering virtual learning during the first trimester of school, the foundation board chose instead to use its funds to help provide internet hookups for Merrillville families that have been challenged to provide basic internet for their children, a necessity when learning remotely.

"This year with the COVID-19 pandemic still upon us, we wondered if there was a different way the corporation could use our money to benefit the students besides the usual round of grants," said Mary Hoffman, foundation executive director. "We also knew that teachers would be very busy with the challenges of e-learning and may not have time to write a grant this fall trimester."

Mrs. Hoffman said the donation

should sponsor 25 hotspot set-ups.

"We greatly appreciate the funding from the education foundation," said Steven Kerr, coordinator of network operations for Merrillville schools. "This will allow us to provide more students with internet access at home during virtual learning and in the future, as we expand the use of technology within the classroom."

Mr. Kerr said the hotspots the school system uses are completely mobile and can provide the service to any of our families without any issues. He said they can also be reissued to different families as needed.

"The corporation has compliant filtering on those hotspots that will help keep our students safe," Mr. Kerr said.

"With all these features in place, the MEF felt that our funds would be used wisely and are proud to, once again, work with the corporation for continued student success in school," Mrs. Hoffman said.



Support our schools while you holiday shop

The holidays are just around the corner, and you know what that means: SHOPPING!

You can support Merrillville Schools while you are purchasing your gifts through Amazon Smile!

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the Merrillville Education Foundation.

Be sure to choose Merrillville Education Foundation as your favorite charitable organization.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

**DOWNLOAD THE
2020-21 SCHOOL
CALENDAR HERE!**

National Food Service Workers' Day Sept. 25



**THANK YOU TO OUR
FOOD SERVICE
STAFF!**

**We are PIRATE
PROUD!**



Merrillville Community
School Corporation

MIS students stand out in September

Some of our Merrillville Intermediate School students were recognized by their teachers for their work during the month of September, earning them recognition as Students of the Month.

The students and parents met online with principals at the beginning of October for a virtual celebration, and principals read all of the positive notes from nominating teachers.

Congratulations to these amazing students:

5th Grade

Jada Blackman
Finley Campbell
Haleigh Carter
Ny'Len Dade
Jameeka Drummond
Chance Hall
Kenya Johnson
Cyanne Kelly
Allison Koves
Joshua Lasenby
Derrick Mabon
Eliana Magallon
Kasandra Maldonado
LaDonta Moses
Jasayis Rodriguez
Gabrielle Sanchez
Trinity Thomas
Kaitlyn Yates



Breakfasts for students and parents are held to celebrate Students of the Month at Merrillville Intermediate School. Last month, students, parents and principals gathered online for a virtual celebration.

6th Grade

Kamarion Brown
Elizabeth Ford
Andress Gutierrez
Jeremiah Hocker
Clyonna Horton
Miles Jewell
Isaiah Johnson
Brianna Lares
Jasmine McGee
Elijah Mitreski
Richard Morris

Amir Odoms
Gwenyth Oman
Jurnee Pearson
Quarion Regans
Sayon Rias
Jayla Robinson
Malayah Roussell
Karissa Rousseve-Ross
Tristan Thomas
Ariel Wilson

A number of Pierce Middle School students earned the recognition of September Students of the Month for their outstanding work in virtual learning.

Congratulations to the following students:

Pierce names Students of the Month

7th Grade

Green

Aarion Kuykendall
Peyton Gonzalez

Silver

Geovani Sanchez
Jeniya Wilkins

Red

Jasiah Fields
Kemarria Landon

Orange

Paige Mick
Keenan Skinner

8th Grade

Yellow

Pascha Campbell
Royce Burgess

Copper

Kayla Smith
Dayonne Johnson

Scenes from Homecoming 2020



2020 Football Homecoming Court, seniors from left: Mia Unmisig, Stephany Valladares, Homecoming Queen Destiny Lilly, Runner-up Beah Corrales, Runner-up Heavenly Bullard, Myia Dickerson, Sonnet Smith, Natasha Soweka, Natalie Martinez, and Hayley Moss.



Mr. Football Armani Glass with Coach Brad Seiss.

Pirates win over Lake Central Indians.



What would Homecoming be without the MHS Band of Pirates?



Cheering on our Pirates!





Boys Basketball Team earns business sponsorship

Lerner and Rowe sponsored the Merrillville High School Boys' Basketball team for a second season! According to the business, "Supporting these young men was a no-brainer. Not only are they great players on the court, but they can often be found serving their community. This includes volunteering for some of Lerner and Rowe's events, like our Backpack Giveaway and Turkey Giveaway."

We are PIRATE PROUD!

Save your Strack's receipts

Strack & Van Til is helping our schools by providing Free Education Equipment. Collect your receipts from Strack & Van Til and bring them participating schools: Wood, Miller and Iddings Elementary Schools and Merrillville Intermediate School.

Ask your family and friends to save their receipts as well so that our schools can maximize the points that they earn. Every dollar spent earns a point towards earning educational equipment. Receipts need to be dated from Sept. 1, 2020 through March 1, 2021.



Attn: Parents of middle schoolers

Interested in free college tuition for your child?

We are starting our 21st Century Scholar Program application process for the 2020-21 school year.

If you are a parent of a seventh or eighth grade student who qualifies for the program, your child can get up to four years of college tuition paid to attend an eligible Indiana public or private college, university, or proprietary institution.

For more information, visit <http://scholars.in.gov/> or contact your child's seventh grade counselor [Ms. Davis](#) or eighth grade counselor [Mrs. Wiersbe](#).



MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Save your pop can tabs
and bring them to
Wood Elementary School!
They donate them to the Ronald
McDonald House of Indiana!

Merrillville Head Start Preschool



Children ages 3 & 4 can still
join our preschool classes this
school year.

Call (219) 756-5940
to apply!

The win over Portage on Sept. 11, propelled our football program to win #500!

If you have ever played football at MHS or coached football or supported our players at Merrillville, you have helped get us here!

What a community achievement!



500
PROGRAM WINS



School bus/transportation reminders

We're hoping in-person learning will begin Nov. 16!

Don't forget that many school start and dismissal times have changed, and Thursdays are early release days (one hour earlier).

Students are expected to be out at their assigned bus stop 10 minutes prior to pickup time.

Here are a few bus and transportation reminders to keep in mind:

- All students are expected to be out at their assigned bus stop 10 minutes prior to pickup time.
- Students will not be provided transportation to daycare until updated information has been provided and approved.
- Kindergarten and first grade parents **MUST** be present at the PM bus stop.
- Electronic devices such as laptops, tablets, MP3's, cellphones, etc., are not permitted for use on the bus.

For more information, contact the Transportation Department, 219-650-5311.

School Board Approved March 17, 2020 MCSC School Start & Dismissal Times Current start times in RED New start times in PURPLE		
	START	DISMISSAL
Elementary Schools & Merrillville Intermediate School	7:55 a.m.	2:25 p.m.
Elementary Schools	7:55 a.m.	2:15 p.m.
Merrillville Intermediate School	7:55 a.m.	2:15 p.m.
Merrillville High School & Pierce Middle School	7:45 a.m.	2:48 p.m.
Merrillville High School	8:30 a.m.	3:15 p.m.
Pierce Middle School	8:35 a.m.	3:20 p.m.



PIRATE PRIDE!



MERRILLVILLE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION

Bus Drivers Needed

Very Competitive Wages

Full-time benefits package available with Part-time hours.

Paid Training

Paid CDL Skills Test & DOT physicals

To apply on-line or for more information, visit our web page at www.mvsc.k12.in.us/transportation

THANK YOU SALVATION ARMY!



Gary/Merrillville Salvation Army employees and advisory board members stopped by today and presented a donation of 1,000 facemasks and 500 individual bottles of hand sanitizer to Superintendent Nick Brown. The donation is in lieu of their annual backpack giveaway.

Pictured are: Richard Hardaway, co-chair Gary/Merrillville Salvation Army Advisory Board; Nick Brown, superintendent Merrillville Community School Corporation; Steve Wood, Salvation Army soldier and site supervisor; Sheila Shine, advisory board member, Captain Amanda Keene and Bob Fulton, advisory board co-chair.

Fieler receives \$5,000 donation

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Classroom.org contacted school administrators and helped to secure the donation for Fieler Elementary School.

According to Principal Michael Megyesi, the teachers will use the funds on a number of new classroom items, such as visual timers, dry erase boards, puzzles, card games, classroom library books, easy access bins for storing the books, science materials, fidgets, and more.

“On behalf of the teachers and staff at Fieler Elementary School, I would like to welcome our new local Burlington store and thank them and AdoptAClassroom.org for their generous

donation to our school,” said Mr. Megyesi. “Our teachers are so excited to purchase the tools they need, whether teaching in the classroom or from home. We are thankful for the support we received from Burlington and AdoptAClassroom.org.”

Burlington is committed to supporting education through its partnership with AdoptAClassroom.org.

Each time Burlington opens a new store, Burlington celebrates by adopting and funding a local elementary school in the market.

The new Burlington store is now open in Merrillville.

DOWNLOAD OUR APP

Merrillville school information is available at your fingertips.

See all the events in the district or select an individual building.

Find out what bus your student rides and the rules and regulations of Transportation.

Get links to Family Access, Food Services, District Calendars and more!

Available on the App Store



GET IT ON Google Play



Coats for Kids & Families

Help keep our children warm in the winter cold!

Thanks to everyone who brought coat donations to our schools!

Coats will be distributed to families in need on

Saturday, Nov. 7

9 a.m. to noon

Impact Christian Church

7071 Broadway, Merrillville

Coats for Kids is a 501(c)(3) organization
9530 Lincoln Court, Crown Point, IN 46307

For more information, visit
www.facebook.com/coatsforkidsandfamilies/

Merrillville Community School Corporation
www.mvsc.k12.in.us * 219-650-5300

