



# Pirate Pride

May 2021

[www.mvsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us) \* 219-650-5300

The Newsletter of the Merrillville Community School Corporation

## New summer school experiences, SEL program planned

The Merrillville Community School Corporation will use dollars from the U.S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund in different ways to provide stu-

dents with needed support to help bridge any learning gaps and emotional challenges resulting from the pandemic.

School administration has outlined what it calls the Summer Boost program.

According to Superintendent Nick Brown, the six-week summer experience will be unlike any other the schools have provided in the past.

*cont'd page 6*

## FREE meals for children available all summer

All children ages 18 and under are invited to receive FREE breakfasts and lunches every day from June 7 through August 13.

Children must be present to receive their "curbside" meals as only one breakfast and one lunch is permitted per child per day.

Students attending summer school will receive their meals at school. Weekend meal bags will be distributed along with Friday meals.

The following sites will distribute breakfast from 8:30-9 a.m. and lunch from 12:30-1 p.m. each day with the exception of July 5 or as noted:

- Merrillville High School, 276 E. 68th Pl., Door I
- Pierce Middle School, 199 E. 70th St., west of Door 3
- Fieler Elementary School, 407 W. 61st Ave., Door C
- Iddings Elementary School, 7249 Van Buren St., Door L
- Salk Elementary School, 3001 W. 77th Ave., Door B
- Stefek Park, 7053 Harrison St.
- Rethink Church, 2920 W. 73rd Pl. (curbside OR eat-in)
- Impact Church, 7071 Broadway, (curbside OR eat-in)

- **LUNCH ONLY:** Collins Park, 9500 Merrillville Rd., noon to 1 p.m.

### Mobile Bus Stops-Lunch Only

- Regency Park Townhomes, 6078 Delaware St., 11-11:30 a.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 5375 Harrison St., 11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
- Miller Elementary School, 5901 Waite St., 12:30-1 p.m.

*Check the end of this newsletter for a one-page meal schedule you can conveniently post as a reminder.*

### MHS Administrator recognized

Assistant Principal Candace Lillie was awarded the Indiana Association of Student Councils Administrator of the Year for the High School Division, 2019-20.

Administrator of the Year Award recognizes building administrators who have shown strong and continued support of student activities in their schools.

She was chosen by a group of students, advisers and other school faculty who determined she has created an environment where the students and staff feel encouraged and appreciated.

**Congratulations, Ms. Lillie!**  
**We are PIRATE PROUD!**



# Watch for the letter: VOI/2021-22 enrollment to begin in July

If you have students returning next school year, you will receive a letter in July requesting you to verify your information online as a form of enrollment for the 2021-22 school year.

The information you provide is used to update school records, provide a safe environment for children and confirm enrollment, so it is important that it is current.

After receiving the letter, all parents are requested to log into their accounts using Skyward Parent Access login and password to complete the verification of information process.

*It is best to complete this Verification of Information process on a tablet, laptop or desktop.* If you use a cell phone to access the Internet or just need

a computer on which to complete this process, please feel free stop in at the Merrillville Community School Corporation Central Office during business hours, where you can use one of our available computers. The office is located at 6701 Delaware St.

Merrillville families with a change of address or incorrect address listed in Skyward Parent Access must visit their children’s schools with verification of address. Families whose children attend multiple schools can simply visit the school of the oldest student.

Address verification items can take the form of either driver’s licenses, utility bills, mortgage statements or leases. For additional information regarding acceptable proofs of residency, parents can



call their children’s schools or visit the school website.

All school bus information for Merrillville Community School Corporation is based on the addresses listed in Skyward Family Access.

For more information, call the Merrillville Community School Corporation, 219-650-5300.

## Applications for free/reduced lunch/textbook program will expire September 29

Parents whose children are on the free and reduced lunch and textbook program can reapply to participate in the 2021-22 school year beginning July 1.

Applications currently on file will expire Sept. 29.

Meals will remain free throughout the 2021-22 school year; however, it is important for parents to apply and take advantage of reduced textbook fees in addition to other benefits that may be offered by state or federal programs, like [P-EBT](#) and the [broadband benefit](#).

You can reapply using any of

- these convenient methods:
- During the Verification of Information process that will begin sometime in July;
  - Apply online using Skyward;
  - Download an application from the website to complete and mail or bring it to the central office;
  - Visit your schools or the corporation’s central office during of-  
fice hours to obtain a form to complete. The office is located at 6701 Delaware St.

### BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Linda C. Jonaitis  
President

Judy C. Dunlap  
Vice-President

Mark S. Lucas  
Secretary

DeLena N. Thomas  
Member

James Donohue  
Member

### 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](mailto:dstuckert@mvsc.k12.in.us) or 219-650-5477.*

## FOLLOW US!



Merrillville School Superintendent  
Merrillville High School  
CTE Program  
Clifford Pierce Middle School  
Food Service  
Merrillville Intermediate School  
Fieler Elementary School  
Iddings Elementary School  
Miller Elementary School  
Salk Elementary School  
Wood Elementary School

@MerrillvilleSu3  
@MerrillvilleMHS  
@MerrillvilleCTE  
@PIERCEadm  
@MCSCFood  
@mis\_principal  
@FielerPirates  
@IddingsElem  
@miller\_elem  
@SalkNews  
@PrinPetrulia





Merrillville High School



# CLASS OF 2021

## TOP 10 GRADUATES



Salvador Contreras  
Valedictorian



Jameelah Ali  
Salutatorian



Elijah Walker



Olusoji Oduneye



Izayah Edwards



Donnicci Marshall



Erin Escobar



Sophia Lotkowski



Gavin Lipsky



A'Veyawn Madry

*We will miss you!*

**Linda Hall**  
**24 years**



Linda Hall has been with Merrillville Community School Corporation since 1997 and has worked in many capacities throughout her time here, including playground and teacher aides, attendance secretary, and secretary to MHS assistant principal and guidance counselors.

She’s worked at Fieler Elementary, Harrison and Pierce Middle Schools, as well as the high school.

She said her favorite memories of working at MCSC are the friendships with co-workers and students.

“Our years of working together have showed me that you can love your work if you love the people you work with,” Mrs. Hall said.

She plans to travel with her husband, continue her hobby of sewing using antique chenille bedspreads to create unique items, and spend more time with her family.

**Mike Hawkins**  
**25 years**



Mike Hawkins is retiring after 25 years with the corporation.

He most recently served as the physical education teacher at Fieler Elementary School, but he also held roles over his MCSC career that included middle school workshop teacher, eighth grade football coach, middle school wrestling coach, and seventh grade physical education teacher.

One of his favorite memories is coaching six undefeated football teams and one undefeated wrestling team.

“Those teams were fun to coach,” Mr. Hawkins said. “So many great athletes.”

During retirement, he plans to keep working drivers’ ed, but he hopes to travel, get things done around the house, continue doing artwork, hang out at his

pool and sleep in!

“I’d like to thank all of my colleagues and coaches that I worked with throughout the years,” he said. “I feel lucky to have met so many wonderful people in Merrillville.

“It was nice to be able to be a small part in my students’ lives,” he continued. “Seeing them grow up and become productive citizens is a rewarding feeling. Thank you for giving me a chance to teach and coach in your school system.”

**Jayne Valant**  
**25-1/2 years**



Mrs. Valant is hanging up her apron after more than 25 years.

She has worked in numerous capacities in the corporation kitchens:

serving in the Salk Elementary School dish room; baking at Harrison Junior High School; and serving as assistant manager at Merrillville Intermediate School and manager at John Wood Elementary School.

She said her favorite memory is when the elementary school would have special lunches, cookouts, Thanksgiving dinner and Dr. Seuss’ green eggs and ham.

“The children really enjoyed those days,” Mrs. Valant said. “It has been a joy to work with so many people with the same goals; children first always.”

Mrs. Valant said she is looking forward to start taking it easy and enjoying her first grand child.

*Once a Pirate,  
Always a Pirate!*





## Diane Rosenthal 17 years

MHS Orchestra Director Diane Rosenthal is retiring after 17 years with the school corporation.

Throughout her years here, she has held several roles, including MIS, Pierce and MHS orchestra directors, Pierce fine arts team leader, MCSC orchestra program coordinator and jazz orchestra club sponsor.

Some of her favorite moments included seeing the pride in the student musicians' eyes on stage as they put their best work out for all to see.

"I am proud to have spent my career in a district that is dedicated to honoring the uniqueness of every student," Ms. Rosenthal said. "I am honored to have been a part of the journey of so many strong, resilient, brilliant student musicians. Keep up the good fight for our great kids, everyone! Once a Pirate, always a Pirate!"



Ms. Rosenthal is relocating to LA to begin a life with her fiancé.

"I will be teaching private lessons and working as a string coach with the Youth Orchestras of LA during the school years and hanging out with family and friends at my home in Miller Beach during the summers," she said.

## Hilda Damianick 14-1/2 years

Assistant Superintendent Hilda Damianick has been taking care of business for the school corporation for more than 14 years.

She will be retiring July 1 and hoping to spend more time relaxing, hanging out with family, traveling, and just enjoying life!

"I am grateful for having had the opportunity to work here and getting the chance to develop relationships with some wonderful people," Mrs. Damianick said. "While I will miss so many here, I am also looking forward to what the future brings. Best wishes to all, and thank you all for all that you do! Go Pirates!"



*Happy  
Retirement!*

*Best  
wishes!*

## Terri Rothgeb 20 years



Terri Rothgeb isn't leaving quite so fast; she's announced her retirement for December.

Mrs. Rothgeb has been in Food Service with Merrillville Community School Corporation for 20 years, in the capacities of cashier and cook server at MHS and manager at Miller Elementary School.

She said one of her favorite memories of working here is "having a former student write me a letter as an assignment, thanking me for feeding her, when her parents didn't have the money. And for listening when she needed an ear. That was an awesome feeling."

After she officially turns in her apron and plastic gloves, she plans on spending her retirement traveling with her husband, Rome.

"Thank you, Jennifer Griffin, for always including the Food Service staff in all Miller aspects," Mrs. Rothgeb said. "I truly appreciate her kindness and that of all of the staff here. It is bittersweet, I will miss you all."

"And to the young man that I mentor through the H.U.G.G.S. program, I will miss you dearly," she added. "Stay on track."

# New summer school experiences, SEL program planned

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“It is a skill-aligned program focusing on a small group of students per instructor to help close any learning gaps that may have occurred due to the pandemic,” Mr. Brown said. “This is a new and very exciting opportunity for our students and teachers.”

The Boost program will provide differentiated instruction to qualified students to address their academic needs in the areas of English Language Arts/Reading and/or Math.

Students in grades three through eight will be invited to participate four days a week from 8 to 11:30 a.m., and the ratio of students to instructor will be 5-to-1.

Invitations will be based on ILEARN test data, IREAD test data and district assessments. Transportation will

be provided.

Funding will also support resources to address social and emotional needs of students and staff, like hiring social workers and offering additional assistance programs on mental health.

A summer social and emotional learning program (SEL) is scheduled to complement the Boost program and provide support for at-risk males transitioning from Merrillville Intermediate to Pierce Middle School.

Students will meet in the afternoons after summer school. Staff will assess their needs while simultaneously allowing for enrichment of foundational elements of academic, behavioral and SEL learning. Their reward for attendance will be Friday field trips.

Mr. Brown said the funding will also support the investment in one-time projects, like upgrading ventilation systems and enhancing internet connectivity for the school community.

In addition to these new programs, summer plans will include the traditional high school summer programs that include academic courses as well as camp for band and orchestra.

Last but not least, a new kindergarten through first grade reading camp from July 6 through 22, will have the little ones reaching for the stars.

The theme for the camp is “Universe of Stories,” and the goal is to support young pirates by improving their skills through the love of reading.

## Choir students earn 88 gold medals

All 20 Merrillville High School choir students who recently competed in ISSMA state events received gold medal ratings.

In addition, eight of the 20 earned their golds with distinction! Students competed in 13 vocal solos, one piano solo and six ensembles, earning a total of 88 gold medals in all.

The following vocalists won accolades: Andre Burns (9.5 with distinction), Miracle Davenport, Erin Escobar (10 with distinction), Kennedy Halliburton (10.5 with distinction), Kamryn Johnson, Alexis McGriggs, Tessa Mroz (10.5 with distinction), Joshua Roberts, Damiah Shaw, Jarius Taylor-Newman (9.5 with distinction), Terry Thomas, Aaliyah Williams, and Genesis Williams.

Burns was also awarded a 7.5 gold with distinction on his piano solo.

The Escobar Ensemble and the Vocalteen Men scored gold with distinction with “Lullaby” and “Drunken Sailor,” respectively.

Large ensembles Choralteens, Kirklen, Molenda, and Roberts all earned gold medals with their division one state ensembles.

Under normal circumstances, students compete at the ISSMA Solo and



Ensemble District level in early February and get feedback from their judges.

If they perform division one pieces and earn gold ratings, they can compete again at the state level two weeks later, where they sing for judges who are college music professors. Adjudication at the state level is with a much higher degree of expectation.

This year, MHS students, all of whom sang division one repertoire, competed at the state level in the one and only ISSMA Solo and Ensemble Competition this year, which means they were judged solely at the state level.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 7  
No School

May 23  
Baccalaureate, 3 p.m.  
Living Hope Church

May 26  
Academic Awards Night, 7 p.m.  
Virtual

May 31  
Memorial Day/No School

June 4  
Last Day of School

June 6  
MHS Commencement

June 14-July 23  
Summer School



## School Board marked female firsts during Women's History Month

As Linda Jonaitis took her oath of office for school board Jan. 5, alongside her fellow members, she realized what a significant moment it was. After serving on the board for 11 years, she knew from this day forward, things were going to be a little different.

For the first time in the history of the Merrillville Community School Corporation, women hold the majority on the board of school trustees. With two existing female members, Mrs. Jonaitis and Judy Dunlap, and one newly elected member, DeLena Thomas, the makeup of the board is now three women and two men.

"During Women's History Month (March), it was important we celebrated and acknowledged the contribution of girls and women in our district especially at this moment in our history," said Mrs. Jonaitis, who was elected board president.

"We have a great board that works well together in the interests of our students," she continued. "The significance of a female presence and, at this time a majority, is important in order to have a board with various perspectives and life experiences."

Mrs. Jonaitis said she's lived through periods of history in which a female majority on the school board and most governmental bodies just did not exist.

"So for me, it brings joy and an opportunity for our students to see that gender should not limit anyone from doing what their passion is," she said.

James Donohue, who has served on the board for 17 years, said the Merrillville School Board has been a cohesive board with respect for each other.

"Our focus has always been 'Kids First,'" he said. "I anticipate our school board will continue to govern with the same successful governance practices with input from the community and collaboration with the superintendent."

Newly elected board vice president Ms. Dunlap is beginning her second four-year term on the board of school trustees. In 2017, Ms. Dunlap made school corporation history.

"I am the first African American to serve on the board and the first to hold an office," Ms. Dunlap said. "I am humble and grateful."

"I feel that gender diversity plays an important role in supporting innovative activity and organizational change," she added. "I appreciate that we now have a diverse board of backgrounds, gender and ethnicities."

"Representation is very important and true visibility matters," said Mrs. Thomas, the second African American to serve on the board. She won her seat in the November election and is beginning her first four-year term.

Administrators of the corporation agree that the continued diverse makeup of the board could only be a win for students.

"It is always a great thing to have a diverse board, as it brings a deeper understanding of what



Board President Linda Jonaitis (left) and Vice President Judy Dunlap note the first time both top offices are held by women.

An advertisement for Sideline Store. At the top, a chalkboard with a wooden frame says "WELCOME NEW PIRATES" in white chalk. Below the chalkboard are three items of merchandise: a grey baseball cap with a pirate logo, a white hoodie with a pirate logo, and a grey backpack with a pirate logo. At the bottom, large white text on a purple background says "20% OFF WHEN YOU SPEND \$60 OR MORE". Below this, a white box contains the text "USE CODE: WELCOME21". To the left of the box is a starburst graphic that says "YOUR OFFICIAL ONLINE SPIRIT WEAR SHOP". To the right of the box, it says "SALE ENDS: 8.1.21". At the bottom right, there is a "SHOP NOW" button with a right arrow, and the Sideline Store logo.

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## Boys' Track & Field Team wins sectionals third time in a row



**15th**  
championship  
of all-time!

**Go  
Pirates!**

## Newly licensed CNAs recognized at school board meeting

The Merrillville Community School Corporation Board of School Trustees recognized the students recently completing the requirements to become CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants).

These students have successfully passed the Indiana State test and clinical exam, earning them the ability to take care of patients in hospitals, long-term residential facilities, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, adult daycares and more.

Nursing Coordinator Tina Foreman presented each one with a pin, and the students received their certificates in front of corporation administrators and family members.



[Click here for more photos.](#)

All are seniors except one student (noted). Not pictured: Angelica Villarreal. Photo front row from left: Bob Phelps, director of technology and CTE; Marissa Ford; Destiny Lilly; Alyssa Noland; Kionna Rodgers, junior; Azhia Strong; Sierra Weaver; Michael Knocke, MHS assistant principal for Career and

Technical Education. Middle row: Aysia Kirklen; Kamryn Harris; Tina Foreman, nursing coordinator. Back row School Board members: James Donohue; Mark Lucas, secretary; Judy Dunlap, vice president; Linda Jonaitis, president; Delena Thomas; and Nick Brown, superintendent.

## Students, staff raise funds to support local organization

Students and staff at Salk Elementary School showed their support for Chasing Dreams by presenting a check for nearly \$400 to organization CEO Denise Babjak.

Salk students helped to raise the money by donating 75 cents on dress-up spirit days during the week before spring break. Due to the pandemic, they weren't able to participate or donate last year; therefore, the check presented included funds collected from the years 2019 and 2021.

The organization, located in Merrillville, provides integrated and vital pro-

grams for individuals with special needs and their families that facilitate an environment of growth, learning, and independence.



**Pictured from left:** Katie Toso, MOMH teacher; Tiffany Scott, LRE teacher; Denise Babjak, CEO of Chasing Dreams; and Nicholas Petralia, Salk principal.



# Juniors inducted into National Honor Society last month

Thirty-six juniors were honored for their scholarship as they were inducted into the MHS chapter of the National Honor Society.

In order to be inducted, each junior must have an unweighted GPA of 3.5 or higher and a clean disciplinary record.

The new inductees included:

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Noelia Arichavala  | • Kentawon Marshall   |
| • Kristiana Chandler | • Phillip Mayer       |
| • Azariah Crosby     | • Aidan McLaughlin    |
| • Mariah Dean        | • Lauren Molenda      |
| • Zachary Dunn       | • Isabella Montemayor |
| • Courtney Evans     | • Lea Patterson       |
| • Vincent Feliciano  | • Leah Pelozo         |
| • Cesar Franco       | • Colin Rogers        |
| • Juliana Gonzalez   | • Joshua Salter       |
| • Rayonna Grady      | • Brice Sanford       |
| • Faith Henderson    | • Austen Short        |
| • Tina Higgins       | • Jason Steffel       |
| • Catherine Hyland   | • Kiersten Stowe      |
| • Christian Jones    | • Merci Tan           |
| • Aniyah Kelliehan   | • Shynia Taylor       |
| • Joshua Krause      | • Jordyn Thomas       |
| • Zachary Krause     | • Hannah Villahermosa |
| • Marianna Lares     | • Peter Wujek         |



MHS Juniors Kiersten Stowe and Joshua Salter show off their National Honor Society certificates.

*Once a Pirate*



*Always a Pirate!*

# New benefit for families on free and reduced lunch program

If your children qualify for benefits under the free and reduced lunch program, your family qualifies for the new Emergency Broadband Benefit.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is an FCC program to help families and households struggling to afford internet service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This new benefit will connect eligible households to jobs, critical health-care services, virtual classrooms, and so much more.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit will provide a discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband service for eligible households.

Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

There are also a number of other qualifications to receive this benefit that you can view here:

<https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>

Eligible households are able to enroll in the program to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service from an approved provider.

Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit).

Take advantage of this new benefit!



## Congratulations

# CLASS of 2021

## Merrillville High School

### PIRATE PRIDE!

Watch for this billboard rotating at the northeast corner of U.S. Route 30 and Broadway. We are so proud of our graduates!

## Staff Feature

**Bonnie Nicksch starts as recess aide, moves up to Media Services**

Bonnie Nicksch started working for the Merrillville Community School Corporation as a recess aide at John Wood Elementary School from 1990-95.

"I started working at John Wood when my son was in first grade and my daughter was in the fourth grade there," Mrs. Nicksch said. "I was able to be with them at their school and have the summers off to do family things with them."

Thirty-one years later, she's still here!

Her career led her into the world of media. She became a book processor at Merrillville High School, where she stayed for the next 11 years, then she landed her current position as secretary

to the director of Media Services.

"In the beginning, I loved working with the young children on the playground," she said. "Since I started working at the high school, my role has changed; first by getting library books ready for students to read as the book processor, and now many different jobs as the office secretary, and for the past year helping distribute textbooks to students."

She said she enjoys the people she works with and seeing projects develop from start to finish.

Mrs. Nicksch plans to retire when she turns 65 in a few years and hopes to travel more with her husband and family.



**Bonnie Nicksch**

## Teacher Feature

**From student to teacher, Renee' Matthews has come full circle**

**Renee' Matthews**

"The decision to return to Merrillville Schools after graduating college was my way of giving back to the corporation which thoroughly prepared me for college," said Renee' Matthews. "I have been fortunate to work with incredibly dedicated people along with having access to really great professional development."

Ms. Matthews attended Merrillville schools from kindergarten through 12th grade, beginning in 1974. She completed her student teaching here in 1991 and began teaching here in 1992.

She was a substitute teacher from 1989-90; MHS junior varsity cheerleading coach 1991-95; and Pierce sixth grade teacher from 1992-96.

She's been a teacher at Salk Elementary School in grades three through six since 1996, where she has taught remedial reading and been an alternative classroom and IREAD Bootcamp teacher.

"I love what I do," Ms. Matthews said. "Reading is my passion and the most important subject in school along with being the foundation to all other academic subjects."

She said both her colleagues and students inspire her.

"Collegiality is the key," she said. "Salk is a great place to work. Together we celebrate achievements, share strategies, and unite to seek solutions to challenges."

"Students inspire me to work harder and learn new things," she continued. "Their curiosity and energy make each day interesting and exciting."

Each year she assists with Title selection testing, and she especially enjoys hearing how well students fluently read who were struggling readers just a few years earlier.

"I know how hard they have worked, and I am so very proud of them," Ms. Matthews said. "While at times teaching is challenging, that is what motivates me to keep learning and looking for better ways to reach them."

"I believe it's the relationships established with students which allow them to put their trust in believing they have the ability and persevere," she said.

After 31 years, she has no plans to retire. When she does retire, she said she'd be interested in being a child advocate or volunteer with the Wounded Warriors or Red Cross organizations. She also wants to get back to traveling internationally.

**Join our team!**

**We have many positions  
available; one may be right  
for you!**

**Click here!**





## Asst. principal cooks breakfast, rewards freshmen

Several Merrillville High School freshmen recently enjoyed a special breakfast to celebrate their successes.

Assistant Principal Tim James cooked up a custom breakfast for each student, taking their individual orders and serving up bacon, sausage, eggs, pancakes and fruit as a reward for their outstanding work during the third trimester in Freshman Academy.

"One of the baselines of the Freshman Academy is relationship-building, which was difficult to do virtually for the first two trimesters," said Paul Trembacki, English teacher. "These students have made dramatic strides since August, showing they have what it takes to set themselves up for success."

Trembacki said the students showed positive behavior, followed the rules, were respectful, and pushed for academic success and good grades, all part of the criteria their teachers used to nominate them to enjoy this delicious reward.

Some of the students who were recognized included: Angel Bustamante, Madison Crawford, Ashley Gillis, Braylon King, and Cjay Porter.

Merrillville High School's Freshman Academy provides additional academic support and resources to students in order to help improve student achievement and renew their interest in school.

The academy serves about 15% of the freshmen class and focuses on math,

English and science.

While he was cooking, James also served up custom breakfasts for teachers, security staff and library staff to commemorate National Library Week.



**MHS Assistant Principal Tim James** serves freshman Braylon King his breakfast in the Freshman Cafeteria.

## School Board marked female firsts during Women's History Month

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the students and community may need," said Superintendent Nick Brown.

Dr. Danny Lackey, executive director of student support services for the corporation, believes a majority female representation represents how the community that the schools serve continues to change.

"I think that it is a great change because it only increases the diversity on our board," he said. "The more diverse in composition, the more diverse in thought which is a critical component to creative and innovation thinking and problem solving."

Making history with a female majority isn't this board's only historical feat this year; both the board president and vice president are women, another first for the corporation.

In addition, for the first time in the corporation's history, two educators hold the top two leadership roles: Mrs. Jonaitis worked for various school districts in-

cluding Merrillville, where she was principal at Pierce Middle School; Ms. Dunlap was a principal with the Gary Community School Corporation.

"The board leadership has been terrific and always focused on doing what is best for our students," Mrs. Jonaitis said. "We have mutual respect as board members and as a result, in making a decision about this year's officers, the board supported a different team at the top."

"I don't know if it was gender-driven

as much as the fact that we were both ready to do the job and everyone agreed," she continued. "It's an honor."

Mark Lucas, member of the corporation's board of school trustees for 29 years, said it shows the quality of leadership of both women.

"It means that barriers are being broken, and the board trusts the leadership they have shown and believe they will continue to move the district forward in the right direction," Mrs. Thomas said.



### Miller Elementary School Principal Jennifer Griffin

will wrap up her second year of Facebook Live read alouds at 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 1 on the Miller PTO Facebook Page.

Till then, catch her every Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Thank you, Mrs. Griffin, for inspiring children through reading!

## Help available to earn your high school equivalency diploma

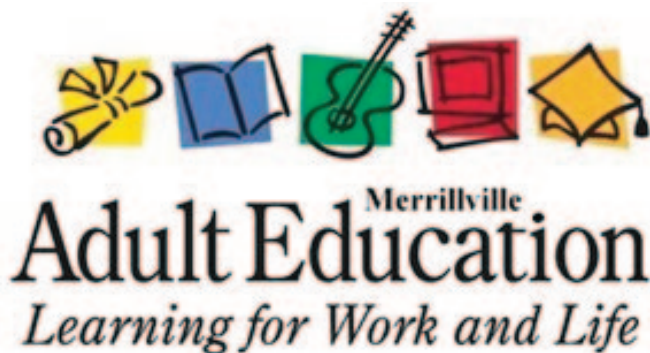
Merrillville Adult Education (MAE) can help individuals earn their High School Equivalency Diplomas by preparing them to complete the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) Test.

Upcoming 2021 TASC Test date: June 7 and 8, registration deadline June 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.

To register for a testing date or for more information, visit the Merrillville Community School Corporation website, [www.mvsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us), or contact the Adult Education Office: [sgreen@mvsc.k12.in.us](mailto:sgreen@mvsc.k12.in.us) or 219-650-5318.



## Food Service schedules elementary ice cream days

Food Services will offer children at all five elementary schools an ice cream day to celebrate the end of the school year.

Students will enjoy walking up to the ice cream bus and getting their choice of chocolate, vanilla, strawberry swirl, sherbet or lemon ice from food service workers later this month.

Don't forget to thank the school PTOs for sponsoring the yummy treats for students!



## School nurses available to address vaccine concerns

The Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is now available for adolescents 12-15 years of age.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the vaccine for use in adolescents ages 12-15. The recommendation follows the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granting the vaccine Emergency Use Authorization for children of this age group.

Parents can get their child the COVID-19 vaccine at any place authorized to administer the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find a location near you or call your local or county health department.

Widespread vaccination is a critical tool in stopping the pandemic, medical experts say.

"Children are very much part of the herd immunity picture," said Tina Foreman, nursing coordinator for Merrillville Schools. "It is normal for parents to have hesitancy and questions regarding the vaccine."

"We would like to be available to provide information and answer any questions so that you can make a decision that you are comfortable with," she added.

For more information or questions, please

contact your school nurse or Tina Foreman RN, 219-650-5307, x7539.

### 10th Annual Merrillville Football Golf Outing

Sponsored by WCFSPORTS.COM

July 25, 2021 - Duck Creek Golf Course

**\$60/PERSON**



**9AM SHOTGUN**



**PIRATE FOOTBALL**



## Alumnus starts down crimson path

A Merrillville High School graduate is switching gears and heading back to school this fall.

David Jonathan Lewis, a 2015 graduate and class president, will exchange his role as teacher back to student and start down the path of graduate school for a master's in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He also plans to enroll in Harvard Law School through a joint degree program.

Mr. Lewis hopes to use his higher education and experience to serve in a state government as a senator or representative in the near future. He desires to work on the Education Committee.

"In doing this, I will play an important role in promoting community understanding of policies that support inclusiveness and civility among residents," he said. "More specifically, I will focus on education and work to provide training on multicultural awareness and civil rights issues to support not only students, but also school personnel."

He encourages anyone who is interested in following his journey to visit his website [www.davidjlewis.org](http://www.davidjlewis.org) and subscribe.

"As I transition into both graduate and law programs, I am looking for resources and support to aid me on my journey," he said.

The MHS alumnus, who is currently teaching fourth grade reading in the Indianapolis schools, has some words of wisdom for this year's graduating class.

"This year as a teacher, I reminded my students daily that they are loved, mistakes are okay, and they can do anything they set their minds to," he said. "Those affirmations did not only encourage my elementary students, but also motivated and reminded me of who I am daily and whose I am. That is my advice to you as a graduate of Merrillville High School."

After MHS graduation, Mr. Lewis immediately attended the University of Indianapolis for one academic year as an undergraduate political science major.

He later transferred to IUPUI in the fall of 2016 to study public affairs through the O'Neill School of Public & Environmental Affairs program.

"Because I was enrolled in dual credit courses at MHS, I finished my undergraduate program in three years total in 2018," he said.

He said his experience at MHS was filled with opportunities to grow, not only academically, but also socially and spiritually.

"Many of the faculty and staff members always challenged and encouraged me to work beyond my known abilities," he said. "Administrators provided me with various opportunities to serve my community. There were countless safe spaces for me to create everlasting friendships with several of my peers."

Some of the teachers he said had the most impact on him included: Sra. Monica DaCosta Gomez, Mrs. Patti Tubbs-Clark, Mr. Mark Danielson, Ms. Teresa Proctor (retired), Mr. Dan Moslander, Mrs. Debbie Willison (retired), Mr. John Branda (retired), Ms. Sharon Row (retired), and Mrs. Alison Skertic.

He is still in touch with friends from his days at MHS: Marguerite Culbreath, elementary educator, and Reesie Woods, songwriter.

Aside from being class president for four years, Mr. Lewis' high school years were filled with numerous activities, including the Band of Pirates drum major, 2013-15; captain of the Mock Trial

## Alumni Connections



**David Jonathan Lewis**  
MHS Class of 2015

Team, 2012-15; student government, Bible Club Leader, 2011-2015; freshman mentor; National Honor Society, 2014-15; and Merrillville Education Foundation Board Member, 2014-15.

He said Mr. Krutz's advice is something every student should take into consideration.

"When Mr. Krutz says 'Split second decisions have long lasting effects,' he is not simply uttering some encouraging words, he is reminding you daily that in every situation you face, you have a choice and you will bear the responsibility for your actions," Mr. Lewis said.

### Kindergarten preregistration continues online through May 28

Click here or visit  
[www.mvsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us) today!



# KINDERGARTEN

# National program taps alumnus to serve on awards committee

## Alumni Connections

One alumnus has found himself in a new role of a familiar situation; he will serve as a judge for an award he won 14 years ago.

As a sophomore at Merrillville High School, Brandon Taylor was recognized with the Power of Children Award for his efforts in creating more kid-friendly environments at local hospitals.

The 2009 graduate was recently sought out by the program's coordinators to serve a multi-year commitment as one of two alumni on the adjudication committee for upcoming awards.

"I am very excited and very humbled," Mr. Taylor said.

The Power of Children Award was created in 2005 by the Children's Museum of Indianapolis to recognize youth in grades six through 11 who identified community needs and designed projects, programs or non-profit organizations to address those needs.

To this day, the Power of Children Award Program has recognized 84 amazing young people from 59 cities, 19 states and 72 schools.

After spending time in the hospital for foot surgery as a youth, Mr. Taylor realized that hospitals weren't fun places for kids to be, especially for extended periods of time.

Together with his closest friends, Mr. Taylor addressed the need to make extended stays at local hospitals a bit more enjoyable for children by creating the non-profit organization Kids 4 Kidz, which earned him the Power of Children Award in 2007.

Kids 4 Kidz gained momentum in the community with donations and a Rotary sponsorship, allowing them to purchase gifts for local hospital pediatric units and donate items like toys, televisions, technology, and gaming equipment.

"Thinking back on this experience, I am reminded of the wonderful potential in youth-led ideas and projects," he said. "They can be really transformational on

a large scale. There's something powerful about youthful creativity matched with a community of support that can address so many of the challenges we face today."

As a Power of Kids Award adjudication committee member, he will review nomination materials, program and project impacts, skills and knowledge achieved and community engagement of nominees.

"It will be really special to see how far the minds of our youth can go now with the resources at hand," he said.

"The reach our communications have now can draw support from really all around the world."

For the past eight years, Mr. Taylor has been establishing his career in the community development space and is now working for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) in their Philadelphia office.

"It's remained an interest and passion of mine dating back to my youth in Merrillville," he said. "I am happy to lead such meaningful work at this unprecedented time facing many cities around the country."

LISC is the nation's largest community development support organization with a local focus in 37 field offices across the U.S. He said the organization's role is best described as an intermediary.

"We work alongside residents and partners to implement their visions and advance restorative justice solutions through neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, and economic stability," he said. "In my direct line of work, I lead our team's community safety, community engagement, and organization capacity building efforts."

"I often tell people that our best work is when we're serving as a catalyst for community change, amplifying the work of our community partners to strengthen their neighborhoods and improve the lives of residents and their



**Brandon Taylor**  
MHS Class of 2009

families," Mr. Taylor said.

After graduating from MHS, Mr. Taylor attended Cornell University in the fall of 2009, starting off in the Architecture Department; but he soon realized his passion led him to the Urban & Regional Studies Department.

He graduated from Cornell in 2013 with a major in urban and regional studies and a minor in architecture.

According to Mr. Taylor, his experience at MHS definitely played an important part in his growth as a young man.

"I learned so much from some really great, supportive teachers; I participated in a variety of activities that challenged me mentally and physically; and I developed a number of long-lasting friendships," he said. "In fact, three friends from my graduating class served as groomsmen in my wedding."

He said one of the most memorable things from his time at MHS had to be Principal Krutz's words, "Split second decisions have long-lasting effects."

"I've experienced the truth of these words at so many points in my years since high school, and that's a big reason for why I'm convinced they are forever

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# National program taps alumnus to serve on committee

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ingrained in my mind,” he said. “I will always be thankful for the leaders, teachers, peers, guidance counselors, and other staff that poured into me during my four years at MHS.”

Another person he highlighted from his time in high school was Michelle Sulich.

“She was a confidant, a cheerleader, an accountability partner, and everything else to me as an MHS student and graduate,” he said. “I will forever be grateful for the sacrifices she made to go above and beyond in supporting students and setting them up for success.

“She showed me at an early age what it meant to really care for other people and invest yourself into their potential,” he added.

He encourages current high school students to never forget to reach back as they climb.

“You likely have many dreams and goals that you’d like to pursue in life, and I believe you should wholeheartedly go after them,” he said. “However, it’s important to avoid the trap of running so hard after your own goals that you forget the younger kids coming behind you who can learn from your mistakes, challenges, and successes.

“I’ve learned that the most fulfilling success comes when we intentionally share and give back as we reach and climb,” he added.

For 2021 graduates, Mr. Taylor has some words of advice.

“Remember what you went through over the past school year leading to your graduation,” he said. “Don’t lose sight of how you overcame the obstacles you faced in being a senior during a global pandemic, and successfully walking across that stage into the next chapter of your lives.

“I encourage each of you to never be afraid to fail,” he continued. “Failure is truly a part of the journey to success – in whatever you’re pursuing. To keep trying even in the face of failure is how you become resilient and success

becomes inevitable.”

While in high school, Mr. Taylor was involved in the National Honor Society, S.T.A.N.D., soccer, bowling, track and field, golf, French Club, Peer Mediator Group, Academic Decathlon, and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD).

“I also volunteered at my church and through my foundation Kids 4 Kidz, Inc.,” he said.

For the past seven years, he and his wife share encouraging advice on relationships through their YouTube channel “Worth the Wait.”

“We started the channel on a whim

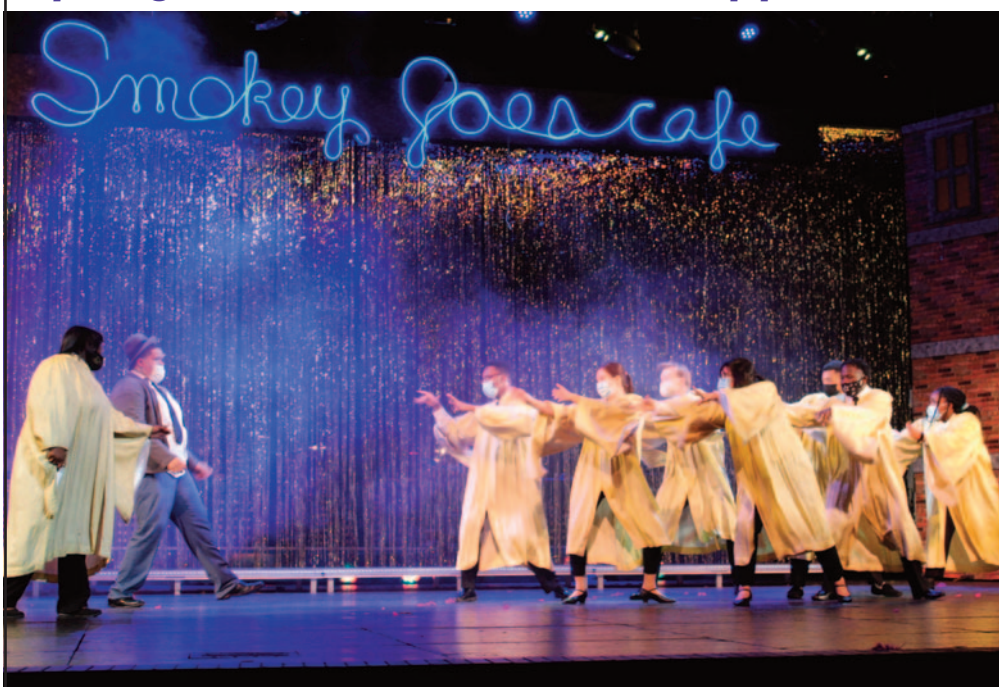
in January 2014, and since then, it has grown to tens of thousands of subscribers from around the world,” he said.

“We also just published our first devotional book ‘Tokens of Love,’ which provides readers with practical insight for their relationships by journeying through 31 different couples from the Bible.

“If anyone is interested in connecting or learning more, you can visit our website at [www.lahministries.com](http://www.lahministries.com),” he added.

He resides outside of Philadelphia with his wife and two year-old son.

## Spring musical featured toe-tappin’ tunes



The Merrillville Performing Arts Department performed the musical “Smokey Joe’s Cafe,” which gave the socially-distanced seated audience some familiar tunes to enjoy.

## 40th+ MHS Class Reunion planned

(40th+ because they couldn't have a reunion last year)

Saturday, July 17, 5-10 p.m.

Hobart Community Center, 111 E. Old Ridge Rd.

RSVP by July 7

For more information, visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/mhs1980reunion>

# Teachers, administrator win foundation support

Merrillville Education Foundation (MEF) recently awarded seven grants to enhance the learning experiences for Merrillville students.

Social-emotional learning, language and math spiraling materials, and culturally diverse books were just a few of the awarded grants to teachers and an administrator in the Merrillville Community School Corporation. The award money totaled \$3,905.99.

"The grant committee is very pleased to award this spring's round of grants to very deserving winners," said MEF Executive Director Mary Hoffman. "We are happy to support these educators. Their projects will inspire students to be successful in the classroom and beyond."

John Wood Elementary School Kindergarten Teacher Stacie Anderson won funding for her project "SEL is Essential," which will use books, yoga techniques and the PATHS curriculum to enhance the social emotional learning curriculum for kindergarteners.

The program will teach kindergarteners basic life skills, how to interact with their peers, and deal with their emotions with activities like daily story readings, self-checks, and yoga activities.

Wood Elementary School Fourth Grade Teacher Morgan Vlassopoulos also won funding. She will use grant money to sponsor the magazine subscription "Dynamath" for fourth graders at both Wood and Miller Elementary Schools.

The material will give educators another way to keep students engaged through small group, whole group, and even individualized, independent instruction.

"Our students have really enjoyed these magazines and have greatly benefited from them," Ms. Vlassopoulos said.

"They love the articles and the resources such as the interactive games that are available with each edition to supplement their learning in the classroom."

Miller Elementary School Principal Jennifer Griffin's, "I See 'Me' When I

Read" project won MEF grant funding.

She said through her project, students will build their own home libraries with culturally diverse books with characters and content that they can connect with as well as learn of other cultures.

"The program will teach students to take pride in their cultures and extend their love of reading," said Mrs. Griffin. "Our students will love reading while increasing their own literacy skills."

The project includes collaboration with library media staff, classroom teachers, principal read-alouds, and guest readers from across the country.

Fieler Elementary School Teacher Michelle Curry earned MEF support for her project "Zone Regulation" that will help students manage emotional stress that occurs in the classroom.

Her grant money will cover materials to help students decrease anxiety, unwanted negative behaviors and provide better ability to focus on learning academics in the classroom.

In addition, her project will give teachers the tools to help students regulate their emotions, creating a more positive atmosphere where students and teachers alike can focus on mastering skills for academics, leading to better test scores for the classroom and state standardized testing.

The MEF will provide funding to Debbie Czazasty, Fieler Elementary School third grade teacher, for Mountain Language and Mountain Math Sets.

"Third grade teachers at Fieler would like to use these for spiral review in grammar and math standards," said Ms. Czazasty.



**The garden at Merrillville Intermediate School that was created last fall was made possible through funding provided by the Merrillville Education Foundation. The garden will provide a new component to the students' science classes and help support the agriculture and natural sciences career pathway for students.**

She said the materials will provide students with the opportunity to review and/or learn the standards presented in a quick, efficient manner to boost standardized test scores and overall academic performance.

Merrillville Intermediate School Fifth Grade Teachers Joy Kent and Angela Wells won foundation funding for their project "Making Vision and Designs into Reality with 3D printing," giving students the opportunity to be active and engaged participants through the conception, design, and execution of their projects and interacting with the 3D printer and the teacher.

Lastly, MHS Teacher Carol von Behren will receive funding for the Inclusion Dance, sponsored by FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America).

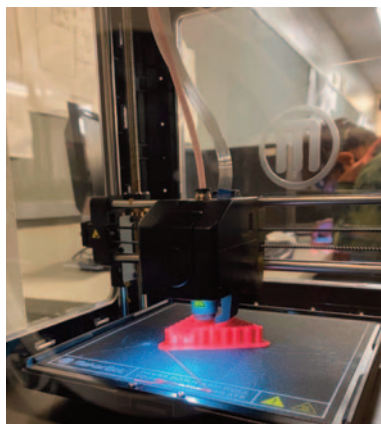
The Inclusion Dance is held for special needs students from seven local schools and helps these students by allowing them to interact with other teens.

There is no cost to the special needs students and young adults to attend the dance.

"The Inclusion Dance does not only benefit the special needs students," said Ms. von Behren. "When FCCLA members see these students interact, it

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**Sophomore Chris Gassaway** prints 3D sensory blocks for a younger corporation student who is visually impaired using files he received.

The four sensory objects have the braille translation of "go, like, want, not," along with objects the student can feel to relate to the words.

Chris is a student in Mr. Longacre's Electronics and Computer Technology 1B course.



**Merrillville Community School Corporation bus drivers** got a visit from Director of School Transportation Michael A. LaRocco from the Indiana Department of Education.

Mr. LaRocco presented information about safety and student management.

## Athletic Physicals for Merrillville students in grades 6-11

Wednesday, June 2

Merrillville High School  
Entrance "S"

**\$20**

IHSAA form available by  
clicking here or on  
[www.merrillvillepirates.com](http://www.merrillvillepirates.com)

**Must have parent signature  
prior to physical.**

## Teachers, administrator win foundation support

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gives them a new respect for these students. They realize that special needs students aren't different from any other teenager – they just have some special needs."

More information about these projects is available on the foundation web-

site, [merrillvilleeducationfoundation.org](http://merrillvilleeducationfoundation.org).

Since 2002, the Merrillville Education Foundation has awarded 443 grants to teachers totaling \$381,988.65.

These grants have impacted 121,962 student experiences in grades PK through 12. The foundation is committed to being the primary private sector partner in supporting public education where

public funds are not available in the Merrillville Community School Corporation. Merrillville Education Foundation, Inc. is designated a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, and participates in a variety of ongoing fundraising events to generate monies for grants. All donations are tax deductible.



# COVID-19 no match for culinary teaching team

A stint at subbing and co-teaching culinary arts has led to a change in career goals for one Merrillville High School teacher's aide.

Culinary Arts Educator Patti Tubbs was hit so hard by COVID-19, she spent 12 days in the hospital last November and still has oxygen needs.

"I was diagnosed on Oct. 31, and within days was in the hospital," Ms. Tubbs said. "I was put on a BiPAP machine when the high flow oxygen did not work.

"I was given 10 treatments of Remdesivir and two treatments of convalescent plasma," she continued. "I went home on seven liters of oxygen."

How does a teacher whose health was greatly affected by COVID-19 conduct a hands-on class remotely? Enter Teaching Assistant Sean Kavois, who has never taken a culinary class in his life, but instead brings to the table a unique familiarity with Merrillville's program.

"I know Ms. Tubbs very well," he said. "My mother Shelley Ray is a Family and Consumer Science teacher and has been for the past 26 years here at Merrillville High School, so I am very familiar with the department and each coworker."

Mr. Kavois, a 2006 graduate of Merrillville High School, has a bachelor's



**Ms. Tubbs surprised her students** with a visit recently. She is still recovering from COVID-19 and spends most of her time teaching her culinary classes from home with the help of Teacher's Aide Sean Kavois.

degree in history from Purdue University.

He started out as a teacher's aide in math at MHS. His career path veered a bit with time teaching at Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative (NISEC), but for Mr. Kavois, as well as many, all roads lead back to Merrillville, where he now works as an aide while he switches his education license.

Mr. Kavois thought his coverage of the culinary arts classes would only be for a few days. Prior to that time, he said he may have subbed only once or twice

for Ms. Tubbs, so he said he had very little knowledge of the class.

In addition, not only was Mr. Kavois faced with the challenge of teaching a hands-on class he never took, but he also had to teach virtual students.

"In the beginning, I think

both the students and I thought my time with them would just be temporary," Mr. Kavois said. "So, we started a little slow; but over time, they warmed up, and I wanted them to feel comfortable with me."

Time went by, and his coverage of the class continued.

"Sean is the most capable of teaching assistants and was most familiar with me and my curriculum," Ms. Tubbs said.

Her first few days back at home, Ms. Tubbs said she was able to move some and would work from her hospital bed.

She said she would give him directions and some tools, but would find herself unable to work further, because she was so tired and hooked up to so many machines.

"As I got better I would email, post assignments, and text additional directions to Mr. Kavois, as I was still very tired and could not talk," Ms. Tubbs said. "When you're struggling to breathe, you use your energy to focus on that."

She said Mr. Kavois ran her classroom with daily check-ins for a couple weeks.



**Mr. Kavois engages** with virtual students in culinary arts class, giving assignments, answering questions, and providing direction.

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## COVID-19 no match for culinary teaching team

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"I really started missing my students the week before Christmas, and I started sitting in on my classes and interjecting into Mr. Kavois' lectures here and there," Ms. Tubbs said.

Their common goal was to make sure the students received the best education and experiences possible and make the most of the challenging and unusual situation.

As she became stronger and less dependent on oxygen, Ms. Tubbs thought she would be able to go back to school; however, she could not be near open flames while on oxygen. In addition, her doctors worried about her catching a cold and having a setback.

As time went on, Ms. Tubbs started

joining the virtual classroom for some of the classes, and the pair started co-teaching.

"Sean has never flinched at attempting a recipe with the students," Ms. Tubbs said. "Students have continued making many complicated recipes under his direction, which has put me at ease."

"Mr. Kavois has had previous teaching experience in our building and performed very well when this occurred," said CTE Principal Michael Knocke.

"I knew instantly from these experiences that he was a terrific candidate to take on this task," he continued. "They both have such an openness about them that they are able to easily collaborate as they co-teach."

"It is because they both have such a positive attitude, they were able to fa-

cilitate a productive classroom that students were always happy to learn in," Mr. Knocke added.

"I love my job and the positive impact it has on our students," Mr. Kavois said. "I am currently in the process of passing the Indiana CORE Assessments for Educator Licensure."

"Once completed, I will be able to apply for a full-time position," he continued. "I would love to be Merrillville High School's first male Family and Consumer Sciences teacher."

As far as the subject of history and even math, Mr. Kavois said he'll still be teaching them in culinary arts, in addition to a lot of other subjects, showing students how all subjects have relevance in the food industry.



# The Adventure Club Summer 2021

## Clubs

Jr. Achievement  
Horticulture  
Photography  
Drumming  
Become an Author  
Advanced Artists  
Sewing & Weaving  
Science



## Activities

Hockey Lessons  
Cheer Lead & Tumble  
Dance  
Parkour  
Youth Cardio Cross Fit  
Basketball  
Yoga  
Hiking & Outdoor Fun

## New This Year "Challenge Island" (Stem Competitions)

Place: Fieler Elementary

Address: 407 W. 61st. Ave., Merrillville

Door: D (right of it)

Dates: June 8 - August 13 (closed 7/5 & 8/6)

Time: 6:30 - 6:00

Grades: K- 6

Register at [www.theadventureclub.com](http://www.theadventureclub.com)

Call: 219-865-6283 for more info

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2021

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For High School  
Graduates and  
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Social distancing protocols will be in place  
and required for all participants and attendees

[college2021workshop.eventbrite.com](https://college2021workshop.eventbrite.com)



Junior Camp: Grades K-2 for the '21-'22 school year

Senior Camp: Grades 3-5 for the '21-'22 school year

Registration begins May 4

Campers will be engaged all day long with a variety of activities ranging from rock climbing, cultural experiences, educational lessons, organized games in the gym and on the field, social, crafts, sports, music and meeting new friends.

**\*Free breakfast, lunch and snacks included!**

**Location:** Dean and Barbara White Community Center

**Fee per session:** Res. \$75/Non-Res. \$85

**Min/Max:** Junior Camp - 6/12. Senior Camp - 6/12

All camps are held Monday-Friday from 7 AM-5 PM

Date	Deadline	Date	Deadline
June 7-11	June 3	July 12-16	July 8
June 14-18	June 10	July 19-23	July 15
June 21-25	June 17	July 26-30	July 22
June 28-July 2	June 24	August 2-6	July 29
July 5-9	July 1	August 9-13	August 5

Register in person at the Dean and Barbara White Community Center!



# Middle School **Scholarship** Opportunity!!

This 10 minute application may save you **THOUSANDS!**

**7th and 8th grade parents:** Your children may be eligible for a college scholarship **Indiana's 21st Century Scholars** program offers Hoosier students up to **four years of paid tuition** at an eligible Indiana college or university after they graduate from high school, dependent upon financial need. In middle and high school, Scholars are connected to programs and resources to help them stay on track for college and career success. Scholars receive support to complete their college degrees and connect to career opportunities. **Applications must be received by June 30 of the student's 8th grade year.**

## **As a Scholar, you pledge to:**

- Complete the Scholar Success Program in high school and in college, which includes activities at each grade level to help you stay on track for college and career success.
- Graduate from a state-accredited high school with a minimum of a Core 40 diploma and a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- Not use illegal drugs, commit a crime or delinquent act, or consume alcohol before reaching the legal drinking age.
- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by April 15 as a high school senior and each year thereafter until you graduate from college.
- Apply to an eligible Indiana college as a high school senior, and enroll as a full-time student within one year of high school graduation.
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards established by my college.
- Complete 30 credit hours each year you are in college to stay on track toward earning your degree on time.

## **Apply online at [Scholars.IN.gov](https://scholars.IN.gov) and provide:**

- Student's Social Security Number, date of birth and address.
- Parent or guardian's Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, if applicable.
- 2020 gross income amounts for all members of the household.
- A valid email address (free email accounts are available at Yahoo.com, Gmail.com, Hotmail.com, and Live.com).

**APPLY AT:** <https://scholartrack.che.in.gov>

**QUESTIONS? CALL** 1-888-528-4719

**OR EMAIL:** [Scholars@che.IN.gov](mailto:Scholars@che.IN.gov)

## **Hear from previous 21st Century Scholars:**

<https://bit.ly/Scholarstory>

<https://bit.ly/Scholarstory2>





Summer Food Service Program 2021

# Food that's 'IN' when school is out

**Weekdays June 7 - Aug. 13, except July 5**

All children ages 18 and under are invited to receive **FREE** breakfasts and lunches. Children must be present to receive their "curbside" meals as only one breakfast and one lunch is permitted per child per day.

Students attending summer school will receive their meals at school. Weekend meal bags will be distributed along with Friday meals.

**The following sites will distribute breakfasts from 8:30-9 a.m. and lunches from 12:30-1 p.m. each day or as noted:**

- **Merrillville High School**, 276 E. 68th Pl., Door I
- **Pierce Middle School**, 199 E. 70th St., west of Door 3
- **Fielier Elementary School**, 407 W. 61st Ave., Door C
- **Iddings Elementary School**, 7249 Van Buren St., Door L
- **Salk Elementary School**, 3001 W. 77th Ave., Door B
- **Stefek Park**, 7053 Harrison St.
- **Rethink Church**, 2920 W. 73rd Pl. (**curbside OR eat-in**)
- **Impact Church**, 7071 Broadway, (**curbside OR eat-in**)
- **LUNCH ONLY: Collins Park**, 9500 Merrillville Rd., noon -1 p.m.

## **Mobile Bus Stops-Lunch Only**

- **Regency Park Townhomes**, 6078 Delaware St., 11-11:30 a.m.
- **Emmanuel Lutheran Church**, 5375 Harrison St., 11:45 a.m. -12:15 p.m.
- **Miller Elementary School**, 5901 Waite St., 12:30-1 p.m.

**Merrillville Community School Corporation**

**[www.mvsc.k12.in.us](http://www.mvsc.k12.in.us) \* 219-650-5300**



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