



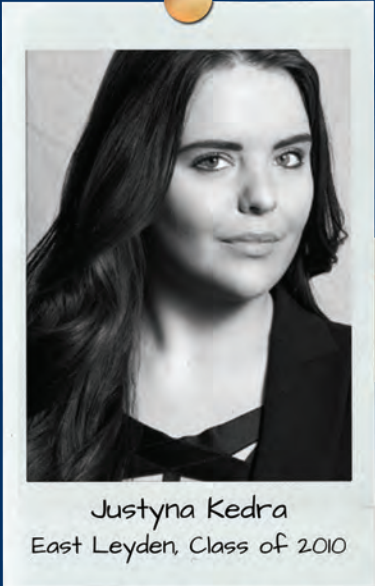
LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212

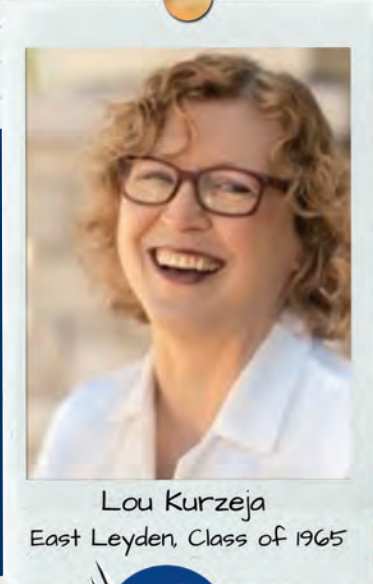
LEYDEN ALUMNI
WALL OF
FAME



Tommy "Mugs" Cain
East Leyden, Class of 1970




Justyna Kedra
East Leyden, Class of 2010



Lou Kurzeja
East Leyden, Class of 1965



Donald J. Chmielewski
West Leyden, Class of 1987


INDUCTION
CEREMONY &
RECEPTION
SEPT. 14, 3:15 PM

Leyden selects four alumnus to induct into its Wall of Fame

Superintendent's Corner



Dr. Nick Polyak
Superintendent

Happy summer to our Leyden community!

As the weather warms and we start to get outdoors and connect with our neighbors, I was thinking about our recent visit this spring from 40+ superintendents and educational leaders from across this country.

As part of the National School Superintendents Association (AASA), we hosted a site visit for the Transformational Leadership Consortium. Our guests had an opportunity to participate in the Leyden experience; a full-day immersed in several featured programs including Co.lab, our Career Pathways and Teatro Leyden. They enjoyed food prepared by our catering students, toured our world-class facilities, heard a performance by our chamber choir, and interacted with our most precious asset - our people! From our students, to our teachers, and so many of our staff, I was proud to watch Leyden shine.

And this experience transcended beyond Leyden and into our communities, as the group visited the new Washington Elementary School in Schiller Park School District 81. If you haven't had a chance to

see this masterfully designed school, it is simply amazing and a true gift for those future eagles.

Experiences like these are critical because they provide opportunities for school leaders to see innovative ideas right before their eyes, and they get to hear the stories about how these programs were created. What's more, participants are able to learn how to adapt these ideas for their own districts for the benefit of their students and learning communities across the country. That's part of what made Leyden so proud to serve as host site for this recent visit - we can connect and share what we have learned along the way to help pave the way for others.

We are grateful for our supportive communities, who honor the value of education for our kids. Without you, innovation would not be possible.

Enjoy the summer and we will see you soon!

With #leydenpride,
Nick Polyak



Leyden Celebrates 100 Years

Save the dates:
2024-2025

October 4, 2024:
Homecoming, Tours, Social Event

February 8, 2025
100th Anniversary Gala

Spring 2025:
Picnic and Festival, To Be Announced

Share YOUR Story!

Leyden celebrates "100 Stories for 100 Years"

We are seeking stories about the Leyden experience to feature during our 100th anniversary celebration (2024-2025). Please fill out the form and provide a clear, high-resolution photo of yourself to include in the feature. By submitting this form, you are giving Leyden permission to use your photo and comments in public forums such as online and print media.

Get Notifications!

Share your name and email address so that we can communicate updates on events and opportunities to celebrate the 100th anniversary.

Calling all Leyden graduates, parents, students, staff and community:

The 2024-2025 school year will bring a year of celebrations for Leyden graduates and the community as Eagles Soar Since 1924! Mark your calendars and get started planning reunions and social events tied to this special once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

As details become available, we will be posting on our 100th anniversary Leyden webpage and on our Leyden Facebook page. www.leyden212.org/anniversary

Scan the QR Code
for "100 Stories"



Scan the QR Code for
100th Notifications



Leyden selects four alumnus to induct into its **Wall of Fame**

On Thursday, September 14, the Leyden High School District 212 Board of Education invites our community to join in honoring our Wall of Fame inductees in a ceremony and reception. This prestigious honor will be bestowed upon four worthy Leyden graduates who have been selected through a rigorous process. Please join us in celebrating: Donald J. Chmielewski, West Leyden, Class of 1987; Lou Kurzeja, East Leyden, Class of 1965; Justyna Kedra, East Leyden, Class of 2010; and, Tommy “Mugs” Cain, East Leyden, Class of 1970.



Donald J. Chmielewski



Lou Kurzeja



Justyna Kedra



Tommy “Mugs” Cain

Donald J. Chmielewski, West Leyden, Class of 1987: Dr. Chmielewski is a Professor of Chemical Engineering at IIT in Chicago. He earned his BS from IIT in 1991, and went on to UCLA for his graduate work, earning a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering in 2000. He has received a myriad of awards in his field, including the Excellence in Teaching Award at IIT. His message to Leyden students: “Even if you fail early on, you can turn things around and be successful. Don’t forget to put in your full effort.”

Lou Kurzeja, East Leyden, Class of 1965: Dr. Kurzeja (Dr. Lou) is a veterinarian at Golf-Rose Animal Hospital in Schaumburg. She earned her DVM from the University of Illinois. She has received various service awards, and has volunteered at the Brookfield Zoo for over 18 years. Her message to Leyden students: “Don’t give up on working toward what makes you want to get up every morning smiling, because you’re doing what you really love doing.”

Justyna Kedra, East Leyden, Class of 2010: Ms. Kedra graduated with a BFA from the Parsons School of Design, majoring in Fashion Design with a focus on entrepreneurship. She is the founder of We Rule, which connects amazing visionaries to mentorship, opportunities, and investors in 30+ countries. Her organization has been recognized by the UN Women as Champions of Change. Her message to Leyden students: “Dream the biggest you can and ignore all of your limitations, whatever they might be. Explore what you are passionate about and meet people who will support you. Realize that meeting the right people is the key to success. I strongly believe that there is nothing that can stop you from achieving your biggest dreams, if you have the right tribe supporting you and you’re doing something you absolutely love.”

Tommy “Mugs” Cain, East Leyden, Class of 1970: Tommy Cain is a musician and musical director. He has recorded and performed with Grammy Award winning Michael Bolton, David Foster, Sammy Hagar, and Jonathan

Cain. He has co-written and played tracks for the films *The Terminator* and *If Looks Could Kill*. He has had numerous television appearances, and toured extensively with Michael Bolton, Foreigner, Sammy Hagar, and Heart. His message to Leyden students: “Don’t give up on your dreams. Believe in yourself--always.”

“Over the years coordinating this program, I am always amazed by how genuinely touched they are by the recognition,” said Janine Asmus, West Leyden Librarian and coordinator of the Wall of Fame recognition program. “When they reflect on their Leyden education, they realize all the tremendous opportunities provided to them. Leyden graduates are indeed the fruits of our labors as educators and, as such, we should all take pride in those who have made recognizable accomplishments.”

The alumni will also speak with students at both East and West Leyden during their visit this fall, and will be honored during half-time at the home football game on Friday, September 15.

Inspirational Eagles

named at
Leyden High School District



The Chicago-O'Hare Rotary, in partnership with Leyden High School District 212, honored twelve students in its eighth annual Inspirational Eagle Awards. The purpose of these awards are to expand what is "typically" acknowledged in terms of academics, and instead to honor students for accomplishments in improving or maintaining academic excellence, attendance, behavior and overall citizenship. Congratulations to the following Inspirational Eagles:

EAST LEYDEN

Mariana Meilyn Calderon

Mariana never understood why when asked for her parent's names, she couldn't put her aunt's name. "She's your aunt, not your mom," people would say, and still do. Mariana has been challenged since birth, starting life being born in Guatemala, with three holes in her heart and a dad who visited her once and never came back. She was raised by her aunt, a woman who taught her to smile at life, despite the circumstances.

Melanie Lobos-Torres

Melanie came to Leyden as a junior transfer student with visions of the American dream. She wanted to be in a high school, with better education and opportunities. She wanted to get to choose her own classes, something

that students aren't allowed to do in Guatemala. She wanted to explore her interests and so she took control of her own life, and she and her older brother moved here.

She never wanted language to be her barrier, and it wasn't, because of her dedication, leadership, self-advocacy, and demonstrating that she could do anything.

Angelica Negron

Angelica was nominated by Ms. Bonilla, and she would like to thank her, and Ms. Araujo, for growing her interest in environmental science, handling personal friendships and confrontations, and how being friendly and understanding can leave a positive impact on the community, respectively.

Isabella Palmisano

Isabella has lived her entire life, in an unstable state of family chaos. From financial struggles including public aid, food stamps, homelessness, to custody battles, she has grown up way too fast. Until recently, she was also a caregiver for her brother, who was disabled and tragically, passed away earlier this year.

Through her challenges, Isabella learned how to advocate for her brother, and for herself, at a very young age. Now, she can see herself in college, owning a home, and having a good job.

Wilson Rodriguez

Wilson came to Leyden from Colombia, learned English, has a job, and gets straight A's. He has high expectations of himself, and while overcoming conflicts such as culture shock, language, and

always being judged as an “outsider,” Wilson has matured on his own.

He is driven by connections, is committed to school, and most importantly, to helping improve the community of Leyden.

Chloe Renteria

Chloe is an artist. An athlete. A daughter of immigrants. And, she has dealt with health issues that affect her daily life - like short term memory loss - for as long as she can remember. She finds herself forgetful, frustrated at times, and scared that someday she will forget everything and everyone. She thinks about that fear every day.

However, Chloe has found comfort and an ability to cope through her artwork. She wants to know she has lived her life to the fullest, because she has realized that you never know when you may lose it all.

WEST LEYDEN

Jennifer Almendarez

Jennifer is not only a student, she is a mother to a beautiful 2 year-old son. As a pregnant teen, she found herself alone and misunderstood. The team at Leyden really helped her to remain in school in the classes she loved, such as French, while still being able to give her son the mother that he deserves. Jennifer admits how difficult it can be to find balance, and when time is short, she can find herself doubting herself as a student and a mother.

However, these same challenges have inspired her to seek a profession in the medical field, and she is currently part of Leyden Certified Nursing Assistant program.

George Diaz-Gamboa

As a child of an immigrant, George recognizes first-hand how a person’s “status” can affect their overall mental health. He comes from a family that struggles in many ways, including financially, and he wants to help others in a similar situation know that they are not alone. He is extremely community and civic-minded, and is involved in Youth in Government, Student Council, Key Club, Model UN, and is a member of the Leyden Chess Team. He cares about people and finds joy in helping others or simply improving himself, both physically and mentally.

Gilberto Flores

Gilberto recognizes the sacrifices his family has made to position him for the best possible opportunities. He also recognizes now, through the help of Ms. Kaiden, the effect he can have on other students. It is these two things in combination that inspire Gilberto to do well and be a role model for others, including his siblings.

Regina Magana

Regina had to make the difficult decision to move out of her parents house. So

far, this has been a challenging and life changing experience that has forced her to grow up fast and take care of herself. It has made her a stronger self-advocate, and able to push herself to do the best can do in any situation. And, she tries to do it with a smile and a positive attitude. Regina believes it is all worth it in the end.

Nathanael Marji

While Nathanael was born in the U.S, he was raised in Kenya and Sudan from the time he was a one-year old. Then, in the second semester of his 8th grade year at a very small private school in a communal society, his family relocated back to the U.S. and Nathanael was enrolled at West Leyden as a freshman. Leaving everything behind that was familiar to him, Nathanael lost his sense of community coming to such a large school and a new way of life. Over time, he started to learn more about his own identity and individualism, and how to expand his comfort around different people and personalities. After a while, the U.S. started to feel like home.

Vanessa Mendiola

Vanessa lost her father at a young age, a man who was a big part of her life and continues to inspire her to do good in school. She promised him that she would continue to work hard, and it’s that promise that keeps her going in her toughest moments. View the full story at www.leyden212.org



To order a paver, please visit www.leyden212.org/pavers or scan the QR Code:



Leyden High School District announces the inaugural sale of Leyden Pride Pavers to commemorate the new concession stand at the stadium. This is a great opportunity to pay a tribute to teachers, coaches, teams, families and students, celebrate a milestone such as graduation, or memorialize a loved one. As Leyden approaches its 100th anniversary in 2024, the Leyden Pride Pavers are a

great way for our school community to be a part of the tradition!

Pavers feature up to three lines of text, 13 characters each including spaces.

Funds raised through the purchase of pavers will benefit the Leyden Foundation, which exists to support student needs that reach beyond the capacity of the school district.

- Three lines of text
- Celebrate a milestone
- Memorialize a loved one
- Standard pavers \$100 each and can be purchased online
- Pay tribute to teachers, coaches, teams, family or children
- Dedicate a brick that will be a part of Leyden for generations

Visit www.leyden212.org/pavers to purchase a legacy brick.

The Leyden **One Amazing Story** video series continues!

Each month we feature a member of our Leyden school community by sharing their story. It's our hope that getting to know each other deepens our connections with each other, our communities and ourselves.



Melanie Lobos, transfer student in search of the 'American Dream'

Melanie came to East Leyden as a junior transfer student from Guatemala. She didn't know English and started in EL classes. In one year, through her own self-advocacy, Melanie went from being an EL student to an AP student. She took the AP exams for both Spanish and German language and culture, and is the first student in Leyden history to take the AP German exam... and she got a 5 on both!



Nathan Diaz, student entrepreneur buys business

East student entrepreneur Nathan Diaz. Nathan is a senior who has been a part of numerous business courses including Incubator here at Leyden. While working as the driver of a zamboni at a local ice rink, he discovered the concession stand was for sale - and used the money he had in savings to buy it! With a partner, Nathan now owns and operates his own small business, and leverages Leyden's work-study program so that he can attend to his new responsibilities.



Leyden Bus Drivers, leading the first 'classroom' of the day

As part of the national "Love the Bus" month, Leyden recognized the important role our bus drivers play in the lives of students. For many students, our bus drivers are the first and last Leyden adults they see each day and the impact they have is embraced by our transportation team. The bus ride is an extension of the classroom and part of the Leyden experience, and we are grateful to have our own team caring for students' safety and wellbeing.



Giovanni Soriano, East student with a passion for journalism

Last summer, he participated in the PBS Student Reporting Labs in Arizona, where he helped produce a segment that was aired on national television. His interest in journalism and storytelling also lead him to join in on the production of this episode of One Amazing Story! Giovanni's story shows us the importance of pursuing your passions, hard work, and finding positive role models.

To watch the latest One Amazing Story videos, scan the QR Code:



Leyden District 212 Board of Education

Board of Education meetings are in the East Campus Board Room



Mr. Gregory T. Ignoffo
President



Mrs. Gloria Murawska
Vice President



Mr. James A. Lima
Secretary



Mr. Joseph Trevino
Member



Mrs. Lisa Anthony
Member



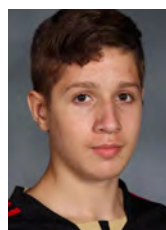
Mrs. Sandra Boehm
Member



Mr. Cesar Garcia
Member



Jovslyn Maldonado
Student Member



Adriel Carrera
Student Member

Leyden High School District 212 is an equal opportunity institution, committed to compliance with all applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination. This includes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, order of protection status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, homelessness and marital/parental status, including pregnancy.

As required by S.B. 898, you may go to Leyden's website to view our budget at: www.leyden212.org

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Thank you to those who contributed photos to this edition of the newsletter.