

# IC The Creek

Indian Creek Local School District Newsletter

August 2023



## Welcome Back!



### *Meet the Team Night Slated for Aug. 16*

Indian Creek High School is ushering in another fall sports season by showcasing its athletes during a Meet the Team and Band event on Aug. 16.

The Indian Creek Athletic Boosters are hosting the festivities, which will include football, volleyball, boys' and girls' soccer, golf, cross country and music players at Robert Kettlewell Memorial Stadium starting at 5 p.m. Admission is free and it will include food, tunes and fun as the teams' games officially get underway.

"There will be a community event outside the stadium and the ICBS band concession stand will be open along with several food trucks from Rubbin Butts BBQ, Clear Creek Coffee, So Nuts 4 Donuts and Kona Ice," said

Booster member Mary-Lil Giusto.

Also planned are a back-to-school supply giveaway, sales of Creek merchandise, a dunk tank, inflatable obstacle course and more.

Games are scheduled to begin this week with golfers teeing off against Toronto at Steubenville Country Club on Aug. 8 at 8 a.m.; girls' soccer at St. Clairsville on Aug. 11 at 7:30 p.m.; varsity football kicking off at Cambridge on Aug. 17 at 7 p.m.; JV football playing at home against Cambridge on Aug. 19 at 10 a.m.; cross country at Buckeye Local on Aug. 22; volleyball at home against Carrollton on Aug. 22 at 5:30 p.m.; and boys' soccer at St. Clairsville on Aug. 23 at 6 p.m.

## Orientations, Open Houses Usher in School Year

Indian Creek schools will be welcoming students back with a series of orientations and open houses at their respective buildings.

Indian Creek High School will hold freshman orientation on Aug. 18 from 9-11 a.m. with upperclassmen obtaining their schedules from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Principal Louie Retton said the newcomers will obtain their schedules, tour the building and meet teachers so they familiarize themselves with the environment.

"One reason is for the freshmen to get acclimated to the building and learn the expectations and rules and the nuances with coming to the building," Retton said. "They will meet teachers, get their schedules, find classrooms and lockers and hear about their options for the curriculum we're offering, which consists of the JVS and different career-tech

pathways we have."

Cross Creek Elementary will conduct an open house on Aug. 21 from 3-6 p.m. while Indian Creek Middle School and Hills Elementary will each host events on Aug. 22 from 3-6 p.m. The elementary buildings will offer many of the same activities from introductions to staff to touring the facilities so students are ready to begin the new year.

"They will meet teachers, see their rooms and make sure they are scheduled for their start times," said Hills Elementary Principal Makenzie Householder. "The PTO's will also be on hand with information."

ICMS will have many of the same activities as well as informational resources from local agencies and organizations at its open house. Principal Dr. Holly Minch-Hick said the fifth-grade orientation will be held in the cafeteria

at 5 p.m. while students and parents can also learn about transportation to behavioral health support during their visit.

"We'll have the transportation department on hand with agencies and groups in the library such as Trinity Health System and the Sycamore Youth Center and the [ICMS] Media Club," she added. "Students can pick up schedules, meet teachers and tour the building."

Student members of the school's Leader in Me Lighthouse Team will act as ambassadors of the school and assist with schedules to lockers.

The elementary sites will have staggered start testing on Aug. 23-24 and the district's first day of school on Aug. 23.

The first full day for grades K-4 will be Aug. 25 with preschool to begin on Sept. 5.



Indian Creek High School has an interesting new inhabitant with the addition of a hellbender salamander at the Wintersville building. ICHS is the first public high school statewide to partner with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Columbus Zoo to save the salamander from extinction. The amphibian will be on hand during the school's Meet the Team event on Aug. 15 but a formal ceremony will be held to help welcome the new ambassador.

## *ICHS Helping to Save Hellbender Population*

There is a new mascot of sorts at Indian Creek High School as the site joins efforts to save an endangered species.

ICHS is the fourth site in the state and the only public high school collaborating with the state Department of Natural Resources and Columbus Zoo to raise a hellbender salamander. Students will raise and study the amphibian and provide data for professional research while juvenile hellbenders will also be cared for onsite and eventually released back into the wild. The school is working in conjunction with the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District and officials said it will be a cross-curriculum program that could benefit all of the district's schools.

"I think it's a great opportunity for our kids to help the environment and get some hands-on training," said Assistant Principal Keith Swearingen, who worked with science teacher Crystal Fluharty on the program. "The students will be feeding and raising the hellbender and doing data collection."

Swearingen said Fluharty began working on the plan last year after she collaborated with the JCSWCD to raise quail. The county organization also has been part of the hellbender program for 15 years and

keeps one of the animals at its office, plus 500 acres of county land have been appropriated for natural habitats with a majority of it located within the school district. Discussions spurred Fluharty to become involved with the hellbender project and officials sought approval through state channels. The ODNR ultimately agreed and a three-year-old hellbender was provided by the Columbus Zoo while facilities are being formed to properly house the animal at the school.

The hellbender, which is the largest known salamander, has been found in the area for at least 160 million years with Jefferson County considered the epicenter of the species' habitat. Interestingly, the eggs used in the program were harvested at Cross Creek. The hellbender can grow to two feet long and live up to 60 years in creeks, but in recent years it has been placed on the endangered list. The Columbus and Toledo Zoos hatch eggs and raise the hellbenders for release and John Navarro, who oversees aquatic animals for ODNR, and Pete Gau, head zookeeper of the Columbus Zoo, have assisted in bringing the school project to fruition.

One room at ICHS will be transformed with tanks, food and actual soil, stones and

water from local creeks and the Indian Creek Foundation also provided a \$15,000 grant to help create the state-of-the-art, bio-secure environment. It will feature 24-hour security and a collaborative atmosphere and the program will be incorporated into multiple studies. Students will tend to the animal and collect data that will ultimately be used for professional research and future plans are to keep juvenile hellbenders to raise and release. Officials said the project would cross educational lines with pupils participating in other classes. For example, the interactive media program would assist in designing a logo and work on merchandise and other promotions and tech support students would join forces with the engineering class to create a microchip prototype for data collection. Additionally, Fluharty hoped to work with Purdue University since it has shown a high success rate with its reintroduction program.

Swearingen said district schools will also take part in naming the hellbender and the public can catch a glimpse during the Meet the Team night at ICHS on Aug. 15 at 5 p.m. Meanwhile, a special ceremony will be set to formally greet the new ambassador.

# Hartman to Helm Career-Tech Education at Creek

Indian Creek Local School District is expanding its horizons when it comes to career-technical education and has a familiar face spearheading the program.

Cross Creek Elementary Principal Dan Hartman was recently named career-tech education coordinator under an amended administrative contract that began July 1. His new responsibilities include overseeing the career pathways offered and ensuring that they remain in compliance with state standards. Hartman served as supervisor/principal at the Jefferson County Joint Vocational School for four years prior to joining CCE and said his background gives him an advantage with his new post.

"My job is to support the career-tech programs that are at Indian Creek and to ensure things are done," he explained. "They have great courses established and I will have conversations with [Indian Creek High School Principal] Louie Retton and [Superintendent] Dr. T.C. Chappelle to understand the labor markets and interest levels."

Hartman said the area had plenty of industrial, blue-collar opportunities and he was involved in beginning the heavy equipment operation program at the JVS before his de-

parture, plus he also sees a need in the realm of healthcare, dental care and sports medicine.

"I'm glad to support it and do whatever I can to make Indian Creek as successful as possible," Hartman said.

For its part, ICHS offers pre-engineering, interactive media, business administration, natural resources, drama and theater and family consumer sciences with new offerings added this year.

Principal Louie Retton added that officials were building pathways in the traditional high school setting and courses were at or near capacity.

"We are going to have classes in animation, computer software programming, stagecraft and stage design," Retton said. "We stated a class last year in engineering called Reading Plans where you read blueprints and we have agricultural foods and natural re-



Hartman

sources. We are moving in as many career-tech pathways as we can. It's another way to give students and families options."

Retton noted that teacher Dave Moffat also rotates courses, which doubles the number of offerings from four to eight for more choices. In addition, all of the business courses from business management and social media marketing to strategic entrepreneurship are full while others including programming are nearly filled.

"We started a theater program this year and the freshman classes are now filled. There were 20 students last year and 38 this year, and we nearly filled the acting and script analysis courses [for sophomores to seniors] and that was doubled since last year. We're also getting growing numbers in the stagecraft and stage design classes and all of the pathways are basically taking off."

He continued that students will have to take at least four classes to be a completer and it gives them a different pathway to choose.

"We're finding that high school is not one size fits all and it's our responsibility to provide as many opportunities as we can. This is all a continuum of services to provide more opportunities every day."

## "Leader in Me" Program Implemented across School District

Indian Creek educators and students are learning the importance of leadership with a new initiative being implemented within the schools.

The district is following the "Leader in Me" school improvement model that focuses on the universal challenges of academics, culture and leadership. The initiative, which is provided by FranklinCovey Education of Salt Lake City, Utah, will unfold over the next four years and incorporate teachers and youth to drive involvement among students and staff, build a high-trust environment in schools and student achievement and improve learning.

Dave Baker, a coach and consultant from Columbus, began sessions in June and has stopped at each site to speak with dozens of teachers and students. For now, only educators are taking part at the elementary level while youth will take part in the future. Both Indian Creek Middle and High Schools have involved grades 6-12 in their gatherings and fifth-graders will be added later. More sessions are slated throughout the year and groups known as Lighthouse teams are discussing ways they could utilize practices and enable students to be college-, career-, community- and life-ready. The groups are also creating mission statements to help students succeed both inside and outside the classroom.

ICHS Principal Louie Retton said 25 teachers and students were involved in his build-

ing and plans are to conduct another session in September.

Practices are based on educator Stephen Covey's book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," that include "Be Proactive" (taking control of choices and actions); "Begin with the End in Mind" (setting goals and visualizing what you want to achieve in the future); "Put First Things First" (prioritizing your time and energy on what's truly important to you); "Think Win-Win" (seeking solutions that benefit yourself and others and fostering a cooperative mindset that values collaboration, fairness and mutual success); "Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood" (listening, empathizing and trying to see things from other perspectives in order to build stronger relationships, resolve conflicts and find common ground); "Synergize" (embracing teamwork, cooperation and open-mindedness to create something greater than what can be achieved alone); and "Sharpen the Saw" (taking care of your physical, mental and emotional well-being by engaging in activities that renew and recharge you to maintain balance, enhance personal growth and perform your best).

ICMS Principal Dr. Holly Minch-Hick added that the first part of the program has begun with the formation of the school team, which included 24 teachers and students at the July session. She said it also helps establish roles for the members.

She hopes to also involve youth in school activities including the upcoming open house on Aug. 22 and said students will act as school ambassadors to help with schedules, finding lockers and other assistance.

"The goal of having them here during orientation is to build curiosity among the student body in the leadership initiatives and have them tackle their first role of being positive leaders within the school community."

Cross Creek and Hills Elementary Principals Dan Hartman and Makenzie Householdner noted that "Leader in Me" supports social-emotional skills as well as academics and self-advocacy. Each team includes about eight people with two Lighthouse coordinators, teachers from each grade level, intervention specialists and a related arts teacher.

"We're going through 'The 7 Habits of the Highly Effective People' and that filters down to the students," said Householdner. "This allows kids to be leaders, take ownership and accountability and provide advocacy for their learning."

Hartman added that sessions may be held twice a month and the program is an ongoing process. Both agreed that the initiative aligns with everything the schools currently do and other processes such as building leadership teams and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) fall under its umbrella. Since its formation, "Leader in Me" has been found in 5,000 U.S. schools and 50 countries.