

Like us on

facebook

IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Wednesday, June 29, 2022

7 p.m.

Administration Building

1220 Howard St.

Visit kalamazoopublicschools.com/boardmeetings for more information

Lists of Graduates

page 7, 10, 11, 13, 14

Excellence in Education

Winners

page 3

Student Athletes

Declare Intentions to

Play College Sports

page 4

Hey! Scholarships Awarded

to Five KPS Graduates

page 6

EFE/EFA Outstanding

Students

page 12

KAMSC Graduates

page 12

Meet Up & Eat Up

Schedule

page 19

First Day of School

Monday, August 29

Congratulations to the Class of 2022

Special graduation edition: See inside for the names of graduates and selected student stories.



Phoenix High School 2022 graduates Noriaha Clark and sisters Kianna and Kiara Harris relax before graduation.



Loy Norrix Principal Chris Aguinaga congratulates Harrison Wood.



Ivana Williams is ready for the KC commencement.



Simon Hunsinger, Kalamazoo Central High School, Class of 2022.



From left, Corey Smith, Karmani Williams, Jaquan Jennings, Alozie Nwokenta, Simbarashe Zvandasara, Sarah Harris smile at the Loy Norrix graduation.



Mickayla Hill, Phoenix High School 2022 graduate.



Celia Baublis, KC; Claire Beougher, LN; Brigid Roth, KC, and Kalee Henderson, KC, celebrate at the KAMSC Senior Recognition program.



KPS Adult Education leader Robin Greymountain hands a diploma to Jessica Wyrick-Philips.



Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program 2022 graduates Jayla Buntson, left, and Alizaye Scott.

Kalamazoo Public Schools Is Hiring

Find information at

kpsjobs.com

NonProfit

Organization

US Postage

PAID

Kalamazoo, MI

Permit 709

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

** ECRSS **

Every Day Is a New Opportunity to Do More, to Do Better

Graduation season is always exciting. Everyone is so eager to get started on their plans for the future.

And this is as it should be, for a graduation, far from being an end, is the beginning of all our students' tomorrows. Over the past several years, they have worked and studied, practiced and played, and grown — grown mentally as well as physically — and now they are ready for life after graduation.

Whatever course their future takes, it is my sincere hope that they look back on their years at Kalamazoo Public Schools as having prepared them for both the challenges and successes that life will present.

The past two years have helped our children develop resilience and strength, because we know that resilience comes not from achieving goals but from the challenges one overcomes

on the way to their goals. I am so proud of the way they have faced the obstacles life has presented these past few years.

I know that Covid has been difficult, and that because of the pandemic they did not have the junior and senior years that they envisioned when they began high school. I hope that they are moving forward knowing that despite the disappointments of the past, they can create the future that they want.

In the world of high tech, there is a concept called Day One — the idea that companies must remain agile and flexible to address problems and challenges. In many ways, all of



Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri, Superintendent, Kalamazoo Public Schools

“...there are always opportunities to keep growing and finding new solutions to address the needs of those around you. There is always a way to move toward the future you envision.”

us have been operating in Day One mode, problem solving and adapting constantly as we've dealt with the Covid pandemic. It's been challenging, but through that you — we — have developed the ability to maneuver and advance through

problems — rather than getting stuck in old habits. And that will serve our graduates well in the future.

Kalamazoo Public Schools has kept moving forward these past couple of years as well, working to establish new opportunities and programs, including Career Launch Kalamazoo, a high school internship program; a Social Emotional Learning Center; an Equity Task Force to explore systemic inequities in the district; a permanent virtual school to expand learning environments for all students; Newcomer Centers to welcome new students from around the world; and an Urban Teacher Residency Program to help us grow teachers from the ranks of current staff members.

It has been vital for the district to keep growing even as we've had to focus intense

resources on the challenges of the pandemic. These programs and initiatives demonstrate that even in the face of difficulty, there are always opportunities to keep growing and finding new solutions to address the needs of those around you. There is always a way to move toward the future you envision.

To the students of KPS, congratulations on your graduation. Congratulations on all of the plans you have for the future. Every day is Day One, a new day, a new opportunity to go out there and re-shape the world to become a better place, a kinder place, a more beautiful place, a more just place, a place that provides freedom, hope, opportunity; a place that uplifts and encourages, a place that teaches all of us how to be the best that we can be.

To the Class of 2022, I wish you happiness, success, and joy.

NEED HOME REPAIRS? GIVE US A CALL!



Community Homeworks is here to offer no or low-cost support to income-eligible homeowners in the City of Kalamazoo to provide critical home repairs such as HVAC, electrical, plumbing, and other health and safety issues. Call or email us today to see if you are eligible at (269) 998-3275 ext 209 or info@communityhomeworks.org.



Visit CommunityHomeworks.org for more information.

This activity is brought to you in partnership with the City of Kalamazoo and support from other grant funding partners.

KPS 2022 Excellence in Education Winners

The Kalamazoo County Excellence in Education program has been one of the most noteworthy and far-reaching recognition programs in the Kalamazoo area since 1986. Each May, the Excellence in Education program holds a reception to reward students for their academic achievements and provide them the opportunity to honor the educators who have contributed to their success.

The program operates with the support of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, as well as the Monroe-Brown Foundation. It also awards Educator Incentive Grants to enhance learning in Kalamazoo County schools.

Anthony Alvarez
Kalamazoo Central,
Kalamazoo Area Math and
Science Center, KRESA CTE
Parents: Fanny Hernandez &
Antonio Alvarez
College: Northwestern Univ.
Major: Computer Science
Significant Educator:
Shannon Houtrouw

Michael Ankley
Kalamazoo Central
Parents: Tiffany & Michael
Ankley
College: Kalamazoo College
Major: Physics
Significant Educator: Rex
Hafer

Sophie Canfield
Kalamazoo Central
Parents: Emily Goodman &
Temple Canfield
College: Boston University
Major: Marine Biology
Significant Educator: Shay
Wintz

Noah Kuhnert
Kalamazoo Central
Parents: Ronda & Steve
Kuhnert
College: University of
Michigan
Major: Pre-Med
Significant Educator: Shay
Wintz

Mollie McDonald
Kalamazoo Central, Education
for the Arts
Parents: Patrick & Nancy
McDonald
College: Adrian College
Major: Computer Science
Significant Educator: Kelly
Schultz

Olive Tatara
Kalamazoo Central, KAMSC,
Western Michigan Univ.
Parents: Ruth & Wallace
Tatara
College: Univ. of Michigan
Major: Biology
Significant Educator: Colleen
Chapoton

Celia Baublis
Loy Norrix, KAMSC
Parents: Carla & Alan Baublis
College: Lawrence
Technological University
Major: Architecture
Significant Educator: Michael
Sinclair

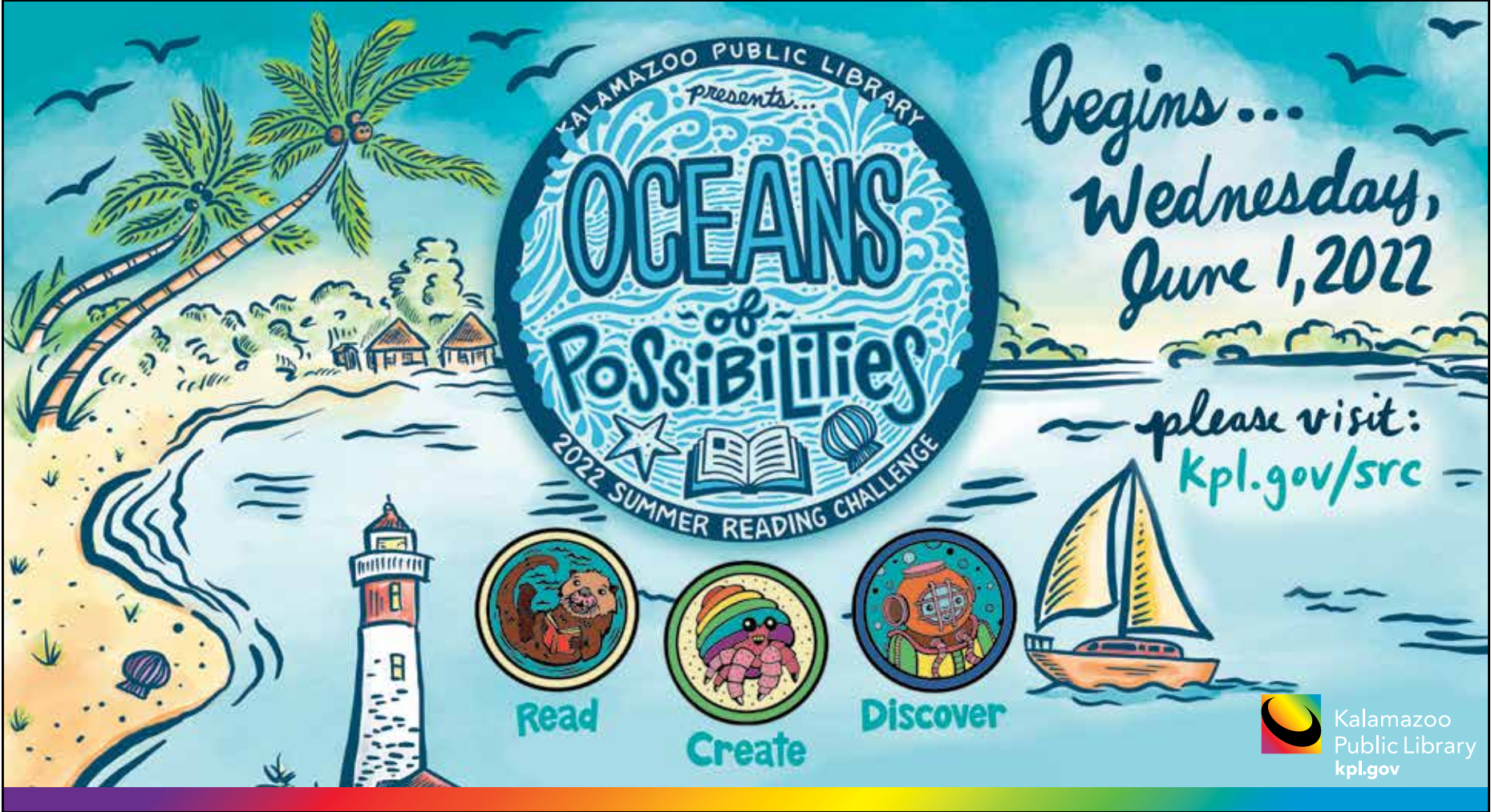
Claire Beougher
Loy Norrix, KAMSC
Parents: Mark Beougher &
Lori Burrell
College: Wellesley College
Major: Political Science
Significant Educator: Laura
Citino

Owen Davis
Loy Norrix, KAMSC
Parents: Julie & Shawn Davis
College: University of
Michigan
Major: Engineering
Significant Educator: Kristin
Antoniotti

Dominick Frost
Loy Norrix, KAMSC
Parents: Denis & Kelly Frost
College: Kenyon
Major: Undecided
Significant Educator: Colleen
Chapoton

Chanel Wilson
Loy Norrix, KRESA CTE
Parents: Molli Kornak & Bobby
Wilson
College: Undecided
Major: Business
Administration
Significant Educator: Atiba
Ward

Evan Teal
Loy Norrix, KAMSC
Parents: Alexander & Rebecca
Teal
College: Undecided
Major: Undecided
Significant Educator: Michael
Sinclair





SCHEDULING THIS FALL 2022!

-Piano -Violin -Voice/Choir -Double Bass

-Cello -Viola

NEW OFFERINGS!

-Trumpet -Saxophone -French Horn -Clarinet

-Flute

-Trombone



Register Now!



(269) 365-2826

1000 W Paterson Ave.
Kalamazoo MI 49008



Student Athletes Declare Intentions to Play College Sports

Congratulations to the following students, who have committed to playing sports at the collegiate level. Best of luck to you as you take your playing to the next level!

Kalamazoo Central High School

Avery Thielman, Western Michigan University, baseball	Jonas Fraley-Burgett, Hope College, cross country
Josh Boggan, Kent State University, wrestling	Madison Winters, Aquinas College, soccer
Aveyon Bullock, Grand Valley State University, football	Ricardo Rodriguez, Olivet College, soccer
Marquese Parker, Olivet College, football	Zach Cathcart, Olivet College, soccer
Thomas Dillard, University of Michigan, Dearborn, basketball	Ryan Talanda, Kalamazoo College, soccer
Alaila Walker, Lincoln University, basketball	Drew Rathbun, Wabash College, soccer
Luke Skuratowicz, Hope College, cross country	Amos Mechtenberg-Berrigan, Aquinas College, soccer
Andre Tarver, Valparaiso University, football	Zenaida Sackett, Kalamazoo College, cross country
Maya Alkema, Kalamazoo College, cross country	Molly Gross, Kalamazoo College, lacrosse
Kendal Vandam, Western Michigan University, softball	Daren Mata, Adrian College, football
Cameron Moore, Aquinas College, basketball	Cincear Lewis, Cincinnati, football
	Onishka Serrano Ortiz, Madonna University, basketball

Loy Norrix High School

Tyler Roberts, Hope College, football and baseball	Vicky McGowan, Olivet College, basketball
Bianca Hobson, Southwestern Michigan College, volleyball	Gavin Gardner, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, baseball
Tony Parlato, Aquinas College, swimming	Annika Schnell, Kalamazoo College, swimming and soccer
Claire Goodwin-Kelly, The College of Wooster, soccer	Aiden Harback, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, baseball
Donovan Wilson, Olivet College, football	Kendyl Kirshman, Kalamazoo College, basketball
Hailey Yoder, Kalamazoo College, swimming	Kevin Lucas, Albion College, football
Kobe Sackett, Madonna University, basketball	

NOTICE

Kalamazoo Public Schools welcomes all students and staff of any religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identification, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability.

The District will not tolerate or condone any act of bias or discrimination toward any person on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identification, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability in any of its activities, hiring practices, programs or services.

Inquiries by students and/or their parents/guardians should be directed to:

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Student Services
Kalamazoo Public Schools
1220 Howard St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0161

All other inquiries should be directed to:

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
Kalamazoo Public Schools
1220 Howard St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0177
District Directory at :
www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

BOARD OF EDUCATION

President

Patti Sholler-Barber

Vice President

TiAnna Harrison

Secretary

Jennie Hill

Treasurer

Ken Greschak

Trustee

Jermaine Jackson

Trustee

Megan Maddock

Trustee

Tandy Moore

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri

Anthony Alvarez: Mastering Life's Challenges with Math and Computer Science

He might be bashful.

Kalamazoo Central High School graduate Antony Alvarez is certainly soft-spoken, but he's certainly not bashful or shy when it comes to demonstrating his computer coding skills.

There he is a master. There he dominates. There his actions speak loud enough for anyone to hear.

Alvarez, 17, has in essence earned a varsity letter in computer programming at the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center, where computer science teacher Shannon Houtrouw says Alvarez is one of the best he's ever seen. Houtrouw has taught him the programming languages C++ and Java, but Alvarez came in as a sophomore already knowing how to code in Python.

"I asked him how he came to learn Python and he told me that whenever he got bored in ninth grade, he would take it upon himself to learn that programming language," Houtrouw said. "I believe this really speaks to his character. While most other students might choose to play games or watch Netflix in their leisure, Anthony takes the time to develop himself and pursue his goal of becoming a computer scientist or an engineer or both."

Alvarez is the equivalent of the Computer Science team captain, helping lead KAMSC to winning performances in competitions at University of Michigan-Flint, Michigan State University, and the Governor's High School Cyber Security contest. He helped lead the program to a first place finish in the American Computer Science League's Classroom Division Contest.

His hard work and skills have earned him a QuestBridge Scholarship, which will provide a full-ride to Northwestern University in Illinois.

Alvarez is the son of Fanny Hernandez and Antonio Alvarez. He moved to Kalamazoo from the Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in the sixth grade when his mother earned a scholarship



Anthony Alvarez says it's easy to lose himself in math and computer science.

to pursue graduate studies at Western Michigan University.

He had to take English as a Second Language classes when he first arrived. The language barrier made it difficult to make friends and probably made him a little more shy, he said.

"I think coming to the U.S. humbled me a bit," he said in a college essay. "Moving to the

U.S. was quite a big change in my life. Suddenly, I was surrounded by people who spoke a different language and had a fairly different culture from mine.

"School was not an issue, but I had a hard time making friends. I think this also initially had the effect of me having little to no confidence in my language and writing skills, as writing in a second language, especially at the level expected at school, is rather worrisome. Yet I am still very confident in my abilities to do other school-related things."

The one area where he has always felt confident is in his math skills.

"I think I have been good at math for as long as I can remember," he said. "I guess it just makes sense to me more than other subjects. I like the consistency of it."

By eighth grade he tested into the Academically Talented Youth Program in math, and then his counselor suggested he apply to KAMSC.

In addition to computer sciences, he said he has particularly enjoyed the higher

level mathematics taught in physics with Mike Sinclair and Modhi Alshehri. He has also enjoyed the CTE Electronics & Robotics course taught by Ken Briggs and U.S. history with Eric Buckleitner at Kalamazoo Central.

Houtrouw calls Alvarez "amazing," not just for his CS skills but for his work ethic and his personality.

"One thing I really appreciate about Anthony is that even though he is such an academic star, he remains quite humble about his accomplishments," Houtrouw said. "He is not just another computer nerd. He is a wonderful young man."

Alvarez said perhaps he does "undersell" himself sometimes.

"I'm not sure. I've always been a bit bashful, I think. But not in math or programming. I'm confident in those areas. I get really excited about those so it's kind of easy to lose myself in those areas. I guess I also like mastering stuff. It's getting through things and knowing I'm good at something and that feels great."



**HERE TO HELP ALL FATHERS IN KALAMAZOO
MAINTAIN ACTIVE AND ENGAGED RELATIONSHIPS
WITH THEIR CHILDREN**

SERVICES INCLUDE:

**1 ON 1 PEER SUPPORT/COACHING
FAMILY FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS
DAD CAFE: VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON
CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES
MEN'S HEALTH CHECK INS**

**CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION
PHONE: (269) 261-0814 EMAIL: info@fatherhoodnetwork.org
[WWW.THEFATHERHOODNETWORK.ORG](http://www.thefatherhoodnetwork.org)**



Advertise in:

EXCELSIOR
KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mailed to Every
Household in Kalamazoo

383-4433

Put Your Marketing
Dollars to Work!

Justine Barnard: Experience Defined by Social Justice and Study Abroad

Kalamazoo Central High School's Justine Barnard senior year was pretty atypical — mostly because she wasn't even in Kalamazoo.

Barnard, 17, has been living abroad in Germany as part of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, or CBYX, which is fully funded by the U.S. Congress and the German Bundestag. It sends 350 students from across the United States to live with a host family and attend a German high school. While there they travel, meet with government officials and learn about global affairs.

She attended El Sol Elementary and Linden Grove Middle School. While at Kalamazoo Central, she participated in Mock Trial, was a volunteer at the YWCA, was a summer scholar with the Great Jewish Books Program, and volunteered for various political campaigns.

Barnard, who is the daughter of Anja and Ken Barnard, will return to the States later this summer and plans to attend Barnard College or the University

of Michigan in the fall, where she wants to study political science and public policy.

Barnard answered questions via email while still studying in Germany.

You received a City of Kalamazoo Social Justice Youth Award earlier this year. How did you get involved in social justice and what are your biggest concerns?

Like many students, I worried about gun violence from a young age. I decided there had to be some way to become actively involved in issues of social justice and began interning for Jon Hoadley's campaign for Congress when I was 14. Some of the biggest social justice concerns I have are the climate crisis, racial injustice, and gun violence. These are complex and somewhat overwhelming issues. But social justice is a process, a goal, and requires participation. This is why I decided to act. It's important for everyone, especially young people, to know that it is possible to make a difference.



Kalamazoo Central senior Justine Barnard spent her senior year in Germany.

How have your student activities reflected these concerns and interests?

My activities center around volunteerism and community work. For example, before the 2020 election, I created a website and organization, KzooBallotBoxRides, which offered rides to ballot boxes. I used a form to request or offer a ride and included a list of all ballot box locations in my county. I contacted several organizations and made announcements at their meetings. I was thrilled

to find that dozens of people in Kalamazoo volunteered to give rides. I decided to tackle this issue because I hoped to make voting more accessible and increase participation. In a community with a high poverty rate, not everyone can simply jump in a car and drop off their absentee ballot or easily navigate the requirements of requesting one.

You also did work studying bail inequities in Kalamazoo. What did you learn through your volunteerism?

The Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says "excessive bail shall not be required." Logically, what is excessive should depend on a person's finances and circumstances. But it doesn't. Bail often requires that 10 percent be posted. So, if bail is set at \$1,000, it would require \$100. This may seem fine to the average person, but for a poor person, this may be impossible. Reforming the bail system, or eliminating it for low-level, nonviolent offenses seems like a part of criminal justice

reform that everyone should agree on, but not enough people understand how bail works.

Your mom is from Germany. Were there ever any questions about whether you would be bilingual in English and German?

Immersion in culture and language has always been an important part of my life, whether that be learning Mandarin at The Chinese Association of Greater Kalamazoo, learning Spanish at El Sol Elementary, or learning German at home. There was never any question about whether I would be bilingual in English and German because my mother's side of the family lives in Germany and we speak both languages at home.

Do you feel like you missed out on anything by being away during your senior year?

My senior year is different but I don't feel I've missed out. I'm seeing the world and making life-long friends. I think I've become more independent and have a broader worldview after studying abroad.

WHAT'S NEW

@

Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo

FREE SUMMER CONCERTS RETURN TO DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO!

Presented by the ACGK as part of the Summertime Live concert series, *Concerts in the Park* and *Music in the Plaza* are happening June through August on select weekends in downtown Kalamazoo. All eight concerts are free to attend, so bring your family and friends. Both venues are part of the downtown Commons Area, so purchase food and drinks from any downtown restaurant and enjoy them while watching the show!

*Except for special Saturday, July 2nd concert

Visit KalamazooArts.org

Heyl Scholarships Awarded to Five KPS Graduates

Five Kalamazoo Public Schools students have been named recipients of the Kalamazoo College Heyl Scholarships.

The award is presented to Kalamazoo County high school students seeking to major in STEM-related fields at Kalamazoo College or who are studying nursing at Western Michigan University.

This year a total of eight Heyl Scholarships were awarded. The scholarships were established in 1971 through the estates of Dr. Frederick Heyl and his wife Elise Heyl. The scholarship covers tuition, room and board, fees and books for four years.

This year's KPS Heyl winners are:

Michael Ankley, Kalamazoo Central, plans to attend K to study physics and environmental science. He has committed to swim or play lacrosse at K.

Annaliese Bol, Loy Norrix,

plans to major in biology. For fun, she runs and is considering running competitively at Kalamazoo College.

Lillian Daniels, Loy Norrix, plans to study biology at K. In her free time, she pole vaults and seeks to become fluent in a second language.

Abigail Houtrouw is a graduate of Kalamazoo Central and the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center. She will be attending the Western Michigan University Bronson School of Nursing. Her long-term goal is to become a nurse practitioner.

Brigid Roth is a graduate of Kalamazoo Central and KAMSC. She plans to major in biology with a focus on neuroscience at K-College and hopes to become a psychiatrist. She participated in WMU's Stryker Medical School's Early Introduction to Health Careers.

Neida Jaimes: Determined to Make Memories Despite Pandemic

Neida Jaimes knows that the Covid pandemic stole a lot of high school experiences from her and her classmates at Loy Norrix High School.

While she's sad about that, she has approached her senior year determined to reclaim her high school experience.

"I feel like Covid took a lot of memories I could have had. In the blink of an eye, it was gone," said Jaimes, 18. "But I think this year I'm making a lot of new ones. It's been going really well. I'm taking it day by day and appreciating every memory that I'm making."

Jaimes is the daughter of Maria Salinas and José Jaimes. Her older sister Lorena Jaimes and brother Christian Jaimes also attended Loy Norrix. In the fall, she will be attending Michigan State University.

It was Lorena, who helped her get through quarantine, Jaimes said. "As much as I don't want to give her credit, she definitely helped me," she said with a laugh. "She was in the same spot herself finishing college. We were both clueless and had no idea what to

do. She just helped make every day different and kept pushing me to get through."

Jaimes moved to Kalamazoo from the tiny town of Covert in the fourth grade. She attended Milwood Elementary and Milwood Magnet schools.

"Along the way I met some pretty good teachers," who built real relationships with her, she said. Among her favorites were Dawn Kahler, a science teacher at Milwood Magnet, who remains close to her today.

"Neida is an original," Kahler said. "She's real. When Neida would laugh in class it was never at someone, but always included everyone in the humor. Everyone laughed with her. She has so much joy and she shares it. When I think of Neida I hear her laugh and it puts a smile on my face."

"She also was that kid that could work with anyone and both people enjoyed working together and learning. She also worked hard at her learning and never sat back when things were good enough. Neida is the kind of person that makes everyone feel



Neida Jaimes, Loy Norrix High School 2022 graduate, was a four-year soccer player and joined the football team as a kicker last year.

good and it feels so good to know her."

At Norrix, she readily found a niche as a varsity soccer player, which she played four years. She also served as a yearbook photographer in her sophomore year. She's in the National Honor Society, plays club soccer and works part time. Then Covid. But even with the pandemic, she still found a way to keep growing and

trying new things.

Her longtime boyfriend Tyler Roberts has always been a football player, and Jaimes watched the game dispassionately for many years. Then her junior year, "I jokingly asked the coach if I could be their kicker," she said. "He looks at me and says, flat out, 'yes.'"

She attended practice and took the field the second game of the season. Her soccer skills

definitely helped her take to the football field.

She was never scared of getting hurt. She was more scared she'd mess up and disappoint the team.

"I eventually did get tackled once. I got up and just laughed it off. Oh, it hurt, but I was like, I'm playing the game, it's bound to happen."

Her two seasons playing football will be one of her favorite memories from high school.

"It's something not a lot of people do," she said. "I got to experience something different and meet a lot of new people. I grew relationships with the coaches. It gave me a lot of connections."

Connections matter to her, and there are so many people who have made a difference at Loy Norrix, she said. Her counselor Becky Parsons, Spanish teacher Christina Holmes, economics teacher Ryan Allen, and football coach Lorenzo Robertson.

"There were like so many teachers in every grade, every year. I think everyone here had an impact on me."

Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program 2022 Graduates

Baez-Cruz, Abel Renault
Baldwin, Hailee Marie
Bluntson, Jayla Lasha
Borden, Katherine Lyn
Branstrom, Natacia Elaine
Edick, Kali Michelle Joanne
Hasan Aljawad, Inas
Hemmer, Annabel Linnea
Jones, Christopher John

Nix, Tiara Lea
Scott, Alizaye Khrystyle Simone
Seaberry, Ramone William
Sirriner, J'Viohn Robert
Thomas, Jada Lynn
Walker, Jordan Elijah
Webster, Ira Cody
Williams, Sophia Monet
Wilson, Alonte Javon



Sophia Williams, left, and Tiara Nix share a smile before the KILP graduation.



Southwest Child Care Resources

Serving Southwest Michigan Counties

Allegan • Barry • Berrien • Calhoun • Cass • Kalamazoo • St. Joseph • Van Buren

SUMMER'S COMING
Looking for Child Care?
Start by giving us a call
269-349-3496

Receive a list of Child Care providers (Licensed Centers or Home/Group) in an area near you!



Your first stop for all things Child Care related



5250 Lovers Lane LL120
Portage, Michigan 49002
www.ccr4kids.org

Funding from the Office of Great Start within the Michigan Department of Education supports the implementation of Great Start.

Robert Wheeler: Revved Up and Ready to Go to the Next Level

For some students, high school graduation is a big step into the unknown. But, for Robert Wheeler III his path is well defined — in part because he has been participating in virtual learning for the past two years, including the past year in the Kalamazoo Focused Learning Experience or KFLEX.

The Covid pandemic created innumerable challenges, but Wheeler, 18, who also goes by Bobby, managed to take advantage of the challenges to create a situation that allowed him to earn his diploma and work full time, developing the skills necessary to build a solid foundation in his family business.

When Covid closed down schools, Wheeler, 18, began working full time at his family’s business, Crosstown Auto and Truck Parts, and he discovered that not only did he enjoy the work but that he was good at it.

Crosstown Auto dismantles old and wrecked vehicles and sells the salvaged parts mostly to other auto and body shops across the country.

Wheeler works as a

dismantler. He takes apart cars, pulling items such as motors and transmissions. He’ll also repair broken parts so they can be resold.

The company is owned by his grandfather and father Robert Wheeler Sr. and Robert Wheeler Jr. and his aunt Carmen West. The rest of his family includes mom Erin, older sister Karley, younger brother Gavin, and little sister Savannah.

He had to participate in virtual school at the end of his sophomore year and through his junior year, but his senior year he could have chosen to return to in-person learning.

“I felt like virtual was the best option for me,” he said. “I could continue to work and get hands-on experience and then balance that out with doing school at night. I think it was the best of both worlds.

“My favorite part of the job right now is being able to work and to use my hands. I just do what I do best, which is work on cars, whether tearing them apart or putting them back together. I took to it naturally



Robert Wheeler found the right balance between school and work with the virtual program.

and I’m really good at it.”

In the fall, Wheeler plans to attend Western Michigan University to study business. A lifelong KPS student, he attended Spring Valley Center for Exploration, King-Westwood Elementary School, Hillside Middle School and

Kalamazoo Central.

KFLEX teacher Kathleen Briggs, who served as Wheeler’s mentor teacher, said the virtual programs create unique learning environments for students. The schedule can accommodate students interested in working, Early Middle College, and off-campus courses such as Career & Technical Education, Education for the Arts or the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center.

“It allows students incredible flexibility to be able to take a different path than traditional schooling, while still gaining a diploma through their home schools and retaining relationships with teachers and peers,” she said.

She added that Wheeler’s maturity and discipline were key to his success.

“Robert fully utilized the opportunities to connect in a virtual environment,” Briggs said. “He attended the synchronous check-ins each week, building rapport with a source of support in the program, and participated in each live session for his courses, which

connected him with his peers.

“Robert’s ability and willingness to not miss one day of a live appointment and to speak in the live sessions of classes, worked so much in his favor.”

That’s not to say it wasn’t difficult and not without its downside, Wheeler said.

He would get to work at 8 a.m. His work day would end at 5 p.m. He’d go home and have something to eat and then hit the books for three or four hours each night. It was exhausting.

And, it equaled an almost nonexistent social life.

“Don’t get me wrong, I have friends and what not but once Covid hit, you’re not in school seeing people every day and talking to them — especially if you’re working full time,” he said. “Your schedules are mixed up and I didn’t really keep in touch with people — and people didn’t keep in touch with me. We just lost connections.”

For fun, Wheeler finds an outlet in an unusual family activity: car racing. Crosstown Auto sponsors two cars — an outlaw super late model and a template late model — in the short track racing circuit, traveling throughout the Midwest for races 10 to 12 times a year. Wheeler works the pit crew, jacking up cars, changing tires, making mechanical changes.

“The same people that own the shop own the cars. It’s all my family, and that’s what makes it fun. That’s what makes work fun too,” he said.

Wheeler is looking forward to the future and to seeing what college life brings. He plans to keep working at least part time when he goes to Western, but his focus will be on his studies, he said.

“One thing I can say my parents were big on is that school is first. Work is not a priority. This is a privilege that I am able to do it right now. My grandpa was the same way. For everyone at the shop, you can’t work for him if you don’t have your diploma.”

create
media
this summer

Learn more at
publicmedianet.org
or call 269.343.2211

359 S Kalamazoo Mall, 3rd Floor

public
media
network



media>u

15TH ANNUAL CHAMPS CELEBRATION

Congratulations
2022 Award Recipients!



Diane Lang



Cathy Boris



Tracy Chappell



Alaya Hunter

In our 15th year of Champs, we celebrated another year of education and recognized the time and effort of those who have aided our students in realizing their full potential.

Learn more about this year's award recipients at: ciskalamazoo.org/champs

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

PRESENTING



CIS mission: Surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and succeed in life.

SENIOR



JUNIOR



SOPHOMORE



FRESHMAN

BDO
Consumers Energy
Greenleaf Trust
Radisson Plaza Hotel
Welsh & Associates, Inc.

Kalamazoo Central High School 2022 Graduates

Acosta, Zaida Madai
Aguila, Sofia Danielle
Akers, Bruce Ozzy
Alcala, Alan
Alkema, Maya Elizabeth
Alkinani, Ali Jasim
Alvarez, Anthony
Amini, Zahra
Ankley, Michael Gerald
Apiyo, Stephanie Chebet
Artley, Amaya Monae
Austin, Dylann Marie
Awad, Ala Nidal
Awad, Ala' Maher
Baker, Zachary John
Banks-Jennings, Jahlin Terrell
Barbosa-Camacho, Kevin
Barnard, Justine Ida
Barr, Mya Lynn
Barry, Gabriella Olivia
Bates, Angelica Rose
Bean, Justonna Gloria-Jean
Bedoor, Suhib Shadi
Betke, Cooper Daniel
Binning, Zachary Robert
Blair, Cadence Melody
Blair, Charles Todd
Blair, Ian Henderson
Blink, Brandi Eileen
Boggan, Joshua Paul
Boyd, Iyanna Kay
Brack, Elizabeth Anne
Bradley, Te'nievia Y'vonne
Brooks, Demetrius Eric
Brown-Deloney, Jafalan Che'on
Brown, Ashanti Takell
Brown, Dayjanique Iris
Brown, Jackson Nathaniel
Brown, Samuel Paul
Browning, Darianna Nicole
Bruen, Kyle Austin
Bull, Alana Starr
Bullock, Aveyon Nahjey
Burcroff, Abraham Alonzo
Burnett, Passiona Eriance Alize
Cahill, Mason Elijah
Call, Jayden Scott
Camilli, Elizabeth Grace
Campbell, Heaven Serenity
Canfield, Sophie Claire
Carnegie, Jayla Ruth
Casey, Alissa Marie
Castro, Yasmin Annai
Cathcart, Zachary Stewart
Ceballos, Alejandra

Clark, Jayden Anthony
Cline-Cole, Edward Desmond
Cobbs, Tamiah La'rae
Cohn, John Ledell
Coker, Karmaisa L
Colvin, Jared Alexander
Contreras, Isabelle Adriana
Corla, Sofia Dorothy
Coronado-Guzman, Jazmin
Corradini, Jasmine Vanessa
Crawley, Lauryn Allana
Crumell, Jayden Howard
Curtis, Ja'marcus Oneal
Daniel, Arianna Renita
Daniels-Thompson, Le'montae M
DeAnda, Halie Renee
DeAnda, Robert Richard
Dhaliwal, Amarvir Singh
Diallo, Asiya Safia
Diaz, Yasmine Esmeralda
Dillard, Thomas Henry
Dixon, Kevin De'Ondre
Dixon, Romeo Martell
Dolislager, Alexander David
Doniaz, Arianna Rosario
Dorantes, Joseluis
Douglas, Austin Edward
Dudley, Monica Rochelle
Dutcher, Aidan Cole
Edmonson, Amarie Tyreese Ahmad
Edwards, Ellis Matthew
Elkafrawy, Salma Tamer
English, Garrett Michael
Faber, Rand Gregory
Farris, Travion Sentell
Farwana, Saleem Mohamed
Felmeden, Jacob Tyler
Filipunas, Katelyn Rose
Fluker, Paris Aaliyah
Ford, Kanye Shawnmar
Fraley-Burgett, Jonas Edward
Frank, Cornell Dante
Gardner, Gretta Joy
Gates, Reagan Marie
Gheen, Cooper Kazaleh
Gibbs, Kyran Onccion
Givhan, David Q
Glass, Tre'Quarius Cardell
Gleaton, Nicholas Lee
Goodenough, Brianne Alice
Gray, Ivory Alesia



Kendal Vandam, left, Betsy Mares Castro, and Rae VanSparrentak laugh together while waiting for the Kalamazoo Central commencement to begin.

Green, Lynnieshya Lyshelle
Gross, Molly Joy
Gueraskova, Natalie Lubomirova
Gumbis, Justin Francis
Gustafson, Otto Joseph
Hale, Lexis Kenzie
Haller, Isaac David
Hamilton, Iris Sophia
Harris, Crystal Rose
Harris, Elijah Allan
Haskell, De'Yanna Darlene
Haskins, Adrianna Nichole
Hawkes, Ernest Franklin
Hawkins, Mia Ann
Haynes, Destyni Lyn
Henderson, Damian Jovan
Henderson, Kathleen Jill
Henry, Larmyia
Hillsman, Shadae Necole
Hollin, Aileena Charnay
Horwath, Nathan Todd
Houtrouw, Abigail Marcia
Hudok, Zoe Jameson
Hudson, Lauryn Christine
Huff, Evan Gregory
Hughes, Scott Everett
Hunsinger, Simon Joyce
Hunter, Alaya Marie
Hussein, Didie
Irvine, Jaala Kalis
Jaber, Alya Majed
Jiang-Kong, Mason
Johnson, Camani Symone Cole
Johnson, Creg
Johnson, Jaiden Lee
Johnson, Paris Morgan
Johnson, TanaJa'e Nyesha

Jones, Dion Jay
Jones, Elijah JayQuaniesse Lovell
Jones, Javito Levell
Jordan, Aquile
Julian, Artazijah Renee
Kelley, Tori Antonius
Kelly, LaDiva Rose Halayah
Kent, Nevaeh Lashay
Killingsworth, Samoni Shakise Ann
Kleinbrink, Benjamin Steepin
Kline, Kadi Marie
Kuhnert, Noah Stephen
Kurkowski, Logan James
Kye, Karen Amaya
Land, Indya Tyasia
Larkins, Naomi Antazia
Lawson, Evan Matthew
Lewis, Cincear Tyon Jakeesse
Lewis, Olivia Nicole
Lewis, Trinity Anne Renee
Lewis, William Welston
Maaz, Rayan Mohammed Dyaaldin
Maikoski-Redner, Jabriel Wolfe
Maikoski, Kayla Leann
Maldonado, Diego Daniel
Malhan, Mohamad Eid Waled
Mares Castro, Betsy Ivon
Marfo, Love Takiyiwaah
Martin, Vallie'Ree Annette
Martinez, Naomi Euzanakarim
Mata, Daren Lee

McCall-Rogers, Nautica
McClain, Ariyanna Nicole
McCouch, Victoria Noel Marie
McDonald, Mollie Maureen
Mechtenberg-Berrigan, Amos Philip
Medema, Ann Elizabeth
Mendez-Melchor, Andrea
Moore, Cameron James
Morales-Diaz, Melanie
Morales, Emellie
Morales, Jenny Carolyn
Moran-Jimenez, Alondra Betsabe
Moreno-Aguilar, Juan Diego
Morrison, Julia Rose Thompson
Morse, Caleb William Matthew
Nash, Cassandra Mae
Nava, Yomari Aaliyah
Ndlovu, Ayanda Kanye
Nelson, Jeremiah Armon
Nesbitt, Marshall Alonza
Nguyen, Emily Bao-Tran
Nichols, Tia Tianna
Norman, Robert Arthur Lewis
Oostema, Nicholas Jacob
Oropeza, Victoria Revae'
Ortiz, Alexander Carlos
Osler, Kamarria Asia
Parker, Marquese Trayvon
Parker, Treyton Grant
Patterson, Jayland Earl
Paulik, Christopher Michael

Plair, Xavier Cameron Alexand
Pomeroy, Aubrey Grace
Porter, Hailey Brianna
Rabb, Alexis Ray
Ragan, Tyler James
Rathbun, Drew William
Resh, Alaini Grace
Richardson, Madison Gabrielle
Rodriguez, Ricardo Humberto
Roth, Brigid O'Rourke
Roth, Evelyn Marie
Sackett, Zenaida Loida
Sanchez, Liz Ximena
Saxton, Maiti O'meara
Scholten, Emily Grace
Scholten, Zachary Steven
Schultz, Adalai Marie
Scott, Morgan Tamara
Seaman, Cohen Michael
Serrano Ortiz, Onishka Michelle
Seubring, Ashton Jay
Shammout, Ibtihaj Hani
Sharp, Logan Garrett
Simmons, Jakhari Anthony
Singleton, Steven Tronzale
Sinkler, Parker James
Skuratowicz, Luke Anthony
Smith-Shepard, Enrique' Arispe'
Smith, Anthony Thomas
Smith, Azi'reouna
Aa'nazjha Nevaeh
Katrice
Smith, Diedra Monique
Smith, Kailyn Sa'rai
Snell, Dra'Shawn Malyk
Snell, Vincent
Snider, Marcus James
Sokolowski, Mercedes Jo
Spencer, Darquan Lashon
Stacy, Pharrell Norman
Starkey-Williams, Dryw Cate
Stender, Caleb Michael
Steward, Jeriah DeeNae'
Steward, Jeriean Lee
Stoll, Andrew Eric
Stoneburner, Ryah Avey
Stovall-Nowling, Jazmine Jaya
Stovall, Kamarri Zade
Strebs, Jude Andrejs
Strong, Brendan Alan
Strunk, Cameron Francis

Sumner, Jayden Alexander
Sunlin, Caiden Tyler
Sunner, Suvneet Kaur
Swartz, Jane Marian
Swartz, Natalie Josephine
Swetay, Skyler Alexander
Taber, Tierra Nicole
Talanta, Ryan David
Tarver, Andre Brian
Tatara, Olive Anne
Taylor, Andrew Allan
Thielman, Avery Christian
Thomas, Delaney Shepard
Thomas, Trinity Niobe-Ni'Shelle
Thompson-Johnson, Keyten K
Thompson, Noah Levy
Todd, Addison Chesley
Tran, Melissa
Trejo, Virginia V
Turkey, Ola Mohammed
Turner, Rashadd Antwone
Underwood, Martell RayVon
Usmanov, Gayratdzhon
Usmanova, Mukaddas
Valllunga, Chance Edward
Vallier, Kali Elizabeth
Vandam, Kendal M
Vanderberg, Benjamin Daniel
Vanderleun, Andrew Robert
VanNiman, Kennedy Jolie
VanSparrentak, Rae Tyler
Vargas, Averie Joel Caswell
Velten, Annabelle Iris
Vernon, Leon David-Nico
Walker, Alaila Dionne Pearl
Warren, Alasjah Monae
Weiss, Elena Kathleen
Westbury, Daphne Beth
Wheeler, Robert Emo
White, Brian James
White, D'kyra Tamina Marie
White, Denver Lamont
White, Laela Chenell
Wichelt, Matthew Johnathan
Wilks, Arylon Elizabeth
Williams, Ivana Elena
Williams, Lanija Keyshay
Wilson, Anayia Marie
Winkle, Colin Michael
Winters, Madison Elizabeth
Witherspoon, Denasja Lynn
Wright, Brittany Renee

Loy Norrix High School 2022 Graduates

Abarca, Alyssa Carlyn
Abbott, Ari'el Kerriana
Alonzo, Vanessa
Amezcu, Melissa
Ampey, Trayden William
Anderson, Shatonio La'qwon
Anderson, Winter Nia-Anae
Apperley, Livia Lane
Atkinson, Ahmaan Shafiq
Atkinson, Emma Reann
Bailey, Danielle Rosemae
Baker, Colby James
Bakos, Anna Jeanette
Baldwin, James Michael
Baldwin, Lukas Andrew
Barber, Sagan Diana
Barboza, Stephanie Dayanara
Battle, Onyx Xavier
Batzloff, Elijah Lennon
Baublis, Celia Phyllis
Beebe, Aiden Thomas
Bell, Triana Janae
Bello, Gina Samai
Bennett, Bailey Shay
Benny, Austin James
Beougher, Claire Gray
Bergan, Jackson Cornelius
Bergman, William Jacob
Bernick, Michael Nicholas
Besser, Haven Elizabeth
Blackwood, Justine Gabrielle
Bol, Annaliese Rose
Borden, Emma Corrine
Bowden, Cris'stia Sanai
Bownes, Arreion Lashay
Boy, Justin Brave
Boyea, Ella Capri
Braun, Liam Anthony
Briggs, Ryan Stanley
Brooks, Braeden Robert
Brown, Wyatt Benjamin
Bueno, Jared
Butler, Deviyana Nicole Joy
Camba, Giulia
Campos, Rafael Emmanuel
Carpenter, Mackenzie Larae
Carson, Arryanna O
Clark, Destiny Timeah
Clark, Ethan Brian
Clemente, Telise Esperanza
Cochran, Jessica Nicole
Compton, Deanne Christine

Conley, Cassidy Nicole
Courtney, Lincoln Xavier
Crothers, August John
Cruz-Salazar, Axel Jael
Danek, Amelia Margaret
Daniels, Lillian Louise
Davis, Hannah Sue
Davis, Kelisha Adream
Davis, Owen Tyler
DeAnda, Lily Marie
Denney, Liam Michael
DeRyke, Jessica Louise
DeThorne, Zachary Robert
Diamond, Nikos Socrates
Diggs-Williams, Janae Elise
Doerschler, James Noah
Drumm Walsh, Luna Marie
Duran, Elizabeth
Dykes, Natasha Maire
Eldred, Evan James
Elechi, Javien Eugene
Elsholz, Fletcher Earl
Elsholz, Sawyer Elwyn
Esquivel, Richard
Figgins, Skyy Madison
Flores, Gabriel Ramon
Fox, Gigi Jacqueline
Fraga, Octavio
Franklin, Kahwaun Tiree-Damond
Frayar, Haniya Elaine
Fredericksen, Elsie Joe
Freeman, Jaylin David
Fries, Isaac Thomas Lee
Frink, Thomas Ransford
Frost, Dominick James
Fulton, Ambika Amrit
Gallardo, Emily Joana
Garcez, Clara Michelle
Gardner, Gavin Jae
Givhan, Kamaria J
Goodwin-Kelly, Claire Elizabeth
Gorham, Skyler Michael
Gray, Jessica Morgan
Gray, Matthew James
Greene, Maia
Guerrero Hernandez, Francisco Steven
Guthrie, Jordyn Elizabeth
Gutierrez-Monroy, Giselle
Gutierrez, Karina Elisa
Guy, Kiara Marie
Hale, Lexi Joy
Harback, Aiden
Christopher
Harn, James Patrick
Harper, Danica Winter



Isabella Woods, left, and Alex Wrzesinski celebrate at the Loy Norrix commencement.

Harris, Sarah Joyce Hely
Hauke, James Christ
Hawthorne, Ella Jane
Helms, Elizabeth Anne
Herington, Conner Logan
Hermann-Wilmarth, Arden Mel
Hernandez Ramirez, Berenice Lizbeth
Hernandez, Juan Santos
Hernandez, Ruby
Hierro Reynoso, Aixa Aline
Higgins, Kay'o Lermont
Hildon, Christopher Frederic
Hill, Georgia Clare
Hobson, Bianca Kiera Rinae
Hodson, Karyss Noel
Hogan, Samantha Kathleen
Holguin Barraza, Joseph Javier
Hoogerheide, Kristen Renee
Hoppe, Victoria Rose
Hostiguin, Joe Anthony
Howard, Joshua David Mitchel
Huerta, Cristian
Humiston, Valerie Frea
Hurley, Evalynn Irene
Ingraham, Mackenzy Lynn
Irons, Maddox Christian Galen
Ismaili-Alaoui, Adam
Jackson Sanchez, Allen James
Jackson, Elijah Khalli

Jaimes, Neida
Jean-Baptiste Vicioso, Briana Nicole
Jennings, Ja'Quan D
Jimenez-Mujica, Jonathan
Johnson, Jordan Wesley
Jonaitis, Cassandra Elise
Juriga, Natalie Elizabeth
Kahler, Grant Michael
Kanipe, Jessica Joy
Kelley, Dylon Christopher
Kelley, Lauren Claire
Kemery, Alyson Jayne
Kennedy, Parker Lucas
Kilgo, Kylie Jacqueline
Kimbrough, Anthony Tyrone
King, Alexandria Ruth
King, Rachael Susannah Robertson
Kirshman, Kendyl Marie
Klute, Tanner John
Knudsen, Claire Wren McKenna
Lanning, Jordan Robert
Lewis, Madelynn Renee
Leyva Ortiz, Jesse Francisco
Lightfoot, Oscar Leo
Littlejohn, Sanaa' Greigh
Loiselle, Ryan Edward
Lopez, Kevin
Lopez, William Santiago
Lucas, Kevin Charles
Luckett, Aaliyah Monyae
Luna-Salazar, Sarahy
Maldonado, Freddy
Masterson, Hollis Ray
Makepeace

Maurer, Marcus Paul
McAfee, Daniel Patrick
McCarty, Hailey Noelle
McDade, Catherine Mary
McFarlen, Elizabeth Lynn
McGowan, Victoria Angelique
McLogan, Liliana Vivian
McMullen, Michael Patrick
McPherson, Elisia Kasmarie-Ann
Medina-Juarez, Adalberto Jesus
Meek, Dylan Jay
Mejia Garcia, Alexander
Melchor, Abigail
Melgar Pina, Victor Daniel
Moan, Gavin Marcello
Mohamad, Mohamad Luqman
Moore, Bryce Mikhail
Morgan, Chyna Krystal
Muchmore, Sadie Pearl Sayre
Mujawimana, Jaqueline
Murcheke, Frances Adalene
Nagel-Bennett, Elias Max
Nagel-Bennett, Samuel Jakob
Nelson, Amanda Brooke
Neves Cordeiro, Isabela
Nkurunziza, Olivier Mupenzi
Nwokenta, Alozie
Ostos, Alexandro
Outlaw, Jay'shon Jeremiah
Padilla, Karen Abigail
Page, Dakota Wayne
Parlato, Anthony Gene

Pena Perez, Ivan Yahir
Perkins, Hank Christopher
Peters, Khalil Amari
Phiri, Brandi-Rose Kynaston
Pixler, Ridley Saul
Poindexter, Alivia Re Nea
Porco, Anthony Vittorio
Pratt, Myesha Ann
Pratt, Pearreese Imon
Prehn, Thomas Lee
Prieto, Carlos Aamir
Radley, Torin
Ramirez Perez, Marlen Yaleshka
Rathbun, Ella Augustine
Ray, Theresa Carolyne
Richmond, Sofia Rae
Ridderbos, Alyssa Kendall
Roberts, Tyler Michael
Robinson, Kempton Pierre
Robinson, Koryania Sharrel
Rodriguez Avelar, Yatziri Magali
Rodriguez, Antonio Brian
Rojo, Isac Cosuelo
Rozanc, Gavin Hunter
Rushing, De'azia Ebonique
Russell, Elliot Dalglish
Rutgers, Talus Everett
Sackett, Kobe Michael
Sanchez-Elias, Erica Jazmin
Sanchez, Luis Miguel
Sanders-Fields, Omarion Lee
Sandoval, Oscar
Saunders, Kamari Adonis
Schabes, Lilyana Rae
Schiffman, Caleb Scott
Schnell, Annika Elizabeth
Schnurr, Ryan Alexander
Schrader, Harper Sohl
Schultheiss, Delaney Anne
Segovia-Perez, Saul
Semelbauer, Kevin Alexander
Shantz, Jacob Kwan
Sloan, Kendall Nalli
Smith, Abigail Annika
Smith, Corey James
Smith, Jaelynn Nicole
Smith, Jayda Mone't
Soisson, Chrysta Bethany
Sperti, Darren Scott
Stapleton, Lanaesia Shani
Stegman, Riley

Suyadi, Brandon J Natanusa
Talo, Sophia Marie
Teal, Evan Alexander
Terrell, Katrina Denise Lee
Thomas, Ella Rose
Thomas, Faye Winifred
Torres Antonio, Kevin
Tribu, Nolan James
Trowbridge, Daniel David
Tuley, Grace Barbara
Turner, Milo
Van Avery, Connor Jackson
Van Houten, Andrew David
Velasco-Stout, Jacob Michael
Ventura-Amates, Rosely Jiselle
Verbrigghe, Anthony Maurice
Villanueva, Marisa Angelica
Vines, Meya Dominique
Vivanco-Vandenbos, Claudio Augusto
Vorva, Zoie Allyson
Wagner, Lauren Catherine
Walker, Aidan Jeremiah
Walker, Ayanna Marie
Walker, Kadin Merriman Ozara
Walker, Myah Renae
Ward, Alec Jenkins
Warner, Tatem Lake
Warren, Eymah Miracle
Wassink, Roman James
Wee, Keng Yew
White, Kaelis James
White, Kalaya Paige-Marie
Whitfield, Marcado Carter
Williams, Kamron D'wan
Williams, Karmani Bijon Channell
Wilson, Chanel Rone' Kornak
Wilson, Donovan Reginald
Wilson, Joshua Isaiah
Wilson, Zamiah Kanye
Wood, Harrison Otto
Woodruff, Ian Hayes
Woods, Isabela Michelle
Wright, Shawn Mikel
Wrzesinski, Alex
Yoder, Hailey Lynn
Zamel, Asmaa Abdel Aleem
Zvandasara, Simbarashe

CTE, EFA and Early/Middle College Honor Outstanding Seniors

The Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency’s Career & Technical Education, and Education for the Arts and Early/Middle College programs honored outstanding seniors who were nominated by their teachers for outstanding work in their areas of specialization.

Kevin Barbosa–Camacho
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Mario Barbosa Cuellar & Idalia Camacho Valdivia
Western Michigan University
Program: CTE Marketing
Instructor: Robert Roy

Cooper Betke
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Anthony & Carolyn Betke

Adrian College
Program: CTE Teacher Academy
Instructor: April Rocco

Darianna Browning
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Darrell & Yolanda Browning
Army/Michigan State University
Program: EFA Intermediate Dance
Instructor: Francesca Pileci

Abraham Burcroff
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: John & Kelly Burcroff
Michigan Technological University
CTE: Electronics & Robotics
Instructor: Ken Briggs

Heaven Campbell
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Pasquinel Campbell & Shawncia Matthews
Western Michigan University
CTE: Art & Design Career Skills
Instructor: Kellen Deau

Le’Montae Daniels–Thompson
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Robert Daniels & Tamika Thompson
Grand Valley State University
CTE: Marketing
Instructor: Robert Roy

Asiya Diallo
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Mohamadou & Lashon Diallo
Full Time Work
CTE: Cosmetology
Instructors: Maria Salinas & Aliah Wafford

Thomas Dillard IV
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Thomas Dillard III & Ondrea Johnson
Kalamazoo Valley Community College
CTE: Accounting & BMA
Instructor: Michelle Claybaugh

Reagan Gates
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: April & Chelsea Branyan
Kalamazoo Valley Community College
CTE: Fundamentals of Health Science
Instructor: Laura Kuzmick

Cooper Gheen
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Chris & Grace Gheen
University of Michigan or Michigan State University
CTE: Information Technology III and CTE Work–Based Learning
Instructors: Rostam Ahmad Daud and Lori Pelton

Nick Gleaton
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Chris & Cindy Gleaton
Western Michigan University

CTE: Electronics & Robotics II
Instructor: Ken Briggs

Ivory Gray
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parent: Antoninette Stubbs
Central Michigan University
CTE: Computerized Manufacturing
Instructor: Greg Mills

Cassandra Nash
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Floyd Nash & Patricia Stratton
Michigan Technological University
CTE: Electronics & Robotics
Instructor: Ken Briggs

Xavier Plair
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Eddie Anderson & Alexis Plair
Pursuing Full Time Work
CTE: Cosmetology
Instructor: Jackie Rush

Tyler Roberts
Loy Norrix High School
Parents: Carl Roberts & Debra Lenz
Hope College
CTE: Management Administration
Instructor: Atiba Ward

Erica Sanchez–Elias
Loy Norrix High School
Parents: Joel Sanchez–Vanegas & Cristina Elias–Ramirez
Michigan State University
CTE: Health Science
Instructor: Laura Kuzmick

Ryan Schnurr
Loy Norrix High School
Parents: Scott & Nichole Schnurr
Western Michigan University
CTE: Law Enforcement II
Instructor: Brian Brusach

Andrew Taylor
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Matthew & Rebecca Taylor
Kalamazoo Valley Community College
CTE: Marketing
Instructor: Robert Roy

Delaney Thomas
Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Mario & Zendalanette Thomas
Full Time Work
CTE: Barbering
Instructor: Jackie Rush

Zoie Vorva
Loy Norrix High School
Parent: Amy Davis
Kendall College of Art & Design
CTE: Art & Design Career Skills
Instructor: Kellen Deau

Chanel Wilson
Loy Norrix High School
Parents: Bobby Wilson & Mollie Kornak
University of Michigan
CTE: Business Management Administration
Instructor: Atiba Ward



Order Online with Curbside Pick-Up & NO SERVICE FEE
On Your First Two Orders (\$4.95 Value)

Enter Promo Code **Hardings** at Checkout

HARDINGS.COM

20% Off Coupon
June 1 - 30
Excludes Bag Sale purchases, June 4, Central parking lot

FRIENDS BOOKSTORE
Wed. Noon-6pm, Thurs, Fri, Sat 10-4pm
Bring this ad to the bookstore and receive 20% off your purchase or...

 **Shop our Online Store**
<https://shop.friendsofkl.org>
At checkout, use the code JUNE22 for 20% off your purchase

Kalamazoo Public Library, Lower Level
315 S. Rose St . kpl.gov/friends . 553-7820

2022 KAMSC Graduates

The following students have completed their course work at the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center as well as the requirements for graduation from their home high schools:

Anthony Alvarez, Kalamazoo Central

Celia Baublis, Loy Norrix

Claire Beougher, Loy Norrix

Owen Davis, Loy Norrix

Dominick Frost, Loy Norrix

Kathleen Henderson, Kalamazoo Central

Abigail Houtrouw, Kalamazoo Central

Adam Ismaili–Alaoui, Loy Norrix

Cassandra Jonaitis, Loy Norrix

Alyson Kemery, Loy Norrix

Emily Nguyen, Kalamazoo Central

Drew Rathbun, Kalamazoo Central

Brigid Roth, Kalamazoo Central

Evelyn Roth, Kalamazoo Central

Delaney Schultheiss, Loy Norrix

Brandon Suyadi, Loy Norrix

Olive Tatara, Kalamazoo Central

Evan Teal, Loy Norrix

Nolan Tribu, Loy Norrix

Grace Tuley, Loy Norrix

Rae VanSparrentak, Kalamazoo Central

Daphne Westbury, Kalamazoo Central

Madison Winters, Kalamazoo Central

Kevin Semelbauer: Band Makes High School Memorable for Clarinetist

Kevin Semelbauer was a band kid who found their place at Loy Norrix High School playing clarinet.

Talking to them, it's easy to see that the joy of making music is a huge part of their identity.

But, they laugh, clarinet was definitely not their first choice of instrument in middle school.

"I initially wanted to do trumpet or percussion," Semelbauer said, "but I was terrible at trumpet, and there were already enough percussionists in sixth grade band, so I tried clarinet and found I was good at it — and I liked it."

And, they only got better, finding a place as the section leader in marching band and concert band, and eventually joining the Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestra.

Semelbauer, 17, is the son of Chris and Todd Semelbauer. They attended Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School and Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Technology and Science, before moving to Loy Norrix.

Eventually, as a rising sophomore, Semelbauer began private clarinet lessons with Georgiy Borisov, the principal clarinetist with the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra.

"Working with a private teacher has been amazing for me. I wouldn't be where I am now if I weren't taking private lessons," Semelbauer said.

"It's really nice to be able to work one-on-one with a teacher," Semelbauer said. "You get to work on things that are very specific to what you are interested in. Plus, you can



Kevin Semelbauer waits for the Loy Norrix 2022 commencement to begin. Semelbauer has been a member of band for four years.

generally work to a much higher standard than just playing notes and rhythms accurately."

Although Semelbauer once considered pursuing music in

college, they now plan to begin studying computer programming at Kalamazoo Valley Community College in the fall.

Still, music has been a huge part of their identity, whether it was attending band camp, making friends with other band members, playing in the pit for school plays, or being a member of Kalamazoo Kids in Tune.

Semelbauer has also been a member of the Kalamazoo Junior Symphony Orchestra for three years and has been a member of the KJSO's Woodwind Trio.

"I love every concert I did with the KJSO," they said. "It's a really cool experience to be able to play with a really high level group like that. It can be nerve-wracking as well if you have important solos or exposed moments."

As a Norrix student, Semel-

bauer's other activities have included performing with Master Singers, the school's most advanced choir; being a member of the bowling team; and, most recently, joining the GSA, or Gender and Sexuality Alliance.

"For a long time I thought I was cisgender and straight — I don't want to get into specifics but last year after a lot of questioning, I found out that I was part of the LGBTQ community," they said. "I am aromantic, asexual and nonbinary."

"When I found out Norrix had a GSA, I thought I should probably join that."

GSA advisor John Kreider praised Semelbauer as "a unique individual, a virtuoso clarinet player, a computer programming whiz, a Rubik's cube whiz, and an awesome GSA kiddo."

Phoenix High School 2022 Graduates

- Abdul-Mutakallim, Nakir
Adil Humza
Abimbowo, Ahliya
Aguilera-Doport, Montserrat Sinai
Anderson, Shaughqual La'Qia
Armstrong, Amauria Arlena
Atlas, Takeitha Karrie
Baran, India Gabrielle
Beischl, Danielle Suzanne
Bell, Tre'ahnna Mary Jo
Berry, Olivia Madison
Bodian, Sonaya Aisha
Bownes, Marshaun Laquay
Brandt, Emma Broersma
Brown, Azaria Israel Lentrice
Buchanan, Aamiyah Terryon
Buchanan, Payge Maddison
Buskirk, Casandra Jo Danvel
Byishimo, Fabrice
Carrillo Betancourt, Juan Blas
Chambers, Tyionah Okita
- Clark, Jayanna Monia
Clark, Noriaha Alexis Marie
Clarke, Dontia Tachelle Ann
Cole, Jania Amoni
Coleman, William Jerrell
Culpepper, Naomi Carolyn-Tyree
Daniel, Malika Ebony
Davis, Brandin Kyle
Dobbins-Parks, Cameron Emmanuel
Donaldson, Raheim Amier
Doonan, Olivia Rochelle
Elajouz, Jad Abdallah
Elliott, Emerald Troi-Nicole
Evans, KaMyia Alliyah
Flores, Jacob Anthony
Foley, Crowe
Foote, Emma Nomonde
Frank, Car'mareah Kanice
Frank, Iya
Gallik, Kaylee Mae Cobb
Garcia, Aidan Alexander Ali
Gardenhire-Lamar, Xavier Douglas
George, Corey



Andrew Schaefer and Fabrice Byishimo wait for the start of the Phoenix commencement.

- Gero, Jack Hale
Gone, Isaac M
Graham, Keiayla Tia Marie
Greene-Little, Khanye' Dacarius
Hall, Marcus Andrew-De'Shon
Harris, Dexter Joshua
Harris, Kianna Marie
Harris, Kiara Marie
Harris, Manyiah Leeann
Haynes, Kassana Fantasy Renee
Haywood, Manuel Lajuan
- Herndon, Arius Deion
Hill, Mickayla Ann
Hinds, Hailey Jayann Jean
Hoard, Marquise Webb
Hobson, Airianna Cierra
Hoskin, Johntay Allen-Defrance
Hussong, Alyssa Paige
Irish, Aidan Freeman
Irons, Jaxson Jesse Lee
Jackson, Derrick Dalton
Jamar, Clayton Hanes
James, Samare Armenine-Danish
Jamison, Keyon Trey
- Johnson, Kylina Nyree
Johnson, Marquae Allen
Johnson, Yahweh Purewater X
Jones, Ernest Fitzgerald
Kalisiak, Zane Michael
Klein Vallier, Karissa Marie
Lewis, Le'kevion Lamar
Lewis, Montajha Denise
Liggion, Mechellea Daniel
Litaker, Noah Ryan
Little, Steven Nicholas
Mejia, Edwin
Miller, Hardie Damond
- Mills, Demarcus Lashawn
Mireles, Jesse Mateo
Mireles, Richard Anthony
Mitchell, Devin Scott
Montesino Fleitas, Noah
Morris, N'khia Li
Nieto, Joseph Connor
O'Bryant, Dar'rion Mahtrell Keith
Parker, Zaykhia Zybren
Peoples, Nevaeh
Peoples, Trinity Ireel
Perry, Deshawn Mykal
Phillips, Alicea Amara
Pratt, Stacy James Edward
Primer, Kyra Maren
Prude, Da'Shon Diallo
Rackley, Ayden Meyers
Randle, Trenton Omari
Reese-Snell, Destiney Monae
Rife, Chevy Austin
Roe, Michael Vladimir
Sanchez, Consuelo Nayeli
Sanders, Diamond Shantel
Schaefer, Andrew Donald
- Slater, Monzell Lavelle
Slavings, Kaylin Marie
Smith, Justice Gabrielle
Snell, Leondre Lamont
Snell, Reyna Valeria
Steel, Samariah Kaitlynn Armoni
Stewart, Savannah Mackenzie
Swift, Christina Nicoe
Tedford, Raymanie Danyell
Thompson, Jamyre Cameron
Tillison, Sierra Leigh
Tolin-Lee, Macey Maquinn
Townsell, Tayanna Anese
Trejo, Brandon
Trowbridge, Alivia Marie
Vargas, Horacio
Velasco-Stout, Ashlyn Willard, Tyler Robert
Wilson, Ju'stice Shamaria
Wistrom, Adrieonna Marie
Woodard, Alexandria Mozaha
Zirkelbach, Madison Marie

Khanye' Greene-Little: Quitting Was an Option, but Succeeding Was Better

Khanye' Greene-Little could have quit. Sometimes he thought about quitting. Like last year, when he didn't graduate.

"Like all my friends graduated. They were having open houses and I'm not," he said. "That messed with my head. But my mom kept encouraging me, 'You can do it, I know that you can.'"

He came back to Phoenix High School and completed his high school education with a year that included at least two stints on the honor roll.

"Those are real accomplishments that my mom can be proud of," Greene-Little said. "I didn't just graduate. I didn't come here and just get by. I came here and got As. I really wanted to do something. I didn't want to just give up."

Greene-Little, 18, is the son of Corcelia Greene and Deemetrius Little. He attended Woodward School for Technology and Research, Milwood Elementary School, Hillside Middle School and Kalamazoo Central High School before moving to Phoenix.

K Central with its large classes and big groups of friends just didn't work for Greene-Little, who said he has attention deficit issues. "There are 30 people in a class and a teacher can't just focus on you. There was too much going on."

Things hit bottom in his sophomore year — that's when he made the switch to Phoenix.

"At Phoenix it's just more focused on you. There are only 10-15 students in a class. And, the teachers here really break it down for you. When I first came here, they didn't let me go home until I did my work."

He felt a real connection to the staff, including English teacher Grace Nelson, Spanish teacher Scott Hunsinger, secretary Sue Valler, Principal Mark Hill, and security officer Terry Buchanan.

"The teachers would break the work down, like one-on-one. They'd teach everybody else then come to me personally and break it down — or after school they were making me understand it. They all just



Khanye' Greene-Little was disappointed he didn't graduate last year, but proud of his achievements this year.

gave me the encouragement I needed," he said.

That made a huge difference and he began to regain his academic footing — and even joined activities such as basketball and yearbook — but then came Covid and virtual learning.

He is not a virtual learner. He said he found it impossible to stare at a screen all day,

and even when the school did offer help, he couldn't find the motivation to attend.

"I was so close, but I wasn't focused. If I would have just woke up on time — or if I would have come in when they offered help. If I would have been doing Saturday School. But I was just lazy and I regret that."

He said he cried when he

realized his friends would all be graduating — without him. He thought about quitting but his mom kept him going. He came back determined to finish.

Greene-Little plans to attend Kalamazoo Valley Community College and study business.

He said he knows there are people who didn't think he'd ever graduate and he is glad to have proven them wrong. The key to success was finding the courage to make the right decision for himself.

"People might think Phoenix is a bad school or not as smart as other schools, but we have all the core classes. I think it's the best school in Kalamazoo. Don't be scared to come over here. When I came to Phoenix they welcomed me with open arms.

"Everybody needs help eventually in life. You can try to be the most independent person in the world but eventually you're going to need help from somebody to do something. My main point is don't be scared to make the change and find the help you need."



THE CLINICAL PRACTICE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
HOMER STRYKER M.D. SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Don't forget your child's wellness exam!

**Be prepared for sports activities and
make sure all immunizations are up to date.**

Call for your appointment today!

**Accepting New Patients
269.337.4600**

**med.wmich.edu
Find us on Facebook @WMedHealth**

Kalamazoo Adult Education 2022 Graduates

Cekola, Angelo
Cole, Aleeah
Hayworth, Tyler
Hill, Ashley
Hostetler, Monica
Hudson-Dowdy, Olivia
Hurley, Alexandra
Johnson, Tyler
Kovach, Ethan
Merchant, Edward
Smith, Lenny
Soria, Dominic
Valkema, Raymund
Wyrick-Philips, Jessica

Chanel Wilson: Reaching for Achievement for Herself — and Others

When Chanel Wilson was 10, everyone in her class was asked to research a career.

She sat and listened to everyone talk about being teachers, doctors and chefs. When her turn came, she said she wanted to be the chief financial officer for a company.

“I wanted to be a CFO for a long time,” said the Loy Norrix High School graduate. “I just thought it sounded different. I realized that I really loved the business industry and I wanted a leadership position in business.”

Wilson, who will be attending the University of Michigan in the fall to study business, has been the winner of the Kalamazoo Social Justice Youth Award and the YWCA Young Woman of Achievement Award. She has already built an impressive business resume. She participated in the KRESA CTEs for business finance, international finance and sports management. She’s been a member of Norrix’s award-winning DECA business club.

Outside of her business interests, she’s been a member of the National Honor Society, PeaceJam, played violin with the school orchestra, and went on a service mission to Africa with Inner City Youth for Change. She’s taken leadership roles with the school’s executive board, the Kalamazoo County Youth Cabinet, the Youth Mobility Ambassador Cabinet, and the Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation department’s Youth Advisory Council.

“I think it’s important to join clubs. You should join everything. You get to learn different things from the conversations and interactions with so many different people,” said Wilson, who was the president of DECA this year. “You also need to take on leadership roles. It makes you nervous but you have to put yourself out there to lose that fear of failing. Sometimes failing is necessary to become successful. You have to fail to learn.”

Wilson, 18, is the daughter



Chanel Wilson was the 2022 president of the Loy Norrix DECA chapter. DECA is a business club. Chanel Wilson and Wendy Miedema earned a gold School Based Enterprise Award for reopening a pop-up school store and writing a 20-page paper about the experience. They also presented a report on the human resources aspect of the project.

of Molli Kornak and Bobby and Denise Wilson. “I want to thank my parents, my educators and my family for helping me and encouraging me to blossom and become the best version of myself that I can be.”

Wilson attended Prairie Ridge Elementary School and Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts before attending Norrix. She comes by her high-energy, can-do personality naturally and is pretty sure she was that way at Prairie Ridge.

“When I was in elementary school, I was always the kid that wanted to have that behavior card stay on green,” she said with a laugh. “Of course my parents motivated me, but as I’ve grown, I’ve just developed a self-motivation and just wanted to be ambitious.”

Even though she was highly focused, sometimes she did need extra encouragement. She remembers sitting in an informational meeting about the Academically Talented Youth Program, in which middle school students complete four years of high school requirements in two years.

“It’s a lot of work and you have to take a test to get in. I wasn’t sure,” Wilson said. “(Principal) Dr. (Jeff) Boggan pulled me out in the hallway. He said, ‘I believe in you and I believe you will be able

to do the program. He gave me a pep talk and believed in me when I didn’t believe in myself. When I completed the program, I told him ‘You’re the reason I went in that program.’

“It was a critical moment. It propelled me to reach for the stars and to believe you can do anything you put your mind to.”

ATYP was challenging. Wilson, who completed the math portion of the program, which requires students to complete Algebra I and II in seventh grade and precalculus and geometry in eighth grade.

“It was challenging, but I also liked being in a setting like that,” she said. It was eye-opening for another reason. Often, she was the only black girl in any of the classes.

“It gave me the opportunity to look out and see you may be in settings that make you uncomfortable, but maybe by being the only black girl in ATYP, there might be a girl in sixth grade who looks up to you and says, ‘Someone who looks like me can do that.’ Maybe it will

give someone motivation because they may think if she’s doing that, I can do that too, no matter the color of my skin, or my gender or the stereotypes placed on women of color.”

Equity and representation are things she thinks of often as she considers the future. She said she likes a quote from Shirley Chisholm, who was the first African American U.S. congresswoman:

“If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.”

Wilson said she sometimes felt added stress as the only black student in some of her advanced classes.

“Sometimes people don’t get a voice. Sometimes people are marginalized or overlooked. At the end of the day, seeing people discriminated against made me want to use my voice to accentuate those things and let adults know what’s going on. Sometimes you are speaking for yourself, and sometimes you are speaking for the people who are overlooked and unheard.”

Cooper Betke: Leaving Giant Footprints to Fill as He Starts on a Path Toward Teaching

Cooper Betke wants to be a teacher.

He's not the student who says he's "always" wanted to be a teacher. In fact when he started high school, he aspired to be an aeronautical engineer.

But now, Betke, 18, has graduated from Kalamazoo Central with the Outstanding Senior Award from the Kalamazoo RESA Teacher Academy, which included a year of hands-on teaching experience, and he is heading to Adrian College to pursue a degree in education.

Betke is the son of Carolyn and Tony Betke and big brother to Cameron, 8, and his late brother Spencer.

Betke attended King-Westwood and Winchell elementary schools, Linden Grove Middle School. In high school, he ran cross country for three years, participated in forensics and the school musicals, and was the student council vice president this year.

Along his career in KPS, Betke said, some of the greatest memories were created by the

amazing teachers.

Retired teacher Tracie James, who taught at King-Westwood Elementary, "saw my potential and pushed me forward. She always said, 'I know you can do this.'"

In fifth grade at Winchell, he says teacher Kathy Dahl "brought joy and happiness into everything she did."

And while he was always a good student, there was one teacher who told him he could be a better student.

"Mrs. (Yonee) Kuiphoff, my eighth-grade science teacher, said this thing to me that really impacted me," he said. "She said, 'Cooper, the way you're going through school is like you're going down a river. Right now you're just floating there. You're not rowing. There's no direction. You're just letting it all go by. You need to start rowing.'"

"That just really impacted me. I think that little phrase helped push me. It was like, 'OK, I'll go row.' Without that little phrase, I think high school would have been completely



Cooper Betke helps preschool student Caio David paint Halloween pumpkins in the Loy Norrix Child Care Center.

different."

But when he talks about the person who really inspired him to want to become a teacher, the name that pops up is that of KC English teacher William Santilli, who Betke had freshman and senior year.

Betke's brother Spencer

died by suicide during his freshman year, and Santilli made the year more bearable. When Betke returned to school after the funeral, many teachers offered their condolences and were there to talk, but he said he remembers one parent-teacher conference with Santilli.

"He was talking to my parents and he said, 'What grade would you like him to have? So, I can get one more thing off of his plate?' He actually did something to show that he cared. That was special to me. After that, I thought I want to do that for other kids. I want to help."

Santilli is equally complementary of Betke.

"Whatever 'it' is, Mr. Betke has 'it.' And it is not so much that he would be a great teacher, he will be great at just about anything he does," Santilli said. "I also had an influential teacher. He was my high school English teacher Mr. Moore, and once he knew that I was to become a teacher, he had a perpetual request for me. I now bestow it on Mr. Betke. He must now change one more life, and the easy ones don't count. Work toward the hard kind of change that no one else can see."

Betke has already helped make a difference at Kalamazoo Central, where administrators honored him at the Senior Awards ceremony with the Giant Footprints Award.

The Outstanding Leader Award is granted to students who: "inspire others to do more, learn more and become more. These leaders know the way, go the way and show the way. They are driven by passion and not position. They are reflective of servant leadership by serving others first and then aspiring to lead in order to make a change in the lives of others and the community."

He said he was absolutely surprised by the award, but he did come into high school ready to follow Mrs. Kuiphoff's admonishment.

"I approached high school with a positive attitude. I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to be here. The best way I can put it is in terms of how (Principal) Mrs. (Valerie) Boggan would put it: I wanted to leave a footprint."

YOUR SUMMER ADVENTURES TAKE FLIGHT

Check out our free community access programs, educational offerings, scholarship programs, events, exhibit openings and more!

Fly-Ins • Day Camps
Science Floor Shows • Open Houses
Summer STEAM Days

6151 Portage Rd. Portage, MI 49002 | Exit 78 off of I-94
269.382.6555

LEARN MORE
airzoo.org/things-to-do

16 | EXCELSIOR

June/July 2022

www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

Ayanda Ndlovu: Grit and Grind and Goals

Grit and grind.

That's all there is to it.

Kalamazoo Central High School graduate Ayanda Ndlovu, 17, said that was the key to high school — and she finds that's the key to most of what happens in life.

Ask her about her activities in high school and with a smile, she says, "I was just a basketball player."

She's been playing forever. When she came to Central, she worked her way through freshman basketball and junior varsity. Then, after the frustration of a season shortened by Covid in her junior year, she tried out for the varsity team. Making varsity was her one goal for high school.

And, she was cut.

She said the coaches came up after tryouts and offered her the chance to be a team manager.

"I was kind of numb. I had played since I was a freshman and I didn't think I'd get cut, but I knew there were things I had to work on," Ndlovu said. "Coach P (Jason Plunkett) told me to go home and think about it. I texted Coach that night and said, 'Yeah, I'm ready to be a team manager.'"

Still, she did wonder why she got cut, so she asked Assistant Coaches Nelly Smith and Alexis Buchanan, what could she do to get better?

"They gave me different things," she said. "While the team was practicing, I'd be on the other side of the gym working on becoming a more confident shooter and dribbling. All of the stuff they said."

Grit and grind. Even when you've been cut.

She was there for every practice, helping the team run drills, assisting the coaches.

"I was actually OK with being a manager," Ndlovu said. "It was the same girls I played with since I entered high school. They're still my best friends. I wanted to stay by their side.



Ayanda Ndlovu, Kalamazoo Central Class of 2022 graduate, takes the ball down the court.

It was our last year. I had to be there for them. We all had love for each other. I just wanted everybody to succeed."

In February, the team went on a bonding field trip to watch the Western Michigan University Broncos take on the Ohio University Bobcats women's basketball team.

"We all got up to get snacks at halftime, and Coach P stopped me for a sec and he told me that he's putting me back on the team. It's only for certain games and he may or may not play me," she said. "I didn't get on the team and every other girl did. I didn't expect to get monster minutes but I told him that I'd work for every second I got."

She ran and told her friends. "We were all screaming and happy. It was a sweet moment."

Ndlovu played two or three games for the varsity team, including scoring several baskets during the crosstown rivalry game between KC and Loy Norrix.

"Everything I get, I have to work for. There are no handouts

in life," she said. "I have to approach everything with grit and grind because that's the only way I know how to. I never got anything just because."

Ndlovu is the daughter Teresa Swindle and Frederick Okes, but her mother died of breast cancer when Ndlovu was 3, and she was raised by her maternal aunt Mildred Morgan. In the fall, she will attend Ferris State University to study business and sports administration.

She said was always a good student but a "challenging" student in terms of behavior. She is grateful to people like Kalamazoo Central Assistant Principal Ajamian Gardner and teacher aide Deborah Yarbrough.

"They took time to get to know me personally in school and outside of school," she said. "They showed me how to get better and I felt like I owed it to them to do better for myself. I did turn my behavior around a lot."

She said that behavior-wise, she "probably" gave her aunt a hard time too.

"I grew up angry. I think

my mom's death affected me. I didn't understand why it had happened. She tried to figure out a lot of things. She pulled me aside, took me to counseling, got me involved in a lot of fun activities to calm me down and wear me out. She's the only mom I really knew. It was a roller coaster but I wouldn't change it.

"I got my grit and grind from her. She pushed me to do my best. Whatever I wanted at home, I had to earn it. She taught me a lot about how to get stuff for myself and to never look for handouts."

Her advice to other high school students:

Have fun.

Try not not to make poor choices.

Don't just choose the fun crowd, choose the friends who will be there for you when you're down.

"Do what you wanted to do when you first woke up in the morning. You don't want to wake up the next day with any regrets."

Grit and grind.



★ Friend of the Court Referee

★ 15+ Years Practicing Family Law

★ Loy Norrix '93/WMU/MSU Alum

★ Balanced. Fair. Experienced.

VOTE Primary Election August 2
Non-Partisan Ballot

www.JoeForJudge.com
Facebook.com/HohlerForJudge



Joseph Hohler III
2022
for 9th Circuit Court Judge




METRO

CONNECTING PEOPLE
THROUGHOUT
KALAMAZOO COUNTY

269-337-8222
kmetro.com

Tyler Roberts: Learning to Give His Best On and Off the Field

Tyler Roberts has spent years honing his skills on the football field, baseball diamond and basketball court.

But an injury that forced him to the sidelines unexpectedly helped make him an even better athlete.

Roberts, who has played all three sports during his four years in high school, was recently named a finalist for the the Michigan High School Coaches Association's Rich Tompkins Award, which honors multi-sport athletes who maintain a high GPA and demonstrate community involvement. At Norrix, he's been the quarterback for the football team, and played third base and shortstop for the baseball team, and power forward for the basketball team. In the fall, he will be attending Hope College, where he has committed to play football and baseball.

Last year, Roberts' junior year was already difficult because of Covid. When the basketball season started late in January — after several delays — he was in the second week of practice, pivoted, and suddenly found himself flat

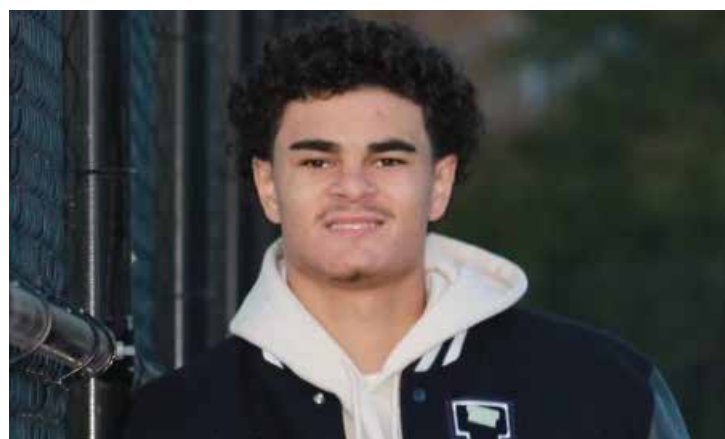
on his face. He thought he might have been hit from behind.

He went to the emergency room that night, but it wasn't until two weeks later that an MRI showed a full thickness rupture of his achilles tendon. Surgery followed soon after — along with a warning from his physical therapist and doctor that these injuries usually take a full year to heal.

He managed to make it back to pitching the last two games of the high school season — only four months after surgery — something that astounded his physical therapy team. But that wasn't the real growth that came from the injury.

With the surgery, he found that for the first time in years, he wasn't going to have sports to occupy his time. After his surgery, his mother urged him to rest, but for some reason he felt compelled to keep attending basketball practice — and baseball when that started.

"I don't think I missed a practice or a game all season long. I was riding around on my one-legged scooter at the games," he



Tyler Roberts, Loy Norrix, is a three-sport athlete and winner of a KRESA CTE Outstanding Senior award.

said. "That experience benefited me more than staying home would have.

"It built my character. I realized things I wouldn't have realized if I'd been playing the sport. I saw different aspects of how it all came together. And I really saw the camaraderie of your teammates and how you can feed off of one another. I could be there to be an outlet for people or give energy to a teammate. I fell in love with that feeling. I couldn't stop."

Steve Verduzco, who was Roberts' Milwood Little League

and Michigan Rebels travel league coach, said it was awful to see Roberts get injured.

"He'd worked so hard and was going to have great basketball and baseball seasons," Verduzco said. "But he once again stepped up for his teammates. He led from afar. He didn't have to be on the field to help his teammates get better."

Before the tear, Roberts said he wasn't a very vocal leader. He chose to lead by example.

"But the tear forced me to be more vocal, to talk to everyone more. I was able to communicate better with my teammates, tell them when they were wrong — or when they were right and I was wrong. It was a blessing in disguise to go through all of that and come out the other side that much better."

The injury may have helped him grow as a leader, but he's always had those skills within him, Verduzco said.

"At a young age, Ty was a dominant player. He was bigger and more athletic than other kids his age," Verduzco said. "But he was different. He was confident, but humble. He was the kind of kid who raised the level of play of his teammates by setting a great example — he led with both his actions and his words.

"To see the young man that he's turned into makes my heart full."

Roberts is the son of Debra Lenz and Carl Roberts. His older brother Drew Roberts

also attended Norrix and is now a student at Michigan State University. All three of them — along with his long-time girlfriend Neida Jaimes — have been key to his success, he said. His brother pushed him to always do more and do better to improve his opportunities; his mother is his top supporter in everything; his father, he laughs, supports in a different way.

"He's the one who when I come home, I don't get smiles from. He's the one that made me the most coachable. That's a huge thing nowadays with attitudes from players. He drives me to be open to anything even if it's uncomfortable or I'm not sure what I'm doing. He makes me feel like I can do anything."

Roberts attended Greenwood and Milwood elementary schools, and Milwood Magnet School before Norrix.

At Norrix, the National Honor Society member's activities have been dominated by sports. Three sports, three seasons, four years.

"I feel like I'm better at baseball than football. I love baseball but it's very slow-paced. With football, in part because I'm the quarterback, I'm constantly doing something. It requires a different level of intensity and competitiveness."

Maybe because he had a big brother and maybe because he's played sports for as long as he can remember, but competitiveness is part of his character, he said.

"I think having a challenge is the best thing for a person," Roberts said. "It pushes you beyond what you think you can do. I think it's a powerful thing to have a goal, to acknowledge it, and to pursue it.

"I don't think it's the best quality I have. I like to always be right. Mistakes happen. But I like to be the best at anything I can do. Anything I try, I try to do to the best of my ability. I don't see a reason why you'd go out and do something lackadaisical or give half your effort. That's pointless to me."

 **MICHIGAN RECONNECT**

ARE YOU

25

**YEARS OR OLDER
WITHOUT A DEGREE?**

GET FREE TUITION

Michigan Reconnect is a scholarship designed specifically for eligible adults who want to pursue an associate degree at a Michigan community college or a skills certificate at a training school.

Fall semester starts on Sept. 7!
Get registered now at
www.kvcc.edu/register.

Learn more at kvcc.edu/reconnect

Kalamazoo VALLEY
community college

KPS Meet Up and Eat Up Begins June 27

Kalamazoo Public Schools announces the sponsorship of the Summer Food Service Program for children. Free meals will be made available to children 18 years of age and under or persons up to 26 years old who are enrolled in an educational program for the mentally or physically disabled that is recognized by a state or local public educational agency. The meals will be provided without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. The only stipulation to the free meals is that the meal be eaten on site.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a



MEET UP

and

EAT UP™

Healthy food
to fuel your
summer.

Meals will be provided at sites listed below. All sites are closed on July 4. Breakfast and lunch times are subject to change.

June 27–Aug 11	Douglass Community Assoc.	1000 W. Paterson St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9 am/1 pm
June 27–Aug 5	Northeastern — Boys and Girls	2433 Gertrude St.	Lunch (M–F)	1 pm
June 27–Aug 11	Upjohn Park	1018 Walter St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	New Village Park	2500 St. Albans Way	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	CEC	714 S. Westnedge Ave.	Lunch (M–F)	12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	Interfaith	1037 Interfaith Blvd.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9 am/1 pm
July 5–Aug 11	CLC–Stones Church	1225 W. Paterson St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	8 am/11:30 am
June 27–Aug 4	Arcadia Elementary	932 Boswell Lane	Breakfast/Lunch (M–TH)	8:30 am/11:15 am
June 27–Aug 11	Salvation Army	1700 S. Burdick St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	Mayors’ Riverfront Park	251 Mills St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 5	Lincoln Elementary	912 N. Burdick St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	8 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 4	King–Westwood Elementary	1100 Nichols Road	Breakfast/Lunch (M–TH)	8 am/10 am
June 27–Aug 11	South Side Park	Palmer Avenue	Lunch (M–F)	9 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	Mobile Site — Fox Ridge Apartments	1320 Fox Ridge Dr.	Lunch (M–F)	11:15 am
June 27–Aug 11	Eastside Association	1301 E. Main St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9:30 am/11:45 am
June 27–Aug 11	LaCrone Park	535 W. Paterson St.	Lunch (M–F)	12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	All Things Possible	2000 W. Michigan Ave.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9:30 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 4	Washington Elementary	1919 Portage St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–TH)	8 am/10 am
June 27–Aug 11	Milwood United Church	3919 Portage St.	Lunch (M–F)	12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	Rockwell Park	1106 Trimble St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	9 am/12 pm
June 27–Aug 11	Civic Auditorium	369 W. South St.	Lunch (M–F)	12 pm
June 27–Aug 4	Greenwood Elementary	3501 Moreland St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–TH)	8 am/11 am
June 27–Aug 4	Linden Grove	4241 Arboretum Pkwy.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–TH)	7:45 am/11 am
June 27–Aug 11	Maple Street YMCA	1001 W. Maple St.	Breakfast/Lunch (M–F)	8:45 am/11:45 am
June 27–Aug 11	Mt. Zion Church	120 Roberson St.	Lunch (M–TH)	11:15 am

Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant’s name,

address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
or fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442
or email: program.intake@usda.gov

BACK
TO
SCHOOL

www.gildenwoods.com

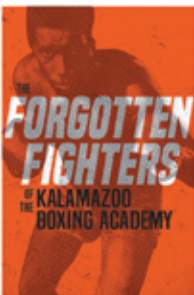
WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE Kalamazoo VALLEY Museum KV



EVENT JUNE 18, 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. | **FREE**

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM BLACK FILM FEST

Organized by Soul Artistry LLC.



SAVE THE DATE SEPT. 10 | **FREE**

FORGOTTEN FIGHTERS OF THE KALAMAZOO BOXING ACADEMY

Enjoy a documentary about the KBA and a reception at 1:30 p.m. More details at kalamazoomuseum.org.

NOW OPEN AGES 0 - 5 | **FREE**

CHILDREN'S LANDSCAPE

Connect with young learners through stories, play and imagination in a space just for them. Hours are limited. First come, first served.



EXHIBIT

NOW - SEPT. 21 | FREE

RUBE GOLDBERG™ THE WORLD OF HILARIOUS INVENTION EXHIBIT!



Rube Goldberg's cartoons and zany contraptions come to life through 3D, life-size machines and more in a humorous investigation of classic engineering principles. *This exhibit was created by the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh in partnership with the Heirs of Rube Goldberg.*



EXHIBIT

NOW - DECEMBER 2023 | FREE

WONDER MEDIA: ASK THE QUESTIONS!

Wonder Media's 14 activity stations provide a fun, hands-on way to get you thinking about big issues surrounding media, news and information.

UPCOMING SHOWS FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS | \$3

PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE

One World, One Sky | Preschool - Grade 1 | 11 a.m. | June 3 - 25

Join Big Bird, Elmo and their Chinese friend, Hu Hu Zhu, exploring the sky they share. Discover the Big Dipper, North Star and the Moon.

The Little Star That Could | Grades 2 - 4 | 11 a.m. | July 1 - 30

Meet a Little Star who is born and searches for a place in space to call home.

Sky on Fire | Grades 3 & up | 2:30 p.m. | June 3 - July 30

Take a trip through time to discover how fireworks have been used for celebrations around the globe.

PUBLIC HOURS: Tuesday - Friday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday | 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday | Noon - 4 p.m.

GENERAL ADMISSION IS FREE

Note: Some areas of the museum may be closed due to exhibit changes, staffing needs, special programs or collections care. We thank you for your patience.

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.



230 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo
kalamazoomuseum.org | 269.373.7900