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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, Feb. 11 & 25, 2021
7 p.m.

For more information on KPS board meeting locations and format, please visit our website at kalamazoopublicschools.net/boardmeetings.

Trimester 3

Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri will host three virtual town halls to discuss learning plans for Trimester 3, which begins March. 15.

They will be held:

6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2

4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3

9 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 4

Please check the KPS website at www.kalamazoopublicschools.com for information on how to register.

**Look for your
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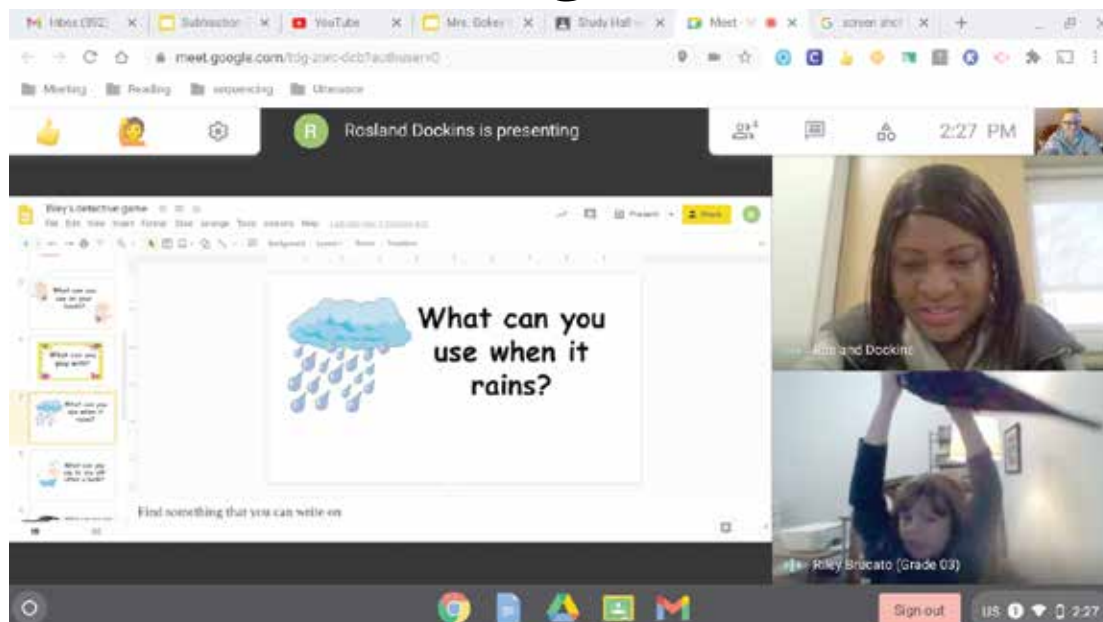
Special Education Focuses on Providing Support During Pandemic

During the now yearlong pandemic, Kalamazoo Public Schools Special Education department has been busy ensuring students receive the services they need.

“What we’re doing is what we have always done, making sure students who may need services get evaluations,” said Reuquiyah “Rikki” Saunders, director of special education for KPS. “We determine if we can do that with fidelity in a remote situation.”

The challenge, Saunders said, is that traditional evaluations require evaluators to meet one-on-one with students and to observe them in the classroom and outside of class in other settings.

(continued on page 5)



Special education paraprofessional Rosland Dockins created a special game to engage Indian Prairie Elementary School student Riley Brucato. Dockins asked Riley’s mom to gather common household items, which she used for the “Detective Game.” Riley was given clues to decipher which items could help him in the game. The fun game built social skills and his inference abilities.

Alumni Day: Grads Back in Virtual Form to Encourage High Schoolers

Alumni Day 2020 in December was virtual, but the advice was real world.

Recent Loy Norrix and Kalamazoo Central grads still visited their alma maters to impart their newfound wisdom on younger students in the annual tradition.

Julia Kemple-Johnson, a

2018 Central graduate, joined Haley Palmquist, a 2020 grad, in Rex Hafer’s KC Advanced Placement government class. Kemple-Johnson will graduate from Michigan State University this year and is currently applying to law schools. She talked about her thesis on the commodification of privacy in

the digital age.

“My mind is blown right now,” said Hafer, who said he’s always impressed with the accomplishments of former students on Alumni Day.

Palmquist, who is a student at Central Michigan University, said her dream has always been to study meteorology. Her only

challenge was finding a minor to pair with that, and she finally settled on computer science.

Palmquist and Kemple-Johnson both applauded students for taking advantage of Advanced Placement classes, which they felt helped them prepare for the rigors of college

(continued on page 4)

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Equity Task Force Will Help KPS Identify, Dismantle Inequities

In June, shortly after I joined Kalamazoo Public Schools, I was compelled to send a letter to the school community following the death of George Floyd, the Minneapolis man who died in police custody after an officer knelt on his neck.

For many, Floyd’s death was a symbol of our country’s history of racial abuse and discrimination toward our neighbors, friends, and colleagues. It was a painful and shameful acknowledgement of the cultural and social injustices that plague our communities and institutions.

I said then that George Floyd’s death should give us pause and inspire us to reconsider whether we as a country are living up to our promises of freedom and equality for all. Those concerns have been only deepened by the recent storming of the U.S. Capitol – during which the largely white crowd faced little resistance – certainly nowhere near the police presence or resistance witnessed by the ethnically diverse crowds that protested Floyd’s death or

who marched in support of Black Lives Matter.

At the time of Floyd’s death, I wrote:

“This war-rants a careful critique of our roles as educators, as citizens, as humanitarians as we all wrestle with our pain, anxieties, and fears. I share in the grief and anger that many of you are feeling. As witnesses to this moment, we are charged to examine why in our nation, for some of our citizens, we have failed to live up to the true meaning of its creed of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all.

“There are some among us who fear that they and their loved ones are mere steps away from meeting their end with impunity. This is not the time to be onlookers; it is time for us to find the strength within ourselves and across our



Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri, Superintendent, Kalamazoo Public Schools

respective communities to do what we can, with all we have.

I said then, and still believe, that when confronted with the horrors resulting from the injustices and inequalities that exist in our community, we are required to take steps to examine who we are and how we may contribute to those inequities. If we fail to do so then we are complicit in their continuation.

As educators, I believe that we need to examine those issues not simply to address current conditions. We are obligated to address those concerns out of our duty to care for and protect our children and their futures. We spend so much time equipping our students with the knowledge and skills they require to succeed – we should work to ensure that they have a world willing to acknowledge and accept and honor their wonderful minds and bodies no matter what their backgrounds or orientations.

At the end of my letter, I announced that KPS would launch an Equity Task Force. I am

“We believe that the solutions to our equity challenges are in the spaces in which we come together to inquire, collaborate, and problem solve.”

happy to say that in December we began the application process for our 2021-2022 Equity Task Force and Design Team. We put out a call for potential team members from within KPS and from the community, and we will begin interviewing candidates later this month.

KPS strives to serve all children and their families, but we know from data and personal anecdotes that not

all of our students experience KPS in an equitable way. That reality came into even sharper focus over the past year as we worked to provide services for our students remotely. When virtual learning launched, one of the first things we had to address was equal access to resources and technology – and we and the community rose to that challenge distributing thousands of Chromebooks and internet hotspots to enable children to connect with their teachers and schools online.

But, truly, we would be naive to think that is the only example of inequity in our community.

This team’s immediate charge will be to begin the long-term process to eliminate and dismantle racism and other forms of intolerance and discrimination within the district’s practices, policies, goals, curriculum, and culture and to have a positive and meaningful impact in Kalamazoo.

Our hope is that the Equity Task Force and Design Team will help us identify equity challenges facing the district and determine approaches for positive change through study, discussion and reflection. We believe that the solutions to our equity challenges are in the spaces in which we come together to inquire, collaborate, and problem solve.

As the team works through its process we will be reviewing all KPS policies and hope to bring recommendations to help KPS embrace and evolve into a better leader for equity in our community. While I am helping lead this effort, I see myself as a learner first and foremost as I work with all of the team members to listen to the concerns of the community, learn from experts in equity work, and reflect on how we can create a more kind and compassionate world that protects and honors the humanity of all.



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“Real Careers, Real Talk!” Offers Students a Peek into Area’s Cool Jobs, Hidden Gems

Kalamazoo Public Schools and Kalamazoo RESA Career & Technical Education have launched an interview series with local professionals to help students explore careers and local employment opportunities in the fast-changing labor market.

“Real Careers, Real Talk!” launched informally on Nov. 4 with a conversation with Dr. Charlae Davis, executive director of ISAAC (Interfaith Strategy for Advocacy and Action in the Community). The series returned full-time in January.

KPS students attend the live interviews via Google Meet, and the interviews will be recorded and available to all students throughout the county. KRESA career coaches curate additional resources, from career videos to family reflection questions, corresponding to each interview at sites.google.com/kresa.org/kresacareerexploration/home/real-careers-real-talk.

[org/kresacareerexploration/home/real-careers-real-talk](https://sites.google.com/kresa.org/kresacareerexploration/home/real-careers-real-talk).

“We hope that these career conversations will continue in the homes of our families and grow roots to help inspire and foster career, college, and citizenship readiness for our 21st century global and interdependent world,” said Tracy Miller, the KPS technology integration specialist who has helped coordinate the series.

The first few interviews were conducted by KRESA career coach Joan Hawxhurst and KRESA business and community relations lead Sarah Mansberger. As the series continues, other interviewers will join the series. Interview topics include: 21st century skills, education and training, resilience and challenge, and “a day in the life” of various jobs.

Miller said the district is excited to give students a



chance to envision their futures and give them the skills to enact their plans.

“This virtual career development initiative and showcase is designed to help students explore and become aware of the variety of career, educational, and training opportunities in their community in the various career clusters,” Miller said. “Students will learn about the academic

skills, job characteristics, competencies, dispositions, and professional and social and emotional learning skills necessary for careers they may be interested in pursuing.”

“Real Careers” will utilize local leaders, employers and employees to share their experiences with students and to create real world excitement about their career paths and the world of work, Miller said.

Exploring local employment opportunities can help students make more informed plans about their futures, Mansberger said.

“We are excited to learn from each of our interviewees about the twists and turns in their professional lives and to see all of the incredible work they are doing right here in Kalamazoo,” she said. “Building bridges with community and industry partners helps create opportunities for young people in Kalamazoo County.”

The “Real Careers, Real Talk!” series launched in conjunction with the region’s celebration of National Career Development Month during November.

For more information about “Real Careers, Real Talk!” and the other initiatives of the KRESA CTE team, contact Hawxhurst at joan.hawxhurst@kresa.org.



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Alumni Day: Grads Back in Virtual Form to Encourage High Schoolers (continued from pg. 1)

study. The women also both suggested that students consider checking out the residential college experience. Residential colleges group students with like interests and areas of study which helps create a sense of community on a large campus, they said.

KC choir teacher Theresa Williams-Johnson hosted graduate Madison Van Natter (2017), who is in her senior year at MSU. VanNatter said she never thought she'd be spending her senior year online during a pandemic, but, her college professors have done a good job working with the students to make learning possible, she said.

"The teachers have been very understanding and are offering way more office hours to make sure students are able to get everything that they can out of the classes," VanNatter said.

She warned students to be prepared for more demanding classes and homework loads when they start college and admitted that she struggled



Western Michigan University student and Loy Norrix alumna Laura Worline, second row, third from left, visited journalism teacher Tisha Pankop's, upper left corner, class on the district's Alumni Day.

her freshman year. She became hyper-focused on her classes after that and put more thought into what she wanted to get out of the college experience.

Like Kemple-Johnson, she's contemplating law school and has been busy building a resume not just with classes in the James Madison College but

with student organizations such as Model U.N. and Moot Court.

Finally, while she always knew she was interested in law, her brother started in aerospace engineering before realizing it wasn't a good fit. He is now a music major.

"My brother was brave enough to change," and he's

much happier now, she said. "Never be scared to change your major. Don't let someone dictate your way through college."

Aiyanna Berry (2020), a political science major with a criminal justice minor at Wayne State University, told Williams-Johnson's class that she didn't understand how expensive college would be — even with The Promise. She encouraged students to explore every scholarship and financial aid opportunity.

"The hard work is so worth it if you can walk out of college debt-free," Berry said.

Western Michigan University student Laura Worline (2017) visited Loy Norrix journalism teacher Tisha Pankop's class and encouraged students to use their college experience to develop independence and make new friends. She lived on campus her first year and, while living on campus is a great way to make new friends and try new experiences, she realized that she enjoys her own space. Now, she lives in the Vine neighborhood by herself.

"It's a good way to figure out how to feed yourself and do your laundry and just manage yourself," said Worline, who is studying public and nonprofit

administration. She said the past year was definitely a challenge. She, like other students, has been feeling screen fatigue, where every day becomes part of "one big day." While time management is important in high school and college in general, it's been especially key during the pandemic, because it helps provide structure to her day. She gets up and works between 9 a.m. and noon, breaks for lunch, goes to her part-time job, and comes back to finish her studies in the afternoon. Her laptop is shut by 7 p.m. each night.

"Everyone has to find their own niche for time management," she said.

At Loy Norrix, Adam Dorstewitz (2018) and Joanna Yiu (2015) visited Ryan Allen's class to talk about their experiences at Kalamazoo College and MSU, respectively, and to encourage students to make the most of their time in high school.

Dorstewitz, who hopes to become a sports agent, said his one big regret about high school was that he didn't get more involved in extracurriculars. He attended Norrix and KAMSC and was focused on his academics, as well as playing baseball and tennis.

"If I had to go back I would involve myself in more things. I wasn't that diverse in terms of what I did," he said. "I wish I'd spent more time in forensics. If you have a bunch of friends in a club, go spend time with them. You won't get that back."

Yiu said she was a member of National Honor Society and PeaceJam, and played soccer for Norrix for several years. High school should be about more than studying — for your own personal enjoyment and because colleges now acknowledge that they prefer well-rounded students.

"They want to see that you have interests," Yiu said. "Character shows more about a person than a GPA."

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

Director of Student Services

Kalamazoo Public Schools
3410 Laird Ave.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0161

All other inquiries should be directed to:

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

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District Directory at :
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Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri

Special Education Department Facing Unique Challenges During Pandemic (cont. from page 1)

“Clearly our assessments and our IEPs (Individualized Education Program) plans have always been written to be implemented face-to-face,” she said. IEPs are the documents that are written by a student’s parents and a team of district personnel to help guide the learning of a student with special education needs. “Watching kids on computers is difficult. We never want to determine if a student has a disability just because of the pandemic. A lot of people are struggling in the pandemic, and we want to make sure our determinations are based on the best protocols.”

After conducting evaluations, the department has been challenged to provide services in a way that families and students may not be used to, Saunders said.

A speech therapist or occupational therapist, for example, may have to provide their services remotely. And rather than create a plan to provide remote learning for a high school student with anxiety, the special education

staff may focus on finding ways to make the remote experience more accessible for the student.

“We are having to create goals that we can meet through distance learning – until we are back in face-to-face learning,” she said.

Over 1,600 students – more than 13 percent of the district’s students – qualify for special education services. In addition to special education teachers, the department has deployed school psychologists, teacher consultants, social workers, occupational therapists and physical therapists to bring services to students.

Staff use traditional therapies and lessons to support students, but they are also delivering food to students, helping families connect to technology, holding small group lessons, and just calling and checking in with children – as well as delivering specially crafted social-emotional learning lessons to support the mental health of all students.

“And still, at the end of the day we’re always reviewing to see who we are not reaching,”

“A lot of people are struggling in the pandemic, and we want to make sure our determinations are based on the best protocols.”

Saunders said. “We may not be face-to-face, but we are trying to make it work for students to the best of our abilities.”

Not every service translates to a virtual setting, but the staff is determined to fulfill IEPs with as much fidelity as possible. Every special education student has a remote learning plan, Saunders said.

The remote learning plans include having special education teachers meet with students four days a week to provide specialized instruction as needed, review goals, and assess what accommodations and supports students need and how those services might be provided in a virtual setting, she said.

“It takes a lot of planning and coordination with families,” to ensure the services are delivered, she said.

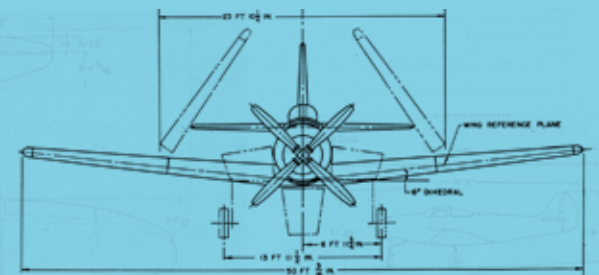
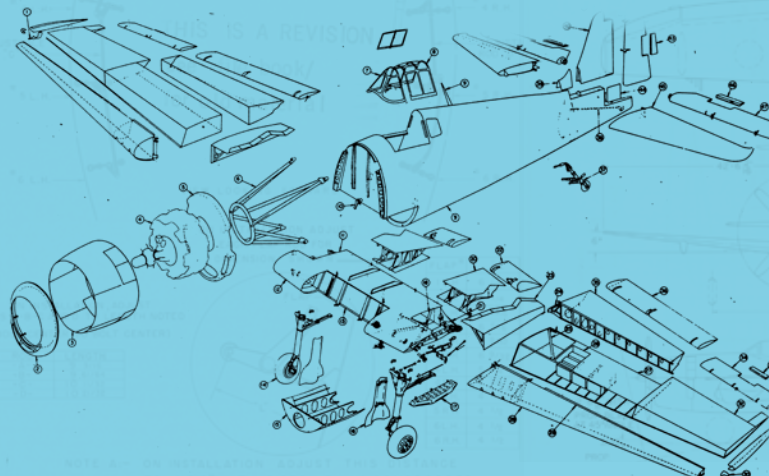
Saunders said she knows

some children are just tired of virtual learning and staff are working hard to help support those students with activities they can do at home and to connect students and families with community resources that might be able to provide supplemental support, such as the community-based equity cohorts, which provide food, tutoring, and exercise opportunities.

At the same time, she said, she’s been pleasantly surprised to find there are students who have blossomed in the virtual setting. Some students who struggle with anxiety and sometimes actively worked to get kicked out of class to avoid the stress, are now participating 95 percent of the time because virtual learning is more effective for them.

Through all the challenges, staff are working to determine whether students have a disability and are not simply responding in a developmentally normal way to a stressful situation, Saunders said. “When we resume face-to-face, we can help those students recover some of their skills.”

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Milwood Magnet, Hillside Hold Thanksgiving Food Drives

Hillside Middle School and Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Science and Technology held food drives for Thanksgiving.

At Hillside, the Student Senate coordinated the drive over two days. Student senators manned the drive-through event and collected donations for local food bank Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes.



DeAsia English, seventh grade, was full of smiles as her family visited the Milwood Magnet School drive-through Thanksgiving celebration.

The senate advisor is teacher Gerald Doult. Milwood Magnet School combined its food drive with a drive-through celebration for families. Staff lined the sidewalks to wave greetings to students — and deliver math packets for anyone looking for extra math homework over the holiday weekend. Staff also gave families a small holiday gift.



Seventh grade math teacher Andrew Drenth greets students and families at the Milwood Magnet School Thanksgiving drive-through food drive.



Hillside Student Senate members Kaitlyn Ozanich, eighth grade; Dillon Purcell, seventh grade; Keegan Clarke, eighth grade; and Maxwell Johnson, eighth grade, collected items with advisor Gerald Doult on Nov. 18. Senate members not pictured: eighth graders Brianna VanLent, and Nick and Annie Alkema.



Milwood Magnet School held a combination food drive and holiday celebration in November. Families dropped off donations — and picked up math packets and gifts from the staff on Nov. 19. From left, teachers Rana Findling and Errin Corstange and behavior specialist Wyndham Harper-Williams collected donations.



Sixth-grader TeJashreya Dantu and her family went through the drive-through line at Milwood Magnet School to drop off food donations and see TeJashreya's teachers.



Sixth-grader Hunter Horn and his family visited the Milwood Magnet School Thanksgiving event.

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December Holiday Activities Lifted Spirits



Santa put Lincoln International Studies School Principal Linda Mitchell on his nice list during a holiday visit.



Santa stopped by Lincoln International Studies School to share candy canes. First-graders Christen McKinney, left, and Yahzere White took a photo and shared their wish lists with the jolly old elf.



King-Westwood Elementary School librarian Terri Luzenske waves during the school's holiday parade for families on Dec. 10.



King-Westwood security officer Jacob Brown greets families during the school's holiday parade.



The staff at Washington Writers' Academy performs their traditional lip sync to the Stingers' rendition of "Silent Night" outside the school one night.



King-Westwood first grade teacher Betsy Johnson greets families during the school's holiday parade.



King-Westwood third-grader Seena Bosker and her family get into the holiday spirit with their decorated vehicle in the school's holiday parade.



King-Westwood first grade teacher Staci Andrews waves to families during the school's holiday parade.



King-Westwood lead activity helper Eileen Mills greets families with her Rudolph doll during the school's holiday parade.



Loy Norrix's PeaceJam service organization kept up its traditional food and clothing drive this year. Loy Norrix teacher and PeaceJam advisor Sveri May and Principal Chris Aguinaga deliver the collection of items to the organizers of Aims Kidz at Interfaith Homes in December. Pictured are, from left, May, Anthony Williams, Jolena Wilson, Donovan Reef, Iyesha Williams, Rashawn Terrell, and Aguinaga.



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Friends Celebrate Former Teacher Carol Bailey Pellowe's 100th Birthday with Parade

Friends and family celebrated former Kalamazoo Public Schools teacher Carol Bailey Pellowe's 100th birthday with a police-escorted, drive-by parade on her birthday Dec. 16.

Pellowe grew up in New York. After attending junior college in NY, she moved to Michigan to attend Michigan State University, where she earned a degree in dietetics in 1947 and worked for several years. Pellowe eventually moved to the Kalamazoo area and earned a teaching degree at Western Michigan University.

After substitute teaching for KPS, she was hired by Superintendent Dr. Richard Percy. She was a homemaking teacher at Northeastern Junior High School from 1958-1959, then transferred to Kalamazoo Central High School (both Old Central and the building on Drake Road) where she taught home economics and social studies



Former KPS teacher Carol Bailey Pellowe watches the parade that was held to celebrate her 100th birthday.

until her retirement in 1983.

In addition to teaching, she served as the department chairperson, led many student groups, and supervised intern teachers and new teachers in her department. As department chair she was responsible for writing curriculum and managing budgets.

Friends and former fellow

teachers Fran Raffel and Judy McGowan said teachers always appreciated Pellowe's leadership because "she was a true worker/leader. She was known for her common sense problem-solving approach and her flexibility. Her enthusiasm for working with teenagers was contagious. Carol mentored her students even after retirement."



Friends from Alpha Delta Kappa created a special banner to celebrate Carole Bailey Pellowe's 100th birthday.

Pellowe said the biggest changes she faced as an educator was after Title 9 was instituted during the 1970s. It required that her classes be opened to male students. She was very much in favor of this, especially for her classes in Personal Living, Home and Family Living, and Child Development because the classes "taught principles needed by

males just as much as females."

Pellowe has been an active member of the Kalamazoo community. Since 1971, she has been a member of Alpha Delta Kappa, an international organization for outstanding women educators.

Her birthday was celebrated with a parade of vehicles and gifts and cards from friends.

KPS Alum Edward Callahan to Kick Off Annual KeysFest

Pianist Edward Callahan will kick off the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival's Virtual KeysFest, an annual learning event for West Michigan piano students.

Callahan, who is a graduate of Kalamazoo Public Schools, will livestream his hour-long concert at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 19 from the Wellspring Theater in the Epic Center in downtown Kalamazoo. The virtual community event is free and available to the public at www.thegilmore.org.

"We're grateful to be one of many organizations that have come together to share this concert with the Kalamazoo community," said Adam Schumaker, director of education for The Gilmore. "It is very special to have a pianist who participated in our education programs as a Piano Labs student return to inspire a new generation of young musicians during the 2021 KeysFest."



KeysFest is for students in first through 12th grade. Students perform with an audience of supportive peers and adults, receive one-on-one instruction from professional pianists and educators, and participate in workshops and performances by KeysFest clinicians and guest

presenters from universities across the country.

KeysFest is available virtually this year to all area students who take piano lessons. Students interested in studying with Callahan may select him as a clinician during registration. For more information about the

event, visit www.thegilmore.org/education/keysfest/.

Callahan was born in Kalamazoo and began piano lessons at age five with Billie Netterwald, who encouraged his interest in classical music. He participated in competitions locally through the Music

Teachers National Association and Michigan Music Teachers Association, and nationally at the NAACP Act-So competition.

He graduated Magna Cum Laude from New York's Nyack College with a degree in piano performance. He has performed with a production of "The Wiz" and toured in Italy with a gospel choir. He works as a music director and pianist at Creston Avenue and Abyssinian Baptist Church. Callahan made his Lincoln Center Debut in 2018. His album "The Minor Keys" featured works by Chopin and Schubert and was released in 2019. He resides in New York and is working on his sophomore album.

The concert is presented by The Gilmore, Crescendo Academy of Music, Helen L. Fox Gospel Music Center, The Kalamazoo Promise, Kalamazoo Public Library, and the Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch of the NAACP.

New Trustee Megan Maddock Brings Special Education Perspective to Board

Special education teacher Megan Maddock joined the Kalamazoo Public Schools Board of Education in January.

Maddock joined the board after winning one of three, six-term seats in the November election, replacing trustee Jason Morris. Board President Patti Sholler-Barber and Vice President TiAnna Harrison won re-election in the race. Board Treasurer Ken Greschak won a separate two-year term.

Maddock lived in several states as a young child, moving with her military family. She has lived in Kalamazoo for 11 years and was in Portage for 10 years before that.

Maddock attended Kalamazoo Valley Community College before earning a bachelor's degree at Western Michigan University and has been teaching for four years. She is working on a master's degree in special education administration.

"I was really unsure what I wanted to do when I was going to community college," she said. "I started working as a caregiver at ROI (Residential



Megan Maddock won a seat on the Kalamazoo Public Schools Board of Education in the November election.

Opportunities Inc.) and I fell in love with communities with different exceptionalities. I realized that I wanted to be a part of an early intervention for that population."

As a Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency special education teacher who works with youth at the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home, she said she's developed a passion for working with

students who may have special needs, different learning styles, or who have faced barriers in their education.

"The reason I wanted to serve on the board was because I wanted the opportunity to be part of equitable change toward creating a more inclusive district that creates better outcomes for all students," Maddock said. "I think I bring a unique perspective as a special

education teacher and will be able to identify some of the areas where we can improve as a district."

In addition to wanting to work on issues related to students with special needs or diagnosed disabilities, she said she hopes to take a close look at programming for court-involved youth.

"I see a lot of our KPS students getting lost within that system," she said. "I'd love for us to give attention to those students and make sure they have access to high quality education, reach graduation and

take advantage of The Promise."

She will also advocate for "inclusive curriculum, anti-bullying efforts, and further creating inclusive and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ young people, families, and school staff."

Maddock said she is excited to find new ways to support superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri and the district.

"I think that KPS is an incredible district with great people. Every board member brings something unique and a differ perspective — I'm interested to see what we can accomplish collectively."



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR COLLEGE DEADLINE MARCH 1

Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) offers more than 56 scholarships and grants ranging from \$250 to \$7,500 to high school students for college.

Students who plan on using [The Kalamazoo Promise](#) can use our scholarships for other educational expenses.

Deadline for most scholarships is **March 1** (unless otherwise noted).



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Savings Just A Click Away

Friends of Poetry Brings Back Poems on Buses for 2021 Poems That Ate Our Ears Contest

Student writers are encouraged to share their creativity with the community in the Friends of Poetry’s annual Poems That Ate Our Ears contest.

Writers in grades K–12 can submit works for the contest. Friends of Poetry will publish a book with winning entries — which writers will receive for free. Works that are eight lines or fewer will be considered for the Poems on Buses contest, with winners being printed on posters and placed on Metro buses. An awards ceremony will be held at Kalamazoo Public Library on June 5, if allowed by public health rules.

The Poems that Ate Our Ears is the longest running children’s poetry contest in Michigan.

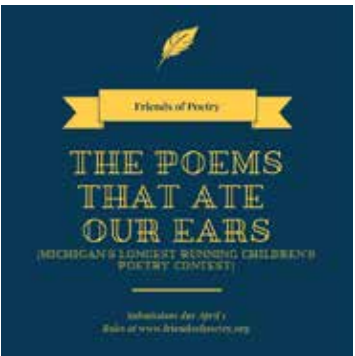
“Although entries are not due until April 1, 2021, it’s a good idea to get started right away,” said poet Elizabeth Kerlikowske, president of Friends of Poetry. “I’ve been posting daily poetry prompts on our Facebook page. They are all student-appropriate, and I encourage you to visit there for some writing ideas.”

For information on other events that Friends of Poetry sponsors, as well as poetry in the area, follow Friends of Poetry on Facebook or visit their website at www.friendsofpoetry.org.

“We hope as many students as possible enter, and we look forward to reading their poems,” Kerlikowske said.

The Poems That Ate Our Ears 2021 Contest Rules

1. Poems can be any style on any topic but no longer than 20 lines. Poems to be considered for display on buses may only be eight lines or less.
2. You may submit up to three poems in any language. Provide an English copy.
3. Do not send the only copy of a poem (poems will not be returned).
4. Categories: 1 (grades K–3), 2 (grades 4–6), 3 (grades 7–9), 4 (grades 10–12).
5. Each poem must be on a separate sheet of paper. On the back of each poem, print the author’s full name, grade and category, name of school,



home address, and home phone number.

6. For a list of winners, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope, with appropriate postage affixed, along with entries. No poems will be returned.

7. Send entries to: THE POEMS THAT ATE OUR EARS, 2423 Russet Dr., Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

8. Deadline: April 1, 2021. All entries must be received or postmarked by April 1.

Winning poems will be published in a book and distributed locally. There will be an awards ceremony on the first Saturday in June at the Kalamazoo Public Library, health restrictions permitting. Winning poems may be used in a promotional capacity.

Chef Samuel • KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

Smoothie Pops

Now that I am a father of a beautiful little girl who has started teething, I find these simple ice pops very useful to have on hand. Eleanor (the beautiful little girl) loves them. She gets so excited when she sees them. Bigger kids will love them too.

— Chef Samuel Dunn



Chef Samuel Dunn

Ingredients

- 2 cold ripe bananas
- 3 cups frozen fruit
- 1 cup water or other liquid
- 8 ounces yogurt of your choice

Equipment

- Blender
- Popsicle molds or small paper cups and wooden sticks

Directions

Blend all ingredients until smooth. Pour into molds and freeze until solid.

Eleanor also loves these ice pops with cooked carrots and sweet potatoes. Puree the carrots and sweet potatoes to substitute them for the bananas, or freeze the cooked veggies and use them in place of the frozen fruit.

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Kalamazoo Public Schools

KPS Behavior Specialists Create 'Toolboxes' to Help Students Focus

Kalamazoo Behavior Specialists Association, comprising Kalamazoo Public Schools' 14 behavior specialists, recently created 400 Wellness Toolboxes for students and families.

The Wellness Toolboxes consist of common calming and focusing tools – such as stress balls and fidget spinners – that behavior specialists often use in classrooms to help students regulate, focus, and stay calm. The kits are designed for students to keep and use at home.

Each toolbox includes an instruction card that explains how the items may be used and tips for other calming and focusing strategies for families. Secondary students also received tri-fold display boards to use during live conference calls to block distracting background activity or to display positive quotes and affirmations.

Tia Whitley, an achievement and behavior specialist at Spring Valley Center for Exploration and the president of KBSA, said the toolboxes are not intended to be a cure, but are tools to help students actively participate

in online learning and be more engaged in lessons.

KBSA received a KPS Innovation Grant for the project and raised additional money to fund the project.

“With the new school year and remote learning taking

place, we wanted to provide some familiarity and support to our students and families,” Whitley said. “The Wellness Toolboxes were prepared and packaged for each identified student and were specifically designed to assist in learning.”



The Kalamazoo Behavior Specialists Association consisting of 14 KPS behavior specialists created “Wellness Toolboxes” for K–12 students.



Kalamazoo Behavior Specialists Association members pack their Wellness Toolboxes at Hillside Middle School.



For 16 years, the Kalamazoo Valley Museum has hosted a Fretboard Festival, celebrating Kalamazoo's unique music history with live performances, demonstrations and workshops.

This year is going to be different. Instead of welcoming thousands of patrons into the Museum, staff will be welcoming thousands to the Virtual Fretboard Festival.

FRETBOARD FESTIVAL

MARCH 6, 2021

musicians who are slated to perform

BOB ROWE AND THE GREEN VALLEY BOYS
MEGAN DOOLEY
THE GO ROUNDS
MARK & DARCY SAHLGREN
BRIAN KOENIGSKNECHT

Workshops for musicians of all skill levels are also planned, along with opportunities to explore the work of talented luthiers and admire exquisitely crafted instruments.

Whatever you enjoy most about the festival, to get insider information, early content and first access to free workshop register for the 2021 Fretboard Festival at

kvcc.edu/fretboard



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

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KPS Grads in Action: America Edwards Exploring Life Online

America Edwards would never have guessed that the world would turn into the perfect laboratory for her doctoral research on how people manage relationships and impressions through technology.

The 2015 Loy Norrix graduate is a doctoral student at the University of California Santa Barbara — but her life is on lockdown while she waits out the pandemic at her parents' home in Kalamazoo.

"I knew I wanted my PhD to focus in particular on how we create and maintain friends on social media and how what we post affects what people think of us," Edwards said. "So much of our life is online. This was my interest before the pandemic. The discipline has spent so much time figuring out how we create communication face-to-face. The research into how we communicate online is still so new."

Edwards moved into Kalamazoo Public Schools as a third grader, attending King-Westwood, Chime and Prairie Ridge elementary schools, Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts and Loy Norrix.

She enrolled in Kalamazoo College for a year before transferring to Western Michigan University, where her parents are communication professors.

She said she was always interested in communication but when she started college, she thought, "I don't want to do this. This is my parents. This is not me. But, by the end of my first year, that's all I wanted. I grew up in an environment where that's what we talked about, and I developed a love and interest in it."

After earning her bachelor's degree from WMU and the Lee Honors College, she enrolled in the University of Central Florida in Orlando. When COVID-19 hit, she finished her master's degree



Loy Norrix graduate America Edwards is working on her doctorate in communications.

from Kalamazoo. She's started her doctoral program virtually as well and hopes to be able to move to California by September.

Her experience in KPS was marked by supportive teachers at every grade level. She participated in Avant Garde and ATYP and always felt challenged, she said. Just as importantly, she appreciated KPS for exposing her to a diverse group of students.

"Things were so well-

rounded," she said. "I felt like I got a real look at diversity and the challenges that can come from different income levels meeting in one group. I wasn't really sheltered when I went to college — unlike some of my peers."

That broad exposure to different groups ignited an interest in social justice and informs her work teaching Intro to Communication and Interpersonal Communication courses to college freshmen.

She said she loves the challenges of education and exploring new ideas. Her master's degree focused on risk and crisis communications. Her thesis, which was funded by the USDA, looked at how members of the swine industry created communication practices to mitigate risk during a medical crisis. The vegetarian found herself challenged to work with the meat industry, but the experience provided a useful

background in qualitative survey methods and grant work — and her work was published in a communications journal.

Edwards looks forward to pushing on with her education in California, but in the meantime, she's been grateful for time in Kalamazoo, with her parents Drs. Chad and Autumn Edwards and for being able to provide support for her sister Emerson Edwards, who is an eighth grader at Milwood Magnet School navigating online learning.

Being an expert in online communication and having a younger sibling who is fully immersed online, what advice would she offer about how to manage a virtual world?

"So often we think of our online selves as disconnected from the face-to-face self. What you post online impacts how people think of you as a person. Not to sound like a parent, but what you post stays on the internet forever."

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