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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, April 8 & 22, 2021

7 p.m.

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

Spring Break Ends

School Resumes

April 5

Half Day

Grades 6–8

April 23

High School Conferences

April 28–29

Half Day, Conferences

Grades 6–8

April 29

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KPS To Expand Social Emotional Learning with Help of Stryker Johnston Foundation Grant

Social emotional learning teaches students social skills and provides emotional support, but it also helps address issues of equity and prepares students with essential skills for the workplace.

The Stryker Johnston Foundation has awarded Kalamazoo Public Schools a \$1 million grant to expand SEL in the district and to develop the Social and Emotional Learning and Professional Development Center at KPS. KPS Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri announced the grant at the Dec. 17 Board of Education meeting. The new center will be housed in the former Oakwood Elementary School.

“We will be using these funds to support teacher learn-



The Milwood Elementary School Learning Hub is filled with items such as fidget spinners to help students practice self management and work on focus during online classes.

ing around SEL, integrating SEL into content areas versus it being a stand-alone topic of learning, and aligning general curricula to employability skills with the infusion of SEL as a part of the

essential skills framework,” Superintendent Raichoudhuri said as she announced the grant. “These essential skills lead to college and career success for our students.”

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) focuses on concepts of self-awareness, awareness of others, self-management, relationship to others and decision making.

“SEL is the process through which children and adults gain and apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, and establish and maintain

(continued on page 7)

African American Studies Classes Can Broaden Knowledge, Deepen Understanding

Kalamazoo Public Schools high school students who want a course where African American history and culture are the focus – and not a footnote – will have the opportunity to take just such a class starting this fall.

KPS is launching a new African American Studies course, which will be available as part of the social studies curriculum at Phoenix, Kalamazoo Central and Loy Norrix high schools. The class will have a Part A and Part B; students can take one or both courses for credit toward the district’s four-credit social studies requirement.

While it’s anticipated that Part A will

focus on ancient civilizations and history and that Part B will focus on current movements and social issues, the district will be refining the course goals and curriculum this summer, said Johnny Edwards, director of secondary education.

“It’s critical that everyone understand that this is open for all students regardless of ethnicity. This is not perceived as or intended to be only for African American students,” Edwards said. “It’s an opportunity for all students to learn more.”

Mark Hill, principal of Phoenix High

(continued on page 8)



Phoenix High School students visit the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History on a pre-pandemic field trip with Principal Mark Hill. These field trips have helped form the basis for the new African American Studies class at KPS high schools.

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In Model UN, Winning Means Finding Compromise on World Issues

There are students who, for fun, choose to spend their free time researching and debating issues such as poverty, small arms and weapons, nuclear proliferation, the environmental impact of plastics, online terrorism, and the politicalization of health organizations.

These are some of the topics that Kalamazoo Central High School students have tackled in recent years as members of Model UN, the student group that since the 1940s has taken its inspiration from the United Nations and taught students how to examine the world's problems from an international perspective.

"When you research a topic, sometimes you don't want to hear research that disagrees with what you think or refutes a fact that you think exists. Sometimes you kind of form tunnel vision," said Ben Venus, a senior, who is serving as the secretary general of the KC Model UN this year. "You



Ben Venus and his sister, graduate Olivia Venus, who works for Model UN at the University of Michigan. Ben is the current secretary general of the Kalamazoo Central Model UN.

have to keep pushing yourself to better yourself and break through that barrier. When you do break through that barrier, it really enhances your understanding of the world around you."

Kalamazoo Central social studies teacher Clifton Fraley-Burgett got involved in Model UN eight years ago, when a student asked for help starting a team.

While he was hesitant about becoming the advisor for the



Kalamazoo Central students (L to R) Olivia Jackson, Isaac Haller, Angel Gomez, Nico Gonzalez, and Tyler Ragan attend a Model UN conference in 2017.

group, he has become its biggest advocate because he appreciates the skills and expansive world views he sees his students developing through the activity.

"It teaches students so many life skills, such as public speaking, learning how to negotiate and work with people of varying opinions," Fraley-Burgett said. "It prepares them for how to do more in-depth research.

"If you are a student who

goes to these things and is not properly prepared, it shows. Students don't like that feeling. It teaches them how to write better, lead a room, and follow procedure. So many aspects of Model UN prepares them for life after high school."

As the secretary general of the Kalamazoo Central club, Venus said he's taken more of a mentoring role with some of the newer members of the

group. The Kalamazoo Central team has about 40 students. In a normal school year they travel around the state for conferences that last an entire weekend. In the age of COVID-19, they have been able to continue the conferences virtually. The presentation and debate process actually works well in a virtual world where parliamentary procedure is enforced by technological constraints.

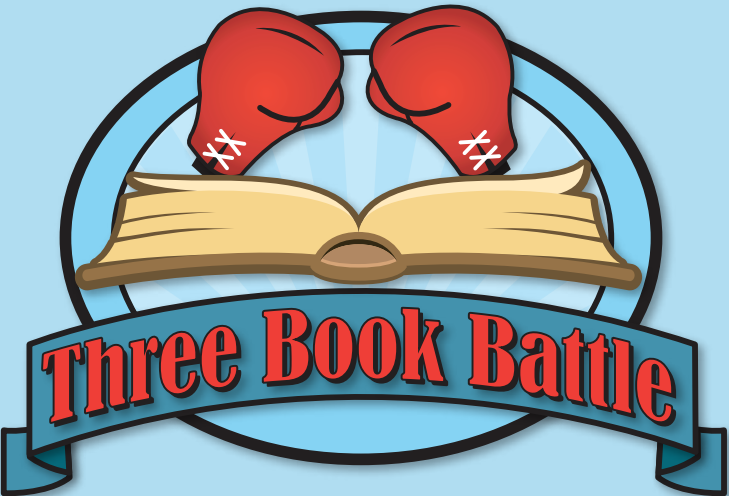
Senior Jonathan Andrews was recently named Best Delegate for his committee on the Irish Revolutionary Dail at the University of Michigan conference.

Before a conference the students at a school are assigned not only topics — but also a country to represent as well. For example, one student may be discussing historic sites while another team member might be examining indigenous people — but

(continued on page 3)

Attention Middle and High School Students!

KPL Presents:



Registration is Open!

Wednesday, April 21 | 6:30–8 pm

For more details, please visit: kpl.gov/three-book-battle/

Three Book Battle returns. Teens and tweens are invited to register online to receive a TBB kit containing all three books, activities, and a surprise! Registrants are encouraged to read all three books on their own and choose their favorite, then attend the online live session with youth librarians to discuss their favorite books, answer trivia questions, and celebrate TBB in a new way this year! No teams necessary; this is an individually motivated program. ®

High School Titles (Grades 9–12):



Middle School Titles (Grades 6–8):



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In Model UN, Winning Means Finding Compromise on World Issues *(continued from page 2)*

they all represent Senegal. At the conference, the students break into rooms to debate their topics and to work together to create a resolution that addresses their issue.

Taking on the perspective of a different country makes the exercise of research and argument that much more challenging, said junior Natalie Swartz, who is in her third year of Model UN.

Her most challenging conference was one where she needed to discuss poverty from the perspective of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — otherwise known as North Korea.

"There's just a lack of information about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," she said.

Swartz said Model UN is "like a more collaborative version of speech and debate. Rather than trying to win the debate, you try to work together to solve the issues while debating them."



Kalamazoo Central students (L to R) Nico Gonzalez and Liam Gakodi attend a Model UN conference in Kalamazoo in 2019.

Learning how to respect divergent ideas and how to compromise are two lessons that are unique to Model UN, say Fraley-Burgett and his students. These are vital to the process of the conventions, in which the main goal of any debate is to create a resolution that can find broad support from all of the countries represented by the students.

"As their advisor, I want them to work with others," he

said. "If you work with others, you can win awards. If you ostracize the rest of the room, if you do not take into account how others think of you, you'll lose. Usually the person willing to step out of their comfort zone and really be that country and work to compromise will get the best solution."

Venus said that the key is good research. The more in-depth he goes into his research, the more



Kalamazoo Central Model UN delegates Jane Swartz, left, and Jasmine Jacobs, right, work on a resolution at a conference in 2017.

nuance he finds in any topic.

"After I do my scholarly research, I can form arguments on either side of a topic," he said. "When I represent a nation, I understand that nation's point of view but once I'm done being that nation, I could sit down with someone and argue both sides."

Students say the hardest part of Model UN is not the research, writing position papers, or understanding one country's

perspective.

"The hardest part is the negotiation and trying to work together to create a resolution," Swartz said. "You have all of these separate bills and you're trying to make it fit for most people."

"It's taught me that compromise has to be a lot closer to the center than you want it to be. You have to try to make it work out well for everyone — even if it's not ideal for you."

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Kzoo PARKS



Online Baking Classes Help Bring Winchell Students Together

The Winchell Elementary School family has found a sweet way to stay connected — through online baking lessons with art teacher Mandy Clearwaters.

The first baking sessions, with a recipe for Cereal Adventure Cookies, took place as part of the school's Kindness Month activities. The event was so popular, Clearwaters repeated the activity with cut-out sugar cookies during Literacy Night in March.

Clearwaters shared ingredients and directions through an app and then she and students mixed and scooped and baked together online. Students could also message back and forth with Clearwaters while they were baking, which led to some fun exchanges like this:

"This is from Alex.... I'm doing all the baking tonight because my family wanted the cookies but didn't want to bake them. Here I am baking for them :D"

To which Clearwaters said, "Welcome to the club, Alex! I do all the baking in this home too. LOL."



Winchell student Jeydon White and Maple Street student Jrya White tried art teacher Mandy Clearwaters' recipe for cereal cookies during a Kindness Month baking class.



Winchell third-grader James Cooper shows off his cookie dough during an online baking class with his art teacher on Literacy Night.



Winchell Elementary fourth-grader Rebecca Ruivivar bakes cookies virtually with her art teacher Mandy Clearwaters.

Chef Samuel • KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

Lemon Poppy Seed Scones with Strawberry Glaze

Spring is right around the corner and these scones have a fresh spring vibe with tart lemon and sweet strawberry flavors. They'd be a perfect addition for your bread basket on Mother's Day.

— Chef Samuel Dunn



Chef Samuel Dunn

Ingredients

- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups self-rising flour
- 1 stick (4 ounces) cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white sugar
- Grated lemon zest from one lemon
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole milk or as needed

Directions

Scones

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Combine dry ingredients in a bowl.
3. In a separate dish, mix the milk and egg together.
4. Add your butter to the dry mix and blend until it starts to

crumble like sand. Add lemon zest, lemon juice, and milk mixture and blend until just combined.

5. Roll out to about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick square and cut into triangles or desired shape. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet and bake for about 25 minutes.

Strawberry Glaze

Cut 3 or 4 large strawberries in to quarters and finely mash. Combine with 2 to 3 cups of powdered sugar until it forms a thick glaze. Spread on scones while warm and enjoy!

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

Director of Student Services
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All other inquiries should be directed to:

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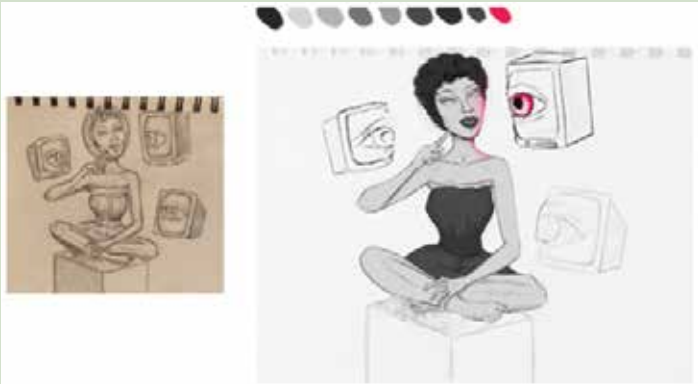
Kalamazoo Central High School art teacher Julie LaBudda provides a glimpse into the world of Advanced Placement art with these works by her students. The pieces show how students develop their works through sustained investigation, research and development of materials and processes. Students must document their process from sketches to revisions to completed works.

“Students can select whatever medium they feel comfortable with, and I tell them not to recreate the wheel but to create art that is personal and has meaning to them. It makes for a much better approach,” said LaBudda.

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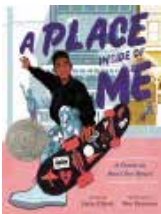


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KPS Librarians Recommend: April is National Poetry Month!

Here are some of our current favorite books of poetry and novels in verse. For more ways to celebrate, check out poets.org/national-poetry-month.

Elementary Grades



A Place Inside of Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart
by Zetta Elliott,
illustrated by
Noa Denmon

There is a place inside of me
a space deep down inside of me
where all my feelings hide.
This book speaks to the depth

and nuance of a child’s experiences following a police shooting — through grief and protests, healing and community — with vibrant colors and words. Here is a groundbreaking narrative that can help all readers talk about the feelings hiding deep inside each of us.



Lion of the Sky: Haiku for All Seasons
by Laura
Perdue Salas,

illustrated by Mercè López
A collection of illustrated poems that combine riddles with haiku to create poems called riddle-ku.

though not very well) to the surprised guest of honor at a birthday party (that he threw for himself), there’s a poem for everyone.



I Remember: Poems and Pictures of Heritage
compiled by
Lee Bennett
Hopkins

A collection of works by poets and illustrators of diverse backgrounds sharing memorable childhood and family experiences and reflecting on their different heritages, traditions, and beliefs.

Middle Grades



Woke: A Young Poet’s Call to Justice
by Mahogany
L. Browne,
Elizabeth

Acevedo, and Olivia Gatwood,
illustrated by Theodore Taylor III.
This beautifully illustrated book encourages students to become involved in justice and equity movements in their schools and communities.



On the Horizon: World War II Reflections

by Lois Lowry,
illustrated by
Kenard Pak

Told in poetic format, this book illustrates the lives of people lost in the tragedies of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima.



Kent State
by Deborah
Wiles

2020 was the 50th anniversary of the shootings at Kent State in Ohio. This novel in verse provides an account of that day and the events that led up to it from the perspectives of students, protestors, National Guardsmen, and residents of the town.

Young Adult



Say Her Name
by Zetta Elliott,
illustrated by
Loveis Wise

A collection of 40 illustrated

poems celebrating the vulnerability and strength of black women and girls.



Apple: Skin to the Core: A Memoir in Words and Pictures
by Eric
Gansworth

The term “Apple” is a slur in Native communities across the country. It’s for someone supposedly “red on the outside, white on the inside.” Gansworth shatters that slur and reclaims it in verse and prose and imagery.



Clap When You Land
by Elizabeth
Acevedo

In this novel in verse, the lives of the two very different sisters collide when their father dies in an airplane crash. Then, despite their differences, the girls begin to bond over — and forgive — their imperfect father.



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KPS To Expand Social Emotional Learning with Help of Stryker Johnston Foundation Grant (continued from page 1)

positive relationships and make responsible decisions,” Rai-choudhuri said.

Teaching those concepts is tied to nearly a decade of work the district has done to tackle climate and culture within the schools. Those efforts have included programs such as restorative justice and trauma-informed care.

“We’re always trying to connect the dots for how we treat our children and how to make them feel physically and psychologically safe to take risks and learn academically in our classrooms,” said Nkenge Bergan, director of Student Services for KPS. “For years, we have been trying to give staff resources and tools for their tool boxes so they could meet children where they are when they come into the classroom. We ask them to think about what kind of learning environment they are cultivating. It is a matter of equity.”

The Stryker Johnston Foundation invests in efforts to eliminate intergenerational poverty in Kalamazoo County. Its grant comes on the heels of a \$45,000 grant the Kalamazoo Community Foundation awarded to KPS to further SEL.

Prior to the pandemic and the closing of schools, the district had received the Kalamazoo Community Foundation grant

and was working to implement an intensive SEL pilot program at King-Westwood Elementary and Hillside Middle School. Leading that effort have been Heather Misner and Shannon Parlato, the district’s culture and climate coaches.

One silver lining to the pandemic, Misner said, is that it forced the district to pivot away from that plan and instead develop SEL classes for the entire district to support students who faced stress from having to distance from friends, teachers, and other supportive staff while learning from home.

Weekly classes on Wednesdays have given students the opportunity to discuss lessons related to those five main SEL concepts. For example, when discussing self awareness, young students might learn how to list their positive traits. For a lesson on personal responsibility, older students might talk about taking personal responsibility on a team project.

The response to the SEL lessons has been hugely positive, Misner said.

“The feedback has been that this is important work for our kids and our teachers,” Misner said. “It was difficult to roll out in the midst of the pandemic when teachers were learning to instruct in a whole new way, but



Hillside Middle School has created a wellness room where students will be able to practice meditation, gratitude journaling, and meditative breathing.

we’ve seen the buy-in and felt the impact.”

As the district moves forward, the question will be how to nurture the seeds that have been planted over the past year, to find ways to move beyond an hour of SEL one day a week and incorporate these concepts into the school day and across curricula.

The new Social and Emo-

tional Learning and Professional Development Center will not support just students, Parlato said. Its first focus will be on providing wellness and social emotional care for teachers and staff.

“We want to start with the staff because you need to start at the top,” Parlato said. “If they’re not taking care of themselves, it is hard for them to take

care of students.”

The center is envisioned as a community resource that will offer growth opportunities not just for children but for their families as well, Bergan said. The hope is to offer a variety of social emotional support for families, such as parenting classes, space for community yoga and mindfulness experiences, and healthy cooking classes.

“We want to make sure parents have resources too,” Bergan said. “We want to make sure that as our children grow and learn, we’re also providing families and community members with the same resources and tools. This is a huge paradigm shift.

“The sooner we can get to a collective approach rather than blaming one sector or another, the better. We have to move away from that and work together. We see this as an opportunity for meaningful engagement with our parents. If they can have the resources to teach and fortify these skills at home, the students will be able to come to school and spend more time on task and succeed.”

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African American Studies Classes Can Broaden Knowledge, Deepen Understanding *(continued from page 1)*

School, has long worked to promote African American studies. For years, he has taken students on tours of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and on field trips to the the Charles A. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. Before those trips, he frequently offered students — and their families — presentations on African American history.

While the course’s unveiling coincides with a number of social and cultural phenomena such as the Black Lives Matter movement, the class represents more than a decade of anti-bias, anti-racism work within the district, Hill said. Students have long advocated for these classes, he said.

“Students would question ‘why do we have to wait until we go on these tours or visit these museums before we learn about us?’” Hill said. “This is really past due. This is something districts have to be intentional about. In the United States, most content in history classes is very intentional about keeping out black history.”



Phoenix High School Principal Mark Hill has had a tradition of taking students to tour important sites in African American history, such as Little Rock Central High School. These field trips have helped form the basis for the new African American Studies class at KPS high schools. This picture is from a pre-pandemic trip.

Edwards said the development of the course out of the work done at Phoenix is not unusual within the district. Student interest helps fuel the creation of new courses, Edwards said, pointing to the Women’s

Studies class, which grew out of student interest at Loy Norrix.

Edwards and Hill said there certainly weren’t classes focused on African American history when they were in high school, but both benefited from having

involved parents who exposed them to books, history and experiences that broadened their understanding of their culture. Hill said that outside of his parents’ influence, his first African American studies classes were as a college student at Western Michigan University.

Likewise, Edwards said, “My awareness started in college more for self-identification and self-exploration. I thought ‘if I’m reading all of these books

for class, I might as well pick up things that I enjoy.’”

Both Edwards and Hill envision the classes as interactive experiences with an interdisciplinary spin, looking at African American experiences and contributions across a diverse range of subjects, from history to pop culture to science.

“For many students, Dr. Martin Luther King defines black history,” Edwards said. “But he was not the only figure. There were many others who made significant contributions. He was the face, the pillar of the Civil Rights movement but he did not do that work by himself. He had a team that went on to do great things, things that he would have done if his life had not been cut short.”

Hill said when students think of science or inventors they tend to focus on men such as Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, when in reality there are many black inventors who have contributed to society. That knowledge can help change the dynamic of relationships.

“I think it’s healthy for the district,” Hill said. “We all come to the table with our own biases based on what we’ve seen in the media, what we’ve read and biases that we don’t even know that we have. This class will help reset the conversation by helping students engage in conversations.”

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Kalamazoo RESA Seeking Special Education Millage Renewal

On Tuesday, May 4, voters in the Kalamazoo RESA (KRESA) service area will be asked to vote on the renewal of a six-year, 1.5-mill property tax to help fund the cost of special education in local schools.

Voters originally approved the millage in 2015. If the renewal is approved, the funds will be used by Kalamazoo RESA to reimburse local, public school districts and public academies for mandated special education costs.

The special education millage currently generates approximately \$12.5 million for special education. Without it, local districts would be required to pay for special education services out of their general funds, resulting in fewer dollars to support programs for all students.

Because this is a renewal, it will not cause an increase in tax rates. Homeowners would continue to pay the same rate based on the taxable value of their home, which is typically about half of the market value. A home-

Because this is a renewal, it will not cause an increase in tax rates.

owner with a home with a taxable value of \$75,000 (approximate market value \$150,000) would continue to pay \$112.50 per year, or \$9.38 per month.

In addition, taxpayers in the Kalamazoo RESA service area will see a reduction in their millage rate in May 2021 when the 0.275 debt millage currently being levied will be removed because bonds approved in 2007 will be paid off.

Registered voters in the Kalamazoo RESA service area may vote on the special education millage renewal in the May 4 election. The last day to register to vote is April 19. Voters may register in person through election day.

Absentee voters who are on the state's permanent absentee

voter list will automatically receive an absentee ballot application six to eight weeks before the election. All voters are eligible to vote absentee in Michigan by requesting an absentee ballot from their city or township clerk in writing by April 30.

More information on absentee voting may be found at michigan.gov/vote. See additional information and answers to frequently asked questions on the KRESA website at kresa.org.



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Let's live in a world where there is a place for each of our unique talents and characteristics to be appreciated. No Missing Pieces uses children's picture books and related art to explore what a beautiful world it could be.

- > *The Invisible Boy*, by Trudy Ludwig
- > *Beautiful Hands*, by Kathryn Otoshi
- > *The Proudest Blue*, by Ibtihaj Muhammad
- > *I Am Enough*, by Grace Byers
- > *The Big Umbrella*, by June & Juniper Bates

Register for craft bags, available for curbside pickup, \$10 for 50 different crafts.

Explore the books and create the art!

Visit us at kalamazoomuseum.org

 Handicapped accessible. Sign language interpreters may be scheduled with a minimum of two weeks notice. Assisted listening devices are available in the Stryker Theater and planetarium.

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

Kalamazoo VALLEY
Museum

269.373.7990 | 800.772.3370
kalamazoomuseum.org

Literacy Night 2021 Celebrated with Drive By Parades



Fifth-grader A'Zion Bush and his mother Pepa Smith stop by Spring Valley for Literacy Night.



Fourth-grader Khalil Steele and teacher Miriah Martinez pose with Springy, the Spring Valley mascot.



Tejashreya Dantu and her mom Anitha Dantu (L) show off the books they chose at Milwood Magnet School's Literacy Night, while the Rackley family, (L to R) Elora, Gideon, Kim, and Phoenix Rackley choose some books to take home.



King-Westwood Principal Dwight Quinn Jr. greets families on Literacy Night.



Parkwood-Upjohn staff get into the spirit of Literacy Night, (L to R) Glenda Forbes (SPED), Sneha Gardner (K teacher), Mary Wright (K intern), Patty Veeder (K teacher), Renay Williams-Whitson (K teacher).



Milwood Magnet School Principal Mitch Hawkins talks with the school's child accounting secretary Tina Jackson during the school's Literacy Night.



Greta Girgis receives a goody bag from second-grade teacher Rylee Guillen during Parkwood-Upjohn's Literacy Night parade.

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We understand that even a simple leak can lead to serious health or safety issues in your home. **Community Homeworks** is here to offer no or low-cost support to income eligible homeowners in the **City of Kalamazoo** to repair plumbing issues. Call or email us today to see if you are eligible at (269) 998-3275 ext 209 or info@communityhomeworks.org.



Community Homeworks provides additional critical home repair services for homeowners, such as HVAC, electrical, and other health and safety issues. Visit CommunityHomeworks.org for more information.

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Bethany®

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UPCOMING DATES

April 13, 2021	9:30 am—12:30 pm
April 22, 2021	5:30—8:30 pm
May 4, 2021	9:30 am—12:30 pm
May 20, 2021	5:30—8:30 pm
June 1, 2021	9:30 am—12:30 pm

**Virtual Info Meetings
Link Provided Upon Registration**