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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, May 6 & 20, 2021

7 p.m.

For more information on KPS board meeting locations and format, please visit our website at [kalamazoopublicschools.net/boardmeetings](http://kalamazoopublicschools.net/boardmeetings).

No PEEP

May 21

Last Day for Seniors and PEEP

May 28

Memorial Day

No School

May 31

KAMSC Recognition Day

June 1

Loy Norrix Graduation

June 2

Kalamazoo Central Graduation

June 3

Phoenix & KILP Graduation

June 4

Summer Camp Guide 2021

Pages 7-18



Remember to Vote May 4. Info on Special Education Millage on Page 6.

KPS Graduation Rate Continued Steady Climb in 2020

Kalamazoo Public Schools continued its strong upward trajectory for graduation rates, according to recently reported 2020 graduation data from the Michigan Department of Education.

The district reported a 2020 graduation rate of 76.05 percent, its highest four-year graduation rate since the revised federal formula for calculating graduation rates was instituted in 2007, Superintendent Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri told the KPS Board of Education on March 25.

The rising graduation rate

comes after the district reported that 734 students graduated in June 2020, which is the highest number of graduating seniors for KPS since the 2005 announcement of The Kalamazoo Promise, the scholarship that is available to all KPS graduates who meet residency and attendance requirements. This is the seventh year in a row that the number of graduates has increased.

“Both the increase in graduation rates and the increase in the number of graduates showed that the pandemic didn’t stop



Elize Moreno, Phoenix High School, 2020

our students from performing at their best or our district from providing the supports it has

committed to providing to ensure that our students are successful,” Raichoudhuri said.

Raichoudhuri congratulated the district and school leaders, teachers, staff and students for the accomplishment, saying, “This is a team effort, yet there is much room for improvement. We will continue to implement district practices and initiatives to take KPS from good to great.”

In 2005, the district had 454 graduates. The number of graduates rose to 692 by 2018 and 715 in 2019.

(continued on page 5)

KPS Earns Grant to Help Attract Young Students to Teaching Profession

Kalamazoo Public Schools will use a \$50,000 state grant to develop a new curriculum to encourage student interest in the teaching profession.

The grant comes as part of the Future Proud Michigan Explore program, which is part of the Michigan Department of Education’s Proud Michigan Educator campaign and a continuation of Michigan’s efforts to grow and diversify the educator workforce. The Explore program is a companion to existing career and technical education cadet teacher programs for students in grades



Judith Casteneda-Garcia works with Remi Morcus at El Sol Elementary school in 2018 as part of the KRESA Teacher Academy.

9-12. In Kalamazoo County, that operates as the Education For Employment Teacher Academy pro-

gram at Loy Norrix High School.

“Teachers help to build a better world, and we need to collectively invest in our future proud Michigan educators,” said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. “We need to encourage our young people to consider developing and using their talents as Michigan educators.”

School districts that qualified for the grant received \$10,000 per eligible building. KPS will implement the program at Kalamazoo Central High School and all four of its middle schools: Hillside, Linden Grove, Maple Street Magnet for the Arts, and Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Science

(continued on page 4)

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# Helping Students Understand and Appreciate the Teaching Profession

There are almost 4 million K-12 teachers in the United States. And that's not nearly enough. There are almost 49 million students.

The teacher shortage is well documented in numerous studies, such as in the Learning Policy Institute study, "A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S." A decade ago, we saw a surplus of teachers, but by the 2017-18 school year there was a shortage of more than 100,000 teachers across the nation.

Teacher shortages obviously affect students when they lack access to enough teachers or the teachers they need to take specific classes. But, it also affects teachers who may find themselves practicing their craft in an environment that is under constant stress. As a result, school systems find themselves in a catch-22. The high stress leads to more teacher turnover, which discourages future

teachers, which perpetuates the shortage. Also, it should be noted that high poverty areas suffer the most in this scenario, leading to further inequity in our education system.

Kalamazoo Public Schools has not been idle in the face of this crisis. I am proud of the proactive steps the district has taken to ensure that KPS can find, train, and retain qualified teachers for our children.

Most recently (as you can read on the front page of this month's Excelsior), the district received a \$50,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Education's Future Proud Michigan Explore program, which will help the district develop a curriculum for a course that in-



Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri, Superintendent, Kalamazoo Public Schools

**"May is Teacher Appreciation Month and it's the perfect time to acknowledge that our teachers are gifted professionals."**

troduces students to the teaching profession. In addition to a course, the students will have the opportunity for extracurricular activities such as a Young Educators Society club and field trips.

The grant will allow KPS to initiate the Explore program in all four middle schools and at Kalamazoo Central. It is one more step in the district's efforts to spark an interest among students in the teaching profession, which can be furthered if students become teacher cadets in the Education for Employment

Teacher Academy — or if they dual enroll in Kalamazoo Valley Community College or Western Michigan University to begin their collegiate studies in education.

I'd like to point out two other efforts that KPS has made to help grow the ranks of teachers. KPS is partnering with WMU on its recently announced Urban Teacher Residency Program. With a \$5 million federal grant, the program will help support current employees in KPS and Benton Harbor schools attend college and earn their teacher certification. The strategy is simple: find people who are already engaged with and interested in the schools and help them take the next step in their professional development. The program has a special emphasis on developing teachers from traditionally underrepresented groups.

KPS is also a supporter of WMU's Future Teachers of Col-

or, providing mentorship and professional development for education students pursuing teaching careers. It's an exciting effort, which we are proud to say counts several KPS graduates among its founding board members.

To break out of the cycle of declining numbers of teachers entering the profession, we need to help students understand the vital roles teachers play in our society and to experience the satisfaction that comes from those powerful interactions in the classroom.

May is Teacher Appreciation Month and it's the perfect time to acknowledge that our teachers are gifted professionals who make a difference every day with the work they do. We hope that helping middle school and high school students understand the power and importance of teaching will inspire many of them to pursue careers in education.

## Wednesday, May 26, 2021 All Day!

KPL presents the 24th annual *Party in the Park*, which is moving online! Join KPL staff and community members for this beloved annual storytime at your convenience. Please visit: [kpl.gov/pip](https://kpl.gov/pip)



# Promise Launches Website Redesign, Prepares to Expand Partnerships with Opening of New Building

The Kalamazoo Promise has launched a redesigned website, which provides students with online access to essential documents and lays the foundation for future initiatives to boost community partnerships and to share employment opportunities and information for Promise scholars.

“The website redesign at [kalamazoopromise.com](http://kalamazoopromise.com) has been in the works for over a year,” said Von Washington II, executive director for community relations for The Promise. “It was important to us that we design our website to match the vision of ‘Your Path, Your Promise,’ the theme of pathways in our new logo. We’re excited by that.”

Key for students, the website has a new student portal, which will allow students to register for and access account information for their Promise scholarship, the scholarship which is given to all Kalamazoo Public Schools graduates who meet residency and attendance requirements. Washington added that while all of the information is now online, students will still be able to count on having access to Promise staff in their schools if they prefer in-person assistance.

The new website will allow



**Von Washington II, executive director of community relations for The Kalamazoo Promise**

The Promise to share its story as “the premiere scholarship that started the Promise scholarship movement,” Washington said. New content will highlight the stories and successes of both the organization and KPS alumni as a way to provide guidance and resources for other Promise-style scholarship organizations.

The website has capacity for growth in three key areas in the coming years: workforce strategy and talent development, community relations and connections between The Promise and other Kalamazoo organizations, and finding new ways to support students who face challenges as they enter college and work to-

ward degree completion.

Creating space and opportunities for student support also will be one of the focuses of The Promise’s new office space at 180 E. Water St., which is anticipated to open in the summer.

“We’re going to have a lot more opportunity to engage with and provide support to Promise students. That’s the goal for us,” Washington said. “We want to make sure students get the support they need and make connections with people

who have expertise in working with students who are facing challenges. We want to be the connector between students and community resources.”

The new offices will include a full computer lab that students can access after school. There will be several spaces for students, teachers and other community members to use for training and meetings.

“We’re interested in students coming down to our facility after school so they can sit, read, work,

be with friends and be connected to other services,” Washington said. “We not only want to be collaborating partners with existing organizations that provide services to students, but to allow those organizations the opportunity to do their work in our space.

“This is an opportunity to leverage so much for the community, in so many ways, for so many people — whether they’re someone who has great means or if they’re someone who struggles every day.”





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# KPS Earns Grant to Help Attract Young Students to Teaching Profession

(continued from page 1)

and Technology, said Sheila Dorsey-Smith, KPS assistant superintendent for human resources.

MDE will provide participating school districts with flexible models for implementation, curricular resources, and free professional development for educators. The KPS grant will be used to develop a curriculum that corresponds with a state curriculum for Introduction to Teaching classes.

“The idea is the classes will pique student interest and help students make a decision to go into the teacher cadet class or to dual enroll and take teacher education classes at Kalamazoo Valley Community College or at Western Michigan University,” Dorsey-Smith said. Ideally, the district will work with KVCC and WMU so the college classes can be taught in the high schools, she said.

A big piece of the program will be the activities that surround and support the classes. These extracurriculars will include volunteer and leadership activities that take students into classes to work with younger students, Young Educators Society Clubs, the opportunity to attend conferences

and field trips, and celebrations for students who decide to pursue teacher education programs at the college level.

“We want students to be exposed to teaching at a higher level than just reading about it,” she said. “We want them to actively work with teachers and to experience teachers monitoring their work. Having a teacher mentor a student while in a secondary school allows for a much deeper, richer understanding of the teaching profession and will allow students to develop lifelong relationships with teaching professionals.”

The design and implementation plan is to work on the curriculum and start some of the extracurricular activities during the 2021-22 school year, with the KPS classes launching in the 2022-23 school year, if approved by the Board of Education.

The grant provides another way for the district to work on its goal of developing a home-grown teacher corps that can help address the national, state, and district need for teachers, and, in particular, teachers from

traditionally underrepresented groups, such as male teachers at the elementary level, female science teachers, and teachers of color.

“We need to do something really prescribed to upset those trends,” Dorsey-Smith said. “If we don’t do anything, nothing will change. We have to make an effort to get more diversity in our teacher ranks.”

KPS has worked to attract more students to the Teacher Cadet program through EFE. It also promotes young teachers earning their college degrees by helping support the Future Teachers of Color student organization and partnering with the FEP/FAME scholars from WMU. The district recently collaborated with WMU on a \$5 million grant to help current KPS employees pursue their teaching degrees while they continue working for the district. That grant will provide a \$20,000 living stipends to the recipients.

“What we are trying to do is create multiple pipelines to teaching so we always have teachers who know KPS and love KPS,” Dorsey-Smith said.

# Lincoln, Northeastern Win Attendance Grant

Lincoln International Studies School Principal Linda Mitchell and Northeastern Elementary School Principal Sylvia Washington were each awarded a \$500 Communities in Schools of Kalamazoo Clara Harbeck Memorial Fund Grant.

Lincoln will use its grant to help strengthen family

connections to the school and achieve school-wide goals, which include building a positive school culture and climate, improving attendance, decreasing behavior referrals, and improving student achievement.

“We want to celebrate students for having good attendance, no behavior referrals, and students that are doing well academically,” Mitchell said. “In addition, we want to recognize and celebrate the parents for making sure that their child attends school each day.”

At Northeastern, the grant is being used specifically to boost attendance while students are engaged in virtual learning and to help improve academic achievement through monitoring of attendance data and providing rewards.

“Our goal is to send a clear positive message that going to school every day is a priority by providing regular recognition and rewards to students and families who have excellent and improved attendance,” Washington said.



Jaxon Burney is all smiles at Northeastern Elementary’s attendance celebration, which was funded in part by the Harbeck Grant.

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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**  
Kalamazoo Public Schools  
3410 Laird Ave.  
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District Directory at :  
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## SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri

## KPS Graduation Rate Continued Steady Climb in 2020 *(continued from page 1)*

The number of 2020 graduates for each high school and high school program:

- **Kalamazoo Central High School — 319**
- **Loy Norrix High School — 284**
- **Phoenix High School — 113**
- **Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program — 18**

Administrators cite efforts

such as curriculum improvements, best practices with instruction, enhanced parent and guardian involvement, and more extensive collaborations with community partners as being key to improving outcomes for students and helping the district to continue to grow graduation numbers and rates.



Loy Norrix students Mikayla Ide, Avery Snow and Tucker Snow celebrate their graduation in 2020.



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Chef Samuel • KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

# Cajun Spice Rub

As it warms up outside, many people are firing up their grills. Here is one of my favorite spice mixtures. Use it to add a little heat and flavor to everything from vegetables to your favorite grilled meats. Enjoy! *Chef Samuel*



**Chef Samuel Dunn**

## Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon ground oregano
- 1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 2 tablespoons granulated garlic
- 1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground paprika
- 1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon dehydrated onion flakes
- 1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- 2 tablespoons, plus 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme

## Directions

Thoroughly combine ingredients, store in a clean, sanitized, labeled and tightly covered container until ready to use. Portion size — 1 teaspoon.

*Suggested uses:* Add to vegetables before roasting or sautéing or stir into hot, steamed vegetables. To season meats, pat thickly over meat or poultry three hours prior to cooking. Refrigerate meat or poultry below 40°F while marinating.



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# Special Education Millage on May 4 Ballot

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 in-

crease 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 homeowner 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](http://michigan.gov/vote). See additional information and answers to frequently asked questions on the KRESA website.



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Go Behind The Scenes at [changethestory.org](http://changethestory.org)

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# SUMMER CAMP 2021

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# SUMMER CAMP 2021

## Summer Camp in the Time of Covid-19

### What to ask camps about staying safe

For parents, the opportunities to learn new skills, make new friends and get outdoors have long been a lure of enrolling their kids in summer camp. But with worries about the spread of Covid-19, many parents may be asking if camps are safe.

According to the American Pediatrics Association (AAP), camps with proper safety steps in place can greatly limit the spread of Covid-19 infections. These steps include wearing masks, physical distancing, smaller group sizes and cleaning and disinfecting as part of the daily routine.

Whether you are considering a day or an overnight program for your child's camp experience, these are some questions the AAP recommends parents ask camp organizers:

#### How will the camp staff help children follow coronavirus safety rules?

Camps should have age-appropriate ways to help children practice hand hygiene, stay a safe distance from others, and wear face masks whenever possible and practical. This can be a challenge, especially for younger campers, who will need a lot of reminders.

#### Will most activities be indoors or outside?

Having activities outdoors with more fresh air and room to spread out can lower the risk of spreading Covid-19. Being outside allows children to connect with nature, which can boost their physical and mental health after a long, stressful year. However, even outside, precautions need to be taken to avoid sharing germs. Camps should limit shared equipment for games and activities and clean the equipment often.

#### Should sports camps take extra safety steps?

Sports camps should follow safety guidance for drills, practices and competitions, including:

- Adhering to local and state rules about which sports and recreation activities are approved.
- Each child should have their own face mask, hand sanitizer, towel, water bottle, and tissues labeled with their names. Some camps also may require they bring



their own personal sports equipment labeled with their name.

- Athletes should stay home from camp if they're feeling sick or have any symptoms of Covid-19 and get a test if the doctor recommends one.
- Avoid gathering in groups before camp starts, maintain physical distance and wear a face mask.
- Some camps may ask that your child stay in the car or an assigned location until the camp is ready to begin.

#### What happens if someone at the camp gets sick?

Camps should have plans for what to do if a camper or staff member has symptoms of Covid-19, or any other illness based on local or state public health guidelines and policies about how to respond and report suspected Covid-19 cases. Camp organizers should provide clear information to staff, campers and their families on when and how long to stay home if



# SUMMER CAMP 2021



they get sick or have had close contact with some who has Covid-19.

## Is camp staff trained on the specific health needs of children?

After having spent a long time not gathering face to face with others, children attending camp may be afraid or anxious about being away from home. Ask if the camp's health providers have specialized training in children's health and emotional well-being. Camp counselors should also have training on how to help children cope with stress they may be experiencing.

## What kind of support is available for campers with special health care needs?

Some children with special health care needs or disabilities may need special accommodations so they can enjoy camp while being protected against Covid-19. If your child has special health care needs, talk with camp directors and your pediatrician to identify specific accommodations your child may need. Existing plans, such as Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans can be helpful to assist the camp in making accommodations.

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# SUMMER CAMP 2021

## How will campers move throughout the day at camp?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), organizing campers into smaller groups with dedicated staff will help minimize Covid-19 risk. Staggered arrival and drop-off times may also help limit contact between groups.

## How will snacks and meals work?

Eating in group dining halls or cafeterias can be risky for Covid-19 infections. If possible, it may be safest for campers bring their own meals and eat in separate areas or with their smaller group. Ideally, children should bring their own water bottles rather than drinking from water fountains.

## What extra steps are being taken at overnight camps?

When looking at overnight camps, ask if children will bunk with their daytime groups and how sleeping

areas will be arranged. Lining up mats or beds so that campers and staff sleep head-to-toe and at least 6 feet apart can help limit risk.

## Should my child be tested for Covid-19 before or during camp?

A diagnostic test can be useful when a camper or a staff member has had a known exposure to Covid-19 or is showing coronavirus symptoms. Test results can help guide decisions such as who can return to camp safely, when to notify families whose children may have been exposed, or whether the camp should be closed.

However, antibody blood tests should not be used in decisions about going to camp. These tests only show if someone had the virus at one point in time. They can't identify someone who still has an active infection but is asymptomatic. Also, a camper who is negative for Covid-19 on the first day of camp may not remain negative throughout the camp session.



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# SUMMER CAMP 2021

## So Many Types of Camp, So Little Summer

Lots of options & types of camps to consider



**Academic** — Academic camps focus on specific area of study designed to either improve grades or explore special topics, like the sciences. Some examples of what academic camps offer are: ESL, STEM, SAT Prep, foreign languages, tutoring, study skills, biology, computer gaming, general science, rocketry, robotics, and physics. While the schedule is usually structured and can be rigorous, many of these camps also have fun activities to give kids time to rest and play.

**Arts** — Arts camps can specialize in dance, music, performing arts, comedy, creative arts, technical theater, painting, and visual arts. Many are held in theaters, on college campuses, and at dance companies. The programs are normally exclusive to the art. Some camps are for children who already have experience and there may be auditions required.



**Religious** — Religious camps are predominantly Christian, Jewish, Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, and Presbyterian. Some religious camps can be traditional/general camps, where they offer the same activities as a traditional camp but with a focus on a specific religion. Other religious camps can be week-long day camps often called Vacation Bible School.



**Community Service** — Community service camps offer programs for kids to be involved in helping local communities. Some camps offer enrichment credits toward graduation. It is normally labor intensive and includes things like building houses, installing water systems, farming, engineering, animal care, and nature preservation.



**Sports Specialty** — Sports specialty camps usually focus on one sport. There is extensive instruction and campers spend most of their time playing or learning about the sport. Some examples of sports specialties are football, soccer, baseball, basketball, volleyball, golf, and tennis.

# SUMMER CAMP 2021



**Traditional/General** — Traditional/general camps offer a little bit of everything like team sports, swimming, boating, fishing, archery, performing arts, arts and crafts, music, dance, hiking, wilderness adventure, and rock climbing. Some of these camps can be resident camps, where the campers stay overnight for a week or for several. Others are day camps, which can last from 2-3 hours a day or all day.

Traditional/general camps also have different types of programming. Programs can be structured, where the schedule is pre-arranged; semi-elective, where the camper has some choice in activities; or elective, where the camper decides his or her entire schedule.



**Wilderness Adventure** — Wilderness adventure camps are usually overnight camps and can last anywhere from a couple of days to a month or longer. They are usually in a forest or a mountainous area. Campers sleep in tents and sleeping bags. Some of the activities are backpacking, hiking, camping, rock climbing, white water rafting, survival skills training, canoe trips, and mountain biking.



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# SUMMER CAMP 2021



**Special Needs** — Special needs is a broad term that is used to separate traditional and specialty camps from those that cater to kids with specific needs. A special need includes, but is not limited to, cancer, autism, physical disability, burn victims, grief/loss, and LGBTQ. Similar to traditional camps, these camps offer activities such as horseback riding, swimming, climbing, team sports, and arts and crafts. The camp may also offer education for kids and their families specific to the need. There may be group therapy sessions or one-on-one counseling. If the camp specializes in serving children who have a disease or physical disabilities, there are most likely nurses or doctors on site as well as medical facilities. Some camps have an approval process. This may mean filling out an application, providing medical documents, or speaking directly to their admissions personnel.

— Information provided by the  
National Camps Association



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393 Helmer Rd North  
(269) 963 - 4770



**Branch of Kalamazoo**  
6712 Financial Parkway  
(269) 544 - 3000



# SUMMER CAMP 2021

## No-cost, low-cost summer options

Looking for a little more fun this summer for your family and children? Here's a list of places to go to find out about no-cost and low-cost alternatives:

### KYDNet Summer Program Finder

A great place to start your search for summer programs is through KYDNet (Kalamazoo Youth Development Network). KYDNet is working to ensure that Kalamazoo County youth have access to high quality in person and virtual programs and the organization's program finder is a great online tool to see youth-oriented programs and activities are available in Kalamazoo County this summer. Find it online at [www.kydnet.org](http://www.kydnet.org). (See ad on page 12).

### Camp Kzoo

The City of Kalamazoo's Parks and Recreation department offer a variety of programs for Kalamazoo's youth. Plans for this summer's activities will be available on its website at [www.kzoozoo.org/programs](http://www.kzoozoo.org/programs).

Financial assistance is available from Kalamazoo Friends of Recreation to help ensure that these

programs are available to, and affordable by, everyone. For more information, visit the Kalamazoo Friends of Recreation website at [www.friendsofrec.org](http://www.friendsofrec.org).

### Do-Dah Parade

The Do-Dah Parade, the event that kicks off the summer season in downtown Kalamazoo, is set for June 5, but with a twist.

Instead of standing on the curb watching the parade go by, attendees will do the moving. With a theme of "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," parade participants will be positioned along the route and the parade-goers will see them by walking the route.

CDC guidelines will be followed to keep everyone involved safe and healthy.

Get more information at [www.dodahkzoo.com](http://www.dodahkzoo.com).

### Outdoor concerts

Another great outdoor activity is offered by the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo's Summertime Live concert series. Free concerts are held throughout the community including in Portage, Parchment, Oshtemo



Township, and of course, downtown Kalamazoo. The schedule was still being finalized at press time, but to find out who is playing where and when visit [www.kalamazooarts.org](http://www.kalamazooarts.org).

### New Genesis Success Academy

## SUMMER CAMP 2021



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# SUMMER CAMP 2021



## Take a Rewarding Hike

The Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy is challenging kids to Hike Our Preserves (HOP) this summer. Registration is \$7 per person and includes a free hiking stick (if you want one), a medallion for each HOP preserve you visit, and a free prize from Jr. Rangerland for the first 50 hikers to visit all 10 preserves. Preserves feature many different types of landscape from wetlands and forests to fens and beaches. For more information visit [www.swmlc.org/hop](http://www.swmlc.org/hop) or call (269) 324-1600.

## Join a Reading Program

Many of the area libraries offer robust reading programs for kids, often with benchmarks and prizes. And all that's needed to participate is a library card (which most KPS students got in first grade!). Libraries are beginning to open back up, but if you're hesitant about physically visiting a library, your children can still participate in two ways:

**Online:** Public libraries have e-books available that can be read on a variety of digital devices.

**Curbside service:** Libraries allow you to check out books online and library staff, wearing masks, will bring them to you in your car in the library's parking lot. Not all public libraries offer this service, so check with your library by visiting its website.

**SHERMAN LAKE YMCA**  
**SUMMER CAMP 2021**

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[WWW.SHERMANLAKEYMCA.ORG](http://WWW.SHERMANLAKEYMCA.ORG)

**THE CIVIC**  
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A LIFETIME OF LEARNING

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Finances should never prevent a student from pursuing their passion! That's why we're pleased to offer partial scholarships to those students in need. Visit our website for more information!

To learn more and to register for a class that's perfect for you, visit [www.kazoocivic.com/education](http://www.kazoocivic.com/education)

\*\*Strict adherence to COVID protocols and mandates will ensure a safe, enjoyable experience for all.

# SUMMER CAMP 2021

Kalamazoo  
Nature Center  
**CAMP**  
Summer Camp  
2021



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and register at  
[NatureCenter.org/  
Camp](http://NatureCenter.org/Camp).

Scan to learn  
more about KNC  
Summer Camp  
2021!



## Benefits of Camp Can Be Lifelong

After a year of Covid-19 restrictions, summer camp offers kids the chance to learn a variety of different skills that may have been missing from their day-to-day experiences. According to the American Camp Association, summer camp experiences help students develop social skills and self-respect, build character and learn about caring and being a good citizen. In addition, attending a camp can have these benefits.

### 1. Socializing and Friendship Building

Whether it's a day camp or overnight camp, summer camp provides a great opportunity for kids to socialize and meet new people, especially other kids who share the same interests. A summer camp program provides a safe environment for children to develop social skills and decision-making skills. Kids develop important life skills through socializing — such as sharing, setting boundaries, and problem-solving — and learn how to develop strong, healthy relationships by interacting with their peers.



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SUMMER 2021



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AGES 4-14  
CAMP KIDWELL  
Youth  
Family  
Fun

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**SUMMER PROGRAMS 2021**

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YOUTH CREATIVITY CAMP  
AGES 5-8  
JULY 6-8TH - 9AM-12PM  
WELLSPRING  
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**LIGHTS  
CAMERA  
DANCING**  
YOUTH CREATIVITY CAMP  
AGES 9-11  
JULY 13-15TH - 9AM-12PM  
WELLSPRING  
DANCE ACADEMY

**OUTSIDE THE BOX**  
YOUTH CREATIVITY CAMP  
AGES 12-14  
JULY 19-21ST - 9AM-12PM  
WELLSPRING  
DANCE ACADEMY

[wellspringdance.org](http://wellspringdance.org)

# SUMMER CAMP 2021

## 2. Less Screen Time and More Exercise

Our kids have had A LOT of screen time this past year and are more sedentary than ever. Sedentary lifestyles increase the risk of health issues including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and obesity. A summer camp is a great solution to get kids moving again. Many programs take place outdoors and include physical activities such as hiking, archery, horseback riding, swimming, rock climbing, dance and team sports.

## 3. Personal Growth and Exploration

Summer camps are an opportunity for kids to explore their interests and learn new things. For example, local science-focused camps can teach kids about chemistry, robotics or aeronautics, while other camps focus on such things as the arts, cooking and nature. While they are having fun and exploring new interests, kids are also being educated and challenged. Studies have shown that 70 percent of parents report that their child gained self-confidence while at camp.

## 4. Positive Role Models

Through their camp counselors and directors, children will have opportunities to interact with positive adult role models. Many camp counselors are younger adults who work or volunteer over their summer breaks from school and whom kids see as “cool” and more relatable than their parents. Because these young adults often share their personal experiences as well as interests with campers, they can provide your child a glimpse into what their future could be like.

## 5. Becoming More Independent

Going to camp gives kids an opportunity to become more independent. Whether for a day, week, or entire summer, separation from parents and caregivers allows children to learn to rely on themselves and other trusted adults and peers. Separation from parents allows children ability to think independently, which builds self-esteem.

## GET IN THE SWING WITH GOLF!

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# Nominations Sought for KC Hall of Fame and Academic Hall of Honor

Nominations for the Kalamazoo Central Hall of Fame and Academic Hall of Honor are due by Aug. 31 and can be emailed to [kcmaroonfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:kcmaroonfoundation@gmail.com) or mailed to 555 W. Cross-town Parkway, Suite 304, Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

The foundation seeks nominees to the Athletic Hall of Fame, who were outstanding athletes while at Kalamazoo Central and who attained post high school achievements in athletics. Coaches and teams

may be included in nominations.

Nominees are also sought for the KC Academic Hall of Fame. Nominees should have been outstanding scholars at Kalamazoo Central and attained post-high school achievements in their community or chosen profession. Coaches and teams may be nominated.

Nominations are also sought for individuals who contributed to the Kalamazoo Central community as a community



member at large.

For complete guidelines and nomination forms, visit [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Z5GHJrXuukSQr41hL6irPZL\\_kR2to7F-MjBBb1Rq\\_J4/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Z5GHJrXuukSQr41hL6irPZL_kR2to7F-MjBBb1Rq_J4/edit)

The nomination form needs to be filled out in its entirety in order to be reviewed by the Maroon Foundation Board and Selection Committee.

# Music and Choir Students Earn State Recognition

Congratulations to the following students for their achievements in solo and ensemble competition for band, orchestra and choir.

KPS SOLO & ENSEMBLE PARTICIPANTS, SPRING 2021

## Kalamazoo Central High School Band

Dan Stout, Director  
Miles Lekan, Alto Saxophone  
Jonathan Andrews, Alto Saxophone  
Savannah Keck, Trumpet

## Loy Norrix High School Orchestra

Sandy Shaw, Director  
Garrick Hohm  
Lauren Adams  
Vivienne Chapman

## LNHS Choir

Julie Pelligrino-Hartman, Director  
Ellen Terzino  
Annabelle Fuerst

## LNHS Band

Aaron Mirakovits, Director  
Kohler Briggs  
Aleah Ward  
Dominick Frost  
Erica Sanchez-Elias

## Milwood Magnet School Band

Aaron Mirakovits, Director  
Claudia Hansen

## MICHIGAN SCHOOL VOCAL MUSIC ASSOCIATION

## State Honors Choir

## Kalamazoo Central High School

Theresa Williams-Johnson, Director  
Rachel Richman  
Maicee Bishop  
Natalia March

## MSVMA All-State Jazz Choir

## KCHS

Theresa Williams-Johnson, Director  
Abigail Baker

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# KPS Grads in Action: Megan Lohner Helps with Pfizer Vaccine, Sees Chance to Give Back

By Lou Blouin, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Loy Norrix Class of 2016 alum Megan Lohner says taking a job at Kalamazoo-based Pfizer was “a little bit of a 180” compared to her vision for her first post-college job. She had studied some biochemistry at University of Michigan-Dearborn, but biomechanics and sports injuries were her primary passions. Lohner, who was a student-athlete, even did research in that area under Professor Amanda Esquivel. But as with many of us, the pandemic changed her calculations about what seemed most important.

“For me, it’s always been about science and helping people,” said Lohner, who graduated from UM-Dearborn in fall 2020. “So when I saw this job at Pfizer, the idea of coming back to Kalamazoo, my hometown, and working on the vaccine that was going to help get us out of



A selfie of Loy Norrix alum Megan Lohner, center, and her parents Joan and Ray Lohner. Joan Lohner is a teacher at Winchell Elementary School.

this just felt like the right thing to do.”

Since January, Lohner has been involved with the most groundbreaking part of Pfizer’s vaccine: It’s part of her job to dilute the concentrated mRNA to the proper levels before large batches of the vaccine are dispatched into tiny, life-saving vials. The feeling that they’re doing something “important

for the country” is palpable at Pfizer, Lohner said. President Joe Biden even visited recently to cheer them on, as has Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

But the work is also deeply personal. Lohner’s family has lived many of the pandemic’s major storylines. Her brother and his fiancée were in their first year of taking over a breakfast and lunch-only restaurant when

“... working on the vaccine that was going to help us get out of this just felt like the right thing to do.”

the pandemic triggered a shut-down. Her mother is a teacher at Winchell Elementary School and has endured the struggles of remote teaching. Her father, who has a preexisting lung condition from his days in the military, works in administration in the trucking industry and didn’t have the option to work from home. When he, and then her mother, came down with COVID this winter, Lohner said she was terrified. Luckily, her parents came through without having to be hospitalized, although her

dad is still facing some residual health effects.

It was a special moment to see her mom recently get the first dose of a vaccine Lohner helped produce. And the whole unpredictable turn of events these past few months has given her something many people have been deprived of during the pandemic: a sense of purpose.

“It’s interesting to see how the whole thing has come full circle,” she explains. “I was always the person who said I was moving out of state as quickly as I could, and here I am back in my hometown, working for the hometown company. When it came down to it, I realized it was really important for me to be here and be around my family. I was a recipient of The Kalamazoo Promise, so this community has invested in me. And now, to have a chance to do something for the town and for the country feels very rewarding.”

## GOT A LEAK? WE'RE HERE TO HELP!



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](mailto: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](http://CommunityHomeworks.org) for more information.

# Kalamazoo Youth Food Drive Collects Over 5,000 Pounds of Food

Kalamazoo Central and Loy Norrix high schools teamed up for the first Kalamazoo Youth Food Drive on March 6. With collection sites at all KPS school buildings and Harding's Friendly Market on Drake Road, the students collected more than 5,588 pounds of food and \$3,955 in donations. All collections went to Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes food bank, which provided almost 150,000 four-day food orders to 28,000 unique individuals during 2018-2019. For more information, visit [kzoolf.org](http://kzoolf.org).



Nava Haus, left, and Chrisselle Comer help collect donations for the all-district food drive in March.



Loy Norrix students Molly Gross, left, and Kayden Bumpus help with collections at the Indian Prairie Elementary School food drive site. All three photos by Kearney Miller.



Kalamazoo Central students Eliza Geer, Tyrell Shaff, and Sidney Murray are ready to help during the food drive at Harding's Friendly Market on Drake Road.

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Kim Powers

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# Celebrating St. Patrick's Day 2021 with Visits and Parades



Teachers Marlean Wilson-Bridges and Maritza Graca-Lobo let students know how much they miss them on St. Patrick's Day at Woods Lake.



Student Braedyn Lovelace wears his lucky hat on St. Patrick's Day for the Woods Lake drive-through event.



Yamen Khames and his mother Sanaad Khames stop by for some St. Patrick's Day cheer with Arcadia Elementary teachers Kate McNeil, Donna Judd, and Karen Alston.



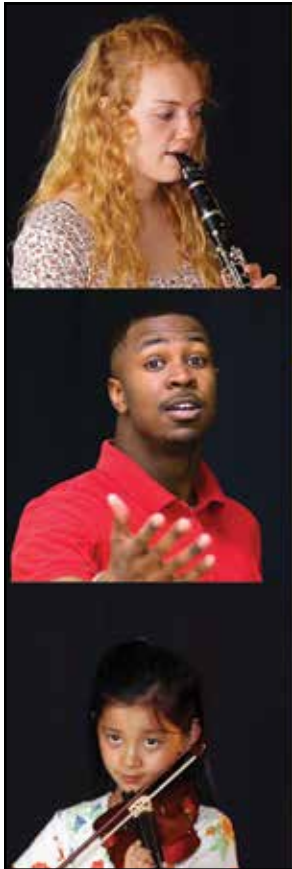
Arcadia teachers Sean Reilly and Mary Smolka found all the green they could wear to celebrate St. Patrick's Day at Arcadia.



O'Meara Timmons shares her pot of gold with student Lucas Saldana during the Arcadia Elementary School's Shamrock Car Parade. O'Meara's mom, Meaghan Timmons, is the principal at Arcadia.



Woods Lake Elementary second-grade teacher Marlean Wilson-Bridges greets student Addison Davis and her family on St. Patrick's Day.





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Teacher David Berlin goes all out on the fun factor for Woods Lake's St. Patrick's Day drive-through celebration.



Timothy Eubanks and his dad celebrated all things Irish at the Arcadia parade.

# KPS Librarians Recommend: Books to Celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, celebrating people in the United States from more than 50 countries from China to Indonesia to Pakistan, and many more. Here are some of our favorite recent books.

## Grades PreK – 3

### The Many Colors of Harpreet Singh by Supriya Kelkar

Harpreet, a young Sikh boy, has a different colored patka, or turban, for the different emotions he feels. When Harpreet's family must move across the country from sunny California to a new snowy town, Harpreet chooses the white patka day after day. He just wants to be invisible. Then Harpreet meets a new friend and slowly he begins wearing other colors of patkas again.



### Mommy Sayang by Rosana Sullivan

This autobiographical picture book celebrates the vibrancy of life in a small Malaysian village. Mother and daughter spend their days in their kampung (small village), making everyday tasks fun together. But when Mommy gets sick, the little girl must comfort herself and think of a way to make Mommy feel better.

### It Began With a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way by Kyo Maclear, illustrated by Julie Morstad

A picture-book biography of illustrator and artist Gyo Fujikawa, who was instrumental in fighting for racial diversity in American publishing. Working in New York while her family was interned during WWII, Fujikawa struggled to get her now-famous work "Babies" published, which in turn helped the public recognize the need for diverse voices.



### Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, illustrated by June Jo Lee

"Sohn maash" is the flavor in our fingertips. It is the love and cooking talent that Korean mothers and grandmothers mix into their handmade foods. For Chef Roy Choi, food means love. It also means culture, not only of Korea where he was born, but the many cultures that make up the streets of Los Angeles, where he was raised.

## Middle Grades 4 – 7



### Stand Up, Yumi Chung! by Jessica Kim

Yumi's parents only want the best for her: an excellent education at an elite school. But their restaurant is struggling and Yumi will need a scholarship to attend school and she has to spend the summer studying for the exam. It doesn't help that Yumi is more interested in stand-up comedy than her scholarship class.

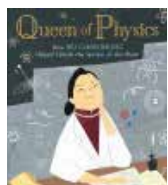


### The Best At It by Maulik Pancholy

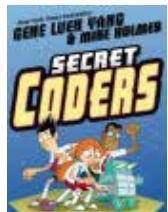
A Stonewall Honor book, Pancholy tells the story of 12-year-old Rahul Kapoor, an Indian-American boy growing up in small-town Indiana. While Rahul struggles to come to terms with his identity, he convinces himself that if he can become the best at something, he will escape being bullied by his classmates.

### Queen of Physics: How Wu Chien Shiung Helped Unlock the Secrets of the Atom by Teresa Robeson, illustrated by Rebecca Huang

When Wu Chien Shiung was born in China 100 years ago, girls did not attend school, but her parents named their daughter "Courageous Hero" and encouraged her love of science. Wu battled sexism at home and racism in the United States to become what Newsweek magazine called the "Queen of Physics" for her work on how atoms split.

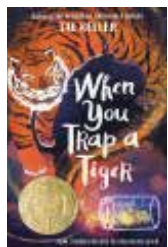


in China 100 years ago, girls did not attend school, but her parents named their daughter "Courageous Hero" and encouraged her love of science. Wu battled sexism at home and racism in the United States to become what Newsweek magazine called the "Queen of Physics" for her work on how atoms split.



### Secret Coders by Gene Luen Yang and Mike Holmes

The founder of the Stately Academy left clues and puzzles to challenge his students. Using their wits and their growing prowess with coding, Hopper and her friend Eni plan to solve the mystery of Stately Academy. This book is the first of a six-book set that graphic novel and action book lovers will enjoy. Yang will be a guest at Kalamazoo Public Library's fall Youth Literature Seminar.



### When You Trap a Tiger by Tae Keller

Long, long ago, Lily's grandma – or Halmoni – stole something from the tigers.

Now they want it back. When Halmoni falls ill, a tiger approaches Lily with a deal – return what her grandmother stole in exchange for Halmoni's health – Lily is tempted to agree. With the help of her sister and her new friend Ricky, Lily must find her voice ... and the courage to face a tiger.

## Young Adult Grades 8 – 12



### Zara Hossain is Here by Sabina Khan

Zara's family has waited years for their visa process to be finalized so that they can become U.S. citizens, but it only takes one moment for that dream to come crashing down around them. This timely, intimate looks at what it means to be an immigrant in America and the endurance of hope and faith in the face of hate.



### A Pho Love Story by Loan Le

Two Vietnamese-American teens fall in love and must navigate their new-found relationship amid their families' age-old feud about their competing, neighboring restaurants.



### Patron Saints of Nothing by Randy Ribay

Jay Reguero plans to spend the last semester of his senior year playing video games before heading to college. But when he discovers that his Filipino cousin Jun was murdered as part of President Duterte's war on drugs, and no one wants to talk about what happened, Jay travels to the Philippines to find out the real story.

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2021 Ages 5-13  
Flag Football (5-7yrs)  
Tackle FB (7-13yrs)  
Cheer (5-13yrs)

Harvey Fluellen 269-352-6656  
Joda Grimes 773-679-9313  
Scott Miles 269-501-3300

Early bird registration begins on 2/8/21 until 6/30/2021.

4. As Arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.  
-Psalms 127: 4



# Children need to be protected

When a child is removed from their home, their world feels out of control. They need to know they are safe during this vulnerable time.

As a foster parent, you give a child a loving home and the stability they need as their family works toward reunification.

**Bethany.org/FosterCare**

## YOU'RE INVITED

JOIN US FOR A NO-COMMITMENT  
INFORMATION MEETING

**Register today**

(269) 372-8800

Bethany.org/SWMichigan

**Bethany®**

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### UPCOMING DATES

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 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 |
| June 17, 2021 | 5:30—8:30 pm     |

**Virtual Info Meetings**  
**Link Provided Upon Registration**