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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, Dec. 3 & 17, 2020

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).

Winter Break

Dec. 21–Jan. 1

School Resumes

Jan. 4

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# It's a Whole New Game: Esports Capturing Student Athletes' Attention

Communication.  
Strategy.  
Practice.  
Watching game tapes.  
Positions.  
Teamwork.

That sounds a lot like the old world of sports — but those elements also apply to the new world of esports. Athletes and coaches say people may be surprised how similar the activities are and to learn about the opportunities that await esports athletes.

In esports, students' hard work can pay off not only with trophies — but college scholarships and recruiting calls from collegiate coaches.



Loy Norrix esports teammates, from left, Yancy Quinn–Cabrera, Sophie Decker, and Elliot Russell take the state title during the state Overwatch tournament in 2019.

“Playing video games with friends can be a lot of fun of course, but you’re just goofing off. It’s a way to spend time,” said LN junior James Hauke.

# State Offering Essential Workers Access to Tuition-Free Higher Education

By: [Michigan.gov](http://Michigan.gov)

In the first two weeks of the Futures for Frontliners, more than 60,000 Michiganders submitted applications for the initiative, which provides a tuition-free pathway to college degree or a technical

(continued on page 5)

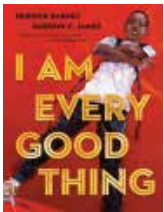


# KPS Librarians Recommend Books for: Holiday Gift Giving

This holiday season might be a little or a lot different than anyone is used to. Kalamazoo Public Schools librarians have suggestions for book gift ideas to lift spirits, spread some joy, give loved ones something fun and meaningful to make or do, and ideas for books that kids and teens will be excited to receive.

**Grades K–3 and up**

**I Am Every Good Thing**  
by Derrick Barnes



“I am every good thing that makes the world go round. You know—like gravity, or the glow of moonbeams over a field of brand-new snow.” With pulsing rhythms and bright images this book celebrates all that is adventurous, polite, inquisitive, playful, creative, artistic, athletic, brave, and worthy in Black boys.

**We Will Rock our Classmates**  
by Ryan T. Higgins

As the only T.Rex in her school, Penelope is often seen as only a dinosaur. But when she loses her confidence after signing up for the school talent show, her father shows her being a dinosaur is just one part of who she is, and with some help from her friends, Penelope finds the courage to rock her classmates!



**Your Name is a Song**  
by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow

Kora-Jalimuso is frustrated at school because every teacher and all her classmates cannot pronounce her name. To help her, the girl's mother tells her that her name is her song, and that she should love the musicality of all names—African, Asian, Black—

(continued on page 6)



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# Community Colleges Play Vital Role in Health of Communities

When President-elect Joe Biden served as Vice President under President Barack Obama, Dr. Jill Biden, his wife, used her role as Second Lady to champion the cause of community colleges and the role they play in the landscape of American education.

That's not surprising given her career as a professor of English, first at Delaware Technical & Community College, and then at Northern Virginia Community College — where she hopes to keep teaching even as First Lady.

"I'm gonna continue to teach," she told CBS News in August before the election. "It's important, and I want people to value teachers and know their contributions, and lift up the profession."

Biden used her position as Second Lady to celebrate how community colleges help create an educated workforce. She hosted the White House Summit on Community Colleges in 2010, and in 2012, she toured the Unit-

ed States as part of the "Community College to Career" program that touted partnerships between industry and community colleges.

Those kinds of partnerships have been a keen interest of mine for many years. During my tenure with Chicago Public Schools, I served as the executive director of Early College and Career Education, helping to provide students with college-level, hands-on, career-focused courses. I am continuing that work in Kalamazoo. Since coming to KPS, I have been working with Kalamazoo Valley Community College President Dr. L. Marshall Washington and others to develop new, robust career pathways for students.

That work will help



**Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri,**  
Superintendent,  
Kalamazoo Public Schools

strengthen our bond with KVCC, which has an essential role in Kalamazoo's educational community, where it helps ensure our students are prepared for the demands and needs of the state and local labor markets.

Already, many KPS graduates use their Kalamazoo Promise scholarships to pursue their college educations at KVCC. And, even before high school graduation, KPS students have the opportunity to dual enroll at KVCC to extend their learning. They can delve in depth into topics that interest them or choose to get an early start on their collegiate experience by taking college prerequisites.

Students can take that concept even further. In 2014, KVCC and the school districts in the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency launched Early/Middle College, which allows students to complete an associate's degree or earn a technical certificate simultaneously

with their high school diploma through a five-year course of study. Students can choose from among dozens of programs ranging from graphic design to welding.

E/MC is a perfect example of the kind of innovation one sees at community colleges, which try to offer maximum flexibility while serving nontraditional students. They often cater to the working student or the student who has family obligations, ensuring that they can achieve their goals despite the challenges they may have in their lives.

That flexibility and agile responsiveness to the needs of the community and the labor market make them an ideal partner for new initiatives. A perfect example of this is the recently announced Futures for Frontliners, a state program that provides a tuition-free pathway to college for essential workers who served their communities this spring. This scholarship can be used to

pursue an associate's degree or a technical skills certificate, either full-time or part-time while they work. If necessary, participants can complete their GED before starting their college career.

Community colleges provide opportunities. It's that simple. They provide opportunities to KPS students while they are still in high school. They provide opportunities after they graduate from high school. They provide opportunities for those who may not have the easiest path to pursuing their dreams.

When Dr. Jill Biden steps into the role of First Lady, I hope community colleges again benefit from her public endorsement and celebration of the important work that they do to help students. Community colleges strengthen our communities by providing opportunities for all to learn and grow — and I hope the future First Lady does not miss the opportunity to celebrate that vital mission.



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# WMed Seeks High School Sophomores for Health Careers Pipeline Program

The WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine is seeking high school sophomores interested in learning more about health careers for its Early Introduction to Health Careers Pipeline Program.

Applications are being accepted through Dec. 3. For more information, visit [med.wmich.edu/EIH2](http://med.wmich.edu/EIH2).

The EIH program has three tiers designed for different age groups. EIH2 is for high schoolers. The 10-week program targets students from groups that

are traditionally underrepresented in medical professions and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds or students who might be first-generation college attendees. The program is led by Dr. Cheryl Dickson, the medical school's associate dean for Health Equity and Community Affairs.

Studies from the American Association of Medical Colleges have shown that practitioners from poor, minority, or immigrant groups are more likely to treat patients from similar com-

munities. EIH is designed to expand the training and graduation rates of students from diverse backgrounds to improve educational achievement gaps and help promote diversity among health professionals.

Students attend class one Saturday a month, meeting with medical students and professionals to learn basic medical knowledge, practice skills such as patient assessment and bandaging wounds in hands-on labs, and complete a final project. This school year, students

will meet virtually on Zoom.

After the 10-week school year program, about two dozen students are selected for a two-week summer intensive at Kalamazoo College, where they work with faculty from WMed and other health care industries in the area.

EIH2 is demanding and interesting, said 2019 Loy Norrix graduate Tristan Morales. The program has inspired him to pursue a degree in nursing. Morales is a sophomore enrolled at Western Michigan University.

Morales said he was considering a career in law before starting the program, but EIH2 opened him to other job possibilities with a similar emphasis on public service. The program introduces students to the breadth of medical careers. Sessions can include everyone from physical therapists to x-ray technicians to physician assistants — as well as doctors and nurses.

"We met all different types of people who told us there isn't just one route to medicine," Morales said. "The program just shows you all of the different routes you can take into the medical field. It shows you how to get what you want."

Before the program, he said, he'd never considered a career in nursing.

"There are all those stereotypes that men aren't really nurses, but that's not true at all," he said. "There are so many male nurses, and EIH just opened my eyes to that."

After EIH2, Morales took the Education For Employment health care course, and by the time he graduated high school he'd earned his certified nurse assistant certificate.

EIH2 is valuable not simply because students learn about different professions, Morales said. They also have the opportunity to develop skills and relationships. For his final project, he and other students developed a survey on sexual health for

young people, which has now become part of the EIH curriculum. That experience taught him to think outside of the box when given an assignment

And, through EIH, he met medical professionals and mentors, who he maintains contact with today. He, in turn, has become a mentor to current high school students, helping to recruit new participants for EIH2.

"I tell them 'it's really something that you don't get a lot of places,'" Morales said. "You don't usually get to talk to doctors and different medical professionals on a personal level."

## EARLY INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH CAREERS PROGRAM (EIH2)



**We are recruiting 10<sup>th</sup> grade girls and boys, until December 3<sup>rd</sup>, who are interested in participating in the program at WMU Homer Stryker M.D School of Medicine.**

**This Mini-Medical School for High School sophomores will help develop an interest in biomedical science and health careers amongst minority underrepresented and low socioeconomic students. We are excited that students will work with medical students, learn more about the body, receive mentorship, and hear stories by medical professions. We are virtual, but it will still be fun!**

**Sessions will be virtual ZOOM on Saturdays once a month until May 2021.**

### For more information, contact:

Dr. Cheryl Dickson, MD  
Candace Moore, MA

Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine

269.337.4538

[Candace.Moore@med.wmich.edu](mailto:Candace.Moore@med.wmich.edu)

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# WMU Receives \$1.5 million Grant to Launch Resiliency Center for Families and Children

By Western Michigan University News

Western Michigan University’s College of Health and Human Services and the Unified Clinics will receive a state appropriation of \$1.5 million for the development of a Resiliency Center for Families and Children to address the many needs of those experiencing trauma, toxic stress, chronic disability, neurodevelopmental disorders or substance use disorders. An additional \$1.5 million has been appropriated but will need to be re-approved by the new legislature after this November’s election.

“Resiliency is the ability to recover from traumatic events, adapt to change and recover following adversity,” said Dr. Ron Cisler, dean of the College of Health and Human Services. “Research has shown that building resilience in families can ease intergenerational trauma, maximize the potential for recovery of individuals with addiction, and generally improve function across the lifespan for children who experience trauma at an early age.

“This funding for the Resiliency Center will allow the Unified Clinics to increase the number of children and families receiving trauma assessments and treatment,” he said.

The appropriation will also allow the clinics to add new services, such as trauma assessments and treatment for parents and for those with substance use disorders, as well as resiliency-based interventions for families and sensory processing therapy for children.

“The Resiliency Center will allow clients to access multiple



Children’s Trauma Assessment Center staff meet to discuss programming.

clinical resources to potentially treat underlying issues due to trauma, toxic stress, anxiety, depression or a substance use,” said Dr. James Henry, director of the WMU Children’s Trauma Assessment Center.

The center will allow WMU to integrate the Children’s

Trauma Assessment Center with other university disciplines and services such as behavioral health, speech-language pathology, audiology, vision, occupational and physical therapy, as well as WMU experts in public health, social work, holistic health, and nursing.

Dr. Carol Sundberg, director of Unified Clinics, said the center will emphasize the best practice of using a multidisciplinary approach to treating trauma.

Learn more about the Children’s Trauma Assessment Center at <https://wmich.edu/traumacenter>.



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

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

### 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  
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District Directory at :

[www.kalamazoopublicschools.com](http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com)

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## State Offering Essential Workers Access to Tuition-Free Higher Education *(continued from page 1)*

certificate to essential workers who do not have a college degree, including those who lack a high school diploma.

"This past spring, these brave men and women put their lives on the line every day to ensure we have essential services and products we need to stay healthy and safe, I am truly thrilled to see that so many are taking advantage of this program — they earned it," Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said. "I encourage every eligible frontline worker to see if this free college scholarship opportunity is right for them."

Futures for Frontliners is a state scholarship program for Michiganders without college degrees who worked in essential industries during the state COVID-19 shutdown in spring 2020 (April 1 – June 30). This scholarship provides these frontline workers with tuition-free access to local community colleges to pursue an associate's degree or a skills certificate, either full-time or part-time while they work. Applicants can also complete their high school

**This scholarship provides frontline workers with tuition-free access to local community colleges to pursue an associate's degree or a skills certificate, either full-time or part-time while they work.**

diploma before starting their college career.

Eligibility requirements:

- Be a Michigan resident
  - Have worked in an essential industry at least part-time for 11 of the 13 weeks between April 1 – June 30, 2020
  - Have been required by their job to work outside the home at least some of the time between April 1 – June 30, 2020
  - Not have previously earned an associate's or bachelor's degree
  - Not be in default on a federal student loan
- Complete a Futures for Frontliners scholarship application by 11:59 p.m. Dec. 31.

"Good paying jobs and a stronger Michigan economy require more of us to have an education beyond high school. The strong interest in Futures for Frontliners shows us that Michiganders are ready to build a brighter, more secure future for themselves and their loved ones," Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) Director Jeff Donofrio said. "With the economic uncertainty that comes with the COVID-19 pandemic and the thousands of high-skilled jobs going unfilled, there's no better time to add new skills."

The program aligns with Whitmer's Sixty by 30 initiative to increase the number of Michigan's working-age adults with a skill certificate or college degree from 45 percent today to 60 percent by 2030. It is part of the state's focus on increasing economic opportunity by providing residents greater access to the education and skills that create pathways to better jobs and bigger paychecks.

**Sixty by 30 aims to:**

- Close the skills gap to ad-

dress talent shortages in the state. Jobs requiring skilled employees today, as well as jobs on the horizon, demand greater education and training than ever before. Increasingly, the best jobs require more than a high school diploma.

- Increase opportunities for Michiganders to have greater access to the education and skills training needed for skilled jobs.

- Make Michigan more competitive for inclusive economic growth.

"The Sixty by 30 goals and the initiatives and programs that will help us reach them are critical to ensuring hardworking Michiganders have a path to economic opportunity and attracting talent to our state," Whitmer said.

Learn more about Futures for Frontliners at [www.michigan.gov/Frontliners](http://www.michigan.gov/Frontliners).

Learn more about Sixty by 30 at [SixtyBy30.org](http://SixtyBy30.org).

Learn about Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Frontliners' program at <https://www.kvcc.edu/>.

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KPS Librarians Recommend Books for: Holiday Gift Giving (continued from page 1)

American, Latinx, and Middle Eastern, White. Empowered by this newfound understanding, the young girl is ready to return the next day to share her knowledge with her class. This book is a celebration to remind all of us about the beauty, history, and magic behind names.

Our Favorite Day of the Year

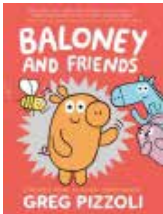
by A. E. Ali  
On the first day of school, Musa's teacher tells the class that some of their best friends that year are sitting in the room with them. Musa doesn't believe her and neither do Moises, Mo, and Kevin. But as they learn about each other through the course of the year, Musa sees his teacher is right and that even though they are different, there are many celebrations they can enjoy together. The calendar of holidays at the end of the book will delight children as they identify special events they can celebrate with friends throughout the year.

Skunk and Badger

by Amy Timberlake  
Sometimes you get exactly what you don't want. Badger gets Skunk as a new roommate. They are not at all alike. This will not work! In a classic odd-couple tale, Badger and Skunk show how opposites attract and that making friends means opening yourself up to possibilities. Finding the things that we share is much harder than seeing the ways we are different. Filled with sweet and laugh-out-loud moments, this is the first tale in a series about two opposites who need to be friends.

Baloney and Friends

by Greg Pizzoli  
Meet Baloney! He's the star of this book, along with his best buddies: empathetic Peanut the



horse, sensible Bizz the bumblebee, and grumpy Krabbit — he'd rather not be here, but what can you do? In this graphic novel for newly independent readers, Baloney and friends invite you to join them on their adventures. At the end of the book, learn to draw all the characters with clear step-by-step instructions!

Fiction Grades 4-7

Last Kids on Earth (series)



A popular book series turned into a Netflix smash hit, this series tells the story of Jack and his group of courageous friends who band together after a monster apocalypse. Funny and fast-paced with illustrations that are sure to draw readers into the stories and keep them coming back for more—especially since there is an additional stand-alone title (June's Wild Flight) and graphic novel versions are planned for spring publication.

Before the Ever After

by Jacqueline Woodson  
Written in poetic format, Woodson tells the story of a father who was a professional football player, now suffering from the many concussions he received while playing. Told from a son's point of view, this heart-wrenching story also reminds us of what it means to be a family — no matter what. Jacqueline Woodson is the featured author for Kalamazoo Public Library's Reading Together series,

and the library will host numerous events tied to her books in March.

Graphic Novels Grades 4-7

Kodi

by Jared Cullum  
The gorgeous story of two friends separated by everything in the world — except love. Readers and animal-lovers of every age will want to relive this journey over and over again. A young girl named Katya is with her Meema at their Alaskan cottage when she accidentally meets a giant, gentle Kodiak bear who loves to fish. Katya and Kodi make friends immediately, but then Katya has to go back home to Seattle. Kodi sets out on a perilous and often funny journey to reunite with his human friend.

Class Act

by Jerry Craft  
The companion graphic novel to the Newbery-winning New Kid. This time, it's Jordan's friend Drew who takes center stage in another laugh-out-loud funny, powerful, and important story about being one of the few kids of color in a prestigious private school.

Dog Man: Grime and Punishment

by Dav Pilkey  
The latest installment of Dav Pilkey's wildly popular Dog Man series. Dog Man's really done it this time! He hands over his badge and clears out his desk, but while he may be out of a job, he's not yet out of hope. With his friends at his side, can Dog Man dig himself out of this hole and paw his way back onto the force?

Twins

by Varian Johnson  
Maureen and Francine Carter are twins and best friends. They participate in the same clubs, enjoy the same foods, and are partners on all their school projects. But just before the girls start sixth grade, Francine becomes Fran — a girl who wants to join the chorus, run for class president, and dress in fashionable outfits that set her apart from Maureen. Maureen and Francine are growing apart and there's nothing Maureen can do to stop it. Are sisters really forever? Or will middle school change things for good?

High School and Adult

Nyxia

by Scott Reintgen  
A Detroit teen accepts an interstellar space contract only to realize the promised millions must be won in a brutal competition where winners face the ultimate choice — take the money and become pawns in the corporation's sinister plans or find a way to fight that won't forever compromise their humanity.

You Should See Me in a Crown

by Leah Johnson  
Liz Lightly has tried to stay out of the spotlight in high school, focusing on her plan to leave small-town Indiana to attend an elite private

school on a music scholarship and become a doctor. When financial aid falls through, Liz's only shot is to compete for a scholarship offered to the prom queen. But to win, Liz will have to face her fears of being black, poor, and gay in a town of affluent whites.

Punching the Air

by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam of the Exonerated Five  
From award-winning author Ibi Zoboi and prison reform activist Yusef Salaam of the Exonerated Five comes a powerful YA novel in verse about a boy who is wrongfully incarcerated. Perfect for fans of Jason Reynolds, Walter Dean Myers, and Elizabeth Acevedo.

The Inheritance Games

by Jennifer Lynn Barnes  
Avery Grambs wakes up one morning to find that she has inherited a fortune from billionaire Tobias Hawthorne. Most people would be pretty excited, but Avery has no idea who Hawthorne is or why he has left her his fortune. Plus, she has to move into his mansion with the rest of his eccentric family for a year before she actually inherits the money. What follows is a yearlong mystery that Avery has to unravel while trying to understand how her life has changed and what she wants for her future. This is the first in what will certainly be a popular series.

Grown

by Tiffany Jackson  
Award-winning author Tiffany D. Jackson delivers another riveting, ripped-from-the-headlines mystery that exposes horrific secrets hiding behind the limelight and embraces

(continued on page 7)

## KPS Librarians Recommend Books for: Holiday Gift Giving (continued from page 6)

the power of a young woman's voice.



When legendary R&B artist Korey Fields spots Enchanted Jones at an audition, her dreams of being a famous singer take flight. Until Enchanted wakes up with blood on her hands and zero memory of the previous night. Who killed Korey Fields?

### Dear Justyce



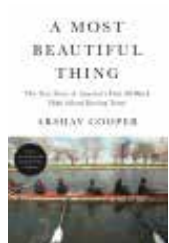
by Nic Stone  
In the highly anticipated sequel to her New York Times bestseller, Nic Stone delivers an unflinching look into the flawed practices and silenced voices in the American juvenile justice system.

### This is My America



While writing letters to Innocence X, a justice-seeking project, asking them to help her father, an innocent black man on death row, teen-aged Tracy takes on another case when her brother is accused of killing his white girlfriend. Fans of Nic Stone, Tiffany D. Jackson, and Jason Reynolds won't want to miss this provocative and gripping debut.

### A Most Beautiful Thing: The True Story of America's First All-Black Rowing Team



Growing up in Chicago in the 90s, Arshay Cooper knew nothing about rowing. When a coach came to his school with a plan to start a team funded by a local philanthropist, Arshay and

several of his friends decided to join. This moving book follows Arshay and his team as they learn about rowing and how to change their life circumstances. There is a documentary based on the book narrated by Common, produced by Grant Hill, Dwyane Wade, and 9th Wonder from filmmaker Mary Mazzio.

### Things to Make and Do!

### Recycling Project Books

Take your craft projects to a whole new level with this ingenious series that turns recycling into an art form! Each project comes with photographic step-by-step instructions and can be completed within an hour.

### I Am Not an Old Sock



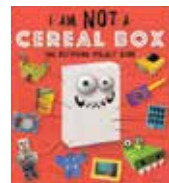
Turn those extra socks into a snake, owl, dog toy, cat toy, mermaid, juggling balls, vegetable patch, and more.

### I Am Not a Toilet Paper Roll



Imaginations will soar as kids take a plain old toilet paper roll and turn it into a unicorn, pirate, treasure chest, ninja, space rocket, or castle.

### I Am Not a Cereal Box



Make a robot, aquarium, teddy bear, car/hot rod, puppet theater and more!

### I Am Not an Egg Carton

This isn't an egg carton — it's a penguin, mini monster, fire engine, dragon, music shakers, mini cars, and more.

### National Geographic Kids Just Joking series

Give loads of laughs! All of the books in this series are jam-packed with jokes, including knock-knocks, puns, riddles,



and tongue twisters, plus photos of cool animals, and silly situations! Get hundreds of fun facts about all the coolest creatures and some of the craziest info about the history of funny business. It's the right formula for laughing, learning, and maybe even launching a stand-up comedy career!

### Two Truths and a Lie (series)



Drawing from the game, this fun book series challenges readers to determine fact from fiction in both history and nature. The facts and fictions are presented, and then a decision is made about what is true and what is false. Information about research is also included in these unique books.

### No Voice Too Small: Fourteen Young Americans Making History



This inspiring title profiles 14 young people who are a positive force for change. The young activists vary in age and actions, but they all took remarkable steps to improve their communities and country.

### Great Cookbooks for the Young and Not So Young

### My First Cookbook: Fun recipes to cook together . . . with as much mixing, rolling, scrunching, and squishing as possible!

America's Test Kitchen Kids



Inspire the youngest chefs to enter the kitchen, empower them to cook, and engage their creativity — plus they'll have fun doing it. From simple after-school snacks, family meals, and holiday celebration recipes, each beginner recipe is developed by America's Test Kitchen Kids before being kid-tested and kid-approved.

### Pizza School: A Kids Cookbook for Aspiring Pizza Makers

by Charity Curley Matthews



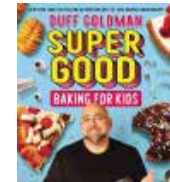
This fun cookbook for kids will teach you everything you need to know to make your own warm, gooey, delicious pizza.



**The Complete Cookbook for Young Chefs**  
America's Test Kitchen  
Over 750 kids

tested and approved the recipes in this cookbook written exclusively for young people to learn how to cook. From breakfast to dessert, with tips about kitchen tools and healthy eating, this book is sure to be a hit with the young chef in your life.

### Super Good Baking for Kids



by Duff Goldman  
Celebrity baker Duff Goldman provides the ultimate baking book for kids who want to learn new tips and recipes for making amazing treats and desserts. With his wit and humor, Goldman teaches kids to love being in the kitchen and trying something new and delicious.

### The Rise: Black Cooks and the Soul of American Food



by Marcus Samuelsson  
An "Eater" Best Cookbook of Fall 2020 This groundbreaking new cookbook from chef, bestselling author, and TV star Marcus Samuelsson celebrates contemporary Black cooking in 150 extraordinarily delicious recipes with a compelling look at the evolution of soul food in America.

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# Chef Sam Dunn Joins Chartwells KPS Team

Chartwells, the food service provider for Kalamazoo Public Schools, welcomed new chef Sam Dunn in September. He replaces Shaun Robinson, who left to pursue other opportunities.

Dunn, 40, is originally from St. Johns, north of Lansing. He has a culinary degree from Lansing Community College and 20 years of experience as a chef, working for restaurants in Steamboat Springs, Colo., the Radisson hotel chain, and Chartwells' parent company, Compass Group, which operates food services programs for senior living centers, hospitals, and schools.

Starting his new job has been different with the constraints of the pandemic. Food service is continuing to provide packaged meals for take home service. He looks forward to overseeing the kitchens when they start preparing meals again and to having the chance to visit schools and meet

at cooking demonstrations.

Dunn became fascinated with cooking at a young age.

"I remember when I was 11 or 12, I asked for an Atlas pasta maker for Christmas," he said. "My dad asked me, 'Why?' and I said, 'Because it's cool.'"

His mom and grandma always cooked from scratch, canning foods in the fall and baking bread. Even as good as that food was, he said, food today is more interesting and complex. And, children have more opportunities to learn about food through the media and to sample different foods.

"This generation has a completely different relationship with food than what I grew up with," Dunn said. Cooking methods



**Chef Sam Dunn**

have changed, understanding of presentation is different, and even the food pyramid has changed.

"I think that's great," he said. "We're educating not only ourselves but our children on nutrition and better ways of cooking and making food that's more presentable and appealing not only to our eyes but our other senses as well."

Dunn, who is the father of a six-month-old daughter with girlfriend Val Zamora, said that at home his cooking is influenced by his years out West, so he has been playing with a lot of Mexican and Filipino cuisine for his family.

"I like to do it all at home," he said. "I especially enjoy that with Mexican cooking you might be grilling, baking, braising, and roasting, so one dish takes all of your abilities."



Did you miss the First Day Shoe Fund distribution? If your child HAS NOT received a pair of shoes from FDSF this year, they may still be eligible to sign up. Parents of Pre-K through 5th-grade student in need of shoes can email [maggie@firstdayshoefund.org](mailto:maggie@firstdayshoefund.org).

**KPS**  
Kalamazoo Public Schools

Chef Sam • KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

## Loaded Butternut Squash

Whether you make this meatless or not, and whether you serve it as a main course or a holiday side dish, you'll love this loaded butternut squash dish. It's extremely flavorful as well as rich and decadent, but not overly so. Buttery, nutty Gruyere cheese works so well with butternut squash. The hint of Dijon mustard balances the sweetness and richness of this dish. Pair it with a salad to give a temperature and texture contrast.

starting at the stem end. Scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Slice off about 1/8 inch from the rounded uncut side of each half, to ensure they lay flat while baking. Transfer to the prepared baking sheet.

3. Place baking sheet in the center of the preheated oven and roast until squash is tender but not falling apart, 60 to 90 minutes. Remove from the oven and let sit until cool enough to handle. Increase oven temperature to 475° F (245° C).

4. Use a spoon to scoop squash flesh into a bowl, leaving about 1/2 inch attached to the skin so it does not collapse.

5. Add salt, pepper, Dijon mustard, and egg to squash. Mix and mash with a spoon until smooth, or leave it a bit chunky, if desired. Stir in 1/4 cup green onions, ham, and diced Gruyere cheese; mix until combined.

6. Scoop mixture back into the squash shells, distributing as evenly as possible and top with grated Gruyere.

7. Bake in the center of the preheated oven until cheese is browned, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and top with green onions. Slice and serve.

### Ingredients

1 3-pound butternut squash  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
1 large egg, beaten  
1/4 cup green onions, thinly sliced, plus more for garnish  
10 ounces smoked ham, diced  
6 ounces Gruyere cheese, diced  
2 ounces Gruyere cheese, grated

### Directions

1. Preheat oven 375° F (190°C). Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.  
2. Slowly and carefully cut butternut squash in half lengthwise,

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# Artists' corner

Loy Norrix High School art teacher Cindy VanLieu shares drawings from some of her students, who were asked to create still life compositions of found objects. The composition needed a light source and overlapping forms. Attention was focused on the values that the artist could see and cast shadow. The drawings are done in pencil and charcoal.



Cristian Huerta



Hannah He



Simone Marshall



Joe Hostigun

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## It's a Whole New Game: Esports Capturing Student Athletes' Attention *(continued from page 1)*

"Esports is a lot of strategy. Every aspect of playing football and soccer is there in esports. There are practices, we train outside of the practices, we have to work well together. This is just a lot more serious."

The Loy Norrix esports team formed just three years ago, with math and French teacher Patrick Greeley serving as coach, and the team has already found success.

The world of esports is divided into seasons, like other sports, with certain games being played in the fall and others in the winter. The Norrix team competes in Rocket League, Valorant, and Overwatch — and were state champs in Overwatch last year — in the fall. In the winter, the school competes in Super Smash Brothers Ultimate, League of Legends and Fortnite. Norrix is part of the Michigan High School Esports Federation, a free educational, nonprofit esports organization.

When Norrix announced they were going to launch a team, "the first meeting was filled to capacity, with 60 to 70 kids who were interested in participating," Greeley said. There still is tremendous interest, with students frequently approaching him about starting teams for different games.

"I tell them 'yeah, just get a team together,'" he said. "There is still a lot of stigma around esports, with people viewing it as kids just playing video games, but we're leveraging that interest in gaming into something that is more focused educationally."

"They're learning to communicate in a professional and constructive way. It's similar to any sports," with students attending practices, participating in individual training, and talking game strategy.

Senior Sophie Decker has been playing on the Norrix Overwatch team for three years, having learned about the team from a friend. In Overwatch, she plays the flex support role, which handles healing for the team. Hauke, in contrast, plays the tank position, which makes a route for the

team to advance and takes much of the damage in a game.

When people talk about the sport, she said, one of the biggest comparisons they make to physical sports is the role that strategy plays in the games.

"We really plan how we can play," Decker said. "We talk about what maps to use, what characters we're going to play in that environment, how are we going to push in, what fighting combos we're going to use to take out characters. A lot of times we'll find an enemy team's training or YouTube videos or talk to someone who has played them, to see how they move, the things they like to do — so we can plan how to react to that."

"People don't realize how much it takes to be good at a game like this. They might think we're just pressing buttons and what is the point of this, but a lot of people are starting to respect it more as a legitimate competitive scene. When I tell people about what my team does and how much thought it takes, even if they don't really understand, they can say, 'OK, I can see this takes a lot of work.'"

Hauke said the games are also great for building communication skills — something that the Loy Norrix team prides itself on.

"When it comes to our esports, our communication is really there," Hauke said. "We let each other know what's going on efficiently and don't just spew out information. We sift it out and understand what's important to let our teammates know."

Greeley said some may still struggle to understand the role esports can play in a school day, but he doesn't question it at all. The activity exposes students to a variety of career paths including computer science, graphics, social media management, and athletic training. Growing teams need team managers, coaches, artists, IT specialists, broadcasters, and business managers.

But more importantly, part of the struggle in education today is to engage students, and he



**Loy Norrix esports Overwatch team accepting their state championship trophy at the 2019 state finals. (Back to front, left to right): teacher and advisor Patrick Greeley, Yancy Quinn-Cabrera, James Hauke Foster Neve-Jones, Elliot Russell, Jackson Kiino-Terburg, Sophie Decker, Evan Eldred, and Cameron Greene.**



**Loy Norrix students watch a Super Smash Brothers match at a Loy Norrix esports tournament held at Loy Norrix High School in 2019.**

is excited about any activity that supports social-emotional learning and gets students involved in their school community and excited about interacting with fellow students and adult mentors.

"Research around esports shows that it helps increase interest in school, and that student athletes have better attendance, better grades, and better graduation rates," Greeley said. "And, these athletes can meet new people, maybe make new friends, and bond over a game they like to play."

### **The Future of Esports**

The Loy Norrix team is currently competing in the Michigan league for the fall season, but because of the pandemic all of their action is taking place remotely rather than in group sessions or at in-person tournaments.

Greeley would love to grow the team, perhaps develop a

physical esports lab at Norrix so the students could practice and play in a central location. He is also working on adding more diversity to his teams. Historically, about 95 percent of competitive gamers are male. He's especially proud of Decker's role not just as an athlete — but as an award-winning athlete on the team.

He sees a lot of potential for growth, and for the new sport's potential to open opportunities for his athletes. According to CNN, more than 380 million people worldwide watch Esports annually, and tournaments draw huge crowds. ESPN and Disney XD recently brokered a multiyear deal to broadcast the Overwatch League, which has 12 franchises.

When Norrix started its esports program, Greeley doesn't think there were any collegiate varsity programs with scholarships — now there are 14 and the

trend shows no signs of slowing down. Among the Michigan schools offering scholarships are Western Michigan, Northwoods, Central, Michigan Tech, and Oakland universities.

Hauke and Decker say that while they knew about the growing esports market at the collegiate and professional level, neither really thought much of it — until college esports coaches started recruiting them.

"I thought it was cool that colleges had esports programs, but I found it really interesting when college coaches began contacting me saying, 'We have a team and we think you should come play with us.'" Hauke said.

Decker said she's been watching the top-tier professional leagues of Overwatch since she was in middle school, but it wasn't until she was in high school that she realized how extensive the college programs are. She's been approached by out-of-state teams, and although she's thinking she'll stay in Michigan to take advantage of The Promise, she has been exploring esports scholarship opportunities.

For students — or anyone interested in learning more about the team — Hauke suggests checking out the Norrix team on twitch.tv (search loynorrixesports). There viewers can watch live streams of tournaments and see clips from games.

Hauke encourages students who like gaming to check out the esports team — but most importantly just find something to get involved with in high school.

"I think it's really important for high school students to do something competitively. If you really like football, join the football team. If you like running, join track," he said. "It's good that we have esports for people who like video games, so they have an outlet where they compete, learn how to work with people to tackle problems with people who have different skills. It's great to have this exposure for high school students."

# Halloween Parades Bring Smiles to Students



Jackson Gorczyca shares a big smile in the Arcadia Elementary drive-through Halloween parade.



Washington Writers' Academy music teacher Karen Kempe adds drama to the Halloween parade.



Linden Grove sixth grader Ka' nahvea Barbee makes a beautiful entrance at the Washington parade.



Jaedon, fourth grade, and Faith Hubbard, second grade, are some of the first students to trick or treat at the Edison Environmental Science Academy Halloween event.



2A teacher Kassidy Albers channels Ms. Frizzle from the "Magic School Bus" at Edison's Halloween celebration.



Kindergarten teachers Victoria Smith-Piper, Mary Smith, and Jessica Roe add a little "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom" fun to the Milwood Elementary Halloween parade.



Milwood Elementary School Principal Craig LeSuer welcomes families to the school's Halloween parade.



Special education teacher Cammy Stewart and third grade teacher Heather Gatton, with her dog Lucy, greet students at Woodward School for Technology and Research.



Principal Lanisha Hannah-Spiller gets help from her son Tycen Spiller recreating a Jurassic Park feel at Washington Writers' Academy.



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