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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings

Thursday, Dec. 5 & 19, 2019
7 p.m.

Administration Building
1220 Howard St.

Board Advance Meeting
Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2019
6:15 p.m.

Media Center
West Main Professional
Development Center
1627 W. Main St.

For more information, call
(269) 337-1572

Winter Break

No School
Dec. 23 – Jan. 3
School Resumes
Jan. 6

KC Feeds Kzoo
Food Drive
page 3

MI Middle School
English Teacher
of the Year
page 4

The Addams Family
runs Dec. 5 – 8
page 8

"You Make a Difference"
Awards
page 10

Teachers Teaching Teachers Through District Coaching Program

Nina LeSuer and Katie Loza have a lot in common.

They're both teachers. Both work in early elementary education. Both teach at Washington Writers' Academy. Both love their jobs and the kids.

But, Loza is starting her second year of teaching, while LeSuer has 20-plus years of teaching experience. LeSuer's decades of experience are a boon to Koza through Kalamazoo Public Schools' coaching and mentoring program.

The district's teacher coaching effort is getting added support thanks to a \$190,947 Title II Part A grant that was announced by the Michigan Department of Education in October. It will help continue in-person and online training and coaching through the New Teacher Center (NTC) in



Veteran teacher Nina LeSuer coaches second-year teacher Katie Loza at Washington Writers' Academy. Both say mentoring is helpful for new teachers.

California.

Out of 87 applicants, only six received grants. Approximately 45 new teachers are participating in the KPS mentoring program.

"The whole idea is to help retain teachers in their first few

years of teaching — as well as to help teachers who are serving as mentors to brush up on their skills," said Cindy Green, assistant superintendent for Teaching and Learning Services.

"It's important to have peo-

ple who understand the profession — who are our peer teachers — help make a difference and help grow achievement," Green said. "Having mentors helps new teachers feel more comfortable in knowing what to do next. The new teachers can have a peer they can check in with to see how to do things."

Johnny Edwards, director of secondary education, and Judy D'Arcangelis, director of elementary education, are leading the teacher coaching and mentoring effort in KPS. The grant will help them develop specific ways to make the district's long-established teacher coaching more efficient and effective.

Loza and LeSuer meet weekly to talk about what's going on in the classroom. Loza said she takes

(continued on page 5)

Give the Gift of Reading: Books for a Page-Turning Holiday

There is a tradition in Iceland called *Jolabokaflod*, which means "Christmas book flood."

It's simple. On Christmas Eve, everyone receives a book and then the family spends the night cuddled in blankets, sipping hot chocolate, and reading. The tradition grew out of rationing during World War II, when paper was one of the few things not rationed — and thus books became popular gifts.

Whether or not you want

to immerse yourself in a good story on Christmas Eve, books still make wonderful gifts for those in your family — especially for young people you want to encourage to become lifelong readers.

Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts sixth-grade teacher Stephanie Hampton said books present the perfect opportunity to connect with person who is receiving the gift.

"I love reading a book and

thinking about who would like to read it," said Hampton, who was recently named The Michigan Council of Teachers of English 2019 Middle School English Teacher of the Year. "I also am drawn to certain stories that remind me of people or life experiences. Books create

(continued on page 6)

"Sulwe," by Academy Award-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o, makes a perfect gift for the young child in your life.



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Before The Promise — and After The Promise

My career with Kalamazoo Public Schools can largely be divided into two time periods — B.P. and A.P. — Before Promise and After Promise.

Kalamazoo Public Schools has always been a good school district. I like to point out that my wife, my father-in-law and my sons all graduated from Kalamazoo Public Schools. My grandchildren currently attend KPS. (I graduated from Gull Lake High School, but don't hold that against me. I did attend Roosevelt Elementary School and North-eastern Junior High in Kalamazoo Public Schools for several years.)

But, before the Promise, KPS was struggling. We had a very hard-working administrative staff, teachers, support staff, and board. But we were losing more and more students, year after year.

For those who follow school finance, you'll understand exactly what the problem was.

Before 1994, Michigan's public schools were funded largely through local property taxes. But with the approval of

Proposal A, the state moved to a new funding structure in which the state allocated funds based on the number of pupils in each district, creating what is known as a school district's "foundation allowance." The foundation allowance is the vast majority of school aid funding, which represents more than 85 percent of the district's budgetary general fund revenue.

As we lost more and more students, we lost more and more revenue. As you lose revenue, you have to cut programs. As you cut programs, you lose more students.

As much as I loved my job as deputy superintendent for business and finance, I did not love cutting programs every year. Each year, we faced difficult and painful decisions about which programs to eliminate, how many teachers we could do without, patching together



Gary Start, Interim Superintendent

ways to keep offering curricular options such as art and music, which some think are extras, but which are actually valuable ways for students to learn about and experience their world.

The simple truth is that we were a good district trying to do good work. But, the other truth is, we couldn't improve, because you can't improve when every year you are preoccupied with dismantling the very system you should be building up.

I tell people that if I had to keep working in that environment, I would probably be retired now. Instead, I'm serving as interim superintendent for KPS this school year — and looking forward to being able to return to my old job.

The reason why is simple: The Kalamazoo Promise.

Thanks to an anonymous donor — or group of donors — who believe in the ability of Kalamazoo Public Schools to impact lives, The Promise was created to support our children and our work. The Promise set us on a new course. It became a stabiliz-

"... we're a completely different school district than we were."

ing force in our enrollment. And, having a stable enrollment made us financially stable.

In the late 1960s, at the height of the Baby Boom, KPS had more than 18,000 students. In the fall of 2005, we were down to 10,335 students. The first year after The Promise was announced, our enrollment grew by 1,000 students. And, except for a few minor blips, we've seen modest but steady increases in enrollment since then. KPS now has about 2,500 more students than we did in 2005.

That growth occurred at a time when most Michigan school districts have been losing students because of a shrinking birth rate and residents leaving the state following the economic downturn of 2008.

Rather than shrinking, KPS has been growing. The growth

means more stable funding, which means we can plan and attack the needs of our students with more teachers, more support staff, curricular improvements and offerings such as music, gym, and art at all grade levels, and expanded Advanced Placement classes.

Thanks to the continued hard work of all of our staff, the Board of Education, and former Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice, we're a completely different school district than we were. We're a better school district for our students, for our staff, and for the future of our community.

I've never been in the position to publicly thank The Promise donors before. People don't turn to the deputy superintendent of finance for those kinds of statements. But, as interim superintendent I can finally give my deepest thanks to the generous donors of The Kalamazoo Promise. It was, is, and will continue to be the most amazing gift to our students and the district.

Thank you for believing in the power of education.

THIS SEASON AT THE KIA



EXHIBITION OPENING RECEPTION
Friday, December 20, 6-8 pm, free
David Park: A Retrospective
The Kirk Newman Art School Faculty Review

FREE ART HOP PARTY
Friday, December 6, 5-8 pm
Say goodbye to *Black Refractions:*
Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem

FREE ART DETECTIVES
Saturdays, Dec 14 + Jan 11, 10:30 am-12 pm for kids 4-8

GALLERY SHOP
December 1: Museum Store Sunday
Open 7 days through December 23

WINTER ART CLASSES
It's a great time to get out of the house and get creative. Classes for children, teens, and adults start in January. Scholarship applications welcome by December 3. Look for one-day workshops to try something new!



Free parking. Open until 8 on Thursday & Friday. Children are always free at the KIA.

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KC Feeds Kzoo Food Drive Hopes to Collect 12,500 Pounds of Food

Kalamazoo Central High School is upping the stakes once again in its annual KC Feeds Kzoo food drive.

Last year, students collected 10,000 pounds of food and more than \$7,700 in monetary donations. This year, the students are aiming for 12,500 pounds of food and more than \$9,000 in monetary donations.

Student organizers are positive that they can exceed those goals — one, because the students are committed to the project, and two, because Kalamazoo is a generous community.

Senior Chloe Carlson, president of the KC National Honor Society, which spearheads the drive, said she had high expectations last year.

“But, that was nothing compared to the generosity I saw of people giving back in our community,” she said. “People were so kind. Even if they didn’t receive a flier, they were willing to give us whatever they had, whether it was the change in their pockets, or going into their cabinets and searching for food. It was a really warm feeling to see how loving our community is and how willing they are to help people in need.”

“Sometimes you knocked on people’s doors and even though they’d obviously rather not open them, they opened them with open arms. It was cool to see.”

This year’s drive will launch with food collections at school beginning Dec. 1 and conclude on Dec. 14, with the annual Stuff the Bus event at the Harding’s Friendly Market on West Main. In between, there will be neighborhood collections, a charity concert at Old Dog Tavern, requests for sponsorships and donations from area businesses, and food collection boxes at area establishments.

Maddie Quintanilla, a senior, and the NHS treasurer, has been participating in the drive for two years, like Carlson. She

said students love participating in the event.

“It’s a great cause. We can see what others are going through. I love being able to help others who need it,” Quintanilla said. “We all do. We truly do care about everybody in our community. This is the place where we’ve grown up. It’s our home.”

Quintanilla and Carlson said they hope to involve KC’s two feeder middle schools — Hillside and Linden Grove in the project. And, eventually, they’d love the program to reach all the way down to the elementary school level.

Carlson said students are very aware of the issues of hunger and food insecurity. They also see it in the general community, but they also see it among their classmates, who do not have enough food in their everyday lives. Providing a stable source of food is key to improv-

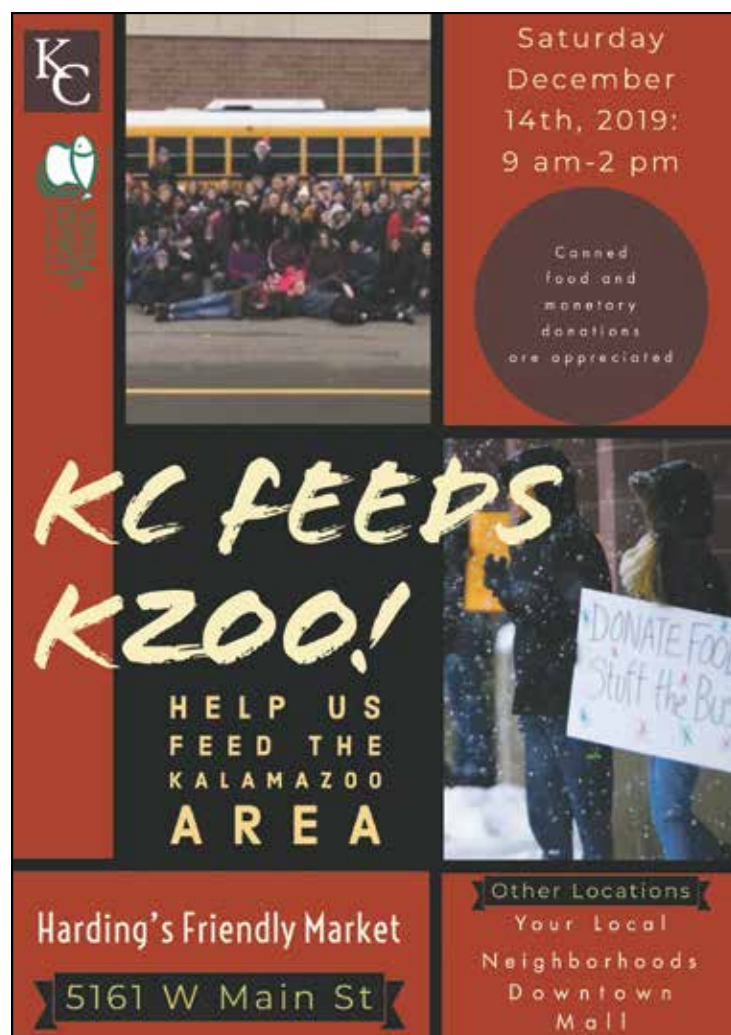
ing the community, she said.

“Knowing we can make a difference drives us,” she said.

- **Stuff the Bus** – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dec. 14, Harding’s Friendly Market, 5161 W. Main St. Bring donations of canned goods and cash to help students stuff a school bus with food for Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes. Other donation sites will be at area businesses around the city.

- **Neighborhood collections.** Students will distribute fliers in select neighborhoods. On Dec. 14, students will go door-to-door in those neighborhoods to collect food from residents and to collect food left out for the drive.

- **KC Feeds Kzoo Charity Concert** with the Out of Favor Boys and the Kaitlin Rose Duo, 6–9 p.m. Dec. 12, Old Dog Tavern, 402 E. Kalamazoo Ave. \$5 cover includes one raffle ticket, other raffle tickets available for purchase.



KC

KC FEEDS KZOO!

HELP US FEED THE KALAMAZOO AREA

Harding’s Friendly Market
5161 W Main St

Other Locations
Your Local
Neighborhoods
Downtown
Mall

Saturday December 14th, 2019: 9 am-2 pm

Canned food and monetary donations are appreciated

DONATE FOOD Stuff the Bus



DECEMBER 12TH, 6-9 PM

AT OLD DOG TAVERN!

KC FEEDS KZOO CHARITY CONCERT

LIVE MUSIC FROM THE KAITLIN ROSE DUO & THE OUT OF FAVOR BOYS!

\$5 COVER (INCLUDES 1 RAFFLE TICKET) ADDITIONAL TICKETS SOLD

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KPS Graduates in Action

Stephanie Hampton: MI 2019 Middle School English Teacher of the Year

Teaching a love of reading and writing — and kindness — are the core missions of Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts English teacher Stephanie Hampton.

And, her success and commitment to those goals helped her earn the title of 2019 Middle School English Teacher of the Year from the Michigan Council of Teachers of English.

Hampton is a 2006 Loy Norrix High School graduate, who went on to earn her bachelor's and master's degrees from Western Michigan University. She has taught at Maple since 2012. She taught for two years with the Alternative Learning Program before moving to Maple, where she is now a sixth-grade English Language Arts teacher.

"I decided I wanted to be a teacher while going to Loy Norrix High School," Hampton said. "I loved talking about books, and refound a love of reading that I had been missing since childhood. Books and talking

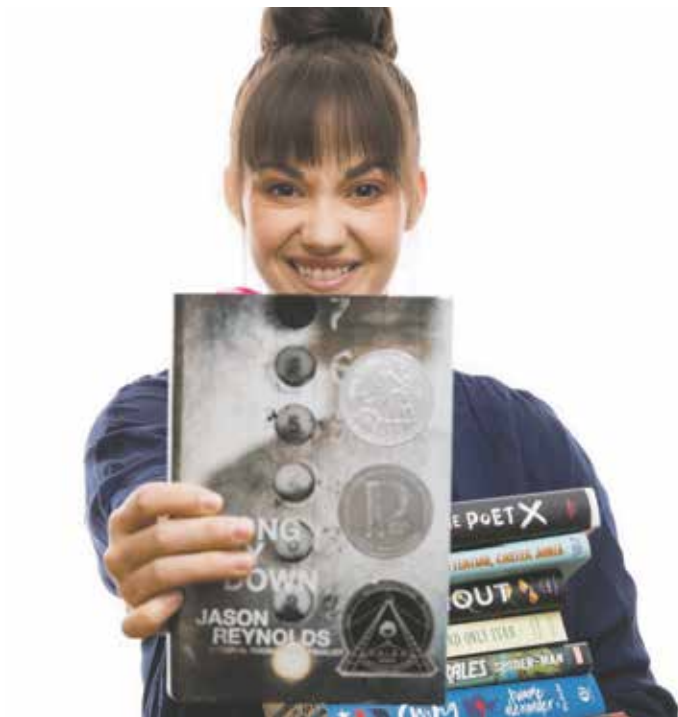
about books continue to be a huge source of inspiration for my teaching."

Nominees for Teacher of the Year must demonstrate a commitment to creating a caring and respectful climate, have a keen ability for meeting the developmental needs of middle level learners, utilize a variety of teaching methodologies, and offer lessons are characterized by originality.

She said she has an affinity for middle school students and all of the changes and challenges they are going through.

"Middle school is a powerful transitional time," she said. "Our students are largely starting to try to figure out who they are and who they want to be. There is a huge difference between sixth grade and eighth grade. As middle school teachers, we get to have a role in this time of change."

Her passion for writing extends beyond the school. She is a teacher-blogger at www.writingmindset.org.



Maple Street Middle School English teacher Stephanie Hampton

Hampton helps coordinate summer writing camps through Read And Write Kalamazoo and WMU's Third Coast Camp for Young Writers. She also serves as a facilitator

for Culturally Responsiveness Training and Maple's School Improvement Team and is in the 2019-2020 National Writing Project C3WP Cohort at WMU.

If she could give one piece of advice for parents, she said it would be to "focus on the joy of writing. Let kids know that writing is a way that we express thoughts, feelings, and can nurture imagination. Writing is about exploration and curiosity. It is not meant to be something that is unpleasant or boring."

Joy infuses her own work — as does gratitude.

"The goal has always been to enjoy the work: the creation of an engaging lesson, the reading and writing and talking I do with students, and the ups and downs of everyday teaching," she said. "What a gift to have the work that I love validated and celebrated."

Hampton was recognized at the annual Fall Conference of the Michigan Council of Teachers of English in October at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing. The Michigan Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) is the state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of

English, an organization for K-16 English language arts teachers.

Here are Hampton's Top 5 goals as a teacher:

#1 Giving my students time to read and reading to and with them. The single act of promoting a love of reading is the best thing I can do on a daily basis. I want to show kids that I love reading, they can love reading even if they hate it now, and books can be ways to show that we are humans with our own stories.

#2 Using books to show that my students can be authors and accomplished writers. I have been on a mission to put diverse and relevant books in front of my students, and then ask how I am teaching my students to look at those books and write like the authors of those books.

#3 We are lucky in that we have a librarian in our building. Ninety-two percent of buildings in the State of Michigan are not served by certified school librarians. Being 47th in the nation in staffing schools with media specialists is just embarrassing.

#4 I push each day for kindness. Being nice gives us hope. Even on a bad day, there is hope. Empathy and kindness are my main priorities right next to reading. We don't have bad kids. We have kids who try to push us out, and who have been shown that reading sucks. We have kids that think their ideas don't matter, so why would they try writing them down? We have some kids that we feel like we won't be able to reach. We have to continue to try.

#5 Lastly, I want to focus on writing for the joy of writing. My students are given free writing time in class, and this is their favorite part of the week because I let them be free. The idea is simple: Write about what makes you happy. Any lesson that allows our students to be themselves, we have to make time for it.

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

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Kalamazoo Public Schools
1220 Howard Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0161

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INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

Gary Start

Teachers Teaching Teachers (continued from page 1)

advantage of the district coaching as well as the guidance of a Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency coach who visits the school.

“Coaches give you a lot of great feedback,” Loza said. “The opportunity to collaborate has made my first years of teaching a lot easier.”

During one mentoring session. Loza and LeSuer talked about one child that Loza was having trouble connecting with. LeSuer suggested interviewing the child to learn more about her and to use that information to build a better relationship. She also offered the possibility of connecting Loza with the KRESA behavior coach for extra input on how to work with the student.

LeSuer, who has been mentoring for about eight years in KPS, said she benefitted from coaching and mentoring when she was a young teacher in Minneapolis.

“I feel like it made a difference in terms of my longevity as an educator,” LeSuer said. “That early support helped me learn how to trust my instincts and to build confidence in the classroom.

All of those things helped me have a long, successful career.”

The NTC training sets up a series of observation periods, where coaches watch the teachers work in the classroom and offer suggestions. Coaches help new teachers with tasks such as taking information from the curriculum and developing or aligning their lesson plans with that curriculum. Teachers and mentors can also discuss how to work on issues such as attendance, test scores, and instructional practices to create optimal environments for student learning.

NTC has worked with educational institutions for more than 20 years to define the characteristics and fundamental elements of high-quality mentoring to accelerate teacher effectiveness and promote equitable outcomes for students.

Improving teacher coaching and mentoring is one of the Michigan Department of Education’s Top 10 in 10 initiatives, and the grant is a federal push designed specifically to cultivate outside resources to help schools build better mentoring programs for new teachers.

Chef Shaun • KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

Almond Herb Paté

Happy Holidays, Kalamazoo!
This delicious paté can be served on top of crackers or on sliced veggies, such as cucumbers, golden beets, or large carrots. It makes a lovely appetizer or a tasty (and healthy!) snack. Ring in your winter holiday with family and friends by sharing this healthy treat — and stay warm! Best Regards, Chef Shaun



Shaun Robinson is the district chef for Chartwells at KPS Food Service.

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients, except herbs, in a food processor bowl and pulse until a coarse consistency. Blend in fresh herbs.
2. Garnish with sprigs of parsley, finely chopped herbs, sliced cherry tomato, dehydrated leeks/onions or the most cancer-fighting of all — broccoli sprouts or broccoli microgreens. For a seasonal touch, place some fresh mint and cranberries on your dipping bowl to resemble holly.

Serves: 6

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cup of almonds soaked for 2-3 hours in water then drained
- 3/4 cup raw pine nuts
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon of sea salt
- 1/2 cup of water
- 1 teaspoon of basil pesto
- 1/2 cup of fresh herbs, such as basil, rosemary, or thyme



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Give the Gift of Reading: Books for a Page-Turning Holiday *(continued from page 1)*

amazing opportunities for conversations, therefore, they make the best gifts because they bring us together!”

Susan Warner, director of youth services for Kalamazoo Public Library, said she starts her book shopping by thinking of books that she has enjoyed, but if she knows what the reader likes, she tries to find something that fits their reading interests.

“When choosing for a child, I try to remember what they have recently read and liked; then I look for others that are at that reading level and books just a little harder to give them a stretch,” she said. Include the receipt when possible, in case the recipient has already read that book.

Patricia Richardson, the acquisitions and cataloging librarian for Kalamazoo Public Schools, said, “I generally only give books as gifts about subjects (or kinds of stories/characters) that I know the child is interested in. I like gifts to be about them, not about me or what I think they should read.”

Mostly, she said, she checks to make sure the subject matter is at about the right age level for that child or teen.

“No Stephen King for a fifth grader, even if they do like scary stories,” Richardson said.

Warner and Richardson also encouraged gift givers to think about graphic novels, which were once looked down upon.

“There is such a wide range of fiction and nonfiction graphic novels for young kids to older teens,” Richardson said. “For adults who are concerned that they aren’t ‘real reading,’ I recommend that we all let go of our notions of what ‘real reading’ is. Graphic novels often have complex storylines and vocabulary. They are also fun and anytime we can help a child connect reading with fun is worthwhile.

“Along those lines, I also recommend picture books and

graphic novels that have no words. Imagination gets activated as kids figure out the story from the pictures.”

And, Warner has one more tip to make book gift giving even more personal and fun.

“One of the most fun birthday gifts I gave my grandkids when they were younger was a coupon for a trip together to Bookbug to buy any book they wanted,” she said. “We did that for many years and had such fun! They spent a long time finding just the perfect book, no parents, just us.”

Below is a list of book suggestions from Hampton, Warner, Richardson and other reading advocates. And, here are a list of book lists, recommended by the American Library Association, which may give other gift possibilities:

ALSC Recommended Books — The Association for Library Service to Children.

Batchelder Awards — Prize is given to an American publisher republishing — in English — the most outstanding foreign language children’s book.

Belpre Medal — Award is presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best celebrates the Latino culture.

Booklist Reader — Children’s Literature — A part of the American Library Association.

Caldecott Medal and Honors — Award is given by the Association for Library Service to Children to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book.

Coretta Scott King Awards — Given to African American authors and illustrators.

Geisel Award — Award given for outstanding book for beginning readers.

Newbery Medal & Honors list — Award from the Association for Library Service to Children for distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

Notable Children’s Books — Association for Library Service to Children list of the best of the best in children’s books.

Sibert Medal — Honors nonfiction works for children.

Bill Caskey — Kalamazoo Public Library, lead children’s librarian.

“Sulwe” by Lupita Nyong’o — In this stunning debut picture book, actress Lupita Nyong’o creates a whimsical and heart-warming story to inspire children to see their own beauty.

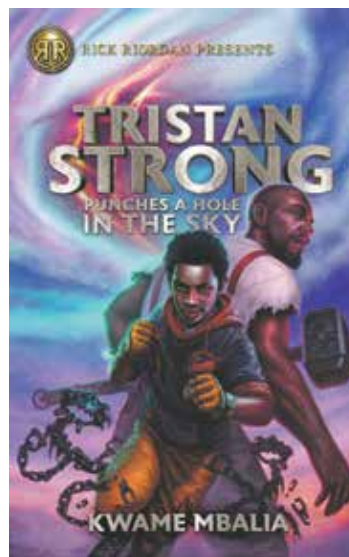
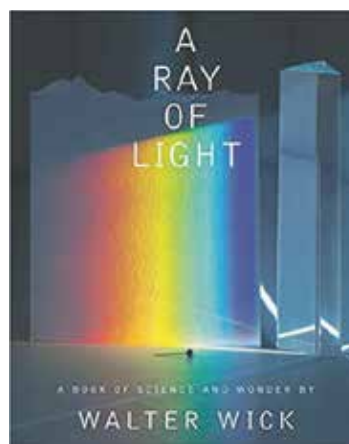


“Fetch-22” by Dav Pilkey — This is the eagerly anticipated next “Dog Man” graphic novel. Can Petey and Dog Man stop fighting like cats and dogs long enough to put their paws together and work as a team?

“The Crossover” by Kwame Alexander with illustrations by Dawud Anyabwile — This new graphic novel adaptation of the acclaimed middle-grade novel is beautiful and moving, whether or not you’re a basketball fan.

“A Ray of Light” by Walter Wick — This visually stunning informational book is all about light. A companion to Wick’s critically acclaimed “A Drop of Water,” the author/illustrator explains light with fascinating images and accessible text.

“Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky” by Kwame Mbalia — This epic fantasy for middle-grade readers is set in a richly imagined world popu-



lated with African American folk heroes and African gods. The book is from author Rick Riordan’s (“Percy Jackson”) imprint Rick Riordan Presents, which promotes adventure and fantasy novels by authors from underrepresented cultures and backgrounds.

“Pumpkinheads” by Rainbow Rowell and Faith Erin Hicks — High school seniors Josiah and Deja are working their very last shift together at the pumpkin patch. They decide to make it a memorable one.

Angela Justice — Kalamazoo Public Schools, coordinator for English language arts, social studies, and library services.

“Sulwe” by Lupita Nyong’o (Gr. K-2) — Academy Award-winning actress Lupita Nyong’o shares a story of a little girl who is inspired to love herself and her unique beauty.

“A Wrinkle in Time” by

Madeline L’Engle (Gr. 3-5) — This science fiction-fantasy classic follows siblings as they search through time and space for their father.



“Look Both Ways” by Jason Reynolds (Gr. 6-9) — Ten short stories about kids walking home from school — that all take place on the same day.

“Trevor Noah: Born a Crime” (Gr. 9-12) — “The Daily Show” host’s memoir about growing up biracial during apartheid in South Africa is funny, inspiring, and compelling.

Sue Warner — Kalamazoo Public Library, director of youth services.

Picture Books



“Hey Dog” by Tony Johnston — A boy cares for, feeds, and helps an abused stray dog learn to trust humans again.

“First Laugh Welcome, Baby” by Rose Ann Tahe and Nancy Bo Flood, illustrated by Jonathan Nelson — A Navajo family welcomes a new baby into the family with love and ceremony, eagerly waiting for that special first laugh.

(continued on page 7)

Give the Gift of Reading: Books for a Page-Turning Holiday (continued from page 6)

“My Papi Has a Motorcycle” by Isabel Quintero, illustrated by Zeke Pena — When Daisy Ramona zooms around her neighborhood with her papi on his motorcycle, she sees the people and places she’s always known — but she also sees a rapidly changing community.

Juvenile Fiction
“Look Both Ways” by Jason Reynolds — A collection of 10 short, inter-connected stories about students walking home from the same school.



“Other Words for Home” by Jasmine Warga — Sent to live with a relative in Cincinnati, Jude worries about the family she leaves behind in war-torn Syria while adjusting to a new life filled with unexpected surprises.

Teen Fiction
“With the Fire on High” by Elizabeth Acevedo — Emoni is overwhelmed by the responsibilities of caring for her daughter and her abuela. The one place she blossoms is in the kitchen, but with life’s pressures will she find time for her school’s new culinary arts class?

“Shout” by Laurie Halse Anderson — Known for the unflinching way she writes about, and advocates for, sexual assault survivors, Anderson has written a poetry memoir that is as vulnerable as it is rallying.

Adult Books
“Nickel Boys” by Colson Whitehead — As the Civil Rights



movement begins to reach segregated Tallahassee, Elwood Curtis in on his way to enroll in the local black college. An innocent mistake destroys that future and sends him to a juvenile reformatory, called the Nickel Academy.

“Moment of Lift” by Melinda Gates — A call to action for women’s empowerment by the chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation identifies the link between women’s equality and societal health, sharing uplifting insights by international advocates in the fight against gender bias.

“Climate Justice” by Mary Robinson — Robinson shows how economic, political, and civil rights are connected to access to food, water, and healthy living conditions. Climate justice is the idea that we must intervene to halt the suffering of the most vulnerable populations caused by the actions of wealthy nations and corporations.

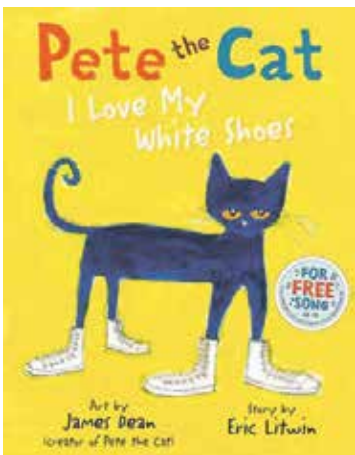
Patricia Richardson — Kalamazoo Public Schools, acquisitions and cataloging librarian.

Early Readers
“Thirty Minutes Over Oregon: A Japanese Pilot’s World War II Story” by Marc Tyler Nobleman — This nonfiction picture book tells the amazing story of forgiveness and reconciliation between a Japanese pilot and the town that he tried to bomb during World War II. A touching story about the toll



war takes on those who fight. “A Stone Sat Still” by Brendan Wenzel — The author of “They All Saw a Cat” returns with small stories that explore the relationship between wild-life and habitat. A great read for children and adults.

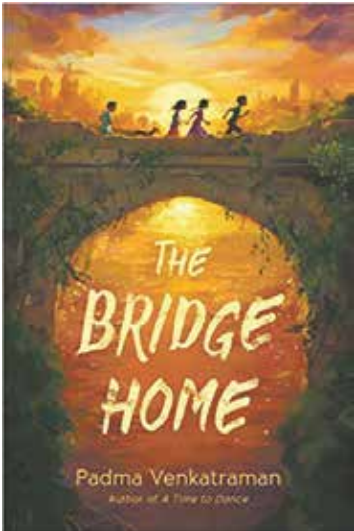
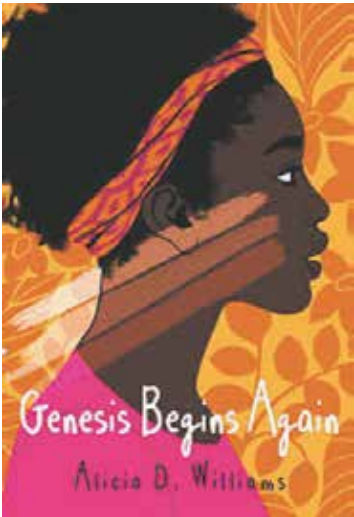
“How to Read a Book” by Kwame Alexander — The award-winning poet compares reading a book to eating a clementine — from peeling back the skin to enjoying it section by section.



“Pete the Kitty” and “Pete the Cat” I Can Read Series by James Dean — “Pete the Cat” books are some of the most popular selections in KPS libraries. If you want to thrill your young reader, “Pete” books are a good bet.

“Yasmin” series by Saadia Faruqi — Another popular series with KPS students, Yasmin is a spirited second grader whose imagination is inspired by her surroundings. Her multi-generational Pakistani-American family delights readers.

Chapter Books
“Two Dogs in a Trench Coat” series by Julie Falatko — When their human Stewart



seems saddened by this thing called “school,” Waldo and Sassy don a trench coat an infiltrate his school by posing as a new student.

Book for All Ages
“Breaking News” by Sarah Lynne Reul — Reul has tips for how adults — and children — can find hope and calm in the face of the difficult and dark things going on in the world. She provides valuable thoughts on community, resilience, and optimism.

Stephanie Hampton — Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts, sixth-grade English Language Arts teacher.

“The Parker Inheritance” by Varion Johnson — A 12-year-old girl moves to her grandmother’s house and finds a mysterious letter hinting at tragedy and fortune.

“Genesis Begins Again” by Alicia D. Williams — Genesis keeps a list of 96 things she hates about herself in this debut novel about overcoming internalized racism and verbal abuse.

“The Bridge Home” by Padma Venkatraman — Two outcast sisters find shelter on an abandoned bridge in the city of Chennai, where they make friends with two homeless brothers.

“Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky” by Kwame Mbalia — The likes of John Henry and Br’er Rabbit do battle with African gods in this fantasy novel.



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Middle School Students Explore Job Options with MiCareerQuest Southwest



Jada Mongeau-Harris talks to a Kalamazoo Valley Community College presenter about health care careers.



Riad Heydarzade tries a chemical experiment at the table run by Charles River Laboratories.

Kalamazoo Public Schools eighth-grade students explored hands-on activities and met professionals in a wide-range of careers at the fifth annual MiCareerQuest Southwest held at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center Oct. 29-30.

During the two-day career fair, students explored opportunities in future in-demand careers from four industries: health and natural sciences, manufactur-

ing and engineering, professional trades, and technology. More than 80 business and industry partners attended the career fair.

Some of the vendor participants included Bronson Healthcare Group, CSM Group, Flowserve, Graphic Packaging International, Humphrey Products, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Michigan State Police, Miller-Davis, Pfizer Inc., Schupan & Sons Inc., Stryker, and Western

Michigan University.

The career exploration field trip is sponsored in part by workforce development organizations Southwest Michigan First, Michigan Works! Southwest, Flowserve Corporation, and Kalamazoo RESA.

"MiCareerQuest Southwest offers a dynamic approach to career exploration and creates a space that provides youth with hands-on opportunities to explore career pathways," said Jakki Bungart-Bibb, Michigan Works! Southwest Deputy Director of Operations. "Michigan Works! Southwest appreciated this year's high quality, high impact event and the opportunity for ongoing partnership and sponsorship."

For more information about MiCareerQuest, visit www.micareerquestsw.org.

KPS Financial Statements Win Awards

For the fifth straight year, Kalamazoo Public Schools has received honors in financial reporting from the Association of School Business Officials International and the Government Finance Officers Association for its annual audit report with the accounting firm of Plante Moran

The district received a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from ASBO and a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Finance Reporting from GFOA.

Jeff Egberts, a partner with Plante Moran, said in his report to the KPS Board of Education on Oct. 10 that in the opinion of the auditors, the district's financial statements are fairly represented in all respects to GAAP — or Generally Accepted Accounting Practices.

"That is the highest level of opinion you can receive (on an audit)," Egberts said. "And it is one the district has received for years and years and years, for as long as I've been around. There were no findings or questioned costs to report."

Egberts noted that KPS not only prepares a financial report, but actually creates a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), which is an enhanced financial report

with more details than a regular report. KPS has done so for the past six years. Egberts and Interim Superintendent Gary Start both praised Laura Kayser, KPS business manager, for her work tracking the district's financial operations.

The district prepares and issues financial statements to organizations, but it is up to auditors to review those statements to ensure they are fair and accurate, Start told the board.

Egberts said that people often think about school districts in terms of the education they provide and sometimes forget that districts tend to be very large and complex financial systems.

"People forget the size and magnitude of this entity," he said. "It's a school district but also a large business operation."

Egberts noted that the district budget had revenues in excess of \$157 million — and the audit found the budget variance to be less than 4 tenths of 1 percent.

"That represents a truly outstanding effort on the part of the administration and all the way down," he said.

Board Vice President Ken Greschak noted that the strong audit results in better bond ratings, which means lower interest rates for the district. "So, it saves us money."

Greschak also said the report underlines the financial strength and stability of the district, which should result in making KPS more appealing to potential candidates in the district's search for a new superintendent.

Board President Patti Sholler-Barber said the strong audit creates a solid financial base that makes it easier for the district to serve children, by doing things such as hiring teachers and bus drivers, and implementing new programs. "It's like having your health," she said. "Without your health you have nothing."

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Helping Students Change Lives, Community Through Service

Ten years ago, the former director of the Kalamazoo Deacons Conference saw a lot of young people come into the nonprofit to receive services, but she didn't often see those urban youth come in to volunteer at the charity, which provides clothing, household items, and job training services to community members.

"She thought it shouldn't be like this, that our kids also have a lot of give. But they don't see the value in themselves and the capacity they have to give," said Jeaninne Sytsema.

The Deacons' Conference started Urban Youth for Africa, and Sytsema was named director of the program which provides students with the opportunity for volunteer work in Kalamazoo and Africa. Two years ago, the program became an independent organization and renamed itself Inner-City Youth for Change.

This summer Sytsema led a team of eight Kalamazoo Public Schools students on a two-week trip to Sierra Leone, where they attended a youth camp, helped paint at a community center, and gave funds that they raised to a college student in Sierra Leone.

"When they presented the money to Medo (the student), he fell to his knees and said he hadn't known how he was going to be able to pay for his next semester," Sytsema said. "It was a chilling experience for them to give him this money they had worked so hard for."

The trip is always an eye-opening experience for students, she said. They had to learn how people communicate in different cultures, saw the school environment, and witnessed extreme poverty. Children played in pools of water where animals bathed. The Kalamazoo students had to help find money and medicine to help a child with an infected foot.

Kalamazoo Central sopho-



Inner-City Youth for Change traveled to Sierra Leone for community service this summer. Team members were, front row, from left: Executive Director Jeaninne Butler-Sytsema, Amy Clabin, Dorien Watts, Archion Streeter, Quincy Ellis, Mariah Crenshaw, Danaja Clay; back row, adult leader Nicholas Baxter, Terrence Bell II, and adult leader Heather Mitchell.

more Archion Streeter said the trip changed his life. Before going to Africa, he did not care what others said.

"I did what I wanted to do, before the trip," Streeter said. "I used to always want things and would be mad if I couldn't get it. Now, I don't care about none of that. I don't get mad all the time, and I'm more respectful to adults."

Kalamazoo Central senior Dorien Watts said the trip was inspirational. "It was emotional to see what people are going through over there. It was very different from what I'm used to having here in America. They don't have a lot of the resources that we do, like running water and drinking water."

Despite their lack of resources, the people are wonderfully open. "What affected me most was their overall compassion. They welcomed us with open arms. They made sure we had everything that we needed," she said.

The program is about making these trips to expose students to the greater world, but more importantly the trips and the program are a way for stu-



Inner-City Youth for Change students Quincy Ellis and Archion Streeter talk with boys from the slums of Kroo Bay in Sierra Leone.

dents to see how they can have an impact on the world, Sytsema said. In the group's twice monthly meetings, they share their own stories and talk about how they can help others.

"We guide them in seeing they can change their future, they can change the trajectory of their lives with the choices they make," Sytsema said.

Among their service projects in Kalamazoo are: raising

money for the homeless, serving at the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, organizing a senior citizen prom — complete with red carpet and disc jockey — and a fun day at LaCrone Park with the Kalamazoo Public Safety Department, which promotes outdoor play, sportsmanship and positive relationships between public safety and the community.

"If someone wants to know



Inner-City Youth for Change team members share their first meal in Sierra Leone.

how they can better themselves, they should join the program," Watts said. "It helped me become a better person and to be more compassionate and helpful with the people around me. It helped me become more social and open and willing to talk. It's helped me be comfortable with them, and made it so they can feel comfortable with me."

The program is looking for current high school sophomores and juniors for the next group of participants. The program used to be a one-year commitment, but recently expanded to a two-year format to provide students were more support. With the new two-year format, the group will alternate trips to Africa with locations such as Haiti, with service learning project in the United States.

"Students come back after our time in Africa and are even more excited about giving and doing and being connected and making a difference," Sytsema. "Their skills are just developing. We don't want them to have a sense of being abandoned — right as they are ready to go. This way we can be available to them longer."

Promise Honors Staff with "You Make a Difference" Awards

This summer, The Kalamazoo Promise recognized 24 exceptional Kalamazoo Public Schools teachers and staff at the "You Make a Difference" award celebration.

The Kalamazoo Promise asked each school in Kalamazoo Public Schools to select one individual who is truly "making a difference in the lives of young people" and has demonstrated creative and innovative services to assist their school to exceed its goals.

The award criteria allows for all school staff, including contract staff, to be nominated. All teachers, bus drivers, custodians, administrators, secretaries, counselors, and food service workers are eligible to receive this award. Each award winner was nominated and selected by his or her peers and colleagues.

"For this event, we wanted to recognize those truly extraordinary individuals who make our schools places where our children can learn to succeed and prepare to take advantage



First Row: Sherrie Gamble, Lisa Thomas, Jami Skinner, Aaron Mason, Erika Zavasky, Mandy Clearwaters, Israel Catarino, Francie Mills. **Second Row:** Tanya Parker, Mary Spiewak, Courtney Horn, Dana Calloway, Dawn Hosler, Jennifer Wright, Sandie Lundquist, Scott Hunsinger. **Third Row:** Rex Hafer, John Buchanan, Victor Rumph, Jacqueline Hampton-Gardner, Donna Partin, Thomas Unangst.

of The Kalamazoo Promise. The 'You Make a Difference Award' is about honoring those who demonstrate a high level of commitment and excellence to their students," said Von

Washington Jr., The Kalamazoo Promise's executive director for community relations.

Announced in 2005, The Promise put all KPS high school students, who meet attendance

and residency requirements, in the enviable position of having tuition scholarships to any community college or public university in the state. In 2015, a select group of private colleges in the Michigan College Alliance, was added to the mix.

Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts — Thomas Unangst
Middle School Alternative Learning Program — Francie Mills
Milwood Elementary School — Mary Spiewak
Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Science and Technology — Tanya Parker
Northeastern Elementary School — Victor Rumph
Northglade Montessori Magnet School — Donna Partin
Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School — Jennifer Boyer
Phoenix High School — Scott Hunsinger
Spring Valley Center for Exploration — Sherrie Gamble
Washington Writers' Academy — Aaron Mason
Winchell Elementary School — Mandy Clearwaters
Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet Center for the Arts — Dawn Hosler
Woodward School for Technology and Research — Dana Calloway

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The 2019 You Make a Difference Awardees:

Arcadia Elementary School — Jennifer Wright
Edison Environmental Science Academy — Erika Zavasky
El Sol Elementary School — Israel Catarino
Greenwood Elementary School — Jami Skinner
Hillside Middle School — Matthew LaFeve
Kalamazoo Central High School — Rex Hafer
Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program — Lisa Thomas
King-Westwood Elementary School — Sandie Lundquist
Lincoln International Studies School — Courtney Horn
Linden Grove Middle School — John Buchanan
Loy Norrix High School — Jacqueline Hampton-Gardner

Chartwells, KVCC Pair Up to Bring Fresh Produce to KPS

Kalamazoo Public Schools is collaborating with Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Food Innovation Center to bring more locally grown, fresh produce to students. The KVCC Food Hub works on bridging the needs of farmers with others in the food chain by helping with food processing.

The farmers bring their produce to the Food Hub, a licensed food processing facility, where it can be washed, chopped, and packed for use by hospitals, restaurants and schools.

Christina Haller, with Chartwells Food Service, which provides food service for KPS, said the hope is to use the Food

Hub to tap produce from local producers, such as Cinzori Farms in Ceresco. They provided the summer squash and zucchini that KPS Chef Shaun Robinson prepared for students at El Sol Elementary recently. Robinson prepared the squash with roasted garlic and fresh basil for students to sample.



Elizabeth Ramos reaches for sauteed zucchini and summer squash. Chef Shaun Robinson prepared it fresh for the students to try at El Sol Elementary.



Chef Shaun Robinson prepares freshly sauteed summer squash and zucchini with roasted garlic and basil for students at El Sol Elementary.

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Artists' Corner

Winchell Elementary School fourth-grade artists dove into the subject of biomes. Each student researched various biomes to discover what plants, animals, and landforms artists might find in different landscapes. After researching, students transferred their knowledge into a silhouette scene. Some students wanted their images to have a warm sunset background, while others chose a peaceful nighttime sky. Isabel Bridges said, "I loved color mixing in the background. That was my favorite!" Art teacher Mandy Clearwaters said students did an outstanding job.



Elliot Marcial



Aryn Chapman



Jasmine Liggins, left, and Isabel Bridges

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 Wednesdays, January 8, 15, 22, 29 | 10:30 am | OSH
 Wednesdays, February 5, 12, 19, 26 | 10:30 am | CEN

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