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IMPORTANT DATES

Board of Education Meetings
Thursday, January 7 & 21, 2016
7 p.m.
Administration Building

No School
Monday, December 21, 2015
Through
Friday, January 1, 2016
For more information call
(269) 337-1572.

Upcoming Events

EFA/EFE/EMC Annual Open
House, February 11
See page 3.

Life Up Through Literacy
Begins on February 2
See page 4.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Community-Wide Celebration
on January 18
See page 4.

Conference Notice
See page 8.

Attention Class of 2017
See page 9.

Opportunities

Apply to PEEP Pre-k for life
changing education
See page 3.

Adult Education Offers
a Second Chance
See page 4.

KPS Is Seeking Bus Drivers
See page 4.

Enrichment Classes
Something for Everyone
See page 7.

Employment Opportunities
See page 8.

Guests Return to Middle School to Share High School Experiences

On October 27, 22 Loy Norrix juniors and seniors spoke to 223 7th graders in 9 classrooms at Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Science, and Technology. The Loy Norrix students were former students at Milwood. The purpose of the pilot alumni day at the middle school was to help Milwood students learn success strategies in preparation for high school, understand the difference between middle school and high school, and ask intriguing questions about high school of current high school students.

Having been a success, the

pilot alumni day will be expanded to allow high school students to share with middle school students at the Middle School Alternative Learning Program, Hillside Middle School, Linden Grove Middle School, and Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts.

Mr. Johnny Edwards, director of secondary education, extends a special thanks to the staff at Milwood — Mr. Noah Krzan, Mrs. Anne Hawkinson, Mrs. Mari Anne Zang, Mr. Robert Tillman, Mr. Mike Venner, Mr. Matt VanStreain, Mrs.

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Loy Norrix students (L to R) Koichi Anderson, senior; Elizabeth Perez-Vazquez, junior; and Arika Hawkins, junior, tell the students at Milwood Magnet School how to have a successful experience in high school.

What The Promise Means to Me

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of The Kalamazoo Promise, the students at Lincoln International Studies School wrote essays on what the Promise means to them. Several students' essays were chosen as the best by the school staff. The winners received Scholastic Book Fair money as a prize. They also had the opportunity to read their essays during the celebration assembly at their school. Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice, Kalamazoo Promise Executive Director Bob Jorth, and

Lincoln students, staff, and some family members were in attendance to join in the festivities.

Here are excerpts from the winning essays.

Jiselle Anderson, 5th grader, says: "The Kalamazoo Promise is a great road to a brighter future. I want to be a doctor when I grow up. So if I have really good grades, Western Michigan University can accept me. Lots of kids in this world don't have The Kalamazoo Promise and are trying to pay for

(continued on page 3)



Jiselle Anderson wrote an essay of what the Promise means to her. The essay was one of five that were selected as the best at Lincoln International Studies School.

FIRST SATURDAY @ KPL January 2

The next First Saturday @ KPL event
will be held at the
Kalamazoo Public Library, downtown,
on Jan. 2, 2016, from 2 – 3:30 p.m.

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KC Musical “In the Heights” A Hit, Underscores KPS Themes

The recent Kalamazoo Central High School musical “In the Heights” was a resounding success for many reasons: its acting, singing, choreography, musical accompaniment, and staging. The musical was also noteworthy in highlighting a variety of KPS themes: diversity, college going, the challenge of being the first one in one’s family to graduate from high school and to go to college, and dream formation and pursuit.

“In the Heights” takes place in Washington Heights, a part of New York City just north of Harlem. In a brief period of time, we learn about Nina, the first one in her family to go to college, the child who was always perceived to be super intelligent and ambitious but who has just come back from Stanford University after having been put on probation, and her parents, who had immigrated from Puerto Rico more than 25 years ago and had

established a car service. We also learn about a number of other friends and neighbors—Usnavi, Abuela Claudia, Sonny, Benny, Vanessa, Daniela, and Carla—and their dreams.

In language and culture, one sees immediately the diversity in the musical, as one sees immediately the diversity in KPS. Indeed, diversity is a major part of the KPS experience, for students and staff. As the largest and most diverse district in this quarter of the state, KPS has all the benefits and challenges that socioeconomic diversity and ethnic diversity have to offer.

As the Promise District, KPS has a special interest in a college-going culture, one in which an increasing number of students



Michael F. Rice, Ph.D.
Superintendent

graduate from high school and continue their education after high school in four-year universities, two-year colleges, trade schools, or the military. We have worked hard on the eight components of our growing college-going culture, and each year we improve, as a district and community, our supports for KPS children to succeed in school and to progress in their lives.

“In the Heights” shows the stark contrast between a working class/poor community and a university world. Nina makes clear that she felt out of place at Stanford, with its wealthy students, many of whose parents had gone to college before them.

An enormous part of our challenge as a district and community is to help our students—all of our students, but particularly those who will be the first in their families to attend college—feel and be

capable of success in college. So much of success is believing that you are capable. While we can’t fully eliminate students’ self-doubts, particularly those of students whose parents and grandparents didn’t attend college, we can still establish a strong network of support for them, both prior to high school graduation and afterwards, to help greater and greater numbers of KPS graduates to successfully navigate college.

Dream formation and pursuit are critical components to success in school and beyond. High school and college are not easy for many students and, for most, there are substantial challenges along the way. Students who have aspirations or dreams—especially ones specific enough to drive their decisions in school and out about classes, activities, effort, and engagement—are far more likely to be successful than those who

are merely going through the paces. This is particularly true for those children whose parents or grandparents haven’t gone to college and who don’t necessarily have specific examples at home of the importance of high school graduation, attendance and studying at a college, and subsequent graduation.

By the end of the musical, several individuals—including Nina, who decides to go back to Stanford with the help of her parents and work toward graduation—have focused or refocused on their dreams. As it is in the theater, so too is it in real life. Some argue that the discussion of student dreams is somehow lightweight or frivolous. And yet, there is nothing more important to a child than what he or she aspires to be. Indeed, it is for this reason that we have focused our male mentoring, which we began this

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First Saturday @ KPL

Saturday 2-3:30 pm
January 2
Central Library

Take your family to the library the first Saturday of each month! Get your library card or pick out some books to check out! Enjoy stories, activities, special guests, and door prizes. In January, get down and dance to some groovy 70's tunes! First Saturday is a partnership program for KPL and Kalamazoo Public Schools. Each monthly event is co-hosted with an organization serving children and families in Kalamazoo.

Partners
Boys and Girls Club of Kalamazoo
Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo
Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan
Goodwill Industries of Southwest Michigan
Great Start Collaborative
Great Start Collaborative Parent Coalition
Hispanic American Council
Kalamazoo in Bloom
Kalamazoo Civic Theatre
Kalamazoo County Ready 4s

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts
Kalamazoo Literacy Council
Kalamazoo Public Schools
Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra
Kalamazoo Valley Museum
KRESA
NAACP
Northside Ministerial Alliance
Parents for Public Schools of Greater Kalamazoo
SW Michigan AEYC
Western Michigan University Reading Clinic



What The Promise Means to Me

(continued from page 1)

college. Thanks to the Promise, we don't have to do all that if we have good attendance, good behavior, and good grades.

"The Kalamazoo Promise is good not only because it helps to pay for college, but it is also good because it is going to affect what college I can go to, what job I get, and how I get through the beginning of my life. Colleges look back to when we were in kindergarten, middle school, and high school and if you have good grades, they say, 'Wow, this person works hard!'

"The Kalamazoo Promise lets us kids in Kalamazoo have the opportunity to dream bigger than big, reach higher than we ever thought we could have, and achieve what once might have been impossible."

Anthony Potts III, 3rd grader, says, "The Kalamazoo Promise means people give you money for college and you finish your education. I will do well in college so that I can be an inventor. I want to make a robot maid. My mom will be so proud of me. I will...get the best education, thanks to The

Kalamazoo Promise."

Emalee Carey, 2nd grader, says "What The Kalamazoo Promise means to me is that if I work hard and finish school, I can be an animal doctor at MSU. One paw at a time, I can make the world a better place."

Isaiah Hughes, 3rd grader, says, "The Kalamazoo Promise means it's free to go to college. So we can get our education and be whatever we want to be when we grow up and be a good person. Thank you very much. To get to college, it is about \$34,000 just for classes. That's a lot of money that would take a long time to save up!"

Zae'on Spurlock, 5th grader, says, "One reason why I like it (The Promise), I can go to my dream college, and I don't have to pay a cent. I will be the second one in my family to finish college. My grandma always tells me that she is so thankful for the Promise because when she was a young woman, she couldn't go to college because she didn't have the money. Now the Promise is here; my siblings and I can pursue our dream jobs."

Middle School Guests Return to Share High School Experiences

(continued from page 1)

Errin Corstange, Ms. Kathryn Dorrington, Ms. Tracy Chappell, and Mrs. Amy Schrum — and also to Mr. John Kreider and Mr. Patrick Greeley at Loy Norrix and Ms. Paula Morgan, Mr.

Robert Bolden, and Ms. Charlene Hamlin at Milwood for making the arrangements for the event.

Thanks also to principals Mr. Craig LeSuer of Milwood and Mr. Rodney Prewitt of Loy Norrix for making the event a success.



Milwood Magnet School: A Center for Math, Science and Technology student Kellis O'Day (center) asks Loy Norrix students about preparing for high school.



Armonte Tolbert, Loy Norrix senior, answers questions about his high school classes.

Mark Your Calendar: EFA/EFE/EMC Annual Open House, February 11

Education for the Arts, Education for Employment and Early/Middle College (EFA/EFE/EMC) annual open house has a new look. They have expanded, and now the entire Kalamazoo County Expo Center will be full.

Come and see this unique hands-on experience, where students will find out what it's really like to be an RN, a graphic artist, a mechanical engineer and more — direct from

people who do these jobs every day.

The EFA/EFE/EMC annual open house is oriented toward middle and high school students and their parents. Plan to attend on February 11, from 5 to 8 p.m., for a look into 40 different careers.

Note: More information will be included in the February Excelsior.

Apply to

PEEP Pre-Kindergarten

and Reach

The Kalamazoo Promise

Applications for the 2016-17 school year can be submitted beginning in January for children who will be 4 years old by December 1, 2016.

Applications are still being taken for this school year for children who are 4 years old by December 1, 2015.

KPS PEEP

High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten

MI Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

Call KPS (PEEP) at 337-0095

or visit the PEEP office at 714 S. Westnedge Ave., Room 212 (Community Education Center) Office hours are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

WINTER HANDS-ON HAPPENINGS

THE GREAT FREEZE

JANUARY 9 | 1-4 PM

The Great Freeze will include a variety of snow and cold-weather crafts for all ages, from snowmen, snow globes, and a snow gauge to sweater-themed crafts and winter journals. **FREE**

FESTIVAL OF HEALTH

JANUARY 23 | 12-4 PM

Take charge of your health! Join community experts and advocates to discover how you can be a healthier you. **FREE**

Kalamazoo VALLEY Museum

kalamazoomuseum.org

269.373.7990

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

KV

Lift Up Through Literacy Begins on February 2

The Lift Up Through Literacy Program offers parents of newborns, preschoolers, and school-age students an opportunity to learn and grow together through the use of hands-on literacy and numeracy strategies. The program helps children achieve their career dreams and benefit from The Kalamazoo Promise.

The Lift Up Through Literacy program begins the winter sessions on February 2. The sessions will be held at nine different locations throughout Kalamazoo. Grandparents, parents, caregivers and children who desire to support children in reading, writing, and mathematics are encouraged to attend. Free books, a light meal, child care, and door prizes are offered each week. An end-of-session incentive is provided for parents who attend all eight weeks.



De'Asia English, 2nd grader at Milwood Elementary, and her mother Ebony Johnson have fun working together on a craft.

KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS SEEKING SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

We offer paid training, flexible hours, competitive wages, medical benefits, retirement package and uniforms.

Applicants must have a safe driving record, pass a criminal background check and have a physical examination.

APPLY TODAY AT:

Kalamazoo Public Schools
1220 Howard Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0177

Kalamazoo Public Schools is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

Lift Up Through Literacy Program, Winter 2016 February 2 through March 24, 2016

PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY MEETING SCHEDULE

Site and phone number	Meeting Type	Day of Week and Time
Boys & Girls Club of GK 915 Lake Street (269) 349-4485	Parent Education	Tuesday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Newborns
	Family Literacy	Tuesday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Preschoolers
Christian Life Center 1225 W. Paterson Street (269) 343-7023	Parent Education	Tuesday, 6 – 7:30 p.m. Newborns
	Family Literacy	Tuesday, 6 – 7:30 p.m. Preschoolers
First United Baptist Church 821 S. Burdick Street (269) 381-3996	Parent Education	Please join another Newborns site
	Family Literacy	Please join another Preschoolers site
Fresh Fire AME Church 2508 Gull Road (269) 381-8050	Parent Education	Please join another Newborns site
	Family Literacy	Please join another Preschoolers site
Interfaith Homes 1037 Interfaith Blvd. (269) 382-5771	Parent Education	Wednesday, 3 – 4:30 p.m. Newborns
	Family Literacy	Wednesday, 3 – 4:30 p.m. Preschoolers
Mount Zion Baptist Church 120 Roberson Street (269) 388-3111	Parent Education	Thursday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Newborns
	Family Literacy	Thursday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Preschoolers
New Life Fellowship C.O.G.I.C. 1912 Birch Avenue (269) 381-1913	Parent Education	Tuesday, 6 – 7:30 p.m. Newborns
	Family Literacy	Tuesday, 6 – 7:30 p.m. Preschoolers
Skyridge Church 394 S. Drake Road (269) 375-3939	Parent Education	Wednesday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Newborns
	Family Literacy	Wednesday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Preschoolers
Trenches Community Church 1003 Gayle Avenue (269) 343-2715	Parent Education	Thursday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Newborns
	Family literacy	Thursday, 5:30 – 7 p.m. Preschoolers

For more information, please call (269) 337-0833.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community-Wide Celebration on January 18

The MLK Day of Service will be held on Monday, January 18, at various locations throughout Kalamazoo. In partnership with Volunteer Kalamazoo, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College, the community will be offered numerous opportunities to get involved locally. Information and sign-ups are available at www.kalamazoocity.org/mlk.

Adult Education Offers a Second Chance

Kalamazoo Adult Education classes begin on Monday, January 4. Adult education is a program where it is never too late to learn and is a second chance for improving your life.

The classes are offered free to adults. You may take literacy classes for basic skill improvement, GED preparation, and English as a Second Language/Literacy-Civics. All classes include soft-skills and technology for specific employment opportunities.

Please call Kalamazoo Adult Education at (269) 337-0422 for more information.

NOTICE

Kalamazoo Public Schools welcomes all students and staff of any religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identification, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability.

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:

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

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

All other inquiries should be directed to:

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Kalamazoo Public Schools
1220 Howard Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0177

District Directory at :

www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

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Nick May to Wrestle for Spartans

Loy Norrix senior Nicholas (Nick) May, who was the Division 1 state runner up at 189 pounds last season as a junior, has signed a National Letter of Intent to wrestle for the Michigan State Spartans next season.

Nick was 48 wins and 4 losses in his junior season and has 109 career wins through three seasons in wrestling. He spent a lot of time deciding whether to wrestle or play football in college, but his success last year made the decision to pursue wrestling easier.

"The success I had last year and the encouragement of my coaches helped out a lot," said May. "My visit to Michigan State was very welcoming." Nick is excited about collegiate wrestling to "compete with the highest level of wrestlers there are and to begin to see what my life will look like after college and wrestling is over," he added.

As his senior season begins this week, Nick is, of course, trying to do the best he can in his own matches and wants to win a state title, but he mainly talked about the future of Loy Norrix wrestling. "I want to



Nick May is surrounded by his proud family: (L to R) Stephen, father; Mia, Loy Norrix freshman; Christopher, Maple Street Magnet 7th grader; Liza, mother; and Scott, Loy Norrix Class of 2014.

try and influence the younger athletes and show them they can be good with hard work and effort," he said, "and I want to help as many people as I can get better so this program will keep going up in the years to come."

Co-head wrestling coach Alex Hill, who took over the Loy Norrix program with Darrick

Parker during May's sophomore season, couldn't be prouder of his wrestler. "Nick is a hard worker, a great teammate," said Hill, "and when I met him, he was set on being a college football player. We knew what his potential was as a wrestler when we met him, and his work ethic has gotten him to where he is today."

Loy Norrix Athletic Director Andrew Laboe said, "Nick is a tremendous student-athlete and leader. He has put in the work to become a Division 1 wrestler. He is a good student and a great person. The most enjoyable characteristic of Nick is that he is humble. He doesn't look for the spotlight, he just works hard and makes positive things happen. That is an incredible trait for someone his age and speaks volumes for how he has been raised and coached throughout his life."

Nick becomes the fourth Division 1 commitment for the Class of 2016 at Loy Norrix with three of those being in the Big 10. Nick joins Grace Labadie (women's soccer - Indiana University), Jane Labadie (women's soccer - Western Michigan University), and Simeon Smith (football - University of Michigan) on the Division 1 committed athlete list.

The three new Big 10 athletes will make four in the conference for Loy Norrix as they join Davis Crocker (2014) who plays tennis for the University of Michigan and recently won the Big 10 Indoor Tennis Championship.

Nominate a Youth for the Dr. Lewis Walker Community Service Award

Nominations are being sought for the Dr. Lewis Walker Community Service Award. These awards are given to students between the ages of 12-19 from the Kalamazoo community who have demonstrated leadership achievements in the area of racial justice through community service activities and volunteerism. Along with the community service awards, the winners will receive a \$200 monetary award. Submission forms can be located at www.kalamazoocity.org/mlk and must be submitted by January 8.

Project Find Is Looking for Special Needs Individuals

If you suspect your child:

- has a disability;
 - is in need of special attention; or
 - is a student with special-education services and has dropped out of school and would like to return,
- call Kalamazoo Public Schools'

Project Find Coordinator Cindy Green at (269) 337-0161.

Project Find helps locate individuals ages birth to 26 with special needs, working with families to provide appropriate education services. Multiple services are available.

Hand Hygiene Programs Help Prevent Disease
Visit kssenterprises.com/hand-hygiene to find out how

KSS Enterprises has the products and knowledge you need for hand hygiene and disease prevention.

Visit Our Showroom:
616 E Vine St
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
269.349.6637

KSS ENTERPRISES
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What!! NO SCHOOL?

Back-Up Child Care
is available at WMU

Space is limited
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W
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Children's Place
Learning Center
(269) 387-2277

wmich.edu/childcare/back-up

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EXCELSIOR

KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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383-4433

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Favorite Books Are the Focus in the Literary Parade

On a warm fall afternoon, Parkwood-Upjohn kindergartners through third graders walked in a literacy parade around the block by their school. Before the day of the parade, each classroom chose a book that they wanted to represent, and then made costumes based on a character from that book.

Some of the books chosen were "Nate the Great & Olivia Sharp" by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat and Mitchell Sharmat, "Bats at the Ballgame" by Brian Lies, "My School's a Zoo!" written by Stu Smith and illustrated by David Catrow, and "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie," written by Laura Joffe Numeroff and illustrated by Felicia Bond.

The students paraded while modeling the handmade attire to the delight of the parents and families who came to enjoy the sight.

Students in Susan Draft's class portrayed the book "Pricilla McDoodlenut McMaes Asks Why?" They are (L to R) Mary Locke, Addison Chupp, Nadia Moore, Arianna Gann, and Addison Severino.



The children in Rylee Guillan's class dressed as characters from, "If You Give a Dog a Donut" for the parade. The adult volunteers walking with the children are the mother and grandmother of student Nicholas Tuesley.







Free Upcoming Shows

JAN 9 - The Green Hornet
JAN 23 - Ira Park, Detective and The Telephone is Put on Hold Mystery
FEB 6 - Faith's Nuggets
FEB 20 - Sorry Wrong Number

Back in the 'Golden Age' of radio, weekly radio programs brought the young and old to their living rooms to listen to adventurous, mysterious and comical tales. Dedicated to promoting this rich history, All Ears Theatre performs newly scripted radio programs for live audiences, complete with old school sound effects, from January through May. Shows are later broadcast on 102.1 WMUK-FM. Performances are at 6:00 pm at the First Baptist Church and are FREE to the public.

Funding provided by
Irving S. Silberman
FOUNDATION



For a complete schedule of shows, visit KalamazooArts.org

Chef Shaun - KPS FOOD SERVICE CHEF

Kale Tacos with Carrot Ginger Spread and Toasted Sunflower Seeds

Happy New Year, Kalamazoo, time for healthy new beginnings! Please try this very tasty appetizer for a start on a nutritious, flavorful new year. Sweet potato is another great filling for these tacos, but keep it simple. As always, please share with your friends and family. Best regards, Chef Shaun

Serves 4 with 1 taco each. Simply make as many as you want.

Ingredients

4 Kale leaves
 4 heaping tablespoons Carrot Ginger Spread (see recipe below)
 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
 Dash of soy sauce

Method

1 Heat a heavy non-stick pan over low-medium heat and toast the sunflower seeds for 5 minutes or until lightly golden and toasty. When done, add a dash of soy sauce to the pan and stir to coat the seeds. It will sizzle; sizzle it good. Turn off the heat and allow to cool.

2 Wash your kale and trim the ends to remove the large woody stem. Keep the stems for a stir fry or other dish.

3 Place 2-3 cups water in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Add a few good pinches of salt and pop your kale in to cook for 1 minute until just tender. Drain and rinse under cold water.

4 Using paper towels dry your leaves, then place them on a serving platter, the "inside" facing up. At this point you could cut them into smaller tacos if you wish.

5 Fill your tacos with the carrot ginger spread then sprinkle the toasted sunflower seeds over the top. Serve.

CARROT GINGER SPREAD

Ingredients

5 medium carrots, chopped into 3/4-inch thick rounds



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

1/4 cup water saved from when you steamed the carrots
 1 clove of garlic, peeled
 1 thumb-size cube (about 1/2 by 1/2 inch) of fresh ginger, peeled
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
 Zest of 1/2 lemon and 1 teaspoon of honey
 1/4 teaspoon salt

Method

1 Steam the chopped carrots for 10-15 minutes until soft. When done, rinse the carrots under cold water. Reserve the steaming water for later use.

2 In a food processor, whiz the carrots, honey, garlic, ginger, oil, lemon juice and zest and salt with most of the cooking water. Puree until smooth. Add more water if necessary until at the desired thickness. I enjoy a fairly thick spread.

3 Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to one week. Use for more kale tacos, or on salad and bread/crostinis. Goes well with crackers and with pasta.

kalamazoopublicschools.com/chefshaun

Artists' Corner

Ms. Denaway describes the art of her students that is featured in this month's Excelsior:

Kymeil Beard, 4th grade: Kymeil used her knowledge of artist Keith Haring and figure drawing to create this work of art. Through her use of figures in motion and bright colors, she created a strong visual message.



Kymeil Beard

Lenny Williams 5th grade: The inspirational art work of environmental artist Andy Goldsworthy was the starting point for Lenny's sculpture. He used various materials collected from the outdoors and painted, tied, and glued them together to create a wonderful hanging sculpture.



Lenny Williams

Abraham Perez, 1st grade: Abraham's project was focused



Abraham Perez

The *Excelsior* is proud of the art talents of its students. The focus is on the fine artwork of students at Arcadia Elementary under the direction of art teacher Jacqueline Denaway.

on learning about using line in new ways. He cut, folded and glued paper to create his amazing 3D paper sculpture.

Madison Loveall, 1st grade: Madison observed different kinds of leaves and selected several to draw for her project. Her work of art utilizes interesting lines to create the leaf shapes colored with warm colored watercolor paints.



Madison Loveall

Cross Country Team Runs on Lake Michigan Beach

Milwood Magnet Cross Country Team finished the season with a highly anticipated trip to Warren Dunes on Lake Michigan. The Warren Dunes tradition started five years ago with Coaches Dustin Anderson and Noah Krzan. Transportation was through carpooling with parents and taking Loy Norrix vans. With the team getting bigger this year, a bus was needed.

Once the group got to the dunes, they hiked and climbed through the dunes to the campground. Then they hiked back, and went for a 20-30

minute run on the beach. After lunch, it was free time. The students could climb the dunes, swim, play soccer or capture the flag in the sand.

"The parent support is really what makes this possible," says Dawn Kahler, science teacher at Milwood Magnet. "They contribute so much food. It really is one of the hardest workouts the students have of the season. They are normally exhausted when we get back."

Noah Krzan remains the team's coach along with Anna Northam.



The Milwood Magnet Cross Country Team hikes the dunes at the Warren Dunes State Park.

Kalamazoo Community Education "HAPPENINGS" CLASS SCHEDULE

available at:

www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

Click: Online Payments Revtrak (to register)

Select from a variety of enrichment class offerings:

- Elder Law
- Managing Health Care Costs
- Cooking Classes
- Probate & Estate Planning
- Genealogy "Online"
- ServSafe Food Protection Certification
- Hatha Yoga
- Okinawan Karate
- Power Hour
- Tai Chi
- Open Volleyball
- Kalamazoo United Swimming Club

Over 300 classes available at Ed2go "Online Learning" Anytime, anywhere ... just a click away!

Conference Notice for KPS High Schools

The high school parent/guardian and teacher conferences will be held on Wednesday, January 27, at the following times:

Kalamazoo Central

12:30-3:30 p.m. and
4:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Loy Norrix

12:30 - 3:30 p.m. and
5-8 p.m.

Phoenix

12-3 p.m. and
3:30-6:30 p.m.

This is an opportunity for you to talk to the teachers and learn how your student is progressing. Students are invited to attend the conferences with their parents/guardians. The staff looks forward to seeing you for the second conference of the 2015-2016 school year.



A free program where grieving children & teens belong, laugh, cry, share, remember, play, sing, and heal.



hospiceswmi.org • 269.345.0273

Travel Club Opens the World

Students of the Merze Tate Explorers had an amazing 2015 summer. Natasha Mahonie and Claire Khabeiry, Loy Norrix juniors, traveled to France and 22 other young ladies experienced everything from flying in planes above Kalamazoo to hoisting the sails on the Friends Good Will Tall Ship in the choppy waters of Lake Michigan. All were a part of the Explorers' Travel Writers Academy dedicated to revealing careers and travel through writing to girls.

The KPS students who were Michigan Ambassadors are: Kymeil Beard, 4th Kendall Connors, 5th Tayla Dillard, 4th ZyNya Dodd, 6th Shadae Hillsman, 6th Kennedy Hudson, 4th Lydia Johnson, 5th Shemaiah Lawler, 7th Kynnedi Patterson, 3rd Aliah Ward, 4th Sierra Ward, 7th

Girls in grades 4-12 had the opportunity to live on

college campuses in France and Kalamazoo College as they experienced daily unique hands-on experiences while meeting amazing women in business and travel. Their efforts were celebrated in the 3rd Annual *Girls Can! Magazine* of *Community Voices* which was unveiled at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts in collaboration with eight other organizations. The magazine is an opportunity for girls to showcase their photography and writing skills and to celebrate experiences that will last a lifetime.

The travel Writers Academy is a program of the Merze Tate Explorers founded in 2008. Merze Tate was a 1927 graduate of Western Michigan University who was the first African American to graduate from Oxford University in England. The native of Blanchard, Mich., left millions to universities across the country such as WMU, where the grant center in Sangren Hall is named for her.

Girls in grades 4-10 in the fall of 2016 are eligible to apply for a spot on the news team for the *Girls Can! Magazine*. Those interested are invited to complete an application by January 22. For more information, call Sonya Bernard-Hollins at (269) 365-4019.



Members of the Explorers' Travel Writers Academy had the privilege of exploring the Friends Good Will Tall Ship.

We Need YOU!

Help make reading possible in Kalamazoo Public Schools!

Become a Volunteer Tutor

Call (269) 345-2661 or visit sldRead.org

KC Musical "In the Heights" A Hit, Underscores KPS Themes

(continued from page 2)

year in our district with more than 100 male staff members mentoring more than 500 male students, on student dreams, aspirations, goals, and interests. If we can better draw the link between success in education and the likelihood that a student can accomplish his or her dreams, we have a better chance of success with our children.

"In the Heights" reminds us of that famous poem, "Dreams," of the great African American poet, Langston Hughes. In 32 short, poignant words, Hughes writes:

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year. Best of luck nurturing the dreams of our children.

Kalamazoo Public Schools Needs Substitute Teachers

EDUStaff who provides substitutes to KPS is hiring qualified candidates.

Interested or want more information?

Go to www.EDUStaff.org/post

Questions: Call (877) 974-6338

An assistant will direct former and new substitute teachers through the application process.

EDUStaff training dates can be found online at their website.

“Taste of El Sol” Is a Huge Success!

El Sol Elementary hosted its annual “Taste of El Sol” PTO fundraising event in November. Over 400 families and community members participated in this multicultural gastronomic tour of edible delicacies.

At this unique event, families sell traditional dishes from their heritage countries and the profits go to help provide field trips and other resources for wellness initiatives for El Sol students. This year the menus included homemade hummus, colada morada (an Ecuadorain spiced berry and purple corn drink), pork and vegetarian tamales, chicken mole, and Indian samosas

with cilantro dipping sauce.

As families strolled the hallways to try the tasty treats, students could also participate in Social Studies Night activities. This year’s theme was historical figures. Games included a “Who Said It?” and “Tow the Line,” a true or false game.

“The PTO successfully raised over \$1,400 while becoming more united as a school community family,” said Principal Heather Grisales. “We would like to thank the community for their support and the volunteers from both Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo College for assisting to make the night a huge success.”



Isaac Castañeda peruses a pile of books. Each child at the event could pick out three free books to take home.



Lucia Mazei and her mother Karina Hazel get ready to enjoy a delicious tamale.



Maya Alvarez (left) and Ahlycea Leake offer a fancy cupcake for dessert.

Even Little Monsters Love to Read

When the Scholastic Book Fair was coming to Milwood Elementary with a theme of “Monster Book Fair,” the students were asked to imagine what book monsters might like to read. Milwood’s art teacher Ms. Abigail Ruffer helped students make their imaginations come to life.

The monsters were created from construction paper with different expressions on their faces. All were reading books and, you can tell by the smiles, loving it. If you browsed through the titles, you would discover some monsters were reading well-known books, like “A Color of One’s Own” or “Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.” Others are reading new stories that the students (and perhaps future authors)

created in their imagination, such as “The Tale of Amy the Bunny” or “All About Monsters.”

When completed, the

monsters were displayed on the walls in the halls for parents to enjoy during their visit to the school for conferences.



Third grader Kaitlyn Ozanich points to the monster she created.

Attention Class of 2017: Mark Your Calendars

FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid] Completion events will take place during February at various locations. Trained volunteers will be available to help you fill out

your application. To learn more, visit www.micolllegegoal.org or www.cacanonline.org. Dates and locations will be included in the February *Excelsior*.

MADALYNNE K. GENERAL STUDIES



GETTING
HER START
AT VALLEY.

Kalamazoo**VALLEY**[™]
www.kvcc.edu/worthit

Young Students Learn Firsthand About Fire Safety

The children in the PEEP and kindergarten classes at Washington Writers' Academy are learning about community helpers and fire prevention. Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety officers were invited to their classes to talk about their jobs. K-9 Public Safety Officer (PSO) Tony Evans brought along his dog, Diego, which received a lot of attention from the children.

Just outside the school awaited a police car and a fire truck for the children to tour. They were told about the car and had a chance to scoot through, briefly sitting in the back seat. Then they walked around the huge fire truck, ladder truck 6, which is the largest in Kalamazoo. The children found out about the different compartments and the equipment inside. The officers kindly answered the many questions the children had.

Public Safety's visit correlated with a story the kindergarten students read titled, "Miss Kindergarten Takes a Field Trip with Kindergarten," written by Joseph Slate and illustrated by Ashley

Wolff. The class in the book visited a fire station among other places.

"We combined this book



with informational text from our school library on police and fire fighters," said kindergarten teacher Nina LeSuer. "It is also a great way to introduce community helpers to our young students. The PEEP students joined the kindergarten classes for the visit."

Other officers involved in the event in addition to Public Safety Officer (PSO) Evans, were Community Police Officer (CPO) John Resseguie, CPO Heath Shoemaker, PSO Jennifer Bryant, Lt. Vernon Coakley Jr., and Sgt Matthew Elzinga.

Public Safety Officer Jennifer Bryant answers some important questions.



All eyes are on the big, red fire truck. The PEEP students are Ella Skiles (left), Elizabeth Walker and their classmates.

Thank You, Kiwanis

During the month of November, the Kiwanis Club of Kalamazoo visited all of the KPS elementary schools to hand out new, free dictionaries to the third graders. "The project is designed to aid third-grade teachers in their goal to see all of their students leave at the end of the year as good writers, active readers, and creative thinkers," said Neil G. Sikora, chairperson of the dictionary project.

"The project is an opportunity for children to expand their vocabulary and for many to actually own a dictionary. They also find fun and interesting things in the book. We feel a child cannot do

this or her best work without a dictionary."

KPS third graders and their teachers appreciate this kind gift from their friends at the local Kiwanis Club. Mrs. Jill Sikaundi, third-grade teacher at Arcadia Elementary, expressed her gratitude, "This is an amazing educational tool that will benefit our students for a lifetime. We do a lot in our classroom with vocabulary words in all academic subject areas. So, on behalf of the third graders at Arcadia Elementary School, we would like to personally thank the Kiwanis Club of Kalamazoo for their generosity and interest in our students' success."



The children in Mrs. Jill Sikaundi's third-grade class at Arcadia hold their new dictionaries. The adults in the back row are (L to R) Principal Greg Socha, Ms. Chris Thomas of Kiwanis, and teacher Jill Sikaundi.

Indian Prairie students Winter Owens (left) and Cailynn Oram appreciate their gifts from the Kiwanis Club.



Vicki Okuniewski of Kiwanis shows Annalise Alkema what the dictionary has to offer.



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DON'T MISS OUR OPEN HOUSE!
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- Tour the Facilities
- Meet Teaching Artists
- On-site Registration
- Enjoy Light Refreshments

For more information or to register visit
www.KazooCivic.com

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for Students of All Ages

Art Students Travel to University of Michigan

The Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan hosted a National Portfolio Day in Ann Arbor on October 25. Twenty-one students from Loy Norrix and Kalamazoo Central attended and met with representatives from 30-plus colleges accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. The

representatives were available to review the artwork, discuss their programs, and answer questions about professional careers in art.

The students attend art classes lead by teachers Cindy VanLieu (Loy Norrix) and Candace Brown (Kalamazoo Central and Education for Employment).



Greg King and Emma Greschak, Loy Norrix students in Cindy Van Lieu's Advanced Placement Studio Art class, wait in line to showcase their portfolios. Greg and Emma were featured in a photo that was posted to the Stamps School of Art & Design, U of M Facebook page.

Are Your Children Safe While Online?

Michigan families, especially minors, are becoming inundated with advertisements from alcohol, tobacco, pornography and gambling marketers through different internet and cell phone inboxes. Texting their advertisements is the newest marketing effort that many of these companies are using.

Thankfully, the State of Michigan offers a free program to stop adult advertisements from reaching e-mails, mobile phones (text messaging ads) and instant messenger IDs. The Michigan Child Protection Registry, like

the federal Do Not Call List, is a free do-not-contact service for Michigan's families and schools and can be located at www.ProtectMChild.com.

"As a strong supporter of this registry," said Alisha Meeneely, Community Outreach Coordinator for Protect MI Child, "I would like to encourage you to sign your entire family up for the registry and inform your friends and colleagues about how they can protect children and families from unwanted adult advertising. To sign up only takes seconds. Just go to www.ProtectMChild.com and keep your family safe."

Parkwood-Upjohn Hoopla: Ten Years of Success

Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary held their tenth annual Panther Hoopla that offered a lot of fun for families with its ever-popular basketball game along with face-painting, food, silent auction and more. The Hoopla fundraiser raises money each year for programs that benefit the children at the school.

Students Alanna Brockman (left), Jayde Hayworth and classmates are ready to run around the gym flying the blue flags to promote their favorite team, Parkwood-Upjohn.



TJ Duckett and the New World Flood Sets Out to Feed Families

Todd (TJ) Duckett, Loy Norrix graduate and retired NFL athlete, and his New World Flood foundation kicked off its 4th annual Thanksgiving extravaganza "community feast." The event brings relief and hope to struggling families as the holidays approach. Turkeys and dinners were delivered to Parkwood/Upjohn Elementary where families came to pick-up the bags of food.

New World Flood was created with the goal of providing a forum by which young citizens could use their positive energy to promote giving and service around the world. Loy Norrix students recognized the need and stepped up to the challenge. They arrived early to Parkwood-Upjohn and helped in the distribution of the food items making this a joyous season for many families.



TJ Duckett, second from right, welcomed volunteers who came to help distribute turkeys and the trimmings to over 900 families. The Loy Norrix students are (L to R) Deandre Buchanan, Xavier Gillon, Na'Quavion Evans, Duckett, and Madison Downham.

Museum Explorers: KALAMAZOO'S TALENT



Presents
BENJAMIN YONATTAN
February 12, 2016 5-8 p.m.

America's Got Talent (AGT) semifinalist will dance at 6 p.m. and talk about AGT and becoming a professional dancer/choreographer while losing his sight.

Become a Museum Explorers member at kalamazoomuseum.org.

Photo by Mark Bugnaski, MLive/Kalamazoo Gazette

For more details visit kalamazoomuseum.org

Kalamazoo**VALLEY**
Museum

kalamazoomuseum.org | 269.373.7990

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





JANUARY @ the library

FIRST SATURDAY

- Saturday, January 2 / 2:00 pm / CEN / Come to the library for First Saturday activities and fun!

STORYTIMES

Adult caregiver must accompany babies and toddlers. Siblings welcome to attend as guests.

- **Toddler Storytime** / Tuesdays, January 5, 12, 19, 26 / 10:30 am / CEN / Songs, movement, and stories. Ages 2-3.
- **Toddler Talk** / Wednesdays, January 6, 13, 20, 27 / 10:15 am / OSH / Toddlers play while adults share the joys and challenges of parenting 1-3 year olds with parent educator/facilitator.
- **Baby Talk** / Wednesdays, January 6, 13, 20, 27 / 1:30 pm / OSH / Discuss with other parents the care of babies up to one year. Connie Koning, RN, facilitator.
- **Family Storytime** / Stories and activities designed for birth-5. Siblings welcome.
Thursdays, January 7, 14, 21, 28 / 10:30 am / EAS & OSH
Fridays, January 8, 15, 22, 29 / 10:30 am / CEN & POW
- **Musical Storytime** / Monday, January 25 / 6:30 pm / CEN / Favorite songs, stories, and special guests with Mr. Bill.

EVENTS

- **1,2,3 Play with Me: A Parent/Child Workshop** / Mondays, January 11, 18, 25 (+ Feb 1, 8) / 10:30 am / OSH / Watch your child's development grow through play in this 5-week workshop. Opportunities to discuss one-on-one with specialists on childhood development. Ages 1-3 with caregiver. **R**

- **LEGO®@ the Library** / Build with other LEGO fans.

Sat, January 2 / 10:30 am / OSH

Wed, January 13 / 4:30 pm / POW

Sat, January 16 / 10:30 am / CEN

Tues, January 19 / 6:30 pm / WSQ

Thurs, January 21 / 4:30 am / EAS

- **Maker Monday** / Monday, January 4 / 4:00-6:00 pm / CEN / Drop in and create with us. Focus on the process, not the product. Topics posted at www.kpl.gov. Ages 6-11.

- **Snowball Express** / Listen to some snow stories, make a snowflake craft, and enjoy a cool treat. Ages 6-11.

Thurs, January 14 / 4:30 pm / WSQ

Thurs, January 28 / 4:30 pm / EAS

- **Little Scientists** / Fridays, January 8, 15, 22 / 10:30 am / OSH / Stories and science for preschoolers and a caregiver. Topics posted on www.kpl.gov. **R**

- **Bookworms** / A book club for kids and their grown-ups. In January we will read *Hachiko Waits* by Leslea Newman.

Tues, January 12 / 4:30 pm / OSH

Thurs, January 28 / 4:30 pm / CEN

- **KSO Presents Carnival of the Animals** / Saturday, January 16 / 10:30 am & 12:00 pm / OSH / A well-loved classic comes to life as it is performed by the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra's Brass Quintet. Fun for the whole family! **R**

- **MLK Day Celebration** / Monday, January 18 / 4:30 pm / POW / Honor civil rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Listen to a story, enjoy a short film and activities. Ages 6-11.

- **A Long Winter's Nap** / Wednesday, January 27 / 4:30 pm / POW / Learn which animals hibernate, listen to a story, and enjoy some fun, warm activities. Ages 6-11.



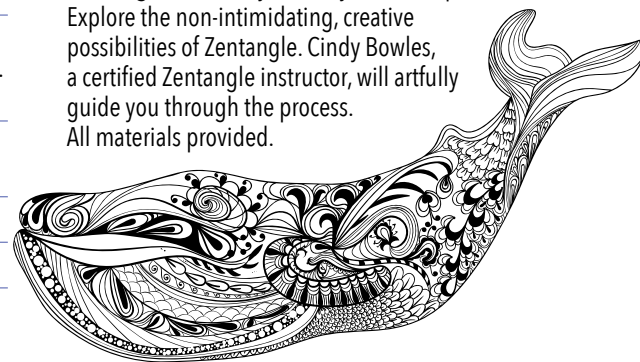
TWEEN/TEEN EVENTS

- **#TAB** / Monday, January 11 / 6:00 pm / CEN / Teen Area / Join the new, improved Teen Advisory Board and volunteer for programs, help with events, contribute to library social media, and more! Grades 6-12.

- **Pizza & Pages** / Wednesday, January 13 / 4:30 pm / OSH / Stop by the Oshtemo Branch Library and pick up a copy of *5th Wave* by Rick Yancey. Read the book before you see it at the movies! Take it home, read it, then come back and discuss it over pizza! Grades 5-12.

- **J-Pop Club** / Monday, January 18 / 4:00 pm / CEN / Enjoy the latest and coolest stuff straight from Japan. Vote for your favorite anime series, and tell us what to get next. Teens only.

- **Zentangle®** / Tuesday, January 19 / 6:00 pm / EAS / Explore the non-intimidating, creative possibilities of Zentangle. Cindy Bowles, a certified Zentangle instructor, will artfully guide you through the process. All materials provided.



- **Maker Monday** / Monday, January 25 / 6:00-7:00 pm / CEN / Teen Area / Tinker, make, try, create, and explore @ the library. Grades 5-12.

- **13th Annual Teen Filmmaker Festival: Films Due** / Saturday, January 30 / by 5:00 pm / CEN / Teen Area / Calling all filmmakers: the 13th Annual Teen Filmmaker Festival is looking for the best teen-produced and directed films! Ages 12-19.



- Baby / Kid ■ Tween / Teen ■ Family ■ All Ages
- T** Ticket Required **R** Registration Required

kpl.gov/calendar

Central Library (CEN)
315 S. Rose St.
553-7800

Eastwood (EAS)
1112 Gayle Ave.
553-7810

Oshtemo (OSH)
7265 W. Main St.
553-7980

Alma Powell (POW)
1000 W. Paterson St.
553-7960

Washington Square (WSQ)
1244 Portage St.
553-7970



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