



FALL 2023

# LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212



Eagles win their Homecoming game against the Proviso East Pirates, 34-26!



# Superintendent's Corner



Dr. Nick Polyak  
Superintendent

Honoring alumni is a two-fold experience. It is a recognition of the amazing things those individuals have gone on to do after leaving our hallways. It's also an opportunity to thank and acknowledge the work of our staff. It's the time we get to see the results of what we do every day, and how it translates into an Eagle's success out in the world.

This fall, we got to honor five Leyden alumni by inducting them into our Wall of Fame: a musician, a veterinarian, an entrepreneur, an engineer, and a professor. And I realized, in this diverse representation of careers, they had one thing in common - us. Leyden.

They all told us stories about the teachers and staff members who impacted their lives while they were

at Leyden. More importantly, those alumni spent two full days speaking to classrooms full of students about their lives and their accomplishments. It's our hope that the current students at Leyden can see themselves in those alumni and aspire to future successes in whatever paths and fields they pursue.

Many of you reading this newsletter are Leyden graduates. There is pride in our communities and we are grateful for our graduates, residents, students and staff, and look forward to continuing to welcome newcomers as they begin to experience these amazing schools.

Welcome home, or welcome to, Leyden High Schools.

With Leyden Pride,  
Nick Polak

## Leyden students selected to work on all-state theatre production



Four Leyden Fine Arts students have been chosen to work on the 2024 Illinois High School Theatre Festival's production of "She Kills Monsters." **Chloe Kovacevich, Alexandra 'Ola' Holubowicz, Korneliusz Kopera, and Martyna Lipski** earned the exceptional achievement of being chosen as members of the esteemed *All-State Crew*.

## Leyden's **One** Amazing Story series continues!



Each month we feature a member of our Leyden school community by sharing their story. It's our hope that getting to know each other deepens our connections with each other, our communities and ourselves.

To watch the latest One  
Amazing Story videos,  
scan the QR Code:





# Leyden Celebrates 100 Years (2024-2025)



[www.leyden212.org/anniversary](http://www.leyden212.org/anniversary)

## Tell us YOUR Leyden stories

We are seeking stories about your Leyden experience to feature during our 100th anniversary celebration (2024-2025). Tell us what made high school so special, or share a funny story, memory or accomplishment. Please fill out the online form and provide a clear, high-resolution photo of yourself to include in the feature. By submitting this form, you are giving Leyden permission to use your photo and comments in public forums such as online and print media.



Scan the QR Code for "100 Stories"

## Sign up to receive email updates

Share your name and email address so that we can communicate updates on events and opportunities to celebrate the 100th anniversary.



Scan the QR Code for 100th Notifications

## Asking for Leyden memorabilia

Pictures, videos, audio clips, letters, journals, newspaper clippings, and just about anything else are considered artifacts and are valuable to the telling of Leyden's story. If you have artifacts you think are valuable to Leyden, please submit them for consideration to the Leyden Archives. Please send digital copies to [Dchaidez@Leyden212.org](mailto:Dchaidez@Leyden212.org) or send physical materials to Darrel Chaidez' school mailbox at West Leyden, 1000 Wolf Road, Northlake, IL, 60164.



West Leyden Librarian Janine Asmus models a design from the 100th anniversary online store collection.

## Shop our online store for 100th apparel and accessories

The 100th Anniversary online store provides an opportunity for our school community to design and purchase their own special edition apparel and accessories. Purchases are mailed directly to your home address and a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Leyden Education Foundation.



Scan the QR Code to access our store

## Sponsorship opportunities are still available

If you own a business, are part of an organization/group and would like to sponsor our 100th anniversary celebration, please check out the various levels starting at \$212. Sponsorship offers many perks including signage, recognition, tax incentives, and knowing that proceeds benefit Leyden's Educational Foundation. Visit our website's 100th anniversary page for details.



Scan the QR Code for our 100th webpage



Queen Ben Cotton in the 1967 homecoming parade





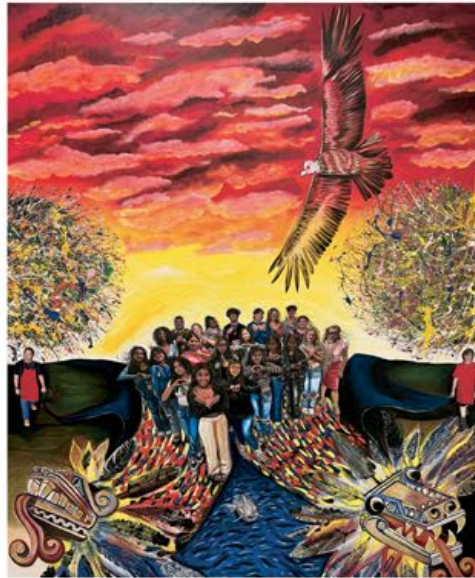
# West Leyden unveils student-inspired art

At an all-school assembly in August, students got their first look at artwork that will be on permanent display in the halls of West Leyden. In a design collaboration process led by professional artist Victor Montañez, a group of students and staff came together throughout the spring and summer to create five interchangeable panels that tell the story of their school.

"The art installation is aimed at continuing to create an educational environment that represents the cultures of the students who attend school here," said **Principal Dr. Arturo Senteno**. "We want our students to be involved, connected and kind, and we feel this art helps ground us all in what unifies us as West Leyden."

The mixed media paintings will be displayed in the hallway near the library at West Leyden.

"I really hope that when students walk down the hallway and see this mural, that they see themselves in it and then they feel like, 'Oh, that's me,'" said West Leyden Student Equity Board Member Grace Dillion. "The photo is for them. It's not just for us, it's for everyone that goes to Leyden."



**Panel 1**

Represents the connection of directions through visualization of the Des Plaines River. A carp fish represents the north, condor bird for the south, and a two-headed dragon for east and west - much like East Leyden and West Leyden. The Student Equity Board is shown gesturing signs of love to everyone. Two people are seen holding a blanket showing the power of human connections. This piece is meant to convey the messages of unity, leadership and strength. The rising sun depicts the start of a new day.



**Panel 2**

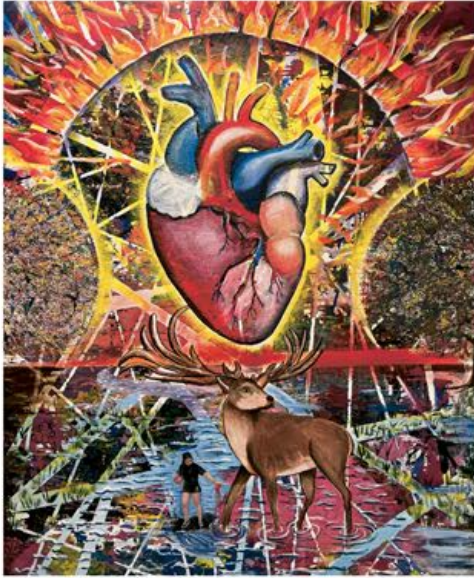
Eagle depicts our cultures: the White Eagle ("biały orzeł"). From American to Polish culture, the eagle represents the same: pride and strength. This bird, being used in many different countries as an emblem, shows the overall similarities that so many cultures share. It not only shows the connection between cultures but also represents Leyden and our diversity. Despite being our country's bird or the school mascot, the eagle represents so many different things to all cultures making it even more impactful. Within this part of the mural, there is also a phoenix rising from the ashes, following the path meant for us, not the one we are meant to take. While this path could take us anywhere, our roots will always be here, within these walls as a Leyden Eagle.





## From the students:

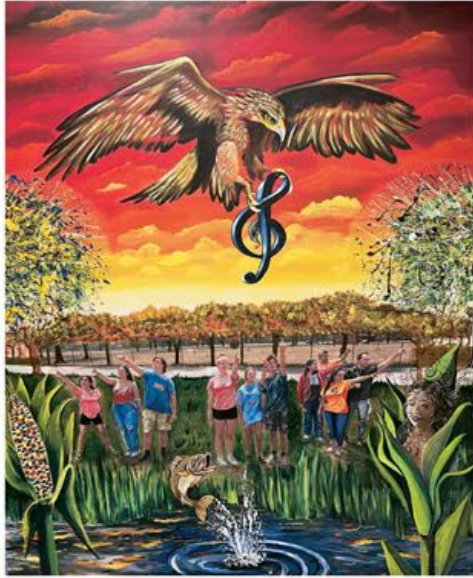
Here at leyden, we have many people to help us to get where we need to be such as our deans, our peers and our counselors. We build a community in these grounds to succeed at something with a supportive atmosphere. Here at leyden we have so many opportunities to change the directory of our lives and our communities with the help of the administration and peers. It is whether you decide to take your paint brush and paint the change you want to see. The overall message of this mural is to never think what you are doing is too little, because anything and everything can cause a ripple.



**Panel 3**

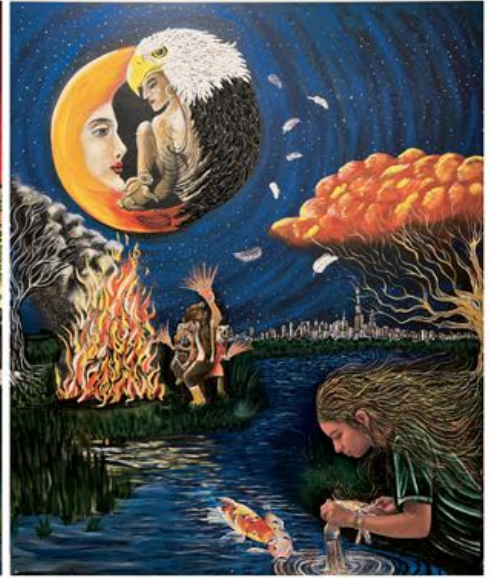
“El Corazon” or the heart, representing not only the soul of our school and spiritual body but the pride and integrity that we have as whole. El Corazon is a collection of abstract art with bright and vibrant colors that fills one with curiosity and perspective. More than 30 amazing leyden eagles contributed to this masterpiece. Aside from El Corazon which is the main piece of the panel that connects all of us and represents us as whole, we also have the Elk, which is symbolic as it represents the strength, endurance, and patience that we have as a school and community.

There is also a young girl who is pouring blood into the water, feeding with nourishment all that we contribute to our community and school. As a school we are one and El Corazon is a great way to include everyone and show that everyone is a part of something incredible and that we are united. Our soul is ever present to this school and the more we put in the more it creates a centerpiece of learning and unity.



**Panel 4**

Represents the life, nourishment, and energy we give to each other. The Mexican eagle or “aguila” not only represents the culture of many of the students but also the strength and majesty within. The eagle is holding a serpent shaped into a musical note. That music is what holds us together universally, especially here at leyden, evident through our amazing fine arts program, the groups that exist outside of leyden, and the great taste in music of our own leyden students. The land represented also reminds of the shared resources that we value through corn and fish. Protecting our natural resources and paying homage to all those who have come before us shows our commitment to conservation. The cemetery in the background also reminds us of our own mortality in the sunset.



**Panel 5**

Depicts the Chicago skyline, the Des Plaines River, the moon, trees with faces in them, our deans dancing around a fire, falling feathers and a girl holding a paintbrush causing a ripple in the water. A mural can be interpreted in many different ways as they say “art is in the eyes of the beholder.” Our interpretation of this part of the mural is that no matter how small someone may think they are, the effect they can have could change the world.

**“I really hope that when students walk down the hallway and see this mural, that they see themselves in it and then they feel like, ‘Oh, that’s me. The photo is for them. It’s not just for us, it’s for everyone that goes to Leyden.’”**

— West Leyden Student Equity Board Member, Grace Dillion



# Belback posthumously added to Leyden Wall of Fame



Joseph Belback



Leyden is actively working to improve translations and enhance our connections with families. Currently, there are more than a dozen requested languages of preference for our Leyden families, and we want to ensure that our messages are accessible to everyone.

This fall, Leyden inducted five amazing graduates onto its Wall of Fame, including **Tommy "Mugs" Cain, Justyna Kedra, Dr. Lou, Dr. Donald Chmielewski** and posthumously, **Joseph (Joe) Belback**, West Leyden, Class of 1977. Mr. Belback, "Joe," was added after the initial feature story was published in this newsletter, and so we wanted to share his story with our community.

Joe's mechanical genius and love of physics at Leyden

eventually led him to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) where he pursued a degree in Electrical Engineering. Joe went on to work on the original MRI machine technology. He later designed the hardware for several Electro Optical/Infrared high-resolution

thermal imaging cameras used to secure our borders and our capitol after 9/11.

"Joe left an incredible legacy both professionally developing leading edge technology, and personally, embraced life to the fullest, providing an example to inspire all," said his brother Greg Belback.



If you or someone you know would like to be considered for induction into the Leyden Wall of Fame, please scan the QR Code to locate the nomination form.

We have designed a video playlist to explain the various translation tools that Leyden is utilizing, including QR codes, Google Docs, the Leyden website, Home Access Center, YouTube, and Microsoft Translate. Currently, the video is offered in four languages, and we are working to produce one in every language of preference for our families.

To access this newsletter electronically as text-only for easy translation, please scan the QR Code. Share with someone you know who speaks a language other than English or Spanish.



Leyden is exploring a partnership with the Cook County Health Department to provide a health clinic in our community. Please help us enhance our understanding of the potential benefit of this type of service by scanning the QR Code and providing your input.



## Leyden District 212 Board of Education

Board of Education meetings are in the East Campus Board Room



Mr. Gregory T. Ignoffo  
President



Mrs. Gloria Murawska  
Vice President



Mr. James A. Lima  
Secretary



Mr. Joseph Trevino  
Member



Mrs. Lisa Anthony  
Member



Mrs. Sandra Boehm  
Member



Mr. Cesar Garcia  
Member



Joyslyn Maldonado  
Student Member



Adriel Carrera  
Student Member

Leyden High School District 212 is an equal opportunity institution, committed to compliance with all applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination. This includes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, order of protection status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, homelessness and marital/parental status, including pregnancy.

As required by S.B. 898, you may go to Leyden's website to view our budget at: [www.leyden212.org](http://www.leyden212.org)

East Campus  
3400 Rose Street  
Franklin Park, IL 60131

West Campus  
1000 N. Wolf Road  
Northlake, IL 60164

Thank you to those who contributed photos to this edition of the newsletter.