

# HILLER HIGHLIGHTS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
HOME OF THE HILLERS!



DECEMBER 2023-2024

## *Happy Holidays from The Superintendent*

**Dear Trinity Area Family and Friends,**

**Happy Holidays! As we head towards winter break and prepare for the New Year, I find myself reflecting upon all the good that has happened throughout the past 12 months. On behalf of our school directors and administrators, I sincerely thank our dedicated teachers and staff, talented students, engaged parents and guardians, and passionate community partners. You are the reason why Trinity Area is special, and I wish you all the joy and happiness you deserve.**

**As a school district family, we have so much to celebrate this holiday season. Our students are learning and growing each day in attractive, state-of-the-art environments designed for exploration and innovation. They are motivated by teachers and staff members who work exhaustively to provide them with an outstanding education and positive, safe school experience. Our campus is already beautiful, and the new intermediate school, set to open next fall, will give us space to expand as our community enlarges. In my daily interactions with representatives from all stakeholder groups, I feel an overwhelming sense of pride to work alongside colleagues and friends, who willingly give their time, effort, support, and encouragement to create a culture of progress and optimism.**

**As 2023 closes, I encourage you to enjoy the season, connect with each other to make lasting memories, and reflect upon all the wonderful things we have accomplished together. I am honored to serve as your superintendent and look forward to our continued collaboration. May 2024 be our best year yet!**

*Dr. Michael P. Lucas*  
*Superintendent*





# Hiller Helpers



Hiller Helpers is an organization started by Mrs. Amber Muschick, Mrs. Brenda Kovacicek, and Mrs. Lindsay Benz to ensure that every Hiller family in need is provided with necessities throughout the year. The Hiller Holiday Helper Project, orchestrated by the TMS Student Council, teaches students the importance of giving back to their community. With donations from Trinity teachers and staff, as well as funds generated from a large kickball tournament held by TMS, Hiller Helpers shop and wrap presents for over 100 students. Students are gifted a huge bag that contains presents, clothing, shoes, a new coat, a stocking filled with toiletries, and a full holiday meal! This project truly takes a village to complete, and all Trinity teachers and staff - both current and retired - pitch in to take good care of our own. A very special "thank you" to everyone who donated money, time, energy, and smiles to a most worthwhile cause.



Camryn Gump

#bethekindkid®



Matteo Lesako

Congratulations!  
December  
Students of the Month



**Tyler Johnson**  
**HIGH SCHOOL**



**Teagan Barr**



**Keegan Mankey**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

# Trinity is Taking Pride in.... ACADEMICS, Arts, and Athletics



**Brody Barkley, Konnor Lese, Landon Marshman, Nolan Sienkiel, Shark: Group Deal, Ben Papson, Cael Nicolella**

TMS concluded their **SHARK TANK** project for the first 60 days of school. Students did an awesome job presenting their products and services to the Sharks (high school students). "Best deal receivers" are shown.



**Garrett Stoy, Brandon Kowcheck, Jacob Startare, Evan Slagle, Roger Li Shark: Group Deal, TJ Allison, Ben Papson**



**Jackson Hoy, Morgan Stimmell, Parker Jennings, Addison Miklic Shark: Ben Papson**



Trinity hosted a Primary Math24 competition at Trinity East on December 12. First, second, and third grade gifted students from nearby schools traveled to Trinity East to compete in the fast-paced math game. Congratulations to Rowan B. for coming in 1st place among the first graders at the competition!



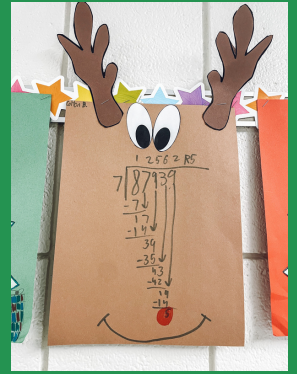
## Foreign Language Classes Are Celebrating!

Foreign language classes clubs are celebrating the season with cultural activities such as decorating poinsettias, lanterns, and Krampus masks. Spanish students are learning about the Christmas tradition of "Las Posadas". The German Club will be creating ornaments for students at the silent disco held on December 21, while the Spanish Club finished up sales for the Pulsera Project last week!





Students in fourth grade at West wrapped up their long division unit by decking the halls with Rudolph the Red Nose 'Remaindeer'. These students shined bright by answering long division problems and turning them into these adorable 'remaindeer'.



Teaching Fab Lab students precision production by helping mass produce Trinity medallions as gifts for our HS faculty. Manufactured from our CNC machine!



## Minute to Win It Holiday Challenge





The THS F.O.R. Club continued its mission of promoting kindness by generously donating gifts to brighten the holiday of 25 local children in our community as they supported the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program. Students also made appreciation cards for the high school administration, as well as high school counselors, nurse, secretaries, custodians, security, and cafeteria staff. The F.O.R. Club wishes everyone will enjoy a refreshing and safe winter break!

### Thank you, Everyone!

Due to the generosity of the entire Trinity School District staff and school board members, over 1200 holiday cards were donated for students to sign for area nursing home residents.

Several groups participate in this project annually. Psychology teacher Mrs. McCarthy's students create original cards. Sergeant Major Harper's JROTC sends personalized cards to over 100 veterans. Mr. Swarrow's seniors and Mr. Komula's chorus students joined this event.

Trinity Middle School social studies teachers, Mrs. Bristor and Mrs. Richey, annually incorporate creating over 100 personal cards for veterans in their Veterans' Day unit.

TLC and NHS have jointly sponsored the cards for over 12 years. Thanks to the TLC Coordinators, Mrs. Giorgi and Mrs. Berty, and NHS Coordinator, Mr. Nick Phillips.



Students in grades 4 and 5 traveled to the Heinz History Center to compete in the annual History Bowl competition on December 6. Teams of 4 students were challenged to find answers to questions, think and write creatively, and practice problem-solving as they explored the exhibits. Congratulations to Drake, Brice, Nicholas, and Kasen for earning 82 points and coming in 3rd place at the competition! Way to go, boys!

# Trinity's Own...Serving With Their Hearts!



This year VING is accepting nominations from young males to help empower them to help another individual. Freshman Oliver Bodart is Trinity's first young man to earn this honor.

# V!NG

Sophomore Ally Krenzela has joined the Trinity VING recipients winning \$1000 for an inspirational individual.



Riley Pegram (8th Grade) is here with Mr. Paul Kostelnik and Dr. Sandra Deems. Riley is the first eighth grader to receive the VING award.



## Early Childhood Education Program Parents Night Out!

The Early Childhood Education Program at Trinity High School hosted their first Parents' Night Out on Friday, December 8 from 5:30-8:30pm in the THS gym. The students in the program hosted the evening by planning a variety of activities such as crafts, basketball, foursquare, and football, and finished the evening by watching the movie, "The Grinch". They also served pizza, snacks, and popcorn. The evening was successful as they hosted approximately 40 elementary aged students. The ECE program's next event will be hosting a Princess Tea Party on January 27 from 9:30am-11am, in the THS cafeteria. They are also planning to host a second Parents' Night Out in the spring.



# Congratulations!



Trinity Area's reelected and reappointed school directors were sworn in. Congratulations to President Jennifer Morgan, Vice President Frances Eates, and Treasurer Penny Caleffe, as well as Mr. Greg Rudman, Mrs. Molly Hott, and Mr. Sean Dobich for extending their tenure! Our directors' experience, passion, leadership, and willingness to advocate for children are invaluable, and we thank you for volunteering to lead our Hiller community.

## Hillers You Should Know...

### Mr. Tim Rosneck



Mr. Rosneck is 65 years old and has been a bus driver for 8 years. He has driven Route 70 for Schweinebraten Bus Co. for the past 6 years, after his retirement. Formally, he worked at DuPont for 30 years as U.P. of National Accounts. He went to school at Pitt. In addition to driving a daily route, he has been a certified bus driver training instructor for the past 4 years at Schweinebraten. Interesting fact: He was a minor league baseball player for the Red Sox organization for six years prior to injury. He loves what he does and stated, "I love what I do, and will continue to do it until it feels like a job again!"

### Ms. Rose Wilson and Ms. Deborah Pierson

Ms. Wilson (left) and Ms. Pierson (right) have been with Trinity Area School District as custodians for 5 and 3 1/2 years respectively. Multiple teachers and building administrators have contacted the Facilities Department to compliment the hard work and dedication of both of these ladies. Thank you both for being great Team Hiller players.







# W

*Western Area CTC*

Brandon Gray is a senior in the WACTC Automotive Program and is employed by Beards Auto Center in Washington through the co-op program. Brandon's day started with unloading some heavy tires/wheels for a customer.



Nelson Pettigrew Jr. is a senior in the WACTC Carpentry program. Nelson, Jr. was on a remodel and finished the mechanical room; that bulkhead is just a bit low for his height! He is employed by N&C Construction LLC in Washington through the co-op program.



Romen Simonelli is a senior in the WACTC Collision Repair Program where he is employed by Mike Higgins Auto Body in Washington through the co-op program. Romen recently restored an old tool box for his ELA12 20 Time Project, so he's able to put his incredible skills to good use!



Dr. Lucas visited Trinity's Toni & Guy students in action at Penn Commercial. He enjoyed a relaxing facial from Trinity's own talented and "career-ready" students. They are working to earn their clinical hours in skin care. These Hillers will soon be licensed professionals who will ROCK the beauty industry!



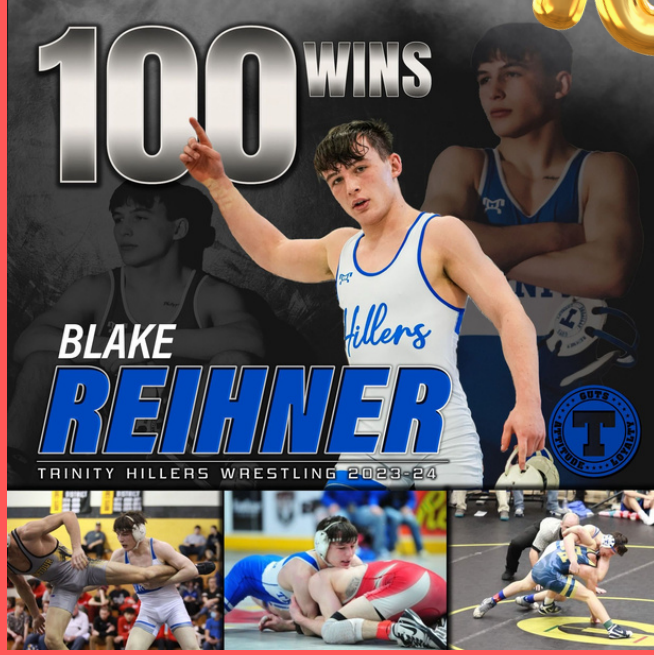
# Trinity is Taking Pride in.... Academics, ARTS, and Athletics



Trinity is Taking Pride in.....  
Academics, Arts, and ATHLETICS

Congrats!

100<sup>th</sup>



Congratulations to Blake Reihner on his 100th win and his 2x Panther Classic Wrestling Champion!

Congratulations!



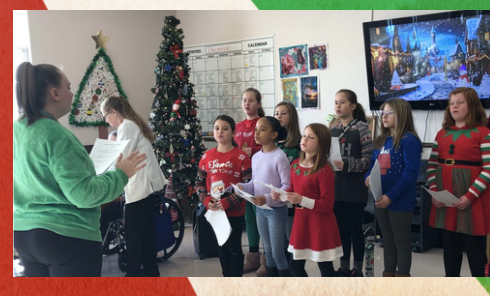
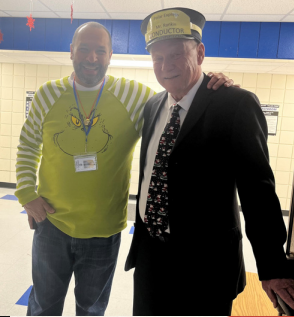
**Braeden Helmkamp - Army West Point - Football**

**Trinity High School Senior, Braeden Helmkamp, signed a National Letter of Intent on December 20 to continue his academic and athletic career at Army West Point. He plans to major in Kinesiology.**

**Army West Point Black Knights!**



# Holiday Fun!



# WHO WE ARE

## #TRINITYFAMILY



**Macy Gross**

**Trinity North**

Miss Macy Gross is a proud Trinity graduate of the Class of 2017. She attended California University of Pennsylvania where she received her Bachelor's Degree in Education and certification to teach grades 4-8 mathematics. She made the Dean's List every semester and graduated Summa Cum Laude. Miss Gross made her mark by being involved in the Cal U Theatre Department and being a dedicated member of the Cal U Dance Ensemble. She also served as treasurer for the Cal U Math Club for 3 years. In preparation for graduation, Miss Gross was placed in a 5th grade math class at Washington Park Elementary School to complete her student teaching. She says this experience prepared her well because it introduced her to many social, emotional, and educational needs. Miss Gross is honored to have been allowed to fulfill her dream of becoming a teacher at her alma mater.

**Cool Facts:** Miss Gross's passions include dance and musical theatre. She has been dancing for as long as she can remember, but her musical theater journey started when she was a freshman at Trinity. Her love has grown so strong that her journey continued long after high school, so much so that she returned to Trinity High School in 2022 to fulfill the role of Choreographer for the spring musicals. Miss Gross choreographed "Mary Poppins" (2022) and "The Addams Family" (2023), and is currently working on choreographing "The Sound of Music" (2024). She hopes you can catch that performance live!

**#trinitypride**



**TRINITY AREA  
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**Kaleb Kibble**

**Trinity Middle School**

Mr. Kaleb Kibble is from Cadiz, Ohio, where he attended Harrison Central High School. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from West Virginia University with his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education. He also received his Master's Degree in Music Education from North Greenville University. Mr. Kibble received the John Phillip Sousa Award, which recognizes the top high school band student who demonstrates superior musicianship and outstanding dedication. As a Mountaineer, he participated in numerous musical ensembles, including the prestigious Chamber Singers. Mr. Kibble is new to the District; however, he began his teaching career in the Fall of 2021 in the Rochester Area School District. He is presently teaching general music courses in addition to instrumental music ensembles at Trinity Middle School. He finds his new role at TMS rewarding, and believes our students are extremely talented and have been a pleasure to work with.

**Cool Facts:** Mr. Kibble and his wife, Rachel, reside in Washington, PA. They met while performing in the "He's Alive!" musical in Wheeling, WV. He continues to perform regularly by singing and playing the trumpet. Between Harrison Central H.S. and WVU, he spent eight years participating in a marching band as a trumpet player. He is a big advocate for our students to join the band, and promises it will be the experience of a lifetime!

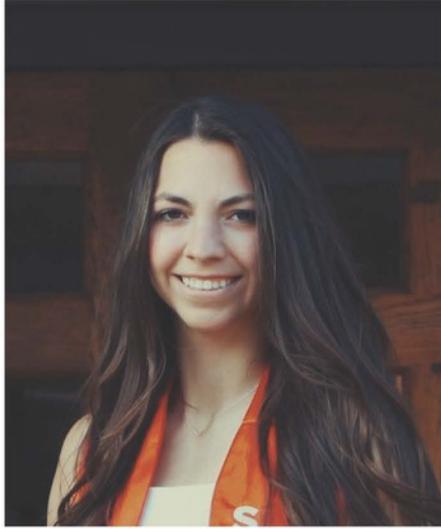
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**TRINITY AREA  
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# WHO WE ARE

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**Dana Vatakis**

**Trinity High School**

Ms. Dana Vatakis is presently a Special Education teacher at Trinity High School. She hails from Monessen High School where she was a standout soccer athlete. She was recruited to play Division 1 softball at Robert Morris University. While competing for the Colonials, she received her undergraduate degree in Early Childhood Education (PreK-4) and Special Education (PreK-12). She received her Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership. Ms. Vatakis was a member of the Dean's Lists every semester. She completed her student-teaching at Moon High School. Prior to being employed at THS, she was a teacher at The Watson Institute. At Trinity, Ms. Vatakis teaches ES English 9,10,11 and 12, and co-teaches Algebra 1 Grounding Principles and Geometry. Teaching has always been her true calling. She positively impacts our students and continuously strives to guide them towards a positive path in life.

**Cool Facts:** At RMU, Ms. Vatakis was a pitcher, member of the All-NEC Rookie Team, and a two-time member of the Academic Honor Roll. This Colonial credits playing for five seasons in the red and blue for helping to shape the teacher, coach, and woman she is today. The skills she had learned about teamwork, time management, and how to be an effective leader impact her work daily. Coach Vatakis gives private pitching lessons and continues to prepare our young athletes for the next level. You will see her at TMS coaching softball this spring. She has many interests outside of teaching and sports. She enjoys time with her family and friends. She is engaged to her college sweetheart, Justice. She loves skiing in the winter and participating in watersports in the summer. Pickleball has become her new passion. She enjoys cooking and trying foods from different cultures, and favors spanakopita because of her Greek background.

**#trinitypride**



**TRINITY AREA  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **INFORMATIONAL FLYERS:**

All flyers are available on the district website under

About

To access, click on the link:

<https://www.trinitypride.org/Content2/district-flyers>

To request that a flyer be posted on the website,  
email:

[tkrieger@trinityhillers.net](mailto:tkrieger@trinityhillers.net)



## **Dates to Remember**

### **December**

21 - Two Hour Student Early Release/ Staff Development

22-31 - Winter Break

### **January**

1 - Winter Break

2 - School Resumes

12 - Two Hour Student Early Release/  
Teacher Clerical

15 - M.L. King Day/No School

24 - End of 1st Semester

To submit an article for publication in  
*Hiller Highlights*, email:  
[tkrieger@trinityhillers.net](mailto:tkrieger@trinityhillers.net)

Articles may be  
submitted in the body of the email  
or attached as a Word document.

Documents in .pdf format  
will not be accepted.

Corresponding pictures  
must be attached  
to the same email in .jpg format.

The newsletter is released at the end of  
each month -  
September through June.

Articles are published pending  
review by the Superintendent.



**Do you have a bachelor's  
degree and want to  
work with kids?**



**THE HR DEPARTMENT IS LOOKING FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS!**

**THOSE WITH A TEACHING DEGREE, AS WELL AS THOSE WITH  
"EMERGENCY STATUS", MAY APPLY  
(FOUR YEAR DEGREE REQUIRED/NO TEACHING DEGREE NECESSARY)**

**DAILY RATE IS \$125**

**IF YOU ARE QUALIFIED AND INTERESTED  
IN WORKING WITH OUR STUDENTS,  
CONTACT**

**MR. JACK MINNICK  
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR  
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**724-223-2000 EXT. 7121 OR 7114**

## **FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTION DAYS**

**The Trinity Area School District has been approved to utilize Flexible Instruction Days (FIDs). Trinity will move to remote instruction when schools are closed due to weather or other concerns. It is no longer a necessity to cancel instruction for weather or facility related issues. When a FID is announced, teachers will teach from home and students will learn remotely from home. If it becomes necessary to cancel in-person school, staff, parents, guardians, and students will receive notification via the Skylert System, local television, and radio sources. On FIDs the students will log onto their Chromebooks and attend school remotely as they have done during closures for the pandemic. Staff, parents/guardians, and students need to be prepared for short-term or sporadic closures due to weather related issues. Students should have their Chromebooks available daily at school and at home. Staff and students must be prepared to work from home at all times.**

**If you have any questions, please contact your respective building principal.**