

Kalamazoo Public Schools



www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

EXCELSIOR

February 2023 · Volume 26, Issue 2



KC Feeds Kzoo Success

Student Innovations Lead to Jump in Giving

(STORY AND PHOTOS ON PAGE 8)

Fifth Graders
Hunt for DNA with
Pfizer Scientists

PAGE 6



NonProfit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Kalamazoo, MI
Permit 709

** ECRWS **
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

Kalamazoo Public Schools, 1220 Howard St., Kalamazoo, MI 49008

KPS Celebrates, Honors Diversity

EACH FEBRUARY, as a nation, we celebrate Black History Month, a time to honor African American contributions to our culture, growth and accomplishments as a nation.

Black History Month's roots are found in the early part of the 20th century, when young history graduate student Carter G. Woodson, lamenting the lack of information about the contributions of African Americans being shared in schools, helped launch Negro History Week.

During the 1960s, college students began to embrace the idea of Black History Month, and by the early 1970s, many municipalities were celebrating the month. In 1976, President Gerald Ford made it a national observance,

on the 50th anniversary of the concept's inception.

“Look beyond your tasseled caps
And you will see injustice.
At the end of your fingertips
You will find cruelties,
Irrational hate, bedrock sorrow
And terrifying loneliness.
There is your work.”

– Maya Angelou, *Letter to My Daughter*

During Black History Month, I like to remind students and others that while the month-long celebration urges us to acknowledge the accomplishments and achievements of the many great leaders who came before us, it also calls on us to continue their work by seeking solutions to the challenges facing our society today.

As Maya Angelou, one of my favorite authors, exhorts us in her book of essays “Letter to My Daughter,” we need to take all of the opportunities and

education we have been given and concentrate on using our skills and knowledge to better ourselves and the circumstances of those around us.

Kalamazoo Public School is proud to celebrate Black history not only in February but throughout the year. We celebrate KPS’s diversity. One of the district’s great strengths is the wealth of cultures, languages and people that make up our classrooms. Each difference is an opportunity to learn to value others and to learn how to work together to reach our common goals.

“All great artists draw from the same resource: the human heart, which tells us all that we are more alike than we are unlike.”

– Maya Angelou, *Letter to My Daughter*

In Kalamazoo Public Schools, our overriding goal is to ensure all of our students build the skills and knowledge they need to thrive as world citi-

zens. We do that by not only celebrating all of our students’ backgrounds — but also by doing our best to ensure that our diversity is reflected in our staff.

That richness in cultures is also reflected in the incredible depth of experience and skills among our staff, teachers, administrators and Board of Education.

The hard work the KPS staff and board does every day embraces the contributions of all members of our district and society and ensures that our students are able to do their work and strive for their dreams — proud of their histories and confident in their ability to find solutions to improve our world.

“Make every effort to change things you do not like. If you cannot make a change, change the way you have been thinking. You might find a new solution.”

– Maya Angelou, *Letter to My Daughter*

A Message from the Interim Superintendent



Cindy Green



Friday, February 3, 2023

5–7 pm | Eastwood | All Ages | Celebrate the 113th birthday of the Eastside/Eastwood Branch!



Peace During War

February 8, 2023 | Washington Square | 4–6 pm | Teen | Peace During War presents an opportunity to discuss gun violence and the impact on youth.

**Check out these fun KPL events this winter!
Visit kpl.gov to learn more.**



Kalamazoo
Public Library
kpl.gov

KPS Winter Celebrations

DECEMBER was full of fun events as Kalamazoo Public Schools staff and students prepared for the holidays. There were gifts, special guests, and activities such as “gingerbread” house decorating and concerts for family and friends.



The Gingerbread Man made a guest appearance at the King-Westwood Elementary Give Back Drive.



Landon and Lucas Chavez enjoy meeting a reindeer during Arcadia Elementary School's Winter Wonderland.



Miyanna Thompson, Amiah Young, Keara Brooks show off their face paintings at the Arcadia Elementary School's Winter Wonderland.



Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School students Kennedy Lozier and Rodney Hill display their sugary gingerbread house decorations.



Winchell Elementary School fourth graders take a bow after their featured performance in “Snowman Where’d You Go?,” from left, Asha Sandhu, Raymond Jamison, Vivienne Garrison, Scout Richardson, Gabriella Langevin, Sophia Brennan and Olivia Frankart.



Skyilar Gray and Malani Taylor look cheery even during the Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet Center for the Arts' Grinch Day celebration.



Kayleigh Jamerson holds all of the treasures she “purchased” with her positive behavior tickets at the Lincoln International Studies School gift extravaganza.



Acire Merritte is all smiles during the Washington Writers' Academy Giving Tree celebration.

KPS ZooBOTix Teams Shine at State Competition in December

THE FIRST Technical Challenge State Championship North West took place in December at Calvin University in Grand Rapids. Both Kalamazoo Public Schools ZooBOTix robotics teams qualified to attend. There were 72 teams in total.

Team 16646, ZooBOTix Linden Grove, did very well on the field. They came out of the qualification matches with a 5-1 record and the highest average points contributed per match. They were a member of the second ranked alliance in the semi-finals, where they went up against a powerhouse alliance and fell short. They were able to take home second place in the Control Award for their ability to demonstrate innovative thinking to solve game challenges such as autonomous operation, improving mechanical systems with intelligent control, or using sensors to achieve better results.

Team 13917, ZooBOTix Hillside, had mixed results on the competition field and didn't end up reaching the quarter finals. However, the all-rookie team won the Innovate Award. This is the fourth-highest award out of seven team awards. The Innovate Award is given to the team that has an innovative and creative robot design solution along with an elegant design, robustness, and 'out of the box' thinking.

Eric McGinnis, the coach for ZooBOTix Linden Grove, is in his rookie year as coach. He mentored 11 middle schoolers throughout the season. His



Team 16646, ZooBOTix Linden Grove



Team 13917, ZooBOTix Hillside

time and dedication contributed to the team's success this year.

ZooBOTix FTC coach Marc Dyksterhouse said several veteran eighth-graders deserved praise for their work. They made significant contributions to the club over

the past three years and now have graduated out of FTC: Henry Applegate, Amelia DeFulio, Lucas McGinnis, Dane Mills, and Akshay Verma.

LINDEN GROVE STUDENTS:

Ahmed Picturewala (Team 13917)
Keaton St John (Team 13917)
Oliver Gauthier (Team 13917)
Maya Van Heest (Team 13917)
Akshay Verma (Team 16646)
Henry Applegate (Team 16646)
Dane Mills (Team 16646)
Amelia DeFulio (Team 16646)
Dalton Mills (Team 16646)

HILLSIDE STUDENTS:

Liam Mwayi (Team 13917)
Peter Lewis (Team 13917)
Arya McGinnis (Team 16646)
Henry Wilcox (Team 16646)
Keegan Pasztor (Team 16646)
Lucas McGinnis (Team 16646)
Greyson Chatel (Team 16646)
Cora Jude (Team 16646)

MAPLE STUDENTS:

Jonathan Solonika (Team 13917)
Dax Geary (Team 13917)
Simon Gottlieb (Team 13917)



ONE APPLICATION. DOZENS OF SCHOLARSHIPS.

GENERAL APPLICATION DUE MARCH 1

GET MATCHED WITH 60+ SCHOLARSHIPS
Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) makes applying for scholarships easy. Fill out one application to get matched with scholarships and grants that fit you and your educational plans. With 60+ scholarships, you can find opportunities to pursue the future you want.

USE KZCF SCHOLARSHIPS WITH THE KALAMAZOO PROMISE TO HELP COVER:



TEXTBOOKS



TUITION & FEES



ROOM & BOARD



COURSE MATERIALS

NEW: APPLY FOR THE REMYNSE THROUGH OUR GENERAL APP!

You can now apply for the Clarence L. Remyne Scholarship through our general scholarship application. Our largest scholarship is open to high school seniors and college freshmen pursuing a bachelor's degree full-time.

START YOUR FUTURE TODAY



SCAN TO APPLY
or visit bit.ly/HowToApply23

BOARD OF
EDUCATION**President**

TiAnna Harrison

Vice President

Jermaine Jackson

Secretary

Megan Maddock

Treasurer

Tandy Moore

Trustee

Jennie Hill

Treasurer

Karla Murphy

Trustee

Patti Sholler-Barber

INTERIM
SUPERINTENDENT

Cindy Green

**Excelsior is mailed to every
household in Kalamazoo.****For information about
advertising, please call
Encore Magazine:
(269) 383-4433**

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 for
Instruction and Student Services**

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

All other inquiries should be directed to:

**Assistant Superintendent of
Human Resources**

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

District Directory at :

www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

Recipe

from the KPS Food Service, Chartwells

Kirsten Strong, registered dietician

Samuel Dunn, executive chef

Collard Green Hand Pies

FEBRUARY is Black History Month. We will celebrate by highlighting the collard green, which is part of African American culinary culture. Collards are prepared in many ways. Traditionally, the green is cooked down with smoked meats producing a warm, comforting liquid, known as pot likker. When doing research for this recipe, the word “Afro-Futurism” came up, which can be defined as a cultural aesthetic that combines science fiction, history, and fantasy to explore the African-American experience and aims to connect those from the Black diaspora with their forgotten African ancestry. Chef and writer Adri Ruff explains it as:

“When I think of Afro-Futurism, the collard green reigns supreme. Afro-Futurism, to me, is examining our food choices and our impact. It’s fighting food insecurity, eliminating food deserts, eating seasonal fruits and vegetables, being mindful of climate change, and ensuring that ingredients are accessible and easy to source for people across the diaspora.”

Ruff’s recipe for Collard Green Hand Pies takes a beloved, familiar, inexpensive, and accessible ingredient and incorporates it into a dish where it is not typically used.



INGREDIENTS

(makes 12 pies)

FILLING

2 tablespoons olive oil
½ cup medium white onion, diced
5 garlic cloves, minced
1½ cups white mushrooms, chopped
2 cups collard greens, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
8 oz. cream cheese, softened

HAND PIES

1 egg
1 tablespoon water
12 5-inch puff pastry discs or store-bought empanada discs

INSTRUCTIONS

FILLING

1. In a skillet over medium heat, heat the olive oil, then add the diced white onion and cook until the onions are translucent.
2. Add the minced garlic and chopped mushrooms. Cook for about 3 minutes.
3. Add the chopped collard greens and lemon juice. Cook for an

additional 5-7 minutes until the greens are wilted and tender.
4. As the greens cook, season with the black pepper, crushed red pepper, salt, and smoked paprika.

5. Taste the greens for tenderness, cook longer if desired, then remove the mixture from heat and allow to cool for 3 minutes. The mixture should be warm, not hot. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the softened cream cheese and the collard green mixture by stirring.

HAND PIES

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a small bowl, whisk the egg along with a

tablespoon of water to create an egg wash.

3. Taking one empanada or puff pastry disc at a time, brush the outer edges with a small bit of the egg wash before filling the center with 2 tablespoons of the collard green and cream cheese mixture.

4. Fold the dough over to form a half circle, closing the sides by pressing with a fork. Use a knife to create 3 small slits in the top of the empanada.

5. Brush the tops of each pie with a bit of the egg wash.

6. Place the hand pies on a lined baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes, until golden brown.



**CONNECTING PEOPLE
THROUGHOUT
KALAMAZOO COUNTY**

**269-337-8222
kmetro.com**

The Sweet Smell of STEM Success

THAT STICKY, sweet, strawberry scent wafting through KPS elementary schools is the smell of science in action.

Guest scientists from Pfizer Inc. are visiting every Kalamazoo Public Schools fifth-grade classroom to deliver a hands-on lesson about how to extract DNA from strawberries. It involves a lot of mushing, smushing, measuring and observation.

"We wanted to give back to the community that

many of our colleagues live in and where our facility is located," said Allison Hurt, a scientist in the company's bioprocess development group. She began developing the curriculum in May, asking other scientists with the company about STEM outreach ideas and how to implement them. She teamed with Kristen Miller, the KPS math and science coordinator, to arrange the demonstrations at the schools.

"Our main desire for these demonstrations is to

focus on STEM and inspire the kids with science, as well as give back to the community and highlight some of the great science we are conducting here in Kalamazoo," Hurt said.

"This is a great opportunity to connect actual scientists from Pfizer with our KPS fifth-grade students," Miller said. "Students have a hands-on opportunity

(continued on page 7)



Charlotte Newhouse, Kaidence Hester, Thomas Moon and Cayden Gougeon-Catarino mash their strawberries.



Ines Pineda Walls, Alejandra McClure, Inara Kunitzer-Fleitas and Lyla Savina watch as Elizabeth Olson works on the experiment.

conquer your debt

with KCCU's Elite Credit Card!

0%
APR*

balance transfer
for 12 months!

apply online today!

KELLOGG COMMUNITY
credit union

celebrate the difference. | kelloggccu.org | 800.854.5421

*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Introductory 0.00% APR applies to balance transfers of \$500 or more that post to your Elite Credit Card account between January 3, 2023 – March 31, 2023. Introductory rate does not apply to purchases, cash advances, or balance transfers from existing Kellogg Community Credit Union credit card accounts. Introductory rate is valid during the first 12 billing cycles following the date of the transfer. After 12 billing cycles, a variable APR (12.00% -24.00%), based on your creditworthiness, applies to unpaid promotional balances. Balance transfers submitted after March 31, 2023, will receive the cardholder's regular variable balance transfer APR (12.00% -24.00%). Variable APRs are accurate as of 1/3/2023 and will vary with the market based on the Prime Rate. The cardholder's standard variable APR (12.00% -24.00%), based on creditworthiness, will apply to any other purchases made. Subject to credit approval. Rates, fees, and terms subject to change and may be terminated at any time. Federally insured by the NCUA.



Auner Lopez Mateo, Bryan Santiago and Maximus Bujanos mix ingredients.

STEM Success *(continued from page 6)*

to learn about, investigate, and explore the DNA of a strawberry. Pfizer provides the volunteers and materials, while KPS provides the eager fifth-grade scientists.”

Hurt said more than a dozen employees have volunteered to run the experiment with the students. During a recent visit to El Sol Elementary, Hurt guided students through the process of smushing the

berries, adding a chemical buffer that separated the DNA from the rest of the berry juice, then adding alcohol to the mixture to help solidify the DNA strands. She was assisted by Elizabeth Olsen, an assistant process development technician and Jessica Barboline, a senior scientist.

“We plan to make this an annual program,” Hurt said. “I am working to expand our efforts and col-

lect more volunteers, so that in the coming years we may be able to reach more schools or provide other opportunities. I believe we are only at the beginning of this collaboration and I look forward to seeing how we can continue its growth.

“It has been a joy watching the fifth-graders’ faces light up as they learn about cells and see the DNA they were able to extract from their strawberries.”



Lindsay Arevalo Balboa and Brittany Perez-Castro mash strawberries to extract the DNA.



Dylan ‘DJ’ Dougal shows his test tube of strawberries and buffer.

WHAT'S NEW



Arts Council
of Greater
Kalamazoo



2023 DATES:
Mar 3
May 5
July 14
Sept 1
Nov 3
Dec 1



NEW FORMAT FOR 2023!

In an effort to expand the programming and offerings of each Art Hop event, we have adjusted the Art Hop Schedule for 2023. There will be 6 special Art Hop events, that will include unique additions such as After-Hop concerts, guided public tours, student/community-based projects, and more! Mark your calendars for March 3rd, and stay tuned for the exciting details as we unveil Art Hop 2023!

Visit KalamazooArts.org/art-hop/



FRIENDS BOOKSTORE



As you walk through the doors of this wonderful store, you'll find over 10,000 gently used books for readers of all ages.

Over 80% of our offerings are priced \$2 or less

Wed Noon-6pm, Thurs-Sat 10am-4pm

**Kalamazoo Public Library
Central | Lower Level**

315 S. Rose St . kpl.gov/friends . 269-553-7820

Online store: <https://shop.friendsofkpl.gov>

Game On: 'KC Feeds Kzoo' Food Drive Scores Whopping 22,000 Pounds of Food

KALAMAZOO Central High School students decided to gamify this holiday season's KC Feeds Kzoo food drive, smashing previous goals and leveling up the whole food drive experience.

This year's drive collected more than 22,000 pounds of food and \$10,000 in cash donations for Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes — far exceeding the school's previous record of 13,900 pounds of food, said Rex Hafer, KC's National Honor Society advisor. The NHS leads the effort along with several other student groups.



Rex Hafer's first-hour hour pose with donations: Honesty Rolland, Sam Quintanilla, Nicholas Jones, Bryce Soisson, Ella Cox, Evan McDermott, Cristina Guanon, Emma Schrum, Natalia Boldt, Mary England, Asaph Marquardt, Ian Webster, Blake Robey, Asia Hoehle and Cassandra Grooten.



Christina Guanon and Audrey Pocopio are two of the seniors who helped organize the drive. They said their original goal was simply to meet or slightly exceed the 13,900 mark.

Both said they were aware of the issue of food insecurity in Kalamazoo, but a field trip to Loaves & Fishes helped them better understand the need in the community and the KLF operations.

"Mr. Hafer brought five students to Loaves & Fishes to see the process of how food gets turned in and gets distributed among people," Pocopio said.

"We live in an urban area," Guanon said. "We can see the issues of the homeless, but do we need to

ON THE FRONT COVER: Evan McDermott, Walter Pollard, Cristina Guanon, Natalia Boldt, Anna Crum, Cassandra Grooten and Madalyn Flegel collect donations from classes.



know more about it and to help? Yes.”

Inspired by the visit, the students worked hard to get as many teachers and students involved in the drive as possible. “Last year, since it was the first year back from Covid, not a lot of teachers or students were too enthusiastic about the food drive,” she said.

This year they upped the fun level by bringing several techniques from popular video games and phone apps to the drive, which is basically split into two parts: the school class competition and the community drive, which includes a door-to-door campaign and the popular Stuff the Bus event held at Harding’s Friendly Market on West Main, Guanon said.

For the school drive, classes are encouraged to contribute food, with the most generous class generally winning prizes.

Dozens of KC students aided in collecting food on Dec. 17 during the Stuff the Bus event.

This year’s drive included “multipliers.” KC staff would roll a die and the number would be a daily multiplier for special items or categories. For instance, students could get three times the points for bringing peanut butter one day, or six times the points for Fruity Friday.

The student organizers also tracked “streaks” for classes that went the most continuous days of donating, which also earned the classes extra points. Guanon said that was key to motivating students to keep giving during the drive.

They also went heavy on social media, using Instagram to remind students about the special collections for a week, track point values, and to share videos of

the staff rolling the dice for the multipliers.

And, Pocopio, who has studied graph theory, helped analyze neighborhood maps so students could take the most efficient routes as they went door-to-door to collect donations.

INSPIRED BY THEIR SUCCESS

The school campaign went so well, the students reached their goal of almost 14,000 pounds of food before they began the community portion of the drive.

“It was amazing,” Pocopio said.

Inspired by this year’s success, Guanon and Pocopio hope to create a document and list of suggestions for the seniors who will be in charge of the 2023 food drive, because as good as this year’s

(continued on page 10)

Kzoo Food Drive *(cont. from page 9)*

results were, they firmly believe KC has even more capacity for giving.

“We’d love to have 100 percent of the classes working on it next year,” Guanon said. “We could tell that the classes in the lead at the start of the drive would stay in the lead, but we would knock on every door the next day and not lose hope. We were always showing up.”

Both students credited Hafer for inspiring them and being committed to making the food drive a success.

“Mr. Hafer did a good job of making people care about something,” Pocopio said. “Because of him, we cared and we made other people care. It was a chain reaction.”

And Guanon also gave credit to the citizens of Kalamazoo.

“It was fun to see that we came together and came back this strong. And, thanks to the citizens of the city of Kalamazoo for showing up for people in need and for being so willing to open their doors and to provide for others in this holiday season.”



Alexander Salinas, Emma Schrum, Samatha Pocopia, Tyler Overbeek and Christina Guanon visit Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes before the drive.



Tyler Overbeek, Christina Guanon and Cassandra Grooten stand next to one of the overflowing collection boxes at Kalamazoo Central.

Need Help with Groceries?

Pick-up and Home Delivery Available

Both Fresh and Non-Perishable Items

No Income Verification or IDs Required

For More Info:

Call
269-343-3663

Email
info@kzoelf.org

Visit
www.kzoelf.org

NO CABIN FEVER HERE!

LEARN MORE
airzoo.org/events

February Events

Open Cockpits
Every weekend in February!

Air Zoo Explorers
Sun., Feb. 12 | 12pm-3pm

SWE Corporate Engineering Challenge
Sat., Feb. 25 | 9am-4pm

6151 Portage Rd. Portage | 269.382.6555

KALAMAZOO COUNTY
PRE-K

Dream big, start small!

A bright future begins with high-quality Pre-K!

Apply today!
Don't wait – spots
fill up fast!

No potty
training required!

Low- and no-cost
options are available!

www.dreambigstartsmall.org

Questions? Call (269)250-9333.



GET THE LEAD OUT!

OTSEOPOROSIS
ORANGE

LOWER
IQ
LAVENDAR

GROWTH
INHIBITOR
GREEN

BEHAVIOR
DISORDER
BURGUNDY

IRRITABLE
INDIGO

LEAD: The Silent Pediatric Epidemic

1. Do you live in the City of Kalamazoo?
2. Do you rent or live in a home built before 1978?
3. Do you have children in the home age 5 years or under?
4. Is your household income considered low to moderate?

Contact KNHS Home Ownership Services today to find out if you qualify for a **FREE lead-based paint hazard evaluation** of your home. Funding is limited, so contact us TODAY!

A collaborative program of KNHS and the
City of Kalamazoo. Funding provided by HUD.



Learn more @ KNHS.org

PH: (269) 762-3595

EMAIL: lead@knhs.org

Scan for Info



Arabic Teacher Sharing Language, Culture at Maple; Strengthening English By Living It

ONE OF the most common questions Moulay Tahar Kettani hears from his high school students in Marrakech, Morocco is, “Teacher, you teach English. Have you ever been to one of the English-speaking countries?”

The answer has always been “no” — until now.

Kettani, 37, is spending the year in Kalamazoo teaching at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts. He is in the United States as part of the American Councils for International Education Teachers of Critical Language Program.

Kalamazoo Public Schools was one of 200 districts that participated in a yearlong application process for the program, which is designed to increase the study and acquisition of important world languages in U.S. schools. Arabic is the second most spoken foreign language in KPS after Spanish.

The district hopes that Kettani’s fellowship can be used to help launch an Arabic language program in KPS. While in Kalamazoo not only will Kettani help develop the curriculum for that program, but he will be able to strengthen his English skills and learn about American culture.

“For me, this is a good experience to get a good grasp of American culture,” said Kettani, who goes by Tahar. “In some of the textbooks, there are some elements of culture, but I wanted a chance to understand it up close, to live it.”

After a two-week orientation in Washington, D.C., Kettani came to Kalamazoo for the start of the new school year. Already there have been challenges, including learning new teaching strategies and making the transition to working with younger students.

He said he’s been impressed with the efforts to meet the needs of every student in the classroom.

“Students are the center of the whole American educational system,” he said. “You want your students to have a really good experience in your class. It gives teachers a big margin to be creative and innovative. You have to do your best to meet the students’ needs.”

One of the keys to the success of the program and his transition to teaching in America has been the involvement of a mentor teacher. “It’s a totally different educational system,” he said. “The mentorship is really interesting and necessary for making visiting teachers acclimate well to the American system.”

Covid did not make the job any easier for teachers here — or in Morocco. There, schools shut down, and students alternated between in-person and online learning. With classrooms that frequently



Moulay Tahar Kettani, who is from Morocco, is serving as a guest teacher at Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts for the 2022-23 school year. He is helping launch an Arabic language program while learning about American culture. Student Promise Perttu shares a laugh with him.



Kettani works with student Azael Carmona to put together a puzzle of countries in the Middle East.

top 40 students, it was necessary to split classes in two and have them alternate days in the classroom.

As in America, the schools in Morocco are working to help students regain academic and social skills that they lost during the pandemic.

Kettani, who is a doctoral student in linguistics, has been teaching an Arabic language class as well as an Arabic culture class. He’s also started an Arabic culture club during the lunch period.

“I’m trying to tap into the artistic vibe of the

school with some of the activities,” he said. Students have explored the craft of Moroccan tile making and learned Arabic calligraphy to make images of animals, which are on display in his classroom.

He is enjoying learning about Maple and the American educational system. He said he’s impressed by some of the staff positions that do not exist at his school, such as the culture climate coaches and the staff such as counselors and social workers who help address student needs beyond the classroom.

Kettani is also enjoying the school’s arts environment, including choir, band and orchestra.

“That’s just great,” he said. “I was amazed to learn about those classes. We lack those programs back at my home school.”

Outside of school, Kettani is settling into American life thanks to his mentor-teacher, community liaison, and other friends who keep him occupied on the weekends. He’s started playing soccer, and usually he finds his social calendar full with birthday parties, hockey games, football games, meals, trick-or-treating, and Thanksgiving and Christmas parties.

“I’m seeing and debunking some stereotypes about the American lifestyle,” he said. “I like the work ethics, openness and readiness to learn about others, this sense of community, and the fact that everyone is involved in the well-being of the whole and concerned with what’s going on in the community.”

ARTISTS' CORNER

Loy Norrix High School visual arts teacher Gregg Stevens this month shares the work of senior **Aanje Greymountain**, who is an AP Art student. The AP program helps prepare students for college, Stevens said.

Greymountain said, "AP Art felt like I got my golden ticket to where the real learning happens. It has

helped me prepare for the possibility of going to an art school by introducing me to the timeline that assignments typically take place in, the rigorousness of the courses, as well as the sense of collective improvement that is required.

AP Art has opened my eyes to the real purpose of art and its meaning. Not only did the class teach me how to create, but it also taught me that I could change the world. Now, I feel my strongest when I create my art. Never before have I been given a platform like this to truly express myself and to imbue my work with my voice and develop my artistic vision. The art work I have created in this class has made me the proudest I have ever been, and I'm afraid there is no turning back."



Loy Norrix senior Aanje Greymountain with her award-winning work "Residential School Effect."

 **MICHIGAN RECONNECT**

OVER 25 YEARS OLD WITHOUT A DEGREE?
GET FREE TUITION

kvcc.edu/reconnect

Kalamazoo
VALLEY™

Law Professor Katherine Macfarlane Advocates for Disability Rights

LOY NORRIX High School alumna Katherine Macfarlane has received a \$250,000 grant from the Ford Foundation's U.S. Disability Rights Program.

Through the grant, she has joined the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights as Special Counsel and will be working on amending regulations implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 is a landmark civil rights law that protects students with disabilities. While working at the department, she is on sabbatical leave from her job as a law professor at Southern University, where she teaches constitutional law.

"My experience as a professor who writes about disability law and the fact that I am a person with disabilities informs the work I do," said Macfarlane, who lives in Baton Rouge, La. "I love it and am proud to have been selected for this important project."

Her mother is Mary Langoni, a retired KPS teacher who taught at Lincoln International Studies School, and she and her sisters, Lorna and Alessandra, and cousin Roy Edward "Taz" Jackson all graduated from Norrix. She graduated from Loy Norrix in 1998.

Many who are familiar with Macfarlane from her time as a student at Loy Norrix, may wonder how she became involved with disability rights — and not realizing that she has a disability herself.

"I was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) at 13 months and with inflammatory eye disease soon after," Macfarlane said in an email. "RA causes joint swelling, chronic pain, and permanent joint



Katherine Macfarlane, Loy Norrix grad, disability rights attorney.

damage, and my RA has never been in remission. My eye disease (uveitis) causes vision loss"

While in high school, the self-described "nerd" balanced schoolwork with a lot of sports and extracurriculars along with weekly medical appointments, and frequent procedures, including knee

aspirations and eye injections.

"I'd have my knees drained and then return to school to finish out the school day," she said. "My high school years were some of the most difficult years of my life. I credit my teachers and coaches, as well as my grandparents, for getting me through to college.

"School was my safe space, where I got to be a kid — just another high schooler — instead of the youngest and sickest person in the doctor's waiting room."

Her favorite classes were Spanish with Janet Gonzalez and journalism with Tisha Pankop.

"School was my safe space, where I got to be a kid — just another high schooler ..."

"Because of Señora Gonzalez, I studied Spanish in college, and studied abroad in Mexico. I eventually became fluent," she said. "During my senior year, my RA flares were

particularly bad in the morning. She let me stay home when I was flaring and would tutor me one-on-one to catch me up. The best part was she didn't make a big deal out of it.

"Another teacher who profoundly influenced my life was Tisha Pankop, my British Literature and journalism teacher. She had a lot of faith in me and always gave me the chance to speak my mind. I was introduced to the First Amendment in Tisha's journalism class. As a professor, I teach and write about the Constitution, including the First Amendment.

(continued on page 15)



THE CLINICAL PRACTICE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
HOMER STRYKER M.D. SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

**Comprehensive Patient-Centered
Primary and Specialty Care**

ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS · 269.337.4600

med.wmich.edu
Find us on Facebook @WMedHealth

Katherine Macfarlane *(continued from page 14)*

What Tisha taught me informed the direction my career took, and who I am today as a teacher.”

Do you feel comfortable discussing your disability?

I do now, but that wasn’t always the case. I’ve been a person with disabilities my entire life, but for most of my life, very few people knew it. My mother decided not to request formal accommodations for me in school, even though I was entitled to them, out of fear that I would be stigmatized. She made the right choice. Stigma is something that kids with disabilities still experience today. People with invisible disabilities are often accused of faking. I am.

What are some of your most important memories of Loy Norrix?

People who know the extent of my disabilities are surprised to find out that I was an athlete in middle school and high school. I played volleyball and swam at Loy Norrix, until joint damage to my left elbow and problems with my vision forced me out of volleyball. But I stuck with swimming, and was captain of the team my senior year.

It’s hard to explain what it’s like to be an athlete with disabilities. In addition to the fatigue my teammates and I experienced as a result of our workouts, I had my RA pain and fatigue to deal with. My high

school swimming coach Vince Gallant, who was also a teacher at Lincoln, knew how to adapt his workouts to my needs. He made me a distance swimmer, which meant that I could rely more on my relatively robust upper body instead of my damaged knees. He pushed me just as hard as everyone else, sometimes harder, which is exactly what I needed at that moment in my life. Vince gave me a lot of confidence.”

What did you do after graduating from high school?

I studied Spanish and gender studies at Northwestern, graduated early (magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa) and moved to Los Angeles when I was 21. I graduated Loyola Law School in 2006 and then served as a judicial law clerk for the District of Arizona and the Ninth Circuit. In 2013, I became a law professor. I’ve been really lucky to live in great cities and do cutting-edge legal work.

Can you describe your work with disability law?

Over the past 8 years I’ve become more involved in the disability community and patient rights advocacy. For a long time I didn’t identify myself as disabled, but when I finally did, it was freeing. That said, despite being a lawyer and law professor, I’ve always struggled to obtain the reasonable accommodations I need at work, from things like ergo-

nomic office equipment to the ability to schedule classes around my infusions. So I taught myself disability law, started writing about it, and began to advocate for people with disabilities — not just myself. This all culminated In 2021 when I published an article in the Fordham Law Review that garnered a lot of positive attention around the country.

What do you want people to know about addressing the needs of students with disabilities?

It’s really important to avoid infantilizing people with disabilities. Describing us as ‘inspirational’ when we’re just doing things like going to the gym is also not the best way to describe us — we don’t exist to inspire others, we just exist, like everyone else. It’s also important to defer to the community itself when it comes to describing us. Terms like ‘differently-abled’ or anything with the word special in it should not be used. Finally, the disability community has a motto — nothing about us without us. Every decision impacting disabled people should involve disabled people.



**ZEIGLER
KALAMAZOO
MARATHON**
DRIVING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

KIDS RUN FREE!

**Arcadia Creek Festival Place
Saturday, April 22, 10:00 AM**

Join us by registering for the PNC Kids' 1K in downtown Kalamazoo!
Entry is FREE and each entrant will receive a T-shirt and medal.



Scan to register kids for free!



SPONSORED BY





**Order Online
with Curbside Pick-Up
&
NO SERVICE FEE
On Your First Two Orders
(\$4.95 Value)**

**Enter Promo Code at Checkout
Hardings**

HARDINGS.COM

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



MINI-EXHIBIT FREE

JAN. 12 - MARCH 19

KALAMAZOO THROUGH THE EYES OF MURPHY DARDEN

This pop-up mini-exhibit showcases Kalamazoo-related items collected by longtime resident Murphy Darden as well as highlights pieces created by Darden representing the people, places and events in Kalamazoo history.



UPCOMING EVENT FREE

THE 18th ANNUAL FRETBOARD FESTIVAL

Friday, March 3 | 5:30 - 9 p.m. Featuring a musical performance by Bahar Ensemble and "The History of the Oud" presentation by Beau Bothwell.

Saturday, March 4 | 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Performances, vendors and workshops, including Joel Mabus, Dave Johnson, Crossroads Blues Band and many more!
For more information and to preregister for virtual access to the festival, visit kalamazoomuseum.org.



PLAY AREA AGES 0 - 5 | FREE

CHILDREN'S LANDSCAPE

NEW THEME: Astronaut Training!

An adventure of learning about our solar system and space science through play. Become the astronaut! Space is limited. First come, first served.

EXHIBIT FEB. 18 - JUNE 18, 2023 | FREE

MENTAL HEALTH: MIND MATTERS

This exhibit creates a safe space for important conversations about mental illness. It was produced for North America by the Science Museum of Minnesota in collaboration with Heureka, The Finnish Science Centre.



PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE

FEBRUARY SHOWS | FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS | \$3

Lucia, The Secret of Shooting Stars Grades 4 & up | 11 a.m. | 31 min.
Join James, a penguin, and Vladimir, a polar bear, as they investigate the Southern Lights, comets, asteroids and meteorites.

Unveiling the Invisible Universe Grades 8 & up | 2 p.m. | 28 min.
Discover how a new generation of tools explores wavelengths that are invisible to our eyes.

SUNDAYS | \$3

Live Tour of the Night Sky All Ages | 1 p.m.

Unveiling the Invisible Universe Grades 8 & up | 2 p.m. | 28 min.

PUBLIC HOURS: Tuesday - Saturday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday | Noon - 4 p.m.

FREE GENERAL ADMISSION

Note: Some areas of the museum may be closed due to exhibit changes, staffing needs, special programs or collections care. We thank you for your patience.

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



230 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo
kalamazoomuseum.org | 269.373.7990