

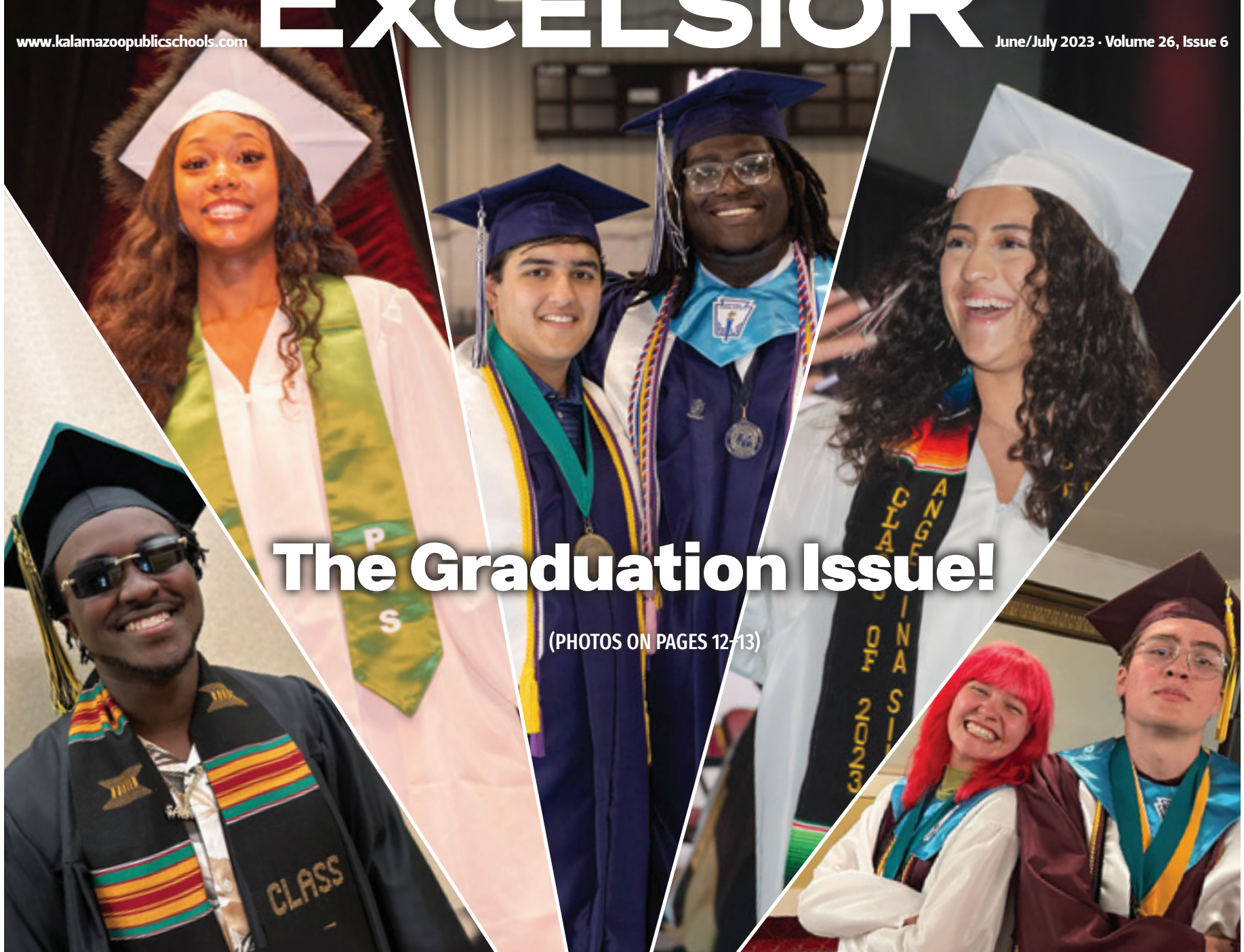
Kalamazoo Public Schools



EXCELSIOR

www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

June/July 2023 · Volume 26, Issue 6



The Graduation Issue!

(PHOTOS ON PAGES 12-13)

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Meet
Superintendent
Dr. Darrin Slade.



PAGE 22

Excellence
in Education
Winners.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



LAST CHANCE TO SEE

CLOSES JUNE 18 | FREE

Mental Health: Mind Matters Exhibit

CLOSES JUNE 4 | FREE

Moments In Time: The Kalamazoo County Photo Documentary Project



EXHIBIT OPENS JUNE 17 | FREE

SPLAT! The Buzz About Flyswatters

Hear collector Iza van Riemsdijk at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, June 17, talk about her collection of over 3,000 flyswatters from around the world.

FREE **Adventure Awaits!**

Drop-in summer fun for kids and their adult caregivers, with hands-on crafts, planetarium shows and special performances. Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for details.

Explore the Land | June 21, 22, 28 & July 1

Explore the Water | July 5, 12 & 15

Explore Space | July 19, 26 & 29



EVENT JUNE 16 | 5 - 8 P.M. | FREE

Juneteenth Celebration Of Freedom Black Film Fest

Film screening of "Summer of Soul" and community discussion with a panel of Kalamazoo musicians, organized by Soul Artistry LLC. Visit @Juneteenthkzoo on Facebook for other Juneteenth events information.

PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE

JUNE SHOWS | THURSDAYS & SUNDAYS | \$3

One World, One Sky | Preschool - Grade 1 | 1 p.m. | 30 min.

Join Big Bird, Elmo and their Chinese friend, Hu Hu Zhu, exploring the sky they share. Discover the Big Dipper and North Star, and take an imaginary trip to the moon.

The Sky Above Us | Grades 4 & up | 2 p.m. | 40 min.

Within this live, season-focused program, learn about "celestial wonders" like constellations, planets and meteor showers that can be seen overhead in Michigan.

FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS | \$3

Perfect Little Planet | Grades K & up | 11 a.m. | 35 min.

Discover our solar system through a different set of eyes — an alien family from another star system.

Weather Wonders & Mysteries Revealed | Grades 5 & up | 2 p.m. | 30 min.

A gaseous blanket of air surrounds our planet. Learn how our atmosphere is affected by the sun and the Earth, causing phenomena that we call "weather."

SATURDAYS | \$3 | 3:30 p.m.

The Queen Light Show: From Mercury With Love | Ages 10 & up | 38 min.

Enjoy a memorable experience of Queen's biggest hits, such as "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Another One Bites the Dust" and "You're My Best Friend."

HOURS: Tuesday - Friday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Saturday | 9 a.m. - 5 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

Congratulations and Thanks in this Graduation Season

CONGRATULATIONS to our high school graduates! What an amazing group of students we have graduating in Kalamazoo Public Schools! Graduation is an exciting life event to celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of our students. It is a passage of youth to adulthood.

A Message from the Interim Superintendent



Cindy Green

Over the past four years, our graduates have experienced life like no other time period in our history. They entered high school like those in the past only to be hit with the announcement on Friday, March 13, 2020, of the pandemic shut down. Chromebooks were distributed and everyone

got to work learning the “virtual way.”

The Class of 2023 was flexible, resilient, and dedicated to the work that needed to be completed. They stayed focused despite the challenges and helped each other out.

After an 18-month period of being out of school, they were more than ready to be back in school. Students worked hard to help each other get across the finish line of graduation. Goals were set to get more students passing their classes each trimester so they stayed the course.

With all that has gone on in the past four years, our graduates have developed strong leadership skills. They lead by example and include others. They are engaged in multiple extracurricular activities such as — but not limited to — plays, sports, debate, forensics, mock trial, service, and National Honor Society. They are excellent speakers at the graduation ceremonies and special events. Our graduates are definitely strong leaders for the future and provide a ray of hope knowing that they care about this world and others.

Kalamazoo Public Schools will have more than 700 graduates this year for the Class of 2023. We are very proud of all of our graduates for finishing strong and making plans for the future. Most of our students are ready to take advantage of The

Kalamazoo Promise with post-secondary education options. Some of our students are joining the military or the workforce. Graduates have 10 years to use The Promise and can go part-time to Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Best wishes to all of our graduates! We know that you are experienced in virtual learning and the digital age of technology. We know that you are great problem solvers and creative thinkers. May you continue to use the skills learned as you enter your next step in life’s journey.

As the graduates complete their K-12 education, I, too, complete my part in transitioning Kalamazoo Public Schools as interim superintendent. I wish to thank the students, staff, families, and community for trusting me to lead the district for the last six months. You understand the need for strong leadership, relationship building with the community, and most importantly, a focus on students first. It has been an honor to be back in KPS as a servant leader to guide our staff in educating our students.

We have worked hard together concentrating on three main areas of accomplishment. We concentrated on creating a climate/culture for academic success and social-emotional learning. Next, we focused on career development for all students. Finally, we know that in transition periods we need to communicate more frequently, so at every board meeting I reported on these three areas of focus.

I love the children in our community and I made every effort to connect the community with our children by being visible and supportive. I wish to personally thank the Kalamazoo Public Schools Board of Education for selecting me as interim and supporting the process of change to Dr. Darrin Slade, who will now lead the district. Dr. Slade and I have been in touch on a weekly basis. We are moving forward with the onboarding process created by the Board of Education to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. We are in great hands with Dr. Slade and I look forward to his leadership in the district.

June 1 – September 2

Kalamazoo Public Library
2023 Summer Reading Challenge

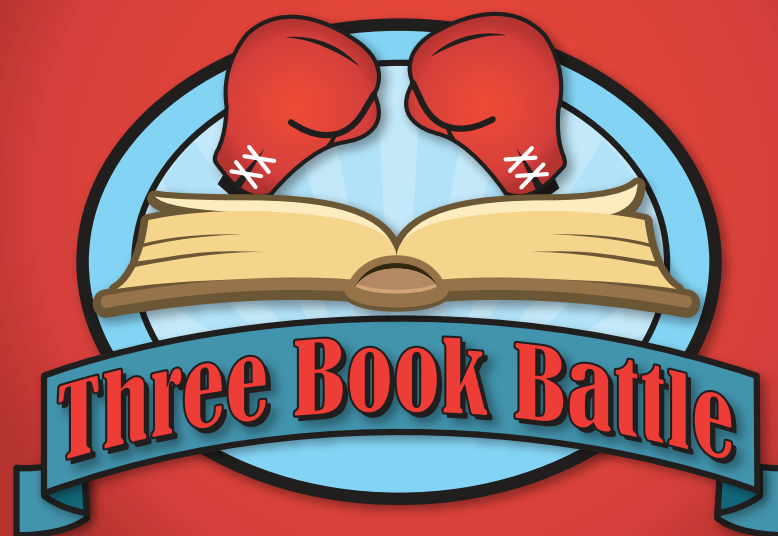
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TOGETHER
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Learn more at kpl.gov/src



Kalamazoo
Public Library
kpl.gov

June 16 | 3–5 pm | Central



Learn more at kpl.gov/tbb

Kalamazoo Public Schools Welcomes New Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade

DR. DARRIN SLADE, who has more than 30 years of experience as an educator and who most recently was the deputy superintendent of the Hazelwood Public School District outside of St. Louis, has been named the new superintendent of Kalamazoo Public Schools.

Slade was selected in May to lead Kalamazoo Public Schools after a nationwide search by the KPS Board of Education. His official start date is July 1.

“My duty in this life is to provide support to and bring compassion for the needs of students. That’s what drives me. I look at all students like they are my own,” Slade said during his interview with the board on May 8.

A native of Maryland, Slade began his career as an elementary school teacher and then assistant middle school principal with Baltimore City Public Schools for 11 years, from 1991 to 2002. He joined the District of Columbia Public Schools in 2002 and for the next 16 years was an elementary, middle school and high school principal at several schools, the last of which was H.D. Woodson High School.

Slade became known for his ability to turn around school performance throughout D.C. At



New Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade poses with students from Arcadia Elementary, left to right, Gabriel Salisbury and Amuri Alenge.

Woodson, he led the school through significant gains including meeting all instructional reading and math goals for five years, reduced suspensions, increased attendance, and the most improved high school graduation rate in the D.C. metro area for three years from 2013-2017. He also led strategic planning and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Slade moved to Kansas City, Mo., in 2018 to take a position as assistant superintendent of school leadership. In Kansas City, he was respon-

sible for supervising principals, instructional programming, school climate and strategic planning. During his tenure in Kansas City, he helped the district achieve full accreditation and led historic gains in student achievement, graduation rates, and attendance. In 2021, he became the deputy superintendent of the Hazelwood Public School District, a suburb of St. Louis.

Slade earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from Towson University in 1991, a master’s degree in teaching from Johns Hopkins University in 1994, a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2012; and an executive master’s degree in leadership from Georgetown University in 2013. He has also completed the Urban Superintendents Program at Howard University and the National Superintendents Academy in Long Beach, Calif.

Slade is a widower with one son, who lives in Baltimore. He is a big sports fan, especially of the Baltimore Ravens and a fan of cheeseburgers, crab cakes and rollercoasters. He enjoys traveling and looks forward to exploring Kalamazoo restaurants and to visiting the lakes and parks in Michigan — and to experiencing a Michigan winter.



Congratulations to the Class of 2023!

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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:

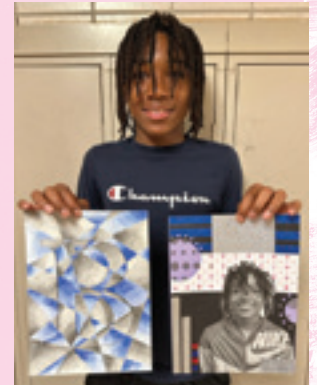
www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

ARTISTS' CORNER

Maple Street Magnet School for the Arts eighth-graders were hard at work in the last trimester of the 2022-23 school year. They learned about Cubist art and used the style along with value scales to improve their shading skills. Students also learned about Michigan-based artist Patrick Quarm and created an introspective mixed media self-portrait project inspired by his work. "Their projects and dedication to their craft is impressive," said teacher Kristen Stevens. "It has been fun watching them grow as people and artists!"



Sheila Mazariegos-Figueroa



Jon'tee Willhite



Alex Ludwa



Daelyn Borick

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WHAT'S NEW

SUMMERTIME Live 2023

Arts Council
of Greater
Kalamazoo

FREE SUMMER CONCERTS ARE BACK!

The Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo is collaborating with the cities of Parchment, Portage, Oshtemo Township, Richland Township, Vicksburg and Kalamazoo, as well as numerous venues, artists, and the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation to bring you the 2023 Summertime Live concert series. This year's series is bigger and better than ever, with:

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For full schedule, visit: KalamazooArts.org/Summertime-Live/

Yacine Lo: Bigger Lessons in High School than Learning How to Ace a Test

THE BIGGEST mistake a Loy Norrix student could make is to leave high school without trying something new.

Yacine Lo's face looks serious as she says this.

"You're only at Loy Norrix for four years. Make the most of it," she said. "The biggest thing I've heard from people who have graduated, their biggest regret, is the things they didn't do when they were in high school. Every club and organization here is a community in some way."

Lo, 18, took her own advice as a freshman. She was an orchestra kid, but when she came to high school one of her friends was into musical theater, so she joined the cast of the fall musical as a freshman.

The decision impacted her in two significant ways: One, she turned from orchestra kid to musical theater kid. And, two, she filled her off-time from musicals with many other activities.

"Musical rehearsals started at 4 p.m. and school ended at 2:30. I had to find things to fill my time because I didn't have a ride to go home and come back," Lo said. "I just started wandering around the school, walking into classrooms. It was like, 'Oh, a capella is happening now. Peacejam is happening right now. Book Bowl is happening right now."



"So all of these things started to occupy my time. And it came to the point where I realized that I liked doing extracurricular activities and started finding things that aligned with my interests and what I wanted to do."

One of those things was theater and forensics. At Norrix, she was in "Pippin," "Theory of Relativity," "Something Rotten," and "Legally Blonde," and was an award-winning member of the forensics team. She's also performed at the Kalamazoo Civic and the Kindleberger Festival.

"Right now, because of senior year stuff, I haven't been in a musical since December," she said. "This is the longest stretch I've gone without being in a show. I'm itching to get my hands on another one."

Shows are hard work, but she loves the creative expression and camaraderie that comes with doing a show.



Yacine Lo will attend the University of Michigan in the fall.

"You think, 'Wow, this is hard work, but when it's done you're always wanting more. You think 'I wish we had one more show.' Only people who have done it will relate to that experience."

Her other activities revolved around civic involvement. She served in the Loy Norrix Student Senate, National Honor Society, Key Club, Executive Board for the Class of 2023. She also co-founded the Black Student Union.

Last year, as students returned from a year of virtual learning, she came back to school with a new

interest in social and political issues, which she said was inspired by discussions her peers had on social media during the lockdown.

She and friend Zakiya Fleming felt the need to start a space where Black students could come together to "share their opinions and just have a place that is uniquely for them."

"A lot of times they do want to talk about things but it's like other people don't relate or they feel like they're alone in the situation," Lo said. "It is a place for culture, community and conversation."

Sometimes the conversations might focus on microaggressions or racial issues — other days it's a place to share celebrity gossip. Sometimes the two combine, such as when a discussion about Kanye West turned into a deeper discussion about male mental health, especially within the Black community.

Lo, who is the daughter of Ndeye Ba and Mama-dou Lo, plans to attend the University of Michigan in the fall. She is considering studying medicine or journalism, but she is leaving her options open as she gets to know the campus and learns to manage her time and responsibilities at college — skills she's already developed at Loy Norrix.

"People complain that high school doesn't teach how to do taxes and things, but you can Google that or watch a YouTube video," she said. "I think that by going to clubs you learn how to interact with other people in daily life and how to find time for yourself. That's a skill. That's what you're supposed to learn in high school."

"You can fail a class, but if you go through four years of high school and never learn those social skills and how to be part of a team — that's the biggest mistake you can make."

NOTABLE EDUCATOR: KYLE SHACK

Yacine Lo: "In high school, it can feel like no one wants to be here, but Mr. Shack wants to be here. He has this really good outlook. It's helpful when you're like 'Oh, I'm so done with high school,' to have someone asking about your day. He has a genuine curiosity and love of knowledge that I appreciate."



What do you try to communicate to students as a teacher? I try to communicate a sense of purpose and belonging. Each student is an invaluable contributor to the learning of our community, and I

Years at Loy Norrix: Four

Classes: Government and politics as part of the social studies department

hope they develop a comfortability with their role in the lives of others.

What advice do you have for this year's grads? As you begin the next chapter of your journey, try your best to stay present in the moment, ask good questions, and keep an open mind. There are so many potential paths you may take over the next few years, and so many of them can be wonderful. Enjoy the process and make sure to celebrate all you have accomplished along the way.

Conroy Robinson: Finding Success and Hope at Phoenix High School

GOOGLE helped Conroy Robinson find his way to Phoenix High School, but it was the instant rapport with staff that made him stay.

Robinson, 18, moved to Kalamazoo from Jamaica last year to be close to his brother, Nickroy, who is a student at Kalamazoo College. He'd been in the house for two weeks, when he decided he was bored.

"I was so tired of being in the house. I thought, 'I need to be in school,'" he said. He Googled "schools close to me." Phoenix was the first one to pop up.

The moment he walked in the door, he was greeted by the secretary Renita Ellis, and then Principal Mark Hill walked up.

"Miss Ellis, she gave us a good greeting. I felt welcome in her presence," Robinson said.

Even though school had been dismissed for the day, they gave him a tour and encouraged him to enroll.

After three straight trimesters on the honor roll, he graduated in June with honors and was named valedictorian of the Phoenix Class of 2023.

"I am very shocked. I never hesitated to work. Now, I'm understanding that my knowledge is growing every day."

He describes his previous school experience as being filled with "negative energy." He never made the honor roll in Jamaica, never felt like he had star student potential.

But the staff and Hill in particular have inspired him to excel in school.

"Since I've come here, he's never been off my back to do my work," Robinson said. "I feel so determined and motivated and changed. I've never seen school be fun but I see it now."

"I'm so grateful. They are the best people. Ever since I came to Phoenix, it has been the best thing



Conroy Robinson is heading to Grambling State University.

that has happened to me."

Robinson is an aspiring musician, who grew up loving music thanks to his grandmother, who was a church choirmaster who insisted he attend church every week. He sings and plays bass and keyboards, preferring gospel, reggae and mento, another traditional Jamaican music.

Robinson plans to attend Grambling State University, an HBCU (historically Black college or university) in Louisiana and to study music and criminal justice.

"I thought since I'm so far from my family already, why not give this a try?" he said. "If I stay in one place and be stagnant, I'm not going to grow, so I'm going to give it a try."

NOTABLE EDUCATOR: MARK HILL

Years with the district: 16 years as principal of Phoenix High School, 1 year principal at Hillside Middle School, 2 years assistant principal at Maple Street Magnet School, 5 years teacher at Kalamazoo Central, 18 years as assistant track & field and cross country coach



Well Dressed, Well Traveled, and Well Rounded." I provide them with examples of what success looks like in those areas, depending on the context.

What do you try to communicate to students as an educator? I try to communicate to students to be "Well Read, Well Spoken,

What advice do you have for this year's grads? You have been gifted with receiving an education in Kalamazoo Public Schools. Regardless of which institution you graduated from, if you graduate from Kalamazoo Public Schools, you have received the gift of being educated in an atmosphere that mirrors our country. Take advantage of the education, support, and care you've received and make good use of your talents and skills.



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Senior Scholar Athletes Bound for College Sports

THE FOLLOWING **Loy Norrix High School** athletes have committed to continuing their athletic careers in college. Congratulations to these students for all of their accomplishments in their sports.

Sam Allen

Parents: Brad & Kristin Allen
Grand Valley State University - Track and Field
4 year varsity track with a national championship, 5 time All Conference, 3 time All Region; 4 year varsity cross country

Tom Clark

Parents: John and Jennifer Clark
Kalamazoo College - Tennis
4 year varsity tennis, 3 year captain; 3 year basketball

Lilyana Coleman

Parents Kristina and Trumaine Coleman
Glen Oaks Community College - Basketball
4 years of basketball, MVP junior year, Best Sportsmanship senior year

Ann Cook

Parents: Meghan and Joe Cook
Western Michigan University - Synchronized Ice Skating
4 year synchronized skating (12 years total), 3 year high school figure skating

Ana Dunfee

Parents: Amy Dunfee and Jeff Dunfee
Michigan State University - Cross Country, Track and Field
3 year varsity track and 3 year MVP; 2 year varsity XC and 2 year MVP; 1 year JV soccer; 3 year varsity swimming; All-State Scholar XC (2022); All-State Finisher XC (2022); Meet of Champions Elite Team 3rd Draft XC (2022); 1st All-Conference XC (2021-2022); 1st All-Region XC (2021-2022); 1st All-Conference Track (2021-2022)

Zachary Eldred

Parents: Erik and Mandy Eldred
Adrian College - Soccer
4 year soccer player (2 JV, 2 varsity), 4 time Scholar Athlete, varsity captain senior year

Anthony Fotis

Parents: Santos and Katie Fotis
Spring Arbor University - Bowling
4 year varsity bowling, four year captain; led conference with highest average four years, state semifinalist two years, first place regionals

Reesah Link

Parents: Kristy and Rob Link
Hope College - Cross Country
3 year volleyball, including Most Versatile and Best Sportsmanship; 2 year varsity track; 1 year cross country, including Best Sportsmanship; ran the Chicago Half Marathon

Michael Martin

Parents: Donna and Michael Martin
Glen Oaks Community College - Baseball
4 years of baseball, 4 years of basketball, 2 years of tennis, 2 years of football

Wendy Miedema

Parents: Amy Miedema and Neal Miedema
Hope College - Soccer
4 year varsity soccer, 4 year basketball; 5 time captain

Wen Wadsworth-Curcuru

Parents: Russ Curcuru & Pam Wadsworth
Wayne State University - Diving
4 year varsity swim and dive, 4 year regional qualifier; All-State Academic Honors for 2022 season, Most Improved freshman year, competitive gymnast pre-COVID

Ethan Waltemyer

Parents: Leigh Waltemyer, Mike and Nazhly Waltemyer
Glen Oaks Community College - Baseball
4 years baseball



Left to right: Anthony Fotis, Tom Clark, Ethan Waltemyer, Michael Martin, Sam Allen, Reesah Link, Wendy Miedema, Ana Dunfee, Zach Eldred, Wen Wadsworth. Not Pictured: Lilyana Coleman, Ann Cook

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community college

Senior Scholar Athletes Bound for College Sports

THE FOLLOWING **Kalamazoo Central** athletes have committed to continuing their athletic careers in college. Congratulations to these students for all of their accomplishments in their sports.

Allan Trejo

Parents: Jorge and Martha Juarez
Calvin University - Cross Country, Track and Field
2 year varsity cross country

Victoria Serrano Ortiz

Parents: Karla Ortiz and Onix Serrano
Siena Heights - Basketball
2 year varsity basketball

Kiana Brill

Parents: Michelle and Brad Brill
Siena Heights - Soccer
4 years varsity soccer, 2 years captain;
3 years varsity golf

Romell Frank

Parents: Heather and Sherrod White
Olivet College - Football
3 years varsity football

Joseph Burrell

Parents: Joseph and Stephanie Burrell
Olivet College - Tennis
2 years varsity tennis

Andrew Jenkins

Olivet College - Bowling
4 years varsity bowling, 3 years captain

Rashawn Terrell

Parents: Iesha and Anthony Williams
Olivet College - Football and Wrestling
2 years on varsity, Wrestling All Conference, New Wrestler of the Year

Anthony Mares-Viveros

Parents: Juan and Sandra
Kalamazoo College - Soccer
3 years varsity soccer, All-District team, All-Conference team

Andre Soisson

Parents: John and Beth Soisson
Hope College - Cross Country and Baseball
3 years on varsity baseball, 2 times All-Conference runner, 3 times All-Conference swimmer,
1 time All Conference baseball and All-Region runner; captain of swim, baseball and cross country

Stephan Moore

Parents: Stephanie Williams and Galloway Moore
Olivet College - Football
1 year varsity football

Mary England

Parents: Andrea England, Cyrus Blacksmith, Gary Swartz
Hope College - Track and Cross Country
4 years varsity track, SMAC champion in 3200m run, MVP track and field
2 time captain for track and cross country, All-Conference, 3200m school record holder

James Spybrook

Parents: Steve and Jessaca
Albion College - Basketball
3 years varsity basketball

Dennis Loveall

Parents: Dennis and Andrea Loveall
Albion College - Football
2 years varsity football, 1st Team All-Conference

Jacob Kubiak

Parents: Jeffrey and Kristen Kubiak
Albion College - Tennis
4 years varsity tennis, captain senior year

Zach Risley

Parents: Julie Lorenz and John Risley
Hope College - Soccer
4 years on varsity, 2 times All-State, 2 times All-Conference 1st Team, 2 times All-District 1st Team, 2 times All-Region 1st Team, team MVP

Bryce Soisson

Parents: Beth and John Soisson
Kalamazoo College - Track and Cross Country
4 years on varsity, 3 times All-Conference, Regional Championship

Kayenn Mabin

Parents: Sokhna Heathyre Mabin
Eastern Michigan - Track and Field
4 years on varsity, 5 time All-State, State Championship in 110m hurdles

Emma Schramm

Parents: Krystal and Dave Schramm
Albion College - Softball
4 years on varsity, captain of varsity softball, Excellent Scholar Medallion award



Top row left to right: Alan Trejo, Anthony Mares-Viveros, Bryce Soisson, Kiana Brill, Victoria Serrano-Ortiz, Taahleak Lewis, Hutch Ward, Joseph Vurrell, Romell Frank, Andrew Jenkins, Sergio Vasquez Cano, Rashawn Terrell, Stephan Moore.

Bottom row left to right: Jacob Kubiak, Dennis Loveall, James Spybrook, Emma Schramm, Kayenn Mabin, Terrence Jones, Mary England, Zach Risley, Andre Soisson.



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Andre Soisson: Everyone Should Want to Improve Every Day

ANDRE Soisson is a perfect example of how playing high school sports is about more than just winning games.

For him sports have taught him about leadership, resilience and excellence.

Soisson, 18, has excelled in three sports during his high school career at Kalamazoo Central High School: running cross country four years and swimming and playing baseball for three years — and serving as captain of each of those teams at some point during his career. He was a two-time All-Conference runner, three-time All-Conference swimmer, and one-time All-Conference baseball player. When he goes to Hope College in the fall, he'll be playing baseball and running cross country.

Being a three-sport athlete hasn't always been easy, especially when injuries took him out of action several times during his freshman and sophomore years. He struggled with having to sit out portions of his running seasons both years, he said, but conversations with his coaches Rex Hafer and Tyler Germaine gave him the perspective he needed to make the hard decision to rest.

"They said, 'We may not have him this year, but this is what he needs to do,'" Soisson said. "My junior and senior year I really took off. I'm happy I stuck with it."

Of his three sports, it is perhaps baseball that speaks most deeply to him. Soisson pitches and has been varsity catcher for all three years that he's played in high school. It would have been four years — had his freshman year not been interrupted by the pandemic.

"I really like leading others," he said. "It's really a benefit to me to be in the catcher position, because it's kind of like being in charge of the set up of the field, kind of a leader. A lot of high schoolers don't end up calling their games, but I've called all of mine since probably half way through my junior year. The catcher kind of sets the tone on the field. I like that a lot"

By participating in KC Athletic Director Dylan Patterson's KC ELITE training, he's been developing leadership qualities in the classroom as well. ELITE

"If you're not at school trying to improve then why are you here?"



Andre Soisson will attend Hope College this fall.

stands for Engage, Lead, Improve, Train and Excellence. Soisson wears bracelets with the words emblazoned on them.

He's thought about how to apply the concepts not just on the field but in the classrooms, trying to help lead discussions and walking with pride in the hallways at KC.

He's a firm believer in leading by example in school. As a senior, he knows freshmen and sophomores watch him — even more so because he's an athlete. When students watch him, he wants them to see a sense of pride in being a KC Giant and to desire to excel at the school.

"If you're not at school trying to improve then why are you here?" he said. "You're here six to eight

hours a day — six to eight hours that you can improve yourself. Everyone should want to improve every day."

Soisson is the son of Beth and John Soisson. And — he says many don't know this — is the oldest of a set of triplets. His brother Bryce will be attending Kalamazoo College next year. His sister Chyrsta, the youngest of the three, graduated last year from Loy Norrix High School and attends Grand Valley State University. He also has seven older adopted siblings.

In addition to sports, he is a member of the National Honor Society and works part-time in his father's construction business Get the Lead Out. He also has taken Career & Technical Education classes in computerized manufacturing and robotics. This year, he was named one of KRESA's Outstanding Students in CTE.

Ken Briggs, the robotics teacher; running coaches Hafer and Germaine; physics teacher Joshua Gottleib; and AD Patterson have all made a huge impact on his four years at KC. Not just as teachers and coaches but as mentors.

He encourages every student to find those adults that can guide and inspire their high school experience.

"Find a teacher or adult that you connect with and try to learn as much as you can from that adult," he said. "They may not have the same experiences as you, but you may be able to listen to their stories and not make the mistakes that they made. You may listen to the story now and two years later you're sitting in the same position and say, 'Hold up. They said not to or to do this certain thing.' A lot of people don't understand the value of age and wisdom, but the longer you live the more you're going to know."

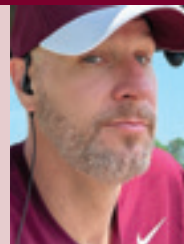
INFLUENTIAL EDUCATOR: ATHLETIC DIRECTOR DYLAN PATTERSON

Soisson: "He's been through a lot. He is someone you can go and talk to and have a good conversation with about anything."

Position: Athletic Director

Years at KC: 3 years as Freshman Academy assistant principal, 7 years as athletic director and assistant principal

What do you try to communicate to students as a coach/teacher/AD? I try to find ways that we can help students overcome adversity, recognize their strengths and weaknesses and plan for success. Talking to them about ways they can structure their lives to be successful is so important. Sharing how



mental tools for students to confidently pursue their dreams.

What advice do you have for this year's grads? Many of them have heard me say this before, but there are four things you should do every day. First, make your bed. You get to start off the day with an accomplishment before you're even

to break down large daunting tasks into smaller manageable incremental steps can ease anxiety and fears and provide the

wearing shoes. Second, give yourself morning affirmations. Celebrate what you are good at and remind yourself that you are going to dominate what comes at you today. Third, tell someone you love them — someone you don't always share that with. It will improve both of your days. Fourth, and maybe most important, prepare for tomorrow's success tonight. Set your clothes out, prep your breakfast or lunch for the next day. Minimize the work you need to do in the morning to be ready to dominate by setting yourself up tonight. If you do these four things everyday, you will be prepared for anything.

Ava Schwachter: Nerding Out at KAMSC Was a Great High School Experience

THE KALAMAZOO Area Math and Science Center was the perfect place to be for recent Kalamazoo Central High School and KAMSC graduate Ava Schwachter.

It was right because the academic rigor was the speed and intensity she enjoyed — and because, well, it's a place nerds can be nerds.

Schwachter found her niche in the biology courses at KAMSC. She loved the academic challenges and opportunities at KAMSC, but even more enjoyable was the atmosphere at the center for advanced and accelerated math and science courses.

"It's a great community, because it's kids from all over the county and the class size is small," Schwachter said. "It's all the little smart kids in class, so you can be a little weird. It's OK to be odd.

"We're the nerds and no one makes fun of anyone else, because we're all weird."

Schwachter will be attending Kalamazoo College in the fall — on a full-ride Heyl Scholarship — and she

plans to study biology or biochemistry. Among her other academic achievements, she was the salutatorian for the Kalamazoo Central Class of 2023 and she was named one of the Kalamazoo RESA Excellence in Education winners.

When she started high school, she was excited about the possibility of attending KAMSC.

"I've done advanced courses my whole life, so I wasn't really challenged by doing normal classes. KAMSC was a lot of work, but I wasn't doing anything else," said Schwachter, 18. "I think the work is hard, but I also think people talk it up so it seems worse than it is."

KAMSC students enjoy a certain amount of freedom there, she said. "We could ask for more time to complete assignments or we could ask to explore something that wasn't listed in the course requirements."

Another example: Covid scuttled her freshman class plans to dissect a fetal pig, but her junior year, after the seniors had left, they asked their teacher if they could dissect the pig that year — and they did. And, she worked for biology teacher Colleen Chapoton as a lab assistant, setting up lab experiments, clean-



ing in the lab, and reading student papers.

The work is rigorous and students need to make a commitment to the work to succeed, but with good time management, students can get the work done and find ways to enjoy other activities as well, she said. She is an accomplished artist and placed a piece in the Kalamazoo Institute of Art's High School Area Show this year. And, she was a member of the Kalamazoo Central National Honor Society and the Environmental Club.

"I'd tell anyone interested in KAMSC to go for it. Apply, and if you get in, you were meant to be there."

Twenty-Three Complete KAMSC Program

Yasmeen Adams, Kalamazoo Central, Michigan State University, anesthesiology

Alejandro Alvarez, Kalamazoo Central, Northwestern University, electrical engineering

Rishabh Bhattarai, Loy Norrix, Michigan State University, software engineering

Natalia Boldt, Kalamazoo Central, University of Michigan, architecture

Tom Clark, Loy Norrix, Kalamazoo College, education

Kendall Connors, Kalamazoo Central, Eckerd College, marine biology

Ana Dunfee, Loy Norrix, Michigan State University, business law

Mary England, Kalamazoo Central, Hope College, physical therapy

Allie Fried, Loy Norrix, Michigan State University, genetic engineering

Ingrid Gardner, Kalamazoo Central, Kalamazoo College, humanities and linguistics

Asia Hoehle, Kalamazoo Central, Michigan Technological University, biomedical engineering

Maia Lintner, Loy Norrix, University of Michigan, medicine or science

Evan McDermott, Kalamazoo Central, Michigan State University, artificial intelligence engineering

Jack Novotny, Loy Norrix, University of Michigan, architecture

Yemaya Presley, Kalamazoo Central, University of Michigan, aerospace engineering

Zach Risley, Kalamazoo Central, Hope College, engineering

Alexxa Rose, Loy Norrix, Michigan State University, software engineering

Alexander Salinas, Kalamazoo Central, University of Michigan, software engineering

Emma Schramm, Kalamazoo Central, Albion College, orthopedic medicine

Ava Schwachter, Kalamazoo Central, Kalamazoo College, medicine

James Spybrook, Kalamazoo Central, Albion College, biostatistics

Benjamin Whitsett, Loy Norrix, Kalamazoo College, physics

Nicolas Yanilla, Kalamazoo Central, Andrews University, physical therapy

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Congratulations!

Phoenix 2023 graduates Kiaran Hinton and Kahare Hinton pose for a photo with a relative.



Zachary Risley, Alejandro Alvarez, and Ingrid Gardner, all of Kalamazoo Central, show off their KAMSC certificates.



Loy Norrix students Ana Dunfee and Jack Novotny share smiles after the KAMSC senior recognition ceremony at Chenery Auditorium.



Emmitt Whalen performs with the Loy Norrix orchestra before graduation.



Jamall Williams, Phoenix graduation.



KC senior band members performed at graduation: Nicholas Jones, Sydney Hughes, Alek Berlin, Savannah Keck, and Tyler Bale.



Kalamazoo Central's Marquis Brown proudly poses before graduation.



KILP director Kimberly Kirshman congratulates graduate Margaret Querfurth.



Drew Hosner, 2023 Phoenix graduate.



Olyvia Ward, Gracie Goschke, James Rocco, Naysa pose on Wings Event Center stage.



Key'Vohn Lewis waits for commencement to start June 1.



Te'Asia Coleman (left) celebrates at the 2023 Phoenix graduation.



Kalamazoo Central graduate Andrew Jenkins is ready for the next stage.



2023 Phoenix graduate Elizabeth Juarez



Jay'Don Kelley and Trevor Watts look ready for success.



KILP graduate Ariya Grimes was third in her class and addressed her fellow students at graduation.



Sa Quiones, and Talia Robertson are ready for the walk across the



Taya and Taylyn Reed pose before the KC commencement at Wings Event Center.



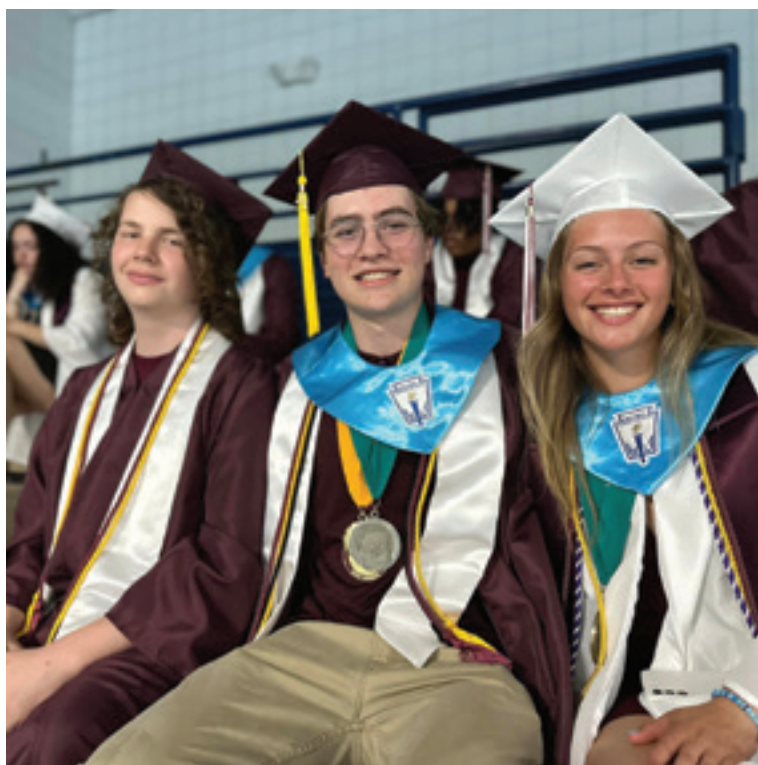
Loy Norrix seniors Tom Clark, Ana Dunfee, Rishabh Bhattarai, and Allie Fried show off their KAMSC certificates after the senior recognition ceremony at Chenery Auditorium on May 30.

ON THE FRONT COVER
From left: Kalii Kyle; Essence Rostick; Rishabh Bhattari and Amady Mboup; Angelina Silva; and Asia Hoehle and Alex Salinas.

Kalamazoo Central High School 2023 Graduates

Abdel-Messieh, Ethan Gabriel
 Ackerman, Cagle Christopher
 Adams, Domnyck James
 Adams, Yasmeen Laila
 Akhidenor, Eric Eromosele
 Al Jaouni, Bisan Ahmad
 Alexander, Amiyah Ashaunte
 Alexander, Paige Dianne
 Alkinani, Mohammad Baker
 Allen, Eric Donte
 Alphonse, Joseph Irakiza
 Alvarez, Alejandro
 Amanga, Mylene Tshibingu
 Annis, Tyler Andrew
 Atkinson, Nariya Quintae
 Aviles, Luis Angel
 Awad, Asmaa M
 Bale, Tyler Sheldon
 Bannister, Samantha Ann
 Bean, Mycah Raa
 Berens, Kaitlyn Marie
 Berlin, Alek Benjamin Thomas
 Berry, Ce'Jai Aamare'
 Bin-Mahfouz, Faisal Fahad
 Bishop, Hudson Nicholas
 Blanchard, Niveah Isis
 Boldt, Natalia Franz
 Bopey, Exauce Lumbamba
 Bowman, Caidon Allen
 Boyd, Khamanni Ariyana
 Brandt, Sophia Broersma
 Brill, Kiana Elizabeth Kimberly
 Brooks, Robert William
 Brown, Bryson Jaylen
 Brown, Donald Danyel
 Brown, Kynneddy Je'nele
 Brown, Marquis Taishon
 Buchanan, Zyen Desinise
 Bumpus, Kayden Christin
 Burnett, Keyamara Ronae'
 Burnley, Sherrell Deveana Yazmean
 Burns, Rebecca Lynn
 Burrel, Joseph Jeremiah
 Bush, Zion Kweli
 Butler, Jestini Marie
 Campbell, Ariona Larais
 Carlisle, Alivia Delaney
 Castle, Eveance Aulease
 Castro, Lucero Ruby
 Chase, Maxwell Leo
 Childs, Hannah Pearl
 Churchwell, NeVaeh Lemech

Clark, Daniel Evan
 Coats, Daniel Robert
 Cobb, Don'Janai Don'Drea Lee'Chaunda
 Coleman-Burroughs, Khamari Dwaun
 Connors, Kendall Ann
 Conroy, Kaylin Marie
 Cooper, Elyse Marie
 Cooper, Zachary Dale
 Cox, Ella Mariah
 Crawford, Zion Taylor
 Crigger, Kimi Renee
 Davis, Lilian Rachel
 Day, Owen Robert
 Derr, Liam Thomas
 Diaz, Rubi
 Diget, Samantha Lynn
 Doane, Jacob Michael
 Donald, Benjamin Joseph
 Donald, Breanna Latece
 Douglas, Alyssa Taylor
 Dupleche', Jalycia Renay
 Edwards, Brooke Alle'
 Eickhoff, Alexander Paul
 Elian, Ziyd Ali
 Elliott, Ramiah D
 Embra-Hobbs, Kiara Ja'nay
 England, Mary Gadsby
 Ferguson, Kyleigh Bren
 Filipunas, Jacob Kenneth
 Firdavsi, Farahnoz
 Fitzpatrick, ShyAnn Theresa
 Flegal, Madalynn Brooke
 Fonger, Lillian Reid
 Ford, Azariah Ashely
 Fowler, Geneva Rayann
 Frank, Romell Carlos
 Gaddie, Kierra Marie
 Gaines, Janya Savoyia
 Galvan-Salas, Guillermo Gael
 Gardner, Angel Nevaeh
 Gardner, Eriq Deivon
 Gardner, Ingrid Ellen
 Geldner, Caleb Michael
 Gifford, Olivia Nadine
 Gonzalez Torres, Flavio
 Gordon, Jeremiah Amir
 Grady, Zacchaeus Alexander
 Green, Trey'kwon Jaquayvios
 Greis, Lane Robert
 Griffin, Whitney Isabella
 Grooten, Cassandra Mae
 Guanon, Cristina M
 Gunderson, Porter James
 Hamblin, Johnathon Jason
 Harris, Devin Lamar



Quinn Sahlgren, Alex Salinas, and Emma Schramm proudly represent Kalamazoo Central's Class of 2023.

Hawkes, Pauline Janiece
 Hayes, Indyah Annette
 Haywood, Zechariah Michi
 Hill, Erick Donavon
 Hodges, Aija Elise
 Hoehle, Asia Saffron
 Holland, Aaron Richard
 Hollin, Desire Milan
 Hough, Riley Leilani
 Howard, Sydney M
 Hubbard, Davion Malakai
 Hughes, Nevaeh Yazmeen
 Hughes, Sydney Paige
 Huynh, Henry Trung
 Intikhab, Eiman
 Jefferies, Aberdeen Evie
 Jenkins, Andrew Dale
 Jennings, Maia Nicole
 Johnson, Deniya Deshay
 Johnson, Lydia Rose
 Johnson, Noah James
 Jones, Alexander Ethan
 Jones, Courtney Nicholas
 Jones, Janashia Jestyng
 Jones, Terrance Isaiah
 Judy, Jocelynn Grace
 Kasem, Mohammed Jameel
 Keck, Savannah Marie
 Keller, Joshua David
 Khaled, Harmony Elizabeth

Kimmel, Joshua Michael
 King, Antonio Maurice
 Kingsbury, Morgan Ashton
 Klein, Sara Michelle
 Kostrzewa, David Reid Patrick Lee
 Kubiak, Jacob Steven
 Lake, Chloe Adelle
 Lamorandier, Alecia Elizabeth Ann
 Lanting, Christina Lee
 Larder, Isabella Clair
 Lee, Hayden Phoenix
 Lehmann, Carter Alan
 Lewis, Jada Jysel
 Lewis, Key'Maura DeNae
 Lewis, Key'Vohn DeAndre
 Lewis, Malikai Jermaine
 Lewis, Taahleak Jakarri
 Lindberg, Owen Geoffrey
 Lindsey, ZaVontrae' Adrian
 Lipsey, Amaris Brionne
 Lockett, Christopher Todd
 Logan, Heaven Leahjah Nevaeh
 Lollis, Da'janae Dashaun
 Loveall, Dennis Paul
 Lyons-Casper, Calihan
 Katelin
 Mabon, Diamond A'janae

Mapondera, Chikondi William
 March, Eli Robert
 Mares-Viveros, Anthony
 Marion, Jacob A
 Marquardt, Asaph Abush
 Mason, Tra'laun
 Mayfield, Mae Lizzie
 McAllister, Jayshonna Jartae
 McClain, Damien Christian
 McClinton, Amarion Jamir
 McCollum, Vincent Alexander
 McCoy, Mya Raslyn
 McDermott, Evan Joseph
 Medema, Abigail Grace
 Meinert, Thomas Blaine
 Meisch, James David
 Menchinger, Diego Ali
 Mielke, Adam Conner
 Mielke, Brandon Ross
 Mitchell, Dexter Alexander
 Mkoiko, Apliona G
 Moaiery, Ava Sue
 Momani, Mohammad J
 Montoya Salazar, Jose Luis
 Moore, Alonni Senese
 Moore, Stephan Elijah
 Morales, Jessy
 Mosley, Jaylan Jay'Shon

Mughazy, Sarah Mustafa
 Murillo, Anis
 Norman, Ciera Johanna Marie
 Norman, Kimani Monay
 Norman, Rhyana Cynai
 Nower, Allison Marie
 Odom, Montayvia
 Overbeek, Tyler Payton
 Ozanich, Raegan Elizabeth
 Pardee, Kyle Andrew
 Patterson, Andrena Renae
 Peplinski, Paul Edward
 Perry, Lyric Marie
 Phillips, Romari Allen
 Pierce, Alayna Lee
 Plair, Sanai Skai
 Pocopio, Samantha Audrey Falconitin
 Pollard, Walter Joseph
 Presley, Yemaya Towana
 Quakenbush, Bryson Alan
 Quintanilla, Samuel Anthony
 Randolph, Sabria Danielle
 Ray, Steven Earl
 Reece, Taya Justine
 Reece, Taylyn Christin
 Reid, Kaylia Kimberly
 Richter, Jayden Zachary
 Rimes, Eli Wheeler
 Risley, Zachary Luke
 Roberts, Layla Paige
 Robey, Blake Ryan
 Rolland, Honesty Christina
 Romero, Luis Antonio
 Russell, Jon Marae
 Ryan, Adrian Ray
 Sahlgren, Quinn Everly
 Salinas, Alexander Christopher
 Schmidt, Cornelius Charles Lamar
 Schramm, Emma Marie
 Schrum, Emma McKenzie
 Schwachter, Ava Isobel
 Serrano Ortiz, Victoria Unix
 Shackelford, Rose Maureen
 Shakner, Emma Christine
 Shaw, Da'khari Kenya
 Shaw, Takota William
 Shears, Natasha S
 Shoemaker, Valene Yu
 Silva, Angelina Alexia
 Simms, Niema Shannille
 Slate, Isa Luke
 Smith, JaKhari Khanye-Nikollas
 Smith, Taihvion Demar

Smith-Brashers, Jaleah Quana
 Soisson, Andre Joseph
 Soisson, Bryce Charles
 Soule, Elliot Ryan
 Spaulding, Drew Daniel
 Spencer, Destiny Mona'
 Spruill, James Rome
 Spybrook, James Patrick
 Stafford, Johnae Ann Marie
 Start, Jason Tyler
 Stender, Alivia Nadine
 Sullivan, Daniel Brady
 Tapia, Sharon
 Taylor, Danielle Marie
 Taylor, Kalijah Faye
 Terrell, Rashawn D
 Thielman, Aliya Rose
 Thompson-Clark, Qori Don'ya
 Tignes, Andon C
 Tignes, Ja'quavious
 Tipton, Samier Anthony
 To, Lauren Elise
 Tonthola, Phineas Emmanuel
 Trejo, Allan J
 Troxler, Joshua Clayton
 VanAvery, Noah Allen
 Vancayseele Mabin
 Stanislas, Kayenn Aya
 Uhuru Bamba
 Varnesdeed, Darren Michael Willis
 Vasquez Cano, Sergio
 Vasquez, Madison Gabrielle
 Ward, Hutch William
 Warner, A'shon Lee
 Warren, Tyree Marquis
 Washington, Trinity Unique
 Weller, Wyatt John
 West, Maija Rene
 White, Kemonni Saundrina
 Wild, Amilya Autumn
 Williams, India Celise
 Williams, Kelshawna Renee
 Williams, Mikehi Amari
 Willson, Damon Charles
 Witherspoon, Javion David
 Woodard, Laniquwa LaShay
 Woods, Joneisha Divinity
 Worthams, Cristiana Grace
 Yanilla, Nicolas Leiterman
 Yarbrough, Xavion Donquail
 Yarbrough, Xayvion Nikolas
 Yepez, Amoni Cha'Qwon
 Zabala, Adriel Francisco
 Zamora, Daniel Max

Loy Norrix High School 2023 Graduates

Abbott, Nadia Brienne
 Adalbert, Ella Lynne
 Adams, Lauren Grace
 Ainsworth, Pria Marcile
 Allen, Samuel Dene
 Alvarez, Joaquin Antonio
 Amy, Stella Marie
 Anderson, Drayon Yonshae
 Anderson, Jiselle Monet
 Aranda Castaneda, Airam Daniel
 Awad, Nada A
 Babrick, Reagan Rene
 Bader, Giana Gray
 Baker, Wesley Allen
 Bardo, Paige Marley
 Battle, Xavier Alexander
 Bell, Terrius Jashon
 Bennett, Jack Sun
 Berg, Oscar Riley
 Berg, Violet Rae
 Betts, Kamiyah Nicole
 Bhattarai, Rishabh
 Bierema, Zoe Christine
 Bosak, Alexander David
 Boucher, Alex
 Brent, Joss Fletcher
 Briggs, Kelcey Marguerite
 Brugh, Hannah Rosella
 Buchanan, Gabrielle
 Mechelle
 Buchino, Braydon James
 Oshea
 Buckley, Alex John
 Bujanos, Oscar Manuel
 Butler, James Leshon
 Cameron, Ezekiah Edwin
 Rashawn
 Campbell, Holden James
 Cervantes-Jimenez, Pablo
 Chakutema T, Rachel
 Chapman, Curtis Albert
 Churchwell, Morgan Ashanti
 Michelle
 Clark, Thomas Franklin
 Coleman, Lilyana Renee
 Coleman-Brannon,
 Khamonni Lashay
 Cook, Ann Rebecca
 Cox, Madisyn Louise
 Cyuzuzo, Eric
 Dalrymple, Alyson Jane
 Daniels, Robert Aaron
 Dallas
 Dantes, Jillian Rose
 Dean-Hall, Tara Elisabeth
 Delp, Dylan Earl
 Denney, Lina Guo

Deweese, Aden Charles
 DeYoung, Norah Nell
 Diaz Martinez, Yatzari
 Diaz Ocampo, Meilie
 Janneyra
 Dixon, Andre Lamont
 Doezema, Inez Felicity
 Doubblestein, Allison
 Aileen
 Duhrkoff, Christian John
 Dunfee, Ana Boline
 Peterson
 Edlefson, Anna Lorraine
 Eldred, Zachary Benjamin
 Elfring, Margaret Ann
 Esquivel, Michael
 Fance, Cassie Marie
 Fance, Reniya Renee
 Fetterley, Joshua Tyler
 Fields, Henry Gregory
 Fierke, Matthew David
 Flanagan, Kate Elizabeth
 Fleming, Zakiya Destini
 Foster, Imani Armonah
 Foster, Laela Rayn
 Fotis, Anthony Javier
 Theodore
 Freeman, Carlton A
 Fried, Allie Elizabeth
 Galea, Spencer Kadin
 Garcia Davis, Jamy Maria
 Joyce Ann Manuela
 Alguarrelles
 Garcia, Andrea Litzy
 Garcia, Andy Gael
 Garcia, Jocelyn Citlaly
 Gervacio, Nataly A
 Getachew, Grace Hale
 Getachew, Hannah Simone
 Gillam, Ka'Mya Carlene Ann
 Godinez, Ariel
 Gordon, Percy Tranell
 Goschke, Gracie Marie
 Greilick, Quentin Paul
 Greymountain, Aanje
 Kendra
 Grinwis, Wyatt Alden
 Grover, Amelia F
 Grover, Sophie K
 Gunn, Andre Lance
 Gustafson, Samantha Emily
 Gutierrez, Lizeth
 Gutter, Destiny Sara
 Hallett, Helen Elizabeth
 Hanley, Luke Simon
 Hardwick, Rickayh Caprice
 Harper, Amarie Alana-Jane
 Harris, Guthrie Rianagh
 Harris, Javon Spencer



Students turn their tassels at the Loy Norrix High School commencement graduation ceremony.

Harris, Takarra Jean
 He, Rebekah Li
 Henderson, Ontreal Lamar
 Henry, David Ian Albino
 Herington, Dylan Avery
 Hernandez Martinez, Isai
 Brian
 Hernandez-Soto, Karen
 Daniela
 Herrera, Anthony Hernan
 Hertel, Commodore Joseph
 Hess, Tyrone Matthew
 Smith
 Heystek, Lucy Margo
 Hohm, Linnea Katherine
 Holm-Griffis, Eden Sage
 Hooper, Reynaldo
 Alquarrellez
 Hoyle-Groat, Stefon William
 Hurley, Gryffin Todd Ferris
 Hutton, Georgia Mabel
 Hyer, Samuel Trent
 Ide, Madelyn Grace
 Irizarry, Amonte' Darion
 Ivy, Jasmine Amaria Angel
 Jackson, Anija Trenell
 Johnson, Alexis Renee
 Johnson, Avery Rose
 Johnson, Consuela Lasha

Jones, Adria Elizabeth
 Jones, Shamiyah Jashay
 Jones, Taizia Renee
 Dominique
 Kagumba, Jeremiah Joseph
 Kane, Joshua Michael
 Kays, Robbie Forrest
 Kelley, Jay'Don Lee
 Krueger, Loden Miles
 Gabriel
 Lacey, Zachary Allen
 Lajiness, Christian Michael
 Lamper, Arianna Michelle
 Lane, Sean Mason
 Latulippe, Jude Bazile Ingo
 Lawrence, Jasmine Ann
 Marie
 Leo, Symaechit
 Leo, Ynodoula J
 Leonard, Kaitlyn Michelle
 Leon-Torres, Aylin
 Lesley, Quinton Dayton
 Lewis, Naylah Zoay
 Link, Reesah Joy Ellen
 Lintner, Maia Catherine
 Lipsey, Jaden Latrell
 Lo, Alexander Charlie
 Lo, Yacine
 Locke, Hannah Kaitlin

Lockett, Shaun Otha
 Long, Kameran Michelle
 Lopez, David
 Lubbers, Gaberiel Edward
 Scott
 MacInnis, Keyton John
 Madonia, Wolfgang Scott
 Makidon, Gavin Adam
 Marquez, Estela Ruth
 Marshall, Vivian Beth
 Martin, Michael Niguel
 Martinez, Yomar Angel
 Martinez-Villanueva, Karina
 Mboup, Amady
 McBride, Conner Marie
 McClellan, Jago Edmund
 McFinton, Sean Patrick
 McNeal, Samuel Quinn
 McNees, Brooklyn Lee Ann
 Medina-Hernandez, Andrea
 Medina-Juarez, Floralia
 Marlenelizet
 Mejia Sanchez, Celso Omar
 Merritte, Tajha Shadae
 Michels, Jay Rose
 Miedema, Wendy Eleanor
 Miller, Selah Jae
 Mims, Tatiana May
 Molitor, Nina Meta

Morales, Ramon
 Morning, Sequoya Kay
 Beatrice
 Morris, Aniyah Shardae
 Moss, Clara Mary
 Mullins, Elizabeth Ceejay
 Musengesho, Annah
 Mutoni, Diane
 Myers, Alexander Jondre
 Damaris
 Nabors, Aujinae Ramona
 Marie
 Naylor, Gabriel Ian
 Neve-Jones, Foster Jackson
 Novotny, Jack Farrell
 Noyes, Alyssa Paige
 O'Flynn, Kyle James
 Painter, Dillon Patrik
 Payton, Unique K. A.
 Perez, Leslie Celeste
 Perez-Castro, Krystal
 Perez-Nemesio, Samuel
 Pinto, Arturo
 Pipe, Thea T
 Pirochta, Aidan Todd
 Polderman, Olivia Anne
 Proctor, Justin Arron
 Quayle, Owen Augustus
 Quinn, James Luken
 Quinones, Naysa Isabella
 Rafferty, Connor John
 Ramirez, Ethan Logan-Teran
 Reyes Soto, Andrea
 Reyes-Sebastian, Christian
 Daniel
 Reynolds, Huck Everett
 Robertson, Talia Lynn
 Robeson, Roburto Montez
 Rocco, James Angelo
 Rodriguez, Rolando C
 Rodriguez-Ruiz, Araceli
 Romeo, Anna Maria
 Rose, Alexa Emi
 Ruegsegger, Max
 Ruiz, Jaydon Michael
 Rutherford, Liam Porter
 Saavedra, Estrella
 Sackett, Riley Jae
 Salazar-Ponce, Diana
 Samuels, Jeziah Damaria
 Lulamae
 Sanchez, Jaylynn Alexia
 Scheel, Gavin Thomas
 Scheele, Duncan McNeill
 Schettner, Spencer David
 Scott, Harmoniee Jayd
 Alexander
 Seilheimer, Lucas Harvey

Shaw, Amarion Octavius
 Sinclair, Jayden Harley
 Skjold, Maija Lane
 Smith, Jonah James
 Smith, Kalee Ann
 Smith, Landen Tyler
 Smith, Tamisha Shantea
 Sorrentino, Rayna Isabella
 Terrian, Jeffrey Scott
 Thomas, Vidamay Unese
 Tillman, Taikia Erica Louise
 Torres Martinez, Jessica
 Tribu, Brendan M
 Trotman-Labarre, Amiyah
 Lynne
 Trujillo, Kayle Cindy
 Turkistani, Sereen
 Mohammad
 Uwamahoro, Alliance
 VandenBussche, Avery
 Lynne
 Vander Beek, Mara Jeanne
 VanderLaan, Hunter William
 Vasquez, John
 Villalobos Huerta, Angel
 Manuel
 Vivanco-Vandenbos,
 Christian Alexander
 Voss, Ian Christopher
 Wadsworth-Curcuru, Wen
 Lucia
 Waling, Levi E
 Walker, Aubrey Jayda
 Lajuana
 Walker, Kierra Lynn
 Waltemyer, Ethan Michael
 Ward, Olyvia Sophia
 Warmelink, Miles Gilbert
 Warren, Lydia Beth
 Wayman, Jaksun James
 Webster, Sharyha Reece
 Weeden, Adam Daniel
 Weston, Joshua Britton
 Whalen, Emmitt Daniel
 Whalen, Garrett Thomas
 White, Allayja Leeshay
 Nacole
 White, Anthony
 White, Coriona Patience-
 Monah
 Whitsett, Benjamin Daniel
 Wiedenhoeft, Oskar Kenneth
 Wieleba, Angela Joy
 Williams, Mataya Sharay
 Wilson, Hope Katherine
 Eldora
 Wilson, Tishawn Terrell
 Wolfgang, Corbin John

Amady Mboup: Valuing and Expanding Opportunities

AMADY Mboup has taken advantage of many of the opportunities presented in school to build an impressive academic resume designed to support his dream of someday becoming an attorney.

He participated in marching band, National Honor Society, Student Senate, Black Student Union, DECA, Youth in Government, Academically Talented Youth Program (ATYP), Advancement Placement (AP) classes, dual enrollment at Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. His honors include the 2023 Kalamazoo Youth Social Justice Award and a Detroit Police Activity League scholarship trip to Dubai.

He is worried, however, that not all students share equally in these opportunities.

As part of his Student Senate duties, he served on the district's Equity Task Force, which looked for ways to make the school district more equitable. He served on a

subcommittee that focused on academic rigor and ways to ensure all students feel prepared and welcome to take advanced academic opportunities.

"I've had a lot of experiences with kids feeling like they're outcasts and excluded from their friend group, when they, as minority students, join APs," Mboup said. "Also there is a climate to consider in AP classes. When you have so many people who don't look like you, you often find it more comforting to find people that you can align yourself with, rather than be in a classroom full of strangers."

He cautions administrators and teachers to be mindful of how they present the option of Advanced Placement or other accelerated programs to minority students.

"I think that the idea of joining an AP is presented to white kids as how important APs are and the benefits they have. It's framed in a very positive way. Oh this is something that you can do to help yourself out," he said. "But when Black kids hear about it, it's oh, it's a really hard class. I don't know if you're ready to take it. It's a lot of responsibility.

"Once I got to high school, taking accelerated classes was a better use of my time."



Amady Mboup is headed to Morehouse College this fall.

"It can really be seen to be like it's more negative than it really is, which is a bit discouraging."

He hopes administrators are also aware of the needs of students who may be the first generation in their families to be considering college. They may need extra encouragement to take advantage of the classes that appear daunting.

"If you're never had a parent go to college, it might seem like a bigger load than they're ready for."

For him the impetus to pursue academic success

came from his parents, Tamerah and Amady Mboup, but also from an inner drive to excel.

"Once I got to high school, to me taking accelerated classes was a better use of my time," he said. "I'm actually interested in doing certain things and to do those things, I have to get the general stuff out of the way. Some things play into my career goals."

With his eye on becoming a lawyer, he took advanced English classes (which was made possible in part by the fact that he participated in ATYP, which allows students to complete their basic high school English requirements in seventh and eighth grade). He dual enrolled in sociology or criminal justice courses.

When he didn't push himself to take those courses — he felt a little regret.

"I took government this year instead of AP government, because I wanted to be with friends, but I realize that was a poor decision," Mboup said. "I was almost sabotaging myself. My sister had a ton of friends in AP or honors classes who dropped them to be with friends. That's a big motivator for a lot of kids."

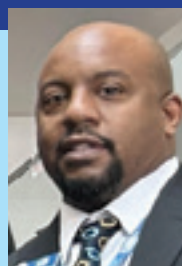
This fall, he plans to attend Atlanta's Morehouse College, a historically black college where he has received an academic scholarship and an Oprah Winfrey Endowed Scholarship. He hopes to major in political science, with a possible minor in business.

While Michigan State University had long been his dream college, when he visited Morehouse this spring, he was overwhelmed by the campus and the atmosphere. "It was very welcoming and Morehouse has such a rich history."

"Plus being in the majority, especially in an academic sense, seemed like a unique experience I think I would enjoy," he said. "I just wanted to figure out what that is like."

NOTABLE EDUCATOR: ATIBA WARD

Mboup: "He was a big source of pure fun and enjoyment this year. He's a presence. He makes you excited about things there's no reason to be excited about. You can tell he cares about your success and seeing you go far."



How long have you been with the district? I've been with the district for 22 years, 11 years at Loy Norrix.

What do you teach? Business education, sports management, international business, business finance, computer applications, Future Young Entrepreneurs and the

Business Academy. I am the advisor for DECA.

What do you try to communicate to students as a teacher? I want them to know that if they work hard, it will pay off and that there are some great jobs in the world of business.

What advice do you have for this year's grads? They should find positive things they like to do and figure out how they can make a career out of them.

Kierra Gaddie: Finding Something to Cheer About in High School

KIERRA Gaddie plans to become a doctor for a very specific reason: She wants to address the problem of maternal health and infant mortality in the Black community.

To do that, the Kalamazoo Central High School will be attending Howard University in the fall to study biology on a pre-med track — with her ultimate goal being to attend the Howard University College of Medicine.

“They are known for graduating the most Black medical school students in the nation,” Gaddie said. “I want to be an OB/GYN and my focus will be helping to eliminate the health disparities for maternal Black women and their babies because there is such a large gap between Black mothers and white mothers.

“Going to a school like Howard gives me the ability to pair my medical training with learning about social justice and how I can help my community. I feel it’s the best education I can get for what I want to do.”

Gaddie has been preparing for this life of service even as a high school student. In addition to her numerous Advanced Placement courses, she has been a Career & Technical Education student studying health science, which has meant studying subjects such as CPR and medical terminology and earning a certification in patient care at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Through the program she also had the opportunity to intern in the Bronson Methodist Hospital maternity ward.

“I’ve really enjoyed the class because it’s what I want to do with my life,” Gaddie said. “I definitely recommend taking a CTE if you can find one that



Kierra Gaddie will attend Howard University this fall.

aligns with your interests. It can be a good resource for the future.”

But the other way she’s been preparing is by working to build her social justice resume. As a member of the National Honor Society, this year she helped start a subgroup called Black Community Awareness. She noticed that the NHS presented many volunteer opportunities to students, but the groups that they

worked with often did not look like she did.

“Basically, the goal of the Black Community Awareness group was to make sure our NHS was working with Black community organizations,” she said. “With our school being so diverse, I think it’s important for us to give back to the Black community.” The group initiated activities such as assisting with the NAACP of Greater Kalamazoo’s annual Baby Shower Drive, donating to the YWCA, and helping the Black Arts & Cultural Center organize its storage unit.

Gaddie is the daughter of Lynneise and Tyron Gaddie. In addition to her CTE and work with NHS, she has been a member of the Ivylettes, a junior organization of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority; Link Crew, and student council.

But her favorite extracurricular activity by far has been cheerleading. After years of playing basketball, she finally decided she didn’t love it as much as she once had, so her junior year she decided to return to cheerleading, something she enjoyed when she was younger.

She wasn’t the captain of the team, which does both sideline and competitive cheer, but felt she was a leader who helped keep the team together, supporting both players and coaches.

“It was definitely the best decision I made for myself throughout high school for the community it gave me and the safe place it gave me,” she said.

“I made new friends and connections, plus I gained a lot of leadership skills from being a cheerleader. It pulled me out of my comfort zone and I started speaking up and being able to recognize my ability to influence and lead others.”

INFLUENTIAL TEACHER: REX HAFER

Years at Kalamazoo Central:
18 years

Job Position: AP U.S. Government and AP Comparative Government teacher, National Honor Society adviser, co-head cross country coach

What do you try to communicate to students as a teacher? As a teacher I try to be a facilitator for the students in class. Through this, I try to get them to believe in themselves and



their ability beyond what they normally do.

What advice do you have for this year’s grads? Don’t forget to call home to the people who love and miss you.

INFLUENTIAL TEACHER: SHANNON WINTZ

How long have you been at Kalamazoo Central? Over 10 years

What do you teach? AP English Language/Composition, Honors 10, and Literature through Films 3.

What do you try to communicate to students? When we write, we discover who we are, and we show others who we are. I want them always to know I am a partner in their education, which is why each student has my phone number to text me when trouble spots arise either personally or educationally. I know my students well, which helps me better assist their needs on a daily basis. Every student



kindness, and respect. They also learn the importance of evidence...that they must solidify all points with evidence otherwise their points become mere conjectures.

What advice do you have for this year’s grads? Take chances and do not allow fear to stand in your way of truly discovering who you are. Make plenty

knows that when they speak, their voices count. We cannot combat the brutality/hatred in this world with emotion; we must use logic,

of mistakes but learn and grow. Do not ever be afraid to meet new people. We learn qualities we want to obtain, and we also learn the behaviors we never want to absorb. Travel everywhere. See this world and all it has to offer. Never lose your imagination ... always keep a hint of innocence since it simply makes life fun. Dream those huge dreams but remember you must set the goals to achieve them. Love yourself. Lastly, use that voice to stand up for others who cannot and to fight respectfully against those who may need an education in compassion.

Outstanding Student Awards and Scholarships

THE KALAMAZOO RESA Board of Education and the Kalamazoo RESA Foundation honored more than 100 Kalamazoo County students this year with Outstanding Student Awards and scholarships.

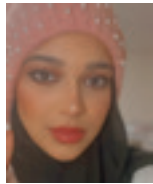
Honorees selected by the Kalamazoo RESA Foundation and Career Connect are chosen from among more than 3,000 individuals participating in more than 30 high school programs, including Career & Technical Education, Education for the Arts, Early/Middle College, and Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU).

Students were recognized for their dedication, hard work, and exceptional resilience.

The 37th annual awards represent a collaboration between public and non-public school districts, Kalamazoo RESA, the Kalamazoo RESA Foundation, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Western Michigan University, and more than 350 local industry partners engaging in our work. The awards also honor children of KRESA employees, who have prioritized educational excellence.

This year's honorees from Kalamazoo Public Schools are:

KALAMAZOO CENTRAL



Bisan Al Jaouni

CTE Health Science, Laura Kuzmick
Parents: Ahmad & Marsel Aljaouni
Career: Healthcare & Health Science
Next Steps: Western Michigan University
Scholarship: Kalamazoo County Association of Retired School Personnel



Alejandro Alvarez

CTE Electronics & Robotics, Ken Briggs
Parents: Antonion Alvarez & Fanny Hernandez
Career: Engineering
Next Steps: University of Michigan
Scholarship: Burdick-Thorne



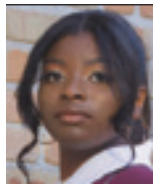
Maxwell Chase

CTE Business, Management & Administration, Michelle Claybaugh
Parents: Daniel & Molly Chase
Career: Business, Management, and Administration
Next Steps: Western Michigan University
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Dr. Robert & Ruth VanderRoest



Owen Day

CTE Marketing, Suzanne Mills
Parents: Bryan & Christine Day
Career: Human Services/Psychology
Next Steps: Kalamazoo Valley Community College
Scholarship: Kalamazoo Valley Community College



Breanna Donald

EFA Dance, Francesca Pileci
Parents: Terrell & Tiffany Lockett
Career: Business, Management, and Administration
Next Steps: Undecided
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Irving S. Gilmore Foundation Scholarship in Memory of Gayle Werme



Whitney Griffin

CTE Art & Design Career Skills, Kellen Deau
Parent: Christina Griffin
Career: Product Design
Next Steps: Western Michigan University
Scholarship: Wightman



Pauline Hawkes

Parents: Ernest & Paula Hawkes
Career: Biology
Next Steps: Kalamazoo College
Scholarship: Children of Kalamazoo RESA Employee Scholarship



Sydney Hughes

CTE Art & Design Career Skills, Kellen Deau
Parent: Guy Hughes
Career: Journalism/Creative Writing
Next Steps: Hope College
Scholarship: Career & Technical Education



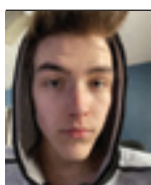
Janashia Jones

CTE Marketing, Suzanne Mills
Parents: Jessie Jones & Destini Moore-Jones
Career: Healthcare & Health Science
Next Steps: Western Michigan University
Scholarship: Career & Technical Education and Children of Kalamazoo RESA Employee Scholarship



Savannah Keck

CTE Art & Design Career Skills, Kellen Deau
Parents: Joseph & Cynthia Keck
Career: Fine Arts/Business
Next Steps: Hope College
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation: Robert C. Thompson Memorial



Eli March

CTE Law Enforcement, Brian Brusach
Parent: Beth Hernandez
Career: Public Safety
Next Steps: Ferris State University
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Sergeant Lisa Zuk Memorial



Kyle Pardee

CTE Business, Management & Administration, Michelle Claybaugh
Parents: Brian & Alison Pardee
Career: Business, Management, and Administration
Next Steps: Calvin University
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Dr. W. Craig & Diane Misner



Blake Robey

Kalamazoo Central High School
Parents: Leslie and Jeff Robey
Career: Education
Next Steps: Western Michigan University
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Quota Club Scholarship



Emma Shakner

CTE Accounting, Michelle Claybaugh
Parent: Lisa Yates
Career: Marketing
Next Steps: Michigan State University
Scholarship: OnStaff USA, Portage MI



Andre Soisson

CTE Electronics & Robotics, Ken Briggs
Parents: John & Beth Soisson
Career: Mechanical/Civil Engineering
Next Steps: Hope College
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Stairway to a Career



Daniel Sullivan

CTE Conservation Biology, Allie Spring
Parents: Micheal Brown & Kelly Sullivan
Career: Natural Resources & Conservation
Next Steps: Kalamazoo Valley Community College
Scholarship: Kalamazoo Valley Community College



Isaac Sullivan

CTE Law Enforcement, Brian Brusach
Parents: Michael Brown & Kelly Sullivan
Career: Public Safety
Next Steps: Western Michigan University
Scholarship: Burdick-Thorne

LOY NORRIX



Wesley Baker

CTE Automotive Technology, Richie Sackett
Parents: David Baker & Heidi Graham
Career: Automotive & Transportation
Next Steps: NASCAR Technical Institute
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Jack & Sue Martin, YOU Scholarship, Children of Kalamazoo RESA Employee Scholarship



Rishabh Bhattarai

CTE Information Technology, Rostam Ahmad Daud
Parents: Dhruba & Chanda Bhattarai
Career: Software Engineering
Next Steps: Undecided
Scholarship: Burdick-Thorne



Jay' Don Kelley

CTE Business, Management & Administration, Atiba Ward
Parents: Brandon Gilkey & Joan Hester
Career: Business, Management, and Administration
Next Steps: Michigan State University
Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Education for Employment Retired Staff and Career & Technical Education

(continued on page 19)

Outstanding Student Awards and Scholarships (continued from page 18)



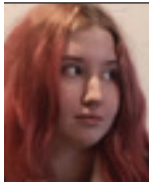
Vivian Marshall

CTE Health Science, Laura Kuzmick
 Parents: Jim & Jamie Marshall
 Career: Healthcare & Health Science
 Next Steps: Michigan State University
 Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation
 Bronson Methodist Hospital and Kalamazoo
 RESA Gayl F. Werme Memorial



Amady Mboup

CTE Business, Management & Administration,
 Atiba Ward
 Parents: Tamerah Mboup
 Career: Law
 Next Steps: Morehouse College
 Scholarship: Career & Technical Education



Conner McBride

CTE Culinary Arts, Kharen Shelton
 Parent: Matthew McBride
 Career: Culinary/Hospitality Management
 Next Steps: Culinary Institute of America
 Scholarship: Kalamazoo County Association of
 Retired School Personnel



Kyle O'Flynn

CTE Cosmetology/Barbering, Delshawn Threatt
 Parents: Shaun & Dena O'Flynn
 Career: Barber
 Next Steps: Kalamazoo Valley Community College
 Scholarship: World of Work



Aiden Pirochta

CTE Welding, Joel Schmidt
 Parent: Haley Pirochta
 Career: Education & Training
 Next Steps: Undecided
 Scholarship: Kalamazoo County Association of
 Retired School Personnel.



Jonah Smith

CTE Automotive Technology, Richie Sackett
 Parent: Shonna Smith
 Career: Automotive Technician
 Next Steps: Lafontaine Automotive Group
 Scholarship: World of Work and Kalamazoo New
 Car Dealers Association



Vidamay Thomas

EFA Intermediate Dance Studio, Heather Mitchell
 Parent: Tawnya Ransom
 Career: Healthcare & Health Science
 Next Steps: Michigan State University
 Scholarship: Kalamazoo RESA Foundation Barbara
 Hawthorne Memorial



Brendan Tribu

Parents: James & Tina Tribu
 Career: Engineering
 Next Steps: Western Michigan University or Michi-
 gan State University
 Scholarship: Children of Kalamazoo RESA
 Employee Scholarship



Trevor Watts

Parents: Darrell & Cassie Watts
 Career: Engineering
 Next Steps: Kalamazoo Valley Community College
 Scholarship: Children of Kalamazoo RESA
 Employee Scholarship



Adam Weeden

CTE Construction Trades, Rob Ling
 Parent: Annette Weeden-Gray
 Career: Construction/Welding
 Next Steps: Trade school for welding
 Scholarship: World of Work

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Jaydon Ruiz: Staying on Top of Work Is an Investment in Yourself

JAYDON Ruiz ran, did the high jump and competed in the long jump in track, played wide receiver and safety in football, and was a basketball forward and guard while at Loy Norrix High School.

And, Jaydon Ruiz was injured while running track, playing football and traveling down the court at Norrix.

But, he never stopped. He never gave up. He never quit.

His injuries ranged from pulled hamstrings to strained back muscles to torn ligaments to sprained ankles.

The most challenging injuries were the ones that took him out of basketball, which is the game that speaks most deeply to the soft-spoken young man.

"I really didn't know who I was without basketball," he said. "I had to bring out other skills."

And, he had to learn how to ask for help.

"I do things on my own," said Ruiz, 18. "I have the attitude that I don't need help from anybody. I got it. It was so hard to ask for help. It was a big hit for me. But I think it made me a better teammate and person. It's OK to ask for help — and to accept it when it's given."

His injuries were a life lesson in another way as well.

"I think you need to be appreciative for what you have," he said. "You have to be grateful you're doing things that others can't do."

Ruiz, who is the son of Rosemary Ruiz and Chika Elechi, said that when he wasn't playing sports, he was

"Sometimes you have to put aside important things for more important things."



Jaydon Ruiz will attend Michigan State University this fall.

working or volunteering as part of team activities.

The biggest challenge he faced throughout high school was time management and facing what he

said was the discipline and accountability that is demanded of a student athlete. The struggle was real when it came to procrastination, but he overcame it by making a schedule and learning to focus on the future.

"I'm preparing for the next level. I realized I had to force myself to prepare and get things done on time," Ruiz said. "Sometimes I had to do things like put aside going out with friends, but sometimes you have to put aside important things for more important things."

For him, it's about seeing what you want for your future self, and he was always envisioning himself as independent, living on campus, pursuing an engineering degree like his father or maybe becoming a mechanical engineer, inspired by his grandfather Larry Haynes' in-depth understanding of cars. This fall he'll pursue that dream as a student at Michigan State University.

All of the time management skills and focus that he's developed as a student athlete have created the foundation he needs to be successful in college, he said. Putting in the work pays off.

"You have to prioritize your work. Don't fall behind, then you won't be overwhelmed and stressed out," Ruiz said. "That's the best advice I could give anyone."

INFLUENTIAL EDUCATOR: COACH DETAVIA MOORE

Ruiz: "He taught me a lot of lessons. He's a very wise man. He definitely pushed me to get better."

Years at Loy Norrix: Four years as coach. He was recently hired to be the Kalamazoo Promise Pathway Coach for Norrix.



should never stop growing and dreaming

What do you try to communicate to students: I try to communicate with students and athletes that they are all unique. They

and to never give up a chance to get better at something everyday.

What advice do you have for graduates: The advice I would give this year's grads would be to enjoy the journey and the process. One day you'll look back and realize all of the sacrifices and dedication were worth it!

Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program 2023 Graduates

Ali, Abdelrahman
Andrews, Addison Raelee
Beard, Kymeil Emily-Ann
Edwards, Dakotah Anne
Flemming, Moriana Gabrielle
Fredericksen, Henry Lee
Grimes, Ariya Danielle
Johnson, Armariyon Isiah
Kyle, Kalii Xavier Adaar
Lampkins, Quintajha Renee

Leggett, Samantha Lorraine
Lindsey, Zamarion Michael
Longstreet, Krista
Martin, K-Cee Chance
Morgan, Derek Dwight
Alexander
Muanda, Jeannecia M
Parker, Shakeda Veledia
Parker, Shamarr Brandon
Querfurth, Margaret Sue

Reed, Kasey M
Rockwood, Jacx Jay
Smith, Anna Joelee
Sundberg, Marissa Nicole
Sundberg, Tiffany Marie
Wark, Samuel Michael Merril
Wenzel, Vanessa Dianne
Williams, Alviana Yvette
Williams, Emontre Rashawn
Wilson, Alex

Adult Education 2023 Graduates

Againeses, Emilio
Ampey, Miriah
Anderson, Tremaine
Basurto-Jimenez, Edwin
Bell, Rynne
Campbell, Chad
Daniels, Lydia
Doster, Brett
Drobny, Robert
Haidari, Muhammad

Hardin, Gage
Heckleman, Joseph
Holt, Sierra
Jennings, AJ
Keeler, Edward
Ndikumana, Francois
Ndjoli, Emmanuel
Pohl, Stephanie
Ransom, Christopher
Reeves, Ryan

Rodriguez-Avelar, Braylan
Sanford, Titus
Simpson, Heaven
Taylor, Elijah
Tenney, Quinn
Zuiderveen, James

Phoenix High School 2023 Graduates

Alexander, Ja'zariah Allana'diyon
 Anderson, Jasmine Marie
 Anzurez, Israel
 Asbeury-De la Cruz, Otto Ruben
 Bates, Courtney Marie
 Beaudrie, Maya Renee
 Bell, Nahshon Jesaiah Mahli
 Booker-Graham, Ta'Nejia Lashea
 Boyd, Eamani Nicole
 Brayboy, Iyaimai Jade
 Brown, Asisana Eria
 Brown, Ke'Niya La'Pearl SheyAnne
 Buckhannon, Andrew Robert
 Bushouse-Sterling, Mariah Renee
 Calderon, Miguel Angel
 Calicutt, Tyson Tayejahn Markes
 Casey, Imari Latrice
 Coleman, Dontral Marquis
 Coleman, Kaniya Nichole
 Coleman, Mariah Monique
 Coleman, Te'asia L
 Conolly, Lauren Marie
 Corsi, Taleah Branae
 Corsi, Tyra Jane
 Courtney, Luke Daniel
 Crawford, Shanaya Lashea
 Cruz, Thalia Jacqueline
 Cummings, Aniya Nyet
 Davis, Julius Kwame

Davis, Ke'Trevon Duane
 DeLaPaz, Joaquin
 DeLorenzo, Tyler James
 Dortch, Traysaun Francisco Lynn
 Duckett, Teriahna Dean
 Dunn, Hope Marie
 Edmonson, Daqayveon Armon
 Essix, Aaron Marquis
 Fernandez-Diaz, Carver Eduardo
 Ford, Amani Lamont
 Ford, Jeremy Lamar
 Ford, Shariah Monique
 Foreman, Casey Jordan
 Fuller, Traci Lynn
 Garcez, Vladimir Christian
 Gardner, Christopher James
 Gomez, Carlota Natalie
 Gonzales, Hannah Victoria
 Gordon, Cay'leigh Rose
 Graham, Gabriel Talmadge
 Greene-Little, Khaniya Danae Irish
 Harris, Lavar Terry
 Hawkins, Oronde Khari
 Hayes, Shanti T'ana
 Hegler, Xavier Mehki
 Hegwood, Calvin Kye
 Henry, Jayla Nicole
 Hickman, Corrie Lea-Keishawnda
 Hill, Kimora L



2023 Phoenix graduates Mariah Bushouse-Sterling and Jayla Henry.

Hinton, Kahare M
 Hinton, Kiaran Tishon
 Hosner, Drew Ira
 Johnson, Danyel Lynise
 Johnson, Jaylen Dimitrice
 Johnson, Tamy Eliza
 Johnson-Woodruff, Australia Unique
 Jones, Jaylyn Montrell
 Juarez, Elizabeth
 King, Maresa Chantia
 Knight, Devin LeiSean

Kubwimana, Elisa
 Lesley, Melissa
 Levario, Benjamin Michael
 Lewis-Atkins, Cameron Marquise
 Libanza, Elie Edola
 Ligon, Lelond Darnell
 Lopez, Jesse Quavion
 Lopez-Martinez, Landy Airel
 Macon, Caleb Dwight
 Maldonado, Aah'mya Monae
 Martinez-Equia, Anayely Esmeralda

Mata Juarez, Johnny
 Matthews, Alex'ria Monye'
 Matthews, RiNyah D
 Montero, Rosario Celeste
 Moreno-Aguilar, Samantha Felisitas
 Morris, Tarques Arnez
 Morris, Teriyae
 Moseley, Makhi J
 Mwambile, Nafsa Athuman
 Ozolins, Adrianna Lynn
 Paiz, Adam Miguel
 Perry, Nataeveis Claudele
 Pratt, Terry Russell
 Ramirez, Carlos Ramses
 Ray, Dakota Anthony
 Reese-Davison, Jeremiah Lee
 Rife, Kaylee Ann
 Rios, Kavontae Dejuan
 Robbison, Damia Hannah
 Robinson, Conroy Staffan
 Rogers, Richard
 Rostick, Essence Sanaa
 Saidali, Abdullah Hasan
 Saidali, Mohammedsaeed Hasan
 Salas, Ernesto
 Sandoval Ramirez, Grecia
 Searce-Thompson, Vince Michele
 Simmons, Breanna
 Simpson, Lucas Albert

Sims, Jamare' Treshaun
 Slater, Melvon Trenell
 Smith, Isabell Angel
 Smith, Jenna Fay
 Smith, Ladell
 Steele, Khamani I
 Suggs, Jorden MiChont
 Summers, Ountayah Tanye
 Taylor, Kaiya Lei
 Thomas, Roy Lee
 Thrash, Raphael David
 Toloza-Juarez, Cielo Ruby
 Tucker, Santana Ashantis Isabell
 Vazquez Placido, Axel
 Villegas, Susan
 Wallace, Taveon Jakeal
 Washington, Latoria Eleanor
 Weathersby, Jordan Ramone'
 White, Desarae Myray
 White, Jahkeith Kemarius
 White, Zechariah Eugene
 Whitfield, Avion Jewel
 Whitmore, Evianna Anise
 Wilkins, Jhy'meir Jaque
 Williams, Jerome Mack-G
 Williams, Miracle Sabrina Jean
 Woodard, Shanon Lee
 Woods, Harmonee K
 Wright, Madalynn Lee



National Day of Summer Learning



July 20, 2023 10am-3pm | Bronson Park

Twelve KPS Seniors Honored by KRESA Excellence in Education Program

THE KALAMAZOO County Excellence in Education program has honored high achieving students and significant county educators since 1986.

With the support of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, as well as a challenge grant from the Monroe-Brown Foundation, the program continues to recognize graduating high school seniors. To date, student scholarships totalling over \$1.4 million have been awarded to 1,889 public and private school students.

In April, the Excellence in Education program held a reception to honor students for their academic achievements and provide them the opportunity to honor those educators who have contributed to their success.

This year's Excellence in Education recipients from Kalamazoo Public Schools are:



Alejandro Alvarez
Kalamazoo Central, KAMSC
Major: Engineering
College: University of Michigan
Parents: Fanny and Antonio Alvarez
Significant Educator: Jennifer Wyrick



Ingrid Gardner
Kalamazoo Central, KAMSC
Major: Mathematics and Linguistics
College: Kalamazoo College
Parents: Joy and James Gardner
Significant Educator: Elizabeth Carr



Guthrie Harris
Loy Norrix
Major: Political Science and Spanish
College: Boston University
Parents: Nicole Butz and Sean Harris
Significant Educator: Christina Holmes



Pauline Hawkes
Kalamazoo Central
Major: Biology
College: Kalamazoo College
Parents: Ernest Hawkes III and Paula Hawkes
Significant Educator: Linda Lee



Asia Hoehle
Kalamazoo Central, KAMSC
Major: Biomedical Engineering
College: Michigan Technological University
Parents: Wayne and Ann Hoehle
Significant Educator: Michael Sinclair



Maia Lintner
Loy Norrix, KAMSC
Major: Undecided
College: Undecided
Parents: Carrie and Brad Lintner
Significant Educator: Michael Sinclair



Nina Molitor
Loy Norrix
Major: Biology
College: University of Michigan
Parents: Derek Molitor and Joanna Parzakonis
Significant Educator: Jason Wagner



Clara Moss
Loy Norrix
Major: Classics
College: University of Michigan
Parents: Anna and Kimberly Moss
Significant Educator: Matthew Frayer



Zachary Risely
Kalamazoo Central, KAMSC
Major: Biomedical Engineering
College: Hope College
Parents: Julie Lorenz and John Risley
Significant Educator: Jocelyn Clark



Ava Schwachter
Kalamazoo Central, KAMSC
Major: Biochemistry
College: Kalamazoo College
Parent: Ella Philander
Significant Educator: Colleen Chapoton



Benjamin Whitsett
Loy Norrix, KAMSC
Major: Mathematics and Physics
College: Kalamazoo College
Parents: Aaron and Kate Whitsett
Significant Educator: Michael Sinclair



Oskar Wiedenhoef
Loy Norrix
Major: Computer Science
College: University of Michigan
Parents: Margaret and Marco Wiedenhoef
Significant Educator: Bradley Schmidt



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KPS Meet Up and Eat Up Begins June 26

KALAMAZOO Public Schools announces the beginning of the Summer Food Service Program for children. Free meals will be made available to children 18 years of age and under or persons up to 26 years old who are enrolled in an educational program for the mentally or physically disabled that is recognized by a state or local public educational agency.

The meals will be provided without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. The only stipulation to the free meals is that the meal be eaten on site.

USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

email: Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Meals will be provided at sites listed below. **All sites are closed on July 3 and 4.** Meals are free to children 18 and younger. No application or proof of income is required. Meals must be eaten on site.

Date	Location	Breakfast	Lunch
6/26 – 8/10	Douglass Center 1000 W. Patterson St.	9:00-10:15 M-F	1:00-1:45 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Mayors' Riverfront Park 251 Mills St.	9:15-10:15 M-F	12:15-1:15 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Rockwell Park 1106 Trimble St	9:15-10:15 M-F	12:15-1:15 M-F
6/26 – 8/3	Greenwood Elementary 3501 Moreland St.	8:00-9:00 M-Th	11:00-12:00 M-Th
6/26 – 8/3	Linden Grove 4241 Aboretum Pkwy.	7:45-8:15 M-Th	11:00-12:00 M-Th
6/26 – 8/3	Arcadia Elementary 932 Boswell Ln.	8:15-9:00 M-Th	11:00-12:30 M-Th
6/26 – 8/10	YMCA 1001 W. Maple St.	8:45-9:15 M-F	11:30-12:30 M-F
6/26 – 8/3	Maple Street Magnet School 922 W. Maple St.	8:30-9:00 M-Th	12:30-1:00 M-Th
6/26 – 8/10	Pre-K International 11 Mills St.	8:00-8:45 M-Th	11:30-12:15 M-Th
6/26 – 8/10	Y.O.U. 422 E. South St.	7:45-8:30 M-Th	12:00-1:00 M-Th
6/26 – 8/10	Tabernacle Church of God 3210 Virginia Ave.	9:30-10:30 M-F	12:00-1:00 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Upjohn Park 1018 Walter St.	9:15-10:15 M-F	12:15-1:15 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	New Village Park 2500 St. Albans Way	9:15-10:15 M-F	12:15-1:15 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Interfaith 1037 Interfaith Blvd.	9:00-9:30 M-F	1:00-1:30 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Stones Church 1225 W. Patterson	9:00-9:30 M-F	11:30-12:30 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Salvation Army 1700 S. Burdick St.	9:00-9:30 M-F	12:00-12:30 M-F
6/26 – 8/4	Lincoln Elementary 912 N. Burdick St.	8:00-8:30 M-F	11:30-12:30 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Southside Park 2156 Race St	9:15-10:15 M-F	12:15-1:15 M-F
6/26 – 8/3	Washington Elementary 1919 Portage St.	8:00-9:00 M-F	10:00-2:00 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	All Things Possible 2000 W. Michigan Ave.	9:30-10:00 M-F	12:00-12:30 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Milwood Elementary School 3400 Lovers Lane	8:00-9:00 M-Th	10:00-2:30 M-Th
6/26 – 8/10	Civic Theatre/Parish Theater 329 S Park St.	N/A	12:00-12:30 M-Th
6/26 – 8/10	Eastside Sunrise Plaza 1628 East Main St.	N/A	12:30-1:15 M-Th
6/26 – 8/10	Northeastern Boys and Girls Club 2433 Gertrude St.	N/A	1:00-1:30 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	CEC 714 S. Westnedge Ave.	N/A	12:00-12:45 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Mobile Site Fox Ridge Apts. 1320 Fox Ridge Dr.	N/A	11:15-11:45 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	LaCrone Park 535 W. Paterson St.	9:15-10:15 M-F	12:15-1:15 M-F
6/26 – 8/10	Milwood United Church 3919 Portage St.	N/A	12:00-12:30 M-F



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Carmilla Little, Courtney Wrenn, & Adiah Jones
Trinity Prep Center

Kristin Zimmerman

Artrella Cohn
CIS Staff Recognition

Matthew Cavalli
Gulnar Husain Volunteer Award recipient

Patricia Carlin
Diether Haenicke Promise of Excellence Award recipient



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Patricia Carlin



Kristin Zimmerman, Imani Foster, and JaVon Wilson



Courtney Wrenn, Carmilla Little, & Adiah Jones



Matthew Cavalli



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