

Kalamazoo Public Schools

EXCELSIOR

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January 2024 • Volume 27, Issue 1

Derek Jeter, Cal Ripken Jr. Unveil New Jeter Fields

(STORY & PHOTOS ON PAGES 14-15)

A special insert on
scholarships from the
Kalamazoo Community
Foundation

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New Opportunities Continue in the New Year

PEOPLE love the start of a new year. There's a sense that we can begin fresh — with new plans, new goals, new possibilities. Truth is that any day can serve as a temporal landmark for a new beginning. It might be a birthday, an anniversary, the new year, the start of a month, the beginning of the week, or ... today.

**A Message
from the
Superintendent**



Dr. Darrin Slade

For me, July 1, 2023, was a huge landmark. I began my tenure as superintendent of Kalamazoo Public Schools. I appreciate the KPS Board of Education and the Kalamazoo community for giving me the opportunity to help guide the district.

Since then, the district has made a good start on several new initiatives, many of which were discussed in the 90-day goals that I outlined for the board last summer. Among the goals highlighted then were to:

- Create and build relationships
- Identify needs of the district

- Begin to address needs of the district, including transportation issues

- Focus on areas related to student achievement, school climate and safety

One of my primary focuses has been on building relationships within the district and with members of the broader community, such as The Kalamazoo Promise and the Rotary Club of Kalamazoo. If we have not had the opportunity to meet, please attend one of the superintendent information sessions happening this winter or spring. These meetings are a chance for us to discuss the work going on in the district, such as the implementation of our attendance and discipline initiatives and how these changes are designed to create learning environments that support stronger academic achievement.

I have also been a frequent visitor in our schools to observe our dedicated principals, teachers and other staff. They are working hard every day, and my hope is that our new policies will make their jobs easier — and help our students more readily engage in learning.

Speaking of which, one of my greatest pleasures has been working with our students. Young people never cease to amaze me with their energy, enthusiasm and intelligence. As an educational institution, our goal is to ensure that all of that potential is given a strong foundation on which to flourish.

We have been able to do that by addressing other issues mentioned in my 90-day goals. We took steps to resolve existing transportation challenges. New pay scales for drivers have helped create a more stable transportation crew and eliminate the bus cancellations that made it difficult for students to get to school.

That was a key issue that had to be tackled to make headway on improving attendance. Elsewhere in the Excelsior, you can read about the new attendance policies and some of the fun ways our schools are seeking to encourage students to be in school, ready to learn every day.

In meetings, school and community members voiced concerns about behavior and discipline in the district. To that end, we instituted new behavior expectations to improve the climate and culture in our schools. The majority of KPS students understand and follow the rules, but for the few that find it difficult to do so, we have made it clear that their behavior is not going to be allowed to disrupt learning for everyone else.

That is our main goal; to ensure our students have all of the educational opportunities they need to succeed in the future. By encouraging students to be in school every day, and giving them calmer, more focused school environments, we have been able to turn our attention to helping students concentrate on learning, because improving student achievement is our No. 1 goal.

Moving into the new year, it is important to remember that we can start over at any time. Every day is Day 1 — if not a new year then at least a new day. To that end, please look for information in the coming weeks about our new Saturday School program for students who need extra support to enhance their reading and math skills.

Students need to know that if we missed a goal yesterday, there's no reason why we can't hit it today, why we can't begin anew. The important thing is to keep working, to keep striving, to bring a renewed sense of purpose to every day.



Ice Cream Challenge

Saturday, January 27
11am - 3pm
Included with Admission

Science never tasted so delicious. Teams will battle to scoop up support for the best ice cream made with the power of liquid nitrogen! Come ready to cast your vote for the most delicious treat.



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ARTISTS' CORNER

Indian Prairie Elementary School second graders have been studying trees for artistic inspiration, said art teacher Jamie McKinney. Using warm colors, the students created unique backdrops for their tree paintings, then the students talked about line quality and how that element could make their paintings unique.



Ny'Aijah Myles



Leah Schrum



Larissa Gakodi



Justin Ligon

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Community Homeworks provides additional critical home repair services for homeowners, such as plumbing, electrical, and other health and safety issues. Visit CommunityHomeworks.org for more information.

This activity is brought to you in partnership with the City of Kalamazoo, LISC, and support from other grant funding partners.

Food Service Welcomes New Director

KPS has welcomed Chartwell’s resident district manager Kimberly Morely as the district’s new Food Service director.

Morley is originally from Saginaw, but came to Kalamazoo to earn her bachelor’s degree in dietetics from Western Michigan University. She also has a master’s degree in administration from Davenport College.



Kimberly Morely, Chartwell Food Service Director

She has been a registered dietician for 25 years and has worked with Sodexo, Compass Group (which is Chartwell’s parent company), and Kauhale Health. During her career, she’s always worked on the clinical side of dietetics and through the years moved into the management side of the business. For Kauhale Health, an assisted living and memory care facility in Otsego, she was the executive director in charge of everything from food service to housekeeping to finances.

“I’ve always had an interest in making an impact with children,” Morley said. “If you can build healthy habits early in life, they can last a lifetime. I like the aspect that I get to work with nutrition and operations, like financials, with KPS. I like having my hands in lots of different areas.”

She lives in Shelbyville with her husband and two children.

Congratulations to Middle School Band Members

THE KPS middle school bands were well represented at the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association District XI Middle School Honor Band on Nov. 7.

The honor band consisted of only 98 students from all of the middle school band students in Kalamazoo, Calhoun, St. Joseph, and Branch counties.

“To have three of our four KPS middle schools represented in this select ensemble is quite an achievement,” said Milwood Magnet and Loy Norrix band director Aaron Mirakovitz.



Pictured, from left: Craig Freeman, band director, Hillside and Maple Street middle schools; Eden Bader, clarinet, Maple Street Magnet School; Tony VanStreain, trombone, Hillside Middle School; Winter Walsh, flute, Milwood Magnet School; and Aaron Mirakovits, band director, Milwood Magnet School and Loy Norrix High School.

READY TO APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS?

Your first step starts here... FAFSA WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

5:30 TO 8PM

THE KALAMAZOO PROMISE
180 E. WATER ST.
KALAMAZOO, MI 49007

FREE PARKING IN N. EDWARDS ST. RAMP

Learn about FAFSA and what you need to fill out.

In addition we will also share information on:

- Different types of financial aid
- Local scholarship sources
- Tips for writing college application essays.

Dinner is provided starting at 5:30pm and the workshop will start at 6pm.

This is a hybrid event. A Zoom link will be sent to those who select the Zoom option when they sign up online.

THIS WORKSHOP IS SPONSORED BY

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SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER OR VISIT [BIT.LY/FAFSA1213](https://bit.ly/FAFSA1213)

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WHAT'S THE FAFSA?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) allows college students to access financial aid for college, including:

- Grants
- Scholarships
- Work study
- Federal student loans.

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LISTO PARA APPLICAR PARA LOS BECAS?

Tu primer paso empieza aquí... TALLER DE FAFSA

MIÉRCOLES 10 DE ENERO

5:30 TO 8PM

THE KALAMAZOO PROMISE
180 E. WATER ST.
KALAMAZOO, MI 49007

ESTACIONAMIENTO GRATIS EN N. EDWARDS ST. RAMP

Aprende sobre FAFSA y que formularios necesitas completar.

Ademas tambien compartiremos informacion sobre:

- Diferentes tipos de ayuda financiera
- Fuentes de becas locales
- Consejos para redactar ensayos de solicitud de ingreso a la Universidad.

Cena es proporcionada a partir de las 5:30pm y el taller comenzara a las 6pm.

Este es un evento híbrido. Se enviara un enlace de Zoom a quienes seleccionen la opcion Zoom. Este taller ESTÁ

QUE ES LA FAFSA?

La Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal para Estudiantes (FAFSA) permite a los estudiantes universitarios acceder ayuda financiera para la universidad, que incluye:

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- Trabaja y estudia
- Prestamos federales para estudiantes

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Dr. Darrin Slade

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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:

**Director of School Improvement,
Title I and Assessments**
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

Kale Apple Salad with Creamy Dijon Honey Mustard Dressing

IT'S THE post-holiday season, which usually means you may be looking at New Year's resolutions to eat healthier after a holiday season of rich food and family celebrations. This sweet, tangy, and delicious kale salad is the perfect way to kick off a new year of eating healthy.

The best part of this salad is the simple homemade dressing. It's sweet and savory at the same time and has a zip that you can't get enough of.

This salad is even popular with youngsters. KPS Dining Services made it for a taste test event at Woods Lake Elementary: A Magnet School for the Arts using local kale from Sunlight Gardens in Battle Creek. The majority of students took a sample and some went back for seconds! It only takes about 15 minutes to assemble and you can use local kale and apples because they are both still available at our Kalamazoo Farmers Market.



SALAD

1 bunch of kale — de-stemmed and chopped to large bite-size pieces
¼-½ cup roasted sunflower seeds
1 apple, sliced and cut into about 1-inch pieces
¼-½ cup dried cherries, raisins, or craisins
½ cup shredded carrots
Optional: pomegranate seeds for Christmas color

DRESSING

½ cup mayonaise
2 tablespoons stone ground mustard
2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
A few dashes of celery salt or celery seeds

DIRECTIONS

1. Add all the dressing ingredients to a small mixing bowl and whisk together.

2. Use a large mixing bowl, add your chopped and de-stemmed kale. Use your clean hands to “massage” the kale. Do this for about 5 minutes. It makes the hearty kale more tender.
3. Toss with dressing. You can let it sit in the dressing to further soften it, but it is not mandatory.

This salad can sit in your fridge for several

days and the kale will not break down or get mushy.
4. Add the rest of the ingredients before serving, toss and enjoy!

Tip: There is a very easy and efficient trick to de-stem your kale. Check out this 27-second video. Search YouTube for “The Easiest Way To Stem Your Kale | Clean & Delicious.”

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Visit KalamazooArts.org/membership/

Traveling Through Time in a KAMSC Physics Classroom

Teacher Michael Sinclair Celebrates 36 Years at KAMSC

KALAMAZOO Area Math and Science Center physics teacher Michael Sinclair is facing a problem of time and space: How did 36 years pass at light speed in his classroom?

When he joined the fledgling science academy in 1988, he was the youngest faculty member, but suddenly he finds himself the oldest teacher on KAMSC's staff. The students are as young and as bright as ever, the work is as challenging and interesting as it has always been, but "I don't remember living that long," he laughed.

Sinclair, 68, was recently named one of the Michigan American Legion's Teachers of the Year. (He is a member of American Legion Post 36.) He'll add the honor to a roster of other awards that include the Kennedy Center/Stephen Sondheim Inspirational Teacher Award, the Michigan Education Association Educational Excellence Award, and multiple Kalamazoo County Excellence in Education Awards.

He never planned to be a teacher. In fact in high school, when he took a career skills test, a counselor told him that his interpersonal skills and interest in math and science would make him an ideal candidate to become a science teacher.

"I said no way on God's green earth was I ever going to be a teacher, because I didn't think I had teachers who really cared," the Boseman, Montana native said.

But life has its ways. After earning a degree in psy-



Michael Sinclair has taught at KAMSC since 1988.

chology at Montana State University and four years of active duty with the U.S. Army thanks to ROTC, he found himself back at school wondering what he should do next. That's when another counselor at Montana State University told him the world was in desperate need of math and science teachers.

Two years later, after a degree in science education with a physics concentration, he was teaching in Wyoming. He went on to earn a master's degree in mathematics at Ohio State University.

Those teachers who didn't care, in part, helped shape him into the teacher he is today.

"When I found myself teaching, I wanted to make

sure the kids knew that I cared about their knowledge, their education. That's why I write so many recommendation letters, why I engage with the kids," Sinclair said. "I really believe a teacher can change a person's life.

"Teaching is something I kind of fell into and I fell in love with it. I think it was the kids that made me fall in love with it."

Dr. Michael Tanoff, director of KAMSC said, "Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the way Mr. Sinclair approaches education is that he is continuously reinventing the material with which he engages his stu-

dents. It keeps him fresh and excited about working with his students year after year."

Sinclair said that beyond the numbers and the theories, there are fascinating people throughout the history of physics. He likes to think of telling the story of physics as a history lesson.

"The people in physics are so diverse and you can see how they're connected together," he said. "Even though they never really knew each other, were never in the same time period, what this person did in the past led to this person having a deeper understanding of something that now leads into a whole new area that no one ever imagined."

(continued on page 7)



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Michael Sinclair *(continued from page 6)*

He hopes he inspires students, and he thinks the students should know that they continually inspire him as a teacher.

“There’s a fearlessness that a lot of these kids at KAMSC have,” Sinclair said. “ They’re going to try stuff if they want to try it. KAMSC kids are so dynamic. I just want to get that through about these kids. They are incredibly impressive.”

When he started 36 years ago, the majority of the kids wanted to be doctors, scientists or engineers. That has changed a bit now. There are still those who are STEM-oriented, but he also sees more who are willing to explore other career paths, such as law and music. He encourages experimentation and curiosity.

“I’ve always told students you can do what you want to do,” he said. “You might have to work at it. You’re going to fail along the way because all of us fail a lot of the time. How you handle failure determines your success.”

That might not have been how he would have approached students in the past. When he first start-

AS PART of Michael Sinclair’s award from the American Legion, he will receive a \$500 cash prize. He plans to use the money to help fund one of his pet projects at KAMSC: the high-altitude balloon launch program.

He has been launching them at KAMSC for the last six to seven years. Students participate in the experiments, which involve flying special stratosphere balloons anywhere from 60,000 to 100,000 feet above earth. The balloons allow scientists a view of the heavens, without interference from the atmosphere. The money will go to purchase balloons, helium and tracking devices. Students who help track the balloons earn their ham radio licenses for the project.

The planned launch in 2024 will be especially notable, because Sinclair plans to launch three balloons during the total solar eclipse, which will be happening on April 8.

“I’m taking a personal day, because I’m going to be on the centerline,” Sinclair said. “I want to see 3 minutes and 48 seconds of totality.”

KAMSC Director Dr. Michael Tannoff said, “The multi-year, high-altitude project, in which he is currently engaged, is exemplary in how it joins students from different cohorts together. And it teaches them how to build on the shoulders of those that came before them.”

ed at KAMSC there was a sense that you could experiment with how hard you could push a student. Now, perhaps because he worries about stress and mental health issues among his charges, he is less focused on cramming as much information as possible in their brains.

“I think my focus is getting the kids to love learning as opposed to focusing on ‘you need to learn this stuff.’ I’ve changed my curriculum to make sure kids have a lot of hands-on activities. I’m beginning to realize how much fun kids have to have in school to really enjoy it.”



Information Nights 2024

Want to know more about the programs and classes that Kalamazoo RESA has to offer? Please join us for a short presentation followed by a Q & A session to answer any questions you may have about the many options available in Career and Technical Education (CTE), Education for the Arts (EFA) and Early/Middle College (EMC).

KRESA staff will be hosting the following virtual and in-person information sessions:

- ▶ **Thursday, Jan. 25** CTE/EFA/EMC from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
- ▶ **Tuesday, Feb. 6** EMC from 5:15 – 5:45 pm and 6:45 – 7:15 p.m. | IN-PERSON during KRESA Career Connect Open House at the Air Zoo
- ▶ **Tuesday, Feb. 20** CTE/EFA/EMC from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
- ▶ **Thursday, Feb. 29** EMC from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. | IN-PERSON at KRESA Wile Auditorium*

**KRESA Wile Auditorium is located at 1819 East Milham Avenue Portage, MI 49002*

For Zoom meeting links, visit the Information Nights section at kresa.org/apply



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ONE APPLICATION. DOZENS OF SCHOLARSHIPS.

2024 SCHOLARSHIP CATALOG



The Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) provides a simple and easy General Application for students in Kalamazoo County to search and apply for most of our KZCF Scholarships. This single application allows you to be matched with scholarships and grants that fit you and your educational plans. With 60+ scholarships, KZCF provides students of all ages with opportunities to pursue the future they want for themselves after high school.

Many scholarships can be used at both in and out-of-state schools. Most can be used alongside the **Kalamazoo Promise** and can be applied toward:

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Must **demonstrate financial need** through the FAFSA



Available to **part-time and full-time students**



Also available to students **already attending college**



Must meet **academic requirements** (complete list provided online)



Available to **adult students** (formerly known as non-traditional)

2024 SCHOLARSHIP LISTING

Due to the delayed release of the FAFSA, the application window is extended from January 1, 2024 - April 1, 2024*



LEARN MORE & APPLY
kalfound.org/scholarships

Full descriptions available at link.

* Unless otherwise noted

Academics



Bhargava Family Scholarship Recognizes graduating high school seniors who demonstrate high academic performance as well as involvement in school, community, and work activities.



Edmond B. Woodruff & Beth Woodruff Shipman Memorial Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or student at a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior.



Kalamazoo Science Foundation Scholarship Graduating senior or undergraduate student who is a Kalamazoo County resident or graduated from a Kalamazoo County high school.

Arts

Dominic and Barbara Court Family Arts Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior, undergraduate, or graduate student pursuing a degree in the arts.



Brady & Patrick Gallagher Memorial Scholarship Graduating senior at Loy Norrix High School who has demonstrated ability and interest in the area of creative arts.



Ann N. MacGregor Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior, undergraduate or graduate student majoring in visual arts.



Melissa Wroblewski Scholarship Kalamazoo Central High School or Loy Norrix High School graduating senior; pursuing 2-4 year degree in the visual arts.

Athletics

Bob Block Memorial Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or student of a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating high school senior and active in competitive swimming or diving during high school.

  **Junior Golf Fund Scholarship** Graduating high school senior, participant in the Junior Golf Association program. Enrolling or enrolled in a four-year degree program.

 **Evelyn Prince Memorial Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or student at a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior and participated on a women’s golf team for a minimum of one season in junior or senior year.

  **Glen C. Smith Jr./KCC Caddie Scholarship** Kalamazoo County graduating high school senior or current undergraduate; two years as a caddie at the Kalamazoo County Club or member club.

  **Brian Thiele Memorial Scholarship** Kalamazoo County graduating high school senior or undergraduate student who played four years of soccer during high school and is enrolling in a 2-4 year degree program at a college/university.

Matthew VanderSalm Memorial Scholarship Southcentral Michigan High School Hockey League defensemen and graduating high school senior attending a 2-4 year college/university within 15 months of graduating from high school.

 **Roy G. Walters Memorial Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or student of a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior and involved in athletics as well as school and community activities.

 **Curtis and Dorothy Young Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or student at a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior and participant in varsity-level high school sports; enrolling at a college/university.

College Undergraduates

 **Ronald C. Cavanaugh Memorial Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of Kalamazoo County high school who is enrolled/enrolling full-time as a junior, senior or fifth-year student in Western Michigan University’s Haworth College of Business.

  **Frank & Hildegard Goodrich Family Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is a junior or senior level undergraduate student or graduate student at Western Michigan University, Michigan State University, University of Colorado or University of Wisconsin.

    **Gail & Hilda Oster Undergraduate Scholarship** Resident of Van Buren County or graduate of a Van Buren County high school pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

College Undergraduates - continued

   **Wade & Clio Van Valkenburg Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident, graduating high school senior or undergraduate student with a previous criminal conviction. Must be enrolled in 2-4 year degree program, trade school or vocational/technical training.

  **John C. Volderauer Scholarship** Permanent Kalamazoo County resident/undergraduate in radiologic technology, magnetic resonance imaging, ultrasound sonography or nuclear medicine technology who is receiving their clinical or didactic training in Kalamazoo County or continuing education for current radiologic technologist employed in Kalamazoo County.

Company Sponsored

 **Welch’s/National Grape Cooperative Scholarship** Graduating high school senior, child or grandchild of an employee of the Welch’s Company plant in Lawton or child or grandchild of a National Grape Cooperative member residing in Allegan, Berrien, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, Kent or Van Buren County.

Leadership

 **Derek Jeter Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or student at a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior and advocates a substance-free lifestyle.

    **Love Where You Live Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is an undergraduate student.

 **William R. Steers Kalamazoo Community Foundation Scholarship** Kalamazoo County resident or student at a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior enrolling at Albion College.

Kalamazoo Public Schools

Mildred McConkey Memorial Scholarship Kalamazoo Public Schools graduating senior who has shown improvement in English composition throughout their time in high school.

 **CIS/Kalamazoo Public Education Foundation Scholarship** Kalamazoo Public Schools graduating senior pursuing a degree in education.

    **Duane Roberts Scholarship** BIPOC KPS graduating senior or graduate who demonstrates a commitment to social justice.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please email scholarships@kalfound.org.

Kalamazoo Public Schools - continued



Mary Ruth Robinson Scholarship Kalamazoo Central High School graduating senior or graduate.



Peter & Inez Schonveld Scholarship KPS graduating high school senior or graduate of KPS enrolled in an undergraduate program.

Specific High Schools



COMSTOCK Mary Roe Memorial Scholarship Comstock High School graduating senior pursuing an undergraduate degree in STEM and enrolling in an accredited 4-year college/university.

HACKETT Earl Haas Hackett Catholic Prep Scholarship Hackett Catholic Prep graduating high school senior; enrolling in a college or university.



PAW PAW David & Barbara Kruse Paw Paw High School Scholarship Paw Paw High School graduating senior (including Michigan Avenue Academy) or graduate enrolled in a vocational or technical school or 2 to 4-year degree program leading to a career in a technical field.



SCHOOLCRAFT Dr. Jack & Charlene Sauer Scholarship Schoolcraft High School graduating senior pursuing vocational or technical training or a 2 to 4-year degree program at a college/university in the state of Michigan.

Specific Area/Program of Study



AVIATION OR ENGINEERING William T. Nuyen Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo county high school pursuing an undergraduate degree in aviation or engineering at Western Michigan University.



BUSINESS Jean Hunse Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is enrolling or enrolled as a junior, senior, or fifth-year senior in the Haworth College of Business at Western Michigan University.

EDUCATION Schwenk Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduating senior of a Kalamazoo County high school who is pursuing an elementary education degree. Renewable.



MANUFACTURING/ENGINEERING Weber Specialties Company Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is pursuing a certificate or 2 to 4-year degree program in manufacturing technology, manufacturing engineering, integrated supply management, engineering graphics or design technology.



NURSING/OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY Phyllis A. Nuyen Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or student at a Kalamazoo County high school who is a graduating senior pursuing a degree in nursing or occupational therapy at Western Michigan University.

Unique Scholarships



High on Heroes Scholarship Child, stepchild, grandchild, step-grandchild or spouse of a currently employed or retired certified law enforcement officer, firefighter, licensed EMT/first responder enrolled at an accredited 4-year college/university.



Kreager Family Scholarship Graduating high school senior enrolled in South Haven High School or a high school in Kalamazoo County, or a resident of Kalamazoo County who has lost a parent through death or abandonment beyond infancy.



Montague Myers Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who has been abused, abandoned or neglected as a child. Must be in a 2 to 4-year degree program or vocational training. Renewable.



Eva L. Ozier Scholarship (Graduating High School) Black, non-Hispanic/Latinx Kalamazoo County resident, attendee of a Kalamazoo County high school or graduating High school senior pursuing technical/vocational training.

Unique Scholarships



Covert Township Community Foundation Scholarship Graduating high school senior or undergraduate student who has been a Covert Township resident for the past three consecutive years and is enrolled in a 2-4 year degree program, trade school or vocational/technical training.



Danial & Joeanna Smith Education Scholarship Graduating high school senior or undergraduate student who is a resident of Van Buren County and pursuing a bachelor's degree full time at a 4-year college/university.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can support and create scholarships in our community!

Through KZCF, you can donate to the Love Where You Live Scholarship Fund which allows KZCF to offer scholarships to college students throughout Kalamazoo County. Learn more at kalfound.org/giving.

Additional Scholarships



Enhancement Ministries Scholarship Adult undergraduates, residents of Kalamazoo or residents of Calhoun County making the transition from an unrelated field into a community service profession or developing skills within their current community service job.



Earl Haas Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school pursuing an undergraduate degree.



David & Priscilla Morris Scholarship Established to provide tuition support for a Black/African American Kalamazoo County resident or graduating senior/graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is attending Western Michigan University.



Eva L. Ozier Student Scholarship (Today's Students) Established for a Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school who is Black or African American and planning to enroll/return to a community college, undergraduate program or vocational/technical institute.



Leon A., Donald J., and Jean K. Schau Scholarship Established to provide renewable grant assistance to residents of Kalamazoo County or graduates of a Kalamazoo County high school, Otsego high school or Plainwell high school who are pursuing a certificate, degree, educational program, continuing education opportunity or professional development opportunity.



Jerry A. and M. Christine Walker Scholarship Resident of Kalamazoo County or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school or GED program pursuing an undergraduate degree, certificate, trade, vocational or community college program.



E. Earl Wright Scholarship Kalamazoo County resident or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school enrolling in a technology or vocational school or 2-year program. Renewable.

Graduate Students



Dominic and Barbara Court Family Scholarship Established to provide assistance to a resident of Kalamazoo County or graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school enrolled in a graduate program in Veterinary Medicine.



Nancy C. Niles Donovan Scholarship For residents of Kalamazoo or St. Joseph County, or graduates of a Kalamazoo or St. Joseph County high school who are enrolling or enrolled in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University.



Kalamazoo Public Library Amanda Green Scholarship For BIPOC Kalamazoo County residents or graduates of a Kalamazoo County high school pursuing a graduate degree in Library & Information Sciences. Renewable.



S. Rudolph Light Medical Education Scholarship Must be a Kalamazoo County resident, graduate of a Kalamazoo County high school or graduate student pursuing a degree leading to a career as a doctor, dentist or nurse.



Benjamin & Cherie Gubin Scholarship For graduates of a Kalamazoo County high school or resident of Kalamazoo County for at least 12 months prior to applying. Must be enrolling or enrolled in an accredited graduate school program at a college/university.



Gail & Hilda Oster Graduate Scholarship Must be a resident of Van Buren County, enrolled in either Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine or Western Michigan University's Homer Stryker School of Medicine. Renewable



Myra P. Whalen For residents of Kalamazoo County or graduates of a Kalamazoo County high school pursuing a graduate degree. Renewable

HOW TO APPLY FOR KZCF SCHOLARSHIPS

Step 1:
Start



Starting January 1, 2024, go to bit.ly/HowToApply23 and click the Apply Now button.

Step 2:
Fill Out Your App

Click "Opportunities" on the left side of the screen and select the 2024 KZCF application. You don't have to finish your application all at once. Be sure to click save before exiting.

Step 3:
Submit Your App

Click "Submit" on the final page of the application when you're finished. Your application must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on April 1, 2024.

Elementary Students Explore STEAM Fun Around the District

PFIZER Inc. scientists have been once again visiting fifth graders around Kalamazoo Public Schools to present a hands-on strawberry DNA experiment. More than a dozen Pfizer scientists and technicians have been setting up temporary science labs



Xavier Penny is fascinated by the gears moving other gears in this long display at the Milwood STEAM museum.

at schools and talking to students about DNA, the cellular molecules that carry the genetic instructions for the growth, development and reproduction for all living things. The scientists direct the students through the pro-



Spring Valley Center for Exploration fifth graders Neveah Teague and Ja'Quan Harris mash strawberries to begin the DNA extraction process.



At the Milwood STEAM Museum, Lincoln Zeider holds up the right side of the arch as the others build the left side.

cess of mashing strawberries and applying a chemical buffer that extracts the DNA from the rest of the berry material. Another additive then helps solidify the DNA strands and makes them visible to the naked eye.

Pfizer launched the project last year as part of its community engagement activities. They are visiting all KPS elementary schools, including Spring Valley Center for Exploration, which is pictured.

Milwood Elementary School students can thank the school's PTSO for sponsoring a visit from the STEAM Hands-On Museum from Mobile Ed Productions on Dec. 1.

The traveling exhibition of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) concepts exposed students to gears, circuits, 3-D printing, and more during the event.

Second grade teacher Mary Spiewak said it was a great event, while student Nola Householder told her mom that, "It was the best thing we have done — ever!"

The Milwood PTSO actively works to improve the school and provide opportunities for the students through a robust fundraising schedule, which includes activities such as a Penny Wars, Movie Night and the upcoming Winter Candy-Gram. At the start of the school year, the PTSO paid for the new gaga pit on the school playground.

"Thank you to our community for the support you give," said Principal Craig LeSuer.



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Baseball Hall of Famers Derek Jeter, Cal Ripken Jr. Attend Ribbon Cutting for New Jeter Fields

BASEBALL Hall of Famer Derek Jeter returned to his high school baseball field at Kalamazoo Central High School on Nov. 14 to unveil new baseball and softball fields for the school during a special ribbon cutting ceremony.

Jeter's Turn 2 Foundation funded the \$5 million project, working closely with the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation, which creates multipurpose parks for youth; Kalamazoo Public Schools; and Elite Companies to bring the renovations to life.

"The newly unveiled fields at Kalamazoo Central High School stand as symbols of aspiration, hard work and community support."

— Dr. Darrin Slade

Jeter and the community marked the milestone with a celebration, which began with welcome remarks by Kalamazoo Central students Isaiah Hawkes and Sadaya Hamby, who participate in Turn 2's Jeter's Leaders program.

"It's incredibly humbling to return to the place where my love for baseball grew to present a new space where the next generation of athletes can also recognize their passions," Jeter said. "I'd like to thank Cal and the many individuals who shared their expertise and passion in collaborating with us on this special project, which I'm confident will grow the game and inspire countless youth to aim high and make their biggest dreams a reality."

Fellow Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. also attended the ribbon cutting.

"I am proud that our foundation provides kids



Derek Jeter and Cal Ripken Jr. talk to students after the ribbon cutting at Kalamazoo Central High School.

nationwide with safe places to play and learn through our parks, programs and STEM Centers. To be here today in Derek's hometown is extra special knowing how much Kalamazoo means to him.

(continued on page 15)

ON THE COVER
Derek Jeter returns to Kalamazoo Central.



Derek Jeter greets several Jeter's Leaders at the ribbon cutting.



Jeter's Leaders attend the opening of the new baseball and softball fields at Kalamazoo Central. Jeter's Leaders is the hallmark program of Derek Jeter's Turn 2 foundation.

Ribbon Cutting *(continued from page 14)*



The ribbon cutting was attended by, from left, Kalamazoo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade; Susan Coney, KPS executive director of communications; Greg Straka, Kalamazoo Central vice principal and athletic director; Judi Mentzer, KC dean of students; Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr.; Valerie Boggan, KC principal; Derek Jeter, Baseball Hall of Famer and KC alum; Sharlee Jeter, president of the Turn 2 Foundation; Karen Jackson, executive supervisor of facilities for KPS; TiAnna Harrison, president of the KPS Board of Education. Patti Sholler-Barber, KPS board trustee; and Jermaine Jackson, vice president of the KPS Board of Education.



Students walk the new Jeter Fields at Kalamazoo Central.

I enjoyed competing against Derek back in the day, however, working with him and The Turn 2 Foundation on this project has a deeper meaning and greater impact than what we did between the white lines,” Ripken said.

KPS Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade said, “The newly unveiled fields at Kalamazoo Central High School stand as symbols of aspiration, hard work and community support. This state-of-the-art facility offers students a space to hone their skills, embrace teamwork, and foster the same spirit of excellence that Derek Jeter embodied throughout his remarkable career. We are forever grateful to The Turn 2 Foundation for its continued support of students in Kalamazoo and are thrilled to also have the support of the Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation.”

Turn 2 Foundation President Sharlee Jeter shared how the newly completed fields will further Turn 2’s mission to empower youth to accomplish their goals.

“Having grown up in Kalamazoo, I’m proud to be giving back to a community that means so much to my family and The Turn 2 Foundation,” Sharlee Jeter said. “Through our Jeter’s Leaders program in Kalamazoo, we provide local youth with enriching opportunities to achieve their full potential and we are excited to deepen our impact by creating an environment where more young people can learn the skills they need to succeed throughout their lives.”

The project provided for completely renovated and reoriented fields outfitted with new seating and new dugouts. The baseball field has a synthetic turf field with new sub-base and drainage system, while



Cal Ripken Jr. and Derek Jeter share a laugh in the dugout.

the softball field has a new clay infield and synthetic turf outfield with sub-base and drainage system. One of the key elements of the new fields is the reorientation of their layouts, so batters face the pitching mound in the northeast. This orientation minimizes the impact of low afternoon and evening sun angles on the players’ vision.

- Both fields include:**
- New elevated aluminum grandstand bleachers
 - New pre-cast concrete dugouts
 - New galvanized fencing, backstop and foul poles
 - New press boxes

The project also included a natural grass practice field, accessible restrooms and accessible parking.

Attendance Matters

New Policies, More Incentives Aim to Improve Daily Attendance

KALAMAZOO Public Schools officially launched new attendance expectations at the start of the second trimester in November, but throughout the school year schools have been promoting good attendance through fun and engaging activities in an effort to emphasize the importance of being in school every day.

"I really appreciate having a new district wide attendance policy," said Northeastern Elementary School Principal Sylvia Washington. "Our attendance is already beginning to improve. Parents have been stepping up by getting their children to school on a daily basis as well as calling the office when they are sick. I am anticipating even more improvement with attendance for the remainder of the year."

According to the advocacy group Attendance Works, chronic absence — missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason, including excused, unexcused absences and suspensions — can translate into students having difficulty learning to read by the third grade, achieving in middle school, and graduating from high school.

ATTENDANCE WORKS SAYS:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss two to four days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
 - Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month and that's known as chronic absenteeism.
 - Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or be held back.
 - By sixth grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
 - When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.
- Research also shows that attendance improves when schools engage students and parents in pos-



Malaysia Crayton achieved perfect attendance at Northeastern Elementary in October. At an attendance celebration, Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade drew her mom's name, Shanteia Smith, as the winner of a raffle for a TV. Smith happens to work for food service at Northeastern.



Fourth-grader Kisubi Lesage won the first trimester perfect attendance tablet at Edison Academy.

itive ways and when schools provide mentors for chronically absent students, according to Attendance Works.

"As we know, positive school attendance plays an important role in the success of our students," said Spring Valley Center for Exploration Principal Heather Misner. "If they are not at school, they are missing critical instruction and skill building that is necessary for them to be successful in school and beyond."

Every KPS school has launched an attendance committee to work with students and families to promote positive attendance. Committees can work with families who are struggling with attendance issues, and they are developing fun incentives to encourage students to attend every day.

At Hillside Middle School, Principal Atiba McKissack says attendance is reinforced through the school's multi-tiered system of supports which provides a framework to identify and provide academic and social-emotional resources to match each student's needs.

Hillside students who meet the attendance requirements are allowed to attend a celebration at the end of the trimester. This fun event includes open gym, a pizza party, cupcake decorating and a dance.

"As we know, positive school attendance plays an important role in the success of our students," said Heather Misner, principal at Spring Valley Center for Exploration. "If they are not at school, they are missing critical instruction and skill building that is necessary for them to be successful."

Misner said Spring Valley also holds monthly celebrations. Students who have perfect attendance each month receive a special treat at lunch or donuts with the principal. In addition, each month the classroom with the highest overall attendance rate receives a class pizza party.

A key to finding success on attendance is parental involvement, said Edison Academy Principal Dr. Julie McDonald. Posters hung around the school and frequent emails to families help emphasize the

(continued on page 17)

Attendance Matters *(continued from page 16)*

importance of being in school every day — for the full day.

Edison’s incentive takes a page from the classic children’s novel “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.” Students can earn weekly “Golden Tick-

ets” for arriving at school on time, staying the full day and fully engaging in the classroom. McDonald draws one name in a raffle and awards the student a computer tablet each trimester.

Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade hosted a perfect

attendance party for 26 students at Northeastern Elementary School to celebrate the school’s attendance efforts. In addition to a pizza party and raffle prizes for each student, Slade purchased a TV that was given to the parent of one lucky student.

KPS Attendance Procedures Overview

THE ATTENDANCE procedures are designed for all students. Good attendance will help students do well in school, college, and at work. It does not matter if absences are excused or unexcused, they all represent lost time in the classroom and lost opportunity to learn. Too many absent students can impact the whole classroom.

School is students’ first and most important job. They are learning about more than math and reading. They are learning how to show up for school on time every day, so that when they graduate and get a job, they will know how to show up for work on time every day. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate and find good jobs. Set an example for your child. Show your child that attendance matters to you and that you will not allow an absence unless someone is truly sick.

All students aged six to sixteen are required to be in school according to state law. Parents/guardians are required by law to make sure their children attend school on a daily basis. Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) expects all students to attend school. A collaborative approach is used in educating young students, which includes the utilization of family support specialists, staff members and administrators to ensure that students attend school on a daily basis.

You can view the entire attendance procedures document on our website (www.kalamazoopublicschools.com/domain/1319).

Contact your child’s school if you have any specific questions.

NEW ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORT Starting on November 27, 2023 (the first day of trimester 2)

When your student has the following number of **unexcused** absences in a trimester, you should expect to receive the following notifications and support.

3 days of unexcused absences in a trimester

- Letter or email to parent/guardian
- Robo text or phone call

5 days of unexcused absences in a trimester

- Letter or email to parent/guardian
- In person, virtual or phone conference

10 days of unexcused absences in a trimester

- Letter or email to parent/guardian
- School attendance committee creates an individualized plan of support

15 days of unexcused absences in a trimester

- Letter or email to parent/guardian
- Referral to central office. The central office attendance team will make further recommendations that may include:
 - wrap around services
 - referrals to community support organizations
 - academic interventions
 - summer school attendance
 - possible recommendations for grade level retention

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)’ RESPONSIBILITY:

- It is the responsibility of the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to notify the student’s school as early as possible on the day of an absence and explain the reasons for the absence.
- Written or email verification of a student’s absence by a parent/guardian is required (unless

otherwise indicated by the appropriate administrator) and should be provided to the school the day after an absence.

- Student absences are considered unexcused if documentation supporting an excused absence is not provided.
- After 3 consecutive absences, a medical note from a physician may be required.
- It is the responsibility of the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to make arrangements with the teacher to obtain missed assignments due to absences.

WHAT IS AN EXCUSED ABSENCE?

- Student illness and/or appointment verified by the parent/guardian or medical professional
- Medically verified extended illness or hospitalization
- Attending a funeral
- Religious holiday
- Absence due to a subpoenaed court appearance
- Any time missed due to KPS school transportation issues

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

The state defines ‘chronic absenteeism’ as attending school less than or equal to 90% of the time. This includes all absences (excused, unexcused, suspensions, etc.). A student who misses more than half the day is considered absent for the day.

Chronic absenteeism not only impacts the absent student, it disrupts learning for the entire classroom when teachers have to repeat lessons for students returning to class.

When your student is out of school, for any reason, they are missing valuable instructional time.

Every six weeks, families will receive letters from the school if their child has an attendance rate of less than or equal to 90%.

Community Helps Washington Writers Academy Give Thanks for Literacy

MORE THAN 300 students, teachers and family members helped Washington Writers' Academy celebrate its 16th annual Giving Thanks for Literacy event in November. It was the school's biggest turnout for the dinner in the post-Covid era.

The annual tradition is a favorite among the Washington community. Guests were treated to a complete Thanksgiving dinner with turkey, mashed potatoes, corn, rolls and yummy desserts. They also

enjoyed a student choir performance under the direction of music teacher David Cicha. Art teacher Todd Patrick coordinated the table decorations.

Kindergarten teacher Katie Loza chaired this year's event, which was made possible by donors including Harding Friendly Markets, Meijer, Trader Joe's, Lighthouse Community Church, and Wenke's. The meal was prepared by Washington's food ser-

vice team Denise Doerschler, Tammy Vargas, and Majida Al Ahmad.

Special guest Kalamazoo Mayor David Anderson welcomed the guests and announced the winner of the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony Poetry Contest. Fifth-grader Reontray Howard's poem was selected to be read at the Kalamazoo Bronson Park Tree Lighting Ceremony on Nov. 24.



Lyrric Armstead, Israel "Mr. Izzy" Ortiz (activity helper) and his son Moses Ortiz.



Music teacher David Cicha leads the student choir performance.

Bag of Books Sale

January 27, 10am - 3:30pm
Van Deusen Room, KPL Central



Thousands of gently used books
priced at 25¢. A bagful for \$3.00

Friends Bookstore

Open Wed Noon to 6pm, Tues - Sat 10am-4pm
Kalamazoo Public Library, Lower Level
315 S. Rose Street . kpl.gov/friends . 553-7820



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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



EXHIBIT NOW - JAN. 21 | FREE

OFF THE SHELVES: Exploring the Kalamazoo Valley Museum's Furniture Collection

Explore the KVM's furniture collection that spans over 200 years of history, from one-of-a-kind items to mass-produced pieces created by local manufacturers.

PROGRAM \$3 PER PERSON

TUESDAY, JAN. 9 | 2 p.m. Adult Discovery Series and Retro Café

Experience an enriching journey through time and space during this immersive adult program with new themes every second Tuesday of the month. Register in advance at kalamazoomuseum.org.



EVENT FRIDAY, FEB. 2 | FREE

SPECIAL OFFERING: Bonnie Jo Campbell Book to Movie

Kalamazoo Valley Community College
Texas Township Campus, Dale B. Lake Auditorium



Author Bonnie Jo Campbell and director Haroula Rose discuss their collaboration to make Bonnie Jo's national bestselling book "Once Upon a River" into an award-winning movie. Stay after to watch the film, followed by a book signing with Bonnie Jo. For details and to reserve your free tickets, visit kalamazoomuseum.org. See the mini-exhibit about Campbell at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum January through June.



DEC. 27 - 30 & JAN. 2 - 7 | FREE

WINTER BREAK: Stories We Tell

Fun family activities explore the many ways people share stories. Experience storytellers, music, dance, hands-on crafts and much more. More details at kalamazoomuseum.org.

PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE

JANUARY SHOWS | \$3 PER PERSON

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS

Polaris | 11 a.m. | 29 min. | Grades 3 & up

Follow the adventures of a penguin and polar bear who meet on the Arctic Sea ice. They become fast friends who use the scientific method and build a spaceship to investigate ice, the seasons and the planets.

Hot & Energetic Universe | 2 p.m. | 29 min. | Grades 7 & up

From the death of stars to the big bang, invisible wavelengths of energy tell the story of our hot and energetic universe.

SUNDAYS

One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure | 1 p.m. | Pre-K - Grade 1

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 | 2 p.m. | 40 min. | Grades 4 & up

Learn about the "celestial wonders" that can be seen overhead in Michigan, such as constellations, planets and meteor showers.

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

SPECIAL NOTICE: Museum closed Dec. 23 - 26 & Dec. 31 - Jan. 1.

On Jan. 4, the museum will open at 1 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.



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The Real Facts about Kids' Exercise

It might sound obvious, but like the rest of us, school age kids need physical activity, not only to build their strength and coordination, but also to boost their confidence.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, here is how much physical activity children need per day:

- Ages 3 to 5: activity throughout the day
- Ages 6 to 17: at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity

What kind of activity should kids get every week?

- Aerobic (at least 3 days/week)
- Muscle-strengthening (at least 3 days/week)
- Bone-strengthening (at least 3 days/week)

Parents know, though...

.... that the best way to get kids to get off the screens and start moving is to make physical activity FUN.

At the **YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo**, we know a thing or two about that. From the ever-classic swim lessons, day camp, and Y-ball to the less traditional (but no less fun) Hapkido, fencing, and disc golf, there's something for every child and family. The Y is dedicated to Youth Development and Healthy Living, and our expert staff is ready to support your family's Healthy Living journey.

There's not just stuff for the kids though. With the Kids Zone (our on-site childcare), state-of-the-art cardio and strength equipment,

and over 140 free-to-member classes, you'll have plenty to do while your kids have fun, too.

JOIN NOW

There's no better time to join the Y than now! Reset your commitment to less thumbs and more Y fun.



YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo

Maple YMCA
1001 W. Maple St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
269.345.9622

Portage YMCA
2900 Centre Ave.
Portage, MI 49024
269.324.9622

**JANUARY PROMOTION:
\$0 JOINER FEE**

\$60 SAVINGS!
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kzoymca.org