

MUSTANG JOURNAL

MEDINA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



Exemplify Excellence in Education

Winter 2024

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Universal Pre-K Applications Now Available

The application for Medina's Full Day Universal Pre-K (UPK) program is now available on the Primary School's [website](#) or by accessing the [link found here](#). Parents of children not already enrolled in UPK who are interested in enrolling their child in Kindergarten for the 24-25 school year are also asked to complete the application form.

To be eligible for UPK, children must be 4 years old by Dec. 1, 2024. To be eligible for Kindergarten, children must be 5 years old by Dec. 1, 2024.

For any families looking to learn more about the full day UPK program, the Medina School District will be hosting an Information Night on Thursday, March 14th from 5:30 - 6:45PM, held at Oak Orchard Primary School. Childcare will be provided for any children eligible to attend school in the 24-25 school year.

Doors will open at 5:15PM and the evening will begin promptly at 5:30PM. There will be a brief general session for adults in the auditorium, and then participants will visit scheduled locations throughout the building. Please plan to arrive by 5:30 and stay for the duration, in order to receive all the information prepared.

Families interested in learning more about Medina's UPK program are encouraged to attend the Information Night. If you are unable to attend, information will be shared afterward on [Oak Orchard Primary School's](#) website.

Timeline for UPK Application, Acceptance, Registration, and Screening:

February 16 - April 1: UPK applications accepted by calling the Oak Orchard Main Office, or through our website, starting on 2/26

Thursday March 14: UPK Information Night 5:30PM - 6:45PM at Oak Orchard Primary

April 2: Families notified of acceptance into UPK Program or if program capacity is reached, that lottery is to be held.

Week of April 1: Lottery held, if needed, and registration packets mailed.

Week of May 6 - May 10: UPK Student Screening, applicants should bring all registration materials to the screening. A parent and the child are expected to attend the screening. Applicants will be contacted by phone to schedule their screening time.

Any questions can be directed to the Oak Orchard Main Office by calling 585-798-2700, option 3 and then 0, between 7:30-3:30, Monday through Friday.

Vision Statement

Exemplify excellence in education.

Mission Statement

Educate to inspire all to reach beyond the expected and positively impact their communities.





Technology Class Sets the Stage for Musical



Technology and Engineering Education teacher Mike Lepkyj and his students have been hard at work building sets for the Junior-Senior High School's upcoming musical "Les Mis".

Mr. Lepkyj says it is a great exercise for the students to learn and expand upon their construction skills and work together as a team. "They are very excited to be part of this and they are going to be very proud when they see the finished product on stage this March when the show runs."



Left to Right: Mike Lepkyj, Xavier King, Sawyer Kingsberry, Will Prest, Alex Benz and Dylan Lonnen.

Andy Parker & Weather Machine Visit Oak Orchard Primary

Students at Oak Orchard Primary recently were visited by Channel 7 WKBW's very own Andy Parker!

Meteorologist Mr. Parker was on hand because the school won a contest to host him and his Weather Machine. The Weather Machine is capable of producing all types of weather elements, from actual tornadoes and lightning to snowstorms and just about everything in between. The students loved the show and interacting with Mr. Parker as he revealed the secrets of the atmosphere and helped out with demonstrations!



Andy Parker with 1st grade students Dominik Hill and Travis Schaal.



Andy Parker and 2nd grader Brynlee Holloway.



Blizzard of Kindness

The Blizzard of Kindness at Medina Junior-Senior High School is back!

The Mustang Mission Team and IMPACT Club are once again sponsoring the Blizzard of Kindness to recognize and celebrate individual students or an entire class who are demonstrating kindness. Every individual student will have their name put on a snowflake on our display as we build our "blizzard." Every week five individuals and one class will be selected to receive a prize for their kindness!

Our local Medina Tim Horton's has generously donated a 40 pack of Timbits each week to recognize our class winners and individual winners receive a donut from our school fundraiser. Students also have the opportunity to recognize staff members who demonstrate kindness.



Mr. Byrne's homeroom with their presentation the week of January 15th.

Tri-County College and Career Day Huge Success

Medina Central School District hosted a Tri-County College and Career Day Conference on January 20th. This annual celebration of educational opportunity was a major event for talented, first-generation college bound students, parents and community members in Orleans, Niagara, and Genesee Counties.

Director of Community Partnerships, Daniel Doctor, says, "The purpose of the College and Career Day conference was to expose anyone planning their future to a variety of careers in order to jumpstart their thinking about career paths. By preparing early, your students will more likely be college and career ready after high school graduation. I felt it was an enlightening event and do believe this was the beginning for students and adults alike to envision their future."

He added, "As educators, our goal is to let students know that there is a magnificent world of possibilities out there. Having a job, most kids can understand; but building a career is a far more elusive idea. No teenager can fully comprehend yet what it means to have a career, or professional life-path. College is just one of those possibilities that often our students don't quite really know enough about. In a nutshell, this event is to get students jumpstarted into thinking about the future."



(LtoR) Daniel Doctor (Director of Community Partnership), and Julie Webber (Director of Curriculum and Instruction).



Message at Black History Month celebration: “See the greatness around you”

By Tom Rivers, Editor of Orleans Hub and Lisa Bielmeier (Reprinted with permission from Mr. Rivers)

Singers Renee Mapp, Char Hamilton, Shannon Louise Carter and Daniel Doctor, from Ephesus Ministries in Buffalo, performed “Ride On King Jesus” during a Black History Month celebration on a recent evening at the Clifford Wise Intermediate School Auditorium. Shannon Louise Carter is a pastor at Ephesus and Daniel Doctor, an elder at that church, is the Medina School District’s Director of Community Partnerships.

Char Hamilton also sang the Black National Anthem.

*“Lift every voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.”*



(LtoR) Singers from Ephesus Ministries in Buffalo Renee Mapp, Char Hamilton, Shannon Louise Carter and Daniel Doctor.

Doctor also leads the West Side Academy of Visual and Performing Arts in Medina. Students from the West Side Academy of Visual and Performing Arts opened the program with a dance. Daniel Doctor joined his students in the presentation.

Mr. Doctor organized the first Black History celebration for the community in the month of February. “I am in such a firm believer in pushing past the obstacles in your life and becoming the best person you can be. As educators and community members we need to lead by example.

Mr. Doctor points to his own life as inspiration to many of the young men and women he mentors in the community. “I was the eighth child of nine growing up in Lockport. We were poor, but my mother made sure we didn’t realize that by providing us with clean clothes, food and a roof over our heads. She instilled in us to get an education and shared her stories of hardship of working in the fields and taking care of her children and other people’s children. She sheltered and protected us and made sure to push us to be whatever it was we dreamed of being.”

Mr. Doctor says he was blessed to have teachers who fostered his talents and his aspirations. “I had several great Art teachers who pushed me and because of them I ended up being accepted into the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. I also auditioned for Broadway shows and made several callbacks to be in The Lion King. Unfortunately, the director felt I did not have the gravelly voice needed for the role and cut me before the show hit the stage. But I was so proud of myself that I made it that far. It told me I had the talent to pursue a stage career if I wanted.”

Unfortunately, a health crisis forced him to return home where he decided to attend Buffalo State College to pursue a career in education. “I will never forget sitting in one of my classes, which I was failing, and the instructor putting a statistic on the board that a high percentage of children of color in a single parent household would not be successful. That pushed me to succeed and I did. After graduating, I got a job at LaSalle Catholic School making \$14,000. I loved every moment of teaching, but I could not afford many things on that salary and took a job in Rochester.”

It was during those long drives from Lockport to Rochester he would pass through Medina. “I would always think this is where I want to be,” he says. When he heard of a job opening, he applied and was asked to come into the office of Assistant Superintendent Mr. Maiorana to be interviewed immediately. Based on his resume and the fact that his fourth-grade teacher, Mr. Maiorana’s sister, sang his praises he was offered the job on the spot. “Being at Medina Central School District has been amazing. I am so lucky to have such a support network here like my Superintendent Dr. Mark Kruzynski and our Director of Curriculum and Instruction Julie Webber. I have been a teacher, an assistant principal, a principal and now the Director of Community Partnerships. I also have three businesses: West Side Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, Daniel’s Men’s Apparel and my antique store, Just What the Doctor Ordered. It has not been an easy road to get where I am and there have been challenges, but like I tell the children in this community keep your head up and your eyes on the prize. Tomorrow is another day and you can always shake the dust off and move forward no matter what.”

He continues, “It is so important to instill in our youth that they are someone and they can achieve what they want and how important it is to focus on academics and a career. I am proud and happy to help mentor these children, no matter what color they are. I was fortunate enough to have great adults in my life that pushed me towards education and my goals. I am looking towards our community and I am

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sending out a request to be a mentor, be a leader that our children need. They need that message 'if you believe it, you can achieve it'. This is the first time we have had a Black History celebration in our district and I am so excited to show everyone the talent and knowledge we have right here in our backyard. I am hoping they inspire everyone the way they have inspired me and others."

Mr. Doctor also interviewed Matthew Clark during the event. Clark runs a dance academy in Buffalo and has coached American and Canadian national teams to the World Championships.

Clark suffered a massive stroke 10 years ago, and has defied doctors' expectations by regaining the ability to walk and dance. He said "perseverance and prayer" have brought him through those trials. He told about 30 people at the event at Medina that God has worked a miracle in his life. He urged parents and teachers to support kids in pursuing their dreams. "Never discourage your children from doing what they love," he said.

Dancer Christian "CJ" Jones showed off his tap dancing talent. He won a gold medal at the World Tap Dance Championship in 2007 in Riesa, Germany, where more than 1,000 dancers from 17 countries competed. Jones is the nephew of Matthew Clark. Jones credited his uncle with teaching him to dance when Jones was only two years old. Jones said he puts his passion into his dances, and emerges as a crowd favorite at competitions. Doctor said Jones is an example of the power of a teacher inspiring and believing in a student.

The program featured several performers who have won accolades. Shannon Louise Carter, who joined Doctor and two others in singing "Rise On King Jesus," is an author of seven books. Doctor said people often overlook the talents of their neighbors and other community members. "See the greatness around you," Doctor implored the audience. "You never know who you're sitting next to." The program ended with the African American Cultural Center in Buffalo – African Dance and Drum performed and then discussed the influence of African American pioneers in dance and music.



Char Hamilton singing Black National Anthem.

Technology Team Take Second Place at Tech Wars Competition

Technology and Engineering Education teacher Mike Lepkyj could not be prouder of how his students did at the Niagara County Community College's Tech Wars competition recently. The students competed in the robotic competition where they designed and built a robot. In teams of three they used radio controlled robots to face off against other teams.

The object of the game is to drive over to your opponent's side of the field and capture a flag and bring it back to your team's side. The students brought home second place! Well done everyone!



Matthew Clark being interviewed by Dan Doctor.



West Side Academy of Visual and Performing Arts.



African American Cultural Center Dance and Drum.



CJ Jones tap dancing.





Movember Event Raises Money and Awareness for Mental Health at Medina CSD

Medina Junior-Senior High School Social Studies teacher and President of the Medina Teachers' Association, Joe Byrne, has made a tradition of challenging his male counterparts in the district to grow some facial hair every November. "Movember" raises attention to the growing number of men's health concerns such as mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer. Staff is encouraged to make a pledge not to shave their moustaches for a full month. "Many of us deal with some strange looks and stares at school and the community along the way as we go from clean shaven to hairy, but it is for a good cause," laughs Byrne. "It is always funny what students say and think about us as our moustaches progress."

The money raised goes to the Orleans County Suicide Prevention Coalition. Mr. Byrne says this year the staff decided to continue bringing attention to a major health crisis that affects men. "Across the world, one man dies by suicide every minute of every day. Men account for 75% of all suicides. I'm so appreciative that our teachers, administrators, and staff continue to support this worthy cause. Men usually don't elaborate on their mental health issues because it's seen as a sign of weakness in our society. Now more than ever, we need to be able to talk openly about our social and emotional wellbeing. It's a tremendous feeling we are able to make a significant donation to Orleans County Mental Health and I know these funds will be earmarked to help assist countless number of men struggling with thoughts of suicide in our community."

Jeff Dole, a Math teacher at the Junior-Senior High School, organized this year's fundraiser. Everyone was thrilled with the \$1,400 that was raised. Mr. Byrne says a special shout out goes to retiring Social Studies teacher Doug Boje. "We were struggling to meet our goal the last few days in November and he sent an email to staff. He thanked those who already donated and gave the staff a challenge – he would match and double the highest donation for the last three days of the fundraiser. His gesture fits in with Movember's slogan on their suicide prevention page "Be a man of more words."

Superintendent of Medina Central School District, Dr. Mark Kruzynski says, "Every year, our faculty raises money for Movember and every year they continue to surpass the previous year. Mental health "IS" health, and I am proud that we were able to donate to this fantastic cause." Nola Goodrich-Kresse, Chairperson of the Orleans County Suicide Prevention Coalition says, "We are very grateful to the Medina Central School District staff for this very generous donation. Mental Wellness is something we all strive for, but we understand there are challenges for some in seeking help anytime of the year, but especially during the holidays. We encourage anyone who is struggling to talk to someone they trust or call 988 to talk with a trained crisis counselor 24/7, the call is free and confidential."



Joe Byrne (Teacher and Medina Teachers' Association President) hands check to Nola Goodrich-Kresse from the Orleans County Suicide Prevention Coalition.



Teachers: Greg Husung, Jesse Mankowski, Mark Fitzpatrick, Joe Byrne, Jeff Dole, Zach Harris, Mike Gray, Dr. Dave Voss, PJ Bell, Collin Scheiber, Doug Boje, Christian Held, Justin Morgan.



Medina Lions Club Provides Vision Screening for Oak Orchard

Did you know that 80% of all visual impairment can be prevented or cured? The first step to prevention is awareness. The second is early detection through vision screening. Recently at Oak Orchard Primary School, the Medina Lions Club partnered with medical professionals and community leaders to screen 62 students to identify those at risk for vision loss.

Oak Orchard Principal Jennifer Stearns says that the students were referred by their teachers and all of the kindergarten students had the opportunity to participate as well. "Eleven students were found to be in need of further evaluation. We are thankful to the Lions Club for not only offering this service, but providing families with financial support with the evaluation and a pair of glasses if needed."

The Lions Club schedules vision screenings every school year and the service is free to the community. Each screening takes approximately five minutes or less and the results are given immediately. Although not a complete eye screening, it indicates when a full ophthalmological evaluation would be beneficial.

Lions KidSight USA Foundation is a nationwide program to safeguard children's vision, concentrating on children age six months through six years, but screening through grade 12 where possible is acceptable. According to educational experts 80% of learning is visual. So if a child can't see well, he or she cannot learn well.

The Lions' vision programs and vision screenings include programs that have, among other things: "Saved the sight of more than 15 million children by providing eye screenings, glasses and other treatments through Sight for Kids."

Thank you Medina Lions Club for your kindness and concern for our students' well-being!



Lions Club Member and K Student Willow Brunette.



Lions Club Members (left to right) Tom Beach, Tom Robinson, Carol Bellack and Don Calquhon and Mrs. Fergen's K class.



Lions Club Member Don Calquhon and K Student Cyrus Bloom.



Holiday Happenings at Oak Orchard Primary

Students and staff at Oak Orchard Primary in Medina got into a festive mood with the melodic sounds of the Junior-Senior High School trumpeters and a capella select choir. Music teachers Kyla Leno, Matthew Jaeger and Rachel Trillizio, the a cappella chorus teacher directed the musicians as they played some holiday classics. As a special treat the second grade Glee Club joined in with the high schoolers and then performed some songs by themselves under the direction of Andrea Busch.

Of course, the holiday would not be complete without a visit from old Saint Nick himself! The students loved seeing Santa and telling him what they wanted under their tree Christmas Day. What a great way to get into the holiday spirit!



Medina Junior-Senior High School Donates to Medina Area Association of Churches

For almost 30 years, Medina Junior-Senior High School has helped out those in need in partnership with the Medina Area Association of Churches (MAAC). This year, under the mentorship of English teacher Kayla Rosenbeck and Science teacher Sara Cinquino, students were asked to donate essential items to help out those in their community.

Students and staff collected over 1,300 items for MAAC to distribute to those in need. "We are always happy to help out," says Rosenbeck. "My Co-Advisor Sara Cinquino and I knew our students would want to help out such a worthy organization. We are very fortunate that our students wanted to donate and we are very proud of them for trying to make the holidays a little bit brighter for those less fortunate."

December 6th, the Medina Fire Department stopped at the school to collect the items and deliver them. Our Mustangs gave them a hand loading them into the ambulances. Great job everyone!





Valley Named Coach of the Week at Bills Game

Congratulations to Coach Eric Valley who was named Coach of the Week by the Buffalo Bills and ADPRO Sports at a Buffalo Bills Game against the Cincinnati Bengals!

Valley was recognized with Coach Isiah Young from University Preparatory Charter School for Young Men in Rochester for their work in their school community in addition to the impact they have had on their student athletes. Each coach received \$1,000 for their football teams.



The Jungle Book Comes to Life at Clifford Wise IS

Music teacher Anna Ferlito and her cast of 90 5th and 6th graders performed four shows of Disney's *The Jungle Book KIDS* between December 7th and 8th. Not only did Mrs. Ferlito direct, she also choreographed the show.

Adapted from Disney's beloved animated film and works of Rudyard Kipling, the man cub Mowgli, bounds through the jungle and learns what it means to be human. The show featured a host of colorful characters and some great songs. Our students were fantastic! Mrs. Ferlito had this to say about her cast, "Congratulations to the entire cast and crew of *The Jungle Book*! You have demonstrated your ability to work as a team while creating a spectacular performance. We could not be more proud of all of you! May you always have these memories and follow your dreams!"





Clifford Wise Students Inspired by Book to Raise Money for a Well in Sudan

Fifth grade students at Clifford Wise Intermediate School are taking action to bring clean water to the Sudan after reading a book based on Salva Dut's life. His story, *A Long Walk to Water*, was told by New York Times bestselling author Linda Sue Park.

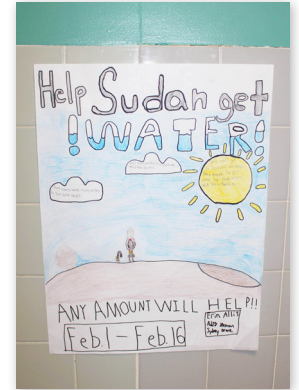
Mr. Sut was born in a rural village in southwestern Sudan in the Dinka tribe. When he was 11 years old, the Sudanese Civil War reached his village and separated Salva from his family. He and thousands of other boys were known as the Lost Boys of Sudan. They sought refuge in Ethiopia and Kenya by walking thousands of miles by foot where he faced many hardships and dangers. After living in a refugee camp for ten years, he moved to Rochester, New York and was sponsored and embraced by a family there who wanted to help him have a better life. He eventually returned to Sudan to reunite with his father, who was ill from waterborne parasites. His father's illness inspired him to bring clean water to the people in his country by establishing a foundation that installs deep-water wells in remote villages in dire need of clean water.

Teachers Deb Weber (Social Studies) and Michelle Gerdes (Science) talked about the story with their students and the how the lack of clean water impacted their lives. "It was a big surprise to our students that they couldn't go to a faucet and turn on the water," says Weber. "It was eye-opening for them that people would have to walk for miles to get a bucket of water and this is how they had to live." "I felt it was a very touching subject," says student Erin. "It's important to remember not everyone has it as good as you."

Gerdes says the students talked about the book and Salva's mission for weeks in class. "We really went into the scarcity of water and how these people's lives and health were impacted. It obviously really touched the students because we would hear them talking about it on their way to lunch and wanting to know what could they do to help." One student, James, said he enjoyed reading the book. "I liked it and knew I wanted to do something to help the people of Sudan." His schoolmate Noah says more people should read the book. "I think it would inspire them and make them aware of what the people in Sudan are going through and how much they need clean water." The students' passion for the book inspired other fifth grade teachers to read the book in class.

A foundation called Water for South Sudan, which is based in Rochester, raises money that supports the population of the country to access clean water and afford communities additional educational and economic opportunities. The Medina students decided to bring attention to that cause by posting posters around the school and setting up pails and boxes for their schoolmates and community members to donate to. "The kids came together as a team and assigned different jobs to one another to promote this charity," says Gerdes. "Some made posters, some wrote and spoke at announcements each morning about the fundraising efforts. They wanted to make a difference." Student Kailana says she was very inspired to help the foundation. "I made posters to put around the school. I have also been saving my change and bringing it in to donate. My mother said I could take her change as well to help with our fundraiser."

The students' efforts raised over \$300 for the foundation. Both Weber and Gerdes say they are incredibly proud of the students and the efforts they made for this worthwhile cause that will change the fate of so many in the Sudan.





FFA Makes Boxes of Joy for Holiday Season

Our FFA students at the High School, under the direction of advisor and teacher Todd Eick, had a frantic few weeks trying to put together holiday boxes for sale.

This is one of the organization's biggest fundraisers and gave the students a chance to promote fresh goods, including some from this area, and their own alpaca dryer balls they make. Students took orders for the boxes and made them themselves with a special brand of their own. The boxes ranged in size and contained items like jam, pickles, maple syrup, goat milk soap, honey and fruit. They made about 150 boxes. "Each class worked on something," explains Mr. Eick. "Some students constructed the boxes, some made dry soup mix, bread dip mix, trail mix, dryer balls, cutting boards and board butter. They did an incredible job!"



Snowcoming! Let the Games Begin!

Our students and staff had a great time at the annual Snowcoming event at the Junior-Senior High School.

What a great way to blow off some steam and get into the holiday spirit!





Medina Students of the Month

The Medina Teachers Association, the Medina CSD and the Medina Area Partnership are proud to announce the selections for Students of the Month. This award is a joint effort between the organizations to recognize students who go above and beyond to help teachers and fellow students succeed and enjoy school.

November winners were:

- Oak Orchard: first-grader Ambrielle Moss, nominated by Shannon Markarian
- Wise Intermediate School: fifth-grader Zoey Davis, nominated by Leah Gates
- Jr-Sr High School: eighth grader Anna Saj nominated, by Alissa Dunham

This month's business sponsor was **Filomena's Favorites**.

December winners are:

- Oak Orchard: kindergartener Prim Taylor, nominated by Stephanie Kruzynski
- Wise Intermediate School: fourth-grader Dylan Wood, nominated by Karen Pane
- Jr-Sr High School: ninth grader Randall Pietkiewicz, nominated by Evan Giacomini

This month's business sponsor was **Bent's Opera House**.

January winners are:

- Oak Orchard: first -grader Kingsley Harden, nominated by Allison Woodburn and Taylor Gross
- Wise Intermediate School: fourth-grader- Thomas Haist, nominated by Kristen Armenia
- Jr-Sr High School: tenth grader Aaron Schmidli, nominated by Rachael Rutledge, Jeff Dole, and Chad Kowalik

This month's business sponsor was **Rosenkrans Pharmacy**.



Congratulations to all our winners!



(LtoR) MTA President Joe Byrne, Anna Saj, Zoey Davis, Ambrielle Moss, Filomena's Favorites owner Danette Oakes, and MCSD Community Outreach Liaison Daniel Doctor.



(LtoR) MTA President Joe Byrne, Faye Conley from Bent's Opera House, Dylan Wood, Prim Taylor, and MCSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction Julie Webber.



(LtoR) Clifford H. Wise Intermediate Dean of Students Mollie Mark, MTA President Joe Byrne, Kingsley Harden, Thomas Haist, Aaron Schmidli, Joseph Meyer of Rosenkrans Pharmacy, and MCSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction Julie Webber.

Preparing for the Path of Totality

On Tuesday, April 8th, the moon's shadow will come across the sun in our area around 3:15 pm causing one of nature's greatest sight – a total eclipse! This historic event won't happen again until 2079 in Western New York!

In anticipation of the event, Katy Hobbs of the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce read "Genny Sees The Eclipse" to help prepare Oak Orchard students to safely view the Eclipse on April 8th.

All Medina students will be provided Eclipse viewers by the District to help encourage safe viewing. <https://visitgeneseeny.com/2024-eclipse>

The path of totality will stretch across a large swath of upstate New York to its northern border with Canada. The Western New York area will be in total darkness for 3 minutes and 45 seconds. According to NASA, "During totality, take a few seconds to observe the world around you. You may be able to see a 360 degree sunset. You may also be able to see some particularly bright stars or planets in the darkened sky. The air temperature will drop and often an eerie silence will settle around you. It is also worth stealing a peek at the people around you – many people have a deep emotional response when the Sun goes into totality."



MEDINA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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