

MUSTANG JOURNAL

MEDINA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



Exemplify Excellence in Education.

Winter 2023

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A Message from your Superintendent

Looking out my office window as I write this, I see trees starting to show buds. And while it feels like school has just started, we are more than halfway through the school year. One of the most important questions I am often asked by parents is, "How can I help my child perform better in school?"



Dr. Mark Kruzynski
Superintendent

There has been plenty of research completed on how students learn. Children learn best when they are well fed, well rested, and physically and mentally healthy. While most of the schooling we all received focused primarily on academics, in recent years, there has been much publicity made of the need that schools need to help students learn about how to interact socially with each other, how to demonstrate self-control, and to become self-aware. As students better develop these skills, they will be more successful academically, socially, and ultimately, as productive members of our community.

This year, the Medina Central School District has been focusing on educating the whole child. We have expanded our curriculum to include social and emotional learning, as well as the traditional academic focus. All parents were invited to attend the Mustang Parent Academy session on March 7th at Wise Intermediate School. Representatives from the district discussed Social Emotional Learning. What is it? What are we doing in Medina? And how can parents support their children at home? This event was open to the entire community, and there was pizza, soda, and door prizes. We invite you to attend the next Mustang Parent Academy session to be scheduled in April on Internet Safety. Watch our website for more details.

As students progress throughout their educational careers, teachers are very aware that high achieving students are often the same students whose parents have been involved in their growth and development at school. Parents play a critical role in the development of personal responsibility, which is so important in success at school. It is important that parents work together with teachers to support their child's education. Please maintain the lines of communication with your child's teachers, so that we can all work together to help your child be successful in school, and in life.

Thank you for being your child's most important teacher, and for supporting our schools.

Mark B. Kruzynski, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Vision Statement

Exemplify excellence in education.

Mission Statement

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



Blizzard of Kindness Sets Up a Flurry of Good Deeds

Medina Jr.-Sr. High School students have set up a flurry of kindness around the school. The school's Blizzard of Kindness was sponsored by the Mustang Mission Team and the IMPACT Club for the month of December.

Dean of Students, Tom Forrestel, says, "We are taking the time to focus on, and celebrate, the power of simple acts of kindness. We all know how easy it is to overlook the little things and kind of take them for granted, but it's the little things that often make such a huge difference! Our local Tim Hortons was happy to donate the Timbits used to reward our weekly classroom winners!"

Mr. Forrestel and Medina Jr.-Sr. High School Principal Michael Cavanagh stopped into the class to congratulate the chosen students and then have them pose with their Timbits in front of the Blizzard of Kindness in the hallway.



Mrs. Lindke's class.



UB Partners with Medina Students for Memorial

University of Buffalo (UB) Professors Joyce Hwang and Chris Romano recently brought a group of graduate students to Medina Jr.-Sr. High School to collaborate with the Arts students taught by Jennifer Scott. With them, they brought three separate project ideas for a living memorial to celebrate the life of Sydney Gross. Sydney was a former UB School of Architecture and Planning student, who tragically passed away her freshman year in a car accident.

They presented their proposals for a memorial/art installation to the Medina students. "The synergistic aspect of my students offering their ideas and feedback to the graduate students was so engaging!" says Scott. "The ideas for the memorial ranged from rocks that made musical sounds, to a park made of walls, to a bridge idea with hammock swings underneath where the community could lounge. The whole project is also part of New York State's Reimagine the Canals Initiative, and will be included as part of Medina's Art Loop and future Art Triennial according to Professor Hwang's graduate Arch Design (Material Culture Studio) course listing ARC: 606." The UB group is planning on building the memorial at the old cement factory site in Medina and will be presenting their final proposal toward the end of March of this year. The students hope to break ground in the fall.

"Some of the input students gave revolved around having a place to relax and enjoy the canal, incorporating all three ideas together, and making the space more than just a playground but a place for photo ops," says Scott. "The real-world example of collaborating with the grad students really helped my Art students enhance their communication skills and gave them a taste of college-level work. Students who participated in this project were from all different Art classes and all different grade levels. It was an inspiring collaboration for both sets of students."





Medina Students Reach for the Stars



Back (LtoR): Mrs. Borsching, Mrs. Granchelli, Krissy Reetz and Jason Klein. Front (LtoR): Isaac Foss, Jasper Reigle-Miller, Mikah MacDonald, Isaias Sanchez-Cabrera, Scarlett Guild and Lucy Trapasso in front of the planetarium.

Within the Medina Central School District, students at Oak Orchard Primary School and Clifford Wise Intermediate School have been learning about different aspects of Earth and its relationship with the Solar System. To coincide with their learning, we wanted our students to experience something “out of this world” and that’s where the Challenger Learning Center (CLC) of Lockport played a crucial role. Mr. Jason Klein (Technology Integrator) and Mrs. Julie Granchelli (Science teacher) wrote a grant, which was funded by BOCES, to work with the CLC of Lockport.

The mission of the CLC is to engage students and teachers in dynamic, hands-on exploration and discovery opportunities that strengthen knowledge in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), inspire students to pursue careers in these fields, and provide an outlet to learn and apply important life skills. “Real-world experiences like these allow students to make deep connections to their learning in class,” says

Mr. Klein. “Students get hands-on opportunities to experience things that they might not normally have the ability to do in class. Additionally, since COVID, students have missed out on some great field trips and learning opportunities, so this was a great way to bring these necessary experiences back into the district.”

The students at Oak Orchard Primary School were able to journey through the universe in a portable, inflatable planetarium this week. The “little astronomers” had an introduction to the solar system in their Science Class, where they were able to make models and learn about the motion of the Earth, moon, and planets. Pre-K to Grade 3 students entered the planetarium to experience a “star filled” sky. Krissy Reetz and Michael Schian, from the CLC, used a laser pointer to guide students through the solar system. Students learned to identify stars, planets, and constellations. Mrs. Granchelli says, “The mobile planetarium is such a wonderful way to immerse our youngest students in the study of stars, planets, and constellations and support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) learning at Oak Orchard.”

Fifth graders at Clifford Wise Intermediate School have been studying the Solar System and aerospace engineering. To bring their learning to life, fifth grade classes went on a field trip to the CLC of Lockport, where students participated in a space mission. Students assumed the role of a mission specialist operating a space station and mission control. They had to work together to keep the crew “safe” while facing various problems and challenges. Through a combination of standard-aligned STEM content, immersive technology, real science data, and hands-on activities, students were engaged in a high-tech simulation environment. In addition to the space missions, students got to experience the night sky in the CLC’s planetarium. The planetarium system allowed students to “fly” to all the planets, their moons, and dwarf planets. The planetarium made celestial bodies appear and move realistically to simulate the complex motions of the heavens. Students learned how to identify all the planets of our solar system in dramatic flights up close to each world. Students learned about Greek mythological (or other cultural sky stories) characters and saw how these heroes of the past can be found in the stars. Students also witnessed the night sky in different seasons and from different global perspectives.



Marcel Lamar gets suited up at the Challenger Learning Center.



Hendrix Jones and Ethan Mulcahy at the control board at the Challenger Learning Center.



Ty’Sharri Crossley at the Challenger Learning Center.



Medina Jr.-Sr. High School Donates to Medina Area Association of Churches

For approximately 28 years, Medina Jr.-Sr. High School has collected canned food items for the Medina Area Association of Churches (MAAC). When the pandemic hit, MAAC asked if the school would be willing to collect essential items instead, since they had a huge need for them. They asked the same favor again for this school year. Student Association Advisors, English teacher Kayla Rosenbeck, and science teacher Sara Cinquino, asked the students to help out and boy, did they!

The students collected over 2,100 items for MAAC to distribute to those in need. "We are always happy to help out," says Mrs. 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 that we had teachers who made it into a competition which definitely helped to bring items in. Our 8th graders brought in over 80% of all the donations this year!"

On December 7th, the Medina Fire Department showed up to collect the items and deliver them. Our Mustangs gave them a hand loading them into the vehicles. Great job everyone!



Young Adult Author Debuts New Book to Medina Students

Acclaimed young adult (YA) author Mylisa Larsen has made her middle school debut with her book "Playing Through the Turnaround". She recently shared her book with Medina students, grades 3rd-8th at the Medina Jr.-Sr. High School, here librarian Jennifer O'Toole and Author's Note bookstore owner Julie Berry hosted her.

The story is about a jazz lab for 8th graders at Conor Eubanks Middle School who are in the jazz band. When their beloved teacher, Mr. Lewist, quits abruptly, and rumors circulate of the Jazz Lab falling victim to budget cuts, the kids decide it's time to take action. "The story is perfect for middle schoolers, musicians or anyone who is struggling to make their voices heard," says O'Toole. "It was a great visit!" Many of the students said they enjoyed the book. One said, "I really liked the book, but the ending was sad. I thought it was great that the Jazz Lab students were such good friends and were able to try to make a difference in their school." Another student added, "It was a good book and it was very heartwarming."



(LtoR) Julie Berry, Mylisa Larsen and Jennifer O'Toole.



Todd Eick Wins Agricultural Award

Agriculture Education Instructor and FFA Advisor Todd Eick was one of six agricultural educators nationwide who received the 2022 National Association of Agricultural Educators Ideas Unlimited award. The awards were presented during the 2022 NAAE (National Association of Agriculture Educators) Convention, which was Nov. 29 through Dec. 3, in Las Vegas.



Todd Eick (second from left), a Medina agricultural teacher, was honored by the National Association of Agricultural Educators for his exemplary performance and dedication to agricultural education.

increases the reading comprehension of his students. When he got word that he would be honored for his project he was floored. “I was surprised and humbled. Blackout poetry is an English thing and normally not used in agriculture. I just took an idea and tried to make it diverse enough to keep the students’ interest. I was very flattered that other educators have approached me because they want to give these assignments to their students too.”

Eick was chosen from all the New York State Region 6 Agriculture Educators for the award. “I gave a presentation in Las Vegas in front of 40 people. This project allows me to tap into my creative side as well. I am sure people were thinking, “Todd Eick and poetry?” he laughs. “It’s been a lot of fun and love seeing what my students come up with and I plan on continuing this in my class. I think it is a great way to build Agricultural literature and it combines poetry and artwork.”

He adds, “It’s been great, I got a trophy, a banner and a stipend. For me the award is when a former student approaches me in a grocery store and tells me I made an impact on them. That is what means the most to me.”

The NAAE Ideas Unlimited award is presented to NAAE members to recognize them for their innovative ideas that optimize student success and development. The Ideas Unlimited Award is sponsored by National Geographic Learning | Cengage Learning. The mission of NAAE is “professionals providing agricultural education for the global community through visionary leadership, advocacy and service.”

Eick received this award for his Blackout Poem lesson plan. To celebrate Ag Literacy Week, Eick collaborated with his school district’s English department to promote agriculture literacy with his high school students. “My daughter was working on a school project with her teacher Karen Jones on Blackout poetry,” he explains. A Blackout poem is a form of poetry that uses another author’s words, in their written order, to create something else. “I decided to give it a twist and assigned it to my students about the theme of hunger. I wanted them to think about someone who was thinking – I am hungry today. Will I get to eat? I told them to take the concept to a local or global level.”

Utilizing ag-based magazines, Eick’s students created their poems. “It was a lot of fun for the students and gave them an opportunity to be creative. They read the article I assigned them and they hunted for words and looked at the context. It was kind of cool for them to play around with. It was kind of a two for one lesson.”

For this past year, Eick had his students go through various articles and black out or color out words to leave just the desired text. Eick has found that this project drastically





Medina Jr.-Sr. High School Recognizes Four Distinguished Alumni



(LtoR) Mercedes Holloway Wilson, Principal Michael Cavanagh and Elizabeth Cooper Leone.

On December 21st, Medina Jr.-Sr. High School recognized four distinguished alumni for their outstanding contributions to their community and/or their chosen career. The award is given annually to honor alumni, promote school spirit, foster pride in the school and community and to serve as an incentive for the current student body. School Principal, Michael Cavanagh said, "Having worked in Medina for many years, I can definitely say that it is a blessing to be part of a community like ours. The people that we honor today are proof that we are all capable of achieving greatness and truly making a difference in society." This year's recipients are: Elizabeth Cooper Leone, Mercedes Holloway Wilson, Kate Schirmer Messner and Christopher Parada.

Elizabeth Cooper Leone formed Cooper Dolls in 1993 when she combined a love of sculpting with the desire to own her own business. She graduated from Medina High School in 1975 and earned a Liberal Arts degree from Wells College and a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education from Buffalo State College. She started Cooper Dolls with eight pounds of clay and a 1954 sewing machine and began to design, sculpt and market her work as collectible dolls and holiday figurines. She incorporated themes in her work of her memories of growing up in Medina. She has exhibited her work and has collectors around the world and has had her dolls featured in magazines and books. She has won several Doll of the Year awards and was invited to show her work at Disney. Mrs. Leone thanked her teachers at Medina for inspiring her and encouraged students to follow their dreams.

Mercedes Holloway Wilson is a 2000 Medina High School graduate. While she attended Medina, she was a proud member of the Varsity Volleyball, Girls Basketball and Track and Field teams. She is an accomplished singer and sang the National Anthem at Section VI basketball games at Erie Community College in Buffalo her senior year.

At the age of 28 years old, Mercedes was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer. With her belief that a healthy body goes together with a healthy mind, she set herself on a path to not only heal herself, but to help others. While still undergoing treatment, she founded a non-profit organization called For Our Daughters, with the goal of helping girls live longer, healthier lives by taking greater control of their well-being. She started a broadcasting career at WBBZ-TV with a show called "What's the Buzz" and focused on a more healthier lifestyle with a focus on nutrition. She authored a book on healthy eating and started hosting a television segment called "Recipes for Life" on WKBW-TV's "AM Buffalo". She was then promoted to be the co-host of the "AM Buffalo" morning show.

In her spare time, she shared her grandmother's relish recipe to a manufacturer and now you can purchase Sadie's Relish in many local stores. She also hosts workshops to educate young women on living a healthier lifestyle. She thanked her teachers at Medina High School for encouraging her along the way and extended a very heartfelt thank you to her aunt and uncle with whom she lived with while attending school. She presented her uncle, Dave King, with a special plaque, for helping to raise her into the woman she is today.

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Kate Schirmer Messner graduated from Medina in 1988. While at school, she was a proud member of the Medina Marching Band where she played flute and piccolo and was also a Varsity Volleyball player. She pointed to her teachers from Oak Orchard Elementary and on who inspired her love for writing. Because of the educators she encountered at Medina, she pursued English and journalism and received a BS in Broadcast Journalism from Syracuse University's Newhouse School. She went on to work as a television news producer and reporter for NBC affiliates in Syracuse, New York and Burlington, Vermont. She also earned a MS in Teaching from SUNY Plattsburgh and spent 15 years teaching middle school English and Writing.

Kate then began to write and publish young reader books such as "The Brilliant Fall of Gianna Z" in 2009. She received the prestigious E.B White Read Aloud Award. In her career, she has gone on to write more than 50 books for children. Her titles have included award-winning picture books like "Over and Under the Snow", "The Brilliant Deep" and "How to Write a Story". Novels like "All the Answers", "Breakout, and Chirp" and nonfiction like "The Next President" and "Tracking Tortoises". She is also known for the popular "Ranger in Time" chapter book adventures, the "Fergus and Zeke" easy readers and the "History Smashers" graphic nonfiction series.

Kate was honored in 2022 with receiving the Empire State Award for Excellence in Children's Literature. Her books often appear on state book award lists, and her science-themed picture books have been honored with the Green Earth Book Award and the Riverby Award for Natural History Writing. She is also a New York Times bestselling author and devotes time visiting schools and libraries around the world to talk about books, writing and reading.



Kate Schirmer Messner via movie.



Christopher Parada

Christopher Parada was a member of the Medina High School Class of 2002. He has been part of the Palace Theater team for over 15 years and the Executive Director for over 10 years. During his time at the theater, he has helped lead the Palace to being a central part of the Lockport community. Directing over 75 shows, he has brought his creative style to thousands of patrons, entertained families and helped to boost the Lockport economy. He has also helped to keep the Palace Theater going through the lean years to prepare the business to partake in a four million dollar renovation that is currently taking place. With the help of the Board of Directors, he is ensuring that the Palace will be there for years to come.

When Chris is not leading the Palace Theater, he has a little side gig as Santa Claus! Ten years ago, Chris built the Santa Cottage on Day Road in Lockport. Every December, he plays Santa to local families with the thousands of children who visit the cottage. He charges nothing for this holiday joy and loves allowing families time to talk and take pictures to create holiday memories to last them a lifetime.

There is no doubt, that Chris has community service in his heart. He is also a member for many years of the Light Up Lockport committee. The committee brings residents together to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season. He raises funds to help decorate Main Street for the holidays and assists the community in any way that he can. His hard work, dedication and passion have truly benefitted Lockport and the surrounding areas thanks to his vision

and drive. Chris says he is very grateful for this award from Medina Central School District and wishes he could have attended in person.

Mr. Cavanagh says it was an honor to be able to recognize this year's outstanding alumni. To earn this honor, nominees must be a current or former member of the school community, who have graduated at least 10 years ago and who have achieved one or more of the following: excellence in their chosen career, made outstanding contributions to their community or profession or someone who made an outstanding contribution to humanity. "What I find quite interesting is the diversity among the honorees," says Mr. Cavanagh. "They have definitely left their mark on society, whether it is right here in our backyard, or in places throughout our country. It was our distinct pleasure to present our alumni with their plaques and recognize their achievements."



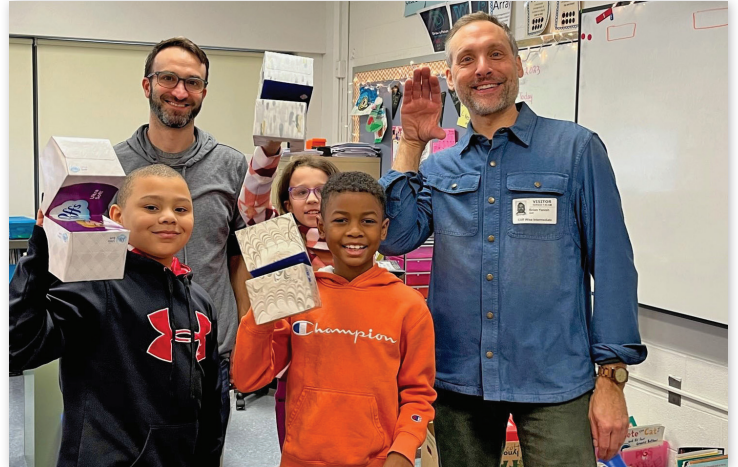
Clifford Wise Intermediate School Students Go Full STEAM Ahead

When District Technology Integrator Jason Klein attended a professional development session called “Infusing STEAM into Today’s Instruction”, it inspired him and Julie Webber (Director of Curriculum and Instruction) to plan a day for Clifford Wise Intermediate School students of STEAM education. STEAM is an education approach to learning the uses of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics for guiding student inquiry, communication, and critical thinking. “We decided to go “Full STEAM Ahead” at Clifford Wise Intermediate School on February 3rd,” says Klein. “We started the day with a school-wide presentation from author, illustrator and maker, Brian Yanish; where he encouraged students to think outside the box and reuse recyclables in new and innovative ways.”

After a fun filled and enlightening presentation, students worked with their peers to compete in a variety of STEAM challenges that encouraged problem solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. “Brian Yanish’s presentation inspired the students and really got their creative juices flowing,” says Klein. “They used that momentum in their STEAM challenges. The students were enthusiastic and excited and couldn’t wait to share their creations and solutions with their peers, teachers and family. I heard one student say, “Time really does fly by when you are having fun.”

The STEAM challenges were broken down by grade. Grade 3 had the Scrapkins: Junk Re-Think Challenge where they had to design and build a character using recycled materials. Grade 4 took on the Amazing Architecture Challenge where they built a home for their rubber duck using 50 marshmallows and 50 toothpicks. Fifth grade was assigned the Newspaper Tower Challenge where they used the engineering design process to design and build a structure at least 30” tall to support a basketball for at least three seconds. Lastly the sixth graders had the Slo-Mo Marble Challenge where they used the Engineering Design Process to design and build the slowest marble run out of recycled materials.

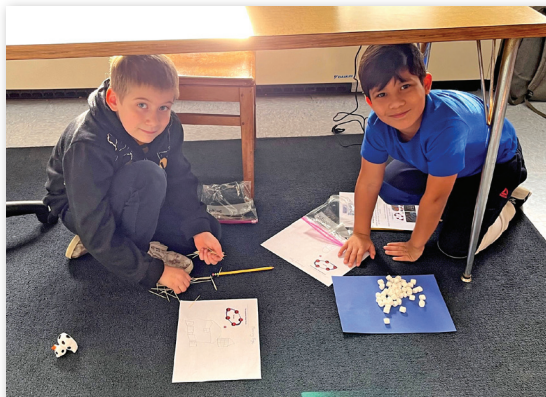
“I believe that the students got a lot of out of this day,” says Klein. “Our goal was to inspire and empower lifelong learners through hands-on STEAM education that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a passion for innovation. We hope students, and even teachers, take away that STEAM is about creativity, trial, error and having fun. If students are not ‘successful’, that’s okay because it is part of the process.” Julie Webber added, “This opportunity truly allowed students to embrace and love learning through exploration. Statements like “I don’t want to go home” and “No... The buses are coming!” were heard from the students. Even the teachers and staff enjoyed participating with the students. Learning is not just about memorizing facts, it’s about applying the knowledge that we learn. Students had a great opportunity to do this!”



Jason Klein and Brian Yanish pose with students from Mrs. Scott's Third Grade Class: Cai Ree Lorenz, Alexis Sherman and Jordan Hammonds with their Scrapkins.



Jason Klein observes students in Mrs. Duhow's 5th grade class with their tower challenge: Oscar Lopez, Avery Twitchell and Amber O'Kussic.



Kole McMullen and Santiago Velez in Mrs. Lemme's 4th grade class plan out architecture challenge.



Third grader Jack Buondonno with his Scrapkins.



Medina School Students of the Month

The Medina Teachers Association, the Medina CSD and the Medina Area Partnership are proud to announce the November, December and January 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 are:

- Oak Orchard Primary School: Second-grader Lyric Chinn, nominated by Michael Gray.
- Clifford Wise Intermediate School: Fourth-grader Marley Stanton, nominated by Marie Lemme.
- Medina Jr.-Sr. High School: 12th grader Joey Waters, nominated by Kayla Rosenbeck and Sara Cinquino.

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



(LtoR) MTA President Joe Byrne, 2nd Grade Teacher Mike Gray, Joey Waters, Lyric Chinn, Filomena's Favorites Owner Danette Oakes, Marley Stanton, 4th Grade Teacher Maria Lemme, and Medina High School Assistant Principal Joel Reed.

December winners are:

- Oak Orchard Primary School: Second-grader Alex Duffield, nominated by Michael Gray
- Clifford Wise Intermediate School: Fifth-grader Lauren Allis, nominated by Allison Duhov
- Medina Jr.-Sr. High School: 10th grader Zack Lilley, nominated by Amber Cleveland

This month's business sponsor was Albone Spray and Foam.



(LtoR) Jennifer Boardway from Albone Spray and Foam, MTA President Joe Byrne, Lauren Allis, Alex Duffield, Zack Lilley, and Wise Intermediate Principal Chris Hughes.

January winners are:

- Oak Orchard Primary School: Kindergartener Bradley Dunham, nominated by Kelsey Evoy
- Clifford Wise Intermediate School: Fourth-grader Bella McGill, nominated by Christina Reddy and Alina Patterson
- Medina Jr.-Sr. High School: 12th grader Cayden Lilleby, nominated by Beth Dickut

This month's business sponsor was Zambistro.



(LtoR) MTA President Joe Byrne, Cayden Lilleby, Bella McGill, Bradley Dunham, Kara Zambistro from Zambistro, and Wise Intermediate Principal Daniel Doctor.



Mustang Parent Academy and GCASA Offer Vaping Awareness Program

“A big concern among our educators at the Junior-Senior High School and parents is vaping,” says Medina Central School District Director of Curriculum and Instruction Julie Webber. The use of e-cigarettes is unsafe for everyone because it contains nicotine and it is highly addictive. They can also contain other harmful substances besides nicotine. “We saw the problem as being a great opportunity to partner with GCASA (Genesee Council on Alcohol and Substance Abuse) and educate parents on the signs their children are vaping,” she says.

Diana Fulcomer, Prevention Educator with GCASA, told Mrs. Webber she had the perfect interactive program that they could offer to anyone in the community who would like to attend. “Vaping is the number one issue we are dealing with,” says Fulcomer. “E-cigarettes have been in the US since 2007 and marketed as a safer or better alternative to the traditional cigarette. In 2016, the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) began regulating these products. At that time, consumers still thought they were safer than tobacco. That is not the case at all. These companies are targeting our youth, which is easy because we are all enticed by anything that is new and innovative. We still don’t have all the research and the information we have shows that they are dangerous. Not only because of the possible nicotine addiction, but because some students are cannabis vaping as well.”



(ltoR) Thomas Forrestel (Medina Junior-Senior High School Dean of Students), Diana Fulcomer (Prevention Educator at GCASA) and Julie Webber (Medina CSD Director of Curriculum and Instruction).

On January 18th, the community was invited to the Mustang Parent Academy’s Hidden Mischief: Unlock the Vape Mystery in the Junior-Senior High School Auditorium. This program was designed to create an awareness of current vaping trends and of ways youth conceal these devices or use everyday items for drug use. The interactive youth bedroom gave each participant an opportunity to search and find vaping paraphernalia, devices and drug references. Each participant learned how everyday items can be converted to hide or use drugs such as nicotine or marijuana. In addition, it created an awareness of the possibilities of how easy these items can be purchased over the internet or at local vendors.

Mrs. Webber said the program went well and they had a lot of positive feedback. “Prevention is the key,” says Fulcomer. “The more education parents have on the dangers, the better. We also showed how to start an open conversation with your child about this topic.”

For more information, please contact Diana Fulcomer at dfulcomer@gcasa.org or dfulcomer@medinacsd.org.



Medina Jr.-Sr. High School Students Take Home Top Prizes at Tech Wars

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Mrs. Jennifer Stearns
Principal



(LtoR) Brandon Christiaanson, Dylan Lonnen, Sawyer Kingsbury Alex Benz, and Josh Hilobuck.

Technology students in Mike Lepkyj's class took home top honors at the Niagara County Community College (NCCC) 2023 Tech Wars. In the Capture the Flag event, the team of: Brandon Christiaanson, Dylan Lonnen and Sawyer Kingsbury took home first place and the team of Alex Benz and Josh Hilobuck took home second place. In the competition, a team of three design and build a radio controlled robot. On a 16'x32' playing field they drive their robot over to the opponent's side of the field and capture a flag and bring it back to their side. They can score additional points by capturing a cube and balls positioned on the field.

The team of Tyler Kroening, Cameron Kenward, Lucuis Wagner and Tyler Allen took third place in the Trebuchet Design Challenge. They had to design and construct a catapult. With their device they have to launch a projectile of their choice at an 18"x18" target that is 40 feet away. The teams have three minutes to complete a total of five shots at the target and receive points if the projectile hits the face of the target during its initial launch.

Mr. Lepkyj says he is extremely proud of how his students did. "We have been working on their projects since this fall. We have three competitions we are participating in this school year, so the students have been tweaking them. This has been a work in progress for five years in my program to get to this point." Brandon says he loves the freedom in class to design what they want. "It was a lot of fun participating and it has really inspired me to want to become a Technology teacher." Classmate Alex agrees. "This is the best class in school. It was the first time I had competed in the Tech Wars and I had a lot of fun." Dylan says it was a great experience for him. "I really enjoyed being part of this project and I think it showed how talented we are." "It was a lot of fun and a great way for all of us kids to work together," says Josh. "I want to go into the construction field and I am taking the Building Trades program at BOCES, so it was a good way to use some of those skills as well." Sawyer said he thought the whole experience was awesome. "This class is great. I just love the way we explore technology and find ways to apply it in different ways."

Well done Mustangs!