

# MUSTANG JOURNAL

MEDINA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



Higher Standards ... Higher Education

Summer 2022

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## Medina Class of 2022 Top 10



**Kaylee Lacey**  
*Valedictorian*



**Hayden Woodroe**  
*Salutatorian*

Kaylee Lacey is the granddaughter of Cheryl Hoffman and James Pinckney. Kaylee has been involved in softball, swimming, and the Medina Mustang Marching Band throughout her high school career. Kaylee has also participated in the American Legion Auxiliary Empire Girls State Program and was nominated for the U.S. Presidential Scholar Award. Kaylee is attending the University at Buffalo to become a pharmacist and has a strong passion for volunteer work in her local community.

Hayden Woodroe is the son of Joel and Elizabeth Woodroe. Hayden has been active in football, baseball, and basketball throughout his high school career. Next year, Hayden will be attending SUNY Brockport to pursue a degree in Physical Education Instruction.

*continued on page 2*



## Vision Statement

Exemplify excellence in education.

## Mission Statement

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



## A Message from your Superintendent

Graduation is a district-wide celebration, and the Medina Central School District is incredibly proud of the Class of 2022. We are proud of everything our students have achieved. Our seniors have endured over two years of COVID-19 restrictions with resilience and grace. The Class of 2022 gives us all hope for the future. Our seniors have left their mark on Medina – academically, athletically, musically, and as good citizens. We know you will do great things in life!

Now, our seniors begin the next chapter of their lives, as they go off to college, careers, and the military. We wish all of our graduating seniors the very best in everything they are doing and hope that they come back to visit us in the future. Please remember that once you are a MUSTANG, you will ALWAYS be a MUSTANG, and you are always welcome back to visit us in the future.

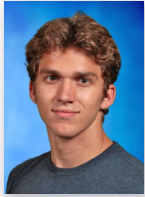
Mark B. Kruzynski, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



**Dr. Mark Kruzynski**  
*Superintendent*



## Class of 2022 Top 10 *continued*



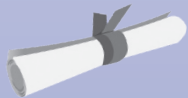
**3. Isaac Pace**

Isaac is the son of Nathan and Margaret Pace. Isaac has participated in swimming, cross country, tennis, and track throughout his high school career. He has served as Class President and led the Masterminds and Chess teams to League Championships. Isaac plans on going to school at Brigham Young University in the fall, and serving a mission for his church after his first year of school.



**4. Megan Zakes**

Megan Zakes is the daughter of Jason and Kimberly Zakes. Megan has been active in band, soccer, track, PAAC, IMPACT, National Honor Society and Student Association throughout high school. Megan has already graduated from Genesee Community College with her Associates in Liberal Arts and Natural Science. She will be attending Nazareth College this fall for Biomedical Science.



**5. Jaxon Phillips**

Jaxon Phillips is the son of Travis and Kristen Phillips. Throughout high school, he's been involved in boys varsity swimming, marching band, National Honor Society, and PAAC (Promoting the Acceptance and Awareness of other Cultures). In the future, he plans to attend the University at Buffalo to work towards a degree in Environmental Science in order to help combat global climate change.



**6. Kristi Oliver**

Kristi Oliver is the daughter of Robert and Kristine Oliver. Kristi has been involved in IMPACT, PAAC, Student Council, National Honor Society, and has done many hours of community service during her senior year. She will be attending Genesee Community College in the fall for Business Marketing and Social Media.



**7. Thomas Burgess Jr.**

T.J. Burgess is the son of Thomas and Jada Burgess. He has been involved in the New York State Champion Medina Mustang Marching Band, where he served as one of the Assistant Drum Majors, as well as spending time in the National Honor Society. He will be attending Hilbert College, where he plans to pursue a master's degree in Criminal Justice and Behavioral Sciences.



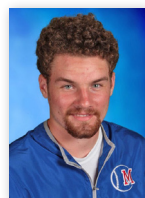
**8. Dakota Alexander**

Dakota Alexander is the daughter of Eric and Christina Alexander. Dakota has been active in field hockey, swimming, cheerleading, National Honor Society, Student Association, and track throughout her high school career. Next year, Dakota will be attending Utica University to pursue a degree in Biology and play field hockey.



**9. Kristen Trillizio**

Kristen Trillizio is the child of Mike and Rachel Trillizio. In the fall, Kristen plans on attending the University at Buffalo to study Biomedical Sciences and continue on into trauma and emergency medical work. Kristen has participated in various extracurriculars such as National Honor Society.



**10. Joseph Cecchini**

Joseph Cecchini is the son of Justin and Julie Cecchini. He's been involved in sports, football, baseball and basketball throughout high school. He's also been involved in FFA where he was the Vice-President. He's planning on attending SUNY Maritime College to study Mechanical Engineering.





## Medina Grads Walk Down Memory Lane



The Medina Jr-Sr High School Class of 2022, led by High School Principal Michael Cavanagh, strolled in front of the High School, Intermediate School and Primary School to the cheers of the students on June 13th.

The students and staff enjoyed this time honored tradition and getting a chance to wish the graduates well and best of luck in their future endeavors. Congratulations to our seniors!



## Graduation



Photos Courtesy of the Orleans Hub/Cheryl Wertman.

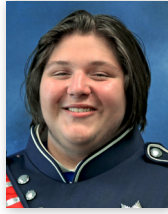




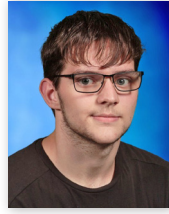
# Congratulations Medina Class of 2022



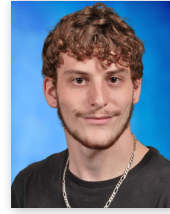
Dakota Alexander



Ayden Amrhein



Troy Avery-Kelley



Logan Balcom



Serenity Baumgart



Dakota Bennett



Andrea Benz



David Berry



Rashawn Bloom



Valencia Bloom



Benny Blount



Zaric Boyce



Samuel Boyle



Aiden Burczyk



Thomas Burgess Jr.



Lily Carpenter



Gabriel Casanova



Saige Cau



Arian Cayea



Joseph Cecchini



Ava Chambers



Amaya Cleveland



Dominic Crews



Kennedy Eick



Emma Ettinger



Zachary Fike



Xavier Fisher



Donald Flatt



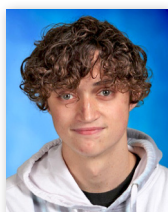
Owen Flower



Brooklyn Garrow



Gianna Greco



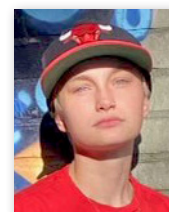
Benjamin Griffin



Evan Harris



Nina Howard



Triniti Jeffers



Samuel Kingsbury



# Congratulations Medina Class of 2022



Kaylee Lacey



Leviticus Latin



Joseph Lederhouse



Qi Li



Gracelin Mahnke



Justin McAdoo



Logan Meacham



Aleigha Mitchell



Madison Morgott



Sadiqua Muhammad



Hannah Neal



Evan Nicholson



Drayven Oakes



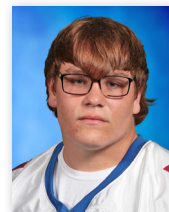
Faith Oberther



Jared Odita



Kristi Oliver



Zackery Oliver



Lana Ortiz



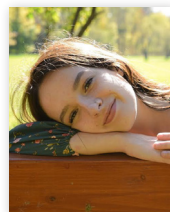
Aidan Owczarczak



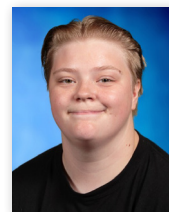
Madison Owens



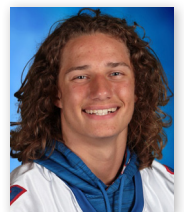
Isaac Pace



Ava Page



Brooklynn Parsons



Xander Payne



Jaxon Phillips



Iverson Poole



Victoria Potter



Jarin Rhim



Lauren Rissew



Karina Rotoli



Charisma Roy



Kamron Rupp



Anthony Rutty



Willy Sanchez Cabrera



Izell Satkowski



Danielle Schmidt





# Congratulations Medina Class of 2022



Anastazia Schwartz



Cole Seefeldt



Lisa Shafer



Joseph Shingleton



Aleena Silker



Willow Smith



Angelo Soliday



Colvin Stalker



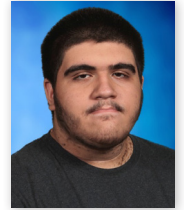
Brianna Stewart



Ethan Stonebraker



Alexandria Strong



Alex Taylor



Gregory Thompson II



Regan Timmer



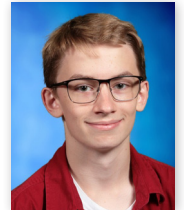
Kristen Trillizio



Robert Vidovich III



Emma Wagner



James Waters



Brandie Watson



Chase Weese



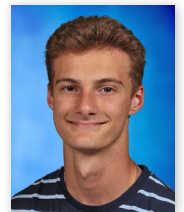
Damien Winters



Chad Wolter Jr.



Ricky Wood Jr.



Hayden Woodroe

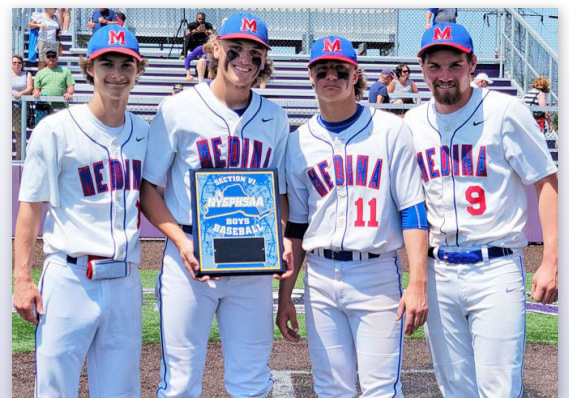


Megan Zakes



## Mustangs Baseball Clinches Section VI Class B Championship

Congratulations to our Baseball team who took home the Section VI Class B championship and a berth in the state tournament. Coach Jon Sherman and Athletic Director Eric Valley say they are super excited about the continued success of the baseball program and are looking forward to seeing what the team can do as they move forward!



(LtoR) Hayden Woodroe, Zach Fike, Xander Payne and Joe Cecchini. Photo Courtesy of the Orleans Hub/ Cheryl Wertman.





## Author Visit Highlights Depression and Mental Health

Medina Jr-Sr High School recently played host to author Bree Barton. She has penned four books: *Heart of Thorns*, *Tears of Frost*, *Soul of Cinder* and her latest *Zia Erases the World*.

High School librarian Jennifer O'Toole invited Ms. Barton and Julie Berry, from the Author's Note Bookstore, to talk to 7th graders in the library on April 28th. Ms. Barton talked with the students about her experiences with depression and how she started experiencing those feelings in the 6th grade. "It came on very suddenly and in the nineties nobody was really talking about mental health. It is a very confusing situation for kids and I am hoping by sharing my story, it may be helpful to students here."

Her experience with depression inspired her book *Zia Erases the World*. The story centers on Zia and her challenge of finding the right words for the fear that is growing inside of her. She settles on a word of her own making: Shadoom. When she stumbles upon a family heirloom: the C. Scuro Dictionary, 13th edition, she realizes in its magical pages she has the ability to erase words that remind her of Shadoom. The consequences of her actions has some funny and heartbreaking moments, but ultimately allows her to get help and overcome her dark moments and reach for the light.

She shared with the students what her life was like in the sixth grade and the challenges she faced as a child of a single mom who moved almost every year. "I was not cool," she told the students. "We were poor and I wore hand-me-down clothing. I was depressed and very sad. I spent a lot of time in the library because books are a great way to escape. I started writing fantasy when I was 10 years old and submitting my stories to editors when I was 11. I got a lot of rejection notices. When some mean girls at school made fun of me, I quit writing for quite a while because their comments really hurt me."

She eventually began writing again in high school. "I had a tough time, but eventually I found a way back to myself and I had my mom and other adults that I could talk to about what I was feeling and they helped me. I took up dancing and getting healthier physically helped me to get healthier mentally. She read a chapter from *Zia* and also discussed with the students what it is like to be an author and her journey as a writer. She also answered questions from the students. Mrs. O'Toole says this about Ms. Barton's talk, "It was a pleasure to host Bree and to learn more about her background and the inspiration for her work. I think her honesty and life story was relatable and truly resonated with our students. I am thrilled to be working with Julie Berry & the Author's Note Bookstore to bring authors in-person to speak with Medina students. It's such a valuable, worthwhile, and fun learning experience for students to take part in."



## Medina Students Make an Impact

Medina students in the IMPACT Club and SAVI 2 Class participated in a day of community service on Friday, April 22nd. They spent the morning completing various projects at the Cornell Cooperative Extension, at the Orleans County Fairgrounds, as part of the United Way Day of Caring.

They then moved to the canal and spent some time picking up trash as part of the NYS Erie Canal Clean Sweep.







## Ag Teacher Donates Hair to Wigs 4 Kids

Medina Jr-Sr High School Agriculture teacher/FFA advisor Todd Eick had been rocking shoulder length hair for quite a while this school year. "I shaved my head from August 2007 to January 2020," he explains. "When the pandemic hit and the hair salons had to shut down my last haircut was February 4th of 2020. My kids convinced me just to let it grow out. So I decided if I was going to do that, I would see if I could donate it to Wigs 4 Kids."

Wigs 4 Kids serves children suffering from hair loss from a health crisis and helps to boost their self-image and self-esteem.

Originally a FFA alum Tori Grimes, who is a hairstylist, was going to come to the school on February 4th and cut Mr. Eick's hair for his donation, so that his current students and his leadership team could take part in the fun. "I wanted to do this in school with the students because one piece of our FFA motto is "Living to Serve". I thought this was a great opportunity to practice what I preach."

Unfortunately, Mother Nature had other plans; February 4th was a snow day. "While by many standards of school aged students and teachers is a wonderful surprise, it stopped my planned "Living to Serve" lesson for my leadership class and officer team," says Eick. Originally scheduled to help with the lesson was an outgoing local chapter officer, a district president, a state line officer and a county legislator. Eick decided despite the weather he was going to go through with his plans and met Tori at the salon she works at, Mera Hair Co., in downtown Medina. His daughter, a current member of FFA and his son, the incoming President of FFA, accompanied him and got in on the action. "It was not what I was hoping for, but we made the best of it and I got my donation in the mail. I want to thank everyone that was going to help and all of those who were able to!"



## Animal Appreciation Day Returns to Medina FFA

FFA advisor Todd Eick and his students were thrilled to bring back FFA Animal Appreciation Day to Medina Jr-Sr High School. Because of the pandemic the last few years have been done virtually through a slideshow.

"It was great having everyone together again," says Mr. Eick. "The students loved being able to bring in their pets and share them with the other students."

More than 20 species of animals were featured and a steady stream of visitors from grades Pre-K to 12th stopped in to Mr. Eick's classroom.

Great job to FFA members Danielle Schmidt and Lily Carpenter who organized the event.







## Medina Quizbowl Wins Championship



*Scholastic Bowl host Derick Evans with Jeff Dole, Alex Balaban, Arian Cayea (Captain) and Isaac Pace.*

Congratulations are in order for Medina Jr-Sr High School's Alex Balaban, Arian Cayea and Isaac Pace who took home first place in the Niagara's Choice Credit Union Scholastic Bowl that was hosted by WLVL 1340 AM/105.3 FM. The event was held at Niagara County Community College on March 25th and the team, coached by Jeff Dole, beat Starpoint to become the 2022 Scholastic Bowl Champions.

Scholastic Bowl is an academic buzzer competition similar to Jeopardy, but with teams testing their knowledge in literature, science, history, math and more. The Medina team dominated the whole season with David Berry, Dan Owen DeVera and Cole Hughes also representing the team throughout the regular season.

Mr. Dole says the team finished the regular season in first place and won the first two playoff games against Roy-Hart and North Tonawanda. "In the championship game against Starpoint, Alex, Arian and Isaac represented our school. It was an intense matchup with the Starpoint team taking a five point lead after the first round. Medina was in the lead by five point after the second round. In the final round, Starpoint took a 25 point lead with one question left. Needing to correctly answer the last 10 point question, Isaac buzzed in and answered with the correct answer and then received a bonus question worth 20 points." Alex came up with the correct answer to who was the first U.S. president to win the Nobel Peace Prize. The answer was Teddy Roosevelt and the team pulled out the win by a score of 170-165!"

The team is currently done for the season, but will be competing in Masterminds, which is another quiz competition. The Varsity team is currently in first place in a league with Albion, Holley, Kendall, Pembroke and Elba. The JV team is also in first place in their league and the middle school team is tied for first.

"We have a lot of dedicated students involved in Masterminds and Quizbowl. They show up to practice, enjoy competition and take school and learning seriously," says Mr. Dole.





## Medina's Oak Orchard Celebrates Kids Heart Challenge Heroes

Oak Orchard Elementary School Gym teachers Greg Husung and Travis Phillips celebrated their students who recently took part in the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge. The Medina students raised \$2,000 in their fifth year of participation! "The year before we raised almost \$3,000," says Mr. Phillips. "We were thrilled to find out we received two grants which we used to purchase a climbing wall for the gym." Second grade student Rayna Balaban says she loves the new addition to the gym. "It's a lot of fun and I really like to climb it."

The Kids Heart Challenge helps kids with special hearts to raise money for the health of all hearts. Oak Orchard students participated in fun physical activities and learned about how to keep their hearts and brains healthy. Thanks to the generosity of family and friends, the funds they raised will go to help others. "The kids were so instrumental in helping us achieve this and we had three major contributors who really helped us," says Mr. Phillips. "We are really proud of everyone who participated."



Gym teachers Greg Husung and Travis Phillips with Aoife Kelleher, Meadow Dunn, Oliver White, Natalie Smith-Flatley, Bryce Allen, Sophia Blount, Jonathan Bessel, Kennedy Hosmer, Cayden Dubois, Phoenix Konieczny, Nathan White, Rayna Balaban, Ryker Kenward, Marcus Falls, Henry Dresser, Lucas Miller, Abigail Sutch, Sterling Biesinger, Jordan Hammonds and Margaret Dunham.





## World War II Connection Shared in Class

During a recent study of World War II in Miss Martin and Mr. Dockery's High School Global History class, Pdraigh Crowley told the story of his great grandfather, Charles Owen.

The class read an article written by Virginia Kropf that appeared in a newspaper several years ago, and Pdraigh added information that his father and grandmother have passed down to him.

Pdraigh shared that his great grandfather, Mr. Owen, was a waist gunner on a B-17 bomber during World War II with the 369th squadron of the 306th Bombardment group. On his 43rd mission, his plane was shot down over Germany and he was taken prisoner. He was sent to an interrogation camp where the Germans presented him with much information about his background. He found out later that there were Nazi sympathizers in Medina who were sending information to the Germans.

He was taken to a prison camp, Stalag 7, where he endured many hardships. He was then moved to Stalag 17, a 600-mile trip in a boxcar. There was no food, water, or bathroom facilities. At the beginning of the war, Mr. Owen weighed 159 pounds. When he returned home to Medina, he weighed 85 pounds.

By 1945, it was apparent that the Germans would lose the war. They did not want to surrender to the Russians because Germany invaded Russia during the war and had committed terrible atrocities while they were there. The Germans marched their prisoners, including Mr. Owen, 400 miles to meet the Americans. It was very cold and there was little food. Mr. Owen said that the only thing that kept them going was that they knew that they were going to be turned over to the Allies.



After the prisoners were turned over to the Allies, they were flown to France where they were going to be sent by boxcar to a hospital. General Dwight Eisenhower, Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, made arrangements for the prisoners to be sent by passenger car instead. Mr. Owen met Eisenhower one day when he came in and sat at his table to explain how they would be sent back home.

Pdraigh also included that Mr. Owen was in training with the well-known actor, Clark Gable, who starred in the movie classic, *Gone with the Wind*.

During his later years, it was easier for Mr. Owen to retell his story. He talked about the importance of students hearing veterans tell of their experiences. He said, "When we're gone, it will be gone." Mr. Owen would be pleased to know that his great grandson has continued to tell his story.



## Medina Students of the Month

The Medina Teachers Association, the Medina CSD and the Medina Area Partnership are proud to announce their 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.

The month of January's business sponsor was Creekside Floral.

- Oak Orchard: first-grader Maisy Dreisbach, nominated by Mrs. Markarian.
- Wise Intermediate School: sixth-grader Felicity Sims, nominated by Mrs. Fassel.
- High School: twelfth grader Jaxon Phillips, nominated by Mrs. Rennie.

The month of February's business sponsor was Ontario Shores.

The winners were:

- Oak Orchard: kindergartener Margaret (Maisy) Dunham, nominated by Mrs. Busch.
- Wise Intermediate School: third-grader Liam Dreisbach, nominated by Mollie Mark.
- High School: eighth grader Marah Qadour, nominated by Mrs. Catalano McCloskey.

The month of March's business sponsor was Lyric and Lizzy.

The winners were:

- Oak Orchard: second grader Isabella Eaton, nominated by Mrs. Harmon and Mr. Gray.
- Wise Intermediate School: sixth-grader Tatianna Lopez, nominated by Ms. Davey.
- High School: senior Troy Avery-Kelley, nominated by Mrs. Gates and Mrs. Zakes.

The month of April's business sponsor was Herbalty Cottage.

The winners were:

- Oak Orchard: second grader Alice Lonnen, nominated by Mrs. Brooks.
- Wise Intermediate School: third-grader Kole McMullen, nominated by Mrs. Toub.
- High School: ninth grader Nick Reese, nominated by Mrs. Trillizio.

The month of May's business sponsor was A Lily and A Sparrow.

The winners were:

- Oak Orchard: first grader Emma Lilleby, nominated by Mrs. Woodburn.
- Wise Intermediate School: fourth-grader Charli Zambito, nominated by Mrs. Lemme.
- High School: eleventh grader Abigail Goodrich, nominated by Mrs. Rennie.

Congratulations to all our winners!



(LtoR) Joe Byrne (MTA President), Mary Lewis from Creekside Floral, Maisy Dreisbach, Jaxon Phillips and Joel Reed (High School Assistant Principal).



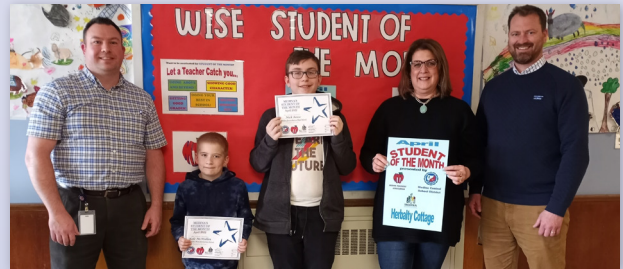
(LtoR) Joe Byrne (MTA President), Marah Qadour, Maisy Dunham, Liam Dreisbach, Joe Zeliff from Ontario Shores and Mark Kruzynski (MCSD Superintendent).



(LtoR) Joe Byrne (MTA President), Troy Avery-Kelley, Isabella Eaton, Jacqueline Chinn from Lyric and Lizzy, Tatianna Lopez and Mark Kruzynski (MCSD Superintendent).



(LtoR) Joe Byrne (MTA President), Abigail Goodrich, Laura Gardner from A Lily and A Sparrow, Emma Lilleby, Charli Zambito, and Daniel Doctor (Wise Intermediate Principal).



(LtoR) Joe Byrne (MTA President), Kole McMullen, Nick Reese, Bonnie Heck of Herbalty Cottage, and Chris Hughes (Wise Intermediate Principal).





## Medina Students Inducted Into the National Honor Society

April 27th, the Medina Junior-Senior High School inducted 32 new members into the Arista Chapter of the National Honor Society.

The Arista Chapter of the National Honor Society was formed in the 1920s as an exclusive club at the High School where members were selected based upon grade point average and formal recommendations. In 1964 Medina decided to charter their own National Honor Society and the district's administration decided to honor the spirit of the existing club and named it the Arista Chapter of the National Honor Society.

The Keynote Speaker was 2014 Medina graduate Ben McPherson, who is the President of the Rotary Club, sits on the Finance Committee for MAP (Medina Area Partnership) and is a financial advisor for Edward Jones.

After a Candle Lighting Ceremony with the current National Honor Society Officers, new members Tatyanna Baity, Marissa Brigham, Bailey Clare, Bryson Costitch, Ella Dahlhaus, Dana Faith DeVera, Paige Dix, Kennedy Eick, Gabriella Flores-Medina, Lydia Fox, Brooklyn Garrow, Abigail Goodrich, Rachel Hill, Seagan Majchrzak, Haley Marciniak, Gabriel Mark, Brooke Moden, Jackson Moreland, Mason Moreland, Elizabeth Parker, Aidan Paul, Henry Rigerman, William Roush, Hilda Santiago Bautista, Lydia Sharlau, Sara Swart, David Vanderwalker, Jeremy Waters, Hailey Wilkins, Lillian Wilson, Kayleigh Wright and Tyrell Wright were inducted by the school's Principal, Michael Cavanagh.

National Honor Society Advisors Samantha Rennie and Alissa Dunham say that it was a wonderful ceremony and they are very proud of all the new members!







## MEDINA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

One Mustang Drive  
Medina, N.Y. 14103  
Phone: 585-798-2700  
Fax: 585-798-5676  
[www.medinacsd.org](http://www.medinacsd.org)

Dr. Mark B. Kruzynski, Superintendent

### BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Mrs. LuAnn Tierney, *President*  
Mrs. Alissa Mitchell, *Vice President*  
Mrs. Annette Allis  
Mrs. Jennifer Buondonno  
Mrs. Arlene Pawlaczyk  
Mr. Scott Robinson  
Mrs. Debra Tompkins

### DISTRICT OFFICE (585)798-2700

Dr. Mark B. Kruzynski  
*Superintendent*

Mr. Marc P. Graff  
*Assistant Superintendent*

Mrs. Julie Webber  
*Director of Curriculum and Instruction*

Mrs. Alexandra DiLaura  
*Director of Special Programs*

Mr. William Fischer  
*Manager of Network & Information Systems*

Mr. Mark Klotzbach  
*Transportation Supervisor*

Mr. Kevin Czaja  
*Director of Facilities*

### MEDINA JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (585) 798-2700

Mr. Michael Cavanagh  
*Principal*

Mr. Joel Reed  
*Assistant Principal*

### CLIFFORD H. WISE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL (585) 798-2700

Mr. Christopher Hughes  
*Principal*

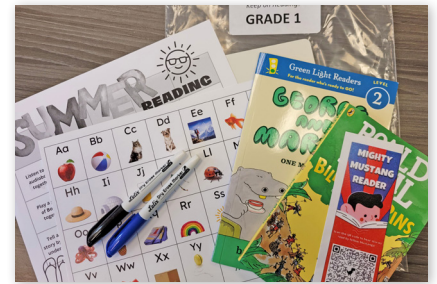
Mr. Daniel Doctor  
*Principal / Community Outreach Liaison*

### OAK ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL (585) 798-2700

Mrs. Jennifer Stearns  
*Principal*

# Medina CSD Encourages Reading All Summer Long

The Medina Central School District wants students and their families to keep on reading all summer long. Students in Pre-Kindergarten through grade five all received a summer reading bag to take home. These bags contain not only books but other items that support the science of reading approach in learning to read.



"For the past two years, we have partnered with The Reading League to educate our teachers on how to approach reading instruction based on brain research," says Julie Webber, Director of Curriculum and Instruction. "We want our students to be successful in ALL content areas and this requires them to be proficient readers. This investment in staff professional learning will take time but we expect to see our students' reading proficiency increase and therefore have higher achievement in math, science, social studies and many other areas."

Mrs. Webber would like family and community members to be a part of students' efforts in learning to read. "Humans are born with the natural abilities to hear and speak. Reading must be explicitly taught - what does a letter look like, sound like, how to write it, etc. The more students can hear and speak language in storytelling and conversations, the more connections they will be able to make when they learn to read," Webber says. "We can all support early readers by simply having meaningful conversations with them and reading to them."

The summer reading bags were assembled by high school students before their final day of class. Included in the bag is a Mighty Mustang Reader bookmark that contains a QR code to access a website with district students and staff reading their favorite books. Webber says this is just another way that students can build their vocabulary knowledge by listening to stories from some familiar people. You can access the Mighty Mustang Readers page on the District website.

The District also recently hosted a Mustang Parent Academy session for parents, grandparents and caregivers on how to support their child's reading efforts. Another session will be offered in the Fall about the Science of Reading approach.

