

# MUSTANG JOURNAL

MEDINA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



Exemplify Excellence in Education

Fall 2024

## What's Inside?

- Impact of Cell Phones .....1
- Community Service .....2
- NTHS .....3
- Students of the Month .....3
- FFA trip .....4
- Published book .....5
- Pep Rally .....6-7
- Veterans Dinner .....8
- Halloween Hijinks .....8
- Class Competition .....9
- Fire Prevention .....10

## The Impact of Cell Phones and Social Media on Student Well-Being

As educators and community leaders, we are committed to providing an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. However, the pervasive presence of cell phones and social media has become a significant obstacle to achieving this goal.

Jonathan Haidt's recent work, *The Anxious Generation*, highlights a troubling trend: the rapid rise in anxiety, depression, and loneliness among adolescents, closely tied to the proliferation of social media and smartphone use. Haidt emphasizes how social media platforms, designed to connect people, often lead to feelings of inadequacy, social comparison, and cyberbullying among young users.

The impact is evident in our schools. Cell phones often distract students from their studies, disrupting lessons and undermining their ability to engage fully in the classroom. Beyond academic disruption, the constant pull of notifications and social media feeds leaves many students mentally and emotionally drained.

We are actively working to address these challenges at Medina Central School District. Our educators set clear expectations for appropriate cell phone use during school hours, helping to minimize distractions and maintain a focused learning environment. Additionally, we encourage families to engage in open conversations with their children about the effects of social media and establish healthy screen-time habits at home.

We are incorporating digital literacy lessons in the classroom, teaching students how to navigate the online world responsibly and resiliently. By equipping students with these critical skills, we can help them strike a healthy balance between leveraging technology's benefits and mitigating its potential harms.

We must work together as a community to address this issue. While technology offers tremendous opportunities for learning and connection, it is our shared responsibility to guide students toward thoughtful and intentional use. By supporting these efforts, we can help our students reclaim their focus, protect their mental health, and build the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Mark B. Kruzynski, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Medina Central School District



**Dr. Mark Kruzynski**  
Superintendent



## Vision Statement

Exemplify excellence in education.

## Mission Statement

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





## Community Service Fair Promotes Civic Responsibility to Students

Participation in Government classes at Medina Junior-Senior High School present an interesting assignment to students each year. Teachers Jennifer Ossont and Todd Bensley invite several non-profits to the high school cafeteria for a Community Service Fair. The students are required to do ten hours of community service with at least three organizations so they can develop civic responsibility, learn new skills and gain a sense of their strength and talents. Once their internship is done, students prepare a presentation of their experiences for class.

Mr. Bensley says, "Many of the organizations are long-time participants. It is nice to know that they recognize the value of our Community Service Fair in connecting them to the next generation of volunteers in the community."



*Bella Fischer, Justine Fitzsimmons, Raquel Russell, and Karen Canning (GO ART!).*



*Georgia Thomas (Medina Historical Society) with students Lukas Grimes and Trenton Morley.*



*Raquel Russell, Bella Fischer, Justine Fitzsimmons, Cole Callard, Trenton Morley and Samantha Covis (Lee-Whedon Library).*





## Orleans/Niagara BOCES CTE Students Inducted into National Technical Honor Society

Congratulations to the Medina students from the Orleans Career and Technical Education Center, who were recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society. Out of all the high school students in the United States, the National Technical Honor Society students who receive this honor comprise 1.6 percent of that population. For staff at the Orleans/Niagara BOCES center, they represent the four pillars of the National Technical Honor Society: scholarship, leadership, service and character.

The students were honored in front of their teachers, families and school district representatives. The students had to maintain an 89.5 grade average in their career and technical education programs and an 84.5 average at their high schools, have superior attendance, exemplary behavior, be a member in good standing with SkillsUSA and have a recommendation from a faculty member.



Photo Caption: **(LtoR)** Maria Vasquez (Security and Law Enforcement), Trenton Morley (Electricity/Electronics), Sophia Goyette (Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering), Eva Lacy (Welding), Abigail Wright (Electricity/Electronics), Sofia Gagliardi (Allied Health), Gisella Garcia (Allied Health) and JSBS Counselor Ms. Morabito. **Back Row:** JSBS Principal Mr. Cavanagh and Superintendent Dr. Kruzynski.

## Medina School Students of the Month

The Medina Teachers Association, the Medina CSD, and the Medina Area Partnership are proud to announce the October winners 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 October business sponsor is the Medina FFA.

The winners were:

- Oak Orchard: Kindergartener Symphoni Wilson, nominated by Saira Borsching.
- Wise Middle School: Fifth-grader Ruth Sanchez Cabrera, nominated by Tiffany Cree.
- Jr-Sr High School: Eleventh-grader Avion Johnson, nominated by Mr. Michael Cavanagh.

Congratulations to our winners!



**(LtoR)** Front row from left to right: Ruth Sanchez Cabrera and Symphoni Wilson. Back row from left to right: MTA President Joe Byrne, FFA President Austin Seefeldt, FFA Student Advisor Mason Eick, FFA Vice President Madison Farley, Avion Johnson, and Jr-Sr High School Assistant Principal Mollie Mark.



## Medina FFA Trip Brings Them to the Emerald Isle

Medina Junior-Senior High School FFA Advisor Todd Eick had been hoping to take his students on an international trip for several years now. "I had been really exploring possibilities and then COVID hit and I had to let it go by the wayside." This past summer his dream for himself and 13 students came to fruition. "My daughter had just gone on a trip with Mrs. Peracciny, one of our Spanish teachers, to London, Rome and Paris and I was looking at the photos and thought why aren't I doing this?" Mr. Eick looked into different tours and found one focused on agriculture in Ireland. Ireland's agriculture sector is a key driver of its economy and is characterized by a focus on livestock production and exports. There are roughly 135,000 farms in Ireland. "For our first trip it was really perfect. It is an English-speaking country and included farm tours, horticulture tours and aquaculture tours. It all fit."

The FFA students were joined by a group of students from northern California bringing their total to 30 for the 10-day trip that went to Dublin, Kilkenny, Waterford, Galway, back to Dublin. "These students came from a very rural section of the west coast and it took them three hours to get to the airport from their town," explains Mr. Eick. "It is much more rural than where we are from. It definitely added to the learning experience for my students hearing about their day-to-day lives." The trip involved a lot of diversity for the students; everything from a pig farm, cattle farm, sheep farm, crop farms and oyster farms. They even observed the training of sheepdogs, which they all loved. "I was very impressed with the farmers we interacted with and it was an amazing adventure for myself and the students," says Mr. Eick. "They really got to experience farm life over there and the farmers were very energetic and very honest with the students about not only their livelihood, but their personal lives as well. One farmer shared with them his struggle with depression and how getting professional help really saved him. It was a great conversation for the students and I think made them aware that it is okay to talk about these issues. It was very impromptu and real and I think the students appreciated his honesty." He says the farmers did a great job engaging all 30 kids and making sure they experienced different things. "They learned a lot about the Irish culture and traditions as well."

One of Mr. Eick's students, Morgan Zeiner, said the trip was a gift. "My mom really wanted me to go and I have to say it was very cool. I loved learning about the history of Ireland and going to the farms was great. It was very hands-on and we milked cows, picked strawberries and helped to harvest oysters. We loved playing with the lambs. As we were walking through the cities and towns, I felt like I was walking through a museum. It was very historical and it was cool to learn about some of their laws too." One of those laws was about opening hedgerows where if they did that, they had to plant three times the amount elsewhere. "The thought is to replace it with more than what you are removing," explains Mr. Eick. "They have a very sustainable agriculture mindset there. I wish we did things like that here."

Mr. Eick says the trip was very successful in exposing the students to a different culture and expanding their worldview. "In 2026, I plan on taking a group of students to Costa Rica and Panama and I am very excited about being able to offer them that experience of seeing the rainforest and volcanos and learning about the flora and fauna."



*(LtoR): Ahlyssa Miller, Jack Cecchini, Mason Eick, Adeline Castricone, Angel Mulchay (front), Will Prest, Sawyer Kingsbury, Faith Baker-Austin, Morgan Zeiner, Liam Castricone, Nate Surdell, and Zach Lilley at the Cliffs of Moher on the west coast of Ireland.*



*East Coast and West Coast, New York and California groups with the tour guide and driver.*





## English Teacher Beth Dickhut Published First Book

For many years Medina Junior-Senior High School English teacher Elizabeth Dickhut has toyed with the idea of writing her own novel, *Still Water*. Several years ago I was thinking about some students I had who had experienced losing a parent suddenly,” she explains. “They were obviously going through a very hard time and I couldn’t help but think what was going on in the inside. It inspired me to start writing about a group of boys who were friends and experienced that loss.” Mrs. Dickhut kept returning to her story throughout the years refining it until she felt comfortable enough to share with colleagues. “I am so grateful to my coworkers and friends who took time out of their busy lives to read this and give me their honest feedback. It really meant so much to me.” Dickhut says *Still Water* is a story of loss and grief; but is also a story of hope, the kind that is rooted in friendship, family and forgiveness.

Another key element of the book deals with the romantic side of adolescence and the protagonist having feelings for one of his friend’s girlfriends. “I do think young adults will really enjoy the story,” says Dickhut. “I hope they see themselves in some of the characters. I really want this book to be a teachable moment for some of them and I want them to know that their teachers do care about what is going on in their lives.”

There were a couple more hoops to jump through before she could publish her book. In *Still Water* two poems are referenced, “The Peace of Wild Things” by Wendell Berry and Robert Frost’s “Going for Water”. There is also a passage from the book *A River Runs Through It* and other stories by Norman Maclean. “I had to get permission to use Maclean’s and Berry’s works, and I was so thankful to the estate and the publishing company to allow me to use them since they meant a great deal to me and to the story. The Maclean estate sent along a nice compliment and said they found the story compelling and wished me the best of luck.” She also designed the cover in Canva, something she really enjoyed doing.

With her book getting ready to launch on Amazon on November 8th, Dickhut says she can barely contain her excitement. “I won’t lie, I am nervous, but it just feels awesome. I have a real sense of accomplishment that I finished the book and people are going to get to read it. It would be really great if I saw students here carrying it around since they inspired it.”

To learn more about the book and Beth Dickhut, you can follow her on Instagram @elizabeth\_d\_writes. *Still Water* will be available in paperback and Kindle formats.







## Pep Rally!

One of the highlights of homecoming week is all our Mustangs celebrating at the pep rally held at Veteran's Memorial Park. Everyone from our Pre-K to our senior class loved seeing the Marching Band's performance, watching our athletes parade and seeing the crowning of our King and Queen, Cole Callard and Sophia Goyette! It was an awesome time!











## Medina Honor Veterans in Traditional Dinner Celebration

Eighteen members of Medina Junior-Senior High School's National Honor Society (NHS) served over 131 dinners in the school's cafeteria and 10 dinners for takeout to local veterans and their families.

Advisor and teacher Zachary Harris says, "This is an extremely important tradition as it allows students to give back to the community, as well as learn about the many local veterans we have. The veterans love visiting the school and having an opportunity to talk with the students. It also allows for local businesses and organizations to have a great way to support local veterans."

The district always looks forward to honoring the brave men and women who defended our country and their families around Veteran's Day. Mr. Harris says it means a lot to him on a personal note as well. "I feel honored to be able to organize and be a part of this amazing event. It is one of the best parts of being the NHS Advisor. It means so much to see how thankful the veterans and their families are, and give back to those who served. I love being able to talk with them and personally thank them for their service."



## Halloween Hijinks

Our students and staff had a great time at their Halloween day celebration. We loved seeing all the costumes and the joy on students' faces when they picked out their pumpkins.







## Class Competition

The Medina Junior-Senior High School students brought their A games for their annual Class Competition.

The students and staff had a blast seeing who was going to take this year's crown at some of the most inventive contests ever!



*Juan Vasquez, Vinny Grey, Cassidy Janas and Kennedy Wheeler. Huwyler), and Jeff Bird.*



*Junior Kolten Fletcher after winning Musical Chairs.*



*Sophomore Malik Lamar after scoring a point for his class during the Scavenger Hunt.*







### 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. Alissa Mitchell, *President*  
Mrs. LuAnn Tierney, *Vice President*  
Mrs. Annette Allis  
Dr. Steven Blount  
Mrs. Jennifer Buondonno  
Mr. Donnell Holloway  
Mr. Scott Robinson

#### DISTRICT OFFICE (585)798-2700

Dr. Mark B. Kruzynski  
Superintendent

Mr. Marc P. Graff  
Assistant Superintendent for Operations

Mrs. Julie Webber  
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction

Mrs. Alexandra DiLaura  
Assistant Superintendent for Special Programs

Mr. William Fischer  
Manager of Network & Information Systems

Mr. Daniel Doctor  
Director of Community Partnerships

Mr. Mark Klotzbach  
Transportation Supervisor

Mr. Kevin Czaja  
Director of Facilities

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

Mr. Michael Cavanagh  
Principal

Mrs. Mollie Mark  
Assistant Principal

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

Mr. Christopher Hughes  
Principal

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

Mrs. Jennifer Stearns  
Principal

# Fire Prevention Day at Oak Orchard

Fire Prevention Week is October 6th through the 12th. The theme this year is "Smoke alarms: Make them work for you!" which strives to educate everyone about the importance of having working smoke alarms in the home.

At Oak Orchard Primary School in Medina, volunteers from the fire companies in Shelby, East Shelby and Ridgeway, along with the Medina Fire Department were on hand to talk to students and do some fun and educational activities. Shelby brought a large ladder truck, Ridgeway and Medina brought fire trucks, East Shelby brought an off-road vehicle and Medina brought a rescue boat. The students absolutely loved the spray station that was set up.

Principal Jenn Stearns says, "We are so grateful for this educational opportunity for our students. Medina and Shelby Fire Departments provided fire prevention tips in our classrooms for UPK and kindergarten this week as well which was wonderful. We want to thank them for the support in helping to protect and keep our families safe."



Students in Lynn Woodruff's class with local fire department volunteers.