

Kalamazoo Public Schools

EXCELSIOR

www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

January 2025 • Volume 28, Issue 1

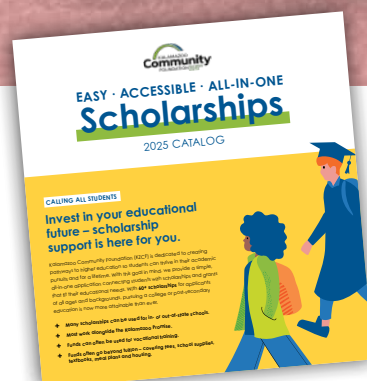


KC's Tyler Germain Named MI Track Coach of the Year

(STORY AND PHOTOS ON PAGES 6-8)

A special insert on
scholarships from the
Kalamazoo Community
Foundation

CENTER PULLOUT



NonProfit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Kalamazoo, MI
Permit 709

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER
** ECRWS **

Kalamazoo Public Schools, 1220 Howard St., Kalamazoo, MI 49008

The Fatherhood Network is here to help fathers in Kalamazoo maintain active and engaged relationships with their children



Services Include

- Individual & Group Support/Coaching
- Father Centered-Family Friendly events
- Dad Cafés
- Men's Health Check-ins
- Basic Needs + Emergency Support
- Men's Wellness Retreats
- Connection to Community Resources
- Professional Development Workshops

Contact us for more information
(269) 261-0814
info@fatherhoodnetwork.org
www.thefatherhoodnetwork.org



Showing Up in the New Year Is a Key Step Toward Success

A Message from the Superintendent

Dr. Darrin Slade



THERE are a number of sayings that all preach the same message: Showing up matters.

Sometimes the quote is attributed to the famous physicist Stephen Hawking: “Half the battle is just showing up.”

Sometimes the variation might be seen under the name of Hillary Clinton, former senator, Secretary of State and First Lady: “Showing up is not all of life, but counts for a lot.”

It is difficult to track down the origin of a lot of what you read on the Internet, but let’s assume for argument’s sake that all of these people, and probably many more, said these words or something similar. And all agree that showing up and being present makes a difference to the job you do, the opportunities you receive, the things you learn.

Showing up is not the only thing there is in life, but as a place to start, it’s a pretty good one.

As an educator, I know that it is an essential part of learning. Your success as a student will depend on the effort you put into your assignments, the skills and talents that you have, the people you choose to surround yourself with, the teachers who teach you — but learning and finding success as a student will begin with you making the effort to be in school every day.

It’s simple really. Every day that you are not in school, is a day that you rob yourself of opportunities.

First and foremost, every day you’re not in school means you miss something your teacher had planned for you that day. These lessons are carefully thought out and skillfully executed. I’ve seen teachers in action — I’ve been a teacher — and teachers are not just repeating words — they are attempting to craft meaningful lessons delivered in inventive and thought-provoking ways. They want

you to be excited and engaged. You rob yourself of that energy and intelligence when you don’t show up.

Every day in school there is a chance to learn something new — outside of what your teacher or teachers are presenting. It might be a fact that you read in a book. It might be an observation a classmate offers. It might be a reaction that you experience in a test tube. It might be the way the colors blended in an art assignment. Schools give you a million different ways to discover your world,

Every day you are not in school means you rob yourself of the opportunity to engage with some of the most interesting and innovative minds you will ever meet. Your classmates. Just as you shouldn’t sell yourself short, neither should you sell your friends and classmates short either. They have different experiences, different ways of looking at the world, different interpretations of art and music and science. They present a million different ways to look at the world — if you make the effort to be in the seat next to them.

Every day that you are not in school is a day that you miss a chance to do something cool. If you didn’t show up you might have missed playing in the big game — or you never even got to join the team because you weren’t there for tryouts. You miss school and you miss the chance to participate in a club, play a video game, see the new books on display, audition for the musical or play in the big concert.

All of this is to say that attendance matters. It matters to everyone at KPS who is invested in your education. It matters to us that you show up. Every. Single Day. Because, being here is one of the most important ways to ensure you are getting the education you need and deserve to be successful.

And, I hope you see how it matters to you. It matters to your learning, to your friendships, to new opportunities in the world. The new year is the perfect time to make a resolution to show up and make the most of the school year. Don’t show up for us. Show up for yourself.

NEED HEAT? WE’RE HERE TO HELP!



If you find your furnace is in need of repair or replacement, **Community Homeworks** is here to help! We offer no or low-cost support to income-eligible homeowners in the **Kalamazoo County**, such as plumbing, electrical, and other health and safety issue repairs. Call or email us today to see if you are eligible at **(269) 998-3275** or **info@communityhomeworks.org**.



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

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

ARTISTS' CORNER

Milwood Elementary School students have been busy exploring a variety of media and techniques with art teacher **Abbey Ruffer**.

Kindergarteners like Chief Robinson listened to the story "Pattern Fish Need" and then created fish using stencils and designed patterns with various shapes and lines that they colored in with neon paint sticks.

Second-grade students like Melynnie Bowden learned

about landscapes by examining the works of artists such as David Hockney, Rob Van Hoek, and Heather Galler. They created their own landscapes using oil pastels and watercolors.

J'Sean Spencer and other fifth graders studied the Mexican celebration of Dia de Los Muertos (The Day of the Dead). They learned about the traditions of the holiday and created their own sugar skulls using markers and watercolors to make patterns and design elements.



Chief Robinson



Melynnie Bowden



J'Sean Spencer

Alma Powell Branch Library



We're Open!

308 W. North St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269-553-7800

Hours:

Monday: 1–6 pm
Tuesday: 1–8 pm
Wednesday: 1–6 pm
Thursday: 10 am–6 pm
Friday: 10 am–5 pm
Saturday: 10 am–2 pm
Sunday: Closed

Learn more at kpl.gov/pow



Kalamazoo
Public Library

BOARD OF EDUCATION

President

TiAnna Harrison

Vice President

Carol McGlinn

Secretary

Jennie Hill

Treasurer

Karla Murphy

Trustee

Takisha Johnson

Trustee

Juanita Yvonne Payton

Trustee

Patti Sholler-Barber

KPS SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Darrin Slade

Excelsior is mailed to every household in Kalamazoo.

For information about advertising, please call Encore Publications.

(269) 383-4433

NOTICE

Kalamazoo Public Schools welcomes all students and staff of any religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identification, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability.

The District will not tolerate or condone any act of bias or discrimination toward any person on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, gender identification, height, weight, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, and disability in any of its activities, hiring practices, programs or services.

Inquiries by students and/or their parents/guardians should be directed to:

**Director of School Improvement,
Title I and Assessments**
Kalamazoo Public Schools
1220 Howard St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0180

All other inquiries should be directed to:

**Director of
Human Resources**
Kalamazoo Public Schools
1220 Howard St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
(269) 337-0177

District Directory at :
www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

Recipe

from the KPS Food Service, Chartwells



Kirsten Strong,
registered dietitian
nutritionist

Black-Eyed Peas and Collard Greens

DID YOU KNOW that black-eyed peas and collard greens are commonly eaten as a New Year's tradition? According to John Egerton, a Southern food researcher, black-eyed peas have a mystical and mythical power to bring good luck, and collard greens symbolize money and will ensure a prosperous new year!

This recipe includes both beans and greens and is prepared in a slow cooker. The prep time is only about 30 minutes with a cook time of approximately 8 hours. About 3 hours in, your home will fill with the wonderful smell of slow-cooking bacon and beans. What a perfect recipe for a wintery January day. Serve with cornbread for a heartier meal or enjoy it as is.



INGREDIENTS

2 pounds collard greens
8 ounces bacon, diced
1 large onion, coarsely
chopped

1 pound dried black-eyed
peas, sorted and rinsed
3 cloves garlic, coarsely
chopped

4 cups low-sodium or
unsalted chicken
stock, more as needed
3 tablespoons tomato
paste
2 tablespoons apple
cider vinegar

2 large dried bay leaves
½ teaspoon crushed red
pepper flakes
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black
pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut thick stems from the collards and slice the leaves into ½-inch crosswise ribbons (you can use the stems, if desired; cut into ¼-inch crosswise pieces). In a large bowl or salad spinner, wash the collards with several changes of water until grit-free. Set aside.
2. Sauté the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat until cooked through but not crisp. Remove the bacon to paper towels to drain, leaving the fat behind.
3. Add the onion to the skillet and cook until soft and translucent, about 3 minutes.
4. Combine the bacon, onions, beans, garlic, chicken stock, tomato paste, vinegar, bay leaves, and red pepper flakes in a slow cooker. Add the black-eyed peas. The liquid should cover the top of the beans (add more stock or water as needed).
5. Cover the slow cooker and cook on low for 6 to 7 hours or on high for 3 hours.
6. Add the collard ribbons and the stems, if using, to the slow cooker. Cover and continue to cook until the collards are tender, about 1 hour more.
7. Taste, season with salt and black pepper to taste, and serve.

Serves 6

METRO
KMETRO.COM • (269) 337 - 8222

TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Ride to & from School
- Extracurricular Activities
- KVCC/WMU/VoTech Programs
- 21 Bus Routes
- Metro Connect
- Travel Training

Visit us at **Kmetro.com**
for information on
transportation options
to increase student access
to educational opportunities
throughout the
community!

.....LET'S
GO METRO!

**KALAMAZOO
& LOAVES
& FISHES**

Need Help with Groceries?

Pick-up and Home Delivery Available

Both Fresh and Non-Perishable Items

No Income Verification or IDs Required

For More Info:

Call
269-343-3663

Email
info@kzoof.org

Visit
www.kzoof.org

KC Track Coach Tyler Germain Tells Students to Find Pride in the Everyday Wins

TYLER GERMAIN can claim an honorific that many would say epitomizes his success as a track coach: The Kalamazoo Central coach was named the 2024 Michigan High School Coaches Association Coach of the Year for boys track and field.

But for Germain, the greatest testament to his success will not be honors like that, or the fact that his 2024 men's team won the state championship, it will be the kids who cherish their experiences as athletes in his program.

"Kids who played high school sports remember their high school sports experiences," Germain said. "They reminisce at class reunions. They remember the times that they had whether it was good or bad. I guess more than anything, I want the kids who are on our teams to have a positive experience while they're here and then when they leave to look back on this time fondly.

"I've had kids show up at practices and ask if they can help or come to watch home track meets to see their former teammates. It just means the world to me."

Germain grew up in Bay City and began running track at Bay City West High School after coach Mike Nesbitt recruited him to the team as a sophomore. He'd always played football and basketball, but when Nesbitt asked him to try out he thought, "Why not?" He liked Nesbitt as a teacher.

He eventually landed as a hurdler and on some of the relay teams. And, somewhere along the way, he fell in love with the sport. That one teacher, that one coach, that one opportunity changed the trajectory of his life.

Germain knew he wanted to be a teacher, but while he was in college, Nesbitt gave him the op-



portunity to coach as well, first as a volunteer and then as a paid assistant coach. Now 39, Germain is entering his 21st year of coaching.

"I feel fortunate that I still feel like I have a lot left in the tank and a lot left that I can learn," he said. "I'm always trying to be a little better coach than I was the year before."

That is easy in track and field, he said, because

the coaching community is so supportive. He always feels he can reach out to other coaches for advice and new techniques.

"I think the reason for this is track is not a zero-sum sport," Germain said. "My success does not depend on me stopping you from being successful. There's no defense.

"I always tell my athletes the only thing you can do is to run your race and control what you can control. You try to execute that to the best of your ability. I see genuine joy from other coaches when our kids do well. I feel genuine joy and happiness for coaches that I know when their kids do well. We all just want to see kids be successful and to elevate our sport."

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Germain, who has a bachelor's degree from Saginaw Valley State University and a master's from Western Michigan University, has been at KC for eight years. He teaches English — everything from Honors 10 to creative writing to Advanced Placement language.

This is his fourth school district and it's the one where he's chosen to raise his own children. He said he appreciates the strength he sees in the district's diversity. "I just feel like in a lot of ways this school district is a microcosm of the best things in our country."

"I can remember this one time that really stood out to me," he said. "I had two students speaking Arabic to one another at one of these tables. Two others were speaking Spanish to one another. Then those students needed to discuss something together — and they turned toward one another and spoke English to each other. I was like, 'This is so cool.'"

He said that when he came to KC as a teacher and assistant coach, he had a vision of what the track program could be like. He wasn't talking about wins but about potential. But the first task was getting kids to try out for track. In his first year, there were only 70 kids combined on the boys and girls teams.

"The first thing on my agenda was to recruit the hallways and to talk to kids and to attend extracurricular activities and to start conversations and say, 'You know, this is what we could do for you, this is how it's going to help you if you're a football player, if you're a basketball player, if you're a volleyball player.

"I believed that if they tried it and if they saw
(continued on page 7)

Tyler Germain (continued from page 6)



Kalamazoo Central alum, center left, Latay'vion Braxton, and Kalamazoo Central senior Jeremy Dixon are caught mid-stride at a meet last spring.

growth and a little bit of success that they would come back and that they would tell their friends,” he said. “Kids talk about what they’re doing. The story that kids tell reveals the culture of your program.”

Last year, the school had more than 140 students on the men’s and women’s track teams. He expects even more to join the teams this season.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Senior Jeremy Dixon, a sprinter who was on last year’s championship team, said he always knew he was fast. So when he joined the KC track team and was given new rules and new assignments and new goals, he challenged Germain.

“I questioned Germain. Germain always had an answer for my questions,” Dixon said. “He’d always say, ‘I wouldn’t make you do anything unless I can explain it.’”

Dixon said he values those lessons. “It almost feels like I’ve had an internship in coaching because I was learning so much. He’s the best coach I’ve ever had.”

Annie Alkema, a senior distance runner who runs the 800, 1600 and 3200 as well as some relays, agrees with Dixon. “Coach Germain motivates his athletes to reach their potential. He not only shows that hard



Kalamazoo Central Junior Daviya McCoy sticks the landing in the long jump.

work is the key to success but the rest of the coaching staff believe it as well. This motivates people to work harder towards their goals not only in track but in school as well.”

Germain said his teams’ approach may be different from the way people think of coaching. It is not the stereotype of a militaristic, hard-nosed attitude. There is none of the grind mentality that has become intertwined with American sports culture.

The KC track and field coaching team includes Jaime Gordon, retired, Hillside Middle School; Brian Berheide, KC social studies teacher; Rex Hafer, KC government and social studies teacher and cross country coach; Jonathan Langworthy, cross country coach; Johnnie Smith, KC campus safety; Tony Thomas, KC



Kalamazoo Central Senior Annie Alkema is a distance runner for KC.

business teacher; Oscar Hall and Cece Steck. Each coach contributes to the success of the team, he said. While he appreciates the Coach of the Year award, the team’s success has been a team effort.

“The one thing that we as a coaching staff try to emphasize is that our coaching needs to come from a place of love and positivity,” Germain said. “We try to make practice the best part of a kid’s day. And, for them to look forward to coming to practice.

“They’re there to do the training that is necessary, but we’re not going to beat them into the ground to where they feel they have to go home and collapse for the rest of the night. We want them to

(continued on page 8)

Tyler Germain *(continued from page 7)*

leave practice feeling like they could do more — because that makes them want to come back the next day and do more.”

There’s no point in leaving athletes broken every day, he said. He wants athletes refreshed and energetic throughout the season, to have something “left in the tank” to compete well in the big meets.

Dixon said Germain would take quality over quantity any day. Germain also expects his athletes to remember that they are part of a team, there to support each other, he said. “We know as a team that when we are at our best together, we can be the best in the state.”

THE BEST IN THE STATE

Last year, the KC boys team was the best in the state.

Germain said at any state track finals, a team never really knows how things will shake out. “Again, there’s nothing any of us can do about another team that has a great day. That’s kind of how it goes with track at the state finals. If you have the type of team where you can crack the Top 5, any of those teams can have

a chance to win just depending how each event unfolds.”

The day of the 2024 state championship there were standout performances by individual athletes like Dixon, who became the state champion in the 100 meters and secured second place in the 200 meters; and Jasper Cane, who finished third in the 1600 meters and second in the 3200 meters. Moreover, the 4x100 team achieved a fourth-place finish and the 4x200 team secured fifth place in the state.

Dixon remembers winning the state championship as a “dream come true. Everything happened one race at a time. Everybody kept placing and kept placing. Nobody really noticed we were going to win the whole thing until late in the meet. There



Photo courtesy Herb Todd

**Kalamazoo Central Junior
Aaliyah Young gives her all in a
race last spring.**

were so many good things happening.”

While coaching may have an impact, it was the students who put in the award-winning performances, Germain said. The team showed up and gave their best effort. That’s all he ever asks of them.

“We preach that to the kids all the time,” Germain said. “The only things you can really control is your effort, your attitude, how you execute your race and the type of teammate that you are.

“We’ve really tried to teach our athletes that when you control the things you can control and focus more on those controllables and your processes day in and day out — more than the outcomes — then you can find small wins all over the place all of the time. We were ecstatic that we won the state championship, but the goal was never to go win X number of state championships.

“The goal has been and remains to be that we want our track and field team to be the best that it can be. We know that if we maximize the potential that we have, the kids will leave here feeling like they got better as athletes, that they had a positive experience, and that they had coaches that cared about them.”

Bag of Books SALE

January 25 | 10 am - 3:30 pm

Central Library: 315 S. Rose St.
3rd Floor, Van Deusen Room

Thousands of books for all ages!

\$3

PER BAG

25¢

PER ITEM

kpl.gov/friends (269) 553-7820 Cash only.

ON SALE NOW!

Disney THE LION KING

THE WORLD'S #1 MUSICAL

JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 9

millerauditorium.com 269-387-2300

Groups (10+): 269-387-2253

8 Excelsior • January 2025 • www.kalamazoopublicschools.com



EASY · ACCESSIBLE · ALL-IN-ONE Scholarships

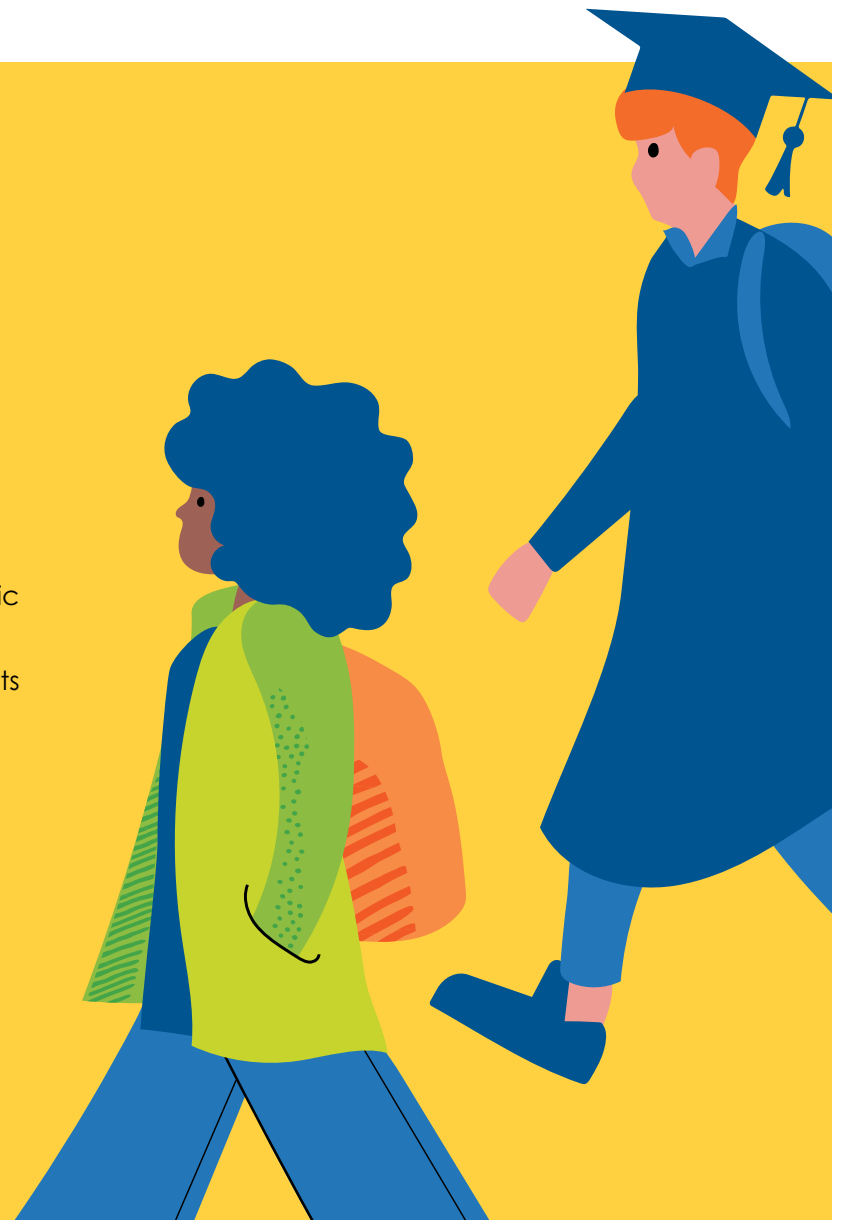
2025 CATALOG

CALLING ALL STUDENTS

Invest in your educational future – scholarship support is here for you.

Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) is dedicated to creating pathways to higher education so students can thrive in their academic pursuits and for a lifetime. With this goal in mind, we provide a simple, all-in-one application connecting students with scholarships and grants that fit their educational needs. With **60+ scholarships** for applicants of all ages and backgrounds, pursuing a college or post-secondary education is now more attainable than ever.

- + Many scholarships can be used for in- or out-of-state schools.
- + Most work alongside the Kalamazoo Promise.
- + Funds can often be used for vocational training.
- + Funds often go beyond tuition – covering fees, school supplies, textbooks, meal plans and housing.



Get started with our 60-in-one, all-access application.



SCAN

Starting December 16, use this QR code to access the site, or go to bit.ly/KZCFscholarships2025.



LOG IN

Once you're on the site, either log in to an existing account or create a new one.



FILL OUT

Complete the application. If you are FAFSA-eligible, be prepared to include a Student Aid Index (SAI) with your application. You don't have to finish it all in one sitting, you can save your progress and exit anytime.

SUBMIT

SUBMIT

Don't delay, your application must be sent no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on March 1, 2025!

FEATURES & CRITERIA



FAFSA required to demonstrate financial need



Must meet specific academic requirements



Available for vocational or trade programs



Available to current college students



Available to full-time or part-time students



Available to adult (non-traditional) students

2025 SCHOLARSHIPS AT A GLANCE

Full details for each scholarship can be found online at kalfound.org/scholarships.

Athletics

Bob Block Memorial Scholarship (Swimming/Diving)



Kalamazoo Junior Golf Association Scholarship



Evelyn Prince Memorial Scholarship (Women's Golf)



Glen C. Smith Jr./KCC Caddie Scholarship (Golf)



Brian Thiele Memorial Scholarship (Soccer)



Matthew VanderSalm Memorial Scholarship



Roy G. Walters Memorial Scholarship



Curtis and Dorothy Young Scholarship



Specific High School Grads

Mary Roe Memorial Scholarship (Comstock)



Earl Haas Hackett Catholic Prep Scholarship



David and Barbara Kruse Paw Paw High School Scholarship



Dr. Jack and Charlene Sauer Scholarship (Schoolcraft)



General

Bhargava Family Scholarship	AR R
Woodruff Memorial Scholarship	CC
Derek Jeter Scholarship	AR R
Love Where You Live Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS R T
Enhancement Ministries Scholarship	CC FT/PT AS
Earl Haas Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS T
Eva L. Ozier Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AR AS R
Leon A., Donald J. and Jean K. Schau Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS R T
Jerry A. and M. Christine Walker Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AR AS R T
E. Earl Wright Scholarship	CC AR AS R
Clarence L. RemyNSE Scholarship	F CC R
Michael J. and Frances D. Peikert Scholarship	CC FT/PT AS R T
George K. and Lois D. Stegman Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS T

Grad Students

Dominic and Barbara Court Family Scholarship	CC FT/PT AS
Must be enrolled in a veterinary medicine program.	
Nancy C. Niles Donovan Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS
Kalamazoo Public Library Amanda Green Scholarship	CC FT/PT AS R
S. Rudolph Light Medical Education Scholarship	F CC AS
Benjamin and Cherie Gubin Scholarship	F CC AR AS
Gail and Hilda Oster Graduate Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AR AS R
Must be a Van Buren County resident.	
Myra P. Whalen Scholarship	F CC AS R

Company-Sponsored

Welch's/National Grape Cooperative Scholarship	AR T
Wright Coating Company Scholarship	AR
Must be a resident of Kalamazoo's Northside Neighborhood.	
Dominic and Barbara Court Family Arts Scholarship	CC FT/PT AS R
Brady and Patrick Gallagher Memorial Scholarship	F CC R
Ann N. MacGregor Scholarship	CC AR
Melissa Wroblewski Scholarship	FT/PT

Current Undergrads

Aldrich Focus on Science Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS
Frank and Hildegard Goodrich Family Scholarship	CC AR AS
Wade and Clio Van Valkenburg Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS T
Must have a previous criminal conviction.	
John C. Volderauer Scholarship	CC AS

Kalamazoo Public School Grads

Mildred McConkey Memorial Scholarship	
CIS/Kalamazoo Public Education Foundation Scholarship	AR R
Duane Roberts Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS
Mary Ruth Robinson Scholarship (K Central)	F CC FT/PT AR AS R
Peter and Inez Schonveld Scholarship	F CC FT/PT AS T

Areas of Study

William T. Nuyen Scholarship (Aviation or Engineering)	F R
Weber Specialties Company Scholarship (Manufacturing or Engineering)	CC FT/PT T
Phyllis A. Nuyen Scholarship (Nursing or Occupational Therapy)	F AR R
Kalamazoo Science Foundation Scholarship (Math, Science or Engineering)	F CC AR R

Specific Eligibility

High on Heroes Scholarship

Must be the child of an active or retired certified law enforcement officer, firefighter, or licensed EMT/first responder.



Kreager Family Scholarship

Must be a survivor of parental death or abandonment.



Montague Myers Scholarship

Must be a survivor of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment.



David and Priscilla Morris Scholarship

Must be a Black student attending Western Michigan University.



Ronald C. Cavanaugh Memorial Scholarship

Must be enrolled at WMU's Haworth College of Business as a junior, senior, or fifth-year senior.



Jean Hunse Scholarship

Must be enrolled at WMU's Haworth College of Business as a junior, senior, or fifth-year senior.



William R. Steers Kalamazoo Community Foundation Scholarship

Must be enrolled at Albion College.



Covert Township Community Foundation Scholarship

Must be a Covert Township resident for the last three consecutive years.



Danial and Joeanna Smith Education Scholarship

Must be a Van Buren County resident.



Gail and Hilda Oster Undergraduate Scholarship

Must be a Van Buren County resident.



EMERGENCY SCHOLARSHIPS TO THE RESCUE

Did you know that KZCF offers urgent funding for unexpected or unmet education costs as they arise anytime of year? Our emergency scholarships are available to any Kalamazoo County residents. Funding is awarded swiftly, and requests can be made with a brief online application.

MAKE AN IMPACT - GIVE TODAY

You can support students in your community by making a gift to our Love Where You Live and Emergency Scholarship Funds.

Give whichever way works best for you:

DONATE

Donate online with the "Give Now" button on kalfound.org.



Send a check to
Kalamazoo Community Foundation
402 E Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3888

SCHOLARSHIP QUESTIONS?

Learn more about scholarships, get help with your application or start a scholarship fund of your own!

Call **269.381.4416** or Email scholarships@kzcf.org



DID YOU KNOW?

All recent Michigan high school graduates can earn a skills certificate or degree **TUITION FREE** with the NEW Community College Guarantee

COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
GUARANTEE



www.kvcc.edu/myfuture

Kalamazoo**VALLEY**TM
community college

ROUTINE CHILDHOOD VACCINES

Walk-ins or by Appointment

📍 311 E. ALCOTT ST

MON-THUR

8 - 11:30 am & 1 - 4:15 pm

FRIDAY

8 am - noon

**We offer all routine
childhood vaccines.**

**Bring a valid photo ID and
any insurance cards.**

**Ask us about financial
assistance, if needed.**

📞 **269-373-5203**



**KALAMAZOO
COUNTY GOVERNMENT**
Health & Community Services Department

Loy Norrix’s Knights Health Center Holds Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

KALAMAZOO Public Schools and the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 15 to celebrate the opening of the Loy Norrix Knights Health Center.

The school-based health center provides students access to personal and mental health services funded by the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Child & Adolescent Health Center Program Implementation Grant Program.

“I am thrilled to see the opening of the Knights Health Center at Loy Norrix,” said Kalamazoo County Health Officer Jim Rutherford. “This initiative is

a significant step toward ensuring that these 1,800 students have access to the health care they need to thrive, both academically and personally.

“By providing services right on campus, we can address health concerns early, reduce barriers to care, and support our young people’s overall well-being, helping them to succeed not just in school but in life.”

The ceremony included remarks from local officials including Rutherford, KPS Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade, and Loy Norrix Principal Chris Aguinaga. Tours of the new facility were offered to guests.

“The Knights Health Center is a great example of

community collaboration to help meet the medical and mental health needs of our students,” Aguinaga said. “Having direct access to low or no-cost care right in school can help improve attendance and the ability of our students to succeed in school.

“The impact has already been felt by several students even before the formal opening of the permanent location. This is such a great gift to the entire school community.”

Aguinaga noted that in the days before the ribbon cutting, several students were able to access the clinic to get the sports physicals they needed

(continued on page 15)



The Knights Health Center has a spacious counseling office.

Kalamazoo County Health Department’s Catherine Wall-Emerson, social worker; Kelly Brizendine, nurse practitioner; Jim Rutherford, health officer; Eureka Jennings, medical assistant; and Penny Born, clinical health division manager, cut the ribbon at the clinic opening.

Loy Norrix Knights Health Center *(continued from page 14)*



The center was developed through a state grant.

before the start of the basketball season. The Knights Health Center is staffed by a team of healthcare professionals who will offer confidential, high-quality care. Services include routine check-ups, immunizations, mental health support, and health education on topics such as nutrition, substance abuse prevention, and sexual health.



More information on the center can be found at www.kalcounty.com/hcs/ph/knightshealth.php.



Loy Norrix Principal Chris Aguinaga said the clinic helped students with sports physicals in its first week.



The clinic has several exam rooms.



**If you need help
paying your
water bill, help
is available.**

Si necesita ayuda para pagar su factura de agua o alcantarillado, hay ayuda disponible. Para obtener información en español, el llame al 311 o al (269) 337-8000.

WWW.PROTECTYOURWATER.NET



City of Kalamazoo
241 W South Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

The City of Kalamazoo is making critical investments in our water and wastewater systems. These investments are funded by all of us through the rates that we pay. Rates in Kalamazoo are still low relative to other communities, but we understand rising costs may create a hardship for some households. Financial and other help options are listed below.

Payment Plans & Due Date Extensions are available. Call 311 or (269) 337-8000 for help.

The Community Action Agency of SW Michigan can help low-income households pay overdue bills. Call 211 or 1-877-422-2726 for more information.

Consumers Energy offers a free home analysis that can help customers save money by reducing energy and water usage. Call 1-888-316-8014 for more information.

www.kalamazoocity.org/Residents/Water-Sewer-Service/Help-with-Utility-Bills

Loy Norrix Takes a Satirical Tour Through ‘Urinetown’



Loy Norrix Performing Arts students presented the musical “Urinetown” in December.



“Urinetown” poked fun at capitalism, politics, and corporate mismanagement.



Ice Cream Challenge

Saturday, January 18
11am - 3pm

Included with Admission

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

LEARN MORE
airzoo.org/ice-cream-challenge

6151 Portage Rd. Portage, MI 49002 | Open 7 days a week | 269.382.6555



AIR ZOO
Aerospace & Science Experience
airzoo.org



Catie Frink and Lucas Banks play Hope Cladwell and Bobby Strong, who are from different sides of the tracks in “Urinetown.”

Kalamazoo Central Presents 'Chicago: Teen Edition'



Aaron Anderson, Desmond Mitchell, Sofia Gross, Carolyn Librizzi, Nina Conroy, Amelia Cox, and Rosemary Harris offer commentary on the failings of the media, celebrity, and fame, in "Chicago: Teen Edition."



Desmond Mitchell and Astrid Westbury share a duet in "Chicago: Teen Edition."

Makiyah Harris and featured dancers do an amazing job with the show's intense choreography.





ARTS COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP

Become part of a network of members that share a similar respect and passion for the arts! New added benefits reach even further to connect you with the community. Each Arts Council membership includes:

- Unlimited event listings on the arts calendar
- Promotional opportunities through select media channels
- Waived application fees for Grants & Art on the Mall
- Rental discount rates at partner organizations
 - Membership at Public Media Network
 - And much more!

Membership has its benefits.



CREATE
connect
ACHIEVE

@



arts council
of greater kalamazoo

Learn more at:
KalamazooArts.org



Harding's
MARKETS
To Go

Order Online
with Curbside Pick-Up

NO SERVICE FEE
On Your First Two Orders
(\$4.95 Value)
(Available at Select Locations)

Enter Promo Code at Checkout
Hardings

SHOP.HARDINGS.COM

Attendance Rates Continue to Improve at Kalamazoo Public Schools

DATA RELEASED in November showed attendance improvements at all 23 comprehensive schools in the Kalamazoo Public Schools district, with the district seeing its rate of chronic absenteeism at 29.38 percent — a drop of 20 percent from the same time last year.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10 percent of days in a school year for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences. This translates to missing approximately two days of school each month.

The district saw a 6.7 percent reduction in chronic absenteeism from 50.2 percent in the 2022-23 school year to 43.5 percent in the 2023-24 school year.

Kalamazoo, like many other districts in the state and indeed across the country, has struggled with skyrocketing absenteeism that only worsened with the Covid pandemic.

KPS Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade made improving attendance one of the hallmark initiatives of his new administration. KPS has tackled the problem with renewed focus, reinforced policies and expanded resources. In addition to outlining clear expectations and working to communicate goals with families, Slade has launched a multi-tiered action plan to improve attendance that includes staff, guardians, and community members.

Attendance expectations are shared with students and families and consequences are clearly outlined. On the positive side, new supports have been put in place as well.

This school year, the district hired former KPS board

trustee Jermaine Jackson as its new truancy officer.

Jackson said in his short time in the position, he can see that many of the issues with truancy stem from basic needs of families, including problems with transportation, illness, custody battles, daycare needs, and work schedule conflicts.

“It’s helpful to have a person who can go and investigate individual cases,” Jackson said. “I can help remove barriers.”

Jackson’s work falls under the purview of Lisa Dewey, the director of Student Services, who said the truancy officer was established to support families and help create community connections with the Kalamazoo County Department of Health and Community Services. Efforts to address the problem has included more contact with parents and guardians, establishment of attendance teams at schools, mental health interventions, and knocking on doors to reach out to students.

The work is not new for the district, but it is receiving renewed attention.

Coming out of the pandemic and remote learning, there was a need to help families understand the importance and value of showing up everyday in the classroom. “Most of our efforts are to get folks back on board,” with understanding the im-



Jermaine Jackson is the new KPS truancy officer.



Ah'mere Dunigan receives an AAA award from Edison Academy Principal Dr. Julie McDonald, center, and teacher Rocann Fleming. AAA stands for Achievement, Attendance, and Attitude.

portance of attendance, she said.

The messaging is not simply punitive, Jackson said. Schools are engaging with students to make sure there is positive reinforcement for improved attendance. That includes parties and raffles at the elementary school level, and it might mean food trucks or open gym sessions at the middle schools and high schools.

There is a “diversity of efforts” to reach students with positive messaging around attendance, Jackson said. The goal, he said, is to create an encouraging environment around attendance, so students are motivated to come to school and to address and head off issues before they become problematic.

“Early intervention is critically important,” Jackson said. “I’m glad to be a change agent to make things better for students and families.”



THE CLINICAL PRACTICE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
HOMER STRYKER M.D. SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Schedule your child’s sports physical!

- \$40.00 due at time of service.
- No insurance will be billed.
- Physical form should be completed and signed by parent prior to appointment.

Please call 269.337.4600 for an appointment

wmed.edu • Find us on Facebook @WMedHealth

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



FREE EVENT DEC. 27 - 28, 2024 & JAN. 2 - 4, 2025

WINTER BREAK: MYSTERIES AT THE MUSEUM

Mysteries await you this winter break at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum! Experience exciting hands-on activities, STEM Mysteries, a magician, planetarium shows and MORE!



Winter Break Planetarium Shows | \$3 per person

- 11 a.m. | **One World, One Sky** | Pre-K - Grade 1 | 30 min.
- 2 p.m. | **Polaris: The Space Submarine and the Mystery of the Polar Night** | Grades 3 & up | 29 min.

LAST CHANCE NOW - JAN. 5, 2025 | FREE

MYSTERY AND BENEVOLENCE: MASONIC & ODD FELLOWS FOLK ART

Featuring over 80 carvings, sculptures, textiles and regalia, "Mystery and Benevolence: Masonic and Odd Fellows Folk Art" brings to light the histories, symbolism and values of the Freemasons and the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows.



LAST CHANCE NOW - JAN. 19, 2025 | FREE



KALAMAZOO STATE HOSPITAL: 165 YEARS OF PSYCHIATRIC CARE

Learn about the history of the patients, employees and buildings on the campus of Michigan's longest-operating mental hospital.

NEW EXHIBIT JAN. 25 - April 27, 2025 | FREE



RAY HARRYHAUSEN: MINIATURE MODELS OF THE SILVER SCREEN

Over 100 original and magical artifacts from the unique collection of animation filmmaker Ray Harryhausen are on display, showcasing his extensive career and the importance of his contribution to the art of stop-motion animation. Special speaker in January to be announced! Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for the latest.

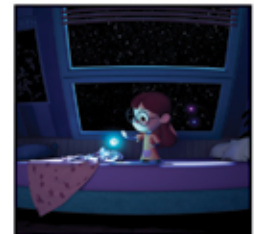
The Ray & Diana Harryhausen Foundation (Charity No SC001419)

PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE | JAN. SHOWS | \$3 PER PERSON

Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for details.

Beyond the Sun | 11 a.m. Sat. & 1 p.m. Sun. | 26 min. | Grades 1 & up

Satellites reveal how interconnected Earth's ecosystems are, helping us understand the impact of human activities on climate change and the delicate balance of our planet's environment.



The Sky Above Us | 2 p.m. Sat. & Sun. | 35 min. | Grades 4 & up

Learn about some of the "celestial wonders" that can be seen overhead in Michigan in this live, season-focused program.



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

FREE GENERAL ADMISSION

SPECIAL NOTICE: The museum will be closed Dec. 24 - 26 and Dec. 31 - Jan. 1. Opening at 1 p.m. Jan. 9.

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.



230 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo
kalamazoomuseum.org | 269.373.7990



Find the Things that Bring your Family Joy!

Make a commitment this new year to giving your family the opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive through the YMCA with a family membership that will put confidence in their steps a smiles on their faces.

THROUGH FUN PROGRAMS FOR KIDS

The Y offers programs and classes for all ages and abilities to learn new skills, develop positive self-esteem, and establish healthy lifestyles. From the classic swim lessons, day camps, Y-ball, and dance classes, to gymnastics, fencing, and disc golf to name a few, there's something for every child and family!

The Y is dedicated to Youth Development and Healthy Living, where our expert staff is ready to support your family's Healthy Living journey.

THROUGH EXERCISE OPTIONS FOR ADULTS

There's not just stuff for the kids, though. With the Kids Zone (our onsite childcare), state-of-the-art cardio and strength equipment, walking /running tracks, tennis, racquetball, pickleball courts, and over 140 weekly, free-to-member group exercise classes, you'll have plenty to do while your kids have fun, too.

THROUGH NEW CONNECTIONS

The Y is community that welcomes everyone and provides safe space for friendships to grow and thrive.

JOIN NOW

There's no better time to join the Y! The earlier you join, the more you'll save.

FIND YOUR JOY!

Explore what the Y has to offer and find the things that bring you closer together for a better, healthier you.



YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo

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

Portage YMCA
2900 Centre Ave.
Portage, MI 49024
269.324.9622

**JANUARY PROMOTION:
25% off Membership Dues
+ \$0 Joiner's Fee thru 1/30**

**Financial Assistance
Available**

**More details on
kzooyymca.org**