



The Creek

Indian Creek Local School District Newsletter

December 2024

Todoroff Bidding Farewell after 22 Years as Treasurer

Indian Creek Local School District Treasurer Denise Todoroff bid farewell after more than 22 years at the helm.

Todoroff, of Wintersville, attended her final school board meeting at Indian Creek Middle School on Dec. 19 and officially wraps up her tenure at the end of the month, and she was thankful for the opportunity she received in the longtime position.

"I'm so grateful for everyone I've worked with," she said. "I'm truly honored to have worked here with great people."

The Adena native and alumna of Buckeye West High School received her degree from Kent State University. She served with Indian Creek since May 1, 2002, and said there were many highlights during her tenure, one of which was the recent construction of the new Indian Creek High School and Cross Creek Elementary, as well as the renovation of Hills Elementary. Todoroff also noted some lower moments from which the district has bounced back.

"We came together and worked hard as a community and were able to pass the bond issue, build buildings and upgrade facilities. Without these buildings, there are things we wouldn't be able to offer the students," Todoroff continued, citing career-technical programs and more.

Her future is even brighter and she plans to spend time with her growing family, which includes her new granddaughter, Sophie. Todoroff was ready to pass the torch to Adam Lewis, her successor and has full confidence in his abilities.

"Adam's going to do a great job. He has experience and he's going to move the district forward."

School leaders praised her for her efforts through the years and said she was a vital part of the district.

Superintendent Dr. T.C. Chappellear said Todoroff has been a major support during his tenure, adding that she has always considered the needs of the district and its students.

"She was there to help me assimilate into the position," he added. "During my time



Denise Todoroff

working with Denise, I've used her as a sounding board for ideas and for financial situations. She was always helpful giving her opinions and I appreciate the fact that she always had the fiscal side but was also

"I'm truly honored to have worked here with great people."

**-Denise Todoroff
ICLSD Treasurer**

able to have the heartbeat of the community and school in mind."

Assistant Superintendent John Belt said Todoroff has been a memorable part of the district and was dedicated to her duties.

"She's arguably the best treasurer in the state," he said. "It's been a real pleasure working with her. I'm confident Adam will

pick up the mantel but we'll all going to miss Denise."

Board President Dr. Ted Starkey concurred.

"She's been great. She's been awesome to work with," he said. "I believe we have an able replacement [in Lewis] and I have no trepidation about the treasurer of Indian Creek Local School District in the future."

Board member Dr. John Figel chimed in that Todoroff came on board during a critical time and helped Indian Creek weather through difficulties.

"Through my years of being principal and assistant principal at Indian Creek, working with you has been amazing," said board member Steve Cowser.

"From Day No. 1 when I came on board to attend the first board meeting in Columbus, they said, 'Make sure you have a good treasurer.' We had a good treasurer before, but you grew into this position and I don't think people realize what you've done. You did a tremendous job."

Even Lewis was grateful to work with Todoroff, saying she has prepared him well for the role as her successor.

"It's been a great working experience with Denise and I've been learning from her," Lewis said. "I wish her well in her retirement."

But Todoroff said everyone did their part to make the district run successfully and she was appreciative to be included.

"I'm very fortunate and we have great people in the district. I appreciate you support and we've all worked well together," she added. "I'm honored that you trusted me to do this job for so long."

Among other matters, the board:

--Heard from Indian Creek Education Association President Joe Hammack, who discussed recently attending an Ohio Education Association meeting in Columbus and learning about legislative issues;

--Heard from district Food Service Director Nicole Marshall that schools celebrated with turkey and ham carvings respectively

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Young Writers to be Featured in Publication

A trio of creative students at Indian Creek High School will have their spine-chilling mini sagas featured in an upcoming publication.

Members of the school's Ink Society creative writing club took part in the Young Writers contest this fall and teacher Aaron Morrida said seniors Addison Runkel, Wil Hurlock and Brilee Tirpek were selected for inclusion in a collection of works.

"Young Writers sponsors a publication called *Fright Club* and they have a contest. Stories can get chosen to be published," he explained. "They had to write a 100-word scary story and three of our students were chosen for publication. I'm proud of them and I know they are very excited."

The contest is open to writers aged 11-18 who are challenged to write a scary story complete with a thrilling twist or a hauntingly funny tale and the top three winners of the contest receive a prize. The ICHS students received certificates for their achievement and are still excited to see their original ideas among the stories in the collection.

Runkel, the daughter of Raeni Runkel of Wintersville, said her tale, "Think Before You Cheat," centers on a relationship gone dead wrong.

"I have a lot of characters and it's a story where one character murders his cheating girlfriend," she said.

Runkel added that she enjoys writing in her free time and is working on another piece that she hopes to publish.

"I like writing because I can enjoy my own made-up world," she commented.

Hurlock, the daughter of Josh and Beth Hurlock of Bloomingdale said her story,



Three Indian Creek High School students will see their original works in an upcoming collection of scary stories called *Fright Club* after entering a Young Writers contest this fall. Pictured from left are Addison Runkel, Wil Hurlock and Brilee Tirpek, who received certificates for their entries and were excited to see their stories among those featured.

"Hang in There," follows a young girl trying to turn her life around that includes a dark twist.

"We had a limit of 100 words and there had to be a dark twist or scary vibe," she added. "We submitted them in October and learned they would be published around Halloween. [My story] is scary but my grandpa Val Valentine, who is a writer,

would be proud. Writing is a break away from reality."

Tirpek's tale, "13 Flyers," follows a character who loses an eye while in prison. The daughter of Jake Tirpek and Tara Patton of Wintersville, she said she was excited about the prospect of being published.

"It's the best thing that's happened to me," she added, saying she enjoys writing.

Todoroff

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for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays and a lunch box program resulted in increased meals at the elementary schools, plus more events are planned with soup offerings for teachers on Fridays. She added that applications were made to add some new kitchen equipment;

--Discussed a thank-you letter from the Trinity Health System Foundation for a \$1,500 donation to the Trinity Emergency Assistance Relief (T.E.A.R.) Fund with proceeds from school fundraisers;

--Approved Micah DiCarlo as a cafeteria worker on the classified substitute list;

--Approved a supplemental personal service contract for Tyler Smith as ICMS track coach;

--Passed a resolution to name Jefferson County Educational Service Center Public Relations Coordinator Amy Gareis to the Ohio School Board Association's (OSBA) 2024 Media Honor Roll;

--Heard an update on the Jefferson County Joint Vocational School Board of Education meeting from member Steve Cowser;

--Learned the district's two new buses have passed inspection while three others were sold and another will be scrapped. Belt

also noted that the district phone system will also be updated;

--Heard winter sports updates from Dr. Starkey and board member James Speece. Officials also discussed a need for a weight room at the middle school;

--Recognized Dalana Bove for winning The Valley's Got Talent contest as well as earning fifth place at an indoor track meet at Muskingum University, Luke McMillion for winning the 190-pound weight class matches at wrestling invitationals in Barnesville and Cambridge and the success of the Indian Creek Foundation Christmas Concert, recent football banquet and girls' basketball team. ICHS basketball player McKenna Scott was also lauded for reaching her 1,000-point milestone;

--Heard from Dr. Chappellear, who praised the ICHS students' recent production of the courtroom drama, "The Night of Jan. 16." He noted that having the community support the levy to create the new high school has afforded more opportunities for students to expand their horizons;

--Set the organizational meeting for Jan. 9 at 6 p.m. at ICMS with Dr. Starkey serving as president pro tempore. The regular session will immediately follow.

ICMS Students Help Stock School Pantry

Indian Creek Middle School benefitted its own students as they gathered goods to stock the school food pantry.

The student council worked in November to stock shelves with a wide variety of goods so students would not go hungry. Efforts began when vice president Ella Hall suggested combining a food drive with a school spirit week.

Advisor Staci Copeland said 1,929 items were collected including macaroni and cheese, Ramen noodles, ravioli, peanut butter and jelly and packs of sandwich crackers.

"[Hall] discussed it with the seventh-and eighth-grade student council officers and it was decided to take of the students and families of students here at the middle school by stocking the school pantry," Copeland said. "The price of groceries is a challenge for many families these days and we wanted to support our community. The students decided on a specific list of items that are selected the most."

Hall said a theme week was conducted each day including favorite holiday, mathletes versus athletes, Disney Day and a color war featuring fifth grade in blue, sixth grade donning green, seventh grade wearing orange and eighth grade in red.

"It's fun," said treasurer Lindley Simons. "This year we're doing a lot of things."

"It's pretty fun being able to do this and everyone can accomplish it," added President Makayla Crouch.

Meanwhile, Copeland continued that the student organization offered extra items to



Student council members at Indian Creek Middle School did their part to help peers and their families by holding a spirit week-themed food drive to stock the school pantry. Nearly 2,000 items were collected to support not only ICMS but food was also offered to the Indian Creek High School pantry to help students there.

the high school and may donate extra to their food pantry as needed.

"All of the credit goes to the student council officers who conceived the idea, created flyers, advertised it, took pictures of students participating in spirit week, counted and collected the items and stocked the shelves.

"I am extremely proud of these young

girls and boys who showed true leadership qualities by organizing and carrying out a plan to assist their school community in offering food and fun and modeled great character throughout this process," Copeland concluded. "We would like to do this again because it was a fun way to stock our food pantry for students in need."



Ugly Sweater Contest

Indian Creek Middle School students donned some fun and festive fashion for an ugly sweater contest to celebrate the holiday season. Among the winners were, from left, fifth-grader Chase Corrigan, sixth-grader Tiegan Chaffee, seventh-grader Cooper LaSalle and eighth-grader Logan Dougherty.

Cross Creek Collects Funds, Food for the Needy

Cross Creek Elementary students shared their giving spirit by collecting food and money to help the needy within their community.

During the week of Dec. 16-20, the school conducted a week of giving where they dressed up on themed days and donated coins and canned goods as a community service project. The event was spearheaded by the fourth-grade student council and included Grinch Day or donning green on Monday; Christmas hat or hair accessories on Tuesday; a Christmas character from a movie or book on Wednesday; ugly holiday sweaters on Thursday; and pajamas on Friday. School guidance counselor Brittany Shank said the group conducted a simultaneous canned food drive and penny wars to benefit the Wayne Township and Winterville Good Neighbors food pantries and raised \$1,185 in addition to 1,010 non-perishable food items to help needy residents stock their shelves.

"We're happy to help," Shank said, adding that the program has been held for years and began at the former Wayne and Winterville Elementary Schools.

Students brought in a wide variety of items, from canned vegetables, soup and pudding cups to canned hams, peanut butter and boxed stuffing. Meanwhile, they gathered pennies each morning which were placed in buckets according to classrooms; however, kids had the opportunity to "sabotage" each other by adding silver coins. Pennies are worth positive points while silver coins and bills subtracted from the amount, while the class with the most points would win a prize. Shank said the funds were divided with \$350 going to Wayne Twp. and \$835 donated to Win-



Cross Creek Elementary's fourth-grade student council gathered money and non-perishable food on Dec. 16-20, raising \$1,185 and 1,010 canned and boxed items for the Winterville Good Neighbors and the Wayne Township food pantries.

tersville Good Neighbors.

That Friday, 10 student council members traveled by bus to Bloomingdale to help sort and stock items before heading to Winterville Methodist Church to assist there. The fourth graders worked like elves to arrange the items in preparation for boxing and distribution that weekend and were treated to hot dogs, pizza and cookies for their good deed. Winterville Good Neighbors Director Jerry Boyd said the group was blessed to have the school's assistance because it definitely helped others.

"We have 62 families this year but there are 150 children, and that's the most we've ever had," Boyd said. "Every family gets food with a Wal-Mart gift card and toys

for the children."

He noted that Kitty Ferguson oversees the gift project and children receive a variety of items from stuffed animals and toys to winter accessories.

Some student council members said they enjoyed the project and it was the real reason for the season.

"I was excited to do the penny wars," said student council President Trevor Casto. "We brought it [to the pantries] for people in the county that are hungry. The reason I ran for council president was to help people and I like helping."

"I always like bringing in cans," said secretary Emma Pusateri. "I really like helping people."



The Grinch Visits Hills

The Grinch gave Santa a little break by making an early stop at Hills Elementary on Dec. 17, much to the delight of students. The former mean one traveled to the school in a special sleigh provided by Eastern Construction and Excavating, Inc., of Steubenville and interacted with the youngsters, who also donned green, Grinch-themed attire for the occasion. Schools everywhere are capping off the week with Christmas concerts, Santa's Workshops and other events as they get ready for the holiday.