The Leaflet

Spring 2025

NATIONAL SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION
PUBLICATIONS AND DIGITAL MEDIA EXCELLENCE AWARD
2024
HONORABLE MENTION
NEWSLETTER



Elmwood student Dominic Casamassimo with his Artist of the Week award.

401 ELMWOOD PARK COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dominic Casamassimo Wins Artist of the Week



Casamassimo and Guenther with their awards

Elmwood Elementary 3rd grade student Dominic Casamassimo has won the Artsonia Artist of the Week in the PreK-3rd category for Dec 8- Dec 14! With the title, Casamassimo was awarded a $50 Blick art supplies gift card, and District 401 a $100 Blick card. Additionally, Elmwood Park's Public Works used his winning piece to wrap parts of the seasonal ice rink in Central Park.

Artsonia is an online art portfolio where students can upload and store their work throughout their educational careers. Elmwood art teacher Lauren Guenther maintains Artsonia profiles for all of her students, uploading the work as they complete it. Each week, Artsonia runs the Artist of the Week award, where they select ten pieces from across the country for each age group.

Guenther has maintained portfolios at every school she has taught at in her career. Casamassimo is her first student to win the award. This is not his first honor. He says it felt good to win and looks forward to entering more competitions in the future.

Elm Student Jeremiah Vera Wins Silver Gloves



Jeremiah Vera (near left) is supported by his father Alfredo Vera (far left) and coach Abel Jimenez (far right)

6th Grade Elm Middle School student Jeremiah Vera has won the prestigious 2024 Illinois State Silver Gloves title fight for the 95 lb weight class.

The audience was impressed with his performance; after the fight, he and his father, Alfredo Vera, were approached by many families and coaches, asking where their gym was and if they could visit to observe how Jeremiah trains.

"His skill set at his age level is really something to watch, and I love that everyone else noticed that for him," Alfredo said.

Jeremiah prepared by training 7.5 hours a week, four days a week at Flowers Fitness. While training can be hard, Jeremiah likes that the sport made him stronger mentally, physically, and socially.

Jeremiah wants to keep competing. He says it would be cool to go pro and go to the Olympics someday.

"We do whatever he chooses to do," Alfredo said. "Whatever the next fight will be, I will just be there to guide him and support him."

District 401 Makes A Difference!



The John Mills community raised $1,746.05 for Misericordia Heart of Mercy Hospital through a McTeacher Night! On Oct 24, 2024, teachers and school staff members volunteered for two-hour shifts each, with profits earned going towards the cause!

On Nov 7, 2024, EPHS's DECA students organized their annual 'Spike for a Cause', and raised $7,000 to fight Alzheimer's disease! Out of all single community events for the Alzheimer's Association, they ranked 17 in the nation for 2024!



2025 SCOTY Recipients

Each year, students from West40 schools are chosen for the Student Citizen of the Year (SCOTY) award. The following students were honored for recieving the award!



Elmwood
Left **Olivia Ghanma,5th Grade**, *Right* **Ashley Silpapradist, 5th Grade**



Mills
Left **Evelyn Hohenadel, 5th Grade,** *Right* **Calvin Fleming 5th Grade**



Elm Middle
Left **Margaux Malalis, 7th Grade,** *Right* **Olive Jenkins, 7th Grade**



EPHS
Left **Olivia Vitacco, 12th Grade,** *Right* **Liliana Vitacco, 12th Grade**

Upcoming Important Dates

Visit **epcusd401.org/enroll** for more information on enrollment.

Returning Student Enrollment — Now Open	New Student Enrollment Opens — April 18
Early Bird Enrollment Fees End — May 03	Elm 8th Grade Graduation — June 01
EPHS Graduation — June 01	Last Day of School — June 03

epcusd401.org/calendar

Sgt. Sanchez Surprises Sons at Elmwood and Elm

On Tuesday, Jan 7, Sgt. Alexander Sanchez surprised his sons Jaxiah and Isaiah Sanchez at school after returning home from a recent deployment. Jaxiah is in 3rd grade at Elmwood Elementary, and Isaiah is in 6th at Elm Middle School.

Sgt. Sanchez serves in the Army Reserve and was based in Kuwait on this deployment, conducting missions in Jordan and Iraq. While overseas, he worked as a food inspector, ensuring all stages of the food supply chain for the U.S. military and other NATO forces was safe.

Sgt. Sanchez deployed in February 2024 and was scheduled to return Mar 2025. He ended up returning shortly after Christmas; when his sons were not expecting it.



Sgt. Sanchez hugs Jaxiah after surprising him at school

For Isaiah, Sgt. Sanchez surprised him during his band class. Isaiah said it was fun to enjoy the surprise at school with his classmates.

"When he first walked in, I was shocked," Isaiah said "I didn't know what to do. It was such a surprise!"

For Jaxiah, Elmwood proposed surprising him in front of an assembly with the school, and Sgt. Sanchez was thrilled by the idea.

With the plan in place, the 3rd grade class was brought into the auditorium, and after a few minutes of usual assembly programming, Elmwood Principal Matthew Lerner called Jaxiah down to the floor. "I heard Jax yell, 'That's my dad!' and that's when it got real," said Sgt. Sanchez. "I'm very thankful the schools allowed me to do this and welcomed me home!"
That night, the whole family celebrated a belated Christmas together.

"It's great to be back home and rekindle what I was missing out on," said Sgt. Sanchez. "I'm fortunate to be able to be back and tell my story a little bit.
A lot of soldiers don't get the opportunity to share, or to even make it home."

Sgt. Sanchez thanks everyone who supported Isaiah and Jaxiah while he was gone and helped him coordinate his surprise return. He also thanks everyone who takes the time to hear his story. Elmwood Park thanks Sgt. Sanchez and all service members for their service.

Get your school spirit wear!
epcusd401.org/spiritstore

Want to work for us?
Check out our job openings!
epcusd401.org/careers

Want to advertise with us?
email fentonm@epcusd401.org

401 ELMWOOD PARK COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT

8201 W Fullerton Ave,
Elmwood Park,
IL 60707

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ASTORIA, IL
PERMIT NO. 9

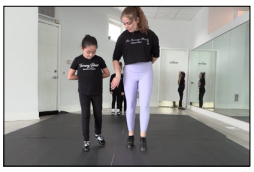
**********ECRWSS****
Residential Customer
Elmwood Park, IL 60707

Stories Around 401

We have the privilege of telling the many stories of our staff and students at District 401. Below is just a small taste of what our district has been up to. Scan the QR code to view our entire district news section!

Source
Mer Fenton, Writer & Designer
Dave Porreca, Photographer
Aaron Celmer, Ed.S., Editor

Dance Student to Dance Teacher



In this "WE ARE 401" video we meet EPHS junior Isabella "Beanie" Martinico, who is now in her fourth year as a dance instructor at Turning Point Dance Studio in Elmwood Park. Beanie has a lifelong love of the arts, but dance holds a special place for her.

Frank DeRosa — DJ on the Side



In this "WE ARE 401" video, we meet Frank DeRosa, EPHS Class of 1988, longtime night custodian at Elm Middle School. When he's not busy keeping Elm in tip-top shape, Frank pursues his side career as a DJ with his younger brother, Robert DeRosa. The DeRosa Brothers have built up a loyal fanbase at local events and establishments!

John Mills 5th Grade D.A.R.E. Graduates



Congratulations to John Mills Elementary School's 5th grade students, who graduated from the school's D.A.R.E. program! The students learned how to resist peer pressure and live drug- and violence-free lives.

Elmwood Students Appear on WGN–TV



Some Elmwood Park parents recently got the thrill of watching their students on live TV when the 2nd grade visited WGN-TV as they learned about journalism. Elmwood is the first school WGN-TV has ever hosted!

High School Principal of the Year



District 401 is pleased to announce that Elmwood Park High School Principal Dr. Amanda Brode-Rico is the Illinois Principal Association's West Cook High School Principal of the Year!

EPCUSD 401 BOARD OF EDUCATION



Frank Parisi
President



Peter Volpe
Vice President



Susan Capraro
Secretary



Jennifer Ranallo
Member



Jonathan Rivera
Member



Jason Shipinski
Member



Michelle Silver
Member

Building Principals

Dr. Amanda Brode-Rico, Elmwood Park High School
Ashley Groeneveld, Elm Middle School
Matt Learner, Elmwood Elementary School
Frank Kuzinewski, John Mills Elementary School



Dr. Leah Gauthier
Superintendent of Schools