

WEST CHICAGO
COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

CHSD94



FROM THE HALLS OF WEGO: OCTOBER CAPTURED

Welcome to the *CHSD94 Review*, your all-access pass to the stories that shaped WCCHS this past month. Inside, Principal Pueyo shares her latest insights in the **Principal's Corner**. We bring you the **Good News of the District**, highlighting achievements that make us all proud to be part of WEGO. We also shine a spotlight on a standout member of our community in our **Student of the Month** feature.

Get to know the passionate and dedicated staff who make our school special with our **Educators & Staff Members of the Month** spotlights.

See what's happening in the classrooms with our **Classroom Highlights**, and relive the moments of triumph and teamwork with the *Wildcat Chronicle's* coverage of **Athletics**.

Finally, connect with the heart and soul of WCCHS through the *Wildcat Chronicle's* touching **Humans of WEGO** feature. And don't miss the latest **WeGo Places** alumni podcast, catching up with graduates who are making their mark on the world.

Miley Pegg
WCCHS Senior



COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 94 STRATEGIC PLAN

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MOTTO
LEARNING.
LEADING.
LIVING.

94

MISSION

Ignite a passion for learning,
foster leadership & responsibility, &
empower all learners to live their personal best.

VISION

Today's Wildcats will become tomorrow's
leaders, designers, & builders by

- C**ontributing to an ever-changing & challenging world.
- H**onoring individual & cultural differences & well-being.
- S**triving to achieve personal growth through a pathway leading to academic excellence.
- D**emonstrating responsibility & accountability for their own learning & success.



GRADUATE PORTRAIT EDUCATOR PORTRAIT

Critical Thinker	Student-centered Advocate
Inclusive Collaborator	Team Players & Collaborator
Effective Communicator	Lifelong Learner
Responsible Decision-maker	Ethical Decision-maker
Self-directed & Confident Learner	Problem Solver
Empathetic & Resilient Friend	Empathetic & Resilient Mentor

SYSTEM PORTRAIT

Continuous Improvement	Learner Interests, Voice, & Choice
Relationships & Safety	Collaboration & Engagement
Innovation & Relevance	Stewardship & Accountability

CORE VALUES

- W**ell-being & cultural awareness
- E**xcellence in all endeavors
- G**rowth through respect, service, & trust
- O**pportunities for innovation & exploration



www.d94.org

326 Joliet St. West Chicago, IL 60185

(630) 876-6200

Community High School District 94 Portraits

Ignite
a passion for learning,
foster leadership
& responsibility,
& empower all learners
to live their personal best

Graduate
Critical Thinker
Inclusive Collaborator
Effective Communicator
Responsible Decision-maker
Self-directed & Confident Learner
Empathetic & Resilient Friend

Educator
Student-centered Advocate
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System
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PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Your Wildcat's Success: Key Resources for the Final Push

As we approach the end of the first semester and final exams scheduled for December 17-19, we want to emphasize the importance of staying informed and involved in your student's academic progress.

Parents and guardians can support their students by regularly monitoring grades in PowerSchool and setting aside time each week to discuss their students' progress. These conversations can serve as an opportunity to celebrate successes, discuss any challenges, and develop a plan for improvement together.

If your student needs additional support, encourage them to take advantage of opportunities such as retaking exams, staying after school for tutoring, or attending Academic Support. We also encourage parents and guardians to contact their student's teachers by phone or email to discuss their progress or ask any questions.

Below you'll find more information on how to access these resources:

PowerSchool:

PowerSchool is the online tool where parents can check their student's grades and attendance.

- Use the following link to access PowerSchool: <https://ps.d94.org/public/>
- If you are experiencing difficulties accessing PowerSchool, please contact Beth Schuck via email at bschuck@d94.org or call (630) 876-6227.

Test Retakes:

Students have the option to retake an assessment if they earned a grade lower than an "A."

- Test retakes must be scheduled with the teacher and completed within two weeks of the student receiving the assessment results.
- Before retaking the test, students may be expected to complete a review assignment or practice work.

After-School Tutoring:

After-school tutoring is available for students in the content areas of Math and English.

- After-school tutoring is available to all students, Monday through Thursday, from 3:15 to 4:30 pm in the Learning Resource Center (LRC).
- Transportation is available for students who ride the bus. A late bus departs at 4:30 p.m. for students who stay after school.

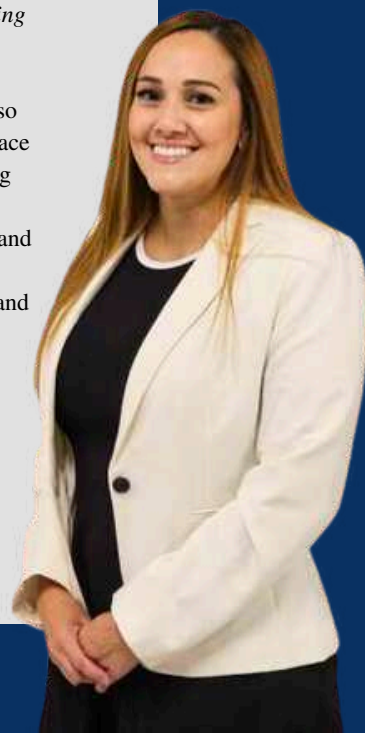
Academic Support:

Students can meet with content area teachers during Academic Support to receive assistance.

- Students must be assigned by their teacher to attend Academic Support, but students can also request to be assigned. These sessions take place in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) during Den and are scheduled as follows:
 - 10th and 12th Grade Students: Tuesdays and Wednesdays
 - 9th and 11th Grade Students: Thursdays and Fridays

Your partnership makes a difference!

Dr. Limaris Pueyo
Principal



WEST CHICAGO COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

CULTURE & CLIMATE

Consistent daily attendance helps build the foundation for your Wildcat's academic success! When students come to school every day, they stay connected to their teachers, peers, and can more easily keep up with classwork; all characteristics that help prepare them for their next step-- college, career, and life.

Missing just a few days can make it harder to catch up and stay engaged. **Our goal is for every student to maintain at least a 95% attendance rate, which means missing no more than 9 days for the entire school year, which equates to 1 or less day per month!** If your student's attendance is currently below that mark, don't get discouraged-- it's never too late to turn things around. Every day that your student does show up makes a difference and brings us closer to that goal.

Families, we appreciate your partnership in helping reach this goal by encouraging strong daily attendance, planning appointments outside of school when possible, and making education a priority every day.

Photo Credit: Dave Jennings



Pictured from left to right: **Jenna Windt** (Director of Culture & Climate), **Antonio DelReal** (Dean of Students), **Janet Hurtado** (Dean of Students)

GOOD NEWS OF THE DISTRICT

WCCHS Seniors Shine as 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program
Semifinalists and Commended Students

"Each of these students has shown exceptional dedication and academic excellence. We congratulate them on this remarkable achievement."

— *Dr. Limaris Pueyo*
Principal



Pictured from left to right: Nick Riconosciuto, Aaron Lorenc, Jessie Myers, & Kody Leano



The future is bright for four exceptional West Chicago Community High School seniors who have achieved significant national academic recognition.

On September, 10th, 2025, officials of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), announced the names of more than 16,000 Semifinalists in the 71st annual National Merit Scholarship Program. These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 6,930 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$26 million that will be offered next spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, Semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the Finalist level of the competition.

We are thrilled to announce that WCCHS seniors, **Kody Albert Leano** and **Jessie Myers**, have been named Semifinalists in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program. National Merit Scholarship winners for 2026 will be announced in waves beginning in April and concluding in July. These future scholarship recipients will join approximately 389,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title.

We also proudly recognize WCCHS seniors, **Aaron Lorenc** and **Nick Riconosciuto**, who were named Commended Students in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program. About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Aaron and Nick placed among the top 50,000 students who entered the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program—a truly remarkable accomplishment.

Congratulations to all four students on these extraordinary achievements! Their dedication, hard work, and intellectual curiosity exemplify the very best of the Wildcat spirit. The entire WCCHS community is incredibly proud of their success and excited to see where their bright futures take them.

STUDENT OF THE MONTH

Kody Leano - Class of 2026

"Find a balance between pursuing personal passions and making a positive impact on others."
—— Kody Leano



Video Credit: Dave Jennings



West Chicago Community High School is proud to announce senior Kody Leano as its latest Student of the Month, recognizing his outstanding contributions to the school community through academics, leadership, and extracurricular involvement.

A true academic scholar, Kody has earned numerous distinctions, including the prestigious National Merit Semifinalist title and recognition as an AP Scholar with Distinction. His commitment to his studies is further demonstrated by his consistent presence on the High Honor Roll throughout his high school career and his active membership in three distinct honor societies: the National Honors Society (NHS), the Music Honors Society (MHS), and the Foreign Language Honors Society (FLHS) for Spanish.

Kody's high school journey is defined by a wide array of extracurricular activities, where he has consistently stepped into leadership roles. A four-year participant in the Math Team, Jazz Band, and Marching Band, Kody has showcased his dedication and skill across multiple domains.

Kody's heart for service shines through his extensive volunteer work. Beyond dedicating over 215 hours to the Northern Illinois Food Bank, he put his entrepreneurial skills to a generous cause, holding holiday bake sales

that raised nearly \$1,000 for the West Chicago Neighborhood Food Pantry. He has also assisted in leading significant NHS initiatives, including creating a memorial planter box for a fellow Wildcat and helping organize the monthly *Wildcat Pride Awards* ceremony to celebrate outstanding students nominated by teachers.

Looking toward the future, Kody plans to attend a four-year university to study electrical engineering, drawn to the field by his love for problem-solving and STEM. His advice to future WCCHS students is to **find a balance between pursuing personal passions and making a positive impact on others.**

The praise for Kody is echoed by his teachers, who enthusiastically nominated him for this honor. His Spanish teacher, Elizabeth Mastroianni, remarked, "Kody is an exceptional Wildcat. He is exactly what every teacher wants in their classroom. Kody is one of the hardest working and kindest students I have come across." Math Teacher and Coach Charles Vokes shared similarly high praise, noting Kody as "one of the most elite mathletes I have coached in 13 years at WeGo."

The West Chicago Community High School community extends its congratulations to Kody on this well-deserved honor and wishes him the very best in all future endeavors.

FROM PORTRAIT TO PRACTICE

Christina Sladek Selected as the WCCHS Educator of the Month

WHEN LEARNING IS GROUNDED IN CARE AND CONNECTION, STUDENTS FIND THE CONFIDENCE TO DISCOVER THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

It is with this spirit that **D94 proudly announces Science Teacher, Christina Sladek, as the WCCHS Educator of the Month.** Her care, creativity, and commitment to students bring our Portrait of an Educator to life each day.

Known for her unwavering dedication and compassion, Sladek has made a lasting impact on students and colleagues alike. Her classroom is a place where curiosity thrives, laughter is welcome, and every student feels seen and supported. Whether she's leading a lively biology discussion, mentoring through student activities, or cheering students on in their personal growth, her care for young people shines through in every interaction.

Science Division Head Scott Albright shared, "Christina has contributed greatly to our school community. She sponsors Snowball and GSA, has worked on the Strategic Plan and its subsequent goal committee, participated in the cohort that developed our PLC norms, and serves as a Den Leader—all while pursuing her master's degree. **She makes a difference daily as a science teacher, a colleague, and a professional.**"



Christina's impact is deeply felt by her students, who describe her as compassionate, inspiring, and unwavering in her support.

Senior Dayari Muñoz shared, "I truly appreciate Mrs. Sladek's effort and dedication to helping me improve. She has always wants the best for all of her students and is constantly encouraging everyone to pursue their personal best."



Senior Nick Roskilly further highlighted Sladek's caring nature, saying, "One thing I truly admire about Mrs. Sladek is that, no matter how she feels, she always puts on a smile and makes others happy, even when she is fully exhausted. Her impact on me and so many others, both in and out of class, is the true reason she is so deserving of this award, and why so many students, including myself, appreciate her so much."

Senior Guadalupe Perez summed it up best, "**Mrs. Sladek is definitely one of those teachers that I will never forget because she's always so kind and understanding—she's like the Mrs. Honey (Matilda reference) of our school!**"

As Scott Albright shared, "Christina truly makes student-centered decisions and commits to student-centered actions. **Her classroom is a place where kids want to be.**"

Join us in celebrating Christina Sladek for her compassion, professionalism, and unwavering belief in her students—she embodies what it means to live out our Portrait of an Educator every single day.

FROM PORTRAIT TO PRACTICE

Emily Renteria Selected as the WCCHS Educator of the Month

WHEN EDUCATORS LEAD WITH COMPASSION AND JOY, LEARNING BECOMES AN EXPERIENCE THAT REACHES FAR BEYOND THE CLASSROOM.

It is with this spirit that **D94 proudly announces Family & Consumer Sciences Teacher, Emily Renteria, as the WCCHS Educator of the Month.** A beloved teacher who embodies our school's Portrait of an Educator, Renteria's impact is felt by students and colleagues alike.

Known for her warmth, leadership, and positivity, Ms. Renteria is a cornerstone of the CTE department. She mentors new teachers, guiding them through lesson planning, classroom strategies, and professional collaboration. Currently pursuing her master's degree, she leads the Foods 1 PLC and is recognized for her thoughtful contributions, strong work ethic, and unwavering support of those around her.

CTE Division Head Nick Kempinski shared, "Emily has helped others grow as educators by assisting with lesson planning, best teaching practices, and professional learning communities. **She leads by example—going above and beyond what is asked of her in and out of the classroom—and our school community is a better place because of her.**"



(Photo by Dave Jennings)

Ms. Renteria also extends her passion for teaching beyond the school day through WEGO Cooks, an after-school program in partnership with WEGO Together for Kids. The program brings in professional chefs to provide students with authentic, hands-on cooking experiences that connect classroom learning to real-world applications.

Her students describe her as kind, understanding, and always willing to listen.



(Photo by Dave Jennings)

Sophomore Amy Cardiel shared, "I appreciate how Ms. Renteria is always there for me when I need to talk about something. She is very comforting and helpful, approaching everyone with kindness and always seeing the good in people."

Senior Cristal Salinas added, "I appreciate that Ms. Renteria is understanding and comforting towards her students, making sure they feel seen and heard. Her kindness and positivity have made a big impact on me as she always makes me feel supported and appreciated. **Her laughter and encouragement make school feel like a safe and happy place.**"

As Nick Kempinski shared, "Emily truly goes above and beyond to support her students and colleagues. **She embodies what it means to lead with care, purpose, and passion for teaching.**"

Join us in celebrating Emily Renteria for her dedication to nurturing confidence, creativity, and connection—both in the classroom and throughout the WEGO community.



A Passion for WEGO

Celebrating Claudia Castellanos, Staff Member of the Month

It is with great pleasure that D94 proudly announces Claudia Castellanos, Multilingual & Multicultural Program Assistant, as the WCCHS Staff Member of the Month. Affectionately known as "Mrs. C," Castellanos is a vital asset to the school community, known for her unwavering commitment to student success and her positive, supportive approach.

Mrs. C embodies dedication, working tirelessly to ensure every student she encounters has the positive experience they need to thrive. Her commitment is evident in her versatile support roles, whether she is working one-on-one or assisting with complex whiteboard work directly in the classroom. She takes initiative, proactively taking detailed notes in class to build strong content knowledge, allowing her to effectively assist students with challenging topics.

Math Division Head Steve Balhan praised her contributions: **"Mrs. C. has been a blessing to our department for many years. She is a staff member who is 100% committed to our students. She is willing to do whatever is asked of her to try and help students succeed."**

Her collaborative spirit and depth of knowledge make her an invaluable resource, as math teacher Katelyn Robb shared: **"Claudia is the most amazing PA. She connects with the students and cares deeply about their success. She is always willing to work 1:1 with students, in small groups, during board work, and always supports students during lessons. She is so strong in supporting students in learning math, and I know I can always rely on her help to explain challenging topics in a way that students understand."**

Mrs. Castellanos has served both the Special Education and the Multilingual departments, bringing the same passion for students to every role she fills. As Steve Balhan summarized, **"What stands out is her passion for the students and the community of West Chicago and her willingness to work hard in hopes of providing positive experiences for everyone she encounters."**

Join us in celebrating Claudia Castellanos for her dedication to nurturing student growth, providing essential support, and making the WCCHS community a better place for all.



INTRO TO HEALTHCARE

From Vitals to Vocations: Students Explore Careers in Healthcare

Step into Peter Vishneski's Introduction to Healthcare classroom at West Chicago High School, and you're immediately immersed in a dynamic environment where the future of medicine is taking shape. This largely self-paced, blended course is designed to be more than just a class; it's a launchpad for students exploring the vast and vital world of allied health careers.

The course empowers students to take the lead in their learning. A core component involves in-depth career research: students select at least four allied health paths—from physical therapy assistant and phlebotomist to physician or EMT—and delve into the specifics of educational requirements, typical salaries, advancement opportunities, and day-to-day job responsibilities.

The positive classroom environment is a highlight for many students. Senior Ean Arizmendi shared, "I appreciate Mr. Vishneski's positive attitude. He makes the classroom feel like a fun place to learn."

What truly sets this class apart is the emphasis on hands-on clinical skills. Students move beyond the textbook, practicing essential procedures using equipment in the



"I've enjoyed learning about the many different careers that make up the healthcare field. It's interesting to see how each job plays an important role in helping people and keeping communities healthy. This class has opened my eyes to new career paths I hadn't considered before."

— *Krishna Patel*

classroom. The course leverages a platform called SimRated for a structured approach: students take notes on the didactic portion, practice the skill in class, and eventually record themselves performing the skill for evaluation by a qualified clinician.

On any given day, the classroom is a hub of activity. Some students might be focused on mastering the nuances of taking vital signs, while others are learning to administer life-saving nasal Narcan in an emergency simulation.

Mr. Vishneski notes that the ultimate goal is to "best prepare students for an allied health career path by training them with essential knowledge and skills to succeed in whichever path they choose." The skills and knowledge gained here not only prepare students for immediate post-secondary steps but also serve as a direct pathway to more advanced courses, such as the school's Athletic Training program.

Through learning, leading, and hands-on living, these students are gaining the confidence and competence to become the compassionate and skilled healthcare professionals of tomorrow.



FOODS & NUTRITION

From Kitchen Basics to Culinary Careers: Students Master the Art of Food

The kitchens at West Chicago High School are bubbling with creativity, culture, and career-ready skills. Students in Foods and Nutrition 2 (taught by Mrs. Slezak) and Foods and Nutrition 3 (Ms. Renteria) aren't just following recipes; they are delving into advanced culinary techniques, exploring international cuisines, and mastering essential safety standards that pave the way for a variety of food service careers.

Foods 2: Mastering Techniques and Tastes

In Foods 2, students build upon foundational knowledge by studying the culinary techniques and preparation methods for a five-course meal, covering everything from appetizers to desserts. The curriculum emphasizes practical application and precision. Senior Arely Angeles praises the teaching style, noting, "Mrs. Slezak has an enormous amount of patience. The ability to teach new skills every week is very appreciated by students. She ensures that everyone masters all skills independently while still providing support."

Last week, the focus was on soups and vital knife skills. Students honed techniques like dicing, slicing, and julienning in a lab on Tuesday, then applied those precise skills by cooking their soups on Wednesday. The course goes beyond savory dishes, covering



From fundamental knife cuts to professional exploration, West Chicago High School's culinary arts students are gaining the confidence, creativity, and knowledge to succeed in the dynamic world of food and nutrition.

topics like cupcake decorating, garnishing, and even hosting a competitive chili "cook-off." On Friday, a Halloween Oreo Truffles lab provided a fun, festive outlet for their developing skills.

Foods 3: Culture, Certification, and Advanced Cuisine

Foods 3 elevates the experience with an emphasis on professional standards and cultural exploration. Students applied their knowledge last week through labs that celebrated diverse food customs for Día de los Muertos. Classes created traditional baked goods, such as Conchas and Tres Leches Cupcakes, which students enjoyed with Mexican Hot Chocolate on Friday. They also wrote letters for an ofrenda.

This advanced course provides exposure to careers such as food scientist, food safety inspector, and restaurateur, giving students a professional edge before they even graduate high school.



[PHOTO ESSAY] The last lights:

Wildcats vs. the Rams

Hard work, personal growth, and teamwork set the Wildcats apart this football season, which ended with a 63-29 playoff loss against the Glenbard East Rams.

By Joselyn Duran Corona, Reporter
November 1, 2025



(Photo by Joselyn Duran Corona)

Wildcats snatch semifinals victory over Leyden

A harrowing second half comeback from a goal deficit pushes the WEGO boys' Varsity soccer team even deeper in the state tournament.

By Caleb Salzman, Staff Photographer
October 30, 2025



(Photo by Caleb Salzman)

ATHLETICS



Presented by the *Wildcat Chronicle*

The official student-run, award-winning, news publication of WCHS



November 2025
Athletics

[PHOTO ESSAY] Spotlights and spirit define cheer team's performances under the lights

The West Chicago Cheer team shares what performing under Friday Night Lights is like.

By Nyara Tate, Reporter
October 29, 2025



(Photo by Ja'Nyah Villa)

Digging for a cause

The West Chicago Community High School Girls' volleyball team digs up their first win against the Wheaton Academy Warriors on their 'Dig Pink' fundraiser game.

By Miley Pegg, Sports Writer
October 17, 2025



(Photo by Miley Pegg)

HUMANS OF WEGO

Presented by the *Wildcat Chronicle*

The official student-run, award-winning, news publication of WCCHS

The *Wildcat Chronicle* is composed of dedicated student journalists who work tirelessly to provide accurate, timely, and compelling content for readers. The *Wildcat Chronicle* has been recognized for its excellence in scholastic journalism, earning accolades from various prestigious organizations.

Humans of WEGO: A stroke of greatness

Senior Jayna Vock has displayed a drive to competition as well as finding ways to encourage teammates.

By Ana Hurtado, Sports Editor
November 5, 2025



Photo by Caleb Salzman, *Wildcat Chronicle*



This podcast is inspired by our alumni Wildcats who embody the spirit of "following their bliss." Each episode explores the unique path these graduates took to find their success and leave the listener with pearls of wisdom they learned along the way.

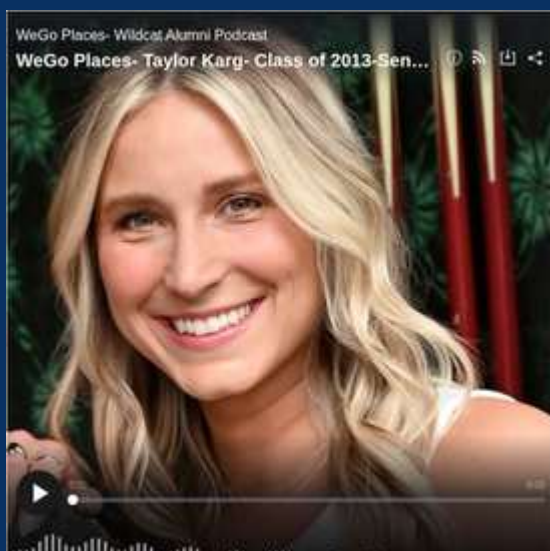
Do you want to be a guest or know of an alum that would be perfect for the podcast?
Contact bturnbaugh@d94.org.

WILDCAT ALUMNI PODCAST HOSTED BY

MR. BRIAN TURNBAUGH



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WEST CHICAGO COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

BOOSTER NEWS

The Wildcat Booster Club had a busy and rewarding fall season, providing concessions at 21 sporting events. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many booster members, parents and students who volunteered their time to help keep our fans fed and full of Wildcat spirit.

A special thank-you goes to the FCCLA Club, whose members contributed over 250 volunteer hours to raise funds for their upcoming competition and community service project. Your dedication and teamwork truly embody Wildcat pride!

Homecoming Events-In addition to their work at athletic events, the Booster Club was proud to donate tickets to the Wego Boutique, giving 20 students the opportunity to attend and enjoy the homecoming dance. Booster members provided and distributed snacks and plenty of water to keep students refreshed as they danced the night away. Teachers and their families enjoyed free meals for the teachers first annual Homecoming Tailgate, a way to show appreciation for our incredible staff!

The Wildcat Booster Club offers a unique way for our community to come together through fundraising and ensure every student can experience the excitement of high school activities and create lasting memories.

Together, we make West Chicago a place where every Wildcat can thrive!
Join our team by emailing wegoboosters@gmail.com





Photo by Leslie Fireman,
Wildcat Chronicle, Adviser

#WEAREWEGO