

THE *Gator* COMMUNICATOR

December 2025

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Elementary InvestiGators explore village



Earlier this fall, our fourth-grade InvestiGators visited the Allegany Historical Association and the Allegany Public Library. During their trip, they learned about the history of Allegany and Limestone, viewed the historic library building (which used to be a bank!), and got library cards. A huge thank you to the folks at the Historical Association and the Library for making it a fun and enlightening day!

Elementary School Thankful for Annual Holiday Feast

On Nov. 21, Mrs. Nitsche's students hosted their much-anticipated annual Thanksgiving Feast.

Our student chefs started prepping the day before by chopping veggies, baking and frosting cookies, preparing to-go boxes, and getting utensil bags filled. Then in the morning of the meal they started cooking.

Each student had a job to help guests through the line.

There were greeters and servers for our guests, who each received a specially designed turkey picture created by our chefs (aka, artists). Once our guests were served, the chefs were able to help themselves and enjoy the fruits of their labors together.



A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Allegany-Limestone School Community,

We are pleased to share an exciting update regarding our district's upcoming building project. The plans are in the final stages of being approved by New York State, marking a significant milestone in our progress. With this pending approval, the next step will be opening the project for bidding, which we anticipate in the beginning of 2026. Our goal remains to break ground this spring, bringing us closer to creating improved learning spaces for our students.

As we enter this holiday season, we find ourselves reflecting with deep gratitude. We are thankful not only for the progress of this project, but also for the collective efforts that strengthen every aspect of our district—from the dedication of our staff, to the hard work of our

students, to the unwavering support of our families and community members.

Your commitment and belief in the Allegany-Limestone School District enable us to grow, improve, and serve our students with excellence. We are truly fortunate to have such a supportive community standing with us as we move forward.

Thank you for your continued trust, partnership, and encouragement.

Warmest regards,
Tony Giannicchi
Superintendent of Schools
Allegany-Limestone CSD



Dear Gator Community,

As we approach the Holiday season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the values that make our school community so special. This time of year reminds us not only to celebrate but also to appreciate the simple joys in life and the people who surround us. At Allegany-Limestone Middle-High School, we believe that education is more than academics - it's about teaching our students the importance of gratitude, kindness, and caring for one another.

The holiday season offers a perfect opportunity to model these values. Whether it's expressing thanks, lending a helping hand, or showing empathy, these small acts create a ripple effect that strengthens our school and community. In a world that often moves quickly, pausing to appreciate what we have and to support those around us can make a profound difference. When we take care of one another, we build a culture where everyone feels valued and respected.

I encourage families to join us in reinforcing these principles at home. Talk with your children about what they are grateful for and how they can show kindness in their daily lives. Together, we can make this season—and every season—a time of compassion and connection.

Wishing you all a joyful, peaceful holiday season.

Warm regards,
Joe Steger
Principal, ALMHS

This fall, we were excited to launch our very first Mountain Biking Group. This young group was very eager to take on the challenge of learning new skills and navigating fresh terrain.

A huge THANK YOU goes out to Nick's Property Maintenance of Allegany and to Noah Bleier, a junior Natural Resources student, for help preparing our trail. Their hard work in trimming back foliage and making the path safe and accessible played a crucial role in getting this program rolling. Thanks, too, to UpCycle in Olean for helping us stock up on 25 mountain bikes for our students to use for our group as well as gym class.



New Mountain Biking Group Hit the Trails This Fall

3 Actions to Help Your Teen Build Resilience

Life is full of ups and downs. Teens who are resilient have confidence to tackle challenges, learn from setbacks and keep going even when things get tough.

1. Encourage problem solving

- When things go wrong, resist the impulse to jump in and fix things for your teenager. Instead, support your teen by encouraging problem solving.
- When they hit a bump, whether it's a tricky math problem, a friendship issue or a misunderstanding with an adult, guide them by asking questions like what do you think you could try? Or what have you done before?
- Doing so communicates your belief that they are capable of handling life's challenges and reminds them that they can tap into their own creativity to find solutions.

2. Teach them how to cope with disappointment

- Life comes with its fair share of let downs and learning to handle disappointment is an essential part of being resilient.
- When something doesn't go the way your teen hoped, perhaps they were dropped from a sports team or didn't get the job they wanted, encourage them to acknowledge the disappointment rather than trying to ignore it.
- Teach them to express their feelings. Reflect on what they can learn from the experience and then focus on what's next. The ability to accept disappointment while moving forward is a key ingredient in resilience.

3. Protect the building blocks of resilience

- Resilience doesn't just happen on its own. It's built on a foundation of good habits that keep teens feeling strong, balanced, and ready to tackle life's challenges.
- Getting enough sleep, eating well, staying physically active and nurturing close relationships make it possible for teens to bounce back from setbacks.
- And remember, adults need to protect their building blocks of resilience too. Taking good care of ourselves models healthy habits for our teens, and it helps us to be the calm, steady presence our teens need when they're facing tough times.

Here's to you, your teen and to building resilience together.

Excerpt taken from Unicef.org, written by Dr. Lisa Damour, a psychologist, author, and mother of two.

NATIONAL DIABETES DAY - NOV. 14



On November 14, 6th grade SAC students planned and carried out a hat day fundraiser for Breakthrough T1D in honor of World Diabetes Day. They encouraged all students and staff to participate, and to wear blue in support of all those with diabetes. They were able to raise over \$450 across both buildings and were able to spread awareness by handing out stickers, collecting donations, and sharing misconceptions and information on the morning announcements throughout the week. Great job bringing a wave of blue to the swamp 6th graders!

ALCS Represents at All-State Concerts

Congratulations to our Gator vocalists who were selected to perform in two Area All-State concerts in November!

Jackson Abbott performed Nov. 8 at NYSSMA Jr. High Area All-State at Pioneer High School and Lilly Shumway and Christina Booker performed at NYSSMA Sr. High Area All-State at SUNY Fredonia on Nov. 22.

These students were selected to perform for Area All-State based on their excellent performances in the May 2025 NYSSMA Solo Festival. Jackson is the first middle school vocalist to be chosen from ALCS since before 2020.

Both performances included the best of the best student vocalists in Western New York. Way to go, Gators!



December/January Concert Schedule

DEC. 3, 7 P.M. (ALMHS):
GRADES 6-8 CHOIR

DEC. 9, 6:30 P.M. (ALES):
3RD GRADE CHORUS

DEC. 11, 7 P.M. (ALMHS):
GRADES 6-8 BAND

DEC. 17, 7 P.M. (ALMHS):
HIGH SCHOOL HOLIDAY CONCERT
(BAND, CHORUS, JAZZ BAND)

JAN. 15, 6:30 P.M. (ALMHS):
5TH GRADE BAND AND CHOIR

2025 TALENT SHOW



Gator Strong: *Making a Difference Together*

The generosity of our Gator community continues amaze us. Our students, families, staff, and friends have come together time and time again to support important causes in our community - raising funds for cancer awareness and family support, collecting supplies for our troops overseas, organizing donation drives, and even rolling up their sleeves to donate blood. These efforts truly reflect who we are as a district and a community.

A special shoutout goes to our students and staff across the district who have dedicated their time and energy to making these charitable efforts a success. Your leadership, hard work, and commitment to helping others embody the true Gator spirit, and we could not be more proud.

“I’ve been here for a long time, and the charitable efforts of our students are very reflective of the community,” said District Superintendent Tony Giannicchi. “Just another reason why our district is a great place to live and work.”

Current efforts include:

- ALES Can Hunger Food Drive is accepting donations of non-perishable foods at the school through **Dec. 18**. Donations will benefit a local food pantry.
- NHS Toys for Tots will be collecting unwrapped gifts for children ages 1-12 at the Middle-High School through **Dec. 5**.

Since the beginning of the school year, our Gators have also been busy with:

- The National Honor Society (NHS) Military Care Package Drive collected many items between the MHS and Elementary School to be included in care packages going to our troops overseas. Thank you to Mrs. Clemens, a retired ALCS kindergarten teacher, and Mrs. Colburn in our district office for their guidance and support.
- National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) GatorAID Food Drive collected nearly 700 food items for the Olean Food Pantry in November. Thank you to Tops Markets for lending NJHS shopping carts to help their collection efforts.
- In a major school and community collaboration, the ALCS Leo Club, Interact Club, and Friends of Rachel teamed up with the Olean- Portville Lions Club, Olean Zonta and Olean Rotary Club to make tie blankets for the Olean Child Advocacy Center in October. The group made over 100 blankets!
- The weeks long “Cash for Cancer” competition hosted by the ALCS Football Program raised over \$4,000 for the 12th Floor at Oshei Children’s Hospital in Buffalo and the family of an ALCS student battling cancer.
- Sixth Grade SAC World Diabetes Day Hat Day raised over \$400 to benefit Breakthrough T1D.
- Districtwide hat days, t-shirt and bracelet sales, and casual days for staff to benefit the family of an ALCS student battling cancer.
- NHS Red Cross Blood Drive in late September.



ELEMENTARY GATORS SHOW GOOD CHARACTER

At our elementary school, we believe that building strong character is just as important as building strong academic skills. Through our weekly Gator Good Character Awards Program, we recognize students who go above and beyond to demonstrate the character trait of the month.

Each week, teachers and staff “catch” students exemplifying the. When a student is recognized, their name is entered into that week’s drawing. At the end of each week, one student from each grade is randomly selected from the entries to receive award.

“ALES is a school that values and models good character in all we do,” said Ms. Bush, ALES principal. “Our character award winners remind us of what kindness, responsibility, and respect look like in action. I am so proud of each one of them.”

September (Friendship) – Since Sept. 26

Bryceson Walker, Aaliyah Winslow, Lilly Hess, Natalie Wetzler, Bohem Scheer, Aya Anderson, Adalynn Teachman, Finnegan Schlosser, Kingston Keith, Stevie Lamb, Nova Pettengill, Camden Thompson, Shane Whittaker, and Josie George.

October (Responsibility)

Maximus Colburn, Liliana Batey, Finley Miller, Luke Custard, Louis Kiffer, Ein Herbert, Cash Johnson, Emilia Thierman, Elle Marvin, Grayson Williams, Kyler Harmon, Elliott Kellogg, Jackson Brickner, Okey Taylor, Kora Geer, Lukas Peckham, Olivia Thierman, Raymond Lamb, Aurora Clingan, Margot Kausner, Sawyer Smith, Hudson Wight, Madison Burton-Mills, Elowen Wilder, and Celeste Derx.



November (Gratitude) – Through Nov. 21

Drake DeLong, Ryan Malpiedi, Kasen Flick, Oakleigh Potter, Landri Irons, Jemma Boerger, Everly Fisher, Lincoln Volz, Sophia Francis, Charlotte Hardy, Alyvia Walker, Acelyn Jock, Caleb Peterson, Caleb Stady, Jhene’ Mckenney, Owen Carrier, Robert Derx, Samuel Hastings, Fiora Porcello, and Ariana Teachman.

December’s character trait is compassion and caring.

RUNNERS SUPPORT STUDENT BATTLING LUEKEMIA

On Saturday, October 11th, Greta Gregory, Tammy Peters, Patty Saglimben, Joy Wilber, and Katie Wolfgang, ran in the Fall Scramble at Holiday Valley Resort, in Ellicottville, NY. It was a 4-mile trail run that started up at Spruce Lake and ended down at the bottom of the mountain, by Yodeler Lodge. The group decided a few weeks before the race that they would run in support of Kienen Duggan, a very special Allegany-Limestone Middle School student, who is currently battling Acute Myeloid Leukemia.





Being a great Gator is rewarding at the MHS

This school year marked the start of the Great Gator Rewards program at the Middle-High School.

The program is designed to recognize our 6-12th-grade students doing something great right at the time they're "caught" doing it. All adults in the building are given tickets to issue Gators who are caught being awesome. Students can save their tickets to earn prizes, such as Gator gear or experiences.

The program has been a hit so far, with all ages of Gators being excited to receive tickets.

Retired service members visit ALES

Before Veterans Day, our second-grade Gators had the special opportunity to meet two visitors from our local Charles Harbel Post 892 of the Allegany American Legion - Bob

"Sarge" Wenzel and Nora Barie-Wolfe. They shared stories about their time in the Marines and the Air Force and what it means to serve our country. Our students had plenty of

great questions. We are so grateful to them for taking time out of their day to speak with our students and help them better understand the meaning of Veterans Day.



1st EVER ALES Staff Pumpkin Decorating Contest

The staff at elementary school is always looking for ways to celebrate the season and collaborate for some fun. This year we decided to add a little enjoyment to our October with a Staff Pumpkin Decorating Contest. Any staff member at the school could choose to participate. The directions were simple...disguise or decorate a pumpkin to look like something other than...a PUMPKIN! We had an overwhelming response and 16 pumpkins were submitted for the final voting. Finished projects were set up in the MakerSpace for viewing. Each student and staff member was given one candy corn to cast their vote at the school. These votes were combined with online votes from the community, taken from Facebook, to determine the winner. (A special Thank You to Tracy DeRose for putting together the Facebook post and for our friends,



family members, and community folk for sharing and voting on the post!) After the votes were tallied, we were able to determine a first, second and third place as follows:

1st Place: Bubbly Cauldron
(Marilyn Strong – 3rd Grade Teacher)

2nd Place: Cookie Monster
(Susan Zimbardi – 5th Grade Teacher)

3rd Place: If You Give A Mouse A Cookie
(Rebecca Stayer – Library Teacher)

Congrats to our winners and everyone else who worked so hard to submit a pumpkin!

Participants: Susan Zimbardi, Rebecca Stayer, Erik Jones, Marilyn Strong, Katie Hirliman, Rikki Ray, Greta Gregory, Lindsey Wernert, Ann Burgess, Ariel Wilson, Valerie Brickner, Todd Miller, Andrea Darrow, Sandra Tully, Amy Kline, Tamara Peters

ALES 3RD MUSTACHE DAY A SILLY SUCCESS!

Our Elementary kiddos had a lot of fun with the Third Annual Mustache Day in honor of World Kindness Day! Thank you to all the Gators who participated.



DONATION HELPS MHS CLOTHING CLOSET STOCK ITS SHELVES

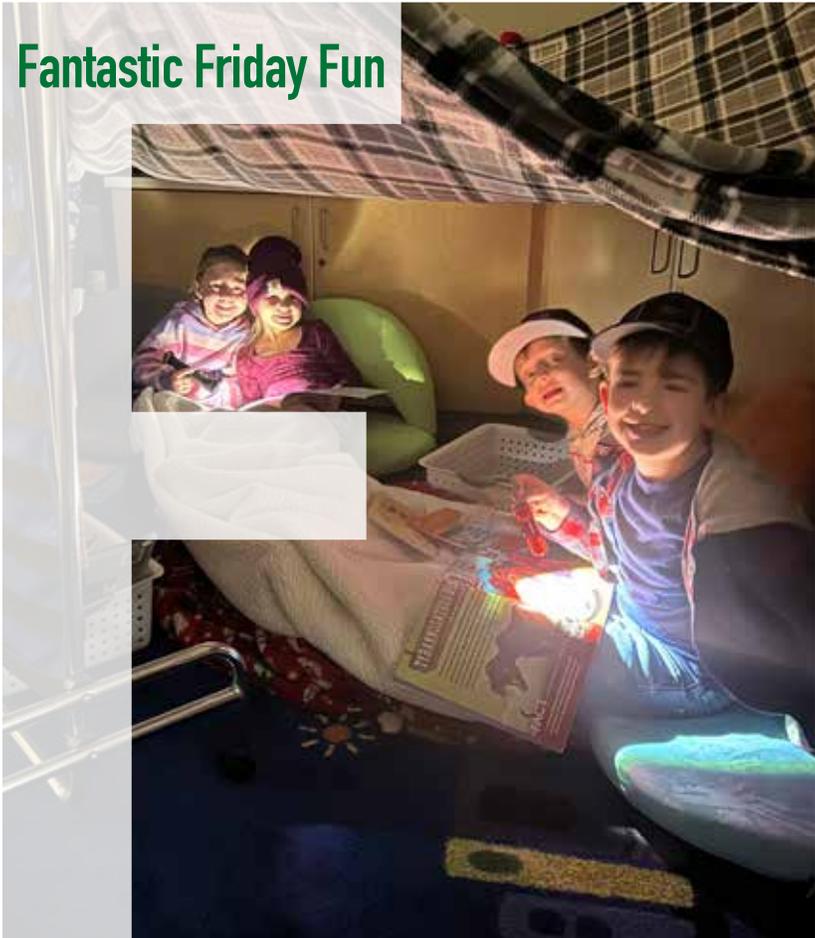


The Allegany-Limestone Clothing Closet team recently hit the stores to stock up on everyday essentials like laundry soap, bleach, stain remover, deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Thanks to a generous donation, members didn't just grab the basics – They also had the chance

to pick out some fun new items. What started as a shopping trip turned into a treasure hunt, with students finding unique pieces to share with each other. These moments remind us that the Clothing Closet is more than just a resource ... it's a community.

Want to help keep the magic going? The Clothing Closet is always accepting clean, gently used clothing and accessories. Reach out to Mrs. Jones at rjones@alcsny.org for more information on helping. Every donation makes a difference.

Fantastic Friday Fun

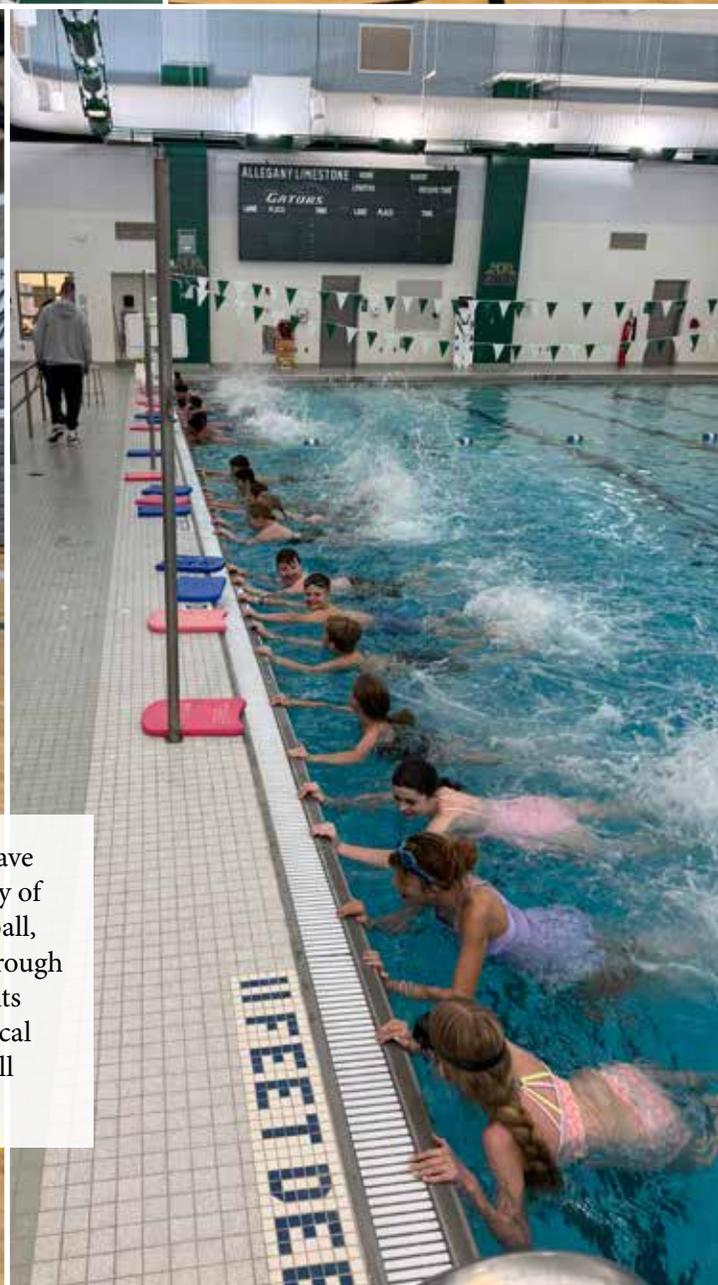


Students in Ms. Vogtli's kindergarten class celebrated letter "F" day by making FORTS, with FRIENDS, and used FLASHLIGHTS to read on a FRIDAY of course!

Phys Ed. has been busy at the MHS



Recently, our students have participated in a variety of units including pickleball, swimming, and volleyball. Through their participation, our students are learning the value of physical activity to help promote overall wellness and enjoyment.





ALCS HOMECOMING COURT:

Freshman attendants: Owen Buzzard and Alexis Prince.

Sophomores: Sawyer Prince and Leea Kopp.

Juniors: Summer Rhow and Michael Questa.

Senior attendants: Madelyn Price-Costa and Gian Parry, and Angel Stromecki and Kaleb Reed.

King and Queen: Seniors Serena Frederick and George Brairton

HOMECOMING 2025



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Kevin Straub, *Assist. Middle-High School
Principal/Director of Technology*

Maren Bush, *Elementary Principal*

Alicia Bockmier, *Director of Special Education*

Erin Anastasia, *Director of Educational Services*

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POSTAL PATRON LOCAL

Or Current Resident

Our Macy's-inspired Thanksgiving Parade

Mrs. Wight's and Mr. Jones's second graders collaborated with Mrs. Zimbardi's and Mrs. Kellogg's fifth graders to put together their version of the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade the morning before break

in November. Over two days, the classes learned about the history of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City and how it all began. On day two, the groups created their own balloons and

had a parade through the school. Some of the students even wrote persuasive letters to Macy's to adopt their designs into next year's parade!

