

December 2025

## Early Childhood Education Excellence: HSD Recognized with Program of the Year Award

Hazelwood School District's Early Childhood Education Preschool Program has been selected as the 2025 FutureBuilders' Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program of the Year for large-sized districts.

This recognition highlights the outstanding dedication of the center's staff, and the impact of their work in building a strong foundation for Hazelwood's youngest learners. The award is presented by the Missouri School Boards' Association (MSBA) through the FutureBuilders' Foundation.

The District's innovative kindergarten readiness program played a huge part in receiving this award. During the 2023-24 school year, the district launched a focused initiative to align instruction with Missouri's Early Learning Standards, supported by a grant from Washington University's Institute for School Partnership. A cohort of teacher leaders was formed to guide this work, meeting regularly to monitor student progress and share best practices. The grant also enabled targeted professional development and coaching for all early childhood educators. In a collaborative effort, kindergarten and early childhood teachers came together in March 2025 to strengthen alignment and support for incoming students. The program's impact was further highlighted when seven teacher leaders presented their work at Washington University's Practical Research in Education Showcase.

"We are deeply honored to receive the 2025 FutureBuilders' ECE Program of the Year Award," said Dr. Stacy Ray, director of early childhood education in HSD. "This recognition reflects the unwavering dedication of our staff, the support of our families, and the ongoing interest in learning shown by our young students. Together, we're building strong foundations for lifelong learning."

Hazelwood School District was formally recognized at the MSBA Annual Conference Awards Banquet on Saturday, October 25 in Kansas City.

The Hazelwood School District congratulates the entire Early Childhood Education Preschool Program team on this well-deserved recognition, and we thank them for their continued commitment to excellence in early childhood education.

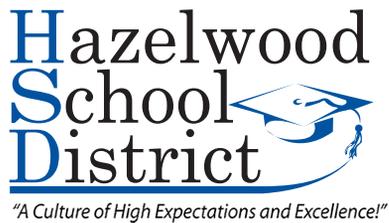
Early Childhood  
Education Program  
of the Year Award



FUTUREBUILDERS  
FOUNDATION

MISSOURI SCHOOL BOARDS' ASSOCIATION





Proudly serving all or part of the following communities:

- Black Jack
- Bridgeton
- Dellwood
- Ferguson
- Florissant
- Hazelwood
- Spanish Lake
- Unincorporated St. Louis County



Greetings HSD Community,

It's hard to believe how quickly this school year is moving along. It feels as if we just welcomed our students back for the 2025-2026 school year, and now winter break is already on the horizon. As we reach this point in the year, I'm filled with gratitude and pride for the tremendous progress our schools have made. From academic achievements to student growth and community involvement, this has been a truly successful year so far. I want to take a moment to thank our dedicated staff, engaged families, and, most importantly, our incredible students for making this school year one of purpose, momentum, and success.

The District is so proud of our Early Childhood Education Preschool Program for being named the 2025 FutureBuilders' Early Childhood Education Program of the Year for large districts. This recognition from the Missouri School Boards' Association is a true reflection of the heart, innovation, and collaboration that define HSD. Congratulations to Dr. Stacy Ray and the entire early childhood team for this outstanding achievement and for setting such a powerful example of what it means to serve students with passion and purpose.

It is my great pleasure to celebrate one of Hazelwood's finest educators,

## From the Desk of the Superintendent

Mr. David Askovich, who has been named the District's 2025 recipient of the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award. Mr. Askovich, an English Learner teacher at Lawson Elementary School, exemplifies the heart of our mission — to ensure that every student is supported, valued, and given the opportunity to succeed. His work with our English Learner students demonstrates both compassion and innovation, helping children from diverse backgrounds build confidence and achieve academic excellence. On behalf of the entire Hazelwood School District, I extend my warmest congratulations and deepest appreciation to Mr. Askovich for his exemplary service and for representing the very best of the District's educators.

I am also pleased to celebrate Dr. Rhonda M. Key, our extraordinary deputy superintendent, for being recognized as an Excellence in Education awardee by the St. Louis American Foundation. Dr. Key's dedication to students, her tireless pursuit of excellence, and her unwavering belief in the power of education truly embody the heart of the Hazelwood School District. On behalf of the entire District, I extend my warmest congratulations to Dr. Key. We are so proud to call her one of our own, and we celebrate this achievement as a shining example of what it means to lead with purpose and heart.

As we reflect on the joy and unity displayed during our homecoming parades and the vibrant Fall Family Festival, I am reminded of the strength of our school community when we come together in celebration and support. These events showcased not only our students' talents and spirit, but also the dedication of our families, staff, and community partners who make these moments possible. Let's carry this momentum of connection, pride, and excellence forward as we move into the final weeks of 2025 — continuing to learn, grow, and celebrate every success along the way.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart*  
Hazelwood School District Superintendent

### Hazelwood School District

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## Lawson Elementary's David Askuvich Named Hazelwood School District's 2025 Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award Winner

The Hazelwood School District is proud to announce that David Askuvich, an English Learner teacher at Lawson Elementary School, has been named the District's 2025 recipient of the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award. Askuvich was recognized on October 15th in a presentation at the school, which included Superintendent Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart and Lawson Principal Melissa Adkins.

Sponsored by Emerson, the Excellence in Teaching Awards celebrate outstanding educators across the St. Louis metropolitan area, from kindergarten classrooms to college campuses, who demonstrate unwavering commitment, creativity, and excellence in their work. Recipients are nominated and selected by the top leadership of their respective educational institutions.

Askuvich, who serves the diverse English Learner population at Lawson Elementary, has been praised for his student-centered approach, dedication to academic growth, and

inclusive teaching practices that help every student thrive.

"Mr. Askuvich exemplifies what it means to lead with heart and teach with purpose," said Lawson Principal Melissa Adkins. "His dedication to our English Learners and their families is unmatched. He brings a calm, positive presence to our building every day, and his impact reaches far beyond the classroom."

The Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award is one of the St. Louis region's most prestigious recognitions for educators, and Askuvich's honor reflects both his personal excellence and the strength of Hazelwood's commitment to student success.

The Hazelwood School District congratulates Mr. Askuvich on this well-deserved achievement and thanks him for his continued service to students, families, and the wider school community.

# Where Tradition Marches On: Homecoming Parades Across the District

The Hazelwood School District community was filled with pride and excitement this fall as all three high schools — West, Central, and East — held their annual homecoming parades, each bringing together students, families, and the wider community for a vibrant celebration of school spirit.

West High kicked off the festivities on September 20th, setting the tone for a season of unity and tradition. Just a week later, Central High continued the momentum with its parade on September 27th, followed by East High rounding out the celebrations on October 11th.

Each parade was a memorable event, featuring energetic performances from student bands and cheerleaders, festive cars, and proud appearances from staff, alumni, and community groups. Streets along the parade routes were lined with enthusiastic spectators, who wore school colors and cheered to support their schools.

“The community turnout was incredible for all three events,” said HSD Superintendent Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart. “Our homecoming parades are more than just celebrations — they reflect the deep connections between our schools and the families we serve. It’s always heartwarming to see our students, staff, and alumni come together in such a joyful and positive way.”

With clear skies and perfect fall weather, each event showed the best of the District’s school pride. From start to finish, the parades were a resounding success, thanks to the collaborative efforts of students, staff, and volunteers who made them possible.

The Hazelwood School District congratulates each high school on a successful homecoming season and looks forward to building on these traditions in the years to come.



# Hazelwood School District Celebrates Community at Annual Fall Family Festival

The Hazelwood School District's Fall Family Festival in October brought families, students, staff, and community partners together for an evening of fun, connection, and celebration. The annual event, held to strengthen school-community ties, featured a variety of engaging activities and performances that highlighted the vibrant spirit of HSD.

Families from across the district gathered to enjoy games, music, student performances, and free books. The festival also included the Community Resource Fair, giving families the opportunity to connect with local organizations offering valuable services and support.

Dr. Audrey Wittenauer, federal programs specialist and one of the event's organizers, emphasized the importance of events such as these.

"The Fall Family Festival is more than just a fun night out — it's a meaningful way to connect families with our schools and local resources," said Dr. Wittenauer. "We're so grateful to everyone who came out to celebrate with us. This is what community looks like."

A special highlight of the evening was the announcement

of the winners of HSD's annual Family & Community Involvement Challenge — a district-wide competition that encourages and recognizes high levels of parent participation throughout September and October.

This year's winners were:

- **Elementary Schools**
  - 1st Place: Brown Elementary
  - 2nd Place: Barrington Elementary
  - 3rd Place: Arrowpoint Elementary
- **Middle Schools**
  - 1st Place: Central Middle
  - 2nd Place: North Middle
- **High Schools**
  - 1st Place: Hazelwood East High School



The challenge underscores the district's commitment to fostering strong partnerships among families, schools, and the community.

"Thank you to all the families, students, staff, and community partners who made this event such a success," said Dr. Wittenauer. "It was a wonderful celebration of everything that makes Hazelwood a truly special place to learn and grow."



## East High Sophomore Terilynn Zimmermann Makes Bold Strokes at the Contemporary Art Museum



East High sophomore Terilynn Zimmermann has been chosen as an intern for the St. Louis Contemporary Art Museum's (CAM) dynamic New Art in the Neighborhood (NAN) program! This incredible opportunity will immerse her in the vibrant world of contemporary art.

"First of all, I am honored to be in the program," said Terilynn. "It is such a wonderful place. Our teacher is awesome—she is a multimedia specialist who has done acting, released music, and made movies." Terilynn added, "The museum itself is awesome! I am thrilled to have the opportunity to participate in this and experience all that we have planned. I think what I am looking forward to most is the opportunity to observe a professional artist at work and learn from the experience. This will assist me in what I do with my art."

"In our sessions, we move. We warm up physically, engage the senses, discuss art through the body, and think and heal together," teaching artist Ahlam Kamis explained. "Students are asked to participate in creative mind mapping projects, immersive installation artmaking, and are encouraged to try new materials and mediums regularly. The space is one of integrity, freedom, and play—where these young artists and cultural workers learn to reclaim their bodies, their artistic visions, languages, and histories."

Debra Shobe, visual and fine arts teacher at East High, has played a pivotal role in Terilynn's success through her unwavering dedication to nurturing creativity and inspiring students to embrace their unique perspectives.

"Terilynn had creativity in her artwork; I saw it right away," Shobe shared. "I want her to gain an experience and level of creativity that she has never experienced in her life; an experience she can get and use throughout life to expand her artistic abilities."

On Saturday afternoons, NAN will host the twelve-week residency from September 13 through December 6, where up to 15 teens, selected through a competitive application process, receive pre-professional-level art instruction from resident teaching artists, museum staff, and visiting artists.

Project-based learning combined with open studio exploration will inspire students and introduce them to new art practices. This approach will also create experimental and supportive environments that cater to artists of varying skill levels and backgrounds.

The Hazelwood School District is excited about Terilynn Zimmermann's internship with the Contemporary Art Museum and looks forward to Terilynn continuing to develop her artistic talents.



### HAZELWOOD CONNECT VIRTUAL ACADEMY REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR!

#### OPEN TO GRADES 1-5

DISTRICT PROVIDES CHROMEBOOK AND HOTSPOT REGISTRATION  
FORMS ARE ACCESSIBLE IN THE PARENT PORTAL

FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR INQUIRIES,  
PLEASE CONTACT KEONNA REYNOLDS AT 314-953-5204  
OR VISIT HAZELWOODSCHOOLS.ORG.

# Dream Big: How Future In Action is Shaping the Next Generation of Leaders at Southeast Middle



At Southeast Middle School, students are already thinking about their futures — not just in terms of classes to take in upcoming semesters, but in choosing the careers they want to pursue. In a recent interview, seventh graders Moses Smith and London Drake sat down to talk about their experiences in the Future in Action program, a career-readiness initiative designed to help students explore their passions, build confidence, and gain real-world insight into potential professions. From hands-on projects to personal growth, these students shared how the program has shaped their goals — and even offered a few fun perks along the way.

“One crucial thing that I learned from the program was how they help kids like me and kids younger than me,” Moses explained. “They help us learn about our jobs and our career choices, and help us learn how to do them. The Future in Action program has lots of fun activities that you can do, food and snacks, and you can work with friends.”

“It is a good program to see what you want to do, how you want to do it, and how you can get there,” London shared. “The program has helped me determine my dream career, which is to be either a toxicologist or a nurse, because I would like to help people.”



Over the course of approximately 12 years, Future in Action has been a community partnership staple in the Hazelwood School District. In the past, Future in Action has worked with high schools and middle school university programs. Three years ago, Hull was provided an opportunity to work at Southeast Middle with the Mindset Monday program, where a host of community partners engage the school’s students each Monday to introduce them to enrichment opportunities, social-emotional learning, and career exploration.

“Coming into Southeast Middle with the Mindset program, we have to be mindful of having classroom management,” Future in Action Executive Director Peggy Hull explained. “We have to be mindful of loving our students, but at the same time, teach them accountability and responsibility.” Hull added, “The program allows us to deal with the layers that our students have experienced. When teaching career exploration and researching different careers, some students can’t imagine the possibility. But we have a partnership, and as a partnership, both people produce. We are asking them to do things that, in normal life, they most likely don’t have to do after they leave school. The overarching goal is to allow students to imagine the possibilities that the world is their oyster.”

Students aren’t just being taught lessons — they’re being seen, heard, and guided toward understanding their worth and their potential. They’re learning that discipline and compassion can exist side by side, that failure is never final, and that the “why” behind learning is what truly drives success.





## Music to Our Ears: Hazelwood Students Achieve Big in Orchestra

The Hazelwood School District is striking all the right chords this year, with its orchestra program reaching new heights of excellence, opportunity, and student achievement. Fueled by strong community partnerships and unwavering dedication from both students and staff, Hazelwood's young musicians are making waves across the region.

This fall, several students from Hazelwood's orchestra program were selected through competitive auditions to join elite ensembles hosted by the Webster Community Music School. Their acceptance marks a significant accomplishment in their musical journeys:

- Toran Price (violin, West High) – String Orchestra
- Avery Ray (double bass, West Middle) – Young People's Concert Orchestra
- Sabrina Bush (double bass, West High) – Young People's Symphonic Orchestra
- Arianna Hunter (violin, Central High) – Young People's Concert Orchestra

"These students are not only talented, but they also work incredibly hard," said James McKay, Central High's Orchestra Director. "Their accomplishments are a direct reflection of their dedication, the support of their families, and the power of music education to change lives."

Hazelwood's growing list of partnerships is helping ensure that opportunity is within reach for every student. Collaborations with Gateway Music Outreach, the University of Missouri–St. Louis (UMSL) Music Department, and the Chamber Music Society of St. Louis are providing access to Saturday orchestra classes at UMSL for 23 Hazelwood musicians. Many of these students are also receiving scholarships for private lessons.

Another bright spotlight shines through Hazelwood's ongoing collaboration with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Through the Symphony's Peer-to-Peer program, two Hazelwood students, West High's Sabrina Bush (double bass) and Central High's Rodney Newsome (cello), will receive regular coaching from professional symphony musicians throughout the school year.

"These partnerships are game-changers," added McKay. "They are helping us build a strong, equitable foundation for music education, one where talent, not zip code, determines opportunity." The Hazelwood School District's orchestra program continues to be a shining example of what is possible when schools, communities, and students unite around a shared vision of excellence. As these young musicians grow in skill and confidence, they also carry forward a legacy of discipline, creativity, and collaboration — values that will serve them for a lifetime.



## HSD All-District Drumline Wins Competition

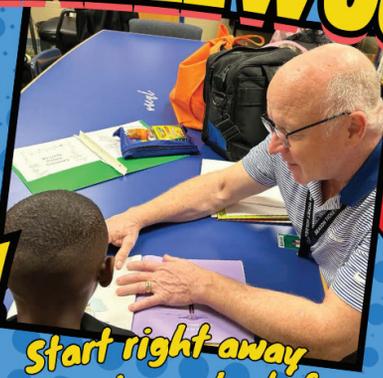
The Hazelwood School District All-District Drumline earned 1st Place at the Delmar Mainstreet Black Business Expo Drumline Battle, held on Saturday, August 30, 2025. Competing in the “Drum Battle of the Bands: HBCU Drumline Edition”, our talented students performed with passion and precision, achieving an impressive score of 54 out of 60 points.

Facing strong competition from Jennings High School and University City High School, the group rose to the occasion and delivered a championship-winning performance. This outstanding victory is a testament to the dedication and leadership of Mrs. Jacqueline Hooker, the All-District Drum Corps instructor, who continues to inspire excellence in our District’s performing arts programs.

“I couldn’t be more proud of our students. Their hard work, discipline, and heart were on full display, and it was a joy to see them shine on such a meaningful stage,” said Dr. James Garrett, the District band coach. “This win is not just about the trophy—it’s about the unity, pride, and talent that our students bring to everything they do.”

Congratulations again to Mrs. Hooker and the All-District Drumline on this well-deserved achievement.

*Discover how to*  
**BECOME A HAZELWOOD HERO READER**  
**HELP A CHILD FALL IN LOVE WITH READING!**  
*Start right away at the elementary school of your choice!*



**HALF AN HOUR A WEEK  
 NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED • ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED**  
 For over 20 years, HSD Heros have been changing the trajectory of learning for students. Now you can help students love reading and learning too!



## Dr. Rhonda Key Honored for Excellence in Education

The Hazelwood School District proudly celebrates one of our own, Dr. Rhonda M. Key, deputy superintendent, as she is recognized as an Excellence in Education awardee at the upcoming Salute to Excellence in Education Gala, hosted by the St. Louis American Foundation. The event was held on November 1 at America's Center in downtown St. Louis — and for all of us in Hazelwood, it's a moment of pride and deep appreciation for a remarkable leader and colleague.

"I was shocked, surprised, and incredibly humbled to be recognized for work that doesn't even feel like work to me," said Dr. Key regarding receiving the award. "I'm truly in love with what I do — creating pathways for children to succeed. It's much like a construction worker watching cars drive across a bridge they helped build and thinking, 'I did that.' That's how I feel when I see kids moving forward; I know I've played a part in helping them build a better future."

Dr. Key's story is one of passion, purpose, and perseverance. What began as a plan to pursue a career in medicine, quickly turned into a lifelong devotion to education — a shift that occurred the moment she stepped into a classroom as a substitute science teacher. "I fell in love," she recalls. And for 38 years, students, staff, and communities across Missouri have benefited from that love.

Throughout her career, Dr. Key has served in both classroom and administrative roles across urban, rural, and suburban districts. Her leadership is distinguished not only by her professional accomplishments, but by her unwavering belief that student success is the true measure of an educator's impact.

Here in Hazelwood, we've witnessed Dr. Key's tireless work to raise graduation rates and drive college and career readiness. Her ability to forge meaningful partnerships with universities, businesses, and community organizations has opened countless doors for our students, preparing them for life beyond high school and helping them see what's possible.

Dr. Key's philosophy is simple, yet powerful: put students first. Whether leading district initiatives, mentoring staff, or collaborating with families, she leads with integrity, compassion, and an unshakable focus on what's best for children. Her efforts extend beyond test scores and statistics — she strives to nurture confident, capable young people who are ready to lead and thrive.

She is sure to note that she wants to share this honor with people who helped her along the way. "This award humbles me because I didn't achieve this alone. It belongs to many people who shared my vision, walked alongside me, pushed me, and supported me every step of the way. I'm honored to receive this on behalf of everyone who's been part of my journey."

As a final message to the community, Dr. Key offered a heartfelt call to action: "Educators are the foundation of student success. I challenge you to take a moment to thank an educator — whether it's with a card, a kind word, or simply acknowledging their impact. In our society, educators often don't receive the respect they truly deserve. Whether your child is five, fifteen, or already in the workforce, an educator helped them get there. Let's show our gratitude."

On behalf of the Hazelwood School District, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Rhonda Key. This honor is richly deserved, and we are so grateful to walk this journey with her.



## Success-Ready Students Network

# Hazelwood School District Launches SRSN Dashboard to Promote Student Success

The Hazelwood School District has unveiled a new data dashboard on its website, providing the community with unprecedented insight into key student success metrics. The dashboard is part of the District's participation in the Success-Ready Students Network (SRSN), which is a statewide initiative focused on reshaping the future of education in Missouri through personalized, competency-based learning.

The SRSN, formed during the 2022-2023 school year, is a collaborative of more than 100 Missouri school districts. Its mission is to create more meaningful learning experiences for students and move away from traditional, one-size-fits-all systems of assessment and accountability. This includes exploring alternatives to current state assessments and accreditation measures through new models such as "Through Assessments" and the "Alternative APR (Annual Performance Report)."

The Hazelwood SRSN Dashboard reflects these goals by offering transparent, user-friendly access to District and school-level data in several key areas:

- Attendance
- Student Achievement and Growth
- Graduation Rate
- Enrollment Numbers
- Demographics
- Program Participation

While student-specific information is not included to ensure privacy, the dashboard allows parents, educators, students, and community members to explore summary and trend data that can be filtered from a district-wide level down to individual schools. Dr. Erik Melton, assistant superintendent of instructional services, emphasized the dashboard's role in driving continuous improvement.

"This dashboard is more than a data tool—it's a reflection of our commitment to making learning meaningful, measurable, and personalized for every student," said Dr. Melton. "It empowers our community

to engage with our progress and supports our move toward a more student-centered model of education."

The SRSN initiative is grounded in years of research and collaboration among Missouri educators and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Its dual focus is on:

1. Supporting districts as they implement personalized, competency-based learning.
2. Advocating for policy changes that remove barriers to educational innovation.

By participating in SRSN and launching this dashboard, Hazelwood is taking proactive steps toward building an education system that not only measures what students know, but also values how they grow.

To explore the new dashboard and learn more about Hazelwood's role in the SRSN, visit the HSD website at [hazelwoodschooldistrict.org](http://hazelwoodschooldistrict.org).

### HSD at a Glance

PRESCHOOL  
ENROLLMENT

994

K-12  
ENROLLMENT

15,351

PRE-K-12  
ENROLLMENT

16,345

FREE AND REDUCED

66%

OVERALL ATTENDANCE

91.4%



HAZELWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT



## West High Senior Alexis Wahome Excels with a 35 on the ACT and National Competition Success

Hazelwood West High School senior Alexis Wahome is making her school and community proud with a series of remarkable achievements. Most recently, Alexis earned an impressive 35 on the American College Testing (ACT), placing her among the top one percent of test-takers nationwide.

Earning a 35 on the ACT is no small feat. The ACT, a standardized test used for college admissions, measures a student's readiness for college-level work across English, mathematics, reading, and science. Each section is scored on a scale of 1-36, and the composite score is the average. A near-perfect score like Alexis's demonstrates exceptional academic strength, focus, and determination — qualities that shine through in all she does.

"I had a big dream and an even bigger tenacity," said Alexis. "While I couldn't have done it without persistently studying during the summer and the school year prior, a major factor in my success was all of West High's resources — the ACT prep course and the Saturday School ACT Practice Test sessions — which granted me the tools, strategies, and motivation to excel."

But Alexis's accomplishments extend far beyond the classroom. Over the summer, she traveled to Atlanta to compete in the National High School Computer Competition during the Black Data Processing Associates (BDPA) 2025 National Conference. She was part of an all-girls, three-member team proudly known as the "Syntax Sistas." The team, which included students from Brentwood and Parkway High Schools, showcased their coding expertise, creativity, and teamwork.

Their impressive performance earned recognition from the St. Louis BDPA Chapter, which awarded each team member a \$500 scholarship for their outstanding effort and success.

After excelling on the ACT and earning recognition for her accomplishments, Alexis reflected on what drives her: "If you have a dream, take every opportunity and don't be afraid to work hard towards your goals."

Hazelwood West and the entire Hazelwood School District community celebrate Alexis for her outstanding accomplishments. Her achievements in both academics and technology are a testament to her hard work, curiosity, and commitment to excellence, qualities that will undoubtedly carry her very far.

## McCurdy Elementary Teachers Spread Kindness Across the Community

On the first day of professional development of the new school year, McCurdy Elementary School staff turned their attention beyond lesson plans and classroom strategies — they focused on kindness. In a heartwarming display of community spirit, teachers stepped out of their classrooms and into the community to participate in a “Random Acts of Kindness” Day.

Armed with \$20 for each team of four and a mission to spread goodwill, the small groups of educators had one hour to make a positive impact. They didn’t disappoint. From stocking a Little Free Library with books to paying for a dog’s care at the Florissant Animal Hospital, the McCurdy team fanned out across the area with creativity and compassion.

The acts of kindness included:

- Delivering flowers to staff at an urgent care clinic and a local daycare center.
- Handing out snacks and drinks to families enjoying time at Koch Park.
- Surprising construction workers, mail carriers, lawn care teams, bus drivers, and police officers with cold water and snacks.

- Paying for laundry at a local laundromat.
- Distributing gift cards to unsuspecting shoppers at Aldi.
- Bringing snacks and activity items to residents at two area nursing homes.

Each team designed its own outreach plan, ensuring that the giving was personal, thoughtful, and impactful.

Principal Terri Lemos was moved by the staff’s enthusiasm and the joy it brought to the community. “This was more than just a team-building exercise,” the principal said. “It was a reminder of the power we have to uplift others — even with something as small as a snack or a kind word. Our staff showed the heart of McCurdy, and this is just the beginning. We’re committed to carrying this spirit of kindness throughout the school year.”

The Random Acts of Kindness initiative marks a new tradition for McCurdy Elementary, one that reflects its deep-rooted commitment not just to academic excellence, but to shaping compassionate, community-minded citizens.



## West High Scores Big with Community Spirit

Under the Friday night lights in September, Hazelwood West High School did more than open its home football season — it opened its arms to the surrounding community in a show of gratitude and unity.

In the home kickoff event against Webster Groves, West High welcomed distinguished guests and local leaders, turning game night into a celebration of the people who help make Hazelwood a resilient, connected community. Among the honored attendees were Hazelwood City Manager David Leezer, Police Chief James Hudanick, members of the Hazelwood City Council, and the Hazelwood School District Board of Education.

A heartfelt tribute came during halftime, when the school publicly recognized the residents of Woodcrest Lane and Howdershell Drive — neighbors whose homes border the West High stadium. The district thanked them for their patience, enthusiasm, and pride throughout the football season, especially on those lively and spirited Friday nights.

“The support of our neighbors is not something we take for granted,” said Superintendent Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart. “Our goal is to build lasting bridges between our schools and the community. When we say we’re ‘Hazelwood Strong,’ this is what we mean — schools, families, and city leaders coming together.”

As part of this outreach effort, the District leadership team personally walked the surrounding neighborhood on August 27th, placing VIP passes on doors and mailboxes. These exclusive passes offered residents free admission to all Hazelwood West football games in 2025,

along with a complimentary combo meal and reserved seating — a small gesture meant to show big appreciation.

The evening was marked by more than touchdowns and cheers — it was defined by connection, mutual respect, and a shared sense of pride in what it means to be part of Hazelwood. The applause at halftime wasn’t just for the players — it was for a community that shows up, supports, and stays united.

As the stadium lights faded that night, the message was clear: in Hazelwood, community isn’t just a word — it’s a commitment.



## Tutoring & Social/Emotional Support Line

The Tutoring and Social/Emotional Support Line is a resource for tutoring, homework help, and access to general social/emotional needs.

Teachers and social/emotional staff will be able to assist students and parents with both tutoring and homework help, and will be able to connect families with other resources as needed.

Call the Tutoring or Social/Emotional Hotline: 314-953-5140  
Hours: Monday - Thursday 6pm - 8pm, Saturday 10am - 12pm

Scan the QR code to sign up for the Tutoring or Social Emotional Hotline.





## Central High and Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park Break Ground on New Student-Designed Greenhouse

The Hazelwood School District celebrated an exciting milestone as Hazelwood Central High School officially broke ground on its new student-designed greenhouse, created in partnership with the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park. Food from the greenhouse will be used to feed animals at the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park.

The collaboration between Hazelwood Central High School and the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park reflects the District's ongoing commitment to Central High's Real World Learning and Innovative High School experiences, where students gain practical skills and engage in meaningful community projects. The partnership between the Saint Louis Zoo, University of Missouri-St Louis, Hazelwood School District, and the Zoo's Education Department provides weekly instructional programming to students at Central High School.

The groundbreaking ceremony, held on the Central High campus on Friday, November 7th, brought together students, district leaders, representatives from the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park, and the Hazelwood Board of Education to mark the beginning of this innovative educational project.

Throughout the 2024–2025 school year, CHS students worked closely with Zoo professionals to research, design, and plan the commercial-grade, ADA-compliant structure. The 1,440-square-foot greenhouse will serve as a hands-on learning laboratory, where students can apply lessons in biology, ecology, and sustainability while supporting conservation and community initiatives.

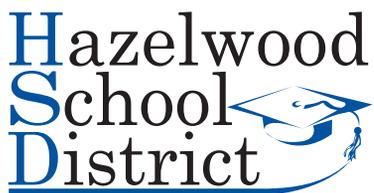
The greenhouse will feature cutting-edge ventilation and

automation systems, prioritizing energy efficiency and optimal growing conditions. Once completed, the facility will be used not only for classroom instruction, but also as a community asset — enhancing environmental awareness and supporting the mission of the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park.

Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart, Superintendent of the Hazelwood School District, emphasized the significance of the project: “This greenhouse represents the power of partnership, innovation, and hands-on learning. We are proud to collaborate with the Saint Louis Zoo WildCare Park to provide real-world opportunities that inspire education, curiosity, and leadership for our students.”

Construction on the greenhouse will begin this fall, with completion anticipated in spring 2026. Once operational, the space will host instructional programs, conservation projects, and community engagement events — further solidifying Hazelwood Central's role as a leader in environmental education and student-driven innovation.





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