

A publication of Ottawa Hills Local Schools

AROUND these HILLS

JUNE 2026



Class of 2026

The world is at your fingertips!

Inside this issue:

Jr./Sr. High School named National Blue Ribbon School

Academic & Athletic State Champions

District leaves TAAC, joins SBC

Foundation reaches campaign goal



Defined by excellence. Supported by tradition.

BOARD OF EDUCATION: Kathy Lathrop (president), Jen Kielczewski (vice president), Maara Fink, Emery Geosits, Tyler Carmony

MISSION: In partnership with our community, Ottawa Hills Local Schools will inspire, challenge, and support each student to realize their unique and full potential; to embrace the joy of learning as a lifelong process; and to become an empathetic, responsible citizen.

CONTACT: Ottawa Hills Local Schools
4035 W. Central Ave., Ottawa Hills, OH 43606
ohschools.org | 419-536-6371
info@ohschools.org

EDITOR: Katie Cho, Communications Manager

CONTRIBUTOR: Ben McMurray, Principal, Jr./
Sr. High School



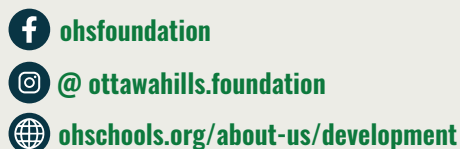
FOUNDATION EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Austin Irving ('02) chairman; Anjali Gupta ('99) vice chairman; John Roemer ('99) secretary; Mike McCullough ('93) treasurer; Judd Silverman ('74) past chairman

FOUNDATION TRUSTEES: Andy Dale, Dr. Adam Fineske, Maara Fink, Kevin Friedman, Emery Geosits, Joel Jerger, George Lathrop, Ben McMurray, Liz Puskala ('99)

MISSION: The mission of the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation is to permanently enhance and extend the unique experience of excellence that defines Ottawa Hills Local Schools.

CONTACT: Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation
4035 W. Central Ave., Ottawa Hills, OH 43606
esilk@ohschools.org | 419-214-4838



DISTRICT LETTER

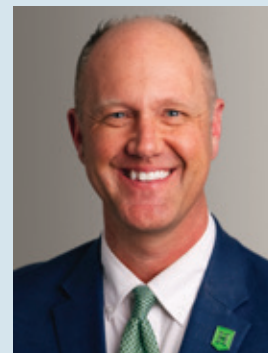
Growing a Green Bear

Dear Ottawa Hills Community,

This past year, our team embraced a school year theme close to the heart of everything we do here: Growing a Green Bear. From kindergarten to graduation, this idea guided our work, conversations, and decisions.

Growing a Green Bear means something specific at Ottawa Hills. It means building learners who can evaluate complex challenges, collaborate across differences, evolve in the face of change, and celebrate the progress made along the way. These four focus areas shaped our Strategic Plan goals this year and showed up in meaningful ways across both buildings, on athletic fields, on stages, and in our community.

I cannot overstate how central your involvement is to the success of our students. Ottawa Hills is not simply a school district. It is a village in every sense of the word, one where families, neighbors, local businesses, and alumni show up with trust, energy, and a genuine belief in our mission. That belief fuels everything. You will see it reflected in every story in this magazine, from students who built beds for children in need, to young athletes signing letters of intent, to performers who filled our theatre with four remarkable productions this year.



This year also brought a distinction that deserves to be celebrated loudly. Ottawa Hills Junior/Senior High School has been named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, one of the most prestigious honors in American education. This recognition belongs to every administrator for their leadership in pursuing academic excellence, every teacher who challenges students daily, every family who supports them at home, and every student who shows up ready to grow. We are deeply humbled and enormously proud.

Our work this year also strengthened the relationship between the district and the Village of Ottawa Hills in ways that directly benefit our students and community. Whether through shared service projects, collaborative programming, or open dialogue at our Coffee & Conversation events, we are committed to building bridges that make our community stronger.

And then there is the Class of 2026. I had the privilege of addressing these amazing students at commencement. They have evaluated, collaborated, evolved, and celebrated throughout their time here too. They leave Ottawa Hills not just with diplomas, but with the habits, values, and character that define a Green Bear. The world they are entering is complex, and I have every confidence they are ready for it.

As I reflect on this school year, I am grateful. Grateful for a staff that leads with dedication and heart. Grateful for families who walk alongside us with encouragement and trust. And grateful for a community that continues to believe deeply in the power of education.

Growing a Green Bear is never the work of one person. It is the work of all of us, together.

Thank you for being part of it.

Go Green Bears!

Superintendent Dr. Adam Fineske
afineske@ohschools.org



Welcome to *Around These Hills!* Published twice yearly by the school district's communications office in partnership with our development office, this magazine offers a thoughtful look into Ottawa Hills Local Schools. Within these pages, you'll find a semester filled with remarkable milestones: a National Blue Ribbon School designation, state and national champions in academics and athletics, four theatrical revivals, and 81 graduates ready to take on the world.

This edition also brings meaningful community updates, from district finances and a new elementary principal to the exciting news that the Green Bear GREEN SPACE Campaign has surpassed its \$1.75 million goal. Through it all, one thing is clear: the Green Bears show up, give back, and make this Village proud. ***Whether you're a parent, community member, donor, or alum, we're grateful for your connection to our schools and hope you find these pages both informative and inspiring.***



11

SERVICE-MINDED STUDENTS

From building beds for Toledo children to cleaning up the Land Lab, Ottawa Hills students spent this year turning classroom values into real-world action. Meet the Green Bears who gave back, stepped up, and made their community a little better.



22

THE WORLD IS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Celebrating the Class of 2026. Meet this year's student speakers, celebrate 81 Green Bears as they head off to their next great adventure, and marvel at a near-record \$12.5 million in scholarships awarded to this exceptional group of students.



28

CHARLEY'S PLAYGROUND

The Green Bear GREEN SPACE Campaign has surpassed its \$1.75 million goal, and Charley's Playground is on its way. Learn about this all-inclusive National Demonstration Site and the community that made it possible.

CONTENTS

AROUND these HILLS

2 District Letter

7 Campus News

4 District News

18 Athletics News

22 Graduation

28 Development News

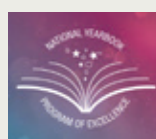
34 Alumni News

36 Upcoming Events

AN AWARD-WINNING DISTRICT



THOMAS
EDISON
AWARDS



Read more about Ottawa Hills Jr./Sr. High School's prestigious recognition as a Blue Ribbon School on page 4.

Send information, corrections, or change of address requests to the editor at info@ohschools.org

Ottawa Hills High School Named a National Blue Ribbon School



One of the most prestigious honors in American Education

Ottawa Hills Jr./Sr. High School earned recognition as a Blue Ribbon School, one of only 14 schools in Ohio to receive this elite honor. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program has recognized public and private schools for overall academic excellence for more than 40 years, and Ottawa Hills was recognized in the Exemplary High Performing category, which identifies schools that rank among the highest performers in their state as measured by state assessments or national standardized testing.

The honor is highly competitive. Schools must submit a rigorous application detailing their culture, curriculum, assessments, instructional practices, professional development, leadership, and family and community involvement. From all applications received nationally, no more than 420 schools are nominated before the final list is selected. The award highlights schools that excel in academic performance and demonstrate effective teaching methods and data-driven instruction.

“This recognition is a direct reflection of the dedication and excellence our teachers and staff bring to Ottawa Hills

every single day. They set a high bar for themselves and for our students, and this award is a testament to that commitment,” said Ottawa Hills Jr./Sr.

High School Principal Ben McMurray, whose exceptional leadership and dedication have been central to this achievement.

In his congratulatory letter to the school, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine wrote, “This is an incredible honor and reflects the dedication of your entire school,” adding, “Teachers and school leaders have the power to change lives.”

The district received notice of earning the award from the U.S. Department of Education last fall. While the program has historically been administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the award was officially presented by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce in March 2026, following restructuring within the federal government.

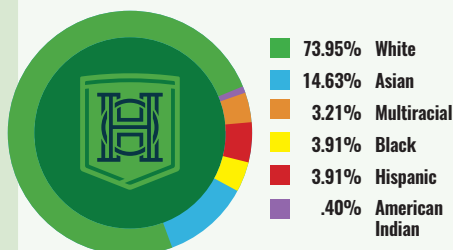


Ben McMurray

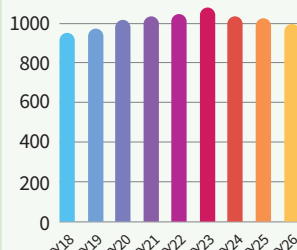


2025-26 District Profile

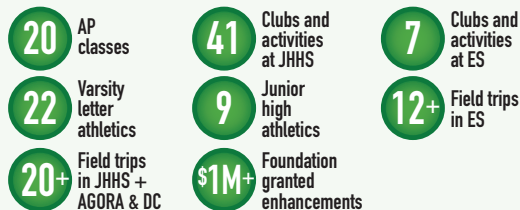
Student Body Snapshot



FY 2026 Enrollment: 998



Student Experience Snapshot



Staff Snapshot



Green Bear Finance update

Protecting Our Schools: Funding Challenges and Our Path Forward

Over the past two years, the treasurer's office and district leadership actively worked to advocate for additional state funding and fairer school funding for our district, to reduce the burden on our taxpayers. This included in-person meetings, advocacy letters, and attempts to form a coalition of similar school districts facing similar issues. Unfortunately, these actions have not produced results outside of spreading awareness. Despite these efforts, we still receive limited state funding, which requires more of our revenue to come from local tax dollars.

As part of maintaining a responsible financial position, we are returning to a three-year levy cycle. This means there will be an operating levy on the spring 2027 ballot. This levy would generate revenue to sustain the current operating budget. The district is currently in the early stages of the levy process, which includes deciding which type of levy to move forward with and how much money we will need over the next three-year levy cycle.

There are two main operating levies that a district can move forward with:

- A property tax levy
- An income tax levy

There has been recent movement from legislators and third-party organizations to reduce or eliminate property taxes. Due to the necessity of local tax dollars to our district, we are considering a small income tax levy to diversify our revenue sources and protect our local dollars to the best of our ability. The Board of Education has not yet made a final decision. We are currently gathering the information needed to make the best and most informed decision for the district's long-term financial sustainability.

Permanent progress

This school year brought meaningful permanent improvement (PI) projects to both buildings as the district began implementing our five-year PI plan. At the Jr./Sr. High School, the music rooms and office were renovated, floors were

refurbished in several classrooms, and the parking lot was sealed and restriped. Elementary bathrooms were also updated, as was the music room.

A significant safety upgrade came through grant funding from the Bureau of Workers' Compensation and the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Shatter-resistant safety film was installed on all first-floor exterior windows and doors at both buildings, and additional security cameras were added to minimize blind spots on campus.

This summer, the work continues at the Jr./Sr. High School, where brick and interior repairs are underway in upper classrooms, all classrooms with water damage will be refurbished, and additional flooring refurbishing will be completed. At the elementary, the parking lot will be sealed and restriped and the playground asphalt will be resealed.

Looking further ahead, the district will make its first payment on a third school bus through the permanent improvement fund. The lease-to-own arrangement will be paid off over five years, launching a replacement cycle that keeps the fleet ready for every athletic and academic endeavor ahead. The district is also setting aside funds for eventual track and turf replacement, roughly seven years out.

Saving for future needs and anticipating expenses down the road is at the heart of a strong permanent improvement plan.

EPISODE 3 - DISCUSSION OVERVIEW

REAL ESTATE TAX REVENUE

1. Why does the District need to continually pass real estate levies?
2. What is a mill?
3. Calculating the cost of a new real estate levy for homeowners
4. Inside millage vs. Outside millage
5. The Lucas County reappraisal process
6. How does the reappraisal affect homeowners and the District?



The Treasurer's webpage is full of Resident Resources

- Monthly Financial Reports
- Five-Year Forecasts
- Budget Information
- Green Bear Finance Episodes
- Advocacy
- & More Resident Resources



I welcome questions from all district stakeholders and can be reached at tsiloy@ohschools.org. More detailed information relating to all things district finance can be found at ohschools.org/about-us/treasurerfinancials.

– Treasurer/CFO Tom Siloy



The wheels on the bus go... Green



Elementary School Welcoming New Principal

When the search began for a new principal at Ottawa Hills Elementary School, the process was deliberately inclusive. A hiring committee drawn from district leadership, elementary teachers and staff, and parents led the effort, and their unanimous recommendation to the Board of Education landed on Andy Evans.

Mr. Evans arrives from Springfield Local School District in Holland, Ohio, where since 2021 he has led Holland Elementary/Holland Intermediate School, a building of approximately 500 students and 60 staff members. Before stepping into administration, he worked as a social-emotional learning coach and classroom teacher, experience that grounded his leadership in the day-to-day realities of student life.

He holds a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Concordia University Chicago and a Bachelor of Arts from Bowling Green State University, and is a licensed Ohio principal with certifications in early childhood education and reading.

Mr. Evans officially joins Ottawa Hills on Aug. 1, though he and current Elementary Principal Rose Gaiffe will work together this summer to ensure a seamless handoff. The Green Bears are ready to welcome him.



Andy Evans

Board of Education update

The Ottawa Hills Board of Education welcomed two new members this year. In January, Emery Geosits was appointed to fill a vacancy following the November election. In June, Tyler Carmony was appointed to fill the seat vacated when member Katie Timmers stepped down from serving. Both will serve through December 2027.

The full board includes President Kathy Lathrop, Vice President Jen Kielczewski, member Maara Fink, and newly appointed members Emery Geosits and Tyler Carmony. All Board of Education meetings are open to the public and streamed live. Visit ohschools.org/about-us/board-of-education for meeting dates and details.



Tyler Carmony

After March 4, the conversation continues

When a swatting incident disrupted our schools on March 4, it was the second such hoax in three years. The response from faculty, staff, and emergency responders, however, was anything but routine.

At April's district Coffee & Conversation, OHPD Chief Carl Reuther joined Superintendent Dr. Fineske and building principals Ben McMurray and Rose Gaiffe for an open discussion with community members on what went well and what could be improved. Chief Reuther shared we were one of several districts targeted that day across the state, and federal law enforcement agencies are investigating the incident. The conversation was candid and constructive.

In the months that followed, federal investigators made significant progress on swatting cases across Ohio. In May, an 18-year-old man from Oregon was charged by federal prosecutors with making hoax bomb threat calls to at least 17 Ohio high schools, including schools in Lucas and Lake counties. In June, a federal grand jury indicted the individual. The case is being investigated by the FBI Toledo Resident Agency, and Assistant United States Attorney Dexter L. Phillips is leading the prosecution for the Northern District of Ohio. If convicted, this individual faces up to 10 years in prison.

Mr. McMurray reflected on what he witnessed from his staff in the aftermath. "While swatting incidents are designed to create chaos and fear, what I witnessed from our faculty and staff was the exact opposite: unwavering focus, professionalism, and compassion," he said. He added that staff were "the calm in the storm" for students during a high-stress situation.

The work continues beyond the conversation. Members of the district leadership team joined OHPD officers at the Ohio Schools Safety Summit to learn about best practices. This summer, Chief Reuther will bring OHPD officers into the school buildings for hands-on training, with a focus on familiarizing newer officers with the Village's schools.





Q: Who are the 2026 Small School Quiz Bowl State Champions? A: Ottawa Hills!

History was made in April when the Ottawa Hills Quiz Bowl team claimed the Small School State Championship title at the 2026 NAQT Ohio State Championship in Bellefontaine. Competing against Ohio's best programs, the Green Bears finished with an 8-2 record, tying for 2nd place overall in the Championship Group and securing the top Small School ranking in the state. State champions Team A included Meral Humaida, Rohan Padhye, Sahil Parikh, and Zacharia Rashid. Team B included Jasper Allred, Josef Duley, Pranathi Gundabolu, Sam Kapadia, Audrey Kelm, Rory Norris, Sungjoo Park, Evelyn Parsons, and Emily Timmerman. Team leading scorer Zacharia Rashid also competed individually at the NAQT Individual Player National Championship in Chicago on April 11-12, finishing 115th out of 302 competitors overall and an impressive 12th out of 302 in the Math and Science category.

The team then traveled to Chicago for the NAQT Small Schools National Championship Tournament (SSNCT), where they went 11-3 and finished 13th overall.

On opening day alone, the Green Bears went 9-1, with their only loss coming to the tournament's top seed. Their second loss came to the eventual championship team, Russell, a match which was tied at the half. The strong showing was no surprise for a program with deep roots at this tournament. Ottawa Hills is one of only five schools in the nation to have competed at the SSNCT every year since its inception in 2014, and the only Ohio school to have done so.

In May, the team headed to Atlanta for the NAQT High Schools National Championship Tournament (HSNCT), where they went 3-7, matching the best performance Ottawa Hills has recorded at that tournament in at least 17 years, and coming within a single question of a fourth win. Club advisor Tim Adkins emphasized, "It is worth noting this accomplishment in context, that most small schools don't attempt to compete at the HSNCT at all, and winning even a single match is a significant achievement on that stage!"



The science of standing out

This spring, Ottawa Hills made its mark at the Ohio Academy of Science's State Science Day in a big way. Nineteen students competed among more than 700 from across Ohio, presenting their findings to professional judges who probed their research, processes, and directions for future study. Notably, Ottawa Hills had more students present at the state science fair than any other school in the region.

The Green Bears were well represented across grade levels. Congratulations to Mera Abusaad, Coral Thompson and Angie Zheng (9th), Emily Chen, Lily Denk, Sofia Denk, Sofia Elfituri, Pranathi Gundabolu, Sungjoo Park, Shivani Pindiprolu, Jack Tremblay, and Eleza Zaidi (10th), Najjad Alsultan, Sara Hamilton, Zahir Mahmood, David Seigar, and Henry Sun (11th), Twayne Lai (12th), and Saatvik Sivaguru (6th). Four students earned a "superior" rating at the state level: Sara Hamilton, Twayne Lai, Shivani Pindiprolu, and Henry Sun.

Michael Woytek, Executive Director of the Ohio Academy of Science, took note of what Ottawa Hills brings to the competition. "Preparing students for the future is the business of education," he said. "When Ottawa Hills students present at a Regional or State Science Day, we see active and intrinsic learning; students who are building durable skills and competencies that will prepare them for whatever they choose to pursue. This is the foundation of life-long learning and the pathway to future success."

No debate about it, Anna Yang is #1

Anna Yang didn't just compete at her first state tournament. The 8th-grader swept the Extemp Debate field, finishing first out of 71 competitors to claim the state championship. She was part of a strong showing from the junior high Speech and Debate team in their inaugural season. Team members Bismann Singh, Aurelia Cavalieri-Heller, Izzah Ali, and Manal Zaidi also participated in the state championship; for a group of first-year competitors, placing in the top half of a state field is no small achievement.

In June, Anna will represent Ottawa Hills at the National Speech and Debate competition in Richmond, VA. With a state championship already on her record, Anna's high school career is one competition worth watching!





Rockets, reading and the 2nd & 7 Foundation

When Cameron Kirk was a football player at Miami University, he was introduced to the 2nd & 7 Foundation, a national literacy program founded in 1999 by three former Ohio State football players with a simple but powerful mission: pair student-athletes with 2nd graders to read, inspire, and put free books in the hands of kids who need them. The program has since grown to nearly 200 communities across 26 states.

Cameron is now a medical student at the University of Toledo, and this spring he helped bring the 2nd & 7 Foundation to Ottawa Hills Elementary School for the first time, in a unique partnership that combined athletics and medicine. Fifteen members of the UT women's varsity soccer team joined three UT medical students for the visit, spending time reading in each 2nd grade classroom. Each 2nd-grader was given a copy of *The Hog Mollies and Quincy's Quest for Quiet*, written by the 2nd & 7 Foundation and illustrated by Avery Hartanft. For 2nd-grade teacher Jennifer Powers, the visit was a hit from the start. She said she would love to make it an annual visit from our UT neighbors.

Cameron sees the program as something bigger than a single visit. "It's about spreading a love of reading and getting kids excited about the importance of literacy," he said, "and getting more athletes involved is very much in the spirit of the program and its community service component."

The Wondry reaches for the Moon

When NASA's Artemis II launched on April 1, 2026, elementary students at Ottawa Hills were ready. Literacy and Innovation

Specialist Amanda Sanderson had spent weeks in The Wondry preparing students to follow along with NASA's first crewed lunar mission in more than 50 years, providing resources and sparking conversations about the historic journey. The nearly 10-day mission carried Commander Reid Wiseman, Pilot Victor Glover, and Mission Specialists Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen, the first Canadian astronaut to travel beyond

Earth's orbit, on a flyby around the Moon and back. At their farthest point, the crew traveled 252,756 miles from Earth, setting a record for the greatest distance humans have ever traveled in space.

The crew splashed down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego on April 10. Mrs. Sanderson's preparation gave Ottawa Hills students a front-row seat to one of the most historic moments in modern space exploration.



New AP course takes root

Ottawa Hills High School has earned a spot on the College Board's AP Honor Roll, an honor reserved for schools that significantly increase student access to Advanced Placement courses while maintaining or improving the percentage of students earning qualifying exam scores. It is a distinction that reflects years of intentional investment in rigorous academics.

The numbers tell the story. In recent testing, 89% of Ottawa Hills students who took AP exams scored a 3 or higher, the threshold considered qualifying for college credit. That figure represents one of the strongest AP performances in the school's history and puts Ottawa Hills well above national averages.

This year, the district added AP Environmental Science to its already robust course offerings, taught by science teacher Paul Genzman. The full-year elective integrates biology, chemistry, physics, and geology while introducing students to key environmental concepts and authentic scientific inquiry. Students connect classroom learning to real-world environmental issues and participate in field trips that bring those concepts to life.



Paul Genzman



Ottawa Hills currently offers 20 Advanced Placement courses across every major discipline:

AP Art History	AP French Language and Culture
AP Biology	AP Music Theory
AP Calculus AB	AP Physics 1
AP Chemistry	AP Physics 2
AP Computer Science Principles	AP Spanish Language
AP Drawing	AP Statistics
AP English Language and Composition	AP United States Government and Politics
AP English Literature and Composition	AP United States History
AP Environmental Science	AP 2-D Art and Design
AP European History	AP 3-D Art and Design



Writers on a winning streak

After sweeping the regional competition in Lima, the Ottawa Hills Junior High Power of the Pen team took its talents to Ashland University on May 18 for the State Competition.

The regional performance was historic. The team claimed 1st place in both the 7th and 8th grade divisions and took home the Regional Sweepstakes Trophy for overall excellence, the first time in school history that both grade levels finished first at regionals. Individually, 8th-graders Manal Zaidi earned 1st place and Allison Leeds took 3rd. In the 7th grade, Janeen Smidi claimed 3rd place.

At states, Ottawa Hills was represented by Janeen Smidi and Johanna Mullan (7th grade) and Tabitha Mezo, Manal Zaidi, and Allison Leeds (8th grade). Johanna advanced to the 4th round, and Chloe Choi made the trip to Ashland as a volunteer runner, supporting the team throughout the day. In a special moment during the awards ceremony, 9th-grader Molly Mullan was honored with the Annual Humor Award for her 2025 story "A Day Without Sun."

"They had a great time meeting other young writers from all over Ohio," said advisor Karen Fischer. "These girls are so creative, and they had such a great spirit throughout the entire season."



Future healthcare heroes take their shot at state

In April, 19 Ottawa Hills Jr./Sr. High School Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) competitors traveled to the annual Ohio HOSA State Competition at the Glass City Center in Toledo, immersing themselves in educational workshops, skills assessments, and career exploration across a wide range of health science disciplines.

Three students earned Top 10 finishes. Eleza Zaidi and Shivani Pindiprolu placed in the top 10 in Emergency Medical Technician, and Rory Norris did the same in Behavioral Health.

Chapter President Ellie Kammeyer reflected on the team's effort throughout the year. "I'm so proud of everyone who has put their trust and time into HOSA," she said. "Regardless of the results, every member has put in so much time and effort into practice and studying, and that effort was shown throughout this week."

The full roster of competitors included Catelin Hawkins (Environmental Science), Lizzy Hoelzle, Kaylin Zheng, Bella Howard, and Hana Mashali (Biomedical Debate), Rory Norris (Behavioral Health), Ellie Kammeyer and Maya Estrada (Community Awareness), Eylan Humaida and Coral Thompson (CPR/First Aid), Shivani Pindiprolu and Eleza Zaidi (Emergency Medical Technician), Anna Hertlein and Noora Khan-Akbani (Forensic Science), Pranathi Gundabolu (Home Health Aide), Josie Hemke (Medical Law and Ethics), Tara Brown (Nutrition), Lena Balaa (Research Poster), and Safia Elsayed (Surgical Technologist).

Soft skills showdown



Crystal Burnworth and Showdown Winners

On Jan. 23, more than 90 junior students gathered in The Foundry for Ottawa Hills' inaugural Soft Skills Showdown, a series of business challenges designed to test four pillars of professional success: communication, creative problem-solving, collaboration, and real-world decision-making.

The event, created and organized by high school College Counselor Crystal Burnworth, brought in a panel of local professionals who served as judges, offering students feedback and perspective that no textbook can replicate. In a job market that rewards more than technical knowledge, the Showdown gave students a chance to practice the skills that matter just as much.



Three sophomores on Ottawa Hills' robotics team, Havoc, went undefeated at the Kalahari Classic Tournament, the largest multi-day robotics competition in Ohio. Adam Ayan, Max Bigioni, and Peyton Ree finished the tournament 13-0, claiming the Waterpark Rampage first-place trophy and a judges' award. The team automatically qualified for the state tournament, where they faced tough competition but gained valuable experience in their first state tournament under the leadership of advisor Mrs. Patty Dowd.

add this to the win column

The team of Raaghav Gundabolu, Allison Leeds, Anna Yang, and Aurelia Cavalieri-Heller competed against the region's top mathematical minds, with Raaghav standing out in the Countdown Round, a head-to-head, fast-paced challenge among the top 12 individual scorers. He claimed 1st place with lightning-fast accuracy. Allison and Anna brought valuable experience back to the team as returning competitors, providing veteran leadership when it counted.



The Mechatronics Club took its work to the University

The event also offered students a chance to engage





Service, smiles, and a good night's sleep

For over a year, senior Arianna O'Neill had been planning for this day. The founder of the Toledo Smiles Project, Ottawa Hills' service-oriented student club, Arianna partnered with Let's Build, a Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan charity that has been building and delivering beds to children in need since 2018, to bring a large-scale service project to life. The cost to build and outfit 30 beds (with a mattress, sheets and pillow) runs approximately \$5,000. Arianna applied for and received a \$4,000 grant from the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation and raised an additional \$1,800 on her own.



On April 4, more than 35 student volunteers from grades 7-12 gathered to build all 30 beds, each branded with the Let's Build logo, for children in our local Toledo community. Ottawa Hills Mayor Marc Thompson, having heard about the project, came to volunteer alongside the students. The experience was as much about learning as it was about giving. Students worked side by side in peer-to-peer teaching moments, learning to safely use power tools and developing collaborative and teamwork skills in the process.

Principal McMurray saw the value immediately. "What we love about this opportunity is not only making an impact, but that it is focused on education, with collaborative and team working skills, learning to safely use power tools, and directly seeing the impact of making something usable when they leave," he said.

Mike Horvath, a mechanical engineer with Dana and Let's Build Director, who helped coordinate the event alongside OH Director of Development Erica Silk, echoed the sentiment. "It's a pleasure for us to work with school-age students to help other school-age students, to teach them about service and philanthropy. Those are values they can carry into their adult lives to better their communities," he said.

The Toledo Smiles Project plans to make this an annual service project within the Ottawa Hills student body. For Arianna, who graduated this spring, it is the kind of legacy that outlasts a diploma. Watch Arianna and Mrs. Silk speak about the project to Mr. McMurray here: <https://www.ohschools.org/about-us/development>.



More than a game

Students from Home to Home took in a University of Toledo men's basketball game this winter, watching the Rockets pull off a 94-75 victory over Eastern Michigan University. The trip turned out to be about much more than the final score.

Director of Development Erica Silk worked with UT Head Coach Tod Kowalczyk and Athletic Director Bryan Blair to make the visit possible. Beyond the game itself, students got a behind-the-scenes look at the full ecosystem that brings a college basketball game to life, from ticketing, athletics, and guest services to music production, food and beverage operations, public relations, broadcasting, sponsorship, event management, and facility operations. The experience opened students' eyes to the range of careers connected to a single night of college sports.

Coach Kowalczyk and Mr. Blair also spoke to the students directly, sharing thoughts on the importance of community and expressing gratitude for programs like Home to Home. Home to Home is a Foundation-supported partnership between Scott High School and Ottawa Hills High School. Its mission is to bring both communities together in intentional, safe, and honest platforms focused on fostering relationships, developing leadership, and strengthening understanding.



Land Lab gets new life

On a chilly May morning, junior and senior high school students gathered by the kindergarten playground to help transform the Land Lab into something new. Under the direction of Treasurer/CFO and Operations Director Tom Siloy, and Head of Grounds Julio Rodriguez, the student volunteers spent the morning pulling weeds, removing debris, and prepping garden beds for the next phase of an ambitious project: a Butterfly Garden designed to give monarchs and other butterflies a place to feed, pollinate, and complete their transformation from caterpillar to butterfly.

The garden's abundant milkweed will serve a double purpose. A favorite of monarch butterflies, milkweed also happens to be a natural pesticide to the spotted lanternfly, an invasive species that has been spreading across the region. For the butterflies, it is a feast. For the spotted lanternfly, not so much.

Many thanks to Native Seed Nursery at Toledo Metroparks for donating native plants to this project.



Giving back, game night style

The Ottawa Hills girls basketball program turned two home games this winter into something bigger than basketball. Working alongside the boys basketball program, the teams organized a donation drive during home games, collecting essential items for women's and children's shelters and local charities throughout the Toledo area. The effort brought together Next Play AAU

Basketball Program, 419 Cares (Neighbors Helping Neighbors), and Team Recovery. The response from the school and surrounding community was remarkable.

The giving didn't stop there. Using funds raised through the basketball program, the team purchased winter coats, beanies, and socks for five homeless youth living in family shelters and attending the Frederick Douglass Community Center, and donated several basketballs for use in the center's youth programs. The center provides a safe, structured

environment for inner-city youth during out-of-school hours.

For the athletes involved, the experience was as much about developing character as it was about giving back. Service, empathy, and leadership are skills worth practicing too.



The bamboo that kept on giving

What started as an invasive species problem behind Epworth Church has turned into a lesson in community stewardship. Science teacher and Environmental Club advisor Paul Genzman has been working alongside the Village of Ottawa Hills, the Toledo Zoo, the Nature Conservancy, and Epworth Church to strategically remove invasive bamboo growing along the Ottawa River. The bamboo was originally planted near the church years ago but has since crowded out native vegetation and disrupted the local ecosystem.

The removal effort comes with an unexpected bonus. Rather than simply being discarded, the bamboo is transported to the Toledo Zoo, where it feeds red pandas, elephants, and Galapagos tortoises. It is environmental problem-solving at its most satisfying, and a reminder that good stewardship often starts close to home.

Breaking fast, building community

Current and former MSA members with faculty advisor Jacob Hall and former Board of Education member Dr. Adam Smidi.



As the sun set on March 6, the elementary gym filled with the warmth of shared food and community. The Muslim Student Association (MSA) hosted a free Community Iftar, the evening meal that breaks the daily fast observed during the month of Ramadan, open to all Ottawa Hills families. The MSA raised over \$800 through bake sales to provide a spread of rice, chicken, vegetable, and other dishes. The meal began in the traditional way, with a date, and was followed by a wide variety of desserts.

Guest speaker Dr. Omar Gad spoke on the spiritual purpose of fasting, exploring how it helps foster inner balance and spreads goodness in the world. MSA student leaders Zahir Mahmood and Lena Balaa shared that the organization gives them a place to practice their faith comfortably and confidently within the school community. Current and former MSA members gathered for the evening, a testament to the lasting bonds the organization creates.

The evening was also a reflection of something larger. Events like this one remind us that our community is made richer by the different traditions, backgrounds, and perspectives that our families bring to Ottawa Hills.



Student Visionaries

Juniors Olivia Stumbo and Ellis Carter are this year's Ottawa Hills Student Visionaries of the Year, leading a team called Blood, Sweat, & Cures in Blood Cancer United's 7-week philanthropy program. The team raised more than \$60,000 for blood cancer research, a disease that has touched many in the Ottawa Hills community.

The students were guided throughout the process by Allison Boesel, Campaign Development Manager for Blood Cancer United, whose expertise in leadership and philanthropy development helped shape the experience into something far greater than a fundraiser.

The Ottawa Hills connection to Blood Cancer United runs deep. Principal Ben McMurray co-chaired the Blood Cancer United board this year, bringing his commitment to student development and community impact to the organization's leadership at the highest level.

Volunteer Focus

Stacy Richards' health class doesn't just study community health. They go out and support it.

This semester, Mrs. Richards' students made multiple meaningful service visits that put classroom learning into real-world practice. Those visits included a day at Food for Thought and an afternoon at Tiny Hooves Farm.

At Food for Thought, students spent the day sorting donations and organizing the pantry floor and came away with something no textbook could teach. During an educational session, they learned that 1 in 4 children in the greater Toledo area faces food insecurity and discussed how hunger directly affects a child's ability to learn and stay healthy. "It really is such a great experience," Mrs. Richards said. "The students always love it, and it really is eye-opening for them."

The class also joined members of Volunteer Focus for a day at Tiny Hooves Farm, a nonprofit dedicated to community healing and grief support. Working alongside former Ottawa Hills Elementary Principal Dr. Jeremy Bauer, students painted a new deck and fence, laid landscaping rocks, and painted special rocks used in the farm's grief support programs.

Dr. Bauer took note. "Your kids were wonderful," he said. "They did so much work. It was great having them at the farm."

A delivery worth making

Before winter break, Jr./Sr. High School students from Student Council and Home to Home collected and delivered donated items to a family in need through Mom's House, a Gold Level childcare center that supports low-income, single mothers working toward high school, technical, or college degrees. Advisor Nikki Tolliver joined student leaders for the delivery. For the students involved, it was a chance to do something tangible and impactful for a family in their community.



smART Show celebrates the 'Joie de Vivre'

On a Thursday evening in spring, the Jr./Sr. High School was transformed into a vibrant gallery of color, creativity, and craftsmanship for the annual smART Show. With hundreds of works on display, every junior high and high school art student had the chance to showcase their talent, technique, and imagination for the community. This year's theme, Joie de Vivre (Joy of Living), was felt throughout the halls. The Jazz Band, led by Michael Leeds, performed throughout the evening, and the Cooking Club provided refreshments. The show was organized by art teachers Kristin Johnson and Caitlin Shawaker, with the assistance of many other faculty and staff.

The evening included presentations by AP Studio Art students Karis Connelly, Evelyn Parsons, Sahil Parikh, and Autumn Lee, who spoke about their portfolios, their journeys as artists, and their plans beyond high school. Cyd Gottlieb ('07) was also present as the artist-in-residence. Ms. Gottlieb, a Boston University graduate, spoke about her work, career path, and the inspiration behind her art.

smART Show 2026 Award Winners

First Place: Keely Stanfield (ceramics)

First Runner-Up: Sahil Parikh (digital art)

Second Place: Paige Hagen (portfolio)

Todd & Nancy Kime Sight Award: Rafaela Marson (ceramics)

Community Art Award: Olivia Wireman (ceramics)

Best in Show

Jewelry: Evelyn Parsons

Ceramics: Evelyn Parsons

Drawing: Shivani Pindiprolu

Painting: Piper Padgett

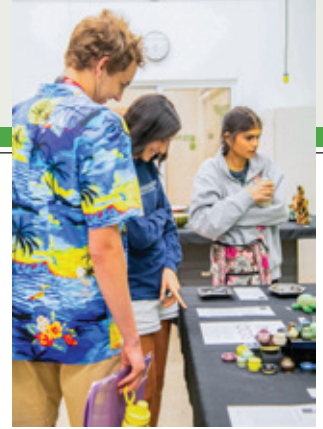
Photography: Zane Green

Stained Glass: Megan Allen

Foundations of Art: Nadia Frost Murnen (drawing)

Junior High Art: Allison Leeds (drawing)

Graphic Design: Sama Barakat (digital art)



Choraliers' voices soar in NYC cathedral

Over Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, the Ottawa Hills Choraliers traded familiar rehearsal spaces for one of the world's largest cathedrals. The group performed at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, filling its soaring interior with a program that included "Weep O Mine Eyes," "Locus Iste," "Holding Hands," and "Homeland." They also performed U2's "MLK," a tribute to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that felt particularly fitting for the weekend.

The trip extended well beyond the cathedral. Students participated in an intensive music and theater workshop with industry professionals, attended Broadway productions and visited Radio City Music Hall, Rockefeller Center, and the Museum of Modern Art.

The Choraliers also performed in the Macy's Herald Square building, singing for alumni spanning more than 50 years of Ottawa Hills history, from the Class of 1970 to the Class of 2021. Vocal Music Director Hayley Hoss led the trip. The experience was made possible in part by a grant from the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation.





OHBBBO

The instrumental music program has a new dedicated support organization: Ottawa Hills Band Boosters Organization a.k.a. OHBBBO (pronounced “oboe” just like the instrument!). Read more about OHBBBO, view meeting dates, and get involved at ohbbo.org.



Green Bears Take the TED Stage

Ottawa Hills juniors Zacharia Rashid and John Denney brought their ideas to the local TEDx stage this spring. Zacharia presented “Machine in Music,” and John captivated the audience with “Impatient by Design: Why We Can’t Sit Through the Ninth Inning.” Congratulations to both on sharing their voices and ideas with the community.



The Romantic Era

Each year, sophomores dive into the “romantic era” under the guidance of English teachers Karen Fischer and Sara Eisenbaum, exploring the nature-obsessed verses of William Wordsworth and Emily Dickinson alongside the darker, supernatural worlds of Edgar Allan Poe and Mary Shelley. The unit culminates in Romantic Idol, a beloved tradition, started two decades ago by former teacher James Kincaid, that sends student performers to the stage in front of the entire student body.

This year’s finalists, Nickel Fineske, Miles Wharry, Owen Christen, Evelyn Sandretto, Sofia Elfituri, Audrey Kelm, Natalie Nixon, and Ruth Mezo brought raw emotion and imagination to every performance. Congratulations to Miles, crowned Romantic Idol 2026, with Evelyn as first runner-up and Sofia as second runner-up.



Reed Gnepper is ‘Wickedly’ talented

On April 21, Theatre Director Grace Wipfli brought a remarkable guest and former Green Bear back to Ottawa Hills for an experience students won’t soon forget. Reed Gnepper, a graduate of The Juilliard School with a Master of Music from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, led a master class for current student actors and singers, sharing knowledge, insight, and real-time coaching.

Reed spoke about his journey in the arts, highlighting his latest work as Swing on the 2026 national tour of “Wicked,” his first professional musical, and the experience that solidified his love for theatre. Reflecting on the production, he said, “Thank you to everyone who has supported me and pushed me to follow my dreams. I am filled with the utmost gratitude.”

For the student singers who participated, it was a rare opportunity to learn from someone living the life they might dream of, and a reminder of where their life’s journey may lead.



Reed backstage on “Wicked” set

A 'Year of Revivals' at Ottawa Hills Theatre

Some stories are worth telling twice. This year, Ottawa Hills Theatre embarked on an ambitious season of revivals, bringing back four beloved productions that left their mark on the Ottawa Hills stage in years past. "Little Shop of Horrors," first performed in 2010, returned in 2025. "Newsies," originally staged in 2019, came back in 2026. "Grease," last seen in 2015, took the stage again this year, as did "Rumors," which first ran in 2011. For longtime community members, the season offered a chance to relive cherished memories.

The Ottawa Hills Theatre Department's 2026 season of revivals was supported in part by a grant from the Eleanor Seifried Fund for the Performing Arts through the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation.

"Little Shop of Horrors" ensnares audience

Ottawa Hills Theatre revived its 2010 production of "Little Shop of Horrors" in November 2025, and the results were nothing short of deliciously devious. The cast brought the darkly comic tale to life with Louie Olah as Seymour, Jasmine Hajjar as Audrey, Nina Clark as Audrey 2, Sam Kapadia as Mr. Mushnik, Lizzy Hoelzle as Ronnette, Cora Walker as Crystal, Evelyn Sandretto as Chiffon, and Miles Wharry in the roles of Orin Scrivello, Mr. Bernstein, Mrs. Luce, and Skip Snip.

A small live orchestra kept the tension alive from the first note to the final curtain.

The production was directed by Grace Wipfli, with Hayley Hoss serving as Music Director and Darrin Broadway as Producer.

"Grease" is the word

Ottawa Hills Theatre returned to "Grease" for the third time in late March, bringing more than 60 students to the stage in a show packed with nostalgia, humor, and high-energy musical numbers. Tommy Hopkins led the cast as Danny, alongside Jasmine Hajjar as Sandy, Miles Wharry as Kenickie, and Nina Clark as Rizzo.



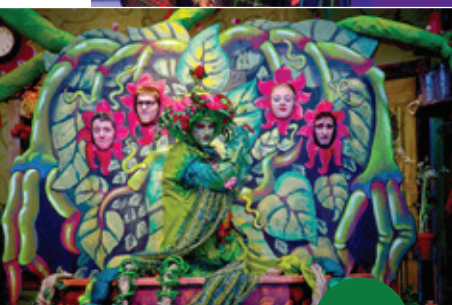
2025



2026



2010



2025 photos courtesy of The Village Voice of Ottawa Hills; 2010 photos courtesy of Kathy Clayton

2005



Left, our very own Mr. Siebenaler in the 2005 production of "Grease."

2026 photos courtesy of The Village Voice of Ottawa Hills; 2005 photo courtesy of Kathy Clayton



2026

"Newsies" seizes the day, and hearts, of the Village

Nearly 150 students from Ottawa Hills Elementary School and Ottawa Hills Junior/Senior High School took the stage in February in the Acting Out! production of Disney's "Newsies Jr." The high-energy musical, inspired by the real-life Newsboys Strike of 1899, follows a spirited group of young newsies who band together when newspaper publishers raise prices at their expense. Led by the determined Jack Kelly (Pete Vanni), the story centers on friendship, courage, and the power of young voices to make a difference. The production marked a revival of the show Ottawa Hills Theatre first staged in 2019.



2019

2019 photo courtesy of Village Voice of Ottawa Hills

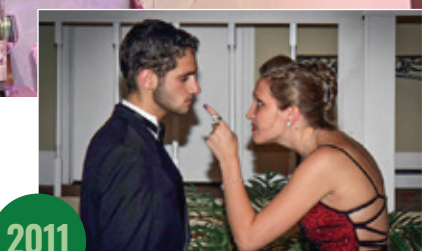


2026

Curtain calls and cover stories

The final revival of the year was "Rumors," a beloved farce returning to the Ottawa Hills stage for the first time since 2011. The plot unfolds in delightful chaos: a dinner party, a mysterious incident, and four couples desperately trying to keep a secret. The result is a relentless, laugh-out-loud ride of mistaken assumptions, frantic cover stories, and physical comedy that had the audience in stitches. In a unique twist, the audience sat on stage alongside the cast for an immersive experience that brought the chaos of the Gorman dinner party to life at close range: Louie Olah and Jasmine Hajjar as Ken and Chris Gorman, Lizzy Hoelzle and Evelyn Sandretto as Claire and Eleanor Ganz, Cora Walker and David Seigar as Cookie and Ernie Cusack, Nina Clark and Kyle Rose as Cassie and Glenn Cooper, and Sawyer Ellis and Sofia Elfituri as Officer Welch and Officer Pudney.

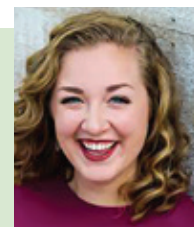
2026 photos courtesy of The Village Voice of Ottawa Hills; 2011 photo courtesy of Kathy Clayton



2011

Role Reversal

Shout out to Jr./Sr. High School Theatre Director Grace Wipfli who went from acting on the stage as a student to leading current students for the past few years.





The Bears are Heading to the Bay

Ottawa Hills has been a founding member of the TAAC since its creation in 1988, joining long-time rivals Danbury, Emmanuel Christian (then Emmanuel Baptist), Maumee Valley, and Toledo Christian to form the conference and allow its schools to compete in basketball. TAAC football followed in 1999, with Cardinal Stritch, Danbury, Ottawa Hills, Toledo Christian, and Lorain Catholic competing in the inaugural season. Throughout the years, the conference has seen schools come and go. Starting this fall, Ottawa Hills will no longer compete in the TAAC, and is instead joining the Sandusky Bay Conference (SBC).



Ryan Wronkowicz

"The move to the SBC is an exciting one for Green Bear Nation," said Athletic Director Ryan Wronkowicz. "We will reunite with some previous rivals that were opponents of ours in the TAAC. The SBC is a highly competitive conference that will

After nearly four decades in the Toledo Area Athletic Conference, the Green Bears are moving on. Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, the Green Bears will compete in the Sandusky Bay Conference.

challenge us moving forward in a variety of sports. The schools are all similar to us in size, which provides us this unique opportunity to join forces."



Of the sports the SBC sponsors, Ottawa Hills will field teams in boys and girls cross country, football, boys golf, girls volleyball, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls swimming, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track and field. The Green Bears' field hockey, boys and girls soccer, boys and girls tennis, and boys and girls lacrosse teams will compete as independents, a status unchanged for most of those programs.

The conference also offered member schools a unique opportunity this year, inviting all districts to submit designs for the new SBC logo. Jr./Sr. High School social studies teacher and girls varsity soccer coach Jessica Kozy created the winning design. The SBC commissioner announced the selection following a vote by the nine-member league's school principals and athletic directors.

SBC CONFERENCE SCHOOLS



Danbury Lakers
Danbury



Gibsonburg
Golden Bears



Lakota
Raiders



Margaretta
Polar Bears



Northwood
Rangers



Ottawa Hills
Green Bears



St. Joseph Catholic
Central Crimson Streaks



St. Mary CC
Panthers



Woodmore
Wildcats

The next play

Surrounded by family, friends, coaches, and classmates, eight Ottawa Hills senior athletes were celebrated this spring as they committed to continue their athletic and academic careers at the collegiate level. Coaches Nixon, Holly, Halpin, and Hardman spoke of the grit, determination, and character each of these student-athletes will carry with them into their college careers.

Congratulations to:

Ian Densmore, baseball,
Bluffton University

Kaed Egan, cross country/track,
Oberlin College

Freya Klaas, cross country/track,
St. Olaf College

Elsa Klaas, cross country/track,
Macalester College

Rafaela Marson, swimming
University of Toledo

Audrey Nixon, swimming,
University of Findlay

Sydney Snyder, beach volleyball,
Stephen F. Austin University

Tobi Stevens, baseball,
Terra State Community College



Once a Green Bear,
always a Green Bear.



TAAC Champs

The Green Bears saved some of their best for last. As Ottawa Hills prepares to join the Sandusky Bay Conference next year, the baseball team and both the girls and boys track and field teams sent the TAAC era out in style, each claiming a league championship title.



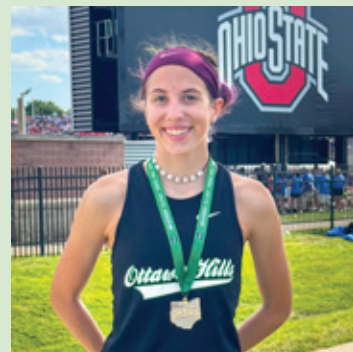
Ahead of the Pack

The Ottawa Hills girls track and field team capped a remarkable season at the state championships, finishing 5th as a team with 21 points and delivering a performance worth celebrating.

Natalie Nixon was the story of the state meet. Competing in three events, she earned state runner-up honors in both the 3200m with a time of 10:59.47 and the 1600m with a time of 5:02.94. The 4x800 relay team of Audrey Nixon, Mercy Alamina, Freya Klaas, and Natalie Nixon added to the celebration with a 4th place finish at state, crossing the line in a school record time of 9:41.21.

The state appearance was the culmination of a strong postseason run. At districts, Natalie claimed titles in both the 1600m and 3200m, and the 4x800 relay won the district championship. At regionals, Natalie won the 3200m championship and Molly Mullan earned 3rd in the same event, with both advancing to state. The 4x800 relay also advanced by finishing 3rd at regionals, and Mercy closed out the regional meet with an 8th place podium finish in the 400m.

Congratulations to the entire girls track and field program on an outstanding season!



The Ottawa Hills boys tennis team, led by head coach Dan Amato, closed out a superb season, highlighted by four state qualifiers and a postseason run that showcased the talent and character of the program.

The postseason began at sectionals, where the Green Bears made an immediate statement. Ian Marzano and Sahil Parikh claimed the doubles sectional championship, while Chris Thompson captured the singles title in an all-Ottawa Hills final against teammate Henrique Marson. All four advanced to the district tournament, where the doubles team of Ian and Sahil finished runner-up, while Chris placed third and Henrique fourth in singles. All four punched their tickets to the state championship at the Lindner Tennis Center, and the team fell just one victory shy of joining them as a team in the state team tournament.

At the state championships, Chris fell 6-0, 6-2 in the first round of singles competition. Henrique had a stronger run, advancing to the quarterfinals before falling 6-2, 6-0. The doubles team of Ian and Sahil fell 6-2, 6-1 to Columbus Academy in the first round.

Congratulations to these Green Bears on an outstanding postseason run, and to the entire boys tennis program on a memorable season.

Pool to podium



Thomas Lathrop wins swim State Championship

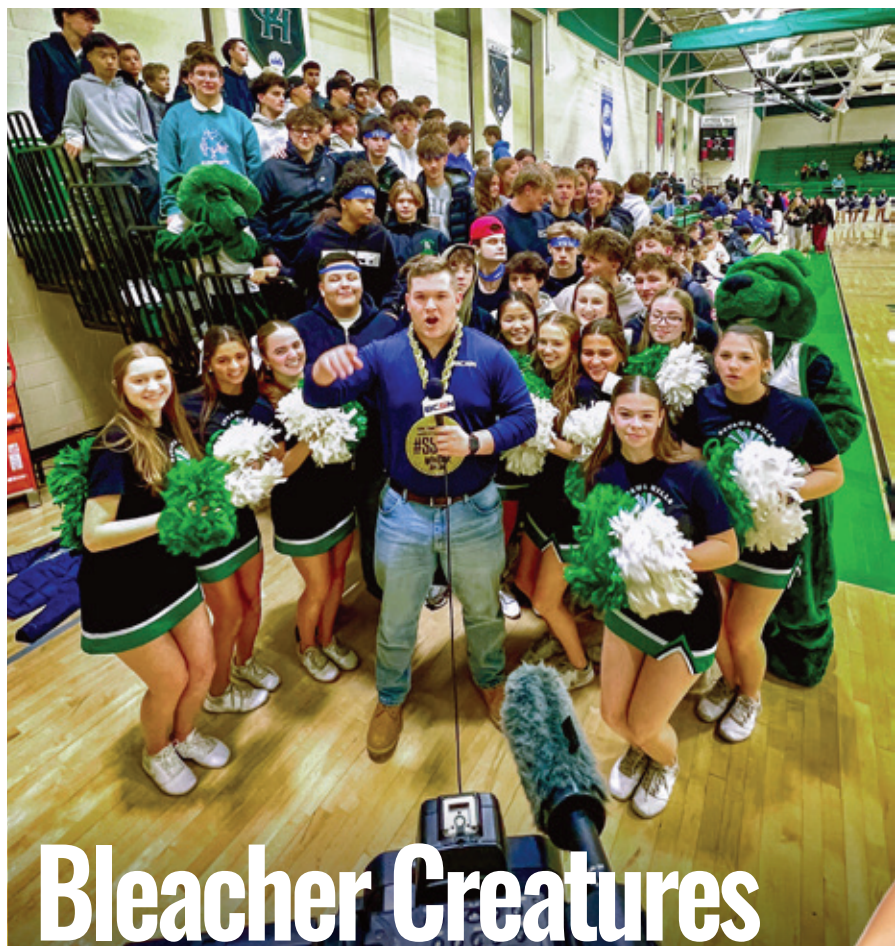
Thomas Lathrop stood atop the podium at the state swimming competition this winter, claiming the state championship in the 500-yard freestyle. He also earned state runner-up honors in the 200-yard individual medley, capping one of the most decorated individual performances in recent Green Bear swimming history.

Thomas wasn't alone on the state stage. Rafaela Marson joined him in the finals after both qualified by finishing in the top eight during prelims. Audrey Nixon finished 22nd in the 500-yard freestyle and 30th in the 200-yard freestyle. The 400-yard freestyle relay team of Audrey, Rafaela, Mary Lathrop, and Ella Majerski finished 20th. Divers Jack Johnson and Camille Weaver both placed 28th in their respective events.



Net gains: A district title

The Ottawa Hills girls basketball team delivered a standout 2025-26 season finishing 17-9 overall and tying Toledo Christian for the TAAC title. The Green Bears carried their regular season momentum into the postseason, claiming the district championship before falling in the regional semifinals. It was a season defined by determination, growth, and a competitive spirit.



Bleacher Creatures

Sportscaster Caleb Spinner presented Ottawa Hills High School with the BCSN Student Section of the Week Award during a home basketball game against Maumee Valley Country Day School.



3rd Boys



6th Girls



6th Boys

Little bears, big champions

The future of Green Bear athletics is looking bright. This season, approximately 185 Ottawa Hills youth basketball players took to the courts, and several teams made their mark in the TAAC. Three teams brought home championships: the 3rd-grade Boys White Team claimed the Boys Division title, the 6th-grade Girls Team won the Girls Division crown, and the 6th-grade Boys Green Team captured the Boys Division championship. The 3rd-grade Boys Green Team and 5th-grade Boys Team both earned runner-up honors in their respective divisions.



While our junior/senior high athletic programs are heading to the Sandusky Bay Conference, the youth recreation programs will continue competing in the TAAC and other local recreation leagues, keeping those rivalries and traditions alive for the Villages' youngest Green Bears. These programs are operated through the Office of Village Life, a recreation office within the Village of Ottawa Hills administration.

Follow the action

If you're not following Green Bear Athletics on social media, you are missing out! Athletic Director Ryan Wronkowitz also posts a Weekly Schedule of athletic contests every Sunday on these social accounts.



@ohls_greenbears

@Ottawa Hills Green Bears

@Ottawa Hills Green Bears

Skiver breaks 24-year-old scoring record

Kendell Skiver is having a season Ottawa Hills won't forget. The 10th-grader broke the school's single-game scoring record earlier this winter, pouring in 42 points during the Green Bears' 69-42 victory over Cardinal Stritch. The previous mark of 41 points had belonged to Lauren Kruse ('03).

It wasn't just the points. Kendell added 8 assists, 9 steals, and 10 blocked shots that night, and after the game credited her teammates for making the record possible. Coach Tim Lambert agreed. "Kendell's performance was special, but what stood out most was her unselfishness and how well her teammates played together," he said. "Records like this don't happen without trust, effort, and great team basketball."

Weeks later, Kendell added another chapter, scoring her 1,000th career point as a sophomore during a 54-34 victory over Maumee Valley, and broke her own single scoring game record with 43 points! She earned a standing ovation and a place in an elite group of Green Bear scorers.

42
POINTS!



The varsity softball team had an early winning streak and finished the season strong.

Class of 2026 Commencement



On May 29, a day filled with pride, possibility and sunshine, the Ottawa Hills Class of 2026 gathered for commencement.





Quinton Smith



Sahil Parikh



Nina Clark



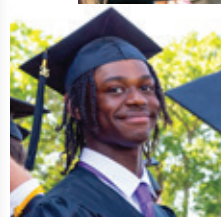
Following Principal McMurray's address to the graduates, Quinton Smith, headed to the University of Pennsylvania this fall, encouraged his classmates to lean into life's most uncomfortable moments, reminding them that it is often there that the deepest meaning is found.

Sahil Parikh, bound for the University of Southern California, urged his fellow graduates to follow a path aligned with their values and to carry their ideals for the world with them wherever they go.

Nina Clark, who will attend Columbia University, encouraged her peers to embrace the unknown rather than search for immediate answers. It is in the unplanned moments, she said, that we discover our most authentic selves.

Nicolo DiPasquale, this year's Italian exchange student, drew warmth and laughter comparing his small village in Italy to the Village of Ottawa Hills, expressed gratitude to his host family, the Jones family, and closed with a charge borrowed from Isaac Newton: "Stay in motion, Class of 2026!"

Senior Class President Emma Friedman closed with a meaningful announcement on behalf of her classmates: the class gift would be a donation to the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation's Green Bear GREEN SPACE Capital Campaign.



Nicolo DiPasquale





Congratulations Graduates

Anushka Norah Agarwal*
University of Glasgow

Mohamed Zeinelabdein Ahmed
University of Toledo

Isaac Ogbakike Alamina
University of Toledo

Megan Lee Allen*
Bowling Green State University

Christian S. Allos
Wayne State University

Jasper Dean Allred*
University of Toronto

Tyler Michael Anderson
Miami University

Raife Gibson Barnes
The Ohio State University

Hannah Jiun Shiuan Chow*
The Ohio State University

Nina Faye Clark*
Columbia University

Sloan Avery Clausen
University of Santa Barbara

Karis Allene Connelly*
The Ohio State University

Gracyn Hawk Connelly-Yerman*
The Ohio State University

Graydon Corns
Purdue University

Joseph Robert Davis
The Ohio State University

Ian Connor Warren Densmore
Bluffton University

Zachary Douglas DeWalt
The Ohio State University

Trace Matthew Douglas*
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill

Piper Grey Downing*
University of Michigan

Jaiden E. Dubois
Ohio University

Josef Barrett Duley*
The Ohio State University

Kaed P. Egan
Oberlin College

Adam El Sayyad
University of Toledo

Charlotte Verna Ellingson*
University of Denver

Kelan Patrick Feldbauer
Junior Achievement 5th Year
Program

Evan Douglas Frey
Bowling Green State University

Emma Rose Friedman*
University of Michigan

Finn Peter Lee Genzman*
The Ohio State University

Cole Matthew Roesti Green
University of Toledo

Zane Thomas Roesti Green
University of Toledo

Nicolas Baker Grossi
Cedarville University

Julian Hanusz*
Miami University

Ahmed Yasser Mahmoud Abbas Hassan
University of Toledo

Claire Elizabeth Hawkins*
Mercy College of Ohio

Meral E. Humaida*
University of Michigan

Gavin Joseph Jacobs
University of Toledo

Ian Nelson Jones
University of Cincinnati

Josiah Jacob Jun
University of Cincinnati

Jayden Joonwon Kang*
University of Michigan

Aiden Edward Kelm
University of Cincinnati

Elsa Abigail Klaas*
Macalester College

Freya Madeline Klaas*
St. Olaf College

Twayne Lai*
Northwestern University

Autumn Eva Lee
College of Charleston

Jeremiah Leeds
Bowling Green State University

Isabella Elena Leonardi-Wilkins*
The Ohio State University

Sharon Lim*
University of Michigan

Ayush Mahaseth
The Ohio State University

BY THE NUMBERS

1

National Merit Finalists

8

National Merit Commended Scholars

23

Summa Cum Laude Graduates

11

Magna Cum Laude Graduates

12

Cum Laude Graduates

57

Honors Diplomas

35

President's Awards for Educational Excellence

35

National Honor Society Members

81

Graduates



Addison Jeannette Marshall
University of Cincinnati

Rafaela Martinelli Marson
University of Toledo

Ian Patrick Marzano
Purdue University

Joseph James Mayer-Heckathorn
The Ohio State University

Pavlo Mykytyn
University of Toledo

Jace Parker Neuendorf*
University of Toledo

Audrey Gratia Nixon
University of Findlay

Magdalena Marie O'Brien*
University of Cincinnati

Arianna Antoinette O'Neill*
The Ohio State University

Rohan Padhye*
University of Chicago

Sahil Parikh*
University of Southern California

Maxwell Kent Peters
Miami University

Olivia Richardson
Real Estate

Tess Elizabeth Riga*
University of Toledo

Maddock James Ronald Robson
Miami University

Elliot P. Schaal
The Ohio State University

Joan Doha Seo*
University of Notre Dame

Shayaan Bin Shahnaz
The Ohio State University

Amogh Sharma
The Ohio State University

Evelyn Sophie Shimborske*
Ohio University

Azalea Siders
The Ohio State University

Sam Reynolds Skiver*
The Ohio State University

Quinton John Smith*
University of Pennsylvania

Sydney Elizabeth Snyder*
Stephen F. Austin State University

Tobias Michael Stevens
Terra State Community College

Lillian Marie Sturtz*
John Carroll University

Jonathan Sun
Transition

Bryn Elizabeth Tangeman
University of Dayton

Emily Clare Timmerman*
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Cora Elizabeth Urfer
University of Mississippi

Sophia Lee VanSlooten
Owens Community College

Julia Sophia Vicente
Miami University

Olivia Grace Wireman
The Ohio State University

*National Honor Society Member



Value of
Scholarships Awarded
\$12.5 million





A Recognition of Excellence

Every spring, Ottawa Hills High School celebrates student achievement at an Honors Assembly. With input from faculty and administrators, deserving students are recognized for their accomplishments in the classroom, in the community, and on athletic fields. Many of these awards and scholarships were created to honor alumni, Village residents, and remarkable teachers.

To honor the individuals and groups who established these awards, *Around These Hills* presents the 2026 recipients of those awards and scholarships.

Connections Award

The Ottawa Hills Connection Award is named for the Connections Window that is installed above the front entrance of the high school building, a gift of the Ottawa Hills High School Class of 1959. The window was created by OHHS Alumna Emily Finkel (Class of 2000), designed by current students, and facilitated by high school art teacher, Steven Tozer Wipfli. It serves as a tribute from the Class of 1959 to the synthesis of their experiences; the high expectations, the richness of the curriculum, the close-knit, supportive community and the ultimate connections they have made to the world since their graduation. This award also honors the creative spirit and the many contributions made to our school and community by Mr. Steven Tozer Wipfli. The award honors a student who, throughout his or her high school career, has reflected the characteristics for which Steve has been valued: elevating subjects and experiences beyond the ordinary; promoting the value of arts experiences as part of the education of the whole person; using creativity to enhance learning and the school culture; welcoming collaboration, at school and beyond; engaging personally in learning and experiences; and intuiting connections.

Charlotte Ellingson

Jon S. Davis Striving to Achieve Scholarship

This monetary award is intended to recognize, nurture and encourage hard work, perseverance, sound judgment and a strong moral compass in students so they can improve their own lives and also serve to improve the lives of others. The honored recipient may have (i) shown unusual inner strength in striving for a goal while overcoming obstacles (personal or otherwise) or (ii) may have upheld a moral or ethical position when it was difficult or unpopular to do so or (iii) may have exhibited extraordinary effort for the benefit of others without any expectation of recognition or reward. Mr. Davis was a 1961 graduate of OH and president of his class. The name of the recipient of this scholarship will be engraved on a plaque that hangs in the main hall of the high school.

Pavlo Mykytyn

Georgetown University Alumni Award

This award, chosen by the social studies department, is presented in the field of social sciences to a junior or senior

recognized for intellectual curiosity and academic achievement in the social sciences; commitment to civic responsibility; the courage to question established ideas and explore new ideas; and the fortitude to accept the responsibility for initiating constructive social change.

Charlotte Ellingson

Tom Docis Phenomenal Physics Award

This award is given to commemorate the many years of dedicated service, practical wisdom, and wry humor which Tom Docis, former chemistry and physics teacher at OHHS, brought to this school, its faculty, staff, administration, and students. The award is presented to the student who best approached the study of physics as Mr. Docis did with wonder and enthusiasm. The name of the recipient is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the physics laboratory.

Zacharia Rashid

Nanci Kay Effler Visual Arts Scholarship

This award was established in 2008 in memory of Nanci Kay Effler, mother of seven Ottawa Hills' graduates, a tireless volunteer in the Ottawa Hills Schools, and an accomplished artist. This scholarship is awarded annually to the graduating senior who demonstrates passion and achievement in the world of visual arts.

Sahil Parikh

The Don Fontaine and Noreen Hanlon French Award

This award is presented to a graduating student who excels in the language and shows a genuine passion for and deep connection to French-speaking cultures. This award stands as a lasting celebration of the dedication, inspiration, and love for teaching that both Don Fontaine and Madame Hanlon have shared with generations of students.

Kaed Egan

Kristjan Gislason Award

This award is given to the senior who has given unselfishly of his/her time and talents and who possesses a positive attitude for the benefit of Ottawa Hills High School. The name of the recipient is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the main hall of the high school. The award

was started by Kristjan's father for the family's deep appreciation for the school's friendship to his son when he was an AFS student from Iceland from 1973-74.

Quinton Smith

Turnaround Award

The Turnaround Award for Self-Improvement was established in the Spring of 2022 with the help of an Ottawa Hills alumnus. The award recognizes a student who has persevered or turned his/her life around for the better. The recipient will receive a \$100 gift certificate from the sponsor and have his/her name on a plaque in the main hallway.

Evan Frey

Steve Gordon Memorial Scholarship

This award was established in memory of Steve Gordon, a 1957 graduate of Ottawa Hills High School. This scholarship is awarded to a senior who possesses oral and written acuity, eclectic and intense exploration of the literary genre, stylistic sophistication, and intellectual curiosity.

Meral Humaida

Archie Griffin Sportsmanship Award

This award, named for two-time Heisman Trophy winner Archie Griffin, is presented each year to a male and female student who have been outstanding in their efforts to promote sportsmanship in their school and community. The Athletic Director chooses this award.

Jaiden Dubois Bryn Tangeman

Brian Nicholas Hoefflinger Memorial Award

This award was established in 2019 in the memory of Brian Hoefflinger. This scholarship is given to a senior who best exemplifies the characteristics of Brian: strong work ethic, academic excellence, optimism, kindness and quirky sense of humor. This award is presented to a graduate who leads by example rather than by recognition, is well liked and respected by peers, and strives to achieve academic excellence.

Jasper Allred Josef Duley

Mark James Ganoom ('77) Memorial Scholarship for Literature

Mark Ganoom, a proud member of the Class of 1977, was a lifelong lover of literature with a passion for timeless classics. The Mark James Ganoom Memorial Scholarship honors his devotion to reading and belief in literature's transformative power. This award is granted to a high school senior who demonstrates a deep love for classic literature, intellectual curiosity, and commitment to learning. The recipient should reflect the qualities Mark valued most: independence, curiosity, versatility, and genuine appreciation for the written word.

Rohan Padhye

Broadcast Student of the Year

Brody Martinez

Nancy and Tom Kabat Scholarship

This monetary award is presented to a graduating senior who is known to be an uplifting person, who makes a positive contribution to his or her class, and is well respected by fellow classmates. The honored senior demonstrates leadership, a good work ethic, high academic achievement, and community and school volunteer service. This award was established in 2003.

Adam El Sayyad

Karen Klein Music Award

Karen Klein, a member of the Class of 1958, was a talented soprano in the Ottawa Hills High School choir. She died shortly after a rehearsal, preparing for the annual spring concert. She is fondly remembered for her leadership, character, and musicianship. The name of the recipient is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the music room.

Emma Friedman

David M. Larabee Memorial Scholarship

This award was established in 2008 in memory of David M. Larabee, mathematics and science teacher at Ottawa Hills. This scholarship is presented to a graduating senior who demonstrates a passion for learning and

talent in mathematics, science, and/or conservation related fields. Special consideration will be given to a student who also demonstrates an interest in the fine arts and represents the qualities of Dave Larabee as a "Renaissance person."

Rohan Padhye

Chad Layne Foreign Language Award

This award is presented to the senior who exhibits a unique appreciation of foreign language study and has excelled in both French and Spanish. The recipient demonstrates an outstanding curiosity, enthusiasm, and diligence for the languages.

Charlotte Ellingson

The Lori Warner Levy Memorial Award

This award was established in 1999 in memory of Lori Warner Levy, who was an intensely creative businesswoman and mother, an accomplished musician, and diligence for the languages. This award honors a graduating senior for outstanding creativity in the fine and performing arts.

Sahil Parikh

Phillip W. Longenecker Science Award

This award is selected by the science department and presented to a senior excelling in the field of science. The name of the recipient is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the main hall of the high school. Longenecker graduated in 1947.

Quinton Smith

The National Choral Award

This award is selected by the vocal music teacher and is presented to the senior who has been a member of the high school concert choir for at least one year and has had at least three years of experience in the Choraliers. The name of the recipient is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the main hall of the high school.

Karis Connelly

OHSAA Award of Excellence

A student who has exhibited qualities that embody good citizenship, good moral character, and good sporting behavior.

Joseph Davis Freya Klaas

OHSAA Scholar Athlete Award

Awarded to a student athlete with high academic excellence.

Quinton Smith

The Ottawa Hills Education Association Scholarship

The OEA award was established in memory of elementary school teacher, Bob George. This scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior who clearly articulates his or her calling toward the teaching profession and demonstrates an appreciation for life-long learning.

Sydney Snyder

James Petas Girls Lacrosse Scholarship Award

This award is a financial scholarship given to the senior lacrosse player who best exemplifies dedication, enthusiasm, a diligent work ethic, self-improvement, and an overall positive attitude both on and off the field.

Bryn Tangeman

Principal's Choice

This award is presented to a graduating senior who exhibits achievement and effort in his/her academic pursuits, is a good citizen of the school and community, has profoundly impacted the school climate and is respected and appreciated by his/her peers and teachers.

Emma Friedman

The Dion Raftopoulos Award

This award is a music-based scholarship granted annually to the college-bound graduating senior who most represents the lofty ideals of musical accomplishment, scholarly attainment, and moral integrity as exemplified by the life of Dion Raftopoulos.

Sahil Parikh

The Kathryn H. Saxby Memorial Award

This award is awarded to a graduating senior based on the following criteria: academic excellence, GPA, class rank, SAT/ACT scores, a demonstrated interest in music, involvement in school activities, and community and school volunteer service.

Twayne Lai

Robert Repp Social Studies Scholarship Award

This award, honoring the professional career of Mr. Bob Repp, is awarded annually to a senior who understands the qualities of a good citizen, has excelled over four years in the social studies, and plans to continue those studies on the college level. The recipient should show the potential to actively pursue leadership roles in American society. Members of the Ottawa Hills Social Studies Department provide this financial award.

Nina Clark

The John Phillip Sousa Band Award

This award is selected by the instrumental music teacher and is awarded to the outstanding senior band person. The name of the recipient is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the main hall of the high school.

Sahil Parikh

Peggy Thomas Memorial Award

This award is a financial scholarship given to the senior who best exemplifies the characteristics of Peggy: affability, happiness, enthusiasm for life, as well as being an individual who puts forth a determined effort toward his/her schoolwork.

Gracy Connelly

Toledo Spain Award

This award is presented to an advanced Spanish senior who has demonstrated outstanding proficiency in the language and knowledge about the Spanish-speaking people. The name of the recipient is engraved on a plaque that hangs in the main hall of the high school.

Amogh Sharma

The Ross Treuhaft Memorial Scholarship

This award was established in 2012, with contributions from the Treuhaft family, in memory of Ross Treuhaft an energetic, enthusiastic, and compassionate person with a great sense of humor. This award honors a graduating senior who exhibits some or all of the following: welcomes diversity; understands and has compassion towards students with special needs, students who are different from the norm; has an interest in special education; demonstrates a desire to include others different from themselves; possesses kindness and joy.

Elliot Schaal

Donna Tozer Wipfli Choraliers Award

This award, established in 2020, is given annually to a graduating Choralier member who aspires to the passions and artistic goals of Donna Tozer Wipfli, Ottawa Hills Elementary and Junior/Senior High School Vocal Music teacher from 1990-2020. This scholarship award is chosen and managed by the vocal music teacher and the recipient's name will be engraved on a plaque displayed in the music room.

Nina Clark

Mayor Jean Youngen Leadership Award

The candidate selected for this honor exemplifies the traits of Mayor Jean Youngen, former Mayor of Ottawa Hills. The recipient has shown a history of interest in issues to improve the quality of life in our community and specific examples of action related to these areas of interest. Like Mayor Youngen, they have "walked the walk." The honoree has also displayed an ability to engage a cross section of our student body and greater community. Above all, the award winner has displayed the courage to advance points of view that may not always be widely accepted and has done so with positive energy, tact, and enthusiasm.

Twayne Lai

Outstanding Male Athlete Julian Hanusz

Outstanding Female Athlete Rafaela Marson

Arrowhead Leadership and Innovative Journalism Award

Jack Siders

Mesasa Editor-in-Chief Megan Allen

Mesasa Artistic Editor Bryn Tangeman

Mesasa Photo Editor Magdalena O'Brien

I Make a Difference

The I Make a Difference event honors teachers who play a significant role in a scholar's academic success. Two of the top scholars in the graduating class are selected to nominate a teacher. Students and teachers are honored at a recognition ceremony hosted by the Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West.

Twayne Lai Quinton Smith

Courageous Athlete

A student who has been involved in or supportive of, the interscholastic athletic program, and who deserves recognition for courage.

Sloan Clausen

Sean Mercer Girls' Basketball Sportsmanship Award

This award is presented to a member of the girls basketball team who has demonstrated the following: hard work on and off the court, dedication and commitment to team, mentored younger players, showed respect to players, coaches, referees, fans, and opponents, given back to the community, participated in girls basketball at Ottawa Hills for multiple seasons

Brodi Kale

John Buckey Scholarship

This award gives special consideration to a scholar athlete who demonstrates leadership with a strong moral compass, exemplifying the power of community, hard work, and unwavering dedication to one's interests and passions. This student is supportive of one's peers, setting a positive example with humility, respect, and an easy-going nature.

Jaiden Dubois

Tyler Thompson Memorial Scholarship for Leadership

Tyler Thompson, a proud member of the Class of 2007, demonstrated keen interest in governmental affairs, community engagement, and business. Known for his strong work ethic, great sense of humor, and willingness to step outside his comfort zone, Tyler was an active student body participant and dedicated Choraliers member. He also achieved the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout, contributing countless hours to positively impact his community.

Finn Genzman

FOUNDATION LETTER

Reaching unprecedented milestones

As we look toward the future of the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation, we pause to celebrate a remarkable chapter of leadership and vision. We extend our deepest gratitude to Judd Silverman as he concludes his tenure as Board Chairman.

Judd's time at the helm has been defined by a steady hand, a generous heart, and an unwavering commitment to our community. Under his leadership, the Foundation reached unprecedented milestones, most notably the ambitious Green Bear GREEN SPACE campaign, ensuring our Village remains a premier place for children to grow, learn, and play. While he is stepping down as Board Chairman, we are incredibly fortunate that Judd will continue to serve as Past-Chairman, providing the wisdom and continuity that have become hallmarks of his service.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to welcome Austin Irving ('02) as our incoming Board Chairman. As an alumnus, Austin brings a deep-rooted passion for the Village and a fresh perspective for the next generation of Green Bears. This seamless transition is a testament to the collaborative spirit of our Board. Please join us in thanking Judd for his transformative leadership and welcoming Austin as we continue our mission to enhance excellence across our schools.

With heartfelt gratitude,
Erica Silk
Director of Development, OHLS



Austin Irving ('02) is chairman of the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation.



Judd Silverman ('74) is past chairman of the Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation.



Erica (Gatchel) Silk ('89) is Director of Development, Ottawa Hills Local Schools.

A Village Invested

Green Bear GREEN SPACE Capital Campaign surpasses \$1.75 million

The Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation is proud to announce that the Green Bear GREEN SPACE Capital Campaign has surpassed its \$1.75 million fundraising goal, thanks to the generous support of Green Bears near and far. This community-driven effort will deliver lasting benefits to students and Village residents alike: a new all-inclusive elementary playground, essential updates to the youth and varsity softball athletic fields, and nearly 11 acres of new greenspace with the completion of White Field.

THANK YOU!

What makes this campaign particularly special is who made it possible. This campaign welcomed more first-time and individual donors than any campaign in the Foundation's history, a testament to the breadth and generosity of this community.

The Foundation would like to give special thanks to Clare and Richard Hylant, Lauren and Bruce Douglas, Jackie and Bubba Berenzweig, and Meredith and Kevin Friedman for their generous leadership and support. Many thanks to the Ottawa Hills Schools Parent Association and the OH Athletics Boosters for their early substantial support that kickstarted the campaign. OHSPA's additional contribution and Cub Scout Pack 27's walk-a-thon helped the campaign reach its full fundraising goal. This has been a true community effort, and every gift, of every size, made it possible.

We are grateful for the work put into these projects by honorary chairs Clare and Richard Hylant, chairs Lauren and Bruce Douglas, and the full committee: Jackie Berenzweig ('93), Willis Day ('73), Anjali Gupta ('99), Kim Grimm, George Lathrop, Julie MacMillan, Katelyn and Dan Murtaugh, Stephanie Pilgrim, Erica Silk ('89), Tom Siloy, Judd Silverman ('74), Alex Stancati, Marc Thompson, and Tenly Yark ('04).

We extend additional gratitude to the playground committee members for their tireless efforts in designing this incredible all-inclusive playground.

Expanding Our Green Space

Charley's Playground

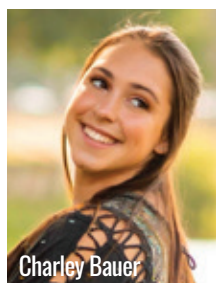
The centerpiece of the Green Bear GREEN SPACE Capital Campaign is Charley's Playground, a state-of-the-art, all-inclusive elementary playground that will serve every child in the Village as a place to play, learn, and grow together.

Charley's Playground will serve as an official National Demonstration Site for All-Inclusive Playgrounds, a distinction that reflects the intentionality behind every piece of equipment and its placement. Designed to serve students of all abilities, every element



of the playground serves a clear, holistic purpose. It is not simply a playground. It is a place where every child belongs.

The playground will be named in honor of Charley Bauer, daughter of former Ottawa Hills Elementary Principal Jeremy ('93) and Alyssa ('96) Bauer. Charley passed away in February 2025 at the age of 21, after a courageous battle with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. This playground, named in her honor, will bring the same joy and love of life to our community's children that Charley brought to so many.



Charley Bauer

Construction is expected to begin near the end of summer and be completed within the first few weeks of the 2026-27 school year.

Youth Athletic Fields and Softball Field

These approximately 10 acres of foundational fields for Ottawa Hills athletics will receive modern updates to improve safety and functionality. These field renovations are expected to be completed this fall.



White Field

Just one mile from Geresy Field, White Field adds approximately 11 acres of multipurpose greenspace to meet the current and future needs of our community. The complex features one full-sized lacrosse field, two full-sized soccer fields, restroom and storage facilities, lighted parking, and comprehensive irrigation and drainage systems.

This project is also a true public-private partnership. The Village of Ottawa Hills has committed an additional \$500,000 investment alongside the Foundation, a reflection of a shared vision for the future of this community and a testament to what Green Bears can accomplish when they work together.



A Note of Gratitude

The Ottawa Hills Schools Foundation is deeply grateful to every donor who supported the Green Bear GREEN SPACE Capital Campaign. On the following pages, you will find the full honor roll of community supporters whose contributions made this campaign possible, including those who left their mark by purchasing a butterfly for the new Butterfly Garden.



Shelly Jamieson

The Butterfly Garden continues to inspire giving beyond the campaign. A heartfelt community effort called "Butterflies for Shelly" is currently underway in memory of a beloved mother, wife, friend, and Village resident, Shelly Jamieson. Donors contributing in her honor will be recognized in our next issue of *Around These Hills*, coming this winter.

Let Your Support Soar with the Green Bear Green Space Capital Campaign

The Foundation welcomes anyone who would still like to be part of this historic campaign. Let your support soar by purchasing a butterfly at the new Butterfly Garden, formerly the Land Lab near the kindergarten playground, available at three giving levels with recognition included. Join your fellow Green Bears in leaving a lasting mark on this community by July 15. The more we raise, the more we can do.



Thank you

Donors, for helping us reach our campaign goal!

GREEN BEAR GREEN SPACE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

(Donors as of June 1)

LEADERSHIP

(\$100,000 and above)

Amie and John Barone
Clare and Richard Hylant
The Swigart Family
White Family Dealerships

VALEDICTORIAN

(\$75,000 and above)

The Berenzweig Family
Meredith and Kevin Friedman
Ottawa Hills Schools Parent Association

SALUTATORIAN

(\$50,000 and above)

The Backoff Family: Tom, Kate, Brad, Jennie, and Leslie
Ottawa Hills Athletic Boosters
Linda and Kevin Gilmore

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

(\$25,000 and above)

The Arnos Family
Chrissy and Brian Deiger
The Denny Family
The Douglas Family
Effler Schmitt Co. / Valle Homes
The Frankel Family
Mary and Jim Geiger
The Grimm Family
The Lewis Family
Christina and Ian Katz
KeyBank National Association
Trustee for the Walter E. Terhune Memorial Fund
Kym and Craig Lemieux
Molly and Geof Meyers
The Pilgrim Family
The Shall Family
The Staelin Family

The Stone Family: Spencer, Christy, Sophia, and Sarah
Waterford Bank, N.A.
Heidi and David Waterman
Tenley and Billy Yark
Emily and D.J. Yark

DISTINGUISHED HONOR ROLL

(\$10,000 and above)

Anna and Michael Bennett
Sam Carson
Stacy and Steve Cochran
Judy and Jeff Cohen
Claudia and John Day
Mandy and Willis Day
The Estes Family
Marci and Matt Frey
Mary and Emery Geosits
Wendy and Troy Greeley
Jen and Bill Kielczewski
The Lathrop Family
Peggy and John Lewis
Jung Sun and Rick Miller
Mark Mockensturm and Rob Salem

Pixie and Phil Noble
Alta Richter and Marc Thompson
Laura and Bill Rudolph
Jenny and Todd Seifried
Bob Shopneck
Signature Bank, N.A.
Jenni and Denny Tucker
Amanda and Frank Viviano

FOUNDERS

(\$5,000 and above)

Sharon and Paul Abendroth
Carol and Ed Bardi
Betsy and Tom Brady
The Buckley Family: Bill, Jean, Mike, Jamie and Kate
Amy Culler and Family
Jennifer and Jamie Diehl, Design Classics LLC
The Gagacki Family
The DiGeronimo Family
Amy and Daniel Gehling
Paul Goldner
The Hammerling Family
Becky and Tom Hauck

The Huntington National Bank
Tina and Mike Hylant
The Irving Family
Dee and Zac Isaac
Sara and David Jamieson
The Kripke Family
Julie, Whitney and Jeff MacMillan
Megan and Tyler McKean
The McKenney Family
Megan Meinerding and Jonathan Downing
Jenny and Steve Mitchell
Katelyn and Daniel Murtagh
Stephanie and Daniel Murtagh, Sr
Katherine and David O'Connell
Susie Poll
Brooke and Marcus Rasmus
The Rost Family
Mary and Steve Saddemi
The Silk Family
Lisa and Judd Silverman
Kathi and Granger Souder
Alex and Andy Stancati
The Stancati Family
Dr. Michelle and Nathan Walker
The Zimmelman Family

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION

(\$1,000 and above)

The Allos Family
The Andrews Family
Anonymous
Teddy & Ford Ansberg
The Algendy-Khalil Family
The Bauer Family: Jeremy, Alyssa, Charley, and Jack
Karen and R. L. Berry
Shannon and Corey Blaz
The Brandstatter Family
Jenny and Rick Brunner
Robin and Keith Buckey
The Burzynski Family
Christina and Tyler Carmony
Jeni and Dave Carter
The Cho Family
Leo Clark
Class of 1970
Class of 1975
Class of 2025
Class of 2026
Class of 2032

Charles "Dewey" Cole
Pam and Brent Cousino
Cub Scout Pack 27
The Dale Family
Karla Dixon and Josh Powell
Mitchell Dixon
Ally and Rich Effler
Katie and Josh Essel
Dorothy and Rex Figy
The Filipiak Family
Amy and Craig Findley
The Fineske Family
Maara Fink and Chris Hamilton
Coulson Freeman
Barbara and Bob Gatchel
The Gillmor/McNulty Family
The Gonzalez Family
Anjali and Anil Gupta
Manju and Kul Gupta
Ina and Jared Hamilton
Noreen Hanlon and Ben McMurray
The Hart Family
Kris and Paul Hertlein
Megan and Tom Hopkins
Lacey and Mike Jacobs
Casey and Joel Jerger
Michelle and Craig Joseph
The Kelm Family
The Kemper Family
Susan and Mark Kruse
Lucy Lambert
Susan and Tom Lewis
Rachel and Will Lewis
Little Green Bear Ball Committee
The McCullough Family
The Melching Family
Laura and JP Moran
Erika and Mark Naddaf
OH Family Club
The Packo Family
Julie and Marc Paulenich
Don Pennell
Sarah and Jack Puffenberger and Family
The Raberding Family
The Rizk Family
The Robson Family
The Roemer Family
Keele and Chris Sanford
The Siloy Family
Spengler Nathanson PLL, Attorneys at Law

Brittany and Michael Stancati
Joyce and John Stengle
The Strigle Family
Katharine Talbott and Family
Heather and Lamont Thurston
Sarah and Andrew Traber
Margo Trumbull
The Wilson Family
Amy and Bill Wolff
Web and Nellie Yark
The Zimmerman Family

ADDITIONAL GIFTS

Anonymous
Sandy and Jim Brown
Class of '65
Class of '70
Clearview Tinting
The Cunningham Family
Susan and Aaron Eidenier
The Gnepper Family
Ashley Hartman
F.K. Joe Holtzman
Neerja and Steve Jindal
The Kight Family
Joanne Kim
The Kozak Family
The Marcus Family
Amanda Martin
Larry Mindel
Peter Steinberg
Rory Taylor
Julie Walter
The Weaver Family
Sheri and Doug Wilkins
The Zook Family

HARDMAN FIELD

Renovations will begin
September 2026.

LEADERSHIP

(\$100,000 and above)

Trompeter Family Foundation

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

(\$25,000 and above)

Cary Cooper
Sofia and Peter Westmeyer
Susan and David VanHooser

DISTINGUISHED HONOR ROLL

(\$10,000 and above)

Sarah and DJ Effler
Kimberly and Ryan Grimm

FOUNDERS

(\$5,000 and above)

Amy and Peter Kadens
Jeanie and Chris Hardman
The Stancati Family

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION

(\$1,000 and above)

Niki and Jon Frankel
Mary and Jim Geiger

2025 ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

LEADERSHIP

(\$100,000 and above)

Alta Richter, Marc Thompson, Tess
Thompson ('09) in memory of
Tyler Thompson ('07)

SUMMA CUM LAUDE

(\$25,000 and above)

Christine and Larry Spetka

DISTINGUISHED HONOR ROLL

(\$10,000 and above)

Michael and Anna Bennett
Jack Brunner ('98)
Kim and Tony Heldreth
Jenny and Todd ('85) Seifried

FOUNDERS

(\$5,000 and above)

Brooke Brown and Adam Levine
DJ ('96) and Sarah Effler
Paul ('64)
Mickey and Steve ('66) Swigart

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION

(\$1,000 and above)

Carol and Ed Bardi
Betsy ('64) and Tom Brady
The Buckley Family: Bill, Jean,
Mike, Jamie, and Kate
Sam Carson, Jr. ('68)

Class of 2024
Charles "Dewey" ('70) Cole
Dora Crowther, in memory of Mark
Ganoom ('77)
Ally and Rich ('00) Effler
Amy and Craig Findley
Heide and James ('62) Klein
Susan and Mark Kruse
Elizabeth Lang ('97)
Kym and Craig ('77) Lemieux
Delia and John ('72) Longthorne
Sarah McHugh
James Medill ('61)
Larry Mindel ('55)
Penny Rogers - Geresy
Law firm of Spengler Nathanson
Val Wiley

ADDITIONAL GIFTS

Beth Askins
James ('51) and Diane Bailey
Timothy Bosserman ('10)
Robin and Michael Brooks
Class of 1970
Richard Cohen ('61)
Ronald Cooperman ('61)
Carolyn Duncan Crow ('59)
Kathy Darlington
Joan Black Davidson
Annabel ('66) and Bruce DeBoer
Carolyn Duncan ('59)
The Ellingson Family
Maara Fink and Chris Hamilton
Mary ('79) and Jim ('79) Geiger
Joan Haigh ('49)
Shirley Hancock
Julie Hanley
Mitzi and Mark Harris
Patricia Harris
Cathleen Heidelberg

Betty and Raymond Heitger
Marge and Steve Haigh
Ann and Ken Hileman
F.K. Joe Holtzman ('59)
Darrel Howard
Mary Kate Hunyor
Karen Kale
Barbara Larsen ('65)
Elizabeth Lehto
The Ross and Kelly (Effler)
Longthorne Family
Kathy Magliochetti
Jay ('58) McGiveran
Karen Merrels
Kathryn and Jon ('74) Miller
Kimberly MacLean Ramey ('77)
Beverly J. Newcomer
Nancy Nicholson
Norm Niedermeier
Stephen Northcraft ('70)
Ann Peterson
Robert Reichert ('63)
Linda Rubino
Thomas E. Seiple ('63)
Aaron and Nicole Shetterly
James and Erica ('89) Silk
Kay Silk
Rana and Adam Smidi
Spartan Chemical Company, Inc
Penny ('64) and Steve ('63) Staelin
Brittany ('01) and Michael ('03)
Stancati
Russell Tibbetts ('72)
Elizabeth and Arthur Washtock
Bebe and Lee Wesselmann
Susan Wiland
Susan and Gary Wilson
Jan and Mike Wilcox
Barbara and James Yavorcik

Mary and William Jenks
The Jenks Family
Shelley and Burt Jamieson
Anne and Jeffrey Bauer
Jenny and Rick Brunner
Becky and Tom Hauck
Lisa and Judd Silverman
The Talbott Family: Katharine,
Truman, Harley, and Archie
Merideth and Mark Wagoner

ADDITIONAL GIFTS

Sandy and Jim Brown
Jean and Bill Buckley
Sarah and Jack Puffenberger
and Family
Susan and Frederic Purtill
Sara and John Roemer
Andrew Shibley
Cathy and Vincent Vanni
Cindy and Bill Beans
Sue and Aaron Eidenier
Banhi and Andrew Gallegos
Cory Kampfer
Peter Lenz
Steven Markowicz
Yael and Daniel Markowicz
Patricia Wesolowski

BUTTERFLY GARDEN

The Bishop Family
The Broderick Family
The Calhoun Family
The Carmony Sisters
Class of 2032
Class of 2035
Cub Scout Pack 27
The Deiger Family
The DiGeronimo
Family
Johnathan Douglas
Peter Douglas
The Gagacki Kids
Nil Gallagher
Girl Scout Troop 1380
Girl Scout Troop 1581
Girl Scout Troop 1694
Gilbert Gonzalez
Oscar Gonzalez
The Gonzalez Family
Luke Grimm
Jay Gupta
Maya Gupta
Meera Gupta
Oaks O'Connell

Priya Gupta
Reena Gupta
Solstice O'Connell
Sunny Gupta
Noreen Hanlon and
Ben McMurray
The Ireland Family
The Irving Family
The Scott Family
Josephine Johnson
Lillian Johnson
Sebastian Johnson
The Jones Family
Aiden Kelm
Audrey Kelm
Fitz Kemper
Jack Kemper
Lucy Killam
The Knapp Family
Dean Lavoy
Sam Lavoy
Eleanor Murtagh
Henry Murtagh
Jack Murtagh
The Newcomer Family

Gavin O'Neill
Grace O'Neill
Nana & Papa O'Neill
The Olah Family
Raegan Reed
Skylar Reed
Hazel Rossi
Makenna Rossi
The Rossi Family
Henry Rost
Penelope Rost
Sophia Rost
The Silk Family
Duke Stancati
Leo Stancati
Stella Stancati
Paloma Viviano
Rocco Viviano
Sabine Viviano
Nellie Yark
Web Yark
in memory
Hanaa Zidan

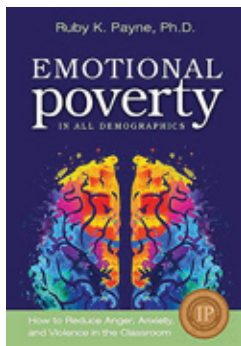
Granted!

The Foundation has granted over 30 experiences this school year. Below is a snapshot of the impact some of those grants have made.

Over the next few pages, you'll discover how donor generosity transforms learning at Ottawa Hills. Each highlighted project received funding directly from the named funds listed on the previous page. These grants create exceptional educational experiences beyond what traditional school budgets can support. Anyone can contribute to these funds, helping to sustain and expand these opportunities for our students.

Well read, well prepared FUND: Heldreth Family Fund for Student Services

Following a district-wide professional development event featuring Dr. Lonny Rivera, the district expanded its professional library with copies of Dr. Ruby K. Payne's *Emotional Poverty*, Volumes 1 and 2. The targeted study approach gives teachers the tools to collaborate during team meetings, refining instructional strategies and strengthening the learning environment for all students.



Drumming up new equipment FUND: Talmage Family General Fund

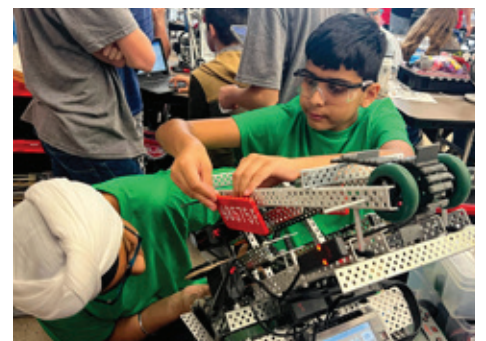
The Ottawa Hills Marching Band received updated equipment to support its musicians and protect their physical wellbeing. Four new ergonomic bass drum carriers replaced 15-year-old unpadded harnesses, reducing strain on younger players. The grant also funded rim shooters to preserve drum integrity and a heavy-duty mobile percussion cart that doubles as a trap table during performances, modernizing storage in the newly renovated music room. This grant addressed immediate equipment needs as the newly formed OHBBO continues to grow.



material accessibility. Ten-year-old 3D printers were also replaced with modern technology, ensuring equitable access to STREAM learning for every K-6 student.

Innovation gets an upgrade FUND: Bill and Anne Lathrop Fund and Annual Impact Fund

The elementary school's cross-curricular innovation hub continued to grow, serving more than 530 students annually. Grant funding supported the Greenlight cabinet system, an innovative visual labeling approach that promotes student independence by color-coding



HOSA takes a shot at state FUND: Annual Impact Fund

Now in its second year, the Ottawa Hills Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) chapter has doubled its number of state qualifiers, sending 18 students to the statewide competition in April. Competing in fields including Biomedical Debate, Forensic Medicine, and CPR/First Aid, the student-led chapter continued to grow its presence at the state level. Grant funding ensured that registration fees were not a barrier for any qualifying student.



Better tools for bigger ideas FUND: Billy Ciralsky Entrepreneurial Fund

The Jr./Sr. High School's prototyping capabilities received a significant upgrade with the replacement of 3D printers that had reached the end of their functional life. Serving approximately 160 students annually across Business, Entrepreneurship, Science Research, and Junior High STEM courses, the new equipment supports a design-test-redesign learning cycle and ensures that robotics teams, Science Olympiad competitors, and student entrepreneurs have access to industry-standard tools.



Supporting creative spaces FUND: STEM Fund

The elementary library and computer lab received organizational and instructional tools to support growing creative spaces. New Beaverbot construction tools and storage for community-donated materials helped equip students with hands-on resources that foster creativity and innovation.

Quiz Bowl State & National Championships

FUND: Annual Impact Fund

Ottawa Hills Quiz Bowl competitors traveled to the Ohio State Championships and represented the district at both Small Schools Nationals in Chicago and All High Schools Nationals in Atlanta. Grant funding covered registration fees, ensuring that qualifying students could compete at the highest levels of academic competition.



Can we kick it? Yes, we can! FUND: Dynamo Soccer Fund

The Ottawa Hills boys and girls high school and junior high soccer programs received modern shared training equipment, including portable goals and agility poles. The multi-use tools support skill development across all programs, giving coaches and athletes the resources they need to train at a higher level.



Words well-traveled FUND: Annual Impact Fund

Two Ottawa Hills students qualified for the National Speech and Debate Competition in Richmond, Virginia, competing in Speech and Extemporaneous Speaking events. Grant funding covered registration fees, allowing the district's top competitors to test their skills on a national stage.



Next level training FUND: Mindel Family Athletic Fund

The Ottawa Hills boys soccer program participated in a university-hosted summer camp focused on technical skill development and team chemistry. The collegiate setting gave players an opportunity to elevate their game and strengthen connections heading into the season.

Sustaining success FUND: Mindel Family Athletic Fund

The Ottawa Hills girls basketball program participated in a leadership and elite development initiative this summer, providing players with professional skill



instruction and competitive summer league experience. The program is designed to sustain the team's competitive success and develop players at the highest level.

Stick with it FUND: Mindel Family Athletic Fund and Annual Impact Fund

A three-day intensive summer camp brought collegiate-level coaches directly to Ottawa Hills, providing instruction and mentorship to both junior high and varsity field hockey athletes. The on-site format gave players access to high-level coaching without leaving the Village, strengthening the program from the ground up.





A 'Luvabull' Green Bear

Annaliese Erickson ('18) is living out a dream on one of the biggest stages in professional sports. The Ottawa Hills alumna just completed her third and final season as a member of the Chicago Luvabulls, the official dance team of the Chicago Bulls. After graduating from Ottawa Hills, Annaliese earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from Western Michigan University before auditioning for the Luvabulls in 2023.

Over three seasons, she performed at more than 40 games per year. "Dancing on an NBA court is an incredibly lucky experience," she said. "The amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to produce each game, getting to know all the people involved, and the friendships I made with my teammates made it so special. Coming to a city where I didn't know anyone and forming such a deep connection with Chicago through dancing at festivals and different events, Chicago feels like home now."

As she closes this chapter, Annaliese is pursuing a career in wellness and a group fitness certificate with a goal of making dance accessible to those who have never tried it or who are looking to find their way back to the art form.



Celebrating Alumni Achievement



Tickets available for purchase for the dinner and induction ceremony on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 5 p.m. Contact esilk@ohschools.org to purchase tickets and for more information.

Distinguished Alumni Award Nominees:

Betsy Ankney ('05)
Sami Aziz ('02)
Paul Goldner ('64)
Judd Silverman ('74)
Steve Steinberg ('72)

Athletic Hall of Fame Nominees:

Lauren Kruse ('03)
Rodger Owen ('58)
Judd Silverman ('74)
Terri Simoneetti ('89)
1974-75 State Championship Golf Team



"Judder" Judd Silverman

Join us!

We welcome the community to join in celebrating our alumni on Friday, September 11, at the home football game, where they will be recognized at halftime.



2008 Soccer Team Celebrates
Athletic Hall of Fame Induction

A correction and an apology

The Athletic Hall of Fame feature in the December 2025 issue of *Around These Hills* should have included Ahmed Abdel Halim ('12), Evan Brochin ('12), Jarrett Bruner ('11), David Joseph ('12), Drew Rohm-Ensing ('10), and Ian Trickey ('12) with the 2008 Boys Soccer State Championship Team. We sincerely regret the oversight. These underclassmen were all added to the roster post regular season. Their contributions to the championship win belong in the record, and we are glad to set it right here. You can view the entire corrected 2025 Distinguished Alumni Awards Program here: <https://www.ohschools.org/about-us/development/alumni>



Photo courtesy of On The Level

Gíslason featured in BMW magazine

Decades ago, Kristján Gíslason ('74) came to Ottawa Hills as an exchange student from Iceland, living with the Jenks family during his 1973-74 high school year. He left with friendships, memories, and apparently, an unquenchable sense of adventure.

Today, Gíslason is a celebrated world traveler and motorcycle adventurer, the first Icelander to complete a solo motorcycle trip around the globe, logging more than 29,825 miles through 35 countries on five continents.

According to *On The Level*, the official magazine of the BMW Riders Association, he didn't even take up motorcycling until age 56. Photography has become an equally important part of his journeys, with a particular focus on capturing the people he meets along the way. His story earned him a feature in the magazine's March/April 2026 issue, titled "The Accidental Mentor."

Upcoming Reunions

Get in Touch!



Class of 1981 (June 26-27) Contact: Julie Fruchtman at fruchieyak@yahoo.com
Class of 1976 (July 31-Aug 1) Contact: Shelley Wolson at threebears@nyc.rr.com
Class of 2001 (Aug 21-22) Contact: Brittany Stancati at thomas.brittany@gmail.com
Class of 1996 (Sept. 25-26) Pete Kadens at eden@kadensholdings.com
Class of 2006 (Sept. 25-26) Zaia Thombre at zaiathombre@gmail.com

Green Bear Nation has a robust alumni network. Share your alumni news at esilk@ohschools.org.



Ottawa Hills Local Schools

3600 Indian Road
Ottawa Hills, OH 43606

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

TOLEDO, OHIO
PERMIT #311

UPCOMINGEVENTS

PLEASE JOIN US

The district invites our community to stay connected by attending any of these upcoming school-related events.

Tickets to plays and regular season athletic events can be purchased online at www.ohschools.org/tickets

In case of schedule changes, please visit ohschools.org/calendar for the latest event information.



August

Saturday 15 – Back to School 5K

Monday 17 – Elementary Open House

Wednesday 19 – First day of school

Wednesday 19 – Jr./Sr. High School Open House

September

Monday 7 – Labor Day: No School

Friday 11 – OH Boosters BBQ

Thursday 10 – Celebrating Alumni Achievement Awards

Saturday 19 – OHSPA Fall Festival

Friday 25 – Village Life Parade

October

Sunday 18 – Fall Collage Concert

Thursday-Friday 22-23 – No School, Parent/Teacher Conferences

November

Tuesday 3 – Election Day, No School

Fri-Sun 6-8 – Fall Play

Mon-Fri 16-20 – Agora week

Wed-Fri 25-27 – Thanksgiving Break

*Celebrating
Alumni
Achievement*

