

Kalamazoo Public Schools

EXCELSIOR

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May 2026 • Volume 29, Issue 5

Beyond the Classroom

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Gardening,
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Diverse Extracurricular Opportunities for KPS Students

A Message from the Superintendent

Dr. Darrin Slade



AT KALAMAZOO Public Schools (KPS), our mission is to ensure every student not only achieves academic excellence but also develops into a well-rounded individual. Participation in extracurricular activities — clubs, fine arts, and sports — is an excellent way for our students to develop values such as teamwork, competition, diversity, and a strong sense of community.

KPS proudly offers a wide range of extracurricular opportunities for students at all levels. Research suggests

involvement in activities outside of the classroom significantly increases a student's sense of engagement and attachment to their school. Students involved in extracurricular activities also typically achieve higher grades

In addition to fun and friendships, students can learn important life lessons outside of the classroom, including:

- **Leadership and Conflict Management:** Taking on a leadership position in a student organization requires students to effectively manage people, budgets, and conflicting opinions.
- **Time Management:** Balancing the demands of a school work with practices, rehearsals, or meetings instills crucial lessons in time management, prioritization, and efficiency.
- **Making Connections:** Extracurriculars are the best place to make connections with students from different backgrounds whom they might otherwise not meet.
- **Exploration and Civic Responsibility:** Extracurriculars offer students the chance to experience potential career paths or hobbies. Involvement in clubs and student government also fosters a necessary sense of civic engagement and responsibility toward the community.

and exhibit better school attendance records, which decreases the likelihood of school failure and dropping out.

As a family or community member, you can support KPS students by attending free musical performances and art exhibits; cheering at spring sporting events such as baseball, women's soccer, track and field, women's tennis, and men's volleyball; or simply asking a young person about what clubs and activities they enjoy. In this issue of Excelsior, you'll learn about a few of the great extracurricular activities our students take part in.

Although academic achievement is our top priority at KPS, we encourage all students to participate in the many learning opportunities available beyond the classroom.



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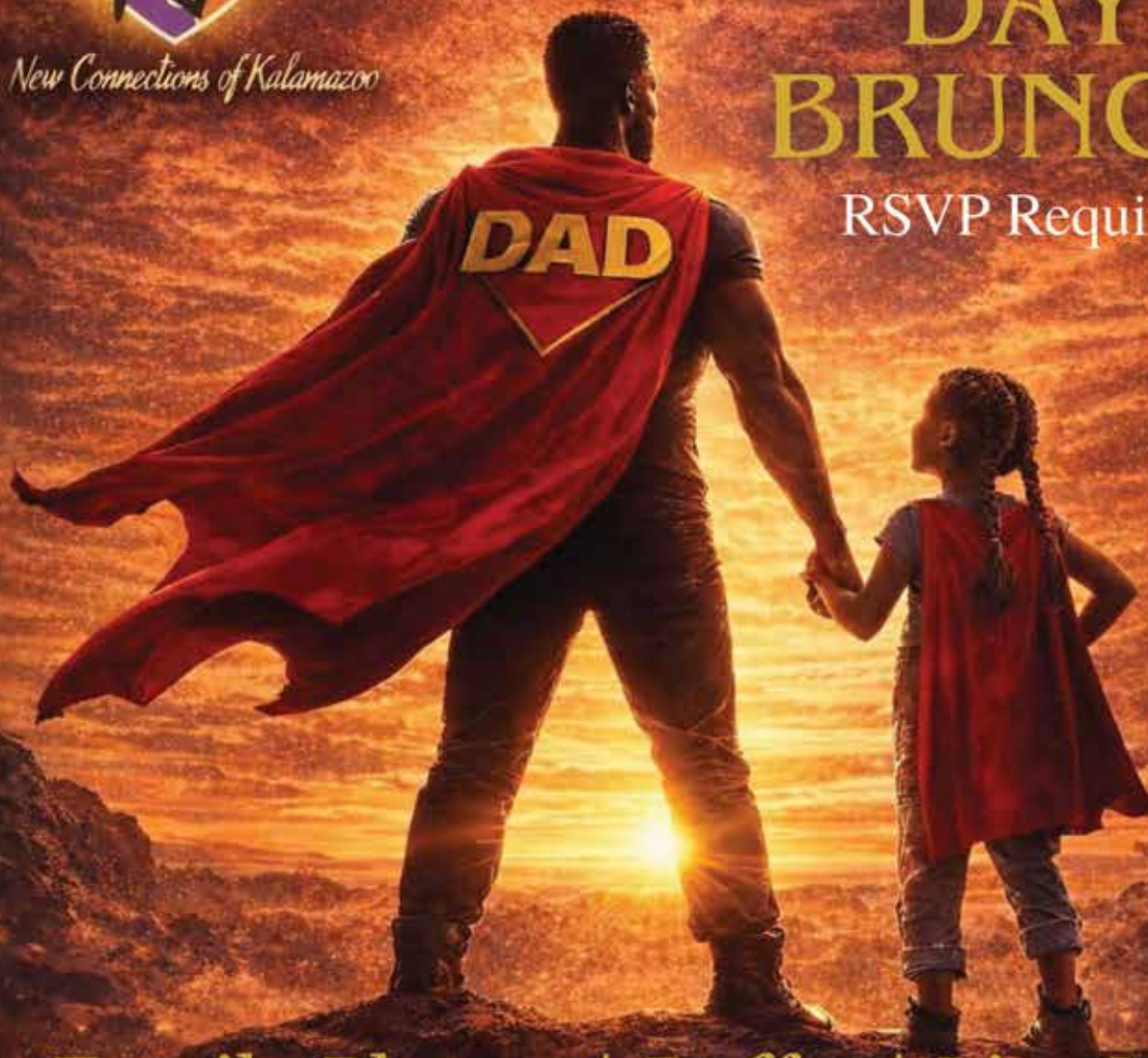
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ARTISTS' CORNER

Ashley Rhodes, Milwood Magnet School art teacher, had her students explore the art of stained glass windows and how they can be created to tell stories, convey religious messages, or celebrate cultural heritage. Each student created a faux stained glass window artwork using oil pastels, demonstrating their understanding of color theory and a variety of techniques. The assignment challenged students to look inward, selecting a subject rooted in a personal memory, a cultural tradition, or a future wish.

Allyson Rivera Velasquez, a 6th-grade student, created a vivid landscape inspired by her wish to travel and explore new places. "When I grow up I want to go to South Korea," Allyson shared. She designed the composition based on images she researched and used blending techniques with analogous colors (similar hues) to create depth and atmosphere. Through this project, students not only developed artistic skills, but also built a personal connection to the work they created.



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Inquiries by students and/or their parents/guardians should be directed to:

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1220 Howard St.
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All other inquiries should be directed to:

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Recipe

from the KPS Food Service, Chartwells

Josh Kerby,
executive chef



Kirsten Strong,
registered dietitian
nutritionist

White Castle Slider “Mock” Recipe

KALAMAZOO might not have a White Castle, but we aren’t missing out. Skip the road trip and fire up the oven or the grill for these spot-on mock sliders. Your taste buds will thank you. This recipe recreates those iconic, savory sliders right in your own kitchen. The secret lies in infusing the beef with that signature onion punch and letting the onions simmer in the meat drippings for maximum flavor. While this version is optimized for the oven, feel free to take it outside, it’s finally grilling season, after all!



INGREDIENTS

2 pounds ground beef
1 (2-ounce) packet
Lipton onion soup mix
1 onion, finely chopped
12 American cheese
slices
12 slider rolls
36 pickle slices
Mustard

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Set aside a half sheet baking pan lined with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the ground beef and Lipton onion soup mix.
3. Spread the meat mixture evenly onto the baking sheet. Use a rolling pin to roll over the meat to smooth it out. Bake for about 10 minutes. The meat will shrink.

4. Put the diced onion around the edges and bake for another 10–15 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven. Spoon the onions from the edges over the top of the meat and top with cheese slices. Bake for another 3-5 minutes or until the cheese has melted.
6. Add 3 pickles and a drizzle of mustard to each burger. You will have enough to have 3 burgers across and 4 burgers long.

7. Add the tops of the rolls over the meat and bake for 3–5 more minutes.
8. Remove from the oven. Slice the meat into individual square sliders with a pizza cutter. Each slider should weigh about 2½ ounces. Pick up the slider meat and its top bun with a spatula and set it on the bottom bun.

Tip: If you have a flat-top for your grill, you can make this recipe outside!

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Save the date for Art on the Mall – downtown Kalamazoo’s can’t-miss summer artfelt kickoff! The Mall comes alive with art, music and inspiration.

Browse and shop original work from 60+ local and regional artists, from jewelry and pottery to sculpture and garden art. Enjoy demonstrations and live entertainment all weekend long!

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Cooking, Gardening, and Community at Woodward’s Club Grub

CLUB GRUB is an after-school program for second- and third-grade students at Woodward Elementary that focuses on healthy eating, gardening, and community. The program is a collaborative effort between The Kalamazoo Nature Center and volunteers from Kalamazoo College’s Center for Civic Engagement. Club Grub is designed to empower children to nourish their bodies and minds, cultivate lifelong

healthy eating habits, and strengthen the community connection around food. Students prepare a healthy snack or meal to eat every week. Hands-on, tangible learning experiences, along with games and group discussions, are used to teach students about good nutrition, food preparation skills, organic gardening, recipes, cooking basics, and where food comes from.

“They are certain it’s magic,” said Kalamazoo College student volunteer Hannah Parsons. “We start Club Grub with piles of tomatillo vines, and two hours later, they’ve cooked a full meal for 20 people. They’re so proud of what they’ve made.” There’s a magic moment when a child realizes food comes from the Earth and not just a store shelf. In addition to gardening and cooking at Wood-



Leo Garcia-Salas enjoying milkweed.



Laurence Dozier, Hannah Parsons from K College, and Juanita Williams-Jackson pick apples.



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Club Grub *(continued from page 6)*

ward, the club’s field trips are a chance to explore the greater Kalamazoo community while connecting places with their food. Club Grub participants have visited area farms, Michigan State University’s W.K. Kellogg Experimental Forest to learn about maple

syrup, and garden centers to learn about vegetables and herbs, which they purchased for their school garden.

“I love seeing the kids get to experience so many types of food at such a young age,” said Parsons.

“Showing them where food comes from, how it grows and what’s in season, that’s powerful. Food brings people together. When we share food and stories, we’re not just feeding ourselves, we’re building community.”



Students learn about water filtration systems.



Kalamazoo Nature Center's Laurel Wong helps students sort and weigh greens to feed the rabbits at KNC.



Leo Garcia-Salas, Elijah Stolzenburg and Talyah Ibrahim work in an aquarium.



galaxy GROOVE

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....LET'S GO METRO!

DECA Prepares Emerging Leaders and Entrepreneurs in Marketing, Finance, Hospitality, and Management

THE LOY NORRIX High School team achieved remarkable accomplishments competing alongside 5,000 other high school students at the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) State Conference in Detroit in March.

DECA prepares students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management through competitive events, role-play scenarios, and community projects.

The team earned three prestigious state championships:

Connor Doren — Glass Award for Sports Entertainment

Brielle Dalke — Glass Award for Business Growth Plan

Alli Boucher — Glass Award for Business Growth Plan

Five students advanced to finalist positions:

Kylie Ruiz — Overall Medal

Thomas Bowler — Test Medal & Best Overall Medal

Madeline Hunt — Human Resources Finalist, Overall Medal & Judge Event Medal

Noelan Boyea and **Theodore Bridges** — Leadership and Team Event Finalists

Theodore Bridges — Received an additional medal recognition for high performance on his Business Administration test

In addition, four students earned the distinguished honor of Thrive Academy State Representative selection: **Dominic Abate, Connor Doren, Heidi Cruz-Ramirez,** and **Plamedie Ekumbaki.**

“Our students’ success at the State Conference reflects their hard work, determination, and commitment to excellence,” said Atiba Ward, Loy Norrix business teacher and DECA advisor. “This achievement is a testament to the collaborative spirit and school pride demonstrated by our entire team.”

Team members will compete later this spring at the International Career Development Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.



Connor Doren shows off his Glass Award for Sports Entertainment.



Noelan Boyea and Theodore Bridges



Kylie Ruiz



Thomas Bowler



Madeline Hunt



Loy Norrix's DECA club members pose with their advisor, Atiba Ward, at the State Career Development Conference in Detroit.



What is the Special Education Millage?



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ZooBOTix Students Build Robots and Life Skills

ZooBOTix is a K-12 robotics program sponsored by KPS that empowers students to design, build, and compete with actual robots. Since its founding in 2016 with one FRC (FIRST Robotics Competition) team, the program has expanded significantly.

In addition to the high school's FRC team, there are Explore and Challenge teams for elementary students and a FTC (FIRST Tech Challenge) team for middle school students. Through these activities, students develop a wide range of essential life skills,

from technical skills (such as turning a screwdriver and programming a robot) to crucial business skills. Older team members also gain leadership experience by mentoring younger students. While KPS students are given priority, the program welcomes students from other schools if space permits.

KPS's middle school robotics team, ZooBOTix FTC Team 16646, represents students from Linden Grove, Hillside, Maple Street, Milwood Magnet, and Portage West. At their season's inaugural event, the team secured the prestigious Inspire Award, the highest honor presented at a FIRST Tech Challenge event. The judges look for teams that show gracious professionalism, engineering excellence, community impact, and effective communication. As Inspire

Award winners, ZooBOTix FTC Team 16646 automatically advanced to the Michigan State Championship, where they earned an invitation to compete at the FIRST World Championship in Houston, Texas.

Beyond the competitions, ZooBOTix students participated in a tour of Stryker Instruments, where they had the opportunity to use the Mako Robot and learn how it is utilized to perform knee surgery. The team also brings a robot to the Air Zoo annually to provide activities for younger students, and they visit STEM events at elementary schools.

The overall mission of the KPS ZooBOTix program is to create an inclusive, collaborative environment where each student is supported in pushing beyond their starting point to discover their full potential.

Pictured below at Strykforce practice field, showing their bot off to FLL team members is FRC Team 6002 (standing): Akshay Verma (K-Central), Keaton St. John (K-Central), Carsten Mills (Maple), Liam Mwayi (K-Central), and Zeke Johnson (Hillside). (Front) FLL Explore: Hunter Ito (King Westwood), Levi Mills (El Sol).

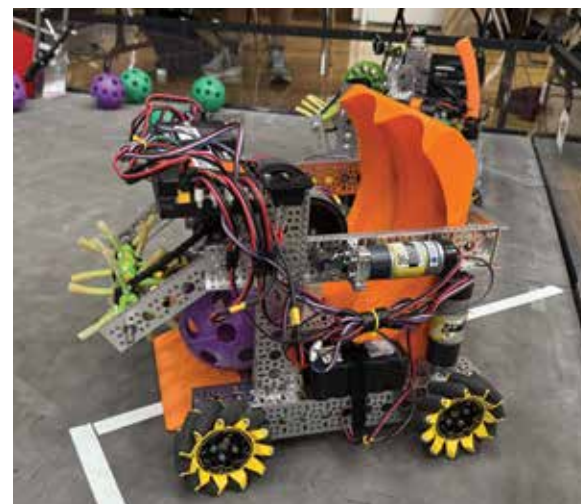


FTC team 16646 at Kentwood Qualifier Nov 2025, (left to right); Zeke Snead (Linden Grove), Pratyusha Niraula (P West), Sophie Alkire (P West), Jonah Antoniotti (Milwood Middle), Aislinn Pasztor (Hillside), Autumn Mwayi (Hillside), Keaton St. John (K-Central), mentor Zeke Johnson (Hillside), Jack Garber (P West), Emmett Kash (Hillside), and Carsten Mills (Maple).



ON THE COVER: FTC team 16646 at the State Championship in Muskegon MI, Dec 2025
Mentor: Lucas McGinnis (K-Central), **Students:** Carsten Mills (Maple), Jack Garber (Portage West), Zeke Snead (Linden Grove), Autumn Mwayi (Hillside).

Left to right: Za'Khari Washpun, Pratyusha Niraula, Autumn Mwayi, and Jack Garber proudly stand behind their robot at the FTC State Championship.



An FTC practice session: Lucas Snead, Parent; Shane Kash, Parent; Zeke Snead, FTC 16646 Member; Eric McGinnis, Coach; Sophie Alkire, Team member; Za'Khari Washpun, Team member; Lucas McGinnis, Student Mentor; Autumn Mwayi, Team member; Mike Bierema, Mentor; Zeke Johnson, Team Member; and Emmett Kash, Team Member.



Students were recognized at a school board meeting. Pictured left to right are Dr. Jeff Boggan, principal of Maple Street, Atiba McKissack, principal of Hillside, Jonah Antoniotti, Aaron Sauter, principal of Milwood Magnet, TiAnna Harrison, Board President, Mike Hughes, principal of Linden Grove, Coach Katherine Mills, and Superintendent Slade. Students in the front row are: Aislinn Pasztor, Emmett Kash, Autumn Mwayi, Zeke Snead, and Carsten Mills.

Readers Shine in KPL’s Challenging Literary Showdown

FORGET college hoops — for students in the Kalamazoo Public Library District, March means playoff season for the Global Reading Challenge. This annual competition, sponsored by the Kalamazoo Public Library (KPL), encourages 4th- and 5th-grade students to read 10 selected works of diverse fiction and nonfiction.

The 2026 Challenge culminated in an exciting final round on March 23 at the KPL Central Library. Preliminary rounds were held the week prior at five KPL branches, with the winners advancing to the main event. The five teams that faced questions based on the required reading list were the Parkwood-Upjohn Crazy Clownfish, King-Westwood’s

Team Nacho, the Woodward Minions, Milwood Elementary’s Book Bros, and the Winchell Bookworms.

After a competitive battle, the title of 2026 Global Reading Challenge champions was awarded to the team from Winchell Elementary School.

The Challenge’s roots go back to the late 1930s in Chicago, where two school librarians created a



Franck Atemandeh, Hannah Miller, Lily Greer, Arabesque Walsh, & Hannah Westervelt from Parkwood-Upjohn.



La'Dainian Bennett, Gideon Wolfe, Principal Craig LeSuer, George Beverly, Nathan Rodriguez, Elijah Hughey, Makih Thomas, and their Coach Heidi Wolfe from Milwood.



Elijah Stolzenburg, Ethan Stevens, Lena Baird, Landyn Lindeman, Francis Beekee, David Lehman-Oliver, Khalilia Foster, and Xavier Maye, with Coaches Cheryl Bukant-Wesselhoff and Briget Billian from Woodward.



Madeline Hile, Edie Hayner, Avery Hayner, Daniel Le, Casey Symko, Eustace Nugent and Zoe Blue from King-Westwood.



PARTY in the PARK

29th Annual Celebration

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 | 10–11 am | Bronson Park

Join Kalamazoo Public Library for this annual celebration of early childhood literacy.

Enjoy a story hour in Bronson Park featuring costumed characters, community readers, a free book and gift, and a snack for each child. **For children from birth to age 5.**

Can’t attend in person? We can deliver materials to you. Register or request delivery at kpl.gov/party-in-the-park.



Kalamazoo Public Library



Global Reading *(continued from page 12)*

program to test young readers’ literary knowledge. Originally known as The Battle of the Books, it became a popular weekly radio quiz show in which teams from public elementary schools identified book titles by answering questions about characters, plots, and settings from well-known fiction and nonfiction.

- The 10 books the students were quizzed on this year included:
- *Mac Undercover* (Mac B., Kid Spy series) by Mac Barnett
 - *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper
 - *The Eyes and the Impossible* by David Eggers
 - *Dragons in a Bag* by Zetta Elliott
 - *Gigi Shin is Not a Nerd* by Lyla Lee

- *Finn and Ezra’s Bar Mitzvah Time Loop* by Joshua S. Levy
- *Honestly Elliott* by Gillian McDunn
- *Gracie Under the Waves* by Linda Sue Park
- *Ben Yokoyama and the Cookie of Doom* by Matthew A. Swanson & Robbi Behr
- *Katie the Catsitter* by Colleen AF Venable



Winchell students Sydney Connolly, Evelyn Williams, Aiden Schoenherr, Lucia Carew, Harrison Suyadi, Miles Nondorf, and Jayce Perry celebrate their win with Coach Laurel Connolly and Principal Kelly Corrigan.



Team Minion members from Woodward School huddle during the championship round.

CHECK FOR TICKS



Ticks are most active in Michigan between the months of April to September. However, they can be active any time the temperature is above 40 °

Feel for bumps and look for tiny brown spots, especially in these areas: scalp, ears, underarms, belly button, waist & back, behind knees, & in between legs.



How to remove a tick

- 1 Use fine-tip tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
- 2 Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick.
- 3 After removal, clean the area with alcohol or soap and water.



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What’s for Lunch? 25 Years of Inspired Science in Schools

Edited for length and reprinted with permission from Andy Brown, Kalamazoo College

ONE RECENT afternoon at Northglade Montessori Magnet School in Kalamazoo, fourth- and fifth-graders gathered around a table for a simple science experiment involving water, soap and glitter.

“Think about what happens when germs spread,” a college student presenting the experiment told them.

Moments later, a finger dipped into the mixture, and the glitter scattered across the surface of the water. The room filled with laughter, surprise and a few delighted yells of “Whoa!”

For the kids, it looked like magic. For the mentors leading the lunchtime activity, it was something more powerful. It was a chance to spark curiosity

about science through a lesson that showed just how quickly illnesses can jump from one person to another.

The demonstration was one small moment in a program that has quietly shaped young learners in Kalamazoo for a quarter century. Sisters in Science—a student organization at Kalamazoo College—is celebrating its 25th anniversary of presenting hands-on STEM experiences to KPS students. The group partners with Communities In Schools of Kalamazoo at Northglade Montessori and Woodward School.

Over the course of the school year, the mentors work with the same groups of children, building relationships along the way. Sometimes, students are surprised simply to learn that the college mentors

are studying science themselves.

Pauline Hawkes, a Kalamazoo Central graduate and biology major at K, joins other leaders in visiting the partner schools twice weekly between classes. The goal isn’t simply to perform experiments, she said. “We’re just learning together,” Hawkes said. “It’s a safe, comfortable space where they’re not afraid to ask questions or try different things.”

Sisters in Science owes its existence to a chance conversation on a school sidewalk. Regina Stevens-Truss, the Dorothy H. Heyl Professor of Chemistry at K and the program’s faculty advisor since its founding, arrived at Northglade in 2001 to pick up her children. A sixth-grade teacher pulled her aside with an observation that would stay with her.

The teacher had noticed that her female sixth-



El Sol Elementary student Lu Moon assisted Sisters in Science faculty and student-leaders at K College to practice an experiment.

Photo credit: Saiko Jawo-Smallia, Kalamazoo College



Sisters in Science *(cont. from page 14)*

grade students consistently outperformed the boys in math and science. But when she saw those same students again in ninth grade, the girls who had once loved science no longer seemed interested.

Research backed what the teacher had observed: girls often lose interest in science and math during the transition from elementary school to junior high, as social pressures begin to reframe those subjects as less compatible with femininity. Stevens-Truss brought the idea of a mentorship program to K, and Sisters in Science was launched.

While the program originally focused on encouraging girls to pursue science, student feedback led



Soap, water and glitter were used to demonstrate how germs spread



Pauline Hawkins from K College enjoys working with students as a Sisters in Science co-leader.

organizers to expand participation to include boys as well. The college mentors remain the “sisters” leading the activities.

The intangible impact of Sisters in Science is evi-

dent when a student’s eyes widen during an experiment, when a child asks a question no one expected, or when a young student realizes science might be something they love.



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If you’re struggling to pay your water bill, we can help.

The City of Kalamazoo is making critical investments in our water and wastewater systems. These investments are funded by all of us through the rates we pay. Rates in Kalamazoo remain low compared to other communities, but we understand that rising costs may create hardships for some households. Financial and other aid options are listed below.

Payment plans and due date extensions are available. Call 311 or (269) 337-8000 for help. The Community Action Agency of Southwest Michigan can help low-income households pay overdue bills. Call 211 or 1-877-422-2726 for more information.

Consumers Energy offers a free home analysis that can help customers save money by reducing energy and water consumption. Call 1-888-316-8014 for more information.

www.kalamazoocity.org/UtilityHelp

Si necesita ayuda para pagar su factura de agua o alcantarillado, hay ayuda disponible. Para obtener información en español, llame al 311 o al 269 337-8000.

The Global Diplomats of Kalamazoo Central

SINCE its founding in 2012, the Kalamazoo Central Model United Nations club has transformed from a small student group into a powerhouse of approximately 50 active students.

The team participated in several conferences this year, including the Great Lakes Invitational Model United Nations (GLIMUN) held in Kalamazoo, and traveled to the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Northwestern University.

Students are assigned specific countries and complex global issues, requiring them to step into the shoes of international delegates. Through a blend of cooperation, intense debate, and public speaking, they work to solve world crises.

The team consistently returns to Kalamazoo Central with individual awards, recognizing the immense effort and research students put into their roles.

This year, the team experienced a full-circle moment at the Michigan State University conference, where seven Kalamazoo Central alumni were actually staffing and running the event.

Kalamazoo Central’s club, led by advisor Clifton
(continued from page 17)



Front Row: Gertrude Hermann-Wilmarth (LN), Braylon Youker, Sophia Mowry, Abebech Kostrzewa, Ava Balint, Emily Elkantar and Clifton Fraley-Burgett (Advisor). 2nd Row: Sophia Gomez-Mizrahi, Urijah Barnes, Naya Dike, Jared Kwei, Michael Kubiak, Leah Mechtenberg-Berrigan, Cole Frederick, Henry Applegate, Aiden Fraley-Burgett, Brady Winther-MacInnis, Evangeline Fraley-Burgett, Cornelius Kaiser-Smith, and Elishka Nyirenda at Michigan State.



Front Row: Katherine Risley, Sappho Slate, Nora Ghazal, Isabella Frederick, Yasmeeen Chaudhry, Amo Kostrzewa, and Abebech Kostrzewa. 2nd Row: Lucy White, Matthew Streeter, Anna Crum, Mackenzie Brooks, Ava Balint, Clara DeWaele, Nadine Arabi, Jonah Mechtenberg-Berrigan, Teague Ott, and Jaelyn Andrick at GLIMUN (Kalamazoo).

Model UN (continued from page 16)

Fralei-Burgett and co-advisor Kiera Langdon, recently welcomed its first member from Loy Norrix High School, with the goal of fostering enough interest to launch a team there in the near future.

While the conferences are the highlight, the true value of Model UN lies in the “lifelong lessons” it imparts. By teaching students how to work proactively with others to achieve common goals, the

club prepares them for success long after graduation. Former members have gone on to excel in a wide array of fields, carrying the skills of diplomacy and critical thinking into the professional world.



Rozyia Rustamova, Jaelyn Andrick, Elliot Spoelstra, Teague Ott, Mackenzie Brooks, Ava Balint, Emma Shakner, Chase Gheen, Anna Crum, Kadence Phillips, Nora Ghazal, Amo Kostrzewa, Abebech Kostrzewa, and Emily Elkantar at Indiana University.

SPONSORED CONTENT

What You Can't See, Can Hurt Them

-The hidden dangers of lead paint in Kalamazoo homes



When people think about lead exposure, many still think of water. But according to local health experts, the bigger risk may be hiding in plain sight—inside our homes.

“If your home was built before 1978, there’s a strong chance it contains lead-based paint,” says Beth McCann, Executive Director of KNHS Homeownership Services.

As paint ages, it chips and peels, breaking down into tiny, invisible particles that settle on floors, windowsills, door frames, toys, and even the soil outside your home. This dust is poisonous—especially for young children, who naturally explore with their hands and mouths and can easily ingest it.

Children under age six—and unborn babies—are most vulnerable. Lead exposure can affect brain development and lead to learning disabilities, lower IQ, hearing loss, speech delays, and behavioral issues. In severe cases, it can be life-threatening.

“Just a few particles of lead dust can be enough to cause harm,” states McCann. “But the good news is—it’s preventable.”



Free Help for Kalamazoo Residents

Through funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, KNHS Homeownership Services—partnering with the City of Kalamazoo—offers a **FREE Lead Paint Hazard Control Program** for eligible residents that covers everything from inspection and repairs to deep cleaning and final testing to ensure your home is safe.

“This is about safety, not remodeling,” McCann adds. “Our goal is to remove the hazard and make your home healthier.”

You may be eligible if you:

- Live in the City of Kalamazoo
- Have a child age 5 or under living in the home or visiting grandchildren, nieces or nephews (6+ hrs/week)
- Meet household income guidelines (≤ 80% AMI)
- Own or rent a home built before 1978

Funding for the program is expected to end in 2026, so residents should apply as soon as possible.

Visit **KHNS.org**

Clearing Up a Common Fear

One of the biggest barriers to participation isn’t cost—it’s fear. “A lot of families worry that asking for help could lead to trouble,” McCann says. “This program is here to support you, not report you.” Lead exposure is tied to older housing—not a reflection on a family—and often goes undetected, earning the name “silent pediatric epidemic.” In 2025, Michigan began requiring blood lead testing for young children by pediatric providers to help identify issues earlier.

Don't Wait to Take Action

In Kalamazoo, roughly 32,000 homes were built before 1978—making lead exposure more common than many realize. Homes with young children that have been tested and have Elevated Blood Lead Level are given top priority.

“The earlier you address it, the better the outcome,” says McCann. “The real risk is doing nothing. This is a chance to make your home safer—for your family and for the future.”



Heron Bothwell Captures Kalamazoo Regional Spelling Bee Title

CHENERY AUDITORIUM was buzzing with excitement on Saturday, March 21. Thirty-seven students from KPS elementary and middle schools took the stage to compete in the Kalamazoo Regional Spelling Bee. Through multiple rounds, the difficulty of the words increased until there was one speller remaining: Parkwood-Upjohn 5th-grader Heron Bothwell. She won by correctly spelling “espousal” and is now eligible to travel to the National SCRIPPS Spelling Bee in Washington, DC, in May.

Students in grades 4-8 had the opportunity to participate in Spelling Bees at their schools in January and February. The champions from all schools, one runner-up from the elementary schools, and two runner-ups from the middle schools were eligible to participate in the Regional Spelling Bee.

The final six spellers were Heron Bothwell (Champion, from Parkwood-Upjohn Elementary School), Orion Bailey (Runner-Up, Hillside Middle School), Kai Miller (El Sol Elementary School), Deborah Agyemang (Linden Grove Middle School), Jonah Antoniotti (Milwood Magnet School), and Savannah Kelley (Woods Lake Elementary Magnet School for the Arts).

REGIONAL SPELLING BEE PARTICIPANTS

- Arcadia Elementary: **Gul Naz Rahimi**
Edison: **Damiya Anderson, Ayden Lewis**
El Sol: **Kai Miller, Katharine Strong-Morse**
Hillside: **Kaja Lewis, Chrysanthus Thamanavar, Orion Bailey**
King-Westwood: **Aaliyah Lynch, Lana Sheeran**
Lincoln: **Gilman Cardona Garcia, Nivek Tolbert**
Linden Grove: **Neela Parthasarathy, Aiden Dominic Pimentel, Deborah Agyemang**
Maple Street: **Josiah Loehrke, Willow Potter, Mylo Chow**
Milwood Elementary: **Phoebe Jansen, Margot MacLeod**
Milwood Magnet: **Jonah Antoniotti, Emiliano Salas, Rowan Allhoff**
Northglade: **Gavin Cundiff, Jude Mix**
Parkwood-Upjohn: **Heron Bothwell, Gracelyn Goertler**
Prairie Ridge: **Ryan Inciong, Tyler Foote**
Spring Valley: **Emeida Hernandez, Promise Haynes**
Washington: **Tyrone Lotts**
Winchell: **Henson Stewart, Evelyn DiTaranto**
Woods Lake: **Savannah Kelley, Olivia Parker**
Woodward: **Lena Baird**



Heron Bothwell was announced as the winner by MLive’s Taylor DesOrmeau.



Orion Bailey, runner-up.



Emeida Hernandez



Gracelyn Goertler



Kai Miller



Neela Parthasarathy



Gavin Cundiff



Phoebe Jansen



Promise Haynes



Savannah Kelley



Willow Potter

Bronson in partnership with the Fatherhood Network,
Western Michigan University School of Medicine, and Urban Alliance present:

MEN'S HEALTH MATTERS



Wellness for
Mind, Body & Community

STRONG MEN PRIORITIZE THEIR HEALTH

BECAUSE TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF IS THE STRONGEST THING YOU CAN DO.



Saturday June 6

11:00am- 1:00pm

*Breakfast will be provided at 10:30am

Urban Alliance

1009 E Stockbridge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49001



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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
— Homer Stryker M.D. —
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



**URBAN
ALLIANCE**

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE



EVENT FRIDAY, MAY 15 | 1:30 - 2:30 P.M. | FREE

ILLUSTRATED MUSE(INGS)

Join the artists of Center for New Media and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum to sketch musicians or dancers, and sometimes both! Bring your sketchbook, drawing tablet or simply your curiosity. No registration or ticket is needed.



EVENT SATURDAY, MAY 9 | 1 P.M. AND 2 P.M. | FREE

150 YEARS OF THE AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY: CHEMISTRY IS EVERYTHING

Celebrate 150 years of the American Chemical Society with local history and exciting science experiences. FREE planetarium shows at 1 p.m. & 2 p.m. Seating is limited. Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

EVENT SATURDAYS | NOON - 3 P.M. | FREE

INNOVATION LAB DAYS!



Join museum interpreters in the Innovation Lab and create new memories together while exploring art making, experimenting, engineering and the cultural heritage of Kalamazoo. Suggested for ages 5+, hands-on, creative and ALWAYS FREE! Activities rotate weekly.

EXHIBIT NOW - JULY 26 | FREE

BLACK COWBOYS: AN AMERICAN STORY

This traveling exhibition invites visitors to explore the lives and work of the numerous Black men, women and children — enslaved and free — who labored on ranches and participated in cattle drives from before the Civil War through the turn of the 20th century.



Black Cowboys: An American Story was developed by the Witte Museum, San Antonio (WitteMuseum.org). The exhibition is presented by Bank of America and generously supported by the John L. Santikos Charitable Fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation, H-E-B and Ed Rachal Foundation.

NEW EXHIBIT MAY 17 - SEPT. 6 | FREE

DINOSAUR EXPLORER

Dinosaur Explorer journeys through the wildest, wackiest and most wondrous dinosaurs to examine how the human body really works through the lens of these creatures. Although they lived millions of years before us, dinosaurs adapted to thrive on Earth. Join us as we explore and understand the most fascinating organisms in history.



This exhibition is created and produced by Imagine Exhibitions Inc.

PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE | MAY SHOWS | \$3 PER PERSON

Visit kalamazoomuseum.org for details. NOTE: No shows Saturday, May 2. Change to shows Saturday, May 9, with FREE "Elements in Orbit" show at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

DINOSOARS! CHANGE OVER TIME | 11 A.M. SAT. | 23 MIN. | GRADES 3 & UP

Join paleontologist Malkia to learn about the connections between the birds we see today and the dinosaurs that roamed the Earth millions of years ago.

EXPEDITION SOLAR SYSTEM | 1 P.M. SAT. | 35 MIN. | ALL AGES

Explore the solar system with robotic explorers in this exciting space adventure.

DID AN ASTEROID REALLY KILL THE DINOSAURS? | 1 P.M. SUN. | 24 MIN. | GRADES 4 & UP

Did a space rock six miles wide slam into the Earth 66 million years ago and wipe out the dinosaurs? Learn about Earth's largest extinction events.

THE SKY ABOVE US | 2 P.M. FRI., SAT. & SUN. | 35 MIN. | GRADES 4 & UP

Discover the "celestial wonders" that can be seen overhead in Michigan in this live, season-focused show

HOURS: Tuesday - Saturday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Sunday | Noon - 4 p.m.

FREE GENERAL ADMISSION

Note: Some areas of the museum may be closed due to exhibit changes, staffing needs, special programs or collections care. We thank you for your patience.

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.



230 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo
kalamazoomuseum.org | 269.373.7990