

# The Grand Island Central School District BRIDGE

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The Community Newsletter for the Grand Island Central School District



## Boys Volleyball Wins GI's First Team State Title

The Boys Volleyball team claimed Grand Island's first-ever team NYSPHSAA Division II state championship title in November. They are one of only two Section VI teams to win a state championship this year, and they went undefeated (23-0) in all dual contests.

Junior Bill Wieberg was named MVP in the Division II state tournament. Members of the All-Tournament Team included junior Zach Cramer, senior Nick Keller and senior David Wynne. Senior Tom Shemik won the Tournament Sportsmanship Award. The team is coached by head coach Bill Schultz and assisted by Shaun Quinn, who have been coaching since 2001, garnering six NFL championships.

In addition, highlights from the Fall 2019 season include two individuals going to state championships: sophomore Kiersten Brown in girls tennis and junior Brooke Eichel in her third consecutive trip to states in diving. League and Section champion teams include Boys Volleyball (NFL championship), Girls Tennis (NFL), Girls Cross-Country (NFL as well as Section VI Class B-1 champions) and Girls Soccer (Section VI Class A-1 and A champions). Congratulations to all on these amazing accomplishments!

## Columbine Survivor Teaches Students the Importance of Kindness

Craig Scott visited Grand Island High School to share his story of surviving the Columbine school shooting 20 years ago. Craig was in the most intense scene, the library, where 10 students were killed. Craig also lost his sister, Rachel Joy Scott, who was the first to be killed in the attack. The program was sponsored by the High School PTSA and Student Council.

Craig's goal in speaking at schools across the country is to make a difference by sharing his story. During the assembly, he touched on many current issues, including depression, anxiety, social pressures and feelings of self-worthlessness. His advice to our students was that we all need to focus on the value of human life and treat each other with love and kindness. During the presentation, he captivated the student audience, and at one point even had the crowd embracing in hugs. Dozens of students stayed after to speak with Craig about their own thoughts and feelings about the challenges facing adolescents in today's world.

Craig additionally met with student leaders and challenged them to develop a plan to continue pushing forward his sister's vision of showing compassion and sparking a "chain reaction" of the same. This smaller group of about 20 students met with Craig to brainstorm ideas and will continue to develop further character education programs in our schools.

Craig has also appeared on many television shows, including "Oprah," "The Today Show," "Good Morning America," and even has a cameo appearance in the movie "I'm Not Ashamed," highlighting his sister's story. Feedback from the presentation has been positive and teachers will continue to have conversations with students in classes.

Please encourage your children to speak to an adult if they are struggling with any feelings of depression or anxiety.



Students pose with Craig Scott.



Craig Scott speaks on stage.

## Follow Us!

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## Students Get Peek into Bills Organization

Amy Boutet's SUPA Sports and Entertainment Management class enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of New Era Stadium and the Buffalo Bills organization. Many Bills executives met with the students to discuss different elements of sports marketing and business administration. Students were able to visit executive suites, security headquarters, game day locker rooms and the field.

## Girls Volleyball Hosts "Intro to Volleyball" Program

Grand Island Girls Volleyball players volunteered to serve as coaches at the "Little Bumpers and Junior Spikers" event that was held at the Grand Island High School. This program was developed to expose more elementary students to the sport of volleyball.

Students came out to learn about age-appropriate skills such as passing, serving and setting. GI's youngest athletes had a fun time not only playing volleyball, but learning about sportsmanship, teamwork and positivity.

Varsity Captain Rose Meaney said, "I wished I was given this opportunity when I was younger to learn about volleyball. It would have improved my skills quicker if I could have played longer. I can't wait to watch the next generation come through as volleyball players."

This will be an annual event hosted by the Girls Volleyball program. Check out the Fall community education handbook for next year!



# Message From The Superintendent

Dear Grand Island Families:

Over the past four years, I have been fortunate to witness the amazing contributions our students, faculty, staff and administrators have made for those experiencing the greatest amount of need during the holiday season. Here are just a few examples of the altruistic spirit displayed in our schools.

At Sidway, the students assisted local families in need through a beautiful and symbolic "Giving Tree." Our students donated \$1 to the Giving Tree project and that dollar was represented by a star, which served as an ornament for the tree. Students also brought in non-perishable food items to put under the tree. All the items were donated to the Neighbors Foundation and Food Pantry.

At Kaegebein, our students also supported the Neighbors Foundation Food Drive, as well as other important charitable projects. The Kaegebein Early Act Club made lap blankets for a local hospital and the faculty donated blood through Roswell to support Julie Milley's son, as well as some other faculty members who require support from Roswell.

At Huth, the Select Chorus traveled to Grand Island's Golden Age Center on Dec. 19. They were very excited to share holiday songs, which brought joy and spirit to the audience before their annual holiday luncheon. Additionally, Huth students contributed many food items that were collected by their Early Act club. These food items were boxed and shipped to the Neighbors Foundation to support families in need.

At VCMS, Karen Grande and her students made blankets to give to the Salvation Army in the Kids for Kids Club. Anne Hennenberger, a cleaner, also made blankets for this project. She collected bottles and cans and redeemed them for funds that were used to purchase blanket material. Sue Szczublewski and Mary Jane Fonte collected new mittens, hats and gloves. These gifts were hung on a Christmas tree in the library and later donated to a local shelter. Mrs. Fonte also collected gifts and items to donate to needy students at the Seneca Street School in Buffalo. The JV DECA students sponsored "Cookies and Cocoa with Santa," where the proceeds were sent to the WNY Domestic Violence Prevention Coalition. The middle school Interact Club collected peanut butter, jelly, non-perishable food items as well as loose change, which were given to the Grand Island Neighbors Foundation.

At our high school, the yearbook staff and editors participated in the 12 Days of Christmas program. This group identified families in need and delivered toys and gifts to them anonymously during the 12 days leading up to Christmas. The high school DECA students participated in the Share the Holiday Magic program around our community. They collected non-perishable food items with Student Council and the Interact club. These wonderful students organized everything collected at the Knights of Columbus for The Grand Island Neighbors Foundation, which has been a tradition for the past 30 years. Casey's Corner held the "Ugly Sweater" contest the day before the break, with proceeds being donated to the "Gold Together" project. This special project raises awareness for childhood cancer. Our Madrigal Singers performed at the M&T Bank "Holiday Music Under the Dome" concert series and our Choral Music Department participated in caroling in the community, bringing the joy of music to all.

As I reflect on all the kindness and altruistic spirit displayed in our schools, I am reminded of how truly blessed we are to be working alongside so many individuals who care deeply about their community and put others first. I would also like to thank you for influencing our students to engage in these opportunities as they strive to serve others in our community. I hope you and your family enjoy the spirit of the holidays and that your new year is filled with laughter, love and precious moments spent with family and friends.

Sincerely,

Brian Graham, Ed.D.



Brian Graham, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools





## Message From Your BOE President

Welcome back to the first edition of The Bridge for the 2019-2020 school year, and thank you for taking the time to learn about what is happening in our schools. At our annual summer retreat, the Board of Education developed goals listed below to work toward during this school year:

- The Board of Education will share one voice and respect the decisions that have been made collectively.
- The Board of Education will monitor and support progress made to address the Superintendent's goals as well as the 5-Year Strategic Plan goals.
- The Board of Education will have discussions that will address long-term improvements of our facilities, as necessary, to sustain academic programs and extracurricular activities.
- The Board of Education will increase communication with the Grand Island community on a variety of topics.



Ashli Skura Dreher  
School Board President

The school board has been working together smoothly, and we have had thoughtful dialogue about projects and initiatives underway. As we move into budget season, the board will hear presentations from administrators regarding needs in each building as well as any progress made on the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Beginning in the new year, I will contribute articles to the Island Dispatch to increase communication with parents and the community. Article topics will be determined at an upcoming retreat and may recap committee work completed by board members or topics discussed during the public session that you may want to comment on at a future board meeting. This is an opportunity for anyone with a suggestion, concern, or input to be a part of the conversation. Meetings are held twice a month, typically on Mondays, at 7:30 p.m. in the Professional Development Room of Grand Island High School.

I hope you have had a wonderful holiday season filled with love, laughter, family, and good friends. I hope to see you at an upcoming board meeting!

Respectfully submitted,

Ashli Skura Dreher  
School Board President

## Sidway Holds Monster Mash

The Burns family danced up a storm at Sidway School's third annual Monster Mash! The first two Monster Mash events were fundraisers for Sidway's new playground. This year, the event was sponsored by the Sidway PTA.



Twins Mia and Christopher Burns with their twin brothers, Paul and Lorenzo, mom Mary and dad Christopher.



Jacqueline Blinzler was a beautiful Elsa at the Monster Mash.

## SUPA Psychology Students Travel to Syracuse University

Don Pray's SUPA Psychology class traveled to Syracuse to be Syracuse University (SU) psychology students for a day! SUPA, Syracuse University Project Advance, is one of the nation's leading concurrent enrollment programs. Students who succeed can earn SU college credits while at Grand Island High School and transfer the credits to their college of choice.

The 16 students received a quick tour of the campus and then attended the same class that is taught at GIHS. The students sat in on Dr. Shannon Houck's Psych 205 class - Foundations of Human Behavior. The students gained valuable college experience by attending a large lecture-style class. After the lecture, department chair Dr. Lawrence Lewandowski met in a small group setting with the students and discussed clinical approaches used in psychology in helping identify people with mental health issues.

After the meeting, the students got to explore Marshall Street for lunch and see the beautiful SU campus on their own. Grand Island senior Allison Fay said, "The visit really opened up my eyes to what a large university and college lecture class are like. I am starting to think about how I can take notes and stay up on the reading in classes like the one we attended."





## JV DECA Students Help Out at Huth Road

Each year, the newest members of Veronica Connor Middle School's JV DECA club debut their acts of service at Huth Road Elementary School's second grade orientation. Besides giving tours of the buildings and providing entertainment to the students during the parent meeting, the eighth graders enjoy forming a human tunnel to welcome nervous, reluctant and even excited kids to their new building on the eve of the opening day of school.

This year's tunnel was especially bittersweet. Huth Road Principal Max Pikula was welcomed to his new position, moving on from his position as assistant principal of VCMS. Mr. Pikula's empowering nature helped grow the JV DECA eighth graders into the emerging leaders they are today.

## Halloween Ball Raises Funds for Relay for Life

The 10th Annual Halloween Ball at the Tonawanda Castle raised \$6,594 for the Grand Island Relay for Life in support of the American Cancer Society. This event, in the last 10 years, has raised \$56,623 for Relay for Life!

The team captains for the Grand Island Elementary Relay for Life Team, Cyndi Booker, Susan Andrews and Jeanne Percival, are part of the committee that puts on this event each year. Thank you to all of the area businesses and teachers and staff of Kaegebein, Huth Road and Sidway that donated to the Halloween Ball!

## Celebrating Summer Reading at Huth Road

How many ways can you find to enjoy reading? Over the summer, the students at Huth Road Elementary were invited to take our Summer Reading Challenge and have fun reading!

Research shows that literacy skills can get a bit "rusty" over the summer.

We are excited to report that 259 students (more than half) accepted the challenge. Students were given a choice board with several suggested reading activities and asked to do five or more of the activities to complete the challenge. Do you take a book with you when you are on the go? Do you enjoy reading outside? Do you enjoy sharing a book with a reading partner? When the students returned their completed board to their teacher in September, they were invited to our celebration of reading where they played bingo, won prizes and enjoyed a special treat provided by the Huth Road PTA.

Taking the reading challenge is a fun way for students to maintain reading skills over the summer. We hope students continue to find the joy in reading and even more students take the challenge next summer.



## HS Students Experience Puerto Rico

This past summer, Spanish teacher Jeannine Scibilia chaperoned a group of Grand Island High School students on an amazing journey to Puerto Rico. It was truly an adventure of a lifetime as they explored this beautiful and interesting island. As they toured, they learned about its rich history, culture, and also felt the passion Puerto Ricans have for their country.

The group spent time in the capital city of San Juan, visiting landmarks such as El Morro, El Capitolio and El Castillo. As they traversed the island from the capital to the coastline, the group experienced a tremendous zip-lining adventure through a rainforest, went snorkeling in the Atlantic Ocean, explored the magnificent Cueva Ventana caves and kayaked through Fajardo's Bioluminescent Bay while witnessing a gorgeous sunset!

There were many other highlights on this journey, including attending a cooking class, where each participant made the native meal "Mofongo" and stopping along their route to sample fresh, tropical fruit at a local fruit market. The students also had the opportunity to do volunteer work at Corredor Del Yaguazo in Catano, where they participated in a service project of removing woodland debris from remnants of Hurricane Maria.

Without a doubt, this meaningful, memorable trip exceeded all expectations and left all with one wish...to return again!



*While in Puerto Rico, students got to zipline through a rainforest.*



*The students helped remove woodland debris from remnants of Hurricane Maria while in Puerto Rico.*





# 10 Facts You Should Know About Vaping

Unfortunately, the use of e-cigarettes and vape products remains a popular trend among teens and young adults despite the growing health consequences. In the last several months, you may have seen an abundance of news coverage regarding a vaping-related lung illness. It is important for all parents and youth to be aware of these 10 important facts on this rapidly evolving trend:

1. Even though vaping is marketed as a safer alternative to smoking cigarettes, it is NOT SAFE - especially for kids and teens.
2. As of Nov. 13, 2019, the legal smoking age in New York State has been raised from 18 to 21. This includes traditional tobacco products as well as e-cigarette and vaping products.
3. The CDC has named the vaping-related illness that has been covered heavily in the media. It is now known as EVALI (e-cigarette or vaping product use associated lung injury).
4. The CDC reports that a recent study found that 99% of e-cigarettes sold in assessed venues contained nicotine.
5. Using nicotine in the adolescent years can impact attention, learning, mood and impulse control, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
6. E-cigarettes can be used to misuse other substances, including THC - the main psychoactive component in marijuana.
7. According to the CDC, approximately one-third of U.S. middle and high school students who had used an e-cigarette reported using marijuana in the device in 2016.
8. E-cigarettes are advertised using the same themes and tactics that have been shown to increase youth initiation of other tobacco products, according to the CDC. However, instead of TV and radio advertising, the vaping industry has done most of their marketing on social media - where teens spend a lot of their time.
9. The CDC reported about 8 in 10 middle school and high school students - more than 20 million youth - said they had seen e-cigarette advertising in 2016.
10. Defective e-cigarette batteries have the potential of exploding. These explosions have caused serious injuries and even death.

## GI Students Attend Leadership Summit

Students from the High School and Middle School attended the Kids Escaping Drugs Leadership Summit. The goal of this program is to educate young people about the dangers and consequences of substance abuse, encourage healthy choices among youth regarding the consequences of experimentation and addiction and to address stereotypes of addiction, and to help young people realize the disease does not discriminate.



Adult participants heard from experts in the field and participated in in-service designed to help them better understand and deal with issues their students are facing. All participants were able to participate in a billboard contest launch to educate the community about substance abuse and/or addiction.

## Students Treated to a Sweet Lesson

To help make the Family and Consumer Science Foods & Nutrition Unit more relevant to today's fast-paced eating habits, and to incorporate more business and technology, seventh graders worked in groups to create a hypothetical food truck. The food truck took into consideration one type of dietary need (i.e. food allergies, healthy fats, limited sugar, reduced salt/sodium, etc.).

As part of the lesson, Veronica E. Connor Middle School was visited by the Sassi Cakes food truck full of cupcakes. Students practiced their interpersonal skills by interviewing the owner about the 4 P's of Marketing (Price, Product, Place and Promotion), as well as ordering and sampling from her wide variety of tasty treats!



*Danielle Sass of Sassi Cakes serving Shauna Stevens.*

## Huth Road Efforts Raise Funds for Maras Family

Jeanne Percival, Patti Kwarciak and Jennifer Centola, teachers from Huth Road Elementary, ran a Bake and Snack Sale at the PTA annual Family Game Night to raise money for Heather Maras, Grand Island Schools' social worker who was in an accident over the summer.

Currently Heather and her daughters are recovering, and the money raised, along with a Dress Down donation from Huth Road teachers, will help defray some costs for the Maras family. A total of \$500 was raised for the family.

## FACS Classes Get Artistic Inspiration from Visitor

Doug MacGregor, coordinator of Arts in Healthcare for the Lee County Florida Hospitals, brought sunshine and self-confidence to Mary Jane (MacGregor) Fonte's eighth-grade Family and Consumer Science classes. MacGregor, also an editorial cartoonist and author/illustrator of several children's books and an all-age book on developing creativity, arrived just in time to kick off the classes' advertising campaigns for entrepreneurship.

Using the creative names and slogans generated by the Student Co-Advertising Teams for each class, Doug empowered the students to draw enticing posters to drum up



*Rocco Misuraco presents his finished works of art to Doug MacGregor.*

business for Cookie Kingdom Corp., Creepy Cones Inc. and FACS and Snacks Co. Each student company had already developed Career and College Readiness Skills when they prepared resumes, cover letters, business thank you notes, interviews and business cards to vie for a position in their company. As with each semester, the students looked forward to donating to a charity, with the Heather Maras family being chosen this time around.

Should you desire to see more of MacGregor's own works, visit [www.dougcreates.com](http://www.dougcreates.com).



## Famed Young Adult Author Visits Connor Middle School

Author of more than 90 books for children and teenagers, Gordon Korman has been a writer since he was in seventh grade! He had his first book published when he was just 14 years old and has been writing ever since. Korman visited Veronica E. Connor Middle to speak to students about his writing career and offer some inspiration to budding writers.

The idea for Korman to visit originated from the students reading his 2017 novel "Restart" as a "One Island, One School, One Book" initiative. Students voted on their favorite Korman book and "Restart" was a favorite.

Staff and students read Korman's novel this fall and participated in literacy activities related to the book. Events included guest readers featuring teachers and administration, a "Literacy Night" held at Adrian's Custard and Beef, and the opportunity for students to win prizes for correct answers to critical thinking questions based on the novel.



Korman's message to VCMS students was how writing can occur simply from asking, "What if?" and how important research can be in the writing process. After his presentation, students were able to ask additional questions of the author prior to being dismissed.

Before the end of Mr. Korman's visit, several students enjoyed lunch with him. In attendance as well were Lora Randles, chair of the "One Island, One School, One Book" Literacy Committee, and Sharyn Mudd, VCMS Library media specialist.

Based on the students' reaction to Mr. Korman, they would have liked to "restart" their visit with him if they could!

## Theatre & Acting Students Attend Niagara University Musical

The small but mighty Theatre and Acting class from GIHS took a field trip to Niagara University to see the Theatre Department's musical production of "Freaky Friday."

After the show, the students were treated to a question and answer session with the cast and crew, and the professors who guided them through the rehearsal process. They also experienced a little of the campus lifestyle with lunch at the Gallagher Center. Afterwards, students wrote a review of the production and all its elements.



Thanks to Niagara University Theatre for providing complimentary tickets to the matinees!

## Coast Guard Visits Sidway

Members of the U.S. Coast Guard visited Sidway students to talk about Veterans Day and the jobs they do with the Coast Guard. The students learned about the importance of recognizing our veterans on Nov. 11, as well as some safety tips.





## VCMS Chess Club is Going Strong

The Grand Island Chess Club continues its fourth year running strong. Chess Club Coach, Susan Szczublewski from VCMS, started the club back in 2016, along with the assistance of Marijan Pro, who is a chess master from the Western New York Chess Club.

Students compete both individually and as a team in monthly scholastic chess tournaments hosted at various schools throughout WNY, in which about 15 area schools participate. The GI Chess Club has several rated players who compete at a higher level against other U.S. Chess Federation rated players in the area, and many unrated players who are striving to become USCF rated players.

During the month of October, the GI club competed at the Buffalo School of Applied Science and Technology and took first place in both the USCF rated section and the unrated section. On Nov. 9, the club hosted the Fall Classic WNY Scholastic Chess Tournament in the high school. Both Grand Island USCF rated and unrated teams took second place overall, falling only half a point behind the first-place school in each section.

The GI Chess Club meets every Tuesday after school in the VCMS library. Their continued success has made them a formidable opponent in the WNY scholastic chess community.



*USCF Rated Team: John Paul Szczublewski, Tanner Hawley, Abi Selvakumar and Jierui Jiao at the Fall Classic Chess Tournament.*



*Unrated Team: (Front Row) Ahmet Savas, Matthew Burrige, Rebekah Dolan, Caden Sharkey, Asher Wright, Chase Judd, Ismail Masoodi; (Back Row) Mehar Arora, Colin Morgan, Mithil Kara, Hayden Garey, Harini Selvakumar and Ryan Scott at the Fall Classic Chess Tournament.*

## Sidway Explores Fairy Tale STEM Activities

Sidway Elementary has started an exciting new program. The Curriculum Extension team is working with students on Fairy Tale STEM activities.

Fairy tales provide a wonderful springboard for developing an engineering program. Anything is possible in a fairy tale, therefore the engineering connections are limitless. The first story explored was "The Three Little Pigs." After reading the story, the students analyzed why the brick house was the only house left standing. Could the straw house or the stick house be improved upon to make them stronger?

Next, it was time to start testing their designs. The students built houses made of straw, sticks and bricks. Who better to test their completed houses but the big bad wolf? The wolf (a leaf blower) huffed and puffed, testing the structural design of each house. Afterward, the students chose musical instruments that best correlated with the different aspects and characters of the story.

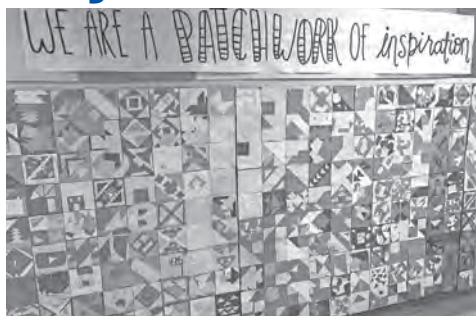
We look forward to collaborating on more fairy tales throughout the year!



## Kaegebein Students Work on Collaborative Art Projects



Kaegebein honors Dot Day in the art room as it celebrates all that creativity can inspire. Students created organic shape dots and collaborated to create a display.



Every student in Kaegebein collaborates to create a paper patchwork quilt inspired by contemporary quilting artist, Libs Elliot. Students discovered how to work together and assemble a collective project to inspire all who see it!



## Kaegebein Artist of the Month Named

Abby Toth, 5th grade, was chosen as Kaegebein's Artist of the Month for November. Not only is Abby a creative and innovative artist, she is always available to help a friend and willing to assist in the art room in any way she can.

Abby's creativity is inspiring and she is a shining member of her art class community. Congratulations, Abby!



## Sidway Student is Artist of the Month

The Grand Island Art Department is proud to announce that Zechariah Goss is the recipient of the K-12 Artist of the Month Award. Zechariah is a first grade student at Charlotte Sidway Elementary School.

Not only is Zechariah an exemplary student, but he also shows an amazing talent and creativity in the visual arts. He says he loves to create artwork at both school and at home. Zechariah loves to free draw with crayons and looks forward to working more with clay and other three-dimensional mediums.

The Art Department would like to wish Zechariah continued success and we hope to see his talents continue to grow in the arts!



## Connor MS Student Selected as Artist of the Month

Each year, the Art Department of the Grand Island Schools recognizes many of its top artistic achievers with the "K-12 Artist of the Month" award. Presented to 10 students annually, the award highlights the varied accomplishments and achievements of district students of all age levels. Recipients of this honor are students who excel artistically and who creatively solve problems by using a wide variety of media to express and find their own unique artistic voices.

Eighth-grade student Joshua Hoover was selected as the first Artist of the Month for the 2019-20 school year. A student at Veronica E. Connor Middle School, Josh is currently enrolled in Studio In Art where he is earning high school credit while still in eighth grade. Josh is hardworking and meticulous in class. He strives to always do his best and constantly works to improve. All his work is thoughtful and of very high quality. Outside of class, Josh keeps a detailed sketchbook which details visually his incredible facility with drawing, particularly pen and ink.

Josh's art teacher cites both his positive work ethic and his tremendous attention to detail as two of the reasons why he was selected to be the recipient of this award. He is an exceptional student whose creative abilities and artistic potential mark him as extraordinary. The art department is proud to recognize Josh Hoover as its "Artist of the Month" for September 2019.



*Josh Hoover with a detailed pen and ink drawing and his op-art assignment.*

## Grand Island Students Honor Veterans with Mail

Recently, at the request of retired Grand Island teacher Kathy Brown, several classes at Huth Road and Kaegebein Elementary Schools created beautiful cards and letters for 17 World War II, 20 Korean War and 15 Vietnam War veterans.

These veterans flew to Washington, DC as guests of Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight. The veterans went to Washington, DC free of charge to receive the honors they deserve for serving their country during times of war.

The student-created mail was given to the veterans during a very special dinner given in the veterans' honor while in Washington. Veterans receiving the mail made from the children described it as one of the highlights of their trip! It put smiles on their faces as they read the wonderful letters of gratitude the children made especially for them. Many of the Veterans remarked that they were impressed with the children's work and even a tear or two appeared in their eyes knowing the children haven't forgotten these heroes!



*Students in Deanna Morris' class create thank-you cards for veterans.*



*One of the happy veterans who received mail from students while in Washington, DC.*



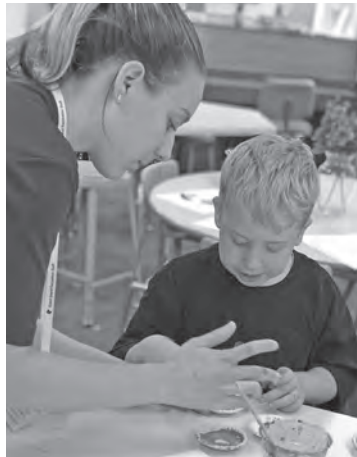


## Town Art Studio Open to Students of All Ages

On select weeknights and Saturdays, the Art Studio at Nike Base Park is filled with GI students exploring their creative potential and sharpening their art skills. Whether it is through drawing, painting, crafting or working with clay, students can use the space to enjoy making art, or build their portfolio. Opened almost three years ago as a joint venture between the Town of Grand Island Recreation Department and the Grand Island High School Art Club, the art space was originally designed to give high school students a safe place to get together and make art, all at no cost to them. To help set the space up, the GI school district donated some used furniture, while art materials and supplies are provided by the Rec Department.

Over the years, the studio has evolved to include guided art time for middle school students on Tuesdays from 6-8 p.m. and the continuation of the High School Open Studio hours on Thursdays and Fridays from 6:30-9:30 p.m. The studio also runs the Rec Department's "Come and Create" sessions for students in grades pre-K through five. These popular arts and crafts sessions are now on Saturdays, and run four times a year. Parents can find times, dates and art studio information, as well as make an account and even register and pay for "Come and Create" (and other Town Rec activities) online at [www.grandislandny.myrec.com](http://www.grandislandny.myrec.com), or call the Rec Department at 773-9680.

In addition to GIHS art teacher Cynthia Wynne, the Art Studio staff includes college art and education majors and high school assistants, who help students with art projects and plan special events. Teens may speak to Mrs. Wynne at the high school about Studio volunteer opportunities.



## Sidway Celebrates Grandparents Day

Sidway students enjoyed some special time with their grandparents and/or a special visitor during the annual Grandparents Day celebrations at Sidway. Students and grandparents enjoyed snacks and board games and also visited classrooms to learn about the school day.



## District Expanding K-6 Literacy Initiative

Two years ago, with the seeds of 19 volunteer elementary teachers, the District began to explore options to enhance our literacy program. Within the first year, we explored the Units of Study for Writing Workshop. The original cohort of teachers were excited with the student growth that they had seen after completing a unit of study within their classroom. This teacher excitement fueled our expansion of the literacy initiative within our district.

By the end of the 2018-2019 school year, teachers at the Kindergarten through 2nd grade level had received training in the Units of Study curriculum and workshop approach that included reading, writing and phonics. K-2 teachers should be fully implementing the units of study for these three areas; and teachers 3-6 are at varied points of implementation in writing dependent upon their training to date.

For more information, view the full article on our website under the GICSD Spotlight.

## Inaugural Spooky Sprint 5K a Huge Success

Amy Boutet and Cheryl Chamberlain want to thank the students who helped with the Spooky Sprint 5K Race and the sponsors, including GIHS Dress Down, GIHS Student Council, GIHS Classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022, Wynne and Wynne CPA, Riverview Chiropractic, Kenmore Dental Associates, Adrian's, Grand Island Sales and Service, Stepping Stone Therapeutics, and the main sponsor, the Grand Island School & Business Alliance. This DECA event will be a business plan executed at States by Megan Lavis, Riley Patterson and Bethany Kulikowski.



## JV DECA Helps Out with Veterans Parade

The royal blue and yellow JV DECA Club of Veronica Connor Middle School donned red, white and blue instead for the third annual Veteran's Day Parade in the district. As each current or former soldier of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard arrived at the school, they were met by members of JV DECA who made formal introduction and escorted them to their place in the parade line-up.

JV DECA is a junior version of GIHS' Business & Marketing Club, which fosters civic consciousness as one of the four points of the DECA Diamond. Being greeters and parade viewers were opportunities that these eighth graders will not soon forget!



*Back row: Zainab Moosodi, Julia Bielec, Ella Zaremski, Anna Kurtzhals, Ryan Stravino and Natalie Martineck. Front row: Hailey Martinez, Kyleigh Ulrich, Jillian Manns and Hannah Susman.*



*Jillian Manns and Hannah Susman with Jeffrey Gonzales and Todd Johnson of the Army.*



*Pearl Sciolino-Coffey hugging her grandfather, Keith Coffey of the Air Force, and her mother, Catrina Smith-Coffey Gray of the Air Force.*

## GIHS Travel and Tourism Class Play Tourist for a Day

Niagara Jet Adventures in Youngstown boasts the most trips to the Category 6 waves in the lower Niagara! Although students didn't see waves that large, Cheryl Chamberlain's College Travel and Tourism Class learned that incredible fact and more during a field trip to this exciting destination.

The weather was perfect for a ride on the mighty Niagara. Fifteen members of the class learned all about the history and business during the excursion.

Captain Shaughn Irving, former Grand Island graduate, led the students through the river and over magnificent waves. After the tour, students had lunch at the Brickyard in Lewiston and enjoyed learning about how the restaurant operates.

This authentic trip was made possible by a generous donation from Casey's Corner School Store. For more information on the new Business National Academy and college business courses at Grand Island, email [cherylchamberlain@gicsd.org](mailto:cherylchamberlain@gicsd.org).



## WWII Vet Earns HS Diploma at Veterans Day Parade

Pfc. Warren F. Richard never graduated high school because he spent time serving his country in the Army in World War II. However, on Nov. 7, Richard officially graduated from Grand Island at the young age of 92.

High School Principal Michael Lauria presented Richard with his diploma in front of other local veterans and officials who participated in the third annual Veteran's Day Parade and Breakfast at the Middle and High Schools. Richard's family surprised him by showing up to see him get his diploma.

Richard was part of Company B, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 11th Airborne Division. He served from 1945 to 1946. He was invited to participate in the June graduation ceremony to be honored with the graduating seniors, one of whom is his own grandson, Benjamin.



*From left, Sue Marston, School Board Vice President; Angelo Morinello, Army, Assemblyman; Warren Richard, Army; Mark Bruno, Army, consultant; Michael Lauria, High School Principal; and Dr. Brian Graham, Superintendent of Schools.*





## VCMS Hosts Literacy Night

Earlier this school year, the students of VCMS participated in their first Literacy Night as part of the One Island, One School, One Book program. One School, One Book is a national program to promote literacy and was organized by teacher and parent volunteers. This is a program where the entire school reads the same book and culminates with a visit from the author.

The entire school was given two books' titles, by author Gordon Korman, to choose from and vote on. With a whopping 87%, the school chose the book "Restart." This is a story about a boy falling from a roof and suffering from amnesia. The fun twist in the book is that this boy was a bully in his school before the accident. However, when he wakes, he turns to the crowd he once bullied. The story is humorous and an excellent life lesson in living with choices you've made.

Literacy Night was an event to raise awareness for reading and build the initiative to the highly anticipated visit from author Korman. By attending Literacy Night, students were entered in a raffle to win lunch with the author on the day of his visit. In addition, Adrian's donated 10% of the event's profits to the initiative.

In the One Island, One School, One Book program, each student received their personal copy of the book, "Restart." They were given a month to read the book. Each chapter was read by a guest reader for students to follow along. The students participated in different contests where they could earn gift cards and autographed books from the author. In addition, students were able to purchase T-shirts for the event to have a yearbook photograph taken with Korman. Students were also given the opportunity to pre-order books autographed by the author.



## DECA Goes Gold Together

The Veronica E. Connor Middle School's musical production of "The Little Mermaid Jr." was a huge hit with the community, and so was the carnation sale for the event.

GIHS DECA students Caralyn Reynolds and sister Emily Reynolds were busy raising awareness for childhood cancer through "Gold Together," an organization that supports and raises money for this important research. The two sisters have been organizing and developing fundraising and awareness opportunities through their DECA chapter for this cause. Carnations were ordered from local florist Flower a Day and sold during the musical with proceeds benefiting the organization.

Caralyn and Emily will be submitting a DECA plan to the state competition in February for their work in the Community Awareness DECA Project Management Event.

## Kaegebein Students Earn Reading Certificates

Kaegebein students were awarded reading certificates for successfully completing Assemblyman Angelo Morinello's Summer Reading Challenge.

Those pictured include Alexa Lewis, Addison Lewis, Nicholas Martineck, Chase Martineck, Daniel Pellitieri and Claire Bonnevie. Not pictured, but receiving an award is Sukhmani Kaur.



## GIHS to Stage Production of “Beauty and the Beast”

Students at Grand Island Senior High School are beginning rehearsals for this year’s winter musical, “Beauty and the Beast.” Performances take place Thursday, Jan. 30 and Friday, Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. There will also be a special character meet and greet on Saturday, Feb. 1 at 5 p.m. with a show to follow at 6 p.m. All performances will take place in the Grand Viking Theater, 1100 Ransom Road.

Step into the enchanted world of Broadway’s modern classic, Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast.” Based on the Academy Award-winning animated feature, the stage version includes all the wonderful



songs written by Alan Menken and the late Howard Ashman, along with new songs by Mr. Menken and Tim Rice. The classic story tells of Belle, a young woman in a provincial town, and the Beast, who is really a young prince trapped under the spell of an enchantress. If the Beast can learn to love and be loved, the curse will end, and he will be transformed into his former self. But time is running out. If the Beast does not learn his lesson soon, he and his household will be doomed for all eternity. This tale as old as time is filled with spectacular dance numbers and enchantment, Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast” offers a great opportunity to bring your entire family together for a night at the theatre.

Tickets are \$12 at the door and \$10 presale available for purchase online ([www.showtix4u.com](http://www.showtix4u.com)). Please check on the Grand Island school website for more information.



## W.E.B. Has Accomplished a Lot So Far!

W.E.B. (Where Everyone Belongs) is a new program at VCMS. It is a mentor program where selected eighth-grade students are paired up with a group of sixth-grade students to help them adjust and feel welcome to the middle school. Last year, the current 8th graders went through an application and interview process in order to be accepted as a W.E.B. leader. The 38 leaders met in June for a Spring Play Day. They got to know each other and start building positive relationships. This past summer, the leaders came in for two days of training. They did team building activities and learned what they would be doing with the 6th graders on orientation day.

On orientation day, the incoming 6th graders were treated to cheering and dancing done by the W.E.B. leaders, who also facilitated warm-up activities. Through the activities, the students gradually became more comfortable with each other. After some whole-group activities, the students separated into their individual W.E.B. groups and continued with activities designed to foster a relationship among them. Afterwards, the students took a themed tour around the building designed and led by their W.E.B. leaders. The students finished up by gathering once again as a large group to learn how easily one can be influenced by someone or something. The students also learned the importance of pulling each other up, instead of bringing one another down.

The relationships have continued to grow since then. The sixth-grade students and eighth-grade W.E.B. leaders have gotten together twice for academic follow-up meetings, in which they met in their small groups. The leaders facilitated activities to get the 6th graders to understand the importance of working together and having a positive attitude. There have also been two social follow-ups, including an ice cream social and a pumpkin decorating challenge. More events will be held throughout the year!

## Sidway Hosts Annual Parent University

Parents of Sidway students attended the annual Parent University recently. Mr. Joe Clem, licensed counselor, therapist and behaviorist, spoke on the topic of the Power of Language. Mr. Clem provided examples of how to increase connection and compliance in conversations and relationships with children.



Activities and childcare was provided, as well as refreshments and door prizes. It was a great evening for all who attended!





## VCMS Stages Production of “Little Mermaid Jr.”

Over 70 students from Connor Middle School participated in a colorful production of Disney’s “The Little Mermaid Jr.” The three showings delighted audiences with classic songs like “Kiss the Girl” and “Part of Your World,” and a standout production of “Under the Sea” with Disney-like puppetry and glow-in-the-dark special effects highlighting the performance.

Starting with auditions during the second week of school, the cast learned the entire 75-minute show in just over five weeks. While the primary goal of a musical is to tell the audience a great story, VCMS students got a chance to explore how all areas of the arts - music, dance, acting, visual arts and technology - come together to help achieve that goal. The cast learned how to help tell a story and focus the audience’s attention using level, planes and proximity, while the student-run tech crew worked with a professional sound designer to help tell the story behind the scenes through the use of audio technology and lighting.

Overall, “The Little Mermaid Jr.” was a fun experience for cast, crew and audiences alike. Everyone at VCMS is already looking forward to next year’s show ... whatever it may end up being!



## Huth Road Class Cares About Veterans

The students in Maureen Gambino’s second grade class at Huth Road Elementary wrote to veterans who are related to them. Each “Veteran of Honor” received a packet of letters in the mail written by all of the students! The class learned what freedom is, why Veterans Day is observed and the sacrifices that were made for our country.



## Sidway Students Get to Ride in a Fire Truck

Some lucky Sidway students recently won a ride to school on a fire truck! This made Halloween even more spectacular for these lucky students.



## Meet the New Administrators at Huth Road and GIHS

The Grand Island Central School District welcomed two new administrators recently - Huth Road Principal Maxwell Pikula and High School Assistant Principal Hillary Kretz-Harvey.



*Huth Road Principal Maxwell Pikula.*

Mr. Pikula has worked in Grand Island for 19 years. He was a special education teacher from 2000 to 2016 at Kaegerbein. He received his Master’s degree in Literacy and is also certified as a Literacy Specialist. In 2016, he became a Teacher

on Special Assignment in our Curriculum Department. A few months later, he became an assistant principal at the middle school. He became Huth Road’s principal over the summer



*High School Assistant Principal Hillary Kretz-Harvey.*

Mrs. Kretz-Harvey has been in education for 16 years, and she is excited to join the Viking family. Since joining GIHS in July, she has enjoyed learning about the strong culture, values and traditions at the high school. Prior to joining GIHS, she worked as a school psychologist and CSE chairperson at Fredonia High School. She graduated from SUNY Geneseo (B.A. in Psychology), Rochester Institute of Technology (M.S. and CAS in School Psychology), and Buffalo State College (CAS in School Building and School District Leadership). She resides in West Seneca with her husband Nate and their three children, Natalie, Rocco and Reece.

## Travel and Tourism Students Tour Hotel

The GIHS Travel and Tourism class took time around Thanksgiving to visit the Niagara Falls DoubleTree by Hilton. General Manager Scott Swagler and his team guided the students through all aspects of the hospitality industry and were impressed by the students' knowledge of hotel operations. Cheryl Chamberlain, business teacher, is proud to offer this course for college credit through the Niagara University NUSTEP program.



## Kaegebein Choir Sings for Holiday Shoppers

The Kaegebein Show Choir, Broadway Bound directed by Renee Michki, performed once again at the Boulevard Mall as a part of their Holiday Shopping Season Concert Series. The children performed a handful of selections from their Winter Choral Concert, which took place on Dec. 4.

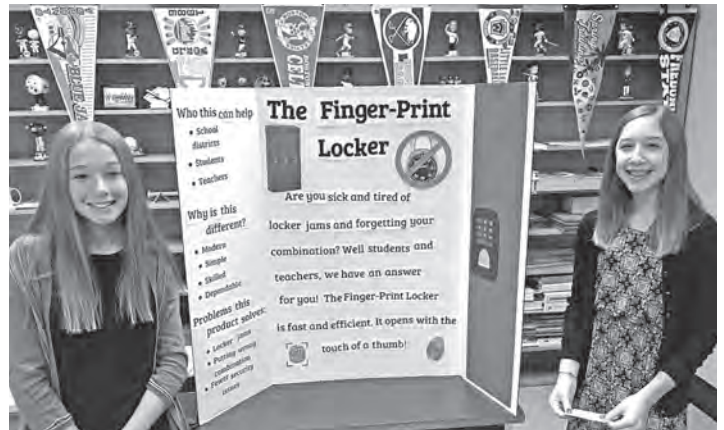


## JV DECA Holds Mini-Regionals Event

Innovation is a trait that will help our youngest generation succeed in our ever-changing world. Recently, the fifth annual JV DECA Mini-Regionals were held at Veronica E. Connor Middle School with 13 teams competing in Innovation Plan.

The top four teams will go on to compete at DECA States in Rochester on Feb. 26-28, 2020. Winners included the following groups: Elijah Linenfelter and Brady Hillman with "Table Pack;" Natalie Martineck, Jillian Manns and Hannah Susman with "The Frizzle;" Ryan Stravino and Preston Whitfield with "Klean Kicks;" and Alex Jensen and Hailey Martinez with "The Finger-Print Locker."

While "The Frizzle" trio will advance in Innovation Plan, the remaining six Mini-Regional winners were designated the driving forces behind the Dec. 13 Cocoa and Cookies with Santa. A special thank you goes out to the small business owners who graciously volunteered their morning to serve as judges: Luke Hess and Gabriella Bergstrom of Casey's Cabana, Jane and Richard Bergstrom of Casey's Cabana and Lauren and Brandon Mumaw of Solely Sport of WNY.



*Alex Jensen and Hailey Martinez with "The Finger-Print Locker."*



*Elijah Linenfelter and Brady Hillman with "Table Pack."*



*Natalie Martineck, Jillian Manns and Hannah Susman with "The Frizzle."*



*Ryan Stravino and Preston Whitfield with "Klean Kicks."*





# GIHS September & October Students of the Month

Congratulations goes out to the GIHS Viking Values Students of the Month for September 2019 and October 2019! The students and their corresponding departments that nominated them are as follows:

## SEPTEMBER

Grade 12: Gabriella Bergstrom (Social Studies), Marissa Lewis (Physical Education/Health), Sarah Moore (Music), Eliza Sarigiannis (Technology), Rachel Soluri (Math) and Olivia Williams (LOTE).

Grade 11: Jaime Lechner (Science) and Quinn Volk (English).

Grade 10: Caralyn Reynolds (Business) and Sophia Terlecky (Art).

## OCTOBER

Grade 12: Zachary Barrett (Technology), Carmela Bartolomeo (Math), Anna LeBrasseur (Business), Elzbieta Sorel (Art) and Abigail Blair (Social Studies).

Grade 11: Sheila Forbes (Physical Education), Ryan Pinzel (Music) and Molly Hegarty (LOTE).

Grade 10: Megan Lavis (English).

Grade 9: Branden Groce (Science).

Pictured with these students are Michael V. Lauria, High School Principal; Hillary Kretz-Harvey, High School Assistant Principal; and Karen Surdyke, High School Assistant Principal.



*The September Students of the Month.*



*The October Students of the Month.*

## Do You Love Someone Who Struggles with Addiction?

The Wellness Committee is excited to share that the Family Support Center has reestablished a relationship with Save the Michaels of the World Inc. (STM), an organization that provides support in many forms to families who are battling the disease of addiction. STM will be offering a support group for any individuals with a loved one in active addiction or early recovery. The first meeting is scheduled for Jan. 22 at 6:30 p.m. at the Golden Age Center. STM will also be hosting a presentation to educate the Grand Island community about their organization and services on Jan. 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the Viking Theatre.

Additionally, the Wellness Committee and the Family Support Center are researching the opportunity to partner with Horizon Health Services to offer students and their families the opportunity to receive counseling services during the school day. Horizons specializes in mental health and substance abuse counseling.

For more about these programs, contact Cheryl Cardone, assistant superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services, at [cherylcadone@gicsd.org](mailto:cherylcadone@gicsd.org) or (716) 773-8816 or Jessica Hutchings, District social worker, at [jessicahutchings@gicsd.org](mailto:jessicahutchings@gicsd.org) or (716) 773-8853.

## Kaegebein PTA Bringing Fun-Filled Events to School

Kaegebein PTA has been hard at work bringing programs and events to the school! So far this school year, the PTA has brought in an assembly on different rainforest animals. Students and teachers were able to interact while learning about some of the amazing creatures found in the rainforest.

In the future, there is skateboard science to look forward to. This event has been brought to Kaegebein before and has always been a huge success! Students love seeing the amazing tricks and stunts the people do, while also learning about all the science and skill that goes on in order to be successful.

Thank you to everyone in the PTA who makes these educational and fun experiences possible!



## Sidway Students Learn Values

Sidway students were taught how to demonstrate the Sidway values on the school bus, in the hallways and in the cafeteria. Students made pledges to follow the important values: Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe and Be Compassionate.





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## School & Business Alliance Holds Golf Outing

The Grand Island School & Business Alliance (GISBA) held its 7th Annual Golf Outing at River Oaks Golf Club. The tournament was scramble format. All proceeds from the golf outing go to benefit students who participate in activities or events sponsored by the group.

GISBA's main purpose is to connect students to real-life experiences in the business world and provide scholarship opportunities to students who plan to attend college, enter a trade school, enlist in the military or enter the workforce. The organization is a joint venture between the District and the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce.

Next year's golf outing is slated for July 20, 2020.

## Sidway Holds Reading is Fun Night

What could be more fun for kindergarten and first grade friends than to come back to school on a chilly fall night to celebrate the joy of reading? Recently, nearly 100 Sidway children brought their parents to school to join in a whole group "read aloud" of Marc Simmont's "The Stray Dog," led by Sidway teachers and event co-chairs Stephanie Hall and Karolyn Ivancie.

Sidway's PTA donated the books using funds raised through various events. Following the story, the children participated in a singalong, featuring an original song capturing the story's central themes, created by music teacher Christine Clendenen.

Afterward, the children and their parents were divided into small groups to learn from classroom teachers about the magic of how reading a book again and again helps it become "an old favorite storybook." Parents had the opportunity to see and hear the universal language used within the classroom during Reading and Writing Workshop. In addition, they received a folder filled with resources to promote literacy at home.

The children and their parents enjoyed a snack while reading a library book together. A special guest appearance by Paws for Love topped off the evening and offered the opportunity for the children to read books with a number of therapy dogs who visited school that night as well.



Sidway Principal Denise Dunbar and her therapy dog, Pearl, share books with Sidway kindergartners (left to right) Lainey Amo, Natalie Reed, Charlotte Scarafia and twins Lucy and Grace Ceccato.



Jacqueline Blinzler reads the book "Frogs" to therapy dog Pearl.