

The Grand Island Central School District BRIDGE

www.grandislandschools.org

The Community Newsletter for the Grand Island Central School District

DECA Holds Back-to-School Supply Drive

Grand Island DECA - in partnership with the Rotary Club and the High School PTSA - hosted a school supply drive to support the members of our community who have been impacted by COVID-19. Supplies are being donated to students in our district and are being dropped off at each of the primary schools for distribution, making sure every student on Grand Island has all the materials they need to start the school year!

This idea was formed as Megan Lavis, Riley Patterson and Bethany Kulikowski became Grand Island DECA officers. They wanted to make sure that DECA was extremely involved in our community this year due to this unprecedented time when our community needs each other the most. With school on everyone's mind, they worried that some families may have trouble with purchasing school supplies due to layoffs, decreased business, or any other difficult situations that have come about because of the COVID-19 crisis. The officers want every student to have an amazing school year, so why not start with school supplies!

Stay Up-To-Date with Reopening Plans

Please visit www.grandislandschools.org for the latest information regarding school reopening plans throughout the year.

Follow Us!

For the latest school news and information, follow us on Twitter, @GrandIslandCSD.



Stately Graduation for 2020 Seniors

Beaver Island State Park was the setting for a very unconventional graduation ceremony for the GIHS Class of 2020 as this year's pandemic disrupted the conventional plans for the event.

Cheryl Chamberlain, graduation coordinator, met with administration during the first week and every week thereafter when school days turned into online learning in March. "Our vision had to change and ideas just started flowing with the online committee made up of students and concerned staff at the high school," Chamberlain said.

Mark Gorton, AV Coordinator, was an amazing asset during this time as he made it possible to put the entire ceremony on an AM radio station. The event was livestreamed with the help of WNY Athletics, a group suggested by Student Council President Maykala Robinson.

"It really was a team effort with help from outside groups like the GI Recreation Department and The Parish Players with huge donations of equipment and stages respectively," Chamberlain noted.

Looking back on the 10 weeks of planning, the program came together in about two weeks with the NYS Parks Department granting approval, with help from State Assembly member Angelo Morinello. Chamberlain asked faculty and staff to assist the day of and was overjoyed at the response for aid.

Chamberlain also noted, "Our employees at Grand Island from Building and Grounds, administration, teachers, staff, along with the School Board members and parents made this an event unlike any other in Western New York and we are proud of our graduates' accomplishments!"

The advisors of the Class of 2020, Amy Boutet and Julie Bowen, were with Chamberlain every step of the way and announced the graduates as they went on stage to accept their diplomas.



Lucas Kruse takes a selfie (photo by Larry Austin).



Anna LeBrasseur (photo by Larry Austin)



Louis Genovese (photo by Larry Austin)



Paul Singh (photo by Larry Austin)

Message From The Superintendent

Dear Grand Island School District Families:

I hope this letter finds everyone safe, healthy and well. Throughout the summer, we have worked tirelessly on our District's school reopening plan, which is available online at www.grandislandschools.org/reopening.

As you may know, we employed a multi-layered planning process that included over 100 stakeholders from across the district, working in teams to make sure that our plans are comprehensive and minimize health risks to students, staff and families. Our committees included students, parents, community leaders, teachers, staff, administrators and Board of Education members. These stakeholders met to discuss the safest way to reopen our schools. In addition to these committees, we held 3 parent forums, a forum for all of our faculty and another forum for all of our staff.

With schools open, we have students attending school, in-person, using the Hybrid model and students using the 100% remote model, referred to as the Viking Virtual model.

Our Hybrid reopening plan requires:

- cloth face coverings to be worn by students, staff and faculty;
- each student, faculty member and staff to be provided with cloth and disposable face coverings by the district;
- instructional staff to schedule mask breaks as appropriate;
- parents, guardians and employees to complete a temperature screening each morning prior to their child boarding a school bus or being dropped off at school or the employee arriving at work;
- employees to conduct a health screening and attest to their healthiness each day;
- parents and guardians to complete a digital health screening form each morning prior to their child boarding a bus or being dropped off at school; and
- students to be divided by the alphabet (A-L and M-Z) and accommodations made for blended families.

In our Hybrid plan, students attend school with an altered schedule to reduce student population within the building and each classroom to approximately 50%. Students attend school in-person for two days a week following an A/B cohort model.

- Students with the last name beginning with the letters A-L attend school 2 days (Mon-Thurs) while the students with the last name beginning with the letters M-Z are home on Monday and Thursday.
- Students with the last name beginning with the letters M-Z attend school 2 days (Tues-Fri) while students with the last names beginning with A-L are home on Tuesday and Friday.
- Wednesday is a day where all students are home (Hybrid Virtual and 100% Viking Virtual) but teachers are available synchronously to support our students.
- Students who attend our Life Skills Self-Contained program, as well as our UPK program at Sidway, attend school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, our students follow a synchronous schedule as outlined above.

When students are home in the Hybrid Virtual or 100% Viking

Virtual plan, they have access and opportunity to the greatest extent possible to:

- teacher directed instruction within the Google Classroom environment;
- the same curriculum, standards and performance indicators;
- specialized academic support as appropriate;
- IEP accommodations, related services and academic intervention services (AIS);
- daily synchronous academic and advisory support with a faculty specialist;
- utilize a District mobile device such as a Chromebook or iPad. All students grade 2-12 have mobile devices; we are waiting for devices to be delivered for students in grades K and 1.

To reduce density on school buses, whether we are fully on campus or following a hybrid model, we have implemented new start and end times for our schools. They are as follows:

- VCMS: Buses drop off at 7:05 AM. School begins at 7:15 AM. School ends at 1:25 PM. Buses depart at 1:35 PM.
- GIHS: Buses drop off at 7:48 AM. School begins at 7:58 AM. School ends at 2:18 PM. Buses depart at 2:26 PM.
- Huth and Kaegebein: Buses drop off (first 10) at 8:28 AM. Buses drop off (last four) at 8:35 AM. School begins at 8:43 AM. School ends at 2:53 PM. Buses depart (first 10) at 3:06 PM. Buses depart (last four) at 3:15 PM.
- Sidway: Buses drop off at 9:15 AM. School begins at 9:25 AM. School ends at 3:35 PM. Buses depart at 3:45 PM.

You may have heard recently that Governor Cuomo has given the green light for Low Risk sports to begin starting September 21, 2020. Although he has given his approval, the next phase of decisions will come from the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSHSAA) and the various sections of the state where competition occurs. We will keep you updated regarding any decisions that are announced by the NYSPHSAA and Section 6.

Currently, we are not hosting any in-person after school extra-curricular activities. Our main focus when students are dismissed is cleaning and disinfecting all areas of our school. The only before and after school programming that is continuing is the childcare program operated by Just for Kids.

The health, safety, and welfare of our entire school community remains our primary focus. We respect that everyone has differing opinions and perspectives about COVID-19 and the requirements necessary for schools to reopen in a hybrid model. Our district must follow the guidance, mandates, and precautions established by the Governor, NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), and the NYS Education Department (NYSED).

It should be recognized that our district will take every precaution and action possible to prevent the potential spread of the virus and to create a safe and healthy environment for all parties in our school community. It is strongly recommended in the guidance from



*Brian Graham, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools*

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Message From Your BOE President

Hello fellow islanders and thank you for reading the fall edition of The Bridge. This is certainly going to be a year full of adaptation as we begin to implement the hybrid model plan for each school and our remote learning opportunities for students.

Thank you to the community members and parents, support staff, teachers, administrators, and fellow board members that have served on any of the reopening committees. Additionally, thank you to all of the parents that have been patient and understanding as we navigate through this hard work. Given the guidance Grand Island Central School District must follow from the NYS Education Department, Governor Cuomo, and the NYS Health Department, a new, flexible growth mindset around what school can look like this year will be paramount as we move through changes or difficulties together.

The board received many questions and emails from parents regarding the reopening of schools. We spent a great deal of time compiling these questions ahead of the board meeting, and Dr. Graham answered the questions from the community and from the board during the Board Report section of the meeting on August 24. A video of that meeting and all of our reopening documents are available at www.grandislandschools.org/reopening. In addition to letters sent to families on July 31 and August 28 with reopening updates, Dr. Graham held several virtual Parent Forums (Zoom has a 250 person limit) during August to explain the documents you can review on the Reopening tab of the website. Reopening forums for teachers and SRPs were held as well, and faculty and staff returned to our buildings ahead of students for three full days to prepare for our reopening.

You may have heard recently that Governor Cuomo has given the green light for low-risk sports including tennis, soccer, cross country, field hockey, and swimming to begin practice and play effective September 21, 2020. However, travel for practice or play is prohibited outside of a school's region. More high-risk sports such as football, wrestling, rugby, hockey, and volleyball may practice but not play until further authorization is given. Although Governor Cuomo has given his approval, the next phase of decisions will come from the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSHSAA) and the various sections of the state where competition occurs. Please continue to check the website regarding any decisions or updates that are announced by the NYSPHSAA and Section 6.

In closing, I am excited about the reopening of schools and look forward to feedback as we navigate through these challenging times together. Please understand that we all want the same thing; we want our schools opened Monday through Friday, to see athletes playing sports again, and to watch performances of our talented musicians. The health and safety of each student is at the forefront of decision-making, and the district has been working diligently to prepare for our students. Thank you for sending your children to the Grand Island School District and entrusting our teachers, administrators, and support staff with their education and development.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashli Dreher
School Board President



Kaegebein Welcomes New Principal

Kaegebein Elementary School is excited to welcome Felicia Pallaci as its new principal.



"I am truly honored to accept this new role and look forward to working with everyone, in efforts to do whatever it takes to advance the achievements of all students," Ms. Pallaci said. "The elementary years are critical for our students and what happens during these years has a lasting impression on their growth and development. As the principal, I want to provide a positive and supportive environment to the students, faculty and staff."

Ms. Pallaci said her goals are to foster collaborative professional relationships, build a foundation to continuously improve, gain an understanding of the practices and policies established at Kaegebein, and to continue to successfully collaborate with Huth Road Elementary School. She previously served as Dean of Students at Veronica E. Connor Middle School.

Assistant Principal Joins VCMS Family

Veronica E. Connor Middle School welcomes Adam Buffomante as the new assistant principal.



Mr. Buffomante joined VCMS from the Charter School of Applied Technology, serving as the Assistant Principal and Dean of Students over the last two years. He began his career in 2005 as an elementary teacher at Pinnacle Charter School, Enterprise Charter School and South Buffalo Charter School. During this time, he served as a classroom teacher, assistant dean of students, behavior intervention specialist, modified basketball coach and athletic director, among other duties.

VCMS is excited to have Mr. Buffomante join their team of "difference makers."

Superintendent Message *continued from Page 2*

NYSDOH, NYSED, and Dr. Burstein, Commissioner of Health of Erie County, that students wear a mask at all times and as much as possible. Wearing a mask is the most widely held successful means of preventing potential spread of the virus.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership with our district.

Sincerely,

Brian Graham, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Sidway Holds Moving Up Day for UPK Students

During Sidway's final student pick up for UPK students in the 2019-20 school year, families decorated their cars with heartfelt notes and balloons. Parents pulled their vehicles up and materials were placed in the families' trunks by Mrs. Roussi, Mrs. Samland and Mrs. Dunbar. Each of the 36 UPK students were presented with a certificate of completion, a balloon and a pair of sunglasses. Parents created a motorcade, parading around Sidway, honking their horns and making it fun for the mini-graduates.

The following day, Mrs. Maureen Roussi and Mrs. Linda Samland hosted an end of the year music singalong. While it wasn't the typical end of the year celebration, it was a happy celebration and brought closure to the students.



Grand Island in the Spotlight at NYDECA

There were a number of Grand Island students who received recognition for their efforts at the 2020 DECA State Career Conference. Emily Cohen, Luke Hess and Ben Spiesz earned first place in their category. The trio of Megan Lavis, Bethany Kulikowski and Riley Patterson were elated to make ICDC for their 5K Spooky Sprint to raise money for the Suicide Prevention LifeLine. Wil Atkinson and Vicki Huang were super excited to make it for the Hospitality Team competition, and Grand Island DECA President Gabby Bergstrom was pleased to compete in Nashville and represent New York as the outgoing New York DECA president!

Middle school students were recognized in the top 10 of their event, and some high schoolers, as well. Mary Jane Fonte was recognized for her service to NYDECA. Thanks goes out to everyone for your continued support of DECA, which prepares our students for career and college readiness!



Huth Student Selected as a 2019-20 Artist of the Month

The Grand Island Art Department proudly selected Layla Oursler as a 2019-20 K-12 Artist of the Month.

Layla, a student at Huth Road Elementary, is a member of the Art Club. She has always enjoyed art for as long as she can remember, but she became more serious about her work in fourth grade. Layla is proud of her "Starry Night" painting she created by emulating the style of artist Vincent van Gogh on a canvas board. Her work is always detailed, with very neat craftsmanship. She takes pride in her work and prefers realistic art and drawing with colored pencils. Her family is very supportive and has encouraged her to keep creating art. She was even paid to create a painting.

Layla would love to become an art teacher someday. Best of luck and keep on creating!





Huth Road Students Start Viking Coffee Cart

During the 2019-20 school year, Mrs. Miller's Life Skills class at Huth Road Elementary started up their own small business - the Viking Coffee Cart! Throughout the week, the students distributed and collected order forms and fulfilled the orders with the correct K-Cups. Every Friday, they collected the money and delivered coffee or tea to each room. They even offered two different delivery times!



This was an amazing opportunity for the students to gain valuable life skills such as sequencing steps in an activity, fulfilling an order, learning appropriate social skills, reading and comprehension, practicing good hygiene, and money counting and handling. Our faculty and staff expressed great interest in this business and every once in a while a sweet treat was offered as well! We wanted to express gratitude to all of our donors who helped make this business opportunity possible!



Academy of Finance Students Attend Tech Conference

Students from the Academy of Finance attended the inaugural Western New York Information Technology Conference at Erie Community College. Some of the topics included Microsoft 365, Google Extensions and Apps, Basic HTML and CSS, Goosechase and Creating a Tech Integration Team.

Students were able to learn from other schools how to implement a technology help desk for students and teachers. This will provide future opportunities for work-based learning at Grand Island High School.



VCMS InterAct Club Holds "Carry On" Drive

Packing before a vacation or big move can be stressful for anyone. Unfortunately, frequent packing can be a common reality for many children in foster care. This task can become more burdensome when a child has nothing but a plastic shopping or garbage bag to carry their only possessions in.

The students in the Veronica E. Connor Middle InterAct Club set out to change that. In their "Carry On" campaign, students collected luggage, duffle bags, and toiletries to put in the hands of children who could use them most. The Grand Island community showed overwhelming support, contributing more than 100 suitcases and duffle bags to the campaign. Hundreds more toiletry bags, soaps, toothbrushes, and feminine care products were sorted by students and prepared for delivery.

Pictured are VCMS InterAct Club members Brooke Warner, Bridgette Warner, Kyleigh Ulrich, Kennady Ulrich, Zoe Weselak, Gracie Weselak, Connor Muehlbauer, Oliver Schmidt, Luke Gworek, Jake Hazel, and Jackson Schmidt.



GIHS Students Head to DECA Regional Competition

Over 40 students competed at the DECA Region 12 competition at Lockport High School. This was the first step toward a spring season full of state and national DECA competitions with students from all over the state and country.

DECA is a competitive business and marketing club that helps students to be career and college ready, regardless of what they choose to do in their future. The competition aspect of DECA promotes critical thinking and presentation skills along with problem solving and communication to judges from all aspects of business - key components of any future career.

Special thanks to the Grand Island-sponsored judges: Katie Miller, Mary Cooke, Yaling Chen, Rich Bergstrom, Ryan McCarthy and Dr. Kevin Augustine. For more information on DECA and the National Academy of Finance at Grand Island, email cherylchamberlain@gicsd.org.



Judges Dr. Kevin Augustine and Ryan McCarthy, who judged the Team Entrepreneurship competitive event with Amy Boutet and Cheryl Chamberlain.



Group picture of the GIHS student competitors.

W.E.B. Leaders Make Fleece Blankets

During the 2019-20 school year, sixth graders and their eighth-grade W.E.B. leaders gathered in the middle school cafeteria for a W.E.B. social. The goal of this social was to celebrate "International Random Act of Kindness Day."

At the social, each W.E.B. group made a no-sew fleece blanket. The blankets were donated to the residents at Our Lady of Victory (OLV). The students learned how to work as a team to complete the blankets in a short period of time. In addition, they learned the value of a selfless act and the positive impact it has on the person giving out the kind gesture.





VCMS Hosts W.E.B. Leadership Conference

During the 2019-20 school year, Veronica E. Connor Middle School hosted the Where Everyone Belongs (W.E.B.) Western New York Regional Leadership Conference. Over 400 middle schoolers from 10 area middle schools attended the conference.

All of the students in attendance were W.E.B. leaders in their schools. This was a great opportunity for the W.E.B. leaders to connect with other students going through similar experiences as themselves. The students talked about the ways in which they connected and helped sixth graders transition to middle school successfully. In addition, they discussed some of the obstacles they faced as W.E.B. leaders and brainstormed ways to overcome those challenges. The students left the conference with many new ideas and felt rejuvenated in their mission as W.E.B. leaders.

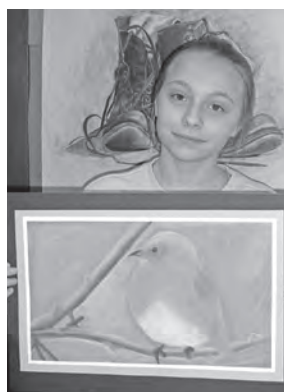


VCMS Artists Display at Grand Island Memorial Library

As part of the recent "Youth in Art Month," a national observance which recognizes and celebrates the work of school-age children, artwork by Veronica E. Connor Middle School students was featured in a display at the Grand Island Memorial Library.

Youth in Art Month is an annual celebration which recognizes the importance and value of art education to student learning as well as encouraging community support of quality programs in our schools. Youth Art Month provides an opportunity to recognize the unique skills and abilities that are developed by students through their involvement in the visual arts and focuses on the ways in which the arts enhance student learning in all content areas.

The artwork showcased highlighted the many ways in which middle-level students use art as a form of self-expression, creatively solving problems by using a wide variety of media to express and find their unique artistic voice. Pieces on display included block print symmetry designs inspired by Islamic art, pastel paintings, perspective op-art creations and student self-portraits, all by eighth grade artists.



Pictured with a pastel painting is Ava Marsala.

VCMS Chess Club Shines in Competitions

The Grand Island Chess Club competed at the Ninth Annual Blizzard Bowl Scholastic Chess Tournament, where over 20 teams from Western New York came out to compete for the Blizzard Bowl trophy cups. Both our U.S.C.F. rated team and our unrated team took home second place trophy cups. Over 75 players competed with their teams. Special congratulations go out to Tanner Hawley, Jierui Jiao, Abi Selvakumar, and John Paul Szczublewski in the USCF rated section and Faiz Cheema, Mithil Kara, Ismail Masoodi, Ahmet Savas, Ryan Scott, Caden Sharky, and Asher Wright in the unrated section. John Paul also tied for second place individually in the rated section, and Ismail took fifth place individually in the unrated section.

The Chess Club also hosted the WNY Scholastic Chess Tournament where 15 teams and about 70 players competed for the top three individual trophies as well as team trophies in both the USCF rated and unrated sections. Our unrated team took first place and our rated team tied for third place. A couple of our chess players also won individual trophies.



Pictured are the Blizzard Bowl trophy recipients from Grand Island.

Operation Casey's Corner Helps Out Navy Sailors

When business teachers Cheryl Chamberlain asked her Entrepreneur Class what to do with the snack inventory at their high school store Casey's Corner, students replied, "Donate it!"



With that in mind, Chamberlain saw a need on social media with former GI student and Navy sailor James Weatherston. James serves on the U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt and recently has been in the news as the aircraft carrier has been affected by the coronavirus. He and his shipmates were in need of books, toiletries and snacks and Chamberlain, with the help of her husband Greg, got together and on the phone. "The donations just started coming," Chamberlain remarked.

All in all, Island Ship Center, Cappellino Cadillac, the Casey Family and numerous others donated toward a nice sized shipment for the crew. What started as a distance learning project, turned into a grand idea! It is what #VikingStrong is all about.



JV DECA Holds Cocoa and Cookies with Santa

Growing up on Grand Island, we are often seen as having "perfect" lives. True, our graduation rate from Grand Island High School is considered high at 90% and the violent crime rate is low at only one-third of the national average, but not all problems within our community are transparent.

A visit from the Family Justice Center during a District Superintendent's Staff Development Day brought to light the growing problem of domestic violence on Grand Island, despite its seemingly utopian reputation. Thus, when the JV DECA Club talked about combining an information sharing venue with a community service project, Cocoa and Cookies with Santa was born. As the only JV DECA chapter in Western New York, the group was excited about the opportunity to start a yearly tradition at Veronica E. Connor Middle School, which not only brings joy to children during the holidays, but hope to families struggling with secretive sorrows. If we can get the word out that a crisis with domestic violence exists, maybe those suffering will feel more empowered and less alone, seeking help for themselves and their children.

Cocoa and Cookies with Santa combined the old-fashioned story of Santa Claus and his giving heart with a modern day need for funding to renovate and staff a new facility within the community. Each child received two suckers from Santa, one to keep and one to give away. It was so much fun to hear from the children to whom they would give their gift. The JV DECA students responsible for organizing the event had simultaneously been working diligently on 20-page manuals on Project Management in Sales and Community Service. The six eighth-grade students would present their projects in front of judges in hopes of placing at the New York State DECA Conference against freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors in high school. Signed and dedicated copies of Doug MacGregor's "Morgan McKinney's Bigger-Than-Life Adventure" were sold before and after the event to help raise money for the DECA States Conference expenses.

Thanks goes out to the families that attended the event, GIHS DECA, Diana Lipp, Tops Friendly Markets, Grand Island's Tim Horton's and teachers/staff from VCMS for their generous donations. So much was learned by each eighth grader who helped throughout the process.



Santa with AJ Spanbauer.



Receiving the giant check for \$100 is Ava Thomas of the Family Justice Center from Alex Jensen, Hailey Martinez and Elijah Linenfelser.



Luke Winarski with Coleman, Joseph and Emmett Kilgore.



French Students Travel to Quebec City

During the 2019-20 school year, French teacher Jennifer Stachnik led a group of seventh, eighth, and ninth grade French students on a trip to Quebec City for a three-night, four-day adventure. The students were completely immersed in Quebecois culture and the French language. The students explored Vieux-Québec, or “Old Quebec,” a picturesque and quaint part of the city which dates back to the 1600s. Here, the students shopped, visited the famous Chateau Frontenac, and some even braved the large toboggan chute that was set up on the Terrasse Dufferin in front of the Chateau Frontenac.

The students visited the incredible Hôtel de Glace, which is a functioning hotel that is completely made of ice and snow. At this same venue, students enjoyed tubing and ice skating at the Village Vacances Valcartier, the largest winter playground in North America.

The group had the unique experience learning how to drive their own dogsled! They also enjoyed the classic Quebec scenery while snowshoeing in the countryside. The students visited other historically and culturally significant sites such as the impressive Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré and Atelier Paré, a woodcarving shop and museum.

The group wrapped up the weekend with a visit to the Érablière du Lac Beauport. This is a sugar shack where the students learned about the process of making maple syrup and they were able to sample different maple products. The sugar shack served a traditional Quebecois dinner that included traditional folk dancing and music.

The students and chaperones all had an unforgettable weekend and made new memories that will last a lifetime.



VCMS Student is a 2019-20 Artist of the Month

Kaleigh Lockett, an accelerated student at Veronica E. Connor Middle School, was selected as a 2019-20 K-12 Artist of the Month.

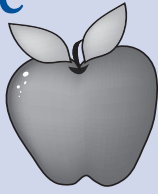
Kaleigh said, “Art is important because it is used to express feelings and emotions. It is much easier doing that with art than with words.” Kaleigh is inspired to make art by the world around her. Nature, animals and looking at the work of other artists are frequent sources of inspiration for her. Her favorite style of art is Realism, a type of art in which Kaleigh is particularly adept. She is pictured here with her pastel hummingbird painting, realistically rendered and inspired by the artist Georgia O’Keeffe.

Kaleigh’s art teacher said that she is an exceptional student who always strives to do her very best. Her work depicts a great deal of thoughtful preparation, precision, and a meticulous command of media. Coming from a family where mom, dad and grandma are all artistic as well has allowed Kaleigh to explore the arts through family trips to museums and showered her with support, guidance and encouragement in all of her artistic endeavors. While she is not planning an art career at this point, Kaleigh is certain that it is something she will pursue and a way of viewing the world that will always remain important to her.

The Art Department is proud of Kaleigh’s exceptional accomplishments and was pleased to select her as a K-12 Artist of the Month.



Delta Kappa Gamma Presents Good Apple Award



The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is a professional honorary society of women educators. The society promotes professional and personal growth of its members and excellence in education. The Good Apple Award is given annually to a non-teacher who dedicates him/herself to students and learning. Each year, this award is presented to a School Related Personnel from the North Tonawanda or Grand Island School District by a member of the Gamma Delta Chapter.

Congratulations goes out to Kaegebein Teacher Aide, Ms. Lee A. Burns! Two adjectives come to mind when thinking of Ms. Burns, the first being charismatic. Lee exudes a love of life and others through her smile and caring nature. She has a way of drawing others toward her with her genuine concern for the welfare to those that she encounters. Whether agreeing to be an Assistant Girl Scout Troop Leader in the past, or during her 17 years as a Grand Island Personal or Teacher Aide, Lee has always put the emotional and educational needs of others first. No stressor in her outside life could keep her from reaching out to many a friend or colleague who have been experiencing personal challenges in their lives.

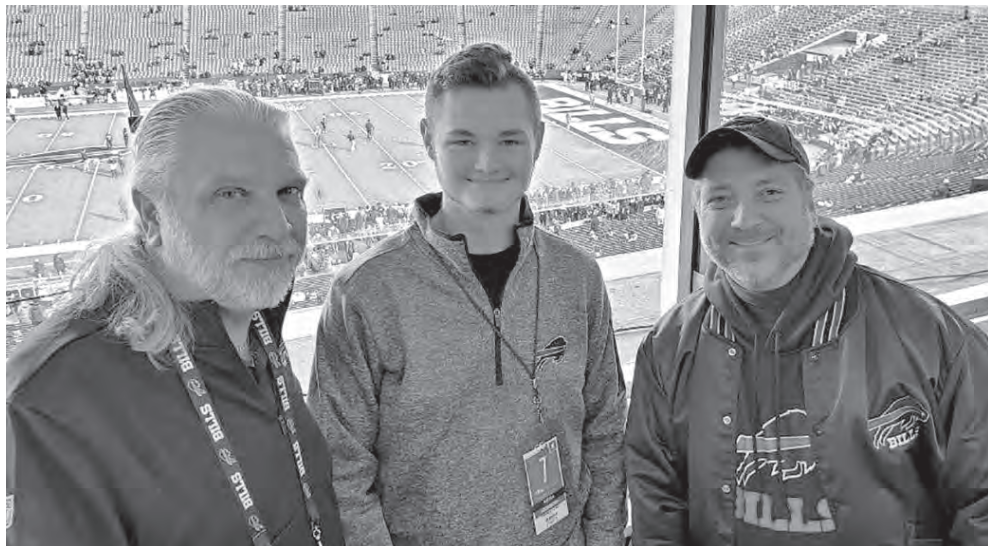
Additionally, Lee is extremely positive. She faces each and every day with a newness and vibrancy that encourages those around her to feel rejuvenated. She has a handle on the learning styles and special needs of the students AND the teachers which she assists. She has been more than willing to change buildings with her students and work just as cooperatively and enthusiastically in her new work situation. Such positivity is much needed in a situation dealing with individuals with special needs.

GIHS Student Shadows Bills A/V Technician

The Business program at Grand Island High School offers students unique opportunities in the community. GIHS Class of 2020 student Connor Raine had the opportunity to shadow Entercom Communications audio visual technician for WGR550 and Grand Island resident Todd Broady at a Bills home football game. Connor had the opportunity to join Mr. Broady and his team in the Radio Broadcasting booth.

During his time there, Connor was exposed to the various elements of broadcasting. His role at the game involved assisting Mr. Broady with all aspects of production, such as setting up and taking down the booth, scheduling on-air time and keeping track of player performance. Connor was also invited to the post-game press conference where he listened to Coach Sean McDermott and Quarterback Josh Allen.

Connor plans to study sports media and communications in college and will take this experience with him. Special thanks goes out to Mr. Derek Boyko, vice president of Communications of the Buffalo Bills, for allowing Connor to be a part of the Bills production team for a day!



Todd Broady, Connor Raine and Mark Gorton.

Essential Workers as Career Role Models



Distance learning required the Grade 8 Family and Consumer Science curriculum to be adapted to meet the times at hand. Rather than writing a persuasive essay on any desirable career and then posting it on the bulletin board outside of the cafeteria for others to read and learn about, students were asked to research careers currently represented by our brave and dedicated essential workers.

The results of the research were then incorporated by the students into letters of gratitude shared from medical professionals to cashiers, across the country from Missouri to Virginia. Despite their exhaustion and endless hours, many of the essential workers immediately wrote back to our students, answering questions posed of them and expressing their sincere appreciation for the energizing effect of being recognized by today's teens. Students were able to practice their ELA skills while thanking heroes of this COVID-19 pandemic.



NTHS Welcomes GIHS Students

A total of 157 students from 27 Western New York high schools were inducted into Erie 1 BOCES' chapter of the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS).

The 2019-20 cohort includes 13 members of the Class of 2020 from Grand Island High School. Those students include - with their Erie 1 BOCES Career and Technical Education program - Kenneth Beittenmiller, Video Production and Recording Arts; Alexis Labin, Fashion Design Technology; Carly Pannullo, Cosmetology; Casey Dummitt, Culinary Arts; Emily Reynolds, Sports Science Careers; Jonathan Dingey, Auto Technician Training; Julia Mysliwiec, Culinary Arts; Matthew Newbould, Auto Technician Training; Matthew Wolfe, Welding; Patricia Tavarez, Culinary Arts; Phillip Thomas, Sports Science Careers; Ruby Chen, Cosmetology; and Stephen Palmeri, Welding.



Grand Island Harkness Center students (from left): Alexis Labin, Kenneth Beittenmiller.

In order to qualify for acceptance into NTHS, a student must be nominated by his or her teacher, have a 90 percent or higher average in their career and technical education (CTE) course, and maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of 85. Furthermore, students must demonstrate skill development and leadership and hone their responsibility and good character. NTHS takes a holistic approach to evaluating students' success in the classroom.



Grand Island Kenton Center students (from left): Front row - Ruby Chen, Phillip Thomas, Patricia Tavarez; back row - Casey Dummitt, Carly Pannullo, Stephen Palmeri, Julia Mysliwiec, Matthew Newbould. Not pictured: Emily Reynolds, Jonathan Dingey, Matthew Wolfe.

GIHS DECA Announces Officer Team

The Grand Island High School DECA Club is traveling into a school year full of positivity and hope.

"This year's team is spectacular and we have a great plan for success in DECA," advisor Cheryl Chamberlain remarked. Chamberlain, along with her Business Department members Amy Boutet and Christopher Simpson, know that business is full of change and they are at the forefront in business education to change with it.

The co-curricular program with DECA, and now the National Academy, will aid students to excel in whatever the future holds. The department members have been on numerous virtual conferences this summer gearing up for the new school year.

For more information on how DECA can help your child, email cherylchamberlain@gicsd.org. The officer team includes Michael Christensen, Bethany Kulikowski, Ally Czerwinka, Megan Lavis, Riley Patterson, Tommy Fabiano, Logan Sionko, Emily Cohen and Jackson Jones.



Friendly Neighbor Makes Hats for Crossing Guards

Jill Travis drove by one of the crossing guards at Kaegebein on a chilly day and realized they stand in the cold for extended periods of time. She decided to help them out. She used fluorescent orange and yellow yarn to make caps for all five of the crossing guards.

Pictured are crossing guards Bonnie Peete and Maria Suarez standing with Mrs. Travis and Mary Haggerty, principal of Kaegebein Elementary.

GITA Donates to Neighbor's Foundation

Mike Grosso, Grand Island Teachers' Association (GITA) vice president, and Mike Murray, GITA president, presented David Conboy, president of the Neighbor's Foundation (GINF), with a donation of \$3,725 from the GITA. This donation will be used by the GINF to provide assistance, primarily food, to Grand Island families in need of support, especially during these difficult times we find ourselves in now. The teachers of the Grand Island schools were pleased to have a way to show their support for the families of Grand Island that are in need.



GITA officers Mike Grosso and Mike Murray present a donation to David Conboy of the Neighbor's Foundation while practicing social distancing.



GI Named Best Community for Music Education for 9th Consecutive Year

The Grand Island Central School District has been honored with the “Best Communities for Music Education” designation from the National Association of Making Music (NAMM) Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. This marks the ninth consecutive year that Grand Island has received this honor.

Now in its 21st year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Grand Island answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities and support for the music programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by the Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

“The Grand Island community has had a decades-long tradition of supporting music for students,” said Martin T. Allen, High School Band director. “The music education of Grand Island’s students is a community effort with a phenomenal community, administrative and parental support. This level of support has been unwavering for over 50 years! This is truly an award for the entire community.”



This award recognizes that Grand Island is leading the way with learning opportunities as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA recommends music and the arts as important elements of a well-rounded education for all children.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music. After two years of music education, research found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically-trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to perceive speech in a noisy background,

pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound; young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers. Social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

A 2015 study supported by the NAMM Foundation, “Striking A Chord,” also outlined the overwhelming desire by teachers and parents for music education opportunities for all children as part of the school curriculum.

Grand Island’s music department is recognized as an example of excellence in music education. The quality of education students receive from kindergarten through 12th grade is a source of pride for the community. Its ensembles (from elementary through high school) have been awarded New York State’s highest ratings at state evaluation festivals. Grand Island faculty members have presented clinics at state and national conferences and Grand Island is proud to support community events with music whenever possible.

Grand Island has long held a tradition of excellence in music education through the support of administrators, the Board of Education, and most importantly its community members. The excellence of the music department is evidenced by the large number of students participating in the various musical ensembles at all grade levels, and the large number of students selected to participate in ECMEA All-County, NYSSMA Area All-State, NYSSMA Conference All-State, NAFME National Conferences, Greater Buffalo Youth Orchestra (GBYO), and other honors ensembles

The music department actively participates in the Erie County Music Educators Association (ECMEA), the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA), the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), the New York State Band Directors Association (NYSBDA), the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) and the Buffalo Philharmonic Educational Concert Series.





Students Get Lesson on Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing came to Cheryl Chamberlain's Entrepreneurship classes when Ryan McCarthy of Social Status Marketing LLC gave a presentation to the students.

Mr. McCarthy is also the vice president of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce and regularly serves as a DECA judge regionally. In his presentation, McCarthy stressed how advertising has changed with the use of social media platforms and stressed the importance of data use to gauge advertising cost effectiveness. Students were introduced to analytics of social media in real time and were given pointers on how to retain customers through excellence in service.

For more information on the new National Academy of Finance and DECA at GIHS, contact cherylchamberlain@gicsd.org.

Kaegebein Music Students Earn All-County Honors

Over two dozen Kaegebein Elementary music students took part in auditions for the ECMEA All-County Festival. All of the participants did extremely well, and 12 students from Kaegebein received All-County honors!

Students selected for the Blue Chorus were Claire Neuhaus and Nicholas Jayme. Students selected for the Concert Band were McKenna Lavin (baritone), Avery McNulty (alto saxophone) and Calli Rudney (bass clarinet). Brianna Schiffmacher (oboe) was selected as a Concert Band Alternate. Students selected as Chorus Alternates were Gianna Bonaccorso, Owen Cioppa, Gianna Gallegos, Bristol Khreis, EllaRae Moore and Mia Rice.

The selected students performed for a packed house at Buffalo's Kleinhans Music Hall. Congratulations to these outstanding student musicians!



Back row, from left: Bristol Khreis, Brianna Schiffmacher, Gianna Gallegos, McKenna Lavin, Mia Rice, EllaRae Moore. Front row, from left: Nicholas Jayme, Claire Neuhaus, Avery McNulty, Cali Rudney, Gianna Bonaccorso. Not pictured: Owen Cioppa.

Sidway Holds Basket Raffle

Sidway held its annual Family Fun Day, with families enjoying games in the gym, a basket raffle and food trucks with pizza and much more!

Pictured here are Lorenzo Pascucci with his mom and brother Vincent enjoying some lunch!

Also pictured, Levi Marlowe scores in the ring toss at Sidway's Family Fun Day!



Free/Reduced Meals Available to Families

Students who qualify for free/reduced meals can receive a free breakfast and lunch every day. You can apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you are receiving temporary assistance or other benefits.

As of Aug. 31, 2020, the USDA has extended free meals for students which allows ALL Grand Island students access to free breakfast and lunch until Dec. 31, 2020. We kindly ask that free/reduced meal applications are still submitted to the Food Service Department. For questions, please visit the Food Services page on the district website.

VCMS Holds Virtual Talent Show

Since they could not hold an in-person talent show due to social distancing guidelines, the students of Veronica E. Connor Middle School instead held a virtual talent show to showcase their many different skills!

Students and staff attended two Google Meets for the first-ever VCMS Virtual Talent Show, titled "The Show Must Go On." Over 135 participants were in attendance for this live showing. The talent show featured a live emcee - student Emily Birtz - eight performances from sixth, seventh and eighth graders, a challenge in which students could submit videos, the annual faculty act and a beautiful song, "At VCMS," that gave the students a special message from music teacher Mrs. Duffy. Students were able to interact with everyone during the performances, and give kind words of encouragement and praise to each one of the performers via chat.

The show was a great opportunity for all the teachers and students to connect again outside of the classroom. The faculty performed a lip dub from the Friends theme song, "I'll Be There For You." Special thanks to Mrs. Howard for putting all the videos together! All the students enjoyed themselves for over an hour watching and interacting with their peers. The event really showed everyone how Viking Strong we are!



Fighting Cystic Fibrosis with Imagination

Cystic Fibrosis (CF) has been in the news a lot lately with the approval of a new drug for its treatment. Although Trikafta was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, hailed by doctors and patients alike as a breakthrough, many children still deal with daily regimes of Airway Cleaning Techniques, enzyme and antibiotic therapies, and frequent clinic appointments and hospital stays for check-ups and tune-ups.

Attempting to lift some of both the emotional and physical weight of CF, a gift of a hand-tied stocking containing a stuffed animal, carnival-sized sucker, coloring sheets, crayons, a book and a Tim Horton's gift card were given to Oishei Children's Hospital families. "Morgan McKinney's Bigger-Than-Life Bedtime Story" was chosen since Morgan McKinney, the main character, also wants to feel "weightless" and takes the readers high above the clouds to meet his zoo friends and Santa, too.

Delta Kappa Gamma (DKG) also tries to lift the burden of college tuition for students, offering two yearly \$500 scholarships to a North Tonawanda and Grand Island student pursuing a degree in the field of education, as the Gamma Delta chapter of DKG draws its membership from these districts.

Pictured are retired Grand Island teachers Karen Zirnheld and Pamela Suszczynski sitting with retired North Tonawanda teacher Joan Holesko, who with her husband over a decade ago established the Stephen P. Holesko Fund in memory of their son to support the Cystic Fibrosis Center at Oishei's. Coming to help with the project were guests Lynn Ackendorf and Laurie Cordero, both members of the Grand Island faculty.

Students Thank Teachers in Video

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week at the Grand Island Central School District, the 2020 Celebration of Inspiration Ceremony was done virtually for the first time. Students from the GIHS Class of 2020 honored and thanked a teacher or staff member who has inspired them throughout their years in the Grand Island School system. The program was sponsored by the Grand Island High School PTSA Council.

5th Graders Enjoy French Lessons

A dozen Grand Island High School students who study French traveled to Kaegebein Elementary School to teach French lessons to the fifth-grade students. The high school students shared their love of the language with the younger children.

The fifth graders learned how to say some colors in French as well as parts of the body and clothing vocabulary. The students also learned to count to 12 in French. The high school French students really enjoyed planning and teaching the interactive lessons and the fifth graders loved having student teachers!





VCMS Holds Fundraiser for Australia Fires

In the days after fires spread throughout Australia, videos of the destruction began to go viral. Many of the videos involved animals, which needed rescuing. Ms. Jill Ungaro at Veronica E. Connor Middle School decided to hold a fundraiser to help the animals in need using her business, Live Love Buffalo Apparel.

After doing some research on vets that were working to help heal the animals, Ms. Ungaro became connected with World Vets, which was working directly with Sydney Animal Hospitals Northern Beaches. She brought the idea to the VCMS Student Council and students loved the idea of helping raise money to help the animals of Australia. With the help of the Student Council and the VCMS PTA, they were able to spread the word.

With everyone's support, the fundraiser garnered \$750 to send and help the animals in need!



Grand Island Girl Scout Troop #30046 participated in the fundraiser for Australia and its animals.

Huth Talent Show Wows Audience

Huth Road Elementary's 2019-20 talent show showcased over 30 fourth and fifth graders as performers, backstage crew, spotlight operators, announcers and ushers. They all worked together to produce an evening of delightful entertainment. The performances included song, dance, piano, guitar, hula-hoop, and karate!

The student performers auditioned and performed for family and friends at the Grand Island High School auditorium. Their schoolmates were able to view the show during a daytime performance on in the Huth Road gym.



VCMS Students Shine at Tech Wars

The Veronica E. Connor Middle School Tech Wars team arrived at NCCC for the annual competition against 24 other local school districts, and ran away with the overall first place championship! The team totaled a dominating 25 points, while the second place school was only able to muster together nine points.

VCMS had a clean sweep of the podium in the CO2 Dragster event, with Ella Zaremski blistering the track for first place, Nathan Cioppa blasting into second and Brady Hillman a close third. All three cars went 65 feet in under one second!

The team of Emma Santorio and Taylor Duscher broke records as their balsa wood bridge could not even be destroyed! They finished in first place overall as they maxed the bridge crusher out at 100 pounds. Their bridge only weighed 31 grams! The team of Kendyl Ode and Brooke Caldwell had an impressive bridge of their own as they took second place. There were 90 teams in this event, with many of them being high school students, so this was quite impressive!

In the trebuchet (catapult) competition, contestants had to be able to launch a projectile and hit a target at 40 feet away. This is another event that mixes middle school with high school and the VCMS teams took second and third overall. The second-place catapult was built by Kyle Haines and Hunter Hall, while Zainab Masoodi and Gabi Verost impressed in third. Only three teams in the entire competition were able to hit the target, and two of them were from Grand Island!

Ethan Szaflarski finished second overall in the mousetrap car event, as his car hit a wall at 112 feet and was still moving. The team of Lauren Soluri and Mylie Porter had an awesome car as well, as they finished in third place. Congratulations to all participants!





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Staying Heart Healthy at Kaegebein

Kaegebein Elementary School's annual Healthy Heart Night took place during the 2019-20 school year. Funded by the school's PTA, Healthy Heart Night is a completely free event for students and their families. The event has been a huge success since faculty and staff began hosting it in 2006, and this time proved to be no different.

Families enjoyed a fun-filled evening of sampling healthy snacks and learning new ways to take care of the mind, body, and soul. The Healthy Heart Committee planned and organized various stations, games, and activities.

Some of the highlights of the night included a dance party in the gym, Zumba, yoga, and CPR with the Grand Island Fire Department. New stations included eye wellness, dental health, and a healthy skills

wheel, where children had the opportunity to explore ways to maintain social emotional wellness through deep breathing and relaxation exercises. Students also had the opportunity to make stress balls, check their blood pressure, and make treat bags of trail mix. Games such as Breakfast BINGO and Musical Veggies were also a hit, and for those wishing to tap into their creative side, healthy food drawing was available in the art room.

A dress down collection was organized by AnnMarie Stewart, school nurse. Faculty and staff supported the American Heart Association by donating money collected during a fundraiser for National Heart Day. The Kaegebein school community views Healthy Heart Night as a way to promote fostering the importance of self-care by living an active and healthy lifestyle.



The Power Authority provided a hair-raising experience!



Physical education teacher Mr. Curtis coached students while they practiced their jump shots.



Yoga was a popular station.



A Kaegebein student gets his blood pressure checked.

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