

**SPECIAL EDITION!**

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**Pioneer**  **Press**

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## Howdy, partner

### Grants are key in district programs

By Amy Higgins  
Community

With 13 schools, nearly 7,000 students and 800 employees, Elyria Schools depends on a general operating budget of about \$74 million to get from one year to the next. The money comes primarily from the state, followed by local real-estate taxes and other state and federal sources. It pays for necessities, like classroom supplies, transportation, utilities and salaries. For a district of this size, \$74 million is a conservative sum.

Fortunately, partnerships abound in Elyria Schools, connecting students to the innovations and resources that help them flourish and grow. Innovations and resources that would not be possible without the financial backing of charitable, civic, philanthropic, corporate and nonprofit agencies. "Our partners give us the means to equip our teachers with 21st Century instruction materials," said Ann Schloss, director of Academic Services. "It's not just about capacity for our students to have lifelong learning, but our parents bene-

See **HOWDY**, 3

## Anchors Aweigh! EHS grad is Naval officer

### Where are they now?

Each new issue of the Pioneer Press will feature an Elyria Schools graduate, looking at where they are now and their road to getting there. This month, Elyria High teacher Jeremy Secaur catches up with former student turned-Navy officer David Yonkings, of the Elyria High School Class of 2009.

**Q:** David, what has happened in your life since you graduated from Elyria High School in 2009?

**A:** I reported for duty and introductory training at the United States Naval Academy on July 1, 2009.

USNA is a four-year liberal arts military academy that focuses on developing the leadership abilities, character and technical skills of the attending Midshipmen to prepare them to be commissioned into the United States Navy and

See **GRAD**, 6



After graduating from Elyria High School in 2009, David Yonkings set out for a career in the United States Navy. Five years later, he's a Navy officer on an path to an impressive military career. Yonkings took time to wish new graduates well at the 2013 commencement ceremony in June at Ely Stadium.

## Game-night celebration

By Amy Higgins  
Fundraising

There's just one word missing when you mix fall with football: tailgating.

The Elyria Citizens Committee for Quality Education will kickoff its annual tailgating party at 4 p.m. Nov. 1 at the Elyria High School dining hall.

This year's event is loaded with fun for fans and families, including a performance by the Elyria High Pioneer

marching band and a costume parade for little ones, complete with sweets and treats appropriate for all ages.

And, as always, the festival will feature its staple offerings of bratwurst, mac and cheese, coleslaw and more — perfect fare for a fall celebration.

The price tag for this once-a-year gathering? Just \$10 per ticket. All proceeds benefit the levy and building campaigns for Elyria Schools.

The marching band will

leave the high school shortly before the Friday night game, making the short trek down West Avenue to Ely Stadium.

The community is invited to line the parade route to cheer on the undefeated Pioneers.

Elyria High will also be open for self-guided tours from 4-7 p.m. Tailgating tickets can be purchased in advance by calling 440-284-8203.

For game tickets, contact the athletic office at 440-284-8256.



# Money matters

By Amy Higgins  
Finance

With a levy on the ballot this November and two additional renewals on the horizon, we presented some of the most commonly asked questions to Elyria Schools treasurer Fred Stephens and assistant treasurer Katie Henes.

**Q:** What does it mean when a school levy is a renewal?  
**A:** It means that voters have approved the levy in the past. Tax levies are approved for collection for a given number of years. Issue 31, for example, has a five-year term, and originally was approved 15 years ago. When a levy's term is up, it expires and has to be placed back on the ballot for renewal. The terms of the levy remain the same with each renewal, so residents simply continue paying what they've always paid.

**Q:** Why do we need it?  
**A:** The funds this levy generates are critical to the operation of the school district. The funds are used to pay for neces-



FRED STEPHENS



KATIE HENES

sities such as utilities, supplies, salaries, benefits, maintenance of building and grounds and transportation of students.

**Q:** How much is it worth?  
**A:** The renewal is for 4.95 mills, which generates roughly \$4 million a year for the school district, based on current property values (valuation).

**Q:** It seems like these renewals come up often. Why?  
**A:** Each levy has a set term. When that term expires, it must be renewed. Most operating levies for Elyria Schools have five-year terms.

**Q:** What happens if voters approve the levy?  
**A:** The district will continue to collect funds that help it maintain a high-quality educational program. Taxpayers will

pay the same amount they've always paid.

**Q:** What happens if the levy fails?  
**A:** Quite bluntly, the district will lose \$4 million in revenue. These funds are vital to the operation of the district.

**Q:** "Property tax rollback and the homestead exemption?"  
**A:** The new budget bill eliminates these deductions for new levies only. Renewals such as Issue 31, for example, are exempt from this change —

property owners who currently participate in the program will still receive discounts on renewal levies.

**Q:** How has the district tightened its belt?  
**A:** Elyria Schools has eliminated \$6 million and 100 positions since 2012. In the last eight years, the district has closed five schools and consolidated buildings to adjust to decreasing enrollment. This equated to millions of dollars more in reductions. The district operates lean, and the staff has eliminated longevity and increased insurance contributions.

To take advantage of savings wherever possible, the district is a member of several school consortiums to reduce the costs of utility, purchasing and many other expenses. The district works closely with major partners like First Student transportation and Sodexo Foodservice to manage costs as efficiently as possible. The new Elyria High School is built to the highest efficiency and enjoys a silver rating on the LEED scale of energy efficient design. All staff across the district practice good energy and recycling habits, encouraging the same from students.

**Q:** I don't have kids in the school system. Why should this levy matter to me?  
**A:** The school district is vital to the community. Schools are at the top of the list for homebuyers, and strong schools drive property values. All children are entitled to public education, and the Elyria School District provides a solid educational foundation that helps develop strong citizens.

**Q:** How does a district receive money that is discounted from property rollback and the

homestead exemption?  
**A:** Currently, the State of Ohio compensates districts directly for discounts home-

owners receive from rollback and homestead exemptions.

**Q:** What has changed with property tax rollback and the homestead exemption?  
**A:** The new budget bill eliminates these deductions for new levies only. Renewals such as Issue 31, for example, are exempt from this change —

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## Educating students for life

By Amy Higgins  
ask@elyriaschools.org



AMY HIGGINS

In crisp-white full-dress military garb, David Yonkings stepped forward onto the track at Ely Stadium. He stood attentively as Superintendent Paul Rigda detailed his accomplishments, and he smiled and waved to the thousands of spectators at Elyria High's Commencement Ceremony in June.

Five years earlier, as a graduating senior, Yonkings himself sat in one of those very chairs on the Pioneer football field.

Like hundreds of his classmates and the thousands of graduates before them, he wondered, perhaps a little pensively, what life would bring upon leaving the familiarity and structure of high school and home. Shortly after receiving his diploma, Yonkings was off to the United States Navy. His inspiring story is described on page one.

Yonkings had an aptitude for math and science at an early age, and participated in programs and advanced courses that bolstered his knowledge every step of the way, from elementary school right up to present day. Other classmates excelled in English-Language Arts, Social Studies or Fine Arts and followed these paths through school.

Still others followed a more typical path and studied hard in traditional classes, and sometimes needed a boost from tutors or intervention programs. With this help and the preparatory classes they took throughout their school career, they were college bound.

There were others with special needs who learned basic skills blended with appropriately tailored courses, and some who decided their paths right out of

See LIFE, 7

# Making sense of cents

By Amy Higgins  
Financial Education

A dollar here, a dollar there. It's never too early to begin a savings plan.

This is the important lesson students at Northwood, Westwood, Eastern Heights and Elyria High schools are learning by banking at student branches housed in their school buildings.

The School Employees Lorain County Credit Union (SELCCU), of Elyria, operates student branches at Westwood and Northwood Middle Schools and at Elyria High School. CommStar Community Star Credit Union, also of Elyria, manages a student branch at Eastern Heights Middle School.

Even if it's just a dollar per transaction, students can deposit money into their savings account during lunch period, one day each week. Credit Union employees are on hand to process the transactions and chat with them about financial matters and planning for the future.

"Children's attitudes about money begin at a very early age," said Mary Vaughan, Director of Membership Development at

SELCCU. "The earlier their exposure to money concepts, the better prepared they will be in making future financial decisions.

"Statistics have shown children with their own savings accounts do better in managing their money as adults," Vaughan said. "By teaching them 'pay yourself first,' it can help prevent costly mistakes in future decisions on credit and budgets."

SELCCU has been recognized nationally for its financial education program for school-age children.

"More and more schools across the country are recognizing the importance of including financial education in their schools," Vaughan said. "The student branches give kids the opportunity to save and budget their money and the pride of having their own savings accounts."

In Elyria Schools, students who enroll in a student branch their first year of middle school can continue saving and banking at school all the way through high school, or at the Lorain County Joint Vocational School (JVS). To learn more about this program, contact SELCCU at 440-324-3400.



This little piggy banked on Westwood

Westwood Middle School teacher Brian Hoch kisses a pig during a pep rally at the school last month. Hoch was the good-natured winner of a contest in which students filled piggy banks with coins to raise money for Student Council activities throughout the year. The School Employees Lorain County Credit Union, which operates a student branch at Westwood, donated dozens of piggy banks for the weeklong fundraiser. Photos of each teacher were pasted onto piggy banks, and students were able to drop their coins into the piggy of their choosing. Hoch, who ended up with the most coins, won the grand prize — a smooch with this fuzzy little snout.

## Elementary, middle school fees eliminated

By Amy Higgins  
Finance

Back-to-school expenses can be a real pain in the backpack, especially for parents with multiple school-age children. To help ease this burden, Elyria Schools eliminated fees for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The change went into effect last year and carries through today.

"Education shouldn't be a burden for families," said Katie Henes, the district's assistant treasurer. "This was something we could do to help parents during the busy back to school

season."

Financially speaking, the decision makes perfect sense. More than two-thirds of Elyria's students qualify for free or reduced-priced meals, which is used as an indicator for community wealth. By law, fees are waived for students who qualify for free meals. In the long term, the cost associated with employing staff to collect and process the fees outweighs the amount that's actually collected.

"It just makes sense for everyone involved," Henes said.

Fees still apply in high school because of the specialized curricular options and programs.

## HOWDY

From 1

fit as we teach children skillsets that help the whole family. Students love nothing more than when they can teach mom and dad something new."

Most recently, the district received a grant for nearly \$185,000 to purchase e-readers for elementary classrooms. E-readers, or tablets, appeal to children's fascination with technology, and the goal of the program is to inspire more reading with e-books, thus giving early literacy a boost.

The Stocker Foundation is funding the project and has been a staunch supporter of the Elyria Schools over the years — especially in reading and literacy ventures — granting the district hun-

dreds of thousands of dollars for programs, supplies and technology, spanning many grade levels.

Elementary education isn't the only focus of corporate generosity.

Hometown tool-and-industrial-equipment maker Ridge Tool Company contributes thousands to bolster technology at Elyria High School, even sponsoring a large computer lab in the high school's media center.

Many others fill in gaps for technology and materials that directly impact students and their families, whether it's for academics or family emergencies.

Parents and alumni aren't left out of the mix. They kick in the capital and a whole lot of elbow grease to sponsor important fundraisers throughout the year, generating much-needed dollars

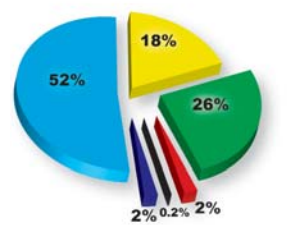
for things like uniforms, field trips and special events. Without the support of parents and alumni, it would be near impossible to offer such items or events, given the district's limited budget.

And giving isn't limited to those with deep pockets or direct ties to students or the school district, everyday citizens regularly donate school supplies, musical instruments, books and hard-earned cash to their neighborhood schools, proving the vitality of community in caring for its children today, and leaders of tomorrow.

"Partnerships are essential for so many reasons," says Schloss. "Ultimately, though, there's nothing more important than the entire community being part of children's education."

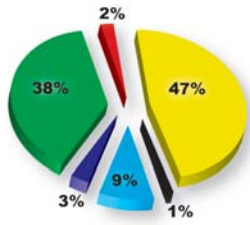
### Expenses

Where the money goes



### Revenue

Where the money comes from



# WORD ON THE STREET

Compiled by Amy Higgins and Heather Durdil

When asked why Elyria Schools is a desirable place to be, students, parents and teachers – teachers who enroll their own children in Elyria Schools – had something important to say.

## STUDENTS

"I like the Elyria City Schools because the teachers, principals, secretaries and staff care about what they do and try their very best in order to make their students succeed in every way possible."



- Juliann Dodd, Westwood Middle

"I am able to be involved with many important leadership activities."



- Maya Todd, Westwood Middle

"The teachers are really nice and helpful and there are so many curricular activities!"

- Emily Negrón, 7th grader at Westwood Middle

"The teachers are excellent and very helpful. They make you understand, they want you to succeed in everything you do."

- Amari Davis, Prospect Elementary

"I like how the teachers are so understanding and kind. I also like how you learn different ways to do different things."



- Kayla Nau, Prospect Elementary

"I've gone here all my life, all my friends are here, and they (Elyria Schools) have good teachers."

- Tevin Donaldson, EHS

"I like that you see many faces and meet many new people. It is also a great place to hear many people's opinions and outlook on things."



- Quinn Rawson, EHS

"I like attending the Elyria Schools because we act as one community, helping and supporting each other. I love attending Elyria High because there is something for everybody. You can always find friends, and there are clubs for everything; the high school embraces creativity. I love the teachers here and I wouldn't want to be at any other high school."



- Noah Katrinchak, EHS

"The teachers are fair, and the principals care about me graduating so it gives me extra motivation to work hard."

- J.L. Kinney, EHS

"My parents let me choose my high school since I was coming from a private elementary school. I knew I wanted a bigger school than I had attended and a wide variety of honors classes and excellent music and theater programs. After attending the fall choir concert last year, I knew I wanted to be a part of that. There are great honors classes and I know there is a great theater department at EHS since my mom has taken me to all the musicals since I was little. EHS was the right decision for me."



- Megan Fisher, EHS

## PARENTS

"Our family just moved here and we were hesitant to send our children to Elyria City Schools but I'm so glad we did! The teachers have been so caring and kind and their passion for teaching shines."



- Lisa Zambano Morrison

"We have three kids who have been a part of the Elyria school district for 15 years so

far. One graduated about three years ago and two more to go. Starting from pre-school to elementary to middle through high school, the staff has always shown such positive interest in all that they do. The teachers, coaches and office staff have a true sense of respect toward the students and their families. Their missions are truly practiced in everything they do every day."

- Georgino Nieves

"My newly independent son was so proud of himself when he walked into Prospect Elementary all by himself! The staff at his new school has been tremendously kind and patient and more importantly, they helped my son transition into a confident kindergartener."

- Sarah Malbasa Henderson

## STAFF

"My wife and I are both teachers in the district and we believe in what Elyria does for our children. Our daughter is in 2nd grade and our son is in Kindergarten at Prospect. We loved the attention that the teachers gave to our daughter in kindergarten and first grade. They have helped her grow and learn. She would come home and share the things she had learned, and I would be amazed at the things she knew how to do. As a result of the positive experiences, we knew that we wanted our son to start Kindergarten at Prospect."



- Beau Brillhart, parent, teacher, coach

"Both of my children attend the Elyria Schools for the many learning opportunities awarded to them. Teachers and staff are able to meet my children's needs, reinforce and build upon their strengths, and bring them to the next level of learning."



- Kristen Metz, parent, ECS autism specialist

"My son is a 4th grader at Prospect Elementary. Since he started there in Kindergarten my wife and I have been thoroughly impressed by the dedication, compassion, and professionalism of the entire staff. My son has received an excellent education each year. While he enjoys telling me recess stories, his teachers have also helped him to recognize his love of math and reading. This year, prior to his first day he was legitimately excited. I asked him who he hoped to sit next to this year, and he told me a few names, but also said he'd like it to be someone he didn't know, so that he could make a new friend. I believe that it's this type of attitude that exemplifies his time at Prospect."



- Matt Jablonski, parent, teacher

## LOCAL LEGEND



"Santa has delivered lots of toys to the children who also attend Elyria City Schools, and they are always excited to get that nice Christmas break! Watching the little ones grow up into fine, upstanding adults who love their community is a special treat for me. I know there are hundreds of other parts of ECS that are so very important to the general education of our children, but the dedication and perseverance of its teachers and staff speaks volumes for the support provided by the greater community of parents and administrators. You are all on my NICE list!"

- Elyria Santa Claus

Be sure to pick up the next issue of Pioneer Press for more "Word on the Street," featuring parents, students and staff.

## Success and stability

Elyria Schools will have an important renewal, Issue 31, on the ballot on Tuesday, Nov. 5.



Paul M. Rigda  
Superintendent

This is a 4.95-mill renewal levy—IT WILL NOT INCREASE TAXES, which means if the levy is approved, homeowners will continue paying what they currently pay.

Renewal of Issue 31 on Nov. 5 means Elyria Schools will continue to receive essential funds to operate school buildings and keep a high-quality educational program in place for the city's thousands of children.

Issue 31 renews an existing tax that voters first approved 15 years ago. School operating levies, such as this one, make it possible to pay the day-to-day expenses of running a school district. Expenses like textbooks and materials, instruction, operating expenses. As you can well imagine, these funds are the lifeblood of a school district. Renewals assure the district continues to receive the funds necessary for maintaining long-term financial stability.

Issue 31 is for a five-year term. It is one of three operating levies up for renewal in 2013 and 2014. All three issues, in and of themselves, are essential, together accounting for nearly \$18 million of the district's \$74 million general fund budget.

On occasion, a resident will ask us why the school district cannot use, for everyday operating expenses, the same money it received in 2007 to rebuild Elyria High School. The simple answer: It's against state law to mingle building and operating funds. School districts are required to keep these monies separate, using them only for the intended purposes. Even if we could use those funds, they have all been expended to build the school as planned.

As the superintendent of a large urban school district, I see firsthand the impact the economic downturn has had on our community in recent years. We've listened to our residents when they've said they cannot pay more taxes. We have balanced our budget by cutting expenses, all while keeping a full complement of programs in place—programs essential to educating our district's 7,000 children.

We believe wholeheartedly in serving the needs of every child and providing them with accelerated classes and tutoring.

It has not been easy. We've made cuts that have changed the way we deliver these services. In just the last two years, for example, we've cut \$6 million from our budget by eliminating 100 teaching, support and administrative positions. We've also combined programs, like seventh- and eighth-grade sports, for instance, and we have reconfigured course offerings to keep a balanced budget.

While far-reaching, these changes have kept us financially stable in the face of local, state and federal losses.

In November, we encourage you to get involved in the electoral process and vote on Nov. 5.

# Helping hands and hearts

By Heather Durdil  
Community Service

When it comes to giving back, students are generous benefactors to the community they call home. Be it food drives, coin collections, clothing sales or good ole-fashioned donations, students make hefty contributions to local charities each and every year.

One of their most significant campaigns hits close to home: the Elyria Salvation Army.

Last year, when temperatures dipped to their coldest and the holidays were imminent, representatives from Elyria's chapter of the well-known charitable organization asked Elyria Schools for help.

The nonprofit's shelves were bare.

Bare, and the holidays were only weeks away.

An average holiday season of late sees hundreds of Elyria families seeking help, according to the Salvation Army.

Their circumstances were dire. With that information in hand, Elyria students and staff collected 16,000 cans of food for the Salvation Army in a matter of weeks, during a district-wide food drive.

The holiday season came and went and spring arrived.

"It was May and we were still moving and rotating boxes of food we had received from the school food drive," said Rebecca Haywood, of the Salvation Army.

"Not only does the food help, but Elyria students are constantly volunteering their time to our efforts. Student volunteers really do make a difference," she said. "We need a lot of hands to pull off all of the events, and it is a mutually beneficial experience."



Of all schools across the district, Crestwood Elementary collected the most food items per student during the Salvation Army food drive last December. Crestwood principal, Megan Pacione, accepted a traveling plaque for this honor from Major Sears of the Elyria Salvation Army.

## GRAD

From 1

Marine Corp upon graduation.

During my undergraduate years, I encountered remarkable experiences and opportunities. I trained with sailors and marines across the country, including nuclear submarines in Hawaii and Georgia, helicopters in Virginia and Marine infantry units in South Carolina. I sailed up and down the Atlantic coast for two weeks by way of the Navy 44-foot sailboat "Commitment." I also spent six weeks interning with Los Alamos National Laboratory's Weapons Division in Los Alamos, New Mexico. I served as Commander of Weapons Training Battalion summer 2012, where I was tasked with training all incoming freshmen (plebes) in basic small arms safety and operation. I also served as Commander of 2nd Battalion spring 2013 and was tasked with leading the 750 members of 2nd Battalion for the semester. The five other Battalion Commanders and I reported directly to the Brigade Commander – the highest ranking Midshipman at the Naval Academy. I was one of 14 members of USNA class of

2013 to be selected to join the Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community. I graduated with honors from USNA with a BS in physics on May 24, 2013, and was commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy. I am currently stationed at the DOD's Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., to learn to speak Russian for the next year.

**Q:** What role would you say the Elyria Schools had in preparing you for all of that?

**A:** I did not achieve everything on the aforementioned list in one big leap, but through many small steps. Elyria Schools gave me a foundation from which I could climb my ladder of excellence. It would be naive of me to overlook the fact that I was blessed with very supportive friends and a loving wholesome family, but I would also argue that these two elements plus the superior quality of teachers at all levels of education in the Elyria Schools assimilated to give me the greatest opportunity for success at each small rung of my ladder.

**Q:** What were some of the key academic opportunities that you took advantage of in your schools?

**A:** Advanced elementary courses such as the GATE program, honors courses in

middle school, and AP and PSEO courses at EHS are crucial for preparing students to tackle the rigors of the first years in an undergraduate program. While I did not realize it at the time I was enrolled in these courses, I now know for a fact that the most effective way to improve one's abilities is to push oneself to get better every single day. Thankfully, my teachers knew this to be true, and they took advantage of the flexibility provided by these advanced courses to ensure I was challenged each time I stepped into the classroom. I never felt behind the curriculum at each new academic milestone as a result, whether it was my first day in middle school or my first day in Chemistry I or Calculus II at the Naval Academy.

**Q:** What about extracurricular opportunities? How did they help you?

**A:** My strongest trait throughout my educational career has been my individual academic ability. This alone is not enough to be successful beyond high school. Participating in various extracurricular activities, especially during my senior year at EHS, was the first step of many toward overcoming my fear of failing in front of everyone, particularly in my physical and social skills. Looking back, I failed a lot in

all of my extracurriculars – on the wrestling mat and football field, in front of the Key Club, Student Council, Drama Club, etc. However, each time I didn't meet the mark, there was always a coach or teacher ready to help. Each failure became an opportunity for growth with their help. This pattern is very common in my life now as I actively try to find new failure points in an effort to continue improving myself. I would not have been selected to become a member of the Navy's elite EOD community if I had not pushed myself to excel in these extracurricular activities and become more adaptable to life's tempo.

**Q:** Can you summarize what it is about Elyria Schools that prepared you for your life beyond high school?

**A:** The biggest memories I have when I think about my time with Elyria Schools are of the teachers and coaches and the caring relationships that I have with them. It has taken me four years of life experiences beyond high school to realize the amount of work my teachers put into mentoring me while I was in their care. I admire my Elyria Schools teachers and coaches more and more with each new endeavor in which the lessons they taught me prove applicable once again.

## LIFE

From 2

high school were in the workforce. Some, like Yonkings, got a taste of military life in the EHS JROTC program and, upon graduation, were bound for their chosen branch of the U.S. military.

Many graduates with college in their sights had studied hard and prepared all throughout high school with the right courses and social experiences to get them in the door. They also worked closely with their counselors and parents to secure scholarships. The graduates would walk away with hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships to offset college expenses.

All of these students shared a common bond: They were Elyria Pioneers whose educational foundation – from kindergarten through high school – was the result of Elyria Schools.

Elyria City Schools has much to be proud of, through its programs and offerings every day at schools in neighborhoods throughout the city. But the district's most grand achievement is the success of the many graduates it sends into the world.

And this success is only possible because of the community's commitment to educating its children.

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# EHS steams ahead



The undefeated Pioneers are on a roll. Here they battle Elyria Catholic on Sept. 6 in the last meeting of these two football powerhouses. Elyria won 48 to 33. EHS students the Pioneer Pack, cheer their team on. The Pioneer Pack is a traveling student cheer squad to boost school spirit and pride.



The EHS JROTC leads the Apple Art Ceremony.

## An apple a day...

By Amy Higgins  
Community

There were more than 800 varieties of apples at the Elyria Apple Festival this year. Not the kind you eat; the kind you draw. That's how many art pieces students in the Elyria Schools entered in the annual Apple Art contest organized by the Apple Festival committee.

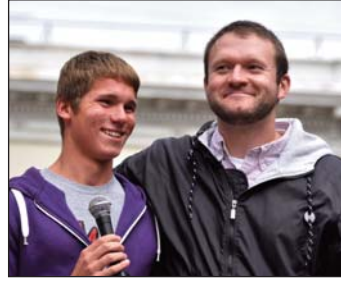
The contest is open to all students in Elyria, grades three through 12, and judged by a panel of citizens selected by the Apple Festival Committee. Judges chose winning pieces based on "most creative," "best use of color," "best message," and "best in show." The artwork is categorized and then grouped by grade levels. Judges select first, second and third place winners from each group, along with winners in the category of "honorable mention."

Of the artwork that earned first-place awards, judges deem one piece, "best in show." This year's winner for that prestigious honor was Noah Katrinchak of Elyria High School. Katrinchak drew a version of the well-known painting, "Dogs Playing Poker," but in his version, the dogs are dealing apple playing cards and betting with Red Delicious apples.

All first- and second-place winners receive U.S. savings bonds, and all participants, whether or not they placed in the competition, earn participation ribbons.



The cotton candy clown is a familiar face at the Apple Festival.



EHS Student, Noah Katrinchak, accepts the "Best in Show" award alongside his art teacher, Mel Rainey.