



WELCOME BACK

The first day of school is Sept. 5

Elyria Board of Education
42101 Griswold Rd.
Elyria, OH 44035

*****ECRWSEDDM*****
Residential Customer
Elyria, Ohio 44035

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ELYRIA, OHIO
PERMIT NO. 257

THE ELYRIA SCHOOLS Pioneer



Press

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4

Summer 2017

WWW.ELYRIASCHOOLS.ORG



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

J.T. Brown, Class of 2017, is headed to West Point on a wrestling scholarship.

Power plays on the track and field

Heather Beck
Athletic director

This past year was a great year for Pioneer athletics.

The fall sports program saw 44 runners on the Elyria High School Cross Country team, with seniors Nick Bartlebaugh, Emily Nemeth and Emma Gardner qualifying for regional.

A record number of young men played soccer last fall — enough to field three teams — while the girls soccer program welcomed an energetic new coach, as well as fielding two teams.

Wrestling and boys basketball dominated winter sports in Elyria Schools.

The wrestling team earned top billing as the Greater Cleveland Conference Champions and the Individual State Tournament runner-up. Head coach Erik Burnett was recognized as the best in the state.

Wrestlers Brendon Fenton (120 lbs.), J.T. Brown (182 lbs.) and Kevin Vough (285 lbs.) earned state championship

See **PLAYS**, 14

Pioneering painters



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Westwood art teacher Ryan Meikle challenged students to paint stylized, wall-sized portraits of newsmakers and iconic figures in the art wing of the middle school. The resulting murals have brightened the hallways and imbued the place with inspiration and zest. Westwood is the only school that will remain standing as part of the district's new master plan. It will be home to the administration in coming years.

A chain reaction:

McKinley and Prospect schools answer Rachel's Challenge



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Thousands of colorful chain links represent thousands of kind deeds at McKinley and Prospect Elementary schools. The annual Rachel's Challenge Rally for Kindness this past spring was the culmination of life lessons taught throughout the year in the K-5 schools, emphasizing respect, responsibility and a readiness to learn. The students gathered at McKinley to celebrate all they learned about acceptance and forging relationships.



Spread kindness



The plain 'tooth' about field day

Gym class goes Jurassic at Prospect Elementary School



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Dino-mania swept the hallways, classrooms and grounds of Prospect Elementary last spring during the end-of-year field day activities. The Jurassic-themed physical education course had students dodging T-rexes, unearthing fossils and balancing giant Nerf dino eggs. The program even included a lesson from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History on what it means to be a paleontologist. The prehistoric program was the brainchild of Prospect physical education teacher Andrea Love.



Board names new schools



Amy Higgins
Communications director

The Elyria Board of Education stayed true to the past in naming the five new schools that will be built over the next five years as part of a multimillion-dollar construction project approved by voters last November.

The district's oldest buildings, McKinley and Ely, will see their names preserved.

Ely Elementary, located at 312 Gulf Road and likely named after Elyria's founding father, Heman Ely, will reopen under the same name and at the same address in 2019.

McKinley Elementary, located at 620 E. River and named for America's Ohio-born President, William McKinley, will close when a new elementary and middle school campus is built at the current site of Eastern Heights.

The McKinley name will carry on at a new site: 1215 Middle Ave., the site of the former Hamilton School. The new McKinley, which will house kindergarten through fourth grade, is slated to open by 2021.

Eastern Heights Middle School, 528 Garford Ave., now serves students in sixth through eighth grade. When it reopens by 2021 as a campus for students in kindergarten through eighth grade, it will do so at the same location and with essentially the same name: Eastern Heights Campus. The facility will sit on the land the district already owns there. The district won't need to acquire additional property in the Eastern Heights area to build the new campus.

Northwood Middle School, situated at 700 Gulf Road, now serves students in sixth through eighth grade. By 2019, Northwood will have a new look, a new location and a new purpose. Northwood Campus — its new name when constructed — will be located at 570 N. Abbe Road, currently the site of Pioneer Field. It will serve students in preschool through eighth grade.

The former Spring Valley Early Education Center, 1005 Roselee Ave., will be demolished this year as part of the larger plan to make way for Northwood Campus.

A campus configuration won't be a significant shift in Elyria Township, where a middle school, elementary school, preschool and administration center already share land.

Westwood Middle School, located at 42350 Adelbert St. and serving grades six through eight, is a stone's throw from Crestwood Elementary, the Elyria Early Childhood Village and the Board of Education office.

The new Westwood Campus will open by 2021 at 42101 Griswold Road, serving kindergarten to eighth grade.

The former Westwood Middle School building will be renovated and will reopen as administrative

and maintenance offices by 2022.

Campus configurations offer the best of both worlds.

Schools co-located under one roof will realize operating efficiencies sharing HVAC systems and some multipurpose spaces. In their unique designs, however, they'll maintain their independence and character as individual schools: elementary and intermediate. These distinct wings in the new campus will separate younger and older students to ensure they don't co-mingle. The campus will feature separate entrances into the buildings and main offices, as well as different bell schedules to flex coming and going and help ease traffic flow. Additionally, parking areas will be designed to provide multiple entrances and exits at main thoroughfares.

Old Schools

Demolition of the existing schools will begin this fall with the Spring Valley building on Rosalee and the Hamilton building on Middle Avenue.

The remaining school buildings of Crestwood, Early Childhood Village, Ely, Franklin, McKinley, Oakwood, Prospect, Windsor, Eastern Heights Middle, Northwood Middle and the Administration Center will be demolished between 2021 and 2022, when the new schools are complete.

The project's construction manager is AGS, a conglomerate of three entities: AECOM Technical Services; Greenspace Construction Services; and Scaparotti Consulting Group. The designer is Architectural Vision Group, which designed the new Elyria High School. The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission is an owner in the project, providing 67 percent of the construction funds.

Ely Stadium

The bond issue that voters approved last November included a provision to replace Ely Stadium with a new 5,000-seat stadium, turf football/soccer field, competition track, practice fields, a venue for the Elyria High School Pioneer Marching Band, and concessions and parking.

Phase two of the project will include new tennis courts and new fields for baseball and softball, as well as a new field house with interior batting cages and a multipurpose area, lockers rooms and coaches offices.

AVG is the architect on the Ely Stadium project. A builder will be selected at a later date.



ELYRIA SCHOOLS

EHS paves path to higher learning

Shane Newark

EHS associate principal

During the summer months, the staff at Elyria High School is busy preparing for the upcoming school year.

The teachers are exploring the continued integration of technology into their classes and also reviewing changes in curriculum. With the start of the school year, EHS also will be offering several new classes.

As society changes so do the needs of employers. To help students successfully navigate their future EHS offers opportunities to explore college and career interests while still in high school.

In partnership with Lorain County Community College through the College Credit Plus Program, EHS is offering new computer-based courses, including an entry-level robotics class that delves into the world of pro-



Newark

gramming and the application of microcontrollers.

Each year EHS strives to add technology courses to give students opportunities to earn college credit.

For freshmen with an interest in problem-based learning and creating and designing products, EHS offers a new course called STEAMPloration. STEAMPloration is based on the principles of science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics. The course will be taught by Mrs. Stape, who has spent the past year developing the curriculum and activities.

Another exciting new class this fall is "The Lost History." This elective social studies class will focus on exploring topics within Black History that may not be

covered by state curriculum. This is a research-based class in which students will explore the innovations and cultural contributions, as well as exclusion/inclusion issues for African Americans. The curriculum is being jointly created by EHS staff, including Mrs. Runion and Mr. Hill, and Mark Swaim from the group, Facing History and Ourselves.

This fall also brings new computer classes and a new college French class to EHS. The new Intermediate French II class brings the total college course offerings at EHS to 17.

As interest grows in the CCP Program, EHS will continue to add college courses that EHS students can take without ever leaving the high school campus.

For a full list of course offerings, visit www.elyriaschools.org and find the guidance department link on the EHS page.

Cool lessons

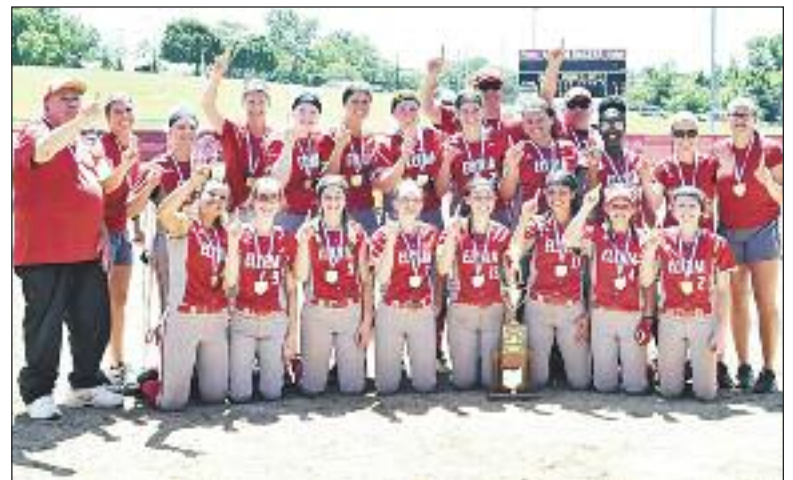


AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Franklin Elementary students get crash course in ice cream

Franklin Elementary students created a chemical reaction that led to a delicious finding: ice cream! The program, dubbed "Rec and Tech," was hosted by an Elyria-based charity called Our F.A.M.I.L.Y (Fathers and Mothers Involved in Local Youth). The program promotes creative learning exercises that give the students the opportunity to experience mentorships in a wide variety of activities.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2017 OHSAA DIVISION I STATE CHAMPION SOFTBALL LADY PIONEERS!



THE 4-1-1 ON THE EHS JROTC



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Cadets in the Elyria High School JROTC program unfurl the flag at the Commencement ceremony held in May at Ely Stadium. The EHS JROTC is a recognized and respected unit in the community, present at hundreds of parades, festivals and special events. The unit has earned high marks in numerous drill meets and competitions throughout the county and beyond, and continues to hold a revered role as ambassadors of Elyria Schools and the United States military.

Tinkering and tech time at Elyria Schools

Brian Kokai
IT director

It is an exciting time to be a Pioneer as advances in instructional technology are paving the way for major changes at Elyria Schools.

In years past, teachers would take their classes to a computer lab to integrate technology such as Internet research, presentations or word processing. However, cheaper computers and processing power makes it possible to integrate these technologies directly into daily classroom instruction.

When school begins Sept. 5, the language arts and math classrooms in grades three through eight will be equipped with a class set of computers called Chromebooks. Commonly called a one-to-one implementation, this gives every student access to a device at all

**Kokai**

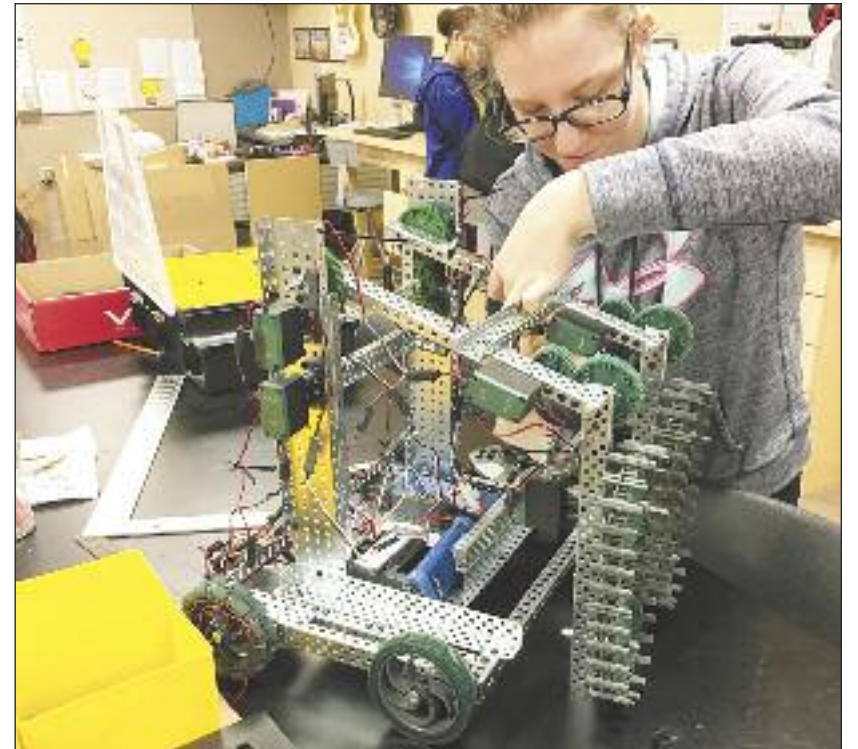
times during their class period. Science and social studies classes will see a similar implementation next school year.

Placing technology directly in the classrooms frees up space in rooms that were once computer labs and media centers.

Work is currently underway to convert the media centers, which used to house both computer labs and library materials, into makerspaces. Branded as Imagineering Hubs, these areas allow for the open exploration of technology from programming to podcasting to 3D printing in a project-based environment facilitated by two makerspace teachers, Mike West and Angie Burgess. The new Imagineering Hub at Elyria

High School will share the space on the corner of Middle Avenue and 7th Street, with the WiFi Cafe and the newly created Pioneer Academy.

But don't fret, bookworms! Since reading and comprehension are as important as ever, the same elimination of computer labs that has made it possible to expand the Imagineering Hubs is freeing up room for dedicated libraries. Rooms are being configured at Elyria High, Eastern Heights and Westwood that are a throwback to the age before computers. Students will be able to enjoy these quiet spaces by exploring a massive collection of fiction and non-fiction books, a game of chess or as spot in which to concentrate.



BRIAN KOKAI / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Class of '17 begins its journey

Elyria High sends a new batch of change-makers into the horizon



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS





ONLINE
See full graduation photo gallery at Elyria City School District on Flickr, or find us on Facebook/elyriacityschoools.



WESTWOOD MURALS



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Plenty of red-letter days

Staff and students at Elyria Schools can take great pride in their accomplishments this past year

Tom Jama
Superintendent

A quick look at some of the monumental events from this past school year in Elyria is all you need to see it was truly one for the books.

The most obvious example of this is the bond issue that Elyria voters approved on Nov. 8, 2016, to fund construction of five new schools — three multi-grade campuses and two standalone elementary schools.

These historic projects will change the face of education in Elyria for decades to come.

You can read more about the

project in this issue and on the website at www.elyriaschools.org, under the Facilities Master Plan tab.

School calendar

When we kicked off school last August, Ohio summer was living up to its reputation. The humidity and high temperatures in our antiquated buildings, many without air conditioning, made for extremely difficult learning environments.

As staff and students struggled with the heat, we could only conclude something had to give. After meeting on these matters, district



TOM JAMA

administrators presented a new calendar option to the Board of Education.

We would start the school year after Labor Day in 2017-18. We're pleased the request was unanimously approved. Our students will return to school on Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2017.

Contracts

In March, the labor unions of the Elyria Schools certified and classified employees came together with the administration

and Board to negotiate three-year contracts.

The negotiations process was swift, efficient and fair, settling well before the end of the school year. The involved leadership teams can mark it down as a success.

Crisis response

Students and staff were placed in predicaments this past year that truly tested their knowledge and skills of emergency situations.

They practice fire, tornado, lockdown, shelter-in-place and evacuation drills many times throughout the year. And they rehearse so that in a real emergency their response is instinctive.

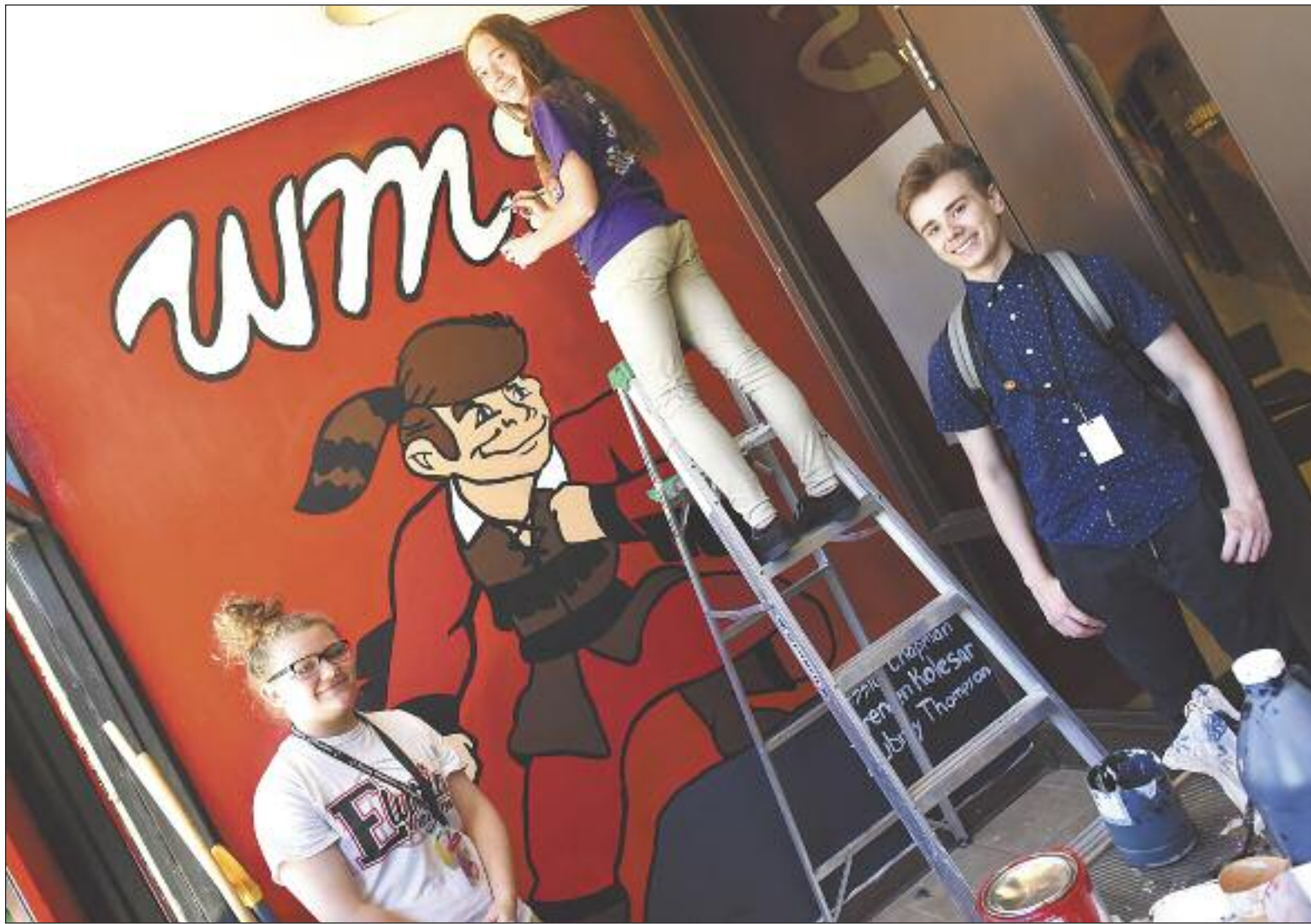
That's what we saw on multiple occasions throughout the district, most recently at Elyria High when telephone threats targeted the school.

Our responsibility in these situations is simple and straightforward: keep students safe. We work closely with first responders to ensure the safety of everyone on our grounds.

Safety is our No. 1 priority.

I want to commend our staff, students, parents and emergency teams for their calm, collected responses to crises this year. They stayed true to their training to ensure safety was top of mind at every turn. I could not be more proud of our schools and community.

Elyria Schools welcomes its students back to school on Tuesday, Sept. 5, for the first day of school



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Students put the finishing touches on paintings in the entryway and hallways of Westwood Middle School.



Heading off into another adventure

After many dedicated years of service, the following teachers and support staff have retired from the Elyria Schools. We wish our colleagues, mentors and friends a lifetime of happiness, health and hearty adventures. Best wishes!

- Gene Eidenmiller, admin.
- Paula Powers, Elyria High
- Philip Meyers, Windsor
- Debra Bigrigg, Prospect
- Judy Gallagher, Northwood
- Sharon Wilson-Sawatzki, Ely
- Barbara Lingenfelter, Westwood
- Kathryn Smith, Ely
- Victor (Mike) Toth, Crestwood
- Stan Boozer, IT
- Judy McIntyre, Crestwood
- Nancy Piper, Westwood
- Judy Hagerty, Crestwood
- Renee May, Ely
- Betty Fisher, Prospect
- RoseMarie Wagner, Early College
- Mark Smith, Eastern Heights
- Nancy Kerchmar, Eastern Heights
- Janet Beckley, Northwood
- Sharon Riccardi, Windsor
- Laura Dembiec, Northwood
- Pamela Christian, food service
- Paula Skuza, Admin.
- Carol McIntyre, special education
- Darlene Tribby, Windsor

Congrats, retired staff of Elyria Schools!

An eye on the future

Visioning process looks at education today and in the future

Flexibility is the name of the game when it comes to designing space in Elyria's new elementary and middle schools.

This was the message heard loud and clear during an educational visioning exercise in June. The three-day workshop was led by a third party consultant, Harrison Planning Group, from Port Clinton, assigned by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

It pulled together school principals and supervisors, teachers and support staff, elementary and middle school students, and parents and community members.

The group was asked to roll up its sleeves and delve into school business related to current and future teaching and learning practices and how school buildings themselves fit in.

"The biggest takeaway I have is

to create spaces that are flexible," said Frank Whitfield, parent and president of the Lorain County Urban League. "The world is changing at a pace that's unprecedented and we don't know what it's going to look like 30 or 40 years from now so the space needs to be created in a way that's flexible enough to adapt to what's needed at that time."

That thinking was prevalent.

"I'm excited (the spaces will) be flexible and we'll be able to do multiple things in different spaces," said David Pope, orchestra director Elyria High School and Northwood Middle School. "That's just being a good steward of taxpayer funds to make sure you're building buildings that can transform with education and transform with students to meet the different needs of different students in the room."



AMY HIGGINS

The efforts of the visioning team will culminate in a comprehensive report that will be posted on the district's website at www.elyriaschools.org.

The process gave the diverse group of participants an opportunity to share information and wide-ranging perspectives, which will no doubt make for a well-rounded and insightful work product.

"It's been great to speak with teachers, administrators, and other folks in the community and think outside of the box about the future of education for our children," Whitfield said.

Students also had a hand in the brainstorming sessions.

"I definitely think it's important we can talk with other students," said Kloe Koepp, a seventh-grader at Westwood Middle School. "It's not too closed in, so I think that's very important. I think it's really cool because this will affect Elyria for a really long time, so I'm very glad that I get to be in this meeting."

Prospect Elementary fifth-grader Robbie Morley said it was fun to have a hand in determining how the new schools may be set up.

"I'm excited there will be a limit of school buildings and not a ton," Robbie said. "And there will be K-8 buildings with all those grades in one big building. It'll be nice to have a fun, creative building. ... Something that would inspire you."

Andrejs Smiltars, principal architect from the Westlake firm Architectural Vision Group, which designed Elyria High School, is excited to head up this project as well.

"Elyria is not an insignificant city and what we're doing is going to have an impact on Elyria for the next 40, 50, 60 years, so that is not something to be taken lightly," Smiltars said. "We didn't take the design of Elyria High School lightly and spent a lot of time and listened to the community."

"The key word is flexibility. Anything we design nowadays has to be totally flexible, because technology is changing so fast that I defy anybody to say what things will be like five years from now, much less 40 years from now."

Amy Higgins is communications director for Elyria Schools.

ROCKIN' THE NEIGHBORHOOD



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

In a gesture of kindness and paying it forward, Eastern Heights Middle School students canvassed the neighborhood in spring delivering hand-painted rocks to homes. The project was modeled after the "Northeast Ohio Rocks" campaign.

Northwood's Aladdin Jr. draws crowd

It was “lights, camera, action” at the Elyria Performing Arts Center as Northwood Middle School presented Disney’s “Aladdin Jr.” in May. The production marked 20 years of theater for Northwood’s Drama Club, according to club advisor and Northwood teacher Christy Krysinski. The elaborate performance included fantastic costumes and scenery, and top-notch acting by Northwood’s student performers. The production was funded by the Elyria Schools Endowment Board. The EPAC is home to many amateur and professional performances throughout the year. The fully equipped, state-of-the-art theater comes complete with dressing rooms, e-ticket services (if desired) and a stage crew. For information on rental of the facility, visit www.elyriaschools.org.



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS



August premieres at the Performing Arts Center

J.R. Simons
EPAC manager

The Elyria Performing Arts Center, aka EPAC, housed at Elyria High School, welcomes two exciting programs in August.

First up is the Olmsted Performing Arts, aka OPA, production of “Shrek: The Musical” on Aug. 4 to 6 with performances on Friday and Saturday night at 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday



Simons

afternoon at 2 p.m. OPA began as a small community theater in Olmsted Falls that produced shows in the basement of the Olmsted Community Center. Since then, OPA has grown from one education department to seven (film, art, theater,

dance, music, gymnastics and homeschool), taught by highly accredited teachers with more than 60 productions. Its productions cast up to 90 children and adults with an audience of more than 3,000 people.

OPA would like to thank the community of Elyria for the gracious use of the EPAC by offering discount tickets for this production. Tickets are normally \$15 each but Elyria residents can

receive \$5 off tickets by calling OPA at (440) 973-4363 and referencing the promo code “Farquad.”

Next up is the Elder AR Ministries Gospel Fundraising Concert, “Breaking Loose II Men Still Worship 2017” featuring Tony Lee, Leon Timbo, Lowell Pye and Jermaine Dolly and hosted by Big Tee on Aug. 26 starting at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each and can be ordered online by visiting the

Elyria Schools website and clicking through to the Performing Arts Center calendar. The ticket-ordering link can be found there on Aug. 26.

We look forward to seeing you at the EPAC in August. Stay current with the latest happenings at the EPAC by visiting www.elyriaschools.org.

Taking pierogies on the road



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Pierogies aren't something you'll find on most school serving lines. But then again, maybe it's just a matter of asking.

That was the case at Ely Elementary School when a student asked for pierogies on the lunch line. Sodexo food service director Tera Fridley decided to give it a go, and not just at Ely. The food service team designated "Pierogi Tuesdays" at every elementary school in the district.

Here, McKinley Elementary students get their chance to sample the delectable ethnic specialty. The flavor of the day? Potato and cheese, of course.

PLAYS

From 1

titles, while five other grapplers earned places in state, including: Brendan Price (runner-up, 160 lbs.); Dylan Shawver (fourth place, 113 lbs.); Mick Burnett (sixth place, 106 lbs.); Joshua Breeding (fifth place, 126 lbs.); and Tristan Brady (seventh place, 152 lbs.).

The boys basketball team also clenched a Greater Cleveland Conference Championship this past season, as well as making an appearance in the Sweet 16 at the University of Toledo.

Sarah Schneider, from the gymnastics team, qualified for the state tournament and finished 16th in the all-around competition. Alexis Qualls represented the girls bowling team at the state finals this year — as first state qualifier and as the first freshman in Lorain County to appear at the state tournament. She finished 76th overall, making us all very proud of her.

In the spring sports, the Elyria Pioneers continued their march to success.

In track, the boys 4x400 relay team

(Geno Woodruff, Kaleb Everett, Darius Brown and Jayvion Benton) and the boys 4x100 relay team (Jayvion Benton, Tayvion Benton, Aaron Frost and Jordan Lucky-Baker) were both regional qualifiers.

The girls 4x100 relay team (Nadiya Ward, Chelsey Farris, JaMaya Ward and Tierra Beckett) made an appearance at the regional track meet as well.

The softball team won the state finals, which is the third state championship for coach Ken Fenik and the Lady Pioneers.

The EHS cheerleaders took home a third-place finish in the state championship non-tumbling division.

During the school year, we also had several athletes commit to continue their athletic careers in college:

Volleyball: Jessie Lee (Ursuline College); Madison Cruzado (University of Notre Dame); Rachel Holliday (Baldwin Wallace University).

Football: Brendan Price (Northwood University); Cameron King (Northwood University).

Price and King will join Simeon Lawrence and Mikah Price, who are also at Northwood.

Wrestling: Kevin Vough (South

Dakota State); JT Brown (West Point); Tristan Brady (Wheeling Jesuit).

Boys Basketball: Dezman Brown (Bluffton University); Josh Lotko (College of Wooster);

Baseball: Javon Harvey (Wright State Lake Campus); James Spicer (University of Northwestern Ohio); Freddie Weimer (University of Northwestern Ohio); Jordan Reed (Lake Erie College); Jamaris Cook (Lake Erie College).

And it wasn't just our current Pioneers who were successful this past year. Chase Farris, a former Elyria High football player, was a member of the Super Bowl Championship team—the New England Patriots. He made an appearance at the Feb. 10 basketball game and sat on the team bench to support his former coach, Brett Larrick, and his fellow Pioneers.

This past summer, gold medalist Olympian Tianna Bartoletta had a standout performance in the long jump at the London leg of the Diamond League. She also won the long jump title this past summer at the U.S. Championships.



PHOTOS PROVIDED

ABOVE: Elyria High School's Alexis Qualls qualified for state finals in bowling.

BELOW: Elyria High School's Sarah Schneider qualified for the state gymnastics tournament.





The Herald

A supplement
to the
Pioneer Press

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

ELYRIA HIGH SCHOOL, ELYRIA, OHIO

Summer 2017

Super Senior special issue

The Elyria High School Herald staff publishes a special supplement called, "The Super Seniors," which is distributed each year at the Elyria High School Commencement Ceremony. Students who are deemed as "super seniors" are nominated by their peers and by staff members because they've been cited as excellent representatives of Elyria High School.



Shelby Barley
Karina Primmer
The Herald

Shelby Barley is a wonderful example of a proactive student whose success in life is nearly guaranteed.

Shelby is involved in a variety of activities, and recently she was inducted into the Elyria High Chapter of National Honors Society, proving is a leader.

She has been in choir throughout high school and is a member of the A Capella choir.

Shelby works in the summer for the city of Elyria as a lifeguard, and during the school year she keeps baseball stats.

Mrs. Evans, one of the teachers who nominated Shelby, said, "There are certain students that you just know are going to accomplish (so much) ... she just has that drive."

Shelby has certainly earned her chair in the letter H at the EHS Graduation Ceremony.

She received a two-year trustee scholarship to the Lorain County Community College, studying Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

Shelby said she will not forget her amazing friends and teachers at Elyria High, or the fantastic memories she's made with them.

Most of all, Shelby believes her experiences at Elyria High have prepared her for her life after graduation. She's learned how to work hard in order to get past whatever challenges she may face, and that hard work is the best way to reach what you want. The diversity that Shelby encountered has provided enough experience that she will, without a doubt, one day achieve all of her dreams.

The world may be harsh and difficult to navigate, but with people like Shelby to light the way, there can be hope for all those who would be otherwise left in the dark.



Virginia Behmer
Sabrina Knowlton
The Herald

Virginia "Ginny" Behmer has been dancing since she was four years old, an interest triggered by her older sister.

Ginny said dancing didn't click at first; it was quite hard and could be frustrating. But, she persevered, and at nine years old, this Super Senior realized just how much she enjoyed the hobby.

Throughout the years Ginny has studied ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical and contemporary (a style of expressive dance including many genres) dancing at a studio called "Movement Works."

The hours spent at this studio have greatly contributed to Ginny's personal growth, work ethic, confidence and independent streak (as her mother puts it.)

Ginny has long since come to the conclusion that being surrounded by people who are ahead of you in dancing (and in other aspects of life) doesn't belittle you as a person; it helps you grow and aim to better yourself in order to step up to greater standards.

Ginny encourages any and all who are interested in dance to at least give it a try. She has gained much from the time she put in; learning to walk with confidence, motivate and push herself, the importance of hard work, and most of all, how to enjoy herself.

One of Ginny's most treasured memories came about from an unexpected subbing job. She was asked to cover a class of five-year-olds and hadn't received much warning, requiring her to improvise. Five-year-olds tend to have short attention spans and are sensitive, so Ginny decided to put a fun twist to the class. She played the song "Jumpin' Jumpin'" by Destiny's Child, and asked the kids to show off their best jumps across the floor. They enthusiastically complied.

Throughout her career in dancing, Ginny has had obstacles to overcome, certainly, but now she is having the time of her life tap-tapping away, staying in great physical condition and leading a healthy lifestyle. How much better could life be?



Antonio Blanton
Isaac Jones
The Herald

Lorain County All-Ohio basketball player and future college star Antonio "Mookers" Blanton is not only known for his amazing jump shot and his perfect release, but he's known nationwide for shooting game-winning three pointers.

In his amazing basketball career, he has hit not 1, not 2, but 3 gaming winning shots. One of these shots won district championships. These achievements helped him to win the Lorain County First Team.

Since starting his basketball career at Elyria High School he has earned "player of the game" 17 times since 2014, led the team in scoring with 452 points, and had 186 rebounds and 55 assists. He became only the ninth Elyria High player to reach 1,000 points in his career.

Coach Brett Larrick said, "Antonio nearly brought Elyria back from a 10-point deficit by scoring eight of his 17 points in the final minutes of the game."

Antonio's favorite moment in his career was the comeback win at Solon, which won the conference championship. "The fans jumped from the stands and rushed the court, going crazy. I couldn't believe it!" he said.

His inspiration is LeBron James because no matter what, he just keeps working, and never gives up. Antonio's lives by the quote, "Obstacles don't have to stop you if you run into a wall. Don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it. Go through it or work around it."

Attending Bluffton University and playing basketball there is in his future plans. Currently, his GPA is 3.0.

In his spare time, he enjoys golf. His best round of golf was at 73 at Columbia Hills Golf Course.



Tatiana Bohannon
Sabrina Knowlton
The Herald

It can be hard to find support at times, a hand reaching out to help. Sometimes tasks are seemingly impossible to complete alone, and sometimes it is easier to simply give up. Why bother?

Tatiana Bohannon is why. Tatiana is proof that people are out there, ready to lend a hand when necessary, ready to provide that extra push to the finish line. In her junior year of high school, Tatiana was on a college tour, scouting where her education would continue after graduation. Learning she needed community service hours to attend some of these schools, she began looking for a place to help.

EHS Teacher Amanda Belcher suggested Tatiana check out Elyria Teens Achieve Success, an afterschool program for teens. Her role would be tutoring for math and to be a listening ear for anyone who needed it.

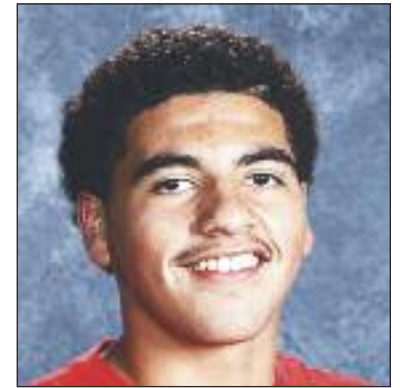
And so it began: Tatiana's community service.

Tatiana made habit of spending about three hours a night, three days a week with this support group; tutoring, making friends and loving life. Tatiana enjoys helping others and, "being in that environment makes me so happy."

Progress is most certainly apparent with the members of this group. The program is organized similar to the high school, with designated teams for the students. This kind of involvement outside school motivates teens, giving them something to look forward to and in a roundabout way, a reason to put more effort into school.

At one time, one of Tatiana's tutoring students came to her on a personal level. Tatiana offered her best advice on the matter, and later, this student returned with gratitude. The student told Tatiana her help had made all the difference. To know she made such an impact on someone's life and decisions made Tatiana, in her words, "Unbelievably happy."

Tatiana will explore a career in education.



Dez Brown
The Herald

Super Seniors need not be super in any one endeavor. But such is not the case with Dezman Brown. He is a super hoopster. But, even better, he is a super young man.

Ask anyone. For instance, ask Elyria social studies teacher and Link Crew Advisor Amanda Belcher. She knows all about Brown's prowess on the basketball court. Yet she is more taken with his good nature, drive, positive attitude, and work ethic. She believes his attributes link quite well with those of the school he attends.

"I am very impressed by how kind, respectful, and helpful he was to everyone he came into contact with," Belcher said. "He has a quiet determination about him to achieve great things without negativity. He exemplifies what makes the people of Elyria and Elyria High so special. We are a positive, kind, driven group that does not allow obstacles to get in our way. We will succeed and we will inspire other to do the same. We are Pioneers. Dez is a Pioneer."

Boys basketball coach Brett Larrick certainly isn't complaining about that. Brown helped his team qualify for the regional tournament. The first-team all-conference selection not only ranked among the top three-point shooters in the state, but earned the Most Valuable Player award at the county all-star game.

Larrick understands that intangibles also play a role in team success. And the 5-foot-10 point guard who has earned a partial academic scholarship to Bluffton University owns those intangibles. "Dez is a winner," he said. "He is a pleasure to coach and have on the team. He is a hard worker, great teammate, and one of the nicest, most unselfish people you could be around."

Those qualities are aided by his desire to maximize his career. That means fending off negative influences and displaying leadership.

"Dez is a very disciplined young man," said visual art educator Kara Lowery. "He doesn't give in to peer pressure and is able to ignore the background noise. He is able to rise above the rest on what truly matters. He is a role model to his classmates."

He is also, very deservedly, a Super Senior.



Dorian Chaffin
Jazmin Cruz Espinal
The Herald

Name one basketball player who played in more high school basketball championships than LeBron James. If you said Super Senior Dorian Chaffin, then you would be correct!

Dorian Chaffin played on the Special Olympics basketball team, the Vipers, as a power forward four years in a row. The Vipers won the state championship three times in a row. Dorian even sank a three-pointer to win the game.

Ms. Andrea Orr, the local Special Olympics Coordinator for Lorain County said, "Dorian is a Super Senior because throughout his high school career he has been a shining example of a student dedicated to his school work, as well as being well-rounded through his commitment to the Special Olympics Varsity Basketball team – where he has been part of the three time State Championship team — his dedication for at least three years to the Sign Choir and their community events, and his ready and welcoming smile in the halls every day."

Dorian, whose favorite sport is basketball, says his favorite player is Cleveland Cavalier LeBron James.

When he's not playing basketball, Dorian likes to hang out with his friends and play games with his family or ride his bike.

Mr. Corp said, "Dorian tries his best at everything. He is a lovable good guy."

After graduation, Dorian will be participating in Project Search at LCCC.



Megan Fisher
Griffin Johnson
The Herald

With her nine years of theatre experience and 4.67 GPA, Megan Fisher embodies what it means to be a hardworking, well-rounded senior.

Megan was nominated as a Super Senior by Mrs. Christian who said she is, "Blessed with a lot of super kids, but if I'm asked to identify someone who stands up above the crowd, that's Megan."

Ever since the young age of five, Megan was destined to be on stage. Her first performance was, "Seussical Junior," which started her career of more than 27 theater performances.

Megan's love of dramatic arts has permeated her career as a Pioneer. She's participated in every Drama Club performance since her freshman year. Without question, Megan's favorite role was, "Emily Webb," the lead character in "Our Town." Megan was only a sophomore.

Another favorite was the role of "Velma Von Tussle" in the Theater Department's most recent performance of "Hairspray." She said, "It was a nice step out of the comfort zone, playing such a bold and brash character."

Megan was also a key officer of the Drama Club as secretary and president, and headed up the costumes crew in every show produced by Elyria High School.

Megan has close bonds to her teachers, most significantly her director, Mrs. Christian. "She's taught me to know that I can succeed," said Megan. "There have been times in the past where she has known that I can do it even though I didn't think I could."

She's also formed a strong bond with Ms. Bondzio, Elyria High School's choir director, saying, "Ms. Bondzio taught me to never judge anyone by what they may appear. And, she is so kind to everyone and that's really been inspiring."

Another inspirational person is Mr. Secaur who sparked her interest in pursuing physics post high school.

Megan said her parents, Betty and John Fisher, always pushed her to be her best, and taught her doing things for others is just as important as doing things for yourself.



Nathan Hensley
Alisha James
The Herald

The general teenage mindset is to shut down when things get tough. "Mr. Secaur taught me that, if you just use your brain and think, you can solve most of your problems and learn a lot about yourself in the process. Most problems are never as bad as you concoct them to be," said Super Senior Nathan Hensley.

Secaur says that Nathan is a super senior because he approaches everything he does as an opportunity to grow.

"Nathan has a positive spin on his experiences because he sees the value in them," said Secaur. "It's helped him develop into a great thinker who's not afraid to have his own ideas and express them. Nathan is a great example for younger students to see how one's approach to their life and their work can reward them."

Nathan is known as 'the piano man.' He's been playing piano since the first grade and has accompanied over 125 songs for the Elyria Schools since seventh grade.

Nathan has performed at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Severance Hall five times, and has served as the principal keyboardist for the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra at Severance Hall for two years. He also arranged the National Anthem for the Madrigals, and wrote the song "Presence" for the Madrigals.

Nathan is also captain of the conference all-star Bowling team. He's been bowling since age three, and he's bowled and played golf all four years of high school. His favorite memory is making a spare to win the bowling conference last year by one pin!

His free-time hobbies include writing music, doing family genealogy (currently up to 22,000 ancestors), mastering the Spanish language to honor his Mexican heritage, running, and cycling. He's vice president of the National Honor Society, as well.

Nathan will major in history at Ohio State University (with a full-tuition scholarship) and pursue law school afterward.



Jessie Lee
Karina Primmer
The Herald

Some may say you can have only brains or brawn, but then, they haven't met Super Senior Jessie Lee.

As a member of the varsity volleyball and basketball teams, Key Club, Link Crew, Presidents' Club, and National Honor Society, of which she is president, Jessie is constantly on the go.

Jessie also works at the Grafton Health & Fitness Center. Given all this, it's no wonder EHS teacher Ms. Horton said, "Jessie is an example of the best students at Elyria High school; she is just a really well-rounded person."

Even with so many commitments, Jessie enjoys taking time to relax with her dogs and work out. Her athleticism and devotion to the sport of volleyball earned her the title of Lorain County's "Miss Volleyball," and a "First Team All Ohio" award for the top eight high school volleyball players in Ohio. Jessie also was awarded a scholarship from the Elyria Sports Hall of Fame.

Elyria High teacher Mrs. Dargo called Jessie, "the most school spirited person I know."

Jessie is also known for being a helper, always looking for more ways to be involved.

Jessie plans to play Division II volleyball and major in nursing at Ursuline College. Her dream is to be a nurse anesthetist.

With the opportunities and diversity that Elyria High has offered, Jessie believes she is ready for college, and for whatever the future holds.

Mrs. Dargo offers these words of advice for Jessie and all the graduates: "Enjoy what's coming. College will pass by quickly. Just be what you are and you'll keep rising to the top."



Zach Opperman
Ashley Moen
and Nathan Cruickshank
The Herald

"Being a senior is more than a title, it's a time to live by example, lead the younger Pioneers into their own greatness and help them understand what it means to be an Elyria Pioneer at EHS."

These are the words of Zach Opperman, a highly involved Super Senior with big dreams. When not in class, Zach is busy volunteering and spending time with his family. He knows that he is prepared for what life will throw at him because of every person who invested themselves into his development since first grade.

"He is a nice young man," said Mrs. Horton, English teacher at EHS. "Zach is an example of the best students at Elyria High school. He is smart, compassionate and hardworking. He is just a really well-rounded person."

Zach is proud to be an EHS graduate, and he plans to continue his education at Cleveland State where he will study Engineering. His dream is to get a doctorate in biomedical engineering and travel to Australia.

Zach also helped with the EHS duct tape float last year. EHS art teacher Mrs. Gebhardt said, "Zach has a great attitude, and he's a great helper. (He) always goes above and beyond."

Zach has been on the EHS football team all four years of high school. He is a member of Link Crew and the National Honors Society. Zach also has been helping with the Special Olympics and Special Olympics basketball for many years.

He also does lawn care for the elderly, and is both a role model and a tutor for his peers.

"I joined Link Crew so the newest members of EHS would have a positive impact as they start their four-year journey at EHS," said Zach. "I was fortunate to have this experience and I wanted to pay it forward."

"It's my job to be a good example of what I represent," he said. "Seniors have an opportunity to impact the lives of so many and give back."



Kevin Vough

Karina Hilwig
The Herald

Kevin Vough, Pioneer star wrestler, is headed to South Dakota State University on a wrestling scholarship.

He hasn't always wanted to wrestle, "My parents started me with several different sports; trying all different ones to see which one I excelled in," said Kevin. "Probably about fourth grade I started wrestling and I just had the best knack for that."

Kevin is not only a star athlete, but also a star student. He was inducted into National Honor Society. He takes his school work seriously and his favorite subject is history. His favorite

teacher is Mrs. Bier.

Kevin said wrestling offers a new challenge every day. It doesn't come easy; it has to be fought for and worked for. "It's a lot about hard work, you know?" he said. "It takes every factor on the mat. It takes what you eat, how much you sleep. It takes every little part of you. It's just all worth it."

Throughout this amazing experience, Kevin had that special someone by his side, Kayla Beiser.

"I'm excited that I really get to be a part of it all," Kayla said. "It's been really fun, especially watching all his success and being able to be a part of it. I'm just

really thankful. He's my biggest supporter, I have to say. And it's mutual."

Kevin is a hard worker on and off the mat. Coach Erik Burnett said, "He's focused when it comes down to wanting to get better at wrestling. He works hard, he's driven."

"I think of (Kevin) as a hard worker; a free spirit, he does his own thing," said Burnett. "He's not easily influenced; he's not a follower. He forges his own trail. If he feels like walking barefoot in the winter time, he will. He's never been a kid I worried about; peer pressure, things like that."

**Have a great
school year,
Pioneers!**