



BUILDING TOYS

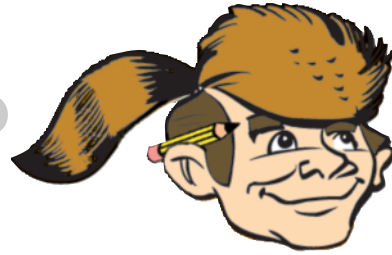
EHS students work to help others
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THE ELYRIA SCHOOLS Pioneer Press



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

WINTER 2015

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Kids earn MLK awards

Amy Higgins

Communications director

When Trey Barbee slips on his yellow vest and hat to signal his Safety Patrolman status, the effervescent fifth-grader is all business.

"Bus 61, line up for Bus 61," he shouts politely from the doorway to the 5- and 6-year-olds in Mrs. Yingling's kindergarten class at Crestwood Elementary School.

As the children file to the cubbies where they store their coats and book bags, they smile at Trey and happily accept the help he offers in getting suited up for their trek to the bus.

To any observer, it's obvious the students like and respect Trey. They look up to him. For his part, Trey takes on the role of guardian and mentor with quiet resolve and pride.

"I just like seeing other people smile," he said. "It makes me feel proud and happy that they appreciate me."

If you were to spend an afternoon with Trey and witness his service first-hand, it'd be easy to see why his principal, Megan Pacione, nominated him for the first-ever "Acts of Kindness Award" sponsored by the Elyria Schools in partnership with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission of Elyria.

Trey is one of six students at Elyria Schools who received the Acts of Kindness Award at the 29th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Celebration at Elyria High on Jan. 19.

The other recipients were equally impressive, and equally humble.

Zachary Opperman, a 10th grader at Elyria High School, is there for everyone, said his teacher, Jennifer Maiden.

"He treats everyone as an equal," Maiden said. "Beyond his kindness in school, it carries onto the field. Zach is a scholar athlete. He is extremely intelligent and extremely beneficial to the



PHOTO PROVIDED

Students Zachary Opperman, Audrey Bauer, Cierra Horton, Destiney Betton, Alena Valles and Trey Barbee are winners of the Elyria Schools Acts of Kindness Award.

football team and all of the extracurricular activities he does at Elyria High."

The quiet athlete doesn't know what all the fuss is about.

"Hearing what people say about me makes me feel honored and like I don't deserve this award because I just do it out of habit," Zach said. "I believe it's important to be kind because it's like a chain reaction; if you're kind to someone, they'll be kind to someone else and it will make someone's day, and life, better. It's a chain reaction."

Elyria High School Choir Director Kalee Bondzio is a newcomer to Elyria, but she was quickly able to recognize the gentle yet influential character in 11th grader Audrey Bauer.

"Audrey is an absolute positive influence on the environment around her," Bondzio said. "She's able to step and be a leader in a positive, influential way without stepping on anybody's toes.

She knows how to work with other people and it's really great to see."

The demure Bauer put it simply: "I try my hardest to make other people happy.

"A lot of people are really nice to me and I try to give back as much as I can," she said. "I just want to spread that good energy around and keep it going."

This "pay it forward" notion resonates with all of the students who earned the kindness title at Dr. King's celebration.

When not in class, Cierra Horton spends her time at Eastern Heights Middle School tutoring her peers, helping them mediate differences.

"She's an old soul," school counselor Heather Werve said. "She puts others before herself and just wants this world to be a peaceful place."

Cierra's only wish is for people to serve each other and get along.

"It makes me feel happy to help other

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PHOTO PROVIDED

The World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra rolls into town on May 12 at the Performing Arts Center.

Chattanooga Choo Choo rolls in

World-famous Glenn Miller Orchestra to perform at EHS Performing Arts Center

Amy Higgins
Communications director

On May 12 the Elyria High School Performing Arts Center will spring alive with the toe-tapping swing of The World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra, live on stage in a concert open to the public.

Wesleyan Senior Living of Elyria is presenting this special event.

The Glenn Miller Orchestra, owned and operated by Glenn Miller Productions Inc., will bring to the Elyria High stage a suite of musicians playing '30s- and '40s-era swing jazz. The 18-member troupe plays many of Miller's original arrangements along with modern selections

See **ROLLS**, 2

To open or not to open?

Ohio winters challenge comings and goings to school

The snow is falling fast and so is the temperature. The wind is howling, blowing snow over roads and sidewalks. The white stuff is shin-deep and piling up fast; trudging through it won't be easy.

Is this the scene for a snow day in Ohio?

Maybe. But there are a lot of unknowns in the scenario described here.

What time of day did the weather turn precarious? Are buses already rolling? Do the majority of students travel by bus or on foot? Can parking lots be cleared in time to open? Are the schools warm and dry? How cold is "too cold" in Northeast Ohio's dead of winter?

The primary question most school superintendents must ask is this: Is it safe for the schools in their district to be open?

If the answer is yes — bearing in mind conditions in one city can be far different from a neighboring community's terrain just a few miles away — then school is in session.

It's not often a popular decision, particularly when a quick glance outside sends shivers up and down your spine. But schools are open for students and parents. Yes, they are a place of busi-



AMY HIGGINS

ness for education, but they are also a gathering place where absences are noticed by good friends and concerned adults. For some, schools are a refuge where meals are guaranteed and special services like tutoring, counseling or therapy are at the ready.

When district officials determine it's safe to open schools, it's important for the district to do so. Many children and families simply depend on it.

Beyond that, it's ultimately up to parents to determine if it's safe for their child to travel to school. On a cold, blustery day, any number of reasons may compel a parent to decide it's not realistic for their child to attend school.

A parent's position on this is legitimate no matter what the decision, and it will yield an excused absence with a simple call to the school's main office.

When school is closed because of foul weather or another calamity such as a power outage



METRO CREATIVE

or serious water problems, parents receive an automated phone call from the district with details of the closing. Parents and community members can also find closing information on the district's website, Facebook page and through area media outlets.

Parents should update their child's school emergency card whenever there is a change in contact information, to ensure they're receiving automated phone calls from the district.

Amy Higgins is communications director at Elyria Schools.

SNOW DAY SUPERSTITIONS

Some kids think these rituals will result in a snow day being announced the next morning:

- Backward or inside-out pajamas.
- Brushing teeth with the opposite hand.
- Flushing a minimum of six ice cubes down the toilet: Must be cubes, not crushed!
- Sleep with a spoon under the pillow.
- Place a light-colored teddy bear on the window sill.
- Put a snowball in the freezer.
- Place a white crayon in the freezer.
- Leave ice cubes on the porch.
- Do a Snow Dance. The more people you have, the more successful it will be.
- Run around the dining room table five times. If the table is against the wall pull it to the center of the room.
- Throw ice cubes out the window.
- Yell "Snow day!" into the freezer.
- Put a penny under the pillow.
- Put a white crayon on every window sill in your house.
- Put a spoon under the bed.
- Drink root beer with a straw the night before.
- Wear a colored sock on your left foot but not on your right foot.
- Go to bed at your regular bedtime. Up too late and the snow day will be ruined!

ROLLS

From 1

in the distinctive Miller sound.

A general admission, concert-only ticket for this once-in-a-lifetime performance is \$25. There is also limited availability of special reserved seating, which includes a pre-concert gala dinner at Wesleyan Senior Living.

Ticket sales begin this month. General seating may be purchased online at www.elyriaschools.org/performingarts-center. For more information on the gala dinner and reserved seating call Wesleyan Senior Living's Kristen Jones at (440) 284-9204.

Glenn Miller

Best-selling musician and swing band leader Glenn Miller produced some of the greatest hits from the 1930s and 1940s with a swing sound all his own, and

The Glenn Miller Orchestra, directed by Nick Hilscher, travels more than 100,000 miles a year in countries across the globe. It's touted as the most sought-after big band in the world, just as it was when Miller himself directed it in his day.

played to sold-out crowds across the world. In 1944, at the height of popularity, he disappeared in a single-engine plane over the English Channel and was never seen again.

Glenn Miller formed multiple bands over his musical career but really hit the swing scene in 1938 with The Glenn Miller Orchestra. In 1942 Miller pulled the plug on that band to join the United States Army, where he launched the famous Glenn Miller Army Air Force Band. Two years later, Dec. 15, 1944,

while flying from England to France ahead of his band, his plane disappeared. The U.S. Army officially declared him dead one year later.

The Glenn Miller Orchestra that exists today was authorized and established in 1956 by the Miller Estate. The current troupe, directed by Nick Hilscher, travels more than 100,000 miles a year in countries across the globe. It's touted as the most sought-after big band in the world, just as it was when Miller himself directed it in his day.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Glenn Miller is touted as one of the most successful dance bandleaders in the Swing Era of 1930 and 1940.

SPARKS

OF SCIENCE

TOP RIGHT: Natalie Wardega of RePlay for Kids demonstrates how to rewire the toys.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Testing the circuitry of an animated toy, an EHS student ensures it's working properly.

BELOW: EHS Science Olympiad students test their engineering know-how on talking toys.



EHS students build better toys for children with special needs

Amy Higgins | Communications director

Little talky toys that sing songs and bop around by battery power generally have little tiny buttons that make them work. For fingers that aren't so nimble, miniature buttons and hard-to-flip power switches don't make it easy to enjoy the gimmicks of these entertaining toys.

Enter RePlay for Kids, a nonprofit company made up of volunteers who use their know-how to repair, rewire and adapt these toys and other devices for children with special needs. Their handiwork often results in toy add-ons like large buttons, switches or foot pedals — things that initiate power but make them easier to use.

This company brought its gear and toys to Elyria High School before the holidays. Students in the Science Olympiad club did the engineering work.

"We were hoping to get 22 to 30 kids to sign up for this project and we ended up with 59," said Kathy Koeppe, science and math content spe-

cialist. "I was shocked to see so many kids. They are all listening and are all engaged, nobody is off task. You could hear a pin drop during the presentation, and that's amazing.

"They aren't getting anything for coming to this workshop," she said. "They are just staying after school to do something good for kids in our community."

The project was funded by the Community Foundation of Lorain County. Koeppe hopes projects like this might steer students toward STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) careers.

"I really hope this sparks an interest in them and makes them think about technology, how they can pull in engineering, circuitry, electricity and design," she said.

"It's funny, too, how as they are taking toys apart they have to use a seam ripper and then they have to sew the toys back together," she said. "Maybe they can fix some holey socks in the future."



AMY HIGGINS PHOTOS

And the plunger goes to ...

Better than an Oscar, golden trophy at Crestwood signifies highest honor in respect of property

Amy Higgins
Communications director

A trash can isn't revered as a prized possession. But a gold trash can? Well, that changes everything.

If you're the keeper of the Golden Trash Can at Crestwood Elementary School, then you've been gifted one of the school's most honorable awards.

Holding the Golden Trash Can means you and your classmates have done a good job keeping the classroom neat and tidy. And the only way to earn the prize is to have your good habits acknowledged by the evening custodian.

If a shipshape classroom doesn't do it, there are a few other ways to earn a golden trophy at Crestwood.

The foodservice department dishes out the Golden Dinner Plate to students who keep their personal dining space orderly and who do their part to keep the cafeteria spick and span.

The Golden Boot award goes to the classroom whose students have the quietest feet in the hallways. Only the school's principal, Megan Pacione, can hand out the award.

The quirkiest trophy at Crestwood Elementary has to be the Golden Plunger, doled out by the daytime custodian. This unconventional award is earned by students who keep the bathrooms clean by making sure paper towels hit the trash can, not the floors.

"The students are recognizing that a lot of people make our schools a nice place and that we need to be respectful and responsible," Pacione said. "We want the kids to see the totality of everything and how the pieces-parts fit together."



Principal Megan Pacione talks about Crestwood Elementary's Golden Trophy Awards.

AMY HIGGINS

WESTWOOD DO-GOODERS



AMY HIGGINS PHOTOS

Westwood teacher Scott Hamker and his students assembled holiday care packages for senior citizens who are unable to venture outdoors. The packages included personal care items like toothpaste, deodorant and Kleenex, along with comfort things like fleece lap blankets and candy. Once assembled, The Neighborhood Alliance Group of Lorain County delivered the items to seniors in Lorain County who were on the list to receive them. Hamker spearheads a community service project like this every year.





AMY HIGGINS

New laminate flooring in classrooms is easy to clean and comfortable for students.

Fun for the feet at Elyria Schools

Amy Higgins

Communications director

Where there are people, there are feet. Where there are feet, there's dirt. And where there's dirt, there's someone hoping for a sensible cleanup solution.

The cleanup specialists at Elyria Schools will slowly enter a new era of clean as the district gradually replaces old floors — tile, carpets and linoleum — with laminate flooring.

Leaders at each school are identifying rooms where tattered carpet and worn tiles need removed, and they're finding a ready replacement in laminate that looks like wood.

The stylish appearance of the pseudo-wood surface is an added bonus to the real reason it was chosen: Laminate is incredibly easy to install and clean, and it doesn't hold dust and allergens. It also requires little maintenance.

Superintendent Paul Rigda said the district has tested many flooring options over the years, but laminate is emerging the winner.

"We don't have a lot of luck with (tiles), with the glues and the adhesives," he said. "And then you have to be careful when you take it up. (Laminate) is the way we are going to go in the future."

In two rooms where laminate recently replaced tile and carpet, Elyria Early Childhood Village Principal Robyn Fisher noticed another benefit to the new flooring.

"You know, it's actually more comfortable," Fisher said. "As you walk on it, you can feel it because it has a cushion underneath it, so you don't feel the cement floor like you do with the rug and the rugs around here are from the '70s."

To break the ice, a good device

Amy Higgins
Communications director

Ely Elementary School, consistently a leader when it comes to introducing new technology to staff and students, has done it again.

Earlier this school year, Principal Jack Dibee unveiled a clever way for parents, students and staff to make quick introductions without all the formalities.

Those who enter the school are greeted by a bulletin board featuring pictures of all the teachers and staff. Positioned next to each photo is a QR code, which is basically a pixelated box of electronic instructions that directs a smart device to a website or online information point.

An Ely Elementary visitor who uses a smart phone camera to scan one of the QR codes will see a website pop up on their smart phone's browser. The site will feature a well of information about the staff member whose photo was featured next to the QR code.



AMY HIGGINS

Principal Jack Dibee shows how easy it is to use a smart device like a phone or tablet to scan a QR code and learn about Ely's staff members. Ely was the first school in the district to roll out a Bring Your Own Device program. The program is now a standard that is rolling out across the district.

MLK DAY COMMEMORATIVE WALK



PHOTO PROVIDED

The city of Elyria and Elyria Schools celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 19 at Elyria High School. Community members participated in the commemorative walk from Ely Square to EHS before the celebration.

Homecomings & holiday happiness



Northwood Middle School students sang carols at the Elyria Rotary annual holiday celebration in December.



AMY HIGGINS PHOTOS

An Oakwood Elementary father returned home from the U.S. Army just days before Christmas and surprised his unsuspecting young sons at school.



Never has there been a more authentic Santa Claus than 'Mr. Kris Kringle,' who visits the Elyria Early Childhood Center each year in December. Students in Kathy Petersen's kindergarten class took great delight in visiting with the big guy one-on-one.



Santa Claus doled out presents to students who attended Elyria Rotary's annual holiday celebration with Elyria Schools.



EHS Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets serve as color guard during the MLK Day celebration and commemorative walk.

“He helped people and I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for him. He inspires me to help other people, too.”

Alena Valles,
fifth-grader
at Windsor Elementary School

MLK

From 1

people because I know they got the help that they needed,” she said. “They are happy inside, so I’m happy for them.”

“Helper” is yet another word used to describe the winners of the Acts of Kindness award.

Alena Valles and Destiney Betton embody this trait. Both are upperclassmen in their schools.

Alena, a fifth-grader at Windsor Elementary, and Destiney, an eighth-grader at Westwood Middle School, seek ways to help teachers, fellow students and community members in every possible way.

Alena is a key member of Windsor’s Antibullying Task Force and she regularly volunteers in the school’s autism unit. She said Dr. King’s message of service motivates her to help others.

“He helped people and I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for him,” Alena said. “He inspires me to help other people, too.”

Destiney is quick to help, too, Westwood teacher Steve Large said.

Ironically, her humility and keen ability to blend in is what makes her stand out among her peers.

“She’s very humble about how she goes about her business. She’s unassuming and doesn’t seek out any kind of reward for what she’s doing,” Large said. “She anticipates some of the needs the kids have and has done a great job by just being their peer and a helper, and has provided great guidance for them.”

Destiney said she believes in doing good things just for the sake of doing them.

“It’s good to help others, especially when nothing is returned. It’s just good to do it,” she said. “If people need some help, I’m there. Not a lot of people are out there like that, and I’m a person that can help.”



PHOTOS PROVIDED

The Move It! Dance Project, a youth leadership program for girls, entertained guests during the MLK Day Program.



The Herald

A supplement
to the
Pioneer Press

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

ELYRIA HIGH SCHOOL, ELYRIA, OHIO

WINTER 2015

Mastering marching band

Daniel March
The Herald

When walking into Elyria High School's music department during marching band season, people are immediately greeted by the sweet sound of musicians playing in unison.

It's quite a pleasant atmosphere. One day this past fall, the marching band was performing "Don't Stop Believing," by Journey. The snares were popping 16th notes, the band was playing chords and the director waved his baton in the air, making sure everyone played in sync. The drum majors spun their batons like helicopter blades.

The band had to prepare mentally and physically to get to that point.

Marching band requires a lot of physical training to get through the marching drills. The band practices "digging" — a form of intense, high-speed marching with one knee parallel to the ground and the other knee down — in their pregame show.

"The hardest thing to overcome in marching band is digging," said Quinten Orantek, a member of the Elyria High School Pioneer Marching Band.

The musicians play lengthy selections before they ever get a break, all while holding heavy instruments. Their determination is clear as they blast notes and play flams as sweat drips down their face.

"Playing the trombone while marching is a real workout," said band member Meredith Hartman.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ELYRIA SCHOOLS

The EHS band stands ready to perform at its annual Appreciation Day concert in Ely Square.

The physical precision for marching band is extraordinary, although after talking to a few of the band members it's also clear that mental skills are also a necessity for success. Marching band gives you a "sense of camaraderie, a want to be the best that you can be," drum major Alex Hull said.

Marching band obviously gives you the skill to perform music, but it also gives you many other skills that can be applied to real-life situations. According to the site ampresents.org, marching band teaches neurological multi-tasking, discipline, teamwork, manners and

flexibility. Most importantly it teaches you how to practice and study for a long time so you can master a skill or technique.

Despite all the endless hard work, marching band students always seem to have a smile on their faces. Tommy March said that marching band really shows you "how to have fun."

Alex said marching band has helped him grow: "(It) has made me feel more confident in myself," he said, "knowing that I have great passion and ambition in knowing what I want to accomplish."



ALEX MOEN

The Herald in print again

Alex Moen
The Herald editor

Welcome to The Herald, new and improved.

We as a newspaper staff are excited for you to read our articles.

This is the new student insert in the Pioneer Press, and we hope you enjoy reading it. Here you'll find original articles by outstanding students, everything from book and movie reviews to opinionated articles about current events.

In addition to this Pioneer Press issue, we have an online paper that is updated weekly. On the website we post stories on a wide variety of topics such as school dances, plays, concerts and more. We even have weekly brain teasers written by our very own Jaedon Yrad.

Many types of students work at The Herald. We have lots of freshmen, as well as sophomores, juniors and dedicated seniors. These students come from all different social circles, but we all have one thing in common: We all love writing.

We hope you enjoy the stories.

Link Crew shows freshmen the ropes

Taylor R. Flynn
The Herald

Elyria High School Principal Tom Jama always repeats the school motto: "Achieving success and nothing less."

This quite likely has a different meaning for everyone at the school.

On the first day of school each year, hundreds of incoming freshman arrive nervous or even petrified to walk through the doors. They're afraid of what awaits them, wondering how it will go.

Link Crew is a leadership organization whose members help these

young adults navigate the challenges of high school. The program's three staff advisors have plenty to say about their methods.

"Our goals are always to make the transition into high school as easy as possible and to help the freshman be as successful as possible," said Amanda Belcher, head of Link Crew. "We try to get them involved in as many activities as possible."

Each advisor has been in the program since it started four years ago, and it's still going strong. They generate new ideas and activities to

improve freshman success in high school and get the students to open up and enjoy themselves.

Not every school has this sort of program.

"I wish my son's school had this," advisor Linda Hammond said. "Everything we do in life involves working with people. This is an excellent experience for that."

"There would be a tremendous change in behavior and attitude if more schools adopted this program," Belcher said.

The teachers and parents involved in Link Crew all take dif-

ferent approaches as they set out to help students.

Trista Prechtel just so happens to be one of those who is always in a positive mood. She calls it "Prechtel Land." When asked if her positive attitude helps students participate, she said, "I don't know for sure. I think it has accidentally become a phrase that is used by some of us. I hope it helps."

Link Crew isn't just about having fun. It's about learning to adapt to your surroundings, meeting new people and learning how to be the best you can be.