



# KINDNESS

Awards in honor of MLK Day  
SEE PAGES 6-7

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 2, ISSUE 3

Winter 2016

WWW.ELYRIASCHOOLS.ORG



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Teammates Jamahirea Harvey (front) and Avianna Clinkscale prep food for their Scholars Pizza.

## Things get heated at EHS

### School's first-ever cooking challenge crowns a winner

#### Amy Higgins

Communications director

Four teams.

Six ingredients.

One mystery food.

An hour to prepare an entree to tempt the taste buds of some of the most finicky patrons: teenagers.

This was the challenge facing students in the Sodexo Culinary Throwdown at Elyria High School, the first cooking challenge of its kind styled after popular chef shows like "Chopped," "Hell's Kitchen" and "Iron Chef."

The competitors were members of various clubs at Elyria High

School, all vying for the moniker of top chef, but more importantly, for a cash prize to apply to their club activity fund. The winner of the competition will see its recipe featured as a menu item on March 22 during the daily lunch rush at Elyria High School.

See **HEATED**, 10

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## Graduate lands prestigious role

#### Amy Higgins

Communications director

Given the scores of incredible students who have called Elyria Schools their home over the years, it's little surprise when the rest of us back home catch word about someone who has gone on to make a name in their chosen industry or profession.

The Pioneer Press has featured a good many stories the past few years about trendsetting and jet-setting Pioneers — and here we've found another one, this being a man on the upward swing in the medical world.

Alexander Smith, Elyria High School Class of 2009, has always had a mind for science and medicine, but he was also a keen student in many other subjects as a Pioneer.

He's been busy since graduating seven years ago, but he was kind enough to take a minute to tell us about his recent achievements and his plan for the years ahead.

**Q:** What did you study in high school to prepare you for your current path?

**AS:** Anything and everything. It's not worthwhile to get too focused on any one subject in high school, because the high school students typically don't know where their path will lead. I certainly did not know where my path would take me. I liked history and government classes as much as anything else in high



Smith

school, and those topics are a world away from where I've ended up. High school is a unique chance to learn about a lot of different things at once, and that chance

tends to disappear the further on into a career people go.

**Q:** Where did you go after high school and how did you determine your career path?

**AS:** I went to Ohio University to study biology and chemistry. I knew vaguely that I wanted to work in a health profession when I started college. It wasn't until I got into upper level biology courses and started to get exposure to medicine through shadowing that I decided I wanted to be a physician.

Ohio University is home to one of the finest schools of osteopathic medicine in the country. Because of that, all of my physician role models and medical student mentors in college were osteopathic physicians and students. Having those positive influences made it an easy choice for me to choose to be an osteopathic physician. I applied to nearly a dozen osteopathic medical schools, took two interviews, and accepted a seat at Oklahoma State University's College of Osteopathic Medicine.

See **SMITH**, 2

# Board business with Kevin Brubaker

**Amy Higgins**

Communications director

Board business is a new column in the Pioneer Press. In each issue, readers can look forward to connecting with a school board member in a casual Q&A format.

As the Elyria Board of Education welcomed new member Kevin Brubaker in January, in this column we chat with Kevin to learn a little more about him and what inspired him to pursue a board seat.

**Q:** How long have you lived in Elyria?

**KB:** Lifelong resident, 1985 Elyria High Graduate.

**Q:** What is your position with the city of Elyria and what does it entail?

**KB:** My title is senior manager. I am in charge of two city departments: 1. The Building Department, which includes all inspectors and staff. We handle all inspections for building permits and all property maintenance code violations through code enforcement. I also oversee the ongoing demolition program of vacant and dilapidated properties. 2. The Building/Lands Department, which includes maintenance personnel, where we oversee all maintenance of buildings and lands at City Hall, Elyria Municipal Court, Elyria Police Department, Health Department and all four Elyria fire stations.

**Q:** Can you tell us about your family?

**KB:** I have been married to my wife Lisa for 23 years and we have one son, Cameron, currently a freshman at EHS. Lisa is a 1990 Elyria High Graduate.

**Q:** How have you been involved with the Elyria Schools throughout the years?

**KB:** Primarily from an athletic standpoint. I have coached baseball and basket-



**Brubaker**

ball at Elyria High and have served as the Friends of Representative from the basketball team to the Athletic Boosters for the last seven years. I have served as past president of the Pioneer Club.

**Q:** Why did you decide to become a school board

member?

**KB:** I chose to become a school board member for multiple reasons, but the main reason is that I felt — with the experience I have in both public and private service — that I could be an asset to the schools and community in a position such as the school board.

**Q:** What are your goals and aspirations as a member of the school board?

**KB:** My goals and aspirations are pretty simple. To work with the board, administration and staff to make the Elyria City Schools the schools by which all others will be judged. Our school system is strong in spirit and drive, and I want to use that to help get the Master Plan from paper to construction. It's vital to our schools to see continued progress in upgrading our buildings and facilities so that it's the best it can be for now and for future generations of Pioneers. I believe that is our responsibility.

**Q:** What would you like folks to know about you, in respect to being a member of the Elyria School Board?

**KB:** I would like people to know I am here for them. I work for them and will listen and respect their opinions with the understanding that we may not always agree, but will work to get the best possible



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Board members, from left, Michael Gebhardt, president; Greg Elek, vice president; Kevin Brubaker, member; Jim Backs, member, are sworn in by Elyria Municipal Judge Gary Bennett.

solution. I make myself available to residents, students and to all employees of the district. It's important for them to know that I care. Ultimately I have to make decisions that I feel are in the best interest of the district and I will use all available means to make that decision.

**Q:** What do you find most intriguing or impressive about the district?

**KB:** I think I am most impressed with the quality of education and the outstanding opportunities provided by the Elyria Schools. The education that a student has

before them is frankly, second to none. I believe our teachers care about the education of their students, and they work diligently to make sure each student is given every opportunity to learn. There are many clubs, classes, sports, performing arts and educational opportunities in the Elyria Schools to take advantage of. And if there is not a specific opportunity available, everything will be done to try and make it available so that no student feels left out.

## SMITH

From 1

An osteopathic physician is a fully licensed physician that is eligible to practice in any specialty of medicine in the United States. Osteopathic physicians are trained equivalently and often side-by-side with MDs in the physician workforce. Osteopathic medical schools teach their students to treat every component of their patients: physical, mental, and social.

Our schooling also features an additional component of training in the use of the hands to both diagnose and treat disease: osteopathic manipulative medicine. Osteopathic medical students now make up over 25 percent of total medical students in the U.S. Your doctor might even be a DO without you knowing it!

I got started with the Student Osteopathic Medical Association because I really love the

topic of how to improve medical education in the United States. SOMA is a national organization representing the interests and needs of over 15,000 osteopathic medical students within our profession. We provide a voice within our profession, mentorship, discounts on exam prep resources, and a supportive community to our members. Being a local SOMA chapter leader during my second year as a medical student gave me my first real taste of leadership, and I couldn't get enough. I spent the subsequent year serving on SOMA's board of trustees, and in April I will become the President of the entire organization.

**Q:** Do you credit Elyria Schools with preparing you for college and a career? If so, how did it help?

**AS:** Absolutely. Do not underestimate the quality of education offered in the Elyria City Schools. I've met a lot of fellow students along the way through college and medical school. I have met very few who had access

to the same wealth of coursework that I had in my time at EHS. Take advantage of courses like computer aided drafting, AP English and German. You will not meet many students who have access to courses like that in high school, and you will be a more rounded student and person for seeking out those unique courses.

**Q:** What are your future career-life goals?

**AS:** I will graduate medical school in 2017. Afterward I intend to complete a three-year residency training program in internal medicine and practice either hospital-based medicine or intensive care. I also intend to practice in a teaching hospital so that I may help train the next generation of physicians.

**Q:** Can you give current Elyria High School students advice on "staying the path" in high school and preparing for college and careers?

**AS:** Learn to become comfortable with who you are and what you want from your life. The path you need to take to find the

life you want will not be the easiest path in front of you. You might cut against the grain. You will have to make sacrifices in your life. You will have to tell your friends no and study while they have fun. All of that is okay. Embrace your willingness to work. That positive energy will carry you a long way in your career.

Find something that doesn't feel like work. Thirteen hours in the ICU feels like 45 minutes to me on most days — it's that enjoyable.

Do not be afraid to fail. I have made more missteps than I could ever count. I struggled immensely with my grades starting out in college. But I never gave up on myself and in the end I turned out to be a stronger person for the experience. Let your setbacks make you better.

**Q:** Anything you'd like to add?

**AS:** Do not ever quit chasing your goals, and when you start to get close to reaching a goal: push the bar up even higher.

# Relationships and investment are Elyria Schools' cornerstones of success

The New Year is well underway and I've enjoyed six months on the job as superintendent of Elyria City Schools. It's been a whirlwind of activity but the most enjoyable moments have come in visiting schools, getting to know the students and staff, and meeting with the community at sporting events, school performances, civic meetings, and one-on-one for casual chat sessions.

The discussions during these formal and informal meetings are honest and genuine. They've given me great perspective, and helped me realize matters of importance to our families and community members. When I get the chance to sit and talk with folks one-on-one or in small group settings like the "Java with Jama" meetings twice per month, the purpose is two-fold. It's to hear about what's going right in our school system or sometimes, what's going wrong, and to work together to make Elyria Schools the best it can be.

I believe in transparent, open communication with every stakeholder, and it's my mission to listen and make effective change for the good of Elyria's kids. I want to build lasting relationships; partnerships that are critical to the success of our school district — Partnerships with students, parents, staff members and business, civic and religious leaders. The Elyria Schools



**TOM JAMA**

weaves a thread that ties the entire community together. Solid, honest, authentic relationships are the fiber that binds this district and gives it strength.

The most essential relationships are built in the schools between the teachers and staff and the students they serve.

During my frequent visits to schools across the district, I'm awed by the work our educators and support staff are doing day in and day out. This team of employees is top-notch. I've personally witnessed amazing educational relationships that blossom between teachers and students — genuine interactions that not only promote student growth and improve achievement, but bolster children's self worth and pride in their work.

Another aspect of my mission in fostering solid partnerships within the district and community is to recognize and reward home-grown talent. Since becoming superintendent, the district has leveled attention on hiring Elyria graduates and residents who are quali-

fied for certified and support vacancies within the district. We're also striving to increase the number of minority employees, particularly in the classroom. It's imperative for a diverse, urban district to reflect the community it serves.

I'm proud of the Elyria Schools Human Resources Department for efforts it's making to attract highly qualified individuals to Elyria Schools. I'll be writing more on these strategies in articles to come. It's worth noting in the 2015-16 school year, the district has hired 80 new staff members to fill certificated and support vacancies. Of those, 21 are Elyria graduates, 12 are minorities and 31 are currently Elyria residents or will be relocating here. We've also promoted eight employees from within the organization to new positions.

As the district moves forward in filling future vacancies, it will continue to give priority to qualified candidates who are graduates and residents of Elyria.

Each and every staff member of the Elyria Schools brings a special skill to their employment and I can't say enough about their professionalism, accomplishments and sincere commitment to Elyria's students.

*Tom Jama is superintendent of Elyria Schools.*



**AMY HIGGINS**

## Let's talk about the future

The Elyria city school district is poised for a facelift.

The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (formerly the Ohio Schools Facilities Commission) has committed to spending hundreds of millions of dollars in Elyria to build new schools for students in preschool through eighth grade.

This is the same entity that partnered with Elyria Schools in 2007 to rebuild Elyria High School.

What's significantly different about that venture and the one for new elementary and middle schools? Cost.

There's an entirely new bond proposal on the table to build new buildings for the district's remaining students, grades preschool through eighth grade.

And it is literally a "buy-one, get-two-free" sale on school buildings.

In 2007, when residents approved a bond issue to rebuild the high school, they agreed to pay 61 percent of the total cost of the project, with the state paying the remaining 39 percent.

Fast-forward nine years. The balance has dramatically shifted in voters' favor.

If voters approve the bond issue, the state would cover 67 percent of construction costs while the local share would cover 33 percent.


If approved, the bond would fund construction of six new school buildings and also a new campus on the west side. This includes four buildings for kindergarten through fourth-grade (preschool will be located in one elementary building); two buildings for fifth through eighth grade; and one facility for kindergarten through eighth grade on the west side.

The kindergarten through eighth-grade campus would essentially be two separate schools under one roof, with the younger students and older students kept entirely separate.

If approved, the bond issue would also fund the construction of a new athletic complex, although this segment of the project would not be co-funded by the state.

*Amy Higgins is communications director at Elyria Schools.*

*You're Invited!*



It's  
Java  
with  
Jama

Join Elyria Schools Superintendent Tom Jama for a cup of coffee and casual conversation about the Elyria Schools.

**Thursday, March 3rd from 3:30 to 4:30 PM**  
at Wesleyan Village, 807 West Ave., Elyria

**Tuesday, March 15th from 8:00 to 9:00 AM**  
at Rubin's Restaurant & Deli, Chestnut Commons, Elyria

**Thursday, April 7th from 5:00 to 6:00 PM**  
at the Administration Building, 42101 Griswold Rd., Elyria

**Tuesday, April 19th from 8:00 to 9:00 AM**  
at Nick's Family Restaurant, 1005 E. Broad St., Elyria

The meetings will be small-group, open format with no set agenda other than quality conversation about the district.

For information call: 284-8201

## WESTWOOD SPELLERS TO COMPETE IN COUNTYWIDE BEE



Westwood Middle School students, from left, Aaron Moen, Jamarious Stefanick, San Fenik, Zarría Todd and Micayla Horton will advance to the Lorain County Bee after placing in the top five spellers of 15 students that competed in the Westwood Spelling Bee. Horton was the first-place finisher. The Lorain County Bee will be March 11 at Avon Middle School.

MARTY YADON / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

# CONGRATULATIONS

TO ALL OUR ATHLETES AND COACHES  
OF WINTER SPORTS!

# WE'RE PROUD OF YOU!



# Gifted program meets students at all levels

**Michelle Buga**

Gifted education coordinator

In Elyria, it's about the kids — all of them. Knowing students and meeting them right where they are, and giving them what they need to learn and grow every day. This is the heart of the gifted education program.

Gifted Intervention Specialists work with students and teachers throughout the district to support diverse teaching methods in the classrooms. Staff members collaborate to determine “just-right” learning opportunities.

During a visit to a gifted classroom, you might see a student of a particular age sharing new understandings as a “resident expert,” a first-grader participating in a reading group with second- and third-graders, or a fourth-grader solving middle school math topics.

Middle school honors students read texts at advanced levels and use higher-level writing rubrics. High school students can pursue content at the college level through College Credit Plus and Advanced Placement courses.

It's not just about working ahead.

Use of high-level thinking skills, active questioning, and development of depth and complexity are essential elements of service. Elementary students look at vocabulary and content from varied perspectives, including Greek and Latin roots, etymological origins,



**Buga**

and analogies. Honors students at the middle school spend time considering the patterns, details, change over time, trends, perspectives, ethics, rules, unanswered questions, big ideas, and connections within topics of study. Eighth-graders recently prepared projects presenting dilemmas that could arise with cloning, while sixth graders in a “Student Oriented Learning Environment” set out on a research adventure to determine what humans are made of. (And yes, one perspective was love.)

Cultivating interests, recognizing social/behavioral needs, and building on strengths are other elements of service. The development of “Maggie’s Library” was a student-initiated response to the need for books to be free and available to students who love to read.

Saturday Scrabble Tournaments at the public library, mathematical problem-solving events, and the work of our aspiring young authors make learning fun and connect to the learning standards in the classroom. Primary students learning about other cultures and countries may choose to try their hand at writing in Chinese. Some fourth- and fifth-graders have pen pals from Ongongwa, Namibia, and are learning how to communicate in the KKG language, which is made



HEATHER DURDIL / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Students test their knowledge at the annual districtwide “Strain Your Brain” academic event through the GATE program.

up of clicks, while others are learning computer coding as an extension of their science curriculum.

Students are continuously presented with challenging activities and are always encouraged to “Strain their Brain.” Across the district, students in grades three through five gather during “Breakfast Buddies” to enhance thinking skills through purposeful play in games like Challenge 24, SET, Prime, and Bananagrams. Productive struggle is encouraged so students can develop the necessary life skills to persevere, especially

when solutions are unknown.

Literature circles and shared inquiry discussion experiences allow students to develop their own interpretations and understandings of text, and communicate evidence-based rationales for their perspectives, while actively listening to peers and asking relevant questions to extend thinking.

In Elyria, we recognize that students identified as gifted are gifted all day, every day.

Gifted staff members and classroom teachers work together in high-quality professional develop-

ment activities to further develop expertise in meeting students’ needs. Teachers may participate in in-house graduate courses to support gifted education, attend workshops, or co-plan with Gifted Intervention Specialists to address specific student needs.

To learn more about gifted education in Elyria City Schools, visit our website or contact Michelle Buga, Coordinator of Gifted Education, at [bugamichelle@elyriaschools.org](mailto:bugamichelle@elyriaschools.org) or (440) 284-5236.

It's imagination at work in preschool teacher Colleen Kamody's room at the Elyria Early Childhood Village.



HEATHER DURDIL / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

## Preparing preschoolers for kindergarten classes

**Nicolle Bellmore Pierse**  
Coordinator of Ready Set Go

“Ready Set Go ... to Kindergarten” is a community collaborative of 13 partners representing neighborhoods, schools, nonprofits and government agencies, all focused on improving kindergarten readiness in Elyria Schools.

The collaborative also works with 14 early childhood education providers whose students are likely to begin attending Elyria Schools as kindergarteners.

“Ready Set Go” provides support in key areas that are essential to focus on when meeting the needs of each child. These areas include academics, behavioral health, physical health, and social-emotional development.

One initiative to meet these childhood needs is a program that's associated with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. It provides age-appropriate, high-quality books directly to the homes of Elyria children ages 0 to 5.

Other initiatives focus on providing important services to children and their families before the children enter kindergarten. There are also initiatives to help the families develop useful transition plans that ensure the child enters kindergarten with ease and success.

Additionally, “Ready Set Go” has programs that provide resources to early childhood education providers, as well as offering staff the opportunity to pursue advanced professional development.

# 'Fairness over everything'

**Amy Higgins**

Communications director

**K**indness takes many forms: Words of encouragement when someone needs a boost; acts of courage in an uncertain setting; a listening ear, and a shoulder to lean on when the chips are down; helpful hands to lift another's burden; actions that demonstrate fairness and equality; and compassion — true caring and empathy for those you know, and for those you don't.

Sounds like a tall order. But really, kindness is everywhere, and children are some of its greatest ambassadors.

Two years ago, the district began recognizing some of its students who show kindness every day. We asked their teachers and the school staff who know them best to tell us about them — what they say and do to treat others with kindness. We gathered all of their responses, and we shared them with committee members on the Elyria MLK Holiday Commission — the individuals who plan the annual citywide celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in January.

Together, we came up with the "MLK Acts of Kindness Award," and presented it to students in front of hundreds during the city celebration at Elyria High School in the Performing Arts Center.

The students that earned nominations, and ultimately the award itself, embody Dr. King's teachings of kindness and justice. They exude good will and service to others. And they do so willingly and innately, just because it's the right thing to do.

So with this, meet the recipients of the 2016 MLK Acts of Kindness Award. Among the winners is EHS senior Morgan Davis, drum major of the EHS Pioneer marching band. Davis also earned special recognition at the assembly by the MLK Holiday Commission — The Youth Leadership Award.

The following page offers excerpts from the student essays and teacher nominations. Read the full essays at [www.elyriaschools.org](http://www.elyriaschools.org).



MARTY YADON / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

**ABOVE:** EHS senior Morgan Davis, left, and Angel Blakely earned Youth Leadership Awards.  
**BELOW:** Ten students from Elyria Schools earned the 2016 MLK Acts of Kindness Award.





**Morgan Davis**

“When I think of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I think of someone that was passionate about peace and equality no matter the status of each individual. I think of someone that was kind to everyone and valued fairness over everything.” Morgan Davis, senior, Elyria High School

“In a busy time as a senior

when many students are focusing on preparing for college, Morgan continues to look for ways to improve the high school that she attends. Many of the young students that Morgan has worked with look up to her and want to be future Pioneers and participate in the Elyria High School Marching Band.” Shane Newark, Associate Principal, Elyria High School



**Mackenzie Jamerson**

“Martin Luther King Jr.’s message of fairness and nonviolence means a lot to me. In my everyday life, just using manners, like saying ‘please,’ and ‘thank you,’ can be a way to be like MLK.” Mackenzie Jamerson, grade 4, Oakwood Elementary

“Mackenzie believes that helping others is important because it makes everyone

feel good. She is a soft-spoken young lady who has earned the respect of her classmates and teachers because she refuses to be malicious. Mackenzie truly cares about the students in the classroom and doing her best at Oakwood School.” Michelle Nimene and Amy Chizmar, grade 4 teachers, Oakwood Elementary



**Kylie Shull**

“Dr. King once said, ‘I have a dream that my four children one day will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their character.’ I also have a similar dream where people will stop judging other people just by the way they look. I dream they will start looking at what’s on the inside instead of what’s on the outside.” Kylie Shull, grade 5,

Crestwood Elementary

“Kylie is kind to all of her classmates and the younger students in the building. I have never heard her say an unkind word to anyone. Kylie exemplifies Dr. King’s teachings by her behavior every day.” Milesa Brunetti, grade 5 teacher, Crestwood Elementary



**John Thompson**

“My actions represent the message of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by showing people we don’t have to live in a world of violence, hatred, depression, racism, stereotypes, ignorance and dismay. What I really mean by this is we don’t have to always be hateful or unappreciative. No, we can live in a world of service, kindness, respect, responsibility, team players and courage.” John Thompson, grade 7,

Westwood Middle School

“(John) doesn’t look to gain praise or be noticed when he does what would fall under the term we’ve come to know as, ‘random acts of kindness.’ He is only 12, but he is exemplifying traits at this age that are habits for him, and traits that others twice his age have yet to learn the significance of.” Gail Jacobs, Westwood Middle teacher



**Samantha Parsons**

“I respect the people around me by giving them the kindness they deserve. I was taught to treat others the way I want to be treated, as my equals. I am always looking for ways to help my classmates and teachers, to put a smile on their faces. Helping others makes me feel warm and happy inside and gives me self respect.” Samantha Parsons, grade 6, Northwood Middle School

“Dr. Martin Luther King spoke to the people of the world to work together. He wanted everyone to be respected and have a sense of worth. Samantha is kind, generous, responsible, respectful, friendly and treats people the way she wants to be treated. Samantha is a friend to all and I believe Dr. King would be very proud of her actions.” Carol Morley, grade 6 ELA teacher, Northwood Middle School



**Kloe Koepp**

“I believe I was selected because I have a big heart and I care about other people. I want people to be happy when they are around me. My mom always taught me: the thing people will remember the most about a person is how you make them feel. I want people to remember me as a kind, caring person.” Kloe Koepp, grade 5, Crestwood Elementary

“Kloe Koepp is an active, positive role model for Crestwood students. I respect Kloe more each day. And that respect is not just for Kloe but also for her parents. They have molded her into a selfless, humble, strong, intelligent role model and leader for our future generations.” Kathy O’Shaughnessy, grade 5 teacher, Crestwood Elementary



**Frankie Fields**

“I believe it’s very important to be kind to others. Being kind paves the way to a better future. If you are not focused on being mean and nasty to others, then you are able to focus more on being kind and bettering yourself. It opens up your mind to accepting others the way that they are.” Frankie Fields, grade 6, Westwood Middle School

“Frankie is a young man who

puts other people’s feelings and needs first. He is aware of how other people are feeling as well as whether or not they are in need of help. Frankie values his education, friends, family and teachers. He demonstrates a level of respect, perseverance and dignity that a lot of kid his age do not. I truly enjoy having him in my class every day.” Nicole Schwarz, grade 6 teacher, Westwood Middle School



**Katherine Hill**

“A simple act of kindness such as, ‘have a nice day,’ or ‘thank you for your wonderful service,’ can make someone’s day. (It) can take someone out of depression and into elatedness. If a simple act of kindness as this can have such an impact, imagine what a greater act of kindness can do. Seeing others benefit from your service and kindness is truly a gratifying reward.”

Katherine Hill, grade 12, Elyria High

“Katherine is a kind-hearted and caring individual. She demonstrates an internal drive to help others. She is always empathetic to others. Katherine tries to find ways to improve the situation of the needy.” Elsa Paesani, assistant principal, Elyria High

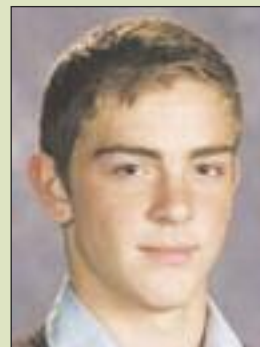


**Giovanni Woodruff**

“It’s important to be kind to help and serve one another because the little things that make a person smile or laugh can make a day go from bad to good. We all have our own battles to fight. Sometimes all a person needs is a smile to reassure them that everything will be all right.” Giovanni (Geno) Woodruff, grade 11, Elyria High

“Geno is very patient with

everyone he meets. He strives to make sure that he treats others equally always. His kindness to others is ongoing, regardless of the situation. Geno is a quiet GIANT. He does not look for recognition. He strives to ensure that everyone feels that they are important.” Elsa Paesani, assistant principal, Elyria High



**Luke Hunt**

“In a world today so full of rage, greed and jealousy, I believe that many people are forgetting what it means to be a genuinely good person to others. Showing goodwill and kindness isn’t something that you need to prove to others, it’s something to take pride in for yourself, and to do to make yourself the best person you can be while making those around you feel like the best people they can be.” Luke

Hunt, grade 11, Elyria High

“(Luke) doesn’t see others’ differences and treats everyone equally and with respect. He contributes nothing but positivity to this school and his peers. I truly believe that he only wants the best for those around him and wants to improve society as best he can with the means he has.” Amanda Belcher, teacher, Elyria High

# EHS drama earns bravos by the pros

**Pam Christian**  
EHS drama teacher

Members of the Elyria High School cast of *Little Shop of Horrors* took their talent on the road to the Cleveland Playhouse (CPH), where they performed to a large enthusiastic audience.

The Elyria High School Drama department has partnered with the Cleveland Playhouse this school year as part of an education outreach program funded by the Nord Foundation and designed to build new drama clubs while enhancing existing ones. Six schools from Lorain and Cuyahoga counties are taking part in this two-year program.

As a culminating event to this affiliation, 28 students from Elyria High School attended a daylong

technical rehearsal at the Allen Theatre in Playhouse Square. Cast and staff members from EHS worked with experts from the Cleveland Playhouse to adjust their performance to the professional stage setting, while CPH lighting and sound designers made adjustments to also meet the students' needs. The technical students were able to see the backstage workings, and some even sat alongside the 'pros' during the performance.

The EHS cast realized the fruits of their labor as they enjoyed a standing ovation from the crowd and celebrated during a reception following their performance. They even had their photo snapped with the coveted Tony Award earned by the CPH last year.

Bravo EHS cast and crew!



PAM CHRISTIAN / ELYRIA SCHOOLS

The Elyria High School Cast of 'Little Shop of Horrors' visited the Cleveland Playhouse, where they performed in front of an audience.

## ELYRIA HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS SCHEDULE MARCH AND APRIL 2016

All events are free unless indicated with an asterisk.

### March 2016

- 2 – Middle School Strings Concert – 7 p.m.
- 3 – Prospect Elementary Music Concert – 7 p.m.
- 4 – LINK Crew Mr. Pioneer Pageant – 6:30 p.m.\*
- 6 – LCCC Band Concert – 3 p.m.
- 7 – Windsor Elementary Music Concert – 7 p.m.
- 8 – Franklin Elementary Music Concert – 7 p.m.
- 9 – Oakwood Elementary Music Concert – 7 p.m.
- 12 – In10sity Dance Regional Competition – All Day \*
- 13 – In10sity Dance Regional Competition – All Day \*
- 14 – 7th Grade Choir Festival – 7 p.m.
- 15 – Crestwood Elementary Music Concert – 7 p.m.
- 16 – 8th Grade Choir Festival – 7 p.m.
- 17 – 7th Grade Band Festival – 7 p.m.
- 18 – EHS Orchestra Concert – 7 p.m.
- 21 – Ely Elementary Music Concert – 7 p.m.

### April 2016

- 14 – EHS Honor Roll Recognition – 7 to 11 a.m.
- 22 – EHS Drama Club and Music Department Present *Once Upon a Mattress* – 7:30 p.m.\*
- 23 – EHS Drama Club and Music Department Present *Once Upon a Mattress* – 7:30 p.m.\*
- 24 – EHS Drama Club and Music Department Present *Once Upon a Mattress* – 2 p.m.\*
- 26 – ROTC Awards – 7 p.m.

**ENROLL NOW IN PRESCHOOL AND FREE, ALL-DAY KINDERGARTEN  
BY CALLING (440) 284-8220 TODAY!**



# Volleying for the benefit of schools

**Kathy Koepf**

Teaching and learning coordinator

The gloves are coming off in the elementary schools.

Principals, teachers, specialists and staff at all levels are putting on their gym shoes and meeting on the court at Elyria High School for the first-ever Staff versus Staff Volleyball Tournament and Fundraiser on Friday, March 18.

The game of elimination begins at 5PM in the main gym and there will be ample parking available for fans in the visitor parking lot on Fifth Street and West Avenue.

Lots of fan participation is encouraged because the school with the most fans wins a trophy. The teachers and staff will need the support of their students, parents and neighborhood communities as they face off with their colleagues in head-to-head competition for the volleyball tournament title.

The tournament is being spon-



**Koepf**

sored by parent associations, which support the elementary schools across the district. Tickets are \$3 for adults and \$2 for students. Presale tickets are available at any

neighborhood elementary school and, if not sold out prior to the event, at the door that evening. Schools are selling spirit shirts, too, so fans can dress like their favorite team.

If the lure of seeing your favorite teacher or principal in sports gear isn't enough, there are plenty of other activities for the whole family to enjoy.

We're anticipating a special visit from the Easter Bunny, along with the Elyria Schools mascot, Petey Pioneer.

Little ones will enjoy the face painting booth while others, particularly those with a solid throwing arm, will enjoy the Pie in the Face booth – a chance to peg

## ELYRIA SCHOOLS



their school principal with a whipped cream pie! Those who make their target will walk away with a real Mama Joe's pie for home.

There will be arts and crafts for kids, 50/50 raffles and baskets for raffle, too.

Other activities to entertain guests of all ages will be happening throughout the Elyria High School dining hall. Voter registration will also be available.

Don't worry about cooking dinner, either, because a full concession booth will be open

for business.

Proceeds generated by this parent-organized night of family fun will be donated to the Elyria Citizens Committee for Quality Education, the levy committee that supports Elyria Schools.

## VALENTINE'S DAY = PAJAMA DAY FOR PRESCHOOLERS



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

Elyria Early Childhood Village students in the preschool program celebrated Valentine's Day in their pajamas. Above, students taste sausage links and pancakes made fresh in the classroom.



At right, students check out the full breakfast spread of goodies.

## HEATED

From 1

Sodexo, the foodservice provider of Elyria Schools, will redirect a percentage of that day's proceeds to the club account of the Culinary Throwdown champions.

In this first challenge of its kind, the Elyria High School MAC Scholars, the Math Club, the Junior Class and the Senior Class faced off in the fully equipped, new central kitchen of Elyria High.

They had a grocery list of common ingredients that aren't so common to the average kitchen: Mango, bok choy, poblano pepper, chorizo, chicken and cojita cheese. They also had to add a secret element. For the MAC Scholars, the mystery item was tomatillos, while the Math Club uncovered papayas. The Junior Class received prickly pears and the Senior Class had coconut to incorporate. All had one hour to work in teams to come up with a recipe, and to prep, cook and

plate their food for the competition judges to sample.

An hour's time flew by in a hub-bub of chopping, roasting, grilling, sautéing and baking. In the end, each team revealed a completely unique, completely tantalizing entrée. And while judges found something to love about each dish, in the end it was the MAC Scholars who earned the win with the "Scholars Pizza."

Judges raved about the pizza's consistency of flavors and its overall appeal to the target audience.

The pizza will be sold on the lunch line next month and the MAC Scholars club will profit from its sales. Unlike the hardcore food challenges on network television, every team walked away a winner in the Elyria High School Culinary Throwdown. Just for competing, the remaining teams each earned \$100 for their school club accounts.



AMY HIGGINS / ELYRIA SCHOOLS PHOTOS

The team representing the Senior Class delighted judges with a burrito, similarly sized and prepared like those sold in national restaurant chains.



**ABOVE:** The Mac Scholars won the Culinary Throwdown with their 'Scholars Pizza.' From left is Myles Roseboro, Jaylan Moore, advisor Maria Gilmore, advisor Hannah Stein, Jamahirea Harvey and Avianna Clinkscale.



**RIGHT:** Senior Nate Looney prepares the main ingredients for the Math Club's 'Circumference Stir fry.'



# The Herald

A supplement  
to the  
Pioneer Press

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

ELYRIA HIGH SCHOOL, ELYRIA, OHIO

WINTER 2016

## Cheerleading squad is state-bound

**Vanessa Wynieski**  
Herald writer

Teamwork and diligence — drivers of the Elyria High School varsity cheerleading squad — are paying off. The squad placed in the state regional competition this month and earned a spot in the state competition in March. Elyria High School was one of only three schools in the non-tumbling division to qualify.

“Heading into the state competition we are nervous but confident,” Coach Allison Morgan said. “The girls have worked hard this past month to change the routine heading into regionals.

“We practiced every day which included running laps around the (Elyria High School) building. This is the first year (Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators) created a non-tumbling division and we knew it was in our

best interest to change our routine to accommodate our strengths and get rid of the tumbling we had, because it was our weakness,” she said.

“We were the only team in our division to qualify and we received very positive feedback from the judges who said they were impressed with our performance,” Morgan continued. “If any team can do it (win), these girls can. I’m incredibly proud of them.”

The squad prepared diligently to ready for this moment.

When not in school, the teammates gather each week at Tumbles and Cheers gym in Avon to refine their motion skills, jumps and competition routines. This particular gym has a set up that helps the team hone gymnastics and cheerleading skills, one reason Coach Morgan chose this facility.

Some of the squad’s training and

team building takes place in the summer during camp, too, where they learn new cheers and chants.

This past summer, the team learned two new dance routines, and reinforced friendships along the way.

“We had six girls in one room with four mattresses, and only one bathroom at summer camp,” joked squad captain Lily Lyons. “We had no choice but to bond (and) it was worth it!”

Lyons and teammate senior Kaela Crawley even traveled to Hawaii last summer with Morgan for a specialized cheerleading camp. This year, four members of the team qualified to attend this prestigious training camp in Hawaii, and they are currently fundraising to pay for travel expenses, which top \$3,500 per cheerleader just to participate.

“Cheering together throughout



ELYRIA SCHOOLS

Cheerleaders perform before the homecoming game at Ely Stadium.

high school, it’s almost like we’ve created more of a sister bond rather than a friend bond,” Lily said.

Morgan said it’s gratifying to see the team click as teammates and

athletes.

“My favorite thing about coaching this group is getting to see them improve over the years, and seeing them cheer as seniors,” Morgan said.



PHOTO COURTESY WOODWARD PHOTOGRAPHY  
EHS senior Jake Chizmar competes in a track meet.

## Running the distance

**Julia Plumb**  
Herald writer

Elyria High School senior Jake Chizmar and junior Nicholas (Nick) Bartlebaugh are entering the 2016 Track season at Elyria High after an eventful and successful Cross Country season.

Over the course of the last three years running together, they have trained side-by-side and also competed against one another at cross-country and track meets.

“It’s bittersweet,” Bartlebaugh said. “Competing against Jake is amazing because I have looked up to him since my freshman year.”

Since last track season, Jake and Nick have had highs and lows. Chizmar’s Cross Country season started off on the wrong foot, literally. Last June, he suffered a serious foot injury off the track, so he spent a good deal of time in recovery.

“I’m happy that I finished,” Chizmar said. “And I did reasonably well (after) missing 11 weeks of training.”

Nick, on the other hand, had a remarkable season. “I made it to regionals with a 17:20 3 miles coming out of districts, and a 16:50 at regionals.”

Jake’s senior year in track is especially significant because his father, Jerry Chizmar, is the team’s distance coach. Jerry, a track star of his own right, holds several records that son Jake would like to best.

Nick also has set personal goals to achieve his best times.

Jake and Nick are teammates and competitors, but they are after the same objective — achieving their personal best and advancing competitively to regionals.



PHOTO COURTESY WOODWARD PHOTOGRAPHY  
Junior Nick Bartlebaugh competes in a relay competition.



AUDREY BAUER

## School and community 'extras' are worth checking out

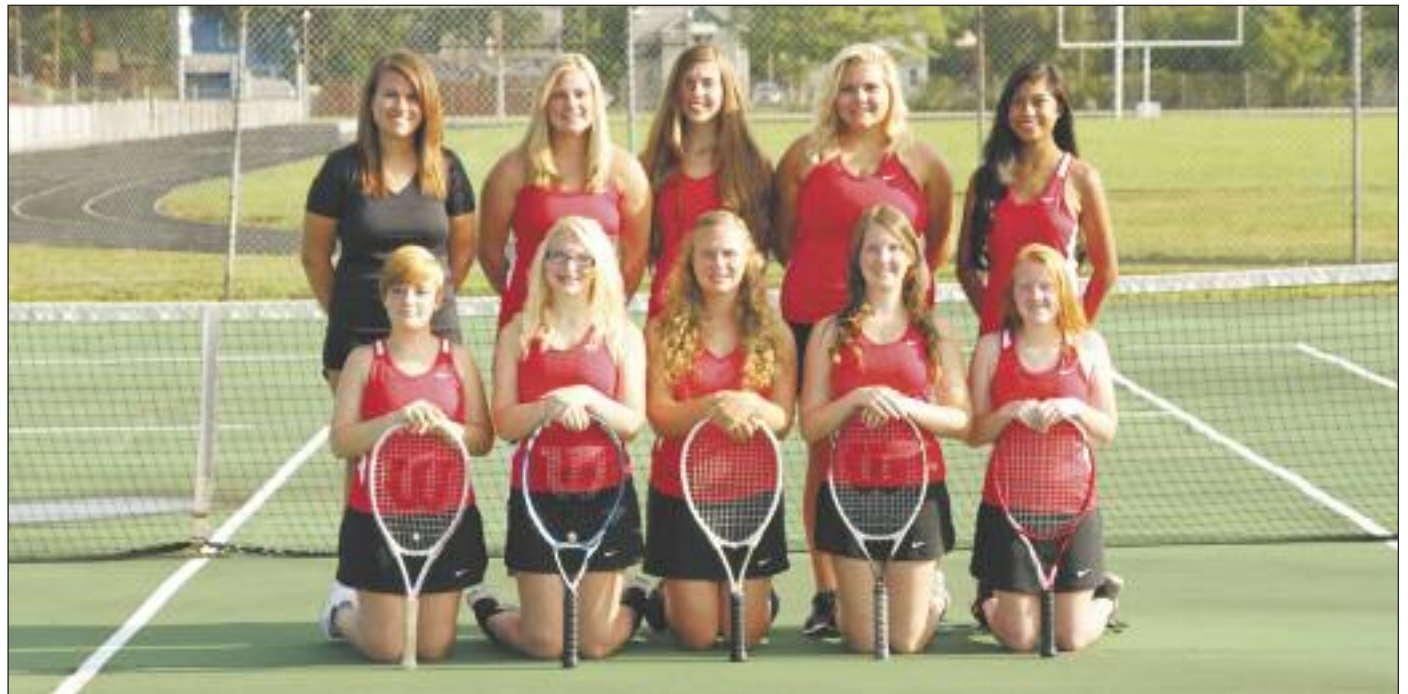
Greetings, readers! I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable holiday. I find it difficult to believe it's already 2016, and that we as seniors are only three months away from our high school graduation. It is amazing how quickly time flies, particularly this past semester. As we are settling into the new year and this new semester, I ask students of all ages, why not consider getting involved in an extracurricular activity? It's not too late!

Extracurricular activities are clubs, sports and organizations offered by the district to help broaden a student's education outside the classroom by teaching us skills through fun and interesting activities. Clubs like Student Council, Link Crew and Where Everybody Belongs mentoring clubs, and the Anti-Bullying Task Forces across the district, help to make students more comfortable among their peers by providing the school with a more pleasant and orderly atmosphere. Programs such as drama club, art club, band, choir, orchestra, and other music ensembles teach us how to better understand and appreciate the artistic world, and help students hone their creative talents. Playing a sport or just helping out with team helps students learn to collaborate and helps advance their athletic abilities, along with maintaining physical fitness, and fostering school pride. Other groups such as Key Club, Leo Club and National Honor Society benefit the community through volunteerism.

Even if your school does not have the exact club or organization listed above, most schools in the district have quite similar groups and activities as listed for students to get involved with. If your school does not have a group you are interested in getting involved with, check around the community! Churches, youth groups, 4-H Club, and the Boys and Girls Club also offer wonderful programs with fun and exciting activities for every age. By joining extracurricular activities, students can learn life and leadership skills that carry into college and careers. It is also a great way to make friends, build fond memories, and visit exciting places, while taking advantage of rare opportunities not otherwise available. These programs also look stellar on college applications.

It is well worth the time and the effort to get involved in your schools and community! If it is writing you enjoy, visit The Herald at [www.ehsherald.org](http://www.ehsherald.org) to view intriguing articles from some Elyria High students who also love to write.

*Audrey Bauer is chief editor of The Herald.*



PHOTOS COURTESY WOODWARD PHOTOGRAPHY

The varsity tennis team. Top row: Coach Kara Gibbs, Lizzie Spieth, Delaney Geib, Ivy Esser-Whidden, Ysabelle Yrad. Bottom row: Klair Barr, Julia Engle, Maisy Breese, Alisha James, Sam Spencer.

## The talk on the tennis court

**Caitlin Fuell**  
Herald writer

The Elyria High School girls tennis team kicked off last season with a new coach and nine new players, each having little-to-no prior experience. Despite these perceived obstacles, the team continues to grow and improve.

Coach Kara Gibbs was liked and respected by the team from the get-go.

"(I) started to play a lot better once

Kara became (the) coach," said team member Julia Engle. Fellow player Maisy Breese echoed that sentiment and said the coach is striving to make the team better.

New player Ysabelle Yrad (Senior, 2nd Singles) said she always wanted to play tennis but didn't know how to get involved as an underclassman.

Ysabelle said joining the team has made her proud to be a Pioneer.

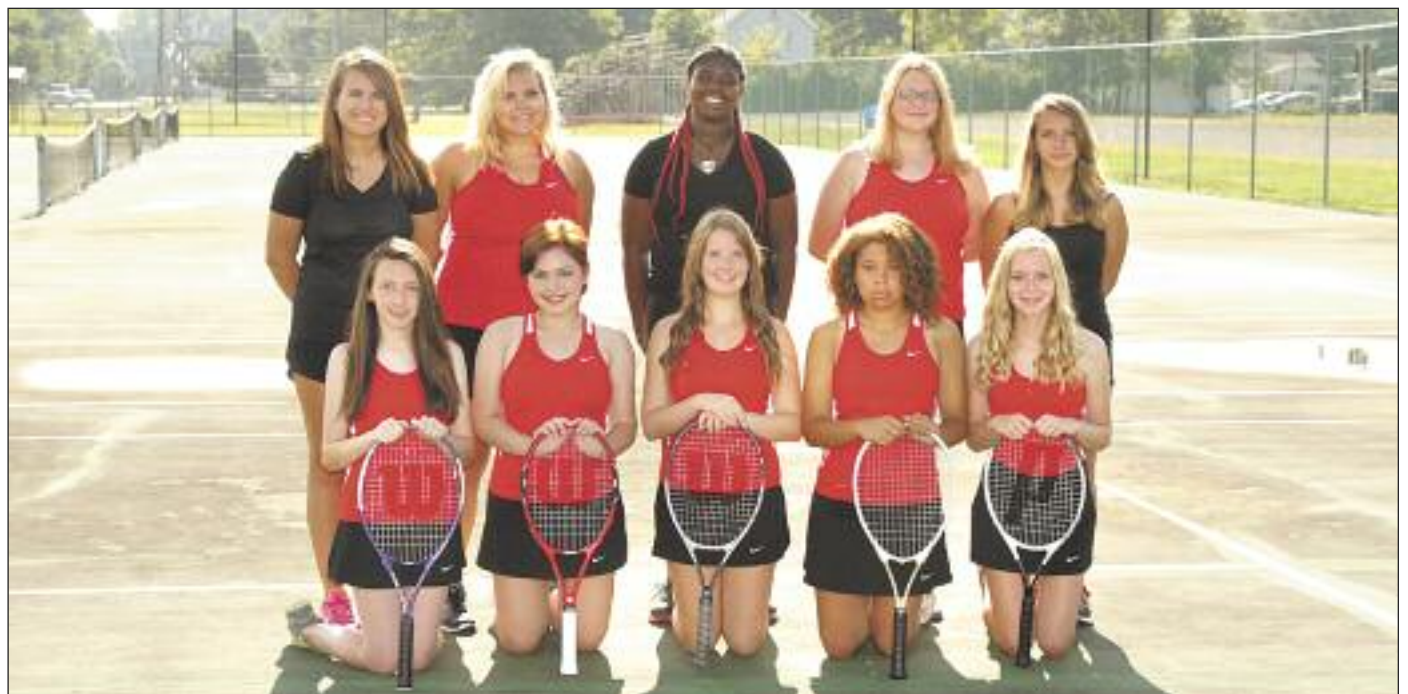
"(I've) made a lot of new friends and

(I) absolutely love playing tennis now."

Fellow newbie Julia said playing has changed her life and made her happy.

"The courts have become a home (to me)," Julia said.

Other players on the team said joining was one of their best decisions. Their new coach, "is great," and she cares about them, they said, taking the time to ensure they improve as a team and as individual players.



The junior varsity tennis team. Top row: Coach Kara Gibbs, Ivy Esser-Whidden, Jessalyn Milton, Brianna Sprankle, Carolyn Harmon. Bottom row: Caitlin Fuell, Elle Fowls, Alisha James, Serena Horn, Elizabeth Schofield.