

DISTRICT OFFICE
 701 S. Seventh Avenue
 LaGrange, IL 60525
 (708) 482-2700

Mr. Steve Bahn,
 Superintendent
 of Schools

APRIL 2019

The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

The Blackboard

www.d105.net

Countryside
 Hodgkins
 LaGrange

D105

The D105 Difference

- ◆ Twenty-eight former Gurrie Middle School students, current high school seniors, were recognized as Illinois State Scholars this year. The students met criteria that included: "performed in the top one-half of their high school class at the end of the third semester prior to graduation, and/or scored at or above the ninety-fifth percentile on the ACT or SAT."
- ◆ This year, the district started a D105 cheer squad coached by Priscilla Drenning, Ideal School third grade teacher, Lauren Huebner, Spring Avenue third grade teacher, and Sara Sparks, first grade substitute teacher at Hodgkins School. All five D105 schools were represented with 125 students. The team performed a remarkable routine during the seventh-grade basketball game in December.
- ◆ District 105 hosted the Math Olympiad on Saturday, March 2. Over 170 students from six school districts participated. Forty D105 students competed, and they had an amazing showing. The fourth/fifth-grade team took first place, the sixth-grade team tied for second place, and the seventh/eighth-grade team brought home the second-place trophy.
- ◆ The Special Services Department hosts several complimentary presentations throughout the school year to provide D105 families with important information. Topics include everything from helping children manage their time to tips for improving their academic and social experiences.

This year's presentations included:

STRESS Less – Life hacks for School Success, presented by *NAMI* (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
 Helping Your Low Effort, Perfectionist or Anxious Child Succeed – *Patrick Donohue*
 Cyber-bullying and Social Networks: A Parent's Guide – *Detective Richard Wistocki*
 Anti Bullying presentation – *John Halligan*



Service Projects Build Empathy, Character

Throughout the year, D105 students engage in a variety of service projects that offer aid and hope to people in need, protect the environment, and recognize the accomplishments of others. Through service to the immediate community, and to the greater world, students gain an increased sense of social responsibility. They are also exposed to diversity and multiculturalism, which help build empathy and understanding. Through these projects, students learn that their efforts can make the world a better place. Here are some of the many ways that D105 students are changing the world for the better:

Every Monday Matters

Members of the Gurrie Middle School's service club "Every Monday Matters" (EMM), have been **continues on p. 4...**



IN FEBRUARY, EMM MEMBERS SORTED MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR PROJECT C.U.R.E. IN WOODRIDGE.

Gurrie Middle School
 1001 S. Spring Avenue
 LaGrange, IL 60525
 (708) 482-2720
 Ed Hood, Principal

Hodgkins Elementary School
 6516 S. Kane Avenue
 Hodgkins, IL 60525
 (708) 482-2740
 Emily Crement, Principal

Ideal Elementary School
 9901 W. 58th Street
 Countryside, IL 60525
 (708) 482-2750
 Eilidh Hall, Principal

Seventh Avenue Elementary School
 701 S. Seventh Avenue
 LaGrange, IL 60525
 (708) 482-2730
 Erin Hall, Principal

Spring Avenue Elementary School
 1001 S. Spring Avenue
 LaGrange, IL 60525
 (708) 482-2710
 Brian Lawson, Principal

IN APPRECIATION



Larry Prystalski is retiring this spring after serving as a D105 Board of Education member for the past eight years. His three eldest children are D105 graduates, while his youngest is currently attending Gurrie Middle School. He has served on several board committees.

Mr. Prystalski was a math teacher for 31 years who recently retired. He taught at Oak Park-River

Forest High School for 17 years, and, previously, in Chicago for 14 years.

During his tenure as a D105 board member, he has seen the administration at each school change, with the exception of Gurrie, and recently, the district's leadership transition to a new D105 superintendent.

He is proud of the Board of Education's accomplishments. "I have always felt that the Board of Education is most effective when it allows the administrators and other district professionals to be creative and use their talents and abilities to improve curriculum and instruction. Therefore, I am proud that as a board, we have supported our staff consistently over the last eight years. I also believe that we have supported an environment of fiscal responsibility throughout my tenure," Mr. Prystalski stated. He will miss the in-depth board presentations.

Mr. Prystalski is impressed by the commitment of the staff members in all the schools who devote their time and efforts toward the educational growth and the personal development of all students. "The district has made impressive strides in preparing students for success in high school," he remarked.

He reports that his cooking, French, and guitar skills have improved since his retirement from teaching, and he hopes that his golf game will follow suit.

Library Media Specialist Earns Recognition



Joanna Marek, Library Media Specialist at Spring Avenue School, was honored in the March 6 issue of *Library Journal* magazine. The publication selected Joanna

as a "Library Mover and Shaker" for her impactful work at Spring Avenue School, where, for the past 11 years, she has worked tirelessly to give children the foundation to reach their potential.

Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Marek meets with fourth- through sixth-grade students after school to produce a school newspaper, which is in itself an unusual project for an elementary school. She believes that covering news helps students work collaboratively and develop critical thinking skills. The newspaper club is so popular that close to 50% of the students participate.

Ms. Marek also facilitated the CONNECT summer learning program. "Joanna facilitated, planned, and implemented the...program for the entire district, focusing on open library times for all the schools to [ensure] opportunities for students from all demographics," said Elizabeth Webb Peterman, retired Spring Avenue School principal, Ms. Marek's former boss, who nominated her for this recognition.

"Cathy Nestlinger, the Library Media Specialist at Seventh Ave School, coordinated a group of a dozen or so colleagues who also submitted letters of nomination on my behalf," explained Ms. Marek. "I found out I had been nominated in November. In December, when I learned I had been selected by the magazine as a Mover and Shaker, I was incredibly excited to be recognized as a school librarian who was making a difference in the field of librarianship. This award was presented to me, but the entire D105 community contributed to my success, and therefore, should also be recognized. I am grateful for the support the district gives to our school libraries and to the certified school librarians."

Kindergarten Students Come Together



All of the approximately 120 kindergarten students in the district gather together four times a year to celebrate and build community. These young students, who will one day be classmates together at Gurrie Middle School, meet to interact during fun-filled learning events. Each of the four elementary schools hosts one two-hour-long event.

Last November, Spring Avenue School held a celebration that marked the fiftieth day of school. Students, parents, and staff members wore clothes and accessories from the 1950s. In February, Ideal School celebrated 100 Days of Kindergarten! Students designed a shirt with 100 items pictured on it to wear on that day. St. Patrick's Day was recently celebrated at Seventh Avenue School, where students boarded an imaginary airplane and participated in a flight simulation that took everyone on a trip to Ireland! Traditionally, the kindergarten celebrations conclude at Hodgkins School in May with a Cinco de Mayo celebration.

ALL OF THE DISTRICT'S KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS JOINED IN SPECIAL ST. PATRICK'S DAY EVENTS AT SEVENTH AVENUE SCHOOL.



Arts Thrive in D105

D105 has a strong commitment to the arts in education. Students have many opportunities for creative growth, including participating in band, orchestra, jazz band, chorus, drama, and even STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), a component of the Fine Arts exploratory program.

Band Directors Thom Schwartz and Whitney Schwenker explained that there are 107 fourth- through eighth-grade D105 students in the Band Program, which includes Cadet Band, grades four through six; Symphonic Band and Jazz Band, grades five and six; and the Concert Band and Gurrie Middle School (GMS) Jazz Ensemble, grades six through eight.



D105 OFFERS MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT MUSICIANS TO PERFORM OUTSIDE OF THEIR SCHOOLS.

All of these groups gave wonderful performances at the Winter Concert in December, and many of the students shared their individual and small group talents at the Annual D105 Solo & Ensemble Showcase in March. The GMS Jazz Ensemble participated in the Big Band Blast concert on March 14 at Riverside Brookfield High School, and will perform with the Chicago Composers Big Band on May 14 at *Wire* in Berwyn. On April 16, the Concert Band and GMS Jazz Ensemble will take part in the D105 Band Aid concert at Gurrie to benefit the Humane Society of the U.S. And, on April 30, all of the bands will participate in the annual spring awards concert.

There are 194 third- through eighth-grade students in the Orchestra Program who participate in: Beginning Orchestra, grades three through six; Philharmonic Orchestra, grades four through six; Chamber Orchestra, grades three and four; and Symphony Orchestra, grades seven and eight. Orchestra teachers Dan Valdez and Melissa Guilfoyle explained that students perform in two full concerts and all students, except beginners, perform in the Solo & Ensemble Showcase to highlight their individual achievements. Symphony Orchestra members have many extra performance opportunities, including the High Note Festival, ILMEA Honor Orchestra, the Gurrie graduation ceremony, and various community outreach concerts. The annual spring awards concert will feature all of the orchestras on May 2.

In January 2019, D105 welcomed Tatiana Murphy as the new Choir Director. The Elementary Choir has 20 students in grades

five and six, and the Gurrie Middle School Choir has 16 students. Ms. Murphy has been impressed by the energy students have brought to rehearsals and with their willingness to go the distance to prepare for their spring concerts.

Rehearsals for this year's musical, *Beauty and the Beast*, began on February 25 with 40 fifth- through eighth-grade students in the cast, representing every school. The musical will take place on May 8 and May 9.

Seventh Avenue students performed in the school's Winter Holiday Concert, "A Season of Fun," in December. And students in grades three through six held their Spring Concert, "Our State Fair," in early March, where they sang old American favorites accompanied by recorders, ukuleles, and even serving utensils!

Spring Avenue School winter concerts included kindergartners singing a song with sign language; first- through third-grade students singing and playing rhythm instruments; fourth-grade students demonstrating their skills in melody and harmony; fifth graders playing recorders, and sixth graders strumming ukuleles.

For their winter program, Ideal and Hodgkins' students performed in the mini musical "Hero In You" by Ellis Paul. The musical focused on American heroes, including Martha Graham, Jackie Robinson, Rosa Parks, Albert Einstein, and Cesar Chavez.

Several events highlight student artwork across the district. At Ideal and Hodgkins schools, the Winter Art Show took place during the music concerts, and there will be a S.O.F.A. (Sculpture, Objects, Functional Art, and Design) show in spring. Additionally, 30 pieces of art from students in all of the D105 schools will be on display during the West Suburban Consortium Art Expo at the Cheney Mansion in Oak Park on April 27. Over 13 school districts and 600 student artists are participating in this annual event.

Fourteen students are members of the Underwater Robotics STEM Club and have been busy building, flying and practicing four Remotely Operated Underwater Vehicles (ROVs) for two competitions, including an intramural, where they will compete with three other teams. The winning team will advance to the Midwest Regional competition in April hosted by the Shedd Aquarium at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago.



MEMBERS OF THE UNDERWATER STEM CLUB TEST AN ROV (REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLE).

Service Projects Build Empathy, Character

continued from p. 1...

helping the environment, people in need, veterans, and many diverse charitable organizations for the past 10 years. Approximately 700 Gurrie students have participated in the club since its inception. The students perform nearly 20 service projects each year and collectively log an average of 2,500 to 3,000 hours of service. This year, there are 77 EMM members, who hold meetings once or twice a month and engage in two to four service projects each month. The club's sponsors are Science Teacher Louise Kulaga and Science and Math Teacher Maggie Quinn. EMM began over 10 years ago when Mrs. Kulaga noticed a sign about the Des

Plaines Valley Restoration Project and began taking groups of eighth-graders to Bemis Woods South to remove invasive species. At the same time, Gurrie Principal Ed Hood proposed that students complete 10,000 kind or good acts by the end of the school year. When a friend gave Mrs. Kulaga a book titled *Every Monday Matters*, which presented

ideas for student service projects and how to begin a school service organization, Gurrie's EMM Club was born.

"There is a very special bond among the students, teachers, and families who have been involved in EMM," Mrs. Kulaga remarked. "EMM 'alumni' return to help us out, or just to participate in a service project because they miss it. We all have fun making the world a better place."

Some of the charitable organizations that EMM has aided include Honor Flight Chicago, the Lincoln Park Community Shelter, Operation Care Package, Share

Your Soles, USA Warriors Hockey Team, and Ronald McDonald House. This year, the club is striving to raise \$1,000 to create and send 200 "Kits for Kids" to Project C.U.R.E., which delivers donated medical supplies and equipment to help developing countries.

Almost every year, EMM members hold a special event. "Party With a Purpose" is a celebration, charity event, and service project. Mrs. Kulaga explained, "We choose an organization we support, such as Honor Flight (www.honorflight.org), raise money and/or gather donations for a month or two. We hold an onsite service project for that organization, and also on that day, celebrate our successful year with a party!"

Principal Ed Hood stated, "The Every Monday Matters Club provides our students with an opportunity to make a positive difference here in our own communities and beyond. Since 2010, students have discovered that serving others not only helps those in need, but also builds a commitment to working together and collaborating with others to leave a place better than when you found it. EMM has been a significant contributor to our service as a building, which as of this past December has seen our students and staff contribute 31,500 hours of service since we began tracking service hours seven years ago. It is amazing to see our students and staff working together to make a difference, and it continues with our former students performing service in high school and beyond. Our students and communities owe a lot to EMM, and to Mrs. Kulaga and Ms. Quinn, for providing our students with these amazing opportunities to serve."

Elementary School Service Projects

D105 elementary students as young as third grade are also engaging in community service projects. During the past year, the district has conducted three inter-scholastic community service projects to benefit the community and selected charities.

In December of 2017, nearly 100 third- and fourth-grade students decorated care packages for the LaGrange Rotary Club's Secret Santa Program, and made holiday cards for senior citizens that were delivered through Aging Care Connections. Buses took the Hodgkins, Seventh Avenue, and Spring Avenue students from their schools and delivered them to

Ideal School. Students from all four of the district's elementary schools worked side-by-side to complete the projects.

In the spring of 2018, over 50 fifth- and sixth-grade students from all D105 elementary schools worked together to assemble and decorate care packages for the charity "Loving Without Limits" that supports families of children with extended hospital stays.

In the fall of 2018, over 60 fifth- and sixth-grade D105 students again worked collaboratively to assemble and decorate food and supply boxes for the D105 Care Closet. Because of this initiative and food drives at each school, over 20 families received food and personal items for the holiday season.



STUDENTS FROM ALL OF THE D105 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ARE COMING TOGETHER TO ENGAGE IN SERVICE PROJECTS.

Spring Avenue School Principal Brian Lawson explained, "In these projects, students are intentionally placed in groups that require them to work with students from the other schools. During these projects, we celebrate the students' generosity, emphasize that we are one district, and comment how wonderful it is that they are working for a good cause using their own personal time, with children that they will meet again when they arrive at Gurrie Middle School. We are looking forward to our third- and fourth-grade students completing another service project before the end of the school year."

The
Blackboard

D105 Educators **TEACH OTHERS**

Teacher Teaches Teachers!

A D105 teacher has been instrumental in sharing her knowledge with educators from across the state for over 30 years! Every March, the Illinois Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (IL ASCD) holds its annual state-wide conference for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten educators. This year's conference took place March 6-8 at the Renaissance Hotel in Schaumburg.

Kindergarten teachers in D105 have been attending this conference since its inception 38 years ago. Mary Pat Larocca, Ideal School kindergarten teacher, has presented at this conference for over 30 years. She has also been a featured presenter for at least 20 years. This year, Miss Larocca and Celine Hill, Seventh Avenue teacher, presented together. They spoke to approximately 200 teachers from around the state about their experience using daily number talks to start their math lessons over this past year. Miss Larocca and Mrs. Hill explained how they begin their daily math lessons with number talks, which are short (10 minute) daily exercises aimed at building number sense, the ability to play with numbers and visualize problem solving. These number talks also reinforce other standards that they work on throughout the year, such as counting and comparing items.

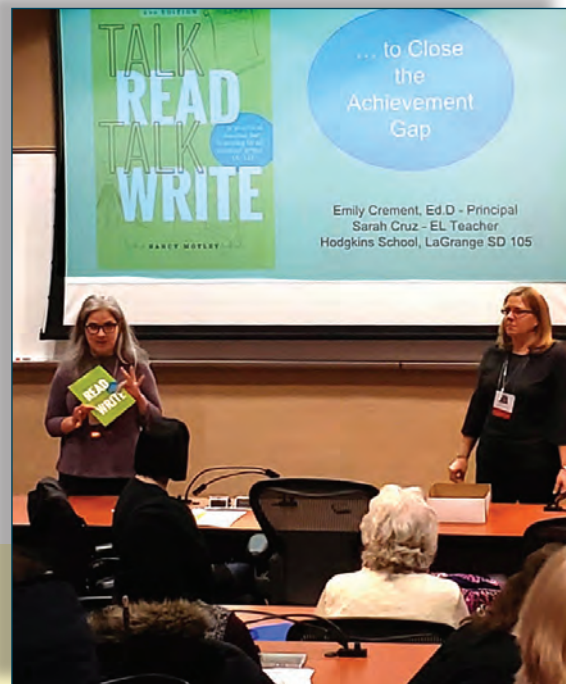
Hodgkins Educators Present

The Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Bilingual Education (ITBE) Conference took place on February 22 and 23 at the Sheraton Hotel in Lisle. Teachers from Hodgkins School and the school's principal were invited to present to an audience of educators from across the state. This marked the first time that Hodgkins' educators presented at this conference.

The conference was an opportunity for educators to share best practices for teaching second language learners. "One of the guiding principles of Responsive Classroom is, 'Great cognitive growth comes from social interaction,'" stated Hodgkins' Principal Emily Crement. "In order to support our students' learning, we have to give them frequent opportunities to talk about academic content." Responsive Classroom is an evidence-based approach to teaching that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness.

On Friday, the first day of the conference, Dr. Crement and EL teacher Sarah Cruz presented an instructional strategy called *Talk Read Talk Write*. On Saturday, Fifth Grade Teacher Adam Bautista presented a tech session on the computer program "Flipgrid," the leading video discussion platform for millions of PreK to PhD educators, students, and families in 180+ countries. Flipgrid allows students to record selfie videos explaining their learning.

According to Mrs. Cruz, "It was an honor to represent Hodgkins School and District 105 at the ITBE conference. We were proud to share how we support English Language Learners as they engage in meaningful discourse!"



PRINCIPAL EMILY CREMENT (L), AND EL TEACHER SARAH CRUZ, HODGKINS SCHOOL EDUCATORS, PRESENTED TO TEACHERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE AT THE RECENT ILLINOIS TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES-BILINGUAL EDUCATION (ITBE) CONFERENCE.

IN THIS ISSUE...

- 1 **THE D105 DIFFERENCE**
- 1 **SERVICE PROJECTS BUILD EMPATHY, CHARACTER**
- 2 **IN APPRECIATION**
- 2 **LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST EARNS RECOGNITION**
- 2 **KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS COME TOGETHER**
- 3 **ARTS THRIVE IN D105**
- 5 **D105 EDUCATORS TEACH OTHERS**
- 6 **D105 WRITING FESTIVAL**

LaGrange School District 105

District Office
701 S. Seventh Avenue
LaGrange, Illinois 60525

The Blackboard

APRIL 2019

Countryside
Hodgkins
LaGrange

D105

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Carol Stream, IL
Permit No. 1369

D105 WRITING FESTIVAL



The D105 Writing Festival is a favorite event that spotlights students' creative writing skills. The eleventh annual Writing Festival is underway, and on May 15 at 6:00 pm in the Gurrie gym, it will culminate with a celebration for the D105 community.

Every student submits an original written work to his/her classroom teacher. A committee of teachers scores the work, and the five students with the highest scores from each school are selected to read their stories and/or poems at the Writing Festival event. The winning entries celebrate the students' passions and their many diverse interests, including famous presidents, dinosaurs, LEGOs, snails and even recess. The students write stories about families, friendships and vacations. Poetry is accepted and all genres of writing are encouraged.

Family members, neighbors and friends are invited to attend the Writing Festival celebration. The students, who have practiced reading their work aloud at home, recite their work using a microphone. Each one of the students receives a ribbon and a certificate for his/her exceptional work. Following the event, families and D105 educators socialize and celebrate with a light snack. Students never cease to amaze the audience with their insight, creativity and talent!



DISTRICT 105 BOARD OF EDUCATION

David Herndon, President

**Kristine Lonsway,
Vice President**

Virginia Kogen, Secretary

Elyse Hoffenberg

Larry Prystalski

Marika Radi

Eileen Tucker

The public is invited to attend Board meetings — generally held at the Gurrie Library Learning Center on the fourth Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m.