

# HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

Powered by Danville Area Community College



## TAKING ONE FOR THE TEAM

**CHAMPAIGN CENTRAL** students celebrated the culmination of a schoolwide food drive by pieing physics teacher **Alex Gordon** in the face — seven times. Senior **Margo Gengler** (above) partnered with Central's Interact Club to run the Hands Against Hunger Emergency Food Drive (Oct. 29- Nov. 11), where students could drop nonperishable items in a box outside one of the classrooms. These were then donated to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. The original goal of 50 items was smashed, as students donated 372 pounds worth of food items. Gordon had volunteered to be pied once for every 50 items donated, leading him to receiving seven facefuls of whipped cream. 'I am honored to put my body on the line for charity,' he said.

— **Adelaide Kota**

## Nursing at DACC

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Application Deadline for Spring '26 is  
Friday, Oct. 17, Noon

# Where Passion Becomes Profession



# Meet the crew

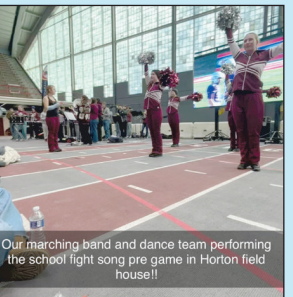
This year's group includes 43 students from 42 schools (*visit news-gazette.com for our photo gallery*). We'll spotlight each correspondent in Top of the Morning on Wednesdays.



**Academy High:** Evie Price  
**ALAH:** London Dugan  
**Arcola:** Addee Mulligan  
**Armstrong:** Aubrey Self  
**Bement:** Kiana Hunter  
**BHRA:** Lahna Benjamin  
**Blue Ridge:** Karly Warner  
**Centennial:** Kennedy Borden  
**Cerro Gordo:** Alexa Rodgers  
**Champaign Central:** Adelaide Kota  
**Chrisman:** Morgan Simpson  
**Cissna Park:** Sophia Duis  
**Danville:** Rylee Jack  
**DeLand-Weldon:** Nathan Smith

**Fisher:** Kesiah Musick  
**G-RF:** Tiffany Taylor  
**GCMS:** Addison Farmer  
**Heritage:** Rylan White  
**Hoopeston Area:** Willamina Clayton  
**Iroquois West:** Traeh Kissack  
**Judah Christian:** Jack Dalbey  
**LeRoy:** Molly Scheuer  
**Mahomet-Seymour:** Abigail Eden  
**Maroa-Forsyth:** Aubrey Stewart  
**Milford:** Kami Muehling  
**Monticello:** Mady Melton  
**Oakland:** Sophie VonLanken  
**Oakwood:** Sophia Aquino

**Paxton-Buckley-Loda:** Brayden Kief  
**Rantoul:** Tamia Bell  
**St. Joseph-Ogden:** Katie Ericksen  
**St. Thomas More:** Duncan Oliveira  
**Salt Fork:** Anna McCollum  
**Schlarman:** Isabella Bogen  
**Shiloh:** Ali Cash  
**Sullivan:** Lillian Moxley, Danica Bell  
**Tuscola:** Claire Leonard  
**Uni High:** Simrah Khan  
**Unity:** Claire Meharry  
**Urbana:** Ruby Pittenger  
**Villa Grove:** Eva Piercy  
**Westville:** Olivia Trogia



Our marching band and dance team performing the school fight song pre game in Horton field house!!



Our fans joined together at the school this morning to send off the football team as they boarded the buses for Bloomington!

# School tours

Carrying on a social-media tradition, each student will take over The News-Gazette's Snapchat account to go behind the scenes at their school. Last week, **Unity's Claire Meharry** took us to state football.



# CERRO GORDO HONORING THE FALLEN

This year at Cerro Gordo High School, the Veterans Day assembly was in the auditorium. During this assembly, we decided to do a reading of the book 'Americas White Table' in order to honor the fallen veterans. The passage talked about honoring the prisoners of war (POW) as well as the soldiers lost in duty. The elementary school came over, and each grade sang their own song to the veterans. After that, the band played a moving piece. After all the music was finished, we went through, and each veteran in attendance got to introduce themselves and say their branch, where they served and how long they served for. A huge thank you to Mr. **Brandon Willard** and Dr. **Emily Weidner** for putting on this amazing assembly for our veterans.

— Hunter Malone



## Georgetown-Ridge Farm

With the help of a local grocery store, FFA donated food to a local church's food drive. The FFA pushed the carts full of food from the store to the church building. The group then stocked and moved the food into a stored area.

— TIFFANY TAYLOR



## Hoopeston Area

Students, parents and community members gathered on Nov. 14 for Meet the Cornjerkers, an exhibition for winter sports athletes. Students involved in girls' and boys' basketball, wrestling, bowling and cheerleading were introduced before showcasing their athletic talents. Pictured (courtesy **Ginger Gonzalez**): senior **Brayden Walder**, senior **Bricyn Jones**, junior **Mady Klaber** and senior **Kaedy Goodrum**. Also pictured: members of the wrestling team in action.

— WILLAMINA CLAYTON





# YEAR 10 OF HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: POWERED BY DACC



## Mahomet-Seymour

Cookie Week, a project for AP economics and economics, had groups from both classes create companies which baked cookies to sell to students before and after school all week. It was also a fundraiser as profits went to different organizations. Students learned about pricing, how not to overspend on supplies and how to make profits. Within the groups, students each had specific roles. Some students managed the group's finances, others baked the cookies, some were presidents of the companies, and other students were in charge of advertising/media.

— ABBY EDEN



# MAROA-FORSYTH SUPPORTING ONE OF OUR OWN



The school and community continue to support **Matthew Clary**, a sophomore who was recently diagnosed with leukemia. He dresses as the school's mascot and is one of the biggest Trojan supporters, especially in football. Over the last few weeks, students wore blue and gold in honor of him, and the staff wore shirts with the mascot on them. Money was collected at school and at the quarterfinal and semifinal football games — including contributions from ALAH.

— Aubrey Stewart



## Danville

The North Ridge Middle School Junior National Honor Society hosted a Trivia Night fundraiser. Students from the Danville High School National Honor Society supported their fundraiser as an ode to potential future members. A group of seniors selected an investigator theme for their table. The 'Detective Divas' took top 5 in the contest and enjoyed the diverse selection of trivia questions.

— RYLEE JACK



## Cissna Park

The girls' basketball team made a quick turnaround from volleyball to play four games last week. With more games than practices, the Timberwolves finished the Tip-off Tournament in second place. **Addison Lucht** and **Laurn Hamrick** made the all-tournament team.

— SOPHIE DUIS

## Centennial

Centennial highlighted women in sports with a trip to the University of Illinois' women's basketball game against Murray State. Associate athletic director **Meghan Siwecki** organized the field trip and provided female athletes with motivational Charger shirts. Approximately 90 Centennial student-athletes, representing a variety of sports, were there to celebrate the Illini victory.

— KENNEDY BORDEN

## Sullivan

Student council attended the district convention at Eastern Illinois University, where **Daisy Richardson** became the new district president.

— LILY MOXLEY





ALAH

The stands were filled to the brim with hopeful fans as the Knights took the field for their first state semifinal game since the school's consolidation in 2014. In a season filled with history, heart and unforgettable moments, the Knights' remarkable journey came to an end with a hard-fought loss to the Maroa-Forsyth Trojans in the Class 2A semifinals. The Knights united four communities — Arthur, Lovington, Atwood and Hammond — with pride, spirit and tradition. For the seniors, the ending was bittersweet. It's the final chapter of their high school football story, but the legacy they leave will shape every team that follows. As the helmets are packed away and the field grows quiet, one truth remains: This season changed everything. The Knights didn't just play football. They made history. Pictured is **Trey Strode, Kamden Morfey and August Burton**.

— LONDON DUGAN



Bement

To give students extra fun before heading off to Thanksgiving break, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America held Trivia Day on Nov. 19. Students answered multiple trivia questions during their homeroom and also had the option to dress like it was the 1960s.

— KIANA HUNTER



Blue Ridge

The Lady Knights started off the basketball season strong with a win against Donovan. Cheerleaders spread spirit at both boys' and girls' basketball games, they spread a lot of school spirit at the first game of the season. All participating athletes provided exciting entertainment for the crowd. Pictured: **Addison Browning and Kylie Madden**.

— KARLY WARNER



CHRISMAN  
CHANCE FOR EXTRA CREDIT



The annual blood drive had 53 donors — including 15 first-timers. If the students wanted extra credit, their family or friends could donate for them. If they were 16, they also could donate for themselves to earn extra-credit points for their classes. On Nov. 13, the FFA team got first place in its section for Dairy, with several individuals placing: **Autumn Ellis** (first), **Lyndsi Smith** (second), **Grant Wells** (third), **Gracie Cash** (fourth), **Izzy Barrett** (sixth), **Sandra Burmmod** (10th) and **Bud Haddix** (middle-school division). In Agronomy, Ellis was ninth. Also, at the first Vet Science CDE, the team placed fifth.

— MORGAN SIMPSON



Judah Christian

Throughout the year, Spanish seniors have been volunteering at Living Alternatives Pregnancy Resource Center to support their weekly Curbside Care program. At Curbside Care, families in need can drive up and receive essential items like diapers, wipes, clothing and formula. Because many families who come through speak Spanish, the seniors in Spanish class help by communicating with them, gathering the necessary items and ensuring they feel welcomed and supported.

— JACK DALBEY



Academy High

To celebrate the start of Thanksgiving break, Academy High hosted its first annual Fall Feast. Organized by English teacher **Megan Hutchinson**, the feast took place last Thursday at lunch. Students brought their favorite homemade dishes and enjoyed sampling the various meals. From empanadas to mooncakes, the foods represented what made each student's family unique and allowed them to share a bit of that with their peers. Pictured, from left: **Sophia Zhang, Yue Cao, Ellie Rogers, Giovanni Bellina and Tey Eagles**.

— EVIE PRICE



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## BHRA

Theater brought the classic mystery 'Clue' to life on stage last weekend. The senior cast featured **Lindze Parker** as Mr. Green, **Wyatt Bywater** as Professor Plum and **Mallory Bell** as Miss Scarlett. The entire cast delivered outstanding performances that kept the audience engaged throughout the show, supported by a hardworking and talented set crew along with amazing sponsors.

— LAHNA BENJAMIN



# UNI HIGH MUSIC TO OUR EARS

Uni student musicians joined music teacher **Richard Murphy** at the Illinois Music Educators Association's (ILMEA) annual District Music Festival at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais. 'It was an honor to accompany such a talented group of student musicians,' Murphy said. Thirty-six students participated in the ILMEA District Music Festival this year, a record for the school, with 30 playing in the senior chorus, band and orchestra and six playing in the junior chorus, band and orchestra.

— Simrah Khan



## Heritage

Members of the Heritage Athlete Leadership Team had the opportunity to visit the Student Leadership Conference hosted by the IHSA Student Advisory Committee. **Mary McGarigle**, Heritage's new athletic director as well as P.E. and health teacher, selected eight members. Leaders visited Peoria with 600 other students from the state to learn leadership skills and hear from two speakers, **Omari Pearson** and **Brittany Richmond**. Pictured (from left to right): **Mary McGarigle**, Schrock, **Erika Bonilla**, **Clair Davison**, Miller, **Kaylee Junglas**, **Bensyl** and **Elmore** inside the conference center.

— RYLAN WHITE



## Paxton-Buckley-Loda

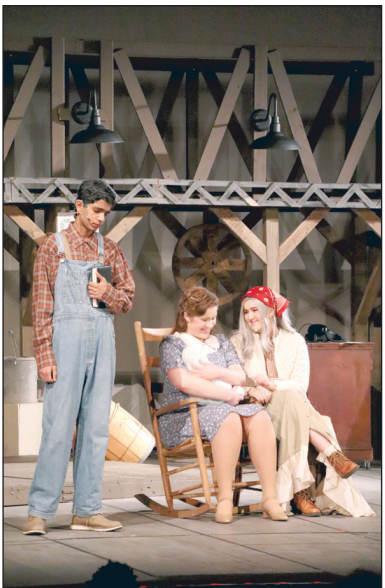
On Nov. 20, PBL hosted an assembly featuring motivational speaker and author **Terrence Talley**, who shared stories of the many students he has met over the years and discussed the struggles people often carry beneath the surface. Beginning his career as a youth pastor and later working with the FBI to help find victims of human trafficking, Talley was drawn to spread joy, hope and positivity to those who need it most.

Students and staff were seen laughing one moment at his spontaneous dancing and jokes and wiping away tears the next as he shared his powerful personal message. One thing he wishes he could have told his younger self is that he mattered and was capable of achieving anything he set his mind to. He hopes that through his speeches and school visits, students who are struggling will feel encouraged to see a little more hope and to reach out to the people who care and are ready to help if needed.

— BRAYDEN KIE







### Urbana

The production of 'Bright Star' was a success. After a matinee at Urbana Middle School, the high school hosted a long weekend of performances.

— RUBY PITTENGER



# ST. JOSEPH-OGDEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

National Honor Society held its annual blood drive — sponsored by ImpactLife — to support the community. NHS members worked hard to encourage students to sign up and donate. **Maggie Hewkin** (right) and **Brynn Ikemire** showed courage and strength during the event, which provided students with an opportunity to help others and make a difference.

— Katie Ericksen



### Iroquois West

Entrepreneurship class, led by **Carrie Miller**, hosted its annual Bingo Night. Students collected food donations leading up to and during Bingo Night to donate to the local GOD's Food Pantry for the holidays. The entrepreneurs also held a 50/50 drawing, where the winnings were kindly donated back to benefit the food pantry by **Lindsey Kanosky**.

— TRAEH KISSACK



### Rantoul

The second 'Meet the Eagles' featured band, cheerleading, boys' basketball, girls' basketball, the Eaglette dance team and wrestling. The introduction of winter sports allowed families, students and community members to show their support for athletes and coaches. Cheer, dance and band were introduced and performed, and the boys' basketball team scrimmaged.

— TAMIA BELL





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## Milford

National Honor Society volunteered at the school's annual blood drive as students helped with checking in and out donors and providing snacks and refreshments. Pictured: **Brycea Brown** and **Molly Coffey** checking in and checking out patients; **Olivia Leppard**; and **Daytin Thompson**.

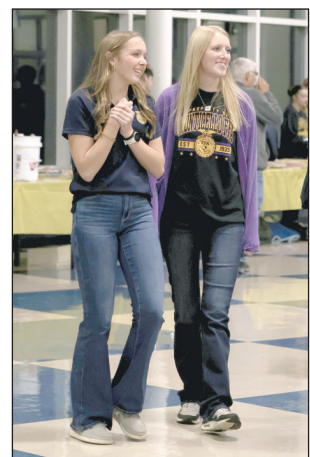
— KAMI MUEHLING



# TUSCOLA STARS OF THE SEASON

The Drama Department performed 'The Best Christmas Pageant Ever!' The five people in the Nativity scene (from left) are **Joslynn Steffens**, **Jaes Mentock**, **Mia Viatile**, **Caden Kerner** and **Max Corum**. Also pictured: **Emma Spillman**, **William Petry**, **Joslynn Steffens**, **Chase Nixon** and **Delanie Yantis**.

— Claire Leonard



## Monticello

FFA diligently worked and planned for weeks in order to prepare for their annual Harvest Fest on Nov. 21 at Monticello Middle School. The event was a fundraiser for their FFA chapter, and it got the whole program and community involved. Throughout the year, Monticello FFA travels to many conventions and competitions, so the money raised at Harvest Fest allows these experiences to happen. Harvest Fest consisted of a live pie auction on a variety of donated pies, a dinner served by FFA students and other activities. Pictured (courtesy **Bailee Wierman**): **Braden Bartlow**, **Lauren Albrecht**, **Mylin Bruhn** and **Elizabeth Rost**.

— MADY MELTON



## Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley

The girls' basketball team captured the annual Bunnie Tip-Off title with a thrilling 50-48 victory over Fisher. **Jillian Rosendahl** earned a spot on the All-Tournament Team, while **Lily Sizemore** was named Tournament MVP for the second year in a row. Sizemore also became the all-time leading scorer in GCMS history this week.

— ADDISON FARMER



## Westville

On Saturday morning, the Westville-GRF wrestling team completed its yearly brick run — 4 miles while holding two bricks. Junior **Makenna Roedl** said: 'It gets better every year. Last year, I couldn't run anything, not even a mile. In comparison, this year, I was able to run all 4 miles. The last thing is once you start, you don't stop. If you get in the flow state, it's easier to keep running than to stop and start running again.'

— OLIVIA TROGLI

**Unity**  
At the IHSA Class 3A playoff semifinal football game between Unity and St. Joseph-Ogden, the schools teamed up before the game to donate canned and boxed food to support the Eastern Illinois Food-bank. Pictured: **Emily Osterbur** and **Gianna Stierwalt** placing their donations in the boxes for Unity.

— CLAIRE MEHARRY



## Arcola

Every year, student council takes on the task of selling candy cane grams — a tradition enjoyed by the students.

— ADDEE MULLIGAN





### LeRoy

Two academic honors were given out to students. The Illinois State Scholars Award is given to seniors based on their sixth-semester transcripts, ACT and/or SAT scores and their junior year unweighted GPA. From left: **Sam Edmundson, Isaiah Schertz, Sofia Hernandez-Estrada, Alyssa Davis, Morgan Fleming, Molly Scheuer, Kenly Downey and Laila Carr.** Also, at the National Honor Society induction ceremony, juniors and seniors with a 3.5 or higher grade-point average are eligible to apply to the program. New inductees were seniors Davis, Hernandez-Estrada and Scheuer; and juniors **Annie Conn, Macy Dean, Peyton Ford, Jacey Hageman, Sadee Owens, Nellie Smith, Gabe Sutter, Maddy Timm and Chloe Warlow.**

— MOLLY SCHEUER

## ST. THOMAS MORE HIGH ACHIEVERS



National Honor Society had its annual induction ceremony, led this year by seniors **Muskan Garg, Ally Nelson and Philip Lee** as well as junior **Claire Kleusner.** Also, students finished their Dia de los Muertos celebration with homemade ofrendas.

— Duncan Oliveira



### Fisher

The cast is starting to practice their acting skills as they get ready to perform 'Willa Wonka and the College Tour.' The Bunnies hosted their annual girls' basketball tournament. Finally, **Terrance Talley** encouraged and motivated students to have each other's backs during a presentation at an all-school assembly. It was a blessing to hear from him and be reminded to show everyone love, because we don't know what they're going through.

— KESIAH MUSICK



### Villa Grove

The Thrift Shop Formal with the theme of 'Masquerade' was the second annual dance with many memories made. It not only included a series of spectacular dance moves but also a spontaneous, impromptu karaoke contest fired by **Jack Jones** and a canned-goods food drive for the local food pantry. Students purchased their attire at local thrift stores, specifically The Salvation Army in Mattoon, which partnered with the high school so participants could get a discount for the event. **Lily Wyant** and **Kinleigh Pellum** both got gently-used floral heels to strut their stuff for the chance to win an award: best dressed, best strut, best karaoke, best dancer and best mask.

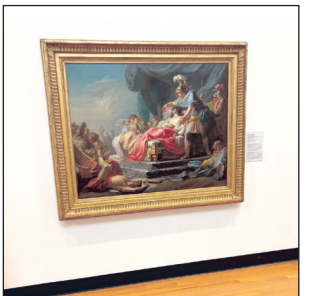
— EVA PIERCY



### Oakland

On Saturday, the girls' basketball team played and won its first two games at the Comet Classic in Oakwood.

— SOPHIE VONLANKEN



### Oakwood

Art students went on a field trip to a local museum, where they spent the day exploring different exhibits and getting an up-close look at professional artwork. Many students said seeing the pieces in person helped them understand the artists' techniques and intentions on a deeper level, making the experience both inspiring and eye-opening. The senior class also took a tour of the Subaru manufacturing plant in Lafayette, Ind. Students were able to watch the entire process of how cars are made. It was a very interesting experience, and not only did students learn about manufacturing cars, but it was a great bonding time for the Class of 2026.

— SOPHIA AQUINO



### Salt Fork

To wrap up the fall sports season, many Salt Fork athletes were selected as recipients of Vermillion County and Vermilion Valley Conference awards. **Maya Smith** and **Rain Pitlik** both made all-county first team for volleyball, while **Ian Church, Maddax Stine** and **Jamison Chambliss** were first team all-county and all-conference. With others in volleyball and football were also honored on an all-county or all-conference team. On top of this, **Karli McGee** (pictured), a senior volleyball player, was named a County Volleyball Sportsmanship Nominee, and **Kade Smith** (pictured), a senior football player, was the County Football Sportsmanship Winner.

— ANNA MCCOLLUM