

# HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

Powered by Danville Area Community College



Darby Manion

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Students at St. Joseph-Ogden are embracing the spirit of giving this Christmas season. Students are competing by grade to see who can donate the most toys for Toys for Tots, which will be gifted to the Marine Corps Reserve. St. Joseph-Ogden has proudly been a three-time champion in this Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots drive. This year marks the Spartans' first participation since COVID-19, and the excitement is building. The winning class will be rewarded a special treat during finals. In addition to Toys for Tots, student council has set up Angel Trees. They've generously spent over \$500 to fulfill Christmas wishes for various children. Council members personally visit stores to make these holiday wishes come true.

— Katie Erickson



Henry McCannon, Brayden Waller and Sydney Steinbach



Reid Bewley

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# YEAR 10 OF HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL: POWERED BY DACC

## Meet the crew

This year's group includes 43 students from 42 schools (*visit [news-gazette.com](https://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 Troglia



Monticello student reporter Mady Melton works with News-Gazette photo Editor Robin Scholz on Sunday. The senior is part of our All-Area Volleyball team that publishes Saturday.

Jim Rossow/The News-Gazette



# VILLA GROVE ADVENTURE AT THE ICE RINK

Adventure Club, sponsored by **Brian Cordes** and **Amber Schweighart**, took students to the UI Ice Arena followed by lunch at The Yard on Broadway. Some kids were natural skaters begging for more time, while others were counting down the minutes to leave the accident-prone ice. **Ryan Lillard** may not have been the best skater, but she still had a great time holding onto the sides with a smile on her face. Friends paired up together, laughing through the falls and creating unforgettable memories. **Hayden Thomas** and **Ella Schweighart** held onto each other for extra support. Unfortunately, Ella Schweighart still needed to resort to the blue ice walker available for less-balanced skaters.

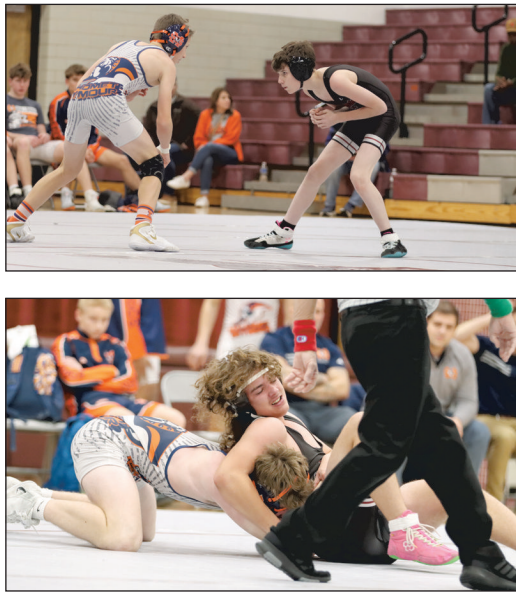
— Eva Piercy



### Uni High

The Asian American Association held a 'create-your-own' boba fundraiser to support next year's Moon Festival. In many Asian cultures, the Moon Festival is a celebration of the autumn harvest and a reunion with family and friends. Every fall, the Asian American Association organizes a Moon Festival for Uni's community. To help fund next year's festival, students could purchase milk tea with a diversity of toppings — including syrups, fruit chunks and cookies. Photo by Ruijing Tang.

— SIMRAH KHAN



### Blue Ridge

Blue Ridge formed a co-op wrestling program with DeLand-Weldon. The collaboration has excited many students and given them a new opportunity to represent the school. The team had its first match against Mahomet-Seymour. Pictured: **Bentley Choate** and **Javin Newberry**.

— KARLY WARNER

### Bement

In December, students involved in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America have helped with the Hat, Mitten, Scarf Drive; an Angel Tree; the popular no-sew blankets; and the PTO holiday shop.



— KIANA HUNTER



### Milford

On Friday, culinary classes put together a Friendsgiving, with each class making amazing dishes to add to their lunch. The students had a fun time making the meals and enjoying each other's company.

— KAMI MUEHLING





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## Tuscola

Student council hosted a holiday door-decorating competition between teachers. The first-place winner was **Hayley Skinner**. In second place was **Mandy Hanner**, and in third place was **Michael Resendiz**. **Robert Johnson** won for best holiday room decoration. Pictured (from left), **Morgan Callow**, **Deondra Cook**, **Callie Cook**, **Kalen Shinn**, **Michael Resendiz**, **Mandy Hanner**, **Claire Leonard** and **Robert Johnson**. Also, the annual Winter Assembly was filled with fun activities, including a gingerbread house competition and a candy cane relay race.

— CLAIRE LEONARD



## Chrisman

Students enjoyed dress-up days leading up to winter break, including 'Holiday Headgear' (Santa hats and reindeer ears), 'Mad Out Plaid' and 'Sweater Day' (pictured: **Addi Miller**, **Autumn Ellis**, **Gracie Smith** and **Izzy Barrett**). For 'Christmas Card Day,' staff made a globe for students to take pictures in. Finally, 'Pajama Day' was the most popular. Also, Future Business Leaders of America students attended the FBLA Eastern Area Conference, where **Bella LaBume** finished first, **Grant Wells** second and **Gabby Nolen** fourth. Finally, the school's FFA chapter attended FFA Trivia, where they finished fourth.

— MORGAN SIMPSON



## Arcola

The student-led club Rider Nation spread Christmas cheer by wrapping teachers' doors with Christmas paper.

— ADDEE MULLIGAN

# GIBSON CITY-MELVIN-SIBLEY BRAVING THE COLD

The cheer team, boys' basketball team and Future Business Leaders of America came together to support the local food pantry and the Gibson City community. Students helped assemble food orders and assisted with deliveries. Despite freezing temperatures, FBLA members distributed food items collected during their food drive. The FBLA adviser is **Vickie Conlin**.

— Addison Farmer



## Maroa-Forsyth

The Principal Advisory Committee hosted Kindness Week. Students dressed up for a winter spirit week, wrote compliments to each other, and decorated school windows about what kindness looks like. The committee also handed out doughnuts and hot chocolate on Wednesday and hid army men around school that students could find to get a candy bar.

— AUBREY STEWART



## Rantoul

Students involved in Madrigals performed their two-day-long play. The production was set in ancient times and centered around a formal dinner. Throughout the performance, students sang to enhance the atmosphere and storytelling. The combination of both acting and music brought the historical story setting to life, showcasing the students' talents and creativity.

— TAMIA BEL



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## Mahomet-Seymour

The Freshman Mentor Program (FMP) hosted its annual Winter Games. Freshmen are divided into advisories with upperclassmen mentors. Some of the challenges in the Winter Games were dizzy candy cane, tug of war and cross the ice. **Raquel Fernandez's** FMP won the games this year.

— ABBY EDEN



## Unity

On Saturday, senior **Alex Wells** organized the Right Here Right Now Wreath Relay, a holiday fundraiser designed to support the Unity Rocket Locker and its mission to provide essential items to local students and families in need. Participants could purchase a spot within the relay with thank-you gifts based on the level of donation. On the day of the event, community members gathered at Tolono East Side Park, forming a continuous line stretching to the Tolono Hand In Hand building. A holiday wreath was then passed from participant to participant until it reached the end of the route. The event featured Christmas cookie stands, hot cocoa booths and a festive parade that follows the wreath as it travels down the line. This event aimed to bring the community together in a meaningful and joyful celebration of generosity during the holiday season.

— CLAIRE MEHARRY



# URBANA ALL IN GOOD FUN

Frohe Weihnachten! The annual German gingerbread house competition, Lebkuchenhaus-Wettbewerb in German, hosted by German teacher **Frau Julie Bequette**, took place in the UHS commons. Teams of joyous students built varieties of festive creations, including a German beer mug and candyland volcano. Die Tradition was ein frohes Fest!

— Ruby Pittenger



## Centennial

Teachers and staff celebrated the upcoming winter break with their annual holiday lunch. Current and former employees joined together in the library to have a festive meal. Pictured (from left) are staff members **Medra Seals, Jess Wilson, Karen Klebbe** and **Stephanie Cahoon**. Students in **Gregory Stock's** Law in American Society class had the opportunity to meet Champaign police Chief **Timothy Tyler**.

— KENNEDY BORDEN



## St. Thomas More

Houses celebrated the season by dressing in ugly Christmas sweaters and participating in festive games and activities. Also, the annual Christmas concert featured performances by different music classes taught by **Caleb Lee**.

— DUNCAN OLIVEIRA



## Schlarman

Each class decorated their hallways with different themes. The senior theme was 'Silent Night.' There is also a sock drive going on where students have a goal to meet.

— IZZY BOGEN





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## Monticello

With the holidays right around the corner, students are participating in holiday traditions and festivities in order to keep spirits high. One of these beloved traditions is the Madrigal dinner, where the Madrigals — an a cappella singing group — recreate a renaissance feast. This year's 51st annual dinner consisted of performances on Friday and Sunday. Pictured: **Madison Bonds, Liam Bartlett, Reece Spainhour, Sophia Bradley, Parker Ryan and Brenna Cunningham** during dress rehearsals on Dec. 11.

— MADY MELTON



# ARMSTRONG HEALTHY COMPETITION

Last Wednesday, FFA hosted Section 18 Greenhand Quizbowl and Trivia Night contests. Both are set up in a Scholastic Bowl-style competition. Greenhand Quizbowl is for first-year FFA members. Trivia Night is for all FFA members and includes questions about FFA history. There are 60 questions in six rounds. Last Thursday, band and choir had their winter concert. **Elaina Nelson**, the band and choir teacher, and the students did an amazing job.

— Aubrey Self



## Westville

On Dec. 9, student council helped at the annual senior citizen dinner. Students helped serve the dinner and drinks, as well as handing out presents to the guests. As always, everyone had a wonderful time, and it was so nice to see so many people come to the dinner.

— OLIVIA TROGLIA





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## Paxton-Buckley-Loda

Throughout December, PBL's chamber choir has been spreading Christmas cheer through the power of music. The choir performed at various nursing homes, stores and local businesses, sharing their voices with a range of audiences. Selections such as 'In Summer' from the movie 'Frozen,' 'Silent Night' and 'Let It Snow' were just a few of the many songs performed for the community by choir director **Tiffany Howard** and choir members.

— BRAYDEN KIEF



# CISSNA PARK PROUD TO REPRESENT

On Friday, two seniors — **Josie Neukomm** and **Addison Lucht** — represented the school at the Daughters of the American Revolution ceremony. They were nominated by teachers of the school, Neukomm receiving the Son award and Lucht the Daughter award. At the ceremony, Lucht (right) had the honor of reading her essay — which won a county contest — to those in attendance. It is been sent to the district level for judging.

— Sophie Duis



## Shiloh

Student council and FFA tackled another successful year of food baskets, winding up with nearly \$10,000 in donations and food collected by the high school, junior high and elementary teachers. That helped provide meals to 50 families and over 150 people in Shiloh's community. Students from student council, FFA, FCCLA and volunteers delivered the baskets to the homes of the recipients and were able to see firsthand what impacting the community really can look and feel like.

— ALI CASH



## Academy High

The school's rock band had its end-of-semester performance at the City Center last Sunday. The opener was **Anika Emily**, a local musician. The rock band's set included songs like 'Spiderwebs' by No Doubt and 'Holiday' by Greenday. Directed by **Mike Ingram**, the band combines rock with instruments not typical to the genre, such as a saxophone and accordion, creating a unique sound. The band will have its next performance at the end of the spring semester. Pictured (via **Simon Aiuvlasit**): **Giovanni Bellina** on drums and **Breanna Patten** on vocals.

— EVIE PRICE



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## Champaign Central

On Dec. 11, Central hosted its Empty Bowls event in the cafeteria. Visual-arts students from Central and Centennial created a variety of ceramic bowls. Community members could purchase a ticket and pick from the selection then enjoyed a meal prepared and served by culinary-arts students. Proceeds went to the Eastern Illinois Food Bank. Pictured: junior **Kike Olukoya**.

— ADELAIDE KOTA



## LeRoy

Since Thanksgiving, LeRoy has held three different fundraisers. The first helped the local Kiwanis Food Bank. Kiwanis hosts a food drive for local families during the holidays. However, the usual donor was spread thin and unable to provide food this year. At the girls' basketball home opener, the team decided that admission to the game would be a monetary donation or nonperishable food items to be given to the Kiwanis group. The second fundraiser was the Key Club Food Drive. During December, students and staff can donate food items that go to the Kiwanis Holiday Family Assistance Program. Finally, student council held a Pancake Lunch fundraiser for United Way. All junior high and high school students could purchase a Pancake Lunch, which included three pancakes, sausage, fruit and a drink.

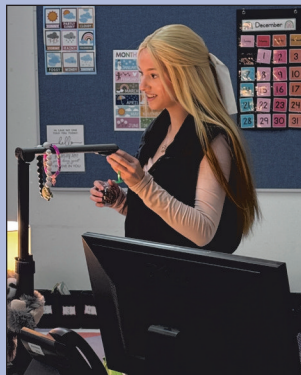
— MOLLY SCHEUER



# BHRA ARTS & CRAFTS

On Dec. 11, art class had the opportunity to visit the elementary school to assist with making Christmas ornaments. High school students worked with children from preschool through fourth grade, spending the day teaching, creating art and enjoying time together.

— Lahna Benjamin



## Judah Christian

The senior class took to the streets, embracing the cold weather and snow to spread Christmas cheer by caroling. Seniors visited families, children, classrooms, administrators, nursing homes and other members of the Judah community. To help raise money for their senior trip, seniors were hired by community members to carol for friends, family members and neighbors. Through their performances, the class shared the joy of the season while strengthening connections within the community. Pictured (from left): seniors **Olivia Daily**, **Ada Osaji**, **Ella Yeackley**, **Michael Oshimokun**, **Sara Ingersoll**, **Jack Dalbey**, **Ian Taber** and **Dominic Mortenson**. Many other seniors caroled but are not pictured.

— JACK DALBEY



## Oakland

FFA students competed in the Quiz Bowl, answering different questions for points. The team, comprised of eighth-graders through seniors, placed third.

— SOPHIA VONLANKE



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## Salt Fork

National Honor Society students spread holiday cheer at the preschool. NHS members purchased copies of the book 'How to Catch Santa Claus' for all the preschool students in the district. Students wrapped each book before bringing them to the pre-k classrooms, where they passed them out and watched the younger students eagerly open their gifts. It's a fun, annual project that allows students to connect with each other and get excited for the holidays. Pictured: **Payton Cox** handing out wrapped books; and **Bella Kurtenbach** delivering a preschooler her gift.

— ANNA McCOLLUM

# DANVILLE PROVIDING WARMTH



Young Women Empowerment and Young Men Empowerment teamed up for a blanket drive. It's the second year both groups have organized the donation event. Advisers **Marla Dye** (women's group) and **Ricky Hoskins** (men's), along with the help of their students, were able to collect over 40 blankets to be donated to the Danville Rescue Men's Overnight Shelter. Their cause was a success with the help of district staff as well as friends and family of the groups.

— Rylee Jack



## Heritage

Finals are around the corner, and the Heritage industrial technology team is preparing for projects they're going to make before they get to enjoy a long break. **Levi Frost** is in his second year at Heritage and has been a great helper to the students that weld, woodwork or are involved in construction. **Brenden McClellan**, **Tyler Lisanby** and **Trent Gilbert** are getting in final preparation welding before making a six-sided die that will be due for their final. **Anthony Happ**, **Tryston Babcock** and **Nathan Bonilla** are using cutoff wheels to cut metal coupons to the correct size. They then used these coupons to weld different joints using the MIG welders.

— RYLAN WHITE

## Iroquois West

Student council, led by sponsor **Abby Redenius**, held its annual teacher/student Secret Santa. Students partnered up and picked a teacher, giving gifts to them everyday. Before school on Friday, student council hosts a breakfast where students reveal what teachers they had, and everyone receives their 'grand finale' present. Pictured: **Kenzie Keller** and **Madi Clark** with their teacher, **Carrie Miller**; and **Jay Lynn Ash** and **Abby Tindle** with **Sandra Henley**.

— TRAEH KISSACK



## Georgetown-Ridge Farm

Students in the building trades class built a Nativity scene for OSF hospital, spending countless class periods perfecting the project. Pictured: **Rocky Thornton**, **Finn McPherson** and teacher **Wade Anderson**.

— TIFFANY TAYLOR



## Cerro Gordo

On Friday, the high school celebrated Holiday Hoopla by playing Holly Jolly games all afternoon. To kickstart the week, students were encouraged to participate in the themed dress-up days: Monday's 'PJ Day,' Tuesday's 'Red vs. Green Day,' Wednesday's 'Favorite Holiday Character Day,' Thursday's 'Holiday Card Day' and Friday's 'Ugly Holiday Sweater Day.' Grades six through 12 were welcomed into the high school gym to watch a beauty pageant, listen to the band and choir, watch French classes perform a line dance to 'Les Champs-Élysées' and play games. Seniors took first place in the Holiday Hoopla, freshmen were second, sophomores and juniors tied for third, eighth-graders were fourth, seventh-graders fifth and sixth-graders were sixth.

— CAYDENCE BROWN