



Kewanee Schools Foundation

ALUMNI UPDATE

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Spring 2019

**KHS GRADUATES RECEIVE OVER \$100,000 IN AWARDS
AND SCHOLARSHIPS THANKS TO ALUMNI AND FRIENDS!**



Class of 2019 Kewanee High School scholarship and award recipients. For a complete listing of scholarships and awards, please go to www.kewaneeschoolsfoundation.org

KHS TAKES ON 'MAMMA MIA' MUSICAL

Kewanee residents had the time of their life as Kewanee High School students presented their winter musical, Mamma Mia!, directed by Heather Olalde.

Performances took place at KHS Petersen Auditorium on Saturday, Jan. 19 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 20 at 2 p.m.

Mamma Mia! is set on an idyllic Greek island, shortly before the wedding of a young woman named Sophie. Sophie longs to have her father walk her down the aisle but isn't certain of his identity. On impulse, she decides to invite three men to her wedding—any of whom might be her father. The show features hits by the band ABBA: "Dancing Queen," "Take A Chance on Me," "Mamma Mia!" and many others.

Those who have seen Mamma Mia! will remember its catchy songs and thrilling dance numbers, but the show had a more reflective side as well.

"At its core, it's a story that celebrates the bond between mother and daughter and the enduring strength of female friendships," said director Heather Olalde. "Act I illustrates that, at any age, women rely on their friends for fun and frivolity as well as for support during difficult times."

However, Olalde said that she was most strongly affected by the mother daughter relationship. "My favorite scene happens in the middle of Act II, when Donna, the mother, helps her daughter prepare for her wedding and reminisces about her childhood, realizing how quickly that time together has passed. It's a poignant moment any parent can relate to."

Despite these emotional themes, the show was above all exuberant.

"As a whole, it's a celebration of fun, dance, and great music," said Olalde. "It's a perfect fit for this year's high-energy cast."

Olalde noted that a large number of people have come together to bring Mamma Mia! to the stage.

"The cast contained 33 students, supported by roughly 20 crew and pit orchestra members, as well as further participation on costuming, scenery, and so on. Including all community members, directing staff, and student participants, there are about 60 people involved in the production."

She added that choreography and staging have been especially challenging this year: "Most members of the chorus have more stage time than the lead characters," she explained.

"This makes staging very difficult, as there are typically 30 cast members on stage at any given time."

The show's many dance numbers were choreographed by KHS senior Lindsey Edwards, with the assistance of sophomore Bryanna Delgado. The choreography is designed to be as contagious as the music. "Our goal for the show was to get the audience on their feet dancing along," said Olalde. "The tunes are impossible to listen to without moving."

Olalde described her cast as extremely enthusiastic. "Everyone was captivated by this energetic show," she said. "But especially those audience members who remember ABBA's music and will enjoy the nostalgia of it."

MAMMA MIA!



A LITTLE ELBOW ROOM New Belle Alexander space open for learning

Kindergarten and first grade students and teachers at Belle Alexander are still getting used to their new digs after moving in to a new 5,500-square foot addition.

The \$1.5 million spent on the addition has created an abundance of new space in the 64-year-old school building, adding everything from more classrooms to additional bathrooms.

You can see the changes immediately as the south hallway was actually extended about 20 feet to accommodate the new wing. A drop-ceiling has been added to the hallway leading there.

"It feels so much different when you come down here," said Dist. 229 Superintendent Chris Sullens.

Workers, many of them local union members and companies, started on the addition last May, but were hindered early on by a wet spring that halted construction on several occasions.

The addition's features include a dedicated counseling room, a Title I classroom, a special education classroom, a first-grade classroom and a new library/media center.

The teachers say the new, sleek classrooms make a world of difference in their approaches and in the minds of students.

"We've gained a lot of room and kids can move around a little bit," said Title I teacher Kelly Jackson. "It felt so much different

since we came down here."

Jackson says "down here" because they and several other specialty teaching classes were previously housed in a repurposed room set on the old school's stage near the gym and lunch room.

It was a cramped space shared by three teachers that wasn't the most conducive to learning, especially when a student needed one-on-one time.

The first-grade classroom is also spacious and includes a large Clear Touch television system that allows the teacher to teach with a variety of technological tools at the touch of the screen.

There are a few unopened cardboard boxes with classroom accoutrements waiting for installation.

There also is outside work that will likely be completed in the spring. Principal Jason Stabler said he and teachers are taking it slow as they decide the best classroom configurations. Having the space to better plan where things go is a nice problem to have, he said.

"Sometimes it's just better to let people see what they want and what makes them most comfortable," he said. "We haven't decided how everything is going to look.

All of the added space also has allowed school officials to better utilize the old space. The stage space, which has been made into one large room with partitions, is being readjusted to accommodate the school's social worker and physical education office space.

The trickle down of space will also pour into the old school

building, where there are plans to add a private parent meeting room, reconfigure space where the computer lab is located, and even expand the teachers lounge, which has just eight spots for 40 staff members.

Dr. Sullens said the school's configuration, outside of being a more comfortable space with extra bathrooms, has led to a reduction in class size from about 24 or 25 to 19 or 20 per class. Not everything in the addition has been completed. The library/media center is just an empty room right now, and one of the bathrooms is waiting for sinks to arrive.

The construction will allow teachers to provide more individualized instruction in almost every corner of Belle Alexander. "We think it's going to have a big impact," he said.



IRVING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER ANGIE DEVENNEY INSPIRES STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AND IS TEACHER OF THE YEAR



For 34 years, Irving School teacher Angie DeVenney has been trying to make a difference in her students lives, and not just their day to day school work.

“I know a lot of them need someone in their lives who cares about them and supports them,” she said after she was named one of two Teachers of the Year in the Star Courier’s annual selection.

She said it’s not a cliché that teachers feel they are successful if just one student changes course and becomes successful.

Mrs. DeVenney said she was recently contacted by a former student who had struggled when he was attending school. She noticed he needed extra help and she offered it. It paid off. “He’s now a wonderful young man who is working on earning his bachelor’s degree”, she said.

There was little doubt from a young age that Angie would become a teacher. She initially was inspired by a cousin to work with disabled students, but that career path never opened up.

“I just love kids,” she said. “I knew I would teach from the time I was little.”

And there are plenty of students who are glad she did, as made evident through the glowing nominations she received.

“She helps me when I don’t understand a problem on my homework,” wrote 4th grader Marcos Torres. “She has the best multiplication songs. She is the best teacher I’ve ever had.” And it doesn’t hurt, added Marcos, that “she tells very funny stories.”

Fellow teacher Paige Milburn said Mrs. DeVenney (her aunt) has also taught new teachers trying to find their way.

“She’s been there for me whenever I have needed any advice on how to run a classroom,” she wrote. “She has taught me to be a role model for my students....she has taught me how to truly love and care for your students.”

MATTINGLY STUDENT COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AWARD ESTABLISHED

The Kewanee Schools Foundation announces a new monetary award has been established for Kewanee High School seniors who will attend Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois.

The Mattingly Student Council Leadership Award will be given to a graduating senior in recognition of the leadership and athletic opportunities afforded to Dr. William Mattingly when he was a student at Kewanee High School (Class of 1970) and Illinois College (1975).

Dr. Mattingly is a retired superintendent of schools and currently lives in Utica, Illinois.

The senior must have demonstrated good character and leadership qualities during their school activities and/or community service, and preference will be given to students with financial need, student council participation and/or written intent to participate in athletics at Illinois College.

This year’s recipients of \$500 each are: George Ullinskey, Molly Welgat, and Willie Terry III.



MENTAL HEALTH 'CHAMPS' RECOGNIZED



Honored as one of the Mental Health Champions by the Henry County Mental Health Alliance is Central School art teacher, Marc Nelson.

Emotional and uplifting characterizes the Henry County Mental Health Alliance's inaugural dinner at PL Damron's recognizing individuals and organizations who have been champions in their efforts to bring awareness to mental health issues throughout Henry County.

Among those chosen Mental Health Champions from submitted nominations was Marc Nelson, art teacher at Central School, who was nominated by Shawn Oetzel, the parent of one of his former students, who stated, "Mr. Nelson inspired my son to have confidence in himself and find expression through drama as director of the fall play at Kewanee High School."

Mr. Nelson "gives students a voice to help describe who they are and how to deal with feelings and emotions," Oetzel wrote. "He has been on the front lines championing the uses of creative subjects such as art and theater to help combat the mental health crisis today's youth face.

FIRST IN CLASS GI, CONTEST PLAY TEAMS EARN FIRSTS AT SECTIONALS

Kewanee High School theater students are on top of the world after a stunning performance at sectionals. Two KHS ensembles-Group Interpretation (GI) and Contest Play (competitive drama)-captured first place, and both advanced to state competition in Peoria at the Peoria Civic Center.

This year marks the second trip to state for Contest Play, and the fourteenth consecutive trip to state for GI. GI performed 'Leap!' Contest Play performed 'Two Rooms'.

At sectionals, the KHS GI ensemble, directed by Heather Olalde, was ranked the best of seven teams. Cast members Lindsey Edwards, Myles Taylor, Alissa VanStechelman, Katy Witte, George Ullinskey, and Cydnie Robinson were selected for All-Sectional Cast awards.

The KHS Contest Play ensemble, directed by Marisa Romanelli, was ranked the best of five teams. Cast members Haley Hamilton and Jack Watson received All-Sectional Cast recognition, while lighting technician Devin Randall was selected for an All-Sectional Tech award.



GROUP INTERPRETATION EARNS BEST SPORTSMANSHIP AT STATE FINALS



Congratulations to Group Interpretation for winning the Best Sportsmanship Award at State Finals. This only goes to one team and our kids deserve it. A job well done!!

KHS'S DEJESUS PLACES AT STATE IN 400 METERS

Melcon DeJesus placed fifth in the 400 meter state championship at Charleston. DeJesus time was 49.92 seconds. DeJesus was a touch slower than his own 49.66 from prelims.



Melcon DeJesus

KHS'S NOLAN QUALIFIES FOR STATE TRACK IN TWO EVENTS

Sophomore Tristan Nolan sets KHS record in 300m hurdles during Class 2A Sectional! The previous record was 48.1 seconds held by Kelli Goreth since 1988 making her run of 47.68 seconds the fastest time ever clocked by a KHS student. Nolan qualified for state in the high jump and the 300 meter hurdles. Nolan will be competing at the State Tournament on Friday, May 17 and if she qualifies, again on May 18.



Tristan Nolan pictured center

STUDENTS AT LYLE SCHOOL HELD A DAY OF SUPPORT FOR A FELLOW STUDENT

Krue Simms, 3, is the son of Karen and Tim Simms of Kewanee and a student in Tiffany's Platz's preschool class. Next month, Krue will undergo surgery to correct a congenital condition.

Platz said the idea to hold the school-wide support day came about after his mother purchased T-shirts for friends and family in an effort to raise awareness about Krue's condition.

Platz, along with Karen Rogula, parent coordinator, and Deena Brants, program coordinator, got together and planned the event, which included the students wearing black T-shirts and buttons with Krue's photo on them.

"We wanted to do something and thought this would be fun and raise awareness for Krue," Platz said.

The Lyle School staff also donated more than \$200, which was used to create a goody basket. The basket was presented to Krue and his mother at an assembly, and included items such as books and puzzles that they hope will keep him busy during his extended hospital stay.

Karen Simms said the surgery is scheduled for June 5, and that her son could be in the hospital anywhere from two to five weeks.

Krue was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome. The congenital defect affects normal blood flow through the heart and Karen Simms said that only about three in 10,000 babies are born with it, making it very rare.

This will be Krue Simms third surgery to correct the condition.



CENTRAL & BELLE READING BUDDIES



Throughout the school year, 5th graders in Mrs. Ralston's class have traveled to Belle to read to Mrs. Anderson's first grade class. Both classes look forward to this time and students have built friendships with their "reading buddies". The 5th graders model fluent reading to the first graders, while also serving as a positive role model to their first grade buddy. The first graders enjoy reading their book aloud and then complete a comprehension activity with their buddy as well.

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PASSINGS

Class of '36

Doris (Krause) Beaston -
3/19/19

Class of '40

Evelyn (Wilsey) Basham -
1/22/19

Class of '45

Doris (Heavner) Witte) -
3/18/19

Class of '46

Joan C. (Clouston) Weeks -
4/21/19

Class of '47

Donald W. Streicher -
12/16/18

Class of '48

Donald Wayne Bullock -
12/30/18
Romona (Barnes) Carlson -
4/8/19

Class of '49

Joyce (Kuster) Long - 3/30/19

Class of '50

Joan (Robinson) Lathrop -
7/31/18

Class of '51

Joyce (Snyder) Fite -3/16/19
Kenneth R. Gord - 11/1/17
Raymond G. Heinrich - 4/1/19

Class of '54

Dwight "Pete" Reiff -
12/30/18
Hester W. Thuerk - 11/28/18
Jerry A. Warner, Sr. - 3/29/19

Class of '55

Thomas McGlenn - 12/4/18
Josephine (Gustaitis) Sobotta -

4/3/19

Class of '56

Glenda (Pyle) Fortman - 4/1/19
Ruth Ann (Mattingly) Saunders -
4/14/18

Class of '57

Marcia (DeClerk) Becker -
2/15/18

Class of '61

Ronald A. VanDenBerghe -
4/18/19
Marjorie (Conway) Wickey -
3/21/19

Class of '62

Jeri Roberson - 2/21/19

Class of '64

Carol J. (Medley) Abbot - 4/1/19
Jerry L. Andris - 1/29/19

Class of '65

Glenda (Mundy) Allen - 5/17/19

Class of '66

Philip W. Grant - 1/7/19
Leo J. Swearingen - 5/7/19
Terry A. Warner - 5/2/19

Class of '67

Jerry Andris - 1/29/19
Marie (Ptasnik) Cole - 2/5/19
John Burton Heartt III - 3/7/19
Susan Kay Laub-Neva - 4/20/19

Class of '68

Michael W. Miles - 2/22/19

Class of '72

Debra (Skovronski) Sundberg) -
2/5/19

Class of '73

Danny E. Moreland - 3/16/19

Class of '76

Ricky J. Zapisek - 1/5/19

Class of '78

Beulah (Crain) Dobbels - 4/4/19

Class of '80

Mark Johnson - 12/2018

Class of '84

Carolyn (Matuszyk) Eilts -
3/2/19



A special Thank You to the Henry Hill Family and the Laurie Gwin Family for the memorial donations to the Foundation!

Kewanee Schools Foundation
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KHS Alumni Class of _____



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