



## Veterans honored at Chicago Christian

DJ Gladney

Reporter

Lauren Woo

Reporter

The Illiana varsity boys basketball team played Chicago Christian in a special Veteran's Day event called Vikings and Knights Unite on Jan 11.

The game featured a USA Loud Crowd theme for both schools, and the Indiana National Guard provided camouflage and white jerseys for the Illiana team.

"The National Guard approached us with the uniforms," Illiana marketing director, Mrs. Jenna Dutton said. The jerseys, which were rented out to Illiana, sparked the idea to have a game devoted to honoring veterans.

Dutton contacted Chicago Christian, who hosted the game, and both schools invited veterans.

"Seventy-nine veterans attended," Dutton said. They were served



Veterans stand at attention during the National Anthem before the game.

Photo by Jenna Dutton

a dinner before the game and given a coffee mug to take home.

Damon Gladney, a veteran who attended the game, said, "It feels nice, feels good to have people appreciate what you did for the country."

"The National Guard would love to do this every year," Dutton said. "I'd love to make this an annual thing. If not with Chicago Christian, then another school where we're rivals but can

come together for this event."

Daniel Chandler, a senior on Illiana's basketball team, said, "It felt amazing putting on the uniform to perform in front of [the veterans]. It made the team want to play hard."

During the game cheerleaders for both teams had their annual tradition where they have a stand off to see who could last longer. Illiana's cheer team won but it was a great competi-

tive effort from both sides.

At halftime, there were a number of activities that took place regarding to the rivalry. First Chicago Christian's cheer team did its cheer routine. After that both sides had an arm wrestling competition. One boy and one girl were taken from each side to compete, resulting in an Illiana win.

Even though our Vikings did not come out on top in the basket-

ball game itself, still everyone had a pretty good time.

The atmosphere was fierce and very loud as both teams chanted things that would motivate their team to win. The Illiana and Chicago Christian rivalry is something that can't be outmatched and something everyone looks forward to every year.

## Viking Academy offers middle schoolers summer classes

Kylie Boss

Co-news Editor

Illiana is creating a new summer program for elementary and middle school students in July of 2019. The new summer camp program will be called the Viking Academy, and it is open to any student fourth grade through eighth grade, as well as high schoolers, according to principal Peter Boonstra.

The program originates from the previous athletic summer camps, according to Boonstra, but the new program will not only include athletic training, but also will possibly include STEM, sewing, Go Club and hiking camps. Illiana teachers will lead most of the camps, but some of the camps might also be led by off campus teachers, according to spiritual development director

Lance Davids. According to Davids, high school students can also work at the camps.

"...You can be an aid in one of the classrooms, help out with lunch, or just supervise," added Davids.

Davids said he got the idea from looking at different schools who have this kind of program in the summer. "It will be something that will grow tremendously," said Davids.

Each three-hour class will start at \$125 and will be one week long, according to Director of Development Cassie Siersema. After the morning class, an optional lunch will be provided, but for an additional fee, said Siersema. Certain classes also may cost more if special supplies are needed, added Siersema.

"If [a student] would take the morning class and the af-

ternoon class it would be \$250 per week," said Siersema.

The program also serves as a revenue and admissions generator for Illiana, though that is not the main purpose of the program, according to Siersema. "It will be an exciting opportunity for Illiana to branch out to the feeder schools and the whole Dyer-St. John area," said Siersema.

The academic classes and sports classes will also be spread out during the day, so students have plenty of options besides sport camps during the day, according to Davids. Davids also added that students will be separated into different age groups: high schoolers, sixth through eighth grade, fourth through fifth grade or altogether fourth through eighth grade.

Math Teacher Doug Gorter is waiting for his hiking class at Viking Academy to be approved by the school board. The class, if approved, plans to venture to Starved Rock, Turkey Run and somewhere along Lake Michigan, according to Gorter.

## Students advocate for unborn in D.C.

Nina Verhagen

Reporter

Benjamin Wheeler

Reporter

36 Illiana students joined about 500,000 on Jan. 18 for the annual protest march that marks the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court

decision that made abortion legal.

Early in the morning, the students joined other protesters near the Washington Monument where they heard from an array of speakers including Vice President Mike Pence before the march kicked off. Afterward, they marched to Capitol Hill. **Turn to Marchers, Page 3**



Photo by Cate Peerbolte

Mr. White and over thirty Illiana students join with about 500,000 others to march for life in Washington, D.C..



## ‘Surviving R. Kelly’ shows artists’ music and actions intertwine

On Jan. 3 Lifetime aired a documentary series entitled “Surviving R. Kelly” which brought to light horror stories of girls and women who had allegedly been abused by the R&B singer. After watching the six part series, it became clear R. Kelly is inseparable from his “art.”



Natalie Togtman

Arts Editor

The stories of the alleged victims clearly highlight he has no regard for these women - he never has and he never will. I don’t care how many “inspiring” songs he puts out, there is nothing redeemable about him. There are still reasons to be concerned such as the

claim that R. Kelly may still be holding women captive in one of his homes.

Unfortunately after the premier of the docuseries there was an increase in the streaming of R. Kelly’s music. While I am not surprised, I am disheartened.

At this point we are supposed to be better than that. At this point we need to be more honest with ourselves. We need to stop putting his music above his alleged victims.

I, like many, at one point convinced myself I could listen to an artist’s music without thinking/caring about the alleged deeds done by the person. But, we can’t.

The docuseries does an amazing job at highlighting that R. Kelly and his music are intertwined. This should have become clear when he began calling himself the “Pied Piper,” an allusion to a children’s tale in Germany about a man who lured away children with his music. This should have become clear with the 1993 track “Your Body’s Calling (His and hers extended mix),” in which Aaliyah, another R&B singer at the time, who was only 14, sang on the track with lines hinting at oral sex. There is no reason Aaliyah, 14, should have been singing on a track that sexual with R. Kelly, 26 at the time. If you need another reason R. Kelly should be turned off we cannot forget about the sex tape featuring a girl who was just 14 at the time. Sadly, due to the fact the girl herself denied it was her on the tape, R. Kelly was free to go with no real consequences. It is a possibility it was not actually her on the tape, but we cannot rule out the possibility that R. Kelly may have paid the victim and her family for their silence.

It’s even harder to separate the man from his music when even his inspirational and positive works of music such as “You are not Alone,” are touched by sleeze. That song was allegedly dedicated to alleged victim, Lizette Martinez, after she had suffered a miscarriage during her relationship with Kelly which began when she was just 17. Even his “positive” music is rooted in wrongdoing.

You can’t separate Robert Kelly, the person, from R. Kelly, the entertainer, and it’s frustrating and exhausting to have to reason with those who continue to believe R. Kelly can be separated from his music. But we need to continue to use discernment because if people keep buying his music, they supply him with more money and power, giving him the space to victimize girls and women with no real consequences.

Unfortunately there’s no formula on how to decide when we let an artist go that has been accused of years of abuse and pedophilia. But, it should go without saying when a man has been accused, countless times, of pedophilia and other forms of abuse, it’s time to turn his music off.



The Library of Congress stands empty behind a roped-off entrance because of the partial government shutdown.

Photo by Cate Peerbolt

## Government shutdown affects Illiana families, instills fear, uncertainty

Taylor Benes

Reporter

As of Wednesday, Jan. 23, the federal government has been partially shut down for 33 days, affecting over 800,000 federal workers in nine federal agencies.

Dec. 22 marked the beginning of the current shutdown. Congress and the administration failed to compromise on a proposed spending deal that would include money for President Trump’s proposed wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

This is the longest shutdown in United States history, surpassing the 21-day long shutdown in 1995 and 1996 during President Bill Clinton’s first term.

According to Time Maga-

zine, the government is supposed to be funded annually by Congress passing 12 appropriations bills to fund all the different government agencies. If this process is not completed by Oct. 1, the government partially or completely shuts down.

Some government employees have noted that this shutdown is worse than past ones because it’s gone on long enough to actually cause missed paychecks, creating financial insecurity for employees and damaging morale in the workplace.

During partial shutdowns, some federal workers deemed “essential” are forced to work without pay, which is what is happening to two Illiana families, the Tambrinis and Yonkmans.

Aaron Tambrini, sophomore Olivia Tambrini’s father, works for the Department of Commerce and is currently working without pay.

“Everyone I work with doesn’t know when our next paycheck is coming,” Tambrini said. “It’s hard to judge how much to spend and how much to save.”

Tambrini is deemed as an essential worker, forcing him to go into work without being paid.

“I go to work like normal, but it’s harder to get things done because we can’t spend any money to buy things. We’re getting farther behind in work.”

Senior Erin Yonkman and

sophomore Olivia Yonkman’s father, Chris, a Chief for Trade Field Intelligence, is also currently deemed essential.

“Right now, it’s okay. It’s a pain, obviously, because he’s going to work and not getting paid for all the stuff he’s doing. It’ll happen eventually, and then it’ll be back to normal, but he’s a little on edge,” Erin Yonkman said.

Yonkman analyzes risk in the product import process. He confirms that imports aren’t counterfeit and that people aren’t avoiding paying the actual import price.

Erin added, “Right now, we have enough [money], so we aren’t behind on anything, but eventually, if he doesn’t get paid in a couple of weeks, we’re going to have to move money around from different accounts to pay for tuition and normal bills.”

## Boer joins staff to manage Renweb use



Photo courtesy of David Boer

Madison Ceronis

Reporter

Mr. David Boer, alumnus of 2012, took a position in the school office late last fall.

Mr. Boer has the responsibility of working with the student information system, Renweb. He deals with student, family and staff member records. These records hold attendance, academics, schedules and grades, church information, transcripts, contacts and addresses. He updates, modifies, or removes information in RenWeb, and he also gives various people access to parts of RenWeb.

Mr. Boer said that it was a strange path that led him

back here. He stated that he likes the mission of Illiana which is to show God’s love and understanding.

His path back began when he saw the job opening posted in the bulletin at Bethel Church in Lansing, where he is a part of the praise team.

Mr. Boer said he feels blessed because God’s path led him to develop new skills, refine his talent and get a better understanding of what it means to be a child of God.

He added that he enjoys the kind and inviting atmosphere of the school. He stated that other office workers treat him as if he was a part of their family. He said he enjoys continuing his education with his past teachers, asking questions he didn’t think to ask in high school.



# U of Washington study shows benefits of later school start times

Maddie Holesinger  
Co-Editor in Chief

On Dec. 12, researchers at the University of Washington and the Salk Institute for Biological Studies published a paper in the journal of Science Advances about a sleep study they did on students in the Seattle Public School district. The researchers found that students in two of the high schools got more sleep when the school start times were pushed back almost an hour later.

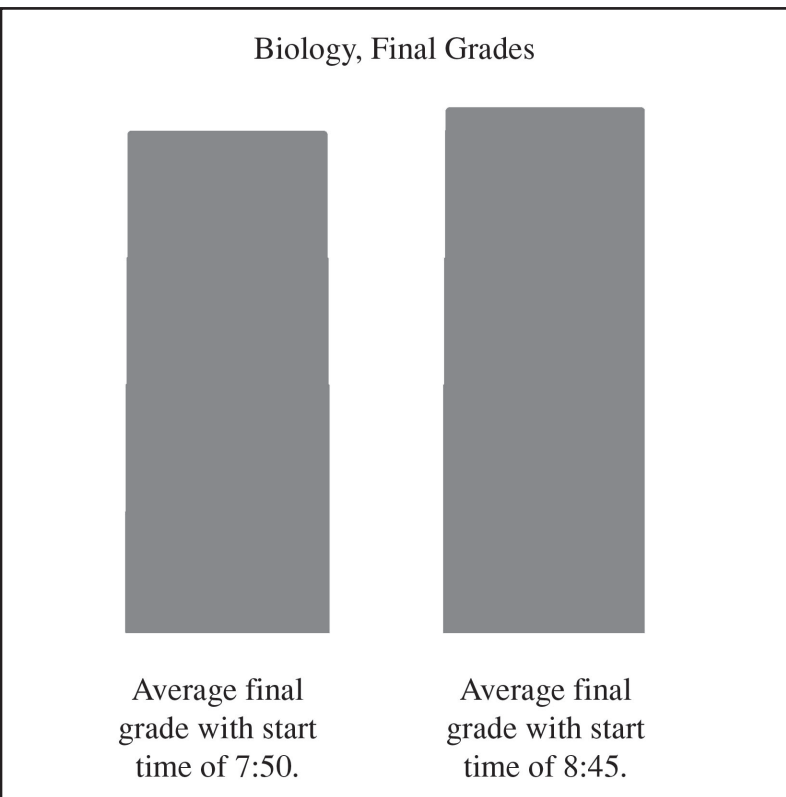
Students in the two schools wore monitors around their wrists to collect light and activity data from subjects. Data was first collected from 92 students for two weeks when the school start time was still 7:50 a.m.. The school’s start time was pushed to 8:45 a.m., and seven months later 88 students wore

the wrist monitors again. The study revealed that even with the later start time, students did not stay up significantly later. In fact, with the later start times, students averaged an extra 34 minutes of sleep, bringing their average to seven hours and 24 minutes. In addition, academic performance, specifically in the students’ first period classes, increased.

Researchers think circadian rhythms are likely the cause. According to sciencedaily.com, the stirring of our circadian rhythms helps our minds and bodies maintain an internal “clock,” telling us when to eat, sleep, and so on. Our genes and external cues from the environment, like sunlight, combine to maintain this steady schedule. But the onset of puberty lengthens the circadian cycle in adolescents and

also decreases the rhythm’s sensitivity to light in the morning. These changes cause teens to fall asleep later each night and wake up later each morning relative to most children and adults.

In an interview with reporter James Urton, Gideon Dunster, a University of Washington doctoral student in biology, said, “All of the studies of adolescent sleep patterns in the United States are showing that the time at which teens generally fall asleep is biologically determined — but the time at which they wake up is socially determined. This has severe consequences for health and well-being, because disrupted circadian rhythms can adversely affect digestion, heart rate, body temperature, immune system function, attention span and mental health.”



Researchers at the University of Washington found that in addition to getting more sleep, students in a first period biology class saw the average final grade increase by 4.5% with the delayed start time.



Photo by Haleigh Olthof  
Vegetables grow in a hydroponics apparatus in Sylvester’s classroom.

## Science teachers test hydroponics in preparation for ‘green room’

Samuel Vargo  
Reporter

Mr. Brian Sylvester, head of the Science Department, and Mr. Jim Kuipers, chemistry teacher, started a hydroponics lab in their rooms this year. Both teachers are growing the same vegetables: kale, lettuce, cherry tomatoes, basil, radishes, and cucumbers.

Hydroponics is a method of growing plants in water instead of soil. Hydroponics is a system where you can grow plants year round.

During the second semester, the teachers intend to get students involved

through a club. According to Sylvester, “Students in the club will design their own labs and solve problems to get the labs to operate correctly.”

Kuipers and Sylvester said they are using this lab as test run to see if they are ready for the “green room” they hope they will get in the coming years. The idea for the green room first arose in 2017.

“We think we have a good idea of how to maintain plants from this experiment, but we will not know for sure until we get the green room up and running,” commented Sylvester.

## Move to Indiana subtracts math team competitions

Sophia Thompson  
Reporter

Here’s one casualty from Illiana’s move to Indiana that no one calculated—the math team.

This year Illiana’s math team is unable to compete due to the fact that Indiana does not have organized regional or state math competitions as Illinois does.

The team has switched to just learning more math after school to-

gether. Mr. Gorter, head coach of the team, plans to conduct an in-school trigonometry competition this year, but says he will have more information later.

Senior Sam Boonstra said, “My disappointment at not having competitions is immense. I am pleased with having had competitions for the past three years, but I do pity the students who now won’t have the opportunity to compete.”

The team may get at least one

competition, however. The mathletes have been invited to compete at Lemont High School on Jan. 30. The team has competed at Lemont for many years.

Other past math team participants are also disappointed that they will have so few competitions. Sophomore Simon Molenaar said he will miss the downtime in between his events at competitions because the team had fun by bringing games and other activities to do between their tests.

## Drost, students Explore God through student participation in Chicago-wide faith discussion

Madison Rogers  
Reporter

History teacher Rachel Drost is leading a devotional study group for students as part of the Explore God initiative in the Chicagoland area. The group meets once a week, usually either Thursday or Friday, from 6:40 till school starts.

The group discusses seven big questions of life such as “What’s your purpose in life?” or “Is there a God?”. Senior Rachel Huisman says the study is a safe place to ask questions about your faith.



Photo courtesy of Shine.fm

The group watches videos about its weekly question and finishes the session with group discussion. This groups allows the students to talk to people their age about questions they share.

This group also prepares students for wondering about their faith later

on in life. Even if a participant doesn’t have anything to say, it still is a place to listen.

Everyone is welcome to come whenever they please, for one session or for all of them. For more information on this group and how to join, speak with Mrs. Drost.

## Marchers join pro-life advocates in D.C.

*Students, from page 1*  
Sophomore Sydnee Tuuk said, “It was such an amazing experience.... You don't really think that many people care about the same belief as you, about being pro-life. I think it's amazing to see how

many people support the pro-life movement and to see how many people want to create a change.”

After the march the students toured the National Guard Museum and The Basilica of the Immaculate Con-

ception, had dinner, and then strolled along Capitol Hill to enjoy the lights. The next morning they left early due to severe snowstorm predictions.

“I thought the trip was awesome!” said chaperone Rachel Devries.



## Love advice: give up! It’s not worth it

I’ve heard it multiple times: “Alex, I think I need to break up with my girlfriend. I don’t know, though. Sometimes I think I love her, but sometimes I’m not so sure. What should I do?”

Newsflash! You don’t love her, and you should break up today! Breaking up is a great alternative to not breaking up: it’s necessary, it prevents divorce, and it’s what our founding fathers modeled.

I should clarify: there are some couples here at Illiana that are destined to be together, like Romaine lettuce and E. coli. This column’s not for you. I’m talking to the couples that argue about things like matching ties with dresses at homecoming or sitting together at Praise Crowd.

“What will teachers think of us if we don’t worship together after the game!?”

“I don’t care about that! I’m exhausted. I want to go home and play Fortnite!”

If that sounds like dialogue between you and your significant other, this one’s for you.

A breakup is like putting down your dog after it bites your neighbor’s kid or some overworked mailman. You don’t always feel great about it, but it has to be done. Breakups save time and money on dates with a person you’re going to forget about when you meet your actual soulmate. So, guys, rip her off like a moldy band aid. Girls, toss him aside like a used makeup sponge.

Couples that can barely handle high school drama won’t be able to get through the parts of marriage like crying babies at 2:30 a.m. or paying grocery bills when money gets tight. I know things seem rough for you and your girlfriend right now, but I promise you this: if you stay together, things will get much, much worse. C.S. Lewis once stated: “What lies ahead is much greater than what lies behind.” Of course, Lewis was talking about life with Jesus, not your naggy girlfriend or obnoxious boyfriend. In fact the opposite is true in terms of your S.O.: things will only get worse. Don’t get divorced in 10 years like 50% of people end up doing. End it today!

When dating in high school, we ought to drop significant others the way Oprah drops prizes on her audience: You get a break up! You get a break up! You’re all getting break ups!

If there’s any doubt about her in any dark little crevice of your mind, immediately E.T.R.! (End the relationship)

If she doesn’t get along with your mom, break up.

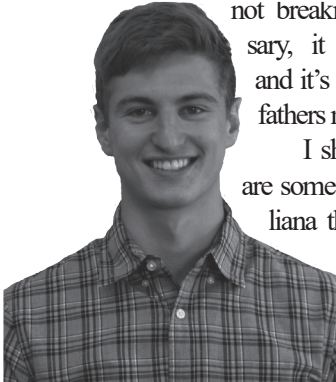
If he smells weird to you, break up.

If she is too big of a Kesha fan, definitely break up. Her morals, her musical taste, and her sanity are all highly questionable.

This great nation was conceived with a break up. The Brits were like “hey, uhh, we’re gonna tax you guys at like 2% since we lost tons of money fighting to keep you from French rule a few years ago, is that cool with you guys?” and Thomas Paine was like “heck no, here’s a huge list of reasons I want to break up with you now; you’re an insane and unreasonable girlfriend” then the absolute madman went and titled the thing “common sense.” What a legend! We’ve been single for like 250 years now and we’re killin’ it! We’re the world’s only superpower! We beat the Nazis! We’re the coolest bachelor ever!

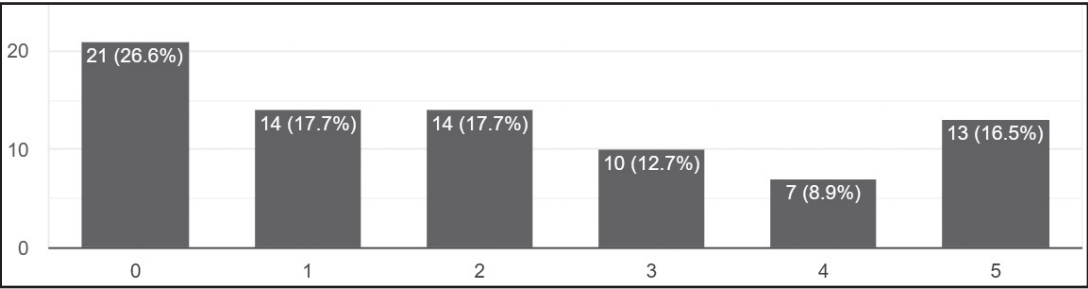
Anyway, what I’m trying to say is: boys, break up with your girlfriend; it’s the right choice.

Unrelated note: Ladies, if your boyfriend broke up with you and you need a shoulder to cry on, my number is (708) 250-3511. Hit me up.



Alex Wondaal  
Co-Editor in Chief

# Previewing Valentine’s day with Illiana’s worst date experiences



Graph from “Bad Date Census”  
The “Bad Date Census” asked respondents to rate their worst dates, five being “I’d go on another date with him/her” and zero being “The date made me want to join my Savior in heaven.”

## Dinner—and disappointment—for two

**Max Klain, Senior** It was really awkward because I knew I was going to break up with her and I felt so weird having dinner at her house.

**Hannah Last, Senior** I went to Culver’s on my first date with this person. It was going pretty well, but then as I was eating my ice cream my worst nightmare came to life. I looked down and saw that I had smashed cookie dough in between my legs. It honestly looked like poop. I tried to subtly go to the bathroom to get it out, but when I tried to get it out it started to smear. When he noticed as I was walking back, he just asked if everything was good. I just said, “Yeah why wouldn’t it be.” We didn’t go on another date.

**Kyle Mulderink, Senior** When I first was able to drive, I took this super cute girl out to Noodles and Company. I was so nervous that I kind of got lost because I missed the turn. I tried to play it off cool, but she knew I was lost. She made fun of me for the rest of the car ride. We finally got there and I ordered a salad and she got noodles. She thought that it was so weird that I got a salad at a noodle place. As we were eating, I went to take a drink of my Mountain Dew and of course it spilled all over me. My pants were soaked. To make things worse, she took out her phone and took pictures to send to all her friends. I didn’t really talk for the rest of the night, and she spent a lot of time on her phone for some reason. She complained a lot about the music I was playing even though she was on her phone and not even paying attention to me. I dropped her off and she got out without saying a word. Overall, the date was absolutely awful, and we never talked again.

**Alli Murrin, Senior** We were walking into Noodles and Company and saw his whole cross country team in there, so we ran away. They all saw us and literally chased us back to the car. It was so awkward because we weren’t officially dating and were trying to keep it a secret that we went on a date.

## Dangerous chemicals produce disastrous results

Grant Gibson  
Co-Feature Editor

Mr. Jeff DeVries’s father, a mason contractor, would occasionally bring his kids the box of leftover donuts from his workplace. One afternoon, young Jeff took a bite of a pastry. It tasted like gasoline. He told his dad about the odd tang, but “my dad insisted that they were fine, and my brother and I were too ignorant to believe our own senses,” he said.

So, the brothers continued scarfing them down. Toward the end of the box, he looked down into it and saw that diesel was pooling at and soaking the bottom. Diesel had likely seeped into the box from the bed of his dad’s truck.

But that wasn’t the worst part—*DeVries had a date that night*. At the theater, he couldn’t stop the viscous fumes coming up as burps “that smelled like truck stops.” Every ten minutes or so, he would have to suppress the stench that ascended up his esophagus and out his kisser. Needless to say, that was their last date together.

## Wasted time and money

**Sam Gaich, Senior** I took her to the haunted house, and after we got out, she said it was such a waste of her time.

**Isaac Gibson, Senior** I met this girl and dropped \$130 on the first date. We went to Accelerate Race place in Orland Park. It was a first date. I dropped too much money for someone not worth it.

**Riley Schutt, Senior** I thought it was a date, but they didn’t.

**Caleb Perez, Senior** I tried to “define the relationship,” but it made it so awkward for the rest of the date.

## Dates so bad they asked to remain anonymous

**Female, Senior** He was speeding on the highway, going almost 90. I told him to slow down, and he said I was overreacting.

**Female, Sophomore** We went blueberry picking, and we took his car there. While we were there, his car ran out of gas! We had to ask the blueberry farm workers to drive to a gas station and get us gas so he could drive me home. I couldn’t have been more embarrassed by my date. It made me want to hide in the blueberry fields and never come out.

**Female, Senior** My junior year my date was in a very bad mood all day and proceeded to leave me at prom until I decided to walk out alone because, otherwise, I wouldn’t have had a ride home.

## Watching their relationships crumble at the theater

**Emma Slings, Senior** We went to see a movie with my now-boyfriend, and my ex was watching it too.

**Sophie Thompson, Sophomore** It was my first and last with that person because we went to the movies, and the whole time his mom was texting him.

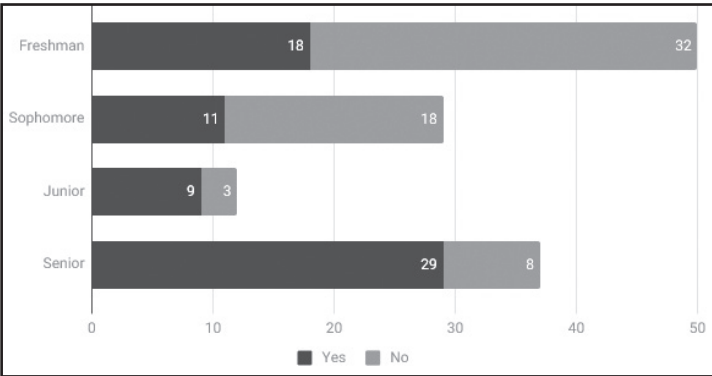
## Love hurts

**Jack Davids, Senior** This one girl got irritated with me and smacked me in the face. Her diamond ring jabbed me in the eye and my eye got all red and swollen.

**Joah DeVries, Senior** I was at the girl’s house, we had been dating for a while, but it was my first time meeting her parents. After entering the house, they’re large German shepherd decided it didn’t like me and decided to bark consistently. They said it

just needed to smell me and get used to me, so I offered it my hand. It sniffed for a second, then bit quite hard, deciding my hand smelled like roast beef maybe. After getting the dog off, I continued to bleed, right over their white carpet. I tried to use my other hand to hold the blood as they got some napkins, but some of it did drip on their carpet.

**Annie Weemhoff, Senior** I had to push my boyfriend on a wheelchair through Chicago... but it was actually pretty fun.



Graph from “Bad Date Census”  
128 students responded to the poll. The dark region shows how many have been on a date; the light region shows how many haven’t been on a date.



# Positivity in spite of pain

Kylie Boss

Co-news Editor

October 11, 2011 - Tori Ruffolo, a ten-year-old girl, sat down by her mom on the couch with her little six-year-old sister by her side. “Honey,” their mom said, “Daddy’s gone to heaven.”

Those five words turned Ruffolo’s life upside down. Her father had been diagnosed with cancer a little over a year earlier, had battled through intense rounds of chemo, and had been in remission, but the cancer came back. Soon after, the chemo rounds began again, but eventually, the cancer took Ruffolo’s father’s life when he was only sixty years old and still had daughters in elementary school.

“I prayed every single day that God would take my dad’s cancer away because I knew He raised people from the dead,... and I didn’t understand,” said Ruffolo.

Tori’s little sister, Megan, who was also only six at the time of her dad’s passing, remembers only a few memories of our dad, most of which are in hospital rooms, said Ruffolo.

“A girl should never have to grow up without her father,” Ruffolo added.

Shortly after her father’s death, Tori and her already grieving family endured more family deaths. A year after the death of her dad, Ruffolo’s cousin died, and then on Christmas her aunt died, followed by the death of her uncle in March. Another one of her aunts died in June, in September her grandpa died, and in December, another aunt died.

“You’d recover from one, and the next one would happen,” said Ruffolo, now seven-

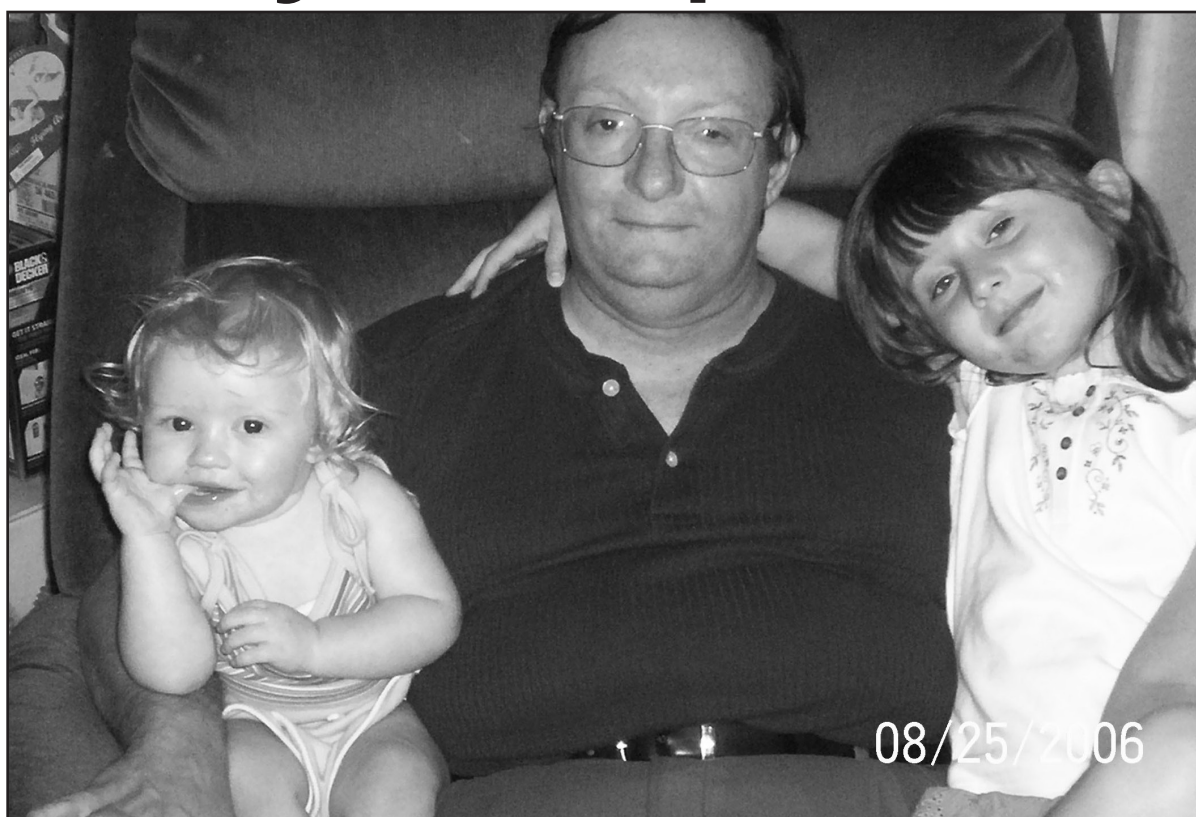


Photo courtesy of Tori Ruffolo

Senior, Tori Ruffolo sits with her sister, Megan, and her late father, Tom, in 2006 at their childhood home.

teen, thinking back to this time in her life. “It got to survival mode. I clung [to] my mom and my uncle and that was it.”

In Ruffolo’s mind, God was taking her family away from her. In the past four years, most of her dad’s family had died, including her dad. Her life became a pattern of visiting hospital rooms then funeral parlors, over and over again. She was scared that no one would be left to care for her and her sister.

Recently, that fear re-emerged because Tori’s mom was hospitalized in late August with of a bleeding intestinal ulcer. Ruffolo’s mother had picked Ruffolo up from school feeling ill, but she continued through her day like normal. Later at home when Ruffolo’s mother started cooking dinner, she mentioned feeling ill and went to lie down, eventually feeling better. When Ruffolo’s

mom started to eat, though, she felt very ill and tried to lay down again. She re-emerged from her room vomiting blood.

“It was all blood,” said Ruffolo, “there was nothing else but blood.”

Ruffolo tried to take her mother to a local urgent care, but the facility closed, so Ruffolo’s uncle proceeded to call an ambulance, which would eventually take Ruffolo’s mother to Franciscan Hospital. The last time Ruffolo saw an ambulance come take one of her family members was at Community Hospital, taking her dad to Northwestern hospital, where he would eventually pass away.

“I saw my dad on that stretcher,” said Ruffolo. “I was so scared...[because] nothing like this had ever happened to her before.”

Her mom ended up being in the ICU, where Ruffolo’s

father also spent his last days, triggering bad memories and stirring fears of her mom being in the same situation as her dad. The thought of losing her only remaining parent scared Tori out of her mind. Her world was crumbling once again, she thought.

“I went home, sat on the ground, and prayed...because when it was with my dad, I had not. I just yelled and screamed.”

Despite the difficulties, Ruffolo chose to have a positive attitude and trust God even though she felt a lot of fear and uncertainty. That positivity paid off, though, for Ruffolo now believes her relationship with God is stronger, and her faith is more firmly rooted in Christ’s never wavering love. Praying actively helped build a stronger relationship with God when times were scary, added Ruffolo.

Ruffolo said that she had to learn how to let God handle situations instead of herself. “I had to learn pretty quickly that I was not control of the situation,” said Ruffolo. “I had to be like ‘alright, God, it’s all you.’”

Ruffolo’s mom was discharged six days later and now is doing fine, resting at home, but the situation still created fear and doubt that Ruffolo struggled to overcome.

Though her relationship God has been strained, Ruffolo wants people to know that even in troubling situations, God is always there, even when it may not seem like it.

“Don’t give up on Christ...he’s something that’s solid. [Even though] it felt like everything was going away, He was always there,” said Ruffolo.

## How to help friends and family in times of grief

Cate Peerbolte  
Co-sports Editor

Being a good friend to someone going through a hard time can be challenging but hard times are when people need support more than ever.

Guidance Counselor Mrs. Benes explained that expression of concern and care is important to support someone. She added, “Grief takes a long time for people to work through, so you must be persistent in showing that you care.” She suggested that listening is more important than talking and that you don’t need to have answers but need to be someone the bereaved can turn to.

Senior Tori Ruffolo said, “A friend who tries to be positive in the little things and see the bright side in life is really helpful.” Ruffolo cautioned against being overly positive because

it can come off as insincere and annoying.

Mr. Davids said, “It takes effort and introspection to be there for someone.” He continued by urging the importance of being empathetic rather than sympathetic. “Sympathy is feeling bad for someone, while empathy is feeling with someone. Ask them questions and try to understand them in their situation. Put your own heart and soul into their situation. This is hard to do because it makes you feel vulnerable, but that is what it takes to support someone in their time of need.” He also encouraged students not to think of themselves but of their friend who needs them.

Davids said, “The most important thing is it show up. When things get awkward it can be easy to leave, which makes them feel even more alone during a very lonely time.”



Photo courtesy of Tori Ruffolo

Senior, Tori Ruffolo, her mother Lori and her sister Megan pose for a family photo two years ago.



# Original activities to do before homecoming

- 1. Have a progressive dinner - Have the soup and salad course at one friends house, then go to someone else’s house for the main course, then go to another friends house for the desert!
- 2. Have your friends cook a meal together - Go to one person’s house and have your friends cook dinner together! It’s a great way to save money, and spend quality time with your

- friends!
- 3. Take creative pictures - Everybody takes pictures before homecoming and usually they all look the same! Try making wooden letters that say “hoco” or make the photos silly!
- 4. Go out for dinner - something like fast food - There isn’t a rule that if you go to dinner homecoming night it has to be something fancy! Switch it up!

Go to Chick-fil-A! Go to McDonalds! Go to Noodles and Company!

5. Do homework - There’s nothing worse than dancing the night away with your friends when suddenly you realize you have an English assignment due at 11:59 p.m. But, if you finish it before you go to the dance there’s no need to worry and there’s no need to fret Sunday night!

# Homecoming ideas for after dance

- 1. Go ice skating - Places such as Deep River Waterpark, and Midwest Training and Ice center close at 11 pm so you’d have to leave the dance early but it would be worth it for some fun on the ice with your friends!
- 2. Host a game night - Everybody goes out after



Photo courtesy of [chicagoparent.com](#)  
*Skiing near Chicago*

homecoming so be different and go home instead! Head to somebody’s house and play board games for a few hours! It keeps you out of the cold and gives you quality times with your friends!

3. Go skiing - The closest ski resort from campus is about an hour away in Lisle, IL but I can guarantee that almost nobody else is doing this so be different and go!

4. Laser tag - Nerf

is for kids, paintball is too messy, and airsoft is too painful, play laser tag!

5. Going to an escape room - Do you enjoy a challenge? Then, an escape room is the place for you! Grab a few pals and try to escape!



Photo courtesy of [timeout.com](#)  
*Time out escape room in Chicago*



Photo courtesy of [choosetchicago.com](#)  
*Ice skating in Chicago*

# Need some dance moves for homecoming? Rock these with our boy Kade

Kylie Boss  
Co-News Editor

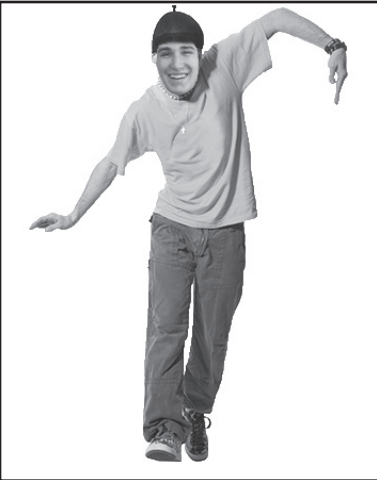
Natalie Togtman  
Arts Editor

Picture this : The first slow song of the night comes on and usually you would put your head down and take a shameful walk to the bathroom because you didn’t have a date. But, tonight you’re feeling especially brave so instead you bust out this dance move and point to your crush. Your crush and you make eye contact because your crush notices your spectacular dance moves. Now, because of this awesome dance move instead of walking away shamefully during the slow dance you’re dancing with your crush.



The Cha-Cha slide comes on. You’re in the front and everybody is looking at you. Act fast and bust out this dance move. It’s simple and easy so people may not be super impressed but at least you aren’t too embarrassed because you executed a cool move!

This dance move is sure to wow the crowd for two reasons : reason number one is because it’s dangerous and reason number two is because nobody else will be doing it. It’s completely unique and takes a lot of flexibility and balance so make sure you’re careful.



# Parks takes talent to new level, plays with Chicago Symphony

Haleigh Olthof  
Co-news Editor

Austin Parks played his first drum set at his brother’s drum lesson. He was four years old.

“I was too little to even sit on the set,” said Parks, but that moment sparked a passion Parks plans to pursue for the rest of his life.

His parents weren’t surprised, as music runs in the family. Parks’ mother and brother sing and play the guitar, and his father plays the bass and piano.

Parks said music has united his family.

“If my dad comes home [while I’m playing the drums], I expect him to pull out his bass and come upstairs and jam with me,” said Parks, even if one of them had a bad day.

Parks enjoys listening to the different genres each person in his family prefers and watching as they all improve.

“That’s the strongest bond in our family.”

In that close family, Parks says he thinks he got his first drum set by annoying his mother. Eventually, she got tired of his stealing her pencils and

pens to drum with, and Parks’ parents bought him a Pearl drum set that he still owns and uses today.

“That was something big for me. That was the spark of something I still hold onto, that they invested in me.”

Parks has continued to invest in drumming, including recently spending \$4,000 on a new set, but he said revenue from gigs helps cover the cost of his equipment.

Parks plays at weddings, birthday parties, and benefits, in addition to background gigs and events like the Chicago Jazz Festival. At one event, his band made \$400 in one night. At a benefit, Parks helped raise \$1.2 million for Merit School of Music.

Parks has planned an event in February to raise money for Illiana’s DR trip.

“It’s not going to be a strict concert,” said Parks. “I want it to be very relaxed.” He plans to serve food and charge \$10 for admission.

Although Parks prefers jazz himself, he has learned to play a variety of genres for different gigs.

“When you play a pop tune or something like Bruno Mars, [the audience] will catch onto that” and express more interest than they might

have in a jazz tune.

Many of Parks’ gigs are booked with the help of the Jazz Institute of Chicago’s Jazz Links Student Council (JLSC). The group helps participants to produce CDs, make video projects, secure gigs, apply to participate in music festivals, and play private concerts. One JLSC program Parks is becoming involved in is the Emerging Artist Project, which promotes rising musicians to help them gain a reputation in music.

Parks often plays with others involved in JLSC, and he has joined with some of them in order to produce a CD. They’re currently working on a demo.

“It’s a long process,” said Parks. “My mentor’s been working really hard with me on this. . . . The people I work with are amazing.”

This mentor, Sam Jewell, works with Parks one-on-one to develop his technique and skills, as well as to [get myself out there.]

Parks also attends a group mentorship program through Ravinia once a week, as well as 8 hours of college-level music theory, technique, and history classes at the Merit School of



*Parks plays with Chicago Symohony.* Photo courtesy of Austin Parks

Music. He also performs and teaches younger drummers at the Griffin Institute of Music.

Many of the drummers who attend in the Merit School of Music are also involved in the Griffin Institute of Music, according to Parks. He said there are not many drummers in the areas he plays in, so it’s easy to feel competitive.

“I’m trying to constantly push,” he said, “but I have to learn to be on my own journey and do my own thing.”

Although Parks plans to major in nursing, he does intend to continue his journey with music throughout his life.

“I want to be intense with my music, but at the same time I want to let it breathe and have fun.”



# Speed and Strength Program implements new changes for winter

Kade Bouwer  
Co-sports Editor

The Strength and Speed Program started its winter season, but with some key differences from before. The times have been moved to before school (6:00-7:20 a.m.) instead of after school because of the heavy usage of the gym.

Another difference is the new attendance policy. Three unexcused absences or five tardies will qualify a student for removal from the program.

“The last time we had a very high number of people interested and it was on a first come first served basis, so you have many people who are not able to participate and then many people who did sign up didn’t stick with their commitment,” said athletic director Darren DeBoer. “The first, most important reason is that this is a progressive program, so if you are missing days you are putting yourself at risk for injury, so when you do come back, you’ll be behind everyone else.”

Tyler Borgman, a certified personal trainer, will be leading this second session. According to Borgman, the program will open for everyone other than athletes in a winter sport. More specifically, the program will be tailored for spring athletes to get in shape.

“It’s gone very well so far,” said junior Coy DeJong. “We have been working hard and it’s been going well, but we won’t know how well it really goes until the end.”



Photo by Jenna Dutton

Sophomore Logan VanEssen drives the lane and puts up a floater in the first half of the game against Chicago Christian. VanEssen’s 17 points were not enough to lift the Vikings past the Knights as they fell 55–45.

# Boys basketball flounders through mid-season schedule

Alex Wondaal  
Co-Editor in Chief

The Vikings suffered a tough 55-45 loss against Chicago Christian; the frustrating game was always within reach, but Illiana never mustered enough of a run to close the gap. For senior shooting guard Andrew Smits, that was “by far” the worst part of the season. Since mid-December, the boys basketball team has had a tough time winning, losing four of their last

seven games. The schedule lightens up only a little bit, as they still will face tough opponents coming down the stretch, most notably Marquette Catholic and Tinley Park.

However, for the remaining six games of the season, Smits said the team will need to improve its defensive communication and rely on its “really effective set plays.”

Currently, the Vikings are 12-5.

For senior forward Isaac

Gibson, a tough part of the season has been the dramatic change from previous years, turning a losing program into a winning one with the help of a new coaching staff. “Even though we aren’t playing for a postseason, we want to go out and compete at a high level,” said Gibson.

Senior Colton DeJong said he wants to continue to focus on the team’s motto from the beginning of the season: “being the hardest working and the most together.”

# Girls basketball improving despite multiple injuries

Liz VanDrunen  
Co-Feature Editor

Illiana’s Varsity Girls Basketball team continues their season with a loss against Munster High School on Tuesday, January 22.

After three months, the team stands with a record of 5-18, and their last game will be Saturday, January 26 at Chicago Christian High School.

Senior Mickey Boss said, “I think we have worked on our offense the most this year. We have so many different offenses we can run against any defense. I think our coaches did a great job of showing us a variety of new and different plays we can use.”

The team has suffered from multiple injuries this season. Seniors Alli Murrin and Hayley Smit are both out for the season due to tearing of ACL’s (anterior cruciate ligament) in their legs, leaving the team with only eight available players.

Boss said, “It has affected our team in many ways. They were huge parts of our team. Alli brought leadership on the court and her shot was outstanding. Hayley’s defense was stellar and her confidence on offense is really missed.”

# Wrestling team shows progress, promise for future

Kade Bouwer  
Co-sports Editor

Despite losing one of the best wrestlers in Illiana history, Isaac Lyzenga, moving to a new state that has different rules and ways of doing things, and having to develop a lot of inexperienced wrestlers, the wrestling team has enjoyed a pleasantly solid season.

Sophomore Jacob VanderZee said, “It has pretty much been a rebuilding season. We are focusing on rebuilding and developing some freshmen and sophomores’ skills, so it’s been a decent season despite that.”

Junior Benjamin Kramer said, “We only have a few returners this year, and I am one of them. I have been doing this since freshman year and this is the best team because they excelled so fast and learned quickly.”

Junior Daniel DeRamus said, “I would say it has been a great experience. I am very glad I tried out. I like this a lot.”

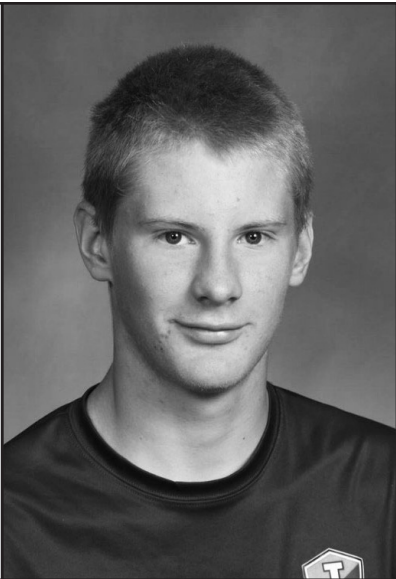
## Male Athlete of the Month

Although the wrestling team is in a rebuilding season, junior Brandon Schutt has been tearing it up on the mat. His dominant performances is evident by the team’s best individual record, 16-10.

Schutt, the captain of the wrestling team, has been thriving in the leadership role.

Teammate Logan Frederick said, “Brandon works hard in practice and brings the team together by adding comedy and bringing a positive attitude.”

Schutt said, “As the captain, I try to help coach the younger players as much as I can. So I’ll take kids aside after their matches and try to teach them a little bit.”



## Female Athlete of the Month

The girls basketball team has been trending in the right direction this year after a poor season last year; and a lot of that improvement has to do with senior Mickey Boss. This year she has been a key part of their improved offense and defense.

Teammate Kaylee Evers said, “Mickey is a super encouraging captain. She picks us all up when we’re down and peps us up before games. She steps up as a leader in practice by leading drills. In games she is a talker who coordinates defensive and offensive plays.”





# Editorial

## Cheers to jeers: Loud Crowd loses way

Welcome to Illiana Christian High School where our mission is to “graduate academically capable people with a comprehensive Christian view of life committed to the challenge of serving God and others.” We pride ourselves on graduating students who know God’s purpose for their lives, which is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Except at our basketball game on Dec. 21. There, all bets were off because our mission was to. . . was to. . . Well, to be honest, we’re not sure what the mission was, but we sure know it was not to honor God. The game on Friday, Dec. 21, made that abundantly clear.

Our school’s Loud Crowd is arguably the best around. For years, students have rallied together on Friday nights to cheer for the varsity boys basketball teams. The Loud Crowd is the epitome of school spirit and unity, complete with students costumed according to the theme of the night and yelling organized cheers at the top of their lungs.

On Dec. 21, however, the Loud Crowd was about 20% focused on cheering for our team and 80% focused on tearing the opposing team down. On a normal night, the Loud Crowd yells “Airball, airball, airball” when an oppos-

ing player misses a shot, and that is about as targeted as our cheers get, which most would agree is seemingly harmless. On that particular night, however, some students went beyond the normal, organized cheers and targeted individual players and referees. Players were fat shamed and offered weight training and workout plans to lose weight. Racial slurs about KFC were yelled. A single

and larger belly. The other referee they called Hitler because of his resemblance. On top of that, an obnoxious student blew an air horn, frustrating the referees further and nearly causing a technical foul for our team.

Loud Crowd did not do its job on Dec. 21, and it brought shame to Illiana Christian’s name as well as the Christian community as a whole. Loud Crowd’s purpose has

Crowd. Welcome to Illiana Christian, you all suck, now let’s go worship God. It would be funny if it weren’t so sad. Our purpose is to glorify God, a purpose that was sorely absent that night.

So yes, by the time Illiana students are walking across the stage on graduation night, most can agree that we are all academically capable people with a complete knowledge of the Christian life. The line blurs around the part about Illiana students being committed to serving God and others. If you ask any of the players on the opposing team that night or the referees, we can guarantee they did NOT feel served. They didn’t feel loved. The atmosphere was hostile at best. They did not feel welcome by any means either. The Christian hospitality we are supposed to exude was nonexistent. We know in our minds right from wrong and how to live the Christian life, but some of our hearts are not on the same page, which Dec. 21 demonstrated.

So, Illiana, let’s not make the game on Dec. 21 a regular occurrence, and let’s get our hearts and minds on the same page so that Illiana’s mission statement is what rings true by the time we graduate and go out from here.

“Players were fat shamed and offered weight training and workout plans to lose weight.”

player, who couldn’t make any of his free throws that night at the beginning of the game, was taunted by students the rest of the game about his missed shots. Students in the Loud Crowd watched the opposing team with hawk eyes, ready to swoop down on them at the first sign of a screw up. Students shouted, “You suck” repeatedly. Illiana students insulted referees, calling one Stalin because of his dark hair and facial features, and another Santa Claus due to his white hair

never been about harassment. The purpose of it is to uplift our players and to show our team as much support as possible. So why was it that when any brave student stood against the ones harassing the other team, he or she was also chastised and told, “Cheer or leave the Loud Crowd.” However, cheering and targeting players are two very different things, a distinction obviously lost on some students.

The icing on top of it all? Afterwards, students rushed to Praise

## New year, new opportunities to take chances, live in moment

There is a special gift that children have. They aren’t afraid to take risks. They can make friends easily and don’t fear sharing their opinions.

Yet as children, we want to grow up. There is a continuous cycle of longing. In kindergarten, we look up to the sixth graders. In sixth grade, we look up to the eighth graders. Eighth graders look to freshman. Freshman look to Seniors. Seniors look to college kids, and so on and so on.

When you are in that stage of admiration, older kids can look physically and mentally matured, as if they have their lives together. Then you get to that age and you realize that you don’t feel any older or any more special. In fact, life has actually gotten more complicated.

For so long, we try to act older and look the part and then we realize that we wish we could go back in time.

Back to the days of recess and juice boxes, which we were so eager to leave behind.

The older we get the more we worry--about others’ opinions, about the quickly advancing future, about money, about time, about lost opportunity.

The irony in this is sad. Spending all your life wishing that you were in a different stage of life is a miserable way to live. We should appreciate the time we are in and live in the moment.

We spend too much time longing for the past or worrying about the future.

“This is the youngest you will ever be,” is a phrase I’ve been focusing on as I enter the new year. It has become not so much a resolution as a mantra for me. It comes from a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt which says, “Today is the oldest you’ve ever been, and the youngest you’ll ever be again.”

It’s a reminder to live in the moment, to realize that I can’t go back in time and I can’t relive the good memories. I can only learn from them and know that I am lucky to have them. Nor do I have to yearn for the future. It will come in its time.

“This is the youngest you will ever be” is a reminder to take risks; try the new haircut, speak in chapel, ask out the girl. So what if it doesn’t work out? It was an experience you now have and one that you may learn from. And if it does work, then you can live in the moment and appreciate the pure adolescence of it all.



Liz VanDrunen  
Co-Feature Editor

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Letters to the editor can be submitted to the advisor or sent to the school. All letters must be signed and must not exceed 250 words. They will be printed provided there is enough room and content is not offensive to the general public.

The Echo Editor’s  
Favorite Break-up Songs:

Alex: “Cry Me a River” -Justin Timberlake

Cate: “Single” - The Neighbourhood

Grant: “Slow Dancing In the Dark” - Joji

Haleigh: “Trust My Lonely” - Alessia Cara

Kade: “Thank U, Next” - Ariana Grande

Kylie: “My Boy” - Billie Eilish

Liz: “Another One Bites the Dust” - Queen

Maddie: “Skinny Love” - Bon Iver

Natalie: “Light It Up” - Luke Bryan

Mr. DeVries: “Love Stinks” - J Geils Band

The newspaper is a forum for expression; therefore, we encourage feedback or commentary. Please contact us at theillianaecho@gmail.com