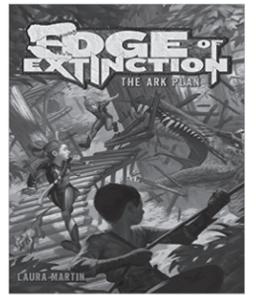




Get full coverage on the I2U mission trip to Uganda on page 4.

the Echo)))

Find out which Illiana alumnus has a new novel coming out in May. We interview her on page 5.



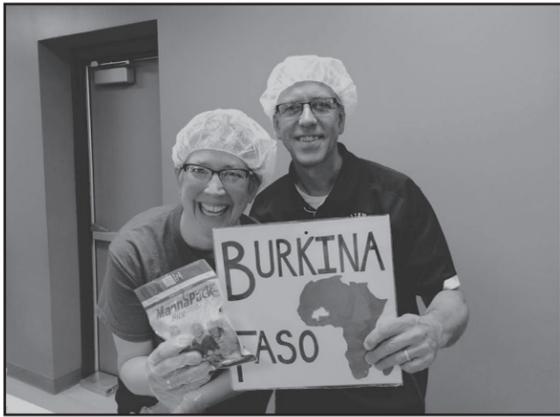
Illiana Christian High School

Volume 70 Issue 8

April 29, 2016

Lansing, Illinois

GO Day moves students outside Illiana walls to serve community in Christ's name



Juliana Knot
Co-Editor in Chief

Illiana held its annual "Go Day" on April 26, 2015.

Go Day, formerly "Christian Service Day," gives Illiana students a chance to go out into the community and serve others. Freshmen homerooms cleaned and painted the facilities and grounds at Camp Manitoqua. Sophomore homerooms packed and prepared food for third world countries at Feed My Starving Children locations. Juniors and senior homerooms chose a total of 13 different places to serve such as thrift stores, schools, and food pantries.

Go Day's sponsor Diane Bilyeu said, "It gives students who normally wouldn't serve an opportunity to try it out. Some don't look forward to the day but realize after that it's kind of fun."

Senior Brooke VanDerAa served at the Children's Hunger Fund in Homewood. There, her homeroom and three others packaged over 2,700 one-and-a-half pound bags of beans. She said, "[Serving] told me that there are so many things you can do that don't take up much of your time."

Junior Derrius Pendleton served by picking up trash and cleaning walls at Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Lansing. "It's important," he said, "that we take care of our community."

Briana Besser was one of the many freshmen who raked, painted, and cleaned at Camp Manitoqua. She said, "[Serving] does not have to be tedious. You can still have a lot of fun doing it with your friends."



Students scattered throughout the Chicagoland region to load food boxes, clean facilities, visit with people, sort clothes, clean grounds, and do other activities.

New campus plans change as fundraising slows

Kassidy Weemhoff
Arts Editor

Faith Mischka
Reporter

The Illiana school board has recently proposed a phased construction plan for the new building due to the slow stream of donor money and is currently considering a \$23-25 million project for the first phase.

Originally, the plan was to raise the total cost for the Illiana building, over \$30 million, before breaking ground. With the current funds only reaching \$13 million in six months, the school board has decided to look at other options for how to get a new building up and running.

A phased construction process would start with a basic academic building fit to con-

duct classes—essentially a collection of classrooms and one gym. Then, according to Principal Peter Boonstra, as donors see progress, they would give more money to cause, allowing for the missing amenities to be added in phases. According to a presentation to faculty by the administration, some of the items missing from phase one would be the auditorium, an auxiliary gym, and a few out-

door athletic areas.

Vice Principal AJ Turkstra said that new plan is "not what we want, but not very often do schools or companies build the whole thing from the very beginning. It's a process."

Boonstra said of the first phase of construction, "It's not that we're settling for half a building. It's that we think if we get going, people will be encouraged by what they see and then

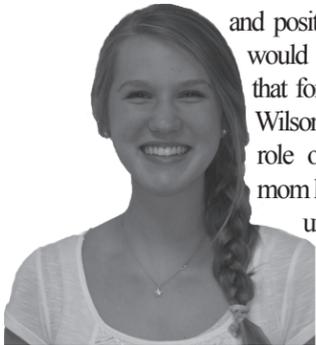
make commitments that would then enable us to come quickly with that second phase."

Right now the Design and Construction Committee as well as the Steering Committee is developing this phasing idea which would then need to be fully analyzed to make sure it's really going to work. The school has asked the architect to redesign the building so it can be built in different phases.

Wilson smiles in face of adversity

Getting to Illiana was really complicated,” senior, Autumn Wilson laughed, but then became more serious. “There were a lot of factors.”

A lot of factors that no one would ever be able to tell walking past her in the halls or sitting next to her in class. From her constant smile



Collette Bouwer
News Editor

and positive attitude, no one would ever be able to tell that for the past few years Wilson has taken over the role of mom, while her mom had suffered from an undiagnosed illness.

“We always say Easter of 2013 as the official start date,” recalled Wilson as she looked away.

“[My mom] was really dizzy and she couldn’t think straight. She stopped driving and she had to quit her job. . . . The sun hurt her eyes, so she had to stay in her room with all the curtains closed. We couldn’t really talk to her.”

That following summer, they took her to multiple doctors, without any diagnosis.

When the school year came, they were constantly moving around, from a hotel to a beach house back to their original home.

“My mom started getting even worse,” Wilson said. “We didn’t even know that was possible.”

Because the doctors couldn’t find anything wrong, her father started tearing apart the house, hoping to find an answer there. Then they found the problem: black mold.

Wilson had to grow up early. She took on many of the chores of a mom: grocery shopping, doing laundry, cooking, and ironing.

“I would go to school, have after school activities until I went to work. We worked on the house until ten. Everyone else went to sleep. I would work on homework until two a.m., and then I would go to school. And at that point I was taking a dual credit college class, an honors class and four AP classes,” Wilson said with a laugh as she recalled her busy schedule, saying she’d catch up on sleep on the weekends.

“It wasn’t like anyone told me to do it,” Wilson shrugged modestly, “but everyone sort of had to fill in the gap that [mom] left.”

Things are starting to look up though. At the beginning of this year, they sold the house, threw away everything they owned, and started over. “So I kept my driver’s license. I have a new one now, but that was pretty much it,” Wilson smiled.

The family is now three months into a projected six to twelve month recovery, and Wilson’s mom is slowly improving. They can finally start to see the end of this long journey.

During dark times, Wilson has often looked to the Bible to keep her positive attitude, the book of Ruth being her favorite.

“It’s sort of just keeping something you’re loyal to,” Wilson explained. “And in this case it was my family, and I was going to hold on to a death grip to this family no matter what happened. When push comes to shove you’re going to do anything to protect your family.” And that is what Wilson, like Ruth, did.

Although they hope to leave this sickness behind, Wilson plans to bring this experience with her in the ministry next fall.

“It gives me a unique perspective to help people,” Wilson said, explaining how her situation gave her a whole new understanding of going through hard times. It made her realize that God really is the one constant, and now she wants to share that with others.

Well, “That and your driver’s license,” Wilson joked, still smiling.



Runners take their mark, ready for the gun to go off at 7:30.

Photo courtesy of Illiana’s Twitter

Funds pour in quickly at annual Pancake Pacer

Victoria Sonowo
Reporter

On Saturday, April 23, Illiana hosted the 7th annual Pancake Pacer 5k run/walk, a fundraising event for the athletic department that raised a total of just under \$15,000. Over 100 runners participated, and many of our spring athletes were present in support roles. Sponsors also lent a hand, not only supporting the school financially, but to cheering on the runners.

Athletic Director, Mr. Lance Davids said, “I started it six years ago. I was into running and I liked running and we were trying to find different ways to fund-

raise for the athletic department.”

This fundraising event along with the others such as the fall golf outing and the winter sport book and auction, have all been very successful in raising funds for the school along with providing a sense of community within Illiana.

“We have fundraisers to raise money for uniforms, equipment and others costs of athletics so our students don’t have to sell candy bars, flowers etc.,” said Athletic Director Ms. Deb Kamp.

The runners in the Pacer varied in age and ability, ranging from those who run to exercise

and those who were actually participating in a 5K race for the first time.

Junior Alaina Kats said, “My friend was going to walk it and she asked me if I wanted to do it with her, so I said sure. I didn’t prepare at all for this race. I was worried about whether I should do it or not because I was sick, so I just walked it and took it easy.”

Sophomores Alyssa Dejong and Grace VanDam, who did the race together both agreed that even though it was their first time, they did not find the race as difficult as they thought it would be.

Term paper inspires graduate to mission work in Thailand

Beth Boonstra
Reporter

The senior term paper may be long and difficult, but it can inspire people to do amazing things. A member of the class of 2015, Hannah Groen, was inspired while writing her paper to go into the mission field. She is now half way across the world in Thailand where she is helping those suffering from HIV.

Groen said, “I have felt missions from a young age.” She originally wanted to go for a year, but God had different plans. She could only get a 6 month visa. She funded her trip through a donations website and left on Jan. 1, 2016.

Groen started her first several months working for New Bless-

ings Vision and Children’s Home where she taught English eight hours every day. Mid-march she started working for Home of the Open Heart, an organization that works with all ages of people suffering from HIV. The ministry is comprised mostly of volunteers, both Thai and foreign.

Groen does everything from updating the organization’s website to teaching or babysitting some of the younger kids, writing newsletters to serving as a hospice caretaker in people’s last days. She misses her family, close friends, air conditioning, hot showers, transportation, and Wi-Fi. “And I miss a lot more,” Groen said, “but I am happy to adjust for what I have here.”

“I have been overwhelmingly blessed,” Groen said. “I



Groen goes for a boat ride in Thailand.

Photo courtesy of Hannah Groen

have grown spiritually more in the last four months than in the all my years in high school. I have been able to see God’s hand tangibly working with me since [the beginning].”

When she returns home, Groen plans on attending Discipleship Training School, “a 5 month hands-on Christian discipleship training program” according to the Youth with a Mis-

Enrollment policy expanding to accept more denominations

Riley Goodwin
Reporter

Illiana Christian High School’s school board has added a change to the school’s admission policy regarding the acceptance of Eastern Orthodox and Catholic families.

“The policy change is actually pretty small,” said Principal Peter Boonstra, “the policy included an exclusion of any families from Eastern Orthodox and Catholic families, so the only thing that’s really happened is that exclusion has been dropped.”

“It needs to be noted that this is not some sort of carte blanche, open-ended admission of Catholic families,” added Boonstra. “The admission criteria remain the same. There are still times when we do not admit Protestant families and there will be times when we do not admit Catholic families.”

“The change in policies grew [out of] our most recent strategic plan which includes the new campus,” said Boonstra, “and we felt it was time to make sure that all Christian families are welcomed to the school. This doesn’t mean that we expect to see a flood of new families coming in.”

“As of this moment we have not interviewed any Catholic families for this upcoming year,” Boonstra said. “We’re not exactly putting this [change] on a billboard. We want this to be a rather subtle extension, so I am not sure when a Catholic family will be admitted.”

mission website. After her training, Groen plans to return to the mission field.

Groen said, “I absolutely love where I am despite all the constant change and challenges. God has become even more real to me than he was before. I can’t wait to come home and see my family again, but I am very happy enjoy God’s creation in a whole new view.”

Grateful for grandparents

Marissa Johnson

Reporter

April 22 was Grandparents Day at Illiana. This day has been going on successfully for nearly a decade now.

Every year Illiana invites the grandparents to join them for lunch and after the grandparents spend time with their grandchild in classes 6th and 7th. To end the day a special program is held, and this year grandparents enjoyed the music of jazz band during that program.

Steve Holwerda, devel-

opment director, said the purpose of Grandparents Day is to thank the guests for their support of Illiana by paying tuition, attending sporting events, and attending concerts. This day gives Illiana a chance to honor these people and the family legacy that they leave us to carry on.

Holwerda said, "Many times when they [grandparents] visit our school, it is for events, and they don't get to see us in action."

Holwerda said Grandparents Day at a high school looks very different from such a day at an elementary

school. Fun can be defined in many ways, and Illiana doesn't need to play games to make Grandparents Day fun. Some students find it fun just spending time with their grandparents and honoring them, and grandparents just want a genuine window into what their grandchildren are doing at school.

Harold Triezenberg, grandparent of freshman Timothy and junior Elizabeth Triezenberg, has been coming to Grandparent's Day for three years. Triezenberg said, "I enjoy the godly experience and the Christian people here."

Fine Arts recital puts talents on display

Mikerra Hall

Reporter

Illiana held its annual Fine Arts Festival from April 6-13. The festival culminated with a recital on Tuesday evening, April 19.

Jim Kamphuis, an Illiana art teacher and the festival's co-sponsor, said, "Fine Arts is a way for students to share their God-given gifts in an art form. These talents allow a person to express something beyond themselves and communicate to someone else."

Senior Prince Hogue competed in the vocal music division of the Fine Arts Festival.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Caleb Last performs "Castle on a Cloud" from "Les Miserables" at the recital, Tuesday evening, April 19.

tival. "I was able to express myself," said Hogue. "It was a great opportunity to use my gifts to glorify God."

Junior Jaimie Dykstra, who participated in the visual arts category, said, "Fine Arts is a way for me to demonstrate my skills and to challenge myself. Later on, when I go to American Acad-

emy of Art for college, the fine arts will be my career and my legacy."

Dykstra is one of over fifty students who were involved. The competition awarded prizes in seven categories: visual arts, photography, instrumental music, vocal music, literary, piano/organ, and drama.

New top-COP in charge

Nikki Van Dam to lead return of Career Opportunity Program

Juliana Knot

Co-Editor in Chief

The Illiana Career Opportunity Program will be returning next year and maybe part of this year under the direction of Nikki

Van Dam.

The previous director of the program, also known as the COP program, took another job. Principal Peter Boonstra said, "It is very difficult to replace. [The problem] is about having someone who champions it."

For Van Dam, COP is worth the work.

"I will have a junior and senior next year, and I would like them, as well as all of the other students, to have the opportunity to see what their potential career might be," she said.

She said that the pro-

gram is ready to go, and it would be possible but difficult to have student groups visiting jobs by the end of the year. The program will be completely up and running for the 2016-2017 school year. She also hopes to update the program, so it can use more online tools.

COP's resurrection comes as welcome news for junior Asia Miller who wishes to study in the medical field.

Miller said, "I have always been looking forward to ... seeing what I'm getting into and seeing real world jobs in action."



Photo courtesy of Illiana's Twitter

Grandparents attend the program in the chapel after walking through classes with their grandchildren.

Jerry Nikkel, grandparent of senior Jocelyn Nikkel, said it was his first year coming for Grandparents Day.

Nikkel said, "I hope to interact with a couple of people and see what goes on in

different classes."

Junior Gianna Natale has brought her grandpa since freshmen year. Natale said, "I love him. He's funny, and he is just fun to hang out with every year."

Choir program singing on new stages

Lauren Curtis

Reporter

On Friday April 8, Women's Chorale was invited by Calvin College to do a joint concert. Each school sang a few songs of their own such as "Girls Garden," "Bless the Lord" and "Windflowers." At the end both choirs came together and sang "Lift Up the Name of the Lord" by John Helgen.

"The mass was a lot of fun," said Kathy Sliemers, the Chorale's director. "I think the choir's biggest struggle was just being confident when singing next to such an excellent choir as Calvin's."

Women's Chorale wasn't the only Illiana choir with special performance opportunities. On Monday April 8, A Cappella and some of Chamber Singers were invited to sing at Orchestra Hall

in Chicago. The sang with several others choirs and with an orchestra.

"The orchestra was made up of various professionals from the Chicagoland area - some from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and some not," explained Sliemers. Dr. Pearl Shangkuan directed the orchestra.

They sang pieces from Handel's "Coronation Anthems," A set of songs that Handel wrote for the coronation of the King of England.

"Singing under Dr. Shangkuan was a great experience, and she went about teaching in ways I had never heard of before," said sophomore Emma West.

"The orchestra hall was amazing; it was so pretty and it looked small but the seats went all the way back," said senior Emmajeane Spoelman.

"People really seemed to enjoy both events," said Sliemers.



Photo courtesy of Kathy Sliemers

A Cappella Choir and Chamber Singers perform at Orchestra Hall.

Delays bring unity

Five countries, four guides, three continents, two chaperones, one team.

On Wednesday morning, I had no idea what to expect. Flying into Brussels airport just two days after the terror attacks made me nervous. I

had peace that we would make it to Uganda which is odd because, if you know me, I stress about EVERYTHING.

When we left school, we thought our travel plans had been rerouted through Munich, Germany and Istanbul, Turkey for layovers instead of Brussels. But when we arrived at



Elyse Dunham
Co-feature Editor

O'Hare, Delta Airlines said that those plans didn't exist. Normally I would have been freaking out and going over all the scenarios of what could go wrong, but I didn't. I was just happy to begin this amazing journey.

We waited in a line for four hours before Delta finally figured out our flight plans, we would be leaving for Newark, New Jersey at 6 the next morning, leaving there at 10 p.m. for Amsterdam, and leaving there for Entebbe. Since it was already late, we decided to sleep at O'Hare. I could have stressed about sleeping in a freezing airport, but I didn't. I was having fun getting to know my fellow team members during our spontaneous sleepover.

Everyone woke up at 3:45 a.m. that morning for our flight, and most of us didn't get much sleep. Our flight had a two hour delay because of technical difficulties. At this point, I normally would have been scared to even get on that plane, spinning out all sorts of horrific outcomes in my imagination, but I wasn't. I trusted there was a bigger plan in all of these delays.

We arrived in Newark around 11:30 a.m. and after lunch we left to explore New York City. The people were meaner than the people in Chicago and the streets were dirtier, but it was as flashy and worldly as I expected it to be. We roamed, trying to soak it all in. My group stopped at a Starbucks, leaving after everybody got what they wanted, well, everybody but me. I was still waiting for my coffee. Now normally I would have had a panic attack, but I didn't. Even though it was a huge, scary city, I kept my composure and walked to our meeting point. I found my group, and everything was okay. After that, we all went back to the airport, ate dinner, and boarded our plane.

We landed in Amsterdam at 10 a.m. We had to carry all of our luggage and the huge, 50 pound bins we brought for the orphanage to the bus that brought us to our hotel. There (after three days in the same clothes) we all finally got showers, then headed out into the city. It was beautiful and the buildings were historic. While running to catch our bus back to the hotel, we almost got plowed over by bicyclists, but we all made it back.

The next morning at the airport, we had to check in at kiosks where we scanned our passports. For some reason my passport registered my ticket as Miss Johnson. So we had to wait in a long line to get our tickets figured out. Usually I would have felt anxious that I wouldn't get a ticket and I would be stuck there, but I wasn't. I knew that I had already come this far and I was going to get to Uganda. And that's what happened. Everything worked out and eventually we made it to Entebbe.

God had a plan. He helped me see that He had everything under control and that I don't have to be stressed about everything. This trip has helped me be prepared for the bumps in the road that I will have to face in the future, I'm going to face those bumps always with God at my side.



Photo by Peter Boonstra

'Charging' through Uganda

JP Peerbolte
Reporter

This spring break a group of 18 students, Ms. Johnson, and Mr. Boonstra traveled to Uganda. This trip was a substitute to the usual mission trip to the Dominican Republic.

"I traveled the world [this spring break]," said Junior Kyle Musch.

The group did get to travel the world.

They ran into many issues with their flights to Uganda. Their original flights to Uganda were cancelled due to the terrorist attack in Brussels, Belgium. The group was split onto different flights, but after four hours at the ticket counter at O'Hare they were able to get tickets all on the same flight. They spent the night at O'Hare to wait for their flight.

They boarded a flight to New York and had a 12 hour layover. They then flew to Amsterdam and had a 24 hour layover. United Airlines paid for hotel rooms for the group while they stayed in Amsterdam. Finally they made

it to Uganda on a flight from Amsterdam. On their flights back to America they had a short 1 hour layover in Frankfurt, Germany.

"It took us 80 hours to get from Chicago to Uganda... on the way back it only took us 17 hours," said Boonstra.

The plan was to visit two orphanages in Uganda, but due to

the flight delays they could only visit one orphanage. The orphanage they visited did not have any electricity or running water.

While at the orphanage the group did service work. "We mostly painted... we also did



Photo courtesy of wikimedia.org

some moving around of bricks and other miscellaneous projects," said Boonstra.

Boonstra added that they not only went there to work but also to understand a different culture.

"We built relationships with people in the area... and explored God's beautiful creation," said Musch.

Also while in Uganda they went on a safari and stayed in cabins.

"The people of Uganda are always joyful," said junior Isaiah Easter. His favorite part of the trip was being able to experience the community.

"They [Ugandans] know how to show love, when anyone is in need they feel as if it is necessary to help," added Easter.

"The team that we had were a great group of kids, that held up well, that grew stronger from the challenges we faced throughout the week," said Boonstra.



Top Left: Water buffalo seen by the I2U team on their safari adventure. Bottom Left: Kylie Boss poses with some of the orphans from Bethel Christian Children's Home. Right: Some of the I2U team taking in the beautiful scenes of the safari terrain.



Photos by Peter Boonstra

Alumnus rattles bones with debut novel

On May 10, Harper Collins will publish “Edge of Extinction: The Ark Plan,” a middle grade novel by Laura Martin (VanWeelden) from the class of 2004. Kirkus reviews has praised the book’s protagonist as “a budding Katniss Everdeen—tough, stubborn, [and] resilient. . .—a promising protagonist.” We caught up with Laura, who gave us the inside scoop on her inspiration and the ins and outs of writing books. What follows is an edited transcript of that conversation:

When did you know you wanted to be a writer?

I don’t think there was a moment where the heavens opened, a light shined down, and I knew it was my destiny. Although, that would have been great! However, I was always a reader. Books were magic to me, and I devoured them by the truckload. Eventually, it started to creep into my subconscious that I’d like to create one of these little pieces of magic. So I started jotting down ideas and playing around with writing. When I got to college, I decided to double major in both Education and Creative Writing, and my creative writing classes were far and away my favorite part of the week.

How long did it take you to write this novel? To find a publisher? Can you explain the process?

I started writing this particular novel over four years ago. It started off as a young adult book, but it morphed into a middle grade adventure novel on the advice of my literary agent. So the original manuscript took a year. It took me a year to land a literary agent and revise it



last two years have been spent splitting my original novel into two novels! As far as the publishing process goes the first step is to find a good literary agent. They are the ones who then take your book to the publishing houses. In return, they get 15% of whatever you make from the sale of the book. In order to land a literary agent you need to write something called a query letter, basically a one-page introduction of yourself and your book. They are wickedly hard to write, and I’ll die happy if I never have to write another one!

Where did you get the idea for the plot?

All stories start with two words... “what if.” My what if came when I took a trip to New York City with my mom and dragged her to their Natural History Museum. The museum has a fabulous dinosaur display, and those gigantic bones caught my imagination. I couldn’t help but wonder... what if dinosaurs came back? Would we survive bringing our own predators out of extinction? And with that simple what if “Edge of Extinction” was born.

Does your book have any Christian aspects or in any way reflect your faith?

I reference the story of Noah and the ark quite a bit throughout the story. In the book, the world as we know it essentially has fallen apart and a man stepped up to save what was left of the human race. He fittingly called himself “The

Noah” and called his plan to save the human race from extinction his “Ark Plan.”

How does your faith affect your work as a novelist?

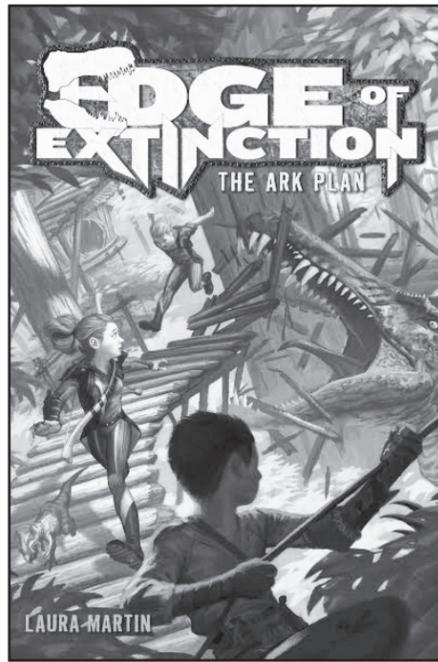
This is a hard question to answer, because I believe our faith doesn’t just affect certain portions of our lives, it molds, dictates, and shapes EVERY aspect of who we are and how we live day to day. So from the stories I choose to write, to the way I conduct myself as an author, a mom, a wife...all of that is a direct reflection of my belief in a God that is mighty enough to make all things possible.

How did Illiana influence your writing career?

I loved writing, but I hated grammar in high school, and I’d heard horror stories about the amount of grammar work required for Honors English. However, I ended up taking Honors and AP English after a gentle nudge from Mr. De Vries, who pointed out that if I struggled with something, wouldn’t it make sense to take a class that would make me better at it? (Insert forehead smacking revelation here.) So I ended up biting the bullet and taking Honors English followed by AP English. That AP English class allowed me to bypass all of my freshman English classes, and opened up the opportunity for me to double major in Creative Writing. If I hadn’t followed Mr. De Vries’s advice, I’m not sure I’d be an author today.

Were there any specific classes or teachers that impacted your writing?

I LOVED Mr. De Vries’s class. He made novels come to life, and he really pushed me as a writer. When I became a teacher, I modeled a lot of how I taught off of him. He was truly fabulous. Honestly though, I loved all of my teachers at Illiana, even the ones who pushed me way out of my comfort zone like Ms. Leistra and Frau Westerhof. I could list name after name, from Miss Top, to



Liz Metcalfe, to Mr. Zandstra, Mr. Kamphuis, Mr. and Mrs. Lagerwey...It took entering the teaching world myself to realize how truly blessed I was with the teachers I had at Illiana.

How did Illiana equip you for life after high school?

Illiana has always been known for pushing its students, and because of that I was more than prepared to face the challenges of the college setting. From the work ethic I developed in the sports programs to the friends that I still cherish today, my four years at Illiana are some of my favorites.

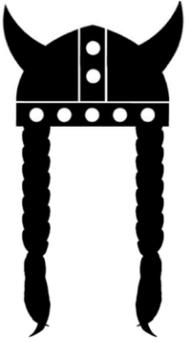
What did you do to have success in the competitive world of writing?

I wrote. And then I wrote some more. I got a boatload of rejections... but I just kept writing. Edge of Extinction wasn’t the first book that I wrote, and it received its fair share of rejections as well before someone finally said yes. Other than writing, I read a lot. I knew the genre I was writing backwards and forwards so I knew how to craft a story. The last thing that I did that led to my success was research. I spent hours upon hours on the Internet learning everything I could about the publishing world, reading blogs by literary agents and most importantly...learning what not to do.

What advice would you give students who aspire to be writers?

Be a reader first. You can’t be a writer unless you’re also a reader. My second piece of advice would be to make writing a habit. Try to find time every day to sit down and put something on paper. Writing is just like anything else, the more you do it, the better you get at it. And finally, decide why you are writing. Is it because there is a story inside of you burning to get out? If so, then it won’t matter how long it takes you to find success, you’ll be doing something you love.

ASK VICKY VIKING



Crush question causes uncertainty

Dear Vicky,

First of all, I just have to tell you how excited I am to be writing to you. I don’t think I’ve ever written to a real life celebrity before. I know you must get thousands of these letters, but I hope you will be answering mine. Please?! This question was actually from my friend, let’s call him Martin, and I didn’t know what to tell him. I knew I could come to you, though, so I really hope you can help me. Here goes—

If someone asks you if you have a crush, if you say no, is it a lie? Do you have to answer the question?

Thanks Vicky,

Crushed in Crete

Dear Crushed in Crete,

Thank you for this very endearing question! I am happy to take some time to come up with a response for you.

In short, the answer is yes it is a lie, but I don’t think there is anything wrong with avoiding the question. Obviously if you answer the question with a “yes” the follow up will be “Who is it?”, and then you’ve gotten yourself into a very tough situation.

There are many creative ways to avoid this question. For example: “Yes, I have a crush but I’m not telling you who it is.” Or “Stop bothering me.” Or “Hey I think they’re selling donuts at break!” Or you can just run away.

Ultimately, my advice would be that it is always better to tell the truth, but if you’d rather skirt the subject, that’s fine too. Just don’t lie.

I’m sorry you’ve found yourself in such a hard position.

Sincerely,

Vicky Viking

When obsession makes things awkward

Dear Vicky Viking,

What should I do about a friend that is overly obsessive with his/her significant other? It’s really awkward and it is making our friendship grow further apart.

Freaked-Out Friend

Dear Freaked-Out Friend,

I think the best thing you can do in this situation is to confront your friend. It’s best to communicate how you are feeling to them. They may not know how their obsessive behavior is affecting you. Tell your friend that you miss him/her and feel that you are losing quality time you used to enjoy.

Once you lay out how you are feeling, it is up to your friend to decide how to respond. If your friend chooses to continue the disturbing behavior, you probably aren’t losing a good friend in the first place.

Tell your friend how you are feeling and you’ll feel a whole lot better.

Hope this helps!

Sincerely,

Vicky Viking

Do you need advice? Contact Vicky at vickyvikingilliana@gmail.com or write a letter and turn it in to Mr. DeVries’s mailbox located in the office. Thank you!



Photo courtesy of Hanna VanderWoude
Sophomore Jared Trivette tags out a Timothy runner who is caught between second base and third base.

Baseball looks to get out of slump

Jacob Thompson

Co-Sports Editor

The baseball team had the opportunity to play at the Gary Railcats stadium on Monday April 11 against rival Chicago Christian. As they have for much of the season, the boys struggled with their bats and lost the game 2-0. Although they held them to just two runs they struggled, hitting just two pitches. The boys are struggling this season and have a disappointing record of 9 wins 11 losses.

"It's just a slump," said Junior Bo Hofstra. "We

have to keep playing to our strengths in the field, and the hits and wins will come."

The boys are still hoping to go deep in the post season despite their recent string of losses. Last season they made it as far as winning regionals and sectionals. Although the boys may not be playing well the team knows the talent is there. Senior Jack Hillegonds say that once they start hitting he believes that they will be a powerhouse.

"We have the potential to win and go far," said Hillegonds. "We just have to start hitting and playing to our strengths."

Girls soccer starts strong

Cassie Iaconelli

Reporter

The varsity girls soccer team has won six games of eight they have played this year and expect to win more.

The Lady Vikings record is 6-1-1. They won six, lost one, and tied one. On April 21, they started their ninth game with Elmwood, but it was suspended due to lightning and will be played at a later date.

"With the way we have been playing," explained senior Amanda Eberly, "I'm sure we can make it to the championship. I believe in this group of girls and our skills."

The team keeps improving each and every game they play. According to Eberly, they learn from each other's mistakes and they never let one another get down about a play or about the game in general. They always build each other back up and they act as if they are a second family. They have started meeting and calling it team bonding which they hope will cause the team to become more like a family. They hope to make it to state and win the championship.

Coach Chip Bevan said, "I hope the team bonding will help us to work with each other better and enhance our skills."



Photo by Hanna VanderWoude
Junior Jared Jonkman watches teammates Curtis Templeman and Jacob Mulderink block spike attempt.

Boys volleyball bounces back after rough start

Hanna VanderWoude

Photo Editor

The boys' varsity volleyball team has a record of six wins and ten losses. The team consists of mostly younger classmen with only four seniors.

"It was a rough start to the season, but we're definitely rebuilding," said junior Jacob Mulderink.

Mr. Dave Bosman, the boys varsity coach said, "One of the things I was worried about was how we would pass the ball, ball control and serve receive, but as the season has gone on it's been one of our

more consistent things."

Bosman added that it was a highlight for him to see the team improving so quickly. He believed that with all the height on their team and the good athletes, being able to put it all together and be consistent was something the team struggled with earlier in the season.

"Some of our recent games are showing me that they're starting to get over the hump and learn how to win games and be more confident," said Bosman.

The boys' last game is May 18 at Rich East.

Sophomore Faith Mischka throws no-hitter

Jennifer DeBoer

Co-Editor in Chief

On April 14, sophomore Faith Mischka threw a no hitter against Elmwood Park for the JV softball

team.

It was a hot, breezy day and on the trek up to Elmwood Park most of the team wasn't feeling well. This may have been to the surplus of sick students at Illiana or the upsetting loss

against Fenton the day before.

Despite the sickness, the team was dead set on winning. They had been working on their hitting at the past few practices and it paid off. "Almost everyone

got a hit," said Mischka.

As it turns out, the team would not need all those hits as the no-hit pitching of Mischka baffled her opponents. "After I started getting two strikes, I'd throw the third pitch as a high ball

which got them out."

Mischka, being the only pitcher on the JV team, had a lot of pressure on her, but once the fifth and final inning was over, the entire team was super excited for Mischka's first no-hit game.

Male Athlete of the Month

Senior James Zandstra has been playing tennis for about 11 years now and says he's always enjoyed playing it. This year James has fallen into the position of first singles and has been playing well, leading his team to a 9-0 start to its season and a big win over Andrew High School (the first in Illiana history). James also remains undefeated this season, and is playing a huge leadership role on the team.

"Playing this well as a team is fun," Zandstra says. "To be undefeated and have a few big wins under our belt is a good feeling. We just have to keep up the good work and continue to play to our strengths."



Female Athlete of the Month

Junior Gianna Natale has been playing exceptional to start this soccer season. With 3 goals and 2 assists she is a big contributor to much of the girls success this season, helping her team to a 7-1-1 record.

Gianna has been playing since she was 4 years old and has had the opportunity to play on many club teams along with school teams and even play on the Illiana Varsity team as a freshman.

"This season has been really fun so far. The highlight for me personally was when I scored 2 goals in 4 minutes," Gianna recalls. "That was pretty sweet."

Tennis team triumphant despite Lytle injury

Andy Sons

Co-Feature Editor

Tennis player, Garret Lytle broke his tibia while doing numerous backflips in a row at Sky Zone, preventing him from taking part in this year's tennis season.

As one of the most valuable players on the team, Lytle is being missed by his teammates and coaches.

"He's a huge loss. He was one of our best players," Mr. Zandstra said. "But I'm proud of the guys for stepping up and responding nicely to this challenge."

Jason Eberly, who was Garret's doubles partner, is now matched up with se-

nior Steven Otte

"I miss Garret, but I like Steven," said Eberly. "He keeps a cool head and we are bonding really well."

But Lytle is not entirely gone. He still attends matches and practices and still keeps up his enthusiasm and silliness, according to Zandstra.

Trapped on the sidelines, Lytle said how much he misses playing and feels like he is letting his team down. He also said he's happy to see everyone filling in different roles than they usually do, especially with Otte.

When asked if there's a chance he'll be back for this year's season he smiled, and said "#THE-RETURN."



Photo by Hanna VanderWoude

Drew Smits serves to his opponent in a first doubles match on April 19.

Wrestling Clinic aims to revive program

Dalton Haven

Reporter

Mr. Dean Bosman, the head wrestling coach, has set up a program that is called Wrestling clinic which takes place here at Illiana in the

small gym. What Wrestling clinic is trying to do is reach kids from fourth to eighth grade and teaching them how to wrestle when or even if they come to Illiana so they will consider joining due to lack of players this year. Eight kids showed up for see what it was like and for most

it was a lot of fun. Most of the wrestlers are involved and trying to encourage more kids to join later on. Wrestling clinic involves teaching them various wrestling techniques and even pitting them against the wrestlers though the wrestlers do have to dial their technique down a few

notches.

Bosman said "I hope more kids join next year so we can win more matches and spread out the matches a bit more."

Kristian Villanueva said that "It was fun to teach the kids some techniques and that the kids learned them

pretty fast and were having a lot of fun. He also hopes that next year more kids will sign up so they can win even more matches than they did this year.

Ryan Disselkoen enjoyed wrestling with some of the kids and he even got to know some of them

Girls Track sees improvement

Luke Hillegonds

Co-Sports Editor

The girls track team has had some quality finishes so far this year. They took first at a 4 team conference meet and also took 3rd in a Rich East Invitational. Coach Luke Fennema said that their best finish was a 4th place finish in the Thornton Fractional South Invitation on April

22.

Coach Luke Fennema said that the strong points on the team are the field events. He also added that Jenny DeBoer is doing very well in discus and Gabby Kreykes is doing well in the shotput. Also, said that Deborah Smith performs well in the triple jump and Taylor Huizenga excels in high jump.

Junior Eden Schipper said, "This season has been

amazing so far. Everyone is doing so well and constantly improving. It's great to see everyone on the team using their God-given talents not only to represent Illiana, but also to glorify God."

Coach Fennema also added, "The season has been a success so far. We have seen a lot of improvement from last season already. We just have a really great group of girls who are really fun to coach."



Photo courtesy of Jenny DeBoer

Freshman Cambrie Van Roekel passes the baton to Freshman Liz Van Drunen.



Photo by Jenny DeBoer

Senior Colin DeYoung beats out opponent with teammate Derek VanProyen close behind.

Distance runners prove vital to boys track team

Luke Hillegonds

Co-Sports Editor

The boys track team has been led by the distance squad, mainly seniors Colin DeYoung and Nick Wondaal.

Colin DeYoung won first place in the 2 mile event at the Palatine Distance Night in Palatine, Illinois on April 23. De-

Young actually broke the school record as well in the 2 mile event with a time of 9:13.

DeYoung said about his breaking of the school record, "It was an awesome opportunity and I took advantage of it. It has been a long journey but I wouldn't change anything about it."

Nick Wondaal took 9th

place in the 1 mile at the same event. He ran a time of 4:22 and was 4 seconds away from beating the school record.

Junior Ryan Koontz said about teammates DeYoung and Wondaal, "They have really taken control of this team. They are some of the best runners this school has ever seen. They are so fun to work with."

Editorial

The true focus of short-term mission trips

Mission trips help everyone from victims of hurricanes to orphans. Over spring break Illiana students went to Uganda on a mission trip to help orphans. But the orphans weren't the only ones that received help. In fact, they may not even have been the primary beneficiaries. Many of the students who went learned new things including the joy of giving and ministry.

Mission trips aren't meant to only help people physically but also emotionally. If only money was sent to help, the people receiving it would have a house rebuilt but their faith that everything will be alright would still be in ruins. By seeing volunteers give their time and energy, the internal flame which fuels a person to push forward in life reignites.

By reigniting that flame, the volunteers build a personal bond with the people they are helping. That personal bond can be used as a stepping stone to ministering to them. Though the victims may not be-

lieve in God or have a different point of view on Christianity, they will know why the volunteers did what they did, giving up your time, money, and energy, because they wanted to serve their God.

Mission trips are of-

“By reigniting that flame, the volunteers build a personal bond with the people they are helping.”

ten expensive. Some may only cost a few hundred dollars but others can cost in the thousands.

Most of the time that money is raised through fundraisers. Some wonder if the money would be better spent on the people who need it. Why does it get “wasted” on travel costs, food, and room and board? That would be a valid argument if the focus is sole-

ly on helping those in need, but mission trips aren't only about the people who need help. They also shape and grow the volunteers who go on the trips.

The volunteers went on the trip for a purpose: to help those in need.

But they are also helping themselves through the experience.

While looking at the poverty in Uganda, they reflected on all that they have to be thankful for. It also changed their perspective and drive to serve. The participants got a comprehensive view of life. By going on the mission trip their perspective on life changed.

The spiritual lives of

the volunteers changed too.

They procured a sense of devotion in Jesus' name. They showed who they were by example and word. Their presence showed how the amazing word of God can be spread across many cultures despite a language barrier.

The volunteers on a mission trip also learn about each other, building bonds that can last much longer than the week or weeks of the trip.

Most people go on a mission trip with a friend or two they know they can trust. But when people are not surrounded by all of their friends and their friend's influences, it's more likely they'll be open to make new friends who can last a life time.

The experiences acquired on mission trips not only benefit the people who receive the generosity of the volunteers but the volunteers too. Yes, repairs to a house may come out of a trip but so does the unity that victims and volunteers gain along the journey.

We miss you, COP

Dear COP Program,

Some mutual friends told me that you're coming back in town. This is kind of awkward, but I need to get something off my chest.

It's been a long year. I haven't been able to get an excused absence for a while since you have been gone. No one has been able to replace you. Snow Day was a fling, a one-time deal. I'll probably never see her again. Her dad doesn't let her get out much. College Visit and I are just friends; I promise. She can't give me the same assurance about the future that you do.

I know I messed up. I took you for granted, wishing of you just as a way to eat lunch downtown Chicago on a school day. But you are so much more than that.

I love the way you match me with prospective career paths. Sitting with one of the COP ladies and talking over possibilities is like speed dating potential suitors. One of these career baes has to be right for me. No wonder my heart fills with indescribable joy when a runner brings me a COP slip. Just the thought of spending the day with you (outside of school) brings a smile to my face.

COP Program, I miss you. We were so good together; you knew me inside out—my passions, my strengths, my fears, my class schedule. You knew when I needed a day away, something different, who knows maybe grabbing some Chipotle before skipping off to see a cadaver at Rush Presbyterian Hospital. Six months later maybe it was shadowing Chief Murrin of the Lansing Police. You scratched itches I didn't even know I had. We were unstoppable. No wonder all of the other schools were jealous of the bond we had.

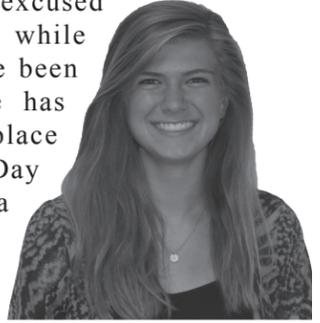
But you left me. Why? I know I'm kind of needy, and I'll admit I occasionally stood you up. What can I say? Did you expect any better from a high schooler?

So now I heard that you're going to be back at Illiana. After all this time, do you think you can forgive me? I once read “Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” and now I know it's true. Let me make it up to you. We should meet up sometime. I know this great accounting firm we could check out, or if you're not feeling that, we could always head to the speech therapist and talk it out.

As the great artist Fetty Wap once said, “I need you to be mine again, baby.” Everything's going to be different this time. I promise. You'll be my only excused absence. You're the only day off I want. Forever.

Yours Always,

The Illiana Student Body



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Co-editor in chief

the Echo)))

Editors-in-chief

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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. Names will not be wfor doing so.

Editorial Cartoon)))



Illiana's new campus: Phase 1

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