

Covid-19 prompts new policies

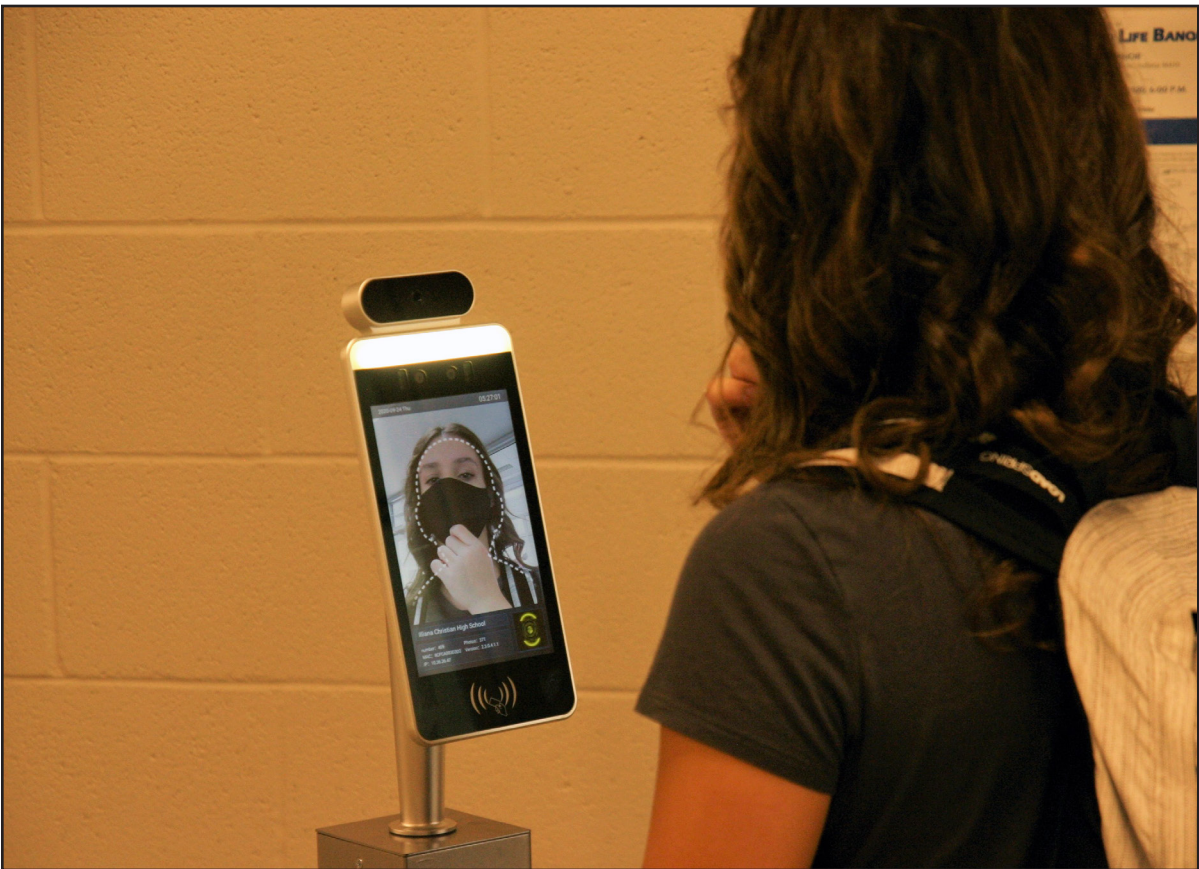
Rachel Bultema
Co-Editor in Chief

During what many are calling “unprecedented times,” Illiana’s school board has chosen to remain fully open with the option of e-learning. In order to be able to remain open, Illiana has implemented many new changes and policies for students and staff to follow.

One such change has been the move from attendance-based vouchers, to earning a voucher through service hours. Now students are able to stay home if they feel unwell, or if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, which the old voucher didn’t allow.

Principal Peter Boonstra said, “We didn’t exactly say this, but in the old days we used to say ‘if you’re not sure, come to school anyways and save your voucher’, but that whole mentality has changed.”

The school has taken other precautions as well, including having students spray disinfectant on



Sophomore Audrey Giroliman has her temperature scanned by the electronic thermometer.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

their desks after every period, requiring masks, moving lunch to homerooms, and placing more hand sanitizer bottles around the school.

One issue of concern is what would happen if a staff member were to test positive for COVID-19. Boonstra said he thinks the school would be able to function as usual, as Illiana tries to have “redundancies” in staff positions around the school, so that school can carry on.

Boonstra said that, in the case of a teacher testing positive for COVID-19, but not feeling too ill, that he/she would teach via Zoom call or Google Meet. If the teacher were too sick to teach from home, the school would find a teacher for the class.

As of Sept. 21, Illiana has had eight cases of COVID-19, according to Boonstra, who said seven of them appear to stem from the same gathering. He reports most of the contacts from the gathering were

quarantined. Boonstra said roughly fifty students were quarantined after doing contact tracing.

Boonstra cancelled the cook-out “due to all the current and legitimate concern about student contact.” He plans to keep an eye on the situation; he compares it to a snow day, saying it’s important to take into consideration all of the factors, including the number of cases, contact tracing, where the student got it, before making “such a significant decision.”

Homerooms lunch together

Hailey Ross
Reporter

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, lunch this fall has been held in students’ homerooms to reduce the spread of this deadly virus.

The Commons is open to a limited number of students and faculty members from two homerooms.

This has been a new experience for all with many different comments ranging on both sides of the spectrum. Some find the new changes nice and refreshing.

“I like eating in my homeroom,” said junior Danielle Bonnema. “It’s less crowded with people and I don’t have to fight for a table to sit with all my friends.”

Others, however, find the change to be one more thing they have lost in 2020.

“I miss eating in the Commons with all my friends and just hanging out,” junior Jessica Bailes said.

“I feel sorry for the kids,” said Nikki Van Dam, a lunch room volunteer. “This is truly a learning experience.”

Some teachers have noted a positive side to all the change. Math teacher Mrs. Kelly Aardsma said, “It gives me a chance to learn more about my homeroom.”

Hillegonds takes helm of Honors English 11

Olivia Oostema
Co-Editor in Chief

Long-serving Honors English teacher Ginny Dykstra is taking the year off due to COVID-19 concerns.

Dykstra, who has served at Illiana for over forty years decided not to teach due to her age and health concerns that could put her at a greater risk if she were to contract the virus. Over the summer she communicated with Principal Peter Boonstra on the school’s coronavirus alleviation plans and ultimately decided to stop teaching temporarily. She said that conversations with her colleagues factored into the decision, and she was “confident that other Illiana faculty could step in” to teach her class.

In Dykstra’s place, Em-

ily Hillegonds is teaching the junior honors course this year for the first time. Hillegonds, with input from the English Department, has made a few changes. Instead of teaching literature for one quarter as Dykstra did, Hillegonds will teach literature throughout the year, putting more focus on improving student reading. She added that she continues to adjust by “bouncing ideas off of coworkers,” and she is enjoying teaching the class.

Anna Holleman, an Honors English student, said she was excited when she found out Mrs. Hillegonds was teaching the course. Holleman said she enjoyed Hillegonds’s teaching style in her previous classes, and this year she has enjoyed the more advanced pace at which an Honors class moves.



Mrs. Hillegonds checks that the students completed their vocabulary assignments.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

Eliminate hidden bias, become that city on a hill

I'm in middle school when my teacher tells the class about "Asian Day" and how students can earn extra credit by "dressing like an Asian." I receive my first and only detention for writing on the board to encourage students not to dress like an Asian.



Rachel Bultema

Co-editor in Chief

I'm sitting in English class asking questions because my middle school didn't prepare me when my teacher asks me, in front of the whole class, if English is my first language. I stammer out a yes before trying to stop my tears.

I'm standing outside of the airport in Washington D.C. The people around me begin joking about the diversity, or lack thereof, in our group, and I join in. Suddenly someone says that the History Department picked me as the least-diverse "diverse person" they could. He says that though I was born in China, I have fair skin, speak English as my first language, and was raised by a white family. I'm no longer laughing, and want to go home.

I know that I do not have it the worst. As I see people attacked for the color of their skin, I know I'm privileged that I haven't been assaulted or harassed for what I look like. But I do know what it's like to be singled out for my race. I do know what it's like to have white people who believe they know my story better than I know it. And frankly, it's arrogant and disrespectful.

But why should we care about something happening to someone else? Why should we care about small actions? Colossians 3:11 says, "Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all."

In the name of Jesus, we are one body and one people. Yet we cannot expect to see each other as equals if we can't look at other cultures without laughing or dismissing them altogether. Maybe we don't see ourselves as bigoted, but bias doesn't always come in the form of yelling racial slurs at someone for the color of his/her skin. Racial bias takes many forms. It's laughing at what other people eat, wear, and say. It's crossing the street because we're scared of the person coming towards us, though we know nothing about him besides his skin tone. It's participating in the "fox-eye" makeup trend, then turning around to make fun of people with almond-shaped eyes. What might seem a harmless joke to some is actually demeaning to another. Jokes about Chinese people eating bats and other animals became more prevalent in recent months and increased harassment quickly followed. Videos began circulating around social media of people yelling at Asian people to "Go back home" and blaming them for COVID-19.

We are called to be the city on the hill. How can we be a good city if we don't let others in? Are we being a good city if the only walls we've built are there to keep people different from us out? Are we being a good city if the only citizens are ones that look like us?

I'm in my sophomore year rehearsing for the play when the director tells me he's giving me a role because someone had to leave the show. My friend turns to me and asks why all the Asians get that role. The person who had the role before me is Guatemalan.



Challenged to Ride participants ride their bikes through a subdivision.

Photo courtesy of Jenna Dutton

Annual bike ride raises \$15,000 for school

Sophia Thompson

Sports Editor

Despite COVID-19 restrictions and other events being cancelled, Illiana was still able to host its annual biking event, Challenged to Ride.

The event raised around \$15,000 for Illiana's Annual

Fund.

The event planners were hoping for fifty riders, and were happy when fifty-four registered. They were pleasantly surprised, however, when the day of the ride twenty-two more riders signed up, giving them over seventy riders.

A couple things changed this year to fit the CDC recommendations for gatherings. Usually the riders get treated to a buffet style lunch, but this year they received bagged lunches individually packaged. They also moved registration desks outside and had people in line spread six feet

apart.

This year the participants biked one hundred miles, from Illiana to Sandy Pines Country club and back.

Jenna Dutton, a planner of the event said, "We were really happy with the turn out of this year's event, and I think all of the riders had a great time."

ICHS welcomes news faculty members



Aubrey Porter
Reporter

Mrs. Rachel Monroe joined Illiana Christian this year as the new band director, filling in for retiree, Mrs. Pat Menninga.

Monroe grew up in Wisconsin, attended the University of Iowa, and later went on to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She has had 6 years of in-school experience with directing bands, including directing honors ensembles and even the trombone choir at the University of Iowa.

"The job felt like God's calling to me," she remarked. Andy Anderson, Illiana's orchestra director and an acquaintance of Monroe, had called her to tell her that there was a job opening at Illiana in band directing, just what she had been doing for years.

Monroe's father, being a band director himself, would always tell her that she would be good at his job. She fought the idea at first, but as she grew older she became more open to it. She later came to realize that she knew she was gifted by God in music, and she found it fun, which would make her future career so enjoyable.

Her favorite part of the job, though, is the people she gets to teach. "I love the kids," she said. "Music really opens up people's hearts to what God calls them to do."

Hailey Ross
Reporter

Illiana graduate of 1996, Mr. Alan Dykshorn, now walks the halls as Illiana's new Director of Technology. His job is to make sure everything from Chromebooks to office computers to journalism and photography software is working and in order.

Those who work with him have sung his praises. Colleague Peggy Mollema complimented his great IT skills, and Principal Peter Boonstra considers him a blessing to the school's staff.

He is a fast learner, a skill that came in handy as the school sought to comply with CDC guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID. He set up and now maintains the temperature scanners at every door where students check in to start the day.

The new computer director said he had a few butterflies about taking on the job. He said he found the volume of work a little overwhelming. Another thing that has found difficult are the masks everyone is wearing because they hide people's faces. He said he can't wait to get back to normal and truly seeing all the students' faces so that students and teachers can build that bond that a mask just doesn't make easy to achieve.



Common Grounds adjusts to Covid-19, increases prices

Aubrey Porter
Reporter

Common Grounds has issued several changes this year, a rise in the prices being perhaps the most important one to a number of students.

A notable number of Illiana Christian students find their way to Common Grounds at least once a day, and many say they go for the same reason: the muffins.

This year, however, those muffins are coming at a higher price by 50 cents.

Mrs. Carol VanDrunen, the Common Grounds coordinator, stated that the reason for these price changes is because the prices have risen at the store where they get their goods.

Along with pricing, there have been some other minor changes to the environment at Common Grounds. They have

had to move around the coffee station to limit congestion, have added a plexiglass barrier at the checkout, and have made smaller stations available during break to sell goods in order to space out students and teachers.

Aside from the topic of guidelines and changes, students have said they think Common Grounds is a unique aspect to the campus. Gavin Cowser, a junior at Illiana, said it "sticks out—not a

lot of schools have something like this."

VanDrunen remarked, "It's great to be back," and added that she and her volunteers have missed seeing the smiling faces of students every day.

Even through the pandemic, Common Grounds have been trying to go back to normal as best as it can, and through the staff's valiant efforts business is booming just like it was six months ago.

It's a Wonderful Livestream

Rachel Bultema
Feature Editor

Like so many things in 2020, Illiana's fall play will look different this year, moving performances to December and performing online.

Mr. Jeff DeVries and Mr. Jim Kamphuis have had to face unexpected challenges with finding a way to get students involved in some sort of a play, but have managed to find a way to include much of the students who would typically work to produce a show.

One change has been the format of the show. Typically, students would take to the stage to move set pieces, set props, and act in front of a live audience, but they are unable to this year due to health regulations.

To combat this, DeVries

and Kamphuis have turned to producing a radio version of the play *It's a Wonderful Life* that will be live streamed through Broadway On Demand's Showshare on Saturdays Dec. 12 and 19. Listeners will not be able to skip, replay, or rewind the show, as it truly is a "livestream." In order to listen to the production, listeners will have to purchase a ticket, not unlike they would with a typical play.

The format of the play isn't the only thing to change. In addition to the show, Kamphuis and DeVries are planning a "Winter Festival" to take place on Friday, Dec. 11. DeVries credits his wife with the idea, and also with the idea of creating displays for the event that

will tell the story of *It's a Wonderful Life*, similar to Macy's Christmas window displays in downtown Chicago

Kamphuis and DeVries hope to "Make a night that lets [sets and props crews] use their talent and skill, but also creates genuine fun for people that come, a fun Friday night," according to DeVries.

Senior Valerie Disselkoen, who's acted in past productions, says she's disappointed there will be no live audience, but was scared she wouldn't have a play for her senior year, but is excited for the Winter Festival, so at least that crisis has been averted!

Kamphuis says, "It's not a one for one substitute, but it's something we think is worthwhile to do."



Photo taken by Jeff DeVries
Senior Jenna O'Brien attends rehearsal in the courtyard

Praise Crowd Breakfasts continue; will Loud Crowd?

Gracie Jania
Reporter

Some Illiana Students say Loud Crowd games are a core component of Illiana, but will they be a part of this year like they have in the past? With nights full of screaming, cheering, and close contact, it's difficult to follow state guidelines for beating back Covid-19. It will be necessary to get creative this season. Some fear that Loud Crowd and Praise Crowd events will not take place this year, but that may not be the case.

The Loud Crowd Committee still plans to come up with new ideas and safer alternatives for the games. Committee member and senior Chloe Weemhoff said, "One of our ideas is to have students spreading out on one side of the gym with masks on."

However, not every student may embrace changes like these. Sophomore Ar-



Photo taken by Rachel Bultema
Students gather together to eat at the first praise crowd breakfast of the year

den DeGraff said, "You can't do that to Loud Crowd games. It definitely wouldn't feel the same. What kind of Loud Crowd game is it if you're not near anybody?"

"I feel bad for the freshmen because they don't get to experience how it usually is. Loud Crowd is iconic for Illiana," Weemhoff said.

Sophomore Allie Holleman added, "They won't know, this whole year, what it's like to be close

to your friends, hear the chants, and just get the full experience."

Senior Gabby Albanese says that, despite not attending the events herself, she feels disappointed that others who do, may not get the experience they want.

As for Praise Crowd, Mrs. Drost shared that "one of our goals is to do things outside, like a breakfast or Praise Crowd of some form, while the weather is still nice. We are still going to do everything that

we can to encourage a passion for God and to develop that Christian community."

This wish came true on Thursday Sept. 18 when the first Praise Crowd breakfast happened on Illiana's lawn and courtyard. Students were able to enjoy Chick-fil-a breakfast chicken sandwiches among other things together. Despite cool temperatures, students participated in an Illiana tradition of breakfast, devotions, and prayer before school.

Freshman Ice Cream Social reinvented as panel discussion

Gracie Jania
Reporter

Due to the coronavirus, the freshman ice cream social was cancelled and replaced with an event primarily for their parents. A few teachers did a panel to answer questions the new parents had and to explain things they didn't know about. "This was the first time it was ever done virtually," explained Mrs. Marie Limback, Illiana's Director of Admissions and the event host.

Mrs. Teach and Mr. Knapper provided additional details at the panel. Mrs. Teach explained that her subject was to show that "we want students to advocate for themselves."

Knapper stated that "there's not a teacher here who wouldn't bend over backwards to help a student." Obviously, the teachers want parents to know that they are always there to help students.

The evening was an alternative to the ice cream socials in the past for safety reasons. Limback said, "There might have been too many people to social distance in the Commons."

Teach also stated, "I'm sad we didn't get to do the event [in person], but people's health and safety are more important."

E-Learning presents familiar challenges to students, teachers during new year

From a student's perspective...

Joseph Gibson

Madie Ceponis
News Editor

"E-Learning to me is an escape from the world's current problems," senior Joseph Gibson says.

He has struggled with the E-Learning process due to "bugs" in Google Classroom meets. He's been mysteriously "kicked"

from the meeting, had his screen blacken when joining, or struggled because his audio wasn't working. When he does miss a Google meet, classmates will email or share the notes with him to make sure he does not get behind or lost in class.

"But teachers have been posting notes in the classroom, presenting Google slides, when going through notes, and even

presenting projects, so we don't miss anything," Gibson said. "That has been nice."

Gibson's reason for staying home is similar to others: his family wants him to do E-Learning to reduce his risk of exposure to COVID-19. Gibson said he would like to return back to school soon to finish off the year strong and with his friends and teachers.



Photo courtesy of Joseph Gibson
Senior Joseph Gibson smiles at he learns from home



Photo courtesy of Correy Williams
Junior Correy Williams sits at his desk diligently working on e-learning

Correy Williams

Madie Ceponis
News Editor

Junior Correy Williams confessed to struggling a great deal with the adjustment to E-Learning. Williams said that joining a Google meeting to watch others in a live class is difficult. He has to write down

questions he has that he can then email to teachers later. He said he feels disconnected from the classroom, learning through a screen. Williams said, "The only thing holding me together is when the teachers patch us in. They make us feel that we are not forgotten."

"It is an everyday struggle, sitting here, not having anyone to talk to, joke with, or even interact with. That is hard for me," Williams said. Social interactions that he

missed aren't just formal or organized ones either. "Simply waking up and not being able to walk into the building, into class, to my locker, to see my friends, is another hard point for me."

Williams said he is an E-Learner because his parents wanted him to stay as safe as possible. But, he said, they have hope that soon enough he will be able to return to school, and be able to complete his junior year as normal.

From a teacher's perspective. . .

Sara Johnson

Madie Ceponis
News Editor

"Communication," Ms. Sara Johnson repeats three times when talking about the key to being successful as a teacher of both E-Learners and In-Person Learners. She is thankful that E-Learning is an option, so she wouldn't have to lose those students, but that doesn't mean having students off site class isn't hard.

The first day was rough for her, but she said that taking a deep breath, praying and going straight at the problem helped her a bit. She learned she just needed a routine, and as soon as she had that, she knew she'd be okay.

The biggest struggle for Johnson was knowing if class was working for students, and she didn't want to put more stress on their backs. After finding a routine that seemed to work, she emailed the E-Learning students for feedback about what was or wasn't working for them. She also asked the In-Person students.

She hopes that students know that "We are all in this together, I want all of my students - all of them to feel that way."



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Art teacher Jim Kamphuis teaches both his in-person class and e-learners about various art concepts

Jim Kamphuis

Madie Ceponis
News Editor

"I'm finding my way," said Mr. Jim Kamphuis who is teaching blended photography and other arts classes. With a chuckle, he added, "Everyday it gets better, and forgetting about students not in the classroom with me is slimming

down."

Like Johnson, Kamphuis he needed to find a routine. He said that he finds himself falling back into a familiar pattern, the pattern he had going last spring, when the whole school went online. As he repeats that pattern, it begins to become familiar and feel more natural to him.

He has E-Learners in several classes, including photography. The photography class is a new course for him, and he is teaching it in an unfamiliar area, the

computer lab, and he's also teaching new content. Adding in the additional worry about E-Learners can be stressful.

Having designed the course around having remote students, he said, "'It will probably be a bit strange the first time when I teach photography without E-Learners.'"

A big goal, he said, is for all of his students to feel cared for and connected as part of the class, even if they are learning virtually.

Mary Lagerwey

Madie Ceponis
News Editor

Mrs. Mary Lagerwey quoted David I. Smith, "Education isn't something you do to people; it's something you do with people." That's what comes to mind, she said, as she seeks to blend e-Learning with traditional learning.

She said that as she learns new skills, she appreciates the patience and she has received when making mistakes. She first struggled with the technology, but she says her main worry was never really about that. Rather, she wants her students to feel welcomed and involved in their learning. She emails back and forth with the students to see what might need some working on, and they answer her respectfully and honestly.

"Teaching online also taught me how to go paperless, which I believe is both good stewardship and more sanitary," Lagerwey added.

Lagerwey hopes "for my students to be ready to 'give the reason for the hope that they have and do it with gentleness and respect' (I Peter 3:15). I'd like to be part of how God shows that He is in control even when it seems like our world is out of control. I would love for my students to encourage each other and grow in faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ."

Music department improvises to COVID precautions



Freshmen Maya Flipse, Reagan Kooy, and Jenna Landman play the handbells in choir class. Photo by Jeff DeVries

Olivia Oostema
Arts Editor

Illiana’s music department has taken various precautions against the coronavirus this fall. Because the virus can spread through air particulates, choir students are required to wear masks while singing. Furthermore, singing time has been limited to half an hour and the rest of class is often spent playing the hand bells.

Choir teacher Kathy Sliemers said she chose to teach her classes hand bells because it was something anyone could do as well as something she had experience with. She said she wanted to give students a musical experience that didn’t conflict with mask wearing. Choir student Citlali Sanchez said singing with masks on is “a bit complicated.” While singing, you have to take quick breaths, she said, and if you wear

a certain kind of mask, it goes into your mouth. Band students have also made some changes because of the virus. Students were initially told to sit at least six feet apart, but this proved problematic because “bands need to sit together to stay together as a group,” said band teacher Rachel Monroe. Later, band members received cloth masks Monroe described as “glorified shower caps” that covered the bells of their

instruments. Because of the instrument coverings, students were able to sit only three feet apart. However, students have to blow harder still without “forcing the sound” because the covering muffles and adds resistance. At the back to school night, choir, band, and orchestra students performed in an outdoor concert on the school lawn. “It was good to see faces,” Monroe said. “It was

just joyful.” Although the back to school night concert didn’t require students to wear masks because it was outdoors, Monroe said band members have been “great sports” when it comes to wearing masks while not playing their instruments, and Sliemers said masks are “worth putting up with” for students who like to sing. Both teachers plan to record and share concerts through social media during the fall semester.

Band boosters becomes music boosters to include choir students

Sophia Thompson
Sports Editor

Starting this fall, every music student at ICHS is involved in a new Music Boosters program, meant to raise money for the entire music program. In years past, the band program has sponsored the Band Boosters Program. Run by a group of parents who have children that participate in the band, the program requires band families to help support the band program by running concession stand and other events and fundraisers for Illiana. Kathy Sliemers, the choir director at Illiana said, “It has been a huge blessing to the band program.”

This year, the program has been opened up to the whole music program to create the Music Boosters. The music program decided to open up the opportunity to all of the music programs at Illiana because it came up in a meeting, and the board decided that it would be a good way to bring more money into the entire program. The booster program is run similarly to the P.I.E program that the school also has. Families of students participating in band, choir or orchestra need to earn 10 points throughout the year through volunteer hours. If parents choose not to volunteer, they must make up the points by buying them back. It is



Moms of choir and band students work concessions to get points. Photo by Jeff DeVries

\$10 per point at the end of the year. These volunteer hours help run the concession stand, plan music events,

and hold fundraisers. The money raised will then be shared between the three departments. “Parental support is

essential to run a good music program and music boosters will be a great way to get parents involved,” said Sliemers.

Girls volleyball team rolls to victory

Sophia Thompson

Sports Editor

Behind the outsized play of junior Mia Doorn, a virtual spiking machine, the girls volleyball team is off to a remarkable start.

Freshman on the JV team Makenzie Mulderink said, "From the times I have worked with Mia, I have noticed her great leadership skills, and her amazing hitting talent."

A senior on the team, Leah Davids said, "I think our team has been so successful because of the amazing talent each player contributes to the team, the passion each one of us has for volleyball, and the compatibility between all of the girls. We always lift each other up and get through struggles together, whether it's on the court or off the court. We're pretty much family."

With a record of 14-5 the team has been performing well, but some of the girls have been struggling with the effects that COVID-19 has had on their season. Davids said, "It's been hard having to be a senior during this coronavirus season, especially when it comes to being involved in a sport. Every game, I remind myself this could potentially be my last game of my high school volleyball career, so it has put a lot of perspective on my privilege of playing the



Photo Courtesy of Mia Doorn

Junior Mia Doorn spikes the ball over the net, scoring another point for Illiana. Her team and spectators watch in anticipation while the other team prepares to attempt to volley the ball.

sport."

However, the team has not let COVID-19 affect their bondedness on the

court. Even with coronavirus' problems, the team has found blessings throughout, their coach is quick to re-

mind them that this year is the first year that Illiana can participate in a postseason. Illiana was not expecting to

be a part of a conference until the fall of 2021, but were lucky enough to get in a conference a year earlier.

Athletes adjust to new normal during pandemic

Rachel Bultema

Co-Editor in Chief

Despite facing COVID-19 challenges and health regulations, Mr. Darren DeBoer, athletic director, has found a way to allow Illiana athletes to continue participating in athletics at Illiana.

Indiana's Health Department requires everyone to

wear masks, and Illiana athletes and fans are no exception. All fans are required to wear masks, until they are seated with their "family unit," and team players must wear a mask when seated on the bench, unless they are spaced six feet apart. They can, however, remove their masks to play. Fans must also sit in every other row,

limiting the number of fans admitted. According to DeBoer, fans so far have been following the guidelines.

Additionally, DeBoer has had to deal with finding new tournaments and games for athletes to compete in. Some schools have been dropping out of tournaments, or are choosing not to hold tournaments because of the limited number of fans allowed in the gym. Typically, by this point of the year, DeBoer says he would be planning the spring sports season, but he is still working on the fall season because of the new challenges.

Illiana has recently begun charging fans to enter soccer games. Ordinarily, fans would be allowed to enter for free. This year, however, only 250 fans are allowed to attend games, and having one entry point allows Illiana to better keep track of how many fans are present.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Towels and disinfectant spray are a common sight in the gyms due to COVID-19



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Coach Bosman gives Nathan Matthews advice before the game against Covenant Christian on Sept. 17. Masks are part of the routine when players are on the sidelines.

Sports briefs



Cheerleading

Rachel Bultema

Co-Editor in Chief

In a new season, the cheerleading team persists, despite the challenges COVID-19 brings.

Despite not being able to attend many in-person competitions, the team plans to attend “virtual competitions” by recording their routine and submitting them. Junior Christine DeYoung, a cheerleader, said she is looking for-

ward to the competitions, despite not having an audience to perform in front of.

This year, DeYoung said that the team is working on bonding. She, along with sophomore Audrey Girolimon, said they enjoy the family-aspect of the cheerleading team. Despite the season looking different, the team is still able to bond with each other and have a “family-vibe.”

DeYoung said she sees a lot of progress in stunting,

and is pleased the cheerleaders can continue to work on it despite COVID-19.

At first, advanced stunts were not allowed due to the close proximity of the athletes, but it is now allowed, though doing stunts makes keeping the team healthy more of a challenge. The team, though they don’t wear masks while stunting, do wear masks while entering and exiting the building.



Photo courtesy of Karlie Detmar

Due to COVID cancelling team pictures, the cheer team decided to go to the beach and take their own team pictures.

Boys Soccer

Rachel Bultema

Co-Editor in Chief

Despite a season filled with unexpected hurdles, including those brought on by COVID-19, and despite having four freshmen on the team, boys varsity soccer has procured a 5-4-2 record this season.

Team captain, junior Adam Gibson, said that he believes the team has a chance to make a deep state run this season. He also mentioned, however, that the team may be less experienced than in years previous with so many young players.

Soccer player Jacob VanderZee says that the team is working on passing and communicating with each other this season.

The season has had its challenges, though. VanderZee said that it’s difficult to keep the team healthy and safe. The team has faced injuries, and



Photo by Jenna Dutton

Senior Jake Vanderzee searches for a teammate to pass the ball to.

has had to deal with losing players for games or practices because they feel ill.

The team has also had to forfeit the tradition of high-fiving the opposing team after a game, and now applauds instead.

Gibson said, “[The soccer team] has some seniors who haven’t had a piece in soccer post season, so I’m confident they’ll play their hearts out and lead us deep.”

Boys Tennis

Madie Ceponis

News Editor

This fall’s boys tennis team has 14 players whom head coach Michael Eberly leads with the help of assistant coach Adam Bloesch.

The team, 5-4 thus far, won and lost both by wide margins, the exception being a match they lost to Highland in a closely contested 3-2 finish.

“As a team, we are strong, by communicating and working together, helping each other improve; I know that the freshmen look up to the upperclassmen, so I want them to realize

that if you’re struggling to be repetitive with it and you will get better,” said junior Will Gibson.

Senior Brendan Kamp said, “My hope is that we improve on our own skills, and together as a team, to set an example, to be different, to connect with players and even other schools. I want my actions to reflect my family and my school.”

As a team they are trying to represent the best part of themselves, according to junior Matthew Smits. He added, “And the best part of myself, of Illiana, is the opportunity to show Christ to others.”

Madie Ceponis

News Editor

Head Coach Luke Fennema, and Assistant Michelle Haan are leading nine girls into the 20-21 girls cross country season.

Senior Dee Smith said, “I have my hopes for this season to see us improve everyday in speed, form and power, and I hope to do that [personally] while setting an example for my

Madie Ceponis

News Editor

Coach Jorge Ramos, with the assistance of graduate Caleb Perez, coaches this year’s boys cross country team which consists of nine runners.

So far this season they have placed 1st out of four schools at the Wheeler Invite, and 6th place out of six schools at Lake Central Invite. They again captured a first place out of seven



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Freshman Heidi Gorter dribbles the ball downfield against Highland High.

Olivia Oostema

Co-Editor in Chief

Illiana varsity girls’ soccer has been a learning experience for the team of mostly underclassmen.

At the beginning of the season

Girls Cross Country

teammates that involves team bonding and positivity, feeling that happiness while running. [Those feelings] make me push harder and feel great doing the sport.”

Sophomore Alex Vis said, “Though an underclassmen, I want to set a good example of being able to work hard and being a top runner at a young age. I want to support the team by helping it become stronger by encouraging and supporting teammates.

I also hope that our senior, Dee Smith, will leave her strength and work ethic to us.”

The team has been invited to 14 invitationals, but four of them have been canceled. The remaining season has 10 invitationals before state tournament play begins..

On Saturday Aug 15, they placed 5th place out of six schools, and on Saturday Aug 29, placed 9th out of nine schools.

Boys Cross Country

schools at the Hobart High Invite. good memories and traditions that we “Throughout this season will carry on.”

, I want us to be recognized by other teams, to set an example by being the first year Illiana is eligible for cheer and supportive,” said freshman Nolan Bouwman. “My actions new campus, our goal is to improve at practices and meets reflect the team, everyday and go far in that postseason. not just myself.”

Junior Logan Boersma said, “This season I hope we make it to the thought that hard work pays off in the postseason. I would like to see the end. I also hope that after I’m gone team do well. I also hope that our seniors still pray everyday before each nior, Justin VanProoyen, leaves us with a race.”

Girls Soccer

Coach Behn was exposed to the COVID-19 virus, so Coach Kelsey Bevan had to take charge of the team for almost two weeks.

With only five upperclassmen, the varsity team has been working well together and “taking things in stride,” said Coach Erin Behn, despite their subpar record of 1-6-2.

Behn highlighted Senior Mia Cruz, who plays defense, and sophomore Cameron Evers, who plays midfield, for their outstanding work. Freshman Reagan Kooy was de-

scribed as “absolutely shining” in her role as goalie.

One highlight of the season was an exciting come-from-behind effort against Covenant Christian in which the girls scored two goals in the last nineteen seconds of the game to tie their opponent.

Freshman Reagan Kooy said the season has been rough but “a lot of fun” and added that the girls are really encouraging to her because she is a freshman goalie, which is especially challenging.

Male Athlete of the Month

Senior Jaxson Smit, one of the right center backs on the boys varsity team, has been showing great talent, and encouragement this season.

“Jaxson has been a really great backbone for our team,” said teammate senior Kyle Clark. “He is always there to encourage and keep the team going strong,”

Jaxson has scored once this season, but is providing for the team in other ways on and off the field.

“He (Jaxson) is always there for the team. Whether I need to vent to someone about a bad game or practice, or need some encouragement for a good play, Jaxson is there to provide that need,” said teammate senior Jake Vanderzee.



Female Athlete of the Month

Starting sweeper, Senior Mia Cruz has been performing excellently this season, according to coach Erin Behn. “Mia is a solid part of our defense,” said Behn.

Cruz has played on Illiana girls soccer all four years for Illiana.

She has also gotten some time playing as a forward and has scored a goal four times this season.

Mia has also shown great leadership on the team, leading as an example to the newer players.

Sophomore Katelyn Dykstra said, “Mia is an amazing sweeper. I see a lot of talent in her. I think something else that makes Mia stand out so much is her ability to play in any position she is put in. She tries her best in everything.”

Editorial

Finding community in midst of pandemic

In the wake of the coronavirus, a second epidemic has ravaged the country: loneliness. Limitations on gatherings, travel restrictions, shelter-in-place orders, social distancing, and quarantining exacerbated loneliness in the U.S.

According to Psychology Today, before the pandemic struck, 61 percent of Americans struggled with loneliness. Especially common among young people, due to heavy social media use, and seniors, due to lack of contact with loved ones, loneliness can have fatal consequences.

According to Hartford Healthcare, loneliness, defined as feeling lonely more than once a week, is a mindset in which one feels empty, unwanted, and isolated even when one is not alone. While loneliness can cause people to exercise less often, eat unhealthily, and sleep poorly, it also increases premature aging and speeds up death by 26 percent.

Furthermore, the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) said loneliness is more damaging than obesity and as unhealthy as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day.

Nevertheless, people do

possess a variety of ways to combat loneliness during the pandemic while remaining safe.

Leaning on family members for emotional support can be one of the most accessible paths to overcoming loneliness. Our parents, siblings, grandparents, and close family friends can

media can boost self-esteem and mood. So instead of scrolling through Instagram to catch up on recent events in your friends' lives, opt for socially-distanced, in-person gatherings or, if an in-person meeting is unwise, communicate through video calls.

Many have come up with creative ways to stay in con-

ers. Instead of wallowing in feelings of loneliness, strive to seek out and include others who might also need a friend. Make an effort to talk to those around you. Brighten your desk partner's day by saying hello. Slip a thoughtful note in someone's locker. Often, making little connections over time can bloom into a friendship.

Although the virus has brought about many changes, COVID-19 has increased awareness of the positive influence of social connections on overall health.

New research by ScientificAmerican.com has shown that, after enduring quarantine, people have recognized the importance of making and maintaining relationships. People worldwide are making greater efforts to reconnect with friends and family, causing loneliness to level out and even decline in many areas around the globe.

Said ScientificAmerican.com, "For many of us, the pandemic has inspired similar solidarity and a spirit that 'we are all in this together.'"

Remember to lean on others during these troubling times and reach out to others. We don't have to go through this alone.

Remember to lean on others during these troubling times and reach out to others. We don't have to go through this alone.

guide us through tough times because they know us so well. Furthermore, by relying on family, we can lessen the loneliness of loved ones as well as ourselves.

Although it may seem counterproductive, avoiding social media is another highly effective step toward overcoming loneliness. People who heavily use social media have increased feelings of isolation said Healthline.com. Moreover, many studies show quitting social

tact with loved ones during the pandemic. For example, writing encouraging messages, mailing handmade gifts, or talking six-feet apart outside are alternative ways to connect with other and lessen feelings of isolation. These methods are also valuable for communicating with senior citizens who are often less knowledgeable of new technology.

Another way to decrease feeling isolated is to take initiative and reach out to oth-

'TikTok'-ing my life away

When taking a look at my phone's browser history. I do not find a lot of interesting things. Usually it is common word definitions that I wasn't sure I was using correctly and looked up. But I also might find scattered weird questions that just popped in my head and I looked up.

If you went through my app history, like how much time I spend on each app in my phone, you would most likely find that snap chat is used the most. This is my main communication with my friends. I don't really spend

time looking at people's stories, but mainly open it for a minute to respond to my friends. If you were to try to figure out what I care about most based on my phone history, you would see that my friends take up most of my time. Usually you will see me on snap chat, snapping back and forth with my close friends. I don't snap many people because I just don't see a point in texting people who I don't enjoy talking to. The second app you would see most used is probably maps. I am constantly looking up directions to places because one, I like to know what the fastest route is and I check to make sure the one I am taking is quickest, or two, because I am terrible at directions and need to have someone tell me where to go. I also look the directions up so that I can see my arrival time. I have constant anxiety about being late. If the event starts at 4:30, I will be there at 4:20 sitting in the parking lot waiting to walk in at exactly 4:30.

One app in particular that I struggle with spending too much time on is TikTok. The other day I was getting ready to go to bed, a long process due to my strict sleeping conditions. I have to first put on my little fan that sits on my vanity, pull out my extra blanket, turn my lights off, move all of my decorative pillows from my bed, and then climb in. I have a very long string of fairy lights that line the top of my walls to give my room a dim lighting, they are controlled by a remote and I turn them off right before I go to sleep. Usually I read a book or scroll through TikTok right before I go to sleep. On this night since I was so tired, I decided to just go right to bed. After what seemed like hours of laying there exhausted, I started to wonder why I couldn't fall asleep. I realized that I hadn't gone on my phone, particularly TikTok. So, as an experiment I opened TikTok and scrolled for a while. When I put my phone down, I fell asleep instantly.

This angered me. How can I let an app control my sleeping? So, I deleted the app the next morning. Now, before I go to sleep, I only allow myself to read a book. I put my phone on the charger and lay it on my nightstand.

This made me wonder what other apps control parts of my life without me even knowing it. I kind of wanted to throw my whole phone out of my window and completely forget I even had one. This also stirred me to think about my friends and what they use their phones for. Are they addicted to an app or website that they don't even realize?

Don't be a phone addict. In reading this, perhaps you found an app you probably use a little too much popped into your head. I urge you to delete it. I know that it's probably not practical to delete the app forever, but maybe try to delete it for twenty-four hours. See if you notice any changes. For me, I noticed that I had a lot more time to spend with my family rather than watching pointless videos on TikTok.



Sophie Thompson
Sports Editor



"The Echo" Editorial Staff

Left to right: Sophia Thompson, Olivia Oostema, Rachel Bultema

Not Pictured: Madie Ceponis

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

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Editors-in-chief

Olivia Oostema
Rachel Bultema

News

Madie Ceponis

Feature

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Olivia Oostema

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