



Junior Max Winters looks away from the needle as he donates blood.

Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Blood drive achieves goal

Hailey Ross
Reporter

Illiana's student body and staff donated 37 pints of blood on Thursday, Nov. 12, during the Student Council sponsored blood drive.

The overall goal of the school was 37 pints of blood and at the end of the day that goal was reached.

Versiti, the organization that collected the blood, was eager to receive the blood donations considering how COVID has adversely affected

the number of donations they have been receiving at their offices. Indeed, according to senior Student Council member Simon Molenaar, the US is experiencing a blood shortage due to the pandemic.

"Since blood is so needed, we are happy to be able to help," said Molenaar.

In order to try to entice more donors to give, Versiti offered all donors a free COVID antibody test. Whether it was the antibody test or just a sense of generosity, Illiana

students showed up.

"This is the most students I've seen come out in my lifetime" said Sara Cutter, Versiti's donor service supervisor on site.

Junior Lorelee DeYoung participated in the blood drive and reported having a good experience with the people and said, "I never really had a bad experience with them."

Versiti wants students to have a good experience so they might become future blood donors.

Veteran veneration goes virtual

Gracie Jania
Reporter

Veterans Day celebrations at Illiana on Nov. 11 happened with a slight twist; instead of celebrating the veterans with a flag-raising ceremony, school-wide chapel, and breakfast run by the Student Council, Mrs. Jenna Dutton and Mrs. Cassie Siersema put together a way to celebrate those who served our country safely and respectfully.

The two created a "Veterans Day Spotlight Survey" on Illiana's Facebook account. According to Dutton, interviewing the veterans began the week prior to the holiday. The veterans interviewed shared stories of their time in the

military, including where and when they served.

"Lots of family members were able to answer the survey... We got pictures to go with each respondent," Dutton said.

Dutton used the information collected to create profiles of different veterans, and those profiles appeared on Illiana's Facebook page.

Even with no in-person events scheduled to celebrate the veterans, Dutton and Siersema found ways to bring the day to everyone's attention. "We just wanted to keep everyone safe, but we still wanted to celebrate the veterans... and honor them," Siersema said.

Dutton said, "I want our veterans to know we appreciate their service and how grateful we are for them."



Photo by Brent Vermeulen

The sophomore robotics team works on its robot at the first competition.

Robotics students progress to quarterfinals

Olivia Oostema
Co-Editor in Chief

Two robots designed by Illiana's robotics team progressed to quarterfinals in the team's first competition of the year.

On November 7, Illiana competed against 35 local teams

at Crown Point High School. The teams had the objective of using their robot to put a ball into one of nine goals in the arena.

Senior team member Sydnee Tuuk said that the team didn't do as well as they'd hoped.

"We had a good design, but unfortunately there were some small things that didn't work

out consistently," she said. "We already have some design improvements that will greatly improve our ability to compete, such as making our robot more compact and faster along with testing different intakes."

Chris Kinkade, a sophomore on the team, said, "Sure, we didn't finish first, but it was a real test of how well we can lose as a team. It isn't hard to win as a team, but losing as a team is a real testament to how well the team functions." He added that the team will continue to improve their abilities to "drive" the robots.

Robotics team coach Brent Vermeulen said he was impressed with the freshmen who made it to quarterfinals, and he believed the event served as a "stepping stone for bigger tournaments this year."

The team is scheduled to compete in a similar competition at Portage High School on December 12 and hopes to have a robot make it to state this year.

Change to Illiana's constitution misses by few votes

Aubrey Porter
Reporter

Upon the campus' move from Illinois to Indiana, the Association Expansion Committee proposed a recommendation to rework certain parts of Illiana's constitution. Acting on that recommendation, the school board proceeded to evaluate the current state of the document.

The first change introduced was located in Article III, which mentions the qualifications for Illiana's association, otherwise known as people who can vote for changes in our school. The board decided to recommend opening up the membership qualifications, enabling people outside of the Reformed church to be members.

The second change, which went hand in hand with the first, would only be passed if the first was voted into effect. This change would allow Association members to be a part of the

Board, and overall allow 25% of the board to be non-Reformed.

Principal Mr. Peter Boonstra hoped that these proposed changes would bring a "sense of ownership, belonging to people outside of the Reformed church, and help the future of Illiana as a whole." Because other Christian schools in the area all let parents who are not a part of the Reformed church vote, he felt obligated to offer this same opportunity at our school.

Although these changes failed to pass, falling short of the 2/3 majority by a mere nine votes, Boonstra believes that "[the board] will pursue this change in the future; we can learn from the results and reactions of the voting." He also understands that it might be overwhelming for people to propose several changes at once, and that hopefully next time there will be better communication and clarification on what this means for the school.

Bridging chasm between poverty and affluence

This past month I had the opportunity to go to Los Angeles, California and serve alongside my brother and family. For those of you who don't know, I have an older brother named Jacob who is 21 and lives at the Dream Center in California. He works as an intern for their short term missions program where he plans and oversees all of the short term mission trips people take to the Dream Center. The Dream Center has many different ministries, one being Restart, a place for children to go to do their e-learning while parents are unable to watch them because of work or other things.



Sophie Thompson

Sports Editor

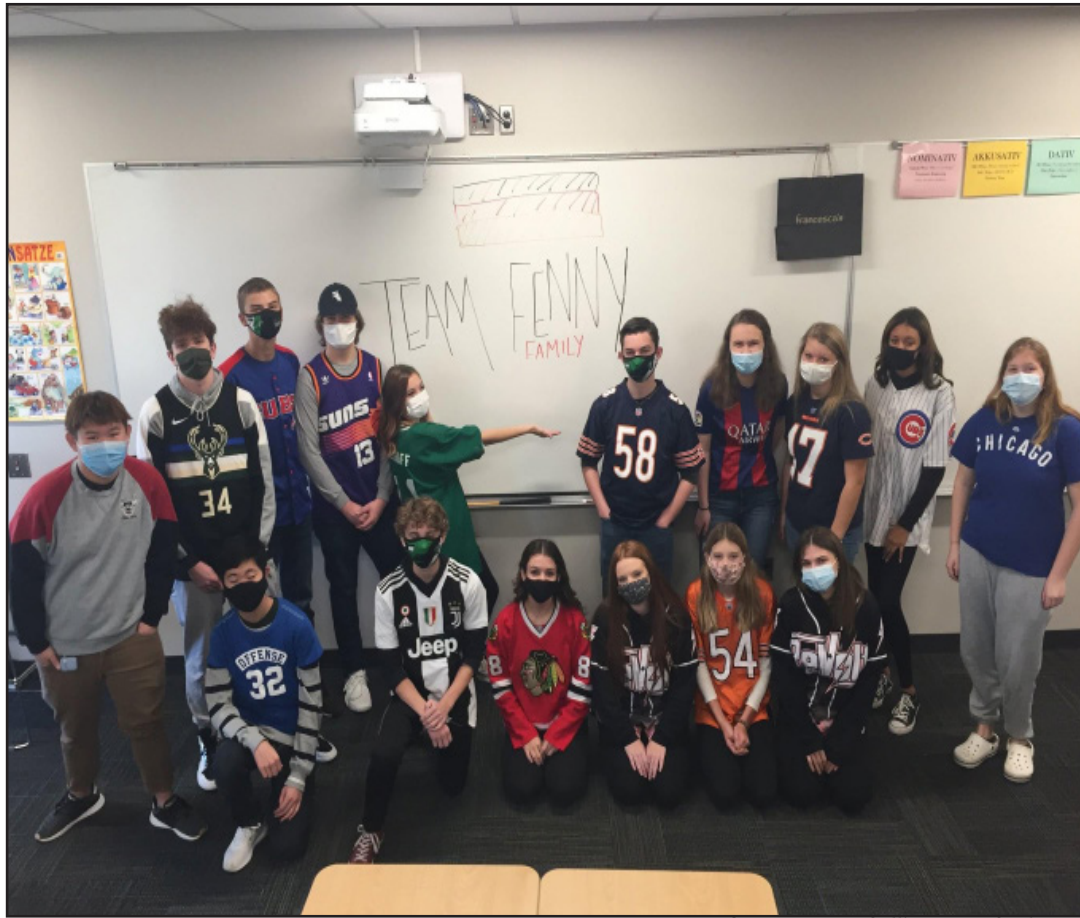
The first day we went to Restart and helped the kids. As soon as I walked into the outdoor area and began walking around awkwardly, hoping a child would need my assistance, a little boy sat up on his desk and called me over. There was already a man sitting with him trying to convince him to focus on his schooling and failing terribly. The little boy whose name tag read, "Raiden," looked at the man and asked if I could take his place at the table. The man sitting with him was quick to get up, leaving me with a rowdy little boy. It seemed like no one wanted the responsibility of sitting with him, but here I was.

As we got to know each other, he came out as a loud, sassy little five year old. We got in trouble multiple times for not doing his work. There were many failed attempts by the rest of my family to try to get Raiden to concentrate, but nothing seemed to work. Raiden went home that day having learned nothing.

The next day we went on Adopt-a-Block, a ministry that goes into the projects and distributes food to the people there while ministering with them. I had never been to a housing project, so I didn't really know what to expect except for what I'd seen in movies. It was worse than I could have ever imagined. Trash littered the ground and young children played unsupervised in the streets. My brother said this project is the safest and cleanest one they go to, Nickerson Gardens being the worst. He then told me that Raiden lives in Nickerson.

I kept catching myself thinking about California when I got home. I just couldn't get the thought of the poverty there out of my head. Then I began to think about the poverty around me right here that I don't even think about. After looking it up, I discovered multiple public housing projects around here, including one in Chicago Heights, not far from here. It made me think about the kids who live there who are doing only e-learning. Are there little kids sitting at home by themselves because their parents can't be around during the day? Are there kids trying to do e-learning who don't even have the tools they need like wifi or a Chromebook?

Why is there such a chasm between us and these kids who are struggling? What is stopping me and you from going there, handing out a hot dog and bag of chips, and asking to pray with the person? Sometimes I think that we should stop focusing on what we have to do, like our own school work, and go out to find kids like Raiden who, without Restart, might be home alone learning even less than what he did with Restart volunteers. We need to stop pretending that the struggling children don't exist. They do, and they are silently begging people like ourselves to help them. It doesn't take much to make an impact on a struggling kid, and we shouldn't settle for anything less.



Students from Mr. Fennema's homeroom pose together dressed for Fan Friday.

Photo courtesy of Illiana's Facebook page

StuCo sponsors dress-up Fridays

Sophia Thompson

Sports Editor

After the cancelling of Illiana's annual Sadie Hawkins dance, Student Council thought of another way to get students involved throughout the school: The group came up with dress-up Fridays, where students are invited to dress up according to the theme Student Council presents.

"We thought it would be a good way to change things up since COVID is restricting our usual activities," said Senior Jaxson Smit, member of Student Council.

The first theme was

flannel Friday. The second was fan Friday, where students wore jerseys and other things to represent who they are a fan of. The last dress up day for Nov. is the 20th. That day's theme is a tie-dye theme.

Sophomore Brenna Thompson said, "I really like the dress up days. It gives me and my friends something to look forward to at the end of the week. It's really sad Sadie's got cancelled, but I am happy that we are coming up with safe alternatives to have fun."

Senior Jake Vander Zee said, "They help keep school from getting too boring and

they make those days a little more exciting. With everything going on right now, it's nice to have a little bit of excitement in the school."

Students council member Simon Molenaar claimed he thought the idea for dress up days was good and that it gave the students something to do.

Student council member sophomore Greg Goodfellow said, "The [dress up days] weren't so much a replacement for the Sadie Hawkins dance."

He said they gave homerooms a chance to "ride together" and bring excitement on a Friday.

Concerts to take new format for future months

Hailey Ross

Reporter

Due to COVID the choirs, band, and orchestra have had to get creative with conducting performances. In the fall, performance groups recorded the different ensembles playing and then posted those videos to YouTube.

For winter, the instrumental programs are hoping to perform for an in-person audience, following the CDC and county health department's guidelines.

This, however, is not the case for the choirs. Mrs. Kathy Slickers, choir director, will continue to record performances for the near future as it is difficult for students to sing in masks.

The choirs also have picked up handbells. With handbells, the choirs were able to perform maskless, but that might change for the winter concert.

"It's a bummer that we can't sing all the time but I do enjoy handbells," said junior Citlali Sanchez, Acapella choir member.

The change away from live concerts still disappoints many.

"It's sad that we can't do a concert for everyone. [In the past] it was super fun, and the best part was talking to everyone afterward," said junior Charlie Breed, Wind Ensemble member.

Slickers said that "it would be nice to do an in-person concert in the spring."

Close call for junior Close Up program

Hailey Ross

Reporter

The Close Up Program, which gives eight Illiana juniors the chance to join other students from across the nation to see and experience the inner workings of government in our nation's capital, was originally scheduled for the week of Nov. 29, but now has

been pushed back to April.

According to Mr. Jeff White, the entire program was originally canceled due to COVID, but then the national program decided to reschedule in 2021. Illiana's students are planning to attend during the new dates.

Still those plans have not yet been finalized.

"It's sad that we can't go

now," said junior Katherine VanDrunen. "It's weird not knowing what's going to happen."

"I'm upset that we could not go now," said Mathew Smits, "but it would be nice to go in the spring."

The program affords eight students one week to travel to Washington D.C. to engage in field studies, attend various

workshops, and listen to speakers. In the past, speakers have included U.S. senators, members of the President's cabinet, and military generals.

The students will also have the chance to explore Capitol Hill, have a free day to roam through D.C., and maybe see the House of Representatives in session.

Praise Crowd dinner meets 'Uber Eats' delivery

Aubrey Porter

Reporter

This year, Praise Crowd committee's members brought fall play dinners to peoples' doors, following safety guidelines and taking the health of the Illiana community into consideration.

In past years, the Praise Crowd committee sponsored dinner occurred between the two Saturday performances

of the annual fall play, drawing people to the show and encouraging a time of fellowship. However, since no in-person performances occurred this year, the Praise Crowd committee had to develop a different approach.

On Saturday Nov. 7, committee members spent their night delivering tacos all around the region ranging from Lansing, Crete, Lowell, Griffith to everywhere in between. About

100 orders were taken, and drivers followed a route that would get everyone their food in their allotted time as efficiently as possible.

According to Mrs. Rachel Drost, a Praise Crowd committee sponsor, the event was extremely successful, raising roughly \$21,000, double the amount raised last year. Despite the unusual conditions under which the dinner was held, Drost thought the event went

smoothly and that the people who ordered food that night were very thankful for all of the hard work that went into the event.

Mr. Doug Gorter, a participant who ordered food on Saturday, noted that his family was very pleased with the food and the experience overall. "We always went to the meal, and it was nice of them to offer this opportunity because we couldn't come to the play," Gorter said.

Illiana Farms finally sprouts

Aubrey Porter
Reporter

Illiana Farms has undergone change this year, but despite minor setbacks such as COVID and an accident involving the farm’s trailer, the organizers foresee great things in store for its future. The idea of growing organic produce sprouted six years ago from Dr. Jim Kuipers when he was a teacher at Chicago Christian High School. Now, this dream has become a reality for Kuipers and biology teacher Brian Sylvester as they work with community members and students from both the agricultural science and

hydroponics classes. “[Illiana Farms] adds significant dimension to the science curriculum,” Kuipers said. Kuipers was offered a trailer by an acquaintance whom he had known for a couple years, which he then acquired for the school to use. Just a week before they were supposed to pick it up, a woman lost control of her car and ran into its side. At first, Kuipers and Sylvester thought the trailer was a lost cause. However, Kuipers negotiated the school purchasing the trailer at a lower cost and used the money saved on the purchase to repair it. This trailer is now

used as another place to grow organic goods alongside the preexisting hydroponics setup that many students at Illiana might see while walking through the science wing. Kuipers said that prior to the pandemic, the farm hoped to sell its produce to restaurants or even grocery stores such as Strack and Van Til. However, Kuipers says that this year they have to come at it with a different approach. Their plan is to sell the vegetables to families within the Illiana community, and whatever isn’t sold will be donated to local food pantries.



Senior Olivia Yonkman and Junior Josue Sanchez transplant seedlings to be moved into the farm trailer.

Photo by Jeff DeVries



Teacher Brian Sylvester hangs plants amidst the growth lights inside the trailer.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

Juniors, seniors participate in virtual COP appointments

Rachel Bultema
Co-Editor in Chief

In a time where it is difficult to get students to experience jobs on site, the Career Opportunity Program has brought appointments and meetings to the students through virtual meetings. Mrs. Amy Gibson from the COP office has, through multiple media platforms including Zoom, Google Meets, and Microsoft teams, helped students meet with professionals from different careers including X-ray technicians and sound technicians. Instead of leaving to go off-campus to visit workers and experience things hands-on, students now sit in the COP office in a virtual meeting talking with professionals about their career. Senior Simon Molenaar, who attended the meeting with radiology and x-ray technicians said, “It’s better than nothing.” Though, he prefers “the old way” as it is “easier to go see and do stuff than it is to look at a PowerPoint.” Of course, despite any drawbacks to the virtual approach, the of-

fice is at least functioning rather than shutting its doors, a possibility that Gibson and her team considered before opting for the virtual approach. “We still wanted to offer them something,” said Gibson. “At least they can learn about the profession: the schooling, what the job entails... Just to make contact with the person is good still.” “If you want to take the day to [meet with someone off campus], you can do that. It’s not through the COP office, but you can do that.” Students are usually notified roughly two days before the appointment, giving them time to prepare questions and research the company which will sponsor the virtual visit. Gibson said, “Each time is different, and we’re learning as we’re going.” Senior Kate Ohm said, “I liked that I could still learn about [my career interest. My visit] was a lot more informational than I thought it would have been.” Molenaar said, “[The virtual COP appointment] was a very good experience. It was very well done.”



Freshman Abbey Helmus writes a Christmas greeting in a card for a resident of Wittenberg Village.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

Hallmark Club makes cards for Wittenberg Village residents

Gracie Jania
Reporter

One of Illiana’s newest clubs, a Hallmark card-making club started by Mrs. Kathy Sliemers and Mrs. Peggy Mollema, has decided to make cards for the residents of Wittenberg Village in Crown Point to spread joy. Club member, senior Rachel Bultema came up with the idea to give the cards to Wittenberg Village specifically. “My grandma

lives in Wittenberg, but with COVID they had to lock down,” Rachel said. “It was really hard on her and the residents because they couldn’t see anyone and it gets lonely.” Not many of the details are known for the delivery of the cards. Sliemers said that since the building is on lockdown, the group will most likely not be able to visit the residents and pass out the cards individually. The selection of residents to receive a card will most likely be random.

Club member sophomore Angelina Daniel said, “I think it’s a good idea; we just get to make people happy.” When asked why she likes this club, Bultema said, “Everyone is so positive. It’s lovely to be with these caring people. They are doing [this club] to make others happy.” “What we hope to accomplish is the gift of service, but also using creativity and sending cards, which is a lifelong activity,” said Mollema.

How Thanksgiving as we know it came to be

Thanksgiving is traditionally thought of as originating from the feast shared by Native Americans and pilgrims in Plymouth Massachusetts. The holiday, however, has a complex history that began well before the colonists, and has evolved since the “first Thanksgiving.” Let’s take a closer look.

Olivia Oostema
Arts Editor

What was the “first Thanksgiving”?

The event commonly referred to as the “first Thanksgiving” was a three-day feast shared by Plymouth colonists and Wampanoag Native Americans in Massachusetts. Organized by the town’s governor, the feast was attended by the Wampanoag chief Massasoit and ninety men of his tribe deemed to be allies to the pilgrims.

What did the colonists and Native Americans at the first Thanksgiving eat?

When many think of the first Thanksgiving in the colonies, they imagine pilgrims and Native Americans giving thanks over a giant table laden with a giant turkey and decadent pumpkin pies. However, this depiction of the event is inaccurate.

Besides portraying pilgrim and Native American relationships as being unrealistically simple and peaceful, this imagination’s menu is historically inaccurate. Contrary to popular belief, the first thanksgiving feast likely did not include turkey at all. Instead, Plymouth colonists and Native Americans shared foods like lobster, seal, pumpkin, deer, and swan. There were no potatoes because they had only just reached Europe from South America, and there is no recorded presence of turkey. Furthermore, colonists didn’t prepare any desserts due to a dwindling sugar supply and lack of ovens.

Was it really the first?

Many scholars don’t consider the meal shared in 1621

to be the first Thanksgiving in America. These historians cite the meal shared by Spanish explorer Pedro Menéndez de Avilé and Timucua tribe members in St. Augustine, Florida, 56 years prior. The feast took place after

stream American holiday largely because of the work of Sara Josepha Hale. Hale, the author of the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” campaigned American politicians for 36 years on behalf of national day

ratification of the Constitution. During their presidencies, many successors of Washington also designated days of thanks. None of these “days of thanksgiving” were consistently scheduled until Abraham Lincoln designated

“Franksgiving” by many opponents and the move was repealed three years later.

Additionally, as aforementioned, Native American and pilgrim relationships were ridden with great conflict. The production of happy Thanksgiving coloring book pages, for example, and any other “deceptively sunny” portrayals of these relations have caused some to participate in a “National Day of Mourning.” This memorial of the lives lost because of these conflicts began in 1970 at a hill overlooking Plymouth Rock and continues to be observed at other locations in the country.

What major Thanksgiving celebrations are shared by Americans?

Introduced in 1924, the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade celebrated the season with floats and marching bands. The parade is the most famous Thanksgiving parade in the country with up to 3 million in-person spectators (this year the parade is entirely virtual). Famous characters like Mickey Mouse and the Tin Man debuted as floats in the 1934 and 1939 parades respectively. Many New Yorkers watch the balloons get inflated before the parade as a holiday tradition. Around the country, many throughout history have celebrated and continue to celebrate the parade from their living rooms since 1932, when it first was broadcasted over the radio.

Though less prominent, another tradition includes a president “pardoning” a few turkeys, saving them from death. Although the tradition is odd, U.S. presidents and governors participate.

All information from History.com



Photo courtesy of Newsweek.com

Menéndez de Avilé and his crew held a mass for their safe arrival in the New World.

Furthermore, thanksgiving feasts are seemingly universal throughout the world. In ancient times, Egyptians celebrated a harvest feast of thanksgiving and celebration to their gods. Jews celebrated a harvest festival called Sukkot. Native Americans celebrated the fall harvest long before European colonists arrived in the Americas.

How did Thanksgiving become a mainstream American holiday?

Thanksgiving is a main-

stream American holiday largely because of the work of Sara Josepha Hale. Hale, the author of the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” campaigned American politicians for 36 years on behalf of national day

of thanksgiving. Her efforts persuaded President Abraham Lincoln to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday during the height of the Civil War. Because of her work, she later became known as the “Mother of Thanksgiving.” Previous to its national institution, certain states, mostly in the north, celebrated their own days of thanksgiving. During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress issued days of thanksgiving, and later President George Washington designated a proclamation to “express gratitude” for the conclusion of the war and

the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving.

Notably, Thomas Jefferson viewed days of thanksgiving as religious and a violation of the barrier between church and state. Therefore, he refused to participate in the tradition followed by other Founding Fathers.

Has there been any controversies surrounding the holiday?

During the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving to the second to last Thursday of the month to increase retail sales. The holiday was referred to as

A Thanksgiving Prayer

Thank you God for showing us the way.
Help us to remember You this day. Let us
Always remember the price You paid.
Never let us forget that with You we can be saved.
Keep us in Your loving arms.
So we know that we belong.
Guide us and protect us, as we walk
In the path that You have set. Even though life can be
Very hard, we know that You won't forget.
I know that I am
Never alone. For You are always there
Guiding my every step with the love You have shown.

By: Trish Hams © 2001

Thanksgiving word search

E	T	L	H	G	B	A	T	D	N	L	I	E	S
T	F	S	T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N	T	I
I	A	E	T	A	S	T	R	E	S	S	E	D	T
E	M	L	U	T	T	D	S	M	S	E	E	T	A
K	I	B	R	I	F	O	D	N	O	L	H	G	F
T	L	A	K	T	D	O	D	E	O	L	D	L	V
A	Y	T	E	U	R	F	A	R	D	O	V	H	R
E	T	E	Y	D	M	L	E	E	G	E	O	I	L
T	T	G	T	E	S	S	D	S	I	V	V	T	R
K	E	E	T	K	S	A	Y	L	V	N	A	A	B
T	I	V	E	A	E	E	D	L	E	I	O	U	L
A	I	H	C	V	E	F	U	T	S	A	I	E	R
O	L	T	H	A	N	K	S	G	I	V	I	N	G
R	T	T	S	O	G	E	T	B	Y	D	M	M	E

- CASSEROLE
- GRATITUDE
- FOOD
- DESSERTS
- FAMILY
- VEGETABLES
- GIVE
- TURKEY
- THANKSGIVING
- TRADITION

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1644086/>

How does Illiana celebrate Thanksgiving?

The entire student body as well as Illiana teachers and faculty were surveyed on the food they share and the traditions they treasure during the Thanksgiving season. Here are the results:

Olivia Oostema
Arts Editor

What’s the most unique dish you eat?

Adam Gibson: “I think we had different weird kinds of beef jerky for fun one time, like goose jerky and alligator jerky.”

Alayna Knoll: “Coughing pickles.”

Michael Moore: “The most unique dish I eat at Thanksgiving is a Hamwich. My sister came up with the name and it stuck. If you didn’t already know what a Hamwich is, it is a ham sandwich, which comes fresh from the just-cooked ham.”

Correy Williams: “We eat a different foreign animal every time!”

Isaac Eenigenburg: “Homemade pickled carrots and salmon stuffing.”

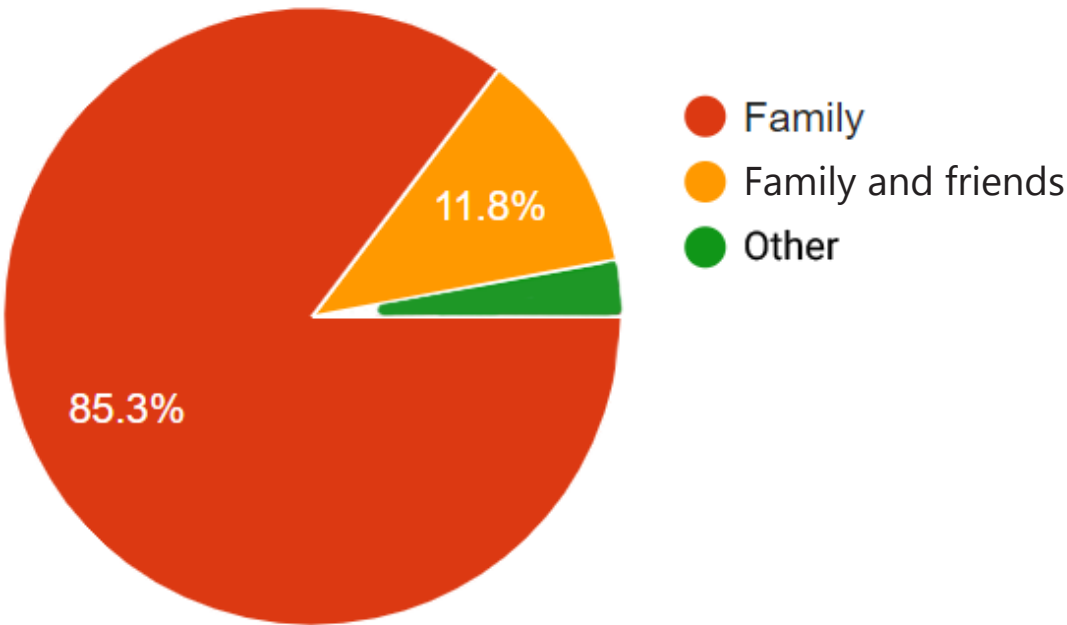
Isabella Verastegui: “Cactus (Nopales).”

Sanyah Sampson: “Sweet potato casserole or deer.”



Who do you mainly spend Thanksgiving with?

136 responses



What’s something you always eat?

Doug Gorter: “Green bean casserole - the one with the cream of mushroom soup and french onions on top. It’s not very healthy.”

Lucas VanderWoude: “STUFFING!”

Tony Ren: “Nothing very specific... Just as normal meals. *Rice, fried noodles, hot-pot, dumplings/wontons/shumais, suan cai, etc...”



Kathy Sliemers: “We make everyone’s favorite pie which usually means we have about 5 pies for 8 people. It is a little ridiculous.”

Brent Vermeulen: “Turkey....duh.”

Ellie Southworth: “Pecan cinnamon sweet potato dish.”

Treyton Sederstrom: “Oreo fluff.”

Luke Fennema: “All the basics: turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, green bean casserole, sweet potato casserole.”

James Mock: “Mashed Potatoessssss.”

What’s one Thanksgiving tradition you keep?

Kristy Medema: “My kids help my husband stuff the turkey in the morning. We all (25-40 of us) sit around a long table to eat. When we’re finished, we go around the table, and everyone tells what he or she is thankful for. There are always tears.”

Sara Johnson: “We draw names for Christmas gifts on Thanksgiving. And, there is always a LOT of football going on. This year, our Thanksgiving is a football tailgate for the Iowa vs. Northwestern football game. Go HAWKS!”

Mary Lagerwey: “We sing some Thanksgiving hymns. And we love to eat leftover turkey on rolls or bread with cranberry sauce and mayo. Oh yeah, and we go for a walk to help digest all that good food.”

Marie Limback: “Since my children were little, my husband always took them to Bakers Square for hot chocolate and cinnamon rolls, and to pick up our pies. It gave me a quiet hour in the kitchen! Our kids are grown now, but they still go with dad on Thanksgiving morning. This year, due to COVID and due to Bakers Square in Lansing being out of business, we’ll probably make homemade cinnamon rolls (We’re already working on a replacement pie source).”

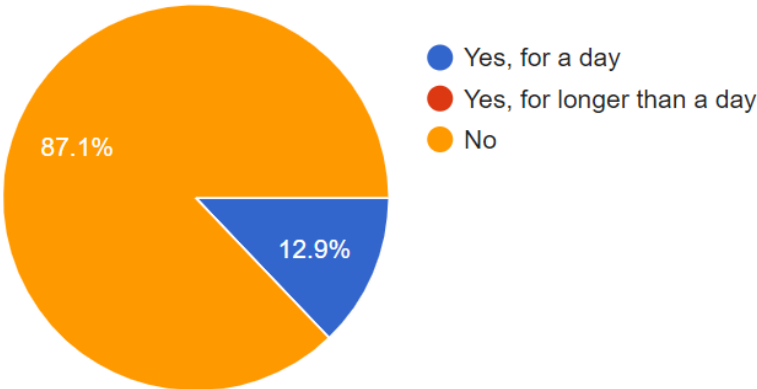
David Boer: “Playing Sjoelbak or Dutch Shuffleboard.”

Rachel Monroe: “We always woke up and watched the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade! I remember watching friends in marching bands on the tv and always looked forward to the Snoopy balloon!”



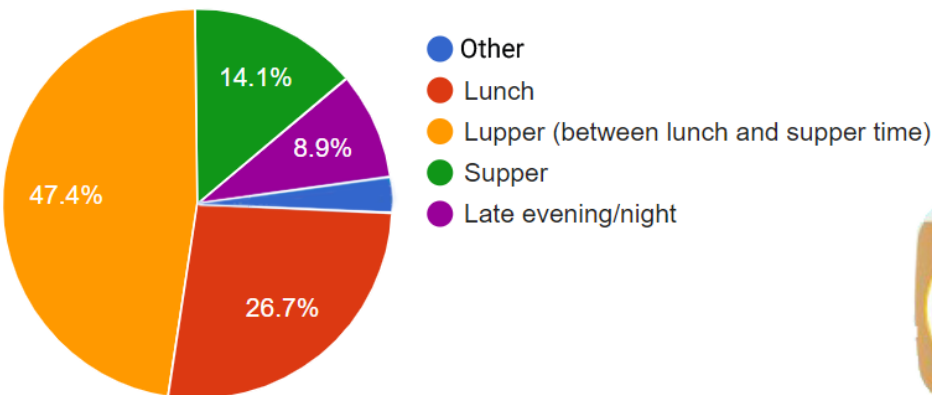
Do you fast before the meal?

132 responses



Around what time of day do you eat your Thanksgiving meal?

135 responses



Winter Festival, beacon of light during cold winter months

Rachel Bultema

Feature Editor

On Dec. 11, the Winter Festival, the brainchild of Jeff DeVries, his wife, and Jim Kamphuis, will take place in Illiana's courtyard in place of a fall play performance.

After realizing a fall play performance wasn't feasible, DeVries and Kamphuis began scheming ways to allow community to gather safely.

Though the cast of "It's a Wonderful Life" will not perform that night, bands, choirs, and the orchestra will. The play will be represented via tabletop displays that tell the story of the play.

To add to the seasonal ambience, choir director Kathy Sliemers plans to have her choirs sing carols outdoors in the courtyard and band director Rachel Monroe plans for the bands to play in the commons, and for the music to be "piped through" to the courtyard, said Kamphuis. Mr. Andy Anderson, orchestra director, said the orchestra will likely play inside the glass for people to watch from outside, "like at the zoo."

Along with musical performances, the Winter Festival will include food and drink. DeVries plans for the cast of "It's A Wonderful Life" to serve hot beverages, and Mrs. Jenna Dutton has secured Bub's Bowls, a food truck, to sell food at the festival. They hope to secure a second food truck for the festival as well.

Mr. Brent Vermeulen hopes to sell laser-cut Christmas ornaments, Bible verses, and "things that have to do with the birth of Christ." He hopes to have about 5-6 different products to be sold at the festival.

The courtyard, said Kam-



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Here's a sneak preview of one incomplete diorama which will feature at the Winter Festival: the Bridge-keeper's House.

phuis, will have Christmas lights strung about: twinkly lights in the trees and party lights strung from table to table. DeVries added that there may be colored, laser lights on the ends of the building.

Kamphuis said that the tabletop displays of the play will rest along the road in front of the courtyard and be lit with "theatrical lighting." Kamphuis hopes to have soundbites of the recording play with some of the sets as a "sneak peek" created by the "Model Painting" and "Model Construction" crews.

Kamphuis and DeVries plan to have fire pits placed throughout the courtyard area to allow attendants to warm up and "maybe roast marshmallows on them," said Kamphuis.

Since they are not perform-

ing, cast and crew members of the show will be working the festival: decorating, arranging, and preparing for the festival, helping out throughout the night, and doing cleanup afterward.

Despite all of the planning and preparation going into the festival, somethings cannot be dealt with right away, such as the weather. DeVries and Kamphuis are unsure of what the weather may hold for the evening, and are not sure how to create a backup plan for it as the event cannot be moved inside very smoothly.

Despite facing this, DeVries looks forward to seeing the Christmas lights strung along throughout the courtyard. He also looks forward to creating and allowing community and

communion to happen at Illiana.

Senior Gabby Albanese, Festival Crew member, looks forward to the possibility of drinking "mass amounts" of hot cocoa at the festival. Junior Hannah Sliemers, cast member, looks forward to seeing

all of the sets set up and walking through the sets and seeing and hearing everything set up. Sophomore Kevin Truong, cast member and Acapella choir member, looks forward to performing at the festival and later listening to the radio show.

Though the format of the show is different, it can still be enjoyed. Truong looks forward to hearing the performance.

Senior Jenna O'Brien looks forward to "showing off the 'final thing' [at the winter festival]. It's going to be crazy fun." She looks forward, also, to showing the finished product at the festival.

When coming up with the idea for the winter festival, DeVries "didn't care" whether people liked the idea of the festival, and challenged such people to "come up with a better idea."

Mainly, he said he was looking for a way to get students involved in some sort of production, and more students than simply cast performing.

Cast member senior Michael Moore looks forward to this new idea and event and appreciates the fact that despite things and activities being limited, new ideas and aspects of ideas are being explored.



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Junior Emma DeBoer paints models backstage for the Winter Festival.

Leaving no seat or plate empty at Thanksgiving

A look at how two establishments in the Region help provide during this unusual Thanksgiving season

Cafe Fresco

Rachel Bultema

Feature Editor

This Thanksgiving, Community Love, the name of the outreach group run by and through Cafe Fresco, will host its 7th annual "No Empty Seats" event at Cafe Fresco in Crown Point, Indiana. For those who don't know where to go, or do not have the means to secure a traditional meal, Cafe Fresco is the place to go.

This year, the front space of the cafe will be open for walk-ins to get food to cook a holiday meal. Others can nominate families in need to receive food to make a meal. The food



Photo courtesy of Cafe Fresco's Facebook

Cafe Fresco's window featured an encouraging message during the spring months

will then be dropped off on the porch or other outdoor area of the home to maintain social distancing.

The event began with Breanna Zolfo and her parents keeping the cafe open for business on thanksgiving, but

it has since expanded to a food drive.

Last year, Community Love donated food to 13 families and had over 100 people walk into the cafe for food and meals. This year, Zolfo expects more walk-ins due to the pandemic.

Suncrest Christian Church

Rachel Bultema

Feature Editor

On, Nov. 7, Suncrest Christian Church held its 3rd Suncrest Serve Day of 2020 and packed 100 meal boxes for families connected to the Sojourner Truth House. Event coordinator Jared Mehrle said, "[Serve Day events]... shine a light on our partners to everyone in the church, and allow us to do some big projects to increase our partners' efforts in the region."

159 people came to the event and 61 of them worked on Thanksgiving Meal Boxes. Mehrle said, "We took extra steps to provide social distancing inside the building, and provided plenty of hand sanitizer."

Mehrle hopes that the events show that Suncrest is "#ForTheRegion", that the church cares about people in the community, and that the church is doing its best to help them.

Mehrle hopes to organize Serve Day again for 2021, but the date is not yet set.

Cheer finishes 4th at State

Sophia Thompson
Sports Editor

Illiana's Competition cheer team showed its great talent even in the face of big difficulties due to COVID. The team's only in-person competition was against Carmel on Oct. 31, where they took first place. The majority of their competitions, however, were virtual, where the team videoed their routine and sent it to the judges or they had a live meeting on a Zoom with a whole panel of judges. Sophomore Gracie Jania said, "Our season went great; all the girls and I became great friends and we improved a lot since the

beginning of the season. We did hit a few bumps along the way since a lot of our competitions had to be cancelled or resort to video competitions, but we did make a lot of improvements." The team placed fourth at the virtual State competition. "It was an exciting season despite the challenges, and I loved all the time I got to spend with my girls," Jania added. Senior Karlie Detmar said, "Being the only senior on the team left me with a big leadership role, to be a model to the girls. I want them to remember that all the glory and honor should go to Jesus Christ, he is the one who gave us these gifts and talents to compete."

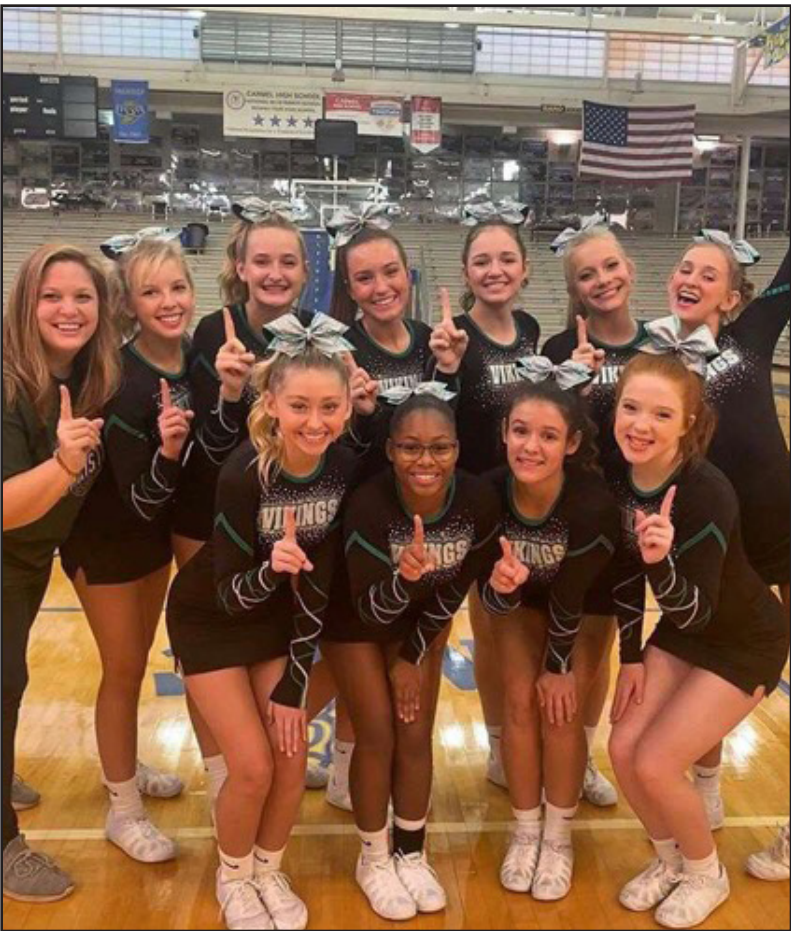


Photo Courtesy of Taylor Olthof
Competition Cheer team celebrates taking first place at the Carmel High School competition.

Wrestling

Sophia Thompson
Sports Editor

This year Illiana's wrestling program has adapted to restrictions COVID has put on their season. Junior Graham Goodfellow said, "Due to COVID, we have to wear masks while wrestling, which is not fun. Some things we do to stay safe include, taking temperature, wearing masks, disinfecting the mats twice a day, cleaning our shoes before and after practice, and not sharing any equipment unless it has been cleaned." The team has also lost one of its three seniors, Jake Vander Zee, who is out for the season with a torn ACL, MCL, and meniscus from soccer. Vander Zee said, "I am bummed about missing out this season, but I am finding other ways to help the team out and I am so thankful for that. One way I am helping is by helping coach the new wrestlers and advising others on their technique."



Photo Courtesy of Erin Behn
The varsity girls anticipate which way the ball is going to go after the tip off as freshman Cheyenne DeJong fights to win the ball in the home game against Highland High School on November 14.

Girls basketball works to overcome early struggles

Sophia Thompson
Sports Editor

Illiana's girls basketball program has had a bumpy start to its season. In the games the girls have played so far, they have suffered losses under some pretty lopsided scores. However, the team has not lost hope for the season. Senior Mia Cruz said, "So far the games we've played haven't gone as planned, but as a team we never gave up and we went down fighting." The team is also battling the inconveniences COVID has brought upon the season. "Due to COVID we obviously have to wear masks on the bus and the bench when we aren't playing and things like that. Things are a little different but we work with it and we are still thankful we even get to be playing right now,"

added Cruz. The only spectators allowed in the gym during games are the parents of the players, no siblings or friends are allowed in the gym at all. This has also added some struggle for the girls. "It really upsetting that I can only have my parents in the gym. It's my last year playing at Illiana and I have a sister and grandparents who love watching me play," Cruz added. COVID has made a significant impact on the junior varsity team. A girl on Highland High School's team tested positive for COVID one day after competing against Illiana. As a result. The entire JV girls' team has had to quarantine. Freshman on the JV team, Makenzie Mulderink said, "I feel bummed because I was really looking forward to being able to play for the JV team this year, but if quarantining for two weeks helps stop the

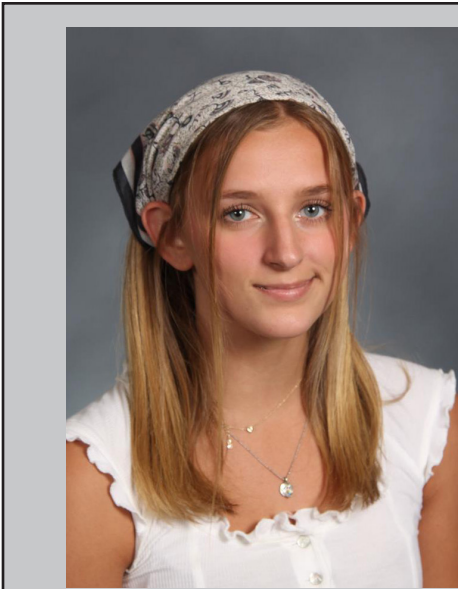
spread, the team will do what needs to be done." The varsity team is looking forward to the rest of its season and is working harder to become better on the court. "So far we've been successful in talking with each other and working hard during practice as a team to become the best we can be," Cruz said.

Boys basketball

Sophia Thompson
Sports Editor

Illiana's boys' basketball players are excited to be starting after having their season questioned due to the recent spike of COVID cases in Lake County. The team is focusing on all of the good things that can come out of this season. Senior Leighton Foster said, "I'm really looking forward to this season. We have a team full of guys that all have a passion for basketball and want to get better and see the team succeed. We have a lot of skilled players this season, and I can't wait to play with them." Even with the good things come COVID restrictions though, and the team is definitely feeling them. Foster added, "The thing that is the most different is not being able to huddle at the start of basketball prac-

tice. We are always focused on not getting too close to each other which is super hard to do. Also the uncertainty of whether or not the team that we have to play will be able to play. And the biggest difference when we get started is getting used to not having any fans." Although there will be no fans watching live games, the team is still improving. "We've spent a lot of time improving our defense because that was something that we struggled with last season. We are putting in a lot of time working on it and we are improving," said Foster. The varsity team's first scrimmage was Nov. 19 against Morgan Township. The team took the overall win, by winning three of the four games played. "I think our game went really well. There are definitely things we can improve on but overall I think we did great," said Foster.



Female Athlete of the Month

Senior Karlie Detmar has participated on Illiana's competition cheer team for four years. She has shown amazing leadership and perseverance throughout every trial and victory her team has faced. "Karlie leads the team in so many ways. She always has the most energy out of anyone in the room and is always smiling," said junior Taylor Olthof. "She pushes herself to do better and try again when she isn't satisfied with her skills, which sets a great example for all the younger girls on the team."

Editorial

Gratitude found in banal, ordinary events

As citizens of a first world country, we sometimes find it difficult to muster up more than token thankfulness. One alluring trap is the idea that we can only be thankful for the big things. But thankfulness shouldn't be restricted to finding an organ donor match within your church. It should also swell within us for simple things like waking up in the morning to walk the dog and do the crossword.

But why is thankfulness so hard? We've all heard the Thanksgiving sermons yelling at us for how ungrateful we are despite having so much to be grateful for. The effectiveness of those sermons is limited, however, as thankfulness ought not to come from fear. Indeed, true thankfulness cannot come from fear. Rather, thankfulness springs from love. Hence, thankfulness may be hard because of where our hearts' focus is.

We feel so nervous that we aren't being grateful enough or thankful enough that we focus on the anxiety we feel and on how to get rid of it, and we lose sight of what should be our goal, thanking the Lord for everything he has blessed us

with. One way to rid ourselves of anxiety is to stop looking at the big picture. By shifting the focus off of the long term goal of becoming more thankful, we give ourselves more mobility in our mindset. We can appreciate the little things more because we can take the time to focus on them in-

the rise and fall of music in the background as we complete our assignments. It's the first embrace of a friend whom you haven't seen in so long. Thankfulness is found in the friendship between a dog and ourselves.

Life is found in the little things. If we keep searching for the big things

sinful. There's no beating around the bush about it. One of the biggest things to be thankful for is that we have been rescued from sin. As Romans so bluntly puts it, our only true entitlement is death. That's what we deserve. But instead, by grace, we are set raised to life and set free to enjoy God and his world. In that life and freedom, we can find millions of things to be thankful for: the cool splash of water in our throats on a hot, dry day; a full moon shining behind a wispy veil of autumnal clouds; the laughter of small children playing in the park. We were dead, but now we are alive. Every single moment of the day offers something to be thankful for, and recognizing this sets us on the path to thankfulness.

After acknowledging our rescue can we begin focusing on, and finding, the little things. But maybe that's difficult. Maybe we have on a set of blinders that hide the good. Nevertheless, it persists. Good finds a way into our lives in many shapes and forms. The first step toward true thankfulness is to look for it.

Good finds a way into our lives in many shapes and forms. The first step toward true thankfulness is to look for it.

stead of glossing over them as we frantically search for things to be grateful for. If we continuously search for big moments in our lives to be grateful for, we can easily skip over the little things that make up everything else.

Life will not always, and may not ever be, hitting the jackpot lottery and finally getting rich after a life of penury. Sometimes it's simply the warm glow of the sun on our faces as we drive to meet our friends. Or maybe it's

to be thankful for, thankfulness will not come easily. It will be easier to find the chip on our shoulder. Looking for big moments and finding them to be few and far between can easily lead to entitlement, an opposite of thankfulness. We feel that we are entitled to joy and the winning lottery ticket, but why? Why do we deserve good?

Romans 6:23 clearly says "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." We are

Finding future and positivity in unpredicted friendships

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm fairly pessimistic. I try to convince myself I'm an optimist, but I'm a realist on my best days. At my worst, I have a set of blinders that entirely block good from my vision.

What always removes my blinders, however, is the reminder that I am only a small fish in a big pond.

I mean, out of all of the people on this planet, I have met so few. Out of all of the people whom I will love, I've only just started meeting them. What secretly excites me is that I have no idea when or where I'll meet them.

Back in elementary and middle school, my best friend was a girl from the same orphanage as I was. Neither of us knew each other in China (I mean, we were babies). But, somehow we found each other again in the United States before drifting apart.

Then, like all incoming freshmen at Illiana, I had to take a placement test a few months before I started high school. I sat in the back of the room, and a few seats ahead of me sat an unfamiliar girl with her hair in a single braid. Little did I realize, only a few months later she would become one of my closest friends after Mr. Sylvester sat us next to each other in Honors Biology on the first day.

In a scrapbook, perfectly pasted, is a ticket to Illiana's production of You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown from when I attended the show with my family. As I sat in the audience, the idea that I would befriend any of the actors I admired on stage never crossed my mind nor that it would be the first time I met one of my closest friends. If only I had known then that I would one day I would work up the courage to start a friendship with the actor on stage I was laughing at.

But why is this important? In each of these instances, my small world grew a bit bigger, and that expansion brought a pleasant surprise each time. Sometimes I forget that my life has only started, that my heart is nowhere near full capacity. I forget that life goes on and expands further than the walls of Illiana. I have so many more people I will love and so many more experiences I will love before life is done, and I think that's something to always look forward to.

Life, and love, are unpredictable. That unpredictability is the spice of life. Knowing I am only one out of nearly 8 billion people is a humbling, but comforting thought. The world does not revolve around me, and I will love as life continues.

Better than that, I have no idea where these people are hiding. Like my three friends, they may be hiding in plain sight or right around the next corner.

Around each corner of life lies the potential of meeting someone important, someone who will have a profound impact on me, someone who could change my life forever.

This is an exciting and terrifying idea. It makes me want to start living faster, if that's a thing, to meet as many people as I can as fast as I can.

But, I think that's the wrong approach. God wants me to meet people at his timing, not mine. I don't know why. I wish I had the answer, but I don't. But, I do know that his timing is better than mine. He will introduce me to everyone when it's best.



Rachel Bultema
Co-editor in Chief

the Echo

Editors-in-chief

Rachel Bultema
Olivia Oostema

News

Madie Ceponis

Feature

Rachel Bultema

Arts

Olivia Oostema

Sports

Sophia Thompson

Advisor

Jeff DeVries

Editorials, unless otherwise stated, have been written by an editor and reflect the opinion of the majority of the Echo staff. Opinions expressed are not necessarily that of the administration, faculty, or student organizations.

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.

Letter to the Editors

Congratulations to the entire ECHO staff for an excellent recent issue. I loved the variety of topics (even though I come to this school every day, I miss some events and issues!) and the evenhanded reporting--even about touchy subjects like dance cancellation and cultural intelligence training. I also appreciated the clean look of the issue and the lack of typos. (Ok, maybe that's a machine/spell check thing--but it's still shows an impressive amount of attention to detail.)

And thanks for the editorial, especially "some people view this kind of selfishness as some...celebration of individual freedom, but such an argument misses the point." I hope we Christians keep asking "what is best for others?" and "how do I love my neighbor in this situation?" long after COVID is past.

*Keep up the good work,
Mary Boerman Lagerwey*

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