



The show must go on: fall play takes on new COVID-19 friendly format

Gracie Jania
Reporter

This year at Illiana, the Drama Department put on a radio show instead of a standard play. It was an audio production with a still shot video, live streamed from Dec. 12 to Dec. 19. Organized by Mr. Jeff DeVries, Mrs. Emily Hillegonds, and Mr. Jim Kamphuis, the structure of the show had to be altered to follow COVID regulations.

The show is accessible on Broadway on Demand for one more day. Interested parties can find a link to it on Illiana’s social media.

Mrs. Mary Lagerwey, who listened to the play from home said, “[the play] was more than lemonade from lemons. This was a historically superb job.” She said that “everyone’s pacing was terrific. Each person spoke slowly and clearly; I could tell the effort to do that was intentional and practiced.” She added that an advantage of



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Winter Festival workers and family stop to enjoy the dioramas at the Winter Festival.

the play’s online form was that it allowed her to gather with family and share homemade gingerbread and good coffee while they listened.

Over the summer, it had become clear to the directors that they could not perform this fall for a live audience, so DeVries said they had to “think of drama in another way.” And thus was born the radio play and Winter Festival.

“It wasn’t as labor intensive,” said senior Emily Feikema, who plays Rose Bailey in the production. She added that where the final two weeks of a show often ate up so much time with rehearsals, but with this year’s production she “didn’t lose much sleep.”

Junior Kenny Pickard, who plays several roles in the show, said, “[This year’s play] was harder because you had to convey emotion

with just your voice.”

Because of this new show setup, the crew and cast finished recording six days earlier than expected. “People are going to be shocked at how professional it sounds,” DeVries said.

Though a different experience than in the years before, sound technician Oliver Postma said the alteration for the show was “the best possibility for this year’s drama production.”

Student ambassadors to replace shadow hosting

Aubrey Porter
Reporter

This year Illiana has introduced a student ambassador program, which will assist the admissions staff as well as make the student ambassadors themselves feel more connected with their school.

In the words of Mrs. Marie Limback, the admissions director, a student ambassador is a “trained Illiana student who will help with admissions activities.” Some responsibilities that a student ambassador might have will include giving tours to new Illiana parents, visiting feeder schools either virtually or in-person, appearing in advertisements

for the school, and more.

The idea initially sprung from the challenges COVID brought upon the admissions staff. The pandemic has limited visitations to feeder schools and other in-person practices and has temporarily halted interested guests from shadowing a student here.

Some students miss being able to host “shadows”, which made the opportunity to be a student ambassador all the more enticing.

Up until student ambassadors were introduced, the admissions staff had made video calls available to feeder schools. Now, with more people willing to help participate, the admissions staff has many more oppor-

tunities to get the “Illiana word out in a very effective way to middle schoolers,” Limback says.

From a different perspective, Max Meter, a junior who volunteered to participate in the student ambassador program, is ecstatic to start welcoming potential new Illiana students.

Meter said, “Coming into freshman year, I know how it feels to be alone and feel unwelcome, so I want to help whoever I can not to feel that way. This is a great school, so if I can help make the decision to choose Illiana, I will do whatever it takes.”

Senior Kendal Taylor chose to become a student

ambassador because she wants to help represent Illiana’s diversity to younger students.

Taylor said that she wants to show students that there are people like them at Illiana and that they won’t be singled out.

She realizes, however, the challenges they may have to face when advertising because shadowing can’t take place this year. She hopes that the videos the ambassadors film will help to spread the message faster than the shadowing would.

“I have high hopes [for the program,” said Taylor, who believes the program has the possibility to go ‘really well.’

COVID-19 Updates

Homecoming: According to Mrs. Sharon Praveen, the Student Council still plans to hold some kind of Homecoming event, but are “unsure what the event will be like exactly because it depends on the latest guidelines from the state of Indiana. Most likely, there will not be a Homecoming Dance - but no official decision has been made on that yet.”

Loud Crowd: No Loud Crowd currently. According to county laws and boys’ athletic director Mr. Darren DeBoer, only parents are able to attend games.

E-learning in the new year: eLearning will be extended into third quarter, according to Principal Peter Boonstra. Illiana currently has a contingency plan for switching to e-learning if necessary, though he doesn’t expect that Illiana will need to use it. Parents can request e-learning for third quarter by emailing Boonstra along with a “reasonable explanation” for their choice.

Illiana and ISSMA: Band director Mrs. Monroe says that Illiana is unsure of what’s going on with the Indiana State School Music Association. After Christmas break, however, more information may become available.

COVID-19 and the musical: The spring musical, Schoolhouse Rock Live! is set to take place. According to directors Mrs. Mary Lagerwey and Mrs. Kathy Sliemers the musical, the musical can take place virtually if necessary.

Illiana and the Right to Life march: Illiana will not be participating in the Right to Life march in Washington D.C, but will be taking part in the Right to Life march in Indianapolis. More information will be available after Christmas break, says director Mr. Jeff White.

COVID-19 and Exams: Currently, exams are still set to be taken two weeks after Christmas break from Jan. 13 to Jan. 15.

E-learning: not as easy as it seems

I bet when you read that you rolled your eyes and thought, “How can it be hard to learn at home?” Well, I am about to tell you.

The biggest issue I have is motivation. It is hard to have the motivation to get up and zoom in for class, every single class, and sometimes it gets stressful. It gets stressful when in class there is a slide show or someone is presenting because it is hard to get everything down, and once you miss it you either rely on your other elearners or email the teachers, but I don’t like to put extra work on the teachers. And after the meetings we have projects and homework just like anyone else, but it’s hard for us to separate school time from homework time because for us it all is the same time.

I also frequently have wifi issues. There are many days where for some reason our wifi will not work, where the screen will freeze, or we get a black screen that says, “trying to reconnect.” And what really stinks about that is the teachers do not know about my technical difficulties. They might just think remote learners are leaving or not trying to get into the meetings, so those days are extra stressful. On top of those problems and missing class, you have to email the teachers about what you missed, and sometimes that puts extra work on them, which I do not like to do.

Throughout the days I actually feel bad for the teachers I have because I email them so many times in one day. Humanities, taught by Mrs. Mary Lagerwey, I’d say I email her about 5 times a day, whether it is between something I missed, something I turned in late, or just asking for updates on homework is due or a test that is coming up.

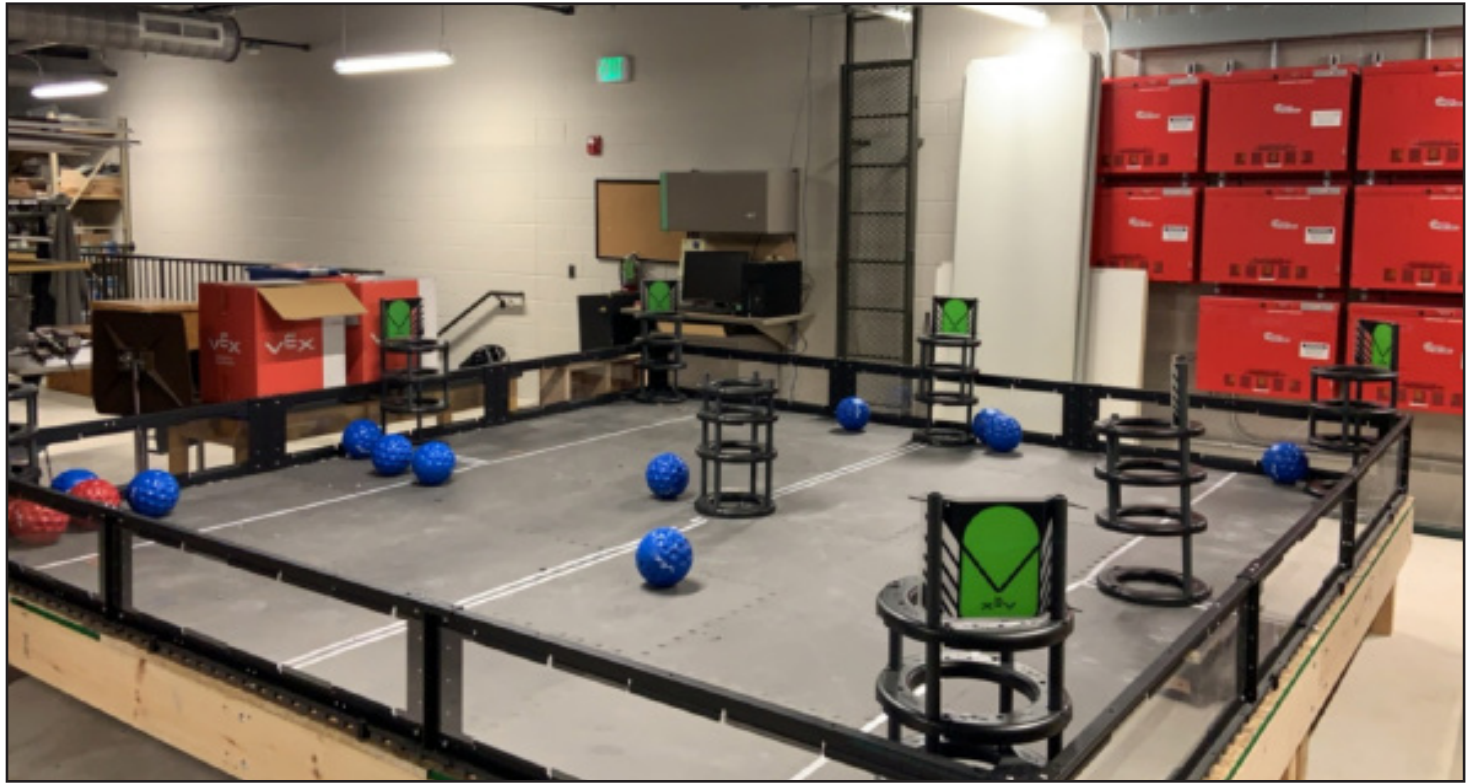
Being away from friends is another hard thing to deal with. Not being able to talk to everyone every day, smiling at everyone, really makes me upset. As you might know, I am a very talkative person and it is really hard to connect with everyone. We elearners have made friends with each other which is nice. We will always wave when the meeting starts and when it ends, also we use the chat sometimes to keep the mood light, but we have to be careful not to make some teachers mad; we ran into that problem a little bit ago.

One of many things I struggle with is not being there with the teacher. I am a very hands-on learner. I ask a lot of questions, and with elearning I cannot do that. That is a very big struggle for me with math and Bible. Math is really hard to learn through a screen because you cannot really ask questions while going through the homework and the notes. We email a student in the class but it is not the same.

And struggling brings more stress because it is my senior year, I have to keep my grades up. And once I fall behind there is really no way to recover, or at least I have not figured one out yet. Additionally, I miss out on spirit week, praise crowds, and we all might miss out on Homecoming, Prom and maybe even Graduation, which is really heartbreaking. Another heartbreaking thing to me is missing my last year of softball, since I am E-Learning I cannot be involved in softball, which is a very big downer to me because sophomore year I was injured and COVID ruined my junior year.



Madie Ceponis
News Editor



Illiana's third floor is home to a practice arena for the robotics team to use for their robots before the competitions.

Photo by Sophie Thompson

Illiana's robotics team hopes for future tournaments after cancellations

Sophia Thompson
Sports Editor

After the Robotics teams first competition, they began working harder in hopes to qualify for the state tournament.

The team's first competition was at Crown Point High School. They were supposed to compete at Portage high school on

Saturday, Dec. 12, but Portage's administration had not approved the competition yet, so it was moved to Jan. 23, 2021.

According to team member Sydnee Tuuk, COVID has not allowed Illiana's team to scout other robotics teams for future alliances, which would have helped them later. This, she said, has created

an obstacle.

They hope to continue their competitions and practices despite COVID threatening to shut them down. “Our team is hoping to just make it to State,” said Tuuk.

The team has taught Tuuk new skills useful outside of competitions. “Robotics has taught me how to problem solve and

work with others, along with learning to never give up,” said Tuuk.

Tuuk hopes for the possibility of future competitions as she said, “Robotics has made such an amazing impact on students that the seniors are not ready to call it quits. ... We always have a lot of fun at practices and competitions.”

Remote students to take exams a variety of ways

Olivia Oostema
Co-Editor in Chief

eLearning and quarantined students will have three options for taking exams this semester.

One option consists of eLearning administrator Bethany DeVries proctoring student exams. She would be able to watch students take their exams through a Google Meet. Another option allows teachers to assign take-home exams in which the teacher would watch them take their exam through Google Meet.

A final option allows eLearning and quarantined students to come to Illiana in-person to take exams in a safe environment.

DeVries said that since half of her eLearning students chose to learn remotely due to health risks (whether personal or familial), the variety of options allows them to take their exams in the way that makes them most comfortable.

Remote exams will be proctored by Bethany DeVries and Heidi Teach. Students who choose to take

their exams remotely will do so through Google Forms, a program more teachers have been using in their classes as an accommodation to remote learners.

However, the opportunity to take exams remotely is not an option open to just anyone, said Principal Peter Boonstra. It will only be offered to students who have been officially quarantined by the school or are designated eLearners. Students who happen to feel sick will not be able to take their exams from home.

Boonstra added that eLearning has improved since last spring. He specifically noted the change from asynchronous to synchronous instruction this year which prevents students from cheating while off camera.

DeVries said optimistically, “I think it’s been better.”

In case of technical difficulties with a student’s Chromebook or wifi connection, the student will be administered his or her exams at a later date after the problem is resolved.

ISTEP retakes offered to juniors, seniors before program is replaced

Aubrey Porter
Reporter

Because COVID cut last year’s sophomores’ and juniors’ ISTEP testing short, this year retakes will be available for seniors and juniors who have to take them again. However, for this year’s sophomores and all of the following incoming classes, Illiana will have a new program in place of ISTEP.

March 13, 2020, the last day before the nationwide shutdown, was a normal day for most. The sophomores were in the midst of the annual ISTEP tests and were

feeling relieved to go home for the weekend. Just the next day would the President declare a national emergency, and school would later come to a close. Little did anyone know, those long hours spent taking the ISTEP would be announced unusable for fair scoring, and the whole class would have to retake them the next year, also robbing the juniors of their first chance to retake them, pushing it back to their senior year.

This year, seniors will have the opportunity to retake their ISTEPs, and juniors will essentially take the tests for the first time. Mrs.

Melanie Benes said this will be a future-altering setback, but it does put slightly more pressure on seniors, who lost two retake opportunities. Juniors’ tests, however, are simply pushed back and students will have the same chance to retake if they do not get a high enough score.

Taking the place of the ISTEP in the future is Graduation Pathways, a new state program which will be implemented for the current sophomores, freshmen, and future incoming classes. Since some students may be nervous test-takers, a score from a standardized test isn’t a fair representation of

their future success, which is where Graduation Pathways comes into play.

“Graduation Pathways has a slightly different way of meeting Indiana’s graduation requirements, and in the best way possible,” Benes said. Graduation Pathways offers several opportunities for students to show how prepared they are for a career, rather than simply taking the scores from a single test. Overall, Graduation Pathways casts a wider net when considering student ability, and may look at test scores, courses taken, and how well one performs in them.

Illiana livestreams winter sports games

Rachel Bultema
Co-Editor in Chief

In the midst of surging COVID-19 cases in the states, schools including Illiana must limit attendance at sporting events. In Lake County, only parents or guardians of players can be in the gym. To combat this change, Illiana’s winter sports have begun livestreaming their games.

Boys’ athletic director Mr. Darren DeBoer and varsity girls’ basketball assistant coach Miss Erinn Behn agree that the livestreaming of the games and matches has been beneficial in at least one respect. The livestreaming feature has been convenient in allowing families that are not from the area to watch the games. Instead of travelling, for example, to watch, they are able to view the sport from home.

DeBoer reported that even with the livestream audience, though it is hard to know how much attendance may be down. Though more than one person may be watching from the device. DeBoer also expressed concern over lost revenue from the gate even as the athletic department’s expenses are rising.

Another new feature of this year is commentators. A few capable people have been able to give live commentary as it plays out. Additionally, a message recently went out to the student body looking for students interested in assisting with livestreaming the games. A few students have shown interest.

The livestreaming has evolved from simply livestreaming on a single iPad to now having multiple cameras for one game. DeBoer is looking into finding a way to have the score as seen on the scoreboard run along the bottom of the video.

Senior Justin Van Drunen, varsity basketball team member, said that not having as many fans in the audience has separated the athletes who love the game from those who love the attention.

Senior Leighton Foster, varsity basketball team member, expressed sadness that the teams are unable to have a crowd for their senior year.

As of right now, with livestreaming, pep band and Loud Crowd are not able to participate in games as they normally would. Cheerleaders, however, are still able to be in the game and gymnasium.



Photo by Olivia Oostena
Mrs. Rachel Drost’s homeroom nearly ready for the decorating competition.

Praise Crowd, StuCo host Twelve Days of Christmas

Sophia Thompson
Sports Editor

Praise Crowd and Student Council worked together this month to bring Christmas spirit into Illiana by sponsoring Twelve days of Christmas events.

Twelve days before Illiana’s Christmas break started, the two clubs started the festive activities. Praise Crowd was in charge of days one through seven and then Student Council took over. Activities consisted of a homeroom decorating contest, handing out candy canes at break, a locker decorating contest, playing Christmas music in the hallways, free donuts at break, writing things you are thankful for on snowflakes, and chicken biscuit Friday for students who contributed to the Pathway for Jesus School fundraiser.

Senior Praise Crowd member Stephanie Huitsing said, “Praise Crowd’s tried our best to keep the Christmas spirit throughout Illiana. It was difficult to come up with COVID safe ideas, but I think we did a great job.”

Student Council took the last five days and created a spirit week, having different Christmas themes each day to bring excitement while leading up to break.

Senior Jake Vander Zee said, “Although it’s not much, it helps get the student body into the Christmas spirit and makes school a little more exciting.”

Students at Illiana and elsewhere struggle with ACT cancellations

Rachel Bultema
Co-Editor in Chief

On Saturday Dec. 12, senior James VanDrunen will sit down to take his ACT for the first time despite having scheduled it months ago. He, like many this year, fears that it will be his only chance to take the test, adding pressure to an already stressful situation. It’s kind of a one shot deal, as he said.

VanDrunen isn’t alone in this situation. ACT testing centers all over the country continue to close; for the Dec. 12 date, 6 in Indiana, 40 in Michigan, 19 in Iowa, and more have closed, as reported by insidehighered.com.

In previous years, the ACT was only offered a few times within a year. This year, however, the ACT decided to offer more testing dates to allow for more students to be able to take it.

Not only did the ACT have to offer more dates, but in some cases, they had to offer a change in location. For senior James Mock, this meant having his testing location change from a high school five minutes from his house to a hotel an hour and a half away three days before his test. Mock wasn’t thrilled by the change, but he took the test in a banquet room in-



Photo by Princeton Review
Many students have faced ACT cancellations at testing sites across the country.

stead of a high school regardless.

Mock said the change in location may have impacted his score. If the test had been in a location “like the ARC or a gym,” Mock feels he could have done better than he did taking it in the hotel banquet room.

At this point, some students’ tests have been cancelled so many times that they’ve lost track. Van Drunen’s test has been cancelled three times.

Senior Gabby Albanese “doesn’t even know” how many times her test was cancelled, but thinks the number is two. Mock’s test was cancelled four times.

Illiana students are not alone in struggling with ACT scheduling and cancellations. Senior Jake Oostman from Crown Point High School describes his experience with COVID-19 and the ACT as “hectic” as he

struggled to get a test scheduled, but managed to snag one in late October. He, like many students, was only able to take it once. Oostman’s college search and application process was delayed because of the delay in testing.

Some students like Oostman were able to take the ACT near their home, but other students weren’t so lucky. Some, like Mock, ended up

having to drive over an hour away to take the test. Others weren’t able to take it at all. Senior Sydnee Tuuk is one such example. She had taken the test twice previously: once after her freshman year of high school and once after her sophomore year of high school. After having her ACT cancelled twice in 2020, Tuuk ended up not taking the test and applied with the score she had. Tuuk said that not being able to retake the test as she had planned has caused her to miss out on some scholarship opportunities she could have been eligible for had she been able to test.

Despite the number of cancellations and the many schools that have gone test optional for admission, guidance counselors Neil Zandstra and Melanie Benes both recommend taking the ACT if possible.

Zandstra said, “If the college that students are looking at uses the ACT for scholarships, the score could potentially boost their chances of earning a higher scholarship.” Benes recommends seniors take the ACT before May 1, the date college decisions are due. She recommends, also, getting the test in as soon as possible for admission and scholarship purposes.

‘Challenged to Serve’ more than just slogan

Illiana has begun to encourage more students to serve their community as exam voucher requirements change from attendance to service hours

COVID
creates
opportunity
to align
exam vouchers
with school
mission

Gracie Jania
Reporter

This year has been full of surprises, including a new voucher system. Instead of receiving an exam voucher for attendance, students must complete at least ten hours of service for each semester to earn a voucher.

Miss Sara Johnson acted upon the idea when parent and school board member Mrs. Janna VanEssen suggested the alternative since COVID would impact student attendance standards.

“We’re exposing students to community service,” said Johnson. “I think any time we can challenge students to think beyond themselves and outside of themselves is a win for the gospel and a win for what we should be doing in the world.”

As of Dec. 10, a total of 125 Illiana students have completed their service hours, which added up to be 1371.5 hours in total.

VanEssen originally suggested the idea of changing the voucher system to be centered on service. Since Johnson is the Missions Director and part of the Return to Learn Committee with VanEssen, the idea was brought to life.

Johnson said, “It is, for me, very important that we expose students to places where they can be the hands and feet of Jesus, where they can do the work, and where they can show why we are Christians.”

“We are so beyond privileged by being able to come to this school and being able to take a moment of our time and show the love of Christ into the world,” said Johnson.



Photo courtesy of Illiana’s Facebook page

The girls varsity soccer team poses together after serving by setting up crosses to mourn lost lives at Bethel CRC in Lansing.

Students find deeper joy than voucher in service

Hailey Ross
Reporter

Aubrey Porter
Reporter

Gracie Jania
Reporter

This year, Illiana’s exam voucher system requires students to complete community service to obtain their exam voucher. Though some students went into this change with a perfunctory approach, many came out with experiences that changed their perspective on serving their community and the impact that it can make.

Junior Natalie Scott is one of the many students who said that these acts of service have impacted both herself and the people she served. Scott went to a wood lot for Faith in Action and chopped wood, she joined her soccer team putting up crosses at Bethel Church in Lansing

to commemorate the pro-life movement, and she served in Reflectors, a special needs ministry at Faith Church in Dyer. The most impactful one for her was serving with Reflectors.

Scott said, “It was interesting to see. [Reflectors] isn’t something you see everywhere, and it was super cool to see the families that were impacted by our service because they could actually attend the church service.”

As for her other acts of service, she says that all of the people she helped were extremely grateful. She added, “Although I didn’t get to see the physical results like I did with Reflectors, I knew what I did really made a difference.”

Senior Olivia Tambrini was also emotionally impacted by her service. She is a counselor for GEMS at her church alongside her mom. Tambrini said, “I was excited because I knew that it was going to be more

than just my service hours.”

She also enjoys getting to know the girls and connecting with them in special ways, including doing activities and being in a smaller class together. “They think I’m like the coolest person ever. I look forward to going [there].”

Freshman Abbey Helmus, who sorted clothes at New Leaf Thrift Store, made phone calls for the Illiana drive, and drew chalk art on the sidewalks at Park Place in St. John, had a wonderful time serving her hours. The Illiana drive, Helmus said, made a lasting impact because she got to witness firsthand the generosity of people in giving to the school.

Helmus enjoyed her time at Park Place after going with a friend. A Park Place administrator came out to applaud them, and her doing so, Helmus said, “was nice to see” because it showed “the difference service actually makes.”

Sophomore Kayla Bosman

also served at the New Leaf Thrift Store, where she met Nancy, an older woman whom she worked with. They enjoyed each other’s company while they worked. Bosman heard different stories from Nancy, many starting with “back in my day.”

Since Nancy was a graduate of Illiana, another topic they talked about was school, plus their differing views ranging from politics to pop culture. Bosman even talked about her struggle with her faith, and Nancy was understanding and supportive.

“It was cool to get to see her perspective,” Bosman said.

Freshman Destiny Palmer worked as a deliverer and packager of food to people’s cars. Palmer has always liked to serve, and the opportunity to get community hours for her voucher was just another opportunity for her. Palmer said, “Giving to people warms my heart, and it makes me feel thankful.”

Student helps elderly woman after she gets scammed

Hailey Ross
Reporter

For junior Hayden DeYoung, service hours came in the form of serving a 92-year-old woman who had been previously scammed by a company claiming to clean gutters but who left the work unfinished.

DeYoung volunteered to work at the home of Mrs. Erickson, about whose plight he learned through his aunt, Mrs. Shelley DeYoung.

DeYoung and his brother spent two hours cleaning Erickson’s house and gazebo gutters while their father su-

pervised and guided when necessary.

Erickson, said DeYoung, was thrilled with the work. “I’ve never seen someone so happy,” DeYoung added.

DeYoung said he would do this again and would encourage others to follow in his footsteps because his service has encouraged him to see the necessity of good works and making a difference. “There is always an opening to help people,” said DeYoung.

“Get out and explore other options,” DeYoung said. “Don’t just serve at church; serve someone [directly].”

What kind of service fits your personality?

If you are creative and like arts and crafts,
try making cards for Phil’s Friends.

If you like to organize,
try helping out at a thrift store like ETC or Second Life.

If you have a gift for teaching and mentoring kids,
try serving in your church’s nursery or a special needs ministry like Reflectors at Faith Church in Dyer.

If you’re looking to volunteer during the summer,
try Connect Christian Camp in Crown Point, IN.

Service doesn’t have to be complicated. Rake leaves for your neighbor or shovel their driveway during the winter. Some churches also organize their own service days. And there’s frequently opportunities to serve at school: helping at fundraisers, working phone-a-thons, or chalking up Park Place.

2020: School year in review and in memoriam

Just about everyone can agree that this year has been unexpectedly wild like no other. From the world shutting down, to “murder hornets,” to numerous Illiana events getting canceled and reimagedined.

Fine arts festival

Athletics weren’t alone in being canceled when classes moved online in the spring of 2020. Illiana’s annual spring fine arts festival was canceled. Fortunately, Fine Arts Committee sponsors Mr. Jeff DeVries and Mr. Jim Kamphuis had the idea to create the first ever digital “Varia,” a fine arts anthology that included links to videotaped performance arts; in other years,

the “Varia” has been a physical book displaying entries. This year, unlike any other, no judging was able to take place, but entries were able to be displayed. People were able to enjoy performances from the comfort and safety of their own home. The move to e-learning also cancelled the field trip for fine arts committee members, a celebration of the festival and showcase.



The print “Jelly” by senior Damaris Dumont was one of many featured in the digital “Varia”. Photo courtesy of Jim Kamphuis

Athletics

Unfortunately for Illiana athletes, along with Illiana moving to e-learning for the end of 3rd and 4th quarter came the abrupt end to their sport season, some before their season even began. Baseball, basketball, track and field, golf, and tennis all had their seasons cut short. So far athletics are currently able to take place in the 2020-2021 school year, though with numerous new protocols.

Sadie Hawkins

Illiana has recently begun offering a Sadie Hawkins dance. What was set to take place in the fall of the 2020-21 school year had to be cancelled due to county health restrictions. Student council had to devise other ways to get the student body involved. Some hoped it would be rescheduled for the spring, but it seems unlikely



Class of 2020 graduates show off their caps and gowns before heading off to graduation. Photo courtesy of Taylor Benes

2020’s graduation

Instead of having an in-person graduation ceremony as originally planned on June 5, Illiana’s graduation ceremony was pushed back to the day after Prom Aug. 1 and then Aug 2. because of inclement weather. The only people allowed in Illiana’s gymnasium were the graduates, Principal Mr. Peter Boonstra, board members and teachers, chambers sing-

ers, the top ten students from the class of 2021, parents of graduates, . Though, originally, family members were to be allowed in the gymnasium if they had a ticket from a graduate. The ceremony was also livestreamed on Facebook. All attendants and class members of 2020 were required to wear masks. To celebrate after the ceremony, Illiana set off fireworks.



In August, director Jeff DeVries donned robe and crown to announce via video the Christmas play and Winter Festival to interested students. Photo courtesy of Jeff DeVries

Fall play

A cloud of uncertainty surrounded the fall play as there were regulations and limits on how many people would be able to be on state or attend. Then, on Jul 17. Director Mr. Jeff DeVries posted a video parodying Hamilton’s “You’ll Be Back” announcing a radio show and winter festival. The radio show began streaming on Dec. 12 and the festival took place on Dec 11.



Students got creative with their masks, some having them match their dresses or suits. Photo by Matthew Huizenga

Prom

Unfortunately, prom had to be postponed from its original spring date to July 31. Prom typically takes place in Munster, but Illiana hosted it in the commons this year and held the dance

in the ARC for the first time. Masks were required in order for the festivities to take place, from entry until attendants sat at their table and any time they weren’t seated. After eating dinner and hearing from student speakers, students headed down to the ARC to dance the evening away.

Looking forward to 2021

Here are some things that Illiana students and staff are looking forward to and hoping for next year:

- Senior James DeVries:** “Mr. Veldman’s second Economics class.”

Mrs. Mary Lagerwey, Bible Teacher: “My niece will be getting married and I’m hoping to go to the wedding.”

Senior Maddy Hoogstra: “I’m looking forward to being at college and meeting new people and being independent. I’m looking forward to being done with all of my college decisions.”

Senior Trey Sederstrom:
- “More freedom restrictions-wise. We could actually have concerts for the bands and choirs. We could have a cookout. That’s what I’m looking forward to.”

Junior Ryne Mulder: “Gym, outside activities, summer.”

Senior Tim Ipema: “Not wearing my mask.”

Junior Ally Tillema: “Some family friends are getting married. They’re really good at planning stuff out, so I’m excited about that.”
- Senior Damaris Dumont:** “The excitement of the unknown.”

Junior Kevin Truong: “Plays and musicals and homecoming.”

Senior Emily Rozendal: “Graduating and starting a new portion of my life.”

Miss Erinn Behn, PE Teacher: “Running the Chicago Marathon.”

Senior Jake VanderZee: “Just Purdue in general.”

StuCo Cookouts

When classes went virtual in March, the spring cookout disappeared along with the classes. People weren’t allowed to gather anywhere, let alone at school to eat a meal together. However, for the fall cookout in 2020, it had seemed that it would be able to take place up until short-

ly before it was set to take place. In the end, the cookout had to be cancelled just a few days prior due to new restrictions that had been put in place by the state and county and as a safety precaution. Students can only hope that conditions may allow for the spring cookout to take place.

Ranking the Top Ten Worst Christmas Songs

Aubrey Porter
Reporter

Gracie Jania
Reporter

Hailey Ross
Reporter

1. “Where are You, Christmas?” (Taylor Momsen) - It may just be the fact that Momsen’s voice in this song is so pitchy that bugs us the most, but we can’t stand this song when the scene rolls around in “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.” Can we fill in those deafening two minutes by giving Jim Carrey more screen time?

2. “Dominick the Donkey” (Lou Monte) - Though this one was a bop in fifth grade, it is no longer. It will get stuck in your head for hours (we know from experience) and the hee-haws are enough to be nightmare fuel.

3. “Believe” (Josh Groban) - The way Groban sings this song irritates us to no end. Although it is a popular song in the movie “The Polar Express,” we never listen to it and every time the song comes on at the end of the movie we immediately turn it off.

4. “The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don’t Be Late)” - Alvin, Theodore, and Simon are not good singers, nor are they good songwriters. Who wants a hula-hoop for Christmas?

5. “Happy Holidays” (Peggy Lee) The dullness of the lyrics and Peggy Lee’s voice work together to make this song annoying and repetitive.

6. “Grandma got Run Over by a Reindeer” (Elmo & Patsy) - We don’t understand the point of this song. If you look at the lyrics the song is kind of depressing too; the family just assumes that Grandma is dead and continues with a cheerful, upbeat, and annoying tune.

7. “Santa Baby” (Madonna) This song, while beyond slow and creepy, is also very old fashioned and just way too ubiquitous. Enough already.

8. “Run Rudolph Run” (Chuck Berry) – Every time we hear this song it reminds us of the movie “Home Alone.” It is played in the scene where the family is running through the airport, and makes us stressed whenever I hear it.

9. “Carol of the Bells” (Mannheim Steamroller) - This song is just plain scary. It definitely doesn’t give us cozy Christmas vibes.

10. “Happy Christmas (War is Over)” (John Lennon) This song is too slow and outdated, and the children’ chorus singing in the background is extremely annoying.

From Trash to Treasure: Three DIY Ornaments that Won’t Cost you a Cent

Does your Christmas tree need a refresh? Do you need to make a small Christmas gift for a friend or family member? Do you want to give someone a gift without spending any money? It seems impossible— can it be done? Yes, it can! Here are three ornaments you can easily make with things laying around the house.

Three kinds of mixed nut ornaments

Olivia Oostema
Arts Editor

Materials

Snowman: white acrylic paint, a paintbrush, a hazelnut and a pecan (both still in their shells), scissors, string, a black permanent marker, glue, and felt (red, orange, black).

Christmas tree: green acrylic paint, a paintbrush, an almond (still in its shell), scissors, string, glue, brown felt, a mini yellow pompom, and gold trim.

Christmas llama: pink acrylic paint, a paintbrush, a walnut (still in its shell), scissors, string, a black permanent marker, glue, pink wool roving, and two mini pasta shells.

Instructions

Snowman: Glue a hazelnut on top of a pecan. Paint both nuts white. Draw on the face and buttons of the snowman. Wrap a piece of red felt around the snowman’s neck for a scarf. Glue in place. Cut a triangle nose out of orange felt, and glue it onto the face. Roll up a black felt rectangle into a cylinder shape, and glue it onto a black felt circle. Glue both onto the snowman’s head, and add a loop of string for hanging it on the tree.

Christmas tree: Paint an almond green. Glue a mini yellow pom pom on top of the tree. Roll a piece of brown felt into a thin cylinder and glue at the base of the tree as a trunk. Wrap gold trim around the tree and glue in place. Finally, glue a loop of string onto the

tree, so it can be hung.

Christmas llama: Glue two mini pasta shells onto a walnut for ears. Paint the walnut and shells pink. Draw a face on the walnut with a permanent marker. Add a tuft of wool roving to form the llama’s bangs. Finally, glue a loop of string onto the llama.

Now go out there and make something memorable. Feel free to get creative by altering the design or adding your own personal touch. And remember, the amount of money you spend on a gift or decoration isn’t equal to how much it’s worth to the person who receives it. And, if crafting is not your strongest suit, you can laugh about how your ornaments turned out with loved ones-- and that’s a gift for everyone.



Photo by Handmade Charlotte

Snowman bottle cap ornament

Materials: hot glue gun, three bottle caps, white paint, a paint brush, scissors, two small pieces of ribbon (one for scarf and one for hanging), black and orange thin-tipped markers or pens, and a button (optional).

Instructions:

1. Gather three bottle caps and place them open-side-up on the table. Paint them white. Glue them together side by side.
2. Draw the eyes, nose, and mouth of the snowman onto the uppermost cap. Draw buttons on the middle cap.
3. Tie a ribbon between the top two caps to make a scarf for the snowman. Glue in place.
4. Finally, glue a ribbon onto the back of the snowman’s head, so it can be hung from the tree.



Photo by Amy Latta Creations

Cork red-nosed reindeer ornament

Materials: hot glue gun, scissors, two and a half corks for the body, fabric scraps for the tail and ears, two googly eyes, a small piece of jute for antlers, a red bead for a nose, and a ribbon to hang the ornament with.

Instructions:

1. Gather your three corks. Use a knife to cut one cork into fourths with a lengthwise and a widthwise cut. These pieces should be equal in size and shape because they will form

the legs of the reindeer. Glue the legs onto the whole cork (not cut) which will be the reindeer’s body.

2. Cut another cork in half widthwise and glue it onto the top of the body cork.

3. Now, attach the googly eyes, red nose, ears, antlers, and tail. (See image for further clarification.)

4. Attach a ribbon to the back of the reindeer, so it can be hung from the tree.



Photo by The Homeless Finch blog



Photo Courtesy of Erin Behn
The Vikings plays a loose man-to-man defense as the other team brings the ball upcourt.

Boys basetball continues improvement

Sophia Thompson

Sports Editor

The varsity boys basketball team has played 4 games so far this season and has a record of 2-2. The Vikings are looking for ways to improve from last year. “We want to show a lot more passion and desire on defense. We want it to define

us, so that’s what we are really focusing on,” said junior Adam Gibson. The team is still adapting to not playing in front of a large audience like usual, and like everyone else, they have new protocols to follow in the era of the pandemic. And, at points, members of the basketball program have had to quarantine. However, they are not letting COVID ruin their season.

Despite rough start, girls’ chemistry strong

Sophia Thompson

Sports Editor

The Illiana girls basketball team has been working on improving their performance after a bumpy start to their season. Senior Mia Cruz said, “We have seen so much improvement from the start of the season. We have really bonded as a team and have gotten comfortable playing with each other. I’m really excited to see what we can do going further into the

season.” The team captured its first win against Calumet Christian. They have unfortunately lost every other game they have played so far. But the team has not lost hope. Junior Natalie Scott said, “It was nice to have a win under our belt. Winning a game definitely gave us more confidence as a team.” The girls hope to continue improving throughout the rest of the season. Coach Lisa Blocker said, “Fundamentally we have grown stronger everyday. I hope that we can continue to progress in our game and work together as a team.” The girls have bonded this season. Senior Marissa Dykstra said, “I really enjoy the team this year. All the girls get along and we have really fun times. Hopefully we can grab another win this season.”



Photo courtest of Justin VanDrunen
Senior Justin VanDrunen blocks his opponent from dribbling up to the net while his teammates run to help him.



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Illiana wrestler fights to put opponant to the ground as his coaches anticipate and encourage him from the sideline.

“Our team has had COVID interferences; we take [the virus] very cautiously and have guys ready to go no matter who goes out because of quarantine,” said Gibson. Assistant coach Caleb Jonkman said, “I think Christmas break will be a good time to regroup physically and health wise and come back in late December and early January ready to rally together.”

Wrestling shows promising future

Madie Ceponis

News Editor

Wrestling season of 2020-2021 has begun with 13 wrestlers and two coaches Varsity Coach, Dean Bosman and JV Coach Dave DeBoer. This season has more rules and regulations because of COVID19, but the wrestlers are still able to play. They must sanitize the shoes and hands before stepping onto the mat, they have smaller meets, and a

limited number of teams can be in the gym. So far the Vikings have had one dual meet that they lost by one point, one quad that they won 3-0, and one tri-team meet but lost by one point. “Our Coaches have done a remarkable job setting up competitions for our team as it is increasingly difficult to find teams that are not either cancelled or quarantined,” junior Faith VanderLaan said. “And with that our team works well together and enjoys every second of the mat time as possible.” Junior Ben Bruinsma said, “I am 4-2 with two pins as of December 7. This is by far my best year yet.” The team played in a quad match at Thomas Edison High School, taking first place against three other teams from around Indiana. Wrestlers that took a win were Faith VanderLaan, Alex Bosman, Ben Ritzema, Brandon Boone, Ben Bruinsma, and Stephann Jean-Phillipe.

Auction raises \$60,000 for atheltic department despite COVID obstacles

Madie Ceponis

News Editor

Illiana Christian High School’s Athletic Boosters ran their annual auction on Nov. 21 , but for the first time the auction was virtual because of COVID19.

Typically the auction has both a silent and a live auction. In a virtual setting, those pieces had slightly different looks. A website link posted items up for bid. In the silent auction, people could bid on pictured items for a block of time and other bids for the items were hidden. In the

live auction, people placed bids on items and could see what others were bidding. Though the move to a virtual setting was new to the school, it was not new to the owner of the auctioneer, Jonathan Kraft, who ran the auction. “Illiana had to take

pictures of all the items,” said athletic director assistant Bonnie Trepton, “and there were over 100 items in total. After the pictures were uploaded and everything was set, the process went very smoothly. About 200 people signed up and bid on some items.”

“It certainly had benefits from being online,” added athletic director Darren DeBoer. “It reached a new group that either did not want to attend the auction in-person or those that are too far.” The auction raised \$60,000 for the athletic programs.

Male Athlete of the Month

Senior Justin VanDrunen has participated in Illiana’s basketball program throughout his entire high school career. This is his second year playing on the varsity team. Justin plays small forward for the team. “Justin has become more of a vocal leader,” said teammate Adam Gibson, a junior. “For example, he will let you know how to fix what you’re doing and be honest with you while also being encouraging.” Assistant coach Caleb Jonkman said, “Justin has taken his defense giftedness to the next level in terms of his ability to guard and be our defensive leader. I think he’s done a great job of growing in his understanding and positioning on both sides of the ball.”



Female Athlete of the Month

Sophomore Cameron Evers, has stepped up as a leader on the varsity girls basketball team. She has played on varsity as a wing since freshman year. Senior Marissa Dykstra said, “She is a good encourager and takes charge bringing the ball down the court each time. She’s really good at defense and is not afraid to get aggressive.” “Cameron has been a consistent player for us on offense and defense so far this season. She has really stepped up as a leader on the floor,” said coach Lisa Blocker.



Editorial

Turning mourning to morning: giving joy victory

Congratulations! The end of 2020 is nearing and 2021 looms in the near future. We’ve made it this far! Memes and posts about how awful 2020 was have grown all the more popular on social media as the year has gone on. From forest fires to global pandemics, to countless natural disasters, or the numerous to the civil unrest, 2020 has wreaked more than its fair share of havoc. But, at some point, we must accept the grief that 2020 brought and use it to shape the upcoming year.

Psalms 30:5 says, “Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.” Pastor and executive editor of desiringGod.org David Mathis discusses the idea that the mourning does not have victory, but the morning does. In his article Joy Comes Through the Mourning, Mathis discusses how God turns mourning into dancing. “God takes our morning, and turns it into dancing. That’s the final word,” he says, “not the other way around... God removes the garment of our weeping and clothes us with joy.”

Oh, how the mourn-

ing has dragged on for what feels like decades. Joy, victory, happiness will have the resounding note; joy will be our grand finale.

Though it may feel like 2020 and all of its anguish has dragged on for more than its allotted time, it will end. We must believe that our days will get better and that our tears will

It may feel easier to fall into despair and to let it win, but the easier choice isn’t always the correct one.

give way to laughter.

Still, though, we must use our grief to grow. As a community, we must look at what we could have done better or what we could have prevented and use it to help create a better future. In order for things to get better, we had to have started from a lower point.

Author Victor Hugo presents this idea in his novel Les Miserables when Jean Valjean carries an unconscious Marius through the French sew-

ers and must descend into the sewage before ascending to life and freedom. Valjean descends into filth and the unknown before he can ascend into glory.

I think we can all agree that we have descended into the filth, given all of the horrible things that have happened this year. Of course, there is the possibility that 2021 won’t get any better. But we must continue through the filth, as Valjean did. We must have faith, even as we sink, that the next step will begin our ascent. We have to practice resurrection.

We can either succumb to sewage and let ourselves be taken in by it, or we can forge on. Before it gets better, it very well may get worse. But, whenever we feel we have reached the end

of our rope, God will provide some more.

A very popular idea among motivational speakers is that grief and hardship make us stronger. The more we can pull ourselves up out of the grief, the stronger we become. It gives us character and hope. If things can get worse, there must be the possibility of things getting better. Therefore, we cannot let the hardships win. It may feel easier to fall into despair and to let it win, but the easier choice isn’t always the correct one.

2 Peter 3:8-9 says, “8 But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. 9 The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake...”

The mourning will turn to morning. Though we may not know when, we must have faith that it will. Our descension will turn into ascension. God has promised, so it will be so. Amen.

Christmas brings peace, reminds Christians of God’s faithfulness

From quarantining away from loved ones to dealing with political division and hatred, 2020 has been a trying year for everyone. And as the year draws to a close, it’s likely we’ll hear people saying how glad they are 2020 is ending. But the problem isn’t with the year itself—the problem is with our world. Some years our lives cruise by without disruption, and we pay little attention to the bad things we see on the news (if we watch at all). During other years, like 2020, reality hits us like a wave colder than Lake Michigan in December, and we’re chilled by our world’s sorry condition.



Olivia Oostema
Co-Editor in Chief

We’ve lived through a global pandemic like none of us have seen in our lifetimes, and we’ve dealt with widespread political hatred. But there’s a bit of light shining through the darkness.

While we’ve seen looting, we’ve also seen peaceful protests. While we’ve seen widespread unemployment, we’ve also seen a 20% increase in people volunteering. We’ve witnessed a virus kill over 1.5 million people worldwide, but we’ve also observed the dedication of healthcare workers and scientists. Yes, our world is really messed up, and we’ve seen that up close and personal this year, but we can’t despair, withdraw under the warm, dark covers of make believe and wait for better days. We can see love at work mending division, helping others, and working for the greater good. Even more so, we should be that love at work.

As Christians, we know that human love is flawed. We don’t need to look far to see people tiring of helping others or giving up in their quest to end division. We know we’re not perfect, but we have a reason not to despair. The Christmas season reminds Christians that we have a hope many don’t: a sureness of God’s love. We can see the love of God entering our sorry world in the form of a baby to save us.

So, we can have faith even in the darkest moments that God loves us. He will never leave us nor forsake us. And because we have confidence in his love, we can mirror it into our dark world. We can let the other Costco shopper have the last jumbo package of toilet paper. We can choose to wear our masks because we care for the health of others. We can volunteer to help those who need a warm meal. We love others because God loves us.

As the year comes to a close, and 2021 approaches with new beginnings, let’s learn from this year, and other years to come, to love like Christ and, in even the littlest of ways, make next year better.

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Echo)))

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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.

Match the favorite and least favorite Christmas song to the editor

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| | A. “(No Place like) Home for the Holidays” |
| | B. “Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer” |
| 1. Rachel Bultema | C. “Wonderful Christmertime” |
| 2. Madie Ceponis | D. “All I Want for Christmas is You” |
| 3. Olivia Oostema | E. “I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus” |
| 4. Sophia Thompson | F. “Santa, Tell Me” |
| 5. Mr. DeVries | G. “Hallelujah” |
| | H. Bing Crosby’s entire Christmas oeuvre |
| | I. “Santa Baby” |

Answer key: 1. A, D 2. F, C 3. G, I 4. D, B 5. H, D

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