



Students pose for a photo during a Loud Crowd event.

Photo courtesy of Illiana Christian High School Facebook

## Music department holds in-person concerts

Gracie Jania  
Reporter

Illiana's bands and choirs came together on February 18 to have their first in person concert of 2021. They performed in the gym rather than the ARC to allow for more space while also following the COVID restrictions such as requiring masks, using socially distanced seating, and limiting crowd size.

According to Mrs. Kathy Sliemers, Illiana's choir director, risers were not used, which allowed for more space between the singers, and each student wore his or her mask while singing. They also played handbells to minimize air exchange.

Sliemers and the choir weren't expecting to participate in a live concert, but they stepped up to the challenge and prepared for the big night.

Sophomore Angelina Daniel, a choir member, said, "It was a change from not having to record to singing in person."

The choir was able to practice by warming up their voices, learning the diction of songs, and practicing their hand bells every day, according to freshman Maya Flipse, a choir member.

The band also performed in the concert after recording most of their previous concerts this year.

"[The band] all played really musically and committed fully," said Mrs. Rachel Monroe, the band director.

Callie Boss, a junior band member, said that the band was "looking forward to having an in person concert and were more excited about it."

Senior James DeVries, another band member, said, "The concert felt more refreshing as I, along with my other classmates, were finally able to perform in person."

Monroe said, "Music is such an important part of our souls... and is worth doing."

## Yellow alert increases capacity, allows for Loud Crowd

Gracie Jania  
Reporter

Illiana's first and last schoolwide Loud Crowd game of this year was on Friday, Feb. 12. But different from these games in the past, alterations were made to the crowd's format for following COVID guidelines.

Since Lake County is now at the yellow alert level, 25% capacity (450 people) could attend the game, making it available for Illiana students to get tickets, as well as family and

community members.

To follow safety precautions, areas on the bleachers were taped off, each about 4.5-5 feet apart, to keep people distanced. Any attendants of the game were required to wear their mask the entire time, excluding those participating in the game.

The Loud Crowd had planned a game for the first semester, but never had the opportunity to execute it.

"This is our one and only chance to make it happen," said Miss Erinn Behn, a Loud

Crowd Committee organizer, before the Friday, Feb. 12 home game.

Mr. Darren DeBoer, Illiana's athletic director, also acted to put this night together. "I'm excited that there's an opportunity to have [the game] this year," DeBoer said. "It's about making the best out of a bad situation."

Senior Ben Ritzema, a Loud Crowd Committee member, said, "We are so excited because we finally have a chance for a Loud Crowd this year with all that has been go-

ing on."

Sophomore Audrey Girolimon, a cheerleader, said that she enjoyed cheering to the Loud Crowd on Feb. 12 because "they were really hyped up and even the parents were more excited than usual."

The cheerleaders and game/Loud Crowd organizers weren't the only ones who got something out of the Loud Crowd experience. Sophomore Zeke Van Essen, a basketball player on the varsity team, said that the Loud Crowd brings "energy and intensity" to the game.

## Illiana learns Black history through clubs, field trips, chapel

Aubrey Porter  
Reporter

Black History Month for Illiana consisted of many festivities and celebrations throughout the school. These celebrations ranged from planning big events such as field trips, to altering the small parts of our day such as homeroom announcements or break time.

Mr. Matt DeBoer, science teacher and club sponsor of the club "Looking Differently," has worked with his club members to organize a few events revolving around Black History Month. They have collected poems from African-American authors and have had different students read them during morning announcements. They also created a playlist that played in the commons on Thursdays, consisting of songs to celebrate people of color.

According to DeBoer, the club will be focusing on Black history not

only in February, but for the next few months through films and music, and they hope that their actions will bring people together all year long.

Mr. Jeff White, history teacher

and basketball coach, has taken students to various locations in past years such as John Marshall Law School as well as a presentation on the Underground Railroad. Unfor-

tunately, due to the pandemic, both trips have been cancelled. However, sometime this April White plans to take 40 students on a day trip to roughly 10 sites on the South side of Chicago, but he prefers to keep the stops a surprise.

The upstairs hallway between the academic wing and the commons sports a special Black History Month quilt put together by teacher Bethany DeVries. The quilt is surrounded by information about four celebrated African American quilters who helped define the art form.

Chapels during February focused on the topic of living with courage, and the Chapel Committee used the opportunity to tell stories of various Black Americans such as Sojourner Truth who showed courage in confronting racism and segregation. The last chapel of the subtheme included a TED talk that reminded students that Black history is American history, not just a footnote to it.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

A quilt made by teacher Bethany DeVries and based on the work of Rosie Lee Tompkins hangs in the hall.



## Great service makes for great vacations

Mexico has long been known as a place with wonderful resorts on pristine beaches, and that is certainly true. We as a family love going to resorts in Mexico; to us these resorts seem like our second home,

or at least it feels that way. But what makes the resorts in Mexico so special, more than the beaches or the sunshine, is the people.

We think of it as our second home because the

resorts we go to are our family resorts and our favorite one is Dreams, Tulum. The workers there make us feel so welcomed as friends rather than customers.

When we get settled in we have a schedule to keep, we go to breakfast pretty early and then hit the pool until volleyball at 3, Zumba at 4, and we head up after that to get dressed for dinner. After dinner there is usually an entertainment show that we watch as a family, and the day restarts again the next morning.

At breakfast we have the best service. Yeraldi is our usual server, and ever since we met her, she has been great to us. Every day is a special surprise. Yeraldi knows just what we enjoy eating every breakfast (including avoiding Nutella entirely!). She even puts out candy for my brothers on the table and she got us all gifts for Valentine's Day. She is our main reason to go to breakfast every day.

We usually have lunch by the pool so the managers—Rolando, Josue and Salvador—usually help us. They are a great bunch and always make sure we have what we need and are happy. Usually when we are at the pool, we have Ana or Daniel, who make sure we drink water all day long to stay hydrated. They are always bubbly and happy to see us.

After lunch, it's time for volleyball; at 3 everyday, either at the pool or the beach, we play games that are run by the entertainment crew. Now that crew makes a good impression on the resort. They are the group that runs all the activities. They are such a fun group of five, always happy and always wanting to get everyone involved. They also run Zumba at 4 on the beach to provide a good little workout every day.

By the time dinner rolls around, we are dressed up in formal attire. We go to dinner and enjoy the family time. And we get to enjoy the resort's shows—fire shows, light shows, dancing groups, and more.

After so many days that we stay, we never want to leave because all of these people have made such an impact on our lives. We will never forget them and the memories we had with them. Resorts are great, but it is ultimately the people who make a resort feel like home.



Madie Ceponis

News Editor



Photo courtesy of Caleb Dutton's Facebook page

The cover for the song Caleb Dutton created with Illiana Bible 5 students.

## Bible 5 students create song with Caleb Dutton

Rachel Bultema

Feature Editor

Mr. Caleb Dutton, a worship leader at Faith Church and aspiring song writing, released on Feb. 19, a song he wrote with Mr. Davids's first-semester Bible 5 students.

Dutton said he finds high school seniors' perspectives on life unique, which led him to want to create a song with them. He believes that the pandemic has been especially difficult on them, and that they've lost a lot because of it.

Dutton later shared the idea of creating a song with students with Illiana teacher Mr. Davids after

reading Jeremiah 29:9-10 and wanting to write a song on it. Davids' class worked together to write lyrics for the song during class a few days with Dutton.

Later, Dutton's producer had the idea to ask the students to stomp and clap on the last chorus. Dutton loved the idea and managed to snag the ARC to record the stomps. Though, he let the students know ahead of time that they may not be able to be used in the final cut.

Dutton asked senior Jenna O'Brien and Illian alumnus Ms. Josie Van Drunen to sing background harmony as they had worked together previously

at Faith Church.

"It was such an honor [to work on the project]. When Caleb came in and said, 'We're going to write this song', I about teared up," said O'Brien, "It's been an honor... and a break from everything going on."

"It was interesting to be a part of something as a group, as a collective body," said senior Jacob VanderZee, a member of Davids's class.

Senior Emily Rozendal, member of Davids's class, said, "I like that we wrote it. I learn a lot through my songs. And I cope with music, so I think this will have a good impact."

## Illiana bands participate in ISSMA, await scores

Sophia Thompson

Sports Editor

Illiana's instrumental music program has joined in the Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA) contest for 2021. The contest was up in question for Illiana because no one knew if it was going to be possible because of the COVID restrictions.

The Wind Ensemble will be

competing in the highest category for the State level of ISSMA, performing two classics, "Variations on a Korean Folk Song" and "On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss."

"On a Hymnsong" is difficult because the story behind the piece represents the loss of Horatio G. Spafford's four daughters who were in a boat accident in 1873," said band director Rachel

Monroe. "Spafford was a Chicago area Presbyterian who is credited with penning the text to the popular hymn 'It Is Well With My Soul' in response to losing his daughters. Wind Ensemble hopes to capture the security and joy we have in Christ through our performance of this piece."

Illiana's orchestra is also competing in ISSMA as a full orchestra, with a few musicians

## Illiana mission trips update

Rachel Bultema

Feature Editor

Though they may not be traveling to exotic locations like the Dominican Republic or Uganda as they have in the past, Illiana has two missions trips headed out to Iaeger, West Virginia and Atlanta, Georgia over spring break.

According to Director of Missions Sara Johnson, groups have been kept intentionally small this year, allowing for students to travel in a single minibus and possibly car to their destination.

Interactions with residents of Iaeger and Atlanta will be limited, however, to mitigate contact. Other regulations may vary based on the state regulations at the time. The students headed to Atlanta may have the opportunity to visit the Equal Justice Initiative. Students headed over to Iaeger have the opportunity to work construction for a women's shelter.

Money raised from last year's cancelled trips helped to fund this year's trips alongside with the dodgeball tournament and new missions' merch. On March 6, between the two musical performances, missions will host its 3rd pulled pork party to help raise additional funds.

Despite COVID-19, both teams were able to get an adequate number of volunteers for the trips. However, as of March 17, a few spots are still available.

## Robotics season comes to close

Hailey Ross

Reporter

The robotics season ended on Feb. 6 when Illiana's team faced 48 teams from different schools. The team made it to finals in the tournament, and team members felt good about their performance.

Junior Andrew Kloosterman praised how well team members worked together. He said, "From

the construction, to the programming, to the driving, each person has a meaningful role to play, and it is important that you do your part."

Mr. Vermeulen, the team's sponsor, was proud off the work that the team had done and happy with the season. He said, "I would like to thank the seniors for their leadership, and I'm excited to see the future of Illiana robotics."



Photo courtesy of Jack Rudenga

Freshmen students back in the fall build their robot.





*To celebrate diversity at Illiana, students and faculty made collages during the MLK celebration day to celebrate their heritage and what makes them unique. This mosaic made up of those collages is on display in both the Illiana commons and the Illiana Facebook page. Take a look and try to find a familiar face.*

# Illiana meets with church leadership board members

Aubrey Porter  
Reporter

On Feb 2 board president Mr. Raleigh West and teacher Mr. Lance Davids led a leadership meeting to which all supporting churches of Illiana Christian were invited. One of the topics discussed at this meeting involved how Illiana Christian can work and be closely involved with the churches associated with Illiana. Illiana is already doing this in several ways. First, seniors in Davids’s Bible 5 class wrote a song in collaboration with Caleb Dutton, a worship leader at Faith Church in Cedar Lake. This song was performed at Faith Church and was released to the public. Another way that Illiana is getting involved with its churches is through its freight farm, which has been actively donating its vegetables to provide for the Emmanuel CRC foodbank. Aside from these, the attendants at the meeting took note and got feedback on other ways that the school might conjoin more with its churches in common purpose. West and Davids also led

a discussion that took place regarding the failed vote to amend the school constitution that occurred this past fall. The churches as well as the leaders discussed how to interpret the failed vote and what it meant for the school and the community in the future. Lastly, there was a time of prayer for all of Illiana, its churches and its families to close the meeting. Although there were no plans set in stone, this event was a way for both Illiana and church staff to share a time of fellowship as well as their opinions. “It started a conversation,” Davids said. “We wanted to take into account everyone’s input so that we can get ideas from the association as a whole.” “I feel my church is sometimes disconnected from the greater Illiana community. It’s a good idea to get to know all the churches in the area. If Illiana’s providing a way to do that, we should take advantage of that and get to know our brothers in Christ better,” said senior Maddy Hoogstra.



Photo courtesy of Jim Kamphuis  
*For the first time in many years, Illiana’s Valentine’s Day celebrations did not include singing telegrams. like this one enjoyed back in 2015 by student Kassidy Weemhoff.*

## Valentine’s Day celebrations, subdued, survive COVID-19

Hailey Ross  
Reporter

Student Council has a long tradition of helping students to celebrate Valentine’s Day, the day of love that comes in all shapes and sizes, by letting students buy flowers, candy, and singing telegrams for each other. This year, however, found much more subdued celebrations on Feb. 11. COVID brought some new restrictions that the Student Council had to consider this year. For example, certain types of candy like suckers didn’t meet health depart-

ment restrictions, so instead students could order mini tubes of M&Ms or Airheads. At first sales started slowly, but by Wednesday, the final day before delivery, sales picked up significantly. The candy was delivered to students in homerooms along with a note from the giver. “Getting people candy brings fun to Valentine’s Day,” said junior Adam Gibson. “It is fun to see your classmates embarrassed or uncomfortable. I received candy and it was pretty decent.” The tradition of singing telegrams fell by the wayside this year

because of a lack of students stepping forward to offer their services. “I was sad that there were none, and it was my first year planning it, so I wanted one in my classes. Plus there were students who were sad about it, and I felt bad for them” said Student Council sponsor, Mrs. Kelly Aardsma. “I was very sad [about the missing singing telegrams],” said junior Danielle Bonnema. “It would have been fun to see.” The money that was raised from candy sales went to help fund Student Council activities.



# Using the five love languages to show you care

Taking a deeper look at the love languages and using them to maintain healthy relationships



Photo courtesy of VerywellMind.com

## The origins of the five love languages, what they mean

**Olivia Oostema**  
Arts Editor

The five love languages describe the primary ways people show love to one another. Dr. Gary Chapman, an

author and minister, discovered the five after analyzing years of notes he took while counseling couples. He explained that understanding and practicing the concepts in his book *The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts* is

the key to healthy relationships. The five show the primary ways people show love to others, not the only way. The book emphasizes becoming multilingual in the love languages to make different kinds of relation-

ships work well. Chapman's book emphasizes learning another person's love language over teaching others to speak yours. According to Ashley Feters, writing for The Atlantic, this aspect of the love languages has been

overlooked since the book's publishing, and the focus has become more self-focused. People have come to ask *What can people do to make my life better?* instead of asking *How can I show my love to others in ways that make sense to them?*

## Defining the five love languages

### Words of affirmation

Writing someone an encouraging note, complimenting someone's taste in music, and cheering someone on from the bleachers are all ways of using words of affirmation. As the National Science Foundation suggests that 80% of a person's thoughts are negative, using words to support and encourage others is powerful. Perhaps consequently, words of affirmation is the most common love language.

### Giving/receiving gifts

Gifts can be a go-to way to show affection to someone. People who have the love language of gifts can get a bad *rap* for seeming shallow, but this belittling attitude stems from a misunderstanding: it's not about the money. Presents, whether big or small, are reminders of someone's affection. They're proof you thought of someone as well as their interests and likes to give them something to make them smile or improve their day.

### Acts of service

Helping make a meal, running errands for someone, and mowing the lawn are a few acts of service. Acts of service not only show you love someone, they also are productive in getting everyday tasks out of the way. And as soon as the chores are done, there's more time to be spent together.



Photo courtesy of Oprahmag.com

### Quality time

Traveling to a new place, watching a movie, taking a walk, and drinking coffee together are a few simple ways to spend one-on-one quality time with loved ones. But take note-- quality time requires that you be intentional and give your undivided attention to the other person-- that means no phones allowed!

### Physical touch

Holding a loved one's hand, kissing them goodbye, or rubbing their back after a long day are a few ways to physically show you care. Physical touch can release the feel-good chemical oxytocin, which boosts your immune system, as well as endorphins, which relieve pain and stress.

## Tips for learning another person's love language

It can be hard to learn another person's love language-- especially if you're not sure what theirs is. Luckily, people tend to show love to others in ways they want to receive love. Moreover, just listening to the needs of someone you love first is a crucial part of making relationships work. Initially it can be awkward trying to show your love by words of affirmation if you're an acts of service type of person, but it's ultimately worthwhile. Focusing on another person's needs by learning their love language can increase empathy, foster personal growth, and strengthen bonds.

If you want to learn more about the five love languages or discover your own love language with a short quiz, check out [5lovelanguages.com](https://5lovelanguages.com).



# COVID19 vaccine myths and facts

## Looking at benefits of the coronavirus vaccine

Aubrey Porter  
Reporter

Hailey Ross  
Reporter

The newly formulated COVID vaccine has gotten a bad rap from many individuals. Many often jump to the conclusion that we don't need it, or that the virus is "not that bad." Some even suggest that we need to all get the virus so that we won't be contagious. These may all seem like reasonable statements, however they all focus on one thing: the negatives. We need to pay attention to the positives. This vaccine is a stepping stone for schools, hospitals, communities, all of America, and the rest of the world to resume where we left off in March of 2020. Here are some good things that this vaccine has brought to US citizens, even after only about 2 months of it being available.

This shot can change someone's life. The highest risk group to the virus is older adults. Many of these adults have been confined to nursing homes, which have not been allowing visitors. This loneliness has been proven to release stress hormones that have in turn led to an increase in deaths amongst these individuals. 28 percent of

all people given the vaccine so far are adults 65 years and older, hopefully allowing there to be fewer restrictions on visiting in nursing homes in the near future.

The workers at the front

States has had over 28 million cases of the virus, and out of the people who got it, half a million lost their life. We need healthy doctors and nurses now more than ever.

Junior Isabella Vander-

worker.

"She definitely feels safer because she was previously risking exposure from her patients," Isabella says. "Most of the clients she works with are pregnant women, whom she es-

has raised the goal to 1.5 million shots per day, and as of Feb. 11, the US distributed 1.6 million shots in a single day. According to Vox, if the US could get the number of vaccinations up to 3 million per day, a figure more and more people are thinking is possible, we could reach herd immunity by late July.

Reaching herd immunity by then relies on, among other things, increased vaccine production and a willingness of people to get the vaccine. Once those things happen, life—including life at school--should return to something we are all more used to.

According to Peter Boonstra, the school will continue to follow CDC and county health department guidelines in the months ahead.

"I don't like the masks and regulations more than anyone else," Boonstra said, "but they are instrumental in reducing the spread of COVID. It will be a joyful day when masks can be removed."

A return to pre-COVID life is almost hard to imagine for some students.

"It will be weird to see everyone's face again," said junior Citlali Sanchez. "We'll just have to learn to adapt to everything again."



Image courtesy of Park Place's Facebook

A resident at Park Place of St. John gets his second dose of the coronavirus vaccine.

lines, doctors, nurses, and EMTs have been exhausted treated COVID cases, and many of them have also become ill with the disease in the last year. As of February 2021, the United

woude, whose mom got the first dose of the Moderna vaccine this past December and her second dose 28 days later, notes that it has had an incredible impact on her job as a healthcare

pecially wants to protect."

Further good news is that the vaccine rollout is starting to improve. President Biden, who had been aiming for the distribution of one million shots per day

## Debunking three prevalent vaccine myths

Based on the latest evidence provided by science, here are three common myths about the vaccine that need to be discredited.

Gracie Jania  
Reporter

**Myth #1: Getting the vaccine is pointless because none of them are 100% effective.** It is true that of the five vaccines being used globally, none is 100 percent effective in preventing the disease. That is also true, however, of other vaccines. Two doses of the measles vaccine is 97% effective and two doses of the mumps vaccine is 88% effective according to the CDC. Yet we use the vaccinations and they have helped to stop the spread of those diseases.

Furthermore, preventing all illness is only one way to measure the vaccine's efficacy. Studies so far have shown that all five COVID vaccines have shown remarkable power in reducing the severity of illness for those will still get the disease. The New York Times reports on one study of 75,000 people who received the vaccina-

tion, not a single person died and only a handful were hospitalized. In comparison, here's the damage COVID has wreaked on a representative group of 75,000 Americans: roughly 150 deaths and several hundred more hospitalizations.

**Myth #2: I don't need the vaccine because only elderly people or those with health conditions are susceptible to COVID.** Elderly people and those with health problems are not the only ones who can be negatively influenced by the contraction of the virus. The types of people listed above are more vulnerable to becoming critically sick than younger and healthier generations, but the latter group can still become ill and hospitalized.

**Myth #3: There is no reason to wear a mask after receiving the COVID vaccine.** No one knows exactly how long the antibodies generated by the vaccine will provide its promised protec-

tion from the virus, so abiding by the rules and wearing a mask for the protection of yourself as well as others is advised. Nor are scientists sure whether or not people with antibodies might still be capable of spreading the disease to others.

Furthermore, wearing a mask encourages others, who have not yet been vaccinated, to do the same. Until we reach herd immunity, the CDC wants to encourage people to wear masks as a simple and effective way to slow the spread of the virus. As COVID spreads through respiratory droplets in the form of talking, sneezing, coughing, etc., masks provide a hedge of protection against these dangers, literally. Though they may not be as effective as other resources, they are proven to reduce the spray of respiratory droplets in which COVID may be found and thus help reduce these exchanges of the virus.

If and when the COVID19 vaccine becomes available to you, are you going to get it?

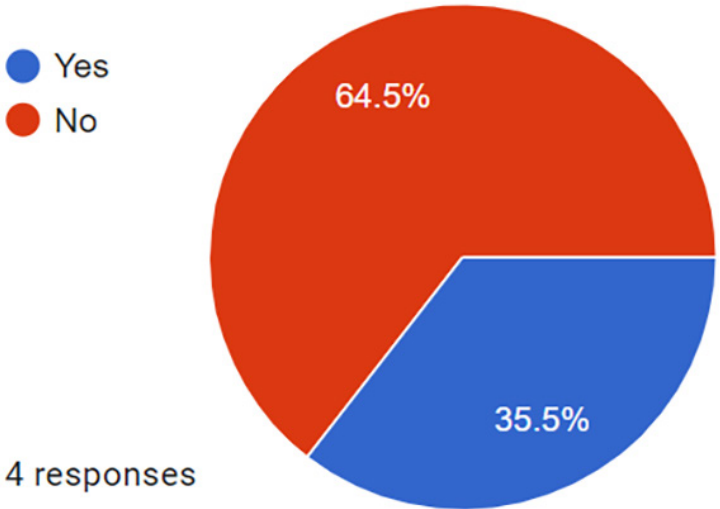


Image created through Google Forms

Illiana students were polled on whether or not they would take the coronavirus vaccine if it were available to them.

Thirty-five and a half percent were willing to get the vaccine while 64.5% were unwilling. According to an AP-NORC poll, 47% of Americans are willing to get vaccinated while 27% of Americans are adamant about refusing to get the vaccine. Others are unsure or waiting on more information.

All information from the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Associated Press National Opinion Research Center (AP-NORC) in Chicago.



# Subscriptions, app alternatives to Netflix, Disney+

Sophia Thompson  
Sports Editor

Netflix, the television and movie streaming service, has grown explosively over the past years. Many people prefer it to cable television because of the price and the options the service offers.

However, over the past months Netflix has been experiencing some dissatisfied customers, after it premiered the movie “Cuties.” Netflix claimed that the movie was critiquing the sexualization of pre-pubescent girls, but many people

say it was encouraging it. The film includes multiple scenes of young girls sexually dancing in provocative clothing. Senator Ted Cruz said, “I urge the Department of Justice to investigate the production and distribution of this film, to determine whether Netflix, its executives, or the individuals involved in the filming and production of ‘Cuties’ violated any federal laws against the production and distribution of child pornography.” The controversy has led many Netflix subscribers to cancel their subscription in a way of “boycotting” Netflix. They also took to social media and soon the

hashtags, “#saveourchildren” and “#cancelNetflix” trended on both Twitter and Instagram.

This opened the opportunity for many people to find a different streaming platform. Here are some other options besides Netflix.

The first one is Amazon Prime Video. This streaming service has 18,405 movies and 1,981 TV shows. That is 13,842 more movies than Netflix. However, Netflix does beat Amazon Prime in the area of t shows. Prime costs \$8.99 a month, the same price as the basic Netflix plan. The subscription has no ads, and there is still the option to down-

load movies and shows to watch offline depending on the plan the subscriber chooses.

Another option over Netflix is Hulu. Hulu is a provider that offers live and on demand tv shows and movies. The standard Hulu subscription has ads, but there is an option to upgrade and pay for the no ad subscription. The standard subscription with ads is \$5.99 a month and the upgraded plan without ads is \$11.99 a month. Hulu also provides a program for students that is only \$1.99 a month with ads.

In addition to Hulu and Amazon Prime Video, another option

is Vudu. Vudu works a little bit differently than the other options. Vudu is not a subscription, but rather a free app watchers can download onto their tv which allows them to rent or digitally buy individual tv shows and movies. This way viewers can pay only for what they want.

YouTube remains an option, however. Though it may not have television episodes, YouTube is home to over a billion videos with 500 videos being uploaded every minute worldwide. It is home to videos ranging from informative to comedic.

*Though Valentine’s Day may be over, it doesn’t mean that the lovey-dovey festivities have to end. Cheesy love songs are a year-round style of music. If you don’t know where to start looking, here are some. . .*

Rachel Bultema  
Feature Editor

## “Hey There Delilah” by The Plain White T’s

Now, Valentine’s Day isn’t just for those in short-distance relationships, but also for those in long-distance relationships. Tom Higgenson of Plain White T’s may have you covered if you’re going long-distance this Valentine’s Day. If you ignore the slightly stalker-y undertones of the song “Hey There Delilah”, it may be the perfect Valentine’s Day song for your long-distance love. Perhaps you hope to be able to get together once circumstances change. Well, remind your paramour of your intentions with “Hey There Delilah” and let him/her know that you want to meet again someday. Or, maybe you just want to ominously let your loved one know that you’re watching him/her. Either way, “Hey There Delilah” might have been written just for you!

## Sweet Caroline by Neil Diamond

Are you looking for a throwback to just about every Loud Crowd and nearly every dance Illiana has hosted? Well, look no further than “Sweet Caroline” by Neil Diamond! Perhaps your sweetheart’s name isn’t Caroline, but you can still let him/her know that you find him/her sweet. Regardless, shouting “Bum bum buh” together will undoubtedly draw you and your sweetheart closer. A little bit of Neil Diamond never hurt anybody. Besides, nothing like nostalgia to make the heart grow fonder!



## “If The World Was Ending” by JP Saxe ft Julia Michaels

Yet another victim claimed by TikTok popularity. This song has flooded all forms of social media in videos cute, serious, and comedic. Maybe you think it’s time for your relationship to take it to the next level: philosophical. Instead of playing other cutes-y songs like “Puppy Love” by Paul

Anka, get your significant other wondering about if they’d run to you during the end of the world. Sure, it may not be as cheesy as songs like “Beautiful Boy” by John Lennon, but who doesn’t enjoy a good philosophical discussion on Valentine’s Day to set the romantic mood?

# Cheesy Love Song Recommendations

## “One Thing” by One Direction



This song is guaranteed to get stuck in any listener’s head for weeks on end. Perhaps, if you play this for the lad or lass you hope to woo, he or she will have you stuck in his or her head for weeks. The line “Get out of my head” is secretly a plea for help because One Direction has had this song stuck in their head for years. Additionally, the song is vague enough to be tailored to any-

one. Perhaps the “one thing” is the way she knows every lyric to every 1D song. Or, maybe it’s how he’ll let you ramble on for hours about the latest drama between Olivia Rodrigo, Joshua Bassett, and Sabrina Carpenter. Either way, this song is just cheesy enough to be cute without having to be a guilty pleasure song, not so cheesy that it’s unsafe for the lactose intolerant.

## “All of Me” by John Legend

John Legend must have known what he was doing when he wrote “All of Me.” From being featured in numerous lovey-dovey videos to being stuck in heads across the globe, “All of Me” has been used to capture just many, many loving moments. It’s not just a romantic song; sure, it can be used to woo your boo, but it fits just about any relationship. Perhaps you want to tell your friends how much they truly mean to you, or show gratitude to your mother for all of her sacrifices; either

way, “All of Me” is the way to go.

Telling your dearest “I give you all of me” will surely get you some flowers and maybe chocolates next Valentine’s Day. But, you gotta make sure you mean those words because your lass or lad might want to get a bit more serious with you if you show up at his or her house blasting this song on your boom box as if you’re John Cusack from the movie “Say Anything”. If you don’t, you might end up like Jack from “Titanic” instead.





# Sports briefs



Photo courtesy of Jenna Dutton  
Senior Logan Vanessen dribbles the ball up the court at first Loud Crowd game of the season against Benton on Feb. 12.

## Boys defense improves from past years

Sophia Thompson  
Sports Editor

Illiana’s boys basketball team celebrated having the opportunity to play in front of a loud crowd at one of their home games Feb. 12 against Benton.

Senior Leighton Foster said, “Having our first and only loud crowd of the season felt awesome. It felt great looking into the

stands and seeing my senior friends who haven’t been able to attend my games there cheering us on.”

The boys have been focusing on defense this season after struggling defensively for the past few years. “Our team is really flourishing on defense, which is something that none of the Illiana teams I’ve been a part of could say. Everyone is playing their part and stepping up,” added Foster.

Junior Adam Gibson said, “Our team is gelling at the right time. We’re coming closer and closer to plating mistake-free basketball and guys are really being confident in shooting and handling the ball. We hope to close our season strong into the postseason.”

“We have improved so much since the beginning of the season and I am super excited to see what we can do in the post season coming up.”

## Girls program shows steady improvement through season

Sophia Thompson  
Sports Editor

The varsity girls basketball season came to end after the team lost its first sectional game, bowing out of tournament play to Bouwen Academy with a score of 42-32.

The team’s final record for the season was 5-16.

Senior Mia Cruz said, “This year’s basketball season ending was bittersweet for me. I loved playing and the game was exciting, but it

gave me a lot of challenges. It took a toll on my body because I hadn’t played basketball for a whole year. I didn’t play freshman year or junior year, but decided to play this year for fun. And it turned out to be so much fun! I loved the girls on the team and everyone was supportive.”

Coach Lisa Blocker said, “I saw a lot of improvement. We were a young team facing giants as competition in the beginning of the year, but with practice and experience, the girls learned a lot

and gained confidence game after game.”

The team also pushed through COVID obstacles. Blocker added, “I’m so proud of these girls for their perseverance. Basketball is a long season sport that is taxing mentally and physically. Tack on COVID ups and downs and constant schedule changes and it’s difficult to stay on task and stay encouraged to play. This team battled until our last game, and I’m proud to see how far they have come since October.”



Photo courtesy of Erin Behn  
Junior Natalie Scott jumps to gain control of the ball at the first sectional game against Bowman Academy.



Photo courtesy of Illiana’s facebook page  
Junior Faith Vanderlaan stands beside her opponents after placing fifth at the State championship.

## Wrestlers overcome adversity, salvage season

Sophia Thompson  
Sports Editor

Illiana’s wrestlers worked through the COVID restrictions to make their season the best they could.

Senior Brandon Boone said, “We had about half of the regular matches we had last year due to a lot of schools not holding in-person learning.”

The team’s record at the

end of the season was 10-10.

The team had to fight through injuries as well. Senior Jacob VanderZee missed the entire season because of a torn ACL and meniscus and the surgery to repair them. The team lost Boone, the other senior on the team, at the beginning of the season from a concussion and he was out for two months. He was able to return to sectionals and capture fourth place, advancing to regionals.

“It was tough but we all managed it very well and were able to get through the season and end strong. We all still had fun and it was a blast being a part of the team,” added Boone.

A highlight of the season was Faith Vanderlaan advancing downstate, where she finished individually in fifth place.

### Male Athlete of the Month

Junior Adam Gibson has been a part of Illiana’s basketball program since he was a freshman. He plays down low for the varsity team.

Adam has been playing amazing. He’s stepped up for the team and played some great defense. He’s also shot lights out in this recent stretch,” said senior Leighton Foster.

Senior Justin VanDrunen said, “Adam is a great role player on the team. He’s confident with the ball, works hard, and gets along with his teammates well.”

### Female Athlete of the Month

Junior Faith Vanderlaan finished her third year of wrestling for Illiana by taking fifth overall at State. Vanderlaan showed her experience and encouragement throughout the season to her team.

Senior Ben Ritzema said, “Faith has a lot of potential and is one of the hardest workers on the team. She never has a bad attitude.”

Another teammate, Brandon Boone, said, “She is very supportive of our team. She works very hard at practice and gives it her all everyday. She gets along well with all of us and is just fun to be around.”



# Editorial

## Who needs New Year’s Resolutions?

As we close out the second month of 2021, how many of us have kept our resolutions that we made 57 days ago? Recent studies have shown that a mere 8 percent of people actually keep their resolutions, meaning 92 percent of people give them up by the end of the year. 80 percent of resolutions will be forfeited already by the end of this month, reports forbes.com. Roughly 25.98% of adult Americans began 2021 not having made any resolutions. But, 55.31% of American adults think their resolutions are attainable and that they can complete them.

For all of the failure, is it worthwhile to make New Year’s resolutions? If only 8 percent of people manage to carry out their resolutions throughout the entire year, should we really bother trying to make resolutions at all?

According to Dr. Sophie Lazarus, an Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center psychologist, no, not for 2021 at least. In the midst of a global pandemic, Dr. Lazarus thinks

adding the stress of chasing possibly unattainable goals is a bad idea. Dr. Lazarus would rather people give themselves grace as we go through difficult times. She does, however, recommend making small changes, if we really want to make resolu-

What matters most is that we recognize our imperfections and that we recognize that, by God’s grace, we can always improve ourselves in one way or another.

tions. Smaller goals are more attainable than large resolutions that seem too daunting to even attempt. They’re easier to track and chart progress, and signs of progress affirm us whereas lack of noticeable progress toward meeting gigantic goals can make us feel frustrated.

Other people argue that making resolutions for the new year is unnecessary, calling January 1st

“irrelevant.” Why does the date of January 1 matter? It puts a deadline on the new year and can start the year on the wrong foot if we don’t immediately succeed.

But, New Year’s resolutions don’t necessarily need to begin exactly on

the new year. They can begin in December, or even in March. For those who find deadlines intimidating, perhaps try making small changes later in the year. February resolutions are just as valid as New Year’s resolutions.

Some people fear that the failure will be too discouraging; forfeiting a resolution already by January 15 can set a bad tone for the new year. Failure

is a possibility, but so is success. Does the possibility of success outweigh the possibility of failure? People looking to make a New Year’s resolution must ask themselves this before making a decision.

Some argue that simply trying to better ourselves is what’s important. Failure or success is secondary; it’s the thought that counts. On the other hand, Jedi Master Yoda says, “Do or do not; there is no try.” What Yoda means is that “trying” doesn’t matter. Failure and success matter more than the act of trying. In the end, there is no one solution to the question of whether or not we should make resolutions. For some, New Year’s resolutions work. For others, it may be better to have April resolutions, or finding another way and time to set goals. It’s a different answer for different people.

What matters most is that we recognize our imperfections and that we recognize that, by God’s grace, we can always improve ourselves in one way or another.

## Dismissing self-love myths; founding ourselves on truth

Self-love has become a buzzword in America. Not to be confused with self-care, which is caring for oneself physically and mentally (often stereotyped as pampered “me-time” after a long day at work), self-love focuses on accepting and loving oneself unconditionally.



Olivia Oostema  
Arts Editor

The Merriam Webster dictionary gives definitions of self-love ranging from “an appreciation of one’s own worth or virtue” and a “proper regard for and attention to one’s own happiness or well-being” to an “inflated love of or pride in oneself.” When one looks at how self-love plays out in our culture, the overall message is this: before you try to love others, love yourself.

Self-love is a popular idea (in the top 1% of frequently looked up words on Merriam-Webster’s website) and can be seen everywhere in our culture. We’re told to look inward to find love and to base our importance on what we think of ourselves instead of what others think. Subscribers to self-love proclaim, “I love me, and that’s what matters most.”

But there’s a major problem with this popular idea: in the words of Dr. Sue Johnson, a clinical psychologist and couples therapist interviewed in the Huffington Post, “We cannot define ourselves within our own skin... that’s not how people work.” She adds that we as humans find who we are by looking into the eyes of those who we love. Self-love depends on first being loved by others; it stems from relationships. It doesn’t work backwards.

In recent years, the idea of self-love has been taken to the extreme and become quite ridiculous. One woman in Italy married herself (with guests, a cake, a ring, and a honeymoon) in a show of “sologamy”, and since then, more women have followed. Besides showing a variety of issues within our culture, extreme self-love (aka narcissism) pushes the narrative that you need to love yourself first of all and above all. And if that means marrying yourself, so be it. Who are we to judge?

Honestly, it’s sad to see people struggling to find love and looking in all the wrong places. Yes, everyone needs to have a basic sense of self-love: please don’t think individuals shouldn’t love who God created them to be. But loving ourselves is not the end-all be-all of our lives.

1 John 4:10, 11 says “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

As Christians, we’re not called to love ourselves first or most. We’re called to follow Jesus’s example of loving others first of all and most of all-- even our enemies. And contrary to self-love, we can’t love ourselves because we are worthy or virtuous of our own accord-- because we aren’t. We can love ourselves because when we look in the mirror we see someone who God created and calls His child. And that’s of much more worth than anything self-love could offer.

the

Echo)))

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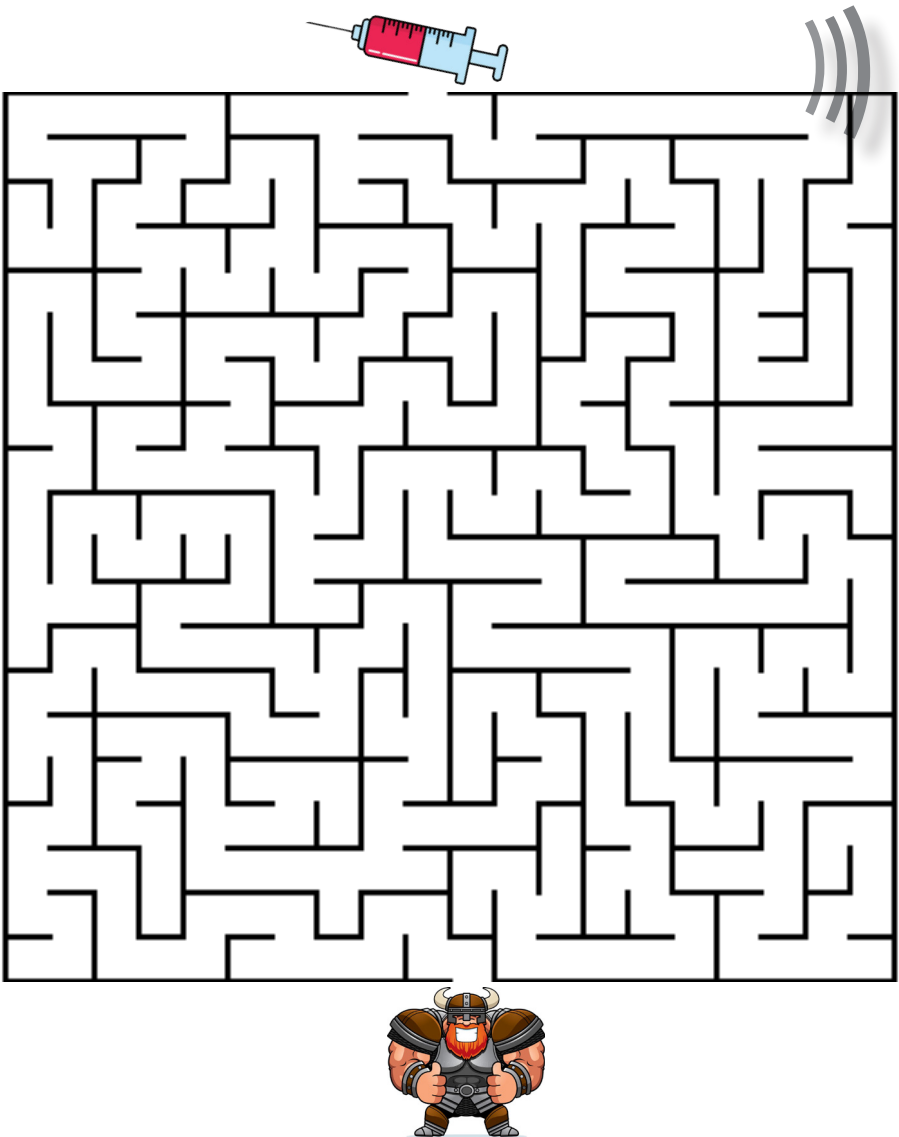
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