

Lucas VanderWoude
Reporter

16 Illiana juniors and seniors spent a full week in Washington D.C. learning about government during the Close-Up trip from Monday, Nov. 28 to Saturday, Dec. 4.

Students who applied to attend this trip had to write an essay telling why they wanted to go on the trip. If their essay garnered the judges’ attention, then they had to be interviewed by Mr. White and another history teacher. Students usually apply sophomore year and go on the trip their junior year, but Covid cancellations last year forced the current seniors to wait one more year until the trip.

Throughout the trip, students attended several “workshops” led by representatives chosen by the national Close-Up program. In these workshops, students gathered in groups and discussed various political and governmental topics. Illiana students got to meet students from other states in these groups.

Students on the trip visited many different memorials, such as the Jefferson Memorial, Martin Luther King Jr. Memo-

Students get in-depth look at U.S. government during Washington trip



Close Up participants stand in front of the Capitol building.

Photo courtesy of Bella VanderWoude

rial, Eisenhower Memorial, and many more. Students also visited the famous Library of Congress, the largest library in the world.

Students had various reasons for why they chose to go on the trip.

“I am very interested in government and politics,” said

Hannah Sliemers, a senior. “Also, our generation will soon be in charge, so we need to start formulating opinions about issues today.”

“I chose to go so that I could see other aspects of America,” said junior Kevin Corcoran. “I wanted a country-wide perspective, not just an Indiana perspective.”

The Close-Up trip had many things that the students liked, but they did have favorites. “My favorite parts were Capitol Hill Day and Colonial Williamsburg,” said Matthew Smits, a senior. “We got to speak with senators and representatives from Indiana. Colonial Williamsburg had people in costumes who role-played people from colonial times.”

Close-Up afforded many opportunities for students to learn more about their country and themselves. “I learned about a lot of different opinions,” said Sliemers. “I also learned how to listen to different people’s views and respect them.”

“I learned how to successfully debate and also how to empathize with other points of view,” said Smits.

“I learned that there were both Christian and non-Christian sides of politics,” said Corcoran. “I also learned more about the base that the United States was founded on.”

Procrastinators scramble to earn service hours before deadline

Danielle Rancifer
Reporter

The clock was ticking as the deadline for service hours slowly approached.

Students all around Illiana searched for a way to complete the required 10 service hours in order to receive the voucher that allows them to skip an exam of their choice. While students had since the start of school to complete these hours, students expressed the multitude of reasons they waited so long.

Junior Zeke VanEssen, who had four service hours as of Dec. 7, said, “I was busy with other activities.”

Freshman Hailey Smith, who had three service hours as of Dec. 7, said, “I just didn’t feel like doing it”

Students claimed they plan to do things like care packages and letters for Phil’s friends to make up for lost time and to get their service hours quickly.

English teacher and administrator of the voucher program, Ms. Sara Johnson, said “I have talked to a lot of students and gotten a lot of emails from parents [looking for last minute service hours].” Johnson says that she would suggest food pantries, getting involved with your local church, and special events going on in the community to help get hours.

Johnson left some parting advice for students regarding service hours in general. “I get that lives are busy,” she said, “and as time goes on we get more and more occupied. Finding time to serve Jesus is hard, but making it a priority in our regular life is important.”

‘Tis the season for Christmas concerts



Photo by Jeff DeVries



Photo by Jim Kamphuis



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Various Christmas concerts took place over the course of December. Top left: Chamber Singers. Top right: Wind Ensemble. Bottom: mass choir.

Explaining Myers Briggs Type Indicator

ISFJ. ENTP. INFP. ESTJ. Maybe you've seen letter combinations like these before on a T-shirt or in someone's bio on social media. Perhaps you've overheard people comparing similar letters, and you've wondered what all the fuss is about. Although these letters are types from the most popular personality test in the world, they remain, for many, rather mysterious. What do they mean? I'm glad you asked.



Olivia Oostema
Editor-in-Chief

Each series of four letters creates one of sixteen distinct personality types in the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. Each letter indicates a trait an individual uses frequently called a preference (not to be confused with how an individual would like to be). Here's what each of the letters means:

'I' and 'E' represent introversion and extroversion. Although these terms are common, many people don't really know what they mean. Extroverts get energy from being around people while introverts get energy from being alone. It's important to note that just because someone's an extrovert doesn't mean they're immensely outgoing—there are shy and socially anxious extroverts as well as socially confident introverts.

'S' and 'N' represent sensing and intuitive types. The difference is in how one takes in information. Sensors focus on the concrete elements of an occurrence (the 'what') while intuitives look at the undercurrents at play ('why'). Sensors tend to be more empirical and rooted in the moment while intuitives are more abstract and imaginative.

Thinking ('T') and feeling ('F') types are what one might expect. When making a decision, is one's deciding factor logical or emotional? For thinkers, the logical easily outweighs the emotional, and for feelers, it's the opposite.

Judging ('J') and perceiving ('P') are the final two preferences, and they describe how people organize their worlds. Judgers tend to be organized and consistent, while perceivers tend to be disorganized and spontaneous. Judging types (not to be confused with people who are judgemental) like deadlines and enjoy making decisions up-front. Perceiving types are more laid back when it comes to deadlines and tend to 'go with the flow.'

It's vital to understand that each of these traits is on a spectrum. No one is 100% any of the four traits. That's why, when it comes to introversion and extroversion, it's lousy to identify as an ambivert merely because "it depends who I'm with." It's an evasive answer as well as a misunderstanding of the scale. People don't like to identify with a trait because they think they're limiting themselves. They're not. Feelers think and thinkers feel: everyone does both, the question is which characteristic an individual tends toward.

This is a simplified explanation of the MBTI. Because the four traits play off of each other in unique ways (e.g. causing an 'S' in one type to behave differently than an 'S' in another), there's much more to discuss.

If you're interested in learning more, please don't use this as your only guide. It's important to do your own research to grasp the complexities of each type. Take a free quiz on a professional site like 16personalities.com or truity.com, be honest in your responses, and read about your type to verify that it accurately describes you. If your results feel wrong, try a different website, and do more research.



Real Care babies pictured waiting to be assigned to students.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

Dolls allow child development class to practice caring for babies

Kyla Bennett
Reporter

In the last month, Illiana's hallways, commons, and even its Loud Crowd have boasted an alarming sight: students with baby carriers. But these carriers held not babies, but dolls.

The dolls are a product of Child Development, a senior class taught by Mrs. Karrie Roeda. Her students received a baby doll to take home, with the purpose of getting a feel for what taking care of a real baby is like. The dolls, programmed to act like real babies, cry peri-

odically and "the parent" must figure out if the baby needs to be changed, burped, rocked, or fed. Many participants reported experiencing stress, enjoyment, and exhaust doing this learning lab.

Tiffany Reichert and Sofia Gaich, seniors at Illiana and students in Child Development, had ups and downs with their assigned babies.

"My experience at home was stressful," said Reichert. "It interfered with my personal life." The senior described her first exhausting experience with the baby. While she was driving home from school,

she had to pull over multiple times to tend to her baby doll's needs. Reichert explained that she usually gets home around 3 p.m. but arrived home at 5 because of her baby.

Gaich mentioned that driving was scary because she didn't know when her baby was going to cry. "It was exciting and definitely gave me a real taste of what keeping a baby is like", said Gaich. Though the participants encountered stressful experiences with their babies, they said that this challenge gave them an eye-opener of what taking care of a baby is like.

Final Praise Crowd events of year encourage community



Students spend time together while sharing breakfast.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

Citlali Sanchez
Reporter

With Christmas break right around the corner, the last Praise Crowd breakfast and Praise Crowd's of the year took place Dec. 3, 16, and 17.

The theme of Dec. 3's praise crowd was choosing joy. The night started with a couple songs followed by a challenge issued by Mr. Lance Davids. The challenge consisted of one student from every grade level, whose goal was to avoid laughing at Davids's jokes.

The winner of the challenge would earn donuts for their entire grade level. Every grade level, except the freshmen, received donuts on Dec. 7. Madison Derks then gave her testimony, walking attendees through her journey fighting cancer and how she chose joy in the tough times. The night ended with a word from Davids and a couple more songs.

Praise Crowd breakfast was held on Dec. 16, with the usual breakfast items being served plus a few Christmas goodies. The annual Christmas Praise crowd will be taking place on Dec. 17 in the

commons with Christmas carols being sung.

"These events are hosted so that both students and teachers can feel part of the Illiana community," said Mrs. Rachel Drost, a Praise Crowd sponsor. The group uses prayer, scripture, worship, and food to help build community. The Praise Crowd committee has chosen this year's theme, Finding Faith, to encourage everyone to find ways to grow in their faith.

"It's [Praise crowd] is one of my favorite things to do here," Davids said. "I'm always excited to do them."

Admissions, student life directors plan winter party for prospective students

Cameron Evers
Reporter

Cookie decorating, hot chocolate, games, and a movie are all a part of this year's 8th-grade winter party on Jan. 7. Jenna Dutton, Illiana's Director of Admissions, and Janna VanEssen, Director of Student Life, have been busy at work creating new and fun events for eighth graders to get them into our building and to highlight the Illiana community.

This Winter Party is a chance for students to meet other kids their age and get a feel of what being inside of the Illiana building is really like. Dutton said, "We really just want to be able to show off what can and is happening here at Illiana. We have a great space that we have been blessed with and being able to invite 8th graders who are looking at Illiana for their future is important, so we had to get creative with how we could show off Illiana."

Many other events have already happened for these kids such as a rally towel giveaway, offering eighth-grade students free admission to Illiana sporting events, and Preview Illiana, which gave them a look into academics and student life here at Illiana.

There is also an upcoming Middle School Basketball Night and Praise Crowd on February 25. In April, the school will make home deliveries of "ICHS swag bags" to get these potential students decked out in some Illiana gear. And finally, on May 21, the school will host a Yard Party for students to once again get to know each other and build relationships before high school even begins for them.

Having a community with other kids that can relate to the same things as them will help create a greater sense of belonging, said Dutton, and will hopefully make the transition from middle school to high school a little bit easier.

Dutton added, "We know that a lot more middle schoolers are getting a say in where they want to attend high school. So, anything we can do to get the kids in the doors of Illiana and show off how awesome we are, the better!"

Student council spreads cheer with dress up days, homeroom decorating

Kyla Bennett
Reporter

In an effort to pump up school and Christmas spirit, the student council devised creative ways for the student body to celebrate the holiday season.

Sponsored by Mrs. Kelly Aardsma and Mrs. Sharon Praveen, the student council invited everyone to decorate their homerooms and to dress up for the week before Christmas break. Monday was Pajama day, Tuesday Red and Green day, Wednesday Ugly Christmas Sweater day, Thursday Thawed Out day, and Friday Formal day.

Monday also featured free chocolate for students during break, courtesy of the student council.

“I couldn’t wait for Pajama Day,” said Aardsma.

Each homeroom also competed to see who wore the most Red & Green on Tuesday and who had the best decorated homeroom. The winning homerooms received donuts.

Illiana’s student council is always trying to find new ways to bring the student body together and build fellowship within the school. Rachel VanderZee, a senior member said, “This is impactful to the student body because it’s a good way to come together, and everyone is able to participate in it”.

Sophomore Baleigh VanderZee said she was excited because the week’s events brought the school Christmas joy.



Photos by Jeff DeVries
Ms. J's homeroom decorated with the theme of Nightmare before Christmas.

David leads first Prayer Crowd

Grace Jania
News Editor

The first ever Prayer Crowd took place on Dec. 1 at 7:00 pm, led by Head of School Lance Davids. The night consisted of worship, snacks, and lots of prayer. Those who attended were given the opportunity to pray aloud and share prayer requests, as well as share in community with the other attendees in conversation. Treats like freshly baked cupcakes and lemon Oreos were provided.

Davids started the night with a time for worship, where people sang “In Christ Alone” and “Amazing Grace.”

“Singing worship music always speaks to my heart, so having worship up front was beautiful,” said Mrs. Rachel Monroe, who attended with her 3-year-old daughter Cora and her husband. “As a band teacher, I’m usually ‘running the music’ and it is wonderful to slow down and just be a part of lifting up my voice.”

Davids opened with a preface for each of the four topics, including adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. After each brief introduction to the topic, a moment of silence followed where anyone could jump in and pray. During this time, attendees prayed for Illiana as a school, their churches, their children. Nearing the end, anyone could lift up prayer requests that were on their minds.

Even though Davids didn’t originally advertise to students due to Wednesday nights being busy for teens, with youth groups and other church events going on, he said that next time he would probably try a different night to make it easier for students to attend. The night was initially planned just for adults, but people of all ages were encouraged to come.

In his email addressed to the Illiana Community, Davids explained his thought process that led to the creation of the new event. He wrote that he wanted to do more at Illiana to bring the community closer in prayer, leading to the production of Prayer Crowd, deriving from the ideas of Praise Crowd and Loud Crowd.

“There have been so many things that have happened in the last few months in our community that have brought people together to pray. It is always good to gather and, in those moments, usually around heartbreak and petition, it reminds me of the power of prayer and how God’s house should be built on prayer,” Davids wrote. However, he also stressed his point that “gathering and praying together should be the norm during good and bad times.”

Monroe said that what touched her heart most was “hearing parents/ community members pour out their thanks and requests to a God who hears us and loves us.”

After the event, Davids reflected on the night, saying, “We prayed for about 45 minutes straight. I haven’t prayed that long in a while. It was great to spend that time with Jesus and other believers.”



Parents and students meet with teachers. Photo courtesy of ICHS Facebook

Revamped Preview Illiana draws families

Cameron Evers
Reporter

Preview Illiana, an event giving potential students a look at Illiana, took place on Dec. 2. This year’s revamped version attracted 53 families, giving each a more personalized experience than in the past.

Students and parents chose three 15 minute sessions on academics, athletics, arts, STEM, finance/tuition, graduation requirements, hydroponics/Illiana farms, student life, or extracurriculars. By allowing visitors to choose topics of interest, the school hoped to keep people engaged with information they found the most helpful.

Visitors then met in the gym to talk to teachers and students about different subjects, sports, and activities offered by Illiana.

Jenna Dutton, Illiana’s Director of Admissions, explained the new approach: “Let’s be honest, do 8th graders want to know more about graduation requirements or do they want to talk to a varsity soccer or basketball player? Parents need to know about academics, graduation requirements, and tuition. Kids just want to have fun.”

Getting current students involved helps parents and incoming students look into life at Illiana from a different perspective, Dutton added.

Illiana advertises Preview nights through feeder schools, but Dutton also worked to reach others. She set pop-up ads on social media for those 18-55 in a 40-mile radius of Illiana. She also dropped off flyers to nearby public schools to spread word about the event.

Sorry seniors, still no quotes

Citlali Sanchez
Reporter

For the second consecutive year, seniors will not have senior quotes in the yearbook, which comes out next fall.

Yearbook sponsors Jeff DeVries and Jim Kamphuis made the decision to forgo senior quotes in August of 2020 due to the pressure that comes with being sponsors of the yearbook. Although many students treated the senior quotes with respect, others included inappropriate comments, thinking that they wouldn’t get caught. DeVries said it was becoming “too much work to cut things out” to make sure nothing inappropriate was left behind.

Last year’s seniors decided to make their own senior quotes and hang them around the school. They did this as a way to try to workaround

the quotes not being in the yearbook.

“If seniors want someone to blame, then they should blame the people who continuously tried to sneak things in, despite warning,” Kamphuis said.

Some seniors feel frustrated that they cannot put a senior quote into the book. Senior Marissa Klain said that the quotes are not only funny, but also a way for people to express who they are. Klain is only one of many seniors who are unhappy with this decision. Other seniors, however, do not care about the decision to drop senior quotes.

Senior quotes are not traditionally part of Illiana’s yearbook. Senior quotes appear in five yearbooks between the years 2014 and 2020, but decades of books before that point have no senior quotes included. Kamphuis said it’s “nice for seniors to leave a legacy,” but it shouldn’t come as a surprise not to have senior quotes.



Photo by Jeff DeVries
The cover of last year’s yearbook, the Spire.

It's bigger than a dress

Dressember, a movement that encourages men and women to dress in formal attire for the whole month of December, is making it's rounds in the Illiana student body.

Jessica Bergfors

Sports Editor

Dressember has brought a chance for activism among Illiana students, and though not many students are participating, those who

are, are making a change.

Head of the campaign, senior Christine DeYoung, said there's about 10 people who are involved, including one boy, and that this is more people than she anticipated.

"I hope to raise awareness and let others know the seriousness of human trafficking."

ing." said DeYoung. "I hope to gather donations for the Dressember fund-

dation to help stop human trafficking and provide support for those who have survived its terrorous affects."

This is senior Camille VanLaten's second year participating in Dressember, as she wants to advocate for awareness for human trafficking. VanLaten said that this year has felt easier in terms of staying warm, but that is starting to change, and that it can sometimes be difficult to stick only to dresses every day since she loves to express herself through clothing and change her style every day.

"I see Dressember as a way for me to spread Jesus's light in me. Since I'm busy, Dressember is an easy change that I can

make that has the potential to help a cause that I care about," said VanLaten.

Emma DeBoer, another senior, has been participating daily since the start of December. DeBoer said that Dres-

sember is a good way to branch out from what she normally wears, all while doing it for a good cause.

"It's not super hard, and it has added to the collection of outfits that I think I will try wearing again sometime," said DeBoer.

Audrey Yonkman, a junior, decided to participate because her older sister has done so for years, and she

wanted to bring awareness to the issue. She encourages people to participate in some way, even if that means dressing up once a week, educating yourself, or posting about it.

"I hope it brings awareness, and that people see the posts, and they have a changed mindset about how bad the issue is," Yonkman said.



Photo courtesy of Dressember.org



Photo courtesy of Dressember.org

About Christine DeYoung, Dressember advocate amongst the ICHS community

Olivia Oostema

Editor-in-Chief

At the beginning of the month, Student Council President Christine DeYoung spoke in chapel encouraging students to join her in participating in Dressember, a campaign to end human trafficking. Students dress up each day of the month to fundraise and bring awareness to the cause.

While dressing up for the entire month, DeYoung also took on the role of organizing and supporting other participants at Illiana. She credits Illiana alumni Haleigh Olthof as her inspiration to get involved. Olthof talked about Dressember in a chapel when she was a senior and DeYoung was a freshman.

"After seeing Haleigh participate, I knew that this was something I wanted to do," said DeYoung.

"My only regret is that I didn't participate sooner."

She noted that the cause is close to her heart because the

affects of human trafficking "touch close to home." Forced labor, she said, is at the root of the cotton in our clothing and the coffee beans in our beverages, and sex trafficking is a serious problem worldwide.

ing human trafficking."

DeYoung said that between five and ten girls as well as a few boys are involved. Eight girls and one boy attended a meeting later that week she spoke.

A few students who were not at the meeting have also joined.

"With a cause as widespread as this, the more participation the better," she said, adding that she was happy with the turnout.

For students who aren't dressing up, there are still plenty of opportunities to get involved. Students can start conversations about trafficking in real life and on social media and donate to the cause through the Dressember pages of friends. Year round, DeYoung advocated that students remain conscious of the clothes and products they purchase as some could have been made by people trapped in forced labor.

"Even if [a student hasn't] participated since day one, any days they participate will make a difference," said DeYoung. "It's never too late."



Photo courtesy of Christine DeYoung

"By speaking in chapel and sharing on social media, I have gotten a few other students to join me in fight-



Photo courtesy of Dressember.org

How Dressember came to be

Aubrey Porter

Feature Editor

"It started with a dress," a segment on Dressember.org reads. The Dressember movement all began with Blythe Hill, a social impact consultant who became interested in fashion, and after hearing about the human trafficking issue, set a personal goal for herself to raise awareness and start conversations about modern slavery by wearing a dress every single day of December.

Hill's movement slowly grew in numbers. Her friends and family joined her in 2010, and by 2016 Dressember had over 5,000 participants.

Participants in the challenge now raise not only awareness, but also funds. In 2016 advocates raised over \$1 million. Only three years later, they had raised over \$10 million and had partnered with a total of 15 organizations.

To raise money, advocates can sign up on the

Dressember website to create a campaign page. People who feel inclined to give can donate to the specific campaign page of an advocate or directly to the organization at Dressember.org.

"Can a dress change the world?" the Dressember website asks. Today, more than 30,000 people have participated in the movement, and it is spreading wider every single year. With people participating in over 30 different countries, the Dressember challenge is truly making a footprint worldwide.



Photo courtesy of Dressember.org

Vaping at ICHS

New trend clogs bathroom stalls and causes tardies, but its greatest harms often lie hidden

Grace Jania
News Editor

Vapers are everywhere, and that includes in the halls of Illiana. Sometimes vaping can become a temptation during school hours, and in that case, one of the most popular places to go is the bathrooms. Illiana’s Student-Parent Handbook states that, “Students possessing tobacco products, smoking, aiding someone who is smoking, or being with someone who is smoking on school property will all be considered in violation of the no-smoking rule. This includes all vape and vaping paraphernalia. The no-smoking rule is also in effect for students in the immediate vicinity of school, and at school-sponsored functions.”

While school authorities are aware of this issue, the problem cannot be stopped immediately, no matter the punishment inflicted upon the vapers, whether that be detention, Saturday school, or suspension.

“The problem is we can educate and tell them what they’re doing to their bodies and lungs,” said Mrs. Karie Roeda, who has caught a number of girls vaping in the first-floor bathroom near the office, “but you can’t really change their minds if they don’t care.”

Principal Peter Boonstra

said, “I would like kids to stop vaping just because it’s a bad thing to do, but I do understand that to some extent, there are some who are going to do it anyway, and those kids probably won’t stop unless they are experiencing some consequences.”

Boonstra said, “I don’t know how widespread it is... but everybody [non-vaping students] is certainly experiencing the effects of there being vapers,” referring to the situation with girls vaping in the bathrooms during breaktime so frequently that other girls cannot use the bathroom.

“Now that they can’t have more than one person in a stall [while vaping, the vapers] take up way more stalls and it takes way longer to use the bathroom,” said junior Allie Holleman. “It also makes the bathroom smell bad.”

A junior student who tried vaping a few times during his freshman year said he tried it due to peer pressure. He remarked that he doesn’t vape anymore.

“It would be nice to stop the peer pressure of people they are influencing,” Roeda said. Students and teachers have

picked up tactics to tell if someone is vaping in the bathrooms. These include multiple people in a stall, a lingering fruity scent, and abnormally long periods of time spent in stalls.

“In contrast to traditional tobacco smoking, vaping is easier to hide, and that makes it harder to prevent,” said Boonstra.

Boonstra mentioned the help of students confiding in him about this issue, specifically concerning the popular choice of vaping in the girls’ bathrooms. However, he mentioned that giving him names of vapers isn’t as helpful as giving him clues as to where he can find them.

“It’s not just a matter of telling me that you know someone is vaping; it’s a matter of somehow getting me information that I can use to catch them vaping,” Boonstra said.



Chemistry explains that vaper’s ‘buzz,’ also shows long-term effects

Lucas VanderWoude
Reporter

Vaping is a growing trend among teenagers. Science has proven that vaping can lead to serious health effects.

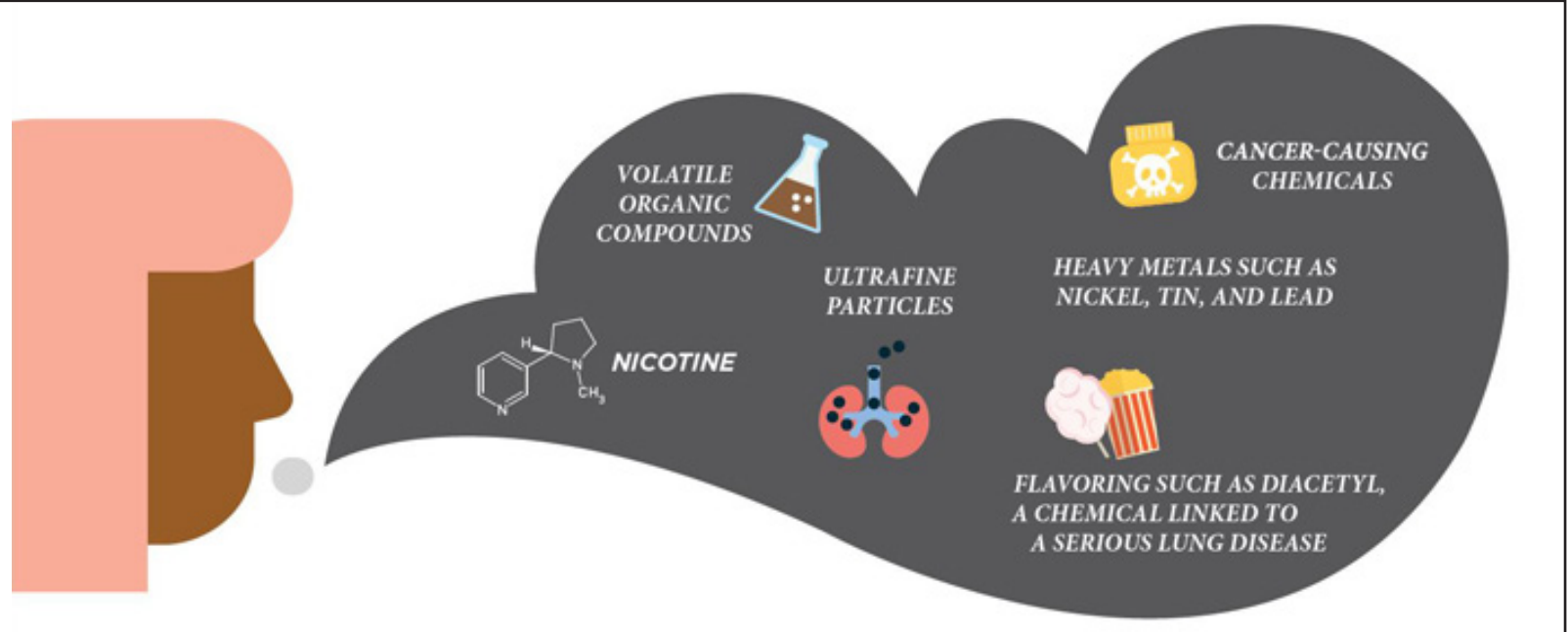
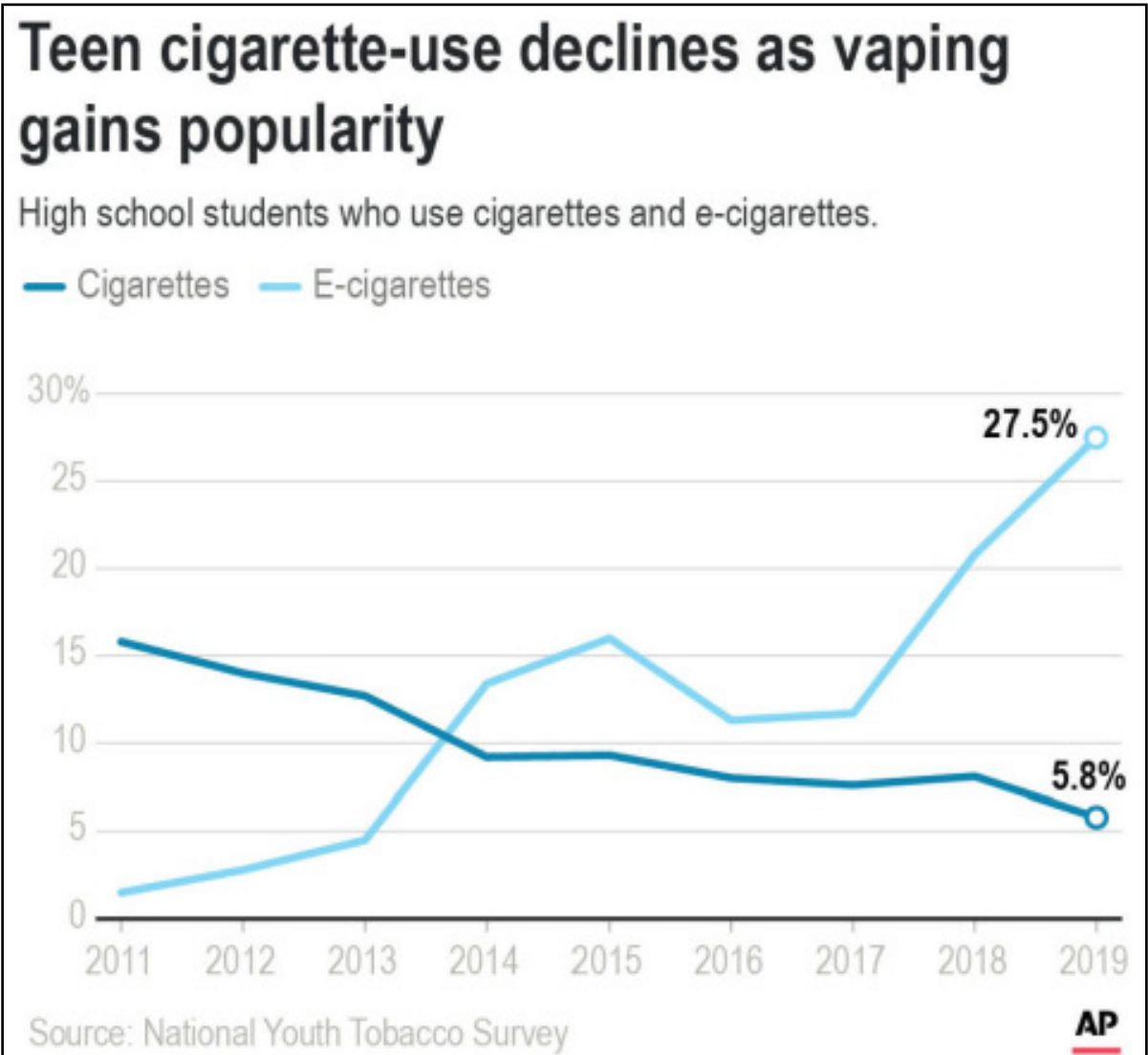
To look at the chemistry and side effects of vaping, people need to know what exactly a vape is and what it does. A vape has four parts: a mouthpiece, a rechargeable battery, a cartridge with a liquid, also called a pod, and an atomizer.

The liquid in a vape contains nicotine, water, flavoring, and solvents, including glycerin or propylene glycol, that stabilize the mist formed in the atomizer. The atomizer is a little chamber that heats the solution from the cartridge, producing an aerosol mist of tiny liquid droplets (technically not a vapor) that the user inhales. When users inhale the mist, their lungs absorb the nicotine and other compounds. (American Chemical Society, Vaping: What You Need To Know.)

The nicotine in the vape is an addictive chemical which increases the level of dopamine in the brain. Dopamine is involved in activating the brain’s pleasure and reward centers. This is the “buzz,” a term for the good feeling that people get when they vape. The constant desire for this good feeling can lead to addiction.

Nicotine isn’t the only dangerous chemical in vaping. According to the American Lung Association, these other chemicals have also been found in vapes: propylene and diethylene glycol, which are chemicals found in antifreeze, and benzene, which can be found in car exhaust.

Nicotine addiction is also not the only dangerous side effect of vaping. According to an article by Drugwatch, vaping can cause severe lung injury, seizures, popcorn lung, strokes, and heart attacks. Popcorn lung affects the lung’s smallest airways, the bronchioles. Vaping may cause inflammation and scarring to the bronchioles, according to the National Institutes of Health.



Research reveals a number of harmful byproducts in e-cigarettes. Graphic courtesy of Center for Disease Control

Taste of Jamaica brings Caribbean vibe to Northwest Indiana

Hailey Ross
Arts Editor

Next time you are passing through Highland, Indiana, you might want to check out Taste of Jamaica, a new restaurant that recently opened on 45th street east of US 41.

The restaurant provides ample parking, plenty really for a restaurant that boasts only six tables in the dining room. Take-out is clearly the primary way clientele get their food. The restaurant itself is painted in green with yellow vertical stripes, the colors a tip of the hat to the Jamaican flag. A canopy in the front of the restaurant says the restaurant’s name. Inside, the decor is simple, including a painting on the wall of a boat in the Caribbean Sea. A small downside is that the property does not seem to be ventilated well, and the result was a dining room that was so smoky that it felt like we were in the kitchen.

The two main things that Taste of Jamaica serves are jerk and curry. Both of which are quite spicy and boned. The jerk chicken was tender and smokey and the sauce that was drizzled on top was sweet, savory and went nicely with the red beans and rice that accompanied it. The jerk catfish was juicy and grilled well, slathered with the same sweet, savory sauce that was paired with the chicken. The catfish also came with red beans and rice. The salad of red beans and rice, lettuce, and optional jerk chickpeas proved tasty as well. These dishes also come with sides. The fried dumplings were warm and soft and the candied yams were sweetened with hints of nutmeg and cinnamon. The cabbage was seasoned well and the corn was crisp.

All in all, the food here is good, though Taste of Jamaica is pricey compared to other Jamaican places.



Photo by Hailey Ross
Jerk catfish, corn, and fried dumplings are just some of the authentic Jamaican treats awaiting visitors in Highland.

Santa Fe Restaurant makes debut in Dyer

Jessica Bergfors
Sports Editor

Located in Dyer, Indiana, at 101st Ave, Santa Fe is a Tex-Mex restaurant that offers both dine-in and take-out. Currently decorated in Christmas/ winter decor, the restaurant has a nice, homey atmosphere. T.V.’s, deer heads, fish, and plants decorate the restaurant.

Going Saturday night for dinner, I expected it to be more busy and there to be a wait time, but I was pleasantly surprised to be seated immediately. The hosts were friendly and welcoming. After being seated, free chips and salsa were brought to the table by a friendly waitress who quick to be there

if we needed anything. I ordered a combination meal, which consisted of a chicken burrito, a chicken, onions, tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, and cheese. The chicken was hot and seasoned well



photo by Alex Pala
The shrimp, steak, and chicken nacho plate made a delightful appetizer.

and judiciously--good taste without the spice burn of too much pepper. The sweet peppers and onions added flavor, and even though I don’t usually like either, they were good with the food. The rice and beans were more on the plain side, but still good. Overall, the food was savory, hot, and filling. I ordered a side of queso as well for the chips, which had mild, very flavorful spice.

With not many nice, sit down restaurants being super close to Illiana, Santa Fe is a good place if you want to sit down with friends at a restaurant that has good food and a great atmosphere.

Vanilla Bean Mexican Flan

- Ingredients:
- 1 cup sugar for coating ramekins
 - 1 8 oz Cream Cheese cubed
 - 1 14 oz sweetened condensed milk can
 - 1 12 oz evaporated milk can
 - 1 vanilla bean seeds scraped or use 2 tsp vanilla extract
 - 5 large eggs

- Make the sugar caramel:**
1. Melt 1 cup sugar in a saucepan over medium high heat until it becomes liquid. Stir often with a wooden spoon until is lightly browned.
 2. Pour the melted sugar into the pan or each ramekin and swirl around to coat the bottom.
 3. Set aside to cool.
- Make the flan:**
4. Add the remaining of the

- ingredients in a food processor or blender and mix until well blended. Note: Make sure NOT to use a kitchen aid mixer. This will leave chunks of cream cheese.
5. Fill the pan/ramekins with the flan mixture
 6. Place the them in a baking pan and fill the pan with enough water to rise about halfway up their sides.

7. Bake for about 1 hr & 15 minutes if baking on a pan (about 40 minutes in ramekins) or until the custard is set (it should not feel liquid or loose when tapping)
8. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or up to 3 days. However, I do think that it tastes better when eaten the next day so this makes a great recipe to make ahead!

Mango Lime Cheesecake

- Ingredients:
- CRUST**
- 8 digestive biscuits
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - ¼ cup butter, melted
- CHEESECAKE**
- 3 large mangoes, or 6 small yellow mangos, peeled & diced
 - 32 oz cream cheese, at room temperature
 - 1 ¾ cups sugar
 - 3 large eggs, at room temperature
 - 2 egg yolks, at room temperature
 - 2 lime zests
- TOPPING**
- 1 cup sour cream
 - 2 lime juices
 - 1 tablespoon sugar

1. Preheat your oven to 375°F.
2. Place biscuits into a ziplock bag and crush using a rolling pin until crumbled.
3. Pour crumbs into a bowl, along with sugar and melted butter and mix until well combined.
4. Pour crust mix into a 9-inch (23 cm) springform cake pan. Use a measuring cup to press into the base and partially up the sides.
5. Bake for 8-10 minutes, until lightly golden. Set aside to cool.
6. Using a blender, puree mangos until smooth. Set aside.
7. In a large bowl, whisk together cream cheese and sugar until smooth.
8. Add the eggs and egg yolk one at a time until combined. Mix in 500 milliliters (2 cups) mango puree, and lime zest, whisking until combined.
9. Pour cheesecake filling into cooled crust. Lower oven to 325°F bake for 1 hour.
10. Remove cheesecake from oven and allow to rest for 15 minutes. Center will still be jiggle. Increase temperature to 375°F.
11. In a small bowl, combine sour cream, 1 tablespoon sugar, and lime juice. Spread the sweetened sour cream on top of the cheesecake.
12. Use remaining mango puree to decorate the top. Create your own pattern of dots, using a toothpick to swirl the pattern.
13. Return cheesecake to the oven and bake for an additional 20 minutes. Turn the oven off and allow the cheesecake to cool inside with the oven door cracked for 1 hour.
14. Cover the top of the pan with clingfilm and chill overnight in the fridge before serving.

Wrestling team making history with the most girls on team ever

Danielle Rancifer

Reporter

Illiana Christian’s wrestling team is breaking barriers by having six girls on the wrestling team. More than they have ever had since 1992

Coach Bosman, who has coached the team since 1992, says that the number of girls has grown significantly in the past ten years. He also said that “adding more girls to the team has given it more a sense of normalcy.”

For her entire high school career, excluding this year, and her sophomore year, Senior Faith Vander Laan has been the only female on the team. This year, two new seniors, and three freshmen girls joined the team.

Senior Anna Haemker said, “I like physical sports, Alex Bosman inspired me to do it, and Faith wanted me to do it.” She also spoke about the highlights of the team in general. “It’s really nice, the girls are chill, and it’s a really positive atmosphere. We all just

love to work, and the coaches are passionate.”

Vander Laan, who as of Dec. 7 had the record of 8-0, commented on what it’s like to have more females on the team: “I like having girls on the team because it’s a lot of fun, I can coach them and help them, and I think it creates an even better team atmosphere.”

She also testified to what her experience has been in a male dominated sport as a female and what advice she would give to girls who are interested in the sport. “I can tell when I’m being underestimated...people can underestimate you when you are female, but it just gives you incentive to work harder.”

Alex Bosman, senior and two-year captain of the wrestling team, pointed out more of the positive things girls add to the team. He said their presence has “added another element that we’ve never had before, and it’s given more attention to the sport, not just girls but the entire sport in general.”



Photo by Beth Goodfellow

The girl wrestlers pose together after their first tournament this year in Brazil, Indiana. The team consists of three freshmen girls, and three senior girls.

Girls grow together as a team, improving their game

Grace Jania

News Editor

The girls varsity basketball team currently holds a record of 4 wins and 8 with most of those wins coming in the last couple weeks as the team has begun to play better. The girls beat Calumet on Dec. 11 with a whopping score of 68-18.

“We have just turned a corner in winning and it’s due to trusting each other and learning about each other,” said Coach Lisa Blocker.

The team’s diverse age group consisting of sophomores, juniors, and seniors and



Photo by Lisa Blocker

Varsity girl’s basketball pose for a photo after winning against Victory Christian Academy on Nov. 30.

some new faces joining the varsity team this year proved challenging for the team.

Blocker commented on her goal for the girls’ continual growth, saying, “We are young, and with that comes lack of

experience. If we continue to work on bettering ourselves daily and working hard at doing our best, we will have succeeded.”

The girls also participated in the Angel Tree project, buy-

ing gifts for the children of incarcerated parents. The team shopped and wrapped these presents together, participating in a team-building activity while also giving back to the community.

Boys have strong team this year, good start to season

Aubrey Porter

Feature Editor

The varsity boys basketball team boasts a record of 4-2.

Coach Tom Roozeboom said this year he views his team as a cohesive unit of 12 strong players.

“We are more balanced now than before, and if we have each others’ backs, we’ll have a successful season,” Roozeboom said.

Junior Zeke VanEssen said, “Our team’s defense is one of our strongpoints that we always seem to do well in.” He added that the team must be more consistent offensively.

Senior Adam Walters, a new addition to the roster, said the team has fared well in the early season playing against some strong opponents.

Male Athlete of the Month

With a record of 8-1 and 5 pins this year, senior Alex Bosman is enjoying his fourth year of varsity wrestling at Illiana. Coach Dave Deboer said, “Alex can beat anyone on any given day. He is always looking to pin, which makes him dangerous for anyone.” Deboer added that Bosman is a well rounded athlete who always comes into the season in great shape and ready to compete. “Alex does a great job being one of the vocal leaders of the team,” said Deboer. “He leads by example and helps direct our young team.”



Female Athlete of the Month

Senior Faith Vanderlaan is in her fourth year of wrestling at Illiana. Vanderlaan has won two tournaments, and her current record stands at 13-1 with 12 pins. Coach Dave Deboer said he admires her positive attitude and her competitive drive, and that she is both disciplined and focused. Vanderlaan has worked very hard in the off-season, and seeks out extra training and competition, added Deboer. “Illiana is lucky to have a great example in Faith who not only competes at the highest level, but carries herself like a champion,” said Deboer. “She has been a great example to our new wrestlers.”



