



Photo courtesy of ICHS Facebook

Grandparents share lunch before going to class with their grandchildren.

# Grateful for grandparents

## Students share what life at Illiana is like these days

Citlali Sanchez  
Reporter

On Friday April 22, about 495 grandparents walked the halls of Illiana for grandparents day. Grandparents arrived through the south doors where student council members checked their names off the list. They then entered the main gym where the orchestra was playing music to greet them. As grandparents sat and chatted with each other, they were

served coffee and water by student council. The program started with devotions led by Head of School Lance Davids who was then followed up by Peter Boonstra who led the opening prayer. Boonstra then led the grandparents through games such as identifying who had traveled the farthest for that day or who had the most grandchildren in the school. Winners received Illiana swag. Afterwards grandparents ate lunch, listened to performances by two choirs and students who had competed in the recent Fine Arts Festival. After all of this, the final part of the program was for grandparents to go with their grandchildren to their 6th and 7th period classes. “It’s nice to see the relationship between our [Illiana] supporters and grandparents,” said Terri Schaff, planner of grandparents day. “Some grandparents told me that this is the event they look most forward to.”

# Pancake Pacer raises funds

Annual breakfast fundraiser supports athletics



Photo courtesy of ICHS Facebook

Runners begin the 5k.

Cameron Evers  
Reporter

The 11th annual Pancake Pacer 5k took place Saturday, April 23, 2022. The race is followed by a full course breakfast serving pancakes, sausage, fruit, granola bars, coffee, and juice. The long-standing tradition at Illiana Christian High School helps fundraise for the athletic department to buy uniforms, pay officials, improve equipment, and care for facilities. Athletic Director assistant Bonnie Trepton said, “We were so happy with the warm and dry weather this year.” This community event also brings back many repeat runners. This year there were 140 runners signed up and 300 people who attended breakfast, which is more than the previous year. This year’s male winner was

34-year-old Keith Koopmans who ran the 5k in 18:30. The female winner was 50-year-old Richelle Vander Zee who ran a 25:57. There are 7 different age divisions and the male and female winners in each category received a medal. Every runner received a Pancake Pacer shirt. This event is run by multiple volunteers and the spring sports teams. Different teams were assigned different jobs such as setting up the night before, preparing breakfast, helping with registration, serving breakfast, encouraging runners throughout the course, and handing out water. Trepton added, “It’s good to get the athletes involved because the money is for them and we couldn’t run something like this without student participation.”

# Making a difference through service



Photo courtesy of ICHS Facebook

On Go Day, students served across the area: cleaning stalls at Erin’s Farm, helping kindergarteners at Lansing Christian, picking up litter at Wampum Lake, helping out at people’s homes, and doing so much more. See Illiana’s Facebook page for more.



Photo by Grace Jania



Photo courtesy of Aubrey Porter



Photos by Jess Bergfors



# My greatest hits of high school      Student body is given voice in form of Student Council new suggestion box locker

High school has been a once in a lifetime experience for me. I have made new friends, learned more about myself, and have had lots of fun times. With almost a month left of school, here are some of my favorite memories I have made these past short four years, in no particular order.



Aubrey Porter  
Feature Editor

## 1. Going on my first mission trip ever this past spring break to

Los Angeles, California. I learned so much about the environment and its people, and even got close with some people I already knew. I also got to experience some very interesting car rides with Mrs. Boonstra where I often questioned if I was going to get to see my family again.

2. **Writing a letter to my future senior self** when I was a freshman. Being Mrs. Bilyeu's final gym class, we got to continue on the tradition of filling out a set of questions that would be fun to look back on a couple years down the road. I haven't gotten it back yet, but I can't wait to see who I had a crush on and what my favorite TV shows were back then.

3. **Getting close with my homeroom** and my teacher over the years: (having breakfasts every once in a while, buying Mr. Haan presents, playing with Benjamin the snake, and getting to celebrate with him through having two more kids!) It was so fun for me, and I'm sure even more for Mr. Haan, to watch a random group of students grow so close together over simply seeing each other every morning for 15 minutes.

4. **Watching Ms. Top's nativity goat** walk right in front of me through the hallway and poop all over the floor. As a quiet freshman, this was quite a shock to me. It was at that moment that I realized how seriously some teachers take homeroom competitions.

5. **Listening to Mr. Bosman** (my favorite math teacher) play and sing "Country Roads" on his guitar for my geometry class, even though he was nervous. We also grew a bond discussing our favorite flavors of Bang energy drinks before class. (His favorite is peach mango by the way.)

6. **Winning best costumes** this year in the first and only dodgeball tournament I have ever played in. We spent at least 2 full weekends working on our costumes (Transformers!) so my team and I were super glad to see all of the work pay off. Although we didn't make it very far, I got Boom out and that was enough satisfaction for me.

7. **Joining the Echo staff:** I have made some of my best friends and have gotten closer to an old teacher. I've also had some of the best laughs, and it is by far one of my favorite classes I have ever chosen to take!

Danielle Rancifer

Reporter

Earlier this year, the Illiana student council decided to open a suggestion box in locker number 2021.

Set up just after Christmas break, the box allows students simply to place a piece of paper in the locker detailing their ideas for possible school events, dress up days, student life issues, or anything else.

Senior Christine DeYoung, student council president, explained the origin of the box, saying, "[Student council is] meant to represent the student body, and everyone should have a way and get a chance to share their ideas, even the people who aren't our friends."

She also explained why the student council



cil chose to have suggestions be anonymous. "Some people might feel judged when giving suggestions, and this way provides anonymity. Judgment free suggestions are important."

Student council sponsor Kelly Aardsma said the suggestion box is a good idea. She said, "We wanted to hear more ideas than just from the 16 people that are on the student council. This not only provides ideas, but it helps us spark entirely new ones." She has also spoken about the success of the locker and says that "it has provided great suggestions and there is a good possibility for more."

A few suggestions the student council hopes to act on next year include things such as a twin day and a decade day for Spirit Week.

## \$500,000 donation goal to reduce school debt still being pursued

Lucas VanderWoude

Reporter

With a \$500,000 matching dollar-for-dollar challenge, ICHS is currently running a debt reduction drive to pay off some of the debt that it owes on the new campus.

As of April 14, people in the community have donated a little over \$128,000 for the campaign. The match brings that number to about \$256,000 toward retiring

the school's debt.

The school runs a debt reduction drive every year during the spring, but the goal of this drive and the one that occurred late last year which raised \$1.75 million is to pay off the \$5 million that Illiana owes on the current Dyer campus.

"This community is so very generous," said Cassie Siersema, the director of development. "The community is so passionate about Chris-

tian Education and ICHS that they are willing to support us both financially and with their prayers. I am so blessed to work here to see the amount of support that this community gives daily."

This year, the students got involved in the drive with the Penny Wars. The Penny Wars pitted the four classes against each other to get the most money in their jar, with pennies deducting

points and all other currency adding points.

The drive also held a tuition challenge, in which the family that raised the most amount of money for the drive would receive free tuition for a student in the 2022/2023 school year. Siersema said that the winner of the free tuition is being kept under wraps to protect the privacy of the winning family.

The dollar-for-dollar match continues through June 3, so people who would still like to contribute to the cause can do so by mailing a check marked "debt reduction" to the school office before then.

## Seniors take first place in Penny Wars, funds help lower school debt

Kyla Bennett

Reporter

In order to raise money for the spring, students at Illiana participated in the penny wars. Hosted by Mrs. Dutton and Mrs. Siersema, the event divided the student body by grade, pitting them against each other to see who could raise the most money over a couple of weeks. The twist that makes the game more fun is that pennies added to a jar actually acted as negative points, so classes could

sabotage other grades by placing pennies in their containers.

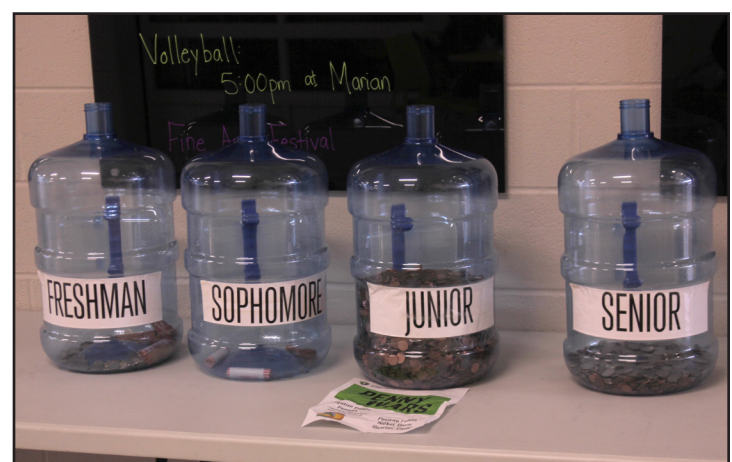
The penny war activity is not new. The penny wars first took place at Illiana four years ago. The administration decided to host this fundraiser again to get the students involved in raising money for their school's debt reduction drive. All the money that was raised will also be matched 1:1, which means the money will be doubled.

In this fundraiser, the students raised a little over \$2,500, so with the match students raised over

\$5,000. The seniors raised the most money, and in doing so, they secured an extra cookout for the senior class.

The juniors, after being sabotaged by other classes, went on to sabotage their own jar with pennies, finishing in negative territory.

"I think penny wars impacted our school in a huge way," said Siersema. "It was fun to see the classes and students getting involved in their own education. I was surprised at the level of involvement and I was excited to see how much we raised for ICHS."



The junior jar is sabotaged, filled with a plentitude of pennies to inflict negative points.

Photo by Jeff DeVries



# Praveen departing Illiana after this school year to possibly begin church ministry with husband

Hailey Ross  
Arts Editor

Spanish teacher Mrs. Sharon Praveen is leaving Illiana at the end of this school year.

Praveen began her tenure at ICHS in the fall of 2006, a fresh graduate from Dordt College returning to her alma mater to teach. In the intervening years she has led students on trips abroad, planned banquets, and sponsored student council. Now after 15 years, she is moving on.

Praveen said, “I am leaving Illiana because my husband and I are hoping to receive a call to a church in September, and we want to be available to go wherever the Lord wants to send us. My husband, Praveen, graduates from Mid America Reformed Seminary in May and then he will take

the candidacy exam with the United Reformed Church in September. Lord willing, if he passes this exam - then he will be able to receive a call from a



United Reformed Church anywhere in North America.”

Leaving Illiana means leaving behind some of her favorite things here: staff members, students and Common Grounds.

Though she is eager to step

into the future, Praveen said that saying goodbye brings some difficulty too. She said, “I have mixed emotions with leaving Illiana. I will miss the wonderful people that I work with, both staff and students. However, I am excited for this new opportunity to serve God with my husband and begin our ministry at a church. I am also looking forward to spending more time with our daughter, Hannah, at home.”

In the near term, Praveen will be heading north. Praveen said, “For the summer, Praveen, Hannah and I will be going to Hills, Minnesota for a ten-week summer internship at Hills United Reformed Church. We are really excited to go there and work with this church because we were with them last summer and love the people of this congregation.”

# Help! Teachers in high demand everywhere!

Cameron Evers  
Reporter

With an increase in teachers leaving their profession and a decrease in students choosing to pursue teaching, Illiana, and schools across the country, are stuck scrambling to find educators for the upcoming school year. Illiana is looking to fill four positions-English, history/Spanish, student services, and science. Despite advertising these positions, the school received an underwhelming response.

Illiana has set up meetings with students at colleges such as Trinity Christian College and Calvin Christian University to try and advertise these roles to up-and-coming teachers in hopes of sparking some interest to work at Illiana. No one showed up to the meeting at Trinity. Two students came to the meeting at Calvin, a showing which Prin-

icipal Peter Boonstra considered a “home run.”

The labor shortage, however, is not just an Illiana issue. The National Education Association suspects that high-stress levels, inadequate pay, and the lasting effects of the pandemic are the reason many teachers are leaving their field,

As the group’s website notes, “According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), there were approximately 10.6 million educators working in public education in January 2020; today there are just 10.0 million, a net loss of around 600,000” (NEA).

Forced into coming up with some creative solutions to try and combat this issue, Boonstra has tried things such as assigning teachers to different positions, but ultimately, he says, “God is working with us...and [He] will provide a way.” His advice for the Illiana community is to “pray for good solutions.”

# Student body, faculty come together to celebrate March Disability Month with Polar Plunge, homeroom competitions

Jessica Bergfors  
Sports Editor

March was national Disability Awareness month, and Illiana’s Impact club joined the effort to spread awareness and knowledge about the cause. Impact club, sponsored by counselor Melanie Benes and Student Services Director Heidi Teach, worked together to create different activities, including the Polar Plunge, during March. The goal

was to bring awareness to different disabilities and to get faculty and students involved in the cause.

“Part of Impact is building community within the school, and helping all feel included, whatever their ability, race, or ethnicity. That is the basis of what Impact does,” said Benes. When it came to planning the month, the main goal was to get everyone in the Illiana community involved.

Many others were involved

with helping the activities come together as well. Seniors Joey Norman, Ashton Podlin, Eddie Lagestee, and Kolton Nelson constructed the platform and put the pool together for the polar plunge. Senior Sanyah Sampson helped create the point system, the Kahoot game, and the music playlist for the polar plunge, while also making announcements during it.

“It’s important to bring awareness to certain topics that some people may not know about,” Sampson said.

Through all this planning came logistics that needed to be worked out, but doing this made Teach and Benes more prepared for next year. Future plans that they hope to achieve include getting the Special Olympics organization involved. One of Teach’s main goals is to become a host site for the Special Olympics, and become a banner school through the Special Olympics, meaning that Illiana has to raise a certain amount of money for Special Olympics, host unified sports (teams that combine players with and without disabilities), and spread awareness. The two also hope to get more people with disabilities to attend Illiana.

“The goal is to get past awareness, and to move more towards acceptance, believing that kids with disabilities are part of God’s family too,” said Teach.



A group of students pose for a picture in their costumes. Photo courtesy of ICHS Facebook

Students jump into the freezing pool during the Polar Plunge. Photos by Jim Kamphuis



# Illiana Christian on Missions

## Los Angeles, California

Lucas VanderWoude

Reporter

During spring break, when many students were on vacation, 15 students and 3 chaperones went to Los Angeles, California on a mission trip to spread God’s hope and love with homeless people.

In order to go on the mission trip, students had to fill out an application in late October or early November. They also

had to agree to participate in meetings and fundraisers leading up to the trips. Sara Johnson, who picks the locations for the mis-

sions to LA and he would go on it, so I started doing a little research. I discovered that we had two alumni of Illiana doing great work in LA, and their missions were only four blocks apart. Once I heard that, I began planning in earnest.”

Students who went on the trip did many things to serve the L.A. community. They handed out free groceries to people in need, visited homeless

people on Skid Row and conversed with them. They also did something called Adopt-A-Block, which involved volunteers knocking on people’s doors, handing them flyers, and sharing the schedule of church events with them. A senior who went on the trip, Annalee Wang, shared what she liked most about the trip. “One thing I liked about it is I could see how God has worked

in us. At first we were all kind of shy and were kind of scared to knock on people’s doors and talk to them. But towards the end of the trip, we all opened up to people and were more willing to share things about God to other people. And God also used our different abilities to reach out to different people.”



Photo courtesy of Facebook

The LA mission trip team unpacks food from a foodtruck in order to hand out groceries to families in need.

sion trips every year, said, “I chose LA because a student asked me to find a trip

people on Skid Row and conversed with them. They also did something called

# Yaeger, West Virginia

Aubrey Porter

Feature Editor

For the third year in a row, Illiana Christian took a group of students to Yaeger, West Virginia this past spring break. Students and chaperones filled their week with different types of service such as painting, cleaning, and moving. They usually worked from sunrise to sunset.

Some activities they did were a little different from previous years. For example, for a couple of days during their trip the team stayed at a wildlife camp where they lived out of a yurt, a Mongolian style of tent, with no water or electricity. At the camp, they shoveled mulch and carried wood to a cliff to build an outlook. The group also repaired a skatepark, building two new ramps for the community to use.

The team kept some annual traditions as well. They attended a church service and went to a local youth group. Paul and Faith Dick, who moved to West Virginia from Pennsylvania to serve and bring Jesus to the community, also hosted

the group for the third year in a row.

Senior Sanyah Sampson said that their main goal was to serve all of the people and businesses in any way they could. “Our work seemed so little, but the gratitude we experienced was amazing. People felt like we had made a giant impact on the area though we felt like we were doing such small things, like cleaning up someone’s backyard.”

Sampson added, “Once I got home, I felt called to go back and help

were doing seemed small.

Senior Sydney Groenewold said that some of her favorite memories from the trip included helping the people in the community and seeing how grateful they were that the group was there.

“I also liked getting to know the people on the trip better and spending time with them all,” Groenewold said.

Dave Gibson, a chaperone, said he surprisingly enjoyed having to adapt to unexpected circumstances,

like losing all of the plumbing for a night and not being able to use the sinks, toilets, or showers. “It was fun to experience the group growing more comfortable through the times like this as the week progresses, and curve balls like this accelerate the growth.”

Terri Schaaf, another chaperone on the trip, said that

the youth group meeting specifically impacted her. “It was shocking to hear their strong beliefs, questions about God, and how much they are yearning to learn more!”

Schaaf added, “We all grew in our relationship with God, each other, and I loved serving alongside each and every person involved.”



Photo courtesy of Grace Goodfellow

Sydney Groenewold and Grace Goodfellow hard at work.

because at times I felt there was so much more that needed to be done.”

The jobs they did repainting a basement and cleaning up the outside of a local food pantry were only the first steps in the long process of repairs, but each and every person the team encountered was extremely grateful, even if the work that they

# Sauk Village, Illinois

Olivia Oostema

Editor-in-Chief

During spring break, four Illiana students (Taya Anker, Jon Bultema, Jillian Hoeksema, and Anna Haemker) served in Sauk Village, Illinois.

Because the trip wasn’t as far away as West Virginia or California, students met each morning at Emmanuel CRC and worked until early afternoon.

“It was the best of both possible worlds,” said Missions Director Sara Johnson. “We got to be the hands and feet of Jesus... while enjoying some of the joys of spring break.”

The group partnered with Faith Church, Emmanuel CRC, Chicagoland Prison Outreach (CPO), and Just Roots Chicago. Their coordinator was Kenan Koops, who works for Faith Church and is a teacher with CPO.

CPO works with previously incarcerated people and teaches them a trade. Students met two men—Marcus and Daryl—who completed CPO’s welding program and were working through the carpentry program.

The group helped out at the community garden, which involved some physical labor. The cold weather proved a challenge because the group couldn’t feel their fingers, said Hoeksema.

On Wednesday, despite a downpour, they helped serve 225 cars of people at a food pantry.

Said Johnson, “It wasn’t ‘fun’, but we made sure the day went smoothly and lightened the load of the regular volunteers.”

Senior Anna Haemker said helping feed people through the food bank was her favorite part of the trip.

Each day after volunteering, the group ate lunch together and invited members of the community to join them.

Said Hoeksema, “Something that challenged me was getting to know new people since we met different pastors and people from the church each day for lunch.”

“[Eating with community members] gave us an opportunity to learn and grow... while breaking bread together,” said Johnson. “I’ll treasure a lot of what we talked about at lunch for a long while.”

Haemker said, “I’m thank-



Photo courtesy of Facebook

The Sauk Village mission team takes a break from shoveling mulch to pose for a photo.

Senior Jillian Hoeksema said that listening to the men and hearing how they want to help their communities was her favorite part of the trip.

The group also met with members of the “It Takes A Village” Community Farm in Sauk Village, which is associated with Just Roots Chicago. The farm works to provide access to local, sustainably grown food.

ful for all the new people I met and for being able to gain experience working in a different area of town.”

Johnson encouraged students to consider going on a mission trip next year, whether for the first or fourth time. Hoeksema added, “Mission trips are a great experience, and I would definitely recommend doing it. It’s a great way to get involved and do Christ’s work.”



# Fine Arts pieces, Fine Arts winners

Visual Arts Winners  
Black & White  
1<sup>st</sup> Thijs vanBelle  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thijs vanBelle  
3<sup>rd</sup> Ella Holleman  
Honorable Mention  
Thijs vanBelle  
Honorable Mention  
Thijs vanBelle  
Honorable Mention  
Tony Jin  
Ceramics  
1<sup>st</sup> Camille VanLaten  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kevin Truong  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kevin Truong and Mia VanProoyen

Honorable Mention  
Kevin Truong  
Sculpture  
1<sup>st</sup> Ally Tillema  
2<sup>nd</sup> Jessica Roznowski  
Honorable Mention  
Tony Ren

Color Drawing  
1<sup>st</sup> Brooke Noble  
2<sup>nd</sup> Camille VanLaten  
3<sup>rd</sup> Audrey O’Brien  
Honorable Mention  
Camille VanLaten  
Honorable Mention  
Thijs vanBelle  
Honorable Mention  
Priya Sen  
Painting  
1<sup>st</sup> Thijs vanBelle  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kayla Bosman  
Honorable Mention  
Anna Holleman  
Honorable Mention  
Camille VanLaten  
Honorable Mention  
Priya Sen

Best in Show  
Kevin Truong

Printmaking  
1<sup>st</sup> Camille VanLaten  
2<sup>nd</sup> Camille VanLaten  
3<sup>rd</sup> Josie Plank  
Honorable Mention  
Loralee DeYoung  
Honorable Mention  
Maddie Ritzema  
Honorable Mention  
Cheyenne DeJong  
Honorable Mention  
Tony Jin  
Photography Winners  
Still Life  
1<sup>st</sup> Hannah Sliemers  
Honorable Mention  
Alex Bosman  
Portrait  
1<sup>st</sup> Hannah Sliemers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Alayna Knoll  
3<sup>rd</sup> Ashton Podlin  
Honorable Mention  
Kelsee Smit

Nature  
1<sup>st</sup> Kayla Bosman  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kayla Bosman  
3<sup>rd</sup> Jenny Beetle  
Honorable Mention  
Hannah Sliemers

Best in Show  
Tommy Ooms

Architecture  
1<sup>st</sup> Hannah Sliemers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brooke Noble  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tony Jin  
Honorable Mention  
Tony Jin

Abstract  
1<sup>st</sup> Hannah Sliemers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Hannah Sliemers  
Honorable Mention  
Eddie Lagestee



Kevin Trong Surrender



Alex Bosman Pastime



Lucas VanderWoude Mark Antony’s speech



Priya Sen The stars in her eyes



Camille VanLaten Flowers



Tommy Oom Untitled



Mia Vanprooyen Kevin Truong Fish Pot



Brooke Noble Reading positions

## Instrumental Winners

Solo category  
1<sup>st</sup> Tony Ren.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Brandon DeYoung  
3<sup>rd</sup> Chistine DeYoung  
Honorable Mention  
Levi Sliemers  
Ensemble category  
1<sup>st</sup> Alyssa Mulder and Hannah Sliemers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Isabella VanderWoude and Oliver Postma  
3<sup>rd</sup> Kenny Pickard, Ryan Sederstrom  
Honorable Mention  
Elliot VanDerGriend and Nolan Bouwman

## Literary Winners

In poetry  
1<sup>st</sup> Loralee DeYoung.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Janna vanBelle  
3<sup>rd</sup> Anna Holleman  
In essay  
1<sup>st</sup> Olivia Oostema  
2<sup>nd</sup> Arie DeYoung  
In fiction  
1<sup>st</sup> Loralee DeYoung  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kayla Bosman

## Vocal Winners

Solo category  
1<sup>st</sup> Kevin Truong  
2<sup>nd</sup> Savannah Glover and Karryn Taylor

## Honorable Mention

Hailey Ross  
Ensemble category

1<sup>st</sup> Abbey Helmus and Anna Bauer  
2<sup>nd</sup> Kenny Pickard, Alex Tambrini, Alex Bosman, Ryan Smith, and Thijs vanBelle  
3<sup>rd</sup> Hannah Sliemers, Alayna Knoll, and Isabella VanderWoude

## Drama Winners

1<sup>st</sup> Hannah Sliemers  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lucas VanderWoude  
Honorable Mention  
Kenny Pickard

## Piano Winners

1<sup>st</sup> Heidi Gorter  
2<sup>nd</sup> Raelyn Sederstrom



# Baseball plays with passion and hustle this season

Kyla Bennett

Reporter

Illiana Christian's Varsity baseball team played to a 6-4 record as of April 27.

Coach Jeff WanderWoude said that there have been many strengths within the team but the strongest part of the team's game this season has been its pitching.

"From our starters to our bullpen, they all have done a phenomenal job of attacking the strike zone and challenging hitters. They have had great success and have always given us a chance to win," VanderWoude said.

The team's biggest win so far this season was against Lowell, whom the Vikings defeated 10-0.

"I believe that was the best the boys have done at controlling their controllables and executing their plan that they had in place," said WanderWoude. He added that his athletes have been playing with a

lot of passion and hustle

The team's biggest game was Andrean. They didn't end up winning, but they competed well, had clearly defined plans, and worked together to execute. The team stayed in the game as a unit, but unfortunately they came up short in the end.

VanderWoude said, "The greatest thing we as coaches are looking forward to this season is to watch these young men grow into someone they didn't think was possible. We will continue to push them out of their comfort zone and grow them not only as baseball players, but as great Christian young men. We want them to realize that anything that they want to accomplish is attainable but they will have to put in a lot of hard work with purpose and intent to obtain it. I look forward to them taking this team over and leading it for themselves and for what they want to accomplish."



Photo by Jeffrey DeVries

*Freshman Gavin Meyer gets ready to catch the ball at their game against Lowell on April 23.*

## Girls tennis remains undefeated

Danielle Rancifer

Reporter

The Illiana girls varsity tennis team, composed of ten girls, shows promise with its current record at 5-0, making them undefeated.

Junior Maddy Smith said, "The team's greatest asset is the fact that we are all so close."

Ave Lindumulder, another junior, said, "I'm excited because it's our first year in the conference."

Another junior, Kate Devries, said, "We seem to be pretty strong in a lot of areas, and so there is nothing big

that comes to mind when I think about what we need to work on."

Senior Christine DeYoung said, "We have a lot of hardworking girls on our team and we are pretty talented because of this hard work. We are a close knit team, and are really accepting of each other no matter the individual pair of wins or losses."

Long time coach, Robert Lagerwey said, "1st singles player Sabri Lopez and the 1st doubles team of Morgan Trivette and Maddy Smith are among the best in the region. Josie Plank and Avery Olthof are also both undefeated so far this season....Overall I'm ex-

cited to see how each player will grow and how our team will grow as a whole."

On Saturday, April 23, the team won the South County Tennis Invite. Lagerwey said, "That was a real confidence booster and evidence of the talent on the team."

The coach pointed out some of the team's strong points, "First we have a deep team and strong players in all positions. Second, the team never gives up. They have come back numerous times after being down in the match. They're a close group who support each other and encourage each other."



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

*The girls pose with their first place trophy at the \Hanover Invitational.*

Lagerwey is also optimistic about the future of the team, especially regarding upcoming events such as the conference. He is "excited to see how far they go."

## Golf team battles bad weather in April

Olivia Oostema

Editor-in-Chief

The boys golf team started its season facing cancellations and rescheduling due to poor weather.

"[There's been a lot] of cold, windy, and damp days, but it is always great to be at the golf course!" said Coach Jack Rudenga. "We've been working hard in [spite of] some pretty harsh weather."

As of the twenty-first, the team has only had one tournament and two matches. On April 11, the team got first place with 179 points. At the Marquette Invite on the sixteenth, the team got seventh. The team lost to Crown Point High School on the 21st.

"We are a young team that could use some more experience," said Rudenga.

Senior Wesley Olthof said, "On the 21st we all played bad for some reason, but it was a nice day to be out on the course."

Athletes are focusing on improving their skills and building relationships.

"We are all very competitive players. Our top guys are always close in score which keeps us fighting for the top spots," said Olthof.

## Softball begins season with 5-0 record



Photo by Jeffrey DeVries

*Senior Taylor Oppenhuis strikes the ball in their game against Griffith.*

Citlali Sanchez

Reporter

The varsity softball team has had a perfect start to its season with a record of 5-0. The girls have already defeated teams that they lost to last year and the team's strongest aspect is its pitching and hitting. They hope to continue this momentum with the hope of winning conference, sectionals, regionals, and state.

Something that the team is doing differently is having devotions not only on game days, but also on practice days. The coaches are also spending much more time on mental preparation than they have in the past.

"The most enjoyable part of coaching this team has been watching their camaraderie both on and off the

field," said varsity coach Nicole Terpstra-Wondaal. "They genuinely care about each other and truly enjoy being in each other's company. This makes our job, as coaches, a bit easier knowing each person has the other person's back."

The junior varsity softball team is currently 2-1.

"This season has done nothing but surpass my expectations so far," said jv coach Stephanie Renner. "What I've enjoyed the most is helping the girls grow not only as players but as Christian women. My goal for them is to get them prepared for varsity as well as make as many positive memories as possible. The girls have already shown huge improvements and always bring joy and excitement into each activity that is handed to them."





# Viking sports briefs



## Volleyball team takes show on road

**Olivia Oostema**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

Boys volleyball started its season with a record of 11-9. On April 23, the athletes competed at the Miller Invitational in Indianapolis. Before the event Coach Clark said athletes were “excited to see what we can do against teams we may see in the state tournament and hopefully improve our Indiana ranking.” At the tournament, the team took sixth place. Senior Colin DeVries said that teamwork is something the team struggles with. “We have a lot of

skill and potential on this team. If we start playing as a team and keep our heads... up, we will play even better than we are now,” said DeVries. The team has many talented players who continue to improve, according to Coach Clark. He said it’s “when they really play together as a team” that they shine. The team must play a certain number of games to qualify for the state tournament, and there are few teams in our area. That requirement led the team to play with schools as far away as Indy. On April 16, the team took third in the Eisenhower Cardinal invite “against some good teams,” said Coach Adam Clark.



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook  
*Marc Rozendal sets up for Ryan Bultema to spike the ball at the Marian Catholic game on April 13.*

## Boys track team pursues ‘love, grit, purpose’

**Jessica Bergfors**  
**Sports Editor**

With winning all their outdoor meets of the season, the boys track team is seeing its hard work pay off. Coach Luke Fennema said that they have a talented group of guys who are committed to working hard and doing their best. Junior Fritz Olthof has been a strong mid-distance runner and has been scoring points in shot put and long jump. Junior Blake Stasny has shown immense improvement in hurdles and pole vaulting, and senior Brady Vroom is the fastest distance runner, with Fennema saying that Vroom is always in the mix for a win. “Our top priority this season is to reflect Christ in love, grit, and purpose,”



Photo by Jeffrey DeVries  
*Senior Trevor Eenigenburg runs in the relay for track.*

Fennema said. “This is our motto for the year, and we have worked on that in team devotions and accountability groups.” Fennema said they train hard daily and want the boys to reach their personal best performances. They also hope to qualify as many people as possible for Regionals and State.

## Girls Track team executing at every level



Photo by Jeffrey DeVries  
*Senior Marissa Vazquez runs the 4 by 8 relay at Illiana.*

**Grace Jania**  
**News Editor**

With an undefeated season in conference so far, the girls’ track team has been executing solid performances throughout the month of April. The

team and so there is a bigger learning curve for them, but I have been impressed by their work ethic. Our returning athletes are doing a great job leading by example and mentoring the girls.” Top noted that she has seen a lot of strength in the pole vault program under Coach Mike Southworth, as the vaulters continue to score points for the team. She remarked that the long distance runners and sprinters are also continuing to do well. “A lot of [the distance runners] success lies in being on the cross country team and continuing to train in the off season,” Top said. “I really want our program to be all about the team versus individuals and having the girls experience growth spiritually, mentally, and physically,” said Top. “I’m looking forward to watching that development as well as seeing them improve in their events individually. And I love just being around them— whether at practices or at meets.” Junior team member Alex Vis said that her favorite part of the season has been “making new friends and getting closer as a team and being able to see improvement already from last year.” Vis added, “I’m looking forward to going into postseason and seeing some more personal records from myself and my teammates.”

### Male Athlete of the Month

Junior Fritz Olthof, member of the track team, has been chosen as April’s male athlete of the month. His coach, Luke Fennema, described him as “the most versatile athlete on our team and one of our highest point-getters.” Olthof is involved in multiple track events, including competing in middle distance running, shot put, and long jump. “He’s just an all-around athlete who is willing to try a variety of events and contribute any way he can,” Fennema said. Olthof frequently wins the 800m at meets and always takes part in the 4x400m relay. He also has participated in the 4x800m relay, which currently has the fastest time in the area.



### Female Athlete of the Month

April’s female athlete of the month title has been awarded to junior Sabrina Lopez, the 1st singles varsity tennis player, meaning that she plays the best player from every opposing team. Her coach, Rob Lagerwey, described Lopez as being “a consistent, intelligent player who does not get frazzled and enjoys a challenge.” One of Lopez’s highlights came at an 8 team tournament, where she came out in first place out of all the singles players, assisting the team in winning first as well. “Sabri always has a positive attitude and leads with her words and with her actions,” Lagerwey remarked. “She is competitive but treats her opponents with respect. Sabri embodies what a Christian athlete should be like.”





# Editorial

## BeReal: a more authentic social media

Social media platforms, especially Instagram, are known for making life out to be picturesque and perfect, with filters, “likes,” and cute captions. But is this what we should be putting on display for the world and our friends to see? What is the point of putting a so-called “perfect life” with “good vibes only” on exhibit when everyone can make their lives look like that if they really tried?

Instagram has been one of the most popular social media apps, especially for teens, but the app creates unrealistic expectations. Nobody has a perfect life, perfect body, or perfect relationships. But pictures that allude to these standards are what most everyone chooses to post and like. What about the real pictures? What about the untouched, unfiltered, raw images that would reflect life lived by a human being? Being picture perfect constantly is unrealistic, and the moment we realize and accept that, the sooner we can learn to be comfortable in our own skin and feel comfortable reveal the imperfections that make us

human and beautiful. This is where the BeReal app comes in. As an alternative to apps like Instagram or VSCO, another app made for posting filtered, aesthetically pleasing photos, BeReal prompts its users to only take pictures of themselves in the most

prompting them to take a picture of themselves within two minutes of the alert. However, when accepting this call to action, the user is cued to take one picture of themselves in selfie mode, and one with the front-facing camera to show where they are or what they are

ment on your posts, which can spark casual conversations, instead of endless compliments that might come from just another Instagram post about your most recent vacation.

With such a small window of time to snap your daily BeReal post, users are compelled to be their authentic selves in their pictures. Even the app name in itself is a constant reminder that hiding behind a mask is something we should learn to leave behind in order to embark on a path of self-love and growth.

Though Instagram is a source to keep up with what everyone you know is doing, and VSCO is fun to organize and add pictures to, we need to ask ourselves what the real reason for having these apps is? It’s clear that no matter how picture-perfect someone’s life may look, there are flaws to everything. Instead of altering the imperfections, it’s important to remember to embrace them.

We need to be real. And this new social media platform may be one of the ways we, as a generation and society, can get on the track to doing just that.

What about the real pictures?

What about the untouched, unfiltered, raw images that would reflect life lived by a human being?

open way possible. In a news article on Bloomberg.com about the trending app, it describes the platform like so: “With no filters, BeReal gives users a brief window, once a day, to post candid, unglamorous photos.” To further explain, users get one notification every day at a random time,

up to. Pictures might show someone in class, filling up at the gas station, or waiting to check out at the grocery store. While “likes” are absent on this platform, added friends can “react” to your posts by sending a picture of themselves reenacting popular expression emojis. They are also able to com-

## A senior’s advice: making the most of high school

Second semester, senior year. Last quarter of high school. As I’m writing this, there are currently 28 days until the last day of school for seniors, excluding weekends and hopefully excluding exam week (fingers crossed). By the time this is published, it is practically the last month of high school for seniors. So, for the underclassmen to take as advice, here are some things that I’ve learned over the past years, and things that have made my high school memories something to cherish.



Jessica Bergfors  
Sports Editor

1. Go on the D.C. class trip: The class trip is one of my favorite memories from high school. I know a lot of teachers push underclassmen to attend the class trip, but honestly, it’s so worth it. Before the class trip, I already went to D.C. twice and honestly did not want to go a third time. However, I’m glad I went because the memories that you make are some of the best. The memories and bonds that you make with both your current friends and classmates who you may have never talked to before are unforgettable, and touring various places in D.C. is pretty fun as well.
2. Participate in loud crowd: A lot of underclassmen look forward to loud crowd and attending the games, but if you’re going to attend, please participate! The experience will be a lot more fun for everyone if you dress up, chant, and cheer on your fellow Vikings.
3. Attend a sports game other than boys basketball: A lot of Illiana’s other sports don’t usually have a loud crowd or get as much hype like boys basketball does, but make it a goal to at least attend one other game other than boys basketball. This year, girl’s basketball got a loud crowd, and it was one of my favorite loud crowds and games of the year! Throughout my years I have gone to volleyball games, girls basketball games, and track meets, and it’s always fun to show support for the teams and your friends.
4. Dress up for spirit week, even if you think it’s lame: Dressing up for spirit days are never lame. Even if you can’t go “all out” for spirit days, at least put some effort into dressing up! I promise that nearly everyone else will also be dressing up and looking goofy right along with you. Plus, it makes the school day a lot more fun and it gives you something to look back on and laugh about.
5. Talk to people who aren’t in your friend group: I know mostly everyone has their clique and their set groups of friends, but something I have found, especially this year, is you can make some of the best friends by just talking to new people who you usually would not have. This year I have found some of the best friendships with people either in my classes or people who I have just grown closer to, who I may not have ever thought about talking to or becoming close with.
6. Build a relationship with your teachers: When you and your teacher get along, it makes those 45 minute class periods a lot more enjoyable and fun. In my experience as well, I’ve found that if I like the teacher and we have a good relationship, I’m more eager to learn and do better in the class.
7. Join the Echo staff: Do I really need to explain why?

the

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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.

Spring Scramble

Unscramble the following phrases from the April issue

1. pceapknacaer

Running, eating event

2. boegiongsusxt

StuCo receptacle for student feedback

3. bisailedisit

March was a month to raise awareness for:

4. gekvislalua

Students went on this local mission trip

5. floobysg

Sport struggling with poor weather

6. cktar

Illiana’s co-ed sports team

7. areyratsnngpad

Day to show relatives what ICHS is like

8. etivruceidrodn

Campaign to decrease debt

9. agydo

Illiana’s day of service

Spring begins

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